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THE HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASES OF THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by Michael L. Perry

Dissertation presented to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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Abstract

This dissertation is a study of the historical and theological bases of the Christian religious education program in the public schools of Ontario. The role of the churches in the introduction, maintenance, decline and disappearance of the program is investigated.

In the early years, the Christian Churches in Ontario reflected the religious divisions of Europe following the Reformation. The overwhelming majority of citizens belonged to five major churches, but these were often in conflict with each other over doctrine and vied for government support for their own schools. A system of non-sectarian public schools which provided for optional religious instruction outside of the regular school hours emerged by the middle of the nineteenth century.

It was not until the late nineteenth century when Canada was expanding in territory and in population that a movement towards unity in the Protestant churches emerged -- partly as a strategy to evangelize the West and partly as a result of like-mindedness in combatting social ills. The union of churches and their increased cooperation in moral and social crusades was a pre-condition for their concerted efforts to obtain increased Christian teaching in the schools. Devotion to a common Bible enhanced these efforts.

Under wartime conditions, the Conservative government of George Drew introduced a mandatory program of Christian

religious education in the schools in 1944. Supporters of the program thought Christian teaching to be a remedy for various ills: the threats of fascism and communism, juvenile delinquency, sexual promiscuity, moral decline in general. Adherence to the regulations grew lax due to increasing opposition from minority religions and secular groups.

The factors which led to the establishment of the program of Christian religious education in 1944 included: reaction to the growth of Roman Catholic separate schools, Protestant ecumenism, concern about juvenile delinquency, the institutional aims of the churches, fears about decline in Sunday School attendance, general concern for the spiritual welfare of children, fears about the growth of secularism and atheism. The factors in the decline of the program relate to the exclusivity, christocentrism, and irrelevance of the Teachers' Guides, but more importantly to the rise of secular attitudes, the indifference of the public to the churches, increased diversity in society, and the basis of minority rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The program was gradually abandoned and officially dropped in 1990. The factors which led to this development included: the multifaith nature of the society, dated or non-existent curricula and materials, lack of support from society-at-large, the exclusivity of the Christian program, and little interest from teachers and students.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The 1944 Program

In 1944 a mandatory "Programme for Religious Education in the Public Schools" was initiated by the Government of Ontario.¹ The regulations concerning religious education were revised to provide for religious teaching as an integral part of the school curriculum. A detailed course of study in religious education was stipulated. The program was promoted by the Protestant churches. By regulation, it was to be non-sectarian and non-divisive², and to be Christian rather than of a multi-faith character. The program stipulated that "scriptural interpretations are to be non-sectarian, and will not follow the tenets or doctrines of any particular creed. They will be confined to those expressions of the Christian faith upon which all Christian denominations are in substantial agreement."³

Although it was claimed that the program was based on what all Christians believe, this presumed a conflation of distinctive doctrines which were never harmonized. Characterized as Christian, the program was narrowly Protestant in its concerns. It was a strategic alliance

¹(Ontario). Programme for Religious Education in the Public Schools, 1944 (Toronto: Government of Ontario, 1944).

²Ibid., 7

³Ibid.

rather than a theological identity. The participating churches did not always agree in theology or doctrine, but they shared moral and behavioural ideals based upon a Protestant ethic of rectitude and conformity to convention.

The content of the program resembled its British predecessor. It was concerned with making good Christian children. The theological content of the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments, upon which the program was purportedly based, was rarely mentioned in the material taught to the children. However, there were many examples of Scripture verses being a starting point for a discussion of conventional behaviour and democratic citizenship. Minority groups, such as Ontario Jews, did not accept the assumption that democracy was based upon Christianity.

The church officials and politicians who promoted the program were white, middle-class, Protestant, male clerics and secular officials of British cultural and racial origin. Dominant in both church and state, they enjoyed privileges in the governance of public education which were denied to others. Their official doctrines, as evidenced by catechisms and official church pronouncements, reflected adherence to traditions passed down from their European parent denominations. Their social views tended to reflect conservatism in religion and education.

While in the 1930s, curricular trends had moved toward a progressive pole; the Second World War brought an intentional swing toward traditional education. The 1944 program of

religious education was a retrogression which, enabled by wartime exigencies, was not to be reversed until the 1960s and not to be eliminated until 1990.

The terms 'religion' and 'religious' are so broad that a few words of clarification are needed. For the purposes of this dissertation, the term 'religion' usually denotes the Christian religion and its doctrines. More specifically, the dissertation is concerned with organized religion as, for example, major Christian denominations which are characterized by a definite structure, polity, significant membership. Although 'religious' is used as an adjective with education, the emphasis of the religious education program of 1944 was specifically Protestant, indoctrinational, and easily distinguished from the secular portion of the curriculum. It was concerned more with matters of belief than with matters of fact. Moreover, in spite of claims by the Protestant churches that the program was broad enough for all children, there were objections to its exclusivity by minority parents. The program obtained for a time because of the dominance of the Protestant churches in Ontario society during the post-World War II period. Later on, religious education came to denote something more closely resembling comparative religion or religious studies of a non-indoctrinational nature. The 1944 program was more concerned with religion than it was with education. The aim was to influence children's thought and behaviour according to predetermined values and beliefs. The

material to be presented to students was sometimes imaginary and mythical, rather than factual.

'Religious education', for the purposes of this dissertation, means the passing on, as normative, of Christian knowledge, beliefs and values to the young. These denotations are most often implied in the sources, even though they could hardly obtain today. A narrow, rather than a liberal, understanding of the term 'religious education' suits the 1944 program.

The purpose of the religious education program was identified:

. . . preparing children to live in a democratic society which bases its way of life upon the Christian ideal . . . to lead the child to choose and accept as his own those ideals of conduct and endeavour which a Christian and democratic society approves to bring home to the pupils as far as their capacity allows, the fundamental principles of Christianity and their bearing on human life and thought. Religious Instruction must aim to set up ideals, to build attitudes, and to influence behaviour, as well as to teach Scriptural facts and Biblical text.⁴

The Course of Study consisted of two parts: the religious exercises and the systematic study of the Scriptures.⁵ The religious exercises, to be conducted at the beginning of each school day, were devotional in character and consisted "largely of Scripture readings, prayer, and music".⁶ Two thirty-minute periods per week were to be set aside for the study of the Scriptures. The basis of the

⁴Ibid., 5-6

⁵Ibid., 7.

⁶Ibid.

Scripture study was a series of six graded teachers' guides which had been used in English Schools and which were revised for use in the schools of Ontario. Each lesson in the manuals included the reading and studying of a definite passage of Scripture, an expanded story about the Scripture passage to be studied, background notes for the teacher on historical information regarding the setting of the Scripture story, and suggestions for additional class work and activities appropriate to the topic.⁷ In the primary grades the main emphasis in Scripture teaching was "the background of family and community life as Jesus knew it"⁸. For grades four to six, the selected stories from the Old Testament were "action and adventure oriented" and "rich in picturesque detail". They were "about men and women to whom God was the greatest reality, however primitive and undeveloped their ideas may have been. The heroes of the early Hebrews, sometimes savage and primitive, appeal to the young child."⁹ The stories and parables from the New Testament selected for inclusion in the program were deemed "incomparable for telling".¹⁰

The teachers' manuals were organized thematically as follows: Grade I - The Friend of Little Children; Grade II - Stories of God and Jesus; Grade III - Jesus and His Friends; Grade IV - Servants of God; Grade V - Leaders of God's

⁷Ibid., 10.

⁸Ibid., 11.

⁹Ibid., 12.

¹⁰Ibid., 11.

People; Grade VI - Jesus and the Kingdom; Grade VII - The Story of Jesus according to Mark; Grade VIII - The Ethical Teachings of Jesus. "A Summary of the Table of Contents of the Guide Books for Instructors in Public Schools"¹¹ is included as Appendix A.

The program depended on compliance with traditional views of the place of religion in the education of children. Although accepted widely in post-war society, it began to unravel by the 1960s. The widespread rejection of the program after 1970, however, encouraged conservative Christians to lobby for Christian teaching in the schools precisely for this reason. This polarity continues to affect the question of religion in the public schools.

The program was titled "Programme for Religious Education in the Public Schools". However, the curricular and pedagogical contexts of the program will be addressed only insofar as these relate to Protestant religious instruction.

2. Related Works

While a substantial amount of literature exists on the history of Ontario education, the place of Protestant doctrines within it, other than Victorian moral precepts, has

¹¹[Inter-Church Committee]. "A Summary of the Table of Contents of the Guide Books for Instructors in Public Schools", 1961. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

received little attention. For example, Curtis¹² has viewed religion within the context of a bourgeois project to reshape society along middle class lines. He emphasized the fascination of bourgeois educators with the "values of regularity, orderliness, predictability, reliability, sobriety, intellectualism, respect for property, religion and the ever elusive 'cheerful and willing obedience' to authority."¹³ He was interested in applying sociocritical theory to the history of the construction of the educational system in nineteenth-century Ontario. In a similar work, Prentice,¹⁴ a social historian, has written about early Ontario education. Prentice's concern was the expansion of the professional bureaucracy into state education and its concern to adumbrate class conflict. She has noted that Christianity was prominent in the opening and closing exercises of schools, and that Ryerson put pressure on school bureaucrats and teachers to conform to these.¹⁵ There was no provision for mandatory religious instruction in the classroom with a prescribed curriculum until 1944.

¹²Bruce Curtis, True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 14.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Alison Prentice, The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁵Ibid., 128-9.

Tomkins¹⁶ has presented a broad account of Canadian education focussing on curriculum. He has made a few brief references to religion in the curriculum. He has discussed the importance of religion and morality in the Victorian curriculum, noting the attempts of reformers to teach "moral precepts and standards of conduct by building moral education into all subjects."¹⁷ He has noted also that, following the recommendation of the MacKay Committee in 1969, values education began to replace religion in most Ontario public schools.¹⁸ While Tomkins has given brief mention of this development, he has not examined the Ontario religious education program of 1944. In many histories of education, the 1944 program of Protestant religion in the public schools has received little attention.

The program of 1944 was influenced by the war and the renewed imperialism and traditionalism which it brought. Robert Stamp, in The Schools of Ontario--1876-1976, has situated the 1944 program of religious education within the broad framework of education for democratic citizenship which characterized the period during and after World War II.¹⁹ Stamp viewed Premier George Drew's program in religion as training for such citizenship.²⁰ As Stamp has stated: "In

¹⁶George S. Tomkins, A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1986).

¹⁷Ibid., 60.

¹⁸Ibid., 346.

¹⁹Robert Stamp, The Schools of Ontario.1876-1976 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1980, 180-2.

²⁰Ibid.

Drew's mind, a 'Christian society' and a 'democratic society' were closely linked, if not synonymous."²¹ Moreover, when the religious education question became controversial during the election of 1945, Conservative leader Drew entered the election by charging that the Liberals would take religion out of the schools and that the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), because of its divisions over the issue, had no clear platform. Portraying himself as a defender of Christianity, Drew supported the program as long as he held office²² and even in later years.²³ Evidence gathered in this research supports Stamp's interpretation.

Manzer²⁴ has made only brief reference to the issue of religion in Ontario schools. He has explained non-sectarian education as a triumph of conservative liberalism under Ryerson.²⁵ He has mentioned the campaign by the Protestant churches, begun in 1927, to institute religion in the schools.²⁶ The thrust of his argument was that liberal ideology underlay educational policy in Canadian schools. Regarding religious instruction, he has recapitulated briefly the shift from mandatory religious instruction to an optional multicultural, multifaith program by 1990. However, his book

²¹Ibid., 181

²²Ibid., 181-182

²³"Religion in the Schools", Kirkland Lake Northern Daily News (April 1, 1969), 4.

²⁴Robert Manzer, Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1994),

²⁵Ibid., 55.

²⁶Ibid., 172-3.

is so broad in scope that he has not dealt with religious ideas in detail.

Gidney and Millar have recognized that "throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the churches remained major participants in the educational enterprise."²⁷ They have recognized the influence of Victorian culture with respect to segregation of the sexes, the *Christian* family, patterns of authority, and class differences throughout the nineteenth century. They have recognized also that because the secondary schools became secularized later in the nineteenth century, the influence of Protestant clergy decreased accordingly.

The emphasis in this dissertation is upon how the Protestant churches were able to get their characteristic teachings into the regular public elementary school program. This campaign, which culminated in the 1944 program, had its genesis in the nineteenth century. The role of the churches in the actual program and the role of the churches during the eclipse of the program will be investigated. The present study is concerned with explaining how a once acceptable program came to be rejected even by the participating churches themselves. In looking at the influence of the Protestant churches, it is important to consider their doctrines and catechisms because the program was ultimately

²⁷R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 31.

rejected by its detractors due to its Protestant doctrinal exclusivity.

Nineteenth century Canadian theological history has been researched by Michael Gauvreau.²⁸ He has shown that evangelical theology persisted in the mainline churches well into the twentieth century, even as the threats of liberalism and social science were displacing it in academia. The framers of the antecedents to the 1944 program paid little attention to the claims of liberal scholarship, as is evidenced by their conservatism. There was a consensus within Ontario Protestantism which Gauvreau has named 'orthodoxy'.²⁹ Evangelical themes continued to be explicated in preaching by many clergy, even while the more theologically literate among them attempted to address challenges such as Darwinism, critical views of Scripture, and explanations of reality based on the experimental and social sciences. The theology of the 1944 program was not concerned with the liberal-fundamentalist debate in religion, but its weak orthodoxy attracted critics from both the left and the right. The watered-down biblical information presented in the program did not survive without serious attacks from liberals and fundamentalists. The 1944 program was for elementary school students. This may be a reason why the insights of scholarship were rarely canvassed. However, Gauvreau's work

²⁸Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada to the Great Depression (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

²⁹Ibid., 5.

is important in order to situate Protestant religious education within the wider theological context. The content of the 1944 program, meant for young children, neglected most modern theological scholarship in favour of a simple view which presupposed a naive literalism. The child was expected to accept uncritically the Bible-based lessons in the program.

McKillop³⁰ has written about nineteenth-century Canadian intellectual history in colleges and universities. He has acknowledged that clergy were influenced by the debates over such issues as Darwinism, doubts about the Bible, and philosophical challenges to orthodoxy. However, the promoters of religious education in the classroom, clerical or lay, were little affected because they based their religious beliefs upon faith. McKillop has noted that even when new ideas triumphed over the old religion, "the moral imperative in anglo-Canadian thought remained a constant presence".³¹

Previous dissertations and theses have focused on philosophical, political, and social factors related to religion in public education. Coppin³² has studied underlying philosophical issues of religion in secular education. He has discussed the major philosophical problems of having

³⁰A. B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979).

³¹Ibid., flyleaf.

³²Norman Roderick Coppin, "Religion in Secular Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Calgary, 1984).

religious studies in elementary and secondary schools. He has claimed that religious events and the human responses to certain claims in religion, and therefore religion itself, have effected significant events in history and culture. He has concluded that secular religious education can be legitimately investigated wherever history, culture, and religion intersect. Young³³ has discussed the problem of whether or not religious education is possible within a public school context. He has examined the philosophical and pedagogical implications of such a project and concluded that, while religion could be taught, it must be subject to open examination by those involved.

Organ³⁴ has shown how denominational schooling can exist in a publicly-funded provincial system. He has chosen Newfoundland as an example. This option has been mooted by Christian fundamentalists and other religious minorities.

Dyck³⁵ has studied the place of religious and moral education in the public schools of Ontario in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. He has concluded that religious education is desirable, essential, and unavoidable for public schools in a pluralistic society and that moral and religious education should continue to be linked. He preferred that

³³Gordon Leslie Young, "Religion, Knowledge, and Public Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1985).

³⁴Gerry Organ, "A Historical Analysis of the Development of the Religious Education Program of the Integrated School System" (Masters Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland), 1991.

³⁵John Edgar Dyck, "Religion and Moral Education in Ontario Public Schools: A Pluralist Response" (Masters thesis, Regent College, Vancouver, 1987).

students be allowed to study moral issues in both a religious and a secular way.

Matthews³⁶ and Schweyer³⁷ have studied the historical development of religious education in Ontario schools. Matthews, an educational bureaucrat, was sympathetic toward religion in the schools. His study focused on elementary education. Although now dated, his dissertation remains valuable for historic details to 1950. Schweyer has provided a brief historical survey of religious education in Ontario schools from the early nineteenth century to 1973. Neither author has treated the specifically religious or theological foundations of the 1944 program in depth.

In a brief study, Mobley³⁸ concentrated on the campaign by the Protestant churches to implement the 1944 program of religious education in the schools of Ontario. He concluded that this foray into politics on the part of the churches was ill-advised and ultimately detrimental to their image. In his view, the strategy of the Protestant churches in the field of education was a reaction to fears about the growing Roman Catholic school system. He was more narrowly concerned with the program as an anomalous event than with its earlier historical and theological genesis.

³⁶W. D. E. Matthews, "The History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1950).

³⁷Douglas Schweyer, "The History and Development of Religious Education in Ontario Schools" (Masters thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, 1973).

³⁸J. A. Mobley, "Protestant Support of Religious Instruction in Ontario Public Schools" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1962).

Thomas³⁹ has examined aspects of church-state relations concerning religious education in the public schools of Ontario. He has recognized that Ontario society was greatly influenced by the Protestant churches and he was familiar with the influences of the churches on public education. He has written an account of the political background of the 1944 religious education program which has been helpful as a context for the present study. However, he has mentioned the historic doctrines and teachings of the churches and the period of church unions and cooperation only in passing.

While the philosophical, social, and political context is very important to an understanding of the 1944 religious education program, explanations which contribute to a clear picture of its specifically religious and theological bases are also important. These theological and religious bases have received little attention. Although the 1944 program is addressed in part in some of the studies cited above, little research has been published about its theological and ecclesiastical foundations.

Robert Stamp⁴⁰ has studied fully religious exercises in Ontario schools. Therefore, this topic will not be examined closely here. This dissertation is concerned with the portion of the program which consisted of Bible study.

³⁹Theodore Thomas, "The Protestant Churches and the Religious Issue in Ontario Public Schools" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1972).

⁴⁰Robert Stamp, Religious Exercises in Elementary and Secondary Schools, (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1986).

A key reason for the genesis of the program was a shift from a perception of doctrinal incompatibility among the Protestant denominations in the early nineteenth century to a later willingness to downplay differences in favour of a strategic alliance aimed at a program of Bible-centred education in the public schools. The study of this development has necessitated an examination of the churches and their interaction over the century preceding the installation of the program.

3. Method

While other lines of investigation have been, and are, possible, the present study is an attempt to describe clearly, accurately, and fairly the history of Protestantism and the public schools of Ontario over a period exceeding a century. Such longterm investigations have been undertaken fruitfully by the religious historian, Jean Delumeau in more than thirty monographs.⁴¹ One of these investigations, Sin and Fear,⁴² is translated into English. In this work,

⁴¹Examples of Delumeau's monographs include Vie Économique et Sociale de Rome dans la Seconde Moitié du XVI siècle, 2 vol. (Paris: De Boccard, 1957-59); Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire (Paris: P.U.F., 1971); L'Italie de Botticelli à Bonaparte, (Paris: A. Colin, 1974); La Première Communion: Quatre Siècles d'Histoire (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1987); Les Malheurs des Temps: Histoire des Fléaux et des Calamités en France (Paris: Larousse, 1987); L'Aveu et le Pardon: Les Difficultés de la Confession, XIII^e - XVIII^e Siècle (Paris: Fayard, 1990); Histoire des Pères et de la Paternité (Paris: Larousse, 1990).

⁴²Jean Delumeau, Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture in the 13th-18th Centuries. Translated by Eric Nicholson (New York: St.

Delumeau has taken up the religious theme of sin, a theological category, over a wide period in order to explain its continuing impact on modern society by providing "a historical record of an era rapidly receding into the past."⁴³ His "historical inquiry"⁴⁴ has aimed to document the changes over time within the cultural phenomenon of an era by examining it in three parts. The first part entailed tracing the origins and causes of that phenomenon back in time. The second part was one of investigating that phenomenon within the world in which it was formerly perceived and practiced. The third part was intended to close the circle by demonstrating diffusion of the phenomenon.⁴⁵

This dissertation is concerned with change over time in the religious instruction of children in public schools, specifically the change from an optional religion program of the nineteenth century, to the appearance of the mandatory program in 1944 and its abandonment in 1990. Therefore, the long view has been taken. Reasons for these developments may not be apparent from a micro-study of each period in isolation.

The vertical axis is chronology. At a critical point, the topic is considered horizontally; it is taken up in greater detail and analyzed in greater depth.

Martin's Press, 1990. Originally published as Le Péché et le Peur (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1983).

⁴³Ibid., 4.

⁴⁴Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵Ibid., 4.

This type of exploration has entailed locating relevant primary and secondary resources which shed light on the churches and their ventures into public education. On occasion, the facts and ideas unearthed from the sources have been analyzed for their significance for an understanding of historical and theological trends, and their impact on religious history in Ontario over a period of more than a century. Therefore, the sources have been cited often at length in order to represent more clearly their historical flavour.

Certain premises underlie this investigation. First, the religious education program of 1944 was part of a strategy by conservative Ontarians to reassert the mythical past of loyalty to Crown and Empire and traditional religion. This past was largely a dream of white, Protestant Anglo-Ontario. It did not endure intact in a multicultural milieu.

Second, Protestantism itself has two poles, Law and Gospel. Protestant catechesis and religion have stressed Law, God's judgment, more often than God's mercy. During the present inquiry, a legalistic interpretation of the tradition was found to prevail. The 'Social Gospel' of God's grace and forgiveness and the need to reform society, advocated by radical clergy such as J. S. Woodsworth and Salem Bland,⁴⁶ played little part in the thinking of promoters of public school religious education. They wanted to entrench the

⁴⁶Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century, 183-4.

status quo. The 1944 program was more an attempt to 'lay down the Law' than to lay bare causes of social injustice.

Ontario was conservative--indeed it was governed by the Conservative party from 1943 to 1985. The conservatism of the Protestant Churches was both a factor in Ontario's history and, by about 1970, an anachronism. The major churches did rediscover 'Gospel', but this rediscovery probably came too late. The assumption in this project has been that while the Protestant community shaped theology, theology also shaped the Protestant community.

4. Sources

The primary materials for the present research are archival. Major sources consulted have been the following: the collection, "Religion in the Schools--Ontario" and the papers of "The Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in the Schools" at the Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada; "The Historical Collection" of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (which included the Teachers' Guides of the 1944 program and the Briefs to the Hope Commission of 1945-50); the Briefs to the Mackay Committee of 1965-69 located at the Archives of Ontario; the minutes of various church bodies located at the Archives of the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, and United Churches; the correspondence files on "Religion in the Schools" of the Ontario Jewish Congress located at the Ontario Jewish

Archives; the Minutes of the Montreal-Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada located at the National Archives of Quebec at Montreal; the Minutes of the Ottawa Presbytery, United Church, located at the Archives of the City of Ottawa; various historic catechisms, pamphlets, and church records. These materials have been amassed, analyzed, and organized. Inferences have been drawn. The materials are necessary for a clear understanding of the role of the churches in the genesis and development of the program.

The dissertations and theses cited in the text were consulted at the National Archives of Canada or ordered from the Interlibrary Loan Service of the University of Ottawa. Government Publications concerning the program were unearthed at the various sources named above.

A study of the archival material has shown how the churches affected, and were affected by, the 1944 program. The church-related documents were most useful in determining denominational doctrines as well as policies concerning religion in the schools. The program of 1944 was distinct from the other subjects in the regular curriculum. The religious content sprang from the Protestant churches, not from the educational bureaucracy. While the present research emphasizes developments within the churches, the significance of the program within the context of the history of Ontario is considered as well.

Major authors who stimulated thinking were William Westfall⁴⁷ and John Webster Grant.⁴⁸ Westfall's thesis, that there was a "growing religious consensus" and "an informal Protestant alliance on a large number of moral issues" between 1850 and 1881⁴⁹, has been borne out. How this Protestant culture shaped the problem of religious education in the schools is taken up in the present study. Grant's treatment of the history of the major denominations of nineteenth-century Ontario was helpful for its deft portrayal of Protestantism. Neither Grant nor Westfall have discussed religious education in the schools in detail. It is this author's contention that both cooperation between churches and church unions during the period 1875-1925 were critical to an understanding of Protestant influences on religion in the schools.

5. Overview

Chapter I is a survey of the history of the question of Christian religious teaching in the public schools to 1950. The emphasis is on the introduction of a mandatory program of Christian religious education in 1944. This chapter lays the groundwork for a more detailed examination of theological and

⁴⁷William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

⁴⁸John Webster Grant, A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

⁴⁹Westfall, 11.

ecclesiastical developments as well as providing a basic chronology and overview.

In Chapter II, "Theologies in the Classroom in the Nineteenth Century", the use of catechisms and other religious material in teaching children is discussed. The particular religious ethos of each denomination is explored. It is posited that there were differences among the churches over doctrine, even though consensus on moral and social issues began to emerge. Denominations were as divided in early Upper Canada by doctrine, polity, and views on education as secularists and conservative Christians are today. They did not begin to contemplate common action until they realized that their many solitudes could accomplish little for the church or the state.

In Chapter III, "The Emergence of a Protestant Consensus", Ontario Protestants, depicted as often poles apart in doctrine, are found to be bibliocentric. While they could not agree always on a specific interpretation of the Scriptures, the Bible was the most important book in the world to them. This explains a coordinated effort to obtain Bible reading in the public schools which their children attended. This hope has a long history which only became effective by 1930, when a graded program of Bible readings was introduced into the schools. There was agreement that the Bible readings were not to be interpreted in a sectarian manner.

The cooperation of the churches with the state is the focus of Chapter IV. The contribution of the Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education to the development of the religious education program, the official positions of the major Protestant denominations represented on this committee, the issue of control, and the responses of the Committee and the churches to the Regulations of 1944 are presented as part of the process of making the mandated Christian religious education program a reality in the public schools of Ontario.

In Chapter V, "Protestantism in the Public Schools", the problem of the Teachers' Guides, and the continuing involvement of the Inter-Church Committee and the churches in the program are outlined. The development of opposition to the program on the part of minority groups, which viewed the religious education program as a course in Protestant indoctrination, is examined.

The rather abrupt decline and disappearance of the religious education program is outlined in Chapter VI, "The Secular Public School". The Mackay Committee Report of 1969 recommended the incidental teaching of religion, rather than the existing indoctrinational program in the schools. In 1990, the Watson Report recommended the abandonment of the program in favour of a mandatory, multifaith, non-indoctrinational program of studies focusing on the world religions. Although the program was not dropped immediately, it began to decline. In 1990, the courts struck down the regulations concerning the program.

A guiding question throughout this research has been: What were the historical and theological bases or foundations of the 1944 program? More specifically, how were the churches able to get the religious content of the program into the schools, how did the churches continue to be involved once the program was mandated, and what role did the churches play in the program during the period of time that it was being abandoned?

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION QUESTION IN ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO 1950

1. The Historical Background: 1791 - 1943

It is often believed that the province of Ontario was founded and maintained on Christian principles and morality. That, certainly, was a desideratum of the British governing class. Simcoe, governor in 1791, aimed to "inculcate in all ranks and descriptions of people a sober and an industrious, religious, and conscientious spirit which shall be the best security that a government can have for its internal preservation"¹. But in the early days, churches and schools, which were the preferred agents for this inculcation, were few in number and scattered throughout the province. Early schools were private and denominational and were open only to those who could afford the tariff--that is, the gentry. Teachers were often clergy who supplemented their stipends by taking in students. The curriculum was British in pattern. While religion was incidental to it, the aim was to prepare students with a modicum of instruction thought necessary to their station in society. Some of the gentry hired private

¹J. G. Hodgins, A Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada from 1791 - 1876, 28 vols. (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, Printers, 1894), 1:8.

tutors or sent their children abroad for their education. Most settlers were too beset by the challenges of the backwoods and lacked cash enough, or inclination enough, to secure formal education for their children, who were needed to work at home or to pursue a gainful occupation as soon as possible. That is not to say that they would not acquire some basic literacy or numeracy at home or in a Sunday School. Full-time study was beyond their reach.

The influence of religion was not negligible during the early period of settlement. In the towns and villages there might be a church or at least a resident clergyman. Even in the backwoods missionaries and preachers visited periodically. These visits were great occasions upon which baptisms were administered and other ministrations exercised. If the minister was licensed to do so, he performed marriages. Any other worship or devotion was left to the heads of families who might possess a Bible or prayer book. While the Church of England was slow to develop due to lack of clergy and desultory finances, Methodist circuit riders, often based in the United States, spread their evangelical gospel to many in the sparsely-populated province. There were also Roman Catholic and Presbyterian settlers and lesser numbers belonging to other denominations and sects. No group dominated the political scene, except for an Anglican oligarchy in the early years.

In 1807, public schools were authorized in each of eight areas of the province, but they were intended for the gentry.

By 1816 the population of the province had expanded to the point that provision for the education of the populace was made in the Common Schools Act. The institutions authorized by this act were rudimentary and poorly-staffed. There was little mention of religion or morality. In the same year, suggested rules for Schools and Teachers for Niagara and the Home District provided for opening prayers before school, religious instruction on Wednesday and Saturday morning, and permission to teach a catechism approved by the parents.

In 1820, a small amount of money was voted for Sunday Schools. This was discontinued in 1833. A half-hearted measure for Sunday Schools could not remedy the perceived lack of religious instruction in weekday schools.

In 1835, Dr. Charles Duncombe made an extensive survey of education in Europe and the United States. He advocated religious and moral teaching in the schools to be given by the classroom teacher². Nonetheless, instruction in religion was irregular, even though the Bible was used as a reader.

There was little opposition to Christian teaching in the schools, but little agreement as to the form of it. John Strachan, Anglican priest and future bishop, wanted the doctrines of the Church of England taught. Egerton Ryerson, Methodist minister, favoured a voluntary system which could accommodate the local situation. Because agreement on

²Ibid., 2:303-304.

doctrine could not be secured, no uniform system was ever adopted in the nineteenth century. Ryerson's bug-bear was sectarian controversy. When he became the head of the education department in 1844, he was careful to try to avoid it. This greatly curtailed the elaboration of content in any provincial religious education scheme.

The School Act of 1843 left the question of religious education largely untouched, except to say that students could receive the religious instruction approved by their parents and guardians. The first statutory acknowledgement of religious teaching in the public schools provided that no child be required to attend devotional exercises or religious instruction to which parents or guardians objected.

In 1844, Dr. Egerton Ryerson was appointed Assistant Superintendent for the education department of the province. From 1846 to 1876, Ryerson held the office of Chief Superintendent of Education for Canada West. His aim was to foster a non-sectarian approach to religious education in the schools by emphasizing the tenets of 'common Christianity'. These Ryerson defined in terms of moral precepts held in common by all Christians. In Ryerson's opinion, only this approach would avoid sectarian controversy. The difficulty of defining exactly what was held in common by Christian denominations was to hamper the complete acceptance of Ryerson's program.

Religious education was left to local boards to define in the School Act of 1846. The tone was to be non-

denominational and based on the Bible and common Christianity. Bishop Strachan continued to recommend an Anglican curriculum, at least for Anglican students. He lamented the lack of religious teaching and therefore proposed parochial schools as the remedy.³ Anglicans under Strachan never possessed the numbers or influence to overturn Ryerson's system. Both Ryerson and Strachan agreed that Christianity, however defined, was the basis for proper education.

The implementation of a curriculum for religion was left to local boards. Religious instruction was placed on a voluntary basis. In the Act of 1857, religious study could be left to visiting clergy after school hours. Where this provision was followed, some clergy did visit the schools, but there was no uniformity in the matter. While religious education was still a desideratum of almost all, the form of it was vague and optional, based on virtues which Christians supposedly held in common--piety, justice, truth, love of country, humanity, universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, chastity, moderation, temperance, and other virtues.⁴ Bishop Strachan was convinced, however, that the voluntary system of religious education was secular and godless.⁵ Ryerson continued to argue for a non-compulsory

³Ibid., 16:115.

⁴Ibid., 9:197.

⁵Ibid., 6:148.

system, and often quoted statistics in his annual reports to illustrate that his policy was bearing fruit.

Until 1884, religious exercises were left to the local trustees to implement. In practice, this meant to the teacher. However, according to Ryerson's yearly reports on education, there was increasing compliance with the recommendation that religious exercises be incorporated into the school day. Religious instruction was more haphazard. Optional instruction by the clergy before or after school hours was not general. However, there were a few attempts to teach Christian Morals, the instructor being the classroom teacher. A "general lesson" based on Scripture had been made optional in 1847. From 1871 to 1875, Christian Morals was part of the senior program. These efforts became controversial. The popular press cautioned that prescribed religious exercises or instruction violated the separation of church and state.⁶ Moreover, by the 1860's, there had been a tacit acceptance of the idea that religious instruction should be restricted to the Sunday School.

Ryerson had written a book, First Lessons in Christian Morals,⁷ in order to inject some Christian instruction into the curriculum. First Lessons was well-received initially, but then criticized by the Baptists as being too sectarian! The grounds for this complaint were unspecified. An

⁶C. E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: Gage, 1957), 329.

⁷Egerton Ryerson, First Lessons in Christian Morals (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1871).

alternate text was permitted. In 1874 the subject of Christian Morals was quietly dropped as mandatory. Ryerson had not been able to define satisfactorily the common Christianity which he advocated throughout his tenure.

Dr. Ryerson's First Lessons in Christian Morals was very conventionally Christian. It is difficult to understand that there were objections to it to on the grounds of sectarianism, as most Christians of the day would have subscribed to its precepts. In language that seems rather advanced for children, the book stressed piety and duty to God and others. No moral teaching of the major denominations was absent. The whole was based on the Ten Commandments and the Old and New Testaments, supplemented by abundant Scriptural references and quotations by respected British theologians.⁸

The Bible was taken literally by Ryerson. It was presumed to be inerrant and unified--the word of God. There was no leeway for skepticism or doubt. In speaking of morality, Ryerson referred primarily to personal virtue. The usual vices were castigated: stealing, lying, 'sensuality', drunkenness, gambling, etc. The virtues of honesty, frugality, sobriety, and industry were extolled. While Ryerson commended the theological disciplines as a higher study than secular learning, he commended the usefulness of the latter, particularly agriculture. As may be expected

⁸Ryerson, First Lessons, 11-50.

from the pen of a prominent Methodist, Ryerson's book stressed the importance of conversion to Christianity, but in the context of baptism and first communion rather than as an independent action. There was no sense of free-thinking, private interpretation, or salvation apart from church membership present in Ryerson's book.

The tone of First Lessons in Christian Morals was unremarkable for the time. Ryerson assumed that the teaching of religious principles in the schools would produce hardworking, God-fearing, virtuous, and obedient citizens for Ontario. Although others would have shared that belief, the goal of discovering doctrines to undergird public morality which would be acceptable to all proved to be a chimera.

Ryerson's problem was one of authority. While nineteenth-century Ontario was a Christian society, religious belief was a private matter. There was no organ of the church powerful enough to compel compliance with its dictates. Church membership was voluntary, but attendance at school became customary and obligatory. How to implement religious and moral teaching in a pluralistic society was Ryerson's dilemma. First Lessons appealed to the authority of scripture. This, Protestants at least, were bound to admit. Since no uncontested magisterium with authority to interpret the Scriptures existed in the nineteenth century (some would say any century), there was bound to be dissent from any attempt to define doctrines of universal acceptance. Moral precepts need some basis of authority if they are to be

followed. Because revelation and reason admit of various interpretations, the best that could be achieved was a discussion or a dialogue about religious authority--hardly agreement on what constituted common Christianity.

In 1876, Ryerson retired. His benevolent, yet paternalistic, oversight of Ontario education had created a common school system in which religious education was recommended yet rarely required. Ryerson was committed to voluntarism in religious matters, but he continued to believe that some elusive, non-controversial core of teaching could be adopted as a basis for religion in the classroom. He attempted such a project in First Lessons in Christian Morals. Christians in Ontario shared a common origin and early history, but they did not agree sufficiently on the interpretation of scripture or tradition to endorse any system of universal Christian education, whether optional or prescriptive. Most denominational groups agreed that religious teaching was desirable, but none were able to define a content or method for such teaching which would have secured lasting general approval and consent.

Pluralism, in the nineteenth-century context, connoted a diversity of opinion which could not be molded into a piece by legislation, exhortation, or any other means, except the prospect of mutual benefit. During the period of Dr. Ryerson's tenure, there was little of the friendly ecumenical climate of a later period. Denominational rivalries ran deep, not least because of the rancour that surrounded the

Clergy Reserve question. Money realized from the sale of land set apart for the support of the "Protestant" Clergy was a source of dispute between Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, and others until the matter was resolved by an Act of 1853.

In addition, the efforts of Strachan and the Anglicans to establish the Church of England in Canada had occasioned violent opposition by Ryerson and his followers. Relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants were often strained, especially over the question of Roman Catholic separate schools. The anti-Roman Catholic Orange Lodge was active in the province and "No Popery" was a frequent cry from Protestant pulpits. There was little reason to expect much cooperation in the matter of religious education -- even among Protestants. Many would have wished for denominational schools at public expense, but Ryerson considered this too costly and impractical, as evidenced by his remarks in a newspaper article in 1852.⁹ Ryerson's earnest desire that the schools be Christian conflicted with his cautious, democratic, and non-sectarian principles. A common school system based on Christianity was Ryerson's ideal, but he could not secure the necessary consensus for the fulfillment of his dream.

Ryerson was an appointee, not an elected member of the government. Since 1876, there had been ministers of

⁹The Christian Guardian (Nov. 10, 1852), 1

education in Ontario who were also politicians. Those wishing changes in the school system had not hesitated to use political pressure to advance their cause. Advocates of religious education in schools saw clearly their opportunity. In 1878, permission was given to school boards to require teachers to not only use the Bible in the classroom, but to provide rudimentary exegetical commentary.¹⁰ By 1884, Bible reading without comment became optional, and religious exercises became mandatory with the usual exemptions. However, the difficulty of providing a common set of lections became apparent almost immediately.

Partly as a result of the Roman Catholic emphasis on religion in their separate schools, Protestant groups began to urge an equivalent emphasis in public schools.¹¹ By 1881, opening and closing exercises had become general, presaging the regulations of 1884.¹² In 1885, the Minister of Education, George W. Ross, proposed a list of selected Bible readings for use in the schools. This met with initial enthusiasm, but then rejection. As an alternative, the entire Bible was authorized as a basis for lections in 1887. The reasons for the wide rejection of the "Ross Bible" were the suspicion that passages which might offend Roman Catholics were expurgated in it, and the possibility of

¹⁰Phillips, Development of Education, 329.

¹¹J.K. Mackay, Religious Information and Moral Development; The Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the Province of Ontario (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1969), 8.

¹²Phillips, Development of Education, 329.

"mutilation of Scripture".¹³ For a time, the matter rested uneasily with no change until the next century.

Some advocates of religious education pointed to the poor preparation of teachers as a reason for the paucity of religious teaching in nineteenth-century public schools. The real difficulty lay in securing the agreement of a religiously-diverse population. Local trustees to whom the implementation of religious education was left, preferred to avoid the divisive potential of a mandatory system. The appearance of compulsory religious exercises had occasioned controversy after all. Mainline denominations lobbied the government for increased attention to religion in the schools. Labour groups, Jews, and some Baptists opposed mandatory religious instruction. One suspects that governments of the day would have liked the issue to go away. It did not.

During the period from World War I to World War II, the belief that perceived declining moral behaviour among youth could be alleviated by augmenting religious education in schools occasioned agitation for such education. The proponents of increased religion in the schools tended to be members of the mainline churches which had increased in adherents, particularly in urban centres, by the early years of the twentieth century. An interdenominational committee of Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and

¹³Mackay Report, 9.

Congregationalists, augmented by other groups in 1929, produced a graded program of Readers for schools. However, these were judged too costly for general implementation.

In 1927, the Ontario Religious Education Council, a committee of representatives from eight Protestant denominations, had been formed to secure mandatory religious education taught by clergy during the school day. In 1939, a committee of the Ontario Educational Association, a voluntary body of Ontario educators, school trustees, and ratepayers groups, proposed that religion be included in the regular curriculum. This proposal met with widespread approval from trustees and the church-affiliated public. By this time, the Inter-Church Committee had prepared a syllabus for the use of clergy and teachers with the cooperation of the Ontario Religious Education Council. The opportunity to implement such material came soon afterwards. With regular teachers as instructors and with written examinations required, the syllabus was used in local trials. In other instances, increasing numbers of clergy gave lessons in religion. Some schools allowed clergy to teach one-half hour before official opening hours in order to circumvent the existing regulations. Local school boards could allow deviation from traditional practice by such questionable, yet technically legal, subterfuge by simply resolving to do so. By 1941, when the call for regular religious instruction in the

schools had mounted, the practice had become common enough to encourage further developments.¹⁴

Other efforts by coalitions of Protestant Christians, particularly the Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education founded in 1936, were able to secure a more lasting influence. As interest in promoting religious education in the schools increased between the World Wars, the Inter-Church Committee and other groups became increasingly active. The aim was to establish religious education in the schools and to foster the reading of the Christian Bible. As a result of the challenges of war and depression and the rise of socialist elements, the climate of religious opinion had become more conservative. Religion was seen, as it had been in previous centuries, as an antidote to societal collapse--or at least fragmentation--in the face of economic disorder, liberal tendencies, or the enemy without. Local action was taken by religiously-motivated citizens to supplement the work of the Inter-Church Committee.¹⁵ The right of clergy to appoint qualified representatives to teach in the schools was reinstated in 1941 at the urging of the Inter-Church Committee. When the standards required of these representatives were approved by the committee in 1942, they

¹⁴E. R. McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools: Based on the Minutes of the Inter-Church Committee on Religion in the Schools, 1922-1965 (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1965), 14-15.

¹⁵A full discussion of the work of this committee is included in Chapter IV.

included religious knowledge, education and training not common for the laity of the time.¹⁶

As the movement for religious education in the schools expanded its influence, the question of adequate materials arose. Many clergy used British texts, such as the "Cambridgeshire Syllabus" guide books.¹⁷ However, a need for materials which suited the Canadian context became evident. This deficiency was never corrected completely, even with the development of Canadian versions of British texts during and after the war. The decision to employ British guide books as a model for Canadian versions was ill-advised in the long term, because the development of the British system of religious education in public schools had followed a different course. However, the demand for materials had seemed to excuse expediency.

During World War II, the forces for the implementation of religious education programs in public schools increased their efforts. Perhaps because of the struggle with fascism, or in tandem with the threat of the social dislocation occasioned by wartime conditions, many Ontario citizens sought solace in the comforts of traditional religion. Interest in the religious training of youth rose steadily throughout the war. That is not to say that those opposed to legislated religion in the schools had been silenced. The

¹⁶Mackay Report, 141.

¹⁷These manuals, published by the Religious Education Press in England in 1939 were revised to become the core of the Ontario program. The revisions were mainly cosmetic.

times favoured the religiously conservative element of Ontario society which had been almost galvanized into action by the war. The moment for the political expression of the conservative agenda was at hand.

2. The Regulations of 1944: A Change of Policy

In 1943, there began a process of change in the policy regarding religious education in Ontario. Prior to that time, the policy of Ryerson had remained in place with few alterations. Ryerson's policy had been that the state provided the facilities for religious education, but that the teaching was done primarily by the parents, guardians, and pastors. Although locally there had been considerable experimentation in the classroom with religious education curricula, the official policy remained intact throughout Ryerson's tenure as Chief Superintendent of Education and until the introduction of new regulations in 1944. The purpose of this section is to outline the shift in policy of 1943-44 and to comment on the implementation what can be considered a drastic change.

On the strong recommendation of the Inter-church Committee on Week-day Religious Education, the government of Ontario began considering how and if compulsory religious education could be introduced into Ontario's classrooms. The general recommendations of the Committee were as follows:

1. That it would be wise to proceed cautiously in the matter.
2. That the worthy traditions and healthy co-operation which now exist between the Church and the Public School should not only be preserved but, if possible, strengthened.
3. That the following fundamental principles . . . should be noted.

(a) That the purpose of all this work should be instructional and religious. It should include not merely a knowledge of the Scriptures but the relation of those Scriptures to life and conduct.

(b) That in view of the responsibility that rests upon the Church for the teaching of religion, the Church must always have a voice in the choice of what is to be taught in this field, and who is to teach it, in elementary and secondary schools and in teacher training schools.

Those who give religious teaching in the schools should be willing, competent, and should also be acceptable to the Church.¹⁸

It was clear that the Inter-Church Committee on Week-day Religious Education viewed religion in the schools as the domain of the Church, not only in establishing what was to be taught, but in selecting who was to teach it.

The specific recommendations of the Committee, not all of which were adopted, were the following:

1. That the Department of Education should prepare and publish a statement setting forth its views as to the purpose and function of education and the place of religion therein, along the lines embodied in the Introduction to the Programme of Studies, 1937.
2. That in view of the place already made for a worship period at the beginning of each school day, the Department of Education should provide further guidance and help for teachers in the performance of these duties by publishing and making available for use in the schools a Worship Book for Schools, such as has been prepared by the Inter-Church Committee on Week-Day Religious Education.

