

Religion Teacher Update

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THE COUNCIL FOR SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL EDUCATION

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS OF RELIGIONS AND ETHICS IN MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Unpacking Baggage

Introducing Christianity in a Christian-dominated culture

BY LAURA KRIER

In my introductory comparative religions classroom, I often find that my students seem to have the most baggage when it comes to Christianity: “Doesn’t the new pope hate Muslims?” “What about the Crusades?” “And the Salem witch trials?” “Pogroms against Jews in the middle ages that we learned about last year...”

While it may not be the case in most of the United States – where according to 2006 data* 80 percent of Americans self-identified as Christian and 85 percent of the population felt directed by God at least occasionally in their daily life – the balance of students in my classroom come from backgrounds not religiously Christian. Both despite and because of this, my students seem to

bring a wide range of expectations, assumptions and convictions concerning Christianity to class.

“Parking rules may be suspended for Diwali or Eid al-Fitr, but stores across the nation breaking out the Christmas music the day after Thanksgiving...”

There seem to be a variety of reasons for the clutter of preconceptions students bring to the table. Foremost, Christianity tends to be the only tradition that every student has come into some contact with before entering my class, and is the tradition they have been exposed to most often in public culture growing up in the United States, as most of them have. Also, there seems to be truth in the old axiom that familiarity breeds contempt. My students, be they Christian or not,

religious or not, are living in a wonderfully diverse and often pluralistic society. Yet it is also inarguably an environment in which Christianity is the dominant religious culture; parking rules may be suspended in New York for Diwali and Eid al-Fitr, but stores across the nation break out the Christmas music and decorations the day after Thanksgiving, inaugurating a month-long con-

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To The North and To The South

Tayeb Salih and encounters with the Other in the Islamic literature classroom

BY MICHAEL E.C. SPENCER

For the past ten years, I have been teaching courses in Comparative Religion. Like most religious studies teachers, I felt a moral obligation to raise awareness and educate my students regarding the religion of Islam in the wake of September 11, 2001. On that day, terrorists hijacked much more than planes. The security of a country, the cultural and political hubris of the West, and the identity of Islam in the popular imagination were all resolutely challenged. In one day, the culture of hope saw the world through the eyes of a terrorist culture born from despair, and the global culture of fear in the twenty-first century was born. Islam, the religion that I had long admired, was cast again in a negative light through the political lens of world events. And I wondered: how did we arrive at this place again?

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CSEE 2008 Institute on Teaching the World's Religions Washington, DC

at Cathedral College, Washington National Cathedral
July 7-12

featuring
David Haberman, Ph.D.
Marc L. Raphael, Ph.D.

Selected Topics 2008

Teaching the Bhagavad Gita
The Gita and the Upanisads: Common Themes
Reading Jewish Texts in the Classroom
How Jerusalem Became Sacred to Muslims, Jews,
and Christians
Hands-On Buddhism for the Classroom
Reverence for the Earth in the World's Traditions
plus
what's new in texts, other media?
what are colleagues in other schools doing?

Tayeb Salih in the classroom (continued from p. 1)

BY MICHAEL SPENCER

Personally, my limited treatment of Islam within the context of a comparative religion course left much to be desired and left my students with more and more questions. Thanks to the encouragement of colleagues in the English department, I initiated a course in Islamic Literature. I dutifully pulled together the syllabus, selected a hefty set of texts, and looked forward to working with my class of senior students to bring together the various political, historical, religious, cultural, and literary strands within the diverse religion of Islam. We read wonderful texts together: readings from the Qur'an and the Hadith, poems from the Sufi mystics Hafiz, Rumi, and Rabia, and the Arabic literature in the Arabian Nights. We also

“The students were hungry to learn about Islam, and these texts gave more than enough to chew on for a semester...”

looked at more modern novels by Muslim authors or those writing out of a Muslim context including Khaleed Housseini's *The Kite Runner*, *The Journey of Ibn Fatouma* and *Fountain and Tomb* by Naguib Mahfouz, Roya Hakakian's *Journey from the Land of No*, and Tayeb Salih's short stories in *The Wedding of Zein* and his novel *Season of Migration to the North*. The discussions around these texts were provocative, interesting, and some of the most engaging I have experienced in over a decade of teaching.

