IF RELIGION IS TO BE TAUGHT *ACROSS THE CURRICULUM*—AS WE have argued—then the Bible and world religions will properly come in for some discussion in many courses, and the themes of this chapter will be relevant to most teachers.

We have argued not just for the *natural inclusion* of religion in existing courses, however, but for *courses in religion*. If educators are to take religion seriously, if they are to treat it with a robust fairness, then there must be *required courses* in religious studies taught by teachers competent (and certified) to teach them. We have acknowledged that neither certified teachers nor required courses are likely prospects in the foreseeable future—but it is important to keep the ideal in mind if we are to move in the right direction.

Of course *elective* courses in the Bible and world religions, if not quite common, are not uncommon either—and there should be more of them. In this chapter we discuss the educational and constitutional issues relating to such courses—and propose what we take to be important in any introductory course in religious studies.

The Constitutional Framework

The Supreme Court has never ruled on the constitutionality of courses in religion, though lower courts have approved both elective and required religion courses when conducted in accord with the Supreme Court's ruling in *Abington v. Schempp* (1963). As we have seen, in his majority opinion Justice Tom Clark distinguished between *devotional* Bible reading, which is unconstitutional, and study of the Bible that, when conducted *"objectively as part of a secular program of education,"* is constitutional.[1] In a concurring opinion, Justice William Brennan, the strictest "separationist" on the Court in recent decades, agreed that the prohibition on devotional Bible reading "plainly does not foreclose teaching *about* the Holy Scriptures" or religion more generally.[2] It is permissible to teach about the Bible and religion in public schools; this is not controversial.

But it must be done properly. What does it mean to teach about the Bible or religion "objectively, as part of a secular program of education"? Both Justices Clark and Brennan grounded their opinions in the Court's reading of the Establishment Clause as requiring religious *neutrality.* To teach objectively is to teach neutrally. As we have seen, two kinds of neutrality are required: neutrality among religions, and neutrality between religion and nonreligion. Schools can't privilege any particular religious tradition or any particular religious interpretation of the Bible. When we disagree—as we do about religion in general, and the Bible in particular—the only way to be neutral is to be fair to the contending parties, include them in the discussion, and refrain from taking sides.

The Court's claim that the Bible and religion must be studied as part of a "secular program of education" should not be taken to mean that the Bible must be read as secular scholars or scientists do (for that would privilege nonreligious over religious approaches and violate the neutrality between religion and nonreligion also required by the Establishment Clause); rather, the *purpose* of studying the Bible or religion must be educational, not religious. Religion courses cannot be used to proselytize or indoctrinate students.

Although lower courts have held that private funds may be used to pay a Bible teacher, it is clear that those funds must come with no strings attached; Bible courses must be completely under the control of the school system. Teachers cannot be required to pass any religious test.

The Educational Framework

Why is religion important enough to be included in the curriculum? In Chapter 2 we suggested three secular, educational reasons. First, religion has been a powerful influence historically on literature and art, politics and war, morality and our intellectual life. Students must understand a good deal about religion if they are to

understand what we already require them to study in history and literature courses. Second, religions continue to offer widely accepted answers to those existential questions about the meaning of life—suffering and death, tradition and identity, reason and faith, happiness and justice—that we inevitably ask as human beings. Students can't be educated persons without understanding something about how religions have answered these questions.[3] Third, a liberal education should introduce students to the major ways people have devised for making sense of the world, enabling them to think in an informed and critical way about the alternatives. We now teach students to think in exclusively secular ways about every subject in the curriculum; the study of religion provides critical perspective on students' secular studies.

Because religions are embedded in worldviews that make sense of reality in terms that are sometimes foreign to modern science and our secular disciplines, religions are difficult to understand. Moreover, religions differ from one another in ways that complicate their study. We have argued that students cannot learn enough about religions by way of "natural inclusion" to get "inside" religious ways of making sense of the world. Consequently, we have argued, high school students should be required to take at least one yearlong course in religion, and if that course is to serve the purposes of a liberal education, it must include the study of several religious traditions.

Finally, it is important to note, yet again, the congruence between our civic and educational frameworks. The purpose of studying religion in a public school is not to initiate students into a religious tradition (as is proper in a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple); rather, it is to inform students about various religions, the different ways they have been understood, their relationships to one another, and their implications for how to make sense of the world, *fairly.* This is what both the constitution and a good liberal education require.

