Religious Education and the Anglo-World

The Impact of Empire, Britishness, and Decolonisation in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

By

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Abstract

Focusing on Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, "Religious Education and the Anglo-World" historiographically examines the relationship between empire and religious education. In each case the analysis centres on the foundational moments of publicly funded education in the mid- to late-nineteenth centuries when policy makers created largely Protestant systems of religious education, and frequently denied Roman Catholics funding for private education. Secondly, the period from 1880 to 1960 during which campaigns to strengthen religious education emerged in each context. Finally, the era of decolonisation from the 1960s through the 1980s when publicly funded religious education was challenged by the loss of Britishness as a central ideal, and Roman Catholics found unprecedented success in achieving state aid in many cases. By bringing these disparate national literatures into conversation with one another, the essay calls for a greater transnational approach to the study of religious education in the Anglo-World.

Keywords

Anglo-World – religious education – Britishness – British Empire – Canada – Australia – New Zealand – Catholic education – decolonisation

1   Introduction

Over the past decade historians of religious education have called for more scholarly work on the international history of religious education.[1] Rob

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1 The terminology for the subject of religious education was not standard across the Anglo-World. Throughout this essay I will use religious education as a generic term when speaking

Freathy, Stephen Parker, and Jonathan Doney recently argued that since such international studies remain "at an embryonic stage," more international research is necessary that might have the potential to "reveal something like a general European or Western pattern of development."[2] Taking up this call, I argue that James Belich's concept of the Anglo-World offers a powerful explanatory framework to understand the development of religious education in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Analysing often isolated national historiographies, this essay will reveal transnational linkages between seemingly parochial programmes of religious education, and suggest avenues for further research to more fully explore these connections. Consider the following three illustrative examples.

First, in 1877 New Zealand passed an Education Act that controversially pronounced public primary education in the country to be 'secular.'[3] Over the next 50 years, more than 42 unsuccessful attempts were made to change the legislation to allow for direct religious education in New Zealand classrooms.[4] Undaunted by these setbacks, Protestant groups developed the Nelson System in the 1890s, a creative loophole of dubious legality which advocated opening schools half an hour later (or closing half an hour earlier) to allow for denominational religious education when the school was not formally in session.[5] Religious teachings could still be found in educational publications like *The School Journal*, and annual Empire Day messages emphasized a

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of formal religious teaching in the classroom. This essay focuses on religious education as a curriculum subject, and only occasionally discusses acts of collective worship or religious exercises, which were commonly associated with religious education until the 1970s. For more on that distinction, see: Stephen Parker, "Mediatising Childhood Religion: The BBC, John G. Williams and Collective Worship for Schools in England, 1940–1975," *Paedagogica Historica* 51, 5 (2010): 614–630.

2 Rob Freathy, Stephen Parker, and Jonathan Doney, "Raiders of the Lost Archives: Searching for the Hidden History of Religious Education in England," in *History, Remembrance and Religious Education* by Stephen Parker, Rob Freathy, and Leslie Francis, eds. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 127. See also: Rob Freathy and Stephen Parker, "The Necessity of Historical Inquiry in Educational Research: The Case of Religious Education," *British Journal of Religious Education* 32, 2 (2010): 229–243.

3 Legal secularity only affected primary schools, not the secondary schools of the country, a provision that one Government Commission labelled "an historical accident." *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1962), 677.

4 Ian McLaren, *Education in a Small Democracy: New Zealand* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 50.

5 Ian Breward, *Godless Schools? A Study in Protestant Reactions to the Educational Act of 1877* (Christchurch: Presbyterian Bookroom, 1967), 37.

common Christianity that united British peoples across the Empire.[6] After an examination of the totality of late nineteenth-century New Zealand education, one scholar concluded that the schools "continued to operate after 1877 in a professedly Christian, predominantly Protestant milieu."[7]

The second example is a 1944 Teacher's Guide to Religious Education entitled *Jesus and the Kingdom* produced for Grade Six classes in Ontario, Canada that resembled imperial adventure literature as much as a religious text. The author, Ernest Hayes, argued that it was critical to offer students what he called "stories of heroic Christian adventure."[8] The book began with a description of Christ's crucifixion, praising the "virility, courage, and forthright manliness of Jesus," emphasizing his masculinity and sacrifice as especially notable characteristics.[9] Hayes went on to provide more contemporary stories of Christianity, especially through Christian luminaries like William Wilberforce and David Livingstone. Livingstone received a great deal of attention as the exemplar *par excellence* of Christian service. At one point the book suggested that Livingstone bravely faced a "horde of fierce natives with a fearless smile."[10] Livingstone's significance was in his efforts to end the slave trade, but also in fostering trade between African peoples and England. He spurred on the work of other missionaries, which the *Teachers' Guide* went to great lengths to show were ultimately for the good of African peoples. European dominance in Africa, according to the Guide, brought peace to the continent, ended the slave trade, and led to the introduction of "western inventions, western knowledge, and western systems."[11]

The third example comes from a 1981 report on religious education in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The report noted that one of the three most widely used curricula in the ACT was the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus (BAS) of 1975, described by the author Graham Rossiter as "a broad pluralist" approach

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6   *The School Journal* was founded in 1907, and was a highly influential publication for the first half of the twentieth century. Geoffrey Troughton, "Religion, Churches and Childhood in New Zealand, c. 1900–1940," *New Zealand Journal of History* 40, 1 (2006): 43.

7   Colin McGeorge, *Religious Aspects of the Secular System Before the Great War* (Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987), 167.

8   Ernest H. Hayes, *Jesus and the Kingdom: Teacher's Guide to Religious Education Grade Six* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1944), v.

9   Hayes, *Jesus and the Kingdom: Teacher's Guide*, 1. The focus on masculinity is reminiscent of New Zealand depictions of a 'Manly Jesus.' Geoffrey Troughton, *New Zealand Jesus: Social and Religious Transformations of an Image, 1890–1940* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2011), Chapter 6.

10   *Ibid*, 152.

11   *Ibid*, 162.

to religious education.[12] That syllabus, developed to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse industrial English city, was a watershed document in the history of religious education in England.[13] That within just a few years this very specifically English curricula was adopted in Australian schools is, I argue, revealing.

Why was it so important to include mostly Protestant religious education in an avowedly secular New Zealand education system in the late nineteenth century? Why was a Victorian Scottish missionary explorer closely linked with British imperialism portrayed as a Christian icon to be admired and emulated by Canadian students in the mid-twentieth century? Why would Australian educators adopt a curriculum made for a city more than ten thousand miles away in the late 1970s?

The answer to these questions, I propose, is that settler colonialism and the Anglo-World system profoundly shaped religious education during the early development of Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand education systems in the second half of the nineteenth century, their consolidation in the early to mid-twentieth century, and the period of decolonization following the Second World War. Local circumstances, historical contingencies, and human agency provided each national or state-level system with unique features, but all of them experienced the transnational formative influence of empire.

The last three decades have seen a staggering amount of scholarly attention to the British Empire, and applying the insights of this body of work to the study of religious education will be a primary methodology for *Religious Education and the Anglo-World*.[14] Influenced by post-colonial theory, scholars in the 1980s and 1990s began to rethink an older historiography that focused

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12   Graham Rossiter, *Religious Education in Australian Schools: An Overview of Developments and Issues in Religious Education in Australian Schools with Descriptions of Practices in Different School Types* (Canberra: Curriculum Development Centre, 1981), 51.

13   Birmingham City Education Committee, *Agreed Syllabus of Religious Instruction* (Birmingham, UK: Birmingham City Education Committee, 1975). Stephen Parker and Rob Freathy note that the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus was groundbreaking in systematically providing students with knowledge of other faiths, even as it continued to privilege Christianity. "Ethnic Diversity, Christian Hegemony and the Emergence of Multi-Faith Religious Education in the 1970s," *History of Education* 41, 3 (2012): 390.

14   A few important historiographical essays on this topic include: Stephen Howe, "British Worlds, Settler Worlds, World Systems, and Killing Fields," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, 4 (2012): 691–725; Durba Ghosh, "Another Set of Imperial Turns?," *American Historical Review* 117, 3 (2012): 772–793; A.G. Hopkins, "Globalisation and Decolonisation," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, 5 (2017): 729–745; Dane Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); Tony Ballantyne, "The Changing Shape of the Modern British Empire and Its Historiography," *Historical Journal* 53, 2 (2010): 429–452.

mostly on economic and political forms of power.[15] An important moment in the development of contemporary scholarship on empire was the production of the *Oxford History of the British Empire* (OHBE) from 1998–1999.[16] Although an authoritative accomplishment, the OHBE series faced criticism for failing to include many insights from postcolonial scholarship.[17] These critiques fuelled the growth of what was called the new imperial history and scholarship on the British World.[18]

The new imperial history focused on the ways in which forms of knowledge, culture, gender, and race were core components of European imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[19] Critically, though controversially, the new scholarship on empire stressed that Britain itself was affected by building and maintaining an empire. British society, argued scholars like John Mackenzie, was suffused with imperial imagery and culture.[20] Other scholars, including most contentiously Bernard Porter, argued that people in Britain were relatively uninfluenced by the empire, and that the new imperial history overstated its case.[21] The debate between MacKenzie and Porter could often be polemical and taken to extremes. This study will draw from the "recognition of the mutual relationship between the culture of the colonial 'periphery' and

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15   For an overview of the influence of post-colonial literature on imperial history, see Dane Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24, 3 (1996): 345–363; Patrick Wolfe, "History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory from Marx to Postcolonialism," *American Historical Review* 102, 2 (1997): 388–420.

16   Roger Louis ed., *Oxford History of the British Empire Volumes I–V* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998–1999).

17   Dane Kennedy, "The Boundaries of Oxford's Empire," *International History Review* 23, 3 (2001): 604–622.

18   Oxford did publish a series of companion volumes on topics that received relatively little attention in the original five volumes. Examples include: Norman Etherington, *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2005); Philippa Levine ed., *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Philip D. Morgan and Sean Hawkins eds., *Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

19   Kathleen Wilson ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

20   Mackenzie's pioneering work on this topic was *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). He was the founding editor of the *Studies in Imperialism* series by Manchester University Press, currently edited by Andrew Thompson. A more recent example of this literature edited by Mackenzie is *European Empires and the People: Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

21   Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

that of the British metropolis."[22] This is a key concept as educators across the Anglo-World looked to each other for ideas, educational materials, and systems to emulate as they all addressed common challenges of public education.[23]

Religion and national identity are also being freshly examined in light of new scholarship on the British Empire. Linda Colley's classic work *Britons: Forging the Nation*, published in 1992, made a persuasive case that Protestant Christianity, along with virulent anti-Catholicism, were central components of a British identity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[24] Other scholars have noted how Protestantism continued to be a defining feature of Britishness in various forms throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hugh McLeod argues that anti-Catholicism, a powerful Protestant identity, and a growing support for empire were strongly linked in the 1870s and 1880s, the formative years of education systems across the Anglo-World.[25] All throughout the empire Protestants predominated numerically, but tensions with large Catholic minorities stressed efforts to promote a unifying transnational identity. Debates over how to teach religion to children, therefore, represent an important site of tension within settler colonies.

Another field of growth in our understanding of the British Empire is the study of decolonisation, which highlights the significance of the mid-twentieth century to both the settlement and dependent territories.[26] An important theme of the work on decolonization are the long-term impacts of imperialism

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22　　Stephanie Barczewski, "The 'MacKenzian Moment' Past and Present," in Stephanie Barczewski and Martin Farr, *The MacKenzie Moment and Imperial History: Essays in Honour of John M. MacKenzie* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 3–14. For more on this idea, see Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

23　　Peter Yeandle argues along similar lines that imperial culture notably influenced the subject of history in England. Peter Yeandle, *Citizenship, Nation, Empire: The Politics of History Teaching in England, 1870–1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 5.

24　　Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

25　　Hugh McLeod, "Protestantism and British National Identity, 1815–1945," in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, edited by Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 58–59.

26　　For some important recent works on decolonization see: Amanda Behm, "Settler Historicism and Anticolonial Rebuttal in the British World, 1880–1920," *Journal of World History* 26, 4 (2015): 785–813; Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Elizabeth Leake and Leslie James eds., *Decolonization and the Cold War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonisation* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

to both the colonized and the colonizers.[27] Jeffrey Cox notes that, "the cultural legacy of empire has outlasted the formal mechanisms of power."[28] The disruption caused by decolonization had a profound impact on Canadian, Australian, and New Zealander education from the 1960s to the 1980s.[29] The loss of an identity centred on the British Empire generated a great deal of soul searching on the topic of religious education.

The early 2000s also witnessed the beginning of the British World subfield. British World scholarship emerged as a reaction to the relative lack of attention that settler colonies received in the historiography of the British Empire.[30] Historians in this field investigated the transnational cultural, economic, political, and strategic connections between settler colonies of the British Empire.[31] As migrants constructed new polities, they actively mimicked the British state in a quest to produce 'Better Britains.'[32] A key consideration of this scholarship was a shared identity known as Britishness.[33] British settlers in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, identified both with their own locality,

27   See Stuart Ward and Astrid Rasch (eds.), *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

28   Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise Since 1700*, 20.

29   See James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); David Goldsworthy, *Losing the Blanket: Australia and the End of Britain's Empire* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002); José Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada 1945–71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Stuart Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001).

30   For more on the development of the British World subfield, see Tamson Pietsch, "Rethinking the British World," *The Journal of British Studies* 52, 2 (2013): 441–463.

31   Important works on the British World include: Philip Buckner, "Presidential Address: Whatever Happened to the British Empire?" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 4, 1993, 3–32; Philip Buckner ed., *Canada and the End of Empire* (UBC Press: Vancouver, 2005); Philip Buckner and Douglas Francis eds., *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich eds., *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre, *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007); Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, Frank Trentmann, eds., *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1880–1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); John Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Stuart Ward ed., *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

32   Cecilia Morgan, *Building Better Britains? Settler Societies within the British Empire 1783–1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

33   See, for example: Darian-Smith, Grimshaw, and Macintyre, *Britishness Abroad*; C. McGlynn, A. Mycock, and J.W. McAuley eds., *Britishness, Identity and Citizenship: The View from*

but also with the wider British imperial system. Like all identities, Britishness evolved over time and its meaning was frequently contested, but it relied on a common understanding of the superiority of the British race to non-Anglo peoples, though in the nineteenth century race included a cocktail of concepts including biological heredity as well as cultural norms and values. In this way Britishness lessened tensions in settlement colonies between Scottish, Welsh, and (though in a more complex fashion) Irish identities by emphasizing their ethnic superiority and their right to rule.[34]

This was complicated, however, by the presence of non-British European populations within the colonies of settlement, such as the French in Canada or the Afrikaners in South Africa. Historians have pointed out that the preservation of whiteness was a key objective of settlement colonies within the British Empire, as exemplified by, for instance, the White Australia Policy.[35] But Britishness typically mixed ethnic and civic forms of identity, and could be appropriated in unique ways.[36] Britishness was highly adaptable and compatible with other forms of political identity, and colonized peoples could embrace Britishness and use the identity for their own purposes. Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw, and Stuart Macintyre argue that colonized peoples could even re-purpose Britishness for anticolonial ends, but that using Britishness necessitated accepting its "legitimacy and the hold of its social institutions on their lives."[37] A settler could be a proud Scot or proudly French-Canadian *and* proudly British because these identities were not mutually exclusive. Critically, this identity transcended national boundaries, extending to the white settler colonies of the British Empire and to Britain itself.

British World scholarship soon came under criticism on several grounds.[38] In their quest to emphasize transnational conditions, British World literature can minimize the significance of local conditions. Perhaps even more alarmingly, by focusing on European settlers, British World scholarship could be accused of ignoring the treatment of indigenous peoples. As Saul Dubow pointed out, "Britishness was often oppressive and exclusionary, not least when it claimed

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Abroad (Oxford: Peter Lang Publishers, 2011); Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

34   Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870*, 24.

35   Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

36   Russell McGregor, "The Necessity of Britishness: Ethno-cultural roots of Australian nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 12, 3 (2006): 494.

37   Darian-Smith, Grimshaw, and Macintyre, *Britishness Abroad*, 9.

38   See Rachel Bright and Andrew Dilley, "After the British World," *Historical Journal* 60, 2 (2017): 547–568.

universality."[39] To address all of these issues, Tamson Pietsch suggests thinking not about a singular British World but about a multivalent series of British Worlds. Pietsch argues that historians should conceptualise British world sites "in this double sense: sites produced by imagined and networked British worlds but also productive of them."[40] Pietsch recognizes that Britishness was creatively appropriated across the settlement Empire. This study will embrace a contingent and contextual approach to understanding Britishness, and religious education provides an exceptional lens by which to evaluate transnational trends while also paying attention to local particularities.

Another significant issue within the subfield has been the lack of definitional clarity: who and what, precisely, should be included in the British World? What are its geographical limitations? Most British World scholars would agree that the so-called 'Old Dominions' of Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand should be included, but what about India or other parts of the dependent empire? And there has been a tradition going back to Charles Dilke of thinking of 'Greater Britain,' which includes the United States.[41] This terminological issue has led to a proliferation of terms that scholars use when describing components of the settlement empire including the British World, Anglo-World, the Anglosphere, Britannic nationalism, or CANZUK.[42] A major feat of the British World scholarship has been to insist on the significance of settler colonialism to the British Empire, and the vital importance of a shared cultural ethos between sites of settlement, but there is as yet no scholarly consensus on the precise boundaries of the British World or Greater Britain.

Perhaps the most compelling explanatory framework for the 'settler revolution' remains James Belich's *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939*. He defines the Anglo-World as "a politically and geographically divided but economically and culturally united

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39   Saul Dubow, "How British Was the British World?" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, 1 (2009): 20.

40   Pietsch, "Rethinking the British World," 462.

41   Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867* (London: Macmillan, 1868). For a scholarly analysis of this idea, see Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

42   For the use of these other terms, see: Duncan Bell and Srdjan Vucetic, "Brexit, CANZUK, and the Legacy of Empire," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 21, 2 (2019): 367–382; John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Michael Kenny and Nick Pearce, *Shadows of Empire: The Anglosphere in British Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018); Srdjan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

entity" that was "sub-global, yet transnational, intercontinental, and far-flung."[43] Belich argues that settlement colonialism went through several distinct phases in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first stage was explosive colonization, fuelled by enormous amounts of investment and migration. By the 1880s and 1890s, after a series of economic busts, the colonies of settlement entered into a period of recolonization, which strengthened their ties to Britain. Finally, following the Second World War, the settlement empire entered into a period of decolonization.[44] Belich's chronology and overall framework closely parallel educational developments regarding religious education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and for this reason I shall employ the term Anglo-World throughout.[45]

Belich's Anglo-World concept is vast, incorporating not just the 'Old Dominions' of the British Empire but also the United States and even sites of informal imperialism such as Argentina. For this study, however, I have narrowed the scope to focus on religious education in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. I selected these territories for comparative analysis because of their close historical connections, shared political traditions, common language, and their embrace of empire for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[46] All three developed state-controlled education systems in roughly the same timeframe, and all developed initially with the common objective of promoting Britishness amongst young people.[47] These territories provide strong evidence that a transnational identity centred on Britishness animated decisions regarding religious education, but more scholarship is necessary to evaluate this phenomena in the wider Anglo-World.

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43 James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 48, 145.

44 For a more detailed look at the New Zealand experience of decolonization, see Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, Part V.

