

Objectives For Teaching Geography

During the summer of 1972, the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian School Societies and Boards sponsored a workshop that discussed the biblical perspectives in the social sciences. The result of this workshop was the publication of a series of papers in a manual which is still available, i.e., Biblical Perspectives in the Social Sciences. One of the inclusions in this manual was a set of objectives for teaching geography, which I include in this issue for your consideration.

Definition of geography: Geography is the study of any phenomena of distribution and interrelationship on the earth that God created.

Basic approach questions:

1. Where are things?
2. Why are they there?
3. How do they interrelate with their environment?

The child should be instructed to understand that:

1. The existence of the earth is the result of the work of God in His six days of creation (Genesis 1, Hebrews 3:11).
2. The earth is the setting prepared by God for man to glorify God or, negatively, to fill his measure of iniquity.
3. Basically little is known about distributions and interrelationships before the flood. However, Genesis 4-6 suggest that a fairly complex civilization existed.
4. The earth after the flood is basically different from the earth as it existed before the flood (II Peter 3:5-6).
5. Physical features do not preclude a particular type of civilization. An outstandingly beautiful example is the provision of God to Israel in Canaan (Judges, II Chronicles).
6. Physical features are sometimes used as a means to deliver or devour a people (I Kings 20:23, 29).
7. God has given resources for man to use to the best of his ability in thanksgiving (II Kings 6:5, 6; Genesis 4:22; I Timothy 4:4).

8. Man in unfaithfulness pollutes his habitat, thereby stealing and ultimately destroying the resources needed for his earthly existence.

9. Catastrophic phenomena portray the work of God in His judgments against sin and in His preserving His people as a sign of our final deliverance (Exodus 9:28; I Kings 19:11b-19; Acts 16:26-30).

10. The final catastrophic climax of the cosmos is to destroy the wicked and to give His Church everlasting life.

11. Most cultural phenomena exist in hierarchical form. Jerusalem portrays this nationally and religiously, but more than that: God said He would establish His Name; therefore, Jerusalem was a unique capital.

12. Urban developments accommodate human agglomerations (Genesis 4:17; Genesis 10:10-11).

13. God controls the laying of national boundaries. He did this uniquely for Israel in the Old Testament.

14. Cultural phenomena are sometimes used and referred to as a means of the preaching and spreading of the gospel (Acts 16:26-30).

15. Transportation developments function as socio-economic threads. They are also importantly used to go to worship and to transport those who are instrumental in preaching and spreading the gospel (Acts 28:14-16).

16. The political age of a country influences the economic affairs therein. This was uniquely true of Israel as portrayed mainly in her spiritual life.

17. All cultures of history still exist in some form and place on the earth today.

18. Technology tends to redistribute.

19. Many factors of change redistribute:

a. Rebellion — Jonah 1:3-4; Genesis 11:8.

b. Captivities

1) Ten tribes in 722 B.C.

2) Two tribes in 586 B.C.

c. Persecution

d. Utilization of resources

e. Depletion of resources

f. War.

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INTERESTING QUOTATION:

THE SOCIAL SECURITY CASE MOVES FORWARD

A suit was filed on November 26 in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania challenging the taxing of church employees under new amendments to the federal Social Security Act of 1984. In the lawsuit (understood to constitute a national test case), Bethel Baptist Church, Reading, PA; its pastor, Dr. Richard A. Harris; and 14 other individuals claimed that the Social Security Act as now written violates their constitutional liberties under the First Amendment.

The church, the pastor, parents who have children at the church's school, and various employees of the church claim that, while the Congress's 1984 amendments to the Social Security Act relieved churches of the duty to pay the tax by shifting the total tax burden to employees of churches, it really kept the tax burden on the churches.

As the complaint states, the church "is bound both by a religious principle of justice to its employees and by the need to retain its employees in its ministry, to increase its employees' wages commensurately with the tax imposed upon them."

But the heart of the complaint's position focuses less on economics than on questions of conscience, religious liberty and church-state separation. Expressing views which they say were "historically held by their religious forbears," the plaintiffs lay down four points of belief that they consider based on Scripture:

- (1) Christians must provide for their own financial security; (2) to the extent that they are unable so to provide, the responsibility to aid them is that of their Church; (3) the freedom to choose the means by which this responsibility to its own people is exercised must remain with the Church and must not be taken away by government; and (4) the Church (including its members) may not participate in, or collaborate in, any effort of government to assume or preempt that responsibility.

ACSI attorney William Ball, chief counsel for the case, believes the matter will go to trial this spring. This is a major religious liberty issue. Pray earnestly about it.

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