Bible Courses

Schools rightly require virtually all students to read a Shakespeare play at some point; yet they usually ignore the Bible although it has been immeasurably more influential than all of Shakespeare's plays together. No book has been so influential in the history of the world as the Bible. Indeed, for millions of Americans the Bible continues to be the source of their deepest convictions and commitments. If any book merits inclusion in the curriculum, it is the Bible.

Bible courses might take a number of shapes.

• *The Bible as Literature.* Students might study the Bible in terms of aesthetic categories, as an anthology of narratives, stories, and poetry, exploring its language, symbolism, motifs, and archetypes.

• *The Bible in Literature.* Students might study the ways in which later writers have used Biblical stories, language, symbols, motifs, and archetypes. We've already discussed these two alternatives in Chapter 6.

• *The Bible as History*. Students might study the Bible for the light it throws on ancient history. As we argued in Chapter 4, the *sacred history* found in the Bible is quite different from the secular history of academic historians. What we can learn about history from the Bible depends on how we interpret it and the criteria we use to assess the validity of historical claims—both matters of considerable controversy.

• *The Bible in History.* Students might study how people of various religious traditions have understood the Bible, and how it has influenced our social and cultural institutions, our beliefs and values.

However important the Bible is as literature or history, however great its influence has been on later literature and history, its primary importance has clearly been as a religious text, *as Scripture;* indeed, this is the source of the Bible's literary and historical importance. To read the Bible simply as literature or history would be a little like reading poetry as if it were no more than prose; it would be to miss a dimension of meaning that is in Scripture. It is through the Biblical account of the Creation, God's covenant with Abraham, the moral radicalism of the Hebrew Prophets, Jesus' teaching of love _and the coming Kingdom of God, and his death and resurrection, that Jews and Christians have acquired their understanding of reality. To not

appreciate the *religious* roots of civilization with all of the theological, moral, social, political, and scientific branches that are nourished by them, is to remain uneducated. And so we add a fifth possibility.

• *The Bible as Scripture.* Students might consider the central *religious* claims made in the Bible, how various religious traditions have interpreted those claims, and how those claims have influenced our history and culture. Of course, to study the Bible as Scripture, as we propose it, is not a matter of reading it devotionally, but learning *about* how the Bible has been understood as Scripture within various traditions.

The Major Issues

Whatever the rubric, we must address several major issues if we are to adopt a neutral and educational approach.

• *Whose Bible?* We've talked so far as if there were a single _Bible, when, in fact, there is a Jewish Bible (the Hebrew Scriptures, or *Tanakh),* and various Christian Bibles—Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox—each composed of different books, arranged in different orders. These differences are significant. Needless to say, it makes a great deal of difference if the New Testament is part of the Bible. (Of course, Judaism is a religion of the Talmud as well as of the Hebrew Bible.) Even the arrangement of books is of significance: for example, the Hebrew Bible ends with Cyrus's admonition to the Jews in II Chronicles to go to Jerusalem; the Christian Old Testament ends with Malachi's prophecy of the coming of the Messiah.

To adopt any particular Bible will suggest to students that it is normative, the best Bible. It will be the Bible of some students and will be foreign to others. Arguably, public schools should use an inclusive Biblical sourcebook that is different from but includes the key texts of each of these Bibles (though such a textbook would not itself be a Bible). If a single Bible is to be used, it must, inevitably, be the most inclusive; hence, teachers should remind students at various crucial points in the course that their Bible is different from other Bibles and the significance of this. Students should, of course, study how the various Bibles came to be.

• *Whose translation?* Traditions and denominations often have their own authorized translations. Whatever its literary merits or religious authority for conservative Protestants, the language of the King James Bible is difficult—it was archaic even when it was translated in the 17th century—and a modern translation is essential. Many scholars prefer the New Revised Standard Version, but many conservatives object to its use of gender-inclusive language. What is important educationally is for students to understand these controversies, read from several translations, and reflect on their theological significance.