45 Belich acknowledges that the term 'Anglo' is problematic, saying simply that "we need a short label, and it is the best of a bad job." *Replenishing the Earth*, 58. Throughout this text I will refer to the Anglo-World as an interconnected cultural milieu, but when referring to specific people within that milieu I will refer to them as British settlers or by the specific designation best applied to their locality.

46 The same cannot be said for either South Africa, which had a tumultuous relationship with Britain in the nineteenth century, culminating in the Boer War (1899–1902), or the United States, whose early independence (1783) marked a radically different formative moment for national identity formation. In each of these cases there was a much more contentious relationship with Britishness than in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand.

47 There are notable exceptions to this, particularly regarding religious education in Quebec schools. Section 2 will more fully explore the complexities of the Canadian case.

To date, historians of imperialism have largely overlooked state-mandated religious education as an assimilationist method of promoting a Christian Britannic identity in the colonies of white settlement to the exclusion of other religions.[48] Though numerous studies mention the controversies surrounding religious education, they only infrequently point to potential transnational phenomena affecting the development of the subject. This is the result of two primary factors. One is the tendency, hopefully on the decline, for historians to eschew the history of education, leaving it instead to Departments of Education. This project will support the stance of historian Laura Tisdall who suggests that historians must take "the 'waste land' of the history of education seriously as history, rather than trying to avoid it, make assumptions about it, or leave it to somebody else."[49]

A dominant trend in histories of religious education, conversely, is to focus on local or national issues in education, with little attention to international trends. This is despite the fact that historians of education more broadly have for the past few decades uncovered the significance of imperialism to education.[50] Works on religious education are unfortunately often "biased toward the development of national policy and academic theory."[51] While

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48   This is despite the fact that post-colonial scholars of culture have long understood the significant role of schools in the formation of national and imperial identities. See Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*.

49   Laura Tisdall, "NACBS Response: The Educational Institution as a Category of Analysis in Modern British History," Comments presented at the North American Conference on British studies Annual Meeting in Providence, RI, 2018. For more on the disciplinary differences between historians and educationists, see the historiographical works of William Richardson, especially: "Historians and Educationists: The History of Education as a Field of Study in Post-War in England Part I: 1945–72," *History of Education* 28, No. 1 (1999): 1–30; and "Historians and Educationists: The History of Education as a Field of Study in Post-War England, 1972–96" *History of Education* 28, No. 2 (1999): 109–141.

50   Some representative works on this topic include: Benjamin Bryce, "Citizens of Empire: Education and Teacher Exchanges in Canada and the Commonwealth, 1910–1939," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, 4 (2017): 607–629; J.A. Mangan, "Introduction: Imperialism, History and Education," In J.A. Mangan ed., *'Benefits Bestowed'? Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 3–4; Hugh Morrison and Mary Clare Martin eds., *Creating Religious Childhoods in Anglo-World and British Colonial Contexts, 1800–1950* (London: Routledge, 2017); Rebecca Swartz and Peter Kallaway, "Imperial, Global and Local in Histories of Colonial Education," *History of Education* 47, 3 (2018): 362–367; Karen Vallgårda, *Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission: Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Clive Whitehead, "The Concept of British Education Policy in the Colonies 1850–1960," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 39, 2 (2007): 161–173.

51   Freathy, Parker, and Doney, "Raiders of the Lost Archives," 107.

historians of imperialism and world history often wrestle with the difficult issue of losing sight of the local in exploring the global, the historiography of religious education reveals an inverse problem: frequently losing sight of the global in favour of hyper-focused, theory-laden, and presentist local histories.[52]

The time is right, then, to evaluate the history of religious education using insights from scholarship on imperial history. Though imperialism was not the only shaping influence on systems of religious education in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, it was a significant one. I argue that the Anglo-World system moulded the subject in four primary ways. Firstly, the Anglo-World promoted a transnational identity called Britishness. Protestantism was often assumed to provide a moral core for the British imperial system and was an important ideal for Britishness. At the level of religious education, however, disputes between rival denominations frequently generated controversy over what should be allowed in the classroom.[53] When installing systems of religious education, non-Catholic educators and policy makers were wary of sectarianism, but generally supportive of Protestant Christianity in classrooms. Overall, Britishness promoted an ideal that white Protestant settlers in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand were part of one imperial family, united by a common destiny and linked together in the British Empire.

The second primary influence of imperialism on religious education was through migration. Histories of education frequently state axiomatically that systems of religious education are designed to meet the needs of the local populace, but in the case of settler colonies the local populace was, with the exception of indigenous peoples, artificially constructed through an intentional process of migrant selection. White settler governments, in concert with the British state, allowed only immigrants of the 'right type.' Assisted migration schemes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries targeted desirable populations to enter settlement colonies. To prevent the 'wrong' type of migrant from entering, numerous colonial governments enacted restrictive immigration laws. This is most noticeable in the case of the infamous White Australia Policy designed shortly after Australian Federation in 1901, but similarly

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52   It should go without saying that there are notable exceptions to these general statements about the field. A fantastic example of a global history of education within the context of the British Empire is Daniel Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

53   Stephen Jackson, "In Accord with British Traditions: The Rise of Compulsory Religious Education in Ontario, Canada and Victoria, Australia," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, 2 (2014), 693–709.

restrictive immigration legislation was created in New Zealand and Canada as well.[54]

There are two periods when migration policy most noticeably affected religious education. The first of these was in the mid-nineteenth century, a period of 'explosive colonisation' according to James Belich.[55] This time period witnessed a tremendous outflow of migrants from Britain to the colonies of white settlement. It also coincided with decisions by settler governments across the British Empire to form compulsory systems of state-controlled education. The religious backgrounds of Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand settlers in the 1870s–1890s was a critical factor in the formation of education systems across the Anglo-World.

Migration also significantly affected religious education in the post-World War II era. In the case of Australia and Canada post-war immigration schemes brought in settlers from across the British Empire and from war-torn Europe. Many of these settlers did not share the traditional religious or ethnic backgrounds of nineteenth century settlers, and so laid the groundwork for a reevaluation of religious education throughout the Anglo-World from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Anglo-World migrations became complicated, and frequently violently so, when faced with indigenous occupants of the land. First Nations peoples in Canada, Aborigines in Australia, and the Māori in New Zealand did not fit well with the Anglocentric British identity many of the new settlers assumed would be the norm in their new homes. In Canada this was complicated still further by the presence of a Francophone and mostly Roman Catholic population. Unique local variations in religious education arose from the resultant processes of negotiation, resistance, and accommodation.[56]

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54   James Belich points out that restrictive immigration policies "underwrote a sense of kinship with Old Britain, creating a further web—of 'crimson threads'—to hold the Greater British system together. Conversely, extending immigration to non-traditionalist sources, even if they were still white, was a sign of decolonization." Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 467. See also: Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line.*

55   Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 17.

56   Indigenous education was a matter of federal, rather than provincial or state, jurisdiction, and often developed separately from the publicly funded schools in many settler colonial contexts. Important works include: Annie Coombes, *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). For an Australian context see J.J. Fletcher, *Clean, Clad, and Courteous: A History of Aboriginal Education in New South Wales* (Sydney: J. Fletcher, 1989); for the Canadian context, see J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996);

Complicating the first two features of imperial influence noted above, the third primary way in which the British Empire impacted the development of religious education was through the extraordinary levels of Irish Roman Catholic migration, and the explosively tendentious relationship between Britain and Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Irish-born emigrants, both Protestant and Catholic, formed large minorities of the population in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. By the late nineteenth-century Irish-born clerics dominated the Catholic Church hierarchy in many Anglo-World settings. The large Irish Catholic presence challenged the Protestant assumptions at the heart of Britishness, and the fears of radical Irish nationalism led to waves of anti-Catholic discrimination. The rise of the Fenian Brotherhood in the 1850s and 1860s, the nationalist quest for Home Rule, the Easter Rising of 1916, and the creation of the Irish Free State sent shockwaves throughout the Anglo-World.

Anti-Catholic sentiments were prevalent in the mid- to late nineteenth century as state-supported systems of education developed, making any sort of settlement on the issue of religious education controversial. In Canada, Australia, and New Zealand Catholic populations responded to the withdrawal of state aid to denominational schools by creating a strong private school network and by continuing to agitate for the renewal of state funding of parochial schools. The private school networks, largely made possible by the efforts of religious orders, ensured that a distinctive Catholic identity persisted well into the twentieth century. In all cases studied here, issues of discrimination and state aid dominated educational policy questions for more than a century. Post-World War II migration schemes permitting significant non-British populations, a strong ecumenical movement, and the decline of Britishness, all combined to rapidly change attitudes towards Catholicism.[57] The quest for state aid to Roman Catholic schools was unprecedentedly successful beginning in the 1960s, with successful lobbying campaigns for denominational (mostly Catholic) schools in Australia, New Zealand, and in some Canadian cases.

The final way in which empire powerfully impacted the development of religious education was through quotidian practices of imitation, borrowing, and modelling. In their efforts to create what Belich calls 'neo-Europes,' settlers

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for New Zealand, see John Barrington, *Separate but Equal? Māori Schools and the Crown 1867–1969* (Wellington, NZ: Victoria University Press, 2008).

57   The ecumenical movement also affected religious education in post-World War II England. See Jonathan Doney, "The British Council of Churches' Influence on the 'Radical Rethinking of Religious Education' in the 1970s," *Studies in Church History* 55 (2019): 593–608.

frequently emulated metropolitan institutions such as education.[58] Many of the earliest systems of education across the Anglo-World were, for instance, modelled off of the Irish national system pioneered in 1831.[59] Educational theory often developed first in Britain and was subsequently transmitted throughout the settlement empire.[60] Sociologist Damon Mayrl suggests that, in the case of Australia, an independent and local professional system of research and development in education did not develop until the mid-twentieth century.[61] Due to the small market size of the colonies of settlement, textbooks and other educational materials were often produced first for British audiences and then disseminated to the colonies of white settlement.[62] Developments in England were repeatedly cited in educational commissions and reports, and represented a profound influence on the development of religious education throughout the Anglo-World.

Transnational sharing of ideas and institutions is an area that needs additional research. Belich describes the relationship between Britain and the white settlement colonies as a series of bilateral relationships rather than a more complex web of connections. In other words, each white settler colony had a close relationship with Britain, but not necessarily with one another.[63] Other scholars paint a much more complex and dynamic portrait of relationships within the British Empire.[64] Gaining a better understanding of the transfer of ideas, institutions, peoples, and texts should be a key avenue of scholarship moving forward.

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58   Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*.

59   Kevin Lougheed, "National Education and Empire: Ireland and the Geography of the National Education System," in David Dickson, Justyna Pyz & Christopher Shepard (eds.), *Irish Classrooms and British Empire: Imperial Contexts in the Origins of Modern Education* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 10.

60   Especially for Canada, the influence of the United States was highly significant as well, increasingly so as the twentieth century progressed.

61   Damon Mayrl, *Secular Conversions: Political Institutions and Religious Instruction in the United States and Australia 1800–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Chapter 4.

62   Leslie Howsam is calling for more scholarly attention to the phenomena of imperial textual sharing. See: "What the Victorian Empire Learned: A Perspective on History, Reading and Print in Nineteenth Century Textbooks," *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vcz041, (2019). https://doi.org/10.1093/jvcult/vcz041.

63   Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 470.

64   See, for instance, Gary McCulloch and Roy Lowe, "Introduction: Centre and Periphery— networks, space and geography in the history of education," *History of Education* 32, 5 (2003): 457–459; Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks, and the British Academic World, 1850–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

One other decision for this project was to limit the scope to publicly funded systems of religious education. Irish Roman Catholics will be particularly important to this story, as they fought for state-funding for private schools. Their efforts to secure state aid will be studied here, but I will not explore the operation of private schools in depth. Though Catholic requests very often fell on deaf ears, they continued to pressure colonial governments across the Anglo-World on matters related to religious education.[65]

1.1   *Organization and Structure*

The rest of this essay will explore some of the key developments regarding religious education in the Anglo-World through an analysis of the existing literature on religious education in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. It will focus especially on the development of legislation surrounding religious education. The analysis reveals that, in all three of these cases, religious education was deeply influenced by developments in Britain and tended to reinforce Anglo-assimilationist ideals of Britishness.[66] Three time periods are of particular importance to this chronology: first, the foundations of religious education systems in the mid- to late nineteenth century; second, the consolidation of religious education systems from 1880 to 1960; and finally, the widespread reform movements in religious education as the attachment to Britishness weakened in the 1960s and 1970s.

Section 2 explores the foundations of publicly funded religious education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Religion was often at the centre of controversies over the extension of responsible government and the development of publicly funded systems of education throughout the Anglo-World in the nineteenth century. Debates over theology and dogma ignited longstanding sectarian battles between Protestant denominations. These battles led to a

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65   Works on Irish education and the empire include: Dickson, Pyz & Shepard, *Irish Classrooms and British Empire*; Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*.

66   For works that examine the influence of British educational ideas on the colonies of settlement, see: Breward, *Godless Schools?*; Kathryn Castle, *Britannia's Children: Reading Colonialism Through Children's Books and Magazines* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Dickson, Pyz and Shepard, *Irish Classrooms and British Empire*; Richard Ely, "The Background to the 'Secular Instruction' Provision in Australia and New Zealand," *ANZHES Journal* 5, 2 (1976): 33–56; Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History & Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905 to 1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006); William Janzen, *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); David Jones, Robert Stamp, and Nancy Sheehan eds., *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, Ltd., 1979); Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*.

bewildering array of legislation regarding religion in the classroom. In several cases, sectarian infighting ultimately led to the creation of 'secular' schools. Providing a legal definition for the word secular was often contentious, and the word could be interpreted in multiple ways. Even for schools that were legally secular, religion was still pervasive in the curriculum, and religious education occurred in sometimes covert forms. In fact, Anglo-World educators proved exceptionally creative in finding ways to implement religious education despite 'secular' provisions. There was a general presumption amongst most policy-makers that Protestant religious education was an important part of public education.

Though divided by near constant sectarian bickering, Protestant groups were often united in their opposition to Catholicism and to the extension of any Catholic forms of religious education in publicly funded schools. In each country studied, this led to the creation of a well-developed network of privately funded schools, and of a century's worth of lobbying efforts for Catholics to receive state-funding. The Catholic response was certainly transnational, but not limited to the Anglo-World. The influence of papal decrees and global trends within the Roman Catholic Church were also important. Nevertheless, the fact that the vast majority of Roman Catholics across the Anglo-World were Irish meant that their actions, and reactions to them, were conditioned by Ireland's "multi-directional involvement in the nineteenth-century British Empire."[67]

Section 3 continues with the development of religious education through the mid-twentieth century, an era Belich refers to as recolonisation. Protestant lobbying campaigns appeared throughout the Anglo-World to strengthen systems of religious education, as they did for Catholic communities seeking to achieve state aid for their schools. Catholic lobbying became even more controversial as debates over Irish Home Rule, conscription during World War I, and the Easter Rising of 1916 led to a surge in anti-Catholic sentiment throughout the Anglo-World. Although many of these campaigns proved unsuccessful, some, such as in Queensland, managed to strengthen Protestant forms of religious education. Catholic demands achieved comparatively few gains in an era where anti-Catholicism was an entrenched feature in many settler societies.

For Protestant communities, two developments in the interwar period were of greatest import. A critical innovation developed first in England with the creation of 'Agreed Syllabuses,' educational documents broadly acceptable to Protestant Christians. The second was a perceived decline in morality and

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67   Barry Crosbie, "Networks of Empire: Linkage and Reciprocity in Nineteenth-Century Irish and Indian History," *History Compass* 7, 3 (2009): 1002.

international threats to democracy. As awareness grew of declining church and Sunday School attendance, and of the international challenges posed by fascism and communism, many educators across the Anglo-World came to believe that strengthening religious education would help preserve the moral underpinnings of Britishness. Ultimately, in the 1940s and 1950s these fears led to substantive changes in systems of religious education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The story of the Butler Act of 1944 and its provisions for religious education in England and Wales are relatively well known.[68] Less well known is that the Butler Act was intentionally emulated in other parts of the Anglo-World, including areas in Canada and Australia.

Section 4 examines the transformation of religious education throughout the Anglo-World in the era of decolonisation. The strengthened systems of religious instruction established in the 1940s and early 1950s became far more difficult to maintain by the 1960s and early 1970s. This was the result of two major factors. First, a growing consensus emerged that contemporary methods of teaching religion in schools were tantamount to religious indoctrination. Secondly, post-World War II patterns of migration meant that far more students came to New Zealand, Australia, and Canada that were not part of traditional Anglo-Protestant backgrounds. The heart of resistance to religious instruction came from English intellectuals. These critics lobbied for alternative models of religious education that kept up with prevailing educational theory, and were increasingly concerned about the problem of indoctrination.[69] By the early 1970s, new Agreed Syllabuses appeared that moved towards the concept of educating *about* religion rather than education *in* religion.[70]

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68   Stephen G. Parker, "Reinvigorating Christian Britain: The Spiritual Issues of the War, National Identity and the Hope of Religious Education," in *God and War: The Church of England and Armed Conflict in the Twentieth Century* by Stephen G. Parker, and Tom Lawson, eds. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

69   Richard Acland, *We Teach them Wrong: Religion and the Young* (London: V. Gollancz, 1963); Ronald Goldman, *Readiness for Religion: A Basis for Developmental Religious Education* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1965); Harold Loukes, *Teenage Religion: An Enquiry into attitudes and possibilities among British boys and girls in secondary modern schools* (London: SCM Press, 1961). For a scholarly view of the impact of the new thinking in the 1960s, see: Terence Copley, *Teaching Religion: Fifty Years of Religious Education in England and Wales* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1997), Chapter 3.

70   For some recent work on changes to Agreed Syllabuses and changes to religious education in England, see R.J.K. Freathy and S.G. Parker, "Secularists, Humanists and Religious Education: Religious Crisis and Curriculum Change, 1963–1975," *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, 42, 2 (2013): 222–256; S.G. Parker and R.J.K. Freathy, "Ethnic Diversity, Christian Hegemony and the Emergence of Multi-Faith Religious Education in the 1970s," *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society* 41, 3 (2012): 381–404; S.G. Parker and R.J.K. Freathy, "Context, Complexity and

Educational critiques were paired with waves of post-war immigration across the Anglo-World that presented problems for educators of religion. The newcomers strained educational resources across the board. Many of the new migrants were not members of mainline Protestant churches, and thus not well represented within Agreed Syllabus frameworks. This was combined with yet another problem: as church attendance fell the number of volunteers shrank, leading to a shortage of instructors. Roman Catholic Churches were similarly challenged with the large-scale presence of non-Irish Catholics, as high numbers of Southern European Catholics migrated following World War II. After the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church was simultaneously challenged by decreases in the numbers of orders religious, necessitating a much higher population of lay teachers that significantly raised the price tag for private Catholic schooling.

One consequence of these new challenges was the achievement of state aid for private denominational (mostly Catholic) schools across the Anglo-World. The centrality of Britishness lessened, ecumenicalism strengthened, and religious membership more broadly waned, leading to a significant decrease in anti-Catholicism, particularly following the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Politicians across the Anglo-World utilized the issue of state aid to their electoral advantage, though this continued to be a bitterly contested issue. Not all Catholic schools received funding, but enough did that this is a significant trend.

Altogether, this essay demonstrates that the history of religious education was intimately tied to the settler colonial project of the British Empire in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My hope in pointing out these connections is that the project will spur on additional research to more fully understand how the transnational web of empire forged religious education throughout the settlement colonies of the British Empire, and how decolonization destabilized established patterns, ultimately resulting in their contemporary form.

