2/5/14

Grade Nine World History

Unit: Major World Religions

Lesson: “Case Studies in African Christianity”

Enduring Understandings:

* Students will understand the three major world religions in their historical contexts.
* Students will understand that misconceptions and animosity between religious groups form and persist due to a lack of education and open dialogue surrounding issues of collective religious identity.

Essential Questions:

* What is the role of government in settling disputes between religious communities?
* How do events in religious history dictate present-day realities?

Standards:

* CC.8.5.9-10.A: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
* CC.8.5.9-10.B: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
* CC.8.5-9-10.I: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Set-up:

* Connect my computer to the SMART Board
* Make copies of the Quaker response letters
* Upload the homework article to Edline

Activities:

1. **Do Now (15 minutes):** Upon arrival, students will seat in their assigned seats and answer the following questions about the NPR interview transcript assigned for homework in their notebooks:
2. What is the history of Egypt’s Coptic Christians?
3. How are Coptic Christians persecuted and discriminated against in Egypt?
4. What role has the Egyptian government played amidst the rising tensions between Muslims and Christians?

We will discuss student answers as a class. I will be sure to connect student responses to the first questions to our past study of Ancient Egypt and the Roman Empire as reference points for the history of Christianity in Egypt. I will also address the “false rumors” spread about Copts mentioned in the interview and ask students how they think this rumor and misinformation about religious groups in general spread in society. Finally, in elaborating upon the third question, I will ask students how they think the government should respond to religious disputes like this one, and to connect to yesterday’s class, ask if students think that human rights organizations should play a role in this conflict.

1. **Lecture (10 minutes):** I will begin by asking students what they think is the fasted growing Christian sect in Africa. After several student guess, I will introduce Quakerism as the fasted growing and present a brief history of the Quaker faith – tracing it from 17th century England, to the United States, and then internationally through 20th century American missions. Africa’s current Quakers number 175,000, the second largest continental Quaker population behind North America, with 150,000 residing in Kenya. I will then outline the governing structure of the Quaker religion, as well as the faith’s beliefs and practices. We will also briefly discuss the appeal and challenges of this structure, with its local control and lack of singular doctrinal authority.
2. **Primary Source Analysis (25 minutes):** I will begin by introducing students to the controversy over the acceptance of homosexuality in the Religious Society of Friends. While American, European, and Australian Quaker meetings have gradually approved same-sex relationships and marriages over the past 30 years, Quaker leadership in Kenya has repeatedly touted the opposite viewpoint. I will then read aloud and project onto the SMART Board a press release statement from the Friends Church of Kenya regarding homosexuality that was made following the 2012 World Conference of Friends held in Kenya. After silently reflecting on that statement, I will project the Epistle to the World Conference of Friends from the Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns ask a student volunteer to read it aloud. I will also explain that this epistle was repeatedly posted and torn down at the conference, demonstrating the controversy surrounding this issue. Students will then break into their “letter groups” and read and discuss one of three letters from Quakers in response to the Kenyan press release. In their learning teams, students will be asked to in their notebooks:
3. Summarize the letter
4. Synthesize the key points the author articulates to support his or her view.

We will then come together as a class and groups will share out the arguments articulated in the various Quaker responses to the press release from the Friends Church of Kenya. We will conclude with a broader discussion of diversity of opinion within a religious community and how much doctrinal and ideological diversity a religious community can tolerate before it fractures.

Homework:

* Read NPR article about the construction of the Cordoba House near Ground Zero