¹⁸E. R. McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools: Based on the Minutes of the Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in Schools, 1922 - 1965 (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), 25.

3. That the Department of Education should extend and strengthen the training now given by the Church in Normal Schools in two ways:

(a) By providing more adequate instruction in courses on the Bible.

(b) By providing instruction and guidance in order that teachers would know how to use their opportunities so that "the curriculum . . . should be pervaded by the spirit of religion (Programme of Studies, 1937, Page 9).

4. That the Department of Education should make provision in the Ontario College of Education and in the Ontario Training College for Technical Teachers, for courses similar to those recommended for the Normal Schools as set forth in Number 3 above.

5. To enable present teachers to equip themselves for better service in this respect, courses similar to those mentioned in No. 3 and No. 4 for Normal Schools and Training Colleges should be provided in Teachers' Summer Schools.

6. That persons chosen to give religious instruction in the elementary and secondary schools should have the following qualifications:

(a) A knowledge of the needs and interests of children of various ages;

(b) A knowledge of the best methods of teaching various ages;

(c) Acquaintance with the present Public School curriculum for the different grades;

(d) A knowledge of Scriptures and Scripture truth and its adequacy for the needs of boys and girls in various stages of their development;

(e) A living Christian experience;

(f) A definite relationship with the Christian Church;

(g) If neither a minister nor a regular school teacher, the teacher of religion should have academic standing equivalent to high school graduation and special training equivalent to that required by the Religious Education Council of Canada for the Standard Leadership Training diploma.¹⁹

The Inter-Church Committee had taken the opportunity to provide detailed recommendations on the statement required from the Department of Education on the teaching of religion, appropriate education of teachers of religion, and the qualifications required to provide this instruction to

¹⁹Ibid., 25-6.

children. Only those living the Christian experience and in a definite relationship with a Christian Church were viewed as potential candidates.

Suggestions on how the Education Act could be amended to accommodate the proposed change in policy were cited. The thrust of these recommendations was that clergy, teachers, or their deputies, should give religious instruction, and that exemptions from such measures should be allowed any Board of Education that applied for such consideration. Suggestions involving changes in Statutes were made explicit to provide harmony with the fundamental principles of the instructional and religious nature of the project. These suggestions were

1. That every School Board shall make provisions to have religious instruction given in every school by one of the following means:

- (a) By one or more clergymen;

- (b) By one of more lay persons authorized by such clergyman or clergymen, the school teacher being eligible to be chosen as such lay person.

2. That the Minister of Education shall have the authority to exempt any School Board from the operation of Section 1, above, provided the Board shall by resolution ask to be exempted, and submits a statement of reasons for such request.²⁰

Children in the public schools of Ontario were to participate in the program. School Boards could be exempted on presentation to the Minister of a board resolution which detailed reasons for the request.

The problem which presented itself immediately from the outset of the religious education project, as envisaged by

²⁰MacLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 27.

the Committee, was the lack of suitable curricula and textbooks. Suggestions were written as follows:

1. A proper curriculum and set of Teachers' Guides or textbooks are needed. Eventually we should have workbooks for pupils of certain ages.

This is true whether the teaching is done by a clergyman, the school teacher, or other authorized representative.

2. Certain materials already are available. The Inter-Church Committee of Ontario has prepared and published an outline under the title, "Syllabus of Bible Study". This has been and still is widely used, but there are no Teachers' Guides or textbooks to accompany it. In England several syllabuses have been prepared, the best known of which is the Cambridgeshire. To give help on these syllabuses the Religious Education Press of England and the Sheldon Press of England have jointly prepared and published Teachers' Guides in several volumes. These have been widely used and highly approved in many parts of Canada. The International Council of Religious Education is preparing a number of courses some of which are definitely Bible-centred and some more experience centred. Eight textbooks on these courses are available now. Still other groups have been making a similar effort.

We are not completely satisfied with any of these but are willing to co-operate with the Department in working out a suitable curriculum. In any case we would ask for the privilege of being consulted about any curriculum proposed.

3. *A Suggested Course of Action:* It would seem that we might look forward to the publication of a Canadian Edition of the English texts, with such revisions as may be necessary or desirable to make them fit our Canadian constituency. With this there would be a revision of our Ontario Syllabus to make it suit the revised texts. When this is done, the Bible readings now authorized by the Department and on which the present Ontario syllabus is based, should be revised so as to fit the new Syllabus.

4. *An Interim Policy:* We would recommend to the Department as an immediate practical measure and as an interim policy that approval be given for use either of

the Ontario Syllabus or the English texts as a basis for formal teaching.²¹

It is evident that the Inter-Church Committee considered the program to be promoted and developed by the Churches, and that they expected editorial control. The fact that the program harmonized with Premier George Drew's political agenda must be considered serendipity from their point of view.

A summary statement by Robert Stamp tells us all but the details about the regulations of 1944. "The children of Ontario were to be prepared to live in a democratic society which based its way of life on the Christian ideal."²² Premier Drew had identified his plan to extend religion in the public schools with 'the Three Rs' and renewed loyalty to the empire in the 1943 election.²³ Appealing to the conservative element of Ontario society, he implied that these measures were necessary in order to redress the excessive progressivism of the 1930s in education. In wartime, discipline, loyalty, and obedience were deemed as necessary for the schools as well as for the armed services.

The Conservative view prevailed. In the election of 1945, which followed a motion of non-confidence in the Conservative minority government over its handling of religion in the schools, Premier Drew won a landslide victory. In fact, he had successfully portrayed himself as

²¹Ibid., 27 - 28.

²²R. M. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario: 1876-1976 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 181.

²³Ibid., 178.

the defender of Christianity against the CCF-Liberal opposition, which, Drew suggested, wanted Christianity out of the schools.²⁴

3. The Impact of the 1944 Regulations

The government's response to the recommendations of the Interchurch Committee was to make study of the Scriptures mandatory in elementary schools. Two half-hour periods per week were to be devoted to such study. Regulation 13 of 1944 attempted to impose religious exercises and Bible study throughout the province subject only to exemptions granted to children whose parents objected. Many school boards introduced religious exercises and religious education or augmented those that were in place. According to Ministry of Education statistics, few applied for exemption.²⁵

The period following the war was one of increased interest in the Churches and in Christianity in general, and the 1944 Regulations were generally accepted by the public. However, the proposal that the Education Act be amended to reflect all the recommendations of the Interchurch Committee was not accepted by the government. Critics of the Drew government's religious education policy, such as Liberal leader Mitchell Hepburn, objected to any curtailment of religious liberty imposed by legislation. Proponents

²⁴Ibid., 181-2.

²⁵McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 38-42.

countered that parents were free to remove their children from religious education classes at any time, thus protecting their rights. However, the stigma of removal from class and possible psychological damage to the children concerned became a secondary objection.

On the issue of Church-state separation, which rallied opponents to Regulation 13, the Interchurch Committee and its allies responded that no such tradition existed in Canada. The Church had always cooperated with the state for the welfare of society.²⁶

Premier Drew's initiative in public school religious education did not receive unqualified public support. In June 1944, a Gallup poll recorded that forty-nine percent of the Ontario population favoured Drew's policy, forty-four percent were against, and seven percent were undecided.²⁷ Nevertheless, Drew introduced mandatory religious education in the first six grades of the public schools in September of 1944. His later landslide victory in the election of 1945 demonstrated either a change in public opinion or flawed polling procedures.

The introduction of a Protestant curriculum of Bible study in the public schools received general assent, in spite of objections from Jews and other minorities, and from Protestants who felt that public schools should be truly non-

²⁶ McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 37

²⁷ C. E. Phillips, Religion and Our Public Schools (Toronto, Ethical Education Association, 1961), p.9.

sectarian. Ryerson had constructed a system in which religious instruction was optional. The regulations of 1944 were preferential at a time when religious coercion collided with principles of democratic freedom. While Premier Drew assumed that democratic and Christian principles were practically coincident, his assumptions were ill-advised as time would show.

While only 63 of 5405 school boards applied for exemption from the new religious education programme²⁸, this did not necessarily imply a whole-hearted acceptance. The Inter-Church Committee chose to interpret these figures as encouraging. However, the problems of such a wrenching change as the 1944 regulations were substantial and not only administrative. Vocal opposition from civil libertarians, non-Christians, and Protestant groups which could not accept the approach or the content of the new program emerged. The Inter-Church Committee and its allies undertook to explain and gather support for the program. According to Department of Education statistics, religious instruction was being given in the majority of public school classrooms (8,913 of 13,764 by 1947)²⁹. Criticism, however, continued to mount, especially concerning the theological teachings of the Teachers' Guides and texts which pertained to the program.

The basic flaw in the program, which was to become evident in time, was that it could be sustained only in a

²⁸McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 38.

²⁹Ibid., 41.

religiously homogeneous rather than a pluralistic society. Ryerson's policy of optional religious education in the schools, with local self-determination, permitted religious groups access to the schools. No mandatory common curriculum could be enforced. Furthermore, the right of parents to determine the type of religious education of their children was respected. Because religion in the schools was a perennially contentious issue, Ryerson had left the content, provided that it was purportedly "Christian", to pastors, parents, local trustees, and in practice, often to the teacher. The government merely provided the facilities. While Ryerson was careful to avoid particularity, he was also determined to ensure that Christianity pervaded the school system. The program begun in 1944 was mandatory and centrally determined. Ontario society-- more diverse religiously than a century earlier-- had not achieved a consensus in religious matters which would permit indefinitely a program of religious instruction that was determined by the government rather than by local authorities.

Although criticism of the religious education program was voiced since its inception, the program was not seriously challenged in the 1940s or 1950s. Continued support from the major Protestant denominations and public acquiescence seemed to suggest that the innovation was accepted. The fact that few boards of education requested exemption was frequently cited as proof that the program was working and that a

diverse religious population could be served by it.³⁰ While it is likely that many schools followed an assertive program of religious education, it is now clear that such a program was often less than vigorously pursued--notwithstanding the letter and spirit of the regulations.³¹ An exact statistical picture is unavailable.

Enthusiasm for a conservative religious education program born of the Depression and the Second World War waned during the peace which followed. It is now clear that during the war many had thought, as had Premier Drew, that democratic principles were somehow rooted in the Christian tradition. In a speech delivered to the Protestant Women's Federation on May 10, 1944, the Reverend Canon F.H. Wilkinson, rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto, stated that "if Democracy is to remain Christian the basic truths of that religion must be taught in our schools" and that "were it not for Christianity, there would be no Democracy."³² These statements by the incumbent of the largest Anglican parish in Ontario reflected conventional Protestant opinion for some time.³³ When the crisis of the war had passed, less urgency seemed necessary in order to

³⁰Thomas, 204

³¹"Although many boards dropped religious education during this time [the 1950s] they did not necessarily obey the legislation by asking for an exemption". G. A. Watson, The Report of the Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario Public Elementary Schools (Toronto, Government of Ontario, 1990), 11.

³²"Links Democracy to Protestantism," The Globe and Mail (Toronto, May 11, 1944), 16.

³³Thomas, 159

ensure the survival of Christian and democratic principles in society. The appearance of compliance was to be revealed as a sham by the 1960s.

From the beginning, the program had been attacked by minority groups on the basis of religious freedom, state interference, defective theology, and indoctrination. These grounds for complaint, while not effective in causing the immediate abandonment of the program, became more plausible over time.

The groups which rejected the program on the basis that it abrogated religious freedom were Non-Christian, most prominently Ontario Jews, who were vocal in defending their rights in education. To the charge that the religious rights of Jews were ignored by the religious education program, supporters of the program replied that parents could excuse their children from religious education classes. However, Jewish leaders, such as Rabbi Abraham Feinberg of Toronto, objected to the negative psychological effect of such exemption.³⁴

There was no absolute right to religious freedom in Ontario at the time of the Regulations of 1944, even though most reasonable people would grant it as customary. Although religious freedom is enshrined in American constitutional history and law, this has not always been so in Canada.

³⁴Feinberg, Rabbi Abraham L., Religious Instruction in the Public Schools/The Ontario Plan - Good or Bad? (Toronto, n.p., 1945).
[National Archives of Canada and the Ontario Jewish Archives]

While there is no established Church, Christian groups throughout Canada's history have been accorded prerogatives and favours such that the principle of Church-state co-operation was seriously defended in 1945 and later by the Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education.³⁵

When answering the protests of religious minorities, proponents of the religious education program replied that "majorities have rights too".³⁶ To abandon the religious education program because it purportedly infringed minority rights seemed to be undemocratic in the sense that democratic government was the rule of the majority.

In addition to protests from minority religious groups, there was opposition to the 1944 program from civil libertarians. Most of these objected to state interference in religious affairs as unconscionable. The Association for Religious Liberty, a vocal proponent of the separation of church and state, accused Premier Drew of foisting a state religion on the province.³⁷ Its membership consisted of members of minority sects, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as Protestants who felt that too close a connection between church and state was a threat to minorities and ultimately divisive.³⁸

Some Protestants objected to the religious education program on theological grounds. They criticized the program

³⁵McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 37

³⁶Thomas, 224

³⁷Thomas, 198-9

³⁸Thomas, 199-200

for being watered-down and unscriptural.³⁹ Some groups, such as the Independent Baptists, had split with liberal Protestantism earlier in the century; these 'fundamentalists' objected to any compromise of the literal interpretation of Scripture. They had condemned the historical-critical method which they believed challenged the literal interpretation of Scripture and over-emphasized the humanity of Christ. Any program which departed from their conservative theological stance, in spite of or because of its endorsement by mainline liberal churches, met with their condemnation. In their opinion, the mainline churches were apostate and the dissemination of their theological views could not be tolerated in the state-supported schools.

The 'state religion' which the new policy promoted was merely a flagrant example of indoctrination in the eyes of its detractors. Was the state to teach theology when it was unsuited and even incompetent for the task? In the eyes of civil libertarians, Christianity, or any other creed, should not be taught in the schools since it infringed religious liberty. In the eyes of Christian fundamentalists, the creed which was being taught in the schools was sub-Christian and heretical.

³⁹Thomas, 205

4. 'State Religion' in Ontario Schools

In 1950 the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, chaired by J. A. Hope, delivered its report. The commissioners did not recommend any change in the policy on religious education. They endorsed it as it was, with the exception that sections of the guide books found offensive by representatives of the Canadian Jewish Congress were to be reconsidered and amended.⁴⁰

The Protestant churches which were represented on the Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education continued to support the principle of church-state cooperation in public school religious education. The Canadian Jewish Congress, the Association for Religious Liberty, the Ontario Committee of the Labor Progressive Party, and the Public School Supporters League⁴¹ all presented briefs strongly opposed to state-sponsored religious education. Although they were given a hearing during the Commission's deliberations, their objections did not result in a recommendation to repeal the regulations on religious education.

The arguments of the supporters of the religious education policy, however, were based on its purported

⁴⁰Government of Ontario, Report of the Royal Commission of Education in Ontario (Toronto, King's Printer, 1950), 126.

⁴¹This body represented the view of the Orange Lodge of Ontario that any sectarian religious education, and especially Roman Catholic religious education, should be disallowed in public schools.

general acceptance by the public and its benefits to the state. In briefs by the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches, and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the charges of the bodies which opposed religious education in the public schools were addressed and refuted. To the majority Protestant bodies, the program seemed beneficial not only to their own cause, but to the welfare of Ontario society. The Church of England brief extolled the teaching of Christianity in the schools as the remedy for, rather than as the cause of, disruptions in society. Religious education was extolled as "one of the first ways of breaking down that middle wall of partition which divides race from race, and of helping to create a national unity for which all true citizens hope and pray".⁴² Judge G. W. Morley, an Anglican layman, suggested in his brief that a thorough program of Bible teaching in the schools would reduce juvenile delinquency.⁴³ The Reverend T. F. Summerhayes, also an Anglican, believed that the Christian religion should be taught in the schools because the structure of Ontario society, its laws and customs, were derived from it. Furthermore, the teaching of Christianity would be a potent

⁴²The Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, "Suggestions Regarding the Place of Religion in Education, Teachers in Rural Schools and the High School Curriculum", Brief No. 77, Toronto, 1945, 5. [Archives of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education].

⁴³Judge G. W. Morley to the Royal Commission, Toronto, "The Urgent Need of Teaching Christianity in Our Schools", Brief No. 103, 1945, 1. [Archives of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education].

remedy for crime, the proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases, and dysfunction in family relations.⁴⁴

The underlying and unproven assumption of such notions as those of Summerhayes and Morley was that moral behaviour was rooted in religious conviction. Various prohibitions against anti-social behaviour which could be culled from Scripture must surely produce well-behaved children--if effectively taught. Such thinking was commonplace in Victorian times. Religion was thought to be the bulwark of the social order. The question was, "Which religion?" In 1950, the answer for many was the Protestant religion. However, that notion defied close definition.

The Protestant churches had another motive in their support of religious education in the public schools; it was proselytization of children who did not attend Sunday Schools. The United Church brief expressed the view that the government was obliged to teach religion to the many young children who absented themselves from Church Schools.⁴⁵ Many Christians believed that religious instruction was the foundation of a meaningful philosophy of life and the bedrock of a moral existence. This notion often was expressed by supporters of religious education prior to the 1944

⁴⁴"Religious and Moral Instruction in the State Schools of Ontario." Brief No. 119. Submitted by the Reverend T. F. Summerhayes to the Royal Commission. Toronto, 1945, 6. [Archives of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education].

⁴⁵The United Church of Canada, Board of Education, "Religion and the Public Schools", Brief No. 64, Toronto, 1945.

regulations and underlay many opinions stated in briefs presented before the Hope Commission.

The Ontario Education Association recommended the adoption of a program of study for secondary schools based on the Bible, the purpose of which was to impart not only Biblical knowledge, but the "fundamental truths of religion and their bearing on life and thought".⁴⁶ The sentiment that religion was fundamental to education echoed through briefs by the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc.⁴⁷ and the Ontario School Trustees' and Ratepayers' Association.⁴⁸ The Ontario Teachers' Federation, whose members were charged with the responsibility of teaching religious education in the classrooms, agreed that religion was an important aspect of moral development, but doubted the qualifications of teachers to teach it.⁴⁹

The opposition to the religious education program centered on the issues of church-state separation and minority rights. The Public School Supporters' League continued to demand total separation of church and state in educational matters in its brief.⁵⁰ In reality the goal of

⁴⁶The Ontario Education Association, "General Recommendations on Education", Brief No. 69, Toronto, 1945, Appendix A.

⁴⁷The Ontario Federation of Home and Schools Associations, Inc., "Recommendations on Education", Brief No. 135, Toronto, 1945. [Archives of the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education].

⁴⁸The Ontario School Trustees' and Ratepayers' Association, "Education in Ontario", Brief No. 36, Toronto, 1945. [Archives of the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education].

⁴⁹Thomas, 229.

⁵⁰The Public School Supporters' League, "The Public Schools of Ontario", Brief No. 205, Toronto, 1945. [Archives of the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education].

the League was the abolition of state support for Roman Catholic separate schools--or indeed any form of sectarian teaching in the publicly-funded school system.⁵¹ The pre-war policy of allowing clergy to instruct school children according to the wishes of their parents was seen by the League as a privilege granted by the state. However, the teaching of religion by salaried teachers of a program prescribed by the state seemed to be a violation of religious freedom and a misuse of public funds.⁵² The thousand-member strong Association for Religious Liberty and the Canadian Jewish Congress concentrated on the issues of religious freedom and minority rights in their submissions to the Royal Commission. The Association opposed any form of "state religion in Ontario".⁵³ While the arguments of the League were high-toned, they veiled partisan sentiment. However, the recommendation of the Association for Religious Liberty that sectarian religious education be withdrawn from the public school curriculum was brought forward again by both the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario [1969] and the Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario Public Schools [1990].

The introduction of compulsory religious education into the public school curriculum was part of a broader program

⁵¹The Orange Association in Ontario, Separation is Wrong, Toronto, 1963. [National Archives of Canada].

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³The Association for Religious Liberty to the Royal Commission on Education "Religious Education in Ontario Schools", Brief No. 45, Toronto, 1945, 2. [Archives of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education].

designed to foster loyalty to conservative beliefs. Premier Drew's educational agenda included also a reorganization of Ontario's cadet corps movement; individual cadet units were to come under the direct governance of the Department of Education so that training would become part of the school curriculum.⁵⁴ Drew himself was an anglophile and an ex-officer of the Great War. He did not hesitate to exploit the patriotic fervour of the Second War for the purpose of bolstering traditional and conservative attitudes and values. The inculcation of a conscientious and religious spirit among Ontario citizens, which had been such an alluring desideratum for Governor Simcoe in 1791, had achieved its highest political moment by 1950.

The roots of this phenomenon in a British-dominated Ontario become clear. The white Anglo-Canadian majority had been hampered in implementing the religious phase of this inculcation by denominational squabbles. The threats of foreign ideologies and socialism had bound them in a common cause, as was evident from the re-formation of the Inter-Church Committee in 1936. Hence, Anglo-Protestants were able to use their dominant position in society to obtain ascendancy in the public schools.

The conservative elite had found World War II to be a convenient moment for entrenching its position in Ontario society. Its creed was Cross, Crown, and Empire. Through

⁵⁴"To Name Director of Cadet Training", The Globe and Mail, Toronto, May 3, 1944, 11.

the agencies of the churches and the schools, children of all classes were to be indoctrinated in a Protestant form of Christianity and a Canadian and imperial way of thinking.⁵⁵ Little attention was to be given to minorities and radicals in this vision. Reaction to the 1944 program and to the domination of Protestants in Ontario society was not to be effective until the 1960s.

This purpose of this chapter has been to provide an outline of the history of the religious education question in Ontario public schools. The topics introduced will reappear in greater detail in the chapters which follow. "A Chronology of Some Important Events in Ontario Public School Religious Education" has been included in Appendix B as a convenience to the reader.

⁵⁵See Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 173-179. For a fuller discussion of the roots of Canadian Imperialism, see Carl Berger, A Sense of Power: Studies in the Idea of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGIES IN THE CLASSROOM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1. Introduction

In order to discuss the role of the churches in the development, implementation, and abandonment of the 1944 program for religious education in the public schools of Ontario, it is necessary that the origin and character of the doctrines of the major denominations be examined. Although there were doctrinal differences which were never harmonized, methods of catechesis were similar. A Protestant Church was never formed, but a Protestant ethos in religious education began to develop during the nineteenth century. This Protestant ethos had implications for the events which followed in the twentieth century. Basic doctrinal similarities and differences are important in comprehending the difficulties involved in coordinating Protestant strategies regarding religion in schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In this chapter, the basic doctrinal beliefs of the major churches and the manner of religious education of their children, whether within or without the common school system, will be investigated. The focus of the study will be the leading religious groups of nineteenth-century Ontario: the

Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Roman Catholics. The character of some other Christian bodies, which together constituted less than two percent of the Protestant population by 1881¹, will be discussed briefly as well.

2. The Anglican View

The Church of England was formed as a separate body during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Its essential difference from Roman Catholicism was a denial of the authority of the Bishop of Rome over English Church affairs. In liturgical and theological matters, it tended to express a moderate position between extreme Protestantism and Romanism. Although Catholic order was maintained, its reformed theology, as expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, had Calvinist elements. Anglican Church historians have characterized Anglicanism as the 'Via Media'-the middle way.²

The Church of England in Canada in the nineteenth century was influenced by two internal developments: the Evangelical Movement and the Anglo-Catholic Revival. The Evangelicals were not necessarily theologically or liturgically different from the majority of Anglicans, but

¹Census of Canada, 1880-1, Ottawa, 1882.

²Stephen Neill, Anglicanism (Oxford: Mowbray, 1977), 119 and John Moorman, A History of the Church in England (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1976), 214.

they were more fervent in religious sentiment and devotion.³ They emphasized evangelism and missionary work. Many of the clergy who came from Britain to minister in Upper Canada had been sponsored by evangelical groups such as the Church Missionary Society. The concern for conversion to 'vital religion' extended to the religious education of children. Formal piety was not sufficient; there had to be wholehearted commitment to Christ and the gospel evidenced by virtuous living, observing the Sabbath, works of charity and devotional exercises such as prayer and Bible reading. For Evangelical children, confirmation was not a mere rite of passage, but a mature profession of faith. Therefore, catechetical instruction had to be thorough and reverent. Regular religious instruction was very important.

The Anglo-Catholic Revival, also called the Oxford Movement, began in 1833 with the sermon on *National Apostasy* by the English priest, John Keble. The essence of Keble's protest was that the Church of England was not a department of government but a part of the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. It was worthy of high devotion as a mystical rather than an administrative entity. The liturgies of the Church were not merely ceremonial and indifferent but sacramental and divinely-ordained. The sacramental life was the *sine qua non* of Anglo-Catholic theology. Frequent and reverent communion and sacramental confession were thought essential

³Neill, 232.

to a pious life.⁴ Anglo-Catholic clergy, though not numerous in Upper Canada, were usually missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Some clergy, including John Strachan, were warmly disposed toward the Oxford Movement.⁵ The roles of priest and, especially, bishop were Apostolic in the eyes of Anglo-Catholics and quite above that of a mere Protestant minister. Priests and bishops handled holy things and were set apart by ordination and consecration for this high duty. Sacramental confirmation by a bishop was taken as seriously by Anglo-Catholics as it was by Evangelicals. The bishop stood in place of Christ.

The Anglo-Catholic Revival was criticized because it seemed to be "Popish" with its Catholic elements. When Anglo-Catholic priests began to adopt Roman Catholic ritual elements, such as the wearing of eucharistic vestments, this suspicion seemed to be confirmed. Some Anglo-Catholic clergy, notably John Henry Newman who was founder of the movement, did defect to Rome. There were cries of "No Popery" from the Evangelicals who thought of themselves as Protestants. Violence had attended the introduction of ritualism by Anglo-Catholic clergy in England, and the tensions between the two camps continued through the nineteenth century. Although rivalry between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals was present in Ontario, it centered upon the

⁴Ibid., 258.

⁵For a discussion of Strachan and the Oxford Movement, see Mark C. McDermott, "The Theology of Bishop Strachan: A Study in Anglican Identity" (PhD. diss., University of Toronto, 1983), 125-141.

founding of theological colleges such as Trinity (Anglo-Catholic) and Wycliffe (Evangelical) and upon episcopal elections in the latter half of the century.⁶

A third group, the Broad Church,⁷ stood in the tradition of the Latitudinarians. These more liberal Anglicans gave little adherence to party and placed more significance on reason in religious affairs than on formality of an Evangelical or High Church flavour. In the society of today, members of the Broad Church would be termed Modernists.

Although polarities existed in the nineteenth-century Anglican Church, most Anglicans did not belong to a church party. Anglicans, in general, were united in their devotion to the Book of Common Prayer, whatever ritual attended it. There was never any serious theological schism.

Anglican theology is not a monolith which can be seen easily in dogmas or even customs; it is to be found primarily in the practice of worship and only derivatively in theological doctrines. The principle of Anglican theology most cited by learned Anglicans was *lex orandi lex credendi*, that is, the faith which is believed is the faith which is prayed.⁸ Central to Anglican theology is the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and its many versions in the course of Anglican

⁶See Philip Carrington, The Anglican Church in Canada, A History (Toronto: Collins, 1963), 109-10, 118, and 128.

⁷For the origin on the term Broad Church see F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, [Third Ed.], (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 241-2.

⁸The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 10. Anglican theology is not inflexible, but rather consists of shared liturgical expression and also theological diversity.

history. The editions of most concern in this dissertation are those of 1662, 1918, and 1962.⁹ Most Anglican prayer books have contained not only extensive liturgical forms, but also articles of belief and catechisms for the instruction of the young.

The catechism which was used most extensively by Anglicans in the early years of the Province of Ontario [Upper Canada] was that contained in the Prayer Book of 1662, which was the approved manual. An examination of the Catechism reveals its basic conservatism, which suited the period following the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 to the Great War of 1914-18--at least in Anglican historical development.

In reaction to the English Civil War (1642 - 1645) and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell (1649-1659), the BCP of 1662 was solidly royalist. The BCP stood for monarchy as against the "unhappy confusion" of the period of war and "usurped powers".¹⁰ The view of the revisers was that the Cromwellian period was chaotic and that the return of Charles II to the throne was "happy".¹¹ In the seventeenth century, religion and politics had been loosely linked. Followers of the King had tended to be Catholic in taste, the rebels

⁹See F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church [Third Edition] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 384-5 for a history of the BCP and its editions. Of particular interest is the background of the proposed 1928 Prayer Book for the Church of England, as the issues surrounding it were debated. The Canadian revision of 1918 was little changed even though clergy interpreted rubrics and directions less rigidly than before.

¹⁰Preface to The Book of Common Prayer, 1662.

¹¹Ibid.

Protestant during the Civil War. Having had a bitter taste of sectarian strife, most English people were glad to reunite under the restored monarchy and to accept the stability of hereditary rule.¹² With the Restoration of the monarchy came the rehabilitation of the Church of England to its established role. The Prayer Book, and particularly the Catechism, naturally reflected reverence for ecclesiastical and royal authority. This conservative view characterized the Anglicans of Upper Canada throughout the nineteenth century.

Most Anglican settlers had witnessed the American War of Independence (1775-1783) and had supported the British side in that conflict. Their leaders had been British officers who were Anglican and Tory in sentiment. Rebellion against constituted authority was abhorrent to them. They had chosen to remain loyal to the Crown. It was natural for them to reverence hierarchy and authority and to wish to impart this principle to their children. The Catechism, and the Prayer Book in general, suited their traditional values and opinions perfectly. The patriarchal and rigid tones of the Prayer Book of 1662 were not to be challenged until the slight revisions of 1962 and the more permissive and liberal Book of Alternative Services (BAS) of 1985. Even the Revision of 1918 left the Catechism basically intact. In 1893, the first General Synod of the Church of England in the Dominion of

¹²Neill, 159.

Canada had vowed to transmit the Anglican Prayer Book "unimpaired to our posterity".¹³ This is not to say that there were not challenges to the patriarchal and rigid tones of the Catechism and of the Prayer Book as a whole, but for most Canadian Anglicans, the beliefs stated in the Catechism reflected their already traditional values and private opinions.

The Catechism was "to be learned of every person before he [sic] be brought to be confirmed by the bishop".¹⁴ It was drilled into the minds of catechumens regularly at church and during other instruction, the teacher usually being the resident clergyman or missionary. It was presented in question and answer form, the answer being given by the candidate and learned by rote until satisfactorily delivered. The components of the Catechism were the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacraments and other popular and pious nostrums. They provided the basis for a dutiful, reverent and Christian life which was lived in hope of salvation and election to eternal life.

The child was to restate the vows of his or her godparents to "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh," to "believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and to keep God's holy will and

¹³Solemn Declaration, 1893 quoted in Book of Common Prayer, 1962, viii.

¹⁴The Book of Common Prayer (London: Queen's Printer, 1662), The Catechism, 1

commandments".¹⁵ The child was to thank God also for calling him or her "to this state of salvation"¹⁶ and pray to continue in the same. Then followed the Creed and the Ten Commandments with an explanation of each. These explanations provided a bulwark for traditional morality and hierarchical notions of order. The Commandments were grouped in two sections: duties toward God, duties toward neighbour.¹⁷ Duties toward God included total commitment and obedience. Duties toward neighbour included the Summary of the Law and explicit subservience to all authority, particularized in such injunctions as "to love, honour and succour my father and mother: To honour and obey the King, and all that are in authority under him: To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters"¹⁸ Included in duties toward one's neighbour were injunctions against hurting others, malice and hatred, drunkenness, unchastity, unfair dealing, "picking and stealing", "evil-speaking, lying, and slandering", covetousness and sloth. The last injunction was "to do my duty in that state of life into which it shall please God to call me"¹⁹--an explicit direction to accept one's lot in life and to see it as the will of God.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., 2.

¹⁹Ibid.

The explanation of the Lord's Prayer enjoined service, obedience, and dependence towards God, particularly that God "keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our spiritual enemy [i.e. the Devil], and from everlasting death." The discussion of the Sacraments covered only Baptism and The Lord's Supper "as generally necessary to salvation." The doctrine of original sin was explicit, Baptism being the remedy. Infant baptism was defended on the basis of the confirmation of the godparents promises. The necessity of self-examination and repentance prior to receiving the Lord's Supper was stressed since the elements were "taken and received by the faithful"²⁰ only.

A series of rubrics followed the Instruction, which indicated the ideal method of teaching the Catechism. The minister was to instruct and examine the children of his parish on Sundays and holy days "openly in the Church".²¹ It was the duty of parents and guardians to ensure that their children and young servants attended. When the Catechism was completely learned, the child was to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed.

These provisions of the Catechism, which reflected a long-ago view of society, were not altered substantially until the Canadian Prayer Book of 1962. In that version, the duty of obeying authority was confined to God, the Queen, and government officials. Parents were to be helped and pastors

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

and teachers respected rather than slavishly obeyed. The injunction to show deference to one's 'betters' was removed. However, the duty "to be courteous to all" replaced it.²²

The Catechism provided a bulwark for traditional morality and hierarchical notions of social order. Such sentiments would have come naturally to the British governing classes and, to their mind, to any religious and sensible person. The Commonwealth was founded on the rule of God and, in God's place, upon the King and other ministers both temporal and spiritual. This was the firm belief of the convinced members of the Church of England in the nineteenth century.

In the early years catechisms were allowed in common schools for the purpose of religious instruction so long as parents or guardians did not object.²³ It is not known how assiduously Anglican students were drilled by clergy and teachers in the Catechism, but it is likely that parents would not have objected to such indoctrination. In mixed schools, where the adherents of more than one religious denomination attended, Dissenters and Roman Catholics probably desired the use of their own manuals or catechisms. The situation depended on parental wishes and the approval of local trustees and teachers. Where Anglicans dominated, it is likely that the Anglican catechism prevailed; where others

²²The Book of Common Prayer (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1962), 548.

²³Hodgins, 6:67; 4:259. The School Acts of 1843 and 1846 contained a clause which excused students from reading or studying any religious book to which parents or guardians objected.

were in the majority, some other and more suitable devotional manual would have been used.

The leading clerical exponent of the teaching of Anglican doctrine and practice in the schools was the Reverend John Strachan, an Anglican clergyman who arrived in Upper Canada from Scotland in December, 1799. Strachan had taught in a private academy in Cornwall before being ordained in the Church of England. Because of his influence with the gentry, some of whom had been his pupils, and because of his outstanding services during the War of 1812, Strachan soon became an influential figure in the province. He assumed important posts in government, including the chairmanship of the General Board of Education.

Until 1841, major appointments to the Department of Education were made by the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada--with whom Strachan had great influence. Strachan thus hoped to promote the Anglican view of religious instruction through political means. He intended to place education "under the direction and control of the regular [Anglican] Clergy."²⁴ He believed that "the true foundation of the prosperity of our Establishment must be laid in the Education of our Youth."²⁵

²⁴Strachan Letter-book, 1812-1814, 184. Cited in George W. Spragge, "John Strachan's Contribution to Education, 1800-1823"; Canadian Historical Review, 22, (June, 1941), 155.

²⁵Ibid.

Strachan's views on religious instruction had been formed in Scotland, where the Church controlled the education system. Spragge has stated:

In that country, the ideal was the policy of John Knox, whose conception of education was that character counts for more than mere knowledge and that there can be no real knowledge apart from the knowledge of God.²⁶

Strachan considered religion to be essential for public security, true liberty and popular morality.²⁷ In a sermon of February 4, 1821, he stated his theology of Church-state relations: "The fear of God must always be considered as the surest foundation of freedom."²⁸

As Bishop of Toronto, Strachan exercised a far from disinterested role in religious and public education. Convinced that non-sectarian public education was "godless" and little disposed to teaching the truths of religion,²⁹ Strachan's preferences in matters of religious education tended towards the inculcation of morality based upon the traditional doctrines of the Church of England. These included notions of the place of the Church in a society which reflected his High Church beliefs.³⁰ In his view, the function of religious instruction was to impart the truth of religion unimpaired to the young. Theories of Christian education which did not rest upon the principles of the

²⁶Ibid. Citation from G. Stewart, The Story of Scottish Education (London, n.p., 1927), 38.

²⁷Ibid., 331.

²⁸Cited in McDermott, 331.

²⁹Hodgins, 10:271.

³⁰McDermott, 332-333.

established Church were thought by John Strachan to be dangerous.³¹ Based upon the Scriptures and the tradition of the Church of England, education must make Christians of those who without this instruction would remain in ignorance. The practical sciences were important to Strachan, but Anglican religious instruction for the youth of the province implied "the proper moral development of the colony."³² In fact, "only an established Church that was directly linked with the schools of a nation could assure that the Christian gospel was taught".³³

While Strachan was anti-republican in matters of government, he was supportive of measures to ensure that every child of ability had access to a good education. This was merited on the basis of "superior talents".³⁴ Presumably, if gifted children were taught the principles of the Establishment, they would be less inclined to imbibe republican philosophies.

Strachan's educational strategy included the fostering of an attachment to the Anglican Church and the British Monarchy--Anglican religious instruction in the schools being the desired instrument of his purposes.³⁵ The emphasis upon loyalty to the Crown and to the Church would provide an

³¹In Strachan's opinion, the spread of dissenting religious views and republican ideas contributed to societal disorder. Ibid., 333-35, passim.

³²Ibid., 332.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Christian Recorder, April, 1819, 52. Cited in Spragge, "Contribution to Education", 156.

³⁵Ibid., 156.

orderly and peaceful society in the province and uphold "the moral character of the nation".³⁶ These notions were commonplace in nineteenth-century Britain, but less palatable to colonial society, which was neither uniformly nor predominantly Anglican, in spite of Strachan's efforts.

Although the elite in the early years were Anglicans (22% in 1842), the majority of the population belonged to the other churches, notably Methodist and Presbyterian.³⁷ A political conflict developed between the Anglican elitists and the "Reformers" over the issue of responsible government. The Legislative Assembly protested the veto power of the Governor and Council. In 1837, radicals under William Lyon Mackenzie staged a rebellion which was quickly quelled, but responsible government was granted by the British in 1848 in spite of Tory objections. While the attachment to Monarchy and British institutions remained strong, there was to be no Church Establishment in Canada; the religious denominations were voluntary organizations. The largest group, the Methodists, benefitted most from this development. The voluntary principle was a factor in the formation of an autonomous Canadian Anglican Church.

Strachan's relations with the other denominations were distant. He thought that the Methodist circuit riders had

³⁶McDermott, 331.

³⁷Paul Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 9.

been educated inadequately for the ministry.³⁸ He was suspicious of revivalism. The Roman Catholics and the Protestant Dissenters he found to be "dangerous and extravagant extremes".³⁹ Between these unstable elements, Strachan saw the Anglican Church as a society of order based on tradition and reason.⁴⁰ For Strachan, the Anglican Church represented a bulwark against ignorant superstition on the one hand and unbridled enthusiasm on the other. In time, Anglicans accepted the voluntary system of church membership and worked with Strachan for a strong Anglican presence in the plural context.⁴¹

Strachan opposed any system of theology or education other than his own.⁴² He cherished the ideal of state schools in the Anglican tradition, but his hopes were disappointed by the establishment of a viable non-sectarian public education system in Ontario. The adherents of the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Churches, while desiring an orderly and moral society, did not see the guarantee of its preservation in Anglican doctrine and church polity. Most convinced Christians worked for the dissemination of their own

³⁸John Strachan, A Sermon Preached at York, Upper Canada, Third of July 1825, on the Death of the Late Lord Bishop of Quebec (Kingston: Macfarlane, 1826).

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 19-49.

⁴¹Ibid., 105.

⁴²Strachan thought that only the doctrines of the established Church of England should be taught in the schools. When he could not secure this state of affairs, he advocated Anglican parochial schools supported from the public purse. Ibid., 19-49.

religious ideas and a religious education for their children based on their own theological doctrines and religious practices. Strachan's ideal of Establishment was not to be, even though his early influence on education in the province had been great. Of necessity, he had come to accept the voluntary system of Church membership. However, he remained an advocate of Anglican influence in Ontario society and education and continued to shape, if not dictate, Anglican policy on religious education until his death.

3. The Methodist Model

Methodism began as a movement within the Church of England during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Essentially, it was a call to greater piety and religious devotion among the masses of lay persons on the fringes of the Church of England. Its founder, John Wesley, was a priest of the Church of England who wanted to emphasize the revival of the experiential element in religion. He had no intention of founding a separate denomination.⁴³ However, in 1784, the first Methodist ministers were ordained to the presbyterate in Scotland and England. Thomas Coke, who was in Anglican orders, was "set apart" as Superintendent for America. After John Wesley's death, the break with the Anglican hierarchy became complete. However, many Methodists

⁴³J. F. C. Harrison, ed., Society and Politics in England, 1780-1960 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 100 and 109.

continued to use the Book of Common Prayer as a devotional manual.⁴⁴

Methodism spread into Upper Canada from Britain and the United States. In the portion of Upper Canada along the United States border, missionaries came often from New York on their circuits to preach their revivalist gospel. Anglicans in Upper Canada were suspicious of these American preachers because many had little formal training and because it was rumored that they encouraged republican sentiments. By 1825 most Methodist clergy in Upper Canada were Canadians by birth or naturalization⁴⁵, and although their usual theological training was not university based, as Egerton Ryerson himself demonstrated, many were literate and competent to preach. The training they received was based on the works of John Wesley and on the works of Anglican divines, such as Bishop Joseph Butler's The Analogy of Religion. Their practical training was rigorous. In fact Anglican priestly formation could often be considered deficient in comparison.⁴⁶

Methodists based their catechisms on the theology of John Wesley. Wesley extended the logical consequences of Protestant doctrines extant in his time. Following Martin Luther, he taught the doctrine of justification of the

⁴⁴Neill, 189-190.

⁴⁵John S. Moir, "John Strachan's Sermon on the Death of Bishop Mountain: A Question of Motives", Journal of Canadian Church Historical Society 40, 2 (1998), 182.

⁴⁶Westfall, 24-27.

believer through faith in Jesus Christ. Due to the sin of Adam and Eve, humanity was made unacceptable to God. Through the atoning death of Jesus Christ, the world was redeemed. Baptized believers were made acceptable [justified] to God through faith in Christ. By the agency of the Holy Spirit, justified believers were regenerated spiritually, thus losing the stains of original sin. Through a commitment to holy living, believers continued to grow in holiness, that is sanctity, throughout their lives. Wesley believed that it was possible to become entirely sanctified in a lifetime. Because Wesley believed in free will, it was possible also to fall back into a state of depravity. Hence, the need for the disciplines of Church attendance and religious activities, moral probity and generous works of charity.⁴⁷

Methodist catechisms emphasized traditional components such as the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, but they included also the doctrines of justification by faith, regeneration by the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of the believer.⁴⁸ Salvation was offered to all, but only effected by conversion to a holy life. In Canada, Catechisms were produced by the Wesleyan Methodists in 1838 and in 1866, and by the Methodist Church, Canada in 1898. These catechisms were in general use in Church and school, but they were rather theologically sophisticated for

⁴⁷Neil Semple, The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 15.

⁴⁸The Catechisms of the Wesleyan Methodists (Toronto: William Briggs, 1866), Section 4.

young children. Even the Catechism of 1866, which was recommended for children as young as seven years, seemed too long at seventy-eight pages to be memorized. The 1898 Catechism, approximately half the length, was an improvement. In any case, not all children would have proceeded to Church membership for which the Catechism was a preparation. The religious education of the young during the nineteenth century consisted of the memorization of Bible verses and stories. A more sophisticated curriculum developed slowly.⁴⁹

A strong sense of duty was encouraged in the catechisms. The Catechism of 1898 stressed duties to parents and others and the following virtues: truth, honour, kindness, equity, fidelity, honesty and industry in business, help to the needy and respect for age and authority.⁵⁰

In educational matters, Methodists supported common schools as a cost effective measure.⁵¹ The common schools must be Christian in character and must include biblically-based religious education. A Christian education based upon what all Protestants held in common would be supplemented by the work of the individual churches. Egerton Ryerson, the Methodist minister who headed the Department of Education from 1846 to 1876, was convinced that Christians held in common the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus. The difficulty of defining exactly

⁴⁹Sample, 373-4.

⁵⁰Catechism of the Methodist Church. Canada containing a summary of Christian doctrine (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), Section 6.

