

**Raising Christian Citizens for the Twentieth Century:
Children, Religion, and Society in Protestant Ontario**

Angela Rooke

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Graduate Program in History

York University

Toronto, Ontario

September 2014

© Angela Rooke, 2014

Abstract

This dissertation examines the Sunday school as an important site for understanding children's lives in Canada's past. It argues that examining children's engagement with institutional religion in Ontario offers valuable insights into Canada's religious history. When it came to dealing with children, Protestant churches sought to modernize their methods and they self-consciously broke with the past. Between the late 1880s and the early 1930s, Sunday Schools nurtured children's peer cultures and drew on modern pedagogy by encouraging age-graded Sunday school classes and age-graded auxiliary organizations. Children were also meant to feel part of a wider, sometimes transnational, community. In their attempt to teach children how to navigate the modern world in appropriately Christian ways, Sunday school teachers also impressed on children their responsibility for bettering their homes, their communities, their nation and the world. In this way, this is also an examination of how Sunday Schools adopted, and adjusted to, the social gospel.

Sunday school curricula focused on nurturing very young children's Christian character and, as they grew older, teaching them how to live up to those character ideals as active, Christian citizens. Though it is difficult to gauge the success of these Protestant efforts in terms of what children believed, the importance of religion to

Canada's childhood history is evident in the sheer numbers of children who participated in Sunday School programmes, the large amounts of money children raised for missionary and other purposes, and the vast resources that churches devoted to the religious education of their young flocks.

Acknowledgments

This project could not have been completed without the generous financial support provided by CUPE 3903, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program, the Ramsay Cook fellowship in Canadian History, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, and the York University Research Assistantship program. I am grateful for the friendly help provided by archivists and staff members at The United Church Archives, The Anglican Archives of Canada, The University of Guelph Library, and the West Toronto Junction Historical Society. Thanks, too, to the different people who were willing to send me photocopies of their Sunday school certificates, lessons, or other related family keepsakes.

My supervisor, Bettina Bradbury, who read this dissertation way too many times, has provided much more than the feedback and advice needed to complete a project such as this one; she has also provided me with moral support, kindness, friendship, encouragement, and much delicious food and wine. I feel so incredibly lucky to have her as my supervisor, friend, and mentor. Kate McPherson and Bill Westfall have, since I first met them in my Master's year at York, consistently provided me with excellent feedback and encouragement. Their insights have made this a better dissertation. Committee member Molly Ladd-Taylor also deserves special thanks for

being a brilliant mentor who shaped my development as a teacher and scholar in many ways.

For sharing early drafts of their own dissertations, providing critical feedback on my early chapters, and for providing friendship, fun and good advice, I thank the members of Bettina Bradbury's PhD reading group: Kristine Alexander, Stacey Alexopolous, Becky Beausaert, Jarett Henderson, Dan Horner, and Heather Steel.

The staff at York University's Department of History, especially Karen Dancy, Patricia Di Benigno, Lisa Hoffman, and Anita Szucsko deserve thanks for helping me navigate office equipment, interpret important protocols, policies and procedures, and for being there, even on Friday afternoons, just to chat.

Though each provided different kinds of support over the years, the following friends deserve thanks for helping me be a better scholar, helping me stay sane, or both: Katie Bausch, Jennifer Bleakney, Helen Fylactou, Brian MacDowall, and Ian Milligan. My extended family, especially Linda Wagner and Kelly Miller, and my future in-laws, Theresa and Dave Wing, encouraged and supported me in different, but important, ways. I am also very fortunate to have had the support of my grandparents, Earl and Valera Phillips, throughout this journey. Their stories about growing up have

always fascinated me and helped to spark my interest in the history of childhood, even though my grandfather's funny and rich stories about growing up were taken from him in the last few years by the memory loss that accompanies dementia.

Thanks to BJ Glidden, my partner, best friend, and *very-soon-to-be* husband, for his moral support, for working extra hours to cover our bills, for putting up with me and my stress during the long road to completion of the dissertation, and for ensuring that coffee was brewed on early mornings of writing, research and teaching. Finally, thanks to my large, loud and loving family: my siblings, Christopher, Daniel, Rebecca, and Deanna Rooke who made my own childhood memories so pleasant and my adult life so rich; and my parents, Denise and Dave Rooke, for all they have given me – including financial support, sympathetic ears, use of their laundry facilities, distractions from stress in the form of card games and fishing trips, and their never-ending moral support.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Illustrations.....	viii

Introduction.....	1
-------------------	---

Part I:

Chapter 1: Creating Christian Childhood in Modern Ways	41
Chapter 2: “We Must Grow Them”: Raising Christian Babies and Infants.....	80
Chapter 3: Caring, Sharing, and Making Friends with Jesus: Developing a Happy Service Motive and Christian ‘Character’ in Beginners and Primaries.....	127
Chapter 4: Junior Citizens of the Kingdom of God: Boys and Girls between Childhood and Adolescence	162

Part II

Chapter 5: “Little Hands can do God’s Work Too”: Child-Citizens, Service to Society and Money for Missions, 1890-1930	201
Chapter 6: Assessing the Impact of Modernization in the 1930s: Religion as Child’s Play?.....	244
Conclusion	262
Bibliography.....	271

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Unveiling the Portrait Statue of Robert Raikes at Queen’s Park, Toronto [1930].....	43
Figure 2. Sunday School Banner.....	59
Figure 3. Sunday School Attendance Thermometer.....	60
Figure 4. Erskine United Church Ground Floor – Floor Plan.....	63
Figure 5. St. James Parish Hall, Toronto. Basement Floor Plan.....	73
Figure 6. Boys enjoying Sunday School picnic food in Prince Edward County, 1909...	74
Figure 7. Pie-eating contest at St. John’s Anglican Sunday School Picnic, Whitby, 1924.....	75
Figure 8. Beginners show off their Cradle Roll achievements in Shreiber, ON.....	80
Figure 9 . Example of a Font Roll (Cradle Roll) Invitation Postcard.....	98
Figure 10. Cradle Roll Ceremony in St. Thomas, Ontario, 1924.....	101
Figure 11. Baptist Cradle Roll Certificate, 1929.....	104
Figure 12. Boys’ Explorer’s Pin.....	194
Figure 13. Girls’ Explorer’s Pin (The Golden Key)	195

Introduction

I placed a classified advertisement in the July 2010 *United Church Observer*, letting readers know I was working on a project on the history of children and religion in Ontario and that I would appreciate it if they would share any old Sunday School records, photographs, or other memorabilia that they may have kept themselves or which may have passed down in their families over the last 80 years or so. Most of what people could share with me either was material I could find in the archives or were personal Sunday School certificates, and so the advertisement was not as fruitful as I had hoped it would be for uncovering children's experience of Sunday school. Yet, the responses I received demonstrate that Sunday school certificates and lessons were cherished keepsakes to many; children (or their parents) kept them for decades. Does the fact that such materials survived indicate that children's experience of attending Sunday schools was so memorable, or formed such a crucial part of their memories of childhood that, even as adults, people thought these certificates were of great personal historical value, similar to high-school yearbooks? Or were old Sunday school lessons and certificates unintentionally preserved among other things in dusty boxes just because they were always around, sitting on coffee tables, in dressers, and in desk drawers? Whether such material survives because of a conscious choice to preserve them or,

simply, because they were so abundant in the homes of average Ontario families, both possibilities evidence the important role that Sunday schools played in the lives of children in the past. Their very preservation demonstrates the importance of the church to children in the early twentieth century, and of its continuing importance to adults who were raised in Ontario during those years. Other archival and published records examined here demonstrate the concomitant importance of children to the church.

This dissertation uses the lens of childhood history to unpack how Sunday schools came to occupy so much of children's time and attention in the period between the 1890s and the early 1930s. I am interested not only in the lessons children learned and the religious and social context that gave rise to such lessons, but also how the Sunday School might have been a place for fun, friendship, and for the exercise of children's agency, as well as a place of learning and prayer. Gwen Terentiuk, an eighty-seven-year-old woman, told me in a 2010 email that she began attending a United Church Sunday School at the age of about four years, in a nursery class. She estimated that another nine children in her Sunday school class graduated into each grade together until they were eighteen years old. Though some of these members have now died, three of them, all now in their late eighties, remain friends and meet every Friday morning for breakfast. Stories such as this one remind us that Sunday schools are not

just part of our religious history, but that they were also an integral part of the way Protestant children lived, socialized, and understood their world.

This dissertation argues that it was a central goal of Protestant churches to make the church and Sunday School a crucial part of children's everyday lives. It is clear that churches sought to make themselves central to the experience of 'growing up' in turn-of-the-century Ontario. Religious educators and Sunday School promoters redesigned the Sunday School as a place for all children, not just those old enough to make a conscious decision for Christ, abide by moral codes, and memorize scripture. By the 1920s, they had developed a complete programme for children that would begin at birth and continue – ideally – through adulthood. Indeed, Sunday schools were institutions for, and were most successful among, the young. Attendance and membership dropped sharply in the teenage years. Throughout the period under investigation, the churches' inability to retain their oldest children was a central concern. Yet scholarly writing on the subject of religious education places much more emphasis on the teenagers that churches were unable to retain, or on the women who

carved out a public role for themselves as teachers in church classrooms.¹ Curiously, little attempt has been made to document the experiences of the children who spent hours each week in those classrooms, who consumed the vast amount of Sunday school literature that was being published by church publishing houses, and who occupied so much of adult church leaders' time and attention in these years. I attempt here to remedy this gap by uncovering aspects of children's Sunday school experience. I aim to explain what children were taught, how they were taught, and what the expected results were of their Sunday lessons. I also uncover, where possible, children's own perceptions.

Another central aim of this dissertation is to uncover why children came to occupy so much time and attention from Protestant churches. I argue that, in large part,

¹ On women's roles in Canadian Sunday Schools, see: Patricia Kmiec "Among the Children: Sunday School Teachers and Evangelical Womanhood in Nineteenth-Century Ontario" (Master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 2008); Mary Anne Macfarlane "'Gender, Doctrine and Pedagogy: Women and 'Womanhood' in Methodist Sunday Schools in English-Speaking Canada, 1880 to 1920" (Ph.D. diss, University of Toronto, 1991); Lucille Marr, "Sunday School Teaching: A Women's Enterprise. A Case Study from the Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church Tradition 1919-1939" *Histoire Sociale/ Social History* 26, no 52 (November 1993): 329-344.

Works that focus on teenagers and youth in the church, include: Nancy Christie, "Young Men and the Creation of Civic Christianity in Urban Methodist Churches, 1880-1914" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 17, no 1 (2006): 79-105; Patricia Dirks, "'Getting a Grip on Harry': Canada's Methodists Respond to the 'Big Boy' Problem, *Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers* 7 (1990): 67-82; Lucille Marr, "Church Teen Clubs, Feminized Organizations? Tuxis Boys, Trail Rangers, and Canadian Girls in Training, 1919-1939" *Historical Studies in Education* 3, no 2 (1991): 249-267; Margaret Prang "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-39" *Canadian Historical Review* 66, no 2 (1985):154-184.

the answer lies in the focus Protestant churches began to place on social service, good citizenship and Christian character. This study makes an important contribution to the body of literature on the period between the 1880s and the early 1930s in Canada by analyzing the rise of Sunday schooling as an important part of the history of Canadian social and moral reform. Though some historians of social and moral reform do focus on reforms that centre on childhood, few acknowledge the Sunday school as a site where important ideas about childhood, citizenship, nation-building and character-building were being put into practice and were being taught to a new generation. The sheer number of children who attended Ontario's Protestant Sunday schools makes this omission in the historiography even more glaring. After all, more Ontario children entered Sunday school classrooms than juvenile courts, and more children participated in their mid-week church meeting than ever dealt with the Children's Aid Society. Thus, even though historians of social reform have paid heed to childhood, this study offers a new way to see how children fit into the larger story of social and moral reform in Ontario. It also accomplishes this by demonstrating how children could be actors and participants in, not just the objects and targets of, reformers' efforts.

Sources

This study relies mainly on the archival records created by the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and United churches between the 1890s and the early 1930s, especially records produced by the various denominational boards and committees that dealt with religious education specifically. These records are used alongside published works, such as children's Sunday school magazines or newspaper articles, and they are complemented by records of interdenominational organizations and religious education councils, women's groups (such as various women's missionary societies), and other associations and groups who cooperated or competed with the denominational religious education boards. In addition to these written documents, I also analyze Sunday school catalogues which advertised a variety of "up-to-date" educational tools for the church classroom, photographs of Sunday school ceremonies and celebrations, architectural plans for church schools, and oral histories.

As with much childhood history, accessing the voices of children who grew up attending Sunday school is very difficult. Though there are glimpses of children in Sunday school photographs, and a few scattered letters that children wrote into editors of children's or family magazines, children's own perceptions of their experience as Sunday school members are elusive. Oral histories provide a few memories of those experiences, but researchers who interviewed people who were children in this period

were generally not interested in their interviewees' Sunday school experience.² The few who were interested in questions of religion often gained only cursory responses from their interviewees, as though Sunday school was such an ordinary experience, as routine as bathing or chores, that they could not imagine how to elaborate. This dissertation thus pieces together the history of children's relationship with the church in Ontario largely based on the written evidence left behind by adults. Nevertheless, I believe that we can learn something about children's agency and children's experience from such records. For example, though we may never know what motivated the average child to join a missionary club, the sums that children raised in such organizations speak volumes about their enthusiasm for missionary work. Similarly, though we may never uncover clear evidence of how children felt about attending Sunday school each week, adults' writings about whether they were maintaining children's interest can give us at least a broad sense of what children found engaging and what they thought tedious about their weekly trek to Sunday school. Such discussions also reveal that, at least to some degree, adults felt the need to make the Sunday school an attractive place to go. Sunday school attendance, after all, was not mandatory, as was public school attendance. Adult-produced records help us to uncover how the Sunday schools attempted to appeal to

² I make this claim based on the oral history collections I examined, but it is also worth noting that Neil Sutherland's monograph, based largely on oral history interviews, contains only a few short discussions of Sunday school. Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

modern children, many of whom had several other ways they could choose to spend their free time. Combining adult-produced, often prescriptive, sources with scattered photographs, a few letters, and the odd mention of religion or Sunday school in oral interviews allows me to piece together a fuller picture of children's experiences. Clues such as these, when analyzed in relation to the cultural and social context, can illuminate how children experienced religion, a subject that has thus far been largely ignored by both historians of childhood and historians of religion.

Historiography

Social reform and religion are closely intertwined in existing historical literature. Historians of religion in Canada have shown that, in response to fears about secularization, mainline Protestant denominations attempted to make Christianity more relevant by making it a *social* religion that would be adapted to the modern world rather

than separated from it.³ Ramsay Cook has shown how, by the 1880s, Protestant churches began to emphasize God's immanence in the world, rather than His transcendence. They also became less concerned about the salvation of individuals and more concerned with the salvation of society.⁴ This dissertation attempts to explain where children fit into this narrative.

I argue that a new focus on the community, and on the social in the here-and-now, meant that children gained a new importance in the Church. Children had a role to play in the extension and consolidation of God's Kingdom, but would have to be trained to the work. In a 1914 Methodist and Presbyterian survey of the rural county of Huron, church leaders made clear that a theological shift towards social service entailed a new role for the church. They explained that, especially in rural areas, "the Church must become more of a social centre and must be more of a moral tonic – dealing with the relationship between men in everyday life – and less a theological school, or mere

³ Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). A.B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979).

⁴ Ramsay Cook, *Regenerators*, 4-5.

preaching place.”⁵ The ideal of a more nurturing church fit conveniently with a reconsideration of the Church’s role in modern children’s lives. The report on Huron County reveals this. The “supreme mission,” the authors claimed, “is to keep all the little ones for Christ, nourishing them year by year as they grow older, instructing, training, counselling them as they take an ever larger share in Christ’s work of service to mankind.”⁶ In this context, children needed to be taught about service, mission, and healthy citizenship. This, when juxtaposed to religious education before mid-century, demonstrates a significant shift: Children were to be nurtured in the values of a social Christianity rather than be drilled in Christianity’s tenets. Learning and reciting the catechism was no longer enough. As Christian citizens, children were expected to work in service to society, and this meant that even leisure time ought to be spent in some socially useful or Christian way. The church now taught children that their behaviour and activity on the street, in the home, and in pursuit of fun had to be of a Christian character.

Even older evangelical moral focuses, like temperance lessons, were subsumed within a broader goal of instilling Christian character. The 1928 Temperance Education

⁵ Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church, the Board of Social Service and Evangelism, and the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies of the Presbyterian Church, *County of Huron Ontario. Report on a Rural Survey of the Agricultural, Educational, Social and Religious Life.* ([Toronto?]:1914), 19.

⁶ *ibid*, 31.

Department's report to the Board of Religious Education of the United Church reported a new statement for adoption concerning temperance education for children under twelve years of age. The statement demonstrates the ways that even temperance was linked with the wider goal of Christian citizenship and active service: "We would define Temperance Education for children under twelve as that part of their Christian education which aims to produce in these girls and boys self-control, health habits, the right use of God's gifts, courage to do right, a willingness to deny oneself when necessary for another's good, and the total abstinence from all things harmful." The statement continued, "we would aim to produce in boys and girls such an attitude towards total abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquor that they will view such abstinence as a valued and welcome opportunity for efficient service, not only because of their example to others, but also because of the better contribution they can make to the world's work if their body is healthier, their brain clearer, and their judgment more sound, as science tells us when we take no alcohol."⁷ Though Bible knowledge would remain important, it often took a back seat to the ideal of raising children to be God's little citizens, working in service of church, community, country and beyond.

⁷ "Report on Departments of Work Assigned to J.C. Robertson," 1928, box 58, book 2, Minutes of the Board of Religious Education subseries, Administrative Records series, United Church of Canada Board of Christian Education Fonds (hereafter UCCBCE), United Church of Canada Archives (hereafter UCC).

The new emphasis on social service and missions, instead of theology and doctrine, was in part a response to the unionizing efforts among the major Protestant denominations in Canada. Unions were taking place regularly in mid-nineteenth and late-nineteenth century Canadian churches. Mergers such as these required finding common ground. Social service goals and missionary zeal offered better opportunities for agreement than did a focus on doctrine and theology.⁸ The Methodist Church of Canada, Newfoundland and Bermuda was formed in 1884, uniting four branches of Methodism. The Presbyterian Church of Canada was formed nine years prior, in 1875, after the union of four Presbyterian branches. Beginning in the mid-1880s, some Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist leaders began thinking about an even larger union, one that united all the mainline Protestant denominations. What eventually became the United Church of Canada in 1925 (uniting the Methodist, most Presbyterian, and Congregationalist churches) was actually an early-twentieth-century agreement. Though the union promoters could not convince the Anglicans to join, even though it was they who initiated the interdenominational talks in the late 1880s, a basis of union

⁸ Phyllis Airhart points out that even those who opposed United Church union shared the new Church's commitment to "extending Christian civilization." Phyllis Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2014), xix.

was agreed upon by the other three uniting churches by 1908.⁹ Though the United Church would only formally be established after the long delay of the First World War, it is important to remember that its formal establishment in 1925 reflected the triumph of a much older ecumenical idea.

Though my sources have required me to focus much more closely on the latter years of the period, I aim to contribute to the rich body of literature that focuses on the years between 1880 and the 1930 as crucial to understanding Canadian nation-building, social and moral reform, state formation, religious life, and modernity. My main contribution to this body of literature is, perhaps obviously, my focus on how Sunday schools and churches responded to the enormous changes that historians have shown took place in these years. These changes, historians have shown, restructured people's thinking about class, gender and race, and they ushered in changes to the worldviews, home life, relationships to the state, and patterns of consumption of everyday

⁹ William Katerberg, *Modernity and the Dilemma of North American Anglican Identities, 1880-1950* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 142.

Canadians.¹⁰ Protestant leaders in Ontario and throughout Canada discussed and debated the meaning of these changes, and saw both risk and opportunity in the changes wrought by industrialization, urbanization, commercialization and, even, immigration.

Much of the literature on social reform focuses on the various efforts that targeted children and childhood, but few works examine children as actors in this process. They do focus on the reformers who called on the state to help them in securing a childhood protected from the dangers of industrialization, poverty and urban life. Compulsory school laws, laws that restricted child labour, and legislative changes that enlarged state authority in the private realm of the home are just some examples of the many subjects related to childhood that have been studied by historians of social and

¹⁰ Denyse Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family, and Home in Montreal During the Great Depression* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999); Bettina Bradbury *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993); Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982); Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman, 1988); Craig Heron, "The High School and the Household Economy in Working Class Hamilton, 1890-1940" *Historical Studies in Education* 7, no 2 (1995): 217-259; Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

moral reform.¹¹ However, this dissertation demonstrates that children were not just on the receiving end of these shifts; in church basements, church gymnasia, and church classrooms, they learned that they had roles to play in reforming and improving their world.

Protestant churches recruited children to participate in efforts to ameliorate the negative social effects of larger structural changes, and they turned Sunday schools into spaces that both accommodated and helped to produce “modern” children. By examining the fears as well as the hopes that motivated adults involved in children’s religious lives, this dissertation aims to expand our understanding of childhood in a period that historians often portray as one in which adults were concerned with children’s protection. In his survey on the history of childhood in Western society, Hugh Cunningham titles his chapter on the period between 1830 and 1920 “Saving the Children” and argues that the new, romantic and sentimental ideology of childhood that

¹¹ John Bullen, “Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario” *Labour/Le Travail* 18 (Fall 1986): 163-187; _____, “J.J. Kelso and the ‘New’ Child Savers: the Genesis of the Children’s Aid Society Movement in Ontario,” in *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada*, ed. Russell Smandych, Gordon Dodds and Alvin Esau, (Winnipeg: Legal Research Institute, 1991), 135-58; Lori Chambers, “Adoption, Unwed Mothers and the Powers of the Children’s Aid Society in Toronto” *Ontario History* 89, no 2 (Autumn 2006): 161-82; Dorothy Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good: Family Courts and Socialized Justice in Ontario, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Margaret Hillyard Little, *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998); Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001).

developed by the 1830s began to shape public action in years following. Philanthropists, voluntary societies, and the state worked to “save children for the enjoyment of childhood.”¹² The supposed plasticity of children made their saving possible. In this dissertation, I show how the supposed plasticity of white, Protestant children in Ontario also made them fit for shaping into participants in social life, contributors to community and Christian citizens.

This dissertation makes two main contributions to the history of childhood. The first is my focus on religion. Childhood historians recognize this period as pivotal; they have described the various structural processes that changed children’s daily lives and have illustrated how these shifts affected popular conceptions of childhood. But these historians have had shockingly little to say about religion. Indeed, not much has changed since 1999, when Robert McIntosh argued in a review essay on the history of childhood that “studies of child welfare, education, health and juvenile delinquency remain the principal paths to the history of childhood.”¹³ These topics continue to

¹² Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London: Longman, 1995), 134.

¹³ Robert McIntosh, “Constructing the Child: New Approaches to the History of Childhood in Canada” *Acadiensis* 28, no 2 (Spring 1999): 127.

dominate the field of the history of childhood and youth.¹⁴ Increasingly, though, historians of childhood are branching out to uncover new aspects of the lives of children in Canada's past. One important new focus is children's organized activity, such as the Girl Guides, Junior Red Cross, summer camps, and children's activist work.¹⁵ These studies have widened our understanding of children's lives by uncovering the activities of children outside the school and home and they offer important new ways to uncover children's agency, peer cultures, and their sense of community. A focus on consumerism and leisure has also offered historians of childhood a new manner of uncovering children's agency and power. By studying the decisions and choices children and youth made about how to spend their money, how to decorate their bedrooms and bodies, and how to spend their leisure time, these studies have helped to position children as

¹⁴ In Canada, recent works that represent scholars' ongoing interest in these topics include: Michael Boudreau, "Delinquents Often Become Criminals': Juvenile Delinquency in Halifax, 1918-1935," *Acadiensis* 39, no 1 (Spring 2010): 108-32; Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Brian T. Thorn "'Healthy Activity and Worthwhile Ideas': Left- and Right-Wing Women Confront Juvenile Delinquency in Post-World-War-II Canada," *Histoire Sociale/ Social History* 42, no 84 (November 2009): 327-59; Denyse Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Kristine Alexander, "The Girl Guides, Imperialism and Internationalism in Interwar England, Canada, and India," (PhD diss., York University, 2010); Sarah Glassford, "Practical Patriotism: How the Canadian Junior Red Cross and its Child Members Met the Challenge of the Second World War" *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 7, 2 (Spring 2014): 219-242; Tamara Myers, "Local Action and Global Imagining: Youth, International Development, and the Walkathon Phenomenon in Sixties' and Seventies' Canada" *Diplomatic History* 38, no 2 (2014): 282- 293; Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

decision makers and shapers of consumer culture.¹⁶ This study draws on and contributes to these new areas of study. The Sunday school, much like other organized forms of children's activity, structured children's lives when they were not in school or at home. The Sunday school responded to, and perhaps even shaped, the emerging children's consumer culture, by finding ways to attract children's pennies and time by offering religious alternatives to the increasingly wide secular activities and goods available for children to purchase or consume. A focus on children's religion thus offers historians an avenue to study children's everyday lives, as well as their patterns of consumption, leisure and community activity. Whether it was the weekly Sunday school class on Sunday, the midweek meeting on Wednesday, the yearly summer picnic, the seasonal concert or the monthly missionary magazine, children's free time continued to be structured by the rhythms of the Sunday school clock and calendar.

Just as important as the amount of time children spent in Sunday school and church activities is what messages they heard and worldviews they may have adopted in the process. I attempt here to uncover those lessons and messages, hoping to highlight

¹⁶ Gary Cross, *The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); _____, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Jason Reid, "My Room! Private! Keep Out! This Means You!": A Brief Overview of the Emergence of the Autonomous Teen Bedroom in Post-World War II America" *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 5, no 3 (Fall 2012): 419-443; Kelly Schrum, *Some Wore Bobby Sox: The Emergence of Teenage Girls' Culture, 1920-1945* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

an important component of what Neil Sutherland called “a new social consensus on how the young should be reared.” According to Sutherland, that social consensus which emerged in the forty years after 1880 changed childhood considerably. As he explained, more children avoided gruelling work, most saw expanded educational opportunities, and children were as a whole less likely to die of childhood diseases and ailments. In short, he argues, children born in the 1920s “had the chance of a fuller, richer life.”¹⁷ My focus on Sunday schools offers an important way to understand that consensus better, and to uncover some of the ways that Protestant leaders sought to make religion an important part of the “fuller, richer” lives that twentieth-century children had the opportunity to lead.

Though some scholars have published article-length examinations of teenagers’ relationship to the church, and some historians mention the church-based Canadian Girls in Training Program or Tuxis and Trail Rangers for teens, children’s religious lives is a subject that continues to be largely overlooked by historians in Canada.¹⁸ The most informative scholarly examination of Protestant children and

¹⁷ Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 238-239.

¹⁸ Nancy Christie, “Young Men and the Creation of Civic Christianity”; Patricia Dirks, “Getting a Grip on Harry”; Lucille Marr, “Church Teen Clubs, Feminized Organizations?”; Margaret Prang “The Girl God Would Have Me Be.”

religion is still Leila Mitchell-McKee's 1982 dissertation on voluntary youth organizations in Toronto, in which she examines the intersections between social reform, youth organizations and Christian citizenship ideals in fruitful ways.¹⁹ Mitchell-McKee also examines some of the Sunday schools' auxiliary organizations, though her focus is much broader, encompassing youth organizations organized under the Young Women's Christian Association, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guide movements as well. McKee's dissertation, however, focuses primarily on teenagers and youth. Though younger children are discussed early on in her sketches of the history of Sunday schools, the focus of her study remains on programmes for teenagers, rather than the entire program of Christian nurture churches developed from birth onward.

My second main contribution to the field of childhood history is therefore my attention to young childhood. By focusing on children below the age of twelve, this dissertation helps to fill a gap in the literature produced in the field of "childhood" history – a body of literature that often focuses much more on teenagers, youth and infants than it does on children between infancy and adolescence. Historians who study the history of teenagers and youth are likely attracted to their older subjects because teenagers and young adults left behind more, and better, historical records. The

¹⁹ Leila Mitchell-McKee, "Voluntary Youth Organizations in Toronto, 1880–1930," (PhD dissertation, York University, 1982).

study of teenagers also appeals to social historians who want to be able to uncover agency and resistance, a goal that is much more difficult to achieve for historians of pre-teen childhood. But it is important to fill this gap in our knowledge, a gap that has been pointed out by one of the most important historians in the field: Peter Stearns has also pointed out that existing literature “leaves the range of childhood between toddlers and teenagers as less familiar territory.”²⁰

We have a fairly well developed body of literature on infants, thanks largely to social and gender historians who study motherhood or the child welfare and public health movements of early-twentieth century Canada. Reformers of several stripes, medical professionals, government agents and maternal feminists coalesced early around the issue of infant mortality, pure milk campaigns, and maternal health.²¹ Scholars have found rich subjects of study in these early child welfare movements. Other studies on different kinds of “child-saving” schemes – those that focus on adoption or on aboriginal children in particular – have offered insights into the changing

²⁰ Peter N. Stearns, “Challenges in the History of Childhood” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* Vol 1, No 1 (Winter, 2008): 36.

²¹ Denyse Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010); Suzann Buckley, “Ladies or Midwives? Efforts to Reduce Infant and Maternal Mortality” in Lindsay Kealey (ed.) *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1979), 131-149; Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993).

and sometimes class- or racially- contingent definitions of childhood in the twentieth century.²² This dissertation, focusing mainly on children between infancy and adolescence, will hopefully serve as some groundwork for historians of childhood who, like me, hope to build a richer body of scholarship on the history of childhood after infancy and before adolescence.

The rich body of literature on teenagers and youth offers important insights into how young people were affected by new fields of expertise that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century, expanded educational opportunities, and the emergence of a youth consumer culture. Scholars who have studied these topics also do an excellent job

²² On Aboriginal children: Robert Adamoski, ““The Child - The Citizen – The Nation: The Rhetoric and Experience of Wardship in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia.” In *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn, and Robert Menzies (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2002) , 315-335; Jean Barman “Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children” in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland and J. Donald Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1995) , 57-80; John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); James Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

On adoption see: Karen Balcom, *The Traffic in Babies: Cross-Border Adoption and Baby-Selling Between the United States and Canada, 1930-1972* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011); Karen Dubinsky, *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Veronica Strong-Boag, “Today’s Child: Preparing for the ‘Just Society’ One Family at a Time” *Canadian Historical Review* 86, 4 (2005): 673-700.

of highlighting the intersectionality of gender, age, and class.²³ I draw heavily from the insights of historians of youth while hoping to demonstrate that the history of younger childhood offers a promising avenue for new scholarship, one that pays even closer attention to age as a category of analysis. Children's lessons in the modernized Sunday schools of the twentieth century were shaped by contemporary understandings about their age group. Increasingly, teachers had to learn the characteristics of the age group they would be teaching, and teachers were encouraged to specialize. Children were placed into the cradle roll if they were infants (or, after 1930, the nursery class if they were three years of age), the beginner's department once they turned four, the primary department at the age of six, and the junior department at the age of nine. As this dissertation demonstrates, each age group was not only taught in different ways, but the goals of their lessons were also different. Each age group was taught a different component of Christian citizenship, so that before children grew in to adolescents, they would be full-fledged Christian citizens.

²³ Some key works on the history of teenagers and youth in Canada include: Paul Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class: Student Life in English Canada in the Thirties* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006); Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Doug O'wram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Joan Sangster, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002).

