

November 13, 2014

To: Members of the Texas State Board of Education

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Subject: Problems in Truth in Texas Textbooks (TTT) Reviews

I have studied the social studies textbook reviews published by the organization Truth in Texas Textbooks (TTT). I paid particular attention to the TTT reviewers' comments on world religions (since I have a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Southern Methodist University, where I also teach courses in world religions).

As a native Texan and a product of the Lone Star State's public schools, I appreciate and share the TTT reviewers' concern to promote "truth in Texas textbooks." Sadly, however, many of the changes they suggest would promote **not truth, but half-truth, misinformation, or even error.**

While I do not advocate dismissing the TTT reviews altogether (they raise some worthwhile points), **I urge you to exercise extreme caution when evaluating the TTT reviews, especially those sections treating Islam and other world religions.**

What is particularly troubling is that the TTT reviewers seem intent on presenting the most negative view of Islam they can manage. One TTT reviewer reveals her bias early on in one review, when she writes of Islam's "threat to the Western world."¹ Elsewhere a TTT reviewer unfairly and unreasonably lumps Muslims together with communists and socialists: "The greatest fear for a communist, a socialist or a Muslim is Truth."² At another point, the TTT reviewers even go so far as to claim that "No one is interested in knowing what Muslims think of Jesus."³ Besides being flat out wrong (many of my fellow Christians are quite interested), the reviewers seem to be advocating ignorance about what Muslims believe.

In many cases TTT reviewers support their clear anti-Muslim bias by cherry-picking facts and relying on sources that lack scholarly credibility and have an evident ideological agenda. To cite a few representative examples:

- "Islam is spread by the sword while monotheistic religions are not" (TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 38).

Both claims are transparently false. (1) The spread of Islam in Texas (the Muslim population has more than doubled since 2000⁴) clearly has not been "by the sword." And while Islam has sometimes spread by military conquest, it has also spread through trade and missionary

work; in fact, Islam spread to Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population, entirely through trade and missions, not conquest.⁵ (In support of their claim, the reviewers cite an evangelical Christian website www.answering-Islam.org, whose authors decline to identify themselves.⁶) (2) Christianity has at times spread through military conquest and forced conversions—for instance, under Charlemagne and in the Spanish conquest of Latin America.

- “According to the *Qur’an*, it is the religious duty of all Muslims to wage aggressive *jihad* warfare until Islam and *shari’ah* law are supreme over the entire world” (TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World History, p. 5).

This is wildly incorrect. As Islam scholar Paul L. Heck (Georgetown Univ.) notes, *jihad* in the *Qur’an* “cannot be reduced to armed struggle. Virtually all instances...speak primarily to the question of true intention and devotion...In short, *jihad* in the *Qur’an* signals not military activity per se but a righteous or right cause before God. What such a righteous or right cause before God exactly meant was envisioned in various ways by Muslims in the centuries subsequent to Islamic revelation.”⁷

- Islam “is fundamentally violent. Roughly 61% of the *Qur’an* is devoted to hatred or violence towards non-Muslims.” (TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester A, p. 28).

In support of this bizarre claim, the reviewer cites Dr. Bill Warner, who holds a PhD in physics and math but has no academic credentials in Islam studies or religious studies. His “61%” figure is based on the highly questionable assumption that *Qur’anic* content about unbelief (*kufir*) is “really” about followers of other religions. The consensus among scholars is that much of the *Qur’an*’s discussion about *kufir* has to do with ingratitude for the benefits God has bestowed, and thus applies to Muslims as well as non-Muslims.⁸ (I should note in passing that there is disagreement within the Muslim tradition as to whether Jews and Christians count as *kufir*.⁹)

- The reviewer claims that the facial veil “is MANDATORY in Islam. Women are commanded to veil their faces and cover their bodies in *Quran* 24:31 and 33:59” (TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World History, p. 10-11).

The reviewer apparently knows no Muslim women; if he did, he would know that, regardless of what is said in the two cited verses from the *Qur’an*, the use of the hijab (veil) in Islam varies widely.¹⁰ (Some of my Muslim women students at SMU wear the hijab, while others do not.) To claim that Islam makes facial veiling mandatory on the strength of these two *Qur’anic* passages is as ludicrous as claiming that Christianity mandates that women have long hair on the strength of 1 Cor 11:15, or that Christian men cannot wear hats, due to 1 Cor 11:7, or that Christian women cannot preach, due to 1 Cor 14:33-34.

- The reviewers claim that “Arabs cannot even correctly pronounce the word Palestine in their native tongue, referring to area rather as ‘*Filastin*’” (TTT Review of Discovery US History Civil War to the Present, p. 25).

This statement reveals the reviewers' prejudice against Arabs. *Filastīn* is quite correct *in Arabic*, the language of the Arab people.

