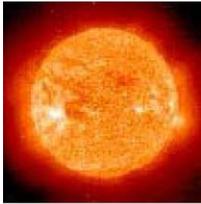




The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Religious Education studies 'should cover atheism'



Non-religious beliefs should be taught as part of compulsory religious education, a thinktank report suggests. Atheism, agnosticism and humanism should be taught to encourage students to discuss ethical dilemmas, the Institute of Public Policy Research said.

It also suggested "religious education" should be re-named "religious, philosophical and moral education". By law all schools have to provide RE.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which regulates the curriculum in Great Britain, is currently drawing up a national framework for religious education.

Senior research fellow Ben Rogers said: "Now that only seven per cent of Britons attend a weekly religious service, many are arguing for the abolition of Religious Education as a compulsory subject - we disagree. RE has an important place in the curriculum - but only if it's brought up to date."

UK becoming more atheistic

The recommendation on Religious Education comes at a time when a survey carried out in 10 countries suggests that the UK is among the most secular nations in the world. Ten thousand people were questioned in the poll by research company ICM for the BBC programme What The World Thinks Of God.

More than a quarter of Britons, 29%, thought the world would be more peaceful with nobody believing in God, but very few people in other countries agreed. The countries polled were the US, UK, Israel, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Nigeria, Russia, Mexico and Lebanon. The interviews were carried out in January 2004. The programme producers said: "Overall, the results of our poll show that levels of belief and religious activity in the UK are consistently lower than in most of the other countries polled. Only Russia and South Korea produced results similar to the UK."

The return of paganism

Public officials around the globe increasingly are adopting measures that favour a return to pre-Christian paganism. Denmark has announced it will allow a group that worships Thor, Odin and other Norse gods to conduct legally-valid marriages. "It would be wrong if the indigenous religion of this country wasn't recognized," said Tove Fergo, the government Minister for Ecclesiastic Affairs and a Lutheran priest.

USA

Across the ocean, back in November last year, a U.S. federal judge in the state of Virginia ruled in favor of a Wiccan, Cyndi Simpson, who was barred from saying a prayer to open a Chesterfield County board meeting. Wiccans consider themselves witches, pagans or neo-pagans, and say their religion is based on respect for the earth, nature and the cycle of the seasons.

The Word of God has some comment on such developments. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

spirits, and doctrines of devils," 1 Timothy 4:1. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away," 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Christ said: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come . . ." Matthew 24:11-14. "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. The decline of belief in the Word of God is clearly foretold in the Bible and is but a forerunner to the acceptance and worship of the Antichrist. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear." Revelation 13:5-9.