⁵¹Sample, 240-1.

what Christians held in common became evident over time. Under Ryerson, non-sectarian public education became the Methodist policy.⁵²

Based on a tour of European educational systems taken before he commenced his duties as Superintendent of Education, Ryerson concluded that religion could be taught in the schools without sectarian bias. He admired particularly the Irish National Schools, which featured a set of readers which incorporated religious material thought to be not objectionable to either Protestants or Catholics. When the Canadian Legislature passed a bill banning the use of any religious book in the public schools in 1849, Ryerson threatened to resign on the basis that the Bible, and even the Irish National Readers, would be excluded. The Legislature backed down and revoked the proposed legislation. Thus, some as yet undefined religious content was allowable in the curriculum. Ryerson appealed to 'common Christianity' as the basis for non-sectarian religious instruction. He found this in the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus. He thought that the content of common Christianity was moral and presumed that all would agree that revealed religion provided a sound basis for the moral law. He brushed aside sectarian doctrines as secondary to the Judeo-Christian ethic. They were not to be taught in the schools,

⁵²Hodgins, 14:266.

but to be left to pastors and parents. The moral law could be taught to all.⁵³

Ryerson's views were in large part supported by the general Protestant assumptions of the Victorian era. Few would deny that religion was the basis for morality. Humanity had fallen from grace due to the sin of Adam and Eve. Therefore, there was a need for humanity to be restored. The vehicle of restoration was the Christian religion--to be found primarily in the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus. Religion was indispensable to the betterment of fallen humanity. Adherence to religious principles would produce moral behaviour and would be the agent of a redeemed social order. Atheism was a grave threat which must be countered by a sustained effort to teach and preserve the Christian moral law. The law of God was anterior to any human law and the basis for proper human relations. This would be granted by most nineteenth-century Ontarians. The need for religious education would be granted also. The debate ensued over whether the public school was to be the vehicle for religious education in a religiously heterogeneous society, or whether the church and the family would better serve the need. The conflict remains unresolved as far as the churches are concerned.

⁵³For a fuller discussion see J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Phillippe Audet, Canadian Education: A History (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 214-239.

Ryerson elaborated the content of 'common Christianity' with the publication of First Lessons in Christian Morals.⁵⁴ Many of his ideas on moral education were cribbed from the works of William Paley.⁵⁵ In the preface, Ryerson assumed the "truth of Christianity and the authority of the Holy Scriptures". He assumed, further, that his work was "in harmony with the views of all religious persuasions"⁵⁶--a view later gainsaid by the Baptists and some other Protestants. Ryerson's First Lessons was concerned primarily with moral duties contained in God's Law. A knowledge of God's Law was necessary because the child's natural faculties were insufficient to discover and to learn moral truth. Therefore, revealed religion was superior to natural religion in this regard.⁵⁷

The duties most prominent in First Lessons were those owed our neighbours, our parents, and all in authority, as well as our duties towards ourselves in virtuous living. In all of this, the child was in a subservient position.

⁵⁴Egerton Ryerson, First Lessons in Christian Morals (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1871).

⁵⁵These ideas recognized Paley's contribution to a moral philosophy consistent with natural religion. In Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy [1785], he enumerated duties of parents and children similar to those outlined in Ryerson's text. Ryerson believed that revealed religion, though complimented by natural evidences, was more important in teaching children morals than natural religion. For the influence of Paley on Canadian theology, see A. B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), 63-4.

⁵⁶Ryerson, First Lessons, preface, i.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 63-66.

Ryerson reminded his readers that the ancient biblical punishment for disobedience towards parents was death!⁵⁸

Ryerson's nostrums are echoes of lists of duties found in Paley,⁵⁹ supplemented by the views of John Wesley on the upbringing of children. Paley had concerned himself rather stringently with the duties of children,⁶⁰ while Wesley counted it no favour to "spare the rod" in correcting improper behaviour.⁶¹ For a child to obey authority was to obey the will of God. Therefore, morality could not be taught without reference to the revealed will of God found in the Christian Scriptures. According to Wesley, and also to Ryerson, the moral formation of the child was based on the Christian religion. The ignorant child needed to be educated in the Christian religion in order to be set on the road to salvation and sanctification. This knowledge, absent from natural religion, was to be found only in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.⁶² The goal of moral behaviour necessitated indoctrination in Christianity as well as the compulsion of divine and human law. Religion was the foundation of the child's education. Other studies were useful but secondary, human rather than divine. Morals, for

⁵⁸Ibid., 29

⁵⁹William Paley, The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy [Third Edition Corrected] (London: R. Faulder, 1786), 282, 301, 304, 310.

⁶⁰Ibid., 304-310.

⁶¹Alfred C. Outler (Ed.), The Works of John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 367.

⁶²Ryerson, First Lessons, 64-65.

Ryerson, were " those principles and duties which Christianity teaches".⁶³

There was little criticism of the object of Ryerson's book, which was the necessity of teaching morals in the schools. However, there were complaints, mainly from the Baptist churches, that First Lessons was too sectarian. First Lessons was quietly withdrawn as a text. The subject of Christian Morals was dropped from the curriculum by 1875. It remains as the most forceful attempt to inject evangelical Christianity into the mandatory curriculum. Although this opportunity did not reappear in the nineteenth century, the growing strength of the mainline evangelical churches, led by Methodism, was translated into agitation for Protestant theological content in the school curriculum during the latter years of the nineteenth century and into the new century.

4. Presbyterian Doctrines

The Church of England was not the only church in nineteenth-century Ontario with a claim to establishment. The Reformation had produced the Church of Scotland under the aegis of John Knox, a Calvinist minister. Commonly called the Kirk, this Presbyterian body was a force in the life of the province during the century. The ideal first iterated by

⁶³Ibid., 9.

John Knox⁶⁴ was a church and a school in every community. However, even a century and a half later, the parish school system had been imperfectly developed in Scotland.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, education was a preoccupation of Scottish Presbyterian settlers in Ontario as it had been for their forebears in the mother country. Following the tradition of Calvin and Knox, this education was to be scientific as well as theological. In the elementary and secondary schools which were envisioned, catechisms and the Bible were to be central. When common schools appeared, religious training based on these appeared also. Presbyterian children were disciplined harshly on occasion, if they were not proficient in answering prescribed questions during catechetical instruction.⁶⁶

John Calvin's Catechisms of the Church of Geneva was the model for Reformed religious instruction. The use of these catechisms was framed by Calvin in Institutes of the Christian Religion.⁶⁷ Calvin had hoped that children would be sufficiently instructed by the age of ten years to make a public profession of faith and to be admitted to the

⁶⁴David Laing, ed., "The Book of Discipline" , The Works of John Knox, vol. 2, (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1846; reprinted by AMS Press, New York, 1966), 208-9.

⁶⁵Klempa, William, ed. The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow: The Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), 1

⁶⁶W. A. MacKay, Pioneer Life in Zorra, 248. Cited in J. K. Mackay, Religious Information and Moral Development (Toronto: Department of Education, 1969), 14.

⁶⁷John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, edited by John T. McNeill, Library of Christian Classics, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

congregation.⁶⁸ Knox enjoined a period of instruction of two years.⁶⁹ The ideal was church-sponsored schools in sufficient numbers to ensure the catechesis of young Presbyterians.

However, in the early years, the common complaint was that the schools were inadequate.⁷⁰ In their zeal for catechesis, the Presbyterians hoped for better, but their ideal of parish schools was never realized. The public schools, therefore, needed a religious dimension more rigorously pursued than heretofore. This goal occupied the Presbyterians and the zealots of other denominations for many years. When Ryerson introduced his system of non-sectarian public schools, it seemed hardly adequate.

The doctrines which were taught to young Presbyterians were modeled on Scottish versions of the Catechism of the Church of Geneva, supplemented by precepts drawn from Calvin's Institutes. Besides the interpretation of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments (of which Calvin recognized only the Lord's Supper and Baptism), were found the two doctrines most peculiar to the Reformed religion: the total depravity of the human race and the predestination of the individual to salvation or reprobation. Although these were emphasized by Calvin's later followers out of proportion to his overall theology, they left their mark on Presbyterianism. Children, being

⁶⁸Ibid., Chapter 19, Section 13.

⁶⁹Ibid., 209.

⁷⁰John S. Moir, Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada [2nd Ed.], n.p., 1987, 100.

totally depraved due to original sin, must be restrained from vice so as not to offend the majesty of God--whether they were the elect or not. Knowledge of God and His Law was paramount in Presbyterian catechesis. Infractions of the Law, as understood by Knox and his ecclesiastical successors, were to be punished severely according to the rules of the Book of Discipline. Calvin thought the pestilent and persistent immorality of the race punishable by damnation, but that the sentence had been commuted for the elect by Christ's atoning death. Following St. Paul, Calvin believed that the role of the secular authority was to restrain and punish vice. Under the tutelage of the Reformed Church, as at Geneva in the sixteenth century, religious education was essential to the furtherance of godliness and to the restraint of vice in a Christian commonwealth. All of this presupposed the subordination of the State to the Reformed Church--a desideratum hardly to be realized in Upper Canada, and only imperfectly achieved even under the domination of the Kirk of Scotland.

The Shorter Catechism of the Church of Scotland was a 'second Bible' for many Presbyterians.⁷¹ A version published at Montreal in 1840 was intended for children.⁷² The question and answer form was concerned with doctrines of God and Jesus Christ. Particular to Calvinism was the doctrine of the

⁷¹J. T. McNeil, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875 - 1925 (Toronto: General Board, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1925).

⁷²The A. B. C. with the Shorter Catechism (Montreal: William Greig, 1840).

predestination of the elect to salvation. The corollary doctrine of the predestination of the lost to reprobation was absent. The doctrines of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, the adoption of the elect as sons and daughters of God, and the sanctification of the elect were present. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments were included. In the explanation of the commandment to honour one's father and one's mother, the view was presented that society consisted of one's superiors, equals, and inferiors, and that this was a just arrangement.⁷³ The traditional doctrine of original sin and the consequent depravity of the human race was contrasted with the sublime majesty of God who is absolute perfection.⁷⁴ As a consequence, humans might be elected by God to salvation, but only because of God's grace and justice and through no merit of their own. Presbyterian children were expected to learn their catechism thoroughly and were punished for not rehearsing it adequately.⁷⁵ The method of imparting the Shorter Catechism has been described as "often a lifeless process of learning by rote".⁷⁶ This

⁷³Ibid., 11.

⁷⁴Ibid., 1.

⁷⁵W. A. MacKay, Pioneer Life in Zorra, 248 quoted in J. K. MacKay, Religious Information and Moral Development: The Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the Province of Ontario (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1969), 14.

⁷⁶John T. McNeil, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875 - 1925 (Toronto: General Board, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1925), 156.

unimaginative procedure was common in the nineteenth century⁷⁷ and was replaced slowly by more modern teaching methods.⁷⁸

When it became clear that a system of publicly-funded parish schools was impractical, the Presbyterians in Upper Canada were concerned that their doctrines of religious education be permitted in the common school system. The Anglicans and Roman Catholics continued to campaign for their own schools. In the event publicly-funded parish schools were not allowed to any religious body, but, under the Act of Union of 1841, separate schools were permitted "whenever any number of the Inhabitants of the Township, or Parish, professing a religious faith different from the majority" so desired⁷⁹. Thus both separate Protestant and Catholic schools were permitted, but not encouraged. This concession fell far short of the Erastian ideals of the Presbyterians and the Anglicans. When the Presbyterians, and many other Protestant bodies, attempted to enact the use of the Protestant Bible as a class book in the common schools on the grounds that it contained "duties to God and others"⁸⁰, the Romans demurred and were permitted to establish their own separate schools. In general, Protestants came to accept non-sectarian common schools with the provision that their children might receive

⁷⁷Susan Houston and Alison Prentice, Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988).

⁷⁸McNeil, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875-1925, 156.

⁷⁹Moir, Enduring Witness. 100.

⁸⁰Hodgins, 4:5.

religious instruction by their own clergy outside regular school hours.

5. Baptist Beginnings

Baptist beginnings in Ontario were shaped within the American revivalist movements of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Congregations were independent, but shared a common theology. Baptists were among the religiously-diverse United Empire Loyalists who migrated north of the Great Lakes after 1783.⁸¹ By 1797, a congregation at Haldimand had covenanted as "brethren and sisters assembled for the purpose of obtaining fellowship with sister churches".⁸² By 1802, three churches near the Bay of Quinte, one of which was in Haldimand, grouped to form the Thurlow Association. Until the War of 1812, American Baptist missionaries regularly ministered in churches throughout Upper and Lower Canada.⁸³

In 1836, the Ottawa Baptist Association was organized for "the promotion of united exertion in whatever may best advance the cause of Christ".⁸⁴ Its constitution, modelled on that of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland,

⁸¹David Priestly, ed., Memory and Hope: Strands of Canadian Baptist History (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 1.

⁸²Harry A. Renfree, "Baptist Unity", in Priestly, 142.

⁸³G. Richard Blackaby, "The Establishment of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists", in Priestly, 100.

⁸⁴Phillip A. Griffin-Allwood, "Baptist Unity in the Midst of Diversity: Canadian Baptists in the 19th-Century Evangelical Debate over Christian Unity", in Priestly, 130.

declared that membership consisted of 'Baptised Believers', it being understood that "every separate Church has, and ought to retain, within itself, the power and authority to exercise all Church discipline, rule, and government, and to put in execution the laws of Christ necessary to its own edification, according to its own views, independently of any other Church or Churches whatsoever."⁸⁵

In 1851, German Baptist beginnings resulted from an American-led revival among German immigrants living in Canada West. August Rauschenbusch, of the American Tract Society, conducted evangelical services in Waterloo County. Upon baptism, converts were organized as members of the Bridgeport German Baptist Church, with Heinrich Schneider as pastor.

The unique ministry of the German Baptists was centred in and reinforced by the German language. A desire to worship in their own tongue was fundamental; religion lost something for German Baptists when it was conveyed in a strange language.⁸⁶ As the growing membership spread over a larger geographic territory, the Bridgeport group divided into three.⁸⁷ These and other emergent churches organized the German Baptist Conference, thoroughly German in composition, operation, and mission, and developed to meet the religious and social needs of the German population--predominantly the

⁸⁵"Minutes of the Ottawa Baptist Association", 1859, 3, cited in Priestly, 130.

⁸⁶Ernest K. Pasiciel, "The Sociocultural Transformation of the North American Baptist Conference", in Priestly, 72.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 69-70.

lower socioeconomic class of peasant farmers, unskilled labourers, and tradesmen. German Baptist churches emerged and expanded in the Great Lakes region where those of German origin tended to concentrate.⁸⁸ Their modest economic circumstance affected severely their educational interests and their concern for religious instruction. At their first conference in 1851, the membership unanimously resolved that their children be instructed in the German language in German Sunday schools and, where practical, German week-day schools.⁸⁹

Although the majority of early Baptists were rooted in British Baptist tradition, usually arriving in Ontario via the United States,⁹⁰ the origins of the Particular Baptists were different. Baptist Calvinism was transplanted to rural Upper Canada in 1818, when Dugald Campbell headed a group of the Particular Covenanted Baptist sect who emigrated from the Scottish Highlands. Arriving to Elgin County, Upper Canada via Pictou, Nova Scotia and Quebec City⁹¹, their move was precipitated by religious intolerance of the Particular Covenanted Baptist sect by the established Church of Scotland and by economic hardship brought on by "an elite desire to modernize the Highlands".⁹² On arrival in Elgin County, the

⁸⁸ Ibid., 72-74.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 73.

⁹⁰ William Gillespie, "The Recovery of Ontario's Baptist Tradition", in Priestly, 30.

⁹¹ Paul R. Wilson, "Church and Community: Old School Baptists in Ontario, 1818 - 1901", in Priestly, 83-86.

⁹² Ibid., 83-86.

families applied for land grants from Colonel Thomas Talbot and settled in Aldborough Township. For a brief period, they worshipped as the first Protestant Church in Aldborough with Highland Presbyterians who had maintained belief in the deterministic elements of Calvinistic theology.

In 1820, doctrinal differences precipitated a split from the Protestant Church. Elder Dugald Campbell and his followers withdrew to form the Baptist Church of Christ in Aldborough, later called the Particular Covenanted Baptist Church. Their independent development began with a statement of their doctrinal position of Old School Baptist faith and function in the form of their "Articles of Faith". The articles spelled out in detail their "belief in human total depravity, absolute predestination, limited atonement, effectual calling, and justification by faith alone".⁹³ Upon creating a "separate Baptist church committed to faith in the absolute sovereignty of God"⁹⁴, these Baptists, otherwise known as Old School Baptists, Calvinist Baptists, Predestination Baptists, Primitive Baptists, and Scottish Baptists, took a hardline position affirming their "belief in biblical authority, inerrancy and inspiration, the Church, the Trinity, salvation, sanctification, and glorification. Sundry articles revealed that in doctrine the Old School

⁹³Ibid., 87.

⁹⁴Ibid.

Baptists represented a Calvinist extreme in the Baptist theological spectrum."⁹⁵

By 1857, the Particular Covenanted Baptist Church in Canada had created its own niche, distinguished by its hyper-Calvinistic faith, within the Ontario's Baptist community. A new stage of development began with the establishment of a connection with American Old School Baptists, who had already made in-roads in associations development over the preceding two decades.⁹⁶

By 1840, a version of the 1833 constitution developed by the Niagara Baptist Association of New York State had been adopted by 76.5% of Ontario's Baptists.⁹⁷ The second article, a compendium of doctrines, became the "keystone of tradition in this constitution".⁹⁸ With only minor stylistic modifications to the compendia by local congregations, it was adopted and passed on to other Ontario associations during the rest of the century. To illustrate the second article of the constitution, the 1844 Grand River Association constitution follows:

The Association shall be composed of such churches only, as embrace in substance the following doctrines:
The being and unity of God--the existence of three equal persons in the Godhead--the divine inspiration of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as a complete and infallible rule of faith and practice--the total and moral depravity and just condemnation of all mankind, by the fall of our first parents--the election of grace according to the foreknowledge of God--the proper

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid, 90.

⁹⁷Gillespie, in Priestly, 30.

⁹⁸Ibid.

divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ--the all-sufficiency of his atonement--regeneration and sanctification of the Holy Spirit--sanctification by grace alone--perseverance of the saints--immersion only baptism--the Lord's Supper, a privilege peculiar to immersed believers, regularly admitted to Church fellowship--and the religious observance of the first day of the week--the resurrection of the body, and general judgment--the final happiness of the saints, and the eternal misery of the wicked--the obligation of every intelligent creature to love God supremely--to believe what he says, and to practice what God commands.⁹⁹

At the turn of the 19th-Century, Canada's Baptists were divided into a variety of denominations with two primary means of transcongregating -- associations and societies. Baptist associations were organic unions consisting of churches grouped together for concerns about faith and order; Baptist societies consisted of members who contributed financially, representing an individual form of church union.¹⁰⁰ In the Canadas, the first society was the Baptist Missionary Convention of Upper Canada (BMCUC), which was organized in 1833. Membership in the convention was open to individuals who paid one dollar. By 1836, the work and treasury of the BMCUC was assumed by the Upper Canada Baptist Missionary Society (UCBMS), an auxillary which supported seven missionaries in Upper Canada. In the same year, the Canadian Baptist Missionary Society was organized, uniting a

⁹⁹The trust deed of the Toronto Baptist College, "Toronto Theological College", Baptist Year Book, (1881), 99; "Minutes of the Toronto Baptist Association" (1875), 25; William Muir, "Our New College", Canadian Baptist, 27, 9 (1881), 4 in Gillespie, "The Recovery of Ontario's Baptist Tradition", in Priestly, 25.

¹⁰⁰Griffin-Allwood, in Priestly, 125.

variety of Baptist denominations: Scottish Baptists, British Particular Baptists, and American Free Comunion Baptists.¹⁰¹ In Upper Canada, regular Baptists, Free Christian Baptists, Free Communion Baptists, Freewill Baptists, and Scottish Baptists, were included in the evolving denominations. As the century progressed, a number of attempts toward unity met by varying degrees of success.

In educating their young, Baptist catechists tended to concentrate on preparation for believers' baptism. Only those able to make a mature profession of faith were baptized. Formal theology was less important than a conversion experience, publicly attested. However, once saved, a believer was expected to follow a strict rule of life which emphasized sabbatarianism and clean living. Alcohol, sexual transgressions, public amusements and elaborate dress were to be shunned. The body, after all, was the temple of the Holy Spirit and must be kept pure and chaste. This was the ideal of all Christian bodies, but the Baptists were more stringent in enforcing it than most. The Baptists were evangelical in belief. They were willing to cooperate in such social causes as temperance, however, they retained a certain exclusivity in matters of theology. Convinced that a salvation experience was paramount, they did not count those who they did not consider to be "saved" as co-religionists. They rejected appeals to non-sectarian

¹⁰¹Ibid., 129.

religion as counter to their own deeply held evangelical beliefs.

6. The Roman Catholic Ethos in Education

This section of the dissertation does not purport to be a history of Roman Catholic Education in Ontario. That history has been completed already by Franklin A. Walker.¹⁰² However, the picture of the development of non-sectarian religious education remains incomplete without some treatment of the Roman Catholic ethos, because the history of public school religious education has been related often to developments within the Roman Catholic School System and because students of the Roman Catholic faith always have been present in the common schools.

The first Catholic elementary schools were established by Alexander Macdonnell, who was a priest in Upper Canada from 1804 and Bishop from 1820 to 1840. These were poor institutions, scattered throughout the province, for which Macdonnell secured limited and desultory government aid.¹⁰³ The first Roman Catholic separate schools were authorized in 1841. Before this, Catholics attended either the few Catholic private schools or the common schools with

¹⁰²Franklin A. Walker, Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada, vol. 1 (Toronto: Dent, 1955); Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario, vol. 2 (Toronto: Nelson, 1964); and Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario, vol. 3 (Toronto: Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario, 1985).

¹⁰³Walker, Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada, 1:x, 24-28.

Protestant children. In areas of Catholic predominance, trustees were allowed to permit some Roman Catholic catechesis, and in mixed schools the regulations permitted a Roman Catholic religious education where the parents desired it. The Roman Catholic bishops preferred separate schools as the ideal. Bishop Charbonnel campaigned for the same financial aid as the public schools.¹⁰⁴ In a lenten pastoral of 1856, he used his episcopal authority to remind Roman Catholic parents of their educational obligations. If children did not know the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments, the Act of Confession and "the manner of hearing mass" by age seven, their parents or guardians were guilty of mortal sin. Any Roman Catholic failing to vote for separate schools was guilty also of mortal sin, as were Roman Catholic supporters of mixed schools.¹⁰⁵ In Charbonnel's mind, only separate schools were suitable for Roman Catholic children and youth. In mixed schools, Catholics would be exposed to the Protestant Bible and to unorthodox teachings.¹⁰⁶

Throughout Ontario history, the Roman Catholic hierarchy has desired a Catholic education for its young.¹⁰⁷ This implied not only the imparting of knowledge, but also spiritual formation. During the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic population, clergy and laity alike, desired a

¹⁰⁴Ibid., xi.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 181.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 182-3.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., vii.

separate education from Protestants, not least because of differences regarding the Bible.¹⁰⁸ Bishop Power of Toronto wrote on the matter in a letter of 1845:

You ought to know that the Bible cannot be made use of as a mere class book and that no Catholic child can attend to readings from the Protestant version of the Holy Scriptures. The Catholic children should be allowed to remain in a separate room until the usual lesson from the Holy Scriptures is read; they can read by themselves a chapter from the authorized version of the New Testament. It would be preferable in every way if the parents of Catholic children could have a separate school of their own, but this must depend in a great measure on the number of Catholics in each locality.¹⁰⁹

In a similar vein of thought members of the Toronto Catholic Institute, composed of leading Catholic laymen, discussed the position of Catholics in relation to the "educational problem".¹¹⁰ In an address to all Catholics in Canada West, while admitting to deficiencies in the education of young Catholic immigrants, the Institute underlined the necessity of religious education for Catholic children:

. . . not merely secular education which consists in a knowledge of things human without distinguishing between that which is good and that which is evil; but an education that has religion for its foundation--that teaches the tender mind to look first to the Kingdom of Heaven as the only country worthy (of) the intrinsic love of man's soul; while at the same time it inculcates that regard, that esteem for the world we live in and its inhabitants, which forms the grand distinguishing feature of the Christian Religion. It is not what a child learns or knows that should be chiefly taken into consideration, but the nature and tendency of that learning and that knowledge; in other words, as in all things, quality rather than quantity should be the

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 78-79.

¹⁰⁹Power to Mills, July 8, 1845, Toronto Archdiocesan Papers, Power Papers quoted in *ibid.*, 54.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 106.

distinguishing feature of a general elementary education for the Catholic youth of Canada.¹¹¹

There was opposition to Roman Catholic separate schools on the part of Protestants. Egerton Ryerson hoped for every child to attend the free, non-sectarian public schools. George Brown, the Reform editor of the Toronto Globe, opposed separate schools.¹¹² Many Protestants agreed and anti-Catholic sentiment was often strong. Some Protestants, notably members of the fiercely Protestant Orange Lodge, believed that the Church of Rome was a threat to their own institutions and religious freedom. The issue of separate schools has been divisive and controversial throughout Ontario history, even though the establishment of separate schools in 1841 was a relatively calm affair.

The question of Biblical instruction activated debate between supporters of and objectors to Roman Catholic separate schools. Because of the controversy over the Bible, some wanted the Bible not to be used in the common schools because of the fear that teachers would present the Bible according to their own particular theological views.¹¹³ Views on the topic varied from a proclamation in a Catholic Reform paper that "no Roman Catholic can expose his child at a tender age to what he believes to be spiritual destruction, without doing violence to the purest dictates of his

¹¹¹The Canadian Mirror of Parliament, September 26, 1851, quoted in *ibid.*, 106-107.

¹¹²*Ibid.*

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 45.

conscience"¹¹⁴ to the belief expressed in a Presbyterian journal that "every man is answerable for his religious belief and his own conscience and his God, and every man should be at liberty to instruct his children in the faith which his conscience dictates."¹¹⁵ Others, notably Anglicans, represented by the Church of England paper, The Church, expressed an opposing view:

Now natural and strong is our indignation at the virtual exclusion of the Bible from our Common Schools, in deference to those who do not like that the light of truth should be shed upon their errors and corruptions, shall we reiterate the loud complaint of every honest and religious mind in the Protestant community, but be patient a little longer in the hope that this too will be heeded?¹¹⁶

Among those who feared that their "errors and corruptions" might be exposed would be Roman Catholics, in the mind of the Anglican writer. Moreover, George E. Clerk, a convert to the Catholic Church and its vocal supporter as editor of the Catholic Chronicle, explained why Catholics could not join with Protestants in teaching a common religion -- "the Catholic religion came from God, while Protestantism came from the devil."¹¹⁷ A major reason that separate schools were allowed in 1841 was that no agreement could be secured between Protestants and Catholics as long as most

¹¹⁴The Canadian Mirror of Parliament, August 8, 1851, quoted in *ibid.*, 104.

¹¹⁵The Canadian Church Examiner and Presbyterian Review, July 21, 1841, quoted in *ibid.*, 41.

¹¹⁶The Church, July 8, 1843, quoted in *ibid.*, 47.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 105.

Protestants insisted on the use of the Protestant Bible in the Common Schools.

In 1844, Bishop Power affirmed the rights of Catholics to their own schools exclusive of Protestant influences: "Catholics have the right to a school of their own. . . . The trustees must be in every case Catholics chosen according to the law and the School Master a member of the Catholic Church."¹¹⁸ Differences between Protestant groups were regarded as differences of opinion, but the difference between Protestants and Catholics "was a difference of Faith--a difference in the belief of certain dogmas which they [Catholics] are taught to regard as of the greatest importance, while any deviation from this belief would be attended with future punishments."¹¹⁹ Differences between Protestants and Catholics over deeply-held theological beliefs precluded their agreement on a common school system. Catholics were not amenable to Anglican domination of the schools under Strachan in the early years, nor to the 'non-sectarian' Protestant inspired scheme of Egerton Ryerson. On the other hand, Protestant prejudices against Roman Catholic separate schools were common. George Brown, editor of the Toronto Globe, wrote that "the worst example of priestcraft's wicked influence . . . was the separate school provision in the Upper Canadian school law."¹²⁰

¹¹⁸Power to Sanderl, June 28, 1844, Toronto Archdiocesan Archives, Power Papers quoted in *ibid.*, 54.

¹¹⁹The Mirror, August 15, 1851 quoted in *ibid.*, 105.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 76.

Egerton Ryerson allowed both Catholic and Protestant separate schools, but hoped they would dwindle. He objected to their inefficiency, uneconomical nature, and their perceived threat to his public school system.¹²¹ Protestant accounts of the establishment of Roman Catholic separate schools, such as that of J. George Hodgins, Ryerson's assistant in the Department of Education, credit the intransigence and persistence of the Roman Catholic Bishops and their political manoeuvring for the appearance and maintenance of the separate school system.¹²² This is to mistake the motives of the Catholic Bishops. They were convinced that only a Catholic institution could be entrusted with education of young Catholics.¹²³ They were not in favour of Catholic children attending schools in which Catholic theology would be either absent or controverted by Protestant heresies. While study was important, the dogmas of the Universal Church were paramount. The Church was guardian of the Truth. If ignorance, irreligion, and heresy were to be avoided, no other body could be entrusted with the education of young Catholics. In all areas of the curriculum, the Church was the supreme teacher.¹²⁴ Only a vigorously orthodox and Catholic education could be a vehicle for the Truth.

¹²¹Ibid., 313.

¹²²J. George Hodgins, The Legislation and History of Separate Schools in Upper Canada from 1841 until the Close of the Reverend Doctor Ryerson's Administration of the Education Department in 1876 (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897).

¹²³Letter of Bishop Charbonnel to Dr. Ryerson (May 1, 1852). Cited in *ibid.*, 39.

¹²⁴Ibid.

Non-sectarian education was anathema. Catholics did not object to a Protestant education for Protestant children. However, they wanted the same privilege.

7. Other Christian Bodies

According to statistics cited by Westfall¹²⁵, by 1881 Catholics made up seventeen percent of the total population of Ontario. Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists constituted approximately ninety-eight percent of the non-Catholic population of Ontario. Other Protestant religious bodies together made up less than two percent of the non-Catholic population. Understandably, they had less impact on the development of religious education in the public schools than the four larger Protestant groups. Nevertheless, they catechized their young according to distinctive principles. The Lutherans and the Congregationalists were significant in view of later developments.

a) Lutherans

Lutheranism developed in Europe.¹²⁶ Lutherans were overwhelmingly German in origin and were collected in

¹²⁵Westfall, 10-11.

¹²⁶For the history of Lutheranism see F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, [Third Ed.], (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1010-11.

discrete settlements. In the early years, they spoke German in church and catechized their young in that language. The catechism was Luther's Small Catechism, which was drilled thoroughly into the catechumens during their tender years until confirmation at about age thirteen. The Catechism presented a conventional Protestant view of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Luther recognized only two sacraments: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion (The Sacrament of the Altar). He treated also Confession and Absolution, but not in a sacramental sense. Luther composed Prayers for Morning and Evening and Grace at Table. These were to be led by the head of the household. The Catechism concluded with a Table of Duties.

In articles on the Creed, Luther taught the doctrine of the atoning death of Christ and of the sanctification of the believer by the agency of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁷ Of interest from the point of view of disciplining and training children was the Table of Duties. This consisted of Scripture passages meant to encourage obedience to teachers, pastors, civil authorities, husbands, parents, and masters, as well as respect owed widows and elderly persons. The injunction to honour father and mother, which is the Fourth Commandment, was extended to authority in general.¹²⁸

¹²⁷Theodore S. Tappert, tr. and ed., The Small Catechism in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 345.

¹²⁸Ibid., 343.

Although there are early examples of separate schools conducted in the German language, these did not endure. Catechesis was carried on by the local pastor and supplemented by church school instruction. Up until the 1950's, there continued to be Lutheran "Saturday schools" which specialized in confirmation instruction--especially in rural areas. Lutherans have never depended on public education for the religious training of their young and showed little inclination to combine with other Protestants in non-sectarian religious enterprises.

b) Congregationalists

Congregationalists trace their history to the time of the Reformation. When it became evident that the Church of England did not intend to become wholly Protestant, these "gathered Churches" outside the normal parish structure increased.¹²⁹ Congregationalists held the doctrine that the local church was independent and autonomous. Associations of Congregationalists were formed for mutual support but they had no legislative authority.¹³⁰ Congregationalism entered Upper Canada primarily from the United States. Its models were the Puritian Churches of New England.

The Congregationalists were Calvinist and evangelical. Warmly disposed to the claims of the intellect,¹³¹ they held

¹²⁹Ibid., 399.

¹³⁰Ibid., 399-400.

¹³¹Ibid., 399.

education in high esteem. They were never numerous in Ontario and were absorbed into the United Church in 1925.

Non-sectarian education had been practiced in New England, a Congregationalist stronghold in the late eighteenth century. Ryerson was influenced by the view of Horace Mann, the New England educator, that moral virtues and principles based on Christianity could be taught without sectarian bias in the public schools.¹³² Congregationalist children received the bulk of their religious instruction in church schools.

Although Congregationalists were evangelical in worship, as the nineteenth century developed, they became more sedate and came to resemble the major denominations. Always a minority, the Congregationalists had minor impact on politics and education, and gradually came to an acceptance of non-sectarian education along the lines proposed by Egerton Ryerson. In 1925, they were absorbed into the United Church of Canada, which was predominantly a union of Methodists and some Presbyterians.

8. Summary and Conclusion

Although Upper Canada contained a religiously-diverse population, the vast majority of the inhabitants belonged to

¹³²Douglas T. Schweyer, The Historical Development of Religious Education in Ontario Public Schools (Master's Thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, 1973), 15 n.

the five leading denominations: Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Roman Catholic. The Anglicans under Bishop Strachan desired an established Church of England with control over the school system. When this could not be achieved, Strachan pressed for publicly-funded Anglican schools. The Methodists, led by Egerton Ryerson, came to support a common school system free of sectarian bias, but based on Christian moral principles shared by all, such as the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus. The Presbyterians, after failing to obtain their own publicly-funded schools, came to accept the common schools, but were uneasy about the possible divisiveness of state-sponsored religious instruction. The Baptist churches were independent bodies united by a similar theology. They suspected Ryerson's efforts to define a common curriculum of religious education. The Roman Catholics demanded and obtained a separate school system.

When the Protestant churches realized that they would not get public funding for denominational schools, they still desired greater religious instruction in the curriculum than Ryerson's common Christianity. They had not been able to reach an agreement on what that would entail.

The divisions among Protestant denominations were greater in the nineteenth-century than in the twentieth century. Most of the early disputes had evolved around the question of Establishment. Within the denominations, there had been doctrinal tensions. As the century progressed,

there emerged a common social conservatism which reflected class-consciousness, a sense of order, and a concern for moral reform. However, the doctrinal debates of the Reformation had not been resolved. There were those who remained suspicious of both evangelicalism and Romanist superstition. The ethnic basis of theological rivalries had further complicated the matter.

For some time in its early history, Ontario had allowed local determination of religious education in particular school districts. Subject to the wishes of trustees and parents, catechisms and other distinctive religious teachings were allowed. Where there was local religious homogeneity, this was acceptable. When a centrally-controlled common school system was erected under Ryerson in the mid-nineteenth century, it was supposed to be non-sectarian and based upon what Christians held in common. Sectarian teaching was not allowed during regular school hours, even though ministers of the various recognized denominations were permitted to use school facilities for religious instruction at other times. Critics of non-sectarian education felt that the system was godless, on the one hand, or divisive on the other. While the common schools provided an efficient method of educating Ontario's children, they could never satisfy the natural desires of Protestants to have their children instructed in their own particular creed. Nevertheless, there was increased interest in religious education in the schools on the part of the major Protestant Churches in the latter part

of the nineteenth century, although no common program was presented which would satisfy all.

There were significant similarities among Protestants in their use of catechisms and the Bible. The Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed were almost always the basic components of catechisms. This suggests that a common program of religious instruction in the schools would have been possible if only the churches could have set aside their historic divisions.

CHAPTER III

THE EMERGENCE OF A PROTESTANT CONSENSUS

1. Introduction

The churches of Upper Canada had desired religious instruction of their own denominational type within the common school system. Denominational education did not emerge, however, with the exception of Roman Catholic separate schools. As Roman Catholic schools increased in number throughout the nineteenth century, the Protestant churches began to demand a Protestant emphasis in the schools greater than the non-sectarian Christianity advocated by Egerton Ryerson. Most Protestants, in spite of doctrinal differences, could agree that the Bible should be more prominent in the schools.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, there were unions of various Protestant bodies which had theological similarities, and cooperation among the churches in social crusades such as temperance. William Westfall¹ has proposed the emergence of a Protestant culture in nineteenth-century Ontario. This culture, which Westfall has termed 'the religion of order' was based upon social views and moral

¹William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

convictions which Protestants shared. John Webster Grant² has noted an era of Protestant cooperation in connection with Canadian Confederation. Clifford³ has noted the problems of sustaining a Protestant hegemony in a multi-cultural Canada. Building on these insights, the present study explores the positive impact of Protestant alliances and amalgamations from 1875 to 1925 upon the question of religion in the public schools.

All Protestants agreed upon the importance, if not the supremacy, of the Bible in catechesis. They differed in doctrine, polity, and custom based on their interpretation of the Scriptures. However, they supported measures to increase the amount of Bible reading and Bible study in the classroom. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the increasing Protestant agitation for Bible-teaching in the public schools, the extent of cooperation among the churches in pursuing this goal, and the impact of church unions and cooperation among the Protestant churches upon the religious education question in the public schools.

2. The Importance of the Bible

In the nineteenth century, the Bible, for most English-speaking Protestants, was the version of 1611, commonly

²John Webster Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era (Burlington, Ontario: Welch Publishing Co. Inc., 1988).

³N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis", Studies in Religion 2, no. 4 (1973): 315-326.

called the Authorized Version or the King James Bible. It consisted of the Old and New Testaments but not the Apocrypha. The King James Bible had been immensely popular--even greatly loved--among nineteenth century English-speaking Protestants. It became the final authority in matters of doctrine, polity, and morality. Its importance to Protestantism is hard to overstate.

Most Protestant parents desired that their children receive Biblical instruction not only in church but at school. "A deeply personal knowledge of the Bible"⁴ was considered the foundation of learning for those subscribing to Methodist beliefs. Daily Bible reading with discussion of its important message "provided not only the one sure guide for salvation and an understanding of God's demands and expectations, but it also established rules of conduct and ethical behaviour that were essential for spiritual and moral growth".⁵ To Presbyterians, as well, it was important that the Bible be used daily in the schools.⁶ When, at the first session of the united parliament of Canada in 1841, Governor General Lord Sydenham introduced "a bill to restructure elementary education in Upper and Lower Canada, thirty-nine petitions were received, each asking that the Bible be a prescribed text for any school receiving public money".⁷

⁴Neill Semple, The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 62.

⁵Ibid.

⁶John S. Moir, Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987, 100.

⁷Ibid.

When responding in the Legislative Assembly to these demands and their potential for divisive results, William Morris highlighted the importance of the Bible to the Protestant population:

If the use by Protestants, of the Holy Scriptures in their Schools is so objectionable to our fellow-subjects of that other faith, the children of both religious persuasions must be educated apart; for Protestants never can yield to that point, and therefore, if it is insisted upon that the Scriptures shall not be a Class-book in Schools, we must part in peace, and conduct the education of our respective Bodies according to our sense of what is right.⁸

The Committee on Union of the United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of Canada represented the state of Protestant opinion in 1857, when it stated that "it is highly important that the Bible should be used in the Common Schools of the country, and that the Church should constantly aim at this direction."⁹ The Synod of the United Presbyterian Church resolved in 1861 that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament should be read daily"¹⁰ in the Common Schools.

Dr. Ryerson regarded the Bible as "a symbol of right and liberty dear to the heart of every Protestant freeman, to every lover of civil and religious liberty--a standard of

⁸ J. G. Hodgins, ed., Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, vol. 4 (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, Printers, 1902), 32.

⁹The Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, June 15-22, 1858 (Toronto: Cleland's Book and Printing House, 1858), 38. Cited in Theodore E. Thomas, "The Protestant Churches and the Religious Issue in Ontario Public Schools" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, N.Y., 1972), 58.

¹⁰Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, June, 1861 (Toronto: W. C. Chewett & Co. 1861), 458. Also cited in Thomas, 59.

truth and the rule of Protestant morals."¹¹ In his Annual Report of 1869, Ryerson highlighted that Bible reading was being conducted in almost seventy percent (70%) of the public schools under his Christian but non-sectarian approach to religion in the schools.¹² However, the optional basis of religious instruction under Dr. Ryerson did not satisfy all. The Anglicans pressed for more religious teaching, and Presbyterian church courts urged not only more instruction, but the mandatory use of the Bible as a text in the schools.¹³ After Ryerson retired as Superintendent of Education in 1876, Protestants sought obligatory use of the Bible in schools. Cooperation within and among the denominations seemed advantageous in the attempt to achieve this goal.

In 1875 the Presbyterian churches had joined together to form The Presbyterian Church in Canada. By 1884, the various Methodist bodies had become The Methodist Church, Canada. Larger churches carried greater weight in influencing political and social issues. The Methodist Church represented 17.6% of the Canadian population by 1891.¹⁴

In reaction to the increase in Roman Catholic separate schools, the major Protestant denominations began to press with greater vigor for the mandatory use of the Protestant

¹¹Egerton Ryerson, Dr. Ryerson's Letters in Reply to the Attacks of the Hon. George Brown, M.P.P. (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, Printers and Publishers, 1859), 65. Cited in Thomas, 65.

¹²Thomas, 68.

¹³Ibid., 76.

¹⁴Ibid., 80 fn.

Bible in the schools. They cooperated where possible in pursuit of that goal.¹⁵

In 1878, the Synod of the Presbytery of Hamilton and London, a Presbyterian body, requested clarification by the Minister of Education, Adam Crooks, of the regulations regarding the use of the Bible in public schools. The Synod asked whether or not the Bible could be used as a textbook in the regular school program without contravening the regulations.¹⁶ Crooks replied that such use of the Bible in religious teaching was allowable insofar as parents did not "expressly object". He later wrote a memorandum stressing that Bible teaching was entirely optional, as parents and trustees desired, not mandatory.¹⁷

While Presbyterian and Methodist bodies continued to lobby the government of Ontario for mandatory Bible reading in the schools, not all Protestant groups concurred in this strategy. The Congregationalists were satisfied with the permissive use of the Scriptures at the local level and objected to the enforced use of the Bible as a textbook.¹⁸ Their long tradition of separation of church and state could not countenance such a development. The Reverend William Robertson objected to any attempt of the state to legislate matters of religion in the schools: "The authority thus given

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 83.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸The Congregational Yearbook, 1882-1885 (Toronto: Congregational Publishing Co., 1882), 108. Also cited in Thomas, 86.

to the state to prescribe in matters of religion is really of a very despotic character".¹⁹ Robertson was concerned that the state was not qualified to determine a religious education curriculum which might offend religious minorities: "It is impossible, among people holding different religious views, for the State to assume the function of a religious teacher without due discrimination between them".²⁰ The imposition of a mandatory system of religious teaching, rather than the permissive but not obligatory regulations then in place, would create religious division and, perhaps, spell "the dissolution of the educational system"²¹ of the province. Robertson claimed that the permissive system of religious education was sufficient as it was²² because the regulations of the time protected the "voluntary character of religion."²³ He believed that a policy proposing mandatory use of the Bible was "a feeble reproduction of the Romish claim"²⁴--a reference to Protestant attempts to institute comprehensive religious education such as was current in Roman Catholic separate schools. Robertson preferred to have Bible instruction left to the home and the church.²⁵

In 1884, appeals from Protestant groups for increased Bible reading in the schools led the Minister of Education,

¹⁹William Robertson, Religion in the School: A Protest (Toronto: Globe Printing and Engraving Co., 1882), 4.

²⁰Ibid., 21.

²¹Ibid., 23.

²²Ibid., 1-2, 20.

²³Ibid., 2.

²⁴Ibid., 10.

²⁵Ibid., 18.

George Ross, a convinced Protestant layman, to change the regulations. Selections from the Bible and approved prayers were made mandatory for use in public and secondary schools. However, teachers or pupils objecting to these practices could apply for exemption. Clergymen or their deputies could continue to visit schools for the purpose of religious instruction, but outside regular hours. These regulations changed the previous permissive regulations of Dr. Ryerson dramatically. Local parents and trustees could no longer determine the type and content of religious or Bible instruction: these were prescribed by the provincial government. There were protests based on the right to freedom of religion, and heated debate concerning the selection of Bible passages now imposed by the Ministry of Education.²⁶

Although the committee which authorized the 281 Scripture readings for use in the schools had included clergymen from the major Protestant denominations, Education Minister Ross had submitted them to Roman Catholic Archbishop Lynch of Toronto for his comment. As a consequence, the initial favourable reaction to the Scripture selections was blunted by the suspicion by some Protestants that Lynch had dictated changes which minimized Scripture references favourable to Protestant doctrines.²⁷ The 'Ross Bible' controversy had hinged on the substitution of 'who' for

²⁶Stamp, Schools of Ontario, 28.

²⁷Thomas, 92.

'which' in the Lord's Prayer. Archbishop Lynch had suggested this alteration and Ross had agreed. In 1887, the 'Ross Bible', although still authorized, could be replaced by the entire text of the King James Bible as a basis for Scripture selections. This was intended to address the concerns of some Protestants about Roman Catholic interference.²⁸

Protestant leaders who favoured the "Ross Bible" defended the Minister's actions. They denied any Roman Catholic influence in their selection. The Reverend William Caven and Dr. E. H. Dewart produced a pamphlet to this effect.²⁹ Caven noted that the Minister of Education had been supported in his actions by representatives of the Congregational, Methodist, Episcopal [Anglican], and Presbyterian Churches.³⁰ He maintained that Archbishop Lynch had exercised no influence in the selections of the Scripture and that it was preposterous to claim that the major Protestant Churches would countenance such a development.³¹ Dr. Dewart stated flatly that the "Ross Bible" was not the work of Archbishop Lynch³² and that the committee which produced it, whose members he named, were representative of the major Protestant Churches.³³ Dr. Dewart defended the nature of the selections themselves: "some portions of the

²⁸Stamp, Schools of Ontario, 28-29.

