

Research Reporter

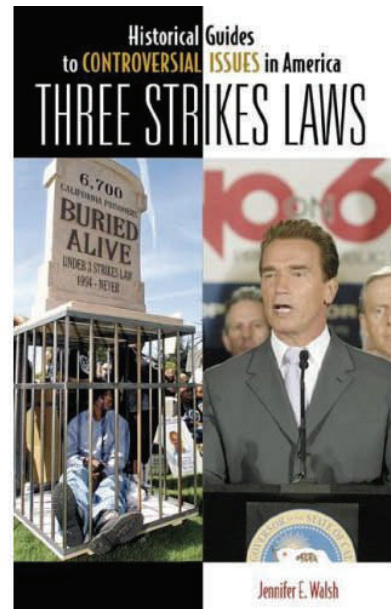
March 2007

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Three Strikes Laws by Jennifer E. Walsh

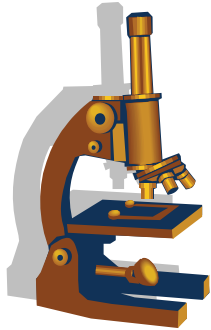
Jennifer E. Walsh, Associate Professor of Political Science, explores fairly and in depth the justice of three strikes laws in California and across the country in her Three Strikes Laws (Greenwood Press, 2007). Each of her seven chapters is filled with recent data that allow opposing positions to dialogue with each other. For example, “Effectiveness of Three Strikes Laws” demonstrates how extremely difficult measuring effectiveness is: can the decline of crime in the last decade be attributed solely to the results of this legislation? How can deterrence and incapacitation effects be measured when both may be occurring simultaneously? After analyzing several studies of crime rates and criminals, Dr. Walsh affirms, “policy makers in states like California where the law is widely applied, may rest a little easier knowing that there is likely some crime-control benefits at work!”



Her final chapter explores various, at least so far, unsuccessful attempts to reform current three strikes law legislation by critics who find the current policy no longer necessary, too unfair, or highly expensive. Again, Dr. Walsh’s even handed approach to this controversy diffuses its volatility by showing the strengths and weaknesses of each stance. Three Strikes Laws is one of a series entitled “Historical Guides to Controversial Issues in America”, and it will prove most helpful to students, professors, and specialists in the fields of law, criminal justice, and sociology. However, as a lay reader, I found it to be fascinating in its controversial content and transparently accessible by its clear style.

—Carole Lambert

Water Reclamation for Remote Environments



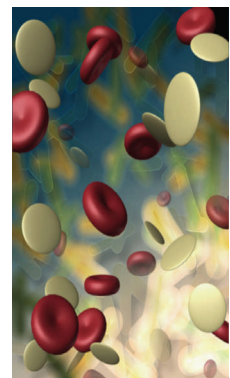
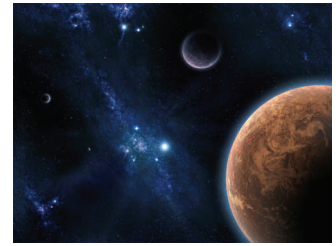
Dr. Wickman succeeds in simultaneously painting pictures with words while positing a hopeful plan to purifying water without damaging the environment on any planet.---

Carole Lambert

Leslie Wickman, Director of the Center for Research in Science, describes a potentially feasible and ecologically satisfying model for providing safe, clean water for space travelers and those living in arid regions in her “Water Reclamation for Remote Environments: an Ecologically Sound Approach” (Proceedings of the 45th American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Aerospace Sciences Meeting and Exhibit, 8-11 January 2007, Reno, Nevada). Her model is patterned after the earth’s own mode of recycling water: “a closed loop life support system cycle” whereby “naturally occurring microorganisms, plants, trees, and geophysical processes break down, degrade, and filter out hazardous substances from water”, using no manmade chemicals and very little human intervention for daily operations or maintenance. The diagrams included in her article show what amounts of water and what levels of purification are needed for interplanetary travels of up to eight hundred days (Figure 1), how the earth’s water cycle performs purifying functions naturally (Figure 2), five categories of water con-