• *Whose interpretation?* Horace Mann and his successors in the common school movement of the 19th century argued that the King James Bible should be read in school without comment or theological gloss as a way of maintaining doctrinal neutrality. Mann's approach continues to have its advocates. The manual for the widely used curriculum of the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools rightly states that study of the Bible must be free of sectarian biases, but it takes this to mean that the King James Bible (which it recommends) should be read without commentary: "Study about the Bible should center on the biblical text itself rather than the extraneous material and theories which might express a particular theological position rather than the historical presentation found in the Bible." Indeed, this approach is "consistent with the teaching found within [the Bible]" (1996, pp. 62, 73).

Of course, this was—and is—a peculiarly Protestant (indeed, conservative Protestant) approach to the Protestant King James Bible. Jews have always read the Hebrew Bible through rabbinic commentary, and Catholics have always insisted that the Catholic Bible requires the authoritative interpretation of the church. Why? Because the meaning of the Bible isn't obvious; it requires interpretation. That is, *just* to read the Bible doesn't avoid sectarian bias; rather, it adopts a particular sectarian approach.

But couldn't one argue that reading the Bible without commentary is not simply a Protestant approach, it is a *secular* approach and, as such, is appropriate for public schools? There are two problems with this. First, the Establishment Clause requires neutrality between religion and nonreligion as well as neutrality among religions; that is, schools can't privilege a secular over a religious reading of the Bible any more than they can privilege a particular religious interpretation. The other problem is that any good secular reading of

the Bible (or Homer or Plato or any secular text) requires the use of modern historical and literary criticism; that is, it requires scholarly commentary to make sense of the text.

Beginning in the 19th century the resources of modern secular scholarship (in history, philology, and archaeology) were brought to bear in developing a new understanding of Biblical texts. For example, scholars argued that the Torah, or Pentateuch, was not the work of Moses but the "redaction" of at least four quite different sources. Biblical texts (such as the Noah narrative) were variations on nonbiblical stories common in the ancient Near East. The Gospels were written 30 to 90 years after Jesus' death by men who did not know him but drew on various sources to develop somewhat different—and conflicting—portraits of him.

In our century, liberal Jewish and Christian theologians have drawn heavily on this scholarship to interpret the Bible and rethink their traditions, while conservative Christians and Orthodox Jews have typically reaffirmed that the Bible is inerrant—at least in its essential teachings. (It is important to note that there is a difference between holding the Bible to be *inerrant,* and holding that it should be read *literally;* theologians have often held, for example, that the true or intended meaning of a passage is allegorical, or metaphorical, and requires interpretation.)

And then, of course, there are the fundamental differences between Jewish and Christian readings of Scripture. Does the "suffering servant" passage in Isaiah 53 refer to Jesus or to Israel? Is the serpent of Genesis 3 Satan? Do we read the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Old Testament, in terms of the New Testament? Not if we're Jewish.

Teachers must maintain some sense of tension between letting the text (like any primary source) speak for itself and drawing on the resources of different (secular and religious) interpretative traditions for understanding it. If we are to educate students about the Bible, if it is to be studied neutrally, we must expose students to the major different ways of reading the Bible in our religious and scholarly traditions. To do this effectively requires the use of secondary sources that deal with various approaches to the Bible.

• *Whose selections?* Individuals often argue that the Bible can be quoted in support of any cause. This is an exaggeration, but there is a point to it. Some biblical texts were quoted by slave holders, others by abolitionists. Different religious traditions have valued (and sometimes denigrated) different portions of the Bible. Students should read enough of the Bible to acquire some sense of its recurring themes, but if they can't read all of the Bible (and it's unlikely that they can), teachers must be careful in selecting the parts they assign.

• *The Bible and history*. One of the problems with *just* reading the Bible is that this wrenches it out of its historical context, throwing students on their own, typically meager, resources for making sense of texts written in different languages and cultures. Students should learn about the Bible in the context of the ancient Near East, in part to understand what was common to the times and what was distinctive about the Bible. Even more important, students must study the Bible in the context of the various major historical interpretative traditions that have shaped its meaning as Scripture. Indeed, because the Bible has been the most influential of all books, students should learn something about its historical influence on a wide variety of cultural institutions and controversies—and on people's most basic beliefs and values *here and now.*

• *Required Bible courses?* Given its importance and influence, schools should require all students to study the Bible in some depth, but we do not favor required Bible courses as the way of accomplishing this end, in part because this comes a little too close to privileging the Jewish and Christian traditions. Educators should incorporate some study of the Bible into appropriate world history and literature courses (at contextually appropriate places)—though, as we've argued, natural inclusion doesn't get us very far. The ideal, once again, is to incorporate the Bible into a religion course in which it would be studied with other sacred scriptures. When the Wake County schools in Raleigh, North Carolina, began offering high school Bible courses several years ago, they required that each of the high schools also offer world religions courses. We find considerable merit in *elective* Bible courses but believe they should be supplemented in the curriculum by courses in other world religions that give all students the opportunity to study their own traditions—and convey to them the sense that their religions are taken seriously.