The students were hungry to learn about Islam, and these texts gave more than enough to chew on for a semester. By far, the most challenging discussions came as we considered the disturbingly powerful writing of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*.

Born in the Sudan in 1929, Tayeb Salih was educated in Khartoum and later in London. His writing combines the often dissonant characteristics of both cultures. This is made clear in *Season of Migration to the North* when the anonymous narrator, having studied in London, returns to his native postcolonial Sudan where he meets the “mocking phantom” Mustafa Sa'eed, also recently returned from journeys in the North. Together they interact, the narrator slowly uncovering details of Mustafa's own chilling past. Each character bears the wounds of exposure to the ideological North of capitalism, consumer-

ism, and modernization. They have each voluntarily been educated in the very culture whose colonial oppression plagued the Sudan, scarring its cultural identity. Each character wrestles with the guilt of this assimilation even as they fight to reclaim their identity. Salih underscores the clash of cultures and the struggle to become whole. The North and the South dance and fight, struggle, and sacrifice one another in the disturbing relationships between Mustafa and the women from the North. In the wake of colonialist oppression, we see the impact on human life – Mustafa, whose lack of emotion belies a rejection and hatred of himself turned outward in violence, and the anonymous narrator still struggling to come to grips with his own attempt at resolution. In this way, the individual process of coming to wholeness reveals the trauma and turmoil of an entire country. This text raises the bar while we consider the detritus of a colonial past.

Salih is a gifted writer who composed *Season of Migration to the North* in the late 60's. Politics aside, the novel stands on its own as a modern Arabic narrative work. The story moves quickly. Mustafa reflects his victimization by the North on the very Northern women he seduces and destroys. In our class, we read this novel not long after considering selections from the Arabian Nights. Salih turns the classic tale on its head. In the Arabian Nights, Sherezad spins her tales over 1001 nights to regain the king's trust of women and save her own life. In *Season of Migration to the North* we begin with relationships of trust that quickly devolve into deep mistrust and destruction as Mustafa sings his own tales for the narrator. In one poignant passage, we hear an eerie prophecy for our own time: “The world has turned suddenly upside down. Love? Love does not do this. This is hatred. I feel hatred and seek revenge; my adversary is within and I needs must confront him.” The hope for the future lies in the radical encounter with otherness and the radical realization of self in the other.

This confrontation with otherness framed our consideration of this novel and its place within the context of the other Islamic Literature studied during the semester. While students were challenged by the graphic violence, they found the colonialist oppression that created the characters dissonance and distress even more disturbing. Our discus-

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Experienced Teachers Workshop: What to Teach, and How?

Report on CSEE's first annual experienced teachers workshop

BY SHER SWEET

This past winter, 20 experienced teachers spent a captivating weekend on methodological issues that arise when teaching world religions. Preliminary and wrap-up discussions were led by Palmer Trinity religion teacher and CSEE consultant Tom Collins, and by CSEE executive director David Streight. The greater part of the time we spent with scholars Carl Ernst and Tom Tweed, both of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The weekend's work led to many innovative ideas for me, and the decision to re-design the world religions course I teach at Northfield Mount Hermon School. Other teachers were equally as excited and eager to incorporate much of what we learned this weekend. Some of these ideas were not new to us, but the synergy of the presentations and discussions led to new insights, as well as to a clearer idea of what a good world religions program in an independent school should look like.

Here are some of the key ideas that resulted from the consensus thinking of this talented group of religion teachers from around the country:

- There is no essence in each major religion. Nor is there a core that each religion shares. Religion is much too complex and varied to be reduced to formulaic descriptions or concepts, like the Five Pillars of Islam. There are some good Muslims who have never heard of the Five Pillars of Islam. One branch of Islam doesn't even observe Ramadan. As Professor Ernst reminded the group, there are many Islams and many Muhammads. Carl describes this phenomenon in his book *Following Muhammad*. The point here is that you cannot talk about a religion apart from the geographical, historical and political contexts. Religions evolve and change over time and place.

- Because of the multiplicity of ideas, concepts, rituals, etc., there is no label that can capture this richness. Hence, there is no such thing as Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. Many students don't really understand this idea unless we repeat it many times. If we use these labels, we must use them in the plural.