Studies in the history of education tend to pay greater attention to children younger than the teenage years. Histories of education are particularly helpful because they uncover aspects of younger children's daily lives outside the home. Yet most studies produced in the field of the history of education focus on the pedagogical changes that took place in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, or on the teachers, promoters and administrators of schools instead of the children they served.²⁴ Nevertheless, this scholarship is particularly useful in helping me to delineate how Sunday school pedagogy relates to that used in formal schools. As this dissertation demonstrates, religious educators were well aware of new models of education, and they often implemented progressive education ideals. When I use the term "progressive education," I rely on Theodore Michael Christou's three-pronged definition of progressivism in education, which he shows meant: "(a) a concern for active learning, (b) a preoccupation with individualized instruction, and (c) the desire to link schools

²⁴ Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (London, ON: Althouse, 1988); Robert D. Gidney, *From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario's Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar *How Schools Worked: Public Education in English Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012); Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

with contemporary society.”²⁵ I attempt here to draw links and demarcate differences between what children experienced in their schools during the week and what they encountered in their church classroom on Sundays. By 1930, activity and experience, instead of just rote learning, were firmly entrenched in Sunday school pedagogies. As this dissertation demonstrates, Sunday schools were also concerned with individualized instruction and the desire to link the Sunday school with contemporary society. I thus contribute to the history of education by showing that children learned in both formal and informal classrooms, in schools that were voluntarily attended as well as those in which their attendance was mandatory. I also show that the public schools were not alone in adopting new methods from educational science or in teaching children about their nation and the duties of citizenship.

Though many of the changes that occurred to children’s religious education in these years can be called “progressive” in terms of borrowing ideas and methods from “progressive education” and because Sunday school promoters characterized what they were doing as reforming the Sunday school for “modern” life, it is a central goal of this dissertation to unpack the real and discursive effects of this modernization of Christian education. To do so, I use the lens of gender history, and borrow heavily from the insights of gender and women’s historians, who have, since the 1990s, produced an

²⁵ Theodore Michael Christou, *Progressive Education: Revisioning and Reframing Ontario’s Public Schools, 1919-1942* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 6.

impressive body of literature on women's religion, women's experiences with religious institutions, and the gender, race and class implications of church discourse and teachings.²⁶ An argument that runs throughout the dissertation is that church efforts to modernize their teachings and update their pedagogical methods had the effect of marginalizing women's roles in the church. The attempt of boards of religious education to wrest control over children's missionary education – previously directed by women in union Sunday schools or by the various denominational women's missionary societies and their auxiliaries – is just one obvious example. Children's religious education was also gendered, especially as they reached the older grades, and the lessons they learned held gendered, racial and class implications. But a nuanced interpretation is required. For example, in some ways, the modernization of church methods and a new focus on missionary and social service activities expanded the opportunities and imaginations of

²⁶ Sara Z. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Gender and Social Service at the University of Toronto: 1888-1937* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Sharon Anne Cook, *"Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Women's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Rosemary Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Cathy James, "Reforming Reform: Toronto's Settlement House Movement, 1900-20" *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no 1 (2001), 55-90; Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Myra Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991).

girls and young women. Sunday school lessons taught them of the various ways their Christian faith compelled them to serve important roles in the community.

Sunday sessions also attempted to foster among white girls and boys friendly attitudes and sympathy towards “other” children at home and across the globe. In other respects these modern ideas bolstered older ideas of race, imperialism and gender, and reinforced dichotomies such as civilized/uncivilized or respectable/unrespectable. “Modern” and “progressive” religious education never disrupted deeply entrenched ideas about gender or race. Gender historians have shown the value of examining how whiteness intersects with colonialism, imperialism and modernity.²⁷ In my chapter on missionary education in particular, I hope to contribute to this rich body of scholarship that interrogates whiteness. Other scholars who study missions specifically, examine the lives, work, and writings of white adult missionaries.²⁸ Those scholars have thus studied the products, not the contents, of children’s missionary education. By

²⁷ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁸ For studies of Canadian missionaries’ work, see Brouwer, *New Women for God*; Rutherford, *Women and the White Man’s God*; Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence*; John Grant Webster, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

uncovering some of the ways that children were taught how their white skin and their religious heritage destined them for a role in expanding the Christian empire in the young nation of Canada, I hope to offer some insight into how children learned race. Through missionary education especially, but also in their other Sunday school lessons and activities, white children in Ontario learned to be, and got to practice being, white. Though children in missionary clubs were taught to care for ‘other’ children who did not know of God’s love, the ways Christian educators taught such lessons of service to children were clearly designed to reinforce their racial superiority. After all, there is no question that part of the urgency to establish ‘missionary zeal’ as well as the service motive in Ontario’s children was a result of the large number of immigrants who came to Canada in the years covered here. By the time the United Church of Canada was established in 1925, church leaders were concerned that “the problem of the non-Anglo-Saxon is no longer confined to the Western Provinces” and that “[t]he whole future of the Protestant Church over great areas in Canada and the United States depends on the successful appeal to the non-Anglo-Saxon.”²⁹

This dissertation also forces us to question why there is a double-standard in research on children and religion: in ethnic communities, immigrant communities and

²⁹ The Board of Home Missions and Social Service of the Presbyterian Church in Canada report prepared for the General Council, *United Church Record of Proceedings and Year Book 1925* (Toronto), 98.

aboriginal cultures, scholars have rightly acknowledged religion as a shaper of children's experience, and characterized the church as an important institution to the communities of which children were a part.³⁰ But few scholars have given more than passing reference to religion in the lives of English-speaking, white, Protestant children in Ontario. Though many immigrant children attended Sunday schools in Ontario along with Anglo-Saxon, Canadian-born children, this dissertation reveals that some of the key markers of Christian character and citizenship were ones that were much less attainable for ethnic, racialized and – in many cases– working-class children. This dissertation demonstrates one of the many ways that white Protestant children 'learned' their white privilege and responsibilities.

In speaking to these different bodies of literature this dissertation attempts, as Lynne Marks did in her pioneering study, *Revivals and Roller-Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Small-Town Ontario*, to "show the importance, indeed the necessity, of

³⁰Jean Barman "Schooled for Inequality"; Selma Berrol, *Growing up American: Immigrant Children in America Then and Now* (Boston: Twayne, 1995); Anne Van Arragon Hutton, *Uprooted. The Story of Dutch Immigrant Children in Canada 1947-1959* (Kentville, NS: North Mountain Press, 2001); Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), especially chapter 3; Jordan Stranger-Ross "An Inviting Parish: Community without Locality in Postwar Italian Toronto" *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no 3 (September 2006): 381-407; David Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

integrating subjects that have largely been studied in isolation.”³¹ Like Marks, I draw on and hope to contribute to religious history, social history, gender history, the history of the family and the history of leisure, but unlike her I also consider one of my main contributions to be to the field of childhood history.

The question of secularization

Much of the rich scholarship on the history of religion in Canada is centered on the question of when, if, and how Canadian society became secularized. Several historians have pointed to the churches’ adoption of social Christianity and key actors’ adoption of a liberal Protestant theology as causes of the secularization of Canadian society. By studying key contemporary thinkers, they are able to demonstrate, in no uncertain terms, the degree to which Christian social reform activities were, by the 1930s, taken over by science, secular moral philosophy and by a professionalized academic sociology.³² Critiquing such analyses, Christie and Gauvreau have argued that the very period that historians claim witnessed the secularization of society was actually

³¹ Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 4.

³² Allen, *The Social Passion*; Cook, *The Regenerators*; Doug Owsram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986); Marlene Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, The Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

that in which the churches adopted social service as a way to make religion accessible to the everyday believer by linking religious goals to day-to-day experience. Rather than triggering widespread secularization, according to Christie and Gauvreau, this period witnessed the rise of a renewed Protestantism with mass appeal and an emphasis on social evangelism. Moreover, they argue, the Protestant churches were not the losers in the new emphasis on moral and social reform; conversely, “Protestant churches were the gravitational centre for a wide variety of social reform movements and the foremost sponsors of modern social welfare policy and the interventionist state.”³³

Though it is a central theme in the existing literature in Canadian religious history, the debate over secularization has tended to deflect attention away from the central concerns of this study: How did Canadians engage with religion and with religious institutions? What kind of society did Protestant churches aim to produce? What can religious education tell us about the problems, both real and perceived, with ‘secular’ life? Although the question of secularization does not frame this study, I do believe that the Sunday school offers some important insight into the debate.

Sunday school curricula were clearly influenced by the social gospel. This was not a defensive reaction to modern life, as some proponents of the secularization thesis have argued of the social gospel more generally. The social emphasis in children’s

³³ Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed*, xiv.

religious education was expected to produce change for the better. It was not protecting an older idea of childhood, but was instead helping to produce new childhood ideals, ones which would fit with a modern society and a successful Christian Canada. Of course, not everything about Christian education was new. Though it no longer retained its all-encompassing importance, for example, the catechism continued to be used. Bible stories were never abandoned. But this dissertation focuses on what was new, what resulted from the transformation of the Sunday school into a new paradigm of social Christianity. I argue that modernization and social Christianity did not make faith irrelevant. Rather, this dissertation shows the ways that churches attempted to teach a new generation the importance of faith in a modern society. I explore how religious educators taught faith in ways suitable for modern life. Age gradations, new pedagogy, scientific theories about how children learn, and new emphasis on “character” are some examples of the many new tactics churches used in their attempt to make faith relevant to a new generation.

As Norman Knowles points out in his study of religion in the mining communities of turn-of-the-century Crowsnest Pass, the debate over secularization has tended to limit scholarly writing on religion. “Preoccupied with the messengers and the message rather than popular belief and practice,” he argues, “Canadian religious history has been dominated by clergy-centred histories of religious thought and reform and an

ongoing debate over the nature and impact of secularization.”³⁴ Much like Knowles’ study, this dissertation speaks to the issue of secularization without making it a main guiding question. Like him, I believe that the debate over secularization has resulted in a body of scholarship focused too heavily on theology, the religious elite and institutions. It is a body of scholarship that focuses far too little on how religion was accessed by everyday people in everyday ways and on how religion was mediated and understood by those not trained in theology.

This study’s focus on children and Sunday schools thus offers an important contribution to existing literature on religion. Though the adults who wrote Sunday school curricula might have kept up with contemporary theological debates, the children who sat through their lessons most certainly did not. A focus on childhood shifts the focus away from the debates that were occurring in theological colleges, newspapers and universities at the turn of the century. A focus on Sunday schools instead forces us to consider how these theological debates and contemporary concerns over secularization played out on the ground in local church classrooms, or whether they had an impact at all beyond the pulpit and lectern. Examining the Sunday school, a site in which church leaders aimed to raise a new generation of church members, is a

³⁴ Norman Knowles, “Christ in the Crowsnest: Religion and the Anglo-Protestant Working Class in the Crowsnest Pass, 1898-1918” in Michael D. Behiels and Marcel Martel eds. *Nation, Ideas, Identities: Essays in Honour of Ramsay Cook* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57.

constructive way to assess the products of contemporary debates. Examining the Sunday school allows us to consider what kind of future citizens church leaders aimed to produce. As will be demonstrated, even in the late 1920s when secularization proponents argue there was a period of crisis or disenchantment, Sunday schools continued to stress Christian citizenship. Children were expected to be fully immersed in the “secular” world, but the goal was always to Christianize it, to bring the values learned in Sunday school and apply them to other areas of life.

This dissertation explores the significance of young children to Ontario’s Protestant churches and suggests that the church, like the public schools, families, and reform and youth organizations that have been the subject of fruitful scholarly investigation, ought to be recognized as a significant site of children’s socialization and that religion should be seen as a significant part of their social lives. Thus, my dissertation speaks to wider scholarly debates about the status and place of religion in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Ontario, by positioning churches and religious culture as institutions of great social influence. Even though churches began to emphasize liberal-Protestant ideas of service and of society over personal morality alone, their focus on Christian character, Christian citizenship, and the inculcation of missionary ideals continued to result in some fairly conservative prescriptions for behaviour. But churches and Sunday schools were not mere protectors of a conservative

status quo. The Sunday schools' adoption of the social gospel also forces us to pay attention to the optimistic and progressive view that churches were adopting of the future. A close reading of Sunday school materials indicates that, when it came to training their young from the cradle to confirmation, religious educators and churches were motivated more by hope and optimism than by fear.

Geographic focus

My focus on Ontario is not meant to limit this study, but to qualify my conclusions. The vast majority of the texts on which I draw were published in Ontario, but reached a much wider Canadian Protestant audience. Similarly, though many of the nationwide religious education organizations and church Sunday school boards were centered in Ontario, it was expected that their prescriptions and curriculum would be implemented across the nation. So, on one hand, this dissertation is about Protestant childhood in Canada, or even North America, but my examples at the local level will all be drawn from Ontario. On the other hand, the lessons held different meanings for Ontario children. Ontario was modern. It had the industrial capacity to produce the publications, ephemera, and curricula that the modern Sunday school required. It also had the population base and levels of urbanization that made modern Sunday schools

feasible there. Ontario was also not Quebec, where French/English Catholic/Protestant relations caused many of these lessons to have different meanings in that context.

Ontario was also still very different from British Columbia – not quite fully ‘civilized’ in this period as Adele Perry has shown.³⁵ Métis’ resistance movements in Saskatchewan in 1885 and in Red River (Manitoba) in 1869-1870 were fresh in the minds of white, Protestant church leaders in Ontario. All of these examples, and more, marked Ontario out to its religious leaders as the natural leader of the march of progress towards making Canada a Christian nation. Focusing on Ontario, then, even when discussing lessons that were applied Canada-wide, allows me to tease out the particular implications these lessons held for children living in a province deemed ‘civilized’ and modern because of its white, English-speaking Protestant majority.

Structure

This dissertation is organized thematically and topically rather than chronologically. Chapter One provides a sketch of the history of the Sunday school movement, from its roots in Britain to its development in North America. It also explains why Sunday schools sought to modernize in this period, focusing on

³⁵ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*.

developments in public school education, shifting definitions of childhood, and theological shifts that laid the groundwork, even necessitated, new pedagogies. Denominational Sunday schools came to dominate religious education, and in large measure interdenominational organizations became agencies of support to those denominational programmes. Drawing on findings in the new fields of child-study and psychology, and finding inspiration in new educational theories and public schools, religious educators strongly encouraged age-graded instruction. An age-graded, denominationally-organized programme of Christian education, from birth to the teenage years, quickly became the main method by which churches hoped to raise proper Christians.

This age-grading shapes the structure of chapters 2, 3, and 4, which follow the churches' children as they grew up in the Sunday school. They focus on three age groups, examining how children's lessons and adult expectations were shaped by children's categorization into these discrete age categories. Chapter Two begins where all children raised in the Sunday school were supposed to begin: at birth. Focusing on children who entered the Sunday school via the "cradle roll" as babies and infants, this chapter argues that through the infant, churches and Sunday schools sought to shape the home life and first years of the church's children, at a time when so many agencies were competing for authority in babies' and mothers' lives. Churches borrowed ideas and

tactics from other kinds of experts, but did not relinquish control to them. Many adults besides mothers and fathers had a stake in having Ontario's babies brought up in proper ways. However, I argue that we should avoid reading the cradle roll solely as an attempt on the part of churches to exert control over the family. When the cradle roll is viewed as part of the whole church programme for children, it is clear that church goals were broader than that. Mothers, too, clearly thought there was a benefit to having children raised with church support, and mothers shaped the services they would receive as well as those they would reject. Chapter Three focuses on the next step in a child's religious education: beginner and primary classes, through which religious educators stressed Christian character above all else. This chapter argues that neither this emphasis on character, nor the progressive pedagogies deployed to teach such young children, masked the ways that 'character' held particular racial, gender, and class implications. Chapter 4 focuses on "juniors," or pre-teen, children in the church. By this age, children were expected to be true Christians, already partaking in active service work to better society. This chapter suggests that the junior child's agency was a source of fear as well as motivation for religious education leaders. The "Explorers" programme was the United Church's response to these fears and hopes. The programme sought to appeal to children's club spirit, their devotion to peer culture and their consumer tastes, and to

direct them into proper channels. The overarching theme at this age was Christian citizenship.

Chapters Five and Six are organized thematically, examining two implications of the modernization of religious education. Chapter Five examines missions. It traces the history of missionary education for children, demonstrating how it was modernized to suit the pedagogical and practical goals of male-dominated boards of religious education. Those boards wrested control of missionary education away from women of the women's missionary societies. Though missionary work and missionary education were established long before Sunday schools became modern institutions of social-service education, at the turn of the twentieth century, missions became a crucial way that Sunday schools appealed to children's sense of duty to serve, promoting children's awareness of their privilege and the responsibilities such privilege entailed. Chapter Six assesses the impact of stressing the social in children's religious education, and argues that, by the early 1930s, some educators were concerned that they had gone too far: worship and reverence had suffered, and the Sunday school had fully replaced the home as the site of children's religious education. These were consequences of the Sunday school's success, but some worried that children's loyalty was to the Sunday school instead of to the church. Religious educators began to stress the need for Junior Congregations, where they could experience and practice public worship, but I argue

this new programme helped only to further distinguish the lives of children from the lives of adults

Chapter 1

Creating Christian Childhood in Modern Ways

In the Spring of 1930, a large bronze statue of Robert Raikes –founder of the first Sunday school in Gloucester, England – was shipped all the way from London, England to its eventual resting place beside the Ontario Legislative Building at Queen’s Park, Toronto, where it remains. The nearly nine-foot-tall statue, according to the *Toronto Star* in 1930, was “an exact replica of one erected on the banks of the Thames at London 50 years ago.”¹ The original London statue commemorated 100 years of Sunday school work. The Toronto replica celebrated 150 years of Sunday schooling, an occasion that was fittingly held in the same year when Toronto hosted the Convention for the International Council of Religious Education. The Raikes statue was in good company at Queen’s Park. As John Warkentin explains, the grounds have several statues, mostly commemorating political leaders, although monarchs, conflicts, founders of Canada and war veterans are now commemorated there as well.² In 1930, the statue

¹ “Honor Sunday School Found” *Toronto Star*, May 6, 1930, 21.

² John Warkentin, *Creating Memory: A Guide to Outdoor Public Sculpture in Toronto* (Becker Associates: Toronto, 2010), 63.

of Raikes joined the ranks of Sir John A. Macdonald (Canada's first Prime Minister, and a father of Canadian Confederation), Queen Victoria, John Graves Simcoe (First Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada), and other dignitaries who were by then commemorated by monument or statue in the same place. The Raikes statue was paid for by James L. Kraft, a food entrepreneur and strong supporter of Religious Education, and the base for the statue was funded by the City of Toronto. Children played a special role at the unveiling ceremony. Sunday school children sang hymns on the steps of the legislative buildings and two children, chosen from the oldest Sunday school in Canada and in the United States, respectively, performed the actual unveiling.³

³ "Raikes Monument Gift to Toronto" *Edmonton Journal*, July 5, 1930, 14.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1568, f1568_it0347

Figure 1: Unveiling of the Robert Raikes Monument in Queen's Park, 1930
 Source: City of Toronto Archives, Alexander W. Galbraith Fonds, item 347

The above photograph captures the simple, well-attended unveiling ceremony. A fairly large gathering of Torontonians stare upwards towards the statue. To the left of the frame is a younger crowd of children, who appear to be admiring the grandness of the new park installation. The photograph suggests the importance (to young and old alike) of the very thing the Raikes statue commemorates: the Sunday school. The photographer, Alexander W. Galbraith, too, had reason to celebrate the founding of the

first Sunday school, having served for 28 years as Sunday School Superintendent in two Presbyterian Sunday schools.⁴

Still standing in the centre of Toronto, the statue of Raikes testifies to the importance of the Sunday school in the minds of Canadians in the first half of the twentieth century. Raikes, a late-eighteenth century British social reformer, was commemorated alongside other people and events deemed central to shaping the Canadian nation. In the minds of many adults in 1930s Canada, the Sunday school was an institution of great influence and importance to the young nation. A photograph taken the day of the unveiling shows young and old alike celebrating and commemorating the Sunday school. Older adults in attendance must have reflected on how much had changed, on how little Raikes' schools bore resemblance to those in existence in 1930s Ontario or, indeed, how much their own Sunday school experience differed from that of modern children.

I use the term 'modern' and 'modernization' throughout this chapter and throughout the dissertation. I employ the term for two reasons. First, both the adults and the children in this story were aware of the changes afoot in society. They did not

⁴ Alexander W. Galbraith Fonds description, City of Toronto Archives [http://gencat4.eloquent-systems.com/webcat/request/Action?ClientSession=2f50744c:1478080cce7:-7e5b&TemplateProcessID=6000_1580_11104&TemplateProcessID=6000_1722_1722&PromptID=&ParamID=&CMD_\(DetailRequest\)\[0\]=&ProcessID=6000_1980\(0\)&KeyValues=KEY_46161](http://gencat4.eloquent-systems.com/webcat/request/Action?ClientSession=2f50744c:1478080cce7:-7e5b&TemplateProcessID=6000_1580_11104&TemplateProcessID=6000_1722_1722&PromptID=&ParamID=&CMD_(DetailRequest)[0]=&ProcessID=6000_1980(0)&KeyValues=KEY_46161) (accessed April 11, 2014).

hesitate to use the term “modern” to describe the changes they were making or witnessing. The source material examined here is replete with references to “modern life,” the “modern mind,” the “modern church,” and the like. Second, religious educators also described the schools they were creating as “modern Sunday schools,” both to describe the changes that occurred to their structure and organization (particularly close age gradation) and to describe the fact that they were meant to appeal to the taste of “modern children.”

This chapter traces the development of the modern Sunday school by sketching out the history of the Sunday school movement, from its origins in eighteenth century America and Britain to its expansion to Canada and Ontario. It outlines the important developments in Sunday school work in the province, and the contours of the various denominational and interdenominational groups and institutions responsible for religious education in Ontario. The goal of this chapter is to provide a chronological and institutional overview of the Sunday school movement, and then to explain the various impetuses for Sunday school modernization in the last years of the nineteenth century and into the 1930s. When it came to dealing with children, Protestant churches sought to modernize their methods and they self-consciously broke with the past. Sunday schools increasingly nurtured children’s peer cultures and drew on modern pedagogy by encouraging age-graded Sunday school classes and age-graded auxiliary organizations.

Sunday schools also sought to nurture children's community connections. The modern Sunday school was also a community service, one that brought together young and old alike to celebrate special occasions and have fun.

Sunday Schools in Upper Canada and Canada West: Literacy, Charity and Salvation

Though children were instructed in religion on Sundays before Raikes became involved in the work, he continues to be celebrated as the founder of the Sunday school movement. Around 1780, Raikes, a printer and Church of England layman in Gloucester, England, organized a school on Sundays for poor children of the slums who spent their day off from working in the pin manufactory playing and being rowdy in the streets. As Anne Boylan explains, the earliest Sunday schools were designed for poor children who, because of their poverty and the fact that they worked the other six days of the week, had neither the time nor the funds for formal education. Sunday schools much like those organized by Raikes spread to the United States by the 1790s. Lay leaders kept poor children off the streets of slums, bringing them into homes instead where they could be taught the basics of reading – using the Bible as a textbook – as

well as proper morals, behaviour and manners.⁵ By the end of the eighteenth century, Sunday schools had been established in Nova Scotia, but, as Alan Greer suggests, they were not widespread in Upper Canada until decades later.⁶

By the 1830s, according to R.D. Gidney, Sunday schools were common throughout both urban and rural areas of Upper Canada, and they were the most accessible means of learning to read for those who could not attend a day school.⁷ Though most Upper Canadian children had some form of elementary schooling, the school system in Upper Canada was neither universal nor uniform. Gidney shows that the means by which people learned to read and write varied greatly. Children whose parents could afford tuition fees or salaries attended state-aided schools, non-aided private venture schools, or received lessons in their own homes directed by governesses and tutors. For those children whose families could not afford tuition and fees, the Sunday school was a crucial site of learning, particularly of learning to read.⁸

⁵ Anne Boylan, "Sunday Schools and Changing Evangelical Views of Children in the 1820s" *Church History* 48, no 3 (September 1979), 321.

⁶ Allan Greer, "The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada," *Ontario History* 67, 3 (September 1975), 169-170.

⁷ R.D. Gidney "Elementary Education in Upper Canada: A Reassessment" *Ontario History* LXV, 3 (March 1973), 176.

⁸ *ibid.*

The ability to read the Bible was important to all Protestant faiths, and so it is not surprising that Sunday school libraries in Upper Canada encouraged literacy among adults as well as among children. As John Webster Grant has pointed out, as late as 1859, Sunday school libraries were better and more common than any other type of library. By that time, he shows, Sunday school libraries were “five times as numerous as all others combined and contained more than triple the number of volumes.”⁹ Sunday school workers also encouraged their students to read at home. Children who attended these early Sunday schools earned rewards for good attendance, punctuality and effective memorization of scripture; the reward was usually a book, or tickets that could be exchanged for a book. Even for those who could afford to attend day schools, Alan Greer argues that, due to the instability and irregularity of both the common schools and the Sunday schools in pioneer communities, “one no doubt helped to fill temporary gaps in the service of the other.”¹⁰ Greer suggests that the high rates of adult literacy in rural Ontario by 1861 can in part be explained by the popularity of Sunday schools in the

⁹ John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 103.

¹⁰ Greer, “The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada,” 171.

province in the 1830s, when those adults were attending Sunday school each Sunday as children.¹¹

Except for the largest towns of York and Kingston, where denominational Sunday schools were common, most of Upper Canada's Sunday schools were non-denominational.¹² Most were organized not by churches, but by voluntary associations and laypeople. The Sunday School Union of Canada, for example, was founded in 1822, though, as Patricia Kmiec has discovered, many schools remained independent from the Association or were associated only with missionary organizations.¹³ As Greer argues, these Sunday Schools were supported by adults "as Christians, conscientious citizens, and good parents, not as Anglicans, Methodists or Presbyterians."¹⁴ They did not aim to teach denominational creeds and doctrine, but a common Protestant Christianity, because "specialized institutions of any kind were luxuries that could not be afforded in the poor and thinly populated townships of Upper Canada."¹⁵ But Greer argues that the predominance of Union Sunday schools does not suggest that Methodists, Anglicans

¹¹ Greer, "The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada," 172.

¹² *ibid.*, 174.

¹³ Patricia Kmiec "Among the Children: Sunday School Teachers and Evangelical Womanhood in Nineteenth-Century Ontario" (Master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 2008), 196-197.

¹⁴ Greer, "The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada," 176.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 176.

and Presbyterians were unconcerned with matters of doctrine and creed; rather, the cooperative effort was a practical response to common fears that children might otherwise grow up unrestrained by Christian principles and prescriptions. The union Sunday school, Greer argues, “taught discipline and self-restraint; it instilled habits and attitudes of loyalty to king and obedience to parents; it gave children the readings skills that could put them in touch with the traditions of Western civilization and, most important of all, it made Christians of them.” Thus, it is no surprise, he points out, “that the people of Upper Canada’s bush communities were willing to make considerable sacrifices to dispense with sectarian bickering in order that their children should benefit from it.”¹⁶ Until after the 1880s, conversion was the primary goal. Recitation, reading and rewards were the means to that end. All Protestant denominations could agree on these aims and means.

By mid-century, as Neil Semple shows, Canadian Methodist leaders began to see the value of organizing Sunday schools along denominational lines, as well as the potential danger of union schools. The promise of Sunday schools producing future church members was one impetus for organizing religious education along denominational lines. The danger of raising children without a connection to institutional religion and without knowledge of denominational doctrine was a strong

¹⁶ Greer “The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada,” 178.

motivating factor for change.¹⁷ These fears and motivations, combined with the rising sentimentalization of young childhood in mid-Victorian thought and theology, urged church leaders to view the Sunday school as an essential auxiliary to the local church and to the denomination as a whole. Increasingly, all Protestant denominations came to see the value of denominational schools, and they slowly brought Sunday schools under the control of denominational leadership.

By the 1870s, all Canadian provinces except for British Columbia had interdenominational Sunday school associations in operation, but the increasing emphasis on Christian nurture and church membership instead of conversion alone sparked growing interest in denominational Sunday schools.¹⁸ Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian churches organized their own Sunday school committees in the 1870s and 1880s and, though interdenominational associations survived, Patricia Kmiec argues that they lost influence as schools came under increasing denominational control into the 1890s.¹⁹

¹⁷ Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 369.

¹⁸ Patricia Dirks, "Finding the Canadian Way: Origins of the Religious Education Council of Canada" *Studies in Religion* (Summer 1987), 304.

¹⁹ Kmiec, "Among the Children," 207.

Thus, in 1872, when the International Association first issued its series of Uniform Lessons, Protestant churches were already feeling pressure to teach denominational allegiance instead of a common Christianity. Considering the denominational associations were still in their infancy, the Uniform Lessons were a great improvement over what the individual churches could offer, but they quickly earned criticism. As will be demonstrated, the Uniform Lesson idea – that all scholars would be taught the same passage of scripture regardless of age (even though there was some recognition that the lesson required teaching in age-appropriate ways) – did not meet the needs of modern children and did not live up to modern pedagogical ideas.

Modernizing Sunday Schools for Modern Childhood

Ontario contained some of the most bustling, commercialized, and industrialized cities in Canada by the 1880s. The province was also the heart of Canadian Protestantism. As William Westfall has shown, Protestants dominated provincial religious life and the four major Protestant denominations – Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists and Anglicans – claimed a large majority of the Protestant population by 1881, a characteristic of the province which helps to explain why the

development of a Protestant culture there was so successful.²⁰ Protestantism thrived in the late nineteenth century not despite, but because of, the rapid industrial development of the province. John Webster Grant has pointed out that the success of this Protestant culture was partly a result of urbanization and industrialization. The large metropolitan churches whose spires dominated Ontario's skyline in cities like Toronto could not have been sustained without large urban populations of church-goers, surplus profits from new industries that could be put to use in support of church-building, and the growth of a middle class who could finance and staff various church schemes, especially middle-class women who had the leisure time and money to spend on religious institutions and in voluntary Christian organizations.²¹ Despite the strength of this culture and the benefits churches reaped from the industrial and commercial growth of the province, Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians were concerned about these secular developments and their potential to affect the moral and spiritual condition of their flocks. In the view of church leaders, the Protestant rank-and-file needed to be taught how to navigate this new world in a Christian way.

Industrialization, immigration, and urbanization sparked new concerns for Protestant religious leaders in Ontario. With the help of church leaders and a host of

²⁰ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 11.

²¹ John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires*, 184.

voluntary organizations devoted to uplifting the Anglo-Saxon Protestant 'race,' Protestant religious institutions hoped to be able to steer Christians through the modern world, engage them in reshaping that world, and strengthen their resolve to live as Christ did in modern context. After all, Methodists, Anglicans and Presbyterians of this industrial age did not believe that Christians had to separate themselves from the world in order to live a Christian life.²² To the contrary, a new emphasis on the social gospel and social reform compelled everyday Protestants to work for the betterment of society in face of new challenges, to work in service of the social good.

Meanwhile, there could be no doubt that childhood had been greatly disrupted by these larger structural changes. Social commentators, religious leaders, educators and judges alike espoused the view that contemporary children and youth were social problems.²³ They identified the many risks that Ontario's rapid industrialization posed for traditional family life, and were well aware of the draw of young people towards the

²² Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 4-5.

²³ Historians have produced a rich body of literature on these topics. For a Canadian sample of this literature, see Lynne Marks, "'A Fragment of Heaven on Earth'? Religion, Gender and Family in Turn of the Century Canadian Church Periodicals", *Journal of Family History* 26, no 2 (April 2001): 251-271; Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law 1869-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Joan Sangster, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002); _____, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

town and city, where it was thought the lure of theatres, city streets and dances threatened to undermine the home and the church as sources of authority in children's lives. Thus, church leaders were not alone in their critique of modern child life, even if they did have more opportunities to express their concerns to large audiences from the pulpit and platform, as well as through Ontario's proliferating Protestant publishers. At the Ontario Provincial Sabbath School convention, in 1900, Reverend Hincks lamented how few children, especially boys, were deciding definitively to accept Christ and become full church members. He warned,

If the home and the church do not together afford the children a distinct opportunity for decision, the outside world will. We find the book stores getting a certain class; cigar stores get them; the billiard halls get them; the saloons get them. We go down to see the theatres emptying at night, and we find that the theatres get them. We find the Sabbath bicycle gets them; we find the Vaudeville in the parks gets them; and, at last, the Penitentiary gets many of them.²⁴

For the over two hundred delegates of the convention and the subsequent readers of the *Proceedings* Reverend Hincks' warning probably served to reinforce what they already knew: modern life and consumer culture put children at risk in an unprecedented way, and if they could not be secured as Sunday scholars and church members, the church was at risk of losing its place and power in Canada and in the world.