World Religions Courses

As important as it is for students to understand the Bible, a course on the Bible and its influence will not educate them about religion generally. Just as there is more to history than American history, so there is more to religion than the Bible, Judaism, and Christianity. Schools must take seriously other religious traditions, and one way to do this is through a course in world religions.

The Major Issues

• *Diversity and depth.* There is, of course, an inevitable neutrality problem with any world religions course, for there is not time in the school day to be fair to *all* religions. There are also educational tensions here. The "fairer" the course—the more religions studied—the more superficial it will be. The religions of the world are not minor variations on a theme, easily captured in short lists of basic beliefs or values. Moreover, some religions have been—and continue to be—more influential than others and, as a result, are more important to study on educational grounds.

Neutrality and breadth must be balanced with relevance and depth. We suggest that in a year-long course students should explore a few religious traditions in some depth—with, perhaps, a cursory survey of other religions to give them some sense of breadth. No doubt Christianity should be one of the religions studied because of its deep influence on American institutions and on the beliefs and values of many students. Neutrality requires that it not be privileged, however, in at least two senses. First, Christianity cannot be assumed or argued to be the "true" religion. Second, schools must teach students about several religions that contrast in marked ways to Christianity. Schools should include at least one non-Western religion in the course, and if a substantial number of students come from a particular minority tradition, it would be good to include that religion in the mix. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge and study the exploding religious diversity of American culture; most urban schools will have students who are members of many of the world's religions.

• *The many dimensions of religion.* In Chapter 2 we cited Ninian Smart's taxonomy of the seven dimensions of religion: doctrine; myth or narrative; moral and legal teachings; ritual; religious experience; social institutions; and art. Different religious traditions give different weight to these various dimensions of religion. For many Christians, especially conservative Protestants, salvation hinges on what one believes. Indeed, from the beginning, Christianity defined itself in terms of creeds, and required *orthodoxy,* or right belief. Some religions—Judaism, Islam, and Confucianism, for example—place less emphasis on belief, however, and more on practice—and are often called "orthoprax" religions. So, for example, Jews are to keep the commandments, observe the rituals, and sustain tradition. It is often said that one is a believing Christian, a practicing Jew. In other religious traditions, ritual, mystical encounters with the Transcendent, philosophical reflection, art and the experience of beauty, or living in harmony with nature may be central.

It is important both that students appreciate these differences and that teachers not impose their own conception of what is or should be normative in religion on other traditions, but convey to students *each religion's own conception of what is normative.*

• *Internal diversity.* Of course, every religious tradition comes in different varieties. We need only think of the differences between _Pentecostals and Presbyterians, Russian Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, African and Anglican versions of Christianity. For some Christians salvation hinges on what one believes; for others it is found in mystical union with God; for yet others, in liberating the oppressed. The term *Hinduism* suggests a unity that obscures a bewildering diversity of myths and rituals, beliefs and values, institutions and theologies. (Indeed, *Hinduism* is a Western term used for the first time in the 19th century to categorize the various "religions" of India; Hinduism is simply the religions of the Hindus.) Although one can trace the legacy of distinguishable Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist traditions in China, Chinese religion has long been an amalgam of them. And, of course, the rubrics "African religion" and "Native American religion" mask a great deal of diversity.

Acknowledging these differences is important, in part because students will sometimes not recognize their own traditions in the simplified versions of them they will encounter in the classroom.

• *Scripture.* All religions have sacred scriptures—texts that members of those traditions have found to reveal the nature of God and ultimate reality—and it is important that students read scripture, learning about religions from the "inside" through their primary sources. As we saw in our discussion of the Bible, students must also appreciate something of the diversity of meaning that scriptures have in different traditions.