- Throw away the textbook. Textbooks often lead to the fallacies I've described above. Using primary material like scriptures and essays, and literature (short stories, novels, plays) give students a better feel for the rich tapestry of each tradi-

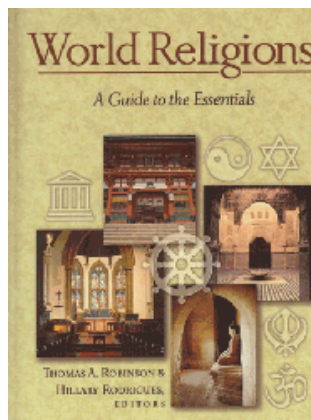
tion. Projects where students explore one facet of a religion in depth will also add to their understanding. Students will learn that there is much more to a tradition than what the authorities of the tradition teach. First hand experience is much more faithful than any textbook can be. Yet Mary Pat Fisher does include a smattering of religious folks' experience with the holy or with rituals in her textbook. A pilgrim's self-identification is the epitome of being a Jew, Buddhist or Muslim, not whether they believe in the Shema, the Three Jewels or the Five Pillars.

- What are you trying to teach? Is it facts? If so, you can't cover enough of them to make a course worthwhile. Plus, we know from educational research that students forget 80% of what they learn within a couple of months. However, taking more time with a tradition and using hands-on learning can improve dramatically how much students understand. In addition, students become more creative and interested in the ideas.

- Don't try to cover five or six major world religions. Even in a semester-long course, you can't help but give a misleading and reductionistic synopsis of these traditions for the reasons I listed above. Depth is much more important than breadth, and students will find this approach more authentic and engaging. That was the consensus among the professors and religion teachers present. Carl Ernst says they stopped teaching world religions at UNC. They now teach two or three traditions each semester.

Both Ernst and Tweed showed great interest in our questions, which led to tremendous dialogue. Issues of gender were woven seamlessly into all of our discussions, with the primary didactic focus looking at Sufi and Zen texts. What often appears to be a simple and straightforward look at texts becomes a window onto a whole lot more. (How does the second text differ from the first one? How is this different from what comes after it? Who is this Sufi Master? What is he like? What's the glossary of terms? What does the text say?)

Tom Tweed led a rich discussion on a chapter from his recent book, *Crossing and Dwelling*. We spent quite a bit of time on his definition of religions: "[They] are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries." In a very lively way, Tom described how he answers the typical comments from students who don't care about religion or think it matters.



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Christianity in a Christian-dominated culture

BY LAURA KRIER (CONTINUED FROM P. 1)

sumer extravaganza. It can be a complex endeavor to determine what the fundamental teachings of Christianity are in this mix, and it can be even harder for students to make a distinction between the actions of people who happen to be Christian and actions that are more explicitly driven by church or faith.

My adolescent students, naturally attuned to perceived hypocrisy in any form, have an acute awareness of the seeming and actual contradictions in the lives of Christian public figures. Few students are unaware of the crisis over sexual abuse

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by priests convulsing the Catholic Church in America. Anti-gay evangelical preachers have been publicly and scandalously “outed” and some conservative Christian politicians have sent their share of contradictory messages. As a foil to some students’ initial skepticism of Christianity, it seems to me that many also feel that it is somehow more acceptable to broadly criticize the dominant tra-

dition. While they have been carefully raised to be considerate of minorities, they do not always extend the same courtesy to the majority they have grown up with.

The same students who point out the Crusades, centuries of Jewish persecution in Europe, and the corruption of the Catholic Church before the Reformation as examples of problematic Christian behavior rarely ask about the discrimination by monks against nuns in Buddhist history or the role of Zen Buddhist monks in the Second World War because they simply don’t have the background to intelligently critique Buddhism the first day we begin our studies. One can never start with a near blank slate when exploring Christianity as is generally the case for a tradition like Sikhism.

All this is not necessarily a bad thing. In many ways, it means there is more to work with, and presents the opportunity for exploring elements of

Christianity in greater depth because there is some level of shared knowledge. Still, I consistently find Christianity the hardest unit to approach in my World Religions classroom, precisely because of all the preconceptions, fore-knowledge, and widely divergent experiences and starting points of the students around the table.

What to do?