²⁴ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, "*Reflected Rays*" *Being a Record of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Provincial Sabbath School Convention* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 81.

All this fuss about children as a group endangered by modern life was certainly a result of the real changes industrializing society had wrought in children's daily lives. By the beginning of this period, children were spending an unprecedented amount of time away from the home, in publicly-funded day schools. Turn-of-the-century parents had fewer children than most Victorian families, which granted them more time, money and energy to focus on the physical health, and increasingly the emotional health, of their children. Expectations that children had a responsibility to contribute financially to the family economy, at least within the middle class and those who aspired to it, had given way to what Viviana Zeiler calls the ideal of an "economically 'worthless' but emotionally 'priceless' child" by the 1920s.²⁵ Childhood was, by then, ideally a stage of life characterized by emotional relationships, nurture, happiness and good health. At the same time, as Cynthia Comacchio has shown, a youth culture emerged, centred on particular commercial activities and consumer goods and based on age-specific peer

²⁵ Viviana Zeiler, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985). On Canadian working-class children's role in the family economy see Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993). On new ideals of childhood, see Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976).

groups with whom children spent their leisure time.²⁶ Churches were well aware of the need to appeal to children's consumer tastes and peer cultures in this context.

Changes to popular ideas of childhood were also influenced by new theories of childhood development and the growing authority of experts on child-rearing, child psychology and progressive education. Indeed, part of what made childhood in this period 'modern' was that science and state-regulation helped to define it as such.²⁷ Protestant church leaders drew on this 'expert' knowledge, acknowledged the modernization of childhood experience, and demonstrated a keen awareness of the need to appeal to children's tastes and desires when they began to reform Sunday schools into what they thought were places of effective learning and fun. Though children did not need to purchase goods to attend Sunday school or pay for the services it provided, the churches marketed the school as a sort of commodity.²⁸

Sunday school teachers and superintendents were given Sunday school supply catalogues, some over 70 pages long, selling a variety of items that could help attract children to the Sunday school. For example, lapel pins and attractive 'Golden Text'

²⁶ Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920-1950* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006.), 162.

²⁷ Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 24.

²⁸ As Kevin Kee has shown, Canadian Protestants often used contemporary cultural forms and commercial strategies to market their product. Kevin Kee, *Revivalists: Marketing the Gospel in English Canada, 1884-1957* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

pamphlets were given out as rewards for good attendance. “Membership contest charts” helped to encourage better attendance and new membership, while Sunday school class banners helped children identify the Sunday school as their own and as a site of peer culture. Schools could also purchase “attendance thermometers” from the boards of religious education. Designed to hang on the wall of the Sunday school classroom to visually remind children of the goal of regular attendance, the thermometer also drew links between modern-day medicine, science and the importance of Sunday school attendance, and implied that individual attendance at church and Sunday school affected the ‘temperature’ or health of the whole group.



Figure 2. Sunday School Banner from around 1918

Source : General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *Organizing and Equipping the Sunday School: Up-to-date Ideas Suitable for Your School*. Toronto: General Board of Religious Education, [n.d.].

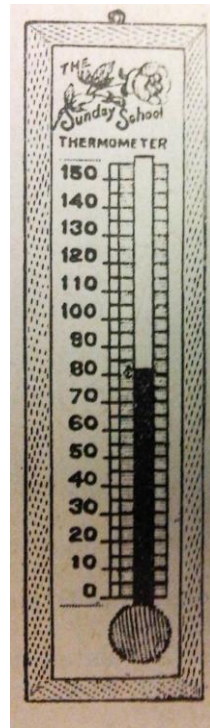


Figure 3: Sunday School “Attendance thermometer”

Source : General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *Organizing and Equipping the Sunday School: Up-to-date Ideas Suitable for Your School*. Toronto: General Board of Religious Education, [n.d.].

The modernization of religious education also reshaped the inside of church buildings. The old Akron Sunday school plan, popular from the 1870s onward, with its one large auditorium (reflecting the fact that all scholars of all ages studied the same lesson) catered to the International Sunday School Association’s Uniform Lesson scheme. As age-graded lessons and age-specific curriculum became increasingly

popular, the ideal Sunday school was increasingly understood to require separate spaces based on age, with particular square footages per pupil. Methodist administrators in Canada were keeping up to date on the new architectural ideal. In one pamphlet published in the United States, but read by Methodist church leaders in Canada,²⁹ the authors recommended that “the Sunday-school building of the future must provide not only separate class rooms for the grades but a separate assembly room for each department.”³⁰ The Akron plan and other similar schemes, it argued, served their purpose in a transitional period in Sunday school history, but had since become “outgrown and are to be avoided.”³¹ Of course, building new churches solely to accommodate the needs of the Sunday school would have been financially impossible, and older churches could not always be retrofitted. Still, it is worth examining the ideal.

One booklet prepared by the Architectural Commission of the General Board of Religious Education in the Anglican Church argued around 1918 not only that separate

²⁹ Commission on Architecture jointly representing the General Sunday School Board, and the Board of Church Extension, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, *Sunday School Architecture (Leaflet No. One)* (Nashville, Tenn: General Sunday School Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, n.d.). The pamphlet is contained in a large scrapbook on Methodist Religious Education in Canada box 5, scrapbook 1 Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC. Hand-written on the cover of pamphlet was a reminder to “return to R.D. Ridout”, a Methodist minister and administrator who also worked for the Methodist Book Room in Montreal.

³⁰ *Sunday School Architecture Leaflet*, 4.

³¹ *Sunday School Architecture Leaflet*, 5.

classrooms were required for the different age groups, but also “in the modern school a separate assembly hall should be provided, wherever possible, for each of the three departments, Primary, Junior and Senior.” Movable walls, used in the Akron Plan, were deemed by Anglican religious educators as “expensive, unsightly, often troublesome in manipulation and they are anti-educational, not being found in good public school buildings.”³² The booklet also explicitly attacked the outmoded practice of holding Sunday school in church basements, cleverly stating, “No Sunday School now-a-days should be placed in a basement. To put a Sunday School into a basement, as has been said, is an abasement of religious education.” Conscious of the modern Sunday school’s links with the public school, the authors noted, “Nobody would think of putting any other kind of school into a basement, and why should a Sunday School, of all schools, be thus mistreated?”³³

The Anglican booklet then provided some floor plans to demonstrate ideal design. The Erskine United Church in Toronto provided one good example of the modern architectural ideal. The ground floor hosted the junior and intermediates’ departments. Their younger counterparts in the cradle roll, beginner, and primary

³²The Architectural Commission of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *The Planning of Parish Halls and Buildings for Religious Education* (Toronto: General Board of Religious Education [n.d.], 6.

³³ *ibid.*, 8.

departments were a floor above. Separate rooms for the different departments, then separate classrooms within those departments, provided for full age-gradation.

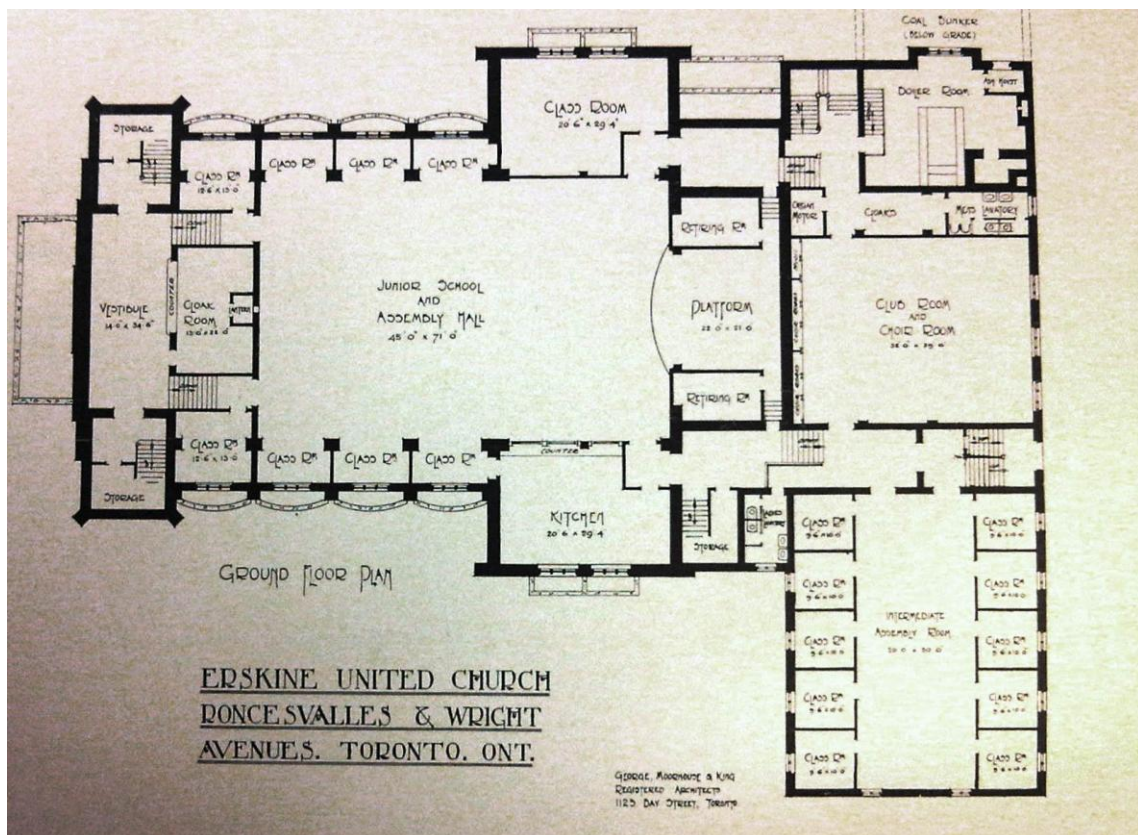


Figure 4 : Erskine United Church Ground Floor- Floor Plan

Source: The Architectural Commission of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *The Planning of Parish Halls and Buildings for Religious Education* (Toronto: General Board of Religious Education [n.d.], 38.

Though, as has been demonstrated, the Sunday school predates the social gospel movement in Canada, the two movements were integrally related by the turn of the century. It was no coincidence that Sunday schools were brought under denominational auspices at the very time that Protestant churches began to concern themselves with social problems. Indeed, by the 1890s, the churches could have easily absolved themselves of responsibility for Christian education, since reading, writing and the basics of Christianity were by then being taught nearly universally to the province's children in the public schools. Instead, between the 1890s and the 1930s, churches placed ever more emphasis on the religious education of the young. This attention to children fit nicely with their new focus on the social gospel. After all, no attempt to reform and Christianize society could be achieved whilst ignoring the rising generation. But children were not just passive recipients of the social gospel's tenets; many of the reforms to Sunday schools in this period were designed to involve even very young children in the larger task at hand, to raise them from birth as Christian citizens.

Denominational Schools and Churches as Social Centres

Though various Protestant denominations began to create their own Sunday school organizations in the 1870s, Patricia Dirks explains that the denominational

schools grew slowly, since many of Canada's Sunday school supporters continued to support the union schools, especially those organized under the various territorial units of the International (reflecting Canada-United States cooperation) Sunday School Association. Dirks explains that the international system was organized around the principle of uniform lessons – whereby “Sunday School students would all study the same weekly scripture lesson regardless of location, age or denominational affiliation” – and that these non-denominational associations offered teachers and administrators a range of support services, teacher training programs, publications and curriculum, and conventions.³⁴ She argues that Ontario, of all the provinces, had the best established and most extensive system of non-denominational association work, and that only in the early years of the 1900s did overlap with Protestant churches begin to pose problems. Until then, Ontario's Sunday school organizers and teachers benefitted from a paid organizer, a Teacher Training Secretary, an Extension Secretary and more. But, as resources became stretched, she argues, the sense that there was no longer a need for these non-denominational associations gained increasing traction.

Around 1900, denominational churches began criticizing union schools. The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Sabbath School Committee “strongly advised” in 1901 that “Presbyterian Schools, where possible, be established instead of Union Schools” for

³⁴ Dirks, “Finding the ‘Canadian’ Way,” 304.

a variety of reasons, including the fact that “the distinctive doctrines of Presbyterianism cannot be emphasized” in Union schools, “Our Mission schemes cannot be assisted from such schools” and, perhaps most importantly, because “We are very apt to lose as church members Presbyterian children that are taught in such schools.”³⁵ By 1902, Canadian Presbyterians were planning their own teacher-training schemes, instead of using the ones provided by the non-denominational association.³⁶ A growing concern that too many children taught in non-denominational schools would never become church members sparked Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican leaders to push for ever more local church involvement and increasing denominational control over children’s religious education, both on Sundays and through the week.

Associational work continued to grow along with the denominational Sunday school movement. But as denominational Sunday school organizations expanded, they slowly turned Sunday school associations into representative bodies of the denominational Sunday school boards and committees. In Ontario, the provincial Sunday School Association began around 1915 to work towards becoming a representative council of the various provincial denominations, as well as of the YMCA, YWCA, and of the Student Christian Movement. It was named the Religious Education

³⁵ Minutes of General Assembly’s Sabbath School Committee, Sept. 4-5, 1901, box 1, file 2, Minutes of the Sabbath School Committee Series, Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies Fonds, UCC.

³⁶ Dirks, “Finding the ‘Canadian’ Way,” 306.

Council of Ontario. The national organization, the Religious Education Council of Canada, would not be officially formed until 1919. Interdenominational organizations helped to establish the fields of “Girls’ Work” (for teen-aged girls) and Boys’ Work (for teen-aged boys) and “Children’s Work,” but often in service of denominations, rather than in competition with them.³⁷

By the early twentieth century, the ideal Protestant Sunday school bore little resemblance to those that had existed in Upper Canada. The Sunday school’s once repressive role, based on the notion that children were naturally sinful, had been replaced by a productive goal, based on a new definition of childhood that emphasized children as future church members and Christian citizens. This theological shift, combined with the new competition churches faced for children’s time and attention at the turn of the twentieth century, made Protestant churches well aware of the need for new, progressive methods.³⁸ Things moved slowly in denominational schools, but the International Uniform lessons quickly earned criticism and various denominations appear to have felt urgency about the need for better methods to attract and retain children not to any Sunday school, but to their local church school, so they would feel loyalty to their local church and to their denomination. Reflecting on this shift in thinking, the Anglican General Board of Religious Education suggested that “the old

³⁷ Dirks, “Finding the ‘Canadian’ Way,” 311.

³⁸ Greer, “The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada,” 184.

ideas of the educational purpose are passing away. It used to be thought that the purpose of education was to take the child and mould him according to some preconceived plan of our own. Now it is realized that, if education does not develop the child's normal powers in nature's own order, it has lamentably failed."³⁹

Religion and Everyday Life

Unlike Upper Canadian children who relied on the Sunday school to learn the basics of reading and writing, turn-of-the-century children in Ontario, by and large, received that training from the public schools of the province. As a result, Sunday schools were able to focus on moral instruction and Christian citizenship and denominational training. But because attendance at Sunday school was voluntary, this shift also meant that Sunday school workers needed to convince parents and children that Sunday school education was both desirable and necessary. As Melissa Turkstra has shown of the city of Hamilton, by the twentieth century, churches had succeeded in this endeavour; even working-class parents who did not attend church services and who

³⁹ General Board of Religious Education, *Our Lesson Courses and their Educational Aim* [n.d], pp. 2-3, box 55, item 200, Pamphlets and Printed Materials Series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church in Canada (hereafter GSA)

were not members of the church often baptised their children and sent them to Sunday school. Parental motivation for doing this is hard to gauge, but Turkstra suggests that some parents sought a rest from child-minding, the material benefits that some Sunday schools offered, or that they wanted to give their children the moral education necessary to grow up into respectable adults. After examining the many ways churches appealed to children's tastes, Turkstra also finds it plausible that one reason for high levels of Sunday school attendance was because children enjoyed it.⁴⁰

Could Sunday school have been fun? Under the control of denominations, religious educators aimed to make the Sunday school a desirable place for children to be and religion a topic that could sustain children's interest. In many ways, Protestant churches spoke of children as consumers – perhaps a response to the many other consumer goods and commercial interests vying for children's time and attention in these years. Sunday school remained a place to learn the catechism and read the Bible, but it also became a place in which children could engage in peer recreation, celebrate birthdays, read stories, put on plays and engage in arts and crafts and expressional work.

By the 1920s, Protestant churches were experimenting with forms of fun for children and youth outside the Sunday school. On days other than Sunday, children were

⁴⁰ Melissa Turkstra, "Working-class Churches in Early Twentieth Century Hamilton: Fostering a Distinctive Working-class Identity and Culture," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 41, no 82 (November 2008), 498.

increasingly invited to spend their leisure time in church basements, skating rinks, and sports clubs. Some city churches, like Eastminster United in Toronto's Danforth neighbourhood, installed bowling lanes in the 1920s. Others installed theatres and gymnasia for badminton and other activities.⁴¹ A host of church clubs for children were established to appeal to the supposed 'club spirit' of children, and to give them throughout-the-week activities that kept them out of trouble. Even with all these activities, young and old alike thought that the church ought to widen its role even further. At a 1921 meeting in Woodstock, one Methodist Reverend declared: "We must say 'Come and join us in our fun'. We can't keep on saying 'Don't do this and don't do that.'"⁴²

While it would be easy to argue that religious education changed only to compete with the new, secular leisure activities that children found in cities, this shift must also be understood as an attempt to revitalize and modernize Christianity to make it relevant to a new generation, in both rural and urban areas of Ontario. It became increasingly clear that if, from birth, children could be trained to see the church as part of the modern world, the world would no longer be a competitor for children's time and attention. Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists were theologically well positioned

⁴¹ Eastminster's bowling alley was recently refurbished, so that today's parishioners can enjoy the same activity as did their parents and grandparents."Holy Rollers; Toronto's Churches Bring Back Bowling in the Basement." *Toronto Star*, (June 5, 2008), A10.

⁴² "Survey Commission Responses to Questions Made at Meetings," box 1, file 3, Methodist Church (Canada) Survey Commission Fonds, UCC.

to teach this lesson. The shift towards a more activist, social Christianity in all three denominations gave the church a way to market itself as an important part of the community, not just a place to secure salvation for an individual soul. The Presbyterian Board of Home Missions and Social Service explained this shift succinctly in its 1925 report to the General Council of the United Church of Canada:

Up to the closing years of the nineteenth century the emphasis was laid largely on the individual rather than on the community. Redeem the individuals, it was said, and society will be regenerated through its redeemed individuals. For the last quarter of a century the emphasis has shifted more to the community. It is now admitted that to make and keep the individuals religious the social environment must be Christian. To emphasize both and to keep the balance is the true responsibility of the Christian church.⁴³

This new focus on the community meant that the church could teach children that their behaviour and activity on the street, in the home, and in pursuit of fun had to be of a Christian character. As Christian citizens, children were expected to work in service to society, and this meant that even leisure time ought to be spent in some socially useful or Christian way. These ideals were not completely new, but what was new was the expectation that churches had to provide their flocks, young and old, with training in citizenship, opportunities to engage in service, and recreational opportunities.

⁴³ Report of the Board of Home Missions and Social Service of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to the General Council of the United Church of Canada. *United Church of Canada Record of Proceedings and Year Book 1925* (Toronto), 101.

A 1935 Report of the United Church Committee on Co-Ordination of Church Programmes explained that since true Christian living happens outside the church building, training for Christian living, such as the training provided in Sunday schools and in its auxiliary organizations, must take a wider view of the world. The explanation is worth quoting at length for its clarification of the ways that the social gospel shaped religious education programming in the twentieth century:

Since the true arena of Christian living must always be the market-place, the work-shop, the playground rather than the temple and the place of worship, the programmes by which modern youth may be fortified for this testing but inevitable day should be planned with this great need in mind. That the Christian only shows his or her true loyalty to Christ when functioning in the world of daily living should be one of the first and constantly remembered principles in all our programme building from the youngest to the eldest. This can be best accomplished by such programme of culture and training in the Christian faith and practice as may accustom developing personalities to function as Christians in the actual state of affairs and experiences of their own age group. To make Christianity a deciding factor in the conduct demanded in the natural surroundings – home, school, play, later in business and as citizens is, in the mind of your committee, a prerequisite to the approach of this question of co-ordinated youth programme material.⁴⁴

By the 1920s, many congregations had heeded the call of their church for a wide range of activities for children and youth which, on the surface, seem to have very little to do with religion. Church basements, no longer the ideal place for Sunday school classes because their dark, damp and dingy rooms were not conducive to effective

⁴⁴ Report of the Committee on Co-ordination of Church Programmes With special reference to mid-week activities of Juniors, Intermediates and Seniors (Board Meeting April 9-11, 1935), box 59, book of minutes 1934-1936, Minutes of the Board of Christian Education Subseries, Administrative Records Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

learning, found a new use in the twentieth century, when churches called for their transformation into recreational areas and spaces for mid-week training. The basement of St. James Parish Hall in Toronto, for example, had a bowling alley, a gymnasium, a kitchen, and locker rooms for girls, boys and men.

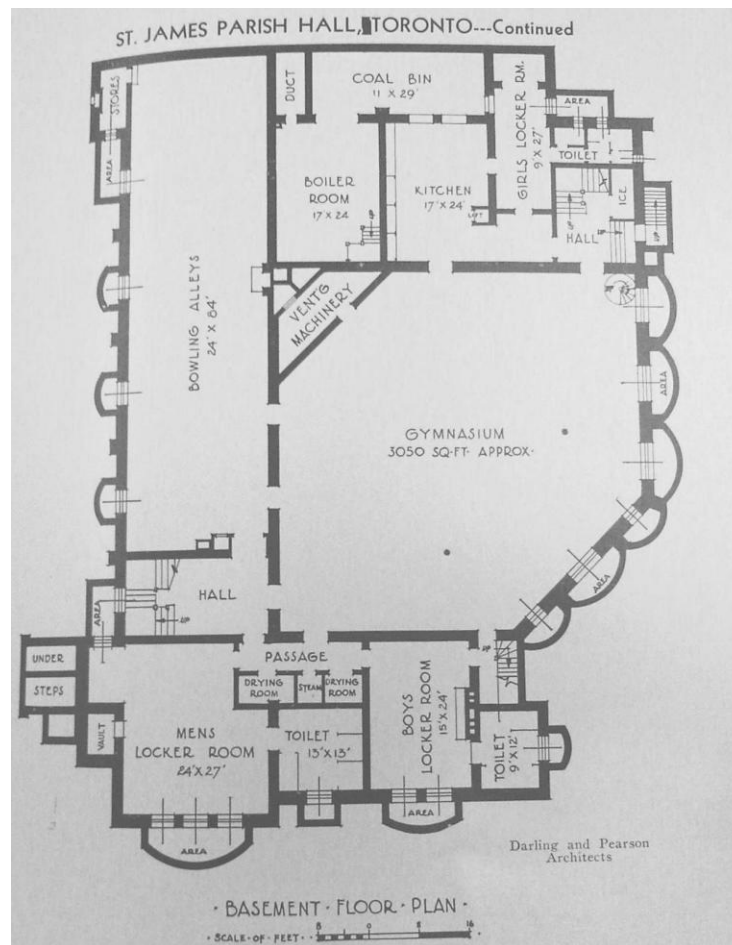


Figure 5: St. James Parish Hall, Toronto. Basement Floor Plan

Source: The Architectural Commission of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *The Planning of Parish Halls and Buildings for Religious Education* (Toronto: General Board of Religious Education [n.d.], 31.

Sports, games and social events for children, on days besides Sunday, were recognized as having an important influence on children and their decision later, as teens, to remain within the fold of the church.



Figure 6. Boys enjoying Sunday School Picnic food in Prince Edward County, 1909.

Source: Deseronto Archives

The Sunday school also in many ways became a community centre. In churches of all sizes, both in town and country, Sunday schools brought the wider community together for concerts, Christmas plays, Mother's days and, the most fondly remembered event of all: the annual Sunday school picnic, where children and parents could

socialize outside of the church with church leaders, Sunday school teachers and pastors, as well as with neighbours, friends and Sunday school classmates. There, they might compete in friendly lawn games, potato-sack races, or in pie-eating contests.

The abundance of photographs taken at Sunday school picnics throughout the province and throughout the years under examination here, demonstrates the chief importance of the Sunday school picnic to the whole community, young and old alike.



Figure 7. Pie-eating contest at St. John's Anglican Sunday School Picnic, Whitby, 1924.

Source: Whitby Public Library, <http://images.ourontario.ca/whitby/53663/data?n=1>

In the photograph above, boys engage in a healthy (at least psychologically healthy) pie-eating competition. An audience of sisters, neighbours, and parents demonstrates how entire communities looked to the church to provide some good fun.

Recreation was important for children in both urban and rural churches, but for different reasons. Reverend R.G. MacBeth of Paris, Ontario, contributed a chapter entitled “Problems of the Country and the City” to an edited collection for Presbyterian Young People, which was published around 1910. In it, MacBeth pointed to the differences between growing up in rural and urban areas, noting that “[l]ife in the country has doubtless its temptations and dangers and inconveniences, but it has some immense and generally admitted advantages.” He argued that “to grow up through the plastic years in the great kindergarten of God’s out-of-doors is a wonderful privilege and training,” and that “there is nothing to equal it in the paved and glaring life of the city’s crowded streets.” Yet while noting that “the child in the country grows up under more favourable surroundings,” MacBeth was careful to acknowledge that young people leave the country for the city partly “as a protest against certain phases of dulness [sic] and isolation.” Thus, in the city, churches needed to provide recreation for urban children to compete with the range of modern amusements they had at their disposal. In the country, recreation was important to counter children’s boredom; to keep youth from

leaving the country, it was important that the church become a social centre as well as the heart of the country's religious life.⁴⁵

In both urban and rural areas, churches began to accommodate children's desire for recreation and sport. The records of the Methodist Survey Commission, which met with various Methodist ministers, laymen and women, and youth throughout Canada in 1920-21 to study the work and needs of the church, give us a glimpse into the recreational side of the church, and its failures and successes at making the church central to social life in both the country and in the city.

The need for recreation was acknowledged by young and old alike. In London, laywomen argued that the church needed to combat all the counter attractions, and especially the picture shows. One woman recommended that the church use feature films to show the facts of the church. In the same city, it was agreed that the church had mistakenly left it up to the Y.M.C.A and the Y.W.C.A to provide for recreational work: "The church has stood still on the question of amusements and allowed other organizations to take our young people until in too many instances we can't [touch] them." One man suggested that the church needed to provide a space where children could "knock about and no harm would come." One church in the city had apparently taken up recreational work already, and the layman who reported this work noted that

⁴⁵ Rev. W.R. McIntosh, ed. *Canadian Problems* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications [c.1910],) 23-33.

the basement was used for athletic work with wonderful results. He reported that the Sunday school teachers took the matter up, and brought in “quite a number of boys from the streets that were really a menace to the church otherwise.” He noted that because of the provision of recreational space, there was less trouble with the boys around that church. At the rural conference held in Woodstock, one reverend reported that they built a shed large enough to accommodate a skating rink, which was to be managed by a church member. A skating rink under church management was also reported at the rural conference in Stratford, and it was reported that this “helped to break up the dances.”⁴⁶

When the ‘Young People’ of London were asked their opinion on whether or not the church was providing adequately for the needs of the young people, the youth highlighted certain problems: church officials were not as interested in Young People’s work as they should be; official church boards would not stand for certain types of games; and that, even if older members were willing to provide recreational spaces, many churches were not well-equipped to accommodate them. Low ceilings and too many pillars made the basements of a few churches unsuitable. In another church, one youth sarcastically noted that recreation was allowed, but because the room had glass on three sides, children and youth could plan anything as long as there was “no noise and [they] don’t break anything.” Yet, other youth reported the positive developments in

⁴⁶ “Survey Commission Responses to Questions Made at Meetings,” box 1, file 3, Methodist Church (Canada) Survey Commission Fonds, UCC.

church recreation. Volleyball, touchball and basketball and community games were organized by some churches, and one church in the city had started building a gymnasium, which was given to girls to use one night a week and to the boys on Thursdays and Saturdays.⁴⁷

Although not all churches succeeded in providing the necessary equipment and space for the recreational activities of children and youth, it was generally recognized that this was an important goal. Successful reports on programs of recreation and sport demonstrated that bringing children to the church and keeping them there by providing 'fun' worked. If the church could provide alternative forms of amusement for city children and youth, and prevent children in the countryside from becoming bored, the costs were deemed to be worth it. More importantly, these forms of leisure brought children into the church and tried to hold them there by teaching them to recognize the links between Christian citizenship and daily life. Sports, recreation, and weekday social events in the church provided children and youth with a Christian alternative to forms of amusement that were offered only for the purposes of profit. They also tied children's social lives to the church and to the community.

⁴⁷ Survey Commission Responses to Questions Made at Meetings," box 1, file 3, Methodist Church (Canada) Survey Commission Fonds, UCC.

Chapter 2

“We Must Grow Them”: Raising Christian Babies and Infants

Figure 8: Beginners show off their Cradle Roll achievements in Shreiber, ON
Source: Shreiber Public Library, <http://images.ourontario.ca/Schreiber/2338735/data>

The above photograph captures two young children – probably “beginners” – on the steps of St. Andrew’s Anglican Church in Schreiber, Ontario. The child on the left seems unprepared for the photograph. The boy on the right of the photograph, though, smiles proudly, propping up the results of their latest efforts. The picture has since been torn and faded, but the context can still be gleaned. Still visible in the frame they hold are the words “Our Cradle Roll.” This photograph likely captures the children after they had gone house-to-house in town, finding newborn babies and young infants who had not yet been enrolled in the Sunday school. Their mission was to find and add to the cradle roll the names of all the local Presbyterian and Methodist babies who had not yet established a relationship with the local Sunday school. Though this photograph comes from northern Ontario, similar tactics – a ‘baby chase’ of sorts – took place in towns and cities across the province in the early twentieth century. Through their cradle roll programs and later nursery classes, churches throughout the province aimed to “round up” babies in the communities they served, hoping that that they would earn the allegiance of both the babies and their parents.

This chapter examines church programmes for babies and infants in a context that saw a range of other agencies compete for the attention of mothers in an effort to reshape their children’s early years. It suggests that the church, though perhaps competing with some of these agencies to establish its authority over children and their

mothers, borrowed ideas from them, too, ensuring that church programmes for babies fit with the medical and scientific understandings of the day. At the very least, the churches' newly founded programmes for babies and infants depended on the same redefinition of childhood that gave rise to local, provincial, national and international extra-church agencies focused on the child's well-being in these years. Now widely understood to be born naturally innocent, the child was a person whose rights must be protected by adults and whose eventual growth into an upstanding citizen of a modern nation must be nurtured by wider society, partly through social policy and legislation, medicine, educational reforms and psychology, but also through religious education. The cultural redefinition of childhood necessitated a response from the Protestant churches so that the religious and the moral were not lost in the process of improving children's health and well-being in other ways. Churches began to focus on babies and infants as never before.