taminants (Figure 3), and four treatment phases for purifying contaminated water: primary filtration with rocks and sand, primary disinfection with heat and radiation, tertiary fine filtration with plant and animal metabolic processes, and final polishing with evaporation, condensation, and collection (Figure 4). Her last illustration (Figure 5) indicates the level of purification needed for various water usages from plant/crop watering to drinking water. Her clear narrative explains her model, and the section of her article entitled “Lunar Applications” stimulates the reader’s imagination to vividly picture water purification on the moon: waste water and solid waste flow downward from the habitat to a pressurized greenhouse and septic field. Then “water seeping through the regolith and fractured rock is captured in perforated PVC pipes several feet below...” After this the water is sterilized by sunlight, cosmic radiation, and evaporation. Dr. Wickman succeeds in simultaneously painting pictures with words while positing a hopeful plan to purify water without damaging the environment on any planet. ---

Carole Lambert



Using WebQuests to Engage Biblical History

Professor of Education Kathleen Bacer introduces educators to an online interactive learning tool called “WebQuests” in her article entitled “Using WebQuests to Engage Biblical History Learners” (*Teachers of Vision* 52 [4]: 12, 15). It’s a truism these days that the Internet can serve as an effective companion in the classroom to more traditional, text-based curricula. But from Sven Birkerts’ 1994 jeremiad, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*, to the laments of other literarily minded Luddites, it’s clear that opposition still exists in some conservative circles to any perceived attack on the printed word on paper. Bacer’s article implicitly rebukes such naysayers by including a very thorough collection of WebQuest sites for Biblical and Christian Education teachers interested in more fully engaging the curiosity of their students in the classroom.

But first, what exactly is a WebQuest? Bacer credits Bernie Dodge, a professor at San Diego State University, with introducing WebQuests to the “online arena” in 1995. In an article found on the

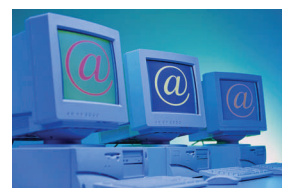
WebQuests homepage (http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about_webquests.html), Dodge explains that a WebQuest “is an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet, optionally supplemented with videoconferencing.” The goal of such interactive lesson plans, or scavenger hunts, can vary from simple “knowledge acquisition and integration” to the fostering of a more extensive and elaborate ability to critically analyze the material at hand. Bacer points out that each WebQuest is helpfully structured into the same seven sections: a title, introduction, tasks to be performed, the process by which those tasks will be performed, the way in which the tasks should effectively be evaluated by teachers, and some concluding questions for students to consider after coming back from their “quest.”

Where Bacer’s article is the most helpful is in its inclusion of a number of various “Bible-Centered WebQuests,” ranging from one (for high school-aged students) dedicated to an

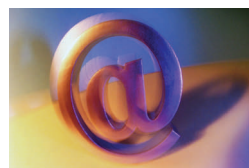
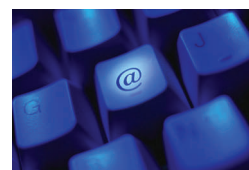
intriguing exploration of the ways in which Christ has been visually represented in different time periods and cultures (<http://www.trinity.wa.edu.au/plduffyrc/subjects/re/bible/image.htm>), to another focused comprehensively on the culture, climate, and religion of the Egyptian Empire during the historical moment of the Exodus for 3rd-6th graders (<http://highland.hitcho.com.au/Ancientegypt.htm>).

Bacer’s research has also uncovered various websites which may be “legally implemented in the public school system from a historical research perspective,” thus ensuring that the wall between church and state isn’t breached, while still allowing teachers to expose students to key concepts from our Judeo-Christian heritage. Although many of these WebQuests are tailored for younger audiences, college professors from such disciplines as Theology, History, or Sociology may also find material to enrich and stimulate discussion in the classroom.

—Stephen Bell



**But first,
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WebQuest?**



**AZUSA PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY**

**OFFICE OF
FACULTY
RESEARCH**

Azusa Pacific University
Office of Research
900 E. Alosta Ave
Azusa, CA 91702

Phone 626.815.2085
Fax: 626.815.2087
E-mail: sferrante@apu.edu

We welcome your input!!

Research Reporter

Office of Research Personnel:

Director, Office of Research: Dr. Carole Lambert

(CLambert@apu.edu);

Consultant, Office of Research: Dr. Beverly Hardcastle Stanford

(BStanford@apu.edu);

Administrative Assistant: Susan Ferrante (Sferrante@apu.edu)

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