There are doubtless many ways to approach the study of Christianity in the classroom that are effective and exciting. One approach is to capitalize on what students know on day one, perhaps by beginning with a recent event, newspaper article, or example of Christian pluralism in the area. Another is to approach Christianity as all the other traditions “covered” in class, dealing with any issues or preconceptions as they arise. One of the strategies I have found surprisingly enjoyable and effective in unpacking Christian baggage is to temporarily ignore what my students already know about Christianity and start with something new to all: a brief examination of the development of Christianity in late antiquity. Although the details change year to year, I’m generally interested in the period book-ended by the historical Jesus and the council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. This is the period in which Christianity struggles for self-definition, before orthodoxy is clearly articulated and promulgated at Nicaea. We can struggle with how to approach Christianity as Christianity struggles with how to think of itself.

Begin at the beginning

I do approach Christianity somewhat differently than other traditions. I am much less likely to spend an entire class period on issues surrounding the original Pali canon of Buddhist texts than I am to take the time to explore the differing depictions of Jesus in the synoptic gospels, Paul’s early letters, an apocryphal gospel, or Gnostic text. While we do address the historical development of each of the central traditions we study in my class, in general, I find myself adopting the current conventions of giving more attention to the lived experience of a religion and its modern manifestations at the expense of some of the time that used to be spent on canonical texts and formative history. Yet I keep returning to late antiquity when I approach Christianity with my students.

In the past I have spent time comparing the descriptions of Jesus in excerpts from Matthew and Luke, or

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Tayeb Salih in the classroom (from p. 2)

sions of the text were heavily influenced by the background reading in the rise and expansion of Islam described in Karen Armstrong's historical summary, *Islam*.

“In the end, all of us in that Islamic Literature class were left floating as well”

In particular, the ideal of the ummah, the community of Muslims described by Armstrong, was challenged by the divisive personal and emotional turmoil experienced by these postcolonial characters. Students questioned the construction of identity under these conditions. What led to Mustafa's psychological breakdown? How would a non-westerner read this text?

How do we read this text in light of the current global war and the rise of terrorism? To what extent is the increase of global nationalism a response to the threats of modernity? Finally, the deeper we moved into the novel, the more we considered the deconstruction of otherness.

There are few authors who so poignantly display this experience of “the other” which so desperately needs to be heard. In the anonymous narrator, we see our future being played out. At the end of the novel, the narrator floats on his back, caught between heaven and earth, pulled by North and South, floating in an abyss that will ultimately lead to death or life: identity or insanity. He must face the “mocking phantom” within, the phantom that he recoils from in Mustafa, the very phantom that he himself has helped to create, the phantom that he might become. In the end, all of us in that Islamic Literature class were left floating as well. Salih effectively pulled our worlds apart; he left us staring up into the vastness of a future that has not yet been born, knowing all too well that we are the ones giving birth.

Season of Migration to the North is a difficult text. It is deeply disturbing with graphic sexual metaphor representing the clash of cultures. As a teacher, this stands as one of my most powerful experiences of subject-centered learning. The text was both mirror and lens and it is good to see, even if for a little bit, through the eyes of the other.

The Rev. Michael Spencer is Dean of the Chapel at St. Paul's School and teaches Humanities and courses in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islamic Literature.

Teaching Ethics and Social Justice

a two-day CSEE workshop with Roger Gottlieb, Ph.D.
St. Paul's School, Concord, NH
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Gottlieb has presented for us on two occasions at the pre-conference meeting of the American Academy of Religion, and is one of the most engaging presenters we have worked with.

Gottlieb is the author of *A Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom* (2003) and *A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future* (2006)

He is also book review editor for *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism: A Journal of Socialist Ecology* and contributing editor for *Tikkun Magazine*

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EXPERIENCED TEACHERS, FROM P. 3

There are lots of examples to the contrary every week in the New York Times. Can a student bring a little dagger to school if it is part of his religious practice? How about wearing a headscarf? What about a Jew needing kosher meals? Tom then described some of the methodologies he uses in the classroom. He pushes his students to “jam on a text.” How many directions can the discussion move? By urging his students to argue well, he gives them the skill of seeing multiple interpretations.

There are many more ways to teach a world religion course than I have considered before now. I'm eager to see what revolutionary ideas are discovered at the next workshop for experienced teachers.