Of course, not all religions have *written* scriptures; much African and Native American religion does not—though many of these traditions have stories and myths, orally transmitted, that function as scripture. (In most religious traditions, "scripture" was conveyed orally for centuries before it was written down.) Whereas Western religions have a closed canon, most Eastern religions (Hinduism, Mahayana Buddhism, Chinese and Japanese religions) do not, but draw on a wide array of scriptures of varying degrees of influence at different times and places. The authority of canonical scriptures has given a measure of unity to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that is not typical of other traditions.

Even among Western religions, there are significant differences in how scripture is understood, however. For example, within Islam the Qur'an is understood much as Christ is understood in the Christian tradition—as the immediate revelation of God. By contrast, Christians typically understand the New Testament as being once removed from God, bearing witness to the revelation of God in Christ. The word *Qur'an* in Arabic means "recitation," and Islam places an emphasis on reciting scripture that is absent in Christianity. Moreover, the Qur'an is not to be translated, but read and recited in Arabic; again Christianity has no parallel.

It is important to remember, of course, that sacred texts are not as central to all religions as they are to Western religions. Other religions may better be approached through art or ritual or tradition.

• *Development and progress.* Another danger of fixating on sacred texts and the origins or "classical" forms of religions comes _from the fact that religions develop. Historically, one can't understand Christianity apart from its development through the church fathers, the medieval synthesis of theology and Greek philosophy, the Reformation, and the development of modern liberal Christianity and conservative reassertions of orthodoxy. Christians often regard Judaism primarily as a precursor to Christianity, which ignores the transforming impact of rabbinic teaching (canonized in the Talmud), and its development in response to Greek philosophy and modernity. Indeed, every religion develops in response both to the larger world and to internal social and intellectual movements—while, no doubt, maintaining traditions and sacred texts that are, relatively speak-ing, more revered by "conservatives" than "liberals" within those traditions.

Of course, when the question of development is posed as a question of *progress,* it becomes controversial—and very important for students to understand. Religious liberals accept the idea of religious progress: through experience, reflection, and scholarship we can acquire greater insight into God and reality and reform our religious traditions. Conservatives often believe, by contrast, the truth was given once and for all in the past, and the only kind of reformation that is possible is dispensing with later accretions and distortions and returning to the original revelation.

• *God.* Needless to say, different traditions have understood God in very different ways. There is the obvious difference between monotheistic, animistic, and polytheistic conceptions of divinity. Whereas the Western religions have traditionally understood God as personal, Eastern religions have more commonly held an impersonal or mystical conception of God (as Nirvana, Brahman, the Tao). Consequently Western scriptures are often understood as the "Word" of God, for God, like persons, reveals "Himself" in language. Of course, mysticism is not utterly foreign to the West, and constant debate has occurred over the extent to which personal language can be applied to God. Some religious liberals argue that the idea of God as a person should be recognized as myth that, if taken literally (as conservatives often do) is a kind of idolatry; it confuses an image of God with the "ineffable" reality of God. Conservatives, by contrast, often find liberal demythologizing of God-talk to be dangerously unscriptural. How literally we take scriptural language about God determines whether it is appropriate to use masculine pronouns for God—another matter of some controversy.

Again, the point is that conceptions of God are quite different in different traditions; it won't do to say (as teachers sometimes do) that deep down all religions worship the same God. They don't—or, at least, the claim that they do is deeply controversial.

• *Religion from the outside and the inside*. It is important, once again, to sustain some kind of balance in approaching religion. We've argued that scripture must be put in historical and linguistic context, using the resources of secular scholarship. Some comparative study of what is common to religions and what is distinctive about each, in turn, is both interesting and important. What can be said about how religions come into existence, develop, and relate to one another?

But, of course, one major purpose of studying religion is to acquire some sense of how the world looks from *within* those traditions. Here, as we argued in Chapter 2, the goal is to nurture an *informed empathy*, an imaginative understanding of the world as seen through the eyes of people in different religious traditions. In such study, they should be allowed to speak for themselves, using the conceptual resources of their own traditions, to make sense of their own religion, lives, and the world.

Consequently, a good course in world religions should use—and balance—both primary sources (scripture, theology, art, film, and literature) drawn from within religious traditions, and secondary sources (perhaps textbooks) that approach various religious traditions from the outside.