2   The Founding Moments of Publicly Funded Religious Education in the Anglo-World

2.1   *Introduction*

Demographic growth energized the Anglo-World during the nineteenth-century. Periods of 'explosive colonization' rapidly changed the economic, social,

political, and cultural landscape of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.[71] In each of these three cases British settlers attempted to create European style societies in their new environments. This meant adapting British forms of law, government, and social norms to local conditions. Education was key to community formation in the process of settlement colonialism. Cecilia Morgan contends that colonial officials responsible for education "often believed that in creating these institutions they had an opportunity to create a 'better Britain' (not to mention better Britons)."[72] By the mid-nineteenth century state-sponsored system of education was an important component of the settler colonial projects of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

Creating public education systems in the Anglo-World, however, proved to be politically tendentious, largely because of disagreements over the proper place of religion in the classroom. Historically, education had been a private responsibility mostly under religious control. But since there was no established church in Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, state involvement in the process raised critical questions about the relationship between church and state. It also inflamed two fault lines in the Anglo-World: the divide between Protestant denominations, and tensions between Protestants and Catholics. In all three cases studied here, the Anglican Church at some point attempted to receive special privileges in the process of education. And, in all three cases, this was met with howls of protest from other Protestant denominations. If there were no established church, who would decide what religious knowledge to include in public school classrooms?

This chapter shows that in most cases Protestant leaders in the Anglo-World were, by the second half of the nineteenth century, able to support systems of non-sectarian (but still Christian) religious education. This accords well with Hilary Carey's idea that in the late Victorian Era many Anglo-World proponents came to accept "a 'generic' Protestantism, which encompassed imperial loyalty and the celebration of uniquely British (or Anglo-Saxon) virtues of freedom, tolerance, justice and civic duty" as a key component of the transnational identity of Britishness.[73] Protestants also tended to reinforce opportunities for doctrinal teaching during Sunday Schools, which bloomed in the nineteenth

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71   Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, Chapter 6.

72   Cecilia Morgan, *Building Better Britains? Settler Societies Within the British Empire 1783–1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017) 100.

73   Hilary M. Carey, *God's Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c. 1801–1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 5.

century.[74] Nevertheless, inter-denominational infighting between Protestant groups was an evergreen stumbling block to the creation of public education.

The other tension, that between Protestants and Catholics, proved even more intractable. The Irish National System of education became a standard template embraced in the Anglo-World, yet high levels of anti-Catholic sentiment set the stage for numerous battles regarding religious education. Over the course of the nineteenth century the Catholic hierarchy generally became less willing to compromise on the issue of religious education, ever more tenaciously asserting the inextricable link between faith and education. Since a large proportion of Catholics in the Anglo-World were Irish, this fault line was even more acute as it ran into entrenched anti-Irish sentiment.

Religious education, therefore, presented a challenge for British settlers intent on creating a unifying national, or imperial, identity. The decisions made, particularly in the 1860s and 1870s, had major ramifications for the future of education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This section will trace the development of religious education systems in these Anglo-World settings, but must begin with an overview of the Irish National System, which proved of enormous historical significance to settler colonies in the British Empire.

2.2   *Ireland Sets the Stage*

Historians of the British Empire often refer to Ireland as the 'laboratory of Empire,' meaning "an experimental milieu for social legislation" that would not be politically acceptable in England.[75] The relationship between Ireland and Britain had wide-ranging ramifications for the Anglo-World in the nineteenth century, as the 'Irish empire' "was ironically propagated on the coat-tails of an unlikely ally in the shape of Protestant Britain."[76] This brief overview will show how the creation of the Irish National System, migration, and anxiety produced by rising Irish nationalism significantly affected the development of educational systems in the Anglo-World.

Catholic Emancipation in the UK came in 1829. Following intense lobbying by Daniel O'Connell, and a shift in public opinion, the UK Parliament passed the Roman Catholic Relief Act resulting in Catholic Emancipation.[77] Hugh

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74   Troughton, "Religion, Churches and Childhood in New Zealand c. 1900–1940," 40.

75   John Coolahan, *Irish Education: History and Structure* (Dublin: Institute of Public dministration, 1981), 4.

76   Oliver Rafferty, "The Catholic Church, Ireland and the British Empire, 1800–1921," *Historical Research* 84, 224 (2011): 289.

77   See Oliver MacDonagh, *The Hereditary Bondsman: Daniel O'Connell, 1775–1829* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988).

McLeod argues that virulent anti-Catholicism continued to be strongly associated with British national identity well after 1829. In fact, over the next two decades a fear of Catholic Emancipation led to an increase in Protestant Anti-Catholic activity.[78]

Two years later, Lord Stanley, the English Chief Secretary for Ireland, created the Irish National System of education. There was already a long tradition of state intervention on education in Ireland, so much so that by 1831 "the provision of public education institutions was an accepted weapon in the Irish state's arsenal of social control devices."[79] Historian Tom Walsh argues that a primary purpose of the National System was to imbue "a sense of belonging to the Empire."[80] A more conventional and longstanding explanation is that the new system intended to provide mass education in order to modernise Ireland without funding Roman Catholic schools. At least initially, the system had the tacit support of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, especially since it meant the use of state-funds and a high level of local control. The relationship between the Catholic Church and the National System became increasingly strained as the nineteenth century progressed.[81]

Two features of the Irish National System are of particular importance. First, the system created a strong centralized Board of Education that would approve grants for local educators, thus ensuring both a measure of local control while simultaneously guaranteeing centralized oversight of education in Ireland.[82] The Board of Education also wielded enormous power over the curriculum. Secondly, the system made a distinction between secular and religious instruction, and actively promoted schools where Catholic, Anglican, and Non-Conforming students would receive education in the same environment.[83] Secular, in this sense, did not mean completely free of religious ideals.[84] The Irish National System favoured Christianity, but attempted to

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78   McLeod, "Protestantism and British National Identity," 44.
79   Donald Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) 37.
80   Tom Walsh, "The National System of Education, 1831–2000," in Brendan Walsh ed., *Essays in the History of Irish Education* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) 28.
81   Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 202.
82   Lougheed, "National Education and Empire," 6.
83   Coolahan, *Irish Education*, 5–7. Non-conformist refers to Protestant denominations which dissented from the established Anglican Church.
84   For more on the British meanings of the word secular, see Ely, "The Background to the 'Secular Instruction' Provisions in Australia and New Zealand." The meaning will be explored more fully later on in this section.

create a non-sectarian set of teachings that would be broadly acceptable to Christians of many denominations.[85]

The National System was supposed to favour the establishment of schools by clergy from multiple Christian denominations, but the reality did not match the theory even from the very beginning. The National System quickly became denominational "in reality if not in law."[86] The vast majority of schools were controlled by a single denomination determined largely by the demographics and geography of each region.[87] By the mid-nineteenth century opposition by both Protestant and Catholic Churches opposed the interdenominational nature of the original design of the National System, and only 4% of schools were under joint denominational control.[88]

While the Irish National System's original purpose of encouraging interdenominational education did not come to pass, it had an enormous impact on the settler colonies of the British Empire, particularly in British North America and in New South Wales. The National System predated mass public education in England by four decades, and therefore represented one of the only examples in the Anglo-World Australians and Canadians could draw from in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the National System also appealed for other reasons. According to Donald Akenson, there were many similarities between the two societies that made the Irish model a good fit for the British North American context. Both were under colonial rule, had largely rural populations, and little tradition of local government when compared to the United States or Great Britain.[89] The same could largely be said for New South Wales.

The influential Canadian educator Egerton Ryerson travelled to Dublin in 1845 and came away deeply impressed by the Irish National System. The next year his Common Schools Act purposefully copied the Irish example.[90] Kevin

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85   A similar movement would form in England with the National Education League that launched a campaign for education that was "free, compulsory, and unsectarian" in 1869. Marjorie Cruickshank, *Church and State in English Education, 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan & Co. Limited, 1963) 16.

86   Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 214.

87   Lougheed, "The Regional Dimension of National Education in pre-Famine Ireland," *Irish Geography* 47, 2 (2014): 52.

88   Walsh, "The National System of Education, 1831–2000," 10.

89   Donald Akenson, "Mass Schooling in Ontario: The Irish and 'English Canadian' Popular Culture," in Akenson, *Being Had: Historians, Evidence, and the Irish in North America* (Port Credit, Ontario: P.D. Meaney, 1985), 150.

90   Names shifted rapidly in the early nineteenth century for British North American colonies. The Province of Upper Canada was formed in 1791. After the Act of Union (1840), Upper and Lower Canada were merged to create the Province of Canada. The

Lougheed points out that elements of the Irish National System were "replicated across the provinces" of Canada, a process facilitated by the high levels of Irish migration to Canada in the 1840s and 1850s.[91] The Roman Catholic Church in Canada increasingly opposed the new system of public education by the mid-nineteenth century, largely over an escalating unwillingness to accept the non-sectarian regulations mandated by the Common Schools Act. By the 1850s Catholics began developing a separate school system controlled directly by the Catholic Church.[92] Battles over the 'separate schools' issue would prove to be a long-lasting source of controversy in Canadian educational history.

The Irish National System also proved a formative influence on the development of public education in Australia. Sir Richard Bourke, an Anglo-Irish Protestant, became governor of New South Wales (NSW) in 1830. He subsequently proposed the creation of a school system modelled on the Irish National System. Bourke's measure did not pass due to strong opposition from the Anglican Church, but after years of debate NSW created a Board of National Education in the 1840s, which "differed only in minor details from the system Lord Stanley had proposed for Ireland."[93] However, the National Board coexisted simultaneously with the denominational school system, which still received state funding. Still, it set a precedent for the gradual exercise of state control over education along the lines of the Irish National System.[94] The NSW model for education became a template for other Australian colonies.

In an era when religion and education almost universally went hand in hand, the National System's original stated purpose of creating a public-school system for a society composed of multiple sects was significant. Even though this vision never became a reality in Ireland itself, the design was appealing to Canadian and Australian colonies because of the lack of an established church and the (Christian) denominational diversity within the European settler populations.[95] The case of the Irish National System is a powerful example of the diffusion of educational ideals throughout the Anglo-World.

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predominantly English-speaking portions were subsequently referred to as Canada West (with the French speaking component Canada East). At the time of Confederation in 1867 it took on its current name of Ontario, and Canada East became the province of Quebec. For more on Egerton Ryerson, see Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton, *Egerton Ryerson and his Times* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978).

91   Lougheed, "National Education and Empire," 10.

92   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 291.

93   A.G. Austin, *Australian Education 1788–1900: Church, State and Public Education in Colonial Australia* (Melbourne: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1961) 48.

94   Lougheed, "National Education and Empire," 10.

95   The Irish National textbooks were also important in the Anglo-World, and dominated the textbook market for several decades during the Victorian age. For more on this,

Ireland influenced education in the settlement empire in two other notable ways in the mid-nineteenth century. First was in the form of migration patterns. Emigration from Ireland expanded rapidly in the 1840s with the Irish Potato Famine. While most Irish migrants travelled to the United States, emigration to the settler colonies also expanded. By 1871 the number of Irish born Canadians was at 24% of the total Canadian population, though a fairly high percentage of that number were Protestant Irish.[96] The numbers were even higher in New South Wales, with the Irish reaching 27.72% of the population in the 1841 census. And Irish immigration to Australia expanded rapidly in the 1850s with the increasing use of assisted migration schemes.[97] The number of Irish born migrants surged also in New Zealand during the 1860s.[98]

The spike in Irish migration in the mid-nineteenth century frequently intensified anti-Catholic sentiment among Protestants in areas with high Irish migrant density. This is most noticeably demonstrated by the proliferation of Orange Lodges throughout the settlement empire. At its peak in the mid-nineteenth century, one in three adult males in Canada was part of one of these organizations.[99] The Orange Order claimed to have as many as ten thousand members in New South Wales in 1872.[100] Not all Orange Lodges were active, and the relationship between Orange activity and anti-Catholicism was in many cases complicated, but the proliferation of these organizations is indicative of Protestant antipathy to Catholic migrants in the Anglo-World.

Irish nationalist activity from the 1850s through the 1870s also inflamed anti-Catholic sentiment in the Anglo-World. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, founded in 1858, formed a transnational base of 'cells' dedicated to a militant struggle to liberate Ireland. The most high-profile group were the Fenian Brotherhood, formed in the United States, that made a series of military raids

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see: John Coolahan, "The Irish and Others in Irish Nineteenth-Century Textbooks," in J.A. Mangan ed., *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience* (New York: Routledge, 1993) 54–63; Lougheed, "After the Manner of the Irish Schools;" Katrina Morgan, "Representations of Self and the Colonial 'Other' in the Irish National School Books," in Dickson, Pyz, and Shepard, *Irish Classrooms and British Empire*, 42–52; Patrick Walsh, "Education and the 'Universalist' Idiom of Empire: Irish National School Books in Ireland and Ontario," *History of Education* 37, 5 (2008): 645–660.

96   Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 13.
97   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 335. For more on assisted emigration schemes, see Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, Chapter 3.
98   *Ibid*, 409.
99   Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 35.
100   *Ibid*, 70.

into British North America from 1866–1871.[101] This caused tensions in Canada but also in Australia, where several Fenian prisoners were transported. Another important event was the 1867 attempted assassination of Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh while the Prince was visiting Australia.[102] These two events exacerbated anti-Catholic prejudice in Canada, Australia and New Zealand by the end of the 1860s.[103]

2.3   *A Proliferation of Religious Education Systems: Canada and Confederation*

In his seminal work on public education in Canada, political scientist Ronald Manzer noted that, in comparison to Australia, the United Kingdom, or the United States, "the diversity of Canadian educational institutions for dealing with religion in public education is striking."[104] And, indeed, there has never been a uniform system for religious education legislation on a national level following Canadian Confederation in 1867. Manzer argued that religious education systems emerged out of a battle of ideas between competing visions for the Canadian state, exemplified by liberalism and communitarianism. His history of ideas remains an essential work on religious education in Canada, but it underestimates the role of migration and Britishness as central components in the creation of the multiple systems of religious education in Canadian provinces.

There are two primary reasons for the lack of uniformity in Canadian religious education. The first is the historical, linguistic, and cultural split between Anglophone and Francophone Canada. Secondly, the British North America (BNA) Act of 1867, the act that joined several separate provinces into a Confederated Canada, contained specific provisions for both religious education and provincial (rather than federal) control over education. The resultant hodgepodge of systems is far more diverse than in Australia or New Zealand.

Great Britain took control of French North America following the Seven Years' War in 1763. The European population remained almost entirely French

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101   Matthew Schownir, "Irish Republican Brotherhood," in Mark Doyle ed., *The British Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia Volume I* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2018), 171–173. See also M.J. Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism* (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewster, 2006).

102   Malcolm Campbell, "A 'Successful Experiment' No More: The Intensification of Religious Bigotry in Eastern Australia, 1865–1885," *Humanities Research* XII, I (2005): 70–71.

103   *Ibid*, 72.

104   Ronald Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 65.

until the American Revolution and the arrival of a large Loyalist population.[105] In the nineteenth century high levels of British migration altered the balance, and Canadian westward expansion was overwhelmingly Anglophone. However, the French remained a large minority population geographically concentrated in what became the province of Quebec.[106] Tensions between Francophone Catholic and Anglophone Protestant Canada dominated pre-Confederation politics in the 1840s and 1850s.

In 1867, the BNA Act passed, a moment known in Canadian history as Confederation. This was a crucial event in the gradual movement towards 're-sponsible government,' the granting of control to the colonies of white settlement first articulated as a principle with the Durham Report of 1839.[107] Section 93 of the BNA Act dealt specifically with education, and stipulated that provincial governments would control education, not the federal government. Provincial governments, however, could not pass any laws that would "prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law in the province at the union."[108] In other words, provisions for religious education at the moment of Confederation were constitutionally protected by the founding document of the Canadian union.

Arrangements for religious education were, therefore, critical as each Canadian province entered Confederation.[109] Creating a religious education settlement acceptable to provincial authorities before Confederation was of vital significance. Compromise between Protestants and a sizeable French and Irish Catholic population was frequently necessary in Canadian provinces,

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105   For more on this process, see J.M. Bumstead, "The Consolidation of British North America, 1783–60," in Philip Buckner ed., *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) Chapter 3.

106   See Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, Chapter 2.

107   On responsible government, see Christian Müller, "Responsible Government," in Mark Doyle, *The British Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia Volume 1* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2018), 133–135. See also Peter Burroughs, "Imperial Institutions and the Government of Empire," in Andrew Porter, ed. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 170–197.

108   The National Archives, UK, "British North America Act (1867), Section 93," http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/30-31/3/section/93 accessed October 3, 2019.

109   Not all territories now part of Canada joined Confederation in 1867. Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick all joined that year, but Alberta (1905), British Columbia (1871), Manitoba (1870), Newfoundland (1949), Northwest Territories (1870), Nunavut (1999), Prince Edward Island (1873), Saskatchewan (1905), and the Yukon (1898) all joined later.

with religious education serving as a fault line that divided Anglo-World senti-
ment in British North America.

2.3.1   Newfoundland

Newfoundland's religious education provisions were the most unique in all of
British North America, and perhaps in the Anglo-World. Newfoundland did
not join Canadian Confederation until after World War II, so federal develop-
ments in Canada following 1867 did not affect Newfoundland education until
much later. Nevertheless, as one historian pointed out, "no topic occupied
more public attention during the nineteenth century than the controversy sur-
rounding the proposed denominational system."[110]

Public education in Newfoundland began much earlier than other Canadian
provinces, as early as the 1830s. During that decade the population was roughly
evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics. Missionary and charitable
organizations ran most of the schools in the colony.[111] The Education Act of
1836 embodied principles adopted from the Irish National System, allowing de-
nominational instruction only outside of school hours by local clergy. However,
Newfoundland Protestants refused to allow equal access to positions on school
boards to Catholics, resulting in a major denominational controversy with the
Catholic community.[112] Interdenominational education quickly became un-
workable, largely due to Protestant anti-Catholic practices.

The controversy simmered until 1843, when legislation passed that created
two separate and independent school boards, one Protestant and the other
Catholic. This compromise proved challenging, however, because of feud-
ing between Protestant denominations.[113] In particular, Anglican Church
leadership wanted a school system for their own pupils. Conflict continued
for thirty years until a major change in 1874 when new legislation subdivided
public monies for education into multiple denominational systems. Roman
Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian churches
all received the right to create their own school systems. The Salvation Army
and Seventh Day Adventist churches followed by the early decades of the

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110   Frederick W. Rowe, *The Development of Education in Newfoundland* (Toronto: The Ryerson
       Press, 1964) 95.
111   For an examination of one of these charitable organizations and its relationship to im-
       perialism, see W.P. McCann, "The Newfoundland School Society 1823–55: Missionary
       Enterprise or Cultural Imperialism?" in J.A. Mangan, *'Benefits Bestowed?' Education and
       British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 94–112.
112   William A. McKim, *The Vexed Question: Denominational Education in a Secular Age*
       (St. John's, Newfoundland: Breakwater, 1988) 32.
113   McKim, *The Vexed Question*, 37.

twentieth century.[114] This compromise occurred because, though both sides agreed that secular education was undesirable, Protestant and Catholic leaders proved unable to reach any sort of compromise on a standard form of religious education.