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BY LAURA KRIER (FROM P. 4)

what epistles like 1 Thessalonians can convey about the structure of the early church and the concerns of early Christians. These are all fairly standard. I've found that my students get the most out of texts like these, however, when they can compare them to other contemporary texts that give them greater perspective on early Christianity. Excerpts from the Life of Apollonius, for example, have remarkable parallels to the early narratives of Jesus both in terms of the claims it makes and the literary style employed. This opens a discussion about genre and literary convention in relation to the gospel stories. One of my favorites, though, is to give students some Gnostic texts to grapple with alongside a parallel canonical account.

Of the early Christian groups, Gnosticism seems to provide the most striking comparison to later Christian thought. Many Gnostics seem to have believed that the orthodox Christian God, the creator of the universe was actually a deeply flawed and ignorant being, estranged from the true spiritual realm and ultimate deity. Christ's role is to reconcile humanity with the ultimate deity through secret knowledge (gnosis); he is not associated with the creator God. In some senses spending time explaining the Gnostic worldview is an odd pedagogical choice. Why waste time on an aspect of Christianity that did not persist to the present day? Why look at an esoteric text that bears as little resemblance to modern Christian theology as the Gnostic take on the Garden of Eden, does?

On a practical level, it is very challenging to engage in productive discussions when every student has a different set of hidden assumptions, and I often find it useful to level the playing field by beginning with a topic that creates common ground by introducing material that is wholly new to everyone. Both the historical context for early Christianity and non-canonical texts serve this purpose. Ideally, this reassures students unfamiliar with religious Christianity that they still have equal footing around the table with self-identified Christians (I find there are similar challenges when beginning the unit on Judaism). It also simultane-

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Listening Pilgrimage to the Middle East

Polly Lodge and Chip Poston (the George School) will lead a trip to Israel and the West Bank in June of 2008. The purpose of the trip is to listen to different voices in Palestine and Israel, gathering information and impressions to help deepen our understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The experience will include home stays with Israeli and Palestinian families, as well as visits to religious and cultural sites. Some time may be devoted to service experiences in the two communities. Listening sessions with numerous Israelis and Palestinians will expose participants to a wide diversity of perspectives regarding life in the Holy Land.

Cost: approximately \$3000.

For further details:

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RTU is edited by Sher Sweet, at the Religious Studies Department at Northfield Mount Hermon School and David Streight at CSEE. Submissions regarding innovative programs, good resources, interesting assignments and other ideas are both welcome and invited.

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ously forces students who assume that the unit will be a breeze because of their practice-based knowledge of Christianity to recognize those assumptions and grapple with new material.

“...getting a general sense of the tone of the text, trying to piece together the plot, and noting the text’s views on the nature of the universe”

Perhaps even more importantly, starting with new and foreign material lowers the emotional stakes and allows me to address those students who have dropped our carefully constructed scholarly approach when they reached home ground. I have had a religiously conservative Protestant who was deeply engaged in our exploration of Hinduism and Buddhism suddenly become unwilling to try to understand Christian perspectives different from her own.

Likewise I have seen avowed atheists shut down at the start of the unit.

As a class, we can reiterate and practice descriptive approaches to religious studies (in my class we emphasize William Young’s historical, comparative, and phenomenological approaches) rather than evaluative ones. As an interesting comparison to early canonical texts like the epistles of Paul or the synoptic gospels, Gnostic texts can serve as a refresher of that wonderful lesson in bias imparted by Horace Miner’s classic anthropological study of the “Naciriema” culture. It makes the familiar very strange and in so doing makes students more aware of their own positions when approaching the texts.

God is great / God is an arrogant dupe: the Gnostic example

The Gnostic text I usually assign is an excerpt from the Apocryphon of John that recounts the creation story, the events in the Garden of Eden, and Christ’s role in humanity’s salvation. It is a tough text to read, and includes some very foreign ideas densely packed. Because the original text is fairly long, the excerpt I give them has narrative holes, but includes most of the crucial parts of the story -- the ultimate divine being, the corrupt Creator god, humanity’s place on earth, and the serpent’s heroic role in the Garden of Eden tale.