Live Religions

A well-constructed course in world religions may serve as an excellent introduction to religion, but if educators focus all of the attention on sacred texts and the classical, historical forms of religions, they will not adequately address one major educational problem that concerns us: the relationship of *live* religions to various "subjects" of the curriculum. The importance of religion lies not just in its historical influence but in the implications of living religion for how *we* think about the world and live our lives.

As we noted in Chapter 2, for most of history religion pervaded all of life. People in other times and cultures haven't divided the _world up as we do. Indeed, *religion* is a modern Western word that *we* have come to use to categorize ideas and institutions in strikingly new and different ways (Smith, 1963). Beginning in the 17th century, Western intellectuals gradually distinguished religion from politics, economics, history, morality, and science, secularizing our ways of conceiving these disciplines. Contemporary public education teaches students that secular ways of experiencing the world are normative, that the modern secular worldview goes without saying. Of course, in cases in which the logic of arguments and evidence is exclusively secular (and is often defined by scientific method), students come to understand religious claims as matters of seemingly blind faith. This is a peculiarly modern, Western view, and one point of a good religion course should be to examine this claim. After all, in all cultures, and for most of human history, it was *reasonable* to understand the world religiously.

There are many ways of defining faith and reason, but we might put the problem this way: because we teach students so little about religion, we teach them, in effect, to accept the adequacy of secular ways of thinking about life and the world *uncritically, as a matter of faith* (Nord, 1995, pp. 179–186). We have argued that it is essential to enlarge the curricular discussion to include religious voices if students are to be truly educated—that is, if they are to be able to think critically or *reasonably* about their lives and what they learn elsewhere in their coursework.

To teach students about every "subject" in the curriculum in secular terms only is neither neutral, nor does it constitute a good liberal education. We would have students learn something about several different religious ways of making sense of the major, religiously contested issues addressed in the curriculum: the origins of the world; the meaning of history; the meaning of America; justice; sexuality and the family; abortion; and morality—that is, those issues we address in Chapters 3 through 9 of this book. Students should learn enough about religion to enable them to understand, and participate in, our ongoing cultural discussion of these issues.

One task of a religion course must be to explore the relationship between religious and secular ways of making sense of the world. Where are the tensions and conflicts, the points of agreement and compatibility? Such "worldview analysis," as Ninian Smart calls it (1987, chap. 1), is neither an easy nor uncontroversial task. What is important is that students understand something of our ongoing cultural discussion about these matters and not (blindly) accept the current conventional wisdom.

Of course, this agenda requires time—at least a year—and the ideal would be a two-year sequence in which students studied world religions in their classical forms and historic development the first year, and the relevance of religion to contemporary issues and the other "subjects" of the curriculum the second.

Reminders

Because religion is a complicated subject, and because courses in religion have the potential to be controversial, we end this chapter with a few pointed reminders.

• *Age-appropriateness.* We have argued that educators can do much to develop the religious literacy of elementary school students, but the complexity of religion and the potential for controversy require that students in Bible and religion classes possess a good deal of maturity. Such courses should be taught only in high schools.

• *Excusal.* If schools require religion courses, we suggest that they have an excusal policy allowing students to be exempted if taking the course would burden their consciences. As we saw in Chapter 1, an argument for excusal policies can be made on "free exercise" grounds, but there are also reasons of sensitivity and political self-interest for having such a policy; indeed, such a policy would likely make required courses politically feasible.

• *Clear policies.* Because religion courses are controversial, it is important that school systems have clear religion policies that have grown out of successful efforts to find common ground and establish trust in a community before they are planned or put into place. Parents, teachers, and administrators all need to understand the constitutional and educational frameworks that must shape such courses. Students might read and discuss excerpts from *Abington v. Schempp* and other court rulings as part of the introduction to any religion course.

• *Teacher preparation.* As we've seen, religion courses require a great deal of sophistication on the part of teachers. We do not favor religion courses unless there are teachers competent to teach them. Religion teachers need to be certified, and certification should require a least an undergraduate minor in religious studies. That is, the field of "religious studies" needs to be developed in public education as it has been in higher education. Scholars in religious studies and education must think carefully about what mix of courses should be required to prepare teachers to teach about religion in public schools—and then make sure that such courses are offered.