Attached to this letter is an addendum discussing some of the problematic passages (as well as some praiseworthy comments) in the TTT reviews. The addendum by no means exhausts the list of problems in the reviews; rather, it illustrates those problems by discussing the most egregious of the religion-related errors in the reviews.

These and similar passages mislead students about the nature of Islam and directly contradict scholarly consensus among credentialed scholars of religions. They also do a disservice to a rapidly growing segment of the population, Texas Muslims—many of whom have children in our public schools.

All Texas students deserve an accurate and unbiased education about the religions of our world, including Islam. Such an education must include a robust discussion of the positive and negative aspects of the various religious traditions, and must rely on the best available scholarship. In too many respects, the reviews offered by TTT do not meet this standard.

Thank you.

Attachment: Addendum: Response to Reviews from Truth in Texas Textbooks (TTT)

CC:

Cengage Learning

Discovery Education

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

McGraw-Hill School Education

Pearson Education

Perfection Learning

WorldView Software

Addendum: Response to Reviews from Truth in Texas Textbooks (TTT)

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Contents:

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2. Misrepresentations of Jihad
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1. Some Praiseworthy Passages

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 13:** Commenting on a list of names of 19th century reformers, the reviewers write: “Students will not remember names listed in passing unless enough information is given to make the people come alive.”
- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 15:** “The Paris Commune is often said to be the first example of working people taking power. For this reason it is a highly significant event, even though it is ignored in the French history curriculum.”
- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 25:** “Jews were persecuted in Germany long before the advent of Hitler.”
- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 42:** In response to a textbook statement (likely in compliance with the tendentious TEKS 13(F)) that “The establishment of Israel in 1948 caused virtual constant conflict in the region,” the reviewers note, correctly, that “There were other causes of constant conflict in the region besides the creation of Israel in 1948....The sentence should be re-written to say that ‘the establishment of Israel in 1948 was one cause of conflict in the region.’”
- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 48:** The reviewers note that the textbook’s coverage of discrimination against black persons in Brazil omits “any discussion of who does the discrimination, what kind of discrimination it is, and what is being done about it, if anything.”

2. Misrepresentations of Jihad

The TTT Reviews repeatedly misrepresent the important Islamic concept of jihad by reducing it to aggressive warfare to establish domination over non-Muslims. Here are some examples:

- **TTT Review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt World History, p. 4:** The reviewer writes: “The ‘inner struggle’ meaning of *jihad* is listed first, incorrectly implying that it is the most important meaning. In fact, according to most classical and modern Islamic theologians, jurists and scholars, ‘armed struggle against unbelievers’, specifically including aggressive warfare for the purpose of making Islam supreme over the entire world, was, and is, the predominant meaning of *jihad*. Explicit in the Islamic doctrine of *jihad* are two issues of extreme importance: (1) warfare in the name of religion, and (2) imperialist aggression.” “According to the *Qur’an*, it is the duty of every Muslim who is able to wage war to make Islam supreme in the world... [] The *Sunna*, as recorded in the *hadith*, confirm the fact that the predominant meaning of *jihad* is waging warfare for the purpose of making Islam supreme in the world.”
- **TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World History, p. 2:** The reviewer writes: “Jihad warfare ‘in the way of God’ is not ‘permitted’ in the Quran. It is MANDATED in the Quran.” “Among others, Chapters 5 and 9 of the Quran command all Muslims to wage warfare against non-Muslims until Islam is supreme over the entire world.”
- **TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World History, p. 5:** The reviewer writes: “According to the *Qur’an*, it is the religious duty of all Muslims to wage aggressive *jihad* warfare until Islam and *shari’ah* law are supreme over the entire world.”
- **TTT Review of Pearson World History, p. 3:** The reviewer writes: “The textbook fails to tell students that according to the *Qur’an*, it is the religious duty of all Muslims who are able to wage aggressive *jihad* warfare until Islam and *Shari’a* law are supreme over the entire world.”
- **TTT Review of Pearson World History, p. 8:** The reviewer writes: “Most contemporary Islamic scholars, jurists and theologians are in agreement with the classical Islamic authorities that the primary meaning of *jihad* is mandatory, aggressive warfare to convert or subjugate infidels. The Encyclopedia of Islam defines *jihad* (dijihad) as follows: In law, according to general doctrine and in historical tradition, the *jihad* consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, of its defense. Encyclopedia of Islam, new edition, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960-2003, ‘Dijihad.’”
- **TTT Review of Pearson Contemporary World Cultures Grade 6, p. 1:** The reviewer again claims that that the Qur’an mandates perpetual warfare against non-Muslims.
- **TTT Review of McGraw Hill US History since 1877, p. 4:** The reviewer claims that “for the Muslims, the world is divided into the House of Islam and the House of War.... The outside world, which has not yet been subjugated, is called the ‘House of War,’ and strictly speaking, a perpetual state of *jihad*, of holy war, is imposed by the law.”

