Sarah Harper

Teaching About Religion

Chapters 7 and 8

November 7, 2013

This article was about the controversy of religion in the public school district. This article stressed the importance of religion as an instrumental aspect to the social and political order of our society. According to Black, there is a correct and incorrect way to present religion in the public school setting. She goes into great detail of what is allowed in regards to the teaching of religion or religions in schools. The strict guidelines that follow anything that involves religion within the schools cause teachers to be extremely cautious, and even nervous to mention religion at all. Black suggests that teachers need to be properly educated in teaching about religion without inquiring their bias and acknowledging the diversity of all religions. Black also identifies how prayer should be conducted within the school premises. She gave great insight to the issues that teachers face with religion in schools.

Susan Black was a professor, historian and mentor. She was also the first woman religion professor at BYU. She is a writer and is a psychologist for LDS Social Services. She is very educated and highly respected, as well as a very likable woman among her students. According to articles written about her she has the students excited about her teaching and eager to take her classes.

According to Chapter 8, the first Amendment provides you the right to freedom of speech (p.249). In compliance with the article for students, as well as for teachers, it is important to remember this to be true. In reference to the article, “… Respect every student’s freedom to hold a religious worldview or a nonreligious worldview, (p.3). Separation of Church and State are stressed in both the article and the reading. “The Supreme Court held that authorizing prayer in school violated the First Amendment’s government establishment of religion and that official, organized prayer in school is not permitted,”(p.262). Prayer as it proves, is a very controversial subject matter in relation to religion and school. While it is the student’s right to pray if they so choose we cannot emphasize in any way that they should pray.

Black seemed to believe that the teaching of religion in schools is conflicted by the teachers’ bias or left our altogether, and I do agree. “The National Education Association says teachers must teach every lesson about religion without bias,” (Teaching About Religion p.1). Luckily, Black provides teachers a way to avoid such issues as bias as well as how to include religion into subjects that are already being taught in our schools. I agree that there are several issues to the presentation of religion in the public school districts. For instance, culture includes religion in holidays, art, music, literature, and history. Sometimes, as a teacher it seems unavoidable to eliminate all bias within these subjects. When teaching about religion all subjects should conclude its “moral code that holds us together as a community,” (Teaching About Religion p.1). I do agree it is important to teach religion in this manner. I also find it very helpful that Black provided the idea of giving teachers the proper education to teach religion. There are several beliefs and religions present in our culture as a society and I agree that its diversity needs to be respected in the school district, as every child will hold different beliefs and sincerity to their own religion. I especially appreciated the education on prayer in the school district. This subject is one of the most controversial as I remember when I attended school as a student, and the way that Black simplified it to my understanding was eye-opening.

This article was thorough and enjoyable, as well as Black was informative and her information beneficial to the issues I may face as a teacher. As I have been raised in church and hold strong beliefs to Christianity, I now have a better understanding as to how religion should be approached and maintained in a public school setting.