2.3.2   Ontario and Quebec

In 1840 the UK Parliament passed the Act of Union, creating the Province of Canada and uniting Upper and Lower Canada, subsequently referred to as Canada East (Quebec) and Canada West (Ontario), and forming a joint legislature. This was an awkward arrangement, and deadlock repeatedly resulted when Anglophone and Francophone representatives were at odds with one another. The deadlock between Anglophones and Francophones on issues relating to religious education from 1841 to 1867 eventually resulted in the creation of distinct school systems based on linguistic and religious differences. The School Act of 1841 was a critical piece of legislation. If the citizens of a parish (Canada East) or a township (Canada West) were not part of the dominant Christian Church of the area, they could form a separate school system from the majority.[115] Subsequently, a division between the dominant 'common schools' and the minority 'separate schools' became the norm in both Canada East and Canada West.

In Francophone Quebec, the creation and maintenance of separate school systems was a relatively straightforward affair. In 1846, a revision to the School Act passed the joint legislature. For Canada East the 'common schools' were technically supposed to be non-denominational, but in reality, were controlled principally by the Roman Catholic Church. In the cities of Montreal and Quebec, school boards were officially divided along religious lines, with a Roman Catholic board and a Protestant board emerging as completely separate entities.[116] After Confederation in 1867, this system became entrenched a short two years later with the Quebec Schools Act of 1869. This Act created two distinct committees in the Council of Public Instruction, one Catholic and one Protestant, with educational subsidies divided between both.[117]

The situation was far more contentious in Anglophone Ontario. The dominant figure in the development of education there was Egerton Ryerson, a Methodist minister and devotee of the Irish National System. Ryerson believed

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114   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 54.
115   *Ibid*, 53.
116   *Ibid, Ibidem*.
117   Rev. David F. McKee, "Quebec," in Carl Matthews ed., *Catholic Schools in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association, 1977) 18.

that a form of non-sectarian Christian teaching should be acceptable in state schools, that separate schools would be tolerated only when absolutely necessary, and that sectarian teaching could be offered as long as this form of teaching was not provided by state teachers.[118] Ryerson begrudgingly accepted the necessity of separate schools for Roman Catholic students, but also publicly opposed the system as an unnecessary threat to the common schools and to social unity.[119]

Ryerson's lobbying for public education resulted in the School Act of 1846 which created a non-denominational set of common or public schools, and a separate Roman Catholic school system. In the common schools, sectarian religious education could be offered but only under certain conditions. Local school trustees, not the provincial government, would arrange for religious instruction. No child was required to attend, and parents were guaranteed the right to withdraw their children if they did not wish them to receive religious instruction. Finally, religious instruction would be offered by visiting clergy, and no provincial teacher would be responsible for this. Ryerson was thus able to satisfy denominational demands to influence public education, and to claim that publicly funded education was non-denominational.[120]

The School Act of 1846, reinforced by legislation passed in 1853 and again in 1863, also guaranteed the rights of the separate Catholic school system. In exchange, Ryerson insisted on the government's right to supervise teacher training and to have a level of control over the separate school curriculum.[121] The development of the separate school system became bitterly controversial in Canada West in the 1850s and 1860s. A major reason for this was the high level of Irish immigration to the province (both Protestant and Catholic), with Canada West as the prime destination. Irish immigration spiked during the potato famine years of the 1840s, and continued to climb in the pre-Confederation generation.[122] A large portion of Irish immigrants to Canada in this

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118   C.B. Sissons, *Church & State in Canadian Education: An Historical Study* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1959) 20; J. Keillor Mackay, *The Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1969) 6.

119   Robert Stamp, *The Historical Background to Separate Schools in Ontario* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1985) 21.

120   Mackay, *The Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the Province of Ontario*, 6–7.

121   Stamp, *The Historical Background to Separate Schools in Ontario*, iv.

122   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 293.

time were Protestant Irish, and there was a concomitant expansion of Orange Lodges from 1840–1860.[123] Canada West became a focal point for Orange activity and anti-Catholic sentiments.

George Brown, the editor of the Toronto *Globe*, emerged as a leading opponent of separate schools in Canada West.[124] Deriding all forms of what he called 'popery,' his central critique was that denominationally controlled schools were socially divisive.[125] His fiery rhetoric received a great deal of support from the local Orange movement, and made education one of the key issues in the debates of the 1860s leading to Confederation. On the other side of this debate was Thomas D'Arcy McGee, one of the most fascinating characters in the Confederation of Canada. McGee was an Irish-Catholic journalist and political activist who was largely responsible for negotiating protections for separate schools placed within Section 93 of the BNA Act.[126] McGee stoutly defended the rights of the Catholic minority in Canada West, but also opposed the militant nationalism of Fenian Brotherhood activists. His opposition to the Fenian uprisings of 1866 actually strengthened his credibility with Protestant Canadians at the influential Charlottetown Conference, where many of the terms of Confederation were negotiated. Unfortunately, it infuriated many radical Irish nationalists, and McGee was assassinated in 1868 at the young age of forty-three.[127]

The bitterness and rancour surrounding the issue of separate schools did not fade away in the aftermath of Confederation. Debates about the proper amount of funding for separate schools continued to animate political controversies in Ontario into the mid-twentieth century. The cases of Ontario and Quebec reveal several important trends. In Quebec with a French-speaking Catholic majority, denominational control over education became entrenched with comparatively minimal controversy. In English-speaking and mostly Protestant Ontario, the presence of separate schools fuelled intense and long-lasting divisions within society. Ontarian education, modelled off of the Irish National

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123   Daniel Murphy estimated an increase from 300 lodges in 1840 to 700 with a membership of over 100,000 in 1860. *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 298.

124   For more on George Brown, see JMS Careless' two volume biography *Brown of the Globe* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959–63).

125   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 299.

126   *Ibid*, 302.

127   For more on Thomas D'Arcy McGee's role in Confederation, see David Wilson, *Thomas D'Arcy McGee Volume II: The Extreme Moderate, 1857–1868* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

System, served as a template to other provinces in Canada as they approached Confederation, though of course with unique variations of their own.

2.3.3   The Maritimes

The Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island also forged religious education settlements as they joined Confederation in the late nineteenth century. As in the cases of Ontario and Quebec, the outcomes depended on a variety of factors, but critically on the relationship between various Protestant denominations, and tensions between Protestant and Catholic communities.

Educational provisions in New Brunswick became one of the first post-Confederation flashpoints in the national conversation surrounding separate schools. Legislation passed in the 1850s created a system of public schools funded by the state, though not all areas had created schools by the time of Confederation.[128] The Parish School Act of 1858 legislated for non-denominational Christian teaching with non-compulsory religious exercises. In practice, several schools in areas with a high density of Roman Catholics received state funding even though they were under denominational control.[129] Controversy erupted with the passage of the Common Schools Act of 1871, which appeared to end this *de facto* practice of supporting some denominational districts, and more strongly enforced the non-sectarian character of publicly funded com-mon schools.[130]

The decision to cease supporting any denominational schools led to legal action, which went to the provincial assembly and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Because the rights of denominational schools prior to Confederation were not enshrined explicitly in law, they were judged outside of the protections of Section 93 of the BNA Act (1867).[131] These decisions led to rioting in the province, which ultimately prompted a reconsideration of the hard-line approach to non-sectarian teaching. Representatives in the New Brunswick legislature agreed to *de facto* denominational teaching in certain cases, predominantly in areas with a high Roman Catholic population. The compromise arrangement withstood a legal challenge in 1896, and remained in place for decades.[132]

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128   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 295.
129   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 57.
130   Sister M. Genevieve Hennessey, "New Brunswick," in Matthews, *Catholic Schools in Canada*, 9.
131   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 58.
132   *Ibid, ibidem.*

A similar compromise gradually emerged in Nova Scotia in the 1860s. The Free Schools Act of 1864 created a system of education modelled on Ryerson's work in Canada West. The schools were intentionally non-denominational, a provision that created tension with the Roman Catholic community.[133] The Roman Catholic Archbishop Thomas C. Connolly lobbied for a system of separate schools as existed in Quebec or Ontario, but this was unacceptable to the Protestant majority. Eventually, legislators negotiated a compromise in which all publicly funded schools were non-denominational in practice, but local agreements could ensure that some schools remained under Catholic denominational control.[134]

Prince Edward Island began developing a system of publicly funded schools by the 1850s, with a population of approximately 45,000 Protestants and 35,000 Catholics on the island by 1855.[135] A central controversy over educational provisions concerned the Bible-in-Schools movement championed by Protestant Inspector of Schools John Stark. This movement advocated the compulsory teaching of the Bible in all schools, but the movement met fierce opposition from the Catholic Church. 1858 legislation ensured that Bible study was optional rather than compulsory, but the issue dominated the election of 1859. The subsequent government reversed course and made Bible readings compulsory, repeatedly rejecting Catholic advocacy on the issue.[136] The Public School Act of 1877 decreed that all education in the state should be non-sectarian, but Manzer suggests that in practice there were some schools in majority Catholic areas that reflected Catholic educational practices.[137]

In the Maritimes Protestant churches and lawmakers supported a system of publicly funded Christian schools that were not under the direct control of any particular denomination but still included Christian teachings. Roman Catholic populations pushed for denominational control over their schools. Though by the letter of the law the Roman Catholic position experienced defeat, a series of compromise arrangements allowed for Catholic control over at least some schools.

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133   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 296.
134   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 59.
135   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 296.
136   *Ibid, ibidem.*
137   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 59

2.3.4   Western Provinces: British Columbia, Manitoba[138]

Manitoba entered Confederation in the year 1870, and one year later created a foundational Education Act setting the stage for religious education in the province. At the time of Confederation, the population was divided roughly equally between Protestants and Catholics. Relations between Protestant, mostly British settlers, and Catholic, mostly Métis populations were tense.[139] Prior to Confederation there were Anglican, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic missionary schools established in the Red River Settlement area in the 1840s and 1850s. The 1871 Manitoba School Act was modelled on Quebec, and created a dual confessional system. Educational grants were divided between these two systems.[140] As we will see in the next section, the Métis Rebellion of 1884, and the late nineteenth century demographic predominance of British settlers profoundly changed Manitoban society, and paved the way for one of the most contentious episodes in Canadian nineteenth century history known as the Manitoba Schools Question.

British Columbia joined the Canadian Confederation a year later than Manitoba in 1871. The earliest schools in the area were created by Anglican and Catholic missionaries in the 1850s and 1860s. The first legislation for public schools passed in 1865 and strictly enforced a non-denominational approach to education in the settlement.[141] This measure was strengthened with subsequent legislation in the build-up to Confederation, meaning that the religious education provisions in British Columbia were "effectively the Stanley system from Ireland (and Ontario)."[142]

2.4   *Strong or Qualified Secularity? Religious Education Settlements in Nineteenth Century Australia*

Beginning in the late 1950s and extending to the 1960s, a great deal of scholarly attention focused on the issue of denominational religious education in Australia, particularly in the mid- to late nineteenth century. In fact, education occupied a prominent place in the history of Australian religion more broadly. Michael Hogan's 1987 work *The Sectarian Strand* provided an overview

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138   Please note that the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the North West Territories did not join Canadian Confederation until a later date.

139   For more on the Métis, see Jean Teillet, *The North-West is our Mother: The Story of Louis Riel's People the Métis Nation* (Toronto: Patrick Crean Editions/Harper Collins, 2019). See also, M. Max Hamon, *The Audacity of His Enterprise: Louis Riel and the Métis Nation That Canada Never Was, 1840–1875* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019).

140   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 309–310.

141   *Ibid*, 311.

142   *Ibid, ibidem*.

of religious history in Australia, and dedicated a significant amount of attention to religious education.[143] In more recent years, works by Catherine Byrne, Marion Maddox, and Damon Mayrl have continued to explore the complicated and important history of Australian religion.[144]

Negotiations surrounding the proper place of religion in publicly funded schools dominated politics in many Australian colonies, especially Victoria and New South Wales, for decades in the nineteenth century, which explains the relative prominence the subject receives in Australian historiography.[145] Foundational statements in several Australian states include the phrase 'free, compulsory, and secular' as it related to Australian education.[146] Despite the declaration of education as secular, religion maintained an active place in most Australian classrooms, and continues to do so in the twenty-first century. Overall, Australian religious education was much more uniform than was the case in Canada, but the controversies religious education aroused were no less fierce as a result.

By the 1840s multiple attempts to create a system of education in New South Wales (NSW) modelled on the Irish National System were only partially successful. After intense lobbying from Christian churches, in 1848 NSW created a dual system of school boards: one for denominational schools and one for the new national schools. However, the intent behind this legislation was to gradually merge the denominational schools into the national system.[147] This solution proved significant for the states of Victoria and Queensland as well, since they inherited this compromise arrangement when they separated from NSW.[148]

By the 1860s, and particularly as radical Irish nationalism stoked anti-Catholic sentiment in the colony, battle lines were drawn between Protestant

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143   Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1987).

144   Catherine Byrne, "'Free, Compulsory, and (Not) Secular': The Failed Idea in Australian Education," *Journal of Religious History* 37, 1 (2013): 20–38, *Religion in Secular Education: What, in Heaven's Name, are we Teaching our Children?* (Lieden: Brill, 2014); Marion Maddox, *Taking God to School: The End of Australia's Egalitarian Education?* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2014); Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*.

145   The British created several different colonies in Australia during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and these did not formally merge into a single unit for some time. Australian Federation took place in 1901, officially creating the Commonwealth of Australia.

146   G.V. Portus, *Free, Compulsory, and Secular: A Critical Estimate of Australian Education* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937).

147   Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 84.

148   The colony of Victoria separated from New South Wales in 1851, and Queensland followed in 1859.

and Catholic populations on the issue of religious education across Australia.[149] That religious education became such an explosive issue in the 1860s was partly the result of structural and funding problems with educational infrastructure, but another factor was the expansion of the Irish population of Victoria. The rise of assisted emigration schemes and a gold rush in the 1850s led to what James Belich would call 'explosive colonization,' and dramatically increased the Irish population. The Irish presence in Victoria, for instance, grew from only 9,000 in 1846 to 100,000 a quarter century later.[150] Daniel Murphy argued that Australian Protestants increasingly saw Irish immigration as a threat to their "cultural and political supremacy."[151]

As Protestant opinion increasingly viewed the rising Irish population with concern, the Roman Catholic leadership became overwhelmingly Irish in national origin. The enormously influential Paul Cullen, appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1849 and of Dublin four years later, believed that "the national schools were Protestant proselytizing agencies."[152] Australian bishops, including a number of Cullen's proteges, became increasingly insistent on maintaining a denominationally controlled school system, and refused to compromise on this central principle.[153] This escalating intransigence "effectively placed them [the Roman Catholic population] alone against the rest of the Australian community."[154] With the growing Protestant/Catholic divide in the mid-nineteenth century, the critical question was whether Protestant denominations could come to a consensus on the nature of religious education in schools.

Since many of the Non-Conforming Protestant churches supported the national schools, and Roman Catholics largely opposed them, Richard Ely argues that the critical factor in the outcome of religious education settlements in

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149   Gordon Pentland argues that the idea of an increase in sectarian discord following the assassination of Prince Alfred needs to be approached with nuance. He argues that "concern about the dangers of sectarianism was more prominent than the reality." However, there is no doubt that the late 1860s witnessed a high level of religious tension between Protestants and Catholics in Australia. "The Indignant Nation: Australian Responses to the Attempted Assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1868," *English Historical Review* 130, 542 (2015): 87. See also: Campbell, "A 'Successful Experiment' No More."

150   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 338.

151   *Ibid*, 349.

152   H.R. Jackson, *Churches & People in Australia and New Zealand 1860–1930* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 87.

153   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 343.

154   Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 94. See also Jackson, *Churches & People in Australia and New Zealand*.

Australian colonies was the position of the Anglican Church. If the Anglican Church maintained a stance of strict support for denominational schools, the result was frequently a stronger non-sectarian outcome after long and bitter political battles. If the Anglican establishment was willing to accept the common national schools, the result was a compromise in which states maintained control over education but allowed non-denominational Christian education.[155]

More Protestant denominations began accepting the necessity of national schools in the 1860s, especially due to the increasing recognition that the denominational system benefited the Roman Catholic church more than the Protestant denominations.[156] In New South Wales, the two largest groups of denominational schools were controlled by the Anglican and Catholic churches.[157] However, rapid demographic expansion caused fundamental problems with education in the colony. Physical expansion of educational facilities and teacher training were particularly expensive, and the various denominations were simply not equipped to meet these costs. To have multiple rival educational systems in sparsely populated areas was inefficient and costly, frequently leading to poor quality schools. Historian A.G. Austin noted that to the casual observer there would have been little difference between the national schools and the denominational schools, since typically both "were squalid and inefficient beyond belief."[158]

Finding a workable solution for the dual education boards was a major stumbling block in the 1850s. Controversy erupted again and again between denominationalists and, increasingly, forces in favour of non-denominational or secular education. In New South Wales, the Colonial Secretary Henry Parkes was a key figure. He introduced the Education Act of 1866, which effectively set the stage for state-controlled education in New South Wales.[159] Parkes was able to achieve this by offering a series of critical concessions to the Anglican Church including a very particular definition of the word secular. In the 1866 bill secular was defined as "general religious teaching as distinct from

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155   Ely, "The Background to the 'Secular Instruction' Provisions in Australia and New Zealand, 53.
156   Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 90.
157   *Ibid*, 85.
158   Austin, *Australian Education 1788–1900*, 57.
159   For a biography of Sir Henry Parkes, see Stephen Dando-Collins, *Sir Henry Parkes: The Australian Colossus* (North Sydney, NSW: Random House Australia, 2013).

dogmatical or polemical theology."[160] In other words, Parkes legally defined the word secular to mean something closer to non-sectarian, and in so doing secured vital support from the Anglican church.

A two-pronged approach to religious instruction thereafter emerged in NSW. A form of instruction known as General Religious Teaching (GRT) included lessons based on Christian Scriptures which were thought to be broadly acceptable to Christians, though the Roman Catholic leadership strongly disagreed with this. A second form of religious teaching, known as Special Religious Instruction (SRI), could be conducted by visiting clergy and focused on denominational instruction. So, while technically secular, the New South Wales system created a "strongly Protestant-inflected dual system of religious education."[161] This system received the critical support of the Anglican Church, enabling Parkes to overcome denominational gridlock.

The creative (re)definition of the word secular is critical to understand religious education in Australia and New Zealand. There is an historiographical tradition that framed the entire debate as an episode in the growth of the modern secular nation-state.[162] J.S. Gregory declared in 1958, for instance, that the religious education bills in New South Wales and Victoria by 1872 meant that "the main ties between Church and State in Victoria had been severed, and the secular ideal of government affirmed."[163] More recently, Catherine Byrne argues just the opposite: that Parkes' compromise in 1866 effectively meant that secularism became a 'failed idea' in Australian education.[164] The underlying presumptions in both of those works is that a secular separation of church and state is ideal, and was genuinely at stake in the education debates of the 1860s and 1870s. But the intention of Australian legislation in this time period was not to create an education system completely devoid of religion, but to create a system broadly acceptable to most (Protestant) Christians.

Richard Ely's 1976 article "The Background to the 'Secular Instruction' Provisions in Australia and New Zealand" provides much needed context to the varying interpretations of the word secular. The meaning of the term fluctuated from the 1840s through the 1880s in Australia. Ultimately, a difference emerged between what Ely called strong secularity, which attempted to

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160   P.D. Davis, "The 1866 Controversy: Religious Teaching in Public Schools," *Journal of Christian Education* 7: 2 (1964): 83.