Each of these depictions of jihad is incorrect. Contemporary scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, do **not** agree that jihad is to be understood primarily as aggressive warfare. In fact, the same article on Jihad in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* which the reviewers cite makes this quite clear. While the article notes that some Islamic scholars in the classical period did understand jihad in terms of military action to subjugate non-believers, it also notes that the classical theory

was already outdated as it was being formulated. The article also notes that “many Muslims today are trying to reclaim the broad meaning of jihad as ‘effort’ or ‘struggle’ **apart from war**. Increasingly, we find references to such struggles as the ‘jihad for literacy’ or the ‘jihad for economic development.’”¹¹ As Islam scholar Paul L. Heck (Georgetown Univ.) notes, jihad in the Qur’an “cannot be reduced to armed struggle. Virtually all instances...speak primarily to the question of true intention and devotion...In short, *jihad* in the Qur’ān signals not military activity per se but a righteous or right cause before God. What such a righteous or right cause before God exactly meant was envisioned in various ways by Muslims in the centuries subsequent to Islamic revelation.”¹²

3. Misrepresentations of *Shari’a*

The TTT reviewers often misrepresent *shari’a* as if it were monolithic—one *shari’a* applying to all Muslims everywhere. For instance:

- “There is no requirement in *Shari’a* law for Muslim leaders to ‘extend religious tolerance to Christians and Jews,’ not in any way we would understand the meaning of ‘tolerance.’ *Shari’a* law imposes a litany of burdens and restrictions on Christians and Jews, both in their daily lives and in the practice of their religions” (Review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt World History, p. 3).
- “Islamic fundamentalism...receives support [from secular Muslims] because Islam requires adherence to *Shari’a*” (Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 43.)
- “*Shari’a* clearly gives men more rights than women...and Muslims more rights than non-Muslims..., hardly steps toward democracy” (ibid., 40-41)

The reviewers’ misconception about a single *shari’a* is understandable, since the word refers to “the path of correct conduct that God has revealed”; in this sense Muslims (particularly Islamic fundamentalists) often speak of “the” *shari’a*.¹³ However, as is clear from one of the sources the reviewers themselves cite, there have traditionally been several different schools of Islamic law, from the conservative Hanbali school to the more liberal and rational Hanafi.¹⁴ Furthermore, Muslims can draw on numerous legal opinions: “there is no central authority for matters of Islamic law in Sunni Islam (some Shi‘ites have developed authority structures), and Muslims may seek advice from a number of different authorities (*muftis*) before making up their mind.”¹⁵ When the reviewers treat *shari’a* as monolithic, they fail to handle the evidence with the level of care and precision expected of scholars.

4. Other Errors in the TTT Reviews

- **TTT Review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt World History, p. 4:** In support of yet another (incorrect) claim that the Qur’an mandates warfare on non-Muslims, the reviewers write: “it must be remembered that the *Qur’an* is considered by Muslims to be the immutable word of God, as revealed to Muhammad. These *Qur’anic* teachings remain widespread in the Muslim world today.”

Response: This is misleading at best. While most Muslims do indeed believe that the Qur'an is "the immutable word of God," the meaning of statements in the Qur'an itself is not always clear—as is the case with other sacred scriptures such as the Bible and the Vedas; as one Islam scholar writes, "Far from being self-explanatory, [the Qur'an] can only be understood by reference to material *outside* itself."¹⁶ Consequently there is a long tradition of Qur'anic interpretation in Islam, that endeavors to understand the revelation and apply it to current circumstances. The bottom line is that simply citing a particular Qur'anic passage may tell us nothing about how that passage has been understood and applied in actual Muslim law and practice.

- **TTT Review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt World History, p. 3:** "There is no requirement in *Shari'a* law for Muslim leaders to 'extend religious tolerance to Christians and Jews,' not in any way we would understand the meaning of 'tolerance.' *Shari'a* law imposes a litany of burdens and restrictions on Christians and Jews, both in their daily lives and in the practice of their religions."

Response: While various Muslim rulers did impose various "burdens and restrictions" on non-Muslim subjects (*dhimmi*), the reviewers offer only part of the story. As an Islam scholar writes: "The status of the *dhimmi* was secured by a legal institution called *dhimma* ('protection'), which guaranteed safety for their life, body, and property, as well as freedom of movement and religious practice on condition of their acknowledging the domination of Islam. This included the payment of various taxes, the most important being the so[-]called *jizya*, a poll-tax levied on all able-bodied free adult *dhimmi* males of sufficient means." In the mid-19th century, "under strong European pressure the provisions of Islamic law were increasingly replaced by new legislations that were intended to free the non-Muslims from their inferior status of 'protected people' and to make them full citizens. **Today most written constitutions of Muslim states confirm the principle of equality of all citizens irrespective of religion, sex, and race.** Certain militant Islamic groups, however, advocate the reimposition of the *jizya* and the *dhimma* regulations."¹⁷

- **TTT Review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt World History, p. 5:** The reviewers claim that "The Qur'an did not forb[id] forced conversions." They then cite, not the Qur'an, but a secondary source which does not mention the Qur'an: "'In the Muslim community, the jihad is a religious duty because of the universalism of the Islamic mission and the obligation to convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force...,' Ibn Khaldun as cited in Karsh, page.67."

