

Dear Rae,

While I was composing this I was interrupted for an unexpected, hour-long telephone interview with Dan Golden of the Wall Street Journal, who is preparing an article on the influence of religious advocacy groups on the California adoption and will shortly be requesting tapes of the Curriculum Commission meetings, comment sent to the State Board, etc. Our conversation did not touch on the crucifixion issue per se, but rather on the Hindu/Vedic issue, and the ICS and CIS in general; but the time for resolving these matters appropriately can now be measured in days. You may convey this as appropriate; there is zero chance the work of the ICS and the State Board will not figure in a newspaper with a national, instead of merely statewide, circulation; and all involved (including, alas, me) will have to live with the consequences of our actions in the full glare of the media.

First, the part of the document "Essential Edits.wps" I sent you yesterday that occurs after a break after the section titled, "Consistency with Edits and Corrections already in train" contains notes that I did not print in the document I laid before the Commission and so are not public.

Second, I have a thought about the consistency issue. The only program with an edit on the crucifixion that was approved at the September meeting of the Commission and is problematic is an edit to the Holt program.

The edit is Holt, #29, SE/TE p. 384. The existing text ran,

``As a teacher, Jesus drew many followers with his ideas. But at the same time, his teachings challenged the authority of political and religious leaders. According to the Bible, they arrested Jesus while he was in Jerusalem in or around A.D. 30.

Shortly after his arrest, Jesus was tried and executed. He was killed by crucifixion.''

The replacement text reads, according to the August 12 IMAP/CRP Reports of Findings, which I believe is identical with the text in the motion approved by the State Board (but I have no copy of that handy), is as follows (changes in caps)

``As a teacher, Jesus drew many followers with his ideas. But at the same time, his teachings challenged the authority of political and religious leaders. According to the CHRISTIAN Bible, ROMAN AUTHORITIES arrested Jesus while he was in Jerusalem in or around A.D. 30.

Shortly after his arrest, Jesus was tried and executed. He was killed by crucifixion.''

I have no problem with the amplification of "Bible" to "Christian Bible."

Passing on to the main matter:

It is certainly true that Jesus of Nazareth was in Roman custody during the day of his execution; he could therefore be accurately described as being under arrest by the Roman authorities; and one could stretch

that to the idea that if at some point he was under arrest by Roman authorities, it is not that much of a misstatement to write that at some point he had to be taken under arrest, or arrested, by them. The main point is that the edit does not state that *only* the Roman authorities figured in the arrest; and the edit should be construed as making the reference to the arresting "political ... leaders" more specifically Roman authorities, without the intent of stating that `according to the Christian Bible' no religious leaders were involved.

On that basis, I can live with this one edit (although I would certainly not concede it is an improvement); fortunately the edit does not say that *only* Roman authorities arrested Jesus; and fortunately the statement that "his teachings challenged the authority of political and religious leaders" is intact, which at least acknowledges that challenges to religious leaders were important in Jesus' life if not his death.

Very fortunately for our case, the edit does *not* state "Roman authorities

[interpreted as Roman authorities alone] arrested Jesus. That would arguably represent a statement about historic fact, and the burden of proof might fall to us to demonstrate to an audience to whom the narrative of the New Testament is a fantasy the falsity of a presumed historic fact contradicted, so far as I am aware, only by the New Testament itself: hopeless. The edit specifically refers to what happened "according to the Christian Bible;" and what the narrative reads is something readily ascertained by anyone--in 8 total, pages, after all!--even whether the narrative is held as a fantasy or not.

If the ICS disputes our interpretation, it faces two handicaps. First, this edit arose out of the IMAP/CRP committee process and not the ICS, and therefore the ICS cannot opine what the true intent of the committee was, as they could with edits of their own devising. Second, if the ICS says that the edit *must* have been intended to assert the view that "according to the Christian Bible" no religious leader had anything to do with the arrest, they should be handed a Christian Bible and challenged to show where in the Christian Bible that view can be supported; a very reasonable request, since the whole crucifixion narrative spans only 2 pages, in English, in each of the four Gospels. If they argue that the Christian Bible is not historically accurate and its version of events contradicted by other alleged facts of history, just note that the statement in the text explicitly concerns only what is reported in the Christian Bible, and not whether what is so reported is historically accurate or inaccurate, and repeat the challenge.

On this basis we can live with the IMAP/CRP edit, and deny that the edits regarding the crucifixion suggested by the ICS must be made in order to conform to it; at worst references to "political leaders" would have to be altered in other programs to something like "Roman leaders," which if unnecessary is harmless.