When handing out the reading, I usually preface the assignment with my students by telling them to focus on three things: getting a general sense of the tone of the text, trying to piece together the plot, and noting the text’s views on the nature of the universe and humanity’s role in it. I also make sure to tell them it is a tough reading and to spend some time on it but not to worry if they feel confused by passages. Otherwise, some students tend to be frustrated by the most esoteric or obscure passages. The next day in class we chart the Gnostic cosmogony and the roles of God/the Demiurge, Christ, Adam, Eve, the serpent, Sophia, and the various entities from the pleroma, or divine realm, in bestowing or obscuring gnosis for humanity. We begin by literally drawing the universe and cast of characters on the board. I have done this as a collaborative class activity, but have also found it successful to have students work in pairs or threes to draw what they think the Gnostic universe looks like. We then chose one of the best (or most legible) and add or eliminate components until we reach consensus. Comparing this cosmogony to the standard Christian version can be done graphically or through discussion.

I tend to ask students to compare the two versions by considering what truths the creation myths convey, what role humanity has on earth, how humanity is related to the creator god, what Christ’s role is, and what the significance of eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil has. Often, students find it easier to analyze the Gnostic text (once we all have the story straight), which they can then use as a template for approaching the orthodox version.

My students generally enjoy the familiar-yet-strange quality of the Gnostic tales, and comparison of the two narratives has never failed to stimulate a lively discussion. Additionally, I find we are often able to jump start a broader conversation about how groups reconcile (or don’t) differing variants within a tradition, and how they negotiate issues of determining legitimacy, claiming authority, and the process of selecting a canon. Students often revisit these ideas as we move into the modern world, and use our initial conversations as a touchstone.

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Final warnings

In addition to any inherent interest, the discussion of the development of early Christianities introduces crucial themes that arise repeatedly throughout the unit – and sometimes find their most direct parallels in the modern world. Pluralism is a prime example. Introducing groups such as Gnosticism challenges ideas of a monolithic Christian narrative until the schism in 1054 or the Protestant Reformation. In addition to the issues of inter-group conflict mentioned above, my students also recognize the struggles with ethical behavior, social justice, and how to live in the world as a Christian as central issues in many of the ancient texts that are still at the heart of the Christian experience today.

If you chose to use early Christian (and non-canonical) texts, I would caution against creating an entire unit on ancient biblical history. While there are always students fascinated by the ancient world and issue of translation and transmission, the majority of my students find an extended foray into patristics or the like quite dry. What engages them most are the ideas behind the texts. The cosmogony of Genesis and the gospels suddenly seems more interesting and new because it is compared to the wild reversals in Gnostic cosmogony. A little conflict and a few accusations of heresy can go a long way – and makes the ancient period seem much more relevant to today. None of these texts need take long to consider, and in my introductory course I realistically cannot spend more than a day or two on ancient Christianity. Still, I find that even that brief a time can set the tone for the entire unit and address some student concerns before they have even been broached.

Bedtime Reading

There is much rich material available on early Christianity and, as I am always reminded at the AAR book fair, a truly overwhelming number of books on the topic. Both the primary and secondary sources are easy to find so I will only mention a few.

Bart Ehrman (UNC Chapel Hill) has written extensively on the New Testament, Gnostic texts, and Christianity in late antiquity, including a series of textbooks published by Oxford UP on early Christianity. I have found the introductory chapters (1-4) of *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the early Christian Writings* particularly helpful in introducing

not only the world of late antiquity, but also the useful questions to pose regarding texts from that time. He also has an excerpt from *The Life of Apollonius*. The most relevant sections are concise enough that much ground can be covered with a short reading assignment.

There are also clear summaries of the Gnostic world view offered in Delbert Burkett's *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (pp.409-412), and Ehrman's *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity* (pp.144-145). In the past I have also found it interesting to assign excerpts from Elaine Pagels' *The Gnostic Gospels*. I find chapter five, "Whose Church is the 'True Church'" to be the richest, though of late I have leaned more towards including this as background reading for myself rather than assigning it to my students, given time constraints.

The Gnostic text I most often assign, the Apocryphon of John, comes from one of the Gnostic Nag Hammadi texts, the collection of ancient codices unearthed in Egypt in 1945. I've used the 1977 *The Nag Hammadi Library* although the same texts are now available online (and with fewer textual signs and bracketed interruptions) through *The Gnostic Society Library*.

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*2006 data on religious identification from the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. <<http://www.norc.org/projects/General+Social+Survey.htm>>

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