Response: The Qur'an in fact **does** forbid forced conversion: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:256).¹⁸ Noted Islam scholar David Waines calls this "the clearest scriptural prohibition" against forced conversion, and reports that instances of forced conversion are historically rare.¹⁹ It should also be noted that Christians have historically employed forced conversion on many occasions: for example, Charlemagne gave the conquered Saxons the choice of conversion or death; and in the Americas the Spanish conquerors frequently forced the conversion of native Americans to Christianity.

- **TTT Review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt World History, p. 7:** Responding to the textbook statement that “In 1099, the Crusaders captured Jerusalem,” the reviewers claim that it “reverses history”: “It is typical of the faulty history of the Crusades which leads students to believe that Christians were the initiators of the aggression in the Holy Land and that Muslims were the victims who were merely defending themselves. The Christians were in Jerusalem centuries before the Muslims. Muslims invaded the Holy Land by the mid-7th century. The Crusades were launched in the late 11th century, some 450 years later, to wrest back control of the Holy Land from the Muslims and liberate the Christians from the Muslim conquerors.”

Response: The verb “captured” neither connotes nor implies anything about who initiated the aggression or which side had a prior claim to the land. The reviewers seem to be reading into the passage information which is simply not there.

- **TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World History, p. 10-11:** The reviewer claims that the veil “is MANDATORY in Islam. Women are commanded to veil their faces and cover their bodies in *Quran* 24:31 and 33:59.”

Response: The reviewer apparently knows no Muslim women personally; if he did, he would also know that, regardless of what is said in the two cited verses from the Qur’an, the use of the hijab (veil) in Islam is highly variable.²⁰ (Some of my Muslim women students at SMU wear the hijab, while others do not.) To claim that Islam makes facial veiling mandatory on the strength of these two Qur’anic passages is as ludicrous as claiming that Christianity mandates that women have long hair on the strength of 1 Cor 11:15, or that Christian men cannot wear hats, due to 1 Cor 11:7, or that Christian women cannot preach, due to 1 Cor 14:33-34.

- **TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World History, p. 3:** Responding to a textbook definition of racism, the reviewer writes: “Muslims erroneously believe that Islam is superior to all other religions, and that they have a duty, mandated by Allah, to wage war to establish supremacy over all other religions.”

Response: The reviewer implies that all Muslims are racists. I have addressed the alleged “duty to wage war” in section 2 above.

- **TTT Review of Pearson World History, p. 8:** The reviewer claims that “The United Nations did not draw up the partition Plan to ‘meet the competing demands of Arab and Jewish nationalists.’ Britain had withdrawn from control over the Palestine mandate because of the increasing terrorist attacks of the Arab population against the Jews of Palestine and the increasing retaliation by the Jewish population.”

Response: The textbook is correct and the reviewer incorrect. The UN Special Committee on Palestine, in its 1947 report to the UN General Assembly, specifically mentions the competing demands of Arab and Jewish nationalists: “the Committee was fully aware that both Arabs and Jews advance strong claims to rights and interests in Palestine, the Arabs by virtue of being for centuries the indigenous and preponderant people there, and the Jews by

virtue of historical association with the country and international pledges made to them respecting their rights in it. But the Committee also realized that the crux of the Palestine problem is to be found in the fact that two sizeable groups, an Arab population of over 1,200,000 and a Jewish population of over 600,000, **with intense nationalist aspirations**, are diffused throughout a country that is arid, limited in area, and poor in all essential resources.”²¹

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History A, p. 1:** In response to the statement that one ancient hominid “may be the ancestor of modern humans,” the reviewer comments that “‘may be’ does not represent fact” (p. 1).

Response: It is difficult to tell what the reviewers are criticizing here. Do they mean that one hominid definitely was the ancestor, or no hominid was, or what?

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History A, p. 6:** In response to a statement that Sumeria “had cities ruled over by a central government,” the reviewer comments cryptically: “No Facts [sic] to help the student form their own opinion about what took place 4000 BC.”

Response: What sort of “Facts” does the reviewer want the author to supply?

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History A, p. 7:** The reviewer complains that the textbook’s use of “New Stone Age” for “Neolithic” is an “Attempt of the Author to change the meaning of a word,” and asserts that “‘New Stone Age’ is a ‘NEW’ word in history and does not change the ‘Neolithic period.’”