161   Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 73.

162   For one of the earliest examples of this idea, see Portus, *Free, Compulsory, and Secular*.

163   J.S. Gregory, "Church and State, and Education in Victoria to 1872," *Melbourne Studies in Education* 2, 1 (1958): 87.

164   Byrne, "Free, Compulsory, and (Not) Secular"; Byrne, *Religion in Secular Education*.

remove religious influence as much as possible from state activity, and what he called qualified secularity, which avoided matters of dogma and doctrine, but could still embrace core Christian principles.[165] The (re)definition of the word secular in the case of NSW, clarified again in the 1880 Education Act, represents an example of qualified secularity that might more accurately translate as non-sectarian.

With their foundational Education Act of 1872, the state of Victoria was one of the Australian states that ultimately embraced strong secularity. Victoria inherited the NSW educational system at the time of separation in 1851, and for the next two decades the fate of religious education was one of the most hotly contested issues in the colony. A committee chaired by Attorney General George Higinbotham in 1867 proposed a system of common schools that would be state-controlled and non-sectarian, but would offer a form of religious education in what Higinbotham thought of as 'common Christianity.'[166] The Protestant denominations largely accepted this, but the Catholic Church "regarded the abolition of state aid as an anti-Catholic measure denying their right of conscience."[167] At one point Higinbotham declared a willingness to make exceptions for Catholic schools, but the Anglican Church fiercely opposed this potential compromise. In the end, Higinbotham's ideal of compromise failed, lending strength to the proponents of a stricter separation between church and state in education.

Five years later, the Victorian Parliament passed the Education Act of 1872 and created a strongly secular system of education in the colony. But even in this case the intent was not to remove religion entirely from education. Denis Grundy persuasively argued instead that "the mood of 1872 encompassed obsessive anti-clericalism" and "a firm determination to prevent sectarian influences in the classroom."[168] In other words, the strong secular stance in Victoria can perhaps best be seen as a repudiation of religious elites who failed to find a workable compromise, not a rejection of religion *per se*. Section 3 will demonstrate that, even in the face of this strongly secular Education Act, religious education increasingly managed to find a place in Victorian classrooms during the era of recolonisation.

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165   Ely, "The Background to the 'Secular Instruction' Provisions in Australia and New Zealand," 53.
166   Denis Grundy, *'Secular, Compulsory and Free': The Education Act of 1872* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1972) 9.
167   *Ibid*, 9.
168   *Ibid*, 92.

In general, other Australian states followed a modified form of either the New South Wales or the Victorian religious education system. Legislation in New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia contained clauses allowing both clerical religious instruction and Bible readings in classes. South Australia allowed Bible reading on an optional basis at the beginning of the school day, and only in Victoria was religious instruction technically not permitted.[169] In all cases by 1893 state funding of denominational schools ceased. By the end of the nineteenth century only two percent of all children in New South Wales attended a denominationally Protestant school.[170]

Although they no longer received state funding, one of the major stories in Australian education in the second half of the nineteenth century was the exponential increase in private Roman Catholic schools. The growth of privately funded Catholic education was only possible because of the increasing number of orders religious that arrived by the 1880s and allowed for the expansion of Catholic schooling.[171] Catholic parents were strongly encouraged to send their children to Catholic schools. Murphy argues that one of the most important outcomes of this was the preservation of a unique sense of identity.[172]

In concluding this section on Australia, a few key points are worth reiterating. First, educators across Australia used the Irish National System as a template to be adapted to local circumstances. Secondly, as the various state governments gained control over education, they did so while frequently declaring themselves secular, but this can often be translated as non-sectarian. While this marks a significant difference from the case of separate schools that developed in British North America, the religious education settlement in most Australian states echoed decisions made by Anglophone populations of Canada, and the parallels are even stronger when compared to New Zealand.

2.5   *New Zealand's Education Act of 1877*

In a 2004 review essay, John Stenhouse made the important point that many historians of New Zealand in the twentieth century adopted the secularization thesis. To such historians, the rise of secularism and the loss of Christian influence "appeared as inevitable as the extinction of the Māori had seemed to many nineteenth-century commentators."[173] Stenhouse noted that recent works in New Zealand history offer a much more nuanced picture of the role

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169   Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 63.

170   Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 63.

171   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 356.

172   *Ibid*, 387.

173   John Stenhouse, "God's Own Silence: Secular Nationalism, Christianity and the Writing of New Zealand History," *New Zealand Journal of History* 38: 1 (2004): 53.

Christianity played in New Zealand, but his point about the underlying pre-sumption of secularization is important to remember in the history of New Zealand education. The foundational Education Act of 1877 created a strong secular system, and can be read as a key moment in the secularization of the New Zealand state. However, a closer look at the historical literature reveals a number of parallels with Australian examples, with broadly similar legislation and outcomes.

Prior to 1877, education in New Zealand was decentralized, and a variety of systems proliferated as a result. As was the case in other areas of the Anglo-World, attempts by the Anglican church to receive special privileges were met with stiff resistance by other Protestant denominations. An early example of this was an 1847 attempt by Governor Grey to provide state support to denomi-national schools in New Ulster, a move fiercely opposed by non-Anglicans.[174] Over the next thirty years competition between Protestant denominations became so intense that the Currie Commission, examining the history of the time period from their perspective in the early 1960s, concluded that sectarian infighting had "disfigured the early history of New Zealand."[175]

By the 1870s there was a movement for a centralized state-sponsored edu-cation system in New Zealand. The decentralized local systems varied widely in quality, and many struggled to raise enough funds to adequately provide for their schools. Attempts to create a national system failed in 1871 and 1873, largely over disagreements between the various Christian denominations.[176] After prolonged parliamentary negotiations the consequential Education Act of 1877 adopted a strong secular stance regarding religious education.

Ian Breward's important 1967 work *Godless Schools?* acknowledged the strongly secular stance of the 1877 Act, but he suspected that support for a sec-ular system in part "came from those who felt that it did not really threaten the vaguely Protestant flavour of the secular systems which already existed in New Zealand."[177] In his conclusion Breward contended that the intent behind the legislation was not anti-religious, but a reaction to denominational rivalry and "a strong tide of opinion running against traditional links of church and state."[178]

As in the case of Australia and Canada, the Irish Catholic population of New Zealand found the new secular education system unacceptable. And as

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174   Breward, *Godless Schools?*, 2.
175   George Currie, *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1962) 676.
176   Daniel Herring, "The Meaning and Purpose of the Secular Clause in the Education Act 1877." *Auckland University Law Review* 22 (2016): 154–160.
177   Breward, *Godless Schools?*, 18.
178   *Ibid*, 102.

in those other two Anglo-World settings, Catholic leadership directed an enormous amount of energy into developing a private school network. This was especially challenging since Irish emigration to New Zealand increased rapidly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with the creation of new assisted passage schemes. From the 1870s onwards, Irish Catholics represented about 18% of the overall population, and "assiduously set about creating a separate Catholic school system" after 1877.[179]

There are two other notable features of the religious provisions of the 1877 Education Act that bear mention here. First, the specific language of the 1877 Education Act contained a legal loophole. The law stated that education during normal school hours must be secular, but did not specifically state that school buildings could not be used for religious teachings outside the normal school timetable. This led to six decades of religious education taking place outside of the normal timetable in order to circumvent the secular Education Act.[180]

The second is that the strongly secular approach taken in primary schools was never mandated for secondary schools. The Commission on Education in New Zealand, examining the historical background to religious education in New Zealand, declared this "an historical accident."[181] There are, as yet, no comprehensive scholarly studies of religious education provisions in New Zealand secondary schools of the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, a historiographical lacuna that needs to be addressed.

2.6   *Conclusion*

Despite the impressive diversity of religious education settlements in the founding moments of education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, several important underlying trends can be detected. First, the Irish National System of education became a base template from which Anglo-World settler colonies borrowed heavily and frequently. The Irish National System appealed because it prioritized state control over education and attempted to promote an interdenominational approach to education. The interdenominational design seemed a reasonable solution to the problem of sectarian strife.

Second, the ability of Protestants to include religious education in the curriculum depended largely on their willingness to accept that the state could offer instruction in a generic common Christianity. In cases where this proved

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179   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Activity*, 417, 420.
180   Herring, "The Meaning and Purpose of the Secular Clause in the Education Act 1877," 143.
181   Currie, *Report on the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, 676.

impossible, such as in Victoria or New Zealand, strongly secular systems of religious education emerged. In cases where Protestants could forge compromise agreements, such as in the public schools of Ontario or New South Wales, qualified secular systems developed. The key variable in this outcome was the position of the Anglican Church, typically the largest Protestant denomination.

Third, by the 1860s and 1870s, and largely as a result of events in Ireland and within the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, the Catholic stance in all Anglo-World settings became entrenched against the form of state-sponsored but non-denominational education favoured by many Protestants and pioneered in the Irish National System. This led in all cases to separate systems of mostly privately funded Catholic schooling. Only in Canada, with a large French Catholic minority and Irish Catholic population, as well as the unique provisions of the British North America Act (1867), were Catholic schools publicly funded.

3   The Intensification of Religious Education in the Era of Recolonisation

James Belich coined the term recolonisation to define an important period in the history of the Anglo-World. With a rough chronology of the 1880s through the 1960s, he defines this period as "the tightening of relations between 'metropolis' and 'periphery' after an era of mass settlement" in which settler colonies of the British Empire thought of themselves as "co-owners of the British Empire and of Old British culture and heritage."[182] This section shows that in the period of recolonisation religious education in numerous Anglo-World locations intensified with strengthened legal and curricular measures that passed in no small part due to decades-long political lobbying campaigns.

The existing historiography on religious education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, however, tends to overlook the era of recolonisation. When surveying the Australian case, for instance, Damon Mayrl argues that "in many states, students in 1960 encountered religion in the curriculum in much the same way their great-grandparents might have encountered it in 1880."[183] It is true that between 1880 and 1960 there was a general stability in settlements regarding religious education, but across the Anglo-World the era of

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182   Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 11.
183   Mayrl acknowledges, however, that religious education was strengthened in some Australian states during this time. Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 121.

recolonisation included multiple movements to strengthen religious education. In some cases, battles over religious education became major national controversies that shook the political landscape. These battles agitated the Protestant/Catholic divide that remained a political fault line throughout the Anglo-World.[184] That these movements for change in the era of recolonisation were not always successful does not diminish their historical significance.

We can roughly divide these movements into two time periods. First, there was widespread agitation for change in the 1880s through the immediate aftermath of the First World War. These movements often took a lobbying approach to have legislation altered, sometimes with a referendum as a preferred means of securing this goal. Secondly, between the interwar period and the Second World War, the examples of England and Wales, especially the creation of Agreed Syllabuses and the passage of the Butler Act (1944), spurred on political action in multiple Anglo-World territories.

3.1   *Strong Secular and Dual Systems through the First World War*

It was the strong secular systems where sustained campaigns for strengthened religious education were most noticeable in the recolonisation era. New Zealand, Victoria, South Australia, and Queensland all witnessed major efforts to alter or undermine the secular provisions of their governing education acts. A series of groups with the general title of Bible in Schools Leagues pressed for parliamentary action, and in the Australian case tended to favour referenda to achieve their political objectives. In the cases of South Australia, Victoria, and New Zealand, only incremental or partial changes happened until the World War II years. Queensland, on the other hand, transformed fully from a strong to a qualified system of religious education much earlier as the result of a referendum in 1910.

South Australia, a colony with "an overwhelmingly Protestant flavour," developed a powerful lobby for the transformation of the strong secular provisions of the Education Act of 1875.[185] Proponents of religious education in South Australia campaigned vociferously on behalf of an expanded role for religion, and frequently drew on a similar movement in Queensland for

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184   Sectarian tensions intensified in this period, see, for instance, Jeff Kildea's perspective on the Australian example, *Tearing the Fabric: Sectarianism in Australia 1910–1925* (Sydney: Citadel Books, 2002).

185   Philip Payton and Andrekos Varnava, "Chapter 1: Australia, Migration, and Empire," in Philip Payton and Andrekox Varnava, *Australia, Migration and Empire: Immigrants in a Globalised World* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) 5.

inspiration.[186] Their advocacy resulted in a referendum in 1896, the first referendum in an Australian colony.[187] Unlike the case of Queensland a decade and a half later, this referendum failed. However, some provisions were made by 1900 to expand the role of religion in public education. The revised regulations permitted a limited amount of non-sectarian Scripture readings for students whose parents requested it, and an 'opt-out' clause for parents who did not wish their children to receive any religious instruction in state schools.[188]

In Queensland, a Bible-in-State Schools League (BISSL) formed in 1890 as a conglomeration of Protestant groups, but primarily Anglicans and Methodists.[189] The group began agitating for immediate change to the Education Act, claiming that the lack of religious instruction in state schools was a matter of national urgency. At this stage the group simply advocated for Bible reading without teacher comment or lessons. The Queensland Bible-in-State-Schools League made the general case that without a baseline of Biblical moral precepts, the moral fabric of society was at risk in a profound way.[190]

When pressing for their case, Queenslanders looked for comparisons in the Anglo-World, and in some cases beyond. Yvonne Perkins points out that the campaign for Bible lessons in Queensland schools "was not an idiosyncratic concern of Queenslanders but connected to debates that were occurring elsewhere in the British Empire."[191] The BISSL was aware of efforts to alter strong secular systems in South Australia, New Zealand, and Victoria, but it was to New South Wales that they placed their hope. In effect, the BISSL wanted to adopt the NSW definition of the word secular, which permitted non-denominational religious teaching in schools. The BISSL was quick to point out that they did not want a return to a denominational system, but simply to emulate the NSW system that, they claimed, effectively preserved morality in schools without sowing the seeds of social disorder.[192]

The Bible-in-State Schools League successfully campaigned for a referendum to be held in 1910. As Clarissa Carden points out, media coverage and

186   Yvonne Perkins, "Queensland's Bible in State Schools Referendum 1910: A Case Study of Democracy," B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Sydney, 2010, 10.

187   Perkins, "Queensland's Bible in State Schools Referendum 1910," 10.

188   D.J. Garland, *Religious Instruction in State Schools: Statement Prepared by the Rev. Canon D.J. Garland for the Education Committee of the Parliament of New Zealand* (Wellington: Wellington Publishing Company, Ltd.) 8.

189   Clarissa Carden, "Bibles in State Schools: Moral Formation in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Queensland School," *History of Education Review* 47, 1 (2018): 17.

190   *Ibid*, 20.

191   Perkins, "Queensland's Bible in State Schools Referendum 1910," 11.

192   Carden, "Bibles in State Schools," 19.

the power of the pulpit were overwhelmingly in favour of the League.[193] The League won the referendum with 53% of the vote, but turnout was low.[194] The Queensland Education Department issued new Bible Readers for schools that became a regular part of the curriculum in 1916.[195] There is evidence that the new courses on Bible teachings in schools were not well received, and some examples of Queensland Readers remaining unopened for decades.[196] But nevertheless, the referendum represented a major triumph for Protestant proponents of religious instruction in schools.

Victoria, which had created perhaps the strongest secular system in Australia in 1872, experienced a parallel movement in the late nineteenth century. During the 1890s a variety of groups, including the Geelong Association for Giving Religious Instruction in State Schools and the Presbyterian Elders Association, accepted the strengthening of religious instruction in the state as major objectives.[197] A group known as the Scripture Education League (SEL) formed in the 1890s and provides an excellent example of the written literature used to persuade voters to lobby for change. One of the major tactics was to emphasize the ways in which Victoria was out of step with the rest of the Anglo-World:

> We are unlike New South Wales. We are unlike mighty London. We are unlike all England. We are unlike Scotland, where there is not a parish without the Bible in the Schools by the free vote of the people of the parish; we are unlike the United States of America with their sixty or seventy millions; we are unlike Canada; we are unlike Switzerland; we are unlike the best educated country in the world, Germany. But we are like France, whose atheistic Secularism in the matter of education is a rebound from centuries of clerical and State oppression.[198]

This description drew first upon Anglo-World examples, and concluded with an unflattering comparison to French education to persuade Victorian citizens to lobby for more religious instruction.

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193   *Ibid, ibidem.*

194   *Ibid*, 22.

195   Queensland Department of Public Instruction, *Bible Lessons: Senior and Junior Course* (Brisbane: Department of Public Instruction, 1911).

196   Carden, "Bibles in State Schools," 22.

197   W.B. Russell, Chair, *Report of the Committee on Religious Education in Victoria* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1974) 5.

198   National Scripture Education League, "The Leaguers' *vade mecum*: being a general view of our principles, purposes, and demands, under the form of answers to difficulties and objections," 189?, State Library of New South Wales, 14–15.

The campaign intensified in the late 1880s and 1890s, with proponents of strengthened religious education lobbying for a referendum. The Minister of Public Instruction Charles Pearson strongly opposed any alteration of the 1872 Education Act, or the introduction of the Irish Scripture Readers into Victorian schools, a major goal of the Bible in Schools movement in the state.[199] He argued that such changes would inflame tensions between Protestants and Catholics in the state, and that these texts were inappropriate for Victorian classrooms. He was most concerned about the divisiveness of the topic, suggesting that if passed, "we are certain to have a religious war in every district. The whole colony will be divided by religious factions."[200]

The Bible in Schools movement published a series of scathing responses to this speech by Minister Pearson. Andrew Harper, a leading proponent of the Irish Scripture Readers into Victorian classrooms, based his argument largely on comparisons to other Anglo-World sites. He claimed that "English-speaking peoples" were fundamentally practical, and could implement religious education in Victorian state schools just as they did in New South Wales or in the case of Ontario. Ultimately, it was imperative that Victorians "respect the influence the Bible has had upon the English race," and align the state more closely with the Anglo-World.[201]

Facing this sort of pressure, government officials appointed a Royal Commission to examine the issue of religious education in schools in 1900.[202] The Commission produced a complete curricula and series of guide books, but the matter proved too controversial for the Ministry of Public Instruction.[203] Proponents of religious instruction changed tactics and advocated for a referendum on the issue. In 1904, the Premier of Victoria agreed to the referendum, which resulted in even more confusion. Just before the vote was to be held, the Premier added a second question to the referendum, and citizens could vote for more than one option. A majority of people supported both the option that the Education Act remain as at present, *and* legislation to allow for new religious scripture lessons, hymns, and prayers to be introduced. With this confusing result in hand, the Premier elected to make no formal alteration to

199 For more on the Irish Scripture Readers, see Akenson, "Mass Schooling in Ontario." See also footnote 91 in Section 2.

200 Charles Pearson, "Religious Teaching in Schools," 1889, State Library of New South Wales, 31.

201 Andrew Harper, "Bible Lessons in State Schools No. 1," 1889, State Library of New South Wales.

202 *Report of the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction in State Schools*, 1900, State Library of New South Wales.

203 Russell, *Report of the Committee on Religious Education in Victoria*, 9.

the Education Act.[204] However, the Ministry did begin to relax their regulations in 1905 and allow visiting clergy to enter classrooms for a half-hour per week during regular school hours.[205] In effect, the Victorian system partially emulated the NSW model without formally amending the definition of secular created in the 1872 Education Act. More changes followed after the Second World War.