²⁹William Cavan, ed., The Scripture Readings: A Statement of the Facts Connected Therewith (Toronto: n.p., 1886).

³⁰Ibid., 3.

³¹Ibid., 3.

³²Ibid., 4.

³³Ibid., 5-6.

Scripture are better adapted to instruct and edify children and youth than others".³⁴

However, Protestants continued to debate, sometimes fiercely, the issue of the Scripture selections to the extent that Ross was forced to give way. In 1887, the Scripture selections were revised. Local trustees were permitted to decide whether the "Ross Bible" or the Bible as a whole would be the basis for Bible reading.

The "Ross Bible" controversy demonstrated suspicion and fear of Roman Catholic influence on the part of some Protestants and it made clear that Protestant opinion was not unanimous concerning the use of the Bible. The principle of Bible reading in the public schools was established and maintained. However, the rights of local trustees to determine the type and content of religion in the schools were diminished.

3. The Trend Towards Unity

A trend in late nineteenth-century Ontario toward cooperation and union within and among Protestant bodies has been noted above. When the hope for denominational schools became politically impractical, Protestants sought Protestant, as differentiated from Roman Catholic, religious

³⁴Ibid., 6.

emphasis in the schools. If the schools were not to be denominational, they must be at least Protestant.

The Bible was a common authority in religious matters among Protestant bodies. However, there were denominational differences in the interpretation of Scripture. These two facts must be held in tension as the history of Protestant cooperation in religious education is examined. Some Protestant bodies had agreed sufficiently in doctrine to unite. Others were to remain independent. Nonetheless, by the twentieth century, the major Protestant bodies spoke with an authoritative voice on the issue of religion in the public schools.

A significant development for the major Protestant denominations in the latter nineteenth century was the establishment of national Canadian Churches. Four Presbyterian groups had united in 1875 to form The Presbyterian Church in Canada. By 1884, six Methodist bodies had combined in the Methodist Church, Canada. The national governing body of the Church of England in Canada, General Synod, was formed in 1893. Although the political union of 1867 was not the only factor in the amalgamations, temporal coincidence may "suggest some connection with Confederation".³⁵

In 1866, a correspondent of Presbyterian had written that "with the coalescing of our divided provinces it is not

³⁵John Webster Grant, "Canadian Confederation and the Protestant Churches", Church History 38, 3 (Sept. 1969), 6.

unnatural to connect the coalescing of our divided churches".³⁶ In an address to the Evangelical Alliance in 1874, George Munro Grant, a prominent Presbyterian minister, had prophesied a "Church of Canada" consisting of a union of the major Protestant, and possibly Roman Catholic, bodies.³⁷ However, the reasons for church unions were complex. To most Protestants it seemed clear that these included the need to present a common front toward the expansion of Roman Catholicism and the need for increased efficiency in evangelizing the West. The Reverend A. B. Courtice wrote of the impending Methodist Union of 1884:

The present movement, if not balked, is to be a great and gracious blessing to the North-West portion of this Dominion, now providentially opened up as an inviting mission-field.³⁸

The West was seen as a mission field in which the regionally-organized Protestant bodies were ill-equipped to evangelize. Previous missions to the west, directed by such European bodies as the Anglican Church Missionary Society or the Roman Catholic Oblates of Mary Immaculate, had concentrated on the proselytization of native Indians. The Protestant Churches of Central Canada did not begin to send out significant missions to the West until the 1860s. As eastern settlers migrated to the West, the churches became interested in extending their organizations to include the

³⁶Presbyterian (October 1866), 311.

³⁷Grant, "Canadian Confederation", 7-8.

³⁸Ibid., 8 fn.

new lands. The imperative of coordinating this effort through national Protestant bodies became clear.³⁹

a) The Presbyterian Union

The Presbyterian Churches in Scotland had suffered the 'Great Disruption' of 1843, wherein the evangelical Free Churches separated from the Established Church of Scotland. Thomas Chalmers, the Free Church leader, had withdrawn from the Kirk over the issues of lay patronage and the interference of the British Government in Church affairs.⁴⁰ Although not immediately relevant to the Canadian situation, Free Church principles became popular in Canada West. More important to Canadians than church-state issues in Scotland was the commitment of the Free Church to "a renewed missionary zeal and a powerful evangelical vision".⁴¹ Free Churches in Canada West were vigorous promoters of moral reform, temperance, and Sabbath observance, and found themselves closer to other evangelicals than to other Presbyterians.⁴²

However, the Presbyterians were the first Protestant body to obtain national organic union in 1875. Intimations of this had come in 1861 with the amalgamation of the United Presbyterians and the Free Church Presbyterians to form the

³⁹Ibid., 9-10.

⁴⁰Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., A Concise History of Christianity in Canada (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 172.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

Canada Presbyterian Church. The differences which had divided these groups had originated in the Scottish homeland and no longer seemed unbridgeable. In particular, attitudes toward church-state relations, including the issue of Bible-teaching in the public schools, had been contentious. In the final agreement on union, the wording was broad enough to allow ambiguous interpretation.⁴³

The voluntary system of church membership had prevailed in Ontario. Any opposition to it became meaningless. Because there would be no state Church, the obstacle to Presbyterian union had been removed. Although secondary matters, such as the use of organ music in worship, had occasioned controversy, there was little theological divergence among Presbyterian bodies. During discussions of union, it was agreed that congregations would be allowed their current worship practices. Doctrinal agreement was established within a matter of days at a General Assembly of the Canadian Presbyterian Church, the Canadian Kirk Synod, the Presbyterian Church and the Kirk Synod of the Lower Provinces [the Maritimes] in 1870.⁴⁴

In 1871, the agreement of the General Assembly of the previous year was sent to the four churches of the proposed Presbyterian union for independent discussion. A period of three years of negotiation and revision culminated in 1875 with a solemn ceremony to form the Presbyterian Church in

⁴³Moir, Enduring Witness, 131.

⁴⁴Ibid., 139-40.

Canada. Congratulations were received from Methodist and Anglican Churches and the event received favourable reports in the press.⁴⁵ The Union of 1875 made the Presbyterian Church in Canada the largest Protestant denomination in the country. It became a powerful voice for Protestantism and a model for unions of other Canadian Christians.

b) The Methodists

Preliminary meetings to discuss Methodist union had been held in the 1850s. By the 1860s, permanent committees on union had been established. Negotiations continued into the 1870s. The Bible Christians, who had splintered from the Wesleyan Methodists, stayed out of these discussions. In 1874, the Wesleyans in Atlantic and central Canada and the Methodist New Connexion Church in Canada joined to create the Methodist Church of Canada. Egerton Ryerson assumed the role of honorary President. This union encouraged the major Methodist groups to seek fuller unity. In addition to the apparent advantages of a truly national church, this new organization could better serve western expansion.⁴⁶

Difficulties to be overcome centred on church government and the role of the laity. The Methodist Episcopal Church was governed by an American-style episcopacy. The Bible Christians and Primitive Methodists were wary of excessive

⁴⁵Ibid., 143.

⁴⁶John Webster Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era (Burlington, Ontario: Welch Publishing Co. Inc., 1988).

clericalism. Many Episcopal and Wesleyan Methodists had feared that excessive lay control of a national church would weaken administration and the effective central control needed.⁴⁷ Eventually, laymen were accorded equal status to the clergy in all church courts, and authority was vested in a General Superintendency. This arrangement was acceptable to most Methodist Episcopal clergy.

Further issues of polity and administration were resolved rapidly by 1884 when the new Methodist Church, Canada, became a reality. The new Church included the Primitive Methodists, the Methodist Church of Canada, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, and the Bible Christians. A powerful and well-financed body was ready to face the challenges of the growing country and to take a major role in national life.

Methodists equated religious instruction in the public schools with Bible teaching. They adhered to Ryerson's system throughout the nineteenth century.

c) The Anglicans

The connection of the Canadian Anglican Churches with Britain had faded by the 1880s. The Establishment of the Church of England had failed in the Canadian setting. The Clergy Reserves had been secularized. Funds from British missionary societies had become limited and would apparently

⁴⁷ Semple, 197.

cease. With Confederation, Canadian nationalism appeared. Cross-country communications provided an impetus to a Canadian Anglican union.⁴⁸ This was first proposed by a resolution of the Diocese of Huron in 1886.⁴⁹ In the following year, the Association for Canadian Church Union was founded by Charles Jenkins.⁵⁰ In 1888, the Synod of the Province of Rupert's Land approved the principle of a Canadian Anglican Church and appointed a committee to consult with the Province of Canada, which was already committed to union. A conference to discuss the matter was held in Winnipeg in 1890. A committee of this conference drafted a report which was adopted as a plan for union. The composition, powers, administration, and leadership of the proposed General Synod were agreed. The Provinces were left largely intact and a new Canadian Primate was to be elected by the Metropolitans of the Provinces. The first General Synod met in Toronto in 1893 and adopted its constitution--a "Solemn Declaration" which is a conservative statement that committed the new church to the historic Anglican faith and the Book of Common Prayer. The formation of a national Anglican Church was an administrative, not a theological, accommodation.

⁴⁸By the terms of the Colonial Clergy Act of 1874, the Church in Canada had become voluntary and autonomous, but not yet united. See H. R. S. Ryan, "The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada: Aspects of Constitutional History", Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society 34, no. 1 (April 1992), 30.

⁴⁹Ibid., 52.

⁵⁰Philip Carrington, The Anglican Church in Canada: A History (Toronto: Collins, 1963), 183.

Anglicans were often at the forefront of attempts to introduce Bible teaching into the schools. In 1897, a group of Anglican clergy made such an attempt in Toronto, only to meet resistance from the Jewish community to the extent that the effort resulted in failure.

d) The Baptists

Unions of Baptist churches in the early days of Ontario were associative but not organic. In Baptist tradition, individual congregations remained independent. With Confederation, compelling reasons for closer ties between like-minded Baptists transcended congregational interests. In 1867, the Baptist Missionary Convention of Ontario had investigated the possibility of "a closer cooperation in regard to matters of general denominational interest and importance"⁵¹ with the Baptists of the Maritimes. Further action was delayed for years. Provincial conventions of Baptists in Ontario and Quebec began to discuss union in 1882. The Canadian Baptist Union, an Ontario association, proposed a federative union of Baptists, which was realized as the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec in 1888. By 1890, this convention represented a church membership of approximately 33,000 in a total of 388 churches.⁵²

⁵¹Minutes of the Baptist Missionary Convention of Ontario, 1867, Canadian Baptist Register (1868), 17.

⁵²Harry Renfree, "Baptist Unity", in Priestly, 143.

Similar unifying movements took place in the Maritimes in 1879, in Manitoba and the North-West in 1884, and in Western Canada in 1909. The modernist-fundamentalist divisions of the early twentieth century were to fracture these federations.

On the question of religion in the schools, in the nineteenth century, the Baptists had no common voice. In the twentieth century, those who remained in the Baptist Convention tended to favour religious education in the public schools. However, those fundamentalists who defected in 1925 and thereafter desired independent Baptist schools where possible, or a share of public funding for the education of their children.

e) The United Church of Canada

The first concrete move toward church union came from the Anglicans. In 1881, when addressing a gathering of the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto, Canon James Carmichael suggested a conference on Christian unity. The Synod appointed a committee in 1886 to explore interest in Canadian church union. At the same time, the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist Churches established similar committees. In a spirit of ecumenism, the Bishops of the world-wide Anglican Communion adopted a basis for church union at the Lambeth Conference of 1888. The four points of this basis, which became known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral were the Holy Scriptures, the Nicene Creed, the sacraments of

Baptism and Holy Communion, and the historic episcopate.⁵³ The Anglicans, for whom disunity had always been regrettable, urged other churches to accept their plan for unity. However, the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist Churches, while accepting the first three points of the Anglican plan, responded negatively to the fourth, the historic episcopate, and while continuing to discuss the matter with Anglicans, began to concentrate on union of non-episcopal bodies. The Methodists began to suspect that the Anglicans intended to reunite what they considered to be splinter groups into the Anglican church rather than to look toward the creation of a new inclusive body.⁵⁴

Discussions on the possibilities of union continued into the 1890s. At the Methodist General Conference of 1890, proposals were made for continuing informal discussions on church union with Presbyterians and Congregationalists and, where possible, with the Anglicans and the Baptists. As a basis for union, the Methodists proposed that all denominations concerned should recognize the validity of each other's ordinations and forms of ministry, that pulpit exchanges should be encouraged, that members of the cooperating churches should be welcome to the Lord's Supper in the other churches, and that congregations should cooperate in community-wide evangelistic crusades. They added that, should organic union be impractical, at the least

⁵³Stephen Neill, Anglicanism (London: Mobery, 1977), 368.

⁵⁴Semple, Lord's Dominion: History of Methodism, 420.

Protestant mission work should be coordinated by a joint body. These measures helped to encourage harmonious relations among the churches and to further the acceptance of the concept of a Protestant church union.⁵⁵

Outreach to the Baptists faced certain dilemmas. There was no body which could speak for them nationally on theological and church government matters. In 1888, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec had united the previously incorporated Baptist associations within these two provinces, but local congregations retained considerable authority. Also, Baptist insistence on adult "believers baptism" presented a stumbling block to those churches which baptized infants and children.⁵⁶

The Presbyterians at their General Assembly of 1890 continued to pursue church union. Like the Methodists, they expressed serious reservations about the Anglican proposal of the historic episcopate as a basis for union. They doubted that the Nicene Creed by itself was a sufficient statement of doctrine. Thus, they turned toward the non-episcopal churches in future plans for union.

In 1893, committees of the Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches met to discuss union, and the Methodists formally proposed federal union with these two bodies in the following year. In 1899, the three denominations agreed not to build churches within six miles

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

of each other in the rapidly-expanding mission-fields of Western Canada.⁵⁷

While the desired union of all Protestant denominations seemed to be reaching a stalemate at the turn of the century, continued cooperative discussions among Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists began to bear fruit. Cooperative ventures in youth programs, Bible classes, and other Christian education became popular and on-going.⁵⁸ Negotiations had been so productive that by 1904 a basis for union was sought. Committees of the three churches met together and agreed that union was practicable. Subcommittees were established to seek agreement on doctrine, ministry, polity, administration, and church law. Progress, however, would be governed by the approval of details by the memberships of the individual churches. By 1906, the Baptists had concluded that they should not enter the proposed union.⁵⁹ The Anglican General Synod had declared that any discussion of church union must presuppose acceptance of the principle of the historic episcopate, to which the joint committee of the churches could not agree.

A draft Basis of Union was submitted to the presbyteries and conferences of the churches in 1907, and by the following year a Basis of Union was published. The doctrinal statement was based on a creed prepared by the Presbyterian Church in

⁵⁷Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, 107.

⁵⁸Ibid., 59.

⁵⁹Moir, Enduring Witness, 200.

the United States of America and was an expression of central beliefs held by Protestants and reflected a balance of "mild Calvinism with a mild Arminianism".⁶⁰ Because Presbyterian theology was still officially predestinarian, and because Wesley had admitted the possibility of universal salvation, the twenty articles of belief were written in language that was elastic enough to satisfy the three churches. The Basis of Union, prepared by the joint committee, stressed the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life,⁶¹ and accepted the creeds of the ancient church and the "evangelical doctrines of the Reformation as set forth in common in the doctrinal standards" of the negotiating Churches.⁶² In effect, these were the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians and the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church, Canada. The twenty articles of belief which formed the Basis of Union for the new church were brief and general, avowing the power of God to order all events and the freedom of human individuals.⁶³ The doctrines of original sin and the natural sinfulness of human beings were counterbalanced by a stress on God's offer of "all sufficient salvation to all men [sic]".⁶⁴ Liberal Protestant clergy felt at liberty to

⁶⁰Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, 108.

⁶¹"The Preface of the Doctrine of the Basis of Union of The United Church of Canada," Our Inheritance: 1925-1975 (Barrie, Ontario: The United Church Renewal Fellowship, 1975), 10.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., 84.

⁶⁴Ibid., 85.

interpret the twenty articles in the light of modern biblical and theological scholarship, and few serious objections were raised. The objectors to union, of whom most were Presbyterian, were concerned about preserving their denomination. William MacLaren, the conservative principal of Knox College, declared the doctrinal agreement to be "on the whole pretty good", yet he withdrew his support for church union for other reasons, chiefly because he wanted the tone of the historic Presbyterian Church to continue.⁶⁵

Practical popular support for the idea of union developed once the Basis of Union had been drafted. Members of local churches began to arrange amalgamations without waiting for an official act of union. In the West there was a widespread desire for union. This spontaneous movement organized itself into the General Council of Local Union Churches which ultimately became one of the constituents of the United Church.⁶⁶

Approval for union came fairly easily on the part of the Congregationalists and Methodists. By 1910, an overwhelming majority of the independently governed Congregationalist Churches had voted in favour of union and the Methodist General Conference had approved the Basis of Union. By 1912, Methodist bodies had voted almost unanimously in favour of

⁶⁵N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada 1904-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 40.

⁶⁶Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era, 110.

union. The Baptists and the Anglicans continued to stand aloof⁶⁷ for reasons stated previously.

The problem concerning form of ministry for the new church was solved by combining the mobility of the Methodist itinerant system with the practice of allowing congregations a dominant role in the choice of ministers. The validity of the orders of the three churches was accepted without question. However, the Presbyterian principle of a high standard of education for ordinands was accepted for the new church.

In establishing the structure of the united church, the three churches agreed that the functions of their church officers were similar even if their current titles differed.⁶⁸ The basic unit of the new church was established as the pastoral charge consisting of one or more congregations. The pastoral charges were organized into presbyteries, annual conferences, and a General Conference.

The Presbyterians were seriously divided. Principal MacLaren and Ephraim Scott, editor of the Presbyterian Record, led the anti-union forces. They supported inter-church cooperation, but stopped short of organic union. In a statement to the Methodists in October 1914, Scott declared that "our two churches will do more by working in harmony and cooperation; adjusting our fields where this can be done,

⁶⁷Ibid., 108-9.

⁶⁸Moir, Enduring Witness, 202.

than by attempting organic union".⁶⁹ MacLaren had opposed union at the 1889 Conference on Unity sponsored by the Anglicans. He believed that doctrinal and administrative differences with the Methodists and lack of consensus among Presbyterians made organic union unwise.⁷⁰

The Senior Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Robert Campbell, also objected to union. He believed that there could not be "a coalescence between types so different as the Methodists and Presbyterians",⁷¹ and insisted that federation or cooperation were more appropriate.⁷² When Campbell became Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in 1907, he continued to resist absorption into the United Church.

Although the General Assembly, the presbyteries, and the congregations of the Presbyterian Church had approved the Basis of Union by 1912, and a vote for union was supported by 50 out of 70 presbyteries and 70% of the membership⁷³, the Assembly decided to delay the final vote. Further discussion might lead to even fuller agreement. The opposite result materialized by 1916. Even though the Assembly of that year supported union by a vote of 406 to 90, the war situation led

⁶⁹Ephraim Scott, "The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Its Preservation and Continuance" (Montreal: Lovell, 1914). Cited in N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada 1904-1939, 70.

⁷⁰Moir, Enduring Witness, 199.

⁷¹Presbyterian (18 June 1904), 790. Cited in Clifford, Resistance to Church Union, 27.

⁷²Ibid., 26.

⁷³John Webster Grant, The Canadian Experience of Church Union (London: Lutherworth, 1967), 45.

it to postpone indefinitely implementation. During this time, opponents of the union organized the Presbyterian Church Association. Its aim was to perpetuate the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Local churches, especially in the West, had proceeded to amalgamate during the wartime moratorium on implementation of organic union. By 1921, almost a thousand pastoral charges had established a united church form. However, anti-union feeling had increased in some areas during this delay, so that congregations became divided on the issue. Opponents mounted challenges in the courts and a public campaign against union. When the votes to implement union were finally taken in 1925, about one-third of the members of the Presbyterian Church remained out of the union, whether or not their congregations had voted affirmatively. The opponents of the union had no rallying theological issue. They opposed union primarily because they objected to the extinction of the Presbyterian Church.⁷⁴

It is possible that the fifteen-year delay between the approval of the Basis of Union and the actual formation of the United Church allowed opposition to organize and coalesce in a manner that would not have been possible had decisive action been taken. However, the decline of popular support during this period is more puzzling. Grant⁷⁵ has postulated that the period of consensus had begun to wane at a time of

⁷⁴Grant, Canadian Experience, 51.

⁷⁵Ibid., 56.

ethnic, party, and regional conflict in the country as a whole. Within this climate, he believed it possible that some Presbyterians may have been uncomfortable with the radical activities of some of the social gospelers, who were predominantly Methodist.

The impetus toward union had been to enlarge Protestant influence throughout the country, especially in the expanding Western Provinces. As a result of the union of Methodist, Congregationalist, and some Presbyterian Churches, the United Church of Canada became the largest Protestant denomination, with potentially great impact on the spiritual, moral, and even political life of the country. However, this union had not brought together all the Protestant churches. Even so, Protestants were able to combine forces in social action due to shared theological and moral convictions.

4. Cooperation Among the Churches

During the late nineteenth century, coalitions of Protestants had been formed in response to perceived social problems. Public morality was a common concern. Temperance and other social issues became a common cause for cooperation. John Webster Grant has characterized this cooperation as follows:

In the late years of the nineteenth century there was building up of an informal sort of coalition of central Protestants. There was nothing like a conscious alliance, but leaders of the three churches [Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist] began to be aware

of a certain affinity. They met on the platforms of temperance rallies, at meetings of the Evangelical Alliance, at Sunday School conventions, in campaigns for supporting the evangelization of French-Canadians. Their chief badges of mutual recognition were receptiveness to new forms of Church life, old-fashioned evangelical zeal, and a moral earnestness closely akin to the English non-conformist conscience. They were all beginning to think of themselves as churchmen rather than sectarians.⁷⁶

The concept of Protestant Church union was a response to these concerns, but even when a unified Protestant Church was not achieved, Protestant cooperation was common. Protestants saw the cause of late Victorian problems such as drunkenness, gambling, poverty, prostitution, and crime as moral failure which could be alleviated by education in Bible truths. However, due to immigration, industrialization, and urbanization, there were many who were untouched by the churches' moral and theological teachings. Teaching religion in the public schools was proposed as an antidote to the social problems which were presumed to afflict the unchurched. The schools were seen as potential agents of moral and social reform and as forces for integrating immigrants into Canadian society: "The teaching of religion in the schools . . . was now proposed as one of the means the State should use in its training for citizenship".⁷⁷ Although they had been divided in the nineteenth century over the issue of Bible instruction in the schools, the major Protestant Churches began to warm to the perceived social benefits of moral instruction beyond the mere reading of

⁷⁶Grant, Canadian Experience, 25-26.

⁷⁷Thomas, 108.

scripture passages. However, concerted effort to realize this idea was desultory until World War I.

The major Protestant Churches had urged the government to extend Bible reading in the schools during the late nineteenth century, but little change had resulted since the scripture reading regulations of 1884. By 1914, most schools were involved in the reading of scripture passages, without elaboration, and some clergy used the schools for the purpose of religious instruction as permitted by trustees. The results of these measures seemed inadequate.⁷⁸ However, it had become obvious that Protestant cooperation in moral and social crusades could bring success. The temperance crusade had helped to bring about prohibition and concerted efforts to obtain legal observance of the Sabbath had resulted in the Lord's Day Act. Religious education in the public schools was adopted as another common cause.

In 1913, the Synod of the Anglican Province of Ontario appointed a committee to lobby the provincial government for increased religious education in the schools.⁷⁹ Representation was made to other denominations. This resulted in a meeting of an interfaith delegation of Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists, Roman Catholics and Jews with Education Department officials

⁷⁸Thomas, 103.

⁷⁹Journal of Proceedings of the First and Second Sessions of the Provincial Synod of Ontario, Church of England, 1912 and 1913 (London:Ptg. and Litho Co., 1914), 19. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

in 1914.⁸⁰ The result of this ecumenical event was the introduction in 1915 of a new series of graded readers with purported moral content. The renewed call of the Provincial Synod in 1916 for more religious content in the curriculum produced little effect. By 1919, the Committee on Religious Education in the Schools reported to Synod that, under the current regulations, religious influence in the schools seemed minimal:

There has been little or no progress in Biblical instruction in our schools for the last twenty years. In so far as Biblical or Religious Instruction is concerned, there is none given or permitted as such. A Biblical passage may be read at the opening, but not taught. A Biblical passage may form a lesson in the Reader, but it is taught as ethics or literature, not as religion.⁸¹

As a consequence, the Synod was asked to cooperate with other denominations to press the issue with the government. A united effort might secure a wider hearing.⁸²

The Archbishop of the Province of Ontario issued a formal invitation to other denominations to work together to prepare a syllabus for religious teaching in the schools. The Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists accepted, but the Baptists cited separation of church and state, their traditional stance, as reason for their refusal.

⁸⁰Journal of the Proceedings of the Third Session of the Provincial Synod of Ontario (Ottawa: R. J. Taylor Printer, 1916), 68. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁸¹Journal of the Fourth Session of the Provincial Synod of Ontario, The Church of England (Toronto: Parker Bros. Ltd., 1919), 86. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁸²*Ibid.*, 87.

The Archbishop was buoyed by the possibility of inter-Church joint action:

It is surely significant that three of the largest non-Romanist Communions in this Province, making with ourselves some 83.4 percent of the non-Romanist population, have agreed to join us in shaping a syllabus of religious instruction to be used in our Public Schools, in school hours, as a part of the recognized school curriculum, and have consented to join us in an appeal to the Department of Education for its adoption.⁸³

A joint committee of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists met with the Minister of Education in 1923 to present the following resolution:

(1) "That some additional provision should be made in the Public School Curriculum of the Province for such systematic reading of the Bible as will present a comprehensive view of its contents to the Public School pupils of the Province; for the memorization of the great library masterpieces of the Bible; and for instruction in morals and good citizenship drawn from carefully selected Scripture passages."

(2) "That to this end, a Scheme of Scripture passages suited to each grade in the Schools should be prepared."⁸⁴

A change of government curtailed further action. However, the following year, the Joint Committee met with the new Premier and Minister of Education, the Honourable George Ferguson, with similar proposals. The Committee received a sympathetic hearing.⁸⁵ Regulation 13 was amended in 1924. The selections of Scriptures were extended to include any

⁸³Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifth Session of the Provincial Synod of Ontario (Toronto: Parker Bros. Ltd., 1922), 59. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁸⁴Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixth Session of the Provincial Synod of Ontario (Toronto: Parker Bros. Ltd., 1925), 57-58. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 58.

list approved by the Minister as well as previously approved sources. This change motivated the Joint Committee to begin preparing a new Syllabus of Readings for submission to the Minister for approval. This work was interrupted in 1924 while difficulties concerning the formation of the United Church were resolved, and resumed in 1926, when sub-committees were established to continue formulating lists of Bible readings appropriate for the public school curricula. By 1930, a comprehensive selection of Bible Readings for Schools for use by elementary pupils had appeared. These readers, in three volumes, were published by the Macmillan Company and "Issued for the approval of School Boards by consent of the Department of Education for Ontario".⁸⁶ This careful wording indicated that the decision to actually use these books rested with local authorities. The "Macmillan Readers" were sold at a cost of seventy-five cents each, an expense which discouraged some schools from purchasing them when the Department of Education still provided a list of approved readings free of charge.⁸⁷ Not until 1949 was a cheaper version of the Readers offered, as well as a free pamphlet containing a list of the Bible passages, with the aim of enlarging their use in the classroom.⁸⁸

⁸⁶McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 7.

⁸⁷Ibid., 7-8.

⁸⁸Ibid., 8.

During the course of developing the list of Scripture passages, the Committee had expanded to include representatives from the Anglican, United Church, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical, Evangelical Lutheran, and Presbyterian denominations. The Congregationalists and the Methodists, with the majority of Presbyterians, had formed the United Church in 1925. The cooperative momentum was to issue in further ecumenical work towards a religious program in the schools.

The work of the Joint Committee had produced tangible effects. Departmental regulations were changed to allow religious instruction by clergy at the beginning of the school day rather than after regular school hours. An agreed-upon syllabus of Bible readings had been produced for the public elementary schools and the memberships of the cooperating Churches had been encouraged by their governing bodies to press, both locally and provincially, for increased religious instruction in the schools.

Throughout the 1930s, the churches had noted the rise of Fascism and Communism with dismay. They saw totalitarianism as a threat to democracy and morality. They viewed democracy as indistinguishable from Christianity and Fascism and Communism as neo-pagan and atheistic ideologies contrary to Christian teaching. When it was reported in 1935 that a Communist youth club had been established in a school, Anglicans, once again, sounded the alarm. At the Provincial

Synod of Ontario of 1935, Judge G. W. Morley presented the following motion:

Whereas it appears from the report of the Rev. Dr. Hiltz recently presented to the Executive Council of the General Synod that Communism and Atheism are being taught in one or more Public Schools in a certain district in Ontario;

Therefore be it resolved that enquiry be made as to whether any action has been taken by the said Council with reference to the same.

Be it further resolved that if the result of such an inquiry is that no action has been taken, that his Grace the Archbishop of Ontario, communicate a strong letter of protest to the Honourable Minister of Education for this Province, requesting (after the necessary particulars have been obtained) that an investigation be made with a view to eliminating the teaching of such doctrine.⁸⁹

The Synod was warned further of the danger of Communism in a motion by Canon Warner and Dr. Bedford-Jones which read in part:

Resolved, That this Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario recognizes in the propagation of the tenets of communism and the attempts to teach along the lines of atheism, the evidence of the unrest in the minds of many people . . .⁹⁰

The remedy for such unrest was "personal witness to what Christ has done for us through his Church" as "the means of answering the needs of spiritually hungry people and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."⁹¹

In response to the threat of atheistic Communism in the schools, representatives of the Baptist, Anglican, Disciples

⁸⁹The Church of England in Canada, Province of Ontario. Journal of the Eighth Session of Provincial Synod (Kingston: Hanson and Edgar, 1935), 16. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 26.

⁹¹*Ibid.*

of Christ, Evangelical, Presbyterian, Lutheran (Missouri Synod and Ontario Synod), and United Church denominations met in 1936 to reform the Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in Schools.⁹² The aim of the Committee was to establish "a greater measure of instruction in religious knowledge in our public schools",⁹³ to be achieved by the preparation of a syllabus for clergy and teachers based on the previously approved Bible Readings for Schools. For the first time, an inter-denominational group had ventured into the area of religious instruction, rather than Scripture readings, in the schools. The threat of anti-Christian philosophies had triggered this change, for the churches believed that Christian teaching in the schools was the necessary antidote. The Synod of the Diocese of Huron passed a resolution in 1937, which was moved by Judge G. W. Morley and seconded by Canon Warner:

Whereas the menace of Communism was brought to the attention of Provincial Synod at its last session in September, 1935, and

Whereas it was thought advisable that the best method of attacking Communism was by the persistent teaching of the Christian religion, and

Whereas Communism has since made great strides due to opportunists who have taken advantage of the depression.

Now, therefore be it Resolved that all Dioceses of the Church of England in Ontario and other communions unite in recommending that the provisions of Public Schools Act [sic] be taken full advantage of by all local municipalities, and Boards of Education with a view of requesting local ministers of the gospel in each

⁹²Thomas, 134-135.

⁹³McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 13.

religious denomination to give religious instruction for a certain period each week to children of their particular religious body.

Be it further resolved that the Clergy and Laity of this Diocese sponsor this suggestion by taking the necessary action in the local municipality in which they reside. Be it further resolved that the Legislature of this Province be requested to pass enabling legislation permitting religious teaching in the High Schools and Universities.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Secretary of each Diocese of the Church of England in Canada, and the General Synod with a request that action be taken along similar lines.⁹⁴

The tone of the motion by Judge Morley, who was an aggressive promoter of public school religious education, was presumptuous. The Boards of Education were presumed to be welcoming. The members of all of the churches were to take action on this issue and religious education was to be extended to the high schools and universities. The other denominations were expected to join this Anglican crusade. In reality, the threat of Communism was insignificant. The basis for this brand of paranoia was the political xenophobia of extreme conservatives such as Judge Morley.

In reference to the threat of Nazi totalitarianism, the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Huron summarized his assessment of the situation: "In short it is Christianity itself which is threatened".⁹⁵ He further warned Synod:

. . . that the concept of the totalitarian state in any form is the absolute antithesis of our philosophy of Divine truth, that it is a deadly negation of that

⁹⁴Journal of the Synod of the Church of England of the Diocese of Huron, Seventy-Ninth Session (London, Ontario: Haydon Press, 1937), 42-43. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁹⁵Ibid., 54

glorious ideal of a catholic humanity gathered up in the universal love of the Eternal Father through the redemption that is in His Son in which neither time, space, race, or any such thing has any relevance whatever, but in which all men, through the redemption, are called children of the universal Father. It is antichrist. . . . Dictatorship in any form cannot co-exist with religious liberty, nor with any other form of liberty, and the liberty of the children of God is part of the heart's core of Christianity, and one of its great central contributions to the welfare of human kind.⁹⁶

The love of God, according to the Anglican Bishop, knew no divisions of race, time, geography, or any such thing. The doctrines of Nazism were antithetical to Christianity, which had been the champion of liberty and the unity of humankind. These high-flown sentiments masked the real concern--that the hearts and minds of school children might be swayed by atheism.

The assumption of the Anglicans, and of their Protestant colleagues, was that Communism and Fascism were godless philosophies which undermined the Canadian way of life. The freedom of religion which Canadians enjoyed was "one of the foundation stones of democracy".⁹⁷ Anti-Christian movements threatened not only the churches, but the freedom of the people everywhere. Religious liberty had been curtailed severely in Communist Russia and Nazi Germany. Totalitarianism was a threat to both the political and religious order of the Western democracies.

As the threat of war increased after 1936, the Churches and the state found a common interest in the promotion of

⁹⁶Ibid., 54-55.

⁹⁷Ibid.

religious instruction in the schools as a bulwark against foreign ideologies. Prompted by the resolution by Judge G. W. Morley and Canon Warner of the Huron Diocese, action was taken by the Protestant churches to coordinate and accelerate religious teaching in the public schools in order to counteract perceived threats of Communism, Fascism, and atheism.⁹⁸

The threat of atheistic ideologies was not the sole reason for increased attention to religion in the schools on the part of the Protestant Churches. There were internal difficulties as well. During the 1930s, Sunday School attendance had declined steadily to an alarming level. In 1938, the Diocesan Board of Religious Education (D.B.R.E.) of the Anglican Diocese of Huron reported: "In common with Sunday Schools throughout the Anglo-Saxon world those of our Diocese have suffered during recent years".⁹⁹ The D.B.R.E. believed that the remedy for this situation, too, was increased religious instruction in the schools, with Protestant clergy actively involved in classroom instruction.

In the City of Brantford, the Ministerial Association had worked cooperatively and successfully within the classrooms of local schools to ensure that all children in the public schools had opportunity to benefit from Bible teaching. The D.B.R.E. reported that the Department of

⁹⁸McLean, Religion in the Schools.

⁹⁹Accounts and Reports of the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron, 1938 (London, Ontario: Haydon Press, 1939), 33. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

Education was "distinctly favourable to the introduction of Bible Teaching in the Public School" and that the Brantford experiment had been "so successful that no complaint has been received, nor child absent through religious bias."¹⁰⁰ It offered the Brantford procedure as a model for adoption by clergy:

Suggested procedure:

1. Agreement among the local ministers, upon whom the work will fall; (a) To undertake the work; (b) As to a course or courses of teaching.
2. Obtain the consent of the School Board and have them pass a resolution directing that upon a certain day of each week, the regular school instruction in the given class, begin at 9:30 a.m. instead of nine and that the period from 9 - 9:30 a.m. be devoted to Bible Teaching.
- The Act permitting this may be quoted to reluctant boards.
3. The names of the ministers undertaking the work are to be forwarded to the Department of Education and permits to teach will be issued. They thus become recognized teachers on the staff, and failure to appear at class will be reported to the Department and reasons asked.
4. The recommended course is 30 lessons, commencing in Oct., one lesson per week. Schedule of lessons should be prepared that a substitute teacher may know the lesson to teach. The course used: The Gospel of St. Mark. Tuesday has been found better than a later day.
5. The term "Bible Teaching" is preferable to "Religious Instruction", as it has aroused no prejudice.

Bible Training strictly as apart from doctrine is the key to agreement and success.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 54.

¹⁰¹Accounts and Reports of the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron, 1938 (London, Ontario: Haydon Press, 1939), 33. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

Clergy were to be accorded status as professional teachers, but with no preparation except their theological training. The schools were presumed to be welcoming of initiatives by the churches. Significantly, the churches would assume control over who would teach and what would be taught. The Brantford experiment did provide a model which was taken up elsewhere. These 'suggestions' by the D.B.R.E. were followed more vigourously by Anglican clergy, and were better received by Boards of Education than they had been heretofore. Local clergy who had neglected such opportunities found them harder to evade. The Brantford experiment became an example to ministers of all denominations.

The Presbyterian Church, the United Church, and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec favoured the efforts to integrate teaching of religion into the regular curriculum to the extent allowable by law. Clergy were encouraged to take full advantage of the existing regulations. They exhorted their members to lobby for public school religious education at the local and provincial level and to actively support the Inter-Church Committee.

In 1936, the Presbyterian Synod of Hamilton and London presented a motion to the General Assembly that its Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies "approach the appropriate bodies in other denominations in order to draw up a course of study in religious education for the Province of

Ontario, for recommendation to the Minister of Education".¹⁰² This motion was intended to further Protestant influence in the schools. However, it incited fears that Roman Catholics, whose children attended public schools in substantial numbers, would demand an extension of their separate school system in response.¹⁰³ Presbyterians debated the issue until the crisis of the Second World War prompted them to take more resolute action.

The United Church Conferences in Ontario encouraged their ministers to capitalize on opportunities to give religious instruction in the public schools in their communities. In 1936, The Hamilton Conference appointed a "sub-committee on mid-week religious education to promote religious and biblical instruction in the primary and secondary schools within the bounds of our Conference".¹⁰⁴ Cooperation with other Protestant clergy in this venture was encouraged.¹⁰⁵ The following year, the Bay of Quinte Conference noted the provisions of the Public Schools Act allowing clergy to teach religion for one-half hour before or after regular classes and urged clergy to cooperate with ministers of other denominations in order to give such

¹⁰²Minutes of the Sixty-Second Synod of Hamilton and London of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1936 (Toronto, 1936), 22. [Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada]

¹⁰³Thomas, 141-2.

¹⁰⁴Record of Proceedings of the Twelfth Meeting of the Hamilton Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1936 (Hamilton, 1936), 31. [Archives of the United Church of Canada].

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 32.

instruction.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the London Conference encouraged clergy to take advantage of all opportunities to teach religion in the schools.¹⁰⁷

The Baptist Convention noted with approval "the cooperative foundation which has been laid for the development of religious teaching in our Public Schools".¹⁰⁸ The Baptist Board of Christian Education urged its membership to work with other Protestants for religious instruction in both elementary and secondary schools in 1940.¹⁰⁹

In the years leading up to the war, United Church Conferences, Anglican Synods, and some Presbyterian Synods favoured increased religious education in the schools. Protestant clergy began to take seriously the task of providing such instruction. However, these efforts were merely a more systematic pursuit of opportunities allowed under existing regulations. A full-scale program of religious instruction in the schools became possible politically only during wartime conditions.

¹⁰⁶The Minutes of the Bay of Quinte Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1937 (Toronto, 1937), 52. [Archives of the United Church of Canada].

¹⁰⁷Minutes of the London Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1937 (London, 1937), 49. [Archives of the United Church of Canada].

¹⁰⁸Yearbook, Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 1939 (Toronto, 1939), 83. [Archives of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec].

¹⁰⁹Baptist Yearbook for Ontario and Quebec and Western Canada, 1940 (Toronto, 1940), 152. [Archives of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec].

5. Summary

All Protestants agreed that the Bible should be taught in the public schools. However, during most of the nineteenth century, they could not agree upon a method of accomplishing this goal. Due to greater harmony within and among Protestant groups, which was an outcome of church unions and cooperation in moral crusades, such as temperance and Sabbath observance, the religious education of public school children had become a cooperative effort by the 1930s. Common concerns over the expansion of the Roman Catholic school system, the lack of moral training of youth, decreases in Sunday School attendance, and fears of foreign ideologies led Anglicans and Protestants to press for a greater emphasis on religion in the public schools of Ontario. Their efforts were aided by more tolerant attitudes toward doctrinal differences as exemplified in the formation of the United Church. What had begun as a campaign to secure Scripture readings in the schools in the nineteenth century had expanded in the years prior to the Second World War to a joint effort of the churches for compulsory religious education within the regular curriculum of Ontario public schools.

As early as 1919, the Anglican Archbishop of Ontario, in his Charge to Provincial Synod, had noted that "one result of the rising tide of public opinion in favour of Church Union might well be a greater readiness to agree on a syllabus of

religious instruction as part of our school curriculum . . .
for I am persuaded that no scheme can be satisfactory that
fails to make religion a part of the recognized course of
study".¹¹⁰ By 1939, the administrative apparatus and a
convergence of Protestant opinion favoured the Archbishop's
hopes.

¹¹⁰Journal of Proceedings of the Fourth Session of the Provincial Synod of Ontario, 1919 (Toronto: Parker Bros. Limited, Printers, 1919), 76. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

CHAPTER IV

COOPERATION WITH THE STATE: PROTESTANTISM IN THE CURRICULUM

1. Introduction

While Protestant bodies continued to pass resolutions urging religious instruction in the schools, their clergy began to take advantage of the opportunities allowed under existing regulations. The Christian Education Committee of the Ottawa Presbytery of the United Church reported that while in 1931 only about 3% of pupils received religious instruction in public schools of Ontario, by 1943 the figure had risen to 20% or 75,000 pupils.¹ Church officials found Boards of Education receptive to their approaches² and willing to adjust the school hours to allow a half-hour of instruction for one day a week for each class.³ Some clergy prepared their own materials while many used the Syllabus which had been prepared by the Inter-Church Committee and was recommended by most of the Churches to their clergy as a course of study. When the Second World War broke out, concern that the majority of students were receiving no

¹Minutes of the Presbytery of Ottawa of the United Church of Canada (December 15, 1943), 1699. [City of Ottawa Archives].

²Acts and Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1939 (Toronto, 1939), 127. [Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada].

³Accounts and Reports of the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron [Church of England in Canada], 1938 (London: Haydon Printing, 1939), 33. [Anglican Church of Canada Archives].

concern that the majority of students were receiving no systematic religious or moral training made previous efforts seem inadequate.

While the Churches were not unaware of difficulties in entering the public arena, they were convinced of the necessity for action. In 1937, the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the General Synod of the Anglican Church stressed the moral imperative for a religious education program:

While the question of the relation of Church and State in the field of Religious Education raises many problems, it is essential that something be done, and not merely to combat the growing spirit of secularism in its various forms, but to build up the citizenship of this country on a sound Christian basis. There is no province in this land which does not declare, in its regulations governing the education of boys and girls, that sound moral principles are to be inculcated. But it cannot be expected that sound moral character can be built up if it does not rest upon solid religious convictions. Morals, apart from religious sanctions, are bound to suffer shipwreck, sooner or later.⁴

The assumption that religious instruction was training for democratic citizenship might have caused unease in some quarters, but the equation of Christianity with Canadianism was to provoke objection. Yet the essence of democracy is not Christianity but rather liberty, and not inculcation in a creed but free choice. This difficulty, pushed aside by the clamor of the Protestant Churches for religion in the schools, was to be revisited. In wartime, the need to

⁴The General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, *Journal of Proceedings of the Fourteenth Session, 1937* (Toronto, 1937), 55. [Anglican Church of Canada Archives].

morally indoctrinate the young seemed to excuse the broad-brush approach advocated by the major churches.

Reports of Christian Education Committees at all levels of organized church bodies noted the opportunities for clergy to instruct in the schools and recommended such action in cooperation with other denominations.⁵ A typical example is taken from the Report of the Christian Education Committee of the Toronto Conference of the United Church for 1939:

We call the attention of ministers to the clauses in the regulations of the Department of Education which make it possible, with the consent of the local Board of Education, for clergymen to give religious instruction in the schools at least once a week. We note an increase in the number of ministers who are taking advantage of this opportunity and we urge that so far as possible all should do so.⁶

When Boards of Education, with the consent of the Minister, began to arrange for school classes to begin at 9:30 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m. on any particular day, so that that half-hour interval might be devoted to religious instruction, more schools made such provision.⁷ This, along with the increased interest in religious and moral training in general, provided new opportunities for the churches.⁸

⁵Record of Proceedings of the Montreal and Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1937 (Montreal, 1937), 1251. [National Archives of Quebec at Montreal].; Minutes of the Bay of Quinte Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1938 (Toronto, 1938), 59. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

⁶Minutes of the Toronto Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1939 (Toronto, 1939), 21. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

⁷Ibid.