Response: Again, the reviewers’ criticism is deeply puzzling. “Neolithic” literally means (and has always meant) “New Stone Age” (from Gk. *neos*, “new” + *lithos* “stone”). If the reviewers are aware of the meaning of “Neolithic,” what are they criticizing?

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History A, p. 8:** In response to the statement that most ancient societies were patriarchal, the reviewer complains that “‘Most’ does not represent facts.”

Response: It is difficult to tell what the reviewers are criticizing here. Do they mean that *all* ancient societies were patriarchal, or *none* were, or what?

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History A, p. 10:** In response to the textbook’s definition of the Mandate of Heaven as “the notion that rulers were chosen by God,” the reviewer complains: “The word ‘notion’ does not represent facts.”

Response: This is particularly puzzling, since the word “notion” means simply a conception or belief, which is certainly an apt description of the Mandate of Heaven. What is the reviewers’ criticism?

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History A, p. 15:** In response to the glossary definition of a Muslim as “one who submits to God,” the reviewer writes: “Muslims submit to ‘Allah’ but not to the God of the Jews and Christians.”

Response: There are two problems with the reviewer’s response. First, the textbook does not claim that the God of Islam is identical to that of Judaism or Christianity. Second, the Arabic word *Allāh* literally means “God” (*al ilah*, “the God”); Arab Christians use the same word for the Christian God.

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester A, p. 21:** In response to the textbook statement “Islam spread beyond the Middle East by peaceful and by military means,” the reviewers contend that “Islam was spread much more by military than peaceful means.”

Response: The textbook statement is historically accurate. The reviewers’ assertion is highly doubtful and likely incorrect. The spread of Islam to sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, and Southeast Asia (e.g., Indonesia) was by trade and missionary work, not by military means. (Also, to support her/his claim, the reviewer cites K.S. Lal’s *Growth of Muslim Population of Medieval India (1000-1800)* (1973). Besides the fact that what happened in one region (India) does not reveal what happened throughout the Muslim world, it should be noted that Lal’s methods and conclusions have been questioned: one scholar notes that while Lal’s book is useful for its references, its population estimates “appear willful, if not fantastic.”²²)

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester A, pp. 21 and 37:** In response to the textbook’s statement that “Many people of lower Hindu castes accepted Islam because it taught the equality of all before Allah,” the reviewers contend that “Islam did not teach the equality of all before Allah,” and then cites inequality between genders, between believers and unbelievers, and between slaves and free persons.

Response: The reviewers seem to misunderstand what equality before Allah signifies. As stated in the *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, “The Qur’an takes the position that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and of the law. No human being has any inherent claim to superiority over another on the basis of lineage or race.”²³ The circumstances of one’s birth or social class, therefore, do not affect how one is judged by God; all humans are held to the same divine law. Furthermore, this applies as well to gender: “With respect to morality and spirituality, men and women are equally accountable to God for their actions and for their religious beliefs and responsibilities ([Qur’an] 33:35), and in this regard, the Qur’an holds an egalitarian vision, as has been pointed out by Leila Ahmed.”²⁴ However, just as Christians have failed to live up to the teachings of Jesus, so the Muslim community has not always treated persons with the equality taught in the Qur’an.

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester A, p. 53:** The reviewers complain that the textbook “has extensive use of the word ‘Palestine’. There is no country of Palestine and the country of Israel did not exist until 1948. The Romans referred to that part of the world as the land of the Philistines. The correct terms are Samaria and Judea to describe what is now Israel and the West Bank.”

Response: The reviewer is incorrect in several respects. *Palestine* is a standard term of reference for the region. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that it has been used in English since 1628, and goes on to say: “The name Palestine is derived from ancient Greek *Palaistinē* (used in Hellenistic Greek in early Christian writing), classical Latin *Palaestīnē* (the name of the Roman province; in post-classical Latin also *Palaestina* (late 2nd cent. in Tertullian), *Palestina* (late 4th cent. in Jerome))...It designates that territory on the eastern Mediterranean coast which in biblical times comprised the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.”²⁵ As that quote indicates, the Romans did indeed refer to the region as *Palaestīnē*.

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 5:** With regards to the Ottoman Empire, the reviewers complain that a textbook passage gives no explanation for “the name ‘the Sick Man of Europe.’”

Response: Quite the contrary. The textbook clearly does explain that name: “The Ottoman Empire was known as ‘the sick man of Europe’ because it was disrupted by nationalist uprisings and misruled by a corrupt, inefficient government. It had fallen behind Europe in technical, material, humanitarian, and administrative achievements.”²⁶

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History B, p. 7:** In response to the textbook’s statement, “the United States...grew concerned about reaping its share of the lucrative profits to be made from the China trade,” the reviewer asserts that “‘Reaping its share’ and ‘lucrative profits’ do not represent facts.”