To devote an entire chapter to children of baby and infant age is important for a few reasons. First, it demonstrates the importance that churches continued to place on the home and on mothers in Christian education. Though prescriptive literature argued for the importance of home cooperation throughout the child's entire Sunday school career, it was through these youngest groups that the home, as a place of Christian nurture, was most closely linked to the congregation and to the school. Sunday school

cradle rolls, established around 1900, were a direct link to the home. Unlike in the older age groups, mothers of cradle roll babies were expected to attend any church-based events along with their child, and the Sunday school sent material, teachers, and other Sunday school children to the home to check up on the future pupil. Nursery classes did not begin until around 1930. In those, children of three and four years of age could attend without their parents. With both age groups, churches used the child as a means to shape the Christian nurture that took place in the home. Mothers gained services, literature, and, probably, some comfort in knowing their baby's religious upbringing was going to be properly guided. Certainly, the relationship between mothers and churches changed in this period. New discourses and ideas about motherhood and 'scientific' childrearing influenced the church's approach to mothers and their babies, and the overarching concern with young childhood more generally in the early twentieth century meant that good Christian mothers had an increasing list of responsibilities to ensure their child was brought up in ways fit for a successful nation. Ensuring their babies were enrolled in the Sunday school from birth was one new responsibility that was added to their 'noble task' at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Second, a focus on babies and infants demonstrates that through the religious education of the very young, traditional boundaries between the secular and the spiritual, and between the private and public, were further blurred. Protestant advice

literature for mothers and church-based programmes for infants borrowed heavily from the discourse and depended heavily on the knowledge produced by secular ‘experts.’ Private and public, though never totally distinct, were blurred further when mothers’ private prayers became the subject of religious education advice for their children and as the Christian nurture that took place in the home came under increasing scrutiny from outsiders. Mothers’ meetings and home visitation by representatives of the church and Sunday school were just two of many ways Protestant churches exerted their influence in the home.

Finally, a focus on Protestant babies allows us to examine the importance of young childhood to religion more generally. This is a question that each chapter seeks to answer in its own way. After all, we cannot ask of babies and infants the question that many historians attempt to answer of adult religion: what did they *believe*? But we can ask why parents, some of whom did not attend church themselves, baptized their babies and asked to have their names added to the cradle roll. And we can examine why the church was so focused on young childhood to begin with. Part of this answer lies in the overarching emphasis on childhood more generally in these years. But in this chapter, I suggest that, like other reform efforts, the aims of church leaders and Sunday schools in recruiting babies and infants were broad and ambitious. A generation of adults, raised

from birth as Christian citizens, was to be the immediate result. The broader goal was to grow out of the nation's babies a better, Christian nation.

Babies and Infants: a Twentieth-Century Concern

Women's historians, social historians and historians of childhood have found rich subjects of study in the various reform movements that arose in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Canada. Many highlight the overwhelming importance placed on childhood in those reform movements. From the public health campaigns that focused on pure milk for infants to public playground movements and the promotion of kindergartens and nurseries – the varied forms of child-saving and child welfare

campaigns had one prevailing idea in common: that to improve the nation, they must focus on the rising generation.¹

The army of adults who concerned themselves with child welfare at the beginning of the twentieth century was even more varied than their differing solutions. Nurses, maternal associations, doctors, psychologists, feminists, organized labour, educationists, and government were just some of the many groups of men and women who were involved in the effort to improve the childhoods of the nation's children. Though many historians highlight the important role of Christian leaders in these campaigns, especially in the early years, most write off the churches' role as one of diminishing importance; the assumption is that the church lost power over child welfare to the state. Perhaps it is the assumption of this diminishing importance that explains

¹ Some Canadian works that demonstrate the focus on the rising generation are Jean Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children" in J. Barman, N. Sutherland and J.D. Wilson, ed., *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, (Calgary: Detselig, 1995), 57-80; Diane Dodd, "Advice to Parents: The BlueBooks, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-34" *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 1, no 8 (1991): 203-30; Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); _____, *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada From the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). For outside Canada, see Fiona Paisley, "Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire" in Philippa Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 240-259; Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Raising Empires like Children: Race, Nation, and Religious Education," *American Literary History* 8, no 3 (1996): 399-425.

why few historians recognize the church and Sunday school as sites of childhood reform.

Until the late nineteenth century, young children and babies were not assumed to need special religious education outside that which ‘naturally’ occurred in the Christian home. Of course, good Christian parents had their children baptized in the Church and they went to church themselves, where they could learn to understand portions of the Bible so they could impart that knowledge to their children. That parents were largely left alone to this task did not mean that home-based religious training was unimportant. In the mid-nineteenth century, Horace Bushnell recognized infancy, what he called the ‘age of impressions,’ as of primary importance in the Christian nurture of children. He proclaimed: “Let every Christian father and mother understand, when their child is three years old, that they have done more than half of all they will ever do for his character.”² Despite the growing awareness of infancy as a critical time for Christian nurture and character building, the task of nurturing Christian babies fell outside the mandate and capabilities of most nineteenth-century Sunday schools. Neither pastors nor Sunday school teachers were better qualified than mothers to teach the fundamentals of Christianity to the very young.

² Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1861), 248-249.

Only a modernized, graded Sunday school, as we have seen, could even entertain the idea of dealing with babies. As Alan Greer has shown, until the 1840s, most Sunday schools were interdenominational union schools, designed to teach a common evangelical Christianity.³ Their heavy emphasis on teaching children to read the Bible precluded them from recruiting pre-literate infants. The denominational schools which developed and eventually predominated in the second half of the nineteenth century gave churches greater impetus to raise children in their denominational faith – seeing in them a pool from which would be drawn future church members and a large source of Christian labour. Yet, the continued use of Uniform Lessons continued to place heavy emphasis on reading, precluding the participation of younger children. Only in the early twentieth century, once graded instruction gained support, could babies be taught. As Frank Langford explained years after it had been introduced, graded instruction entailed a shift in goals: it replaced the goal of teaching the Bible with the goal of teaching the child. With this shift, denominational schools could be sure their children were learning about their local church, their denominational doctrine, the various mission enterprises in which their church was involved, as well as

³ Allan Greer, “The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada,” *Ontario History* 67, no 3 (September 1975), 169-170.

other schemes the church supported, like temperance.⁴ Thus, this move towards denominational control of religious education and graded instruction paved the way for recruiting ever younger children into the church. Children too young to be literate could be taught separately, in different, age-appropriate ways.

There had also been theological barriers to recruiting infants to the Sunday school. Before the 1880s, very young children were largely ignored by the educational arm of the church because of their questionable moral status. As Neil Semple has shown of Canadian Methodists, until the 1870s very young children were thought to be naturally sinful by virtue of their being heir to Adam's sin. Until Christians could be mature enough to repent and be reborn, they were damned. Even babies were doomed. Semple argues, however, that this theological position was untenable in the context of late-nineteenth century Romantic sentimentalism and the 'discovery of the child.' By the 1880s, a more positive view of the moral status of children took hold. Very young children and babies, though they could not be reborn and could not actively repent, were nevertheless deemed capable of being saved, thanks to some theological adjustments and widespread acceptance of the idea that Christ's atonement conferred on them God's saving grace. As Semple explains,

⁴ Frank Langford, "Periods in the History of the Sunday School Curriculum," (1940) adapted and revised by E.R. McLean in 1955, box 18, book 3, Curriculum subseries, Functional Committees Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

Under pressure from Romantic sentimentalism, popular belief would simply not tolerate the resulting eternal damnation for deceased infants. In fact, even the view that children were neutral, *tabula rasa* – blank surfaces upon which proper attributes could be etched – was giving way to the trust that children were innocent and naturally moral creatures. Under such assurance, the church could more logically protect and praise childhood.⁵

Until the turn of the century, then, there were few reasons to bring the very young child into the church. Damned until they could consciously repent, and incapable of reading and understanding the Uniform Lessons, babies and infants had no place in the Sunday school. The modernized twentieth-century Sunday schools, now, according to Semple, the “nurseries of the church,” rather than nurseries of piety, had good reason to recruit scholars of younger and younger age groups.⁶ The twin goals of instilling denominational identity and enlisting children as future church members were central to all twentieth-century Sunday school efforts. Even babies were seen to need the special nurture of the Church. Mothers’ instinct, it seems, was not enough to raise children in the faith properly. It was up to a new breed of Protestant educational expert to ensure children were raised from birth as good Christians.

⁵ Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 370.

⁶ Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 370

Church educators recognized early on that, when it came to very young children, church programmes were lacking. A 1908 compilation of recommendations made by 131 Methodist Sunday School District secretaries throughout the country included that “[a] closer sympathy with childhood [is] needed generally” and that children need to be brought into church relationship through the Sunday school early.⁷ In the same year, the Committee recognized the need for a system of thoroughly graded instruction, “particularly for the benefit of the younger children.”⁸ By that point, the need to enlist the very young was already recognized in some respects. In 1902, when the Presbyterian Church of Canada considered grading the Sunday school classroom into departments based on age and ability, it included the recommendation to have both a cradle roll for Presbyterian babies and a primary department for “non-readers” up to the age of eight years.⁹ Though it took some time to incorporate these suggestions and to make changes, these early recommendations demonstrate a new concern for babies and infants among religious educators and church leaders in the first years of the twentieth century.

⁷ Frank Langford, “Periods in the History of the Sunday School Curriculum,” 5.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Minutes of General Assembly’s Sabbath School Committee, April 9-10, 1902, box 1, file 2, Minutes of the Sabbath School Committee Series, Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies Fonds, UCC.

Undoubtedly, these efforts to enlist very young children were partly a response to the lowering fertility rates among Protestants. As Peter Gossage and Danielle Gauvreau have shown, Ontario had the largest discrepancy among all of the Canadian provinces in 1901 between Catholic and Protestant fertility; in no other province or territory did Catholic fertility outweigh that of Protestants to such a large degree.¹⁰ The church would have seen that Catholics, though still a minority in the province, had the numbers to support increases in church membership. Protestant Ontarians, however, were having fewer and fewer babies, making the task of raising in the Protestant faith the fewer Protestant children being born all the more important. George C. Pidgeon, Convener of the Board of Home Missions and Social Service of the Presbyterian Church, highlighted this fact in his 1917 pamphlet “Nation Building: A view of the Work of Home Missions and Social Service.” In it, he drew on Horace Bushnell’s work on Christian Nurture to restate the argument that “if the church simply holds its own its growth will be rapid, even phenomenal.” Conversion and family propagation were the two main ways by which the Kingdom of God could be extended, he argued, but to “hold our families for Christ” was the first aim of the home mission work. He explained, “the church that fails to hold the members of her own families fails in the

¹⁰ Peter Gossage and Danielle Gauvreau, “Canadian Fertility in 1901: A Bird’s-Eye View” in Eric W. Sager and Peter Baskerville eds., *Household Counts. Canadian and Household Families in 1901* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 83.

most important part of her divine commission, for no ingathering from the outside can compensate for their loss.”¹¹

In the Cradle Roll, church and Sunday school leaders found a way to enlist children from birth, with the hopes that they would form a lifelong attachment to their congregation, school, and to their faith from babyhood forward.

The Cradle Roll for Babies

In a welcome ceremony for infants, the superintendent of the Sunday school was told to ask the scholars, “what kinds of babies do we want on the roll?” In response, Children of the beginner’s department were to sing the following song:

*Babies short, and babies tall,
Babies big, and babies small.
Blue-eyed babies, babies fair.
Brown-eyed babies, with lots of hair.
Babies so tiny they can't sit up,
Babies that drink from a silver cup.
Babies that coo, babies that creep,
Babies that only can eat and sleep.
Babies that laugh, and babies that talk,
Babies quite big enough to walk.¹²*

¹¹ George C. Pidgeon, *Nation Building: A Review of Home Missions and Social Service* (Toronto: The Board of Home Missions and Social Service, [1917?]), 9-11.

The cradle roll (or “Font Roll” in the Anglican Church) probably did attract babies of each sort; it was one of the most enduring and successful programmes for Protestant children in the twentieth century. Its roots date back to 1877 in New Jersey, where an infant class teacher in a Baptist Sunday school began a group for the little sisters and brothers of the pupils.¹³ In Ontario, the cradle roll was given special emphasis at the Annual Convention of the Provincial Sunday School Association in 1900.¹⁴ Not yet a well-established programme in the province, the cradle roll was nevertheless touted “as an important means for the still greater development of Sabbath School work throughout the Province.”¹⁵ Miss Harlow was asked to speak on the topic and to stress the virtues of the cradle roll to the delegates of the convention. The cradle roll, she explained, was “those children who are under Sunday School age, but whose parents desire to have them under the pastoral care of the school, with the understanding

¹² Elizabeth W. Sudlow, *The Cradle Roll Department* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1915), 71.

¹³ *ibid.* 7.

¹⁴ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, “*Reflected Rays*” *Being a Record of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Provincial Sabbath School Convention* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 85-89.

¹⁵ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, “*Reflected Rays*,” 39.

that when the child becomes of Sunday School age, he shall enter the school.”¹⁶ She then explained the aims of the cradle roll:

The thought was not primarily to help the little child, but the primary thought was, how could that child be early drawn into the school with cords that should multiply as the years go on, instead of the thread growing constantly weaker, and perhaps not snapping suddenly, but just giving way when boys and girls get to that age when they think they know a great deal more than anybody else in the world.¹⁷

So important was it to get the baby to enrol that the mother’s motives in taking such a step did not matter much. In a 1915 book recommended for cradle roll workers in the United Church, author Elizabeth Sudlow did not seem to mind that parental motivations could be less than purely religious. She points out that “[p]arents may be willing to allow their names to be enrolled because of the beautiful wall roll which is used, or because of the good times which are provided at the little parties.”¹⁸ She also suggested that parents might be attracted to the programme because of a birthday card or a holiday remembrance the baby received. Whatever the reason, even if it were superficial, the author stressed that the real importance was getting the baby’s name

¹⁶ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, “*Reflected Rays*,” 85.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Sudlow, *The Cradle Roll Department*, 6.

added to the roll. The result of doing so would be good for the whole family: “At any rate, baby is a member of the school, and as a result of its presence we find the parents and other members of the family with a deepened interest in things of a spiritual nature.”¹⁹ A 1931 article published in the United Church’s *The Counsellor* magazine for Sunday school teachers echoed Sudlow’s optimism about the cradle roll. The anonymous author stressed that the cradle roll was so “immensely worthwhile” that “no church school can afford to be without [it].”²⁰ As soon as the baby’s name was added to the roll, he became a member of the church school. This, according to the article, established his identity, and placed responsibility on the church for the baby’s religious upbringing.

Indeed, once instituted, the baby members would be well taken care of; they would be “suitably remembered on birthdays and school festivals and visited like regular scholars” in the Presbyterian Church.²¹ The Methodist church would send them birthday cards and other tokens of remembrance, and their parents received a certificate

¹⁹ Sudlow, *The Cradle Roll Department*, 6.

²⁰ “Our Babies” *The Counsellor* 1, no. 3 (1931): 36.

²¹ Minutes of General Assembly’s Sabbath School Committee, April 9-10, 1902, box 1, file 2, Minutes of the Sabbath School Committee Series, Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies Fonds, UCC.

attesting to their baby's enrolment in the Sunday school.²² In the Anglican Church, the goal was to enrol every baptized baby. Such babies were given membership cards, remembrance cards, and, later, were given mite boxes upon enrolment, so they could develop early habits of giving money to missionary causes.²³ In the Anglican Church, babies were so important that the Sunday school's Font Roll and the Women's Auxiliary's Babies Branch found themselves in competition for babies' allegiance. After years of negotiation, they finally united under the awkward name "The Little Helpers of the Font Roll and of the Babies' Branch" in 1919.²⁴

²² *For Teachers: Supplemental Bible Lessons and Grading the Sunday School. Outline of Studies and Suggestions*, box 6, scrapbook 1, Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

²³ See, for example, the Sunday School Commission reports on Font Roll and Babies' Branch in box 1, file 4 Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

²⁴ First Annual Report of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada for the year ending December 31' 1919, pg 6. box 4, file 1, General Board of Religious Education Series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

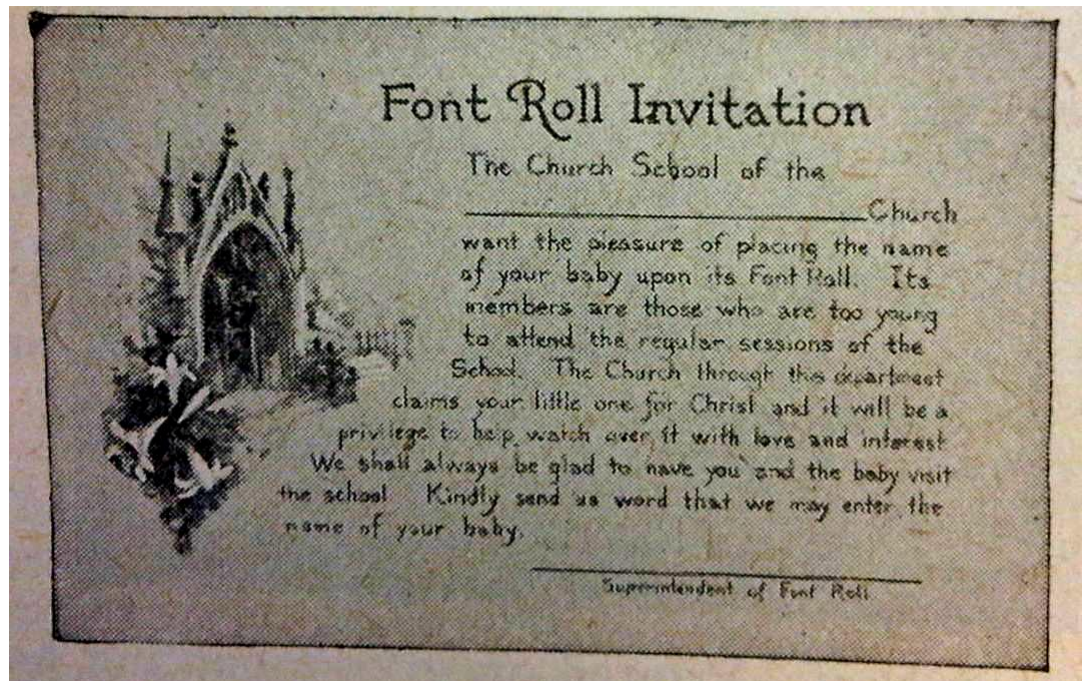


Figure 9. Example of Font Roll (Cradle Roll) Invitation postcard
 Source: "Catalogue of Church and Sunday School Supplies of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada." (1926), box 54, item 20, Pamphlet and Printed Materials series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

The cradle roll certainly appealed to many parents. The Methodists throughout Canada had over 12,000 babies on their rolls by 1907.²⁵ In 1914, the Anglicans reported

²⁵ "Our Sunday School Work. Methodist Church Canada and Newfoundland" box 6, scrapbook, Methodist Church of Canada General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

343 font rolls in 19 Dioceses, with a total Canadian membership of 11,745.²⁶ After uniting with the Women's Auxiliary, their numbers amounted to 14,127 in 1921. In 1930, the United Church of Canada claimed just over 60,000 babies on its roll.²⁷ Add this figure to the Anglican numbers for 1930 and we find over 84,000 babies and infants were under the care of the Sunday school in that year.²⁸ Parents were so enthusiastic about the idea that there were reports of parents with babies under an hour old requesting to have their baby's name added to the roll.²⁹

Most babies were likely recruited by the Sunday school through its various outreach activities. Congratulatory notes from the Sunday school or Cradle Roll Superintendent upon hearing of the birth of a baby in town, followed by an invitation to the baby to join a few weeks later, was one way of encouraging enrolment. Sudlow also recommended establishing "little mothers" clubs among the girls of the Sunday school, (particularly those in the primary or junior departments) though boys could also do the

²⁶ Sixth Annual Report of the Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada [1914], pp 17, box 1, file 4, Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada Series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

²⁷ Report of Frank Langford, Secretary, 1933, pp 31. box 3, file 3, Annual Reports and Files of the Board Executive subseries, Administrative Records series, BCEUCC, UCC.

²⁸ 12th Annual Report of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada for the year ending December 31, 1930, pp 23, box 4, file 1, General Board of Religious Education series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

²⁹ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, "*Reflected Rays*," 86.

work if they wished to form a “little fathers” club.³⁰ The “little mothers” would act as messengers between the baby and the Sunday school, delivering messages and birthday cards, and attending to the baby at cradle roll and Sunday school events, in cases where the parent could not attend him or herself. Sudlow also recommended that the “little mothers” and other older Sunday school pupils form into a “Cradle Roll Band” who could be “rounding up stray babies” who had not yet been enrolled.³¹ She recommended that a business meeting be held at the end of each month, so the girls can tell the group “all about the babies whom they have visited.”³² According to Sudlow, one superintendent who used the Cradle Roll Band method managed to double membership within a few weeks.³³ The photograph with which this chapter opens demonstrates that at least some churches followed Sudlow’s advice and used children of beginner age to help round up and enrol the town’s babies whose parents had not yet done so.

³⁰ Sudlow, *The Cradle Roll Department*, 18-19.

³¹ *ibid.*, 20.

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*



Figure 10: Cradle Roll Ceremony in St. Thomas, Ontario, 1924.
Credit: Elgin County Archives, Scott Studio Fonds

A fairly elaborate cradle roll ceremony day would be held at a later date to initiate the baby into the church and school. The above 1924 photograph of a Central Methodist Church ceremony in St. Thomas shows the older Sunday school children ready to welcome the new babies to their school. Surrounding the cradle in the centre are dozens of full-fledged Sunday school members, a few young women – likely the Sunday school teachers – and an audience of parents and parishioners.

In addition to bringing the baby into the church early, the churches quickly discovered that the cradle roll also offered the church an effective means of reaching the parents. At the same Sunday School Convention in 1900 mentioned above, Miss Harlow added to her explanation of the programme's aims by highlighting the unexpected benefits of the cradle roll on the home:

... our first thought of the Cradle Roll was not so much to help the little child as it was to reach the home back of the child, but we found that the influence reached infinitely further than we expected, and it has brought the mothers and it has brought the fathers into the Sunday School, and I can tell you of five fathers and mothers that came into the church simply because their babies were on the Cradle Roll. They said, we will come to the church that takes care of our baby.³⁴

As the cradle roll gained popularity among parents, the church increased its scope and used it as a way to exert its influence in the private realm of the home. Through the cradle roll and later nursery classes of the Sunday school, Protestant churches managed to bring mothering under the auspices of the church, not only because mothers were Christians in their own right, but also because they were nurturers of Christian babies.

As many historians have argued of this period, one of defining aspects of turn-of-the-century motherhood was the new importance placed on medical and scientific

³⁴ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, *Reflected Rays*, 97.

expertise.³⁵ Others have suggested the increased influence of scientific expertise in Canada more generally represented a shift in the worldviews of Canadians away from the religious and towards the scientific.³⁶ But as the development of the Cradle roll demonstrates, this new emphasis on scientific and medical expertise in child-rearing did not mean that religious authority was eclipsed by secular expertise. Rather, the Church borrowed from these experts and reformed their methods to keep Christian nurture in line with the scientific and medical theories of the day. The cradle roll certificates that were presented to parents after their baby had been listed on the Sunday school membership roll were so intricately designed that it is clear that they were meant to be displayed, not packed away somewhere, in the home. Hung on a wall in the home, such certificates not only signified that babies raised in the house were already Christians; they also served as an attractive piece of evidence that the mother was both modern and

³⁵ Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Rainer Baehre, "Victorian Psychiatry and Canadian Motherhood," *Canadian Woman Studies* 2, no 1 (1980): 44-46; Denyse Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec 1910-1970* (Waterloo, On: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009); Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children 1900-1940* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); Dodd, Dianne E. 'Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, M.D., and the Federal Department of Health.' *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 8 (1991), 203-30; Wendy Mitchinson, *Giving Birth in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

³⁶ Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

Christian. The example below, from a St. George Baptist Sunday School in 1929, is similar to the ones Methodist, Presbyterian, United and Anglican churches used.



Figure 11: Cradle Roll Certificate, 1929. Rosebrugh Family Collection.
 Source: The County of Brant Public Library and South Dumfries Historical Society,
<http://images.ourontario.ca/brant/2337431/data>

By the late 1920s, the cradle roll was defined by the United Church as “the instrument through which the church does the three-fold task of leading the parents to see the needs of the child, inspiring in them the desire to meet that need, and giving them practical assistance in their efforts to meet it effectively.”³⁷ The methods of achieving these goals were remarkably similar to those used by the secular ‘intruders in the nursery,’ so named and described by Veronica Strong-Boag. Much like the social workers, psychologists, doctors and teachers that Strong-Boag has shown gained unprecedented access to the nurseries and homes of Canadian babies after the First World War, cradle roll leaders were influenced by large-scale efforts to “reshape the critical preschool years.”³⁸ They were not only expected to keep up-to-date on the child-member’s health (so they could send cards in cases when the infant was ill), but were also to set up Mothers’ or Parents’ meetings where parents were taught how to develop obedience in the child, for example, or how to ‘teach children to pray.’ The Presbyterian Church recognized in 1919 that the cradle roll had enlarged its large field of “usefulness” primarily “by undertaking to bring real help to mothers in the care of their

³⁷ The National Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *The Cradle Roll Department* [c1925-1930], pp 6, box 15, file 1, Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

³⁸ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Intruders in the Nursery: Childcare Professionals Reshape Years One to Five, 1920-1940” in Joy Parr, ed *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982), 160-178.

infant children and especially in providing reliable practical suggestions for their religious instruction and trai[n]ing.”³⁹ As the sentimental scene in the above cradle roll certificate indicates, church schemes for babies drew on images of a “timeless” motherhood ideal, while drawing on modern methods and science to elevate the role of motherhood further.

Perhaps one of the most invasive techniques used by the cradle roll department – though also one of the methods stressed most in the prescriptive literature for teachers – was home visitation. According to church leaders, the arrival of a new baby was the best time to link the Church to the home and the child to the Sunday school, because parents were most receptive at this time:

At no time are the hearts of parents more open to sympathetic approach than at the time of the gift of a new life, fresh from the hand of God. The very fact that the Church is interested enough to come into the home through its representative, the Cradle Roll Worker, and ask for the enrolment of the baby, draws out the mind of the parents toward the fact that this wee mite of humanity is something more than flesh and blood – that it is an immortal soul with infinite possibilities. The visitor by tactful conversation may lead the parents to see something of their responsibilities for the spiritual welfare of the child.⁴⁰

³⁹ Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Sunday School and Home Religion* (Toronto: Committee of the Forward Movement, 1919), 2.

⁴⁰ The National Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *The Cradle Roll Department* [c1925-1930], pp 6. box 15, file 1, Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE (83.051C), UCC.

But home visitation did not end upon the child's enrolment. There were many other occasions in which the church volunteer could check up on baby. Cradle roll workers were directed to visit the home on birthdays and "in case[s] of sickness or bereavement."⁴¹ Phone calls and letters were also "valuable home contacts" which could remind the parents not to neglect the religious aspects of child-rearing while attempting to raise children in proper, modern ways from birth.⁴² By 1930, cradle roll workers were expected to offer new parents books and magazines on child training and Christian nurture, and to set up parent education study groups and parents' classes, the results of which were to be "a better-informed parenthood, a more richly equipped childhood and a more influential church."⁴³ Home visitation was supposed to occur at least four times yearly, and teachers were expected not only to report any home needs or problems they saw to the superintendent of the Sunday school or to the Minister, but also "to offer,

⁴¹ The National Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *The Cradle Roll Department* [c1925-1930], pp 6. box 15, file 1, Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ The Board of Christian Education and The Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Nursery Department of the Church* [1930], pp 5, box15, file 1. Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

when and wherever necessary, personal service in the homes to relieve busy or sick mothers.”⁴⁴

In these ways, churches developed their own ‘experts’ of infancy and early childhood and attempted to establish their authority as such with parents. By the 1920s, the ideal cradle roll workers were well-trained. Teachers who wished to specialize in the Cradle Roll Department and who were enrolled in the Church-led Standard Teacher Training Course of 1926 not only had to take the eight ‘general courses,’ on subjects such as The New Testament, The Old Testament, A Study of the Pupil and The Principles of Teaching, but would also have had to choose their departmental specialization (‘Cradle Roll’) and take three units on the “Organization and Administration of the particular department,” “Materials and Methods for that age group,” and “A Psychological Study of the age group.” A Cradle Roll teacher had to add to this list of courses one on “The Study of Infancy and Materials and Methods.”⁴⁵

Borrowing from psychology, child-study and new theories of childhood development, Church children’s workers sought to ensure that moral and Christian principles be

⁴⁴ The Board of Christian Education and The Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Nursery Department of the Church* [1930], pp 4, box 15, file 1, Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

⁴⁵ *Trained Teachers of Religion* [1926], pp 8, box 21, file 1, Leadership Education subseries, Functional Committees Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

taught in keeping with the very medical and scientific expertise that some have claimed took power away from religious institutions in the early twentieth century.

The methods and aims of the cradle roll clearly demonstrate that for many Protestants in Ontario, there was no clear break away from the religious and towards the medical-scientific when it came to childrearing. Rather, churches drew on and contributed to the new emphasis on ‘scientific motherhood’ in this period. We must not forget, as Cynthia Comacchio points out, that there was a “profound social optimism about science and technology” in this period.⁴⁶ Modern Christian mothers may have had as much faith in science, medicine and psychology as they did in the ability of their religion to uplift society.

The churches’ free programmes, services and literature might have encouraged even non-church-affiliated mothers seeking advice on childcare and childrearing to appeal to the Church for help. Perhaps this explains the staggering numbers of babies added to the rolls in the decades after the Cradle Roll idea was born. This also may explain Melissa Turkstra’s findings of the largely working-class Calvin Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, where she discovered that between 1909 and 1929, nearly half of the children baptised in that church had non-member parents and 300 of that church’s

⁴⁶ Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 94.

Sunday school scholars had parents who were in no way connected with the Church themselves.⁴⁷ Turkstra's findings suggest that many working class parents saw the church as a benefit to their babies and young children and, perhaps, to themselves as parents, even if not for their own spiritual well-being.

The Churches' Influence on the Home and on Mothers

As we have seen, part of the motivation for establishing cradle rolls was to get at the home. In her dissertation on Methodist women in Sunday schools, Mary Ann Macfarlane suggests that cradle roll visitations were an attempt to inculcate babies' mothers with middle-class values and middle-class understandings of womanhood.⁴⁸ The obvious middle-class bias of the prescriptive literature and curriculum gives support to her claim. In prescriptive literature, women's roles were tightly circumscribed by the motherhood ideal. In the churches where the babies were expected to contribute money to the missionary cause, the middle-class bias of the cradle roll programme becomes even more evident. I do not disagree with MacFarlane's larger argument that

⁴⁷ Melissa Turkstra, "Working-class Churches in Early Twentieth Century Hamilton: Fostering a Distinctive Working-class Identity and Culture," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 41, no 82 (November 2008), 495.

⁴⁸ Mary Anne Macfarlane, "Gender, Doctrine and Pedagogy: Women and 'Womanhood' in Methodist Sunday Schools in English-Speaking Canada, 1880-1920," (PhD diss, University of Toronto, 1992), 327.

cradle roll programmes were an attempt to “solidif[y] the church’s ideological and material control and influence over women’s lives,” but it is an oversimplification.⁴⁹ Focusing on the cradle roll’s effect on women alone skews the wider aims of the programme in relation to Sunday schools more generally. The Sunday school was primarily concerned with the rising generation, even if its consequent prescriptions for mothers were quite conservative. Moreover, the sheer number of babies baptized and added to the cradle roll suggests that these church programmes for mothers and infants cannot be read solely as a way for the church to exert its influence in the home, as MacFarlane suggests; certainly parents, and especially mothers, saw benefit in these programmes.

Cradle roll programmes undeniably did espouse a narrow vision of motherhood, one that exalted the ‘natural’ position of mothers as Christian nurturers while, paradoxically, insisting on their need for training. The view that “an ounce of mother is worth is worth a pound of parson,” expressed so eloquently by Rev. Hincks in 1900, did not lose sway at any point in this period.⁵⁰ The supposed ‘natural instincts’ of mothers were the basis on which church educational programmes for mothers were built. Of course, motherly instincts alone were not enough. Church leaders ought to

⁴⁹ Macfarlane, “Gender, Doctrine and Pedagogy,” 335.

⁵⁰ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, “*Reflected Rays*,” 82.

ensure that mothers were prepared, informed and trained well enough to raise a baby properly modern ways.