⁸E. R. McLean, "A Brief Synopsis for the Benefit of the Members of the [Inter-Church] Committee", 1956, 2. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

2. The Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education and Denominational Initiatives

By 1936 the major Protestant denominations of Ontario were in agreement that religious instruction in the schools was desirable and that interdenominational cooperation was important in devising a course of study. The Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education was reactivated and immediately began to plan a syllabus. On September 10, 1936, a sub-committee for this purpose, composed of two representatives from each participating communion, was struck.⁹ The sub-committee recommended that a syllabus be based on the existing Graded Bible Readings for Schools, which had been approved for some time.¹⁰ The Syllabus Committee which ensued consisted of representatives from the Anglican, Baptist, United, Evangelical, and Presbyterian Churches, the Church of Christ and the Missouri and Ontario Synods of the Lutheran Church.¹¹ The Committee studied the Ontario School Readers in order to determine the number of scripture citations already present in approved materials, and presented a summary of their findings in January 1938.

During this time, the full Inter-Church Committee met seven times up to January 1941, with the following results. Normal Schools were encouraged to inform their students of

⁹McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 13.

¹⁰Ibid., 14.

¹¹Ibid.

their opportunities to teach religious education when they became teachers. Five thousand three hundred copies of the pamphlet "Religious Education in Public Schools"¹² were circulated, but the demand required a reprint of two thousand and fifty copies, and even a second edition of three thousand four hundred copies. This suggested the increasing popularity of religious instruction. The Anglican Provincial Board of Religious Education and the United Church Board of Christian Education were asked to prepare a list of helps for clergy in teaching courses from Grade Four to Grade Eight. The approved Scripture lessons, which had been printed as Bible Readings for Schools by the MacMillan Company in 1930, were printed in list form at no cost to the schools, so that where the texts had not been purchased the syllabus could be used.¹³

During the period 1938 to 1943 opportunities for religious instruction were enhanced. The classroom teachers already had the right to give religious instruction based on the approved Scripture readings within regular school hours. Clergy were permitted to teach in the schools only one-half hour before or after the school day. Local school boards, however, could determine opening and closing times. A model had been established based on the City of Brantford

¹²Inter-Church Committee on Week-Day Religious Education, "Religious Education in The Public Schools of Ontario" (Toronto: Thorn Press, May, 1945), 18p.

¹³E. R. McLean, "The Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools, Report of the Secretary," Jan. 3, 1941, [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

experiment.¹⁴ This model was followed in Peterborough and Toronto and elsewhere.

The Inter-Church Committee was deemed "qualified to represent the considered judgment of the great majority of Protestant citizens of Ontario" by the Christian Education Committee of the Montreal-Ottawa Conference of the United Church.¹⁵ Indeed, the combined membership of the denominations represented on the Committee formed the majority of church members in the province in 1941.¹⁶ Both through the Inter-Church Committee and through the official bodies of the Protestant churches efforts to increase religious teaching in the schools were general during the war years.

The Presbytery of London of the Presbyterian Church in Canada had passed a resolution in 1940 which echoed similar proposals by other church bodies:

Whereas our public schools offer the widest possibilities for fostering principles of Christian citizenship through the teaching of Bible knowledge.

Therefore we, the Presbytery of London, humbly recommend that the General Assembly make an unequivocal pronouncement in favor of putting such subjects on the regular time-table of our Public Schools.

Further, as a Church, we should indicate our willingness to be represented on an interdenominational committee appointed to prepare and select text books for the purpose. Agreed.¹⁷

¹⁴McLeam, Religion in Ontario Schools, 14-15.

¹⁵Minutes of the Montreal-Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada (1944). [National Archives of Quebec at Montreal].

¹⁶Dominion Bureau of Statistics, The Canadian Year Book, 1943-44 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1944), Table 23, 109.

¹⁷Minutes of the Presbytery of London of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (May 14, 1940), 807. [Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada].

Although clergy had the right to teach religion during the half-hour prior to the official opening of the school day, many were reluctant to act upon this opportunity. The minutes of the Presbyterian Church's General Assembly confirm that this issue was addressed in the 1940 report of the Week-Day Religious Education Committee:

In every province in the Dominion provision is made for the local clergymen to give Bible instruction in the public school to members of their own communion, but very few take advantage of this privilege. Many gave as a reason for not undertaking such a task the lack of a syllabus or course of studies. This need has been met by the issuing of a syllabus covering the eight years of public school instruction. The General Secretary will be pleased to send a copy to any minister who is interested, and to give information regarding the organization of such classes.

Most of the Provincial Departments of Education, and local school boards, are very sympathetic to such work, and your Board urges every minister to seize the opportunity of bringing to all the children of the community the message of the Bible. Such instruction would make the work of the Church much more effective.¹⁸

At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada of the same year, the Report of the Committee on Church Worship was received and its recommendations considered seriatim:

That this Assembly ask for Legislative action making Religious Instruction in Protestant Public Schools obligatory, and that an hour be found during the morning period, for that period of instruction.¹⁹

¹⁸Acts and Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (1939), 126-127. [Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada].

¹⁹Acts and Proceedings of the Sixty-Sixth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (1940), 25. [Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada].

Similarly, the Report of the Board of Education of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec of 1940 indicated support for increased cooperation with other Protestants in securing religious instruction in the public schools:

Many communities within the Convention have been organized, usually through the local ministerial association, to broaden the field for religious instruction by going into the public and high schools of their own towns or cities. There are various plans of work but usually there is an agreement on the material to be covered, the grades to be taught and the time -- ordinarily one-half hour per week. The work is more than justified by reason of the large number of boys and girls contacted who otherwise might get little if any instruction in affairs of the Christian life. A pamphlet on *Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario* and a *Syllabus of Bible Study* have been prepared by an Inter-Church Committee and are much in demand by ministers who seek to avail themselves of the provision of the Provincial Act allowing them time for instruction in the public schools.²⁰

However, some Baptists were later to be cautious about state-mandated instruction because of their principle of separation of church and state.

Believing religious instruction to be essential to the proper education of young people, the United Church also supported a strong program of religion in the schools. The Committee for Week-day Religious Education of the Montreal-Ottawa Conference of The United Church of Canada reported forcefully and at length on religious education at the 1941 annual meeting. Deploing the "divorce of effective

²⁰Baptist Year Book for Ontario and Quebec and Western Canada, 1940 (Toronto: Standard Publishing Company, 1940), 170. [Archives of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec].

religious instruction from the week-day educational system"²¹ and the "trend in education toward a complete separation from religion"²², the Committee believed it a "great error when almost all religious instruction is left to the homes and the Churches [It] inevitably leads to a lack of respect for religious values, and issues in what has been well described as 'Dualism in Education'".²³ The Board of Christian Education had reported as follows:

The Board pronounced the time ripe for a concerted effort by the Church to secure for every child the largest possible measure of Religious Education in his day school experience, this to include: worship, teaching of history and geography of the people and lands of the Bible, and religious instruction given by Ministers, teachers, or other lay people, under the direction of the Church, in time made available by the school authorities.

Your Committee on Christian Education urges upon the attention of all Ministers the need of their taking fullest possible advantage of the opportunities for religious instruction now provided by the School Acts of the two Provinces in which our Conference is situated.²⁴

The Bay of Quinte Conference of the United Church of Canada in 1941 put forward the following resolution concerning Week-Day Religious Education:

Whereas a number of Public Schools within the bounds of the Bay of Quinte Conference are now receiving religious instruction, in accordance with the Provincial Education Act, and

Whereas it has met with general approval and is now beyond the experimental stage, your Committee of Religious Education would recommend that all ministers and lay delegates in our Conference make a determined effort to introduce Week Day Religious Education in

²¹Minutes of the Montreal-Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada (1941), 1731. [National Archives of Quebec at Montreal].

²²Ibid., 1732

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 1732-1733.

their own communities. The following procedure is recommended:

- (1) A meeting of the ministers to arrange co-operative interdenominational action.
- (2) A conference with the local Board of Education to secure their consent and arrange time of instruction.
- (3) A discussion of the arrangements with the Principal of the School and Teachers concerned.²⁵

These resolutions marked a concerted effort to place religious and moral training into the schools. They were typical of resolutions passed from time to time by the same church bodies in support of increased religious instruction in the public schools. This similarity demonstrated not only effective work by the Inter-Church Committee, but increasing militancy and cohesion in strategy on the part of the churches. The majority of students were not being reached by the optional program allowed by the regulations.

Complementing the work of the major denominations and the Inter-Church Committee, the Bible Study Committee of the Ontario Educational Association (O.E.A.) adopted the following resolutions in May of 1942:

1. that a course on the English Bible and the Christian Religion be an obligatory subject in the public and secondary schools of Ontario similar to other subjects;
2. that pupils receive credits for examinations in this course as in other subjects;
3. that teachers of this course be trained in the Normal Schools and the College of Education and certified by the Department of Education;
4. that a syllabus and teachers' manuals be prepared by the Department of Education, but that the Bible be the only book in the hands of the pupils;
5. that a list of supplementary reading books be recommended by the Department of Education.²⁶

²⁵Minutes of the Bay of Quinte Conference of The United Church of Canada (1941), 63. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

²⁶McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 19.

The O.E.A. represented those with a vested interest in education: trustees, ratepayers, teachers and parents. The popularity of mandatory religious instruction in the schools had spread beyond the churches to others who advocated conservative values. It is interesting to note that, only a few years before, the O.E.A. had provided a forum for progressivist views in education at its annual conventions.²⁷ The government eventually incorporated some of the recommendations of the O.E.A. in its policy of 1944.²⁸

3. The Churches Press the Issue

a) The Anglicans

At the General Board of Religious Education (G.B.R.E.) Committee Meeting of the Anglican Church on May 19, 1942, the General Secretary presented letters telling "of the efforts being made in the Diocese of Ottawa to provide for Religious Instruction in the Public Schools, in the Deaneries of Carlton (sic), Pembroke and Lanark the success of the effort in connection with the release of children from the Schools to attend the Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day Services [and that] plans had been made for the giving of Religious Instruction in the Public Schools of Norwood and Havelock, and that the work was developing

²⁷Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 174.

²⁸McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 19

satisfactorily".²⁹ A verbal report stated that "arrangements had been made for giving Religious Instruction in the Public Schools at Whitby".³⁰ A Report Re Work of Ontario Inter-Church Committee, outlining recent work on the Syllabus, Worship, Tests, and Publicity to School Boards, was attached to the minutes. A copy is included as Appendix C.

At the General Synod of the Anglican Church, the following resolutions were passed on September 13, 1943 concerning Religious Education in Public Schools:

Moved by the Archbishop of Kootenay, seconded by Canon Naylor that, having heard of the progress made in the matter of providing Religious Instruction in the Public and High Schools of the various Provinces of this Dominion, the General Synod commends the efforts which have been responsible for this progress, and, while urging their continuance, would express the hope that these efforts will be regarded only as a step in the direction of making more satisfactory and more adequate provision for the full recognition of the place of Christian Religion in Education; further, that, in consultation with Boards of Religious Education of other communions, our Department of Religious Education be, and is hereby instructed, to take the necessary steps to formulate a *general policy in this field*, with a view to presenting the same to the proper Educational authorities of each Province.

Carried in both Houses.

Moved by Judge Morley, seconded by Rev. H. A. E. Clarke, that the Fifteenth Session of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, assembled, co-operate with all other Christian communions in Canada,

Provinces of the Dominion of Canada, except where action has already been taken to introduce Bible Teaching as part of the curriculum in the public and secondary schools, and that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the heads of the other Christian communions in the various interested Dioceses in the Dominion of Canada,

²⁹Minutes of Meeting of Committee on Religious Education in Public Schools (Toronto, May 19, 1942). [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

³⁰Ibid.

with a request that they take action along the lines mentioned.

Carried in both Houses.³¹

In 1943 the Board of Religious Education of the Diocese of Huron reported as follows on the urgency of securing Religious Education in Public Schools:

Our return shows an increase of 30 schools over last year, 115 schools in which Bible is taught one-half hour per week. The gain is slow and only touches the fringe of the great need. Never before has the Public Press been so urgent in this most important matter. In England, in U.S., and in this country the daily Press discusses the subject. Educational authorities, Social Service workers and the Church as a whole are alive to the need. There can be no quick solution; the only action that can be taken is in our own parish. A revolution is in progress in this most conservative of all realms of thought. What to teach children about the Bible--God and Jesus is a live question as well as how to teach. Study and experiment point the way, and it is a long road.³²

The full recognition of religious education in the curriculum was considered by Anglicans to be an urgent matter. They were quick to urge a coordinated Protestant strategy.

b) The Presbyterians

With the war Presbyterians began to take a serious look at mandatory religious education as a bulwark for social order in the struggle against totalitarianism. In 1942 the Presbytery of Hamilton passed the following resolution:

³¹Journal of Proceedings of the Fifteenth Session of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada (1943), 26-27. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

³²Journal of the 84th Session of the Synod of the Diocese of Huron (London, Ontario: Franks, Haggarth and Mitchell, 1943), 79. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

Whereas the war in which our country is engaged is testing the very foundation of our social order showing a lack of faith in Christ Jesus by a portion of our citizens, and

Whereas the course of study for the Public and High Schools of Ontario does not include Bible Study as a subject, and

Whereas the present permissive arrangement available is quite inadequate to give a thorough grounding in the Christian gospel, and

Whereas religious instruction has been made obligatory in every school in the United Kingdom.

Synod's Committees on Sabbath Schools to consult with the same committees of the other Synods located within Ontario to invite the other Protestant denominations to join in preparing a recommendation to the Minister of Education of Ontario to establish a course in Bible Study for every pupil whose parents do not ask him to be excused.³³

Christianity, as seen by the Presbytery, was part of the social fabric. It was being threatened by a lack of faith on the part of unbelievers or backsliders, which had to be addressed by religion in the schools.

At the 69th General Conference of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1943, it was recommended that the efforts for religion in the schools be combined with the work of the Christian Advance, a movement by the major denominations to evangelize the country:

a. That the Churches co-operate to the fullest extent with all Home and School Clubs, or Parent-Teachers' Associations which are sponsoring religious education in the Public Schools.

b. Believing that Religious Teaching in the Public Schools is meeting a crying need, every opportunity

³³The 68th Session of the Hamilton Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (1942), 33. [Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada].

should be seized to broaden the scope of instruction in this field.

c. That Presbyteries be urged to make provision for Teachers' Training Courses within their bounds.

d. That Scripture Texts, authorized and published by the Board of S.S. [Sunday Schools] and Y.P.S. [Young Peoples' Societies] be used to a larger extent.³⁴

The Presbyterians seemed ready to support any other religious body which would advance the common cause.

c) The Baptists

The Baptist Board of Religious Education introduced a keenly optimistic view of progress in religious education in the public schools. Their report on Week-Day Religious Education at the Baptist Convention of 1943 reads as follows:

The programme of religious instruction in the Public Schools has gone forward with great zest. As at January, 1943--"852 clergymen are giving instruction in 1909 class rooms in the Province." In most cases this means working with children in only one or two grades. In this way a total of some 60,000 boys and girls are being helped. There is an increase of about one hundred schools over last year.

Behind this work have been the combined efforts of several committees, together with the support of the Ontario Education Association, and prospects for the future are very bright indeed.³⁵

A coalition of Protestants, including the Baptist Convention, had been formed. Doctrinal differences had paled before the great mission of reaching the youth of Ontario.

³⁴Acts and Proceedings of the Sixty-Ninth Session of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (1943), 9. [Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada].

³⁵Baptist Year Book 1942-43 for the Convention of Ontario and Quebec (Toronto: Standard Publishing Company, 1943), 155. [Archives of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec].

d) The United Church

Conferences of the United Church of Canada were eager to secure for every child the largest possible measure of Christian education in his or her day school experience. The Bay of Quinte Conference in 1942 cited the unfortunate secular and materialistic attitudes within Ontario society, the general lack of knowledge about Christianity, and the practicality of improving this situation through religion in the schools.³⁶ The conference recommended:

1. That ministers and congregations give special attention to the problem of Christian education in the schools under three main aspects:

(a) The most important is that of the spirit and atmosphere in which the work of the school itself is conducted;

(b) The Religious teaching in connection with the regular school curriculum, especially in the subjects of history and literature;

(c) Formal Christian teaching.³⁷

The report suggested further that schools should have a Christian atmosphere, that history and literature courses should stress the Christian heritage, that the Bible be taught as Literature, and that all religious instruction, whether by clergy or lay teachers, be under the direction of the Church.³⁸

The Committee on Christian Education reported to its London Presbytery in 1942, noting the growing demand for week

³⁶Minutes of the Bay of Quinte Conference of The United Church of Canada (1942), 63-64. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

day religious instruction in the schools by secular, religious, and educational organizations. They recommended increased cooperation among the Churches, the Government, and educational organizations on the following matters:

- i. who shall teach
- ii. Who shall take the initiative in arranging teaching.
- iii. The time and frequency and period of instruction.
- iv. An official syllabus outlining courses and suggested Bibliography.
- v. The possibility of having the teacher give the religious instruction in as much as provision is already made for such training in religious instruction on the Normal School course of study.³⁹

The Committee suggested that Church take these initiatives through the Inter-Church Committee, and that each denomination be represented on that committee.⁴⁰

In 1943 the Weekday Religious Education Committee of the Bay of Quinte Conference responded to a proposal of the Minister of Education, Premier Drew, to place Bible teaching in the hands of the regular teaching staff. Stressing the "right and responsibility of the Church for the teaching of religion,"⁴¹ the Conference urged that the churches be represented by the Inter-Church Committee in the determination of the following:

- (a) In the preparation of an adequate curriculum.
- (b) In the preparation of approved texts.
- (c) In training of teachers.
- (d) In the selection of those who give religious instruction.

³⁹Minutes of the London Presbytery of The United Church of Canada (1942), 23. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹United Church of Canada, Bay of Quinte Conference (1943), 30-31. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

(e) In maintaining and strengthening contacts between the church and the school at such times as special religious and national occasions such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Empire and Dominion Days.⁴²

It is clear that there was a militant attitude on the part of the churches in support of mandatory religious education in the schools. This was spurred on by the apparent concurrence of the Ontario Education Association, the new Conservative government of Premier Drew, and the encouragement of the success of the efforts of the churches from 1938 to 1943. The war was an occasion for conservatives to appeal to traditional values in education. Religious instruction seemed to be an opportunity for character training. It was also a forum for Christian evangelism. The assumption of the churches was that Ontario was a Christian society. Ryerson had always believed that Christianity should pervade the curriculum. However, in his time, the churches could not set aside doctrinal differences in their pursuit of a Protestant, non-sectarian curriculum. In the 1930s and 1940s, while the churches were not entirely in agreement on doctrine, they exhibited a single-mindedness in pressing for religion in the schools which had heretofore eluded them. Much of the documentation above repeats a similar theme. It could be magnified tenfold. The churches wanted access to all the public schools of Ontario. They wanted to control the religious aspects of the proposed course of study, the staffing, the materials, and the

⁴²Ibid.

training of teachers. However, they were still supplicants to the government. Cooperation with school boards was general, but when the government acted to mandate a centrally-controlled program of religious education in the schools in 1944, the Inter-Church Committee and some of the major denominations were taken by surprise.

4. The Issue of Control

The issue of who was to control the content of Bible instruction exercised the churches and the Inter-Church Committee. Cooperation was one thing, but the churches were reluctant to give control of the curriculum to the state. The Reverend G. F. Dangerfield, a United Church minister, neatly summarized the advantages and disadvantages of the impending move toward compulsory religious education in his report to the Ottawa Presbytery of December 15, 1943:

Advantages of Compulsory Religious Instruction.--

1, 100% would be reached; 2, Children would have a better knowledge of Bible, giving Sunday School an opportunity to relate teaching of Bible to daily life; 3, Would be looked upon by teachers and pupils as an essential part of education and not something added.

*Disadvantages of Compulsory Religious Instruction.--*1, Many teachers have inadequate knowledge even to teach Bible; 2, They may have no religious conviction; 3, The Church is not the State, it is custodian of Christian Faith; 4, The plan may cause discord in some Christian communities.⁴³

⁴³Minutes of the Ottawa Presbytery of The United Church of Canada (December 15, 1943), 1699. [Ottawa City Hall Archives].

Mr. Dangerfield suggested steps toward an amicable introduction of religious instruction from the point of view of the churches:

*Steps that might be taken to strengthen work.-- 1, Department should publish a pamphlet stating their position; 2, Department should provide further guidance, for instance a Worship Book; 3, Department should extend and improve training of teachers in Normal Schools; 4, Department should provide for training of special teachers for task of Religious Instruction; 5, Act amended whereby every school make arrangement for Religious Education. As the matter stands now, ministers through Board and Department, may give Religious Instruction; but if changed, then all schools would be compelled to give it unless permission by the Department.*⁴⁴

Mr. Dangerfield's assessment of the possible negative impact of the impending change in policy was to be magnified by those opposed to religion in the schools. Most of the issues raised by Dangerfield were to become contentious. In gaining access to the public school classroom, the churches could not foresee the difficulties which were to come. In fact, the dream of access to the majority of Ontario's children blinded most enthusiasts to the thorny problems which Mr. Dangerfield had enumerated. The Conservative government and the churches overrode all objections.

5. The Drew Government's Policy Realized

Shortly after the Conservative Party was returned to power in 1944, Premier and Education Minister George Drew

⁴⁴Ibid.

informed a deputation from the Inter-Church Committee of plans to review, in the immediate future, the whole matter of religious education. The announcement of policy which followed contained striking changes from the former Regulations for public schools. Religious instruction was to be given by the classroom teachers for two half-hours per week within the regular school timetable. A school board, if it so wished, might continue to use local clergy, or might secure an exemption from including religious education in the school day, if such were the wishes of the constituents. A pupil whose parents so requested might be exempt from religion in the schools on written request.⁴⁵

McLean has written that "the policy of the Minister came as something of a surprise to the Inter-Church Committee and was received with something less than rejoicing".⁴⁶ The Committee presented a lengthy memorandum to the Department of Education on April 3, 1944, expressing general approval of the "radical change", but drawing attention to its concerns such as adequate training, religious conviction, textbooks, and teaching aids. The full text is included as Appendix D. The Memorandum, described as "a clear portrayal of the collective judgment of the Inter-Church Committee and the Ontario Educational Association"⁴⁷, emphasized the fundamental role of the Churches in religious education in the schools.

⁴⁵McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 22.

⁴⁶Ibid., 23.

⁴⁷Ibid.

The members of the Inter-Church Committee asserted their right to approve the selection of teachers, content, and materials in any official program. They cautioned that the program should be introduced with care because, in some communities, there could be objections. They doubted that the program at the Normal Schools was adequate, and although they were not entirely satisfied with the Teachers' Guides available from Britain, they were prepared to recommend a Canadian revision of the 'Cambridgeshire Syllabus'. They were most concerned that the Church lose none of its accustomed prerogatives, which had been gained when the program was optional.

In spite of these reservations, the Committee placed on record "its gratification at this recognition of the importance of a knowledge of the Bible in general education and the need for giving a larger place to teaching it."⁴⁸ It recapitulated the positions of the Churches and the O.E.A. in one authorized document. Several recommendations were ignored by the government. The Ministry of Education was not about to cede control over who could teach a regular subject in the curriculum--even if it were religion. The Ministry did exempt teachers from this duty on grounds of conscience. No program of worship other than that authorized by existing regulations was allowed. Most glaringly, Drew chose to

⁴⁸Inter-Church Committee on Week Day Religious Instruction, "Religious Education in the Public Schools: A Memorandum for the Department of Education of the Province of Ontario" (Toronto:April 3, 1944). [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada, Box 29, General Board of Religious Education]. Also in McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools,

introduce his reforms without delay, in spite of the caution of the Committee. He did accept in principle the view that the churches should be consulted in the matter of curricula--and they were. However, the more insistent requests of the churches regarding organizational control of the program on the basis of supposed rights and responsibilities of the Church were denied.

Two weeks later, on April 19, 1944, an Informal Sub-Committee reporting on Religious Education in Ontario to the Study Committee of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario met in the Board Room at Trinity College in Toronto. The fourteen member group was composed of two principals of Toronto Collegiates, five principals of Toronto elementary schools, two educational authorities of Protestant Communion, four ministers representative of Protestant churches, and one member of the parent committee. The group discussed the system of religious education then in use in approximately 20% of the elementary schools, its strengths and weaknesses, and its possibilities for the future. They then moved on to the "pronouncements on religious education recently made by the Provincial Minister of Education".⁴⁹ The memorandum prepared by the Interchurch Committee was before the group throughout the discussions. The results of this meeting are recorded in a Memorandum Regarding the Findings

⁴⁹Memorandum Regarding the Findings of an Informal Sub-Committee reporting on Religious Education in Ontario to the Study Committee of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario on the evening of Wednesday, April 19, 1944, 2. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

of an Informal Sub-Committee on Religious Education which may be found in full in Appendix E. A summary of the five resolutions resulting from this meeting follows:

1. The Sub-Committee was pleased by the Government's intention of two one-half hour periods per week of Biblical study throughout elementary and secondary schools, and anxious that "this excellent plan should be introduced into the schools under the most favourable conditions; that the syllabi and textbooks should be prepared carefully and co-operatively, and be available to the principals and teachers . . . in ample time for study and preparation for the courses which they are to teach".⁵⁰ The project should be introduced gradually over the course of several years, and voluntary in the initial year.

2. The present system should be continued and developed during the transition. Both the principals and the ministers of the Committee reported that the half-hour at 9:00 a.m. was most productive to pupils and convenient to clergy. "In most of the schools teaching has been of a very co-operative and non-controversial quality".⁵¹

3. During the transitional period, compulsory courses in Religious Education in Normal Schools and Colleges of Education should ensure that every new graduate was competent in teaching the Bible. Summer courses should be provided. Principals believed that some current staff might be

⁵⁰Ibid., 1.

⁵¹Ibid., 2.

reluctant to teach religion "because of their lack of experience, training, and instruction in teaching the Bible".⁵²

4. The syllabi and textbooks should be submitted as early as possible to the Inter-Church Committee for Week-Day Religious Education, to the Ontario Teachers' Federation, and to the Ontario Educational Association for their consideration.

5. Experimentation should be carried out on a voluntary basis during the transition year with a "view to the formation of a suitable syllabus and text book for each grade, the whole to be effectively integrated that a sequence may be provided".⁵³

During the spring and summer of 1944, the Government's policy on Religious Education in the Schools received much discussion throughout the Province. Meanwhile, the Department of Education prepared a draft of the Regulations it proposed and presented it to the Inter-Church Committee on June 19, 1944. The Committee's request that the Regulations setting the time for instruction during the first half hour of the morning or the last half hour of the afternoon be amended by the addition of the words, "or at such other time as the Board may determine" was denied. However, the Committee's second proposal requesting that the words "secure

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Memorandum Regarding the Findings of an Informal Sub-Committee on Religious Education (1944). [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

permission to teach the required course" be changed to "secure permission to give religious instruction", making it permissible for clergy to give instruction acceptable to their denomination rather than being restricted to the curriculum, was granted.⁵⁴

6. Responses to the Drew Government's Policy on Religious Education

The Anglicans seemed more enthusiastic and less cautious than some Protestants in commending the government's approach. They had no fear of church-state problems and had been the prime movers during the many years which preceded the formal introduction of Bible teaching in the public schools. Rev. Dr. Hiltz, General Secretary of the Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, addressed the 1944 Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Huron on the subject of Religious Education on May 16, 1944. A motion to commend Premier Drew followed his presentation:

That a resolution of approval and encouragement be drawn up by the D.B R.E. and sent from this Synod to Premier Drew in view of the efforts of his Department of Education for Religious Education in the schools of the Province. Carried.

Later the following resolution was presented: "The Synod of Huron now assembled, sends greetings and assures you we wholly approve and heartily commend your efforts on behalf of the children and youth of the Province by furthering the spiritual element in their

⁵⁴McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 29.

education through Bible Instruction and other means in our Public and High Schools."⁵⁵

The response of The United Church to the Regulations of 1944 was equally laudatory, but it reflected a concern to maintain the principle of cooperation rather than diktat. The Ottawa-Montreal Conference of The United Church reported on religious education in the schools at its June 1944 meeting:

We must also approve the interest of the Ontario Premier and Minister of Education in his proposal to extend the scope of religious education in the schools of that Province. His proposals have not yet been presented in detail, and this committee would express the hope that the plan of the Ontario Department of Education may be worked out in full co-operation with the Interdenominational Committee on Week-Day Religious Education that has studied the situation for many years and is qualified to represent the considered judgment of the great majority of the Protestant citizens of Ontario.⁵⁶

At the Twentieth Annual Toronto Conference of The United Church of Canada participants were alerted to the dangers of the secularization of education in schools, the recognition of inadequacies in this regard by both the Church and the State, the remedial measures underway in response to the consensus of opinion that religion must have a greater place in the curriculum, and the rise from three to twenty percent of schools participating in religious instruction.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Journal of Proceedings of the 85th Session of the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron of the Church of England in Canada (London, Ontario: Franks, Haggarty and Mitchell, 1944), 40-41. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁵⁶Minutes of the Montreal-Ottawa Conference of The United Church of Canada (1944). [National Archives of Quebec at Montreal].

⁵⁷Minutes of the Toronto Conference of The United Church of Canada (1944), 37. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

Recognizing the need for formalization and expansion of religious instruction in the schools, the Christian Education Committee submitted the following recommendations:

- (1) We commend the Government of Ontario for its desire to make greater provision for the teaching of religion in our schools.
- (2) We desire to maintain the worthy tradition of helpful co-operation which exists between the Church and our School system.
- (3) We affirm the principle of Freedom of Religion and the right and responsibility which rests upon the Church for the supervision and teaching of religion.
- (4) We urge the Department of Education pending development of plans to strengthen and extend the present arrangements and we call upon our ministers to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded at present.
- (5) We commend the work of the Interchurch Committee and find ourselves in substantial agreement with the memorandum recently presented to the Government.
- (6) We are most anxious to confer and co-operate with the Government at all times in this important matter.⁵⁸

By 1945, when the government plan was underway, the Toronto Conference of The United Church expressed a desire for the fullest cooperation in providing religious courses in the schools:

... our ministers and churches, acting wherever possible in co-operation with other religious bodies seek every opportunity to encourage the public school teachers in the discharge of their important work of religious instruction, such encouragement and assistance being given through conferences of church workers, parents, and public school teachers, and through training courses in Biblical knowledge and interpretation for public school teachers.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Minutes of the Twenty-First Annual Toronto Conference of The United Church of Canada (1945), 23-24. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

The Baptists had been more cautious than the Anglican and United Churches, but they accepted the new policy. By the time the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec met in 1944, the government had already changed the regulations and "A Memorandum for the Department of Education of the Province of Ontario From the Inter-church Committee on Week Day Religious Education, April 3, 1944" had been submitted. The report of the Baptist Board of Religious Education was lengthy and detailed. It accepted Premier Drew's plan. However, the report highlighted certain concerns which had already been enumerated by the Inter-Church Committee: the need for adequate Bible training for teachers and an adequate curriculum and textbooks, the right of the churches to approve those who taught the program, the need for teachers to have a living Christian experience and to be in a definite relationship with the Christian Church.⁶⁰

While the imposition of a program of religious education in the schools heartened the churches in their goal of providing Bible teaching to every child, certain difficulties were to plague the program thereafter. The voluntary, or quasi-optional character, of Bible teaching had almost disappeared. The charge of sectarianism was imminent and the rights of individual churches appeared to be infringed in the matters of curriculum and selection of teachers. The issue

⁶⁰Baptist Year Book for Ontario and Quebec (Toronto: Standard Publishing Company, 1944-5), 184. [Archives of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec].

of Church-state separation immediately activated opposition from political opponents, minority groups and even individual members of the churches. The years after the war were to be relatively calm as the program developed but opposition gathered strength readily. Theological doctrines and political fiat did not necessarily mix well in a democratic and multi-faith society.

Objections to the program of religious education centred upon its mandatory nature. The Canadian Jewish Congress insisted that religious education belonged to the "church and synagogue and, even more, to the home."⁶¹ The teaching of a sectarian creed in the schools would produce "obstacles to unity".⁶² The Jews had not objected to Christians of any denomination teaching their own children under the voluntary system of religious education. However, they did not care to have Jewish children singled out by having to leave the classroom during what had become a regular subject. They believed that psychological damage and friction between children might result.⁶³ Confuting the assertion that Christianity and democracy were inseparable, the Congress warned that "the separation of Church and State, a historic

⁶¹"Official Declaration by Canadian Jewish Congress on Religious Education in the Public Schools" (March 22, 1945), 1. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada; Ontario Jewish Archives].

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Rabbi Abraham L. Fineberg, Religious Instruction in the Public Schools/ The Ontario Plan - Good or Bad? (Toronto:n.p., 1945). [National Archives of Canada and Ontario Jewish Archives]

principle vital to the progress of the democratic way, is being imperilled".⁶⁴

The essence of the Inter-Church Committee's defence of the program was that the Church had a historic right to teach Christian theology and morality in the schools:

While control of our schools has long since passed over from the Church to the State, this, fortunately, has not meant that the school is cut off from all religious teaching and influence. Those who in the earliest days in this Province pressed for a system of free public and compulsory education, and desired to make it non-sectarian, never intended that the schools were to be non-Christian.⁶⁵

In this statement, the Inter-Church Committee was referring to the intentions of educational bureaucrats, such as Ryerson. The impasse between defenders and attackers of the program centred upon the right of the Christian Church and the government to impose any kind of religious teaching on the schools. However, the indoctrinational content of the program provoked opposition as well. As in the optional program of the nineteenth century, the 1944 program was to be Christian, but non-sectarian. With church unions and ecumenical ventures, the clergy of the major Protestant denominations were more in agreement than they had been a century earlier. However, there were critics of the syllabi and the Teachers' Guides who based their charges on defective

⁶⁴"Official Declaration by Canadian Jewish Congress on Religious Education in the Public Schools" (March 22, 1945), 1.

⁶⁵Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in the Schools of Ontario, "Brief to the Royal Commission on Education Respecting the Place of Religion in Public Education" (1945), 4. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

theology. A statement on the doctrinal basis of the Guides provided by Basil Yeaxlee, a professor of Oxford University, was used to allay fears regarding the orthodoxy of such materials:

It should be clearly understood by teachers that the doctrinal basis of all the lesson material in these volumes, and the convictions of the individual writers and of the members of the Editorial Board, are those held by the vast majority of Christians of all denominations, and summarized in the Apostles' Creed. These convictions are those upon which the Agreed Syllabuses for use in Day-schools are based, and in consequence the Guides are in complete accord with such syllabuses.⁶⁶

Objections to the approved materials based on theology appeared in a pamphlet entitled, "The Christian Faith and the Religion in Ontario Schools" by the Reverend Arthur Cochrane, Ph.D. and others. Dr. Cochrane was President of the Association for Religious Liberty, which consisted of minority groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and some Protestants who were disgruntled with the Drew government. The essence of their complaints was that the Guide Books presented a defective theology of the Person of Christ--what is usually termed Christology. Although the Guide Books had presented Jesus as an attractive human figure, Dr. Cochrane would have no diminution of Jesus' full divinity, as difficult as that concept might be for young children to grasp. Cochrane criticized the attempt in the Guide Books to create fables about the boyhood of Jesus. The New Testament

⁶⁶"A Suggested Syllabus of Lessons", n.d. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

is practically silent on this matter. There were other criticisms regarding departures from Scripture, most spurious, but some telling.

In spite of such criticism, the overwhelming majority of the electorate had approved the government's religious education policy in the election of 1945. The Conservatives had been returned with a majority over the issue. In the churches and in society, support for religious education in the schools had grown, while criticism went largely unheeded. The critics of the program were not silenced, however. By the 1960s, almost all of their objections to the government's religious education policy had gained a wider hearing.

In a letter of 1946 to the Canadian Forum⁶⁷ supporting religious education in Ontario schools, R. C. Chalmers, a Christian minister, expressed the view that "the genius of the Christian faith has never meant that the Church must have 'no dealings' with the State, for from the Christian viewpoint the State is also under God and He must be Lord of all or He is not Lord at all."⁶⁸ Few could imagine that post-war Ontario was a true theocracy or that governments of the day were subject to the tutelage of the churches. However, it seemed that conservative views of society had been reflected in the churches, schools, and homes of Ontario during the post-war period and for some time thereafter. In

⁶⁷R. C. Chalmers, "Correspondence", The Canadian Forum, 25 (291), November, 1946, 16.

⁶⁸Ibid.

allying itself with the Drew government's traditionalist program in religion and education, the churches had received criticism unknown during the long period of optional religious instruction in the schools.

7. Summary

The intent of this chapter has been to describe the imposition of the Drew government's policy of religious education within the context of the campaign of the churches, from the early 1930s, to extend their influence in public education. The achievement of the program of 1944 was a mixed blessing for the churches. Riding the wave of Premier Drew's conservative program for a renewed imperialism, and a return to the Three Rs in education, the churches were willing to accept his policy on religion in the schools. If religious education were to become province-wide, the churches were optimistic about the prospect of reaching every Ontario public school student. However, there was less enthusiasm, and even criticism, on the part of civil libertarians, minorities, fundamentalists and other Christians, and opposition politicians.

Under the optional program, the churches had been able to exercise control over who could teach religion in the schools and what materials could be used. Although they continued to possess rights of consultation in these matters, the proposition that professional educators could be subject

to the dictates of the Church was not entertained by the government. Distrust of this alliance between Church and state, which had been a sore point to critics, would undermine the hopes of the churches during the more liberal 1960s.

CHAPTER V

PROTESTANTISM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: DENOUEMENT AND PERPLEXITY

1. Introduction

By September 1944 religious education was a subject in the regular curriculum of public elementary schools in Ontario. The program consisted of two half-hour periods of instruction per week based on the Christian Bible. The regulations provided that "issues of a controversial or sectarian nature shall be avoided".¹ The materials used were Teachers' Guides and the Bible itself. The Teachers' Guides consisted of a series of graded lessons based on passages of Scripture, with moral or theological teaching. The Guide Books were published originally for the first six grades and centred on stories of Jesus and other major figures in the Bible. Typical titles for a unit of study were "Jesus, the Kind Healer", "Jesus, the Friend of Little Children", "Pioneers of Jewish History: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph" and "Leaders of the Early Church".² The original Guide Books were Canadian versions of a British series published by the

¹Ontario Regulations 30/44, 13 (i) (c).

²"A Summary of the Table of Contents of the Guide Books for Instructors in Public Schools", n.d. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

Religious Education Press. They had been agreed upon by the major Christian denominations in England.

The content of the program had been vetted by the Inter-Church Committee and was acceptable to the major Protestant Churches. Usually, the classroom teacher was expected to teach the material for grades one to six, and clergy taught grades seven and eight. Guides for the latter grades were not published until 1960, so that clergy were at liberty to use their own materials. To their credit, advocates of the program aimed to foster the moral and spiritual well-being of the child. Their assumption that a program of Protestant theology in the schools was the best method to achieve this aim was not approved by all.

Some criticized the potential of the program to divide people of differing religious faiths. Some claimed that religious freedom was infringed. Some Christians declared that the theology of the program was defective--it was too liberal. These critics and their disagreements with the program have been identified previously.³ The wonder is that the Conservative government and the churches were able to answer their critics and to convince the public that, despite its defects, the program met a crying need and was supported by a majority of citizens. The optional nature of the program was used constantly to blunt criticism. School boards, teachers, and students could be excused.

³The Canadian Jewish Congress, the Association for Religious Liberty, Dr. Arthur Cochrane and others, various evangelical sects. (Chapter IV).

2. The Teachers' Guides

The question of the theological base of the religious education program is both difficult and controverted. Compilers of the Guides claimed that they were based upon convictions "held by the vast majority of Christians of all denominations, and summarized in the Apostles' Creed."⁴ Even though this explanation satisfied the Inter-Church Committee and its member churches, it did not satisfy some theologians and some sub-units of the churches. The Guides assumed support for a broadly Protestant view of the Scriptures and suited most mainline churches, but dissatisfaction grew over time. Some caricatured the theology of the Guide Books as anemic, too liberal, even heretical. No program could have avoided criticisms from the right and the left of the theological spectrum.

Although teachers were encouraged to prepare their own materials rather than slavishly follow the Teachers' Guides, the biblical base was to be followed. Each lesson was supported by a verse or verses to be read and memorized. Most lessons consisted of homely examples of spiritual or moral virtues. In the unit on "Home and Helpfulness", family members were given traditional roles. Children were expected to "help Mother" in minor domestic chores. They were encouraged to be obedient and compliant. The virtues of

⁴"A Suggested Syllabus of Lessons", n.d. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

politeness, gentleness, and truthfulness were named. Similarly, the virtue to be exemplified from the story of the healing of the centurion's servant (Matthew 8: 5-10) was "promptness."⁵ The centurion was obeyed promptly by his soldiers! In the primary grades, the virtues of polite society received as much emphasis as the Bible stories themselves. Where there was no Biblical evidence for a virtue they wished to stress, the authors resorted to fabrication. In the unit, "The Child Jesus,"⁶ three of the four stories included have no foundation whatsoever in Scripture. These appeals to the child's imagination vexed some adult critics. In the pamphlet, "A Brief on Religious Education in the Schools"⁷, the Association for Religious Liberty noted that "only 9 [sic] stories that could be described as accurate retelling of the Bible narrative" were included in the sixty-four stories of the Teachers' Guides for the first two grades. The Association complained about "fabricated stories about Jesus for which there is not the slightest element of scriptural truth concerning Jesus' childhood and boyhood."⁸

The aim in the Teachers' Guides for primary grades was to portray Jesus as a friend of little children. From a

⁵The Friend of Little Children: Teachers' Guide to Religious Education. Grade One. [Notes by Betty Barker, B.A., Winnifred E. Barnard, Irene Jenkins and Helen M. Rose] (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1944), 17-18.

⁶Ibid., 26.

⁷Association for Religious Liberty, "A Brief on Religious Education in the Schools" (March 7, 1945). [National Archives of Canada. Also at General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁸Ibid., 5.

religious point of view the aim was laudable. However, the method was questionable from an academic viewpoint. The program continued for grades four, five, and six was less dependent upon fable. The kindly portrayal of Jesus gave way to one of "virile humanity".⁹ The Jesus of the Teachers' Guides possessed all the virtues which the authors wished to instill in the children.

Although the greatest emphasis was on virtues supported by examples from the Christian Bible, the Teachers' Guides contained explicit Christian doctrine, most notably the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ and the story of Jesus' birth. The Guides were catechetical in intent; the specifically Christian elements were presented as simple fact. No mention was made of a world religion other than Christianity. It is not surprising that religious minorities, atheists, and rationalists objected to the narrowness of the content. When deficiencies in the Guides were identified, the supporters of the program appealed to the good which had been achieved to counter such objections.

3. The Inter-Church Committee

The Inter-Church Committee had expressed some reservations about the government's religious education policy in April 1944. However, by the time the policy had

⁹Ernest H. Hayes, Jesus and the Kingdom [Grade Six] (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1944), 1.

been promulgated and criticized by others, the Committee had become an apologist for the new regulations. The Association for Religious Liberty and the Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Division, protested infringement of religious freedom. The Committee prepared a statement entitled, "Religious Freedom Upheld,"¹⁰ in support of the government's policy. It was signed by representatives of the Anglican, United, Convention Baptist, Presbyterian, and Evangelical Churches and the Churches of Christ (Disciples). The statement highlighted that the regulations had not reversed, but rather had extended, traditional policy:

In the regulations issued by Egerton Ryerson in 1848 is found the following: "As Christianity is the basis of our whole system of elementary education, that principle should pervade it throughout".¹¹

To discount charges of widespread disunity, the Committee noted that local school boards could apply for exemption and that only 45 of 6,405 school boards had applied.¹² In response to criticisms about the abridgment of freedom of conscience and freedom of worship, the Committee pointed to the conscience clause which allowed teachers and students to be excused from the program and to the right of clergy to teach their own faith group should parents desire it.¹³ To counteract the charge of psychological damage to

¹⁰Inter-Church Committee for Weekday Education, "Religious Freedom Upheld" (1945). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

minority children on being withdrawn from class, the Committee replied that minority parents had withdrawn their children from classes for as many as twelve holy days per year.¹⁴ Committed to the belief that the regulations were flexible enough to accommodate minorities, the Committee summed up its position:

It should be observed that majorities have rights as well as minorities, and so long as rights of conscience of the minorities are respected, the desire of the majority should prevail.¹⁵

Ever anxious to maintain a cordial relationship with the government and to retain influence over the religious education program, the Inter-Church Committee wrote Premier Drew to advise him of the necessity of a permanent Joint Advisory Committee to consist of the representatives of the Inter-Church Committee and the Department of Education. The proposed committee would consider any revision of the courses and the Teachers' Guides, the preparation of Bible Readings, and any other related matters.¹⁶ Through this forum, the Inter-Church Committee hoped to influence worship in the school, the training of teachers in religious education, and the selection of materials for grade seven and grade eight. The Joint Advisory Committee was established as requested.