Response: Here again, how is this not factual? The profits from the China trade in the 19th century certainly were lucrative.

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, pp. 40-41:** In response to a textbook passage that mentions “tentative steps toward more democratic government in the Middle East,” the reviewers write: “Shari’a clearly gives men more rights than women...and Muslims more rights than non-Muslims..., hardly steps toward democracy.”

Response: While it is true that traditionally *shari’a* has not accorded equal treatment to women and non-Muslims, this fact does not negate the real strides toward greater democracy made in some Muslim countries. It should be remembered that at the time of the enactment of the U.S. Constitution—a giant step toward a more democratic government—women, African-Americans, and Native Americans did not have rights equal to those of white males. Recent events in the Muslim world suggest that Muslims are now struggling with issues of equality much as Americans have struggled since the early 19th century.

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History Semester B, pp. 60:** In response to a textbook passage on anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe after 9/11, the reviewers complain that the passage does not “mention that is [sic] was Muslims who were responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.”

Response: This information is covered in some depth in an earlier chapter (Ch. 19, Overview, International Relations, International Violence and Terrorism), as well as later in the chapter (Ch. 22) cited by the reviewers, under “The War on Terrorism.”

- **TTT Review of WorldView World History B, p. 63:** In response to the textbook statement that some East Europeans “yearned for the stability” of the former Communist regimes, the reviewer asks, “How does one ‘yearn’ for stability of former regimes?”

Response: This is an exceedingly odd question. People “yearn” for stability in many ways.

- **TTT Review of Cengage World Cultures & Geography, p. 6:** In response to a textbook statement that “Many residents of New Orleans believe that better levees might have limited damage caused by flooding after Hurricane Katrina,” the reviewer claims that the term “many” “does not represent facts.”

Response: It is difficult to see what the reviewer means. Does she want a count of such residents? If so, that is simply silly.

- **TTT Review of Cengage World Cultures & Geography, p. 6:** The reviewer claims that “Religions spread because people accept the teachings[,] unlike Islam which converts by conquest.”

Response: As I mentioned earlier, Islam only spread by conquest in certain regions and periods. Even in those places and times, it also spread in part because some people accepted its teachings. Its spread today is not through conquest.

- **TTT Review of Cengage World Cultures & Geography, p. 13:** The reviewer claims that “Christianity is not a religion that is known for forcing people to convert.”

Response: Perhaps this aspect of the history of Christianity is not “known” to the reviewer, but it happened. Charlemagne at times resorted to forced conversions, using the death penalty for refusal to convert, as in the case of the Saxons in the 780s.²⁷ Forced conversion was also practiced by the Spanish on the native American population under the *encomienda* system, under the Spanish *Requerimiento* of 1513; native Americans were given the choice of conversion or enslavement.²⁸

- **TTT Review of Cengage World Cultures & Geography, p. 20:** In response to the textbook wording “When Islam came to Africa in the A.D. 700s,” the reviewer claims that “Islam didn’t just ‘come’ to Africa. It arrived by military conquest,” and suggests that “A more accurate beginning to the sentence would say, ‘After the Islamic conquest of North Africa, etc.’”

Response: In fact, “came” is more accurate with respect to Africa as a whole, since Islam only arrived by conquest in North Africa; it arrived in East and Sub-Saharan Africa largely through trade and missionary work.

- **TTT Review of Discovery World Cultures & Geography, p. 1:** Objecting to the textbook statement that “there are different types of Christians,” the reviewer claims that “Christianity is a belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. There is only one type of Christian though groups may practice their belief differently.”

Response: This is an exceedingly odd claim, suggesting that the reviewer is unfamiliar with the meaning of the word “type.” Let us take the Oxford English Dictionary definition of *type*: “A kind, class, or order as distinguished by a particular character.”²⁹ Certainly there are many “kinds” (“types”) of Christians: as a sacramental Episcopalian, I am a different kind or type of Christian than a Baptist or member of the Church of Christ. The textbook wording is just fine.

- **TTT Review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Contemporary World Studies, p. 1:** The reviewer takes issue with the following textbook passage: “Muslims conquered Palestine in the mid-600s. However, from the late 1000s to the late 1200s, Christians from Europe launched a series of invasions of Palestine called the Crusades.” In response, the reviewer claims that “Pope Urban II issued a call for what he termed a ‘holy war,’ a Crusade to regain control of the Holy Land. The textbook’s wording illustrates an egregious revisionism of the history of the Holy Land common to the textbooks reviewed which leads students to the erroneous conclusion that Muslims were indigenous to the Holy Land and that Christians invaded it. The precise opposite is true. The Christians were in the Holy Land centuries before the Muslims. In the 7th century Muslims invaded the Holy Land to take control of it, and over 450 years later the Crusades were launched to wrest back control of the Holy Land from the Muslims.”

