# Freedom: The Joy of Being Hooked by Christianity 10/8/16

The article I pulled from is “Freedom: The Joy of Being Unhooked”. This article goes over addictive acts like drugs, and casual sex, and explains their negative effects. The real underlying message that this article portrays is to make teens feel negative about their current actions and teach that true happiness can only be found by abstaining from drug use, never having casual sex, and by converting to Christianity. The audience of this article is public high school and college students with any religious beliefs. As this text comes from a Christian textbook for public schools it may only be intended to educate students about the religion, not to recruit them. The text is from 1995, and I don’t believe this version would pass current standards of public school textbooks because of its promotion of Christianity over simply the teaching of it. The writers are Christian activists looking to educate students about the religion, and promote it without looking like they are promoting it.

The article is written in a textbook called “Growing in Christian Morality”. What I found very odd about the text, is that it actually rarely talks about Christianity, and when they do they seem hesitant to call Christianity the “right” way. Instead they simply positively portray it as a means to finding happiness. “Christianity is not antisex or antipleasure; the Christian tradition affirms that our sexuality is beautiful and good and meant to be enjoyed” (Pg 162). Notice how they only paint Christianity in a positive light, they avoid directly promoting it over alternative religions. For a Christian textbook, I am very surprised at the lack of persuasion towards joining the Christian religion. I believe the textbook was written this way, so it would be usable at public schools throughout America. I looked up guidelines for religion in public schools and found this “\*OK\*: Teaching about the Bible, the Torah, or other sacred texts and their influence on human behavior. No one denies that religion has strongly motivated behavior in the United States and around the world. \*Wrong\*: Teaching sacred documents with devotion or as singular truth. It crosses the line when a teacher or school district portrays one religion or religion in general as the preferred belief.”.

The article is very ironic in the sense that they titled the piece “Freedom: The Joy of Being Unhooked” and then advocate rules and guidelines that you must follow to stay happy. In the first paragraph of the article it says “Our meaning of freedom is that we are not in the grip of something… when we feel compelled to act a certain way” (Pg 159). The irony here is impeccable. They are directly making readers feel compelled to act in a certain way and making that way seem like the only right way. The rest of the article is simply about acting in a certain way and how if you don’t act that way you’re only headed for depression and unhappiness. So to take part in “Freedom: The Joy of Being Unhooked” you must be hooked in their fashion, by following the guidelines they set forth as the end all, be all. The whole message is a paradox that falls short on its own premise.

The context of this article is a Christian morality textbook from 1995. You can tell it is a textbook from annotations in the text that refer to the bottom of the page where small assignments are given. Another clue on how this article is from a textbook is that it takes place on pages 159-166 which means there’s quite a bit of material written before this, and probably a good amount after. I imagine this textbook once passed being in public high schools because the religion it is talking about is Christianity, the most popular one in America. If I imagine the textbook had “Christianity” replaced with “Judaism” and it has been taught in my high school, I can already see a petition being passed around to remove it from the curriculum.

Later in the article a teen’s story is used. In the story it says, “I’m not a religious person, but I do believe in God. I don’t know if he’s a big reason for me staying straight. But when I have problem that could cause me to not stay straight, I go to him and they’ll be answered” says Mark (Pg 166). This quote alone seems to have some hidden meaning with the use of the word “straight”. Mark can always go to God when he’s not feeling “straight” which can also refer to one's sexuality, and in the Christian religion being straight is the right way to be. That quote also includes persuasion in the form of ethos. Mark, prior to that quote, had told a story talking about his drug use with friends. They made Mark relatable to the demographic and made praying to god sound much cooler by relating to their demographic.

The material lacks actual reasoning (not to say there is not some) on why using drugs, and participating in casual sex, can cause depression. It simply states what not to do, and not to do it because it will eventually lead to unhappiness and/or depression. I don’t think the writers of the text even have reasons themselves, except the guidelines of Christianity, the religion they believe in. They do include facts and statistics but fail to use those stats to back up any argument. They give you percentages on the amount of teenage drinking but never cite the information for any arguments. I am not sure what they are expecting us, the readers, to take away from the facts they give. All I seemed to take away from the stars was that most people my age drink. That doesn’t make me feel bad as I fit right into the other 87% of teens who have drunk. Apparently, 87% of us teens are headed towards depression and despair.

Although I do not agree with what is written, I must admit they did a good job writing it. The promise of “true” happiness is very appealing and makes the reader feel like they aren’t experiencing it like they are missing out big time.

Works Cited

By Contrast, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy Wrote Strongly That the Better Approach Was the “coercion Test.” In Lee v. He Wrote That Unless the Government Forces People to Support or Participate in Religion against T. ``Religion and Public Schools." \*Religion and Public Schools\*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Oct. 2016.