The Secretary of the Inter-Church Committee, the Reverend E. R. McLean, prepared a memorandum for the member

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Inter-Church Committee to the Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Ontario (n.d.). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

denominations on February 19, 1945. The memorandum, "Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario"¹⁷, was an apology for the religious education program and a defense of the position of the Inter-Church Committee. McLean grounded his defence in the statements that "religion is the only true basis for morality" and that "to teach morals apart from religion avails little."¹⁸ He emphasized the importance of religion in shaping the child's character; secular studies alone could not accomplish this.

McLean noted that while church and state governed their own spheres, in the history of Ontario it was never intended that they should be entirely separate. The intention was that they would cooperate.¹⁹ As long as there were provisions for local input and rights of conscience, there was no legal reason why this should be otherwise. McLean quoted from the historic and revised statutes to demonstrate that the Christian religion had always been a part of Ontario Education. He commended the statement in the Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI, Ontario Public and Separate Schools (1937) that "the schools of Ontario exist for the purpose of preparing children to live in a democratic society which bases its way of life upon the Christian ideal".²⁰ He

¹⁷E. R. McLean [for the Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education] (February 19, 1945). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 1.

²⁰Ibid., 2.

denied that the school was ever, or should ever be, neutral in the matter of religion.²¹

McLean reiterated the reservations that the Inter-Church Committee had expressed to the government regarding who should teach.²² Teachers of religion must be acceptable to the Church as well as to the government. In support of the new system, he called upon the clerical members of the Committee to work diligently with teachers and school officials to promote the religious education program.²³

The comments and concerns cited in earlier documents from the Inter-Church Committee reappeared in its formal Brief to the Royal Commission on Education of 1945. Citing the historic inclusion of Christian principles in the public school curriculum, the Committee recapitulated statutes and curriculum guides which assumed Christian teaching in the schools.²⁴ It requested that the Royal Commission consider the intimate connection between democratic ways and Christian belief: "Is the democratic way of life safe without religion?"²⁵ The threat of moral decay, without the foundation of religion, made it imperative that church and school cooperate in the provision of religious instruction.²⁶

²¹Ibid., 4.

²²Ibid., 6.

²³Ibid.

²⁴The Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education, "A Brief to the Royal Commission on Education Respecting the Place of Religion in Public Education" (1945). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada], 1-2.

²⁵Ibid., 6.

²⁶Ibid.

The Committee thus wanted the Commission to endorse the 1944 regulations. In the end it did.

The Inter-Church Committee continued to promote the religious education program with teachers and the Department of Education in the post-war period. On his retirement as Secretary, the Reverend E. R. McLean noted some activities of the Committee: Guide Books were revised, conferences on religious education for teachers and clergy were held, requests for the extension and enforcement of the religious education program were made to the Minister of Education, curricula for grades seven and eight were proposed.²⁷

Although it appeared that there was support for the program from teachers and students, the government decided not to proceed further. When asked to approve Teachers' Guides for grades seven and eight, the Minister, W. J. Dunlop, answered: "We feel that we have gone as far as we can safely go".²⁸ In retrospect, Dunlop had a firmer grasp of what was possible politically than did the Inter-Church Committee.

4. The Churches

The Anglican Church was most anxious to maintain the religious education program and expressed this desire in its Brief to the Royal Commission on Education of June 1945.

²⁷E. R. McLean, "A Brief Synopsis for the Benefit of the Members of the Committee" (1956), 7-8. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

²⁸Ibid., 8.

Anglicans took exception to "the fact that the place of religion in Education is being challenged in this Province by certain groups".²⁹ The purpose of their brief was to counter the protests of the minority groups with the majority view "that religion has an essential and proper place in any Educational System".³⁰ It was essential that Home, Church and State work together towards a common goal.³¹ The Brief detailed the long and intimate connection between religion and the schools. Anglicans assumed that religion was indispensable to the character formation of the child and that "morals cannot be taught effectively apart from religious sanctions".³² The conscience clause, they believed, was sufficient to accommodate those dissenting from Christian beliefs, while retaining the "religious liberty of that vast majority of our citizens who believe in God and desire that the education of their children give proper place to religious belief".³³

When addressing the citation of cases of "viciousness, unhappiness, discrimination and bad teaching" by opponents of religious teaching in the schools, the Anglican Brief stated that, for every such case, there were "hundreds of cases where the direct opposite had resulted from religious

²⁹"A Brief Submitted to the Ontario Royal Commission on Education by the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario" (June, 1945), 1. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada]

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 2.

³²Ibid., 6.

³³Ibid., 7.

instruction".³⁴ Religion must not be removed from the schools because of opposition. Without it "the forces of evil will have no qualms of conscience about training [the children] in the opposite direction".³⁵

The Brief refuted the charge of the Canadian Jewish Congress that the religious education program contributed to disunity and racial discrimination by stating that "the teaching of the basic principles of the Christian faith cannot but be one of the finest safeguards possible against racial discrimination."³⁶ God was "no respecter [sic] of persons in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free".³⁷ Comments concerning religious education ended with a quote from an editorial in The London Times: "the healthy life of a nation must be based on spiritual principles."³⁸ Religion in the schools was indispensable.

The Board of Christian Education of The United Church supported the religious education program in its Brief to the Royal Commission. The need to provide basic Christian education for the many children who did not attend a church school was highlighted as a reason for continuing the program.³⁹ The exclusion of religion from the curriculum might lead children to conclude that it was of little

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., 8.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 9.

³⁹Board of Christian Education, The United Church of Canada, "A Statement of the Relations Between Religion and Public Education", Brief No. 64 to the Royal Commission on Education (Toronto, 1945), 3. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

importance.⁴⁰ After reviewing alternatives to the government policy of church-state cooperation in religious education, the Board concluded that the program which had evolved was best. The right of the churches to interpret the historic faith was retained while the state provided the classrooms and staff. Each was in its proper sphere. The United Church Brief did not refer to "majority rights" nor to the criticisms of the program and the teaching materials.

The representative of the Presbyterian Church in Canada reported that although some Presbyterians had opposed a close connection between church and state, the denomination had "with surprising unanimity supported largely the regulations as they had been set forth by the Department [of Education]".⁴¹ The Report of the Special Committee on Religious Education in the Schools of the Synod of Hamilton and London of the Presbyterian Church gave approval of the religious education policy of the government, but made a series of eight recommendations for improvement: 1) The government should continue to seek more religious education in the schools; 2) that content and methods of presentation become more Scripture oriented; 3) that radical revisions be made to the first three books in order to augment scriptural content; 4) that consideration be given to engaging full-time and fully-trained teachers of religious education who were

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹(Ontario), The Proceedings of the Royal Commission on Education, Third Session, Part B (Toronto: Baptiste Johnson, 1945), 67. [Archives of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education].

trained and supervised by the Church; 5) that minority faiths be granted full-time staff if requested; 6) that the Synod submit these recommendations to the Royal Commission on Education as a contribution to the resolution of the separate schools issue; 7) that the Synod overture the General Assembly to ensure that the Inter-Church Committee had strong appointees from the Presbyterian Church; and 8) that the special committee continue to pursue its study of religion in the public schools.⁴² This special committee on Religious Education from the Presbyterian Synod of Hamilton and London had taken a fervent stand on the need to focus the content of the program on the Scriptures and to ensure that the teaching was controlled by the Church.

In 1948, the report of the special committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools recommended:

1. "That concerning religious instruction in the public schools, the Synod of Hamilton and London affirm its adherence to the basic principles underlying Recommendation No. 4 of the Committee's 1947 Report, viz., that Christian education, including the supervision and training of those who teach the Christian faith, must be entirely under the direction of the Church, as represented by the cooperating churches. Agreed.⁴³

Thus the Synod supported the long-held position of the Inter-Church Committee that the churches, not the state alone, must approve and train teachers of religion as well as the long-

⁴²Minutes of the Seventy-Third Synod of Hamilton and London of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto, 1947), 12-13.

⁴³Minutes of the Seventy-Fourth Synod of Hamilton and London of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto, 1948), 15.

held position of the Presbyterian Church that the Scriptures should be taught to young children.

Dr. Leland Gregory of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec stated that the Teachers' Guides did "no violence to the standards of Christianity as we think of them".⁴⁴ The Board of Religious Education for the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec expressed approval for "support in this matter of teaching the Bible [coming] from the courses on Religious Education in the PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC".⁴⁵ However, the Board cautioned that the Ontario system was "still in process of development and revision and during the past year the members of the Board have maintained a watchful eye".⁴⁶ Baptists had given suggestions regarding the memorization of Scripture and revision of the Teachers' Guides, and the Board continued to recruit instructors in religious education for the Baptist students in Normal Schools.⁴⁷ The Baptists considered the Ontario program in the schools to be supplementary to the overall efforts of the Church in Bible teaching.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Proceedings . . . Royal Commission on Education, 66.

⁴⁵Baptist Year Book for Ontario and Quebec, 1946-47 (Toronto: Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 1947), 145. [Archives of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec].

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

5. The Jewish Congress

In its brief to the Royal Commission, the Jewish Congress, Central Division, detailed its objections to the principle of religious education in the schools and to the program as it existed.⁴⁹ The program violated the separation of church and state.⁵⁰ There was danger of totalitarianism because the state could choose to teach dangerous religious ideas in the schools.⁵¹ Jewish and other minority religions were accorded unequal status with Christianity and this was unacceptable in a democratic society. The instruction itself was sectarian. Students exempt from instruction were made to feel inferior.⁵² The Teachers' Guides were "biased and unfriendly" toward the Jewish religion.⁵³

The Jewish Congress objected to the texts because they misrepresented Judaism and cited many errors concerning Jewish Law and customs.⁵⁴ More seriously, they contained evidence of anti-Jewish sentiment. For example, on page 92 of the Grade Four Guide, the Jewish rulers were characterized as murderous.⁵⁵ There were other examples of friendly Jewish rulers in the New Testament, but these were strangely absent

⁴⁹Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Division, "For Children in a Democracy: Religious Instruction in the Public Schools of Ontario", Brief No. 46 to the Royal Commission on Education (Toronto, 1945). [Archives of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Ontario Jewish Archives].

⁵⁰Ibid., 2.

⁵¹Ibid., 3.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 12.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., 18.

in the texts. The Congress wanted a thorough revision of the Guides so as to remove anti-Semitic bias.

6. Report of the Royal Commission on Education

When the Report of the Royal Commission on Education was published in 1950, it endorsed the regulations of 1944 on religious education in the schools.⁵⁶ The principle of Protestant religious instruction was upheld. The historic regulations on the matter were recited and approved and the reasons for the 1944 regulations were considered to be valid.⁵⁷ Many children were receiving no religious instruction in Sunday Schools or at home. The change to the regulations had become necessary to accommodate the "rapid increase" in clergy wanting to teach in schools during the war. The Commissioners had been influenced by the conviction of many who appeared before them that "education can never be complete without religion".⁵⁸ Support for this view had come from the Inter-Church Committee, the Board of Christian Education of The United Church of Canada, the Church of England, the Catholic Bishops of Ontario, the Canadian Jewish Congress [although it opposed the current policy] and private individuals.⁵⁹ The Commissioners must have been convinced

⁵⁶The Report of the Royal Commission on Education, Third Session, Part B (Toronto: Baptist Johnston, 1945). [Archives of the Ontario Institute for the Study of Education].

⁵⁷Ibid., 123-4.

⁵⁸Ibid., 125.

⁵⁹Ibid.

that the dissenters, "certain Presbyterian ministers, certain Baptist ministers, and some members of the Jewish faith",⁶⁰ did not represent public opinion, for the Commission concluded:

. . .[e]vidence submitted to us has demonstrated that if our aims in education are to be achieved, religious education should be included as a subject of study in the proposed curriculum of the elementary schools. The present regulations relating to religious education in public schools seem to be eminently satisfactory.⁶¹

The recommendations of the Commission were the following:

- (a) that religious exercises continue to be conducted and religious education continue to be a subject of instruction in public elementary schools;
- (b) that the present regulations relating to religious exercises and religious education in public schools be continued;
- (c) that in any revision of the guide books in religious education careful consideration be given to specific items raised by the Canadian Jewish Congress in Brief 46, Appendix 1;
- (d) that consideration be given to the advisability of granting approval for the use of children's Bible stories containing such parts of the Scriptures as may be especially suitable for elementary school pupils;
- (e) that the Department of Education seek the co-operation of The Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education in the preparation of a list of daily Scripture readings, based directly on the course of study for religious education, for use in the senior division of the elementary school;
- (f) that provision be made in the programmes of junior colleges of education and in the elementary school option of the Ontario College of Education for instruction in methods of conducting religious exercises and of teaching religious education in public elementary schools.⁶²

⁶⁰Ibid., 126.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, 1950 (Toronto: Baptist Johnson, 1950), 126-7.

This was to be the only time that the status quo regarding religious education was endorsed by a government commission or inquiry. The Commissioners had gone further than to endorse the religious education program for elementary schools. While cautioning the need for careful consideration to the Jewish concerns of misrepresentation of their faith, they suggested approval for the use of children's Bible stories (which would address the limitation about which the Hamilton and London Presbyterian Synod had been adamant). Methods of instruction in teaching the religious education should be provided to teachers by the College of Education. Further, the Commissioners recommended that the course in religious education be extended to secondary schools and junior colleges as the Inter-Church Committee had requested:

In our opinion, it is essential that students in the new secondary schools and in the first two years of junior college receive either instruction in religious education given by clergymen or instruction in ethics from members of the regular staff of the school.⁶³

In formulating its conclusions, the Commission noted that few boards had asked formally for exemption, and that the few formal requests for exemption from 1945 to 1948 implied little objection to the program.⁶⁴ The practice of abandoning formal instruction in religion grew. Although exact figures are unavailable, by the 1960s many boards had quietly let religious education classes lapse.

⁶³Ibid., 127.

⁶⁴Ibid.

7. Teachers and Students

In this section, the attitudes of teachers and students to the 1944 religious education program will be explored. Their opinions were not uniform.

In 1948, a questionnaire regarding the religious education program was sent to women elementary teachers in southern and eastern Ontario by the executive of Region 4 of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. The results were presented in a memorandum, "Research in Religious Education, Region 4, Easter, 1949."⁶⁵ Twenty-one percent of the addressees had replied. It is possible that those who took the time to reply placed more significance on the program than those who did not. The content of the Teachers' Guides was rated as "satisfactory" by 69% of the rural teachers who responded and 58% of the city teachers who responded.⁶⁶ Suggestions for improvement of the Guides included:

- [1] All Bible stories, please. Delete myths and fictitious stories in order that the children not be confused between truth and fiction.
- [2] There is need for a great many stories--at least one for each week preferably two. (3) the need of teaching pictures to accompany text.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, "Research in Religious Education, Region 4, Easter, 1949." [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁶⁶Ibid., 1-2.

⁶⁷Ibid., 2.

The primary teachers wanted coloured pictures and maps to accompany the lessons.⁶⁸ Their request that fictitious material be deleted reflected the concerns of the Association for Religious Liberty cited earlier. Although little information was received from grade five and six teachers, most of the respondees viewed the Teachers' Guides favourably. They, too, wanted more maps and pictures to accompany the lessons and more background information on such social customs, geography and history of ancient Palestine.⁶⁹ The grade seven and grade eight teachers noted the lack of Guide Books and requested that, when provided, they should contain only stories based on the Bible, accompanied by illustrations, maps and background material.⁷⁰

When asked about difficulties, the teachers reported few:

Practically nil so far as giving Religious Instruction is concerned but teachers' work is sometimes made difficult by

- (1) lack of religious background in the home
- (2) In a few instances, the children have no Sunday School
- (3) Lack of interest in spiritual things.⁷¹

While few teachers reported that the program presented difficulties, many thought it beneficial. In Ottawa, 52% of the responding teachers found it beneficial to the attitude of children toward school work, to each other, and to other races and denominations. The benefits of the program

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., 3.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., 4.

compiled from the Ottawa teachers' responses included the following:

- (1) releases tensions
- (2) creates proper attitudes
- (3) less dishonesty among pupils
- (4) higher morals as a result
- (5) children are more reliable, more considerate of others
- (6) Religious Education periods are most beneficial
- (7) Increases the sanse [sic] of responsibility
- (8) children are learning that happiness consists of sharing with others.⁷²

The women teachers reported that the comments from grade seven and grade eight children about the opening exercises and Bible readings were uniformly positive. The students' verbatim answers quoted in the teachers' research paper follow:

GRADE 7.

"I do need the Opening Exercises because I have a grand feeling that stays with me all day".

"They have helped me to understand that God is forever near me".

"It helped me to forgive a girl".

"It gives me assurance for the day".

"God has helped me to see the other person's way and that I am not always right".

A new Canadian Canadian child whose A.D.P. card is marked "no religion" wrote:

1. It made me believe in God
2. It helped me to learn to pray
3. It helped me that I have every day a nice "happy life".

Another child who according to time-table is in different classes each morning of the week says:
"No, the Bible reading does not help me. In one class the teacher reads part of a chapter and then stops. I don't get the meaning of the Bible when it is read that way".

⁷²Ibid., 5.

GRADE 8

- (1) "They help me to forget myself and think of others."
- (2) "They give me a feeling of safety and faith".
- (3) "I get along better at school and at home".
- (4) "They help me control my temper and get on better with others."
- (5) "I was helping Mother wash - complaining - began to think how tired Mother was and of what Jesus would have done in a similar position."
- (6) "They help me to know what kind of girl God wants me to be"
- (7) "Made my girlfriend say "Hurlbut's Story of the Bible is the most interesting book I ever read".
- (8) "They help me to be calm and gentle with other children".
- (9) "They have made me realize that everyone no matter what colour or race or financial standing is the same in God's eye".
- (10) " They help me get along in everyday life and help me get along with other people. They show me how much I have cinned [sic] -- "They help me feel that God is nearer than anyone else in the world".⁷³

The summary to the teachers' research report revealed the strong support of the Region 4 teachers for the existing program, their desire to teach it, their enthusiasm for voluntarily assuming a leadership role in formulating improvements to be considered by the educational authorities, and their expectation that teachers be familiar with the Scriptures.⁷⁴ These teachers believed that their opinions represented the general opinion of public school teachers in the province. In their view, the major limitation was lack of concrete teaching materials. They offered to assist in any revision of the Teachers' Guides and supplementary Bible reading lists.⁷⁵

⁷³Ibid., 5.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., 6.

The teachers who replied to the survey may have been teaching the program with evangelical zeal. The students' comments which the teachers cited suggested various responses to the program--from attitudinal changes which influenced behaviour at home and at school, to purported religious conversion, to hyperbole.

Results of the survey were summarized in the memorandum as follows:

On the whole the information gathered in this report reveals (1) a "vote of confidence" in regard to the course as it is at present (2) is at once gratifying and challenging. Gratifying in that much excellent progress has been made in the comparatively short time (4 yrs.) in which Religious Education has been compulsory. Challenging because the enthusiastic promotion of this work does not yet seem to be general.

The Committee is more convinced than ever that an inspirational message is essential. Therefore your convenor will set aside every other claim to out-of-class hours until that is accomplished, in the hope of presenting it along with the pamphlet of Prayers for Little People to the Directors at their next meeting.⁷⁶

In concluding her report, the Provincial Convenor for Research in Religious Education, Eva Gordon, tapped the conservative sentiments of the post-war years with the following passage:

In our own province let us go forward with the conviction of one who said "No man can be wholly uneducated who really knows the Bible, nor can anyone be considered a truly educated man who is ignorant of it". Churchill has again challenged us "to move forward together in discharge of our mission and our duty, fearing God and nothing else." Is it not also a fitting message for the class-room?⁷⁷

⁷⁶Ibid., 6.

⁷⁷Ibid., 8.

This Churchillian prose was reminiscent of the imperialist and traditionalist sentiments of Premier George Drew to which Eva Gordon had added an evangelical tone.

In summary, it would appear from this research report that the attitudes of the teachers and the students canvassed were positive. Teaching the Bible was accepted as a normal classroom activity; while there were numerous suggestions for improving teaching materials, few negative comments about the program as such were recorded. Without the support of elementary teachers, most of whom were women, the program would have faltered sooner than it eventually did.

In contrast to the above, 67.7% of the male elementary public school teachers of Forest Hill, North York, and Weston wanted the program removed from the schools.⁷⁸ The men teachers stated that there had been 'a general concern' among them over the question of religion in the schools.⁷⁹ The Brief by the men teachers was submitted almost twenty years later than the information from the Region 4, F.W.T.A.O. It should be noted that Forest Hill, North York, and Weston were areas of minority settlement by this time. Those teachers who opposed the program echoed the continuing criticisms which had been made by the Jewish Congress and the Association for Religious Liberty. They included themes such

⁷⁸"'A Survey Report on Religious Education', A Brief Submitted by the Male Elementary Public School Teachers of Forest Hill, North York, and Weston to the Minister's Committee Investigating Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario", May, 1966. [The Ontario Jewish Archives]

⁷⁹Ibid., 1.

as the lack of qualifications of teachers, the lack of time in the curriculum, possible intrusion on personal rights, the discriminatory nature of the regulations, the possibility of indoctrination, parental objections, the impossibility of a program set up by the Church being unbiased, and the fact that, in many areas, the regulations were being ignored.⁸⁰ The fact that the questionnaire which had been distributed received a 95.8% return indicated not only the importance of this question but the validity of the survey. The most telling result was that only 7% of the teachers canvassed wanted to retain the 1944 program while 24% desired substantial change.⁸¹

The two examples of surveys of teachers' opinions represent polarities. First, they are separated by almost two decades--enthusiasm for the program was stronger in its early years. Second, the survey taken by the women teachers represented views of a relatively homogenous population: the men teachers' survey represented views from an area of suburban Toronto which evidenced ethnic and religious diversity. In the context of wrangles about religion in the schools, teachers were more apt to desire that their board request exemption from the program or that the program be scrapped.

Educational bureaucrats had often favoured religious education in the schools, not only for its educational value,

⁸⁰Ibid., 5-6.

⁸¹Ibid., 2.

but because of their own faith. At a meeting of teachers and clergy sponsored by the Ontario Educational Association in 1954, Dr. G. A. Wheable, Superintendent of Schools for the London Board of Education, spoke passionately in favour of religious education. His opening remark was that "The need for a stronger faith in God has never been more urgent and imperative than in this day".⁸² He not only commended the program, but advocated its extension. Drawing on a survey of 11,529 elementary pupils, he reported overwhelming acceptance of the religious education program. He claimed that there were no examples of 'disunity' ensuing from it.⁸³ Dr. Wheable concluded his address with the following remarks:

. . . I am convinced that the course in Religious Instruction as given in our public schools is very worth while and can be conducted without violating the religious liberty or offending the religious beliefs of our pupils or their parents.⁸⁴

In a survey of Grade Twelve students conducted in 1957, opinions about religion were canvassed.⁸⁵ With few exceptions, these students would have been exposed to the religious education program during their earlier years. The sample consisted of 1,100 students from schools in all parts of Ontario. Responses were grouped according to gender.

⁸²G. A. Wheable, "A City Superintendent Looks at Religious Instruction in the Public Schools", An address at a Conference of Teachers and Clergy, Toronto, O. E. A. Week (April 19, 1954), 1. [General Board of Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁸³Ibid., 3-4.

⁸⁴Ibid., 5.

⁸⁵John F. Flowers, "Some Opinions of Ontario Grade 12 Students on Religious Education and Government", The Ontario Journal of Educational Research, 3, 1 (October, 1960).

Replying to the statement, "Moral development of children in the prime responsibility of: the church, the home, the school", 88% of boys and 93.3% of girls chose the home. Only 6.4% of boys and 2.5% of girls chose the school, and 5.6% of boys and 4.2% of girls chose the church.⁸⁶ The rationale of the Inter-Church Committee and the Churches that morals were a major concern of the cooperative efforts of school and church was gainsaid by these results.

A rationale of the proponents of the religious education program had been that it would be "a bulwark against Communism."⁸⁷ Only 2.6% of boys and 1.5% of girls in the survey chose this statement as a major purpose of religion. The conclusion of the pollster was that "an insignificant proportion of both sexes believed the most important purpose of religion is to act as a bulwark against Communism".⁸⁸

When given the multiple choice statement, "Students should be taught: what beliefs are correct, nothing at all about beliefs, how to arrive at their own beliefs", the overwhelming majority (79.1% of boys and 84.7% of girls) chose the option, "how to arrive at their own beliefs". The religious education program, as it existed, tended to stress 'correct' beliefs. Independent thinking, after all, was antithetical to its catechetical purpose.

⁸⁶Ibid., 27.

⁸⁷Ibid., 28

⁸⁸Ibid.

8. Dissatisfaction and Reappraisal

The pinnacle of cooperation among schools, the churches, and the government came in 1956 when religious education was made an option in high schools. Boards of Education could invite clergy to teach two half-hour classes per week in local high schools. However, only a few years later, a debate over the propriety of the religious education program emerged. In 1959 the Ethical Education Association was formed for the express purpose of opposing religion in the schools. During the 1950s Sunday School attendance, as a percentage of the population, began to decline. Post-war immigration had brought large numbers of people of different cultures and religions to Ontario, especially to the major cities. A Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools, under the chairmanship of J. Keiller Mackay, former Lieutenant-Governor, was struck in 1966 in answer to requests from boards of education in North York and Scarborough. The municipalities of these school boards contained significant numbers of immigrants and minorities. There had been organized resistance to the 1944 program in these areas.

In a submission to the North York Board of Education in 1961, the Canadian Jewish Congress reiterated its opposition to "a Protestant form of the Christian religion in the public

school system".⁸⁹ Quoting the respected educationalist, Charles E. Phillips, the representatives of the Congress claimed that mandatory religious education in the schools, as instituted in 1944 in Ontario, was an historical anomaly in North America.⁹⁰ The Congress posed the question that if religious education were optional even during times of Protestant hegemony, "how can such a curriculum be justified today in a context of much greater diversity and complexity?"⁹¹ Although the Congress did not object to the study of religion "as an objective factor in the learning process", it abjured "indoctrinating children in the particular tenets of a variety of Protestant Christianity".⁹²

In its closing paragraphs, the Congress pointed out the religious diversity of the municipality and pleaded that the school board apply for exemption from the religious education program:

The Township of North York is made up of a wide variety of religious and religio-ethnic groups: Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Jews, Eastern Orthodox, and a wide variety of Protestants each dedicated to its beliefs and each observing them in the freedom of this land. There is sufficient evidence of growing dissent and controversy arising from the presence of sectarian religious education in the schools, coming from pupils, parents, and teachers alike. This Township would make a tremendous step forward if it applied for exemption from teaching the prescribed course of sectarian religion in its schools. Such a step has ample precedent. Full provision exists

⁸⁹Meyer W. Gasner and Sydney M. Harris of the Canadian Jewish Congress (Central Region) to the North York Board of Education (1961). [Ontario Jewish Congress].

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid., 2.

⁹²Ibid., 5.

for it. Other boards throughout the province in areas widely divergent as to physical and demographic characteristics have asked for such exemption which is always granted without question.⁹³

Groups opposing the religious education program prior to 1959 represented the views of various faith groups which saw their rights curtailed by the program. Such were the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Association for Religious Liberty. But the Ethical Education Association was an inter-faith group dedicated to the preservation of the public school system free of sectarian influence. In 1961, the Association sponsored a public lecture by Dr. C. E. Phillips on "Religion and our Public Schools". Dr. Phillips' lecture was a learned address, the essence of which was that while religious history could be taught, but "beliefs cannot be taught as a public school subject".⁹⁴ Teachers were not to tell pupils "what [they] must believe".⁹⁵ Phillips concluded with a plea to keep the public schools inclusive and non-sectarian. In other words, the schools were to be entirely secular.

The latter point was not to be granted by the Christian Women's Council on Education, formed in 1959. The Council claimed to represent all Christian denominations and had as its aims:

⁹³Ibid., 7.

⁹⁴C. E. Phillips, "Religion and our Public Schools". A lecture given under the auspices of the Ethical Education Association at the Royal Ontario Museum Theatre (March 22, 1961), 12. [University of Toronto Library].

⁹⁵Ibid.

- (1) To retain the teaching of the Bible in Public Schools.
- (2) To help preserve the Christian heritage of Canada.
- (3) To promote harmony and cooperation among people of different races and faiths.⁹⁶

The arguments of the Executive of the Council in favour of religion in the schools, were reminiscent of the 1930s. Opponents of religion in the schools were characterized as "those who are campaigning to paganize our schools".⁹⁷ Citing the regulations regarding Bible Study in the public schools, and claiming that the majority of parents desired it, the Council Executive castigated delinquent educators:

Principals and teachers who neglect Bible teaching, without legal exemption, are actually breaking the law in Ontario. We do not expect the teaching profession to set such an example to our youth.⁹⁸

To emphasize the danger of paganism, the Council Executive quoted Anglican Bishop F. H. Wilkinson of Toronto:

It is well to be reminded that what gave impetus to the concern for Religious Education in our schools was the demonstration of evil consequences of the Nazi pagan state upon the education of the youth of Germany.⁹⁹

Another argument from the 1930s, namely that Bible teaching was an antidote to juvenile delinquency, was buttressed by a quotation from the Anglican journal, The Canadian Churchman:

Our immature youth, who receive no restraining teaching, succumb to evil influence. Juvenile Court authorities point out the fact that fear of punishment is no deterrent to crime. If we are to prevent instead of

⁹⁶Executive Committee of The Christian Women's Council on Education, "Report on Religious Education in Public Schools" (1960), 1. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

⁹⁷Ibid., 4.

⁹⁸Ibid., 5.

⁹⁹Bishop F. H. Wilkinson, Toronto, Addressed to Synod (May 1960), in *ibid.*, 6.

punish delinquency, we must inspire our youth to be law-abiding and self-controlled. This is impossible without the inspiration and power that comes from the Bible, the source of our moral law.¹⁰⁰

In turning to objections raised by opponents of the program of religious education, the Executive of the Christian Women's Council on Education restated familiar arguments for retaining the program. Children who did not attend Sunday School must be reached. Parents who objected were allowed to excuse their children. Canada was "founded and pioneered by Christians" and "immigrants are constantly bringing new demands which can be democratically satisfied without disrupting the very foundation upon which the country was built".¹⁰¹ The Bible was an indispensable textbook of ethics.¹⁰²

In defense of the Teachers' Guides of the religious education program, the Executive characterized criticisms in the press as taken out of context, or based on reports of children which were "not necessarily accurate".¹⁰³ Whatever shortcomings the Guide Books had, they were soon to be revised, "and the next edition of these books will show that all necessary revisions have been made".¹⁰⁴

The Executive of the Christian Women's Council on Education reiterated much of the position of the churches and

¹⁰⁰D. E. McGuire, The Canadian Churchman, n.d., in *ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 9-10.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

the Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education in deploring any secularization of the schools.¹⁰⁵

Should the schools be secular? This was the issue as understood by all sides of the religious education question. When the Jewish Community and the Ethical Education Association began to lobby for secularization, the major churches, and especially the Inter-Church Committee, organized resistance. The government was aware of the debate but did not act to adjudicate it immediately.

In an address to the Clericus of York Mills on April 25, 1961, Bishop H. R. Hunt of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto discussed the religious education controversy at length.¹⁰⁶ Bishop Hunt was to become a spokesman for the Anglican Church on religious education in the schools. Although partisan, the Bishop's comments revealed a clear grasp of the positions of the parties in conflict. He conceded that the Jewish Community was "unanimous in opposition to the teaching of religious education in the public schools".¹⁰⁷ He identified the Ethical Education Association, whose President "happens to be Unitarian"¹⁰⁸, and the Jewish Congress as the major opponents of religious education in the schools. Reminding his hearers that religious education had been a "hot issue in

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 13.

¹⁰⁶Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Clericus of York Mills of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto (April 25, 1961). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 1.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

the 1945 election"¹⁰⁹, he warned that history might be revisited:

It may come to this again. The people of Ontario are annoyed. Opponents are trying to get the public behind them. We agree that revision is necessary, but we do want Bible instruction of some kind in the schools.¹¹⁰

Bishop Hunt pointed out that although the Jewish Congress desired the discontinuation of the religious education program, it did not object to opening exercises, which included Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer. The Ethical Education Association wanted all overtly religious activity dropped.¹¹¹

After the Bishop's speech, the Clericus of York Mills committed itself to opposing the activities of the Jewish Congress and the Ethical Education Association by presenting a motion to the North York Board of Education supporting religious education in the schools. Further, it was reported to the Clericus that the Joint Executives of the Ministerial Associations of the Township of North York intended to encourage a letter-writing campaign, legal action, and the mailing of literature to every household in North York in aid of retaining religious education in the schools.¹¹²

The campaign to discontinue religious education in the schools of North York had failed. Similar battles over the issue were waged in Etobicoke and Scarborough, but were also

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 2.

¹¹¹Ibid., 2.

¹¹²Ibid., 3-5.

without immediate result. However, the issue had been raised and would continue to be a public controversy throughout the 1960s.

A letter to the clergy from the Anglican Bishop of Toronto, F. H. Wilkinson, in March 1961 is a statement of the issue of religion in the schools from the proponents' point of view.¹¹³ It was published in the heat of the conflict with the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Ethical Education Association. The text, without attachments and enclosures, is reproduced in full in Appendix F.

After reviewing the history of the controversy over religious education in the schools, Bishop Wilkinson stressed that those who opposed the 1944 regulations, particularly in Metropolitan Toronto, were a vocal and active minority. However, they had been able to seize media attention. He noted that they intended to present a motion to the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations to delete the word Christian from the Public Schools Act. Bishop Wilkinson deplored this attempt to remove Christianity from schools while secularizing them. He maintained that the spiritual and moral values of the nation would be damaged. The clergy were asked to bring the matter to the attention of their parishoners so that they might be fully informed. The clergy were advised to avoid the media and to encourage the laity to

¹¹³Bishop F. H. Wilkinson to the Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto (March, 1961). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

be present at any meeting which might be associated with the question of religion in the public schools.¹¹⁴

Realizing that the matter needed to be studied further, Bishop Wilkinson had established a Committee on Religious Education in the Schools. In 1962, the Committee had reached the following conclusions:

The Churches must take the lead in urging upon the Province a more realistic attitude towards the whole question of religious education. The rights of parties to both views of education are to be protected. We feel that the time has come to establish a Royal Commission or some similar body to deal with the whole situation and to take it out of public dog-fighting and letters to the press.¹¹⁵

As with the North York and Scarborough Boards of Education, the Bishop's Committee was looking for government arbitration of what had become a heated controversy over religion in the schools.

The issue became the subject of an hour-long television documentary, "Religion in the Schools", presented on January 6, 1963 on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation network.¹¹⁶ The program was hosted by J. Frank Willis. Major church and educational authorities were interviewed individually and in groups on the questions of the funding of separate schools and on religion in the schools generally.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵The Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Toronto, "Bishop's Committee on Religious Education in Schools" (February, 1962), 2. [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

¹¹⁶"Religion in the Schools," Close-Up (January 6, 1963), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. [Print Nos. 3894 and 3895, National Archives of Canada].

Bishop Emmett Carter of the Roman Catholic Church explained that the public schools were "basically secular". Catholic children, therefore, needed to be educated in their own publicly-funded schools in order to obtain a religious education.

Dr. C. E. Phillips, the noted educator and champion of non-sectarian public education, gave a short history of the question of religion in the schools. He stated that the elementary schools in Ontario were Protestant rather than truly non-sectarian. He believed that the question of whether religion should be taught in the public schools should be addressed by the government.

All of the representatives of the Protestant churches were opposed to extension of funding to the Roman Catholic high schools, yet they defended the retention of Protestant teaching in the public schools. Bishop Hunt of the Anglican Church claimed that the teaching in the public schools was not specifically Protestant, but rather Christian and non-sectarian! The United Church spokesman, Dr. Long, claimed that the religious education program stressed what Christians held in common and reflected the current ecumenical theology of the major churches.

Douglas Fisher, Member of Parliament, stated that parents wanted values--not theology--taught in the schools. He considered most public school students to be religiously illiterate. The religious education program was a failure. The society-at-large, he believed, considered religion in the

schools to be irrelevant. Although the schools originally had been based on the religious conception of life, they had become secular. Society itself was tending to become secular in the 1960s. Secularists, claimed Fisher, were afraid of programs which exacerbated religious divisions or infringed the rights of minorities. Religious belief should not be a concern of the state. Fisher believed that the religious education program was "turning children off".

A panel of expert academics consisting of Dr. Lewis Beattie, Professor Leslie Dewart, and Professor John Seeley could reach no consensus. Dr. Beattie had helped frame the 1944 regulations on religious education in the schools. He felt that schools should pass on tradition, which in the case of Ontario, was Christian tradition. He believed that people were naturally religious, that their curiosity should be served by a study of religion without sectarian doctrines being imposed, and that this could be accomplished through the study of religious literature in the English program. Dr. Beattie felt, however, that the atmosphere of the school should reflect Christian values.

Dr. Dewart, a Roman Catholic academic, insisted, as did Bishop Carter, that Catholicism was a "whole way of life" and required its own system of education. A school was not 'objective', but rather should be concerned with values. In order to maintain Catholic values, Catholic schools were necessary.

Professor Seeley, a secularist, wanted religious education removed from the schools on the grounds that religious teaching was indoctrination. However, the academic study of religion was to be allowed. No religious doctrine should be taught under state auspices because of the "danger of totalitarianism". The scientific study of religion, such as was done in universities, however, could allow students to "break from their parochialisms".¹¹⁷

Douglas Fisher had the last word. Because of the wide range of views within the religious community, he felt that the question of religion in the schools was a difficult issue to resolve.

What is of particular interest about this CBC television program is that secularist opinions were stated and were acknowledged also by the parties involved. The Protestant church officials appeared to be somewhat out of touch with both the Roman Catholic and secularist positions. Their statements about religion in the schools reflected earlier positions which were not in tune with the social realities of the 1960s.

The churches had promoted, with conspicuous success, a program of religion in the schools from the 1930s to the 1950s. By the 1960s they were forced to defend their hegemony. Their rearguard action rested on familiar arguments, the essence of which was that Christian

¹¹⁷Ibid.

instruction in the schools contributed to the character of children. Dr. Lewis Beattie, in an official statement of the Board of Christian Education of the United Church, stated that "Education is incomplete without religion", and that there should be in the curriculum "an emphasis on the Hebraic-Christian heritage as a source of the religious and cultural motive for character."¹¹⁸ However, a paper produced by the General Board of Religious Education of the Anglican Church on January 3, 1964 indicated that the Church must recognize its position realistically:

The claim that the Church should control society has in the twentieth century been made quite untenable both by the rise of secularism and the divisions of Christendom. Those who persist in pressing such a claim must find themselves ultimately in one of two positions. Either they continue to fight a defensive rearguard action on behalf of a dying, if not defunct, tradition of ecclesiastical control or they withdraw from a contaminated society and set up a dream world of their own in separate and private schools.¹¹⁹

The recognition that society had become increasingly secular alarmed many Christians who supported religion in the schools, while others accepted this trend as fact. Thus, the Christian Women's Council on Education continued to warn about the dangers of secularism, while Christian academics spoke of a post-Christian society. The privileged position of the Protestant churches in Ontario was in doubt by the

¹¹⁸Dr. Lewis Beattie, Secretary of the Board of Christian Education, The United Church of Canada, "The Relation of Religion and Education" (1964), 3. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

¹¹⁹General Board of Religious Education of the Anglican Church of Canada, "Religion and Public Education in Ontario" (January 3, 1964). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 30, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

mid-1960s. This was true particularly with regard to Protestant teaching in the schools.

After calls for a study of religious education in the schools by opponents and supporters of the program, on January 27, 1966 the government appointed a special committee to examine religious education in the public schools of Ontario. Before presenting its report, frequently referred to as the Mackay Report, the Committee heard representations from 141 groups or individuals. The churches were heavily represented, and there were briefs from the Jewish community and secular groups, such as the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

The Canadian Jewish Congress presented an extensive Brief which opposed the program of religious education in the schools. The revisions to the Teachers' Guides, made in the early 1960s, were unsatisfactory to the Jewish community. Even though some disparaging views of Judaism had been deleted, there remained "clear bias and distortion".¹²⁰ Specific examples of bias against Judaism were detailed in an Appendix. In the Grade Six text, for example, the phrase, "the Jewish rulers bent on murder", had been changed to "the rulers, bent on revenge".¹²¹ The Congress claimed that the "whole spirit of the passage" was unchanged, in that the Jewish authorities were still portrayed as "a group of evil

¹²⁰"Brief of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Division, to the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario" (February 10, 1967), 27. [Archives of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education]

¹²¹Ibid., Appendix C, A7.

and diabolical persons . . . plotting and scheming to get Jesus 'into their clutches', 'trap Him' and 'kill Him'".¹²²

Aside from references to the texts which it found upsetting, the Congress claimed that Canadians-at-large did not support religion in the schools. In a Gallup Poll of 1957, it appeared that a majority of members of the major Protestant Churches actually opposed religious teaching in the schools.¹²³ In addition to arguments about the harm the program caused to minority children and parents, the Jewish position rested on the contention that "any instruction in doctrinal religion has no place in the public schools".¹²⁴

In at least one instance, dissatisfaction with the religious education program centred on the activities of fundamentalist teachers belonging to a group known as the Bible Club Movement. A group of parents in the Township of Gosfield South in Essex County were upset with the literalistic and evangelistic teachings of the Bible Club teachers.¹²⁵ With the help of the Ethical Education Association, the parents petitioned the Gosfield South School Board to redress their grievances. The school board denied the petition "until such time as the Minister of Education for Ontario, in his wisdom, makes changes [in the

¹²²Ibid., Appendix C, A7. .

¹²³Ibid., 41-42.

¹²⁴Ibid., vi

¹²⁵A Delegation of Parents from the Township of Gosfield South to the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario, Brief No. 85 (1966), 8. [Archives of Ontario]

regulations]".¹²⁶ Neither the validity nor the propriety of the parents' complaints were upheld. The Ethical Education Association presented a brief to the Board on April 19, 1966 asking the Board to apply for exemption from the religious education program. This was denied, but slight changes were made to the program, and parents were polled as to whether or not they supported a program of religious education at school.¹²⁷

The Ethical Education Association suggested to the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools that there were "similar situations in other jurisdictions", but that they could not be publicized due to the reluctance of the parents concerned to indulge in public controversy".¹²⁸ Finally, the Association asked for the religious education program to be abandoned.

The Special Committee on Religious Education in the Schools claimed to have given careful consideration to all of the material presented to it during its three-year period of deliberation, and to have been guided by the principle that "in a democratic society every adult, and every young person, has the right to choose freely the spiritual and moral values he wishes, or, indeed, to reject them".¹²⁹ The Committee

¹²⁶ Ethical Education Association to the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario, Brief No. 57 (1966), 6.

¹²⁷A Delegation of Parents. . . , 9.

¹²⁸Ibid., 7.

¹²⁹J. Keiller Mackay, Chair, Religious Information and Moral Development: The Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools in the Province of Ontario (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1969), xv.

noted also that "our society has been altering greatly in recent decades, and is continuing to change rapidly".¹³⁰ There was to be no endorsement of the status quo as there had been by the Royal Commission on Education Report of 1950. In fact, the Committee concluded that the religious education program, as it existed, consisted of indoctrination and should be abandoned.¹³¹ In its appraisal of the program, the Committee characterized the content as "definitely Christian and Protestant"; therefore, it was "a vehicle leading to religious commitment rather than true education".¹³² While the Committee recognized that a "general knowledge of religion [was] necessary to form a well-educated person, this, however, [did] not mean that religious indoctrination should take place in the public schools".¹³³ The Committee had no objection to indoctrination as a normal function of churches, synagogues and homes.¹³⁴ The conclusions of the Committee were opposed to the aims of the Inter-Church Committee.

In its Brief to the Committee on Religious Education, the Inter-Church Committee on Public Education, as it had been renamed, had continued not only to support, but to suggest improvements for religious education in the schools. A concession was made that "there will be suitable times and

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid., 93.

¹³²Ibid., 21.

¹³³Ibid., 23.

¹³⁴Ibid., 25.

occasions when some other of the resources of the world religions would be included" in religious instruction, but the Christian core of the program would remain.¹³⁵

The churches were dismayed that the Mackay Report had ignored their supplications. The Provincial Board of Religious Education of the Anglican Church in Ontario declared the Mackay Report to be unsatisfactory:

We will not stand passively by and allow the religious orientation of our public education system to be overthrown through the skillful opposition of a vocal minority, blind to the true dimensions of religion and education.¹³⁶

The Conservative government did not follow the recommendation of the Committee on Religious Education to abandon the program of religious education because it did not want to alienate conservatively-minded Ontarians for the sake of appeasing dissidents. However, the emphasis on moral values education recommended by the Committee as a replacement for Bible study gradually supplanted the teaching of religion. There remained to Boards of Education the legal option to continue to teach the Christian Bible in their schools. In some areas, such teaching continued through the 1980s. But the churches were unable to maintain the province-wide program. The reason that boards began to abandon the program in greater numbers even without permission was because it was totally unsuited to the times.