Response: Once again, the reviewer objects to a fault which the textbook does not in fact commit. The textbook wording neither makes nor implies any claims about which side had priority over Palestine.

- **TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World Cultures and Geography, Grade 6, p. 1:** In response to the textbook’s description of the terrorist attack on 9/11, the reviewer claims that “the book fails to identify the type of terrorism and terrorists. Nowhere in this paragraph does the publisher identify the terrorists as Muslims or Islamic Jihadists.”

Response: While the paragraph in question does not identify al-Qaeda as Islamist, the textbook does, at Ch. 17, Lesson 2, p. 8: “On September 11, 2001, **an Islamist organization called al-Qaeda** carried out terrorist attacks on U.S. soil that killed nearly 3,000 people” (emphasis mine).

- **TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World Cultures and Geography, Grade 6, p. 2:** In response to a textbook statement that at the time of British Mandate, “Most of the people living in Palestine... were Muslim Arabs,” the reviewer claims that “Most of the people were not Muslim Arabs. Jews have maintained a presence in Palestine since ancient biblical times. For example, they were a plurality in Jerusalem from the 1840s onward and a majority in the city by 1880. In 1914, although the Jews made up 12% of the population of Palestine, they were 60% of the population of Jerusalem.”

Response: The reviewer contradicts herself. The textbook statement refers to the population of *Palestine*, not Jerusalem. And as the reviewer herself notes, in 1914 Jews only made up 12 percent of the population of *Palestine*. Additionally, I believe that the reviewer's dating is incorrect: in 1914 the Jewish population was 60,000 (7.6%), and the Arab population 731,000 (92.5%); it was in 1922 that the Jewish population of Palestine was 12% (83,790), whereas the Arab population accounted for the remaining 88% (668,258).³⁰

- **TTT Review of McGraw-Hill World Geography (Grade 9), p. 2:** The reviewer complains that the textbook does not “provide the information that Islam ‘spread’ through Jihad” by the 700s CE.

Response: The textbook would be incorrect if it did so, if by “jihad” the reviewer means military conquest. During the 7th through the 9th centuries, Islam was brought to East Africa by traders and missionaries, not through military conquest.

- **TTT Review of Pearson Contemporary World Cultures Grade 6, p. 1:** The reviewer claims that “There was and is no respect for Judaism or Christianity in Islam.” She then again claims that the Qur’an mandates perpetual warfare against non-Muslims.

Response: This is belied by the obvious respect the Prophet Muhammad gave to Jews and Christians as fellow “People of the Book.” It ignores the evidence in Qur’an 2:62, which says that God will reward Jews and Christians as well as Muslims on the Last Day. It ignores the important work of Muslims such as Mohammed Talbi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr in interfaith dialogue with Jews and Christians. And it demonstrates that the reviewer has no personal knowledge of the many gracious Muslims who contribute constructively to contemporary American society.

- **TTT Review of WorldView World Geography, p. 7:** The reviewers claim that “Christianity was never a sect within Judaism. Judaism is always associated with the Jews, never with the Church. A transition period between the Age of Israel and the Christian Church Age began at the birth of Christ and ended at Pentecost (50-days after Christ’s death.)”

Response: This may be what the reviewers believe, but it does not reflect the consensus of credentialed scholars of early Christianity and Judaism.³¹

- **TTT Review of WorldView World Geography, p. 7:** In response to the textbook passage “Muhammad blended Christian and Jewish beliefs with Bedouin culture to begin teaching a new monotheistic religion on the Arabian Peninsula,” the reviewers insist on modifying the last phrase to “a new, **and very different**, monotheistic religion.”

Response: Contrary to the reviewers’ insistence elsewhere on “facts,” the addition of this phrase reflects not facts but the reviewers’ own *subjective* opinion about the degree difference between Islam and its predecessors. While Islam was certainly new and different, the claim that it is “very” different is a matter of opinion.

- **TTT Review of WorldView World Geography, p. 7:** The reviewers claim that “Jesus did not preach the principles of brotherhood.” Instead, they write, “He preached that he was the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6. He said nobody can come to God except through him....This is not ‘principles of brotherhood.’”

Response: This is a strange and surprising claim. According to the gospels, Jesus refers to brotherhood at several points, including: Lk 6:41 (“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your **brother’s** eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”); Lk 22:32 (“I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your **brothers**”); Mt. 12:50 (“whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my **brother** and sister and mother”); Mt. 18:35 (“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your **brother** or sister from your heart”); Mt. 25:40 (“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these **brothers** and sisters of mine, you did for me”).

- **TTT Review of Discovery US History Civil War to the Present, p. 25:** The reviewers claim that “Arabs cannot even correctly pronounce the word Palestine in their native tongue, referring to area rather as ‘*Filastin*.’”

Response: This statement reveals the reviewers’ anti-Arab prejudice. *Filastīn* is correct in Arabic, the language of the Arab people.