Suggested Readings_and Resources

Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *What Is Scripture?* (1993) is an extraordinarily helpful account of the idea of scripture in the major world religions. *Sacred Writings* (1994), edited by Jean Holm with John Bowker, provides good overviews of the origins, translations, interpretations, and use of scriptural texts in the major world religions. In *The Bible As Literature* (1990), John Gabel and Charles Wheeler provide historical and literary background on the composition of the Biblical texts, the formation of the canon, and translations of the Bible. Jeremy Daniel Silver's *The Story of Scripture* (1990) and Samuel Sandmel's *The Hebrew Scriptures: An Introduction to Their Literature and Religious Ideas* (1978) are helpful studies of the Jewish Scriptures from within the Jewish tradition.

For background on the all-important split in the late 19th and early 20th centuries between liberals and conservatives over modern historical study of the Bible, see Martin Marty's *Modern American Religion: Vol. 1 (The Irony of It All, 1893–1919)* and *Vol. II (The Noise of Conflict, 1919–1941)*. William R. Hutchison's, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (1976) and George M. Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980) are classic studies of liberalism and fundamentalism during this crucial period. For a good historical survey of how the Bible has been interpreted from the Church Fathers through the present day, see *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (1984), by Robert M. Grant with David Tracy. Donald McKim's *What Christians Believe About the Bible* (1985) provides historical background but focuses on recent interpretations ranging from fundamentalism to feminism. See James Barr's *The Bible in the Modern World* (1990) for a good account of the Bible's encounter with modernity, and *Scripture in the Jewish and Christian Traditions: Authority, Interpretation, Relevance* (1982), edited by Frederick E. Greenspahn, for essays written from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish perspectives. In *The Bible in Translation: An Essential Guide* (1997), Steven M. Sheeley and Robert N. Nash provide brief but helpful accounts of the major English translations of the Bible.

There is, of course, a truly vast literature on world religions. Huston Smith's *The World's Religions* (1958, 1991) is justifiably considered a classic; his newer *Illustrated World's Religions* (1995) adds pictures. Also Ninian Smart has written a number of excellent studies of the world's religion: see his *Religious Experience of Mankind* (1976), with chapters devoted to each of the major religions, or his *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (1996), with chapters devoted to the differ-_ent dimensions of religion (myth, morality, art, etc.), each illustrated with examples from the different religions. Smart was also the chief consultant for *The Long Search*, an excellent 13-part videotape series _on the world's religions. Karen Armstrong's *A History of God* (1993)—deservedly a bestseller—traces the development of ways in which God has been understood in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions from the beginning to the present day. *The Story of the World Religions* (1988), by John Tully Carmody and Denise Lardner Carmody, is a textbook that might be used with bright high school students. For the primary sources, see *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology* (1984), edited by Ninian Smart and Richard B. Hecht; *The World Religions Reader* (1998), edited by Gwilym Beckerlegge; and *Readings in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (1998), by John Corrigan (Contributor), Frederick M. Denny (Editor), and Martin S. Jaffee.

Jacob Neusner has edited an excellent set of essays dealing with religious pluralism in the United States: *World Religions in America* (1994). In Chapter 4 we described at some length the CD-ROM *On Common Ground: World Religions in America* (1997) produced by the Harvard Divinity School's Pluralism Project, and the 17-volume series *Religion and American Life* (forthcoming) for use in high school classrooms. The *World Religions & Cultures* catalog of the Social Studies School Service lists many of these and other resources (books, videos, and CD-ROMS); call 1-800-421-4246 for a copy.

While it was prepared for college teachers, *Teaching the Introductory Course in Religious Studies: A Source Book* (1991), edited by Mark Juergensmeyer, provides a wealth of helpful essays for high school teachers (including essays on teaching the major world religions). All teachers would benefit greatly from access to the authoritative essays in the 13-volume *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987), edited by Mircea Eliade. The *HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion* (1995), edited by Jonathan Z. Smith, includes charts, pictures, short essays on innumerable topics, and longer essays on the major world religions.

Michael J. Buckley explains the development of modern atheism through the French Enlightenment in *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (1987). In *Without God, Without Creed* (1985) James Turner shows how modern "unbelief" came to characterize much of American intellectual life by the end of the 19th century. (Also see the books by Marsden and Reuben in the Suggested Readings and Resources for the Introduction.) For defenses of contemporary atheism, see Paul Kurtz, *In Defense of Secular Humanism* (1983), and Anthony Flew's *Atheistic Humanism* (1993).