Advice literature produced or recommended by the church for mothers varied from books and pamphlets on childhood religion to others that fit more closely in the historical genres described by Katherine Arnup in her study on “education for motherhood” in the 1920s.⁵¹ Before the Second World War, this ‘secular’ advice literature to mothers emphasized habit formation in children and, as early as the 1890s, drew on the language of industrialization and of ‘the machine,’ to explain to mothers how habits are formed and instilled. Strict routines were to be applied to the feeding, bathing, toilet-training and sleeping schedules of babies and infants. In time, babies would learn ‘good habits’ instead of bad ones, which would later develop into good emotional and social habits.⁵² The church drew on this expert knowledge of the habit-formation abilities of babies, even those just a few days old, and advised mothers to instil good Christian habits from birth. Even church-recommended literature on prayer clearly borrowed from the scientific and medical literature that was widely distributed to twentieth-century Canadian mothers.

⁵¹ Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice to Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

⁵² Arnup, *Education for Motherhood*, 85-86.

As the title of Edith Mumford's 1915 book, *The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child*, suggests, religion was assumed to come somewhat naturally to children.⁵³ The book, recommended for use by the Methodist Young People's Forward Movement for Missions for teachers of children and by the Presbyterian Church for parents, described itself as "primarily a mother's book." Although Mumford suggested that certain laws and "an orderly process of development" underlay children's development of religion, the author made clear that this did not mean that parents were absolved of responsibility for their Christian nurture. Rather, the very existence of this "mother's book" is a testament to the fact that religion was deemed to need implanting in the child, and that mothers, especially, played a crucial role in developing Christian character in the child.

Drawing on expert knowledge that even babies and very young children could learn lifelong habits, Mumford suggested that though babies could not have 'knowledge,' they can have 'impressions of thought and of feeling' that they come to associate with particular activities, such as bathing and feeding. A baby of a few months old, she concluded, can also learn to distinguish between the mundane and the spiritual by taking cues from its mother: "For when his mother prays, her attitude, her tone of voice, her expression of face, the very touch of her hand, are different from what they

⁵³ Edith E. Read Mumford, *The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of a Child: A Study of Child Life* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915).

are at any other time and under any other circumstances: and to this difference the child instinctively responds.”⁵⁴ Mumford concluded that what the mother feels, the baby learns to feel too, and so “a child is capable of religious feeling, long before he is capable of religious thought.” Eventually, she concluded, these various impressions of thought and of feeling form into a “definite conception” of an “Unseen and Loving Father” that builds itself up in the child’s mind. None of this could happen without the intervention of the nurturing mother. Mumford argued that telling a child about God and teaching them a prayer was a ‘poor substitute’ for teaching them to really *know* God. The latter could only be achieved with a mother’s work beside the cradle, praying and showing “her submission to, and reverence for, a Power greater than herself.”⁵⁵ When the child was older, and able to pray on its own, it would have learned from its mother and father how to do so. But mothers were still needed to ensure that the child prayed in ways that would effect lifelong habits. Mumford told mothers that “habit is as necessary in religion as in all else, and prayer in childhood should be regular – coming at stated times, as part of the order of the day.”⁵⁶ As Katherine Arnup has argued, the idea of habit training was at the core of all scientific child-rearing, as was regularity and

⁵⁴ Mumford, *The Dawn of Religion*, 11

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 25.

regimentation of every activity.⁵⁷ For mothers who were swayed by this expert advice, and who had the ability to establish such strict routines, the church provided a similarly scientific way to rear babies into habitually Christian children.

In this church-produced prescriptive literature, we can see how the effort to raise Christians from birth justified increased scrutiny of the religious life of the mother and of the home. But these intrusive means were not, of themselves, the goal of the cradle roll scheme. Moreover, mothers had their own motives for enrolling their babies. As with any prescriptive literature, it is difficult to determine if, why, and in what ways parents heeded the advice offered by the church. But this does not mean we should assume that this was an exclusively top-down process. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary: that, in many ways, the church was responding to the desires and needs of mothers and their children.

The Nursery Class

The eventual establishment of “the nursery class” for children between three and five years of age was to provide mothers and their children with a form of church support between babyhood and the beginner years, so that the church now provided a

⁵⁷ Arnup, *Education for Motherhood*, 85.

programme for children of all years between birth and age six. The nursery class –still very new in 1930 – included and expanded the cradle roll department. It also, evidently, was established at the insistence of mothers. One pamphlet described the need to fill this age gap, explaining that it responded to the fact that “many churches have allowed children under four years of age to be enrolled and attend the Sunday session of the Beginners’ Department,” which was intended for children over four years.⁵⁸ Clearly, mothers had encouraged their very young children to attend beginners’ classes before the age they were supposed to enrol, whether for the benefit of the child, or for the free hour of childcare and free advice literature their child’s enrolment entailed. To describe the cradle roll program as an attempt of Protestant churches to exert influence over mothers skews stories such as this one, which demonstrate that churches were also responding to the needs and desires of mothers, who wanted church programming for their infants.

By the early 1930s, the nursery class, for children of three and four years of age, would be held either at the same time as the Sunday school, or, as was recommended, during the hour of the morning congregational service, so that parents could attend the church service – making the nursery class a useful service for

⁵⁸ The Board of Christian Education and The Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Nursery Department of the Church* [1930], pp 4, box15, file 1. Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

churchgoing mothers.⁵⁹ The Anglican Church was not sure of mothers' motivations for sending their child. It questioned mothers' motives for sending their children to Sunday school in a 1920s pamphlet "The Parent and the Sunday School": "Now let us be quite frank with each other in this confidential circle of church parents," it said. "Do we parents really care intensely about the Sunday School as it works with the home in our child's religious education? [...] Do we seriously send our children there for religious training? Or do we crave a free Sunday afternoon, and 'he might as well be there as anywhere?'"⁶⁰

The newly-formed nursery class, for children of three and four years of age, aimed to ensure that children's religious training was nurtured in a way that would benefit society. Children had natural inclinations, but these needed to be directed into proper channels and manifested in particularly Christian ways. One pamphlet for leaders in the nursery department explained that "[e]motional stimulus may result in attitudes of love or hatred, obedience or disobedience, happiness or petulance, confidence or fear," making the task of the teacher to ensure the right outcome crucial. Though every child

⁵⁹ The Board of Christian Education and The Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Nursery Department of the Church* [1930], pp 4, box15, file 1. Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

⁶⁰ General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *The Parent and the Sunday School* [192?], pp5, box 56, item 309 Pamphlet and Printed Materials Series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

was capable of Christian personality, the pamphlet explained, this achievement would not come naturally; “long years of careful training are necessary to help him achieve what he ought to become.” So, the teacher’s task, with the cooperation of the home, was to “supply the conditions of growth through providing wisely-guided experiences in Christian living.”⁶¹

Mothers’ reasons for enrolling their babies and infants in the Sunday school were likely quite varied. Some would have been convinced that to raise good Christian children, they needed the help of the Sunday school. The free hour of childcare on a Sunday afternoon would certainly have appealed too many, as would have the emotional and practical support that the cradle roll community offered. In addition to a wide range of social events organized under the auspices of the cradle roll, MacFarlane found cases when cradle roll workers offered material or financial aid to women in need during their regular visits to the home.⁶² Mothers also certainly had some level of control over how

⁶¹ The Board of Christian Education and The Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Nursery Department of the Church* [1930], pp 9.

⁶² MacFarlane, 328

they used the program, much in the same way as they were able to exercise agency in the face of other public health and welfare schemes for children.⁶³

Church goals in establishing these programs were equally varied. By examining the cradle roll and nursery programmes in light of other church programmes for children, it is clear that in addition to its elements that verge on social control or moral regulation, there was also a very productive goal: the programmes reflected what was, by the first decades of the twentieth century, a clear understanding that to raise children into Christian citizens, religious education must begin from birth. This new form of Christian nurture was to result in the growth of a generation of men and women who would be capable of meeting the vagaries of the new age in a Christian way and with a Christian outlook. These efforts were a modern church response to wider discussions about the rights of children and the nation's well-being, and they were part and parcel of the broader push to improve society, world, and nation through the rising generation.

⁶³ Both Cynthia Comacchio and Denyse Baillargeon argue that mothers were able to exercise agency by taking what they liked and rejecting what did not suit them from the advice and services offered by child-welfare institutions and service providers. Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children 1900-1940* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); Denyse Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec 1910-1970* (Waterloo, On: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009).

From Cradle Roll to Christian Nation

Protestant churches were, from the beginning, participants and supporters of efforts to better the lives of children. Babies and very young children gained increasing attention in these years, in response to a variety of social ills that accompanied aspects of Ontario's development. The Children's Aid Society, established in Toronto 1891, had by 1893 already accomplished an important feat: the passing of Ontario's Children's Protection Act. Infant mortality rates were also alarmingly high and, although there was little effort to ameliorate poverty, reformers and women's groups established pure milk depots, sponsored well-baby clinics, hosted better-baby contests and argued for greater state involvement in combating childhood disease.⁶⁴ Yet, as Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau show, after the First World War, it was not medical authorities and the state who were responsible for the host of new services made available to parents; rather "during the 1920s, prior to the entrenchment of professional expertise, it was the efflorescence of grass-roots reform –the expression of the convergence of interests between progressive clergymen and maternal feminists – which pressed the state and a

⁶⁴ For the Local Council of Women's involvement in these schemes, see Gerald E. Thomson. "A baby show means work in the hardest sense": The better baby contests of the Vancouver and New Westminster Local Councils of Women, 1913-1929" *BC Studies* 128 (Winter 2000/2001): 5-36.

reluctant medical establishment to give priority to child-centered reform.”⁶⁵ They show that it was the churches that initiated the well-baby movements, and the churches that popularized the child welfare movement through their Child Welfare Exhibits that traveled to various local fairs throughout the country.⁶⁶ Most of the initiatives to save, protect and enhance children’s lives in this period drew large levels of support from the Protestant churches. And it was not lost on Protestant reformers that the Sunday school was a peculiarly strong force with the potential to promote their child-saving objectives: By 1900, the Sabbath School Association of Ontario already claimed it had 6000 Sunday schools in operation, teaching nearly half-a-million scholars, making the church a useful agency through which to guide the rising generation in the right direction.⁶⁷ By 1930, the United Church alone in Canada had over 500,000 Sunday school pupils, half of them concentrated in Ontario.⁶⁸

Churches recognized that only so much could be achieved by a focus on children’s bodies and health and by a reliance on science and medicine. The National

⁶⁵ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 126-127.

⁶⁶ Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed*, 128.

⁶⁷ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, “*Reflected Rays*,” 61.

⁶⁸ Secretary’s Report of the Executive Committee of the Board of Education [September 1931], box 58, book of minutes 1931-1932, Minutes of the Board of Religious Education subseries, Administrative Records series, UCCBCE, UCC.

Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada pointed to these limitations in a pamphlet stressing the value of the cradle roll: "men are coming to realize," the pamphlet pointed out, "that in childhood is the hope of the future. State, church, home and the community are [...] today placing great emphasis on the welfare of the child, physically, mentally and morally. Representing the church, it is our responsibility to see that the moral and spiritual needs shall be fully met."⁶⁹ The church took advantage of this new emphasis on childhood health to ensure that the spiritual and moral side of children's well-being was not lost in the process of improving childhood in every other way.

By 1923, training in religion and morals was deemed by the Religious Education Council of Canada as not just necessary for the development of a Christian Canada, but also as an "inalienable right of childhood."⁷⁰ Similar language was used in the Young People's Forward Movement for Missions; in one pamphlet the YPFMM declared that "the church is responsible for doing in such a way that none shall be

⁶⁹ The National Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *The Cradle Roll Department* [c1925-1930], pp 3, box 15, file 1, Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

⁷⁰ Annual Report of the Committee on Week Day Religious Education [Apr. 1923], pp 2, box 2, file 1, Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

deprived of the moral and religious training which is the birthright of every child.”⁷¹

So, by the end of the First World War, the churches understood their responsibility as not just to provide religious education to those who wanted it, but also to ensure that no child’s right to religious education was infringed. This was no small task; nor was it cheap. Between 1920 and 1924, the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches together spent over \$390,000 on Religious Education – quite a large amount considering most Sunday school labour was provided free by volunteers.⁷²

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the ideal Sunday school had a programme of Christian nurture that carried children from babyhood to their adult years. The cradle roll was a crucial first step towards a life of Christian values and Christian service. Certainly, raising children from birth to be good Christians would benefit the church in terms of money, personnel and power, but Church goals were broader than this. One Pamphlet entitled "HELPING Half-a-Million Boys, Girls and Young People to Make the New Canada," published by the General Board of Sunday Schools and

⁷¹ Board of Sabbath Schools and Young Peoples’ Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Forward Movement and Christian Education: A Survey of the Work of Christian Education and its requirements for the next five years, prepared by the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young Peoples’ Societies November 1918*, (Toronto: The Committee of the Forward Movement of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1918), 2.

⁷² “Minutes of the Sub-Executive Committee of the Departments of Religious Education of the United Church of Canada” [Feb 11, 1926] box 1, file 1, Annual Reports and Files of the Board Executive subseries, Administrative Records series, UCCBCE, UCC.

Young People's Societies in 1921, points to the churches' broader aims. Since Canada was in its own "plastic period of its youth," now was the time for shaping the nation's character. The pamphlet asked its readers:

What are our broad acres, and what our great resources, if the church and the home fail to give us a generation of men and women whose hearts cherish the ideals of the Christ, whose lives are actuated by the service motive, and who to the faith of our fathers, pledge themselves to be true till death? There is only one way by which we may ever hope to secure such people -- we must grow them.

The pamphlet argued that the future of the nation is the hands of the children, which made the educational task of the church a crucial part of its significance into the twentieth century. "The one greatest opportunity we have to-day is in the holding of one generation of childhood and youth from getting away from Christ, and training them to be like Him and to serve Him," it argued. "The youth of our land constitute her greatest national asset." As a result, it concluded, "the most patriotic service we can render to-day is in the conservation and upbuilding of our children and young people into Christian citizenship."⁷³

As cradle roll babies grew up and graduated their way into the beginner, primary and junior levels of the Sunday school, increasing emphasis was placed on building Christian character and on practicing for a life of Christian citizenship. In the

⁷³General Board of Sunday Schools and Young Peoples' Societies, *HELPING Half-a-Million Boys, Girls and Young People to Make the New Canada*. Box 5, File 1, Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

meantime, it was hoped that through its cradle roll and nursery departments, the church and Sunday school were succeeding in ‘growing’ Christian children. Tests of faith would not, of course, come until much later, but watching them graduate into the beginners’ department was an important first sign of success.

The graduation ceremony was an elaborate one, signifying the important step children were about to take in joining the main school. In Leamington, Ontario, the cradle roll service of 1932 filled the 1,300-member church to capacity. It was reported in the local newspaper, the *Leamington Post and News*. The article described in great detail the way the church was decorated for this special service, as well as the proceedings of the promotion ceremony. “Just before the promotion exercises, Patsy Wigle, who is just four years old and a member of Mrs. Beacom’s Cradle Roll class, sang ‘Jesus Loves Me’ in a way to capture the hearts of the entire audience,” it reported. After two more recitations by children, the ceremony began:

Twenty-three of the 35 children promoted went through the open gates in the picket fence up onto the platform, where members of the Beginner’s Department were waiting to welcome them. As the children went up the steps and through the gates, symbolic of entrance into a new period of development, Mrs. Beacom presented each one with a diploma. Two little girls, Ruth Tippett and Marie Mason, held the gates open while the young graduates passed through.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ “Cradle Roll Service at United Church” *Leamington Post and News* (June 23, 1932), 4.

The newspaper then published the names of each child who had “passed through the gates” and into the beginner’s class of the Sunday school. There, as we will see in the following chapter, teachers would train five- and six-year-old children to build on the “impressions” they received as babies and infants and to learn ways of living that would establish lifelong Christian character.

Chapter 3

Caring, Sharing, and Making Friends with Jesus: Developing a Happy Service Motive and Christian ‘Character’ in Beginners and Primaries

In a pamphlet dating from around 1916 entitled *The Sunday School - Its Purpose and Place*, the General Secretary of the Anglican Sunday School Commission examined this subject “of fundamental importance.” In explaining why the Sunday school was of such vital importance to the church, the author highlighted three main points: first, that the Sunday School fulfilled the teaching function of the church; second, that the Sunday School is “the great feeder of the Church” in terms of future workers, leaders and church development; and, third, “that the Sunday School counts more for character than any other part of the Church’s work.” The author felt the need to justify this third point in a way that did not undermine the other ways the church builds character. “We need not undervalue the influence of worship on character, or of any of the functions of the Church and her ministry,” he admitted. But, he stressed, “it is

beyond dispute that, next to the home, the Sunday school contributes more in the line of moulding and developing the character of the child than any other institution.”¹

This chapter seeks to unpack what “character” meant to Protestant educators by focusing on church programmes for beginner and primary children in the Sunday school. These were the youngest groups of children officially enrolled in the school. The primary department was later divided into beginners (aged 4 and 5 years) and primaries (children of 6, 7, and 8 years). Though church programming acknowledged these different ages as distinct, there were enough similarities that they were grouped together under the umbrella organization of the “Primary Department,” along with the cradle roll and nursery classes, and they were the focus of specialized “children’s workers” in the churches and in interdenominational Christian education groups.

Though Protestant reformers and Church leaders sought to instil Christian character in all of Canada’s children – including immigrant, working-class, and aboriginal children – this chapter argues that the Sunday school focused foremost on building up a religiously-inspired, moral, and social-service minded Canadian nation from white, primarily middle-class, children of Protestant lineage. Churches’ efforts to recruit four- to eight-year-old children were a clear example of Protestant attempts to

¹ The Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, *The Sunday School – Its Purpose and Place* [n.d.], pp 6, box 2, file 4, Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

modernize Christianity for the twentieth century. Christian educators were not shy about proclaiming that they sought to shape the future through the church's children.

Religious education materials therefore reveal a lot about what Christian leaders feared about the modern world. Their focus on the Christian character training of young children reveals anxieties about the failure of families and concern over excessive individualism and the dangers of immigration. Such anxieties, though never made plain in these lessons for young children, are nonetheless made evident in the Anglo-Saxon and middle-class bias of children's educational materials. Christian character training in Ontario's Sunday schools presumed a young subject who would grow up to be God's helper, not the one who needed helping. These children were the ones who were supposed to be happy and cheerful, not the children whom church missions targeted and tried to cheer up at Christmas. As will be made clear in this chapter, this effort to instill Christian character in the Sunday school's children had conventional effects. Though couched in modern pedagogical language and 'progressive' goals, religious educators taught 'character' in ways that encouraged Anglo-conformity and they defined 'character' in ways that upheld middle-class notions of civilization, respectability and gender. This is important because character training was preparation for citizenship,

and, as historians of citizenship remind us, citizenship always depends on marginalizing and excluding others, or on defining non-citizens and strangers.²

In the twentieth century, the church began to provide a specialized form of Christian education for very young children, one suited to their psychological development and educational capabilities. The primary goal was not to impart Christian truths, but to instil in them Christian character that would be nurtured throughout their childhood years and which would last into their adulthood. To achieve this, Sunday school lessons focused on making children see Jesus as a real man and child, so they could seek to live as he did, and on seeing God's immanence in the world – seeing God in everyday things: birds, trees, sun and rain. The hope was that this domestication of God and Jesus would translate into more than just *knowing*; children, even those between the ages of four and eight years old, were expected to demonstrate their love for God by “working with him and for others,” distinguishing between right and wrong, and, by the age of six years, expressing their “love and gratitude to God, in worship, in acts of helpfulness and loving service, and in all [their] conduct.”³ By the beginner age,

² Julie McLeod, “Educating for ‘world-mindedness’: Cosmopolitanism, Localism and Schooling the Adolescent Citizen in Interwar Australia” *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 44, no 4 (November 2012), 339-359.

³ National Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *The Primary Department* [1926?], box 15, file 1, Church School Administration subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

the goal of Sunday school lessons was “that the child may learn to live in a Christian way with others, and may find happiness in the heavenly Father’s approval and in the sense of being his helper.”⁴

Christian educators acknowledged the limits and characteristics of young children. One pamphlet on beginners summarized the ‘general characteristics’ of children of four and five years of age, classifying their characteristics into physical, mental, social or religious attributes. Physically, beginners were described as restless and dependent, but not helpless. Mentally, their attention was thought to be shifting and momentary, but they had eager curiosity, an unbridled imagination, and they enjoyed imitation and suggestibility. On a social level, pamphlet writers thought it was relevant that children of this age group were fonder of individual play, though they were trustful and loving towards others. This was counterbalanced by children’s presumed egoism; beginners were described as naturally self-centred and “apt to be selfish.” In the religious category, beginners were thought to be very impressionable: “home and things in Nature constitute the realm of their experience, and we must drawn[sic] on their interests.” Religious educators thus had to develop ways to work within children’s

⁴ The Board of Religious Education and the Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Beginners Department of the Church School* [1930?], pp 7, box 15, file 1, Church School Administration subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

capacities and capabilities, and with their personality traits, to teach them to interpret their world religiously.⁵

Ideally, the child entering the beginners' department at four years of age had for some time been under the careful Christian nurture of church volunteers, parents, and – through their parents – the Sunday school. But by joining the beginners' class of the Sunday session, these young Sunday school scholars were placed even further under the care of the Protestant churches. In contrast to babies on the cradle roll and toddlers in the nursery class, where the focus was on Christian nurture, the children of the beginner and primary departments were taught and targeted as Christians in their own right. Except for special occasions or rare parental visitation to the school, the beginner and primary child attended the Sunday school session on their own. Parents certainly played a large role in the decision to send their young children to the church school, but children's attendance at the school without their parents made this age group distinct from their younger counterparts. Children's leaders in The United Church stressed to teachers that, for many in these age groups, "the church is the first socializing agency outside their home".⁶ It was this fact that made these youngest scholars so crucial to the task of 'raising' Christians from birth. The Sunday school had a critically influential role

⁵ The Board of Religious Education and the Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Beginners Department of the Church School*, 3.

⁶ *ibid.*, 2.

on shaping children's character in the present and for the future, and it was for this reason that it was among these youngest scholars in the Sunday school that the emphasis on Christian character was most pronounced.

Sunday schools assumed responsibility for teaching children how to understand the social world around them and how to play proper roles in that world. A focus on children between four and eight years of age thus brings into focus the ways that Protestants were eminently concerned with young children and not just youth – despite both historians' and contemporaries' obsession with the problem of older boys and girls leaving the church behind.⁷ Frankly, Sunday schools and many other Christian education institutions and programmes were childhood ones: throughout this period, more children could be found in church classrooms than teens. In rural Huron County in 1914, a social survey indicated that 80 percent of boys and 98 percent of girls aged five to twelve were enrolled in their denominational Sunday school. What was alarming were the statistics for teens: only 66 percent of boys aged 13 to 20 and 77 percent of girls in the same age-group were enrolled. If Huron County is at all typical, it is clear

⁷ See, for example, Patricia Dirks, "'Getting a Grip on Harry': Canada's Methodists Respond to the 'Big Boy' Problem, 1900-1925" *Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers* (1989): 67-82; Lucille Marr, "Church teen clubs, feminized organizations? Tuxis Boys, Trail Rangers, and Canadian Girls in Training, 1919-1939" *Historical Studies in Education* 3, no 2 (1991): 249-267; Diana Pedersen, "'Keeping Our Good Girls Good': The YWCA and the 'Girl Problem', 1870-1930" *Canadian Woman Studies* 7, no 4 (Winter 1986): 20-24; Margaret Prang "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-39" *Canadian Historical Review* 67, no 2 (1985): 154-184.

that the Sunday school was primarily made up of younger children.⁸ Rather than signifying that these efforts to recruit young children were an attempt to retain them when they hit their teen-age years, we might better see them as a good reason to examine younger children's religious education on its own terms. These statistics clearly show that Sunday schools were dominated by the young. This fact was not lost on teens and youth. In 1921, when the Methodist Survey Commission asked young women from Alma College why more young people do not go to Sunday school, the young women responded frankly that both young men and young women "say they are too old to go to Sunday School" and that there "are always more children at Sunday School and the young people do not want to be with them and be classed as 'kids.'"⁹ It is therefore important to examine the Sunday school primarily as an institution of young childhood. By focusing on the youngest groups officially enrolled in the church school, this chapter forcefully illustrates that Protestant churches were fully committed to the religious nurture of young children, seeing in them the foundation for the future nation.

⁸ Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church, the Board of Social Service and Evangelism, and the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies of the Presbyterian Church. *County of Huron Ontario. Report on a Rural Survey of the Agricultural, Educational, Social and Religious Life.* ([Toronto?]:1914), 19.

⁹ Survey Commission Responses to Questions Made at Meetings [1921], box 1, file 3, Methodist Church (Canada) Survey Commission Fonds, UCC.

Developments in psychology and child-study in the 1920s bolstered Christian leaders' interest in young childhood. In the 1920s, as Mona Gleason has argued, psychology began to move away from hereditary explanations for mental hygiene, in order to secure for psychologists an area of professional expertise. After all, hereditary traits could not be treated. Environmental explanations, on the other hand, gave psychologists good reasons to interfere in private lives, get involved in prevention as well as treatment, and, importantly, to demonstrate how psychology could be applied to childcare.¹⁰ This push towards environmental explanations made the early years of childhood crucial to the child's future mental hygiene and moral fitness. Religious thinkers may have stressed these environmental influences even earlier than psychologists were able to popularize them. In a 1919 pamphlet on *The Local Church and Home Religion*, the Board of Sabbath Schools of the Presbyterian Church in Canada urged ministers to make addresses on the topic of "The Home." One of its suggestions was that ministers address their flocks on the subject of heredity and environment, hinting that "Heredity determines physical characteristics [;] environment or racial heredity (influences subsequent to birth) determines higher moral and spiritual

¹⁰ Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 24.

qualities.”¹¹ Certainly, Religious Educators had been interested in psychology prior to the 1920s; G. Stanley Hall’s work on adolescence was of interest to religious educators in Canada in the early 1910s. By the 1920s, though, when child-study developed into an area of professional psychological expertise and once the environmental bases for mental hygiene gained favour, the conditions were ripe for religious educators to carve out an area of expertise for themselves in young childhood.

The impetus for recruiting young children into the Sunday school was to shape their personalities early. Religious educators made clear that these lessons were supposed to be productive; they were to result in a shift of behaviour. To twenty-first century observers, this may sound little different from mid-nineteenth century religious-based moral codes. But church leaders stressed that the emphasis on character was a modern, pedagogically-sound improvement over more traditional methods. In a 1926 address to the General Board of Religious Education, Professor J. M. Artman discussed character education and the concomitant “shift in behaviour” as a new development:

Public School teachers and all public educators are coming more and more definitely to the conclusion that character is the final end of education. We, in the field of Religious Education, have to face the implication of this judgment. Religion must not be content to be merely dogmatic. Much past religion has been conceived of as truth handed down, instead of truth worked out. We have

¹¹ Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Local Church and Home Religion. For Ministers and other leaders in Religious Education*. (Toronto: Committee of the Forward Movement, 1919).

been “intellectually-minded,” and have thought of ‘teaching lessons’ instead of ‘producing character.’ Lessons are never an end in themselves. They must lead to a control in an actual human situation. There is no merit in a subject or in a book, but always in a person. The Bible should be thought of as a book, setting forth experiences of people who are trying to establish their lives on a basis of religious control. The real test of an educated person is how he will act when taken off guard. Education involves a shift in behaviour. Learning must actually register in the nervous system. Once registered it is never lost. There must be knowledge, but knowledge must be used in such a way as to make a change in behaviour. The only things that we have really learned are those that have stuck in behaviour.¹²

The emphasis on Christian character was a sign of the changing times. As Phyllis D. Airhart has shown of Methodists in Canada, “prescriptions for personal and public behaviour underwent significant modification in the late Victorian period.” As a case in point, she highlights the decision of the 1910 General Conference to drop the “controversial ‘footnote’ listing drinking, card-playing, dancing, and theatre attendance among forbidden activities for Methodists.” She argues that in place of strict prescriptions for behaviour, there emerged a new focus on “‘educated Christian conscience,’ rather than specific rules, as the guide to morality.”¹³ Curricula and materials published for primary and beginner children in the Sunday school also show

¹² “Outline of Address Delivered by Professor J.M. Artman at the Board of Religious Education of the United Church September 1, 1926,” box 58, book of minutes 1925 – 1926, Minutes of the Board subseries, Administrative records series, UCCBCE, UCC.

¹³ Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press), 103.

that “Christian character” was expected to result in more than the simple inculcation in children of strict habits and moral codes.

The growing importance of young childhood outside the home

As the previous chapter highlights, it was only at the turn of the twentieth century that Protestant religious educators began to acknowledge the importance of nurturing young, non-literate children in matters of religion. Though “Primary work” dates to the 1870s in the United States, when the first primary teachers’ meeting was organized in New Jersey, it appears that no national or international recognition of the work was achieved until 1884, when, at the International Sunday School Convention, the National Primary Union was announced and officers were elected to represent the various Sunday school unions in existence. Still, it was not until 1889 that the International Primary department was given partial financial support from the International Sunday School Association, and not until 1902 did the International Sunday School Association incorporate with the International Primary Department, thereby securing for Primary work some level of financial support. It was in Toronto, at the 1905 meeting of the International Sunday School Association, that the International Primary Department, composed of one member from each state and province, was

renamed the “Elementary Council of the International Sunday School Association.” At that time, none of the presidents, secretaries, committee or council members can be identified as Canadians, though the Association promoted Primary work in Canada at that time. Indeed, as early as 1900, the Ontario Sabbath School Association reported Primary Unions in Toronto, Guelph, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Meaford, Brampton and Keene. Almost 2000 copies of the “Primary Leaflet” were distributed that year, indicating a fairly large sphere of Primary work in the province.¹⁴ By that point, even rural and Northern districts were involved in the work. At the same meeting of the Provincial Sunday School Association, the County Superintendent of Primary Work in Northern Ontario reported that she distributed 100 pamphlets that year, appointed several Primary Superintendents of Townships, and that a Primary Teacher’s book had been added to their Sabbath School Libraries.¹⁵

In denominational Sunday schools, when religious educators pushed for age-graded instruction, the need to attract these youngest groups of children to the Sunday school became increasingly apparent. The need for a “primary department” was

¹⁴ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, *“Reflected Rays” Being a Record of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Provincial Sabbath School Convention* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 39.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 57.

acknowledged by the Presbyterians as early as 1902.¹⁶ In 1904, the Inter-Diocesan Sunday School Committee of the Church of England in Canada also recommended a programme of religious education that included a primary department.¹⁷ By 1908, the Methodist Church already counted over 77,000 scholars in its primary department Canada-wide.¹⁸

Few curricular materials exist from this early period, but we can glean what primary work entailed in these early years from the Ontario Sabbath School Association's report of 1900. At that meeting, a Miss Harlow was invited to speak on 'Primary Helps' to the delegates interested in primary work. Her description of the work was fairly vague, but much emphasis was placed on the child's conduct; Harlow stressed the need to prevent irreverence in the class, such as when boys fail to raise their hats upon coming to the door, or when a child strikes a bell before school time or plays on the piano. Such behaviour, she suggested, had to be held in check in order to promote proper conduct, but she also stressed the need not to have "too much restraint" in the

¹⁶ Minutes of General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee, April 9-10, 1902, box 1, file 2, Minutes of the Sabbath School Committee Series, Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies Fonds (79.171C), UCC.

¹⁷ Inter-diocesan Sunday School Committee Minutes, April 11, 1904, Box 1, File 1 Inter-diocesan Sunday School Committee Series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

¹⁸ General Board of Religious Education Minutes Sept 1, 1908, Box 1, File 1, Methodist Church (Canada) Fonds, UCC.

classroom. Children in her primary class were given the primary lesson papers at the end of class to bring home for study. Each quarter, parents of the scholars were given a report on their child's attendance, whether or not the child "knew the text, brought an offering, and if the conduct was satisfactory or not."¹⁹ Miss Harlow thought that the badges she gave out to children for their regular attendance were an effective means of attracting new students. Some parents, too, thought the badges were important. Harlow recounted a story of one mother whose child had mumps and could not attend the class. In the child's place, the mother came to the school to repeat the text and bring the child's offering because the child "did not want to lose her badge."²⁰ Harlow's story emphasizes the importance both parents and teachers at the turn of the century placed on memorization, attendance and on conduct. Though such concerns never disappeared through the process of modernizing Sunday school methods, they were eventually weakened as later developments in primary work placed more emphasis on happiness, the development of character and Christian conscience, than on conduct, attendance and memorization. As it became clearer to religious educators that families were failing to provide proper Christian character education in the home, the Sunday school assumed increasing responsibility for the task.