- **TTT Review of Pearson Magruder’s American Government, p. 2:** The reviewers complain that the textbook contains “no comparison of how women are treated in Islamic dominated cultures as compared to [sic] the United States.”

Response: The textbook also contains no comparison of how women are treated in Hindu or Buddhist or largely secular cultures. Why should it offer such comparisons? The reviewers do not explain the pedagogical benefits of such comparisons, nor their reasons for singling out Islamic countries for comparison.

Notes

¹ Review of Pearson World History, p. 1. (The reviewer is identified as Dr. Sandra Alfonsi.)

² Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 71.

³ Review of WorldView Software/High School World Geography, p. 6.

⁴ <http://www.texasalmanac.com/topics/religion/religious-affiliation-texas>

⁵ On Indonesia’s Muslim population, see Drew DeSilver, “World’s Muslim population more widespread than you might think,” Pew Research Center, June 7, 2013. URL: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/06/07/worlds-muslim-population-more-widespread-than-you-might-think/>.

⁶ See <http://www.answering-islam.org/about.html>.

⁷ Paul L. Heck, “Jihad Revisited,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32:1 (2004) : 97-98.

⁸ Cf. "Kufr." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*, edited by John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/article/opr/t125/e1323> (accessed 14-Nov-2014).

- ⁹ "Kafir." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/article/opr/t125/e1229> (accessed 13-Nov-2014).
- ¹⁰ Cf. "In most Muslim countries where Muslim women have the freedom of choice, some, especially in the modern urban centers, have discontinued the practice of veiling. Some of those who had discarded the veil have returned to it." Anwar, Ghazala, and Liz McKay. "Veiling." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 721-722. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. p. 721.
- ¹¹ Hashmi, Sohail H. "Jihad." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 377-379. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. Emphasis mine.
- ¹² Paul L. Heck, "Jihad Revisited," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32:1 (2004) : 97-98.
- ¹³ Brockopp, Jonathan E. "Shari'a." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 618-619. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁴ Toni Johnson and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Islam: Governing Under Sharia," Council on Foreign Relations website, July 25, 2014. URL: <http://www.cfr.org/religion/islam-governing-under-sharia/p8034>. The reviewers cite this source in their Review of WorldView World History Semester B, p. 43, l. 197.
- ¹⁵ Brockopp, Jonathan E. "Shari'a." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 618-619. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁶ Malise Ruthven, *Islam: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27-28.
- ¹⁷ Franke, Patrick. "Minorities: Dhimmis." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 451-452. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. p. 452. Emphasis mine.
- ¹⁸ *Holy Qur'an*, trans. by M. H. Shakir (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc.).
- ¹⁹ David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 53.
- ²⁰ Cf. "In most Muslim countries where Muslim women have the freedom of choice, some, especially in the modern urban centers, have discontinued the practice of veiling. Some of those who had discarded the veil have returned to it." Anwar, Ghazala, and Liz McKay. "Veiling." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 721-722. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. p. 721.
- ²¹ UN Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly, A/364, 3 Sep 1947, ch. V, Introductory Statement, item 3. Emphasis mine.
- ²² Simon Digby, Review of *Growth of Muslim Population of Medieval India (1000-1800)* by K. S. Lal, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38:1 (1975) : 177.
- ²³ Esack, Farid. "Qur'an." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 562-568. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. p. 567.
- ²⁴ Kassam, Zayn R. "Gender." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 265-272. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. p. 266.
- ²⁵ "Palestine, n." OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/view/Entry/136295?redirectedFrom=palestine> (accessed November 13, 2014).
- ²⁶ WorldView World History B, Chapter 2, Overview.
- ²⁷ See, for example, Yitzhak Hen, "Charlemagne's Jihad," *Viator* 37 (2006) : 33-51. Accessible at https://www.academia.edu/775061/Charlemagne_s_Jihad_Viator_37_2006_pp_33-51.
- ²⁸ See, for example, John R. Pottenger, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Liberal Democracy and the Religious Axis* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 63: "the Indians were required to submit themselves to the Spanish crown and convert to the Christian faith or face enslavement. Refusal to abide by the *Requerimiento*, participate in the *encomiendas*, and convert to Christianity was rarely tolerated."
- ²⁹ "type, n." OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/view/Entry/208330?rskey=iYHir8&result=2&isAdvanced=false> (accessed November 14, 2014).
- ³⁰ "Israel / Palestine: Arab / Jewish Population (1914-2005)." URL: <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=000636>.
- ³¹ For example, Shaye J. D. Cohen notes that practices such as baptism, the Eucharist, and speaking in tongues "made Christianity a 'sect' or, at least, a separate group within Jewish society." Cohen argues that early Christianity only "ceased to be a Jewish sect when it ceased to observe Jewish practices," including circumcision. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1987), 168.