¹³⁵Ibid., 25.

¹³⁶Journal of the Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario (1970), 69.

The pendulum in education had swung towards permissiveness.¹³⁷ The religion program had been formed in an era of traditionalism, patriotism, and imperialism. It had become obsolete. Moreover, all of the complaints about the program -- indoctrination, psychological harm to minorities, disunity, and undue influence on the part of the churches -- had been validated by the Committee on Religious Education.¹³⁸

9. Summary

The religious education program in the public schools was enthusiastically promoted by the Protestant Churches which had pressed for its establishment. There was evidence of support from teachers and the public. Although criticism of the Teachers' Guides arose immediately from a vocal few, and objections from the Jewish Community were ongoing, serious threats did not emerge until the late 1950s. In fact, in 1950, the Royal Commission on Education had recommended a continuance of the program. The Churches and the Inter-Church Committee characterized the program as Christian, but non-sectarian. Opponents called it a course in Protestant indoctrination. Aware of considerable controversy over the program, especially in religiously-diverse municipalities, the provincial government appointed a special committee to review the question of religion in the

¹³⁷Stamp, Schools of Ontario, 217-20.

¹³⁸Mackay, Religious Information and Moral Development, 22-26.

public schools in 1966. The Churches were shocked by the conclusion of the Committee that the program consisted of indoctrination and must be scrapped.

During the twenty years following World War II, Ontario society had become more diverse due to immigration. The Churches' privileged position in society had come into question. Secularist opinions had grown and the danger of secularism was noted by the Churches. In the 1970s and the 1980s, the Churches continued to lose their prestige and influence. Even though the provincial government did not legislate an end to religious education in the schools after the publication of the 1969 Mackay Report, enthusiasm for the program waned dramatically. The Protestant Churches had begun to fight a rearguard action only twenty years after the Drew government's victory in the field of religious education. The Mackay Report was a defeat--the full implications of which were not to be clear until the 1980s.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL

1. The Churches and the Mackay Report

The Churches were less than pleased that the Mackay Report had recommended the incidental teaching of religion rather than a definite program in the schools. The proposal that religions other than Christianity should be part of the curriculum was more readily granted.

The United Church's Board of Christian Education accepted the thrust of the Mackay Report. It affirmed that religion in public education must not be sectarian, but "must be religion defined on an extensively broad inter-faith basis".¹ It accepted that curricula were not to be developed by the churches but by the Department of Education, and that classes were not to be taught by clergy but by "highly-qualified public school teachers".² Any further involvement by the United Church with public school religion would include its work on the Ecumenical Study Commission on Religious Education. Thus the United Church was not committed to continuing the rather intimate connection between the churches and the actual program of religious

¹The United Church of Canada Year Book, Vol. II (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1970), 128. [Archives of the United Church of Canada].

²Ibid.

education begun in the schools in 1944, but it did want some study of religion in the schools.

The Hamilton Conference of The United Church responded at length to the Mackay Report. The full text is included as Appendix G. Although the Conference was critical of some aspects of the Mackay Report, it agreed that the present course of studies should be dropped because it was divisive. The Hamilton Conference Colloquium wanted a substantial, rather than an incidental program, of religious instruction. Although the Colloquium could envisage a study of non-Christian beliefs, it wanted the major emphasis placed upon Judaeo-Christian beliefs. It saw the Mackay Report as a basis for experimentation in moral values and religious education at the local level. The Colloquium accepted that the Church was only one agent among many in the field of education and that clergy would have no special privileges in the schools. The automatic rights of clergy to visit and to instruct in religion would be abolished. The Colloquium concluded its report to the Hamilton Conference of the United Church with the following summary statements:

We agree with the proposed policy of dropping the present course of studies for the reasons stated in the Committee's report.

We commend the Committee for its recommendation that the legislation pertaining to school visitors . . . be repealed. We support the elimination of the privileged position of the clergy, and recommend that clergy assume appropriate responsibilities on the same basis as other resource persons in the community when invited by school authorities.

We agree with all other recommendations of the report, and we wish to commend the Committee for its recommendations to remove some of the factors dividing our society on sectarian grounds.³

The Board of Religious Education of the Anglican Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario was not so charitable. While accepting the need for revision, it deplored the trend toward de-emphasizing religion in the schools. It formulated three recommendations:

Recommendation 1: a revised, dynamic program
 Ontario Anglicans recommend that religious education in the public schools be continued--with a revised program and a revitalized approach. . . .

Recommendation 2: more status as a subject
 We also recommend that immediate steps be taken to make religious education in the schools as significant and up-to-date a subject as other disciplines. . . .

Recommendation 3: courses in world religions
 We urge that the proposed Grade 11 and 12 courses in world religions be introduced soon, and be taught by persons qualified in both religion and theology.⁴

The Board was dissatisfied with the Mackay Report because its proposals would diminish the role of religion in the education of public school children:

The Mackay Report we challenge on two main grounds: its unsatisfactory view of both religion and education. If true education involves the development of the whole person, it should include a significant encounter with the religious dimension of life--with its spiritual insights and moral ideals, its impulse to conviction and fellowship and service. Some people reject these qualities. Others are indifferent. But is there any doubt that the great majority of the citizens of Ontario

³The United Church of Canada, Record of Proceedings, Hamilton Conference (1970), in United Church of Canada Minutes of Conferences, Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1970), 66-67. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

⁴The Anglican Church of Canada, Journal of Provincial Synod (Toronto, 1970), 68-69. [Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa].

value the religious dimension of life and wish to see it adequately presented in our public schools?

We will not stand passively by and allow the religious orientation of our public education system to be overthrown through the skilful opposition of a vocal minority, blind to the true dimensions of religion and education.⁵

There is no doubt that the majority of Ontarians to which the Board of Religious Education referred were Anglo-Protestants like themselves.

The Anglicans wanted a revised program of religious and moral education based on "crucial life-issues" which were to be "illuminated by the insights of religion".⁶ Religious education would be a definite subject taught by properly-prepared teachers. The Anglicans thought that the majority of Ontario citizens would wish to see such a program. They "would not stand passively by and allow the religious orientation of our public education system to be overthrown through the skilful opposition of a vocal minority".⁷ The Anglicans assumed that, because the majority of the population was Christian, Christianity should be prominent in the schools. Their hopes were to be disappointed.

The Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church criticized the Mackay Report. It approved the emphasis on moral values education, but it lamented a perceived diminution of the role of religion in determining values:

⁵The Anglican Church of Canada, Journal of Provincial Synod (Toronto, 1970), 68-69.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

Moral development turns out to be the main concern of the Mackay Report. We commend their emphasis on increasing moral sensitivity and encouraging "moral reasoning". We appreciate the insights presented from the writings of Lawrence Kohlberg and other developmental psychologists.

But the Mackay Committee are [sic] unrealistic in looking so completely to reason to produce moral decisions. Christian experience shows that the best moral reasoning is undergirded by objective standards--the religious values found in the Biblical revelation. In the words of the Diocese of Toronto's brief,

we question whether moral education in terms of abstract reasoning will be sufficient to achieve the desired goal of moral maturity. Kohlberg's definition is too simplistic in its assumption about human nature.⁸

The Presbyterian Board of Christian Education had deputized a scholar to present its Brief to the Mackay Committee. Michel Despland characterized his Committee on Church and Public Education as a "special interest group thinking about schools".⁹ Despland accepted secularization completely. He argued that the churches also must do so, and challenged Christians to accept the new society with its free exchange of ideas. The power of majority status must not be exploited; "power politics" was an unseemly activity for "communicators of the Christian Gospel".¹⁰

Despland recommended a religious studies approach--the academic study of religion with no one religious tradition as normative. In a prophetic way, he insisted on teaching about

⁸Ibid., 60.

⁹Michel Despland, "A Rationale for Religious Studies in the Public Schools", Brief No. 106 to the Special Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the Province of Ontario (1968), 1. [Archives of Ontario].

¹⁰Ibid.

religion, rather than teaching a religion as had been done since 1944. The program he advocated would be "a course designed to enable students to examine religious traditions and the religious values which have been conveyed to them by their families, churches, and synagogues, in an atmosphere of academic integrity and knowledge".¹¹ The church should contribute to an open-ended inquiry into religion which was "not directly useful to the purposes of the church".¹² It should contribute to, not catechize in, the schools.

The Brief submitted on behalf of the Presbyterians was the most forward-looking of those presented by the churches. The church was not to further its own ends through religion in the schools, but to promote unselfishly the welfare of a secular enterprise.

The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec had not submitted a Brief to the Mackay Committee. However, it had adopted a position which supported religious education in the schools and continued to allow freedom of conscience. While stressing the separation of church and state, the Baptists affirmed that religion had a place in the life of the citizenry and the schools. They reaffirmed their opposition to secularization in the schools and their support of the religious education program. The Baptist statement, included in full as Appendix H, concluded with the following resolution:

¹¹Ibid., 4.

¹²Ibid.

. . . we recognize the fact that each person within our Churches must act according to his own conscience and his own sense of duty to God and to our Province even as the laws regarding 'religious education in the schools' recognize that there will be those pupils who do not participate in any religious studies or any exercise of devotion objected to by his parents or guardians.¹³

The churches accepted that the exclusive position of Christianity in the curriculum could not endure; other religions were to be included in the course of studies. They preferred a definite program of, or *about*, religion rather than an incidental approach to the topic. However, the denominations had responded in different ways to the prospect of abandoning the 1944 religious education program. The United and the Presbyterian Churches had been more accepting of secularization than the Anglican and Baptist Convention Churches.

2. The Christian Religion and Moral Education

The Ecumenical Study Commission on Religious Education was formed in 1969 to deal with the implications of the Mackay Report. Its task was to represent the major denominations in the matter of religious education in the schools. It was established jointly by the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches and included representatives from the United, Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman

¹³Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec Year Book, 1964-65 (Toronto: Baptist Church House, 1965), 50-51.

Catholic Churches.¹⁴ In its Brief to the Minister of Education in 1970, the Commission recognized that, in a pluralistic society, it would be inappropriate to teach only Christianity in the schools, yet some treatment of the Christian religion as a part of Canada's heritage seemed to be required in order to understand Canadian society.¹⁵ The other major religions basic to this understanding were seen to be Judaism and secular humanism.¹⁶ The Commission proposed a "course in Religion, rather than one particular religion, namely, Christianity. Secondly, it would be taught by certified specialists in religious studies on the regular full-time staff of the school"¹⁷ The type of program proposed by the Commission "would be stronger and more vigorous than the amorphous Religious Information Programme advocated by the Keiller Mackay Report."¹⁸

Returning to the theme which the churches had once advocated as the rationale for religious education in the schools, the Commission noted the intimate connection between morality and religion:

Ontarians seem to be unanimous in desiring their children to be instructed in "values", but values are never disembodied, and are much more likely to be

¹⁴These churches accounted for over eighty percent of the church population of the province. James M. Houston, "Moral Values Education", Crux, 18, 2, (1982), 8.

¹⁵The Ecumenical Study Commission, "A Brief Concerning Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario" (1970), 5-6. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 30, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

¹⁶Ibid., 6.

¹⁷Ibid., 7.

¹⁸Ibid., 8.

imparted when embedded, as they have been throughout human history, in religion.¹⁹

The Ecumenical Study Commission was alarmed by the trend in educational circles to consider moral values education apart from religion. When the Minister of Education, the Honourable Thomas L. Wells, in a speech in 1974, advocated a moral education program without a religious base for the schools, the Commissioners declared themselves to be "unsettled", because they felt that religion and morality were intimately connected.²⁰ However, they were encouraged that the door was left open for religion by Mr. Wells' comment that "perhaps we need to consider new ways of accommodating some form of religious education for those who wish it, as well as moral education."²¹ The Commission was concerned that if religion were to be excluded effectively from the schools, then the philosophy of secular humanism would replace it.²²

In separating the teaching of moral values from religion, the Ministry of Education was pursuing a policy designed to avoid sectarian controversies over the teaching of religion in the schools. Everyone could agree on the importance of moral education. The government's relative

¹⁹Ibid., 8.

²⁰The Ecumenical Study Commission on Religious Education, "Moral and Religious Education" (Toronto, 1974), 9. [General Board of Religious Education, Box 30, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

conflict. The Ecumenical Study Commission was apprehensive about the official shift to values education:

What is bothering us is that religious education may become the neglected step-child of Ontario education, whereas we would like to see the same kind of investigation and research done in Ontario on religious education as was done on moral education.²³

Although moral education apart from religion is not the subject of the present inquiry, the fact that it came to overshadow religious education in the schools must be stated. Based on Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development²⁴, promoted in Ontario by Clive Beck of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the notion that children could arrive at moral judgements by reason alone, apart from religious revelation, became acceptable to educators. Kohlberg's system was based on a theory of six stages of moral development, which ranged from total self-concern to principled behaviour founded on a concern for universal justice. Discussion of 'moral dilemmas' was integrated into the regular curriculum. How the students resolved a dilemma would reveal a greater or lesser ability to reason morally. The teachers were not to impose their own religiously-based beliefs.

From the point of view of the Commission, moral values education was a good thing, but somewhat limited by its reliance on "reasoning" alone. If reasoning meant merely

²³Ibid., 10.

²⁴L. Kohlberg, Stages in the Development of Moral Thought and Action (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).

"the cognitive functioning of the mind", then it missed the wider sense of being "in relation to ultimate ends".²⁵ The Commission challenged Dr. Beck and other moral values educators to define 'reason' and 'the reasoning process'. The members of the Commission would not support a program of moral education devoid of religious content. They believed:

- a) moral education divested of any rootage in religion is exceedingly hard to achieve effectively
- b) Religion is a subject worthy of study in its own right.²⁶

The Churches represented by the Ecumenical Study Commission were convinced that "a public education programme which bans Religion is gravely defective".²⁷ The inclusion of a World Religions option for Secondary Schools in 1971, for example, was welcome, but did not "exhaust the meaning of religion in education".²⁸ While attempts to clarify and improve the ability of students to reason morally were laudable, there were dimensions of life which transcended moral education and should be included in the curriculum:

In short, religion as well as morality is a function of human life so intimately meshed with the human spirit and its cultures that the aims of Ontario Education so often summarized as for the whole child cannot be achieved without its inclusion as a respected discipline.²⁹

²⁵The Ecumenical Study Commission on Religious Education, "Moral and Religious Education", 14.

²⁶Ibid., 16.

²⁷The Ecumenical Study Commission, Religion in our Schools (Toronto, 1972), 7. Quoted in "Moral and Religious Education", 17.

²⁸Canon H. L. Puxley, ed., "Religious Education in a Pluralistic Society", Special Edition of Religious Education, (July/August, 1973), 70-71. Quoted in "Moral and Religious Education", 17.

²⁹Ibid., 17-18.

In the opinion of the Commission, moral values education was not an adequate substitute for religion; religion had educative value in its own right.

The divorce of moral education and religion was significant in several ways. If moral education could proceed without a religious base, then the often-stated argument of the churches that morals required roots in Christian teaching was gainsaid. If reason alone could lead humans to discover universal principles of morality, then revelation was not necessarily required. Revelation, however, is a critical component of Christian theology:

In Christian theology the word [revelation] is used both of the corpus of truth about Himself which God discloses to us and the process by which His communication of it takes place. Traditional theology has tended to conceive of revelation in the latter sense as taking place through propositions; but there has been an increasing tendency among many theologians to insist that Divine revelation reaches us largely, and even primarily, through God's activity . . . rather than in propositional statements. Since it is commonly held that there are certain truths about God which can be learnt through man's natural endowments . . . while others . . . are not knowable except by faith, Christian philosophers have often held that a sharp distinction must be drawn between "truths of reason" and "truths of revelation" Christians of the Protestant tradition hold that all revelation is sufficiently contained in Scripture; Catholics on the other hand commonly maintain that part of it is also found in the unwritten truths of the Church.³⁰

Three commonly-accepted bases for Christian doctrine on faith and morals are Scripture, tradition, and reason.³¹

³⁰F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds.), The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church [Third Edition] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1392.

³¹John Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology [Second Edition] (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1977), 380-382.

Protestants give primacy to Scripture. Reason of itself is insufficient as a means of finding universal truth. Christians who are unwilling to accept reason alone as a means of finding truth often place great emphasis on Scripture, and especially on such revelations as the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus. They want these taught as unvarying and absolute truths. Where the public schools no longer included this teaching in the curriculum, fundamentalist Christians were perturbed by the prospect of the secular humanism, which they detested, replacing it. Some began to lobby the government for a return to Christian teaching in the public schools.³² Private Christian schools became another option for them.

Mainstream Christianity, represented by the Ecumenical Study Commission, did not recoil from the moral education movement. However, it insisted that a person not educated in religion could understand neither modern society nor the past. The Commission deplored the lack of studies in religion in the schools and continued to press the government for its inclusion in the curriculum.

As a plea for the inclusion of the study of religion in the curriculum, the Ecumenical Study Commission published a series of articles under the title Religious Education Belongs in the Public Schools.³³ James Perkin's article³⁴

³²Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (1973).

³³Ecumenical Study Commission, Religious Education Belongs in the Public Schools (Toronto, 1985).

considered the question of whether religious education and public education were compatible. He did not see humanism as necessarily secular.³⁵ There could be a Christian humanism. In Perkin's view, humanistic learning could be used to understand Western culture, even Christianity.³⁶ In the pluralistic school system, students studied various religious and moral codes in the process of working out their personal values. Values education had replaced moral teaching based on Christianity.³⁷ Perkin recognized that for evangelical Christians, for whom there was no salvation outside the Christian faith, there seemed to be no real alternative but private schools.³⁸

Priestly wrote that values education, for all its social-scientific basis, was "historically unaware" and had "little regard for the past".³⁹ The answers of the past need not be overlooked just because the student was to arrive at his or her own values. Priestly believed that the problem with moral values education was its relativism. It was based entirely on reason, and ignored, or never came to grips with, the claims of revelation. In the schools, the relationship

³⁴James Perkin, "Religious Education and Public Education: Are They Compatible?", in Ecumenical Study Commission, 1-6.

³⁵Ibid., 3.

³⁶Ibid., 5.

³⁷Ibid., 6.

³⁸Ibid., 4.

³⁹Jack G. Priestly, "Religion, Education, and Secularization", in Ecumenical Study Commission, 17.

between religious education and values education was ambivalent.⁴⁰

The Ecumenical Study Commission believed that the study of religion had worth in its own right. It was valuable as a basis for moral judgment, but it was much more than that.

Tom Malcolm and Harry Fernhout⁴¹ of the Curriculum Development Centre critiqued the attempt of the Mackay Report to separate religion from morality in education. They mirrored the comments of the Ecumenical Study Commission that "moral education is a religious issue in spite of current attempts to separate the two".⁴² The Ecumenical Study Commission, according to Malcolm, saw religion as an "integral part of all teaching which interprets the meaning of life or its depth values".⁴³ Therefore, religion was not separate from moral values education. Malcolm's own conviction was that every educational issue was a religious issue.

Harry Fernhout,⁴⁴ in his article "Education versus Indoctrination: Religious Education in Ontario's Public

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Tom Malcolm and Harry Fernhout, Education and Public Purpose: Moral and Religious Education in Ontario (Toronto, Curriculum Development Centre, 1979).

⁴²Ibid., 36.

⁴³The Ecumenical Study Commission, Religion in Our Schools: An Ecumenical Reaction to the Keiller Mackay Report (Toronto: n.d.), 12.

⁴⁴Harry Fernhout, "Education versus Indoctrination: Religious Education in Ontario's Schools", T. Malcolm and H. Fernhout, Education and the Public Purpose: Moral and Religious Education in Ontario (Toronto: Currim Development Centre, 1979).

Schools", stated that religion and morals had become separated in the increasingly secular society in Ontario:

In previous times it would have been impossible to consider moral education apart from religion: religion was understood as providing the context for a code of moral conduct. In Ontario's secularizing society, however, a separate consideration of religion and morals became not only possible, but necessary.⁴⁵

Malcolm and Fernhout advocated Christian schools, which would retain Christian teachings as an alternative to the bifurcation of Christian beliefs and moral values, within the public school system. They believed that the moral values approach was unfair to religion and favoured secularism.

James M. Houston, Chancellor of Regent College, a conservative theological institution, was highly critical of the values education movement. He claimed that moral values education was

a deliberate attempt to build up the character of 'Joe Citizen' with a morality that is without religion. Behind it lies the brave effort, unique perhaps in human history, to build a whole civilization on secularism, without any religious foundation, whether pagan or Christian, Jewish or Moslem, Buddhist or Hindu.⁴⁶

Huston stated that the basic assumption of moral values education, that morality can be taught and practiced without any need for a religious basis, was precisely the reason why values education was unacceptable to conservative Christians.⁴⁷ He credited "the lack of religious cooperation and the suspicions between the major denominations", "the

⁴⁵Ibid., 24-25.

⁴⁶James M. Huston, "Moral Values Education", Crux 18, no. 2 (January, 1982), 6.

⁴⁷Ibid.

general secularization process in the modern world that sees confessional religion as having no place in the public life of society and of its education", and "the increasing awareness of society as being pluralistic and having multi-belief systems and pressure groups" for hastening the secularization of school boards.⁴⁸

Huston stated that the intellectual framework for Kohlberg's moral values education was based on the psychology of Piaget⁴⁹ and the moral philosophy of Hare.⁵⁰ Moral values education had been popularized in Ontario by Clive Beck. It had become the basis of major recommendations by the Mackay Committee. Out of the Mackay Report of 1969 came "a whole re-orientation of public school religious instruction, away from a nurturing, towards a more critical use of moral values education".⁵¹

Although there was no unified reaction to the implementation of moral values education in the schools, Huston noted several areas of objection by Christians. By ignoring religion altogether, religious history and development became obscure, if not absent. The use of reason alone in determining values was reductionist. Moral values education was not "objective" but presupposed secularism.

⁴⁸Ibid., 6-7.

⁴⁹ See Jean Piaget, Moral Judgment of the Child (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932).

⁵⁰ See R. N. Hare, The Language of Morals (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952).

⁵¹Huston, 7.

Its underlying core was utilitarianism, which is but one philosophical perspective.⁵²

Brian Crittenden, a philosopher upon whom Huston leaned heavily in his critique of moral education, thought that "if the notion of religion is interpreted rather loosely (e.g. as a sense of the mystery of the universe, or what Tillich calls ultimate concern) it seems to me likely that religious attitudes form an integral, and perhaps necessary, part of any moral system".⁵³ The Mackay Report, however, "seems to assume that morality is necessarily a secular (or only vaguely religious) matter".⁵⁴

For many Christians, the seemingly arbitrary and artificial separation of religion from moral education was disturbing. They were unsure about their children receiving moral education from which Christian beliefs would be absent, and perhaps, unwelcome.

3. The Abandonment of Christian Religious Education

Although the provincial government had not acted to discontinue the Christian religious education program in the

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Brian Crittenden, Form and Content in Moral Education: An Essay on Aspects of the Mackay Report (Toronto, Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1972), 94, n.2.

⁵⁴Ibid.

public schools, the program had been abandoned in over ninety-five percent of school systems by the 1980s.⁵⁵

The Ottawa Public School Board had met several times to discuss the matter of religious education in the schools prior to preparing its submission to the Committee on Religious Education in the Schools in November 1966. In its Brief, the differing concerns of the nine trustees were expressed, but no consensus on a course of action was evident.⁵⁶ Only one trustee supported the program as it was. Three trustees, including the former, favoured Christian teaching. Three favoured teaching about all religions. Two opposed any form of religious instruction. One trustee, while favouring some form of religious instruction, could not be specific.⁵⁷ However, a perusal of the Minutes of the Ottawa Public School Board from 1965 to 1973 revealed little mention of religious education. In 1965, reference was made to the Mackay Committee, indicating that the Board would make a submission.⁵⁸ In 1968, records indicated that no clergy visited the Ottawa Public Schools.⁵⁹ There is no evidence of a discussion of exemption from religious education, yet it is clear that the program was dropped. There is no record of its continuance after 1968, and, in the recollection of

⁵⁵John R. Meyer, "Shaking the Foundations - Religion and Schooling in Ontario", Religion and Public Education, 16, 1, 1989, 66.

⁵⁶City of Ottawa Public School Board, Submission to the Ontario Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools (November 18, 1966). [Archives of Ontario].

⁵⁷Ibid., 2.

⁵⁸Minutes of the Ottawa Public School Board for 1965, 335.

⁵⁹Minutes of the Ottawa Public School Board for 1968.

former administrators, it was quietly discontinued.

According to Meyer, "As jurisdictions became more pluralistic and less rooted in Western Christian traditions, religious education in schools became less implemented as instruction."⁶⁰ This statement is borne out by data collected in the 1980s. A Ministry of Education survey of 117 elementary schools and 98 secondary schools showed that only 4% of elementary schools had regular religious education classes and 71% of elementary schools had no formal religious education program. However, 95% of elementary schools reported having integrated moral and values education into the curriculum. The reason most often stated reason for neglecting religious education was the lack of ministry guidelines.⁶¹ Inadequate teacher training in the subject area was another reason cited.⁶² It is likely that the boards of education which attempted to follow the regulations regarding religious education (see Appendix I) either relied on visiting clergy or used locally-produced curricula.

By 1985, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association had identified a number of jurisdictions where an exclusively Christian program of religious education continued to be provided. In a letter to the Minister of Education, it objected not only to these boards of education favouring one

⁶⁰J. R. Meyer, "Shaking the Foundations: Religion and Schooling in Ontario", Religion and Public Education 16 (Winter, 1989): 64.

⁶¹Glenn A. Watson, Chair, The Report of the Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario Public Schools (Toronto: Government of Ontario, 1990), 13-14.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 14.

religion, but to the regulations which allowed such partiality. The Civil Liberties Association was hopeful that the regulations would be rescinded.

In the Elgin County Board of Education, the curriculum contained the doctrine that "only through the blood of Jesus can . . . sin be taken away".⁶³ Moreover, in the Elgin County program, students were encouraged to indoctrinate others.⁶⁴ Similarly, in the Norfolk Board of Education program, students were encouraged "to share with others the fact that Jesus died, arose, ascended into heaven and will return".⁶⁵ The Civil Liberties Association claimed that indoctrination was being conducted in the schools of Frontenac County. It based this claim on the statement by Ron Axford, President of the Kingston and District Bible Club Movement, that its representatives were going into the schools "to offer pupils an opportunity to . . . learn about what God says to them through the Bible about Himself and about Jesus Christ".⁶⁶ The Northumberland and Newcastle Board of Education had rejected the possibility of teaching comparative religion instead of the religious education program. The Association suspected that the negative stance of the Christian Port Hope Ministerial Association toward the introduction of comparative religion had affected the decision.⁶⁷

⁶³Quoted in Canadian Civil Liberties Association to The Honourable Keith C. Norton, Minister of Education (March 14, 1985), 2.

⁶⁴Ibid., 3.

⁶⁵Quoted in *ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., 4.

The teaching of Christianity as an exclusive truth in religious matters seemed "to violate the equality rights guaranteed in Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms--the right to the equal...benefit of the law without discrimination ... based on religion'",⁶⁸ because minority rights were clearly infringed. The Minister did not act to discontinue the program. However, concerns such as those expressed by the Association eventually led to a ministerial inquiry.

The lack of religious education in the schools had been addressed by the Ecumenical Study Commission, yet throughout the 1970s and 1980s no new program had been developed for the province. Lack of up-to-date ministry guidelines was one reason that Boards of Education did not follow the regulations, but the other reasons for not teaching the program were not clear. The Ecumenical Study Commission commented that the inactivity of the government during the 1970s and 1980s was another contributing factor:

... it created a larger vacuum with regard to religious education in the schools in recent years. In some places the vacuum has been filled by religious groups who have been allowed access to the schools or by programs, official or unofficial, which have sometimes been the subject of controversy or even court challenge.⁶⁹

The Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario Public Elementary Schools was conducted by Dr. Glenn

⁶⁸Quoted in *ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁹The Ecumenical Study Commission on Public Education to the Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario Public Elementary Schools (May 15, 1989).

A. Watson in 1989 and 1990. The mandate given by the Minister of Education, The Honourable Chris Ward, was the following:

To:

- * review the existing policy with respect to religious education;
- * identify curriculum options for an appropriate religious education policy for the public elementary schools which responds to the multicultural and multifaith nature of the population of the province;
- * identify appropriate teacher preparation strategies to support the proposed curriculum options;
- * examine religious education policies of other Canadian provinces;
- * examine the 1969 Report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario and reports of other similarly-mandated inquiries from other Canadian provinces;
- * conduct extensive consultation with interested parties;
- * make recommendations to the Minister of Education with regard to the adoption of a religious education program policy.⁷⁰

Public boards of education were surveyed "to obtain information on the status of religious education in elementary schools".⁷¹ Sixty-one of seventy-eight boards replied. Of these boards, eighteen had received exemption from teaching religious education. The reasons for so doing were summarized as follows:

- the multicultural, multifaith nature of the community;
- the lack of ministry guidelines;
- the shortage of time in the school day;

⁷⁰ Government of Ontario, Order in Council 427/89 in *ibid.*, 122.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 28

- the lack of resource materials;
- the absence of appropriate teacher preparation, and
- the existence of moral and values education as an alternative program.⁷²

Twelve boards did not offer a religious education program even though they had not applied for exemption. Twenty-two boards reported that they offered some religious education, ranging from some classroom instruction to special Christmas and Easter activities. Only nine of the sixty-one boards which replied to the survey were offering a full religious education program according to the regulations.⁷³

Based on student enrollments, only four percent of elementary students appeared to be receiving religious education in class time.⁷⁴ This approximated the level, relative to student population, of religious instruction in the schools in the 1920s and prior to a concerted effort by the Churches to obtain Bible teaching throughout the Ontario educational system.

Theoretically, the 1944 program, as revised, was still mandatory. However, after the Mackay Report, it seemed unlikely that anyone would demand that the program be taught. The materials were dated and out-of-step with theological and pedagogical developments and impossibly christocentric and ethnocentric for the times. Nevertheless, the government did not move to produce new materials or curricula. Local preferences more-or-less obtained.

⁷²Ibid., 28.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., 28-29.

When boards of education were asked to give suggestions about religious education, the following "received an equal amount of support":⁷⁵

- provide ministry guidelines for a multifaith program;
- integrate religious education into current programs;
- permit boards to develop their own religious education programs;
- provide ministry guidelines but allow board exemptions;
- provide ministry guidelines for a mainly Christian program, and
- have no religious education in the schools.⁷⁶

There was also limited support for the enhancement of the moral values education program as an alternative to religious education.⁷⁷ Support for the continuation of a mainly Christian program of religious education stood at about sixteen percent. It was clear that curriculum options appropriate to the multifaith nature of the population of Ontario would go beyond the Christian religious education program as it existed.

While letters from individuals to the Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education generally favoured "the continuation of a Judeo-Christian emphasis in religious education . . . the majority of briefs supported a program that would be a multifaith or multireligious approach, to include information about other religions as well as Christianity".⁷⁸

⁷⁵Ibid., 29

⁷⁶Ibid., 29-30.

⁷⁷Ibid., 29.

⁷⁸Ibid., 30.

The Protestant, Bible-based program dating from 1944 was found to be unsuitable. The new program of "Religion Studies" which the Ministerial Inquiry recommended was to be a compulsory multifaith, non-indoctrinational and non-sectarian program for all public elementary schools. The focus would be on major world religions.⁷⁹ Before the government could act further, however, a development which had great repercussions on Christian religious education in the schools emerged from another quarter--the Courts.

On January 30, 1990, the Ontario Court of Appeal struck down the provincial regulation on religious education in the public schools.⁸⁰ A group of parents from Elgin County had sought to remove religious education completely from their public schools. Their claim was that subsection 28(4) of Regulation 262, which required two half-hour periods per week of religious education, violated section 2(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in that it infringed the rights of minority children by requiring their participation in classes intended for majority [Christian] children. The school board argued that its classes in religion were not exclusively concerned with Christian beliefs and that the purpose for teaching religious education, in any case, was primarily to teach morality. The court, however, found that subsection 28(4) constituted indoctrination and violated the

⁷⁹Watson Report, 2.

⁸⁰Canadian Civil Liberties Association vs, Ontario [Minister of Education] (1990), 71 O.R. (2d) 341 (C.A.)

Charter and, therefore, ordered the Elgin County Board to drop its religious education curriculum.⁸¹

On December 6, 1990, the Ministry of Education ordered all public schools to end any indoctrination in a particular religious faith in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 112. (See Appendix J). Regulation 262 was amended to reflect the court decision. Under the title Religion in Schools, the Regulation, now numbered 298, subsections 27, 28 and 29 reads as follows:

27. Sections 28 and 29 do not apply to a separate school board or to the Roman Catholic sector of The Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board.

28. (1) A board may provide in grades one to eight and in its secondary schools an optional program of education about religion.

(2) A program of education about religion shall,

(a) promote respect for the freedom of conscience and religion guaranteed by the *Charter of Canadian Rights and Freedoms*; and

(b) provide for the study of different religions and religious beliefs in Canada and the world, without giving primacy to, and without indoctrination in, any particular religion or religious belief.

(3) A program of education about religion shall not exceed sixty minutes of instruction per week in an elementary school.

29. (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a board shall not permit any person to conduct religious exercises or to provide instruction that includes indoctrination in a particular religion or religious belief in a school.

(2) A board may enter into an agreement with a separate school board or the Roman Catholic sector of

⁸¹G. M. Dickinson and W. R. Dolmage, "Education, Religion and the Courts", Canadian Journal of Education 21 (4, 1996), 366-370.

The Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board that permits the separate school board or the Roman Catholic sector to use space and facilities to conduct religious exercises or provide religious instruction for the purposes of the separate school board or the Roman Catholic sector.

- (3) A board may permit a person to conduct religious exercises or to provide instruction that includes indoctrination in a particular religion or religious belief in a school if,
 - (a) the exercises are not conducted or the instruction is not provided by or under the auspices of the board;
 - (b) the exercises are conducted or the instruction is provided on a school day at a time that is before or after the school's instructional program, or on a day that is not a school day;
 - (c) no person is required by the board to attend the exercises or instruction; and
 - (d) the board provides space for the exercises or instruction on the same basis as it provides space for other community activities.
- (4) A board that permits religious education or instruction under subsection (3) shall consider on an equitable basis all requests to conduct religious exercises or to provide instruction under subsection (3).⁸²

The most significant fact about the new regulations on religion in the schools was that a program about religion was entirely optional. This corresponded to the actual situation in the schools. Few boards had been offering a program in religion. Most had switched to some form of secular moral values education. The second significant fact is that even if a program of religion were offered, it could not be exclusively Christian, even if a local school board area contained a Christian population which supported such a program. Thirdly, even though the program about religion was

⁸²Chico Korbee, ed., Consolidated Ontario Statutes and Regulations, 1993 (Scarborough, Ontario: Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing, 1992), S29-S30.

an option, there was no Ministry of Education curriculum guide (until 1994) and no plan for teacher preparation. These facts discouraged boards from enthusiastically adopting a program, although in some locations experimentation did ensue.

4. Summary

Of major significance for the present inquiry is that the Christian-based religious education program, in whatever form, had become a relic. The atmosphere of the public schools, moreover, was no longer to be pervaded with the principles of Christianity nor with its doctrines and customs. In spite of the protests of the mainline and conservative Protestant groups, the era of Protestant pre-eminence in the religious instruction of Ontario schools had come to a close. The primacy of Christianity, or any religious faith, could not obtain legally in a public school in Ontario. According to the new regulations, neither religious exercises nor religious instruction favouring a particular religion were valid in the public schools. Therefore, after forty-six years of prescribed Christian religious education in Ontario, the schools had become secular.

Whether the public education system can maintain its present neutrality is another question. The desire of parents from different faiths to have their children

instructed in their faith could challenge the integrity of the public education system. At present, as in the nineteenth century, some religious groups are hopeful of public funding for their schools. But, the 'non-sectarian, yet Christian' and Protestant formula can no longer be applied, and it is unlikely that opening up further funding for religious schools would be a peaceful venture.

CONCLUSION

At the founding of Upper Canada in 1791, the British governing class intended that, as in England, the Church of England would prevail. But the Church of England was never really established, and the settlers belonged to different denominations which competed for members. The early schools were not necessarily religious by law and religious observances or instruction were haphazard and perfunctory. Trustees determined the manner of religious instruction according to local conditions. These provisions suited the pluralistic religious situation, but resulted in irregular instruction in religion, even though the Bible was used as a reader.

The Reverend John Strachan, an Anglican priest and educator, pressed his view that the schools should be administered by an established Church -- the Church of England -- in order to ensure religious orthodoxy and loyalty to British institutions. The Reverend Egerton Ryerson, a Methodist minister and later Superintendent of Education, promoted a non-sectarian common school system, which became the public school system. In Ryerson's common schools religion was recommended but not required. Ryerson aimed to avoid controversy by stressing a "common Christianity", which was primarily moral. The doctrinal controversies of the time were to be avoided in the classroom. In the Education Act of

1850, religious instruction was entirely voluntary, according to local initiative. There is evidence that Ryerson's attempts to deal with pluralism, while building a common school system, did not result in effective or widespread instruction in religion. Pluralism was a contributing factor in inhibiting common religious instruction in the nineteenth century, and was to be again in the twentieth century.

Religious divisions imported from Europe were exacerbated by political tensions over questions such as the Clergy Reserves and popular government. Among Protestants rivalries ran deep. Roman Catholics were beyond the pale. Denominational conflict precluded any cooperation in a religious education program in the nineteenth century because Christians held to their distinctive tenets with unyielding loyalty. The price paid for the establishment of efficiency and economy in the common school system was a non-controversial but weak program of religion in the public schools.

Yet most parents desired their children to be religiously educated in spite of the diversity of religious opinion. Ryerson was unable, in spite of his attempt in First Lessons in Christial Morals, to define a theological content for moral instruction which would please all. There was some supplemental instruction in religion permitted in the early common schools. Where parents did not object, such instruction became rote learning based on catechisms or other manuals. Catechisms emphasized conformity, subservience to

authority, and loyalty to British institutions. Beliefs peculiar to the denominations were emphasized, for example predestination to salvation or reprobation for Presbyterians, while the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed were frequently stressed. This was allowed according to local conditions. During catechesis by a minister or a teacher, children were to be passive and obedient. The catechism was drilled into them, and although they may have memorized the content, it was not certain that real learning had occurred. Such Christian formation may have been a pious hope.

During the fifty years from 1875 to 1925, the major non-Roman denominations found that they had more in common. Although divided by polity and doctrine, they could agree that the Bible should be prominent in the schools. Due to cooperation in social crusades, such as temperance, they found that more could be achieved in Christianizing the expanding nation by joining forces for a common mission than by their individual efforts. After gaining government accession to a program of Bible reading in the schools in 1884, the major Protestant bodies began to consider a full program of Protestant religious education in the schools.

By the twentieth century, the major denominations had become organized into national churches. This was due in part to the influence of Confederation and the imperative of Christianizing the West. In order to achieve efficiency and economy, churches could set aside their doctrinal differences

and cooperate, if not unite, in a common mission. Out of this impulse emerged the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Methodist Church, Canada, the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada and several Baptist unions. There was a dream of a united Protestant Church, which was only partly realized in The United Church of Canada in 1925. The aim of expanding Protestant influence in the country encouraged inter-church cooperation in the area of religious education in the schools.

The Anglicans initiated a call for combined efforts for religion in the schools in 1913. The Baptists refused at this time due to qualms about separation of church and state. But after World War I work was continued towards a syllabus of Bible readings for schools which would be acceptable to the major denominations. The purported benefits to society of mandatory Bible reading in the schools were an uplifting of morals and good citizenship. A graded series of Bible readings was published in 1930. Shortly after this accomplishment, efforts to obtain religious instruction increased.

Protestant bodies began to cite reasons for the necessity of religious education in the schools in the 1930s. They pointed to the threats to democracy of non-Christian ideologies such as fascism and communism. Their assumption, sometimes explicit, was that democracy was based on Christianity. The Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education was reformed on such a basis in 1936. As

well, the churches noted with dismay a general decline in Sunday School attendance with a supposedly consequent drop in morals and increased juvenile delinquency. The government became increasingly sympathetic to the concerns of the Inter-Church Committee, especially since it spoke for churches which represented the majority of Ontario citizens.

The threat of foreign ideologies in Ontario was more imagined than real. However, the prospect of reaching unchurched children in the schools enticed the churches. The Baptists began to cooperate, as well, by the late 1930s. But while there was Protestant consensus, Jews and sectarian minorities objected.

By 1939, the proponents of religious education in the schools were organized under the Inter-Church Committee to cooperate with the provincial government. The aim was to build up the citizenry on a Christian moral basis. The "forces of evil" to be combatted were not only the Axis powers but secularism and materialism. Protestant opinion was favourable to Christian religious education in the schools. The rights and wishes of Jews and the other minorities were not considered. When a Conservative minority government sympathetic to the churches was elected in 1943, and religious education was made mandatory in 1944, the issue was controverted--especially by minorities. However, the government was returned with an overwhelming majority in 1945 and the program was continued for some time. The fact that religious education had been introduced into the English

school system had influenced the Anglophile premier, George Drew. He also placed the cadet movement under the Department of Education. In wartime, children must be trained in a creed and be prepared for military service. The urgency of winning the war demanded it. However, the rights of minorities, unheeded in 1944, were to be revisited by future governments, and ultimately to be the basis for legal challenges to the program of religious education.

The change from an optional program to a government-directed mandatory program ceded control over major issues, such as curricula and staffing, to politicians and civil servants. In the short run while the churches were powerful, they gained influence. As society became secular, they lost it. Although the Christian religion and education had a long and intimate connection in Ontario's history, this began to unravel as society became increasingly secular and plural.

The theological base of the program of 1944 was never specified. The Teachers' Guides were based on British manuals which claimed to be rooted in what all Christians held in common and summarized by the Apostles' Creed. The regulations in Ontario specified that controversial doctrines were to be avoided. Most of the Guides contained moral teachings based on Bible verses. The virtues championed by the Guides, such as kindness and honesty, were commonplace. In fact, the Scriptures were seen through a cultural lens -- that of polite Protestant society. Critics questioned the considerable amount of fictional material, especially

concerning Jesus. The Jewish community protested examples of anti-Semitism.

The program was defended by the Inter-Church Committee and the churches as being consistent with Egerton Ryerson's policies and the extant program of studies. It was defended also on the basis of "majority rights". The belief that public morality was based on the Christian religion and the identification of Christianity with democracy made Christian religious education in the schools essential in the opinion of the churches. Protestants saw church, home and school as partners in this good work. Opponents of the program were characterized as sinister and, in some instances, non-Christian groups were viewed as un-Canadian in their resistance to the majority culture.

The Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Division, objected to the program of religious education from the outset on the basis of minority rights. It also pointed out that such a program was an anomaly in North America. Yet the program continued without serious challenges until the 1960s.

As the question of religious education in the schools was debated in the 1960s, school boards asked the government for a study of the matter. In areas of significant minority populations, there had been unrest. Avowed secularists had organized to oppose the program. In 1966 the government referred the matter to an arm's-length committee which recommended that the program be dropped on the grounds of indoctrination. The government did not want programs which

incited divisiveness or seemed to infringe minority rights, yet it did not act to change the regulations. The tone of the Ministry of Education pronouncements from 1970 onward was not enthusiastic about religious education and warmed instead to a non-religious values education program. Most Boards of Education dropped the Christian education program, either formally or informally, and adopted some kind of values education program. In some boards the program continued, but often with conservative Christian teachers and materials. This occasioned objections by parents and civil libertarians. Conservative Christian churches wanted either a return to a Bible-based program or public funding of Christian schools.

During the 1970s, governments recognized the multicultural nature of Canadian society. The notion of the country as a Christian society was abandoned. Therefore Christian-only teaching in the schools of Ontario, although at a low ebb, was an anachronism. Since the society had changed, assumptions about the primacy of Christianity in institutions changed also. The major Christian denominations would accept the teaching of the world religions in the schools as long as the importance of Christianity to Canadian history and development was included. How to construct an appropriate curriculum became a problem since materials and expertise were not general within the public system. In most cases, little was accomplished. Even the Senior Division option in World Religions dwindled in strength during the 1980s.

As measured by meaningful association, religion became less important to Ontarians from the 1960s. Attendance declined for the major churches. Their voice in society weakened. That voice became critical of society rather than supportive of the status quo. The Ecumenical Study Commission made representations to the Ministry of Education for inclusion of a study of religion as well as moral values in the curriculum. Such study was deemed essential to general education and to children personally. The Ministry preferred to avoid controversies about religion in the schools. The government was anxious to promote the ideal of multi-cultural harmony.