In New Zealand, the secular clause in the 1877 Education Act remained a constant source of controversy and contention. Colin McGeorge's study of the enforcement of the Act suggests, however, that Christianity was never fully removed from the curriculum. Clergy were frequently represented on school boards, many state-teachers also served as local Sunday School teachers, and texts continued to make frequent religious references.[206] Geoffrey Troughton notes that religious references were particularly notable in the context of the British Empire that emphasized the concept of 'Christian civilization' to "extol the virtues of Empire."[207] Discussions of Christianity and Empire were an important theme in the *New Zealand School Journal*, a key source of educational content in New Zealand classrooms starting in 1907, where an average of thirty percent of the content focused on imperial themes until the 1920s.[208] As was the case elsewhere in the Anglo-World, even in places with a strong-secular approach, non-sectarian or cultural Christianity continued to persist in New Zealand schools.[209]

But all of these ways in which Christianity persisted in New Zealand education were not enough to satisfy opponents of the secular 1877 Act. In 1880, Otago and Southland Presbyterians presented the first petition to remove the secular clause from the curriculum. By 1885, the first Bill to achieve this end came up for debate, but was subsequently rejected. Over the next fifty years 42 more legislative Bills designed to eliminate the secular provisions of the

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204   *Ibid, ibidem.*

205   Garland, *Religious Instruction in State Schools*, 9.

206   New Zealand relied heavily on books produced for the British market, which did not have any secular restrictions on educational materials. McGeorge, "Religious Aspects of the Secular System Before the Great War," 165.

207   Troughton, *New Zealand Jesus*, 173.

208   E.P. Malone, "The New Zealand School Journal and the Imperial Ideology," *New Zealand Journal of History* VII (1973): 14. See also Grace Bateman, *Signs and Graces: Remembering Religion in Childhood in Southern Dunedin, 1920–1950*, PhD Thesis, University of Otago, 2013, Chapter 3.

209   Grace Bateman defines cultural Christianity as "a 'lowest-common-denominator' form of Christianity, with strong emphasis on mutually agreeable values." Bateman, *Signs and Graces*, 34.

Act failed to pass through the New Zealand parliament.[210] A chief complaint was that this was out of sync with other settler territories of the Anglo-World. When presenting to the New Zealand Parliament, a leader in the Bible-in-Schools movement bemoaned that "I have yet to find any, with the exception of New Zealand, English-speaking state in the British Empire which does not make some provision for religious instruction in connection with its educational system."[211]

The continued inability to unify around one strategy or to effectively cooperate, and sustained opposition from the Catholic Church, typified the struggle over religious education in New Zealand. The Catholic Church advocated for state aid to private denominational schools, but Protestant churches coalesced around two primary tactics. The first strategy was to remove the secular clause altogether, and to promote Bible reading and religious education in schools. This strategy was the centrepiece of a series of organizations known as Bible in Schools Leagues (BISL).[212] These groups began forming independently of one another soon after the 1877 Act. Prior to World War I, the most significant of these groups was a BISL created by the Anglican church with the cooperation of other non-Catholic Christian denominations.[213] In a clear example of the interconnectivity of the Anglo-World, the group brought in the Rev. Canon D.J. Garland in 1913 to serve as their director. Garland had successfully led the referendum campaign to alter the secular provisions of the Queensland Education Act.[214]

The great complicating factor for the Bible-in-Schools League was resistance from the Catholic Church. Though the BISL claimed that it promoted only non-sectarian teachings that could be agreed to by all Christians, to Catholic authorities this was "pure Protestantism."[215] A Catholic Federation was created in 1913 to oppose the BISL, and this "provoked a wave of anti-Catholic bigotry" by Protestant groups across New Zealand.[216] These tensions were, of course, exacerbated by events occurring in the United Kingdom. Debates over

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210   McLaren, *Education in a Small Democracy*, 50.

211   Garland, *Religious Instruction in State Schools*, 8.

212   They went by various names, but Bible in Schools Leagues can be found in numerous Anglo-World sites. More work is needed on these groups to see how they interacted with one another and pursued political change in a shared Anglo-World context.

213   J.J. Small, "Religion and the Schools in New Zealand 1877–1963," *Comparative Education Review* 9, 1 (1965): 56.

214   *Ibid, ibidem*.

215   Rory Sweetman, *'A Fair and Just Solution'? A History of the Integration of Private Schools in New Zealand* (Palmerston North, NZ: Dunmore Press, 2002) 25.

216   Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 427.

Irish Home Rule consumed politics in Britain, and inflamed sectarian tensions across the Anglo-World.[217]

The BISL lobbied parliament in 1914 for the inclusion of Bible readings in schools, with provisions in place for students whose parents did not wish them to receive religious instruction to opt-out, a 'conscience clause' similar to provisions included in legislation in other Anglo-World sites.[218] But if the New Zealand Parliament legalized religious instruction in the schools, would this pave the way for state recognition and funding for Catholic schools in the country? The parliamentary debate was long on this issue, but ultimately the measure did not pass, as members of parliament were unwilling to change the status quo and risk additional sectarian division.[219] The BISL went largely dormant following the outbreak of World War I, but returned to prominence in the 1920s.

The other major strategy employed by proponents of religious instruction was the Nelson system. The basic idea behind the system, pioneered by Presbyterian Minister J.H. McKenzie in Nelson in 1897, was to move religious instruction outside of legal school hours.[220] Local clergy, rather than state teachers, would offer this form of religious instruction, and parents who wished could withdraw their children from the courses. Advocates of this method lobbied local school committees to delay the official opening of school for half an hour per week, thus circumventing the strongly secular language of the 1877 Education Act. The legality of the Nelson system remained in doubt until the 1960s, and pupil attendance grew only slowly. Only about ten percent of pupils followed the Nelson system in 1930.[221]

Prior to World War I there were several Canadian movements to strengthen religious education as well, especially in areas with high levels of British migration. Pro-imperial sentiments were complicated at the national level by the

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217   John Wolffe suggests that appeals to Protestantism continued to be successful, especially when linked to political concerns including Irish Home Rule. "Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire," in Hilary Carey, *Empires of Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 58.

218   Small, "Religion and the Schools in New Zealand," 56. In England, the right of parents to opt out of religious classes dates to the 1870 Cowper-Temple amendment. For more on this, see: Patricia Hannam, *Religious Education and the Public Sphere* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019); Lois Louden, "The Conscience Clause in Religious Education and Collective Worship: Conscientious Objection or Curriculum Choice?" *British Journal of Religious Education* 26, 3 (2004): 273–284.

219   Sweetman, *'A Fair and Just Solution,'* 26.

220   Breward, *Godless Schools?*, 37.

221   McLaren, *Education in a Small Democracy*, 51; Currie, *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, 680.

large French-Canadian presence. Education was a key site in which Canadian schools emphasized imperial loyalty. Empire Day, celebrated every year on Queen Victoria's birthday (May 24th), was a Canadian invention that spread throughout the Anglo-World.[222] The era of recolonisation similarly affected religious education, as new migrants sought to strengthen the mostly Protestant forms of religious education in public schools. The examples of Manitoba and Ontario demonstrate the immense controversy that could erupt over attempts to change the dual systems of education.

Manitoba provides the strongest example of a government actively attempting to circumvent the BNA Act on the issue of religious education. The previous section profiled the emergence of a dual system of education in Manitoba, one for predominantly English-speaking Protestants, and the other a denominationally Catholic system. The years after 1867 brought with them massive migration of predominantly English-speaking migrants. The growth in population was powered overwhelmingly by Protestants, who outnumbered Catholics by 5 to 1 in 1900.[223]

In 1890, the Manitoba legislature passed two measures that effectively terminated the dual confessional system and abolished Roman Catholic school districts entirely. The new unified school system was to be non-sectarian, with religious instruction and exercises only allowable outside of the regular school hours, and only if local trustees requested it.[224] The legislation also largely prohibited French-language education in the province, one of many cases where religious and linguistic differences were lumped together with tension between Anglophone and Francophone communities. The move obviously violated the protections in Section 93 of the British North America Act and sparked an immediate outcry from Francophones across the country. The Manitoban Catholic Church led the legal battle to overturn the measure. The resulting court case reached the Canadian Supreme Court, and was ultimately adjudicated in the Privy Council in London, where it was finally decided not to overturn the legislation.[225]

The Manitoba Schools Question, as it came to be known, affected national politics as the legal proceedings raged in the courts. As matters came to a head, it was one of the leading issues in the national election of 1896. The Conservative Party tabled a bill that would have partially addressed the

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222 Maurice French, "'One People, One Destiny': A Question of Loyalty: The Origins of Empire Day in New South Wales, 1900–1905," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 61, 4 (1975): 237.

223 Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, 309.

224 Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 60.

225 *Ibid, ibidem.*

Catholic grievances of Manitoba. The Liberal (and French-Canadian) Wilfred Laurier vehemently opposed the bill, campaigning to solve the crisis through negotiation and compromise rather than passing legislation.[226] And, after he successfully won the election, he forged the Laurier-Greenway Compromise with the Premier of Manitoba. The compromise allowed for Catholic religious education in schools where there was a substantial Catholic population and the local trustees petitioned for it. The compromise did not overturn the legislation of 1890, but did allow for flexibility in permitting Catholic religious education in some cases.[227]

Other Western Canadian provinces and territories were influenced by the Manitoba example, and similarly began enacting Anglo-conformist legislation. Ontario-born David James Goggin, who had served for several years as the Superintendent of the Manitoba Normal Schools, became a highly influential figure in the schools of the North West Territories, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. His central focus was promoting assimilationism to an Anglo-Protestant norm wherever he went. He emphasized English-only classrooms and a major focus on citizenship education. Goggin wanted religion in classrooms, but only of a non-sectarian (Protestant) variety.[228]

Ontario, the heart of both British migration and attachment to the British Empire in Canada, also experienced challenges to their system of religious education. The central issue at stake was the expansion of education to secondary schools. As secondary education slowly expanded in the province during the early twentieth century, the provincial government refused to provide funds for secondary education in the separate (Roman Catholic) schools. Legally, they argued that Section 93 of the B&A Act (1867) protected only the type of education at the time of Confederation, and since secondary education was largely not a state responsibility at the time, it was not protected by Canada's founding legislation. This principle was tested in two court cases in the 1920s, both of which went all the way to the Privy Council (UK). The courts

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226   For a detailed overview of the political machinations involved with the Manitoba Schools Question, see Paul Crunican, *Priests and Politicians: Manitoba Schools and the Election of 1896* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

227   For the full text of the compromise, see: "Laurier-Greenway Compromise (1896)," Compendium of Language Management of Canada (CLMC), University of Ottawa, https://www.uottawa.ca/clmc/laurier-greenway-compromise-1896 Accessed October, 2019.

228   Neil McDonald "David J. Goggin: Promoter of National Schools," in David C. Jones, Robert M. Stamp, and Nancy Sheehan eds., *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, Ltd, 1979) 23.

ruled that the government had no obligation to provide funding for Catholic separate schools at the secondary level.[229]

Across the Anglo-World from the 1890s through the early 1920s, religious education continued to be a focal point of social controversy. The trend in this time period was to strengthen pre-existing systems of religious education, particularly where strong secular systems existed. Many proponents of expanded religious education were well aware of developments in the Anglo-World, and frequently used these examples to bolster their own case. More work needs to be done establishing the extent of connections between these movements. Their durability and intensity over decades indicates the seriousness with which many British settlers took the issue of religious education well into the twentieth century.

3.2 *The Rise of the Agreed Syllabus and Ecumenicalism in the Twilight of the Recolonisation Era*

From the 1920s through the early 1960s the non-sectarian (Protestant) systems of religious education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand either remained firmly entrenched, or were strengthened. In this time period, changes to religious education in England and Wales were highly influential in the Anglo-World. Critical to these changes was the increasing ability of Protestant churches to work together and form Agreed Syllabuses, especially as the international threats of the 1930s and 1940s convinced many educators of the need for more religion in classrooms to provide a moral core for British style democracy. Historian of religious education Rob Freathy argues that policy makers in England during the interwar period increasingly "used the traditional alliance of Christianity, national identity and citizenship as a means of defending British democratic values."[230] This was made possible in part by the increase in ecumenical activity between the various Protestant churches. The new spirit of Protestant cooperation allowed policy-makers to proclaim "a common Christian heritage."[231] In the field of education ecumenical activity was most noticeable with the creation of Agreed Syllabuses.

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229 Duncan MacLellan, "Faith-Based Schooling and the Politics of Education: A Case Study of Ontario, Canada," *Politics and Religion* 6, 1 (2012): 40.

230 R.J.K. Freathy, "Ecclesiastical and Religious Factors Which Preserved Christian and Traditional Forms of Education for Citizenship in English Schools, 1934–1944," *Oxford Review of Education* 33, 3 (2007): 371.

231 *Ibid, Ibidem.*

An Agreed Syllabus was a curriculum for religious education based on principles to which multiple Christian denominations could agree.[232] Agreed Syllabuses first began to appear in the 1920s, with the Cambridgeshire Syllabus, originally published in 1924, a notably influential example.[233] The emergence of Agreed Syllabuses marked an important turning point in England, but also for the Anglo-World. Since the nineteenth century the most intractable issue in establishing systems of religious education had been denominational differences between Protestant groups. The creation of Agreed Syllabuses, therefore, removed a major barrier to religious education.

Agreed Syllabuses were a hallmark of the Butler Act of 1944, one of the only significant pieces of social legislation passed during the Second World War in England and Wales.[234] Religious education was to be a mandatory subject in English and Welsh schools for the very first time, and would be taught according to an Agreed Syllabus. Agreed Syllabuses would be constructed at the local level with the input of the Church of England, other religious denominations, the local education authority, and teacher unions.[235] The act did not specifically state that Christianity would be the religion taught, but this was generally assumed by policy makers and legislators at the time.[236] Both the emergence of Agreed Syllabuses and the Butler Act profoundly influenced events in several Anglo-World contexts.

Political pressure to strengthen religious education in South Australia had been a constant throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century. Between 1915 and 1940 five parliamentary bills were proposed to expand the role of religion in state schools, each of which failed. But in 1940, at the request of the Council for Religious Instruction, a new and more qualified secular system emerged. Essentially, the new system emulated the Special Religious

232   For more on Agreed Syllabuses, see: Derek Gillard, *Agreed Syllabuses 1944–1988: changing aims—changing content?* www.educationengland.org.uk/articles/10agreed.html Accessed October, 2019. See also Jack Priestley, "Agreed Syllabuses: Their History and Development in England and Wales, 1944–2004," in Marian de Souza *et al* eds., *International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions in Education Part Two* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006). See also Stephen G. Parker, Rob Freathy and Jonathan Doney, "The Professionalisation of non-denominational religious education in England: politics, organisation and knowledge," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 37, 2 (2016): 201–238.
233   Priestley, "Agreed Syllabuses," 1004.
234   The Butler Act legislated for England and Wales, but not for Scotland or Ireland. For more on the Butler Act, see Elizabeth Libi Sunderman, *For God and Country: Butler's 1944 Education Act* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).
235   Priestley, "Agreed Syllabuses," 1005.
236   Hannam, *Religious Education and the Public Sphere*, 16.

Instruction formula of New South Wales, where denominational clergy had a right of entry to offer instruction to children of their particular sect. A further change came eight years later when state teachers were formally permitted to offer religious instruction.[237]

The province of Ontario intentionally altered their religious education to more closely resemble the Butler Act. A key figure here was the Premier of the province, George Drew. Drew was a World War I veteran who had spent time in England. As he heard that the UK Parliament was debating changes to religious education in the country, his "admiration for all things English encouraged his advocacy of similar program for Ontario."[238] The new "Drew Regulations" were enacted in 1944 and made religious education a mandatory subject in Ontarian schools for the first time. Two half-hour periods per week would be given by either ministers or, if none were available, by state teachers. The regulations also included a conscience clause by which pupils could opt-out of the course.[239]

Preparations for the new religious education courses involved a number of key choices. The Ontarian government worked closely with an outside religious organisation called the Inter-Church Committee for Weekday Religious Education in Ontario, composed of members of leading Protestant denominations in the province. In another example of the transfer of educational practices across the Anglo-World, the Inter-Church Committee adopted the Cambridgeshire Syllabus from England and implemented it in Ontarian schools.[240] The new religious education courses and syllabus were controversial in the province, especially to the Jewish Congress of Canada and humanist groups in the region. But in 1950 the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario weighed in on the subject, issuing a strong vote of confidence in the rightness of the Drew Regulations as it reaffirmed the place of religion in Ontarian classrooms.[241]

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237   Committee on Religious Education in State Schools, *Religious Education in State Schools*, 1.

238   Martin Sable, "George Drew and the Rabbis: Religious Education in Ontario's Public Schools," *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 6 (1998): 31.

239   Stephen Jackson, "In Accord with British Traditions: The Rise of Compulsory Religious Education in Ontario, Canada and Victoria, Australia, 1945–1950," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, 2 (2014): 696.

240   Stephen Jackson, *Constructing National Identity in Canadian and Australian Classrooms* (London: Macmillan Publishing, Ltd., 2018) 105.

241   Jackson, *Constructing National Identity in Canadian and Australian Classrooms*, 108 and 114.

Victoria, the Australian state that had constructed one of the strongest secular systems in the country in 1872, experienced a transformation to religious education remarkably similar to that of Ontario. Victorian proponents of religious education rejoiced after the passage of the Butler Act, and "in Parliament and pulpit demands were made for change."[242] Though the political moment seemed opportune, political roadblocks, including potential opposition from the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church, remained. Three key events allowed for the passage of new legislation. First, the Council of Christian Education in Schools (CCES), representing the major Protestant denominations, created an Agreed Syllabus in 1946.[243] Second, in 1947 the Minister of Public Instruction Kent Hughes issued a direct challenge to the churches, indicating that he would implement a strengthened system of religious education if all of the mainline Protestant denominations agreed on a common policy.[244] Third, a compromise was reached between Protestant and Catholic groups. State paid teachers would not be involved in religious instruction, and in return the Catholic Church agreed to not tie the question to the renewal of state aid.[245] With the new legislation, the CCES arranged for voluntary instructors to provide Agreed Syllabus lessons across the state.

In New Zealand, the interwar period witnessed the growth of both the Nelson System and the BISL movement. There was a renewed sense of urgency in Protestant communities because of the precipitous decline in Sunday School attendance. From a peak at the turn of the century reaching almost ninety percent of students, census data suggested that only about fifty-five percent of students attended in the 1930s.[246] Grace Bateman's excellent work on the lived religious experiences of children in the Dunedin region indicates that these statistics need to be taken with a grain of salt, suggesting that nearly all children in this time period were exposed to Sunday Schools in some fashion.[247] Nevertheless, to contemporaries the decline in attendance rates seemed dire, and action to promote education in the schools seemed even more necessary.