¹⁹ Sabbath School Association of Ontario, "*Reflected Rays*," 59.

²⁰ *ibid.*

Prior to the mid 1910s, Christian character was something that religious leaders thought could be taught effectively only in the home. As Brian Fraser has shown, early twentieth-century Canadian Presbyterian Progressives thought that the character of a nation depended largely on the training that children received in the home. Fraser argues that “much of the programme of the Social Gospel among Presbyterians was aimed at preserving and strengthening the influence they thought had been traditionally provided by the Christian home in the life of the nation.”²¹ Even where proper Christian homes were not possible, the settlement houses and other reform schemes sought to provide the closest approximation to Christian homes in terms of their influence on character.²² The crucial basis for all social and moral reform, argues Fraser, was thought to be the family. Yet, he points out, everywhere Protestant progressives looked, it appeared the home was failing in its task: “the family was proving incapable of providing the necessary moral and religious nourishment.”²³ Though less ideal, it was up to the press, the pulpit and the platform, and the public and Sunday schools to advance the “Christian collective conscience” of Canadians.

²¹ Brian Fraser, *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 100.

²² Cathy James, “Reforming Reform: Toronto’s Settlement House Movement, 1900-20” *Canadian Historical Review* 82, 1 (2001), 55-90.

²³ Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, 105.

As Sunday school boards pushed for ever-more age gradations, character-building possibilities were made more viable. The primary department became even further specialized into distinct age groups. Though the primary department continued to focus on children between the ages of five and eight years, both the United Church and the Anglican Church distinguished the group even further into the “Beginner Class” and the “Primary Class” by 1910. Age-graded character education in the Sunday school was a radical departure from the traditional character education children had received at home. As Fraser points out, one of the reasons the home was deemed so important to Protestant progressives was because it nurtured social harmony.²⁴ Though Sunday schools did not give up on this goal, they made the peer group the solution to the problem of individualism, rather than the multigenerational community that was the family. In so doing, Protestant churches were helping to redefine childhood in ways fitting the modern world. In acknowledging the limited nature of young children’s experience, and basing the curriculum on their developmental abilities, Christian educators were consciously drawing on modern ideas of childhood development. By grouping them as they did into particular age groups, they helped to bolster those ‘progressive’ ideas. As Peter Stearns has pointed out, modern childhood in Western cultures entailed a greater gulf between children’s and adults’ lives (between childhood

²⁴ Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, 104.

and ‘real life’) than ever before: the modern child’s time was increasingly spent in age-graded public school classrooms, peer-group based leisure activities, and in play and affection in their families.²⁵ Sunday school authors and pedagogues, in creating Christian education materials suitable to young children’s child-centred worlds of pets, nature, and home, were both drawing on and buttressing the modern ideal of childhood, which stressed children’s innocence and the importance of prolonging such innocence. Yet, church leaders were not content to let childhood be a time of idleness; even these very young children were trained to be active Christians.

A Practical programme for Pleasing God

The 1933 *Yearbook* of the interdenominational York Bible Class (eighty percent of whose members were either Anglican or United Church) opened with its leader Denton Massey’s greeting that nicely summarizes the Protestant definition of an active, social Christianity that emerged in the 1920s. “For eight and a half years now we have met together, a group of young men, searching for truth – a virile truth, a living truth, a practical truth.” He continued:

²⁵ Peter N. Stearns, *Childhood in World History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 56.

In York Bible Class, we are attempting to find a practical work-a-day religion, a religion that serves us the twenty-four hours of each of the seven days of each of the fifty-two weeks of each year, and we are finding this religion through the simple principles expounded by and lived out in the life of Jesus Christ – the life of Him who is our friend – yes indeed our friend, through whose friendship we find salvation.²⁶

Though the Bible class was for young men, not children, this testimony provides an interesting introduction to the subject of the Christian character training of beginners and primary children in Protestant Sunday schools because it helps us to make sense of two of the most important lessons imparted to children of these age groups: that Jesus was their friend and the ultimate example to which children should aspire to live and that Christian life and Christian character meant interpreting one's world religiously, and applying Christian principles to everyday life. For young men such as those who were part of the York Bible Class, these two lessons would have had different practical applications than they would for young children. For example, young men might apply Christian principles to their business life. They might use Christian ideals to shape their political vote. But children's education leaders had to translate this emphasis on practical Christianity and Jesus as a friend in ways that made sense to young children.

²⁶ *1933 Year Book. York Bible Class* (Toronto: York Bible Class Publications Committee, 1933), 8.

The focus was on teaching the young first (in the beginners' department) to interpret their daily experiences religiously and then (in the primary department) "to provide for the expression of his love and gratitude to God, in worship, in acts of helpfulness and loving service, and in all his conduct."²⁷ Living in a way pleasing to God, of course, meant living as Jesus lived and being prepared to serve home, church and state – goals that were applied to all children's work in the church. The novelty of teaching such lessons to very young children was that, because of their age and limited ability to read, there could not be much emphasis on the Bible. This is important because existing historiography has tended to view twentieth-century Sunday schools as conservative and as still deeply influenced by their mid-nineteenth century roots. For example, Leila Mitchell McKee describes the Sunday school in conservative terms; she argues that, "in Sunday schools, both the subject matter (temperance, for example) and the pedagogical approach (lectures and examinations) were traditional. It was left to the auxiliary youth organizations of the churches to advance the precepts of social Christianity."²⁸ Yet, when it came to children of beginner and primary age – a group most historians have ignored – modern pedagogies and methods precluded a heavy emphasis on the Bible, rote learning and memorization. A more nuanced reading of

²⁷ National Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *The Primary Department* [1926?].

²⁸ Leila Mitchell-McKee, "Voluntary Youth Organizations in Toronto, 1880–1930," (PhD dissertation, York University, 1982), 329.

Sunday school materials for this age group reveals that these lessons sought to engage children in the project of social Christianity, by imbuing them with Christian character that would shape their motivations and inspire their interactions with others.

In these age groups neither the subject matter nor the pedagogical methods could be described as ‘traditional.’ Teachers of beginners were instructed that “there is no need of referring to books or papers for information” during the actual lesson. Even when telling their pupils stories, “The story should be **told**, not **read**.”²⁹ In fact, the overwhelming emphasis in the Christian education of beginners and primaries was not on the Bible *per se*, but on character-building, feelings, and emotions – and on instilling the very traits of character necessary to have the child grow up into a Christian fully committed to social Christianity.

Richard Allen’s history of Canada’s social gospel movement argues that the basis of the movement was that “Christianity was a social religion, concerned, when the misunderstanding of the ages was stripped away, with the quality of human relations on earth.”³⁰ The influence of this movement on children’s religious education can be seen

²⁹ The National Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *The Beginners Department of the Church School* [n.d], pp. 8, box 15, file 1, Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC. emphasis in original

³⁰ Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 2.

clearly in two ways: first, in the ways that Sunday schools sought to teach children ways of living, Christian character, and how to interact properly with others, and; second, in the broader goals of the Sunday school in the twentieth century, with its energies devoted to bringing up (through children) the social reality of a Christianized world, compared to the older, evangelical goal of simply bringing or teaching the message.³¹

The “Standard for the Church Sunday School,” eventually adopted by the Board of Christian Education of the United Church, made it clear that ‘traditional’ methods would not be effective. It explained that children in younger groups “cannot take part in responsive readings nor read words of hymns nor understand many scripture passages nor pray in the words of the adult who leads the school in prayer.” The suggestion was to allow children fairly free reign of their worship activities, allowing them “to sing quietly their own songs, express in simple words what they wish to talk about with God, and find opportunities of working with him through giving their money and planning bits of service which they can render to others of his children.”³² This Standard also made clear that the 30-minute period dedicated to ‘study’ in the Sunday school be interpreted in beginners’ groups as more than just a “lesson period.” It

³¹ This is a distinction made by Richard Allen, though he does not apply it to the Sunday school movement. Allen, *The Social Passion*, 7, note 7.

³² Religious Education Council of Canada, *Standard for the Church Sunday School, Adapted from International Standard B, Approved, December 1930*, pp 27, box 21, file 6, Leadership Education Subseries, Functional Committees Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

explained that “[l]esson materials will be used, but they will not be the reason for the class session.” Instead, the Standard explained,

The group meets in order that they may think together of the way the Heavenly Father wants his children to live. The lesson stories and other materials are used to help in discovering his way, and being brave enough and strong enough to do it. The teacher will therefore provide for conversation with the pupils; for the use of pictures, nature materials, play materials, and songs and prayers; for the “acting out” of the right way to treat visitors and strangers, or making the room beautiful by bringing flowers; for trips out of doors, and visits with the minister.³³

Indeed, when ‘Bible Stories’ and biblical material were used, there was strong emphasis on how they could be practically applied. For example, the fifth theme of the first year of the beginners’ lessons in the United Church was “Pleasing the Heavenly Father at Work and Play.” For eight weeks, children learned of various ways to do so: Sharing with Others, Saying we are Sorry, Waiting our Turn, Caring for Ourselves, Using What Belongs to Us, Saying ‘Thank You,’ Obeying Cheerfully, and Making Others Happy.³⁴ Other lessons that did not deal directly with children’s behaviour still focused on teaching children to see the world around them as God’s world. Lessons about God’s love, for example, explained that God cared for birds, animals, trees and flowers. Lessons that sought to teach children gratitude to God focused on God’s

³³ Religious Education Council of Canada, *Standard for the Church Sunday School*, 27-28.

³⁴ The Board of Religious Education and the Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Beginners Department of the Church School* [1930?], pp 8.

“friendly helpers”: firemen, police, farmers, milkmen, and the like. In these ways, Bible lessons were simplified to suit children’s presumed developmental and intellectual abilities, and the lessons stressed the simplest ways children could recognize the workings of God in everyday life and in relations between people. Children were still expected to memorize short verses, such as “The Lord is good to all” or “Let us love one another,” but the goal of such memorization was that the “children will repeat it as their own expression.”³⁵

In its attempt to accomplish these goals, the church was drawing on the expertise of psychologists who had stressed that most character traits were in fact learned, not inborn. In *Knowing Our Pupils: A Course on a Study of Growing Life*, Harold J. Sheridan explained to his Sunday school teacher-readers that psychologists “are telling us that that these larger traits of generosity, courtesy and the like, come as a result of having developed a great many smaller habits.”³⁶ These character traits were also taught through story and what were called ‘expressional activities’ - the main methods in teaching beginners. Again, Sheridan drew on psychologists who were “generally agreed” on the idea that most learning takes place through action and activity,

³⁵ The Board of Religious Education and the Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Beginners Department of the Church School* [1930?], pp 6.

³⁶ Harold J. Sheridan, *Knowing our Pupils: A Course of Study on Growing Life* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1932), 26.

by doing rather than observing.³⁷ Relying on this consensus of opinion, children's workers sought to engage beginners and primaries in expressional activity and in small tasks that were designed, over the long term, to develop into character.

It was by the primary age that the results of Christian character education were expected to bear recognizable fruit. "At this age," wrote Christian educators in their guidelines for the teaching of primaries, "the child is outgrowing his belief in imaginary, unseen companions and great care should be exercised to so relate God to the child's life that he will become a permanent reality." The pamphlet gave a few, concrete examples, of how this could be achieved: "When a child plants and cares for a garden he should learn that he is working with God to make his world more fruitful. If he cares for a younger child, or pet, he learns to comprehend God's protecting goodness. When he shares joyously with others he learns that he is working with God to make this world happy. When he graciously gives up his place in a game he may learn the approval of God when his children relinquish their own wishes for the pleasure of the whole group."³⁸ In summary, the very goal of the primary lessons was to "establish a vital relationship between God [...] and the child's experiences, and build habits which may

³⁷ *ibid.*, 32.

³⁸ The Board of Religious Education and The Board of Publication of The United Church of Canada, *The Primary Department of the Church School*, pp 2. box 15, file 1, Church School Administration Subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

become the basis for Christian personality and the medium through which that personality will be expressed.”³⁹ In some ways, mid-nineteenth century observers would have been shocked at the simplified messages Protestant children were taught by 1930, and probably would have seen them as far too diluted. There was virtually no attempt to instil anxiety about salvation. The focus was not on individual behaviour as a rejection of worldly concerns, but on individual behaviour as proper expressions of Christian character, a trait that would express itself primarily in children’s interactions with and care for others. The hope, in the words of J.C. Robertson, who wrote the textbook on “The School” for the Standard Teacher Training Course of 1917, was that the beginner’s lesson of the Sunday school provided young children with “one of the happiest and most helpful hours of the whole week.”⁴⁰

Happiness and Helpfulness: the Character of the Nation

Of course, by assuming the child’s experience was limited to an affectionate family life, experience in nature, and a love for pets, Christian educators were assuming a level of privilege among their juvenile audience that many immigrant or working-class

³⁹ The Board of Religious Education and The Board of Publication of The United Church of Canada, *The Primary Department of the Church School*, pp 2.

⁴⁰ J.C. Robertson, *New Standard Teacher Training Course Part Four: The School*. (Toronto: R. Douglas Fraser and William Briggs, 1917), 288.

children simply did not have. Many children in Ontario continued to encounter “adult” experiences of labour, city streets, and liquor, for example. Religious education leaders might have felt safe in assuming that such children were not the ones who were attending their regular Sunday schools. Many immigrant children in Ontario instead attended Sunday schools organized cooperatively in All People’s Missions rather than by the general boards of religious education, marking those children as different from the children who attended regular Sunday schools in local churches. Even if the same lesson materials were used in All People’s Missions, those children were still marked out as ‘Non-Anglo-Saxon’ in Home Mission reports, a title that carried undercurrents of danger. That such Sunday scholars were seen to pose unique risks was highlighted in the 1926 report on Home Missions of the former Methodist Church, which reported that their work in Port Colborne and Welland areas among New Canadians led the chiefs of police to give credit to those missions “for the partial elimination of juvenile delinquency.” Ninety percent of children in those missions, according to the same report, came from children of “foreign parentage.” As a result, it was assumed that “the only religious training they receive is imparted through our mission.”⁴¹

⁴¹ The United Church of Canada, *Year Book 1926 and Record of Proceedings of the Second General Council, Montreal, 1926*, (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1926), 321-322.

Children who had white skin, spoke English, and came from “respectable” middle class or skilled working class families were the clear targets of Christian character education. In the Anglican church, this was made clear in a pamphlet which described the curriculum of religious education as having the aim “to direct and enrich the whole life with a view to proper control of conduct and the development of a fully-rounded Christian character, using to this end both the present experience of the pupils and the accumulated experience of the race.”⁴² Nowhere in the teacher training material was mention made of having to assimilate the children to Canadian ways, or having to deal with non-English pupils. Those tasks were largely left up to the home missions, or to the boards dealing with social service and moral reform.

Children’s Sunday school magazines for beginner and primary children so reflected a middle-class bias that few working-class or poor children would have been able to learn the lessons they were supposed to impart. The story of “Bobbie’s Bread and Butter,” which the child refused to eat, is a case in point. To teach Bobbie that many people would be “only too glad to get it,” the mother threw the bread out the window, to

⁴² Special Committee on Curriculum of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *Some Modern Viewpoints in Religious Education* [1932], pp 7, box 56, item 327, Pamphlets and Printed Materials series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

demonstrate that birds would eat it right up.⁴³ In the very same issue, beginners and primaries encountered the story of “When Bertie Disobeyed,” in which the central character decided not to tell his parents about having broken the beautiful vase his sister had gifted to his mother at Christmas. Only after finding out that Ella, the new maid, was being blamed for the broken vase did Bertie confess his guilt.⁴⁴ Children without maids and without an abundance of buttered bread would have had difficulty identifying with the central characters in these stories. Of course, children’s literature of all kinds often had middle-class bias. But, in the Christian education of beginners and primaries, the goal was to teach them lessons that related to their direct experience, making the middle-class bias of these lessons all the more important.

Character education for beginners and primary children not only assumed a level of privilege among its pupils; some lessons promoted conformity to middle-class values, especially gender ideals, which became especially clear when educational programming dealt with the subject of motherhood. There was widespread recognition among church educators that truly effective Christian education entailed the help of mothers. Indeed, the important role of mothers was appropriately celebrated in beginners’ classes in the United Church on Mother’s Day, when a special lesson,

⁴³ I. Winifred Colwell, “Bobbie’s Bread and Butter” *The Child’s Own* (January 5, 1919), 1.

⁴⁴ “When Bertie Disobeyed” *The Child’s Own* (January 5, 1919), 2.

encouraging children to give thanks to God for their mothers through prayer and by making a mothers' day card or gift, was taught. On these days, a Mother's Day party encouraged mothers to come into the classroom. At Donlands Avenue United, the Sunday school scholars' mothers were invited to the Annual Mother's Day Party. They left with a souvenir card of "Motherhood Beatitudes" which demonstrates the impossible ideal mothers confronted:

Blessed is the Mother who rejoices in her work....whose children obey promptly for love....who accepts her task from God....who does not worry or fret....who can win her children's confidence....whose children are happy to please her....who takes a few minutes daily for self and God....who is not troubled by trifles....who has a sense of humor....who sings at her tasks....who makes home 'the best place on earth'....who takes the children into partnership.⁴⁵

By bringing the religious education of their children out of the home and into church classrooms, it appears that mothers' roles might have only been further circumscribed. On one hand churches made the religious nurture of the young so specialized that mothers could no longer be trusted to teach children religion without the help of the Sunday school. Though the lessons might seem simple enough to teach, as we have seen, religious educators felt strongly that the teacher had to be trained in methods, objectives, and on the characteristics of their age group. Mothers simply were not

⁴⁵ Mother's Day Souvenir card in scrapbook, private collection, Wilma Margaret Halliday family papers, Toronto, Ontario.

trained in these ways. On the other hand, mothers were continually bombarded with messages that they must be fully committed to the work.

Indeed, one consequence of the goal of teaching beginners as much about daily life as about the Bible was that it required these lessons to be reinforced at home. As with babies in the church, the role of mothers in the Christian education of beginners was paramount. Each “Beginners Bible Stories” leaflet was accompanied by an explanatory note, offering additional advice to mothers on how to reinforce the weekly lesson at home. The story of Donald and Doris, who eventually learned to share their new red sleigh with others by waiting their turn, for example, stressed to beginners the importance of “God’s Children Working and Playing Together.” The notes for how this could be reinforced at home suggested a few different ways: parents should make children wait their turn before telling a story, receiving attention from mother or father, or being served at the table.⁴⁶ In all cases, proper reinforcement of the lesson depended on parents (usually mothers) with the time and the willingness to read their child’s Sunday school leaflets and carry out the suggested lessons at home.

Boys and girls in the primary department, though taught the same lessons, would have certainly understood the gendered roles they were expected to play as

⁴⁶ “Beginners Bible Stories” in scrapbook, private collection, Wilma Margaret Halliday family papers, Toronto, Ontario.

Christians with good character. “Being helpful” meant different things to boys and girls, particularly when it came to helping at home. Sunday school weeks that focused on lessons of “Helping to Care for a Baby” or “Helping Mother in Holiday Time” would have certainly had different implications for boys and girls. Primary children were also presumed to be at the age when they imitate and idealize those they looked up to. For this reason, the character of the teacher was paramount. The teacher of primary children was expected to have a “vital Christian conviction and a growing Christian personality.”⁴⁷ The pamphlet on the primary department urged, “regardless of age she should be young in spirit, with a friendly, happy, pleasing disposition which will immediately win the children’s confidence.”⁴⁸ The pamphlet’s presumption of a female teacher in the primary department made sense. As Mary Anne MacFarlane points out, teachers in the cradle roll, beginner and primary departments were almost always women, much like in secular education, where women were disproportionately located in teaching positions with infants and younger children.⁴⁹ In their teachers, then, girls found an appropriate person to idealize, a fact not lost on male-dominated boards of

⁴⁷ The Board of Religious Education and The Board of Publication of The United Church of Canada, *The Primary Department of the Church School*, 4.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Mary Anne Macfarlane “Gender, Doctrine and Pedagogy: Women and ‘Womanhood’ in Methodist Sunday Schools in English-Speaking Canada, 1880 to 1920” (Ph.D. diss, University of Toronto, 1991), 170.

religious education, who hoped girls would later devote their time to work in church, Sunday school, or women's missionary societies. The overwhelming figure of the female teacher perhaps explains why Eleanor Binns Jones, who attended Sunday school in the 1920s Junction area on the outskirts of Toronto, was confused about the 23rd psalm. In recounting her years in Sunday school in an oral history recording, Eleanor remembered that the superintendent of the beginner's department was Miss Helen Sheppard and "I can remember me thinking the 23rd psalm began 'the Lord is Miss Sheppard' ... The kids all thought that."⁵⁰

Certainly, the teacher was much more imitable for girls than the male figures were for boys. The minister or Sunday school superintendent may have provided some example for boys, but Jesus was always the paramount man. The curriculum specifically asked children of both sexes to aspire to live as He did, though likely only boys identified with His power. The domestication of Jesus in young children's religious education subtly linked Jesus to forms of household and social organization. In their attempt to make children's lessons relatable to child life, Christian educators tried to relate otherwise only imaginable concepts to aspects of children's real-life life

⁵⁰ Eleanor Binns Jones, interview by Diana Fancher 1986, tape 1, Growing Up in the Junction 1900-1930 Fonds, digitized recording, West Toronto Junction Historical Society (Toronto, Ontario).

experience. Thus, heaven (God's home or the heavenly home) was related to children's actual 'home' and Jesus was to be understood as once a real-life boy.

Conclusion

The silences and biases in children's Sunday school lessons give us a good understanding of the goals of character education and a good sense of the future nation envisioned by Protestant leaders. Though the lessons stressed the active role girls and boys were expected to play in the shaping of their community, subtle cues hinted that certain classes of children were especially fitted for the work. Though nowhere in the educational materials was mention made of racial superiority or class inferiority, the programmes imparted lessons that only some children could be expected to understand. At a time when immigration was deemed a threat to the moral makeup of Canada, it is no surprise that religious educators sought to instil Christian character in white, English-speaking children in Ontario. A generation raised with Christian character would do much to preserve and strengthen the moral character of the nation, especially when those children were trained to take on active roles in building up the nation, motivated by social relationships and the principle of social service. As Brian Fraser points out, "Christian character," it was thought, "produced the internal motivation and discipline

essential for responsible citizenship.”⁵¹ Responsible citizenship would be taught to children as they grew older and graduated into ‘juniors’ in the Sunday School.

The social impetus in Christianity was largely an attempt to fit Christianity for the modernizing world. As we have seen, it was hoped that the emphasis on an active, social Christianity – and its starting point, Christian character – would have broad, radical implications. Borrowing from psychology and progressive pedagogy, Christian leaders sought to raise activist Christian citizens by nurturing them each step of the way to adulthood. So crucial was the task that parents were no longer properly equipped for the job, not even among their pre-school aged children. Boards of religious education, using trained teachers of religion, produced methodically planned lessons, emphasizing the character traits of good citizens, and ways to teach such traits in four- to eight-year-old children. In so doing, the boards of religious education were trying to create the social reality Protestant reformers so often promoted in papers and from the pulpit. The modernization of religious education, however – perhaps ‘progressive’ in terms of pedagogy – often shored up rather than dismantled older ideas of good character. It was clear that children’s gender, race, class and the citizenship status of their parents would continue to shape the roles children would later play in the modern nation.

⁵¹ Fraser, *Social Uplifters*, 119.

Chapter 4

Junior Citizens of the Kingdom of God: Boys and Girls between Childhood and Adolescence

In July 1897, the famous Massey Hall in downtown Toronto housed an audience of nearly 3000 children. They did not assemble there for the sake of an afternoon entertainment of the usual kind, such as a concert or other live performance. Rather, they attended as members of their respective Junior Epworth Leagues, each league represented at the meeting by its own banner. The larger occasion was the Epworth League Convention, held in Toronto that year, though this particular “Junior-Mass Meeting” was designed for the youngest members of the Epworth League. According to an ensuing article in the *Epworth Herald*, children were entertained by some music. Certainly, most found some time for socializing with their peers as well. But the rest of the meeting was taken up by adult speakers. The Introductory Address, by Mary C. Foster of New York, was on the subject of “How to Be Good.” Rev. S. T. Bartlett of Cobourg, Ontario then spoke to the large audience of juniors about their importance as future Senior Epworth League members, and he, too, stressed the importance of being good. According to the *Epworth Herald*, Rev. Bartlett told the juniors that “the great difference between people... was not how they dressed or looked,

but how they lived.” A similar message was espoused by a Mrs. Percy E. Powell of Indiana, whose main message to the children was that “the best way to keep happy oneself was to make others happy.” The emphasis that the speakers placed on children’s ways of living, making others happy, and being good, were messages deemed particularly important to impart to children of this age group. Beginning in the early twentieth century, thousands and thousands more young Protestant children, termed “juniors” by adult religious education leaders, would learn lessons about the wider social importance of ‘being good’ in their Sunday school classrooms and in auxiliary church organizations.¹

This chapter examines the increasing attention garnered by children in their pre-teen years among church leaders, and it unpacks the meanings of Christian citizenship and active service in their lessons. Unlike babies and beginners who were seen as quite receptive and malleable, juniors posed unique challenges for church leaders. By the 1890s, ‘juniors’ was a term generally used to describe those of the age just before young adulthood, but by the 1920s, in graded Sunday school programmes, it referred specifically to that period just before the teen age (ages nine to eleven). At this pre-teen stage, the challenge was no longer solely one of shaping the home life of the

¹ *Epworth Herald* (July 31, 1897) clipping, box 5, scrapbook 2, Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

child, or on instilling Christian character. Though their younger counterparts were seen to have open and impressionable minds that could be moulded through parent-church cooperation, church leaders recognized that children of the junior age were no longer influenced only by adults. Since juniors were old enough to partake in social life outside the home, and beyond the watchful eyes of their parents, the motivation to train them to assume proper roles in that social world was much more pressing than it was among younger groups.

Examining juniors as an age group thus allows us to examine adults' anxieties about older childhood, and permits us to examine critically the results of the considerable effort church leaders put into shaping children's lives in these years. In the junior child Protestant churches saw possibilities for shaping a better world. Their goal was to stress children's Christian citizenship and to train them to be good citizens by engaging them in practical work that bettered their church, their community and themselves. The churches' success with children of this age suggests that this message of participation, service, and citizenship resonated with the children themselves.

Though many religious historians have highlighted the new activist ethic that took hold among liberal Protestants in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, most examine this activism as it expressed itself among adult social reformers and the church elite. An examination of church programmes for juniors allows us to see how the

activist ideal was manifested in children's religious education. By the junior age, children were capable of being –and were expected to be – fully committed to social service. The churches sought at this age to lay the groundwork for a life of activist Christianity, not only through instilling Christian character, but also through hands-on practice and lessons on real life situations. Thus, by examining the programmes for juniors - especially the Explorers program, which was the result of years of planning, study and organization on the part of Children's Work leaders – we can also gain a greater understanding of the ways that a new emphasis on activism in Christian thought played out in the lives of everyday, though young, people.

The evolution and the importance of 'Juniors'

Before 1915, when churches began to adopt closely graded lessons in their Sunday schools, "juniors" could mean a variety of different things. Generally it was used to describe that period of childhood when children were making decisions for themselves, but before they were considered young adults. Once the educational organizations in the church began to grade their Sunday schools and auxiliary organizations more closely, 'junior' meant more strictly children of nine, ten, and eleven years of age. They were the oldest group still under the auspices of 'Children's Work'

instead of ‘Boys work’ or ‘Girls work,’ whose area of focus was teenagers, whom they defined as boys and girls from twelve to seventeen years of age. Though still considered ‘Children,’ adults acknowledged that juniors’ agency was both a risk and an opportunity. This motivated adults to shape how children exercised that agency and, at the same time, it allowed children the opportunity to shape their education in ways that interested them most.

The Methodist Church had a Junior Epworth League dating from the 1890s, and recognized early the importance of that stage before young adulthood. Rev. S.T. Bartlett, Vice-President of the Junior Department in the of the Bay of Quinte Conference, and ‘Junior League Specialist,’ compiled a manual of methods called *The Junior League Hand-Book*, published in 1897, in which he made the case for acknowledging the importance of that stage of development to the religious lives of children.² Though technically the Junior Epworth League was designed for all children between six and sixteen years old (at which age they would join the more senior Epworth League), it is clear in the methods and aims of the Junior League that the goal was to attract those in early teen and pre-teen years. This becomes especially clear when the author and other contributors to the book discuss children’s agency.

² S.T. Bartlett, *The Junior League Handbook* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897).

In outlining how to organize a Junior League in the *Hand-Book*, Bartlett quoted from a letter written by Rev. Dr. Maclean, a Methodist pastor in Port Arthur, Ontario, who described how his own church's Junior Epworth League came into being not on the insistence of church leaders or parents, but on the children's own initiative. According to Maclean's account, the children were inspired to organize some way of helping the missionary cause after a Children's 'Missionary Day' church service. His letter explained, "The following week, without any suggestion on the part of the superintendent, the young people brought scrap-pictures, needles and thread, and remnants of dress goods, and ... began work themselves." The pastor then explained that interest in the group grew to the point that "whilst the League was for Methodist children only, we found children from every denomination in town, including Roman Catholics, begging to become members of the League." However exaggerated this account may be, Rev. Maclean made it clear to his readers that children of this age were capable, at least to some degree, of making their own decisions and shaping their own religious education and sociability.³

Of course, church leaders recognized that children's agency and initiative did not always result in positive outcomes; just as juniors could decide to form a club, they could easily decide to leave one. This was principally a problem among boys. Bartlett

³ Quoted in Bartlett, "How to Organize a Junior League," in *Junior League Hand-book*, 33.

and other contributors dealt with this subject in another chapter in the Methodist *Hand-Book* called “How to Get and Keep the Boys.” Their main concern was with how to maintain boys’ interest in the Junior League when it seemed especially suited to girls. Attracting boys by organizing athletics and other social events was fine and good, but it was not, on its own, an appropriate solution. Mrs. W.H. Gordon of Belleville Tabernacle Junior League warned that “To try to sandwich a minimum of religion in between a maximum of ‘fun’ is to do poor work.”⁴ Though healthy sport and recreation were considered an essential part of Christian character-building, they were not sufficient. Junior leaders tried to figure out better ways to keep the boys’ interest. A superior approach, according to Gordon, was to appeal to boys’ masculinity and chivalry. She urged leaders of juniors to “impress on them our great need of their assistance.” She explained, “You know boys like to feel their importance in the world, and also that others are depending on them for help, especially if that other is a lady. I think this is one reason why ladies are generally more successful teachers of boys than men.”⁵ The idea that ladies were better teachers of boys than men was not, in fact, generally accepted. But what Gordon’s commentary does reveal is that juniors (and especially boys) were seen as different from their younger counterparts in that they made their own decisions on whether or not, and to what extent, they would join the

⁴ “How to Get and Keep the Boys” in Bartlett, *Junior League Hand-book*, 49.

⁵ *ibid*, 48.

church programmes designed for them. The church could no longer count on parents, alone, to involve their children with the church and Sunday school; religious educators realized the programmes had to be made attractive to children themselves.

Juniors had a level of agency that both concerned and motivated the adults who worked with children of this age. They were likely to have playmates and schoolmates. They were old enough to be trusted to walk to the store. They encountered their own problems and challenges which they needed to be able to sort out on their own. They also had some level of decision-making power, especially when it came to deciding whether or not to join a church group, attend Sunday school, or to donate their time and money to social service or missionary causes.