Although a purportedly non-sectarian program of Protestant religious education in the schools could obtain when Ontario society was almost uniformly Christian, the program could not be maintained as that society became religiously and culturally diverse. The churches could assume for many years that religious education was the basis for the moral training of the young. This argument lost ground after the Mackay Report of 1969 emphasized moral values education apart from religion. Any public school program of religion thereafter which was in any way indoctrinational, or exclusive to one faith, was suspect. The 1944 program, which the Mackay Report recommended be abandoned, was not elastic enough to accommodate religions other than Christianity theologically, yet the government did not move to change the regulations or to introduce a new

curriculum. The situation was ambiguous. Religious education was still allowed, but the form and content of it had not been adapted officially to a new age. In practice many jurisdictions abandoned the program and others continued to offer a modified Christian program or some variation between these alternatives. The major churches, having abandoned the 1944 program, wanted a new program of world religions with major emphasis on Christianity. The failure of the Ministry of Education to provide a curriculum guideline for teaching religion in the schools was a major reason why boards of education did not follow the regulations and a discouragement to proponents of religion in the schools.

The major Protestant denominations hoped for some treatment of religion as a regular subject, albeit on a multi-faith basis. Their often-cited reason was that education without religion was incomplete. Secularization was admitted as a fact. The possibility of teaching morals without any religious reference was not. Religion should be taught and the greater stress in a Christian society should be on Christianity. Protestant officials seemed out of touch with the new secular society, using arguments for their position which only obtained under the conditions of the 1930s and 1940s.

The churches represented by the Ecumenical Study Commission on Public Education were the major Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church. The Commission never wavered in its insistence that religion should be

taught. It was unconvinced that morals could be taught apart from religion. It insisted that religion was integral to Canadian society and history and that morality was rooted in religion. If religion were not part of the curriculum, secular humanism would take its place.

Support of the churches, as measured by meaningful connections such as attendance, began to wane during the 1960s. This weakened the tutelage of the churches in society. In addition, the government policy of multiculturalism and the guarantee of equal rights and freedom of religion in law undercut the claims of the churches in the field of public school religious education.

The provincial legislation on religious education in the schools was struck down in 1990 by a court decision which declared that it infringed minority rights. The Ontario Court of Appeal ruled, however, that education about religion could be allowed under specified conditions which precluded indoctrination into any particular faith. Any confessional teaching of Christianity was now unlawful in the public schools.

Religion had been the foundation of any education system for Strachan and Ryerson; it was now a carefully hedged-in object of study on a purely optional basis. The liberal denominations could hope for a curriculum on this basis; the conservatives began to press for publicly-funded Christian schools. Secular humanism, which seemed to them to

characterize the public school system, was unacceptable. The schools no longer had a vestigial Christian basis.

The secularization of the public education system ended the historic and intimate connection between Protestantism and education in Ontario public schools. This development could not be overturned by the churches who were now powerless to influence either the government or the courts. Society had changed since the 1960s. Assumptions about the primacy of Protestant Christianity in the culture of Ontario had changed also. Ontario was no longer a Christian society in any legal or cultural sense.

The moral crusades of the Protestant churches had achieved some political successes in Ontario. The Lord's Day Act of 1906 had enforced Sabbath observance. The temperance movement had been able to introduce prohibition in some jurisdictions. Bible instruction in public schools had obtained for a time. Public morality in general was a concern for the Protestant churches. Yet the measures which they had secured did not endure. Prohibition proved unenforcable and was withdrawn. The Lord's Day Act was repealed, after being often flouted, in 1985. And compulsory Christian religious education in Ontario public schools was struck down by the courts in 1990. Victorian Protestant morality had lost its power. Vestigial remnants of Protestant domination in institutions had been, and continue to be, challenged in the courts.

The secularization of the public school system is an indicator of the larger process of secularization within Canadian society and its institutions. The Christian religion is no longer the foundation of society's moral convictions, but an optional allegiance for a declining number of active worshippers in an open market.

The problem which has been delineated in this dissertation is that of church involvement in public school religious education. Churches changed their policies and acted in ways meant to further their own interests. When they hoped for denominational public schools, their outlook was parochial. They were not united on the issue until after the First World War. Prior to this time, the foundation for cooperation had been a common interest in Bible reading, which prepared the way for a more unified stance on religious education before and after the Second World War. The cultural and historical context of the late 1930s helped accelerate the Protestant strategy. A return to traditionalism and imperialism, combined with the religious conservatism of the Churches, favoured the introduction of the 1944 program of religious education.

Doctrinal and political differences among the Churches, which had seemed formidable in the nineteenth century, were set aside for the perceived common good of religious instruction in the public schools. The 1960s brought increased ecumenism. However, the 1960s was an era of radical critique of religion and of greater religious and

ethnic diversity in Ontario. Anglo-Protestant Ontario could not accommodate sufficiently to these trends. Of greater importance, the Government did not act with sufficient vigour to introduce acceptable programs of religion in the public schools in the new multifaith, multicultural environment.

When the mandatory 1944 program had appeared, Rabbi Abraham Feinberg noted that the Jewish people had not opposed the previous regulations which allowed optional instruction in religion in the public schools to be extended.¹ Had this method continued, the program might have gained ground without the opposition--and even rancour-- which it attracted. The Churches were not overjoyed at the prospect of government control. The program became a political football. By the end of the 1960s, the 1944 program no longer suited the new Ontario society of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity which had emerged. Perhaps the 1944 religious education program continued as long as it did because of the reluctance of successive Conservative governments to alienate Anglo-Protestant Ontario.

The problem of historical change in relation to religious traditions has been examined in this study. The specific focus has been the question of Protestant Church involvement with the public school religious education program in Ontario. During this investigation, the

¹Rabbi Abraham Feinberg, "Religious Instruction in the Public Schools", Canadian Schools Journal (June, 1945). [Ontario Jewish Archives, File 32, Reel #1].

conclusion has been drawn that most Churches retained their corporate identities while they forged alliances to further their institutional goals. The United Church was able to state a moderate doctrine and polity sufficient to create a new denomination. The Protestant Churches were conscious, through their spokesmen, of representing their traditions in relation to social and political questions. Through church assemblies, official policies were formulated and promulgated with regard to the issue of public school religion. In the main, the faithful supported these policies. Doctrine continued to be important in expressing denominational identity. However, even where there was little doctrinal identity among the churches, there was cooperation because a viable Protestant culture had been formed.

The ethnic similarities which were shared by most Protestants and their kinship within British cultural tradition helped to strengthen common strategies surrounding social issues. In the case of public school religion, even doctrinal dissimilarities could be set aside. An example of this is the 'weak orthodoxy' of the 1944 religious education program.

This study has examined the question of how the churches initiated, implemented, and finally abandoned the 1944 program. It has revealed that, where Anglo-Protestants could band together with a common aim, their advances into the field of public education prospered. However, Protestant domination ended due to the impact of secularism,

multiculturalism, and religious diversity--all of which emerged in Ontario during the latter half of the twentieth century. Traditional Protestant churches no longer possess the influence in Ontario culture and society which they once had.

APPENDIX A

A Summary of the Table of Contents of the Guide Books for
Instructors in Public Schools

Appendix A

A SUMMARY OF THE TABLE OF CONTENTS OF THE GUIDE BOOKS FOR INSTRUCTORS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GUIDE BOOK I. THE FRIEND OF LITTLE CHILDREN. (6 yr. olds)

1. Harvest Stories	3 lessons
2. Home and Helpfulness	6 lessons
a. The Gospels	3 lessons
b. Modern Illustrations	3 lessons
3. The Coming of Jesus	5 lessons
4. The Child Jesus	6 lessons
a. The Gospels	5 lessons
b. Modern Illustrative story.	1 lesson
5. Jesus the Kind Healer	5 lessons
6. Springtime Stories	5 lessons
all 5 Illustrative stories	
7. Little Sita of India	<u>3 lessons</u>
	<u>33 lessons</u>

GUIDE BOOK II. STORIES OF GOD AND JESUS. (7 yr. olds)

1. God's Wonderful World	5 lessons
Lessons to awaken wonder and reverence.	
One of them a modern illustrative story.	
2. Jesus, the Friend of the Children	4 lessons
a. The Gospels	2 lessons
b. Modern illustrative stories.	2 lessons
3. Stories of the Baby Jesus	4 lessons
a. The Gospels	3 lessons
b. Modern illustrative stories.	1 lesson
4. The Boyhood of Jesus	5 lessons
a. The Gospels	4 lessons
b. Modern illustrative stories.	1 lesson
5. Stories Jesus Told	4 lessons
Friendly host, good shepherd, loving	
Father, Good Samaritan.	
6. Eastertime	2 lessons
7. Stories of God's Loving Care.	6 lessons
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, Elisha	
	<u>30 lessons</u>

Table of Contents - 2.

GUIDE BOOK III. JESUS AND HIS FRIENDS. (8 yr. olds)

1. Stories of Harvest	4 lessons
2. Stories of Worship and Service	4 lessons
Solomon's temple, built and repaired.	2 lessons
Brother Francis and building of St. Sophia	2 lessons
3. Friendliness to animals	3 lessons
Three medieval stories	
4. Birth and Infancy of Jesus	5 lessons
Birth and Infancy of Jesus	3 lessons
Modern Illustrative Stories	2 lessons
5. Old Testament Stories of Friendship	6 lessons
Abraham and Lot, Rebecca	2 lessons
Joseph	4 lessons
6. Friends of Jesus	8 lessons
Fishermen, Boys and Girls, Zacchaeus, Martha and Mary, Peter.	
7. More Stories of Friendship	5 lessons
Good Samaritan, Moses, Elijah, Syrian Maid	
	<u>35 lessons</u>

GUIDE BOOK IV. SERVANTS OF GOD. (9 yr. olds).

1. Jesus Mighty in Deed and Word	18 lessons
a. Life of Jesus, Call of Disciples to Resurrection, almost wholly from Mark (Guide Book VII)	16 lessons
b. China and India	2 lessons
2. Leaders of the early Church	6 lessons
Peter, Stephen, Phillip, Barnabas, John, Mark, Timothy	
3. Modern Servants of God	6 lessons
Dr. Barnado, Florence Nightingale.	2 lessons
Wilfrid Grenfell	4 lessons
	<u>30 lessons</u>

Table of Contents - 3

GUIDE BOOK V . LEADERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE. (10 yr. olds)

1. Pioneers of Jewish History Abraham, Jacob, Joseph	10 lessons
2. The Exodus Moses, Joshua, Gideon	9 lessons
3. Leaders of Jewish History Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon	12 lessons
	<u>31 lessons</u>

GUIDE BOOK VI. JESUS AND THE KINGDOM. (11 yr. olds)

1. A rapid survey of Jesus' life and Work From Nazareth to Emmaus	9 lessons
2. Service for the Kingdom Five from life of Jesus Wilberforce, Damien	7 lessons
3. Teaching about the Kingdom Parables Sermon on the Mount	7 lessons 5 lessons 2 lessons
4. Pioneers of the Kingdom The Acts David Livingstone	8 lessons 4 lessons 4 lessons
	<u>31 lessons</u>

GUIDE BOOK VII. THE STORY OF JESUS (12 yr. olds)

From the Gospel according to St. Mark. (the entire book)

GUIDE BOOK VIII. (13 YR. OLDS)

Tentative plan: The ethical Teachings of Jesus with relevant Old Testament passages and the beginning of the early Church.

NOTE: PARTS OF THE BIBLE ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE GUIDE BOOKS.

Historical portions after Solomon
Most of the poetry
The Wisdom Literature
The Prophets
The Story of Paul
The Epistles
The Revelation

APPENDIX B

A Chronology of Some Important Events in Ontario Public
School Religious Education

Appendix B

A CHRONOLOGY OF SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS IN ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 1843 The passage of the School Act of 1843. Exemption from religious instruction granted if parents or guardians objected.
- 1846 The School Act confirmed that religious education could be taught in the public schools, but it must be non-sectarian.
- 1850 The School Act granted discretionary power to local authorities concerning religious education.
- 1857 The School Act permitted clergy or their deputies to teach religion in the public schools.
- 1867 The British North America Act recognized Roman Catholic Separate Schools in Ontario and Protestant Separate Schools in Quebec.
- 1871-4 Christian Morals was a subject in the regular public school curriculum.
- 1876 The Ontario Ministry of Education was created. Dr. Ryerson retired.
- 1884 Bible reading was made mandatory as part of the religious exercises. The classroom teacher was allowed to discuss the Bible reading as long as controversial doctrines were avoided.
- 1897 The Jews objected to an Anglican plan to introduce Christianity into the regular curriculum in Toronto.
- 1914-18 During World War I, support for the teaching of religion in the schools increased.
- 1927 Ontario Religious Education Council (OREC) formed.
- 1930 A series of graded Bible Readings for elementary schools was published.
- 1936 Activation of the Inter-Church Committee on Week-day Religious Education.
- 1939-45 World War II rekindled concern for the necessity of teaching religion in the schools.

- 1944 A mandatory religious education program was
 instituted in the public schools.
- 1950 The Hope Commission approved the 1944 program of
 religious education in the public schools.
- 1969 The Mackay Report recommended that traditional
 religious education be abandoned in favour of
 "Religious Information and Moral Development".
- 1990 The Watson Report recommended multifaith,
 multicultural religious education to replace the
 old indoctrinational program
- The courts struck down the 1944 program of
 religious education

APPENDIX C

Report re Work of Ontario Inter-Church Committee

Appendix C

REPORT RE WORK OF ONTARIO INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE

1. Syllabus.

An examination of the Teachers' Guides, published by the Religious Education Press, and by the Sheldon Press, of England, in connection with the Agreed Syllabuses for use in the Council Schools, shows that there is a great deal of material which is common with the Syllabus recommended for use in the Ontario Schools.

While it was not considered advisable to take the necessary steps to revise our own Syllabus, until more of the volumes in the series were ready, the Inter-Church Committee decided to recommend the four volumes of the series, as already issued, for the use of those giving the instruction based on our syllabus.

The four volumes are:-

- i. The Friend of Little Children - 40 lessons, for those under 5 years of age.
- ii. Stories of God and Jesus - 50 lessons for those from 5 to 7 years.
- iii. Servants of God - 54 lessons for those from 7 to 11 years.
- iv. God and Myself - 63 lessons for those from 11 to 15 years.

2. Worship.

Forms of Service for use at various times during the year have been prepared. These make provision for such occasions as:-

- i. The Opening of Term.
- ii. Thanksgiving Day Week.
- iii Remembrance Day Week.
- iv. Last day of School before Christmas Holidays.
- v. The New Year.
- vi. Last day of School before Easter Holidays

vii. Empire Day Week

A List of Suggested Hymns has also been prepared. These will be submitted to the Department of Education.

3. Tests.

With a view to encourage the right use of tests and the use of the right kind of tests, a statement is being prepared which it is hoped will be issued by the Department of Education.

4. Publicity to School Boards.

A Statement setting forth what is being accomplished in some places in the Province of Ontario has been prepared for sending to Boards of Education in places where, as yet, nothing of this nature is being done. It is hoped that this will stimulate them to action.

APPENDIX D

Religious Education in the Public Schools

A Memorandum for the Department of Education of the Province
of Ontario from the Inter-Church Committee on Week Day
Religious Education, April 3, 1944

Appendix D

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Memorandum for the Department of Education of the
Province of Ontario

From the Inter-Church Committee on Week Day
Religious Education, April 3, 1944

The Inter-Church Committee on Week-day Religious Education has given careful consideration to the proposals of the Minister of Education on this subject. We understand these proposals to include the teaching of the Scriptures as a definite part of the regular school curriculum, the work to be done by the regular teaching staff.

The Committee fully appreciate the spirit and motive which have prompted the Minister to make the proposals and desires to place on record its gratification at this recognition of the importance of a knowledge of the Bible in general education and the need for giving a larger place to teaching it.

Analyzing these proposals the committee recognizes the following advantages. Practically 100% of the schools would be reached instead of the 20% (public elementary) as at present. Even a factual knowledge of the Scriptures would give the Church Schools a basis on which to build and thus enable them to do their own work more satisfactorily. The instruction would be given by teachers who are trained to teach. The instruction being given by the regular teacher and as part of the regular school day would be looked upon by the pupil as an essential part of education and not as something appended.

The Committee, however, sees also some difficulties.

1. To do this work properly it is essential that the teachers should have a preparation in Biblical knowledge more adequate than that afforded them at the present time in our Normal Schools and Training Colleges./
2. There are as yet no adequate curriculum and textbooks.
3. If such teaching is to have religious and not merely instructional value, it is essential that the teachers themselves should be persons of religious conviction.

4. We fear such a plan as the Minister of Education proposes if carried out at once would probably cause division and discord in some of our communities and even among Christian people themselves since it might raise the old question of the relation of Church and State in this field.

In reference to these difficulties it may well be that the Minister and his Department have thought through the problems raised and have already made provision for meeting them. If this be so, we would appreciate any information which the Minister may see his way clear to give.

A. General Recommendations

In the light of our present knowledge and the above analysis, we offer the following recommendations:

1. That it would be wise to proceed cautiously in the matter.

2. That the worthy traditions and helpful co-operation which now exist between the Church and the Public School should not only be preserved, but, if possible strengthened.

3. That the following fundamental principles already in substance in the memorandum of February 25th, 1944, should be noted.

(a) The purpose of all this work should be both instructional and religious. It should include not merely a knowledge of the Scriptures but the relation of those Scriptures to life and conduct.

(b) That in view of the responsibility which rests upon the Church for the teaching of religion, the Church must always have a voice in the choice of what is to be taught in this field, and who is to teach it, in elementary and secondary schools and in teacher training schools.

(c) Those who give religious teaching in the schools should be willing, competent, and should also be acceptable to the Church.

B. Specific Recommendations with the present Statutes

In harmony with the above we offer the following specific recommendations of ways in which we think this work could be strengthened within the provisions of the present statutes.

1. That the Department of Education should prepare and publish a statement setting forth its views as to the

purpose and function of education and the place of religion therein, along the lines embodied in the Introduction to the Programme of Studies, 1937.

2. That in view of the place already made for a worship period at the beginning of each school day, the Department of Education should provide further guidance and help for teachers in the performance of these duties by publishing and making available for use in the schools a Worship Book for Schools, such as has been prepared by the Interchurch Committee on Week-Day Religious Education.

3. That the Department of Education should extend and strengthen the training now given by the Church in Normal Schools in two ways:

(a) By providing more adequate instruction in courses on the Bible.

(b) By providing instruction and guidance in order that teachers would understand how to use their opportunities so that "the curriculumshould be pervaded by the spirit of religion" (Programme of Studies, 1937, Page 9).

4. That the Department of Education should make provision in the Ontario College of Education and in the Ontario Training College for Technical Teachers, for courses similar to those recommended for Normal Schools as set forth in Number 3 above.

5. To enable present teachers to equip themselves for better service in this respect, courses similar to those mentioned in No. 3 and No. 4 for Normal Schools and Training Colleges should be provided in Teachers' Summer Schools.

6. That persons chosen to give religious instruction in the elementary and secondary schools should have the following qualifications:

(a) A knowledge of the needs and interests of children of the various ages;

(b) A knowledge of the best methods of teaching various ages;

(c) Acquaintance with the present Public School curriculum for the different grades;

(d) A knowledge of Scriptures and Scripture truth and its adequacy for the needs of boys and girls in various stages of their development;

- (e) A living Christian experience;
- (f) A definite relationship with a Christian Church;
- (g) If neither a minister nor a regular school teacher, the teacher of religion should have academic standing equivalent to High School graduation and special training equivalent to that required by the Religious Education Council of Canada for the Standard Leadership Training diploma.

C. Suggestions Involving Changes in Statutes

If the Minister desires to go further than the present Education Act permits, we would offer the following suggestions as to ways in which the statutes themselves might be amended and still be in harmony with the fundamental principles under A.3 above.

1. That every School Board should make provision to have religious instruction given in every school by one of the following means:

- (a) By one or more clergymen;
- (b) By one or more lay persons authorized by such clergyman or clergymen, the school teacher being eligible to be chosen as such lay person.

2. That the Minister of Education shall have the authority to exempt any School Board from the operation of Section 1, above, provided that the Board shall ask by resolution to be exempted, and submits a statement of reasons for such request.

Note: Under the present Act and Regulations, religious instruction can be provided only before or after the regular school day and even that becomes effective only when the local School Board and clergymen of the district go to the trouble of having a special resolution passed and having that special resolution endorsed by the Minister of Education. The onus is upon those who want something done. The above suggested amendment puts the onus upon those who want nothing done.

D. Suggestions regarding Curriculum and Textbooks

1. A proper curriculum and set of Teachers' Guides or textbooks are needed. Eventually we should have work books for pupils of certain ages.

This is true whether the teaching is done by a clergyman, the school teacher, or other authorized representative.

2. Certain materials already are available. The Interchurch Committee of Ontario has prepared and published an outline under the title "Syllabus of Bible Study". This has been and still is widely used, but there are no Teachers' Guides or textbooks to accompany it. In England several syllabuses have been prepared, the best known of which is the Cambridgeshire. To give help on these syllabuses the Religious Education Press of England and the Sheldon Press of England have jointly prepared and published Teachers' Guides in several volumes. These have been widely used and highly approved in many parts of Canada. The International Council of Religious Education is preparing a number of courses some of which are definitely Bible-centred and some more experienced-centred. Eight textbooks on these courses are available now. Still other groups have been making a similar effort.

We are not completely satisfied with any of these but are willing to co-operate with the Department in working out a suitable curriculum. In any case we would ask for the privilege of being consulted about any curriculum proposed.

3. A Suggested Course of Action: It would seem that we might look forward to the publication of a Canadian Edition of the English texts, with such revisions as may be necessary or desirable to make them fit our Canadian constituency. With this there would be a revision of our Ontario Syllabus to make it suit the revised texts. When this is done, the Bible Readings now authorized by the Department and on which the present Ontario Syllabus is based, should be revised so as to fit the new Syllabus.

4. An Interim Policy: We would recommend to the Department as an immediate practical measure and as an interim policy that approval be given for use either of the Ontario Syllabus or the English texts as a basis for formal teaching.

We believe that both the Minister and ourselves are desirous of obtaining the same ultimate results and have largely the same goal in mind. It is for this reason we offer this memorandum and with it our readiness to co-operate. While both Church and State have their distinctive responsibilities in the field of education, we believe that by co-operative effort on the part of

both, those objectives of education which we have in common can be better achieved.

In the preparation of this memorandum as well as in the whole work of the committee we have had the valuable co-operation and assistance of representatives of a committee of the Ontario Educational Association. The Interchurch Committee, however, is solely responsible for the suggestions and statements contained in this document.

The Committee must call to the attention of the Department that there has been no opportunity to present this memorandum to the authoritative bodies of the various denominations but as their official representatives we offer these recommendations in good faith believing that they fairly represent the judgment of our respective units.

Signed on behalf of the Interchurch Committee

A. R. BEVERLEY Chairman

E. R. MCLEAN Secretary

¹"Religious Education in the Public Schools: A Memorandum for the Department of Education of the Province of Ontario From the Inter-Church Committee on Week Day Religious Education" (April 3, 1944). [Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada]. Also in McLean, Religion in Ontario Schools, 23-29.

APPENDIX E

Memorandum Regarding the Findings of an Informal Sub-Committee Reporting on Religious Education in Ontario to the Study Committee of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, on the Evening of Wednesday, April 19, 1944

Appendix E

MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE FINDINGS OF AN INFORMAL SUB-COMMITTEE reporting on Religious Education in Ontario to the Study Committee of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, on the evening of Wednesday, April 19, 1944.

On the above date, a group of fourteen men spent the evening in the Board Room of Trinity College, Toronto, discussing religious education in the province. Of the fourteen present, two were Principals of Toronto collegiates; five were Principals of Toronto elementary schools; two were educational authorities of two of our Protestant Communions; the other four were ministers representative of Protestant Churches. One of the members of the Parent Committee, Mr. J. M. Macdonnell, was able to be present for most of the evening.

The Chairman in the opening discussions suggested that we deal, first of all, with the present system now in use in twenty percent. of the elementary schools of the province, discuss its strength and weakness, together with its possibilities for the future. Thence we would pass on to the pronouncements on religious education recently made by the Provincial Minister of Education and by Dr. Althouse. Throughout these discussions we had before us the memorandum prepared for the Educational Authorities by the Inter-Church Committee for Week-Day Religious Education and dated April 3, 1944.

The Chairman of the meeting did not find it difficult at any time during the evening to keep the discussion on the go! Everyone present was intensely interested in the whole issue and, selected as they were because of their special knowledge and experience, almost everyone brought fresh angles to bear on each point of our discussion. After a couple of hours of steady work, we arrived at the point where certain resolutions were beginning to form themselves in our minds. These we tried to put on paper and, after being read and re-read, they were unanimously adopted as recommendations to be passed to our parent committee, with the request that they should consider them and, if they so desire, commend them to the Educational Authorities. The following are the resolutions, together with a few necessary comments and expansions.

1. Our representative group wanted to express their unqualified pleasure in learning of the Government's intention to establish religious education throughout both our elementary and our secondary schools of the province. Our interpretation of the official pronouncements is that in each room in the elementary and secondary schools of the province there will ultimately be two periods of Biblical instruction each week. Our anxiety is that this excellent

plan should be introduced into the schools under the most favourable conditions; that the syllabi and text books should be prepared carefully and co-operatively, and be available to the principals and teachers on a date that will give them ample time for the study and preparation for the courses which they are to teach. The unanimous opinion of the committee was that the project should be introduced gradually into our schools over the course of several years, beginning, perhaps, in this coming September with a course for Grade 9, provided the syllabus and text book for this course can be in the hands of the principals and teachers by June of this summer. It was also agreed that this beginning of the whole plan throughout Grade 9 of the elementary schools should be on an optional, rather than a compulsory, basis for this current year, i.e. where the school authorities are willing to introduce it this September, this should be done, emphasizing as much as possible the voluntary side of it for this coming fall and then later, probably the September following, commending the course to the schools as a necessary part of instruction.

2. Our committee recommends that the present system in use in twenty percent. of the public schools (over fifty percent. of the public schools in the city of Toronto) be continued and developed throughout the transitional period during which the Educational Authorities are preparing and establishing the more complete system which they have announced. The public school principals present had had experience in the operation of the system in Toronto and were unanimous that it had been beneficial, and that it was well worth continuing. They recorded no serious difficulty that the plan had presented to them, and they were agreeable that it should continue and develop, in so far as the ministers of the city are able to take up this work and carry it forward. The ministers present spoke with warm preference for the 9:00 a.m. half-hour which had been accorded to them in almost half of the Toronto schools now sharing in the plan. They find the children fresh and keen at that hour; also, it is a time when it is much easier for a minister to be regular in these teaching obligations. When the half-hour at the close of school in the afternoon is given to them, their other pastoral engagements, funerals, etc., are constantly interfering with the regularity of the course. The Rev. H. R. Hunt, who is the Secretary of the Inter-Church group in charge of this teaching programme in Toronto, commissioned both by the Churches and the Board of Education to give it supervision, said that in Toronto his committee hopes to expand their (sic) work, so that most, if not all, of the elementary schools will be enjoying these benefits before the end of next year. In most of these schools, Grades 7 and 8 are being reached by the ministers. The teaching has been of a very co-operative and non-controversial quality.

3. In the elementary schools, then, our recommendation is that the Authorities should let this present plan continue and develop throughout the transitional period during which the more complete plan of the Educational Authorities takes form and moves into operation. During this transitional period the courses in Normal School and College of Education should be adjusted, so that every new teacher graduated becomes competent to take a share in teaching the Bible. Summer courses in this instruction should also be provided. While there are some teachers who, at present, would not wish to teach this subject, the consensus of opinion among the principals present was that most of the men and women who would hesitate to accept such a task do so not because of opposition, but because of their lack of experience, training and instruction in teaching the Bible. But as our training schools turn out the two hundred new teachers each year, our schools will soon be provided with a good proportion of trained teachers capable of doing this work and enjoying the experience.

4. It was agreed by our committee that the syllabus and text books to be used in all the courses should be submitted as early as possible by the Governmental Authorities to the Provincial Inter-Church Committee for Week-Day Religious Education, to the Ontario Teachers' Federation and to the Ontario Educational Association for their consideration.

5. During the transitional period, it is recommended that experimentation be carried on in elementary and secondary schools in view to the formation of a suitable syllabus and text book for each grade, the whole to be effectively integrated that a sequence may be provided from the early grades to the senior ones. All present expressed their desire that the writing of the text book should not be a hurried job carried through at high pressure. For the fall of 1944, let us concentrate on preparing equipment for Grade 9. Although this preparatory work will of necessity be quite hurried, still it can be given necessary revision as the whole integrated plan begins to take shape and the sequence of instruction is matured through the revision that comes with experience and experimentation.

All of us realize, of course, that the Educational Authorities of the province have probably weighed the considerations which we have listed above and have already faced the obvious difficulties to which we have called attention. Yet it may be of some assistance to them to know that an independent group of experienced and interested people has spent an evening bringing their thoughts on this vital subject into some clarity and complete unity; and expressing them, as we now do, in the recommendations which are submitted above.

G. N. LUXTON, Chairman.

APPENDIX F

Letter to the Clergy of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto from
the Right Reverend F. H. Wilkinson

Appendix F

Letter to the Clergy of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto from
the Right Reverend F. H. Wilkinson

March 1961.

My dear Brethren:

The subject of religious education in the tax-supported schools of the Province of Ontario is becoming increasingly a matter of vigorous public debate. In 1944 the Public Schools Act was revised in respect especially of its provisions for religious instruction in the primary schools, so that what formerly had been a permissive arrangement became compulsory. The regulations governing religious exercises and education included "conscience" clauses allowing exemptions to local school boards, teachers or pupils in classrooms in those cases in which objection was raised. The relevant section of the Act and the 1944 regulations are appended for your information and study. Also appended is a comparative schedule of religious statistics in Canada, revealing that in the 1951 Dominion census 94.8% of Canadians reported themselves as members of the Christian Church in one or other of its Communion.

The opposition to the 1944 Regulations by certain groups within the Province and particularly in Metropolitan Toronto, always vocal, has become especially active at the present time. The views and arguments of the critics are published widely in the daily press, in magazine articles and editorials, and over the radio and television. Public meetings are frequent. So that you may be familiar with the viewpoints of the critics of the present system of religious education in the schools we enclose copies of two briefs on this subject, presented by the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Ethical Education Association, representing the Unitarians.

The most recent action of the opponents is the preparation of a resolution for consideration at the forthcoming annual meeting next month of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc. This resolution, also appended, calls for the deletion of the word "Christian" from that section of the Public Schools Act which defines the duties of a teacher. Clearly it is the intention of the critics to remove entirely from our school system any reference to Christian ideals and culture as well as the study of the Bible. This attempt to "secularize" education is a most serious development and must be resisted by all who cherish and would maintain the spiritual values and moral principles from which our nation derives its character and ideals.

In the month of January a special committee was appointed to make a careful study of this whole matter and to prepare a report with recommendations. This committee, under the chairmanship of the Suffragan Bishop, has had several meetings. Through one of its members, the Reverend Newman Bracken, a most valuable paper has been produced, reviewing the history of religious education in Ontario. This is enclosed and we commend it to you for study and use.

The committee is also preparing a statement on the philosophy of religious instruction and in support of the retention of this vital subject within the school curriculum. In due course this also will be forwarded to you. In the meantime we draw your attention, for purposes of study, to the document, entitled, "Why?", prepared by the Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in the Schools and in which thirteen reasons are given for the preservation of Bible study in our schools. You are also reminded of the statement on the subject embodied in the Bishop's Charge to the 1960 session of Synod.

Some improvement can be made in the present regulations and this is a matter which, no doubt, will receive attention by the Department of Education. The entire abandonment of the whole system and the removal of the word "Christian" from the Public Schools Act would be most injurious to the well-being of our people and future good of our nation. We ask, therefore, that you make this a matter of prayer, and so acquaint your parishioners with the matter under debate, by sermon and conversation, that they may be fully aware of the situation. We do not counsel public debate with the critics over radio or television, but would advise adequate representation at meetings of local school boards, where petitions may be presented, and also at meetings of Home and School Associations and the annual meeting of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc., where resolutions may be advanced, so that the case will be presented for the retention of religious exercises and Bible instruction in our public and high schools.

Faithfully yours,

Frederick Toronto (signed)

George B. Snell (signed)
Bishop Coadjutor

Henry P. Hunt (signed)
Bishop Suffragan²

²Bishop F. H. Wilkinson to the Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto (March, 1961). [General Board of Religious Education, Box 29, Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada].

APPENDIX G

Report of the Colloquium to the Hamilton Conference of The
United Church of Canada on the Mackay Report, 1970.

Appendix G

REPORT OF THE COLLOQUIUM TO THE HAMILTON CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA ON THE MACKAY REPORT, 1970.

On Implementation:

The Colloquium regrets that the Committee seems to have given great importance to recommendations based on consensus of presentations given to it, rather than on that of sound educational principles. It disagrees with the Committee . . . that there should be a continuance of opening exercises on the ground that such meaningless and innocuous use of forms is a discredit to real religious values and does more harm than good.

The Colloquium was concerned about recommendation numbered 7 that in achieving a "program of incidental teaching and study" the new concepts of religion should be outlined as specific content for such a program, and not left completely without substance. Such content may become part of the social studies or reading programs, but should be carefully prepared to include much more than ancient tradition and myths, both of Judaeo-Christian and/or other religions, even including Marxist Communism and Humanism. Such content need not be labelled as a specific religious tenet but may be included in stories about peoples of the world, or as part of the social studies program concerned with a culture. We would expect however that greater stress was given to the Judaeo-Christian beliefs as being basic to our own cultural pattern, and that these were included in such a way that all children would be exposed to the challenge of these ideas in a controversial atmosphere, with no thought of manipulation or indoctrination.

We agree with recommendation numbered 8, that a formal course dealing with the principal religions of the world be offered as one of the optional courses in grades 11 and 12 in Secondary Schools. We feel however that a special department of religion should handle such a course or courses and that they should place major emphasis on Judaeo-Christian beliefs and not omit Marxist Communism, Humanism, or the "American Way of Life" since these are important religions of our day.

On Further Experimental Study:

It is our contention that we are not ready to implement throughout the province, a uniform course in religion and/or moral development, but that we are still at a stage where much experimentation would be of value. Furthermore, we are encouraged by (a) the fact that the Hall-Dennis Report makes experimentation possible in Public Education and (b) the fact that presently there is a time slot available according to the school legislation for religious education.

In order (a) to encourage creative experiments in Religious Education in our government school system and (b) to involve local community members to a much greater extent, in the study of the whole area dealt with by the Keiller MacKay Report, we recommend that the delegates to this Colloquium seek out a few interested parties in their local communities and encourage them to become involved in the designing of well-thought-out experiments on implementation in the local school setting and on trial basis. Accounts of such experiments should be carefully recorded and sent to the Department of Education.

We would share some suggestions concerning local action.

(1) We suggest that the minister might play a behind-the-scene role in the preparation of such experiments. It might be his role to get a few others interested in such projects. There are many highly competent people in the community capable of leadership in creating useful designs.

(2) School authorities obviously should be involved in the discussions at a very early stage.

CONCLUSION

We agree with the proposed policy of dropping the present course of studies for the reasons stated in the Committee's report.

We commend the Committee for its recommendation that the legislation pertaining to school visitors . . . be repealed. We support the elimination of the privileged position of the clergy, and recommend that clergy assume appropriate responsibilities on the same basis as other resource persons in the community when invited by school authorities.

We agree with all other recommendations of the report, and we wish to commend the Committee for its recommendations to remove some of the factors dividing our society on sectarian grounds.³

³The United Church of Canada, Record of Proceedings, Hamilton Conference (1970), in United Church of Canada Minutes of Conferences, Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1970), 66-67. [Archives of The United Church of Canada].

APPENDIX H

Statement of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec re:
Religious Instruction in the Public Schools of Ontario, 1965

Appendix H

STATEMENT OF THE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC RE:
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1965

WHEREAS

- 1) We live in the Province of Ontario where there is religious liberty and where all 'Churches' are separate from the organized 'State' and do cherish the heritage that is ours; nonetheless as citizens we are concerned about the future of our Province, our children, and their children.
- 2) Our public school system was inaugurated in 1843 to guarantee to every child the right to an education and from that day our laws have permitted, encouraged and provided for the teaching of religious education in the Public Schools of Ontario.
- 3) Religion has a place in the making of citizens and the preparation for life along with reading, writing, arithmetic, social studies, and science.
- 4) There are those citizens who are endeavouring to secure the complete secularization of our Public Schools.
- 5) There are those who believe that secularization leads to materialism and Godless materialism to the City of Destruction.
- 6) Baptists of this Convention have since 1929 been active on Inter-Church Committees on Religious Education in the Schools, and have availed themselves of the opportunity to teach the Bible in the Public Schools as well as in the province's Teachers' Colleges.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- 1) That we re-affirm our support of the teaching of Religious Education within the school system of the Province of Ontario.
- 2) That the Department of Christian Education of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec be represented officially on those committees whose concern is religious education in the schools of Ontario.
- 3) That we encourage laymen and ministers of the Convention Churches to show interest in this aspect of the School Curriculum and to give support to the School Boards as opportunity is given them.

4) That we urge those ministers who do avail themselves of the opportunity of teaching in the classroom to acquaint themselves with 'The Regulations and Programme for Religious Education in the Public Schools'.

5) That we recognize the fact that each person within our Churches must act according to his own conscience and his own sense of duty to God and to our Province even as the laws regarding 'religious education in the schools' recognize that there will be those pupils who do not participate in any religious studies or any exercise of devotion objected to by his parents or guardians.⁴

⁴Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec Year Book, 1964-65 (Toronto: Baptist Church House, 1965), 50-51.

APPENDIX I

Regulation 262: Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1980
Religious Exercises and Religious Education in the Public
Schools

Appendix I

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

28. -(1) A public school shall be opened or closed each school day with religious exercises consisting of the reading of the Scriptures or other suitable readings and the repeating of the Lord's Prayer or other suitable prayers.

R.R.O. 1980, Reg.262, s.28 (1).

(2) The readings and prayers that form part of the religious exercises referred to in subsection (1) shall be chosen from a list of selections approved for such purpose by the board that operates the school where the board approves such a list and, where the board does not approve such a list, the principal of the school shall select the readings and prayers after notifying the board of the principal's intention to do so, but this selection is subject to revision by the board at any time. O. Reg. 617/81, s.21, part.

(3) The religious exercises under subsection (1) may include the singing of one or more hymns.

(4) Two periods per week of one-half hour each, in addition to the time assigned to religious exercises at the opening or closing of a public school, shall be devoted to religious education.

(5) Religious education shall be given immediately after the opening of a public school or immediately before the closing of school in either the morning or the afternoon session.

(6) Instruction in religious education shall be given by the teacher and issues of controversial or sectarian nature shall be avoided.

(7) By resolution of a board, a clergyman or clergymen of any denomination, or a lay person or lay persons selected by the clergyman or clergymen, may give religious instruction in the schools of the board in lieu of a teacher or teachers.

(8) Where two or more clergymen of different denominations, or lay persons selected by the clergymen, upon written application to the board, secure permission under subsection (7) to give religious instruction in the same school, the principal of the school, by resolution of the board, shall arrange for such accommodation within the school and such times within the periods referred to in subsection (5) as are agreeable to both the principal and the clergymen or the lay person selected by the clergymen.

(9) Where the number of rooms in a public school is insufficient to meet the needs of the groups organized for religious instruction under subsection (7) or (8), the principal of the school, by resolution of the board, may arrange for additional accommodation elsewhere. R.R.O. 1980, Reg. 262, s.28 (3-9).

(10) No pupil shall be required to take part in any religious exercises or be subject to any instruction in religious education where a parent of the pupil, or the pupil where the pupil is an adult, applies to the principal of the school that the pupil attends for exemption of the pupil therefrom. O.Reg. 617/81, s.21, part.

(11) In public schools without suitable waiting rooms or other similar accommodation, if the parent of a pupil or, where the pupil is an adult, the pupil applies to the principal of the school for the exemption of the pupil from attendance while religious exercises are being held or religious education given, such request shall be granted. R.R.O. 1980, Reg. 262,s.28 (11).

(12) Where a parent of a pupil, or the pupil where the pupil is an adult, objects to the pupil's taking part in religious exercises or being subject to instruction in religious education, but requests that the pupil remain in the classroom during the time devoted to religious exercises or instruction in religious education, the principal of the school that the pupil attends shall permit the pupil to do so, if the pupil maintains decorous behaviour.

(13) If, because of the right to be absent from religious exercises or instruction, any pupil is not present in the classroom during the periods specified for religious education or instruction in religious education, the absence shall not be considered a contravention of the rules of the school.

APPENDIX J

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 112

Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and
Secondary Schools

Appendix J

POLICY/PROGRAM MEMORANDUM NO. 112

Date of Issue: December 6, 1990 Effective: January 1, 1991

Subject: EDUCATION ABOUT RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Application: Chairpersons of Boards of Education
Directors of Education of Boards of Education
Principals of Public Elementary and Secondary
Schools

I. Background

On January 30, 1990, the Ontario Court of Appeal unanimously struck down subsection 28(4) of Regulation 262 concerning religious education in the public elementary schools. The court ruled that the subsection infringed on the freedom of conscience and religion guaranteed by section 2(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Neither the subsection nor the court decision applied to schools operated by the Roman Catholic separate school boards.

Section 29 of Regulation 262, regarding provision of religious instruction by clergy or designates in the public secondary schools, was not before the court, and the court's ruling did not apply expressly to that section. However, subsequent advice by legal counsel indicates that the principles outlined in the decision make section 29 equally untenable.

In its decision, the court made it very clear that subsection 28(4) of the regulation was invalid because it permitted the teaching of a single religious tradition as if it were the exclusive means through which to develop moral thinking and behaviour. the court also ruled that education designed to teach about religion and to foster moral values without indoctrination in a particular religious faith would not contravene the charter.

In distinguishing between religious indoctrination and education about religion, the court made the following statement:

While this is an easy test to state, the line between indoctrination and education, in some instances can be difficult to draw. With this in mind it may be of

assistance to refer to the following more detailed statement of the distinction:

- The school may sponsor the study of religion, but not sponsor the practice of religion.
- The school may expose students to all religious views, but may not impose any particular view.
- The school's approach to religion is one of instruction, not one of indoctrination.
- The function of the school is to educate about all religions, not to convert to any one religion.
- The school's approach is academic, not devotional.
- The school should study what all people believe, but should not teach a student what to believe.
- The school should strive for student awareness of all religions, but should not press for student acceptance of any one religion.
- The school should seek to inform the student about various beliefs, but should not seek to conform him or her to any one belief.

Subsequent to the court's ruling, an interim policy for public elementary schools, dated February 28, 1990, was established, whereby boards were permitted to provide programs in education about religion in the time previously used during the school day, as long as these programs were in accordance with the court's ruling. Boards of education were also advised that they could continue to provide space outside the school day, as they do for various community-related activities, if parents requested that their children be taught religion by clergy or designates. This interim policy for elementary schools was intended to remain in effect only until policy considerations related to the public elementary and secondary schools were finalized.

II. Permanent Policy

The Ministry of Education will amend sections 28 and 29 of Regulation 262 to reflect the following permanent policy, which will apply to public elementary and secondary schools:

1. Boards of education may provide programs in education about religion in Grades 1 to 8 during the school day for up to 60 minutes per week.
2. Boards of education may continue to provide optional credit courses in World Religions in secondary schools, as specified in the curriculum guideline entitled History and Contemporary Studies, Part C: Senior Division, Grades 11 and 12, 1987. The program described

in the guideline meets the court's definition of permissible education about religion.

3. Schools and programs, including programs in education about religion, under the jurisdiction of boards of education must meet both of the following conditions:

- a) They must not be indoctrinational.
- b) They must not give primacy to any particular religious faith.

4. Boards of education may continue to provide space before the beginning or after the close of the instructional program of the school day for indoctrinational religious education. Given the provisions for the equality of treatment in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, boards choosing this option must make space available on an equitable basis to all religious groups.

This policy will come into effect on January 1, 1991.

III. Purpose

The purpose of programs in education about religion is to enable students to acquire knowledge and awareness of a variety of the religious traditions that have shaped and continue to shape our world. The programs enable individuals to understand, appreciate, and respect various types of religious beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour.

The purpose of these programs is not to instil the beliefs of any one particular religion. It is the prerogative of individual pupils and their families to decide which religious beliefs they should hold. Indoctrinational religious education has no place in the curriculum or programs of public elementary and secondary schools of the province.

IV. Content

Since the world's religions are many and varied, a particular program in education about religion cannot be expected to include every one of them. As a minimum, programs in any grade should include a balanced consideration of world religions that have continuing significance for the world's people.

Both content and method should be appropriate to the ages and levels of maturity of the pupils. In developing programs of education about religion, consideration may be given to various organizational frameworks.

V. Resources

The Ministry of Education will develop a resource document to assist boards of education in developing programs in education about religion for elementary schools.

Programs for the secondary schools will continue to be developed in accordance with History and Contemporary Studies, Part C: Senior Division, Grades 11 and 12, 1987.

VI. Context

This permanent policy and the forthcoming amendments to Regulation 262 are to be understood within the context of the long-established vision of the public elementary and secondary schools as places where people of diverse backgrounds can learn and grow together. The public schools are open and accessible to all on an equal basis and founded upon the positive societal values which, in general, Canadians hold and regard as essential to the well-being of our society. These values transcend cultures and faiths, reinforce democratic rights, and are founded in a fundamental belief in the worth of all persons.

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