By 1936 as many as half of New Zealand students were receiving some form of religious exercises or religious instruction before the regular school hours began.[248] Given the failure of legislative action, and the steadily impressive

242   Russell, *Report of the Committee on Religious Education in Victoria*, 10.
243   Jackson, "In Accord with British Traditions," 702–703.
244   Russell, *Report of the Committee on Religious Education in Victoria*, 10.
245   *Ibid*, 11.
246   Breward, *Godless Schools?*, 78.
247   Bateman, *Signs and Graces*, 18.
248   Troughton, "Religion, Churches and Childhood in New Zealand," 44.

growth of the Nelson system, the efforts of the BISL shifted to promote the Nelson system. In 1949, the Council for Christian Education formed, combining the Bible-in-Schools-League with the National Council of Churches. This ecumenically minded organization attempted to foster a closer relationship between the churches and schools, and to alleviate fears of sectarian rivalry. The group was also far less overtly political than its predecessor the BISL. By 1950, the Council created an Agreed Syllabus modelled on English precedents, and engaged in efforts to train teachers.[249] With this new organization, and a stronger set of educational materials, the Nelson system reached as many as eighty percent of students by the year 1962.[250]

The post-war era also witnessed renewed efforts by the Catholic community of New Zealand for state aid to education. In the 1950s the Holy Name Society was particularly energetic in organizing a public campaign for state recognition of Catholic private schools. Their pleas, as they had since 1877, fell mostly on deaf ears. However, there was limited state assistance to these schools in the form of items like providing some foods, textbooks, school library services, and other assistance.[251] This was not full recognition by any means, and the campaign goals of the Holy Name Society were not met, but these limited forms of state assistance paved the way for greater measures a generation later.

The report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand, known more generally as the Currie Commission, altered the course of religious education in New Zealand. Appointed in 1960, the Commission had a wide frame of reference to look into matters of education. One of the chief issues that they addressed was that of religious education. The Commission received briefs advocating comparisons with England and Scotland, but decided to stress comparisons with Australia and Canada, because they were "English-speaking communities with a Protestant majority" that were "translated to a colonial environment."[252] In other words, the Currie Commission deliberately used other Anglo-World settings as the strongest exemplars in thinking about religious education.

The Commission asserted in the report that teaching about religion was not in any way a violation of the secular provisions of the 1877 Education Act.[253] But providing instruction in religion was a far more complicated matter. Ultimately,

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249   Breward, *Godless Schools?*, 92.
250   Troughton, *New Zealand Jesus*, 178.
251   Sweetman, 'A Fair and Just Solution,' 32.
252   Currie, *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, 678.
253   *Ibid*, 675.

the Currie Commission rejected formally incorporating religion into the curriculum as well as any additional state aid to private denominational schools. These decisions were interrelated, since a decision to allow strengthened religious education in the public schools could potentially force the state "to assume a responsibility to make available to each sect what that sect considers a satisfactory religious education."[254] In other words, enabling religious education as a formal subject could lead directly to state support of denominational schools. The commission also rejected the idea, long advocated by Protestant groups, that they could create a non-sectarian curriculum that would appeal to all Christians. The report called this a "virtual impossibility."[255]

However, the Commission did make an important recommendation that the state recognize the legality of the Nelson system. Religious education could take place as long as it was clearly delineated that the school be "officially and unequivocally out of session when pupils are receiving religious instruction."[256] This represented official sanctioning of a system that had existed for almost seventy years by 1962, but a critical recognition that religious education was possible in New Zealand schools as long as it was conducted outside of the official timetable.

In the era of recolonisation, religious education continued to be an important source of debate and controversy. Powerful lobbying groups exerted intense pressure on states in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand to expand religious education, and to remove what they perceived to be onerous secular restrictions. Increasingly, Protestant groups were able to work together to form common educational materials and goals, most notably exemplified by the New Zealand Council for Christian Education and the Victorian Council for Christian Education in Schools. These groups frequently looked across the Anglo-World for examples to bolster their campaigns, and linkages between movements in Australian colonies and in New Zealand were common.

The innovation of the Agreed Syllabus and the passage of the Butler Act (1944) were important milestones, spurring on legislative change in multiple Anglo-World locations. Even as mostly Protestant forms of religious education were strengthened, the Catholic request for direct aid to private denominational schools continued to be denied in most cases.

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254   Currie, *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*, 684.
255   *Ibid*, 685.
256   *Ibid*, 688.

4   The Crisis and Transformation of Religious Education in Australia,
       Canada, and New Zealand

> The present course of studies in religious education has failed in its
> first obligation, teaching, because it is not designed in accordance with
> modern principles of education. It does not provide for the objective
> examination of evidence, nor stimulate the inquiring mind; it does not
> teach children to think for themselves either about the facts of religion
> or about ethical matters. Instead, it presents Bible stories and religious
> ideas which may have little relation to the daily life of children, and it
> sometimes does so in terms that are offensive to many.[257]

> The Committee believes that it is possible for the study of religion to be
> based on sound educational principles which provide for open enquiry
> and question, without attempting to lead students to accept a particular
> viewpoint.[258]

The above quotations are taken from committees established in the 1960s and
1970s to study and make recommendations regarding religious education in
various Anglo-World locations. Concerns about indoctrination, the challenges
of religious pluralism, the growing strength of secularization, shifting attitudes
regarding the Catholic Church, and a changing role for the school made teach-
ing religion in state-classrooms an enormously difficult undertaking during
these decades. In the era of decolonisation, between the 1960s and 1980s, the
landscape for religious education underwent a period of intense scrutiny and
often transformation in the Anglo-World. This section will provide a general
overview of how and why so much change happened after a period of stabil-
ity, and trace the major developments in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.
    There are many causes to this intense period of reflection and change,
but three stand out as most significant. First, demographic changes trans-
formed societies through both migration and, in the case of New Zealand and
Canada, the resurgence of minority populations.[259] For a variety of reasons
Canada experienced cultural decolonisation earlier than either Australia or

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257 Mackay, *The Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of
     Ontario*, 27.
258 Committee on Religious Education in State Schools, *Religious Education in State Schools*
     (Government Printer: South Australia, 1973) 14.
259 A similar process occurred in England, where by the 1960s "issues of immigration and
     'racial' integration, rather than dechristianisation or religious pluralization *per se*, were to
     become highly significant stimuli for reconsidering the aims and content of RE." Parker and

New Zealand.[260] In Canada, by 1961 only 44% of the population claimed the British Isles as their place of origin, and the United States was an increasing cultural influence.[261] There was also a resurgence in French-Canadian nationalism known as the Quiet Revolution, which challenged Anglocentric norms and even threatened the viability of the nation.[262] José Igartua argues that the Quiet Revolution influenced English Canada, challenging them towards a redefinition of civic nationalism and away from Anglocentrism.[263]

Australia began permitting a much higher percentage of non-British European migrants following World War II, many of whom were not from the same Protestant backgrounds that had traditionally predominated in the nation's history. Australian immigration policy also began admitting more migrants from Asia, and removed the last vestiges of the White Australia policy in 1973.[264] These steps significantly altered the religious landscape of Australia.

New Zealand's migratory preference for Britain lasted longer than the other two cases, but even in this most British enclave by the 1970s government policy was characterized by "the ending of privilege for UK migrants, the erosion then termination of white New Zealand policy," and "post-imperial immigration flows from Asia."[265] The Māori population, which had fallen to as low as 5% of New Zealand population in 1900, gradually grew by the mid-twentieth century. By the 1970s, Māori activism was on the rise and profoundly challenged the established Pakeha norms of the country.[266]

In New Zealand, new migrants tended to be of minority denominations of Christianity, or, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, non-Christian. They clustered in urban areas, and, along with newly resurgent internal minority communities, made demands for change that were difficult for policy-makers to ignore. James Belich argues that these demographic changes in New Zealand

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Freathy, "Ethnic Diversity, Christian Hegemony and the Emergence of Multi-Faith Religious Education in the 1970s," 383.

260   For more on the cultural decolonisation of the Anglo-World, see Belich, *Paradise Reforged*; Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*; Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace*.

261   Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 12.

262   For more on changes to the national identity in this time period and how they interacted with multiculturalism and assimilationism in Canada and Australia, see Jatinder Mann, *The Search for a New National Identity: The Rise of Multiculturalism in Canada and Australia, 1890s–1970s* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016).

263   Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*.

264   Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 61.

265   *Ibid*, 109.

266   Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 467–470.

"interacted very closely with the disconnection from Britain, and the opening up to the world."[267] But this could be said of both Australia and Canada as well.

Second, following World War II education in all three cases expanded rapidly. Education systems throughout the Anglo-World dealt with the twin challenges of the baby-boom generation and societal demands for the expansion of secondary and tertiary education. Students in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand tended to persist in education far longer than previous generations, necessitating a major expansion of educational facilities, particularly in the 1960s.[268] The challenge here was that in many cases religious education was performed not by state-paid teachers but by volunteers or local clergy. In all three cases, though, church attendance fell abruptly by the 1960s, leading to a chronic shortage of religious education teachers.[269] In many cases the inability of the traditional churches to supply the system with necessary instructors was the precipitating cause of investigations into the viability of religious education.

Third, new developments in educational theory seriously questioned the appropriateness of extant systems of religious education. English authors in the 1960s such as Harold Loukes, Ronald Goldman, Richard Acland, Violet Madge, and others levelled withering critiques of contemporary methods of religious instruction.[270] These educators increasingly wrestled with cultural pluralism. How can you meaningfully teach religion in classrooms where you might have students of many different faiths, or no faith at all? Increasingly, English thinkers emphasized a distinction between religious instruction, which guided students towards a specific set of faith beliefs, and religious education, which provided information about religion toward students. Stephen Parker and Rob Freathy point out, though, that the new and ostensibly religiously neutral forms of religious education continued to give a privileged place to Christianity, simply masking the assimilationist intent of these newer forms of

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267   *Ibid*, 465.

268   Sara Burke and Patrice Milewski eds., *Schooling in Transition: Readings in Canadian History Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); For Australia see Simon Marginson, *Educating Australia: Government, Economy and Citizen Since 1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); For New Zealand see McLaren, *Education in a Small Democracy*.

269   For a broad overview of this process, see Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For the cases of New Zealand and Australia, see Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); David Hilliard, "The Religious Crisis of the 1960s: The Experience of the Australian Churches," *The Journal of Religious History* 21, 2 (1997): 209–227.

270   Copley, *Teaching Religion*, Ch. 3.

religious education.[271] These critiques of traditional religious instruction were influential in the Anglo-World, with educators often referring to the English example as they sought solutions to the problem of religious education.

Altogether, then, religious education experienced a crisis point from the 1960s through the 1980s. This happened concomitantly with the collapse of the British Empire, which had provided the cultural keystone to a transnational British identity throughout the Anglo-World. The process of formal decolonisation accelerated rapidly after the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956, a pivotal moment in the cultural decolonisation of Canada.[272] Stuart Ward and James Belich argue that, for Australia and New Zealand (respectively), the 1973 British decision to join the European Economic Community was the critical moment in cultural decolonisation, the moment when Australians and New Zealanders had to formally grapple with the loss of empire.[273] Since the nineteenth century, religious education had served as "a key aspect of citizenship formation," but how would it evolve as the very nature of the Australian, Canadian, and New Zealander nations changed so rapidly?[274]

4.1   Negotiating the Crisis of Religious Education in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

Following the Second World War, systems of religious education were challenged by an expanding educational infrastructure, a dynamically evolving landscape of the philosophy of education, and the inability of churches to keep up with the traditional programmes of religious education. There were three common outcomes to this process. First and most common were attempts to reform religious instruction with new pedagogical techniques designed to teach about religion rather than promote any particular religion. Second, there were attempts to remove religious education entirely from the curriculum, sometimes through normal curricular methods and sometimes through litigation. And, finally, there were some instances, such as in New Zealand or

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271   Parker and Freathy, "Ethnic Diversity, Christian Hegemony and the Emergence of Multi-Faith Religious Education in the 1970s," 402. See also: Freathy and Parker, "Secularists, Humanists and Religious Education."

272   For a bibliography of recent works on the process of twentieth-century decolonization, see the "Decolonization Resource Collection: Further Readings," National History Center, https://nationalhistorycenter.org/decolonization-resource-collection-reading/ Accessed November, 2019.

273   Belich, *Paradise Reforged*; Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace*.

274   Stephen G. Parker, Jenny Berglund, David Lewin, Deirdre Raftery, "Religion and Education: Framing and Mapping a Field," *Brill Research Perspectives in Religion and Education* 1, 1 (2019): 14.

Queensland, where no major changes occurred to established methods of religious education.[275] In all cases where religious education was seriously scrutinized, significant controversy was sure to follow.

These potential outcomes mark a shift from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when Protestant Christian groups assumed that religion was essential for the national identity and a transnational sense of Britishness. In almost all cases there was a recognition that Anglo-World societies had to grapple with societal pluralism for the first time. In fact, these societies were religiously and culturally plural since European colonization began, but assimilationist policy-makers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries often ignored this fact.[276] As the ideal of Britishness crumbled and Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders began to gradually accept cultural pluralism, they addressed religious education with remarkably similar means and in parallel directions.

By the 1960s, Canadian religious education settlements began to transform under the tremendous pressures of post-World War II educational expansion. Changes in Canada often came about as the result of legal decisions or political compromises, a legacy of Section 93 of the British North America Act (1867) which guaranteed the forms of education at the moment of Confederation. The situation changed even further in 1982 with the passage of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Charter lists "freedom of conscience and religion" as a fundamental freedom to be experienced by all Canadians, and has obvious implications for state-mandated religious education.[277] The tension between Section 93 and the Canadian Charter set the stage for a number of protracted legal battles that would decide the fate of religious education in several provinces.[278]

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275   Helen Bradstock's examination of the contemporary New Zealand Religious Education programme critiques the decision to leave religious education alone following the 1964 Education Act. She argues that "the irony of the New Zealand educational context is that policies designed to protect children from indoctrination into belief are themselves co-opted into promoting uncritical acceptance of specific worldviews." Helen Bradstock, "Religion in New Zealand's State Primary Schools," *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 26, 3 (2015): 352.

276   For a recent look at the embrace of multiculturalism, see Mann, *The Search for a New National Identity*.

277   "Constitution Act, 1982," Government of Canada Justice Laws Website, https://laws-lois .justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html Accessed November, 2019.

278   For more on this, see Anwar Khan, "Religious Education in Canadian Schools," *Journal of Law and Education* 28, 3 (1999): 431–442.

As shown in Section 2, the province of Quebec developed a dual confessional system in the nineteenth century that persisted into the twentieth. The Quiet Revolution, a Francophone nationalist movement that largely rejected the Catholic Church's privileged position in Quebec society, presented a challenge to the confessional system in the 1950s and 1960s.[279] Maintaining a dual confessional school system in a secular nationalist environment seemed increasingly anachronistic, but it took a protracted political movement to effect significant and lasting change.

In 1964 the Quebec Ministry of Education was formed that "combined denominational and functional principles of organization," providing representation for both Protestant and Catholic schools in the province.[280] The Parent Commission released an influential report in 1966 that recommended unifying the dual confessional boards along regional lines, and that these secular school boards would operate both English and French, denominational and non-denominational schools.[281] The report's recommendations were controversial, and proved impossible to immediately implement. The Parti Québécois won the elections of 1976 in part on a platform of implementing the Parent Commission's findings, but struggled to accomplish this while still maintaining the protections in place with Section 93 of the BNA Act.[282]

In 1987 the Quebec Liberal government of Robert Bourassa introduced Bill 107 which provided for language-based school boards (English or French) rather than confessional boards. The Bill passed but wound up in a long-lasting legal struggle with the Protestant School Boards and the Montreal Catholic School Commission who argued that it violated the BNA Act. Ultimately the Bourassa government agreed to make some modifications, and by 1993 the bill was upheld as constitutional.[283] Quebec schools remained bifurcated, but the primary division would henceforth be based on language rather than on religious affiliation, an enormous departure from past practice.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ontario had been a bastion of pro-British sentiment. José Igartua argues that it was in the post-World

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279   Arzina Zaver and Ashley DeMartini, "Citizenship, Secularity and the Ethics and Religious Culture Program of Quebec," *Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education*, 10, 2 (2016): 74.

280   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 166.

281   Andrew G. Blair, *The Policy and Practice of Religious Education in Publicly Funded Elementary and Secondary Schools in Canada and Elsewhere: A Search of the Literature* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1986) 30.

282   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 166–167.

283   *Ibid*, 167.

War II context that this identity, once central to Ontario, began to crumble.[284] The effects of the shift of identity away from Britishness was an important component of the crisis in religious education in Ontario's public schools beginning in the 1960s.[285] Minority religious groups, especially the Jewish Congress of Canada, continued to criticize the Drew Regulations of 1944 as discriminatory and biased. Though the Hope Commission of 1950 reaffirmed the Regulations, criticisms continued to grow in an increasingly pluralistic Canadian society.[286] Simultaneously, many Ontarian educators sharply questioned the type of religious education initiated in 1944. Clearly, the wartime consensus that led to the passage of the Drew Regulations had faded, and religious education once again became a lightning rod of controversy in Ontario.

Faced with mounting criticisms, the Department of Education did its best to avoid controversy altogether. In a meeting with the Ontario Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education in the Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum David Clee said that the Department was experiencing critiques "from various minority groups and the place of religion in education is being challenged as never before." Later in the meeting Clee advised the O.I.C.C. to avoid controversial statements and to shy away from publicity.[287]

In response to these criticisms, the O.I.C.C. attempted to re-think the religious education curriculum of the province. By 1966, they redefined the nature of religious education to, in their view, more closely align with the educational standards of the day. They also asked the Department of Education to create a new course in religious education that could be offered by provincial teachers. Part of their recommendation was to incorporate the "recent revolutionary changes in educational theory and practice" into religious education, and thereafter treat it just like any other subject.[288] In other words, the O.I.C.C. encouraged the Department of Education to redesign the course to avoid the

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284   Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*.

285   More will be said about full funding to Ontario's separate Roman Catholic schools below.

286   Jackson, *Constructing National Identity in Canadian and Australian Classrooms*, 143–147.

287   "Minutes of the Annual Meeting—1962, The Ontario Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in the Schools," May 10, 1962. General Synod Archives: Anglican Church of Canada, 3.

288   "The Foundations of Education: A Brief of the Ontario Inter-Church Committee on Public Education," Presented to the Mackay Committee on April 1, 1966. General Board of religious Education—Series 4 Box 29A, General Synod Archives: Anglican Church of Canada, 3.

pitfalls of indoctrination, thus circumventing the central critiques of religious education in the province.

The Department of Education, for its part, created a Committee, generally referred to as the Mackay Committee, to oversee the entire issue of religious education in the public schools. The committee released its report in 1969, and strongly indicted the Drew Regulations as a form of state-sponsored indoctrination. A central critique was that the curricula then in use did not reflect the increasingly plural nature of Ontario, and needed not revision but to be scrapped entirely from the curriculum.[289] The Committee recommended a new course in moral development heavily dependent on the ideas of Lawrence Kohlberg to replace religious instruction in Ontarian classrooms.[290]

The Mackay Report met with widespread public criticism from Christian groups, and the Ministry of Education continued its policy of avoiding controversy. The Drew Regulations remained unchanged legally, and the Ministry turned a blind eye to school districts that chose not to enforce religious education in the classroom.[291] Although educators and many people increasingly recognized that Canadian society was becoming more plural, the Department of Education was unable to successfully alter the Drew Regulations or design a new course that was broadly acceptable to Ontarian society.

Ultimately, it was not the Ministry of Education but the courts that decided the matter in Ontario. According to court rulings in the 1980s, "religious education violated the Charter guarantees of freedom of religion."[292] Within a matter of months the Ministry removed the Drew Regulations, ending both compulsory religious education and religious exercises in the public schools of Ontario. Teachers were given free rein to teach about religion, but never to give "primacy to any one faith in doing so, or indulge in any activity which might be construed as indoctrination, or confessional instruction."[293] The Ontario case of *Zylbergerg et al. v The Director of Education of the Sudbury Board of Education* was influential across Canada. Two more cases, one in 1989 and another in 1992,

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289   Mackay, *The Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the Province of Ontario*, 25.