It was also at the junior age that adults thought children were likely to encounter their first test of faith, and Protestant churches sought to equip children of this age group with the tools in order to meet those tests of faith in an appropriate way. As Edith Mumford explained in her *Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child*, up until this age, most “fortunate” children have seen life “almost wholly a beautiful thing.”⁶ But even upper middle class children would, by the junior age, have encountered some injustice, unfairness, or personal challenges. As Mumford explained, “as the child grows older, and, in the wider life of school, meets with new temptations; as he begins to know

⁶ Mumford, *Dawn of Religion*, 83.

more about the world in which he lives... the simple conceptions of his childhood, and the naïve prayers which were bound up with them, perforce come to an end – and, with them, somewhat of the unquestioning simplicity of his childlike faith.”⁷ Yet, she explained, it was at this age that faith was needed as never before, because it is at this age the child encounters for the first time the “difficulties of life and the existence of wrong, in that large world in which he now begins to play his part.” Indeed, it was at this age that Mumford considered a child’s religious life to be “in full process of development.”⁸ So it was at this age, too, that children’s faith could be tested. This made it all the more important to ensure that real-life social situations could be handled by children in an appropriately Christian way.

Thus, even before G. Stanley Hall published his famous study of adolescence in 1904, church leaders acknowledged the importance of cementing a child’s loyalty to church and Sunday school before they hit those turbulent teenage years.⁹ Juniors’ growing level of independence is what made this age group both so important to church leaders, and, if they failed in their goals, a potential threat to the stability of the future

⁷ Edith E. Read Mumford, *The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of a Child: A Study of Child Life* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915), 83.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education, Volume 1 & 2* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904).

church. As Steven Mintz points out, one of the most anxious concerns adults had about children and youth in this period was that they were “far more independent and less deferential than their predecessors.”¹⁰ Mintz attributes this fear to the profound transformation that took place in parent-child relations between 1880 and 1930. Children’s independence grew along with the child so that peer groups, a growing selection of consumer goods for children, and the school were feared to have supplanted the authority of parents by the teen age. In light of these anxieties about the teen age, it should come as no surprise that juniors, these children on the cusp of adolescence, came to garner intense interest among church leaders, religious educators, as well as the public at large.

By the 1920s juniors were recognized as a group with unique needs, and there is some indication they virtually demanded their own program. In 1922, the interdenominational Religious Education Council of Canada set up a special committee to consider how they might accommodate children of the junior age. Mrs. Nellie V. Burgess of Ottawa was asked to design a mid-week programme specifically for juniors, and, by her account, the programme was initiated because juniors did not seem to fit in the pre-existing groups for teens, nor those groups for the younger children. Reflecting in 1967 on the early stages of her program for juniors, Burgess explained that “[t]here

¹⁰ Steven Mintz. *Hucks’ Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 214.

was at the time a healthy demand in this country, headed by the Juniors, themselves, for a through-the-week program to supplement them as the teen-age programs indubitably were to their older brothers and sisters, and which would be exclusively their own.” She added that leaders of the teen-agers wanted the juniors “to stop invading the older groups’ meetings which were too advanced for them,” while children’s work leaders had enough responsibility as it was, having to tend to the “pressing needs” of the younger children.¹¹ Burgess’ project eventually culminated in the elaborate ‘Explorers’ program for juniors. The point here is that, though part of the motivation for a separate program for juniors was to lay the groundwork for a successful adolescence, there was also clearly a recognition that juniors needed their own program, designed to meet their immediate needs. A more nuanced reading of the literature surrounding junior aged children reveals that they were not seen by adults solely as future teens, nor likely did they see themselves that way.

Certainly, those who specialized in children’s work would not have viewed the significance of the junior years only by the fact that it was the period right before the more problematic period of adolescence. Indeed, in the opening of its *Canadian Junior Manual for Teachers and Parents of Juniors*, the Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada explicitly challenged this view. Though the

¹¹ Nellie Burgess and Olive D. Sparling, “Story of the Explorer Program” [1967], pp 2. box 84, file 1, Explorers subseries, Department of Children’s Work series, UCCBCE, UCC.

authors recognized that comparatively little attention had been paid to children of the junior age, they explicitly critiqued the view that the junior period's significance lay only in the fact that it is a transition period between the earlier years and adolescence. Children's workers saw the junior age as particularly important. "For those who have loved and studied and guided him," wrote the authors, "there is no one more responsive than the Junior child, and no period so pregnant with character-building possibilities as that of later childhood." Stressing this point further, they suggested that "[i]t is even possible that the golden key to successful living might be found in the proper guidance and training throughout this period."¹²

Adolescence, nevertheless, loomed large. And the junior age was crucial. These children between the ages of nine and eleven years sat anxiously on the border between a life of Christian citizenship and an adolescence that seemed to threaten the very future of society. On one side sat the possibility of the junior growing up to be fully committed to, and working for, a Christian home, church and community. On the other was the possibility that the child would snub the needs of his or her Church, community and family in favour of a life of selfish consumption and delinquency. These fears were not held by the church alone. In the wake of largely successful efforts at abolishing child labour, middle class reformers of all kinds worried about what children would now do

¹² The Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual for Teachers and Parents* (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1924.), 7.

with their leisure time. Some offered alternatives. As Sharon Wall has shown, the impetus for the establishment of children's summer camps in the 1920s was so children could escape the temptations presented by modern consumer culture and the ills associated with urban life.¹³ Others, as Kristine Alexander has shown of the Girl Guides, encouraged organized clubs as a way to teach girls how to be proper citizens, and they stressed social service to curb unscrupulous consumerism in many of the same ways the churches did.¹⁴ Capturing juniors' minds (and ensuring their bodies, too, were in the 'right' place on Sunday mornings) was a project with an importance much more immediate than the need to enrol babies and instil character in beginners. That juniors had agency was widely acknowledged. The challenge was to channel their energies and desires into healthy, Christian outlets.

In response to this growing recognition of the importance of juniors, more and more church programmes for pre-teen children were established throughout these years. Juniors were eager to participate. By 1930, the United Church alone had 838 junior organizations throughout Canada. These comprised a variety of different groups organized outside the 6000 Sunday schools in the country. Indeed, there were so many

¹³ Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Kristine Alexander "The Girl-Guide Movement, Imperialism and Internationalism in Interwar England, Canada and India" (Phd Diss, York University, November 2010), 212.

organizations for juniors that there were large overlaps in the work. In her 1928 Report, Netannis Semmens, Children's Work Secretary, called for greater integration in the organization and program for juniors. She pointed out that United Church members between the age of nine and eleven had a variety of different organizations at their disposal, many of which overlapped in aims. After attending the regular Sunday school class for juniors, children between the age of nine and eleven would have difficulty finding time to get involved in each of the other junior organizations with links to their church. Competing for children's allegiance was the Mission Band, the Loyal Temperance Legion, the Explorers, the Golden Keys, the Junior Epworth League, the Junior Christian Endeavour, Cubs or Brownies, and the Junior Congregations on Sundays.¹⁵ These different children's organizations were run by a variety of diverse adult organizations interested in children, including the Woman's Missionary Society, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Sunday school, the Young People's Societies, the Scout and Guide organizations and the church itself.

¹⁵ Report of Department of Work Assigned to Netannis Semmens [1928], box 58, book of minutes 1926-1928, Minutes of the Board subseries, Administrative Records series, UCC.

Juniors in the Sunday School Session

Despite the never-ending concern about boys' attendance and enrolment, and the continued fears about losing children to commercial attractions and consumer culture, if London, Ontario was typical of other cities, the junior age was a very successful one for urban Protestant Sunday schools in Ontario by the 1920s. When seeking to point out the falling off of Sunday school enrolment of the intermediate and senior age groups, the London Social Survey's writers took the junior age group as their standard against which to judge the older grades. They found the junior age one of "fairly complete" enrolment, meaning they figured most Protestant children of this age were enrolled in their church Sunday school. Taking the juniors to represent 100 percent enrolment, the surveyors calculated that the intermediate age had an enrolment of 83 percent, the seniors an enrolment of 68.5 percent, and an enrolment of 71.5 percent among adults (which they considered those over the age of 21 years). Of course, the surveyors knew that enrolment statistics were not necessarily suggestive of attendance, but even in this respect the churches were quite successful with juniors. The same survey pointed out that average attendance among children of junior age was almost 85 percent, though attendance was slightly better among girls than boys. The starkest gender difference in attendance came later, in the intermediate age, when for every 100

girls enrolled, 26 would not attend, while for every 100 Intermediate boys enrolled, 44 would not attend.¹⁶

In many ways, then, the continuing importance of children of the junior age is that they were *there*, that they attended. When nearly all children of the same age-group from the neighbourhood attended the Sunday and mid-week sessions together, the influence of the Sunday school was all the greater. At the junior age, church leaders harnessed children's peer culture and encouraged these groups of children to spend their leisure time engaging in wholesome, productive activities as a group. Though social service and hands-on activity was encouraged among all Sunday school scholars, it was stressed much more heavily to juniors than to their younger counterparts.

What stood out in the Sunday school programming for juniors was the emphasis in curricula on 'learning by doing' and on life situations, as opposed to younger age groups, where the emphasis on Christian character outweighed more practical concerns. Of course, by the age of nine, the hope was that Christian character traits had been fully assumed by the child, which is why the emphasis could be placed on putting what was learned into practice. The Religious Education Council of

¹⁶ Presbyterian Committee on Religious Education, Methodist Department of Temperance and Moral Reform, and the Presbyterian Board of Social Service and Evangelism, *The City of London, Ontario: Report on a Limited Survey of Educational, Social, and Industrial Life* (Toronto, 1913), 38-39.

Canada's 1924 *Canadian Junior Manual* acknowledged that the curriculum each individual Sunday school adopts would be highly dependent on its particular circumstances (whether it was urban or rural, large or small), but that regardless of those circumstances, certain "accepted principles and tests" should be applied to any curriculum under consideration for juniors. Thus, whether the school was closely graded, departmentally graded, or whether the older, International Uniform lessons were still employed, the Religious Education Council suggested that the lessons "should deal with life situations that the children find of value in the adjusting of their own lives."¹⁷ Additionally, it recommended that "a junior lesson course should be in the form of stories, since generalized or abstract teaching is too advanced for them" and that "since children learn by doing, the activity of the pupil should form the central part of the teaching plans."¹⁸

In stressing stories, real-life situations and hands-on activity, the *Junior Manual* self-consciously broke with the past. "We have long ago outgrown the idea that we are providing an adequate religious education when we persuade or otherwise induce a child to memorize long passages of Scripture or answers to questions," the authors pointed out. Study of the Bible alone would not yield the results necessary for modern

¹⁷ The Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 23.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

times. “Even a knowledge of the Bible, important as that is, constitutes a small part of what religious education must mean if it is to lead to real Christian living.”¹⁹

Activity, practice and Christian living were not mere pedagogical techniques, however. The *Junior Manual* also made clear that the goal of using these more modern religious education techniques was broader than one of pure pedagogy; they were to result in a child’s devotion to the social world outside the walls of the church. The *Junior Manual* explained that because of the “present chaotic state of the world,” the necessity for ‘social emphasis’ in the religious education of children was all the greater. It listed some of the most blatant examples of the chaos that seemed to reign in the 1920s:

The present chaotic state of the world with its international jealousies, strifes and self-seeking, as well as the ever-present industrial and commercial strife, the individual lust for power, wealth and personal advantage for their own sake are all illustrative of the dangerous effects of making self and one’s own personal development the dominant notes and motive in education.²⁰

¹⁹ The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 11.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 12-13.

“The need of the world today,” according to the *Junior Manual*, “is a deeper sense of human brotherhood.”²¹ That would be achieved only through the rising generation.

The only way to bring this about is through educating the children of to-day to think in terms of the social units, small and large, of which they form a part, instead of in terms of self; in terms of social needs, which they can help meet, rather than in terms of what they can get from those about them; to develop an outgoing and outgiving rather than an ego-centric life.²²

By the 1920s, the Anglican Church too, stressed practical activity and daily life. A pamphlet outlined three essential characteristics that any “rightly constructed curriculum” must meet. First, it must be graded. Second, it must be “characterized by an essential unity,” meaning that it must fit in with what had already been taught to the child. Third, “[i]t must be related to the active life of the pupil.” This third goal was elaborated more clearly for the benefit of teachers and superintendents. “It is the Church’s duty to direct not only the instruction of her children, but their activities as well,” it advised. After all, it argued, “To give information, however valuable, without

²¹ The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 13.

²² *Ibid.*

any effort to show how to relate it to life is to teach the child to regard truth as something which calls only for a passive assent and not active expression.”²³

We can see how these larger aims were put into actual Sunday school lessons for juniors. In his or her second year, a junior’s Sunday school lessons were put under an umbrella theme of “Working with God in His World.” The lesson for each quarter fit into this larger theme: Partnership with God; Being at One’s Best Every Day; Builders of a Christian World; and, Adventures in Neighborliness.²⁴ The emphasis on the social side of life is clear. In 1934, the Committee on Junior Graded Lessons surveyed all the lessons in the existing junior course, and calculated how many lessons taught children about God (26 or more), about Jesus (47 or More), about the Bible or Bible Characters (99), about the church and its mission (9 or more), about philosophy of life (5 or more), about Christian Social Order (43 or more) and about Christian Behaviour (146).²⁵ Junior

²³ General Board of Religious Education, *Our Lesson Courses and their Educational Aim*, pp. 2-3, box 55, item 200, Pamphlets and Printed Materials Series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

²⁴ The Board of Religious Education and the Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Junior Department of the Church School* [1930?], pp 10-11, box 15, file 1, Church School Administration subseries, Functional Committees series, UCCBCE, UCC.

²⁵ Recommendations to the Joint Lesson Committee from the Committee on Revision of the Junior Graded Lessons (March 23, 1934), box 18, book 1, Curriculum Development subseries, Functional Committee series, UCCBCE, UCC.

children learned more lessons about Christian behaviour and the Christian social order than they did about God, Jesus, and the Bible combined.

By the early 1930s, even “Bible study” tests had changed to reflect the new emphasis on Christian citizenship and service to society. Junior children were expected to know the answers to more traditional questions about the Bible, such as one asking the name of the first book in the New Testament. But they were also likely to encounter a question about behaviour, such as “Write three ways in which Juniors may ‘do well’ upon the Sabbath day”: (the desired answers were: 1. do a kind act to help someone 2. try to make everyone in the home happy 3. attend church and Sunday school). They were also expected to give the correct answer to hypothetical situations, such as the following from a 1931 test for juniors:

Muriel was left at home alone to look after baby Jimmy. She put him to sleep in his carriage on the porch. Mildred came along and said “Come to the store with me. The baby will be safe. He is sleeping.” What would Muriel do if she is trustworthy?

‘Correct’ answers to the above question and similar ones would, of course, vary.

Teachers were directed to provide full marks as long as “the answer indicates reasonably correct judgment on the pupil’s part.”²⁶ Children were also expected to be able to

²⁶ United Church Bible Study Tests, 1931, for Pupils 9 to 11 years of age, box 17, file 4, Church School Administration subseries, Functional Committees Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

answer questions about the mission fields they studied, such as: “Write one thing the United Church is doing for Indian boys and girls in Canada.”²⁷

Juniors were old enough and had agency enough to decide to be full-fledged Christian citizens, which is why the emphasis on service and on the social gained such greater importance in this age group. But effective lessons on Christian living could not be limited to the realm of the hypothetical. Children’s leaders stressed the importance of actual activity and practice among juniors. Indeed, one pamphlet that described how best to set up a junior department in the Sunday school described the junior as “not [...] a passive listener, but an active ‘Doer of the Word.’”²⁸ Juniors, like their older counterparts who were enrolled in the Canadian Girls in Training and Trail Ranger Programmes, needed the opportunity to put the lessons they learned about the social world into practice. The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada thought a mid-week session, similar to that of the juniors’ older sisters and brothers, was the appropriate time to provide this training.

²⁷ United Church Bible Study Tests, 1931, for Pupils 9 to 11 years of age.

²⁸ The Board of Religious Education and the Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Junior Department of the Church School* [1930?], pp 6.

The Explorers, Golden Keys and Citizenship in the Social Realm

‘Mid-week’ sessions of the Sunday school for juniors were to avoid at all cost any duplication of the Sunday session. The *Canadian Junior Manual* explained that although the Sunday Session was devoted to training in worship and the acquiring of the Bible and other knowledge, “[it] provides for a comparatively small contact with his actual life interests.” These interests lay in the world of play and social contacts, according to the authors. Juniors needed this mid-week session to supplement what was learned on Sunday, so that the mid-week session could “apply its principles and teachings to everyday living.”²⁹ Indeed, though the suggested outline for a mid-week session included six separate periods (Devotional; Announcements or business; Drill, contest or story; Activities; Games or recreation; and, Closing), the ‘activity’ period was to take up thirty minutes of the hour, and it was deemed the most important part.

The activity period of the mid-week junior session was to provide guided life experiences, typical of children’s everyday life. The *Junior Manual* explained that this training in Christian life experiences should include:

How to play with others, giving and receiving a square deal, how to undertake, plan for and carry out with others some activity that appeals to him as being worth while, development of initiative through having to face problems that

²⁹ The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 26.

require solution, and how to fulfil his part as a Christian citizen in all the social contacts of life.³⁰

Service and missionary activities were seen to be of particular educational value in these regards, especially when initiated by the children themselves.³¹

The Religious Education Council of Canada's Explorers Programme was one option that met all these requirements and which was available to children's leaders in the 1920s, though until 1945 only the United Church of Canada officially endorsed its use. Despite its limited use outside the United Church, as the most fully fleshed-out plan for juniors' mid-week activities, it is worth examining in some detail.

In 1922, Nellie V. Burgess, who had already been involved in Children's religious education in the Quebec Council of Religious Education, went to the Hartford School of Religious Education in Connecticut to further her education. According to her own account, she was asked by children's leaders in Canada to consider the subject of juniors there. Upon further urging from her supervisor, Professor A.J.W. Myers, she decided to do research into juniors and their needs to "see what type of program would best fit into the general scheme of development used in Canadian churches."³² The

³⁰ *ibid.*, 27.

³¹ The Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 45.

³² Nellie Burgess and Olive D. Sparling, "Story of the Explorer Program" [1967], 3.

answer was the Explorers programme, which was soon divided into ‘Explorers’ for boys and ‘Golden Keys’ for girls, “because of frequent difficulties when junior boys and girls tried to work together, and also because of Canadian opinion,” according to Burgess’ account.³³ Though continual improvements were made to the programme, by 1924, a “Canadian Junior Programme” was prepared for the use of any leader of juniors who desired it and a chapter on the programme was included in the *Canadian Junior Manual*.

The explicit aim of the Explorers programme was “to lead the girls and boys to explore God’s world for the purpose of locating and filling their places therein.” To accomplish this, the programme dealt with “the various social units, small and large, of which they form a part, commencing with the home and broadening out until the Juniors recognize themselves as part of God’s great world.”³⁴

The first ‘Exploration,’ called *Explorations in God’s World Round About Us* looked at church, school, community, district and country. The idea was that, under the direction of the adult leader, and through construction work, collecting, play, and dramatization, “the children will be led to a sympathetic understanding of their various social groups and to a sense of such needs of these social groups as they can

³³ Nellie Burgess and Olive D. Sparling, “Story of the Explorer Program” [1967], 4.

³⁴ The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 56.

appreciate.”³⁵ Furthermore, it was expected that junior explorers would see how all these social groups “working together, the strong helping the weak, may meet these needs, and through this understanding, to decide their share in the common task, and how they may best carry out this share in actual living.”³⁶ Leaders and children found various ways to carry these ideas into practice.

Nothing captured the imagination and energy of juniors quite like the opportunities to help others at Christmas time. In April 1935, Children’s Work leader Netannis Semmens boasted about the greatest example of Explorer ideals “made real.” At Christmas, juniors had provided warm clothing, toys, candies, books, and decorations to seventy-three families in Canada “to make their isolated homes festive.”³⁷ Though the books and candies would have been purchased, some of the toys, clothing and decorations were more likely made by the juniors themselves. What made Christmas so important was the level of interest such activity garnered from the juniors

³⁵The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 58.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷Report of Netannis Semmens, Children’s Work Secretary (April, 1935), box 59, book of minutes 1934-36, Minutes of the Board subseries, Administrative Records series, UCCBCE, UCC.

themselves. According to Semmens, “There is no service throughout the year which has more human interest for Explorers than this annual Christmas project.”³⁸

Children’s behaviour also mattered. After learning all about the ‘World Round About Us,’ Juniors were asked to create and declare for themselves a code of living, a statement of the conclusions they came to in completing this ‘Exploration.’ Children would later have to report on their success in living out their codes, which included also the opinion of their parents and teachers, presumably gathered from them by the children themselves.³⁹

The second unit, *Explorations in the Land in Which Jesus Lived*, was designed to set Jesus up as the test against which children judged their own standards of living. It was also hoped that it would cement children’s allegiance to Him and His way of living. Having an entire section devoted to the life of Jesus may seem less in-tune with the modernizing pedagogies and goals of religious education, but it, in fact, fit quite nicely with new educational principles. Jesus was studied not only so children had knowledge of Him and of the Bible, but also because it was thought Junior children were natural ‘hero-worshippers,’ and so who better than Jesus to be the ultimate hero for children to

³⁸ Report of Netannis Semmens, Children’s Work Secretary (April, 1935).

³⁹ The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 58.

worship?⁴⁰ The unit covered Jesus' home life in Nazareth, His school life and religious training and, eventually, His ministry. By seeing Jesus as a child, and studying His growth, it was hoped children would identify with Him and decide it was He whom they would naturally hero-worship.⁴¹

The third Exploration was mostly missionary in character, teaching children about "them and us." *Explorations in Other Parts of God's World* had sections on 'The Mother Country – Great Britain' 'Our Next-Door Neighbor – The United States,' 'Our Neighbor Across the Pacific – Japan,' 'An Interesting Country in Europe – Holland,' 'The Great Empire of India,' 'An Old Country with Many Canadian Missionaries – China,' and 'The Dark Continent – Africa.' It also had two thematic chapters, including one on plans for Christmas, and the concluding chapter entitled 'All the People trying to Find God – Our Share in Helping Those Who Have Less Light.'⁴² As we will see in the following chapter, this unit fit into larger goals of inculcating in children a missionary zeal and missionary spirit that would last into adulthood. Any programme that hoped to be successful by the mid-1920s had to include a missionary education component.

⁴⁰ The Board of Religious Education and the Board of Publication of the United Church of Canada, *The Junior Department of the Church School* [1930?], 2.

⁴¹ The Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 58.

⁴² The Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 59.

Stressing missionary goals also made sense in terms of the wider social goals of the religious education of juniors. It was hoped that children would adopt Jesus as their hero and sympathize with and develop goals to improve different social groups. Missionary explorations, it was hoped, would lead juniors to be “Doers of the Word” and to fulfill their role as Christian citizens. As we will see in the next chapter, the missionary component of children’s religious education was probably the greatest example of church leaders’ success in their goal to have children put their Christian training into practice. It certainly always held the greatest appeal among children.

Though the Explorers programme material does not explicitly tell us how a child’s success in living out these codes of living would be judged, A.J. William Myers in his *Teachers of Religion: A Course on the Principles of Teaching* suggested some ways teachers could measure the success of their teaching more generally. The obvious one, testing knowledge through examination, was listed last, implying that it was the least important or least inventive way to measure results. Much more emphasis was placed on judging what the children had learned by the way they expressed it in their attitudes to others, in their personal life, in their class work, and in their relation to other groups. For example, Myers asked teachers to think about the pupils’ respect for others: do they share? Do they radiate good will to others? Is their attitude to other races respectful? Children could also be judged on how they relate to groups. “Is the child in

the school and on the playground more helpful and co-operative[?]' Is children's recreation and social life clean? In class work, do they do their fair share, assume responsibility and bring projects to completion? Teachers were expected to be able to measure the success of their teaching by answering such questions. For juniors, the pressure to conform to particular codes of living would have been strong. Gone were the days when an adequate recitation of the catechism was enough to prove children's loyalty to the church; by the first decades of the twentieth century a junior's whole life, inside and outside the walls of the church, was measured against the principles taught in the classroom.⁴³

It was imperative to instil in children the all-encompassing nature of the ideal of Christian citizenship. This was not only about personal moral codes, but ways of treating others and bettering the world through 'being good.' Though its all-encompassing nature made the ideal harder for children to live up to, it was probably also part of the appeal to children themselves. Taking part in activities and projects with fellow pupils tied them ever more closely to peer culture. And Sunday school peer culture likely fuelled interest in the group. Even outside the Sunday school room, we can imagine juniors planning next week's handcraft lesson, or discussing the recent

⁴³ A. J. William Myers, *Teachers of Religion: A Course on the Principles of Teaching* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1932), 70.

convention at Massey Hall, which brought together thousands of like-minded children, all part of the same church programme.

Initiation and graduation ceremonies, insignia, uniforms, and an opportunity to hold office in the Explorers group were some of the benefits and marks of citizenship. We have no way of knowing whether children wore markers of Christian citizenship, such as the explorer's pin, outside the prescribed times and places, but it seems likely that these symbols of belonging would be worn with some pride, at least in this age group. Burgess explained that when she considered the program's components, considerable attention was directed to such 'minor' things as uniforms and insignia because they were "weighty in the minds of Juniors themselves."⁴⁴ As this was a free programme, the uniform was basic so that most of it could be built from things that might be found around the home of children: girl explorers wore a white middie, a red Windsor tie hanging free, a navy-blue pleated skirt and a navy-blue beret. Boy explorers wore a blue shirt, navy-blue shorts, marl grey socks, a red silk tie and a blue beret.⁴⁵ The programme literature does not explain where children from less privileged families could find the material to build their uniforms. It is likely that leaders of juniors in working-class neighbourhoods allowed greater flexibility in the uniforms' components,

⁴⁴ Nellie Burgess and Olive Sparling, "The Story of the Explorer's Program" 1967, 4.

⁴⁵ National Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Explorers: A Church Programme of Christian Education for Juniors* [n.d.], pp 5-6, box 84, file 2, Explorers subseries, Department of Children's Work series, UCCBCE, UCC.

but in a church with a mixed congregation, minor differences in the material of a tie could obviously single out an underprivileged child.

The uniforms were accompanied by the ‘explorer’s pin,’ insignia that was, in this early period, different for boys and girls. The boys’ pin, as described by Burgess, centred on the purpose of the group itself: “It represented God’s world with a star at the top, and on the globe a compass, representing the junior steadfastly following the example of Jesus as the compass always points to the North star. A slightly larger circle surrounded was superimposed on a maple leaf.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Nellie V. Burgess and Louise G. Coulton, *Explorations in Other Parts of God’s World Third-Year Plans for Week-day Religious Education of Junior Children, to be used with Canadian Junior Manual, for Sunday-school Classes, Vacation Bible Schools, Week-day Classes in Religious Education and other Junior Groups* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, n.d.) pp 4, box 84, file 2, Explorers subseries, Department of Children’s Work series, UCCBCE, UCC

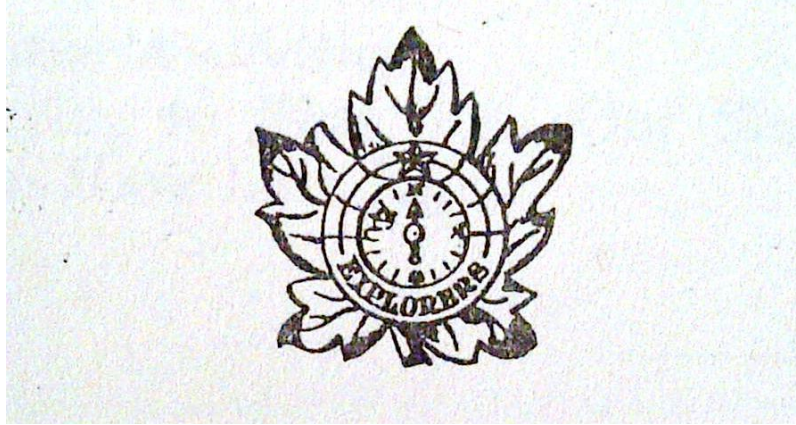


Figure 12. Boys' Explorer's Pin
Source: Nellie V. Burgess and Louise G. Coulton, *Explorations in Other Parts of God's World* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, n.d.), 4.

In contrast with the girls' pin, which was the form of a golden key, with the word "Canada" inscribed upon it, the boys' pin seems to have represented the wider opportunities that citizenship conferred on boys. The compass and globe imply a life of adventure, travel and exotic mission. The girls' golden key had more domestic connotations. Though meant to represent the "Golden Key to life," the key is also suggestive of the domestic space of the home instead of worldly adventure. The globe in the boy's pin is replaced by the word 'Canada,' making the girl's pin a more domestic symbol in a global sense, too.

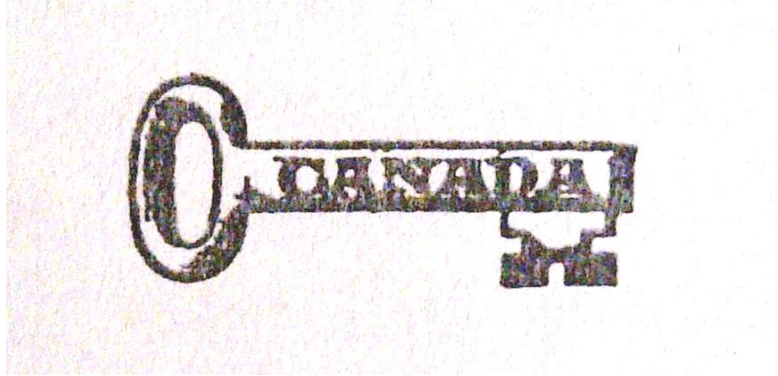


Figure 13. Girls' Explorer's Pin (The Golden Key)
Source: Nellie V. Burgess and Louise G. Coulton, *Explorations in Other Parts of God's World* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, (n.d.), 4.

The difference between the pins for boy and girls was greater than the differences between the actual lessons themselves, however. In most respects, the 'Explorers' and the 'Golden Keys' (girl Explorers) learned the exact same lessons. There was no separate curriculum for boys and girls, nor were any limitations placed on the gender of Explorer leaders. Besides a few vague references to 'sex-antagonism' between girls and boys, there is very little discussion in the Explorer literature that explains why boy and girl explorers could not complete the programme together. It is quite possible that separating girls and boys in these mid-week programmes was designed to make them look more like the programmes for the older age-groups which

were also divided by sex. It is also possible that the church was attempting to capitalize on the popularity of other gender-based organizations for children that drew in large numbers of Canadian children of junior age, such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.⁴⁷ But these could not have been the only reasons. Juniors were also the first age group whose Sunday session was supposed to be divided by sex, and so it was not just in the mid-week activities with their different uniforms and insignia that girls and boys were separated.

One interesting possibility is that, since the emphasis at the junior age was placed on social service, dividing these programmes by sex would ensure that girls and boys developed interests in the forms of social service ‘appropriate’ to their gender. Nellie Burgess hinted at this possibility in the *Junior Manual* when she argued that leaders should make use of children’s “native endowments” in their religious education. For example, she argued that “we must direct the boy’s desire for adventure, exploring, and continuous activity, and the girl’s desire to find out meanings and to please, toward

⁴⁷ A short history of Girl Guides in Canada mentions that, beginning around 1914, younger girls between the ages of eight and eleven years began to “tag along with the older girls and probably became a nuisance.” In 1919, these younger girls’ groups were formally included in the Girl Guides organization under the name “Brownies.” Girl Guides of Canada website, “A History of Guiding,” http://www.girlguides.ca/uploads/File/our_history/14.3.1.3.pdf (accessed March 11, 2014), 4.

finding out and doing things worth while.”⁴⁸ And since the social service and life experience lessons were considered most valuable when carried out at the suggestion of children themselves, it was all the more important to ensure girls and boys get to ‘practice’ Christian living in gender-appropriate ways.

