

February 24, 2016

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I'm writing to comment on the proposed legislation to amend Idaho Code 33-1604 concerning the Bible's role Public education. In response, I'd like to suggest that the Bible is simply good literature. The 40 different original authors wrote while living in different locations and times, over a span of 1500 years (1500BC-400BC; AD45-100), across 3 continents and in 3 languages (Koine Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic) to write about controversial subject matter. What we have today in the Bible is rendered as an accurate record of the original message through a plethora of literary forms. Some of the more prominent genres used in the Bible are legal literature, narratives, poetry, parable, letter and apocalyptic...with a whole host of sub-levels within each of these. To be exact, Leland Ryken offers a list of 280 different literary types in the Bible (A Complete Handbook of Literary Forms in the Bible, 2014).

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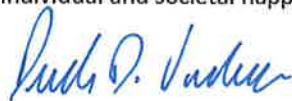
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In light of that, the Bible can be a tool to hone one's interpretive methodology. The Bible's historical accuracies require sound hermeneutics in order to really 'hear' what is being said in it. Reading the Bible requires critical thinking and analysis, both of the original historical situation of life that backdrops the 66 books therein, as well as the literary contextual flow of thought within each book. That demand alone makes the Bible a valid prospect for learning how to read and research well. Thus, the Bible aids in interpreting world history and the geo-political movements in each era as they overlap with Biblical events. It also addresses human behavior, as well as astronomical and natural phenomenon that sciences also validate. The Bible is helpful to understand all of life.

Because of the Bible's literary diversity it can aid any literature-based courses...from American Lit. to the Classics, to studying ancient Greco-Roman and Hebrew cultures via Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Due to the literary diversity and precision of its rich historical tapestry, the Bible is something students of all ages could use to learn to read better. In fact, across the global continents today, the Bible is a common non-religious textbook for individual learning how to read, learn history, and think critically. Whether it is an elementary age student or a collegiate pursuing a bachelor's degree, the Bible offers both introductory and graduate level challenges for anyone on an excursion to learn.

The principles for life read in the Bible have served as the basis for the fabric of the American family and local governments for centuries. The virtues of life found in the Bible are moral and orderly guides for leaders at home, school, business and government. The Bible reveals how society ought to live in peace and harmony under the constructs God has laid for reasonable human governance. If one wants to understand the historical worldview of the framers of the U.S. Constitution, one would be wise to study the role the Bible played in shaping their understanding on the macro and micro principles of government as set forth in the Bible. Indeed, this book serves as the ideal for American citizens to exist and thrive together in society.

In short, offering the Bible in Idaho's academic scope and sequence of non-religious courses and competencies would parallel the fabric of our nation's endeavors for life, liberty and the pursuit individual and societal happiness under God.



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