290   *Ibid*, 44–49.

291   R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, "The Christian Recessional in Ontario's Public Schools," in Marguerite Van Die ed., *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 283.

292   *Ibid*, 288.

293   *Ibid, ibidem*. For more on this, see Greg M. Dickinson and W. Rod Dolmage, "Education, Religion, and the Courts in Ontario," *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de l'éducation* 21, 4 (1996).

struck down regulations mandating religious exercises in British Columbia and Manitoba, respectively.[294]

The education system of Newfoundland and Labrador also profoundly changed in the late twentieth century. Newfoundland officially joined Confederation in 1949. At the time of Confederation Newfoundland had multiple privately run denominational school systems. One of the preconditions of Confederation in 1949 was that Catholics could present their grievances all the way to the Supreme Court.[295] But as early as the 1960s a Royal Commission recommended an overhaul of education in the province that would have abandoned the denominational system because of its inefficiency.[296] The Newfoundland Teachers' Association opposed the denominational system as well because "it was an anachronism no longer suited to the needs of the province."[297] After decades of drawn-out debate, two separate votes were taken in the 1990s to overhaul education and get rid of the denominational system in existence since the nineteenth century. The second of these amendments passed with 73% in favour, and the constitution was duly changed even in the face of Catholic objections based on Section 93 of the BNA Act.[298]

Administrative challenges and a desire for consolidation significantly challenged religious education regimes in the Maritimes during the 1960s and 1970s. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, each province had a formally secular system but a series of 'gentleman's agreements' to allow some Catholic schools to remain in place. Crucially, since these were informal arrangements they were not protected under Section 93 of the British North America Act (1867). By the 1960s each province underwent a process of consolidating the high number of school districts. In New Brunswick the change happened rapidly in 1967 as the number of districts shrank from 433 to a mere 33 districts.[299] Enrolment in the traditionally Catholic schools dwindled to only 4% as a result.[300] Similar issues affected Nova Scotia, with the 1974

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294   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 173.
295   Bonaventure Fagan, *Trial: The Loss of Constitutional Rights in Education in Newfoundland and Labrador: The Roman Catholic Story* (St. John's, Newfoundland: ADDA Press, 2004) xxvi.
296   *Ibid, ibidem.*
297   *Ibid,* xxvii.
298   *Ibid,* 216.
299   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 169.
300   Blair, *The Policy and Practice of Religious Education in Publicly Funded Elementary and Secondary Schools in Canada and Elsewhere*, 13.

Graham Commission strongly recommending that no religious education of any kind be allowed in publicly funded schools.[301] Prince Edward Island experienced the closure of its last remaining Catholic high school in 1970, but in some cases provisions were made for religious education outside of the normal school hours.[302]

Australian education experienced a religious crisis of its own between 1961 and 1980, as every state and the Australian Capital Territory initiated committees of inquiry into religious education in the state schools.[303] In almost all cases official inquiries began with a structural problem. Numerous Australian states relied on local churches to supply volunteers to offer Special Religious Instruction (SRI). But the rising demand for volunteers could not be met, especially with a simultaneous drop in church attendance.[304] Damon Mayrl argues that changes to religious education across Australia were ultimately the result of the influx of progressive educational ideology and the decentralization of educational authority across Australia, democratizing tendencies that together allowed for local voices to challenge established systems of religious education. Religious education remained in most schools across the country, but "its position, content, and meaning were transformed."[305]

Victoria and South Australia, both of which had strong secular systems of religious instruction until the Second World War, had two of the swifter responses to the Australian crisis of religious education, and offer important case studies of how challenging the process of transforming religious education could be in the Australian case. In both cases churches struggled to keep up with the rapidly expanding educational system following World War II. In South Australia this pressure led the Methodist Church to simply withdraw from the state system of SRI altogether in 1968. This permanently crippled the system, and two years later the Methodist Church requested that the state government investigate religious education in the public schools. The Methodist request resulted in the creation of the Committee on Religious Education in State Schools, more commonly known as the Steinle Committee.[306] In Victoria, the

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301   *Ibid*, 17.
302   Sister Elizabeth Dunn, "Prince Edward Island," in Carl Matthews ed., *Catholic Schools in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association, 1977) 5.
303   For an overview of these reports and the changes they wrought, see: Rossiter, *Religious Education in Australian Schools*.
304   *Ibid*, 45.
305   Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 143.
306   Committee on Religious Education in State Schools, *Religious Education in State Schools*, 1973.

Council for Christian Education in Schools (CCES) similarly struggled to find qualified instructors, and eventually asked the state government to study the matter of religious education, leading to the formation of The Committee on Religious Education in Victoria, known more often as the Russell Committee.[307]

Both the Steinle and Russell Reports advocated for a new system of religious education in the schools to be offered by state-teachers rather than outside volunteers or clergy. The Russell Report strongly critiqued the volunteer system, saying that "in days when even the best qualified, full-time teachers are under great strain, the non-professional volunteer is very seriously handicapped."[308] The report envisioned a new type of course that it labelled Religious Studies, differentiated from the previous course because its "approach would aim to study the practices and beliefs of various ways of life of various religious traditions" rather than provide a confessional focus leading students to a particular set of beliefs.[309] The Steinle Report advocated for a similar style of educational course that would lead to open inquiry and not to the acceptance of any particular viewpoint.[310] In other words, both reports envisioned a system that taught *about* religion, rather than a confessional course that would *lead to* religion.

Though the origins and statements of each committee were remarkably similar, the outcomes for South Australia and Victoria were very different. In Victoria, the chief problem was the 'secular' provision dating all the way back to the 1872 Education Act. In 1976, an opinion came down from the Crown Solicitor of Victoria J. Downey, who ruled that the Russell recommendations were illegal under current state law.[311] There was no possibility of establishing the programme of religious education provided by state teachers envisioned by the Russell Report. Ultimately, SRI remained active in the Victorian school system despite the opinion of the Russell Committee.

In South Australia a Religious Education Project Team formed to create a new course in religious education, but a public controversy broke out even before the completion of the Project Team's work. A secular humanist group called Keep Our State Schools Secular (K.O.S.S.) formed that criticized the new course as a form of state-sponsored indoctrination.[312] The group lobbied the

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307   Russell, *Report of the Committee on Religious Education in Victoria*.

308   *Ibid*, 47.

309   *Ibid*, 72.

310   Committee on Religious Education in State Schools, *Religious Education in State Schools*, 14.

311   Jackson, *Constructing National Identity in Canadian and Australian Classrooms*, 140.

312   Alan Ninnes, "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Religious Education in South Australia," *Learning for Living* 17, 4 (1978): 146.

Labor Party to call for a new evaluation of religious education in the state. That new evaluation found that the curriculum did not indoctrinate students, but that the course content could be integrated into other subjects in the primary level.[313] Originally, this was to be the first compulsory Australian system of general religious teaching (GRT), but as a result of these continuing controversies it was never introduced on a mass scale.[314]

These patterns occurred all across Australia.[315] The committees of inquiry inevitably generated significant public comment and often controversy. With a few exceptions, the overall net result was that the system of GRT remained a part of the curriculum, but gradually began to reflect contemporary educational philosophies which emphasized teaching about religion (sound) rather than teaching towards religion (indoctrination).[316] An exception to this is the state of Queensland, which largely left its 1910 system of Bible Reading in place, though even in this case the content of religious education was revised to more closely align with contemporary educational thinking.[317] Special religious instruction remained in place in several Australian cases as well.

4.2   The Success of Catholic Education and Aid to Private Religious Schools

Even as the traditional systems of religious education underwent transformation, another surprising development took place in several Anglo-World cases as denominational schools, and in particular Catholic private schools, began once more to receive direct state aid. Historian Michael Hogan's comment that "it was the dogma of a century that state aid was political suicide" referenced the Australian case, but it could just as easily have been made for Canada and New Zealand as well.[318] Yet in Australia, New Zealand, and several cases in Canada, private denominational schools achieved their decades-long goal. That they were able to do so is a sure sign that the assumptions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Anglo-World, based often on Protestant religiosity, had significantly dwindled by the 1960s and 1970s.

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313   Education Department of South Australia, Directorate of Research and Planning, *Evaluation of Religious Education, 1976* (South Australia: Government Printer, 1977).

314   Byrne, *Religion in Secular Education*, 172.

315   For general overviews, see: Alan Black, "Religious Studies in Australian Public Schools: An Overview and Analysis," *Australian Education Review* 7, 3 (1975): 1–44; Rossiter, *Religious Education in Australian Schools*.

316   Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 122.

317   Byrne, *Religion in Secular Education*, 171.

318   Michael Charles Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid: A Study of a Pressure Group Campaign in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, 1950–1972* (Sydney: Catholic Theological Faculty, 1978) 87.

There are commonalities between all three cases.[319] In the first place, the rapid expansion of education following World War II was a major problem for the privately funded Catholic school systems. In both Australia and Canada, the Catholic population rose as a result of migration, mostly from Southern Europe.[320] Additionally, the private education systems struggled with new societal expectations for the school leaving age. They simply could not keep up with the rapid surge in demand for secondary education and the astronomical increases in infrastructure expenses that this would entail. Catholic schools had always been sustained by orders religious, but this labour supply quickly diminished, especially following the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). In New Zealand, the number of lay teachers was 5% in 1956, but at 28% by 1972.[321] In Australia, where the Catholic population doubled between 1945 and 1965, there were 4 religious for every lay teacher in 1963, but just one decade later there were 3 lay teachers to every religious.[322] By the 1960s privately funded schools were teetering on the edge of collapse.

An important precursor to the granting of state aid in Australia was a split in the Australian Labor Party (A.L.P.) in 1955.[323] The A.L.P. had been the traditional party of the Catholic vote, and by 1951 made supporting state aid to denominational schools an official party policy. However, following the 1955 split the A.L.P. reversed course with "the characteristics of a soured romance," as "state aid was an issue symbolic of the ousted right wing of the party."[324] Ultimately, this became an important wedge issue for the Liberal Party of Robert Menzies. Menzies had pursued guarded measures to provide indirect aid for denominational schools, but had for most of his career stopped short of direct government aid.[325]

A major turning point was the Goulburn School Strike of 1962. The private and Catholic school of Goulburn was cited as failing a school inspection over the condition of their facilities. The local bishop, an ardent state aid proponent, decided to close the school to protest what he believed was an inherent

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319 Please note that the situation was obviously different in cases like Ontario, which did receive partial state-funding for primary schools.
320 Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid*, 4; Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540–2015* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2016) Chapter 8.
321 Sweetman, *'A Fair and Just Solution'?*, 42.
322 Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid*, 4.
323 *Ibid*, Ch. 2.
324 *Ibid*, 14.
325 Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 201–203.

injustice. The case garnered national attention, showcasing the plight of strug-
gling private Catholic schools.[326]

Realizing the potential to utilize the state aid issue, Robert Menzies cam-
paigned for it in the federal elections of 1963 by offering direct aid for science
education to private schools.[327] His electoral victory that year meant that "the
political dynamics of state aid decisively shifted," and over the next decade the
trickle of state aid became a flood.[328] A 2007 analysis claims that Australia is
unique because it "places no limit on the amount of income that such schools
[non-government] can generate from fees and other sources."[329] This repre-
sents a seismic shift from the nineteenth century settlement that forbade any
and all forms of state aid to private schools.

Rory Sweetman's work reveals that private and mostly Catholic schools also
received state aid in New Zealand, but the form it took was significantly dif-
ferent than in Australia. Some indirect state aid for items such as milk, apples,
and textbooks, began to flow into private schools in the late 1930s and early
1940s. But this was limited in scope, and did not meet the demand for full fund-
ing made by a number of Catholic advocates. The Labour Party of New Zealand
expressed open sympathy for Catholic private schools, but the victory of the
National Government in 1949 nixed any hopes of full-funding early in the
1950s.[330] A crucial tactical change in New Zealand came in 1960 with the for-
mation of the Interdenominational Committee of Independent Schools (ICIS),
which lobbied for state aid to all denominational schools, not just Catholics.
The unity of Christian denominations during the Currie Commission was also
important because "it took the remaining sting out of sectarianism."[331]

A key political moment for New Zealand came in 1965 when Norman Kirk
became leader of the NZ Labour Party. Possibly influenced by the Australian
example, Kirk immediately set out to study the issue. He decided on a unique
solution to integrate Catholic schools into the national system, which he en-
acted in 1975 with the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act.[332] The
Australian example loomed large, with New Zealand Teachers Unions citing

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326   Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid*, Chapter 5.
327   *Ibid*, 87.
328   Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*, 203.
329   Ian Wilkinson et al., *A History of State Aid to Non-Government Schools in Australia*
       (Australia: Department of Education, Science and Training, 2007). This overview also
       provides a rich body of work explaining the major forms of aid in Australia in the late
       twentieth century.
330   Sweetman, *'A Fair and Just Solution,'* 29.
331   *Ibid*, 44.
332   *Ibid*, 5.

Australia as an example of what *not* to do, since they funded even wealthy schools.[333] Perhaps unsurprisingly, this act produced an enormous controversy, with the devil very much in the details. How much control would the national government have over the denominational schools? Would they be able to retain an identity? 249 Catholic and 9 non-Catholic private schools had integrated into the national system by 1984, a very different outcome than in the Australian model.[334]

As usual, the diversity of educational models makes the Canadian example more complicated than either New Zealand or Australia, but nevertheless there are significant parallels. Full funding of Catholic denominational schools through the secondary level was achieved in both Ontario and Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan full funding occurred with relatively little controversy in 1964, but the debate was protracted and bitterly contested in Ontario.[335] Though several of the major parties supported full-funding, the Conservative Party remained staunchly opposed until the 1980s. In 1984 the Premier of Ontario William Davis made an abrupt about face, promising a bill guaranteeing full funding for Catholic secondary education.[336] Bill 30, as it is known, was duly tested in the Courts, which went beyond ruling simply that the law was constitutional, stating further that previous decisions restricting Catholic education were themselves wrong.[337] An important lingering issue in Ontario is whether state-funding should flow to other private denominational schools.[338]

The proliferation of state aid to denominational, mostly Catholic, private schools beginning in the 1960s is a major development in the history of education in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. What is perhaps even more striking in the historiography is a general consensus that the decades long campaign by Catholics for state aid was not the primary catalyst for change.

333   *Ibid*, 216.

334   *Ibid*, 249.

335   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 169. The province of Alberta began funding independent schools in 1967. John Hiemstra, "Calvinist Pluriformity Challenges Liberal Assimilation: A Novel Case for Publicly Funding Alberta's Private Schools, 1953–1967," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39, 3 (2005): 146–173.

336   Duncan McLellan, "Faith-Based Schooling and the Politics of Education: A Case Study of Ontario, Canada," *Politics and Religion* 6, 1 (2012): 42.

337   Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas*, 170. For more on this topic see Franklin A. Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario Volume III: From the Hope Commission to the Promise of Completion, 1945–1985* (Toronto: Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario, 1986).

338   Linda A. White, "Liberalism, Group Rights and the Boundaries of Toleration: The Case of Minority Religious Schools in Ontario," *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 36, 5 (2003).

Looking comparatively, Michael Hogan suggested that these campaigns "have been less important than the social and economic factors."[339]

Multiple authors note the swift and powerful enervation of sectarian rivalry that had been the hallmark of education in each case since the advent of public education.[340] I would suggest that the loss of Britishness, which held Protestantism as a core tenet, was also a significant factor in this process. As the lights faded on the British Empire, an insistence on the necessity of a Protestant British identity carried increasingly less relevance.[341]

5   Concluding Remarks

In 1976, Alan Ninnes, the Director of the Religious Education Project Team of South Australia, received a grant from the South Australia Institute for Teachers to travel abroad to study trends in religious education in other countries. He visited and examined programmes in Minnesota, California, Ontario, and the United Kingdom. Ninnes found that South Australian religious education was "just as far, if not further advanced in developments" than the North American examples he studied.[342] After his visit to Birmingham, England, he came to believe that "there is more that we can learn from the English situation than from North America."[343] But Ninnes also noted the parallel developments occurring in each of his case studies, and concluded that "we are part of a trend common to a large part of the English speaking world. A trend that is gaining momentum. A trend to introduce the study of religion on educational grounds alone."[344]

Throughout this issue, I have demonstrated the parallels between the evolution of religious education in the Anglo-World that Alan Ninnes recognized as late as the 1970s, but that have been frequently overlooked in the history of religious education. The existing historiography analysed for this project mostly had a national or regional scope, but when examined comparatively these works reveal the potential of using the analytical framework of the

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339   Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid*, 252.
340   See Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid*; Mayrl, *Secular Conversions*; Sweetman, 'A Fair and Just Solution.'
341   For some innovative work on the evolution of nationalism in the Canadian context, see: Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*.
342   Alan Ninnes, "Religious Education Overseas: Teacher Developments for RE Further Advanced in SA Than in USA or Canada," *South Australian Teachers Journal* 9, 6 (1977): 7.
343   Ninnes, "Religious Education Overseas," 15.
344   *Ibid, Ibidem*.

Anglo-World to uncover an international dimension to religious education. Communities of British settlers in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, intent on creating neo-Europes with an identity centred on Britishness, constructed and maintained systems of religious education as part of the settler colonial project.

The analysis has, in particular, highlighted three distinct periods in the history of religion in the publicly funded schools. First, the foundational moments of religious education in the public-school systems of the mid-nineteenth century. Though schools existed in each case before this period, the 1860s through the 1880s represented a major point of departure for public education as well as for religious education. Differences between Protestant denominations, and with the Roman Catholic Church, created headaches for policy-makers, and in many cases resulted in either dual educational systems or in technically secular systems that often permitted Christian non-sectarian religion in classrooms.

Secondly, between the 1880s and the 1960s, an era James Belich refers to as recolonisation, campaigns across the Anglo-World mounted to strengthen religious education in public schools. These campaigns were often bitterly contentious, creating seemingly intractable problems for contemporary policy-makers. Several of these campaigns were successful at achieving meaningful legislative change by the 1960s, particularly in the period surrounding the World Wars.

Finally, during the era of decolonisation, religious education programmes in most cases underwent profound changes. The older assumptions of the Christian (mostly Protestant) nature of the state faded rapidly, and religious education had to grapple with increasingly plural societies. Part of this involved transforming the nature of religious education in publicly funded schools, but also the reversal of long-standing policies of refusing state aid to private denominational schools.

The parallels revealed here can lead to multiple avenues of further research. Perhaps one of the most important questions will be to further analyse whether the development of religious education is simply a case of mimicry, of colonial culture cringe, or does it reveal a more complex web of transnational interactions between Anglo-World members who shared in and drew from a common cultural milieu? Examples in this analysis include the adoption of the Irish National System and the proliferation of Agreed Syllabuses that would tend to support the idea of imperial mimicry. But the creation of Bible in School Leagues and other activist groups, as well as the unique permutations of religious education in various colonial sites indicate a more nuanced picture of colonial adaptation and creativity. One way to access this critical question

will be to examine transnational actors, especially migrants, and their effects on religious education.

The other obvious question to ask is, of course: how far do these trends extend across the Anglo-World? This analysis has only examined three contexts in a much wider cultural community that existed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Would similar parallels be noticeable in the cases of, say, South Africa, India, Kenya, or, extending beyond the formal boundaries of the British Empire, Argentina or the United States? Answering this question is beyond my scope here, but I hope this work is convincing that it is a question worth investigating.

Acknowledgements

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