Though the Explorers was gendered in this early period (the Religious Education Council of Canada and the United Church’s Board of Christian Education would later on recommend more and more co-educational activities for juniors), this does not mean that the Explorer programme was wholly conservative. Church leaders and children’s workers, in placing emphasis on service and on the social, expected these lessons to yield positive results. These programmes for juniors were an attempt to produce a generation of children who would grow up more socially aware, more interested in the plight of others, and who would have a sense of themselves as citizens of a nation they hopefully would help to improve.

Yet no matter how modern the pedagogies and how updated the theology, these goals continued to be limited by traditional ideas about the proper roles of women and men in church and public life. It is not surprising that it was at the junior age - when children learned ways of living- that separating boys and girls became important.

Though churches expected both women and men to participate fully in social service,

⁴⁸ The Children’s Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual*, 12.

the range of opportunities for women was much narrower. Girls would not likely realize the limitations of their Christian citizenship until they were older. Despite being taught that religion was not private, but public, separate spheres ideology and maternalism limited the practical ways they could apply their Christian beliefs and principles to the world outside the home.⁴⁹

Conclusion: The Importance of Citizenship and the Social

As Mariana Valverde reminds us, the moral and social reform movements were part of a larger, national project that sought to establish in English Canada a common vision of the pure life. Though this led to moral regulation, she reminds us to look at the productive, not just the repressive aspects of moral and social reform. Her analysis of the moral and social reform movements offers a corrective to the “popular view of the social purity movement,” a story, she depicts as one about “a group of repressed clergymen and church ladies who tried to make everyone stop drinking, having sex, and gambling.”⁵⁰ Valverde suggests we not only look at the negative and prohibitory aspects

⁴⁹ Veronica Strong Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988).

⁵⁰ Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 22.

of the movement, but also the movement's attempts to produce, preserve and shape (or "regulate") individuals' subjectivities and the character of both the nation and its people.⁵¹ Along this vein, it is important to look more critically at church programmes for children to see what they attempted to produce, not just the behaviours they sought to repress.

Juniors provide an excellent case study in the ways that Protestantism continued to assert itself in the public realm. When it came to children of the ages between nine and eleven, the churches no longer sought only to reform the home life of the child or to cement their loyalty to church and Sunday school, as was the case with their younger counterparts. These goals never disappeared, but for children of the junior age, church goals were broader. The emphasis on active Christian citizenship in religious education for juniors was partly an attempt to prepare the next generation to assume an even greater share of social responsibilities. But it was not just preparation for the future. It was also recognition that juniors, though still only children, were capable of being productive participants in these broader social efforts. Certainly, the churches' success with children of the junior age demonstrates to some degree that children, too, believed in their own capabilities and power. When it came to raising money and organizing for missions, as we will see in the next chapter, children's agency

⁵¹ Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water.*, 33.

and effort in these regards became clear by the sums they raised and in the time they devoted to the cause. As we will also see, however, there were limits to “Christian citizenship.” As Robert Menzies, Robert Adamoski and Dorothy Chunn point out, “however omnipresent it may appear, citizenship is finite, and is infinitely alienating of all those who circulate outside its boundaries.”⁵² When children of all ages got together to study, pray and work for people who would never be Christian citizens, the boundary between inclusion and exclusion was reinforced to a new generation.

⁵² Robert Menzies, Robert Adamoski, and Dorothy E. Chunn “Rethinking the Citizen in Canadian Social History” in *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn, and Robert Menzies (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2002), 19.

Chapter 5

“Little Hands can do God’s Work Too’: Child-Citizens, Service to Society and Money for Missions, 1890-1930”

*Little ones in India
Lisp the Idol’s praise,
Lone in homes of darkness,
Pass the weary days.*

*Oh that we could tell them,
Of a heaven above,
And that we could teach them,
Of a saviour’s love.*

*Try now little children,
Young in hand and heart,
Each to gather something,
Each to do your part.*

*Little heathen children,
By the sums you raise,
Then will hear of Jesus,
And will sing His praise.¹*

“Little Ones in India,” a hymn that was specifically recommended for the use of Anglican children at meetings of their church-based missionary clubs in the 1890s, contained messages that all church-going Protestant children would hear again and

¹ “Little Ones in India,” *Hymns and Songs for Junior Missionary Meetings with Opening Exercises* (Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1892), 19-20.

again as they graduated their way up to the highest levels of the Sunday school. Though this particular missionary hymn was designed to teach children about childhood ‘heathens’ in India, Protestant children in Ontario sang similar hymns about peoples living in faraway China, Africa, Japan, as well as in ‘Hindoo lands.’ In many cases, these hymns were vaguer and pointed to idolatrous customs or skin colour as more important signifiers of heathenism than nation or geography. The hymn “A Queer Little Girl,” describes its young subject only as a “black little, odd little, strange little one,” who lives somewhere “down in the south.” Yet, of course, even she “has a soul somewhere that Jesus put in.”² These hymns are certainly evidence of the imperialist and racist worldview that persisted in most Protestant churches well into the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, but they are not only that. I suggest that in order to understand sources such as these, we must recognize that they were not designed to be read or sung passively by children just so they could learn about and compare themselves to strange ‘others;’ by the late-nineteenth century, hymns such as these were very much designed to spring children into action, and churches provided Protestant children in Ontario with opportunities to help.

Missionary hymns, Sunday school lessons that stressed social service, and children’s church periodicals are rich sources that evidence the social, global, and

² Eliza Snell Long, “Queer Little Girl,” *Palm Branch* 1, no 6 (June 1894), 6.

activist vision that Protestant churches sought to instil in Canadian children through religious education in these decades. They also give us a sense of how these ideas led to real pedagogical and practical change in Canadian Sunday schools, which is important not only because of the continuing cultural influence of religion, but also because the Sunday school was among the most important institutions that strove to, and often successfully did, shape the free time and leisure activities of pre-teen children in these years. A focus on children's missionary clubs – clubs in which they were trained to pray for, study, and give to missions and other social schemes – demonstrates that the churches directed children how to spend their money and time and taught them in what ways Christian citizenship conferred on them a responsibility to work in service to society. Children's own testimonies, combined with the amount of money and goods children worked to raise in service to some social cause, highlight the enthusiasm with which Ontario's children heeded the churches' calls to action.

A Society Worth Saving

Teaching the young about Christ-like living *everywhere* and at *all times* gained increasing importance as growing numbers of Ontario's children lived not on family farms, but in cities and towns, where children's opportunities to spend their time and money expanded to include much variety. Church leaders were well aware of the many

consumer goods and attractions that children's nickels and dimes could buy at nickelodeons, theatres, candy shops and department stores. Innovations to Sunday school programmes and the advent of church-based forms of recreation for children, such as sports, clubs, and camps demonstrate some of the important ways in which churches attempted both to offer alternatives to these less-than-desirable forms of leisure and to become places of Christian nurture for the young – places where children could serve God through prayer, play, and recreation. As previously mentioned, innovations such as these were also, at least in part, a response to the growing culture of consumerism that was developing in urban areas of the province in these years. Yet, none of these innovations targeted money specifically. Churches were forced to recognize that many children were gaining greater access to money which they could spend as they wished. The increasing popularity of parents' allowances for children, and the growing tendency of parents to purchase consumer goods marketed to children gave the church good reason to teach lessons about the spiritual value of money. Thrift always maintained virtue, but spending cash, if it was going to a good cause, also had importance. The significance of recognizing children as consumers and spenders extends beyond their own access to money, however. As with many other church schemes for children, church leaders recognized their potential impact on parents and other adults. As Dennis Denisoff has argued of nineteenth-century Britain, “ Even

though the vast majority of [children] had minimal access to money, they nevertheless held formative roles as agents defining demand, swaying market forces and challenging older people's conceptions, not only of children and consumerism, but also of adults as well."³ Thus, churches not only hoped to teach children lessons about spending, but also, through them, to shape a wider responsible, Christian consumer culture.

One way this was achieved was by appealing to children for help in the churches' missions. Since the Church was only partially successful in its project of Christianizing and civilizing Aboriginal peoples in its own territory, Protestant missionary discourse painted Canada itself as only half-civilized and as liable to succumb to heathen darkness. Canada's geography and its position in the Empire were defined with the same worldview. As Adele Perry has shown for mid-nineteenth century British Columbia, the Empire's periphery was defined not only by colonial borders, but also by the degree to which its inhabitants conformed to Victorian social norms.⁴ In missionary discourse, many parts of Canada at the turn of the century occupied a similarly peripheral imperial space. Whereas mid-nineteenth century British Columbia was envisioned as 'the edge of empire' because its gender and racial make-up subverted

³ Dennis Denisoff, *The Nineteenth Century Child and Consumer Culture* (Burlington VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 4.

⁴ Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.)

Victorian ideals, late-nineteenth century Canada was, in missionary discourse, a political and social landscape that sat uneasily on the boundary between Christian civilization and heathenism. In this context, raising children to be missionaries was essential and urgent, not only for the Church and its missions, but also for the future of Canada and the Christian empire to which it belonged.

Protestant children in Ontario were not alone in being taught they were responsible for the survival of race and Empire. Fiona Paisley has demonstrated the multiple ways that white children in the Empire were held responsible for the future of their race: through child migration schemes, which sent children from Britain overseas in an attempt to build up and populate the colonies; through race and social hygiene projects in the emerging welfare states, which targeted the bodies and health of children who were held accountable for the virility of the white race; and through clubs, such as the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, which taught white children to conform to proper gender roles and to middle-class standards of respectability and benevolence as a means to improve the race and shape a future citizenry.⁵

Examining children's missionary education materials thus reveals much about how adult Canadians viewed Canada's place in the world and it highlights their fears

⁵ Fiona Paisley, "Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire" in Philippa Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 240-259.

about the rising generation and of the future more generally. It was, thus, in response to real and perceived needs – of the mission fields, of Canada, and of the churches’ future – that missions became central to a redefined religious education. During the First World War, the missionary focus of religious education was seen as fundamental by church leaders. An Anglican pamphlet published between 1914 and 1916, outlining the need for missionary education in church programmes of religious education, asked its readers: “What sort of Christianity, then, will result from an education that refuses to acknowledge as an essential the very basic principle of our religion? What hope is there for our Church of the future if these leaders are not trained in the right direction?” Quite bluntly, the pamphlet proclaimed, “The Sunday School must be the recruiting ground for the mission field.”⁶

Children’s Missionary Periodicals

One way to attract children to Christianity was to draw on their love of reading by publishing religious periodicals suited to modern children’s tastes and needs.

Religious literature for children was not new in the 1880s, but its character had changed.

⁶ Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, *The Missionary Department of the Sunday School*, box 2, file 4, Sunday School Commission of the Church of England series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

Increasingly, the ‘children’s pages’ of adult periodicals gave way to religious literature geared specifically for children, and even for specific age groups. For example, in 1879, the Methodist *Sunday School Guardian* decided to devote itself primarily to older children, and to create a whole new periodical, the *Sunbeam*, for its younger readers, whom it referred to simply as “little folks.” It was hoped this new publication would “be suited to their age and tastes,” and “as bright and cheerful as its name implies.” The editors of the *Sunday School Guardian* spoke of children as patriotic and denominationally loyal consumers, stating, “We appeal to their Connexional loyalty and Canadian patriotism to support the effort of their own Church to prepare a paper that shall be every way [sic] worthy of their patronage.”⁷ Magazines like this one were published by all mainline Protestant denominations and reflect the churches’ awareness that children, together with their parents, made decisions about what products they would consume. By the 1890s, each of the three mainline Protestant denominations had their own missionary magazines devoted to children and youth.⁸ Most carried missionary news, lessons on proper Christian behaviour, pictures of peoples in ‘far-

⁷ *Sunday School Guardian* (November 22, 1879): 172.

⁸ Anglican children could read the *Canadian Church Juvenile*, while Presbyterians had their *Children’s Record* and the Methodists their *Palm Branch*. Each contained stories of mission fields and missionary lessons for Canadian children and youth.

away' lands, notes on Sunday school lessons, and stories about children's duty to work in service of family, community and society.

Religious periodicals for children evidently appealed to children's tastes enough to make them financially viable products, and sometimes even turn a profit that could be used in support of church causes.⁹ Urban and rural children alike could purchase them for between ten and fifteen cents for a yearly subscription, and have these magazines sent to their homes or Sunday schools. Every month, these periodicals brought into their homes and schools sketches of the world's 'Heathen' cultures, puzzles with a missionary message, and letters addressed to children from real, live missionaries in the field. One magazine, which happily reported it printed ten thousand copies monthly in 1887, boasted that it had a price low enough "to bring it within reach of even the poorest."¹⁰

Though it is difficult to uncover what, exactly, children liked about these periodicals and how many poor children could afford them, many children certainly bought, shared and read them. They were quite likely attracted to the very things that distinguished them from adult periodicals. One girl, who wrote into the Methodist *Palm*

⁹ For example, The Presbyterian *Children's Record* donated its profits to the church's missions. See: *Children's Record* (December, 1886), 173.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Branch, reported that she “like[s] it very much for its puzzles, nice readings and recitations.”¹¹ That these magazines had fun games and puzzles alongside stories of peoples who had yet to be converted and civilized also makes this literature a form of what Anne McClintock calls “commodity racism.” Like other forms of commodity racism, such as the imperial exhibitions and Victorian advertisements that McClintock analyzes, these children’s magazines “converted the narrative of imperial Progress into mass-produced *consumer spectacles*.”¹²

Missionary magazines certainly fit into this genre. Typical in these magazines were stories of the value of the Gospel to ‘heathen’ groups, and stories of ‘other’ children who did not have the privileges of Christian citizenship. Aboriginal peoples in Canada were a favourite focus of these magazines, because, according to the Methodist *Palm Branch*, children “must never forget that we have dispossessed the Indians...”. But if these Indians could be given the Gospel, the writer suggested “with all its elevating influences surely it will be a blessed exchange and they will be better and richer than ever their fathers were.” Although recognizing that Canada’s “Indians” had been dispossessed of their land, the writers were not willing to acknowledge to their child readers any form of existing Aboriginal spirituality.

¹¹ *Palm Branch*, (July, 1897): 6.

¹² Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 33. emphasis in original.

Also figured as spectacles in these papers were children in India, Japan and China. It was assumed that Ontario's Protestant children would feel a special obligation to people of their own age, and that stories of little girls having their feet bound in China or of eight-year-old widows in India would further raise their interest in missions. If children could be taught to recognize their privilege and assume the responsibilities such privilege entailed, missionary education through magazines accomplished one of its main goals. Church leaders expected these lessons about difference to result in children's action. As one writer of the *Palm Branch* explained to its young readers, "I do not know why God has made us different from [Africans, u]nless it is that we may help them, and teach them, and be kind to them."¹³ Children became spectators and consumers by reading stories about dangerous, dispossessed and distressed children from both near and far, but they were also meant to feel a sense of obligation and privilege.

In children's church periodicals, the contrasts between white, happy children in Canada and the sad lives of 'other' children were made explicit. In the Presbyterian *Children's Record*, R.C. Murray wrote about Christmas as the "happiest and brightest day in the whole year" for children in Canada, who would surely be telling their friends about their new sled, a pretty toy, a lovely doll, or some better gift. In contrast to the

¹³ *Palm Branch* (Aug. 1895): 6.

lovely presents Canadian children received, Indian children, he pointed out, “have to run about in the scorching sun without coat or cap or clothing of any kind.” Girls, he told them, “were shut up in horrid, nasty zenanas” and “would be more comfortable in our jails at home.” The lesson of this contrast between Canadian and Indian children was to get children to see “what is done in a land where there is no Christmas,” and to learn about Indian children who “have no hope of going to heaven when they die.” But, as always, these stories were accompanied by lessons about Christian service and giving; children were reminded of what they could do to help, and contrasting Indian children’s want with the material goods children in Canada received for Christmas was designed to show them where this money could have been better spent. Of course, in the process of this moral lesson, the author writes off the crippling poverty that many immigrant and poor girls and boys endured closer to home.¹⁴

Missionary magazine lessons, designed to elicit sympathy and then action, also drew on adult fears of the future. Child-readers were continually reminded of the larger picture. In an 1886 *Children’s Record* article entitled “Dying without Hope,” Presbyterian children were reminded that there were one billion ‘heathen’ in the world, with one hundred thousand dying each day without knowing of Jesus. Worse was that “just as fast, the little baby heathen are coming into the world and grow up in darkness

¹⁴ *Children’s Record* (February, 1886): 23-24.

and sin with none to tell them of a Saviour's love".¹⁵ An overwhelming focus on 'other' children, then, was not just a useful tool to elicit children's sympathy, but was also an effective way to bring into focus what the world would look like when a generation of a billion 'heathen' children grew up to be adults. By framing these scary stories in attractive magazines next to fun puzzles and word games, adult religious leaders turned stories of "the heathen" across the globe into a product consumed by white children in Canada, further reifying their privileged class, racial and religious status.

Missionary Clubs under the WMS

The success of these late-nineteenth century missionary magazines is a result of the missionary-education efforts of various church-based women's missionary societies and auxiliaries, who were among the first to recognize children as a crucial source of active participation and financial support. They also hoped children would grow into adult missionaries. The formation of Mission Bands normally followed the establishment of Women's Missionary Societies and thus, by the late 1880s, missionary clubs, where children learned about, prayed for and earned money to donate to church

¹⁵ "Dying without Hope," *Children's Record* (Jan. 1886) :10.

missions, were full-fledged children's and young people's organizations. Thanks to the WMS, late-nineteenth-century children could join Mission bands, Junior auxiliaries, Missionary Guilds or 'light bearers' clubs, depending on their age and denomination. These clubs ranged from a few to up to fifty children, and would meet in the Sunday school or in the home of the adult president, usually on a week-day or after Sunday school class. Unlike other types of church organizations for children, the emphasis in mission bands, as their name might imply, was overwhelmingly on missions, which made the donation of money and material goods much more important. These missionary clubs drew support from tens of thousands of children across Canada, but unlike the Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Cadets, and other clubs for children, they have yet to receive serious scholarly attention.

Though mission band leaders always stressed that the primary object of these groups was to develop the 'missionary spirit' in children, their success was measured by how much money was raised, and it was no secret that their 'secondary' goal was to raise money for missions.¹⁶ In mission bands, female leaders appealed to children's Christian conscience for missionary money. One of the surest ways to accomplish this was to tell stories of children in "heathen" cultures, both at home and abroad. Miss

¹⁶J. N. Jackson, *The Importance of Mission Bands. Paper prepared and read by Mrs. G.N. Jackson, at the annual meeting of the Manitoba and North-West Branch of the W.M.S.* (Toronto, [1898?]), 6.

G.N. Jackson of the Presbyterian Church, argued that “we can arouse the interest and touch the sympathy of the young heart without depressing the spirit, by telling [children] of the lives of the little ones in those lands, and showing them the striking contrast to their own sweet bright lives; and all because the fathers and mothers of these benighted children have never heard the sweet story of Jesus and His love.”¹⁷ In mission bands and in children’s religious periodicals, this attempt to garner children’s sympathy for ‘other’ children through story was a popular and successful pedagogical method. Stories such as these reminded children of their global mission, but educators recognized that they were not, alone, the best tools to train children to the work of the church. As in Sunday schools, it was supposed that children learned best through group work, hands-on activity, song, and playful imitation.

W.M.S. mission bands employed a variety of pedagogical methods. One ‘missionary game,’ suggested in the Anglican Women’s Auxiliary’s *Letter Leaflet* for the Junior Auxiliary asked children to act as missionaries and to mimic colonized groups. The description of the game explains how this could work: pretending to be missionaries, children are greeted by an ‘at home’ party. There, the other children greet them and say, “Welcome, little travellers, welcome, welcome home. Tell us little travellers, from what land do you come?’ And the answer comes: ‘We all come from

¹⁷ G.N. Jackson *The Importance of Mission Bands*, 3.

China land, where all the people bow to idols, have their feet bound, drink tea, eat live fish' (as the case may be). The travellers themselves select the country, and say what the people do in it. They suit the action to the word always, and bow low, hobble around, make believe to drink or eat like little natives."¹⁸ Through mimicking both the colonizer and the colonized, children learned much about which countries, actions and cultural traditions were respectable and civilized. Certainly, they would have been able to recognize on which side of the colonizer/colonized dichotomy their own cultural traditions placed them.

Visual learning especially reinforced children's sense of superiority, as it reinforced to them that they were the spectators rather than the spectacle. Significantly, it was also one of the main means through which children were taught about missionary work and its needs. At one 'Missionary Evening' in the Anglican church, children were taken through "a most interesting journey" by limelight. For what it showed children, and because of the way in which it was described, this missionary evening is worth describing at length. According to the Junior Superintendent, Reverend Canon Sweeny first took the children through Canadian regions, showing them pictures of the missionary stations "from one end of the C.P.R. to the other." Through limelight, she explains, the Reverend brought before his attentive listeners "the homes, schools,

¹⁸ *Letter Leaflet*, (May 1894): 219-220.

churches, and last, but not least, the figures of the Indians, young and old, from the hoary, feather-headed chieftain to the dark-eyed mischievous papoose, in all of which the members of the Junior Branches take such a hearty and practical interest.” The effect of this limelight show was enhanced by bringing the children to Japan, where they were able to witness the “quaint outlines, costumes and customs of the Japanese.” There, they saw a missionary “with her two native assistants, all in Japanese robes, and engaged in the familiar occupation of ‘pouring out tea,’” but, as the Junior Superintendent notes, “at a somewhat different table to which we are accustomed.”¹⁹ India was next. There, children saw “a Hindu woman in full native costume, a quaint figure with its flowing robes, coins on the smooth, dark hair, and the numbers of bangles, nose ring, etc., the face sad and pathetic.” After seeing also a “typical Jew ... turban-wreathed” with “fierce, dark eyes and aquiline features,” and, finally, pictures from the Canadian diocese of Algoma, the show was brought to a close.²⁰

At a single ‘missionary evening,’ the whole of the Empire and beyond, as well as some of the world’s most interesting and different inhabitants were brought before

¹⁹ Japanese tea as it differed from English tea was a popular discussion in missionary literature. One missionary wrote from her experience in Japan, “As soon as we arrived, Japanese tea and little cakes were brought, but we preferred making our own tea, so boiled the water over the Brazier, and enjoyed a good cup of *English* tea. [Emphasis in original]” “Mission Field: Letter from Japan” *Church Evangelist* (June 6, 1895): 12.

²⁰ “Junior Report,” *Letter Leaflet* (May, 1894): 224-225.

the eyes of children in a kind of exhibition. In much the same way as the children's religious periodicals, which brought the world's heathen into the homes of children in Ontario, the limelight show constructed these missionary pupils as the spectators of 'others.' That the child-spectators in the Sunday school exhibitions occupied the privileged position was reinforced by the use of limelight; in 1894, children would have been able to recognize limelight as a technological innovation and as a product of their own modern and progressive society.

While the child-viewers were positioned as 'modern,' the people children were seeing in the limelight images were described as "quaint," which meant both "old-fashioned" or "old-world," as well as "strange." Such descriptions could be described as examples of the deployment of what Anne McClintock calls "anachronistic space." This trope, McClintock explains, situates the colonized as "inherently out of place in the historical time of modernity." As she explains, in the trope of anachronistic space, "Geographical difference across *space* is figured as a historical difference across *time*."²¹ Strategies such as limelight shows thus reinforced children's modern and privileged position even more than magazine articles did, by situating the colonized

²¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 40.

subjects of the show as living in a different time, far away from modernity, as well as in a different geographic place.

It is difficult to gauge how well these lessons accomplished their goals. Certainly the amount of money these groups raised testifies to the effectiveness of the methods. Perhaps so do the letters children wrote about the work they carried out in their mission bands. Writing into the Methodist *Palm Branch* in 1897, Minnie Pringle from Markham reported that her mission band had a thriving membership of forty-two, and that “we sew almost every time we meet” and “have two quilts almost completed.”²² Another girl, from Athens, Ontario wrote into the same magazine, telling of her own mission band’s work. She explained, “our Band meets every Tuesday after school and is free to all boys and girls, but with collections, birthday offerings, selling home-made candy and our thank-offering service we have raised \$15.00 since last September.”²³

Other children thought it was worth writing into the editor to explain how deeply affected they were by the lessons. One girl wrote into the *Palm Branch*, telling of how, after her mission band lesson on the foot-binding of little girls in China, she

²² *Palm Branch*, (June, 1897), 6.

²³ *Palm Branch*, (June, 1898), 6.

asked her mother to bind her feet one night, so they hurt just enough to make her sorry for the poor foot-bound girls in China. Reflecting on the experience, and reassuring her readers of her return to privilege, she wrote, “Oh, I am so glad I am a little girl in a Christian land for I do love to skip.”²⁴

More common were children’s proud stories of saving and sacrifice. Nine-year-old Bella, from Bainsville, Ontario wrote into the nondenominational *Northern Messenger* in 1898 to explain her method of earning and saving money. She wrote, “I wanted to tell you how I made missionary money when I was seven years old. I earned ten cents by picking strawberries. Then I set a hen with a dozen of eggs, which I bought with the ten cents. Seven nice little chickens came out; but four died and I sold the rest for thirty-five cents. I gave that for missions.”²⁵ Another girl, from the Aylmer Mission Band, was happy to share her stories of ‘suffering’ to save nickels and dimes. She wrote a letter to the *Palm Branch*, explaining, “When first given my five cents I was enthusiastic, and in my dreams I saw scores and scores of poor little children, clothed, fed and educated all from the small beginning of five cents...” She explained the various ways she tried to make extra money to donate to the cause: She made fifteen cents cutting the lawn, five cents for running an errand for her mother, and she saved, rather

²⁴ *Palm Branch*, (May, 1894), 7.

²⁵ *Northern Messenger*, (March 11, 1898), 7.

than spent, the ten cents given to her for ice cream. She most happily recounted how she saved through her own suffering for “the heathen.” When her father gave her 25 cents to get a tooth pulled from the dentist, she walked the backyard for two whole hours with a brick tied to her tooth because, she explained, “My father always lets me have the money if I pull it out myself.”²⁶ It is likely that some of these stories were exaggerated, but the very fact that children deemed their methods of saving and sacrifice worth sharing with others testifies to the zeal with which children took up the missionary cause.

As can be read in these children’s testimonies, the W.M.S. employed hands-on, practical activities in its mission bands for children, and stressed practical service over prayer. Children sewed quilts to send to mission stations abroad, they held bake-sales and socials to raise money to send new missionaries where they were needed most, and they made dolls or donated clothing and Christmas trees in an attempt to raise the spirits of children from afar who were learning about the Christian God. By getting children to do practical work for missions, female leaders were drawing on their existing practices and experience in church work. As Marguerite Van Die has argued, “Even when [...] ecclesiastical arrangements fully assumed (or resumed) their male hierarchical character, women would continue to view religion as a site at which to

²⁶ *Palm Branch* (March, 1900), 7.

exercise domestic skills and family concerns in public ways.” She points out that when women offered their homes for church purposes or when they made goods and food with their hands, women “were making important statement[s] about the links between spiritual priorities and their material expression.”²⁷ This blending of the spiritual and the practical in women’s church work can be seen in their provision of hands-on missionary activities for children. Protestant women drew on the knowledge, experience and organizational skills they had gained as mothers, wives, and church fundraisers and volunteers to attract children and young women to a cause that was, by the late-nineteenth century, of particular concern to women. For women who did not meet the qualifications required to become missionaries themselves, or those who did not see the appeal of being sent out to the mission field, staying at home and teaching children missions was an important and useful alternative. As Compton Brouwer, Rutherford, and Gagan have shown, missionary work was one of the few professions open to women at the turn of the century, but the hundreds of women who chose to become

²⁷ Marguerite Van Die. “Revisiting ‘Separate Spheres:’ Women, Religion, and Family in Brantford” in Nancy Christie, ed., *Households of Faith: Family, Gender and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 243.

missionaries did so not as simple opportunists, but as an expression of faith.²⁸ Women who stayed home could express that faith in other ways, one of which was through educating and training children on the subject of missions.

Because most of these clubs were initially organized by the WMS and their auxiliaries and because many club activities centred around raising money for missions by selling children's home-made goods, or contributing handwork directly to missions, girls 'naturally' took on a greater share of the work. Certainly, clubs that were organized under the auspices of women's groups consisted mainly of girls. Ontario-wide sex-differentiated membership lists for children's clubs in this period are difficult to find, but one example from Cobourg, Ontario in the year 1891 is revealing. In that year, the Anglican Junior Auxiliary had a total membership of 71, which consisted of 10 boys and 61 girls.²⁹

²⁸ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Rosemary R Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Myra Rutherford, *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

²⁹ "Reports of the Junior Branches" *Fifth Annual Report of the Woman's Auxiliary to Diocesan, Domestic and Foreign Missions of the Church of England. Diocese of Toronto* (Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1891), 37.

Under the auspices of women's organizations, the mission band movement grew and thrived, even if its young membership consisted overwhelmingly of girls and young women. By 1897 the Methodist church alone in Canada had 286 mission bands, who claimed over 6,700 members.³⁰ The value of these children's organizations was recognized early on. In the 1890s, the Committee on Young People's Societies of the Presbyterian Church believed that the mission band, and similar organizations like the Junior Christian Endeavour [C.E.] society, might be the solution to keeping children in the church. It noted that there was much emphasis on getting older youth and adolescents involved in church schemes, but that providing this type of practical training in Christian service to younger children might prevent them "from drifting out of sympathy with the Church and its work, as too many, especially of the boys and young men, now do."³¹ Indeed, by 1897 the Presbyterians had concluded that teaching younger children to donate their money and time provided them important lessons in Christian citizenship and it trained them to acknowledge their roles in a modernizing world. They concluded,

The 37 Junior C.E. Societies and a number of boys' and children's Mission Bands represent the experiment of putting the children in training for Christian

³⁰ *Palm Branch* (December, 1896), 8.

³¹ Report of the Committee on Young People's Societies [1898], 6. box 1, file 6, Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies Fonds, UCC.

work. Where wise leaders have charge, the experiment has been distinctly successful. It is worthy of much more extensive trial. Why should not the teaching of the home and the Sabbath School and the pulpit be thus supplemented? Can we begin too early to lead our children to understand that they are part and parcel of the great host by which the world is to be conquered for Christ, or too early to show them what there is to do and how it is to be done? ³²

The W.M.S. ‘experiment’ with children, which took the form of mission bands, was deemed successful by the churches and the W.M.S. alike. However, given the churches’ new emphasis on sound, practical religious training for the young, religious educators sought to remove missionary education from the homes of W.M.S. volunteers and place it firmly in the Sunday school. There, they could try to find better ways of getting boys involved, under the purview of male leaders. Under the direction of male church leaders, it was also hoped that missionary education’s effectiveness and methods could be measured and improved.

Modernizing Missions: Bringing Missions into the Sunday School

As churches reinvented themselves as institutions of service in addition to their role as preservers of morality, missions, both at home and abroad, occupied an

³² Report of the Committee on Young People’s Societies [1897], pp 1, box 1, file 6, Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies Fonds, UCC.

increasingly central place in Sunday school lessons. By the turn of the century, this focus was important enough that religious educators established separate missionary education departments to encourage Christian educators to “naturalize the missionary spirit and the work of missions in the lives of the members of the Sunday School.”³³ Like the other reforms to religious education, outlined in previous chapters, the missionary education movement was designed to revitalize Christianity, make the Church a central and relevant part of social life and to ensure that children at risk of adopting narrowly secular worldviews had a sacred alternative. Indeed, as we saw in the Explorer’s program for Juniors, once religious education was brought under the auspices of the Sunday school and religious education boards, missionary education was deemed a part of, and was taught alongside, children’s duties to work in service to society more generally. Missionary education became an essential part of twentieth century Sunday-school based religious education.

By the twentieth century, special missionary councils, committees and departments were formed with the purpose of implementing, and then standardizing through curricula, missionary education as part of a well-rounded religious education. These groups worked to ensure that Protestant children were learning about missions, giving money to missions, and were being geared towards the work. Sunday school

³³ Ralph E. Diffendorfer. *Missionary Education in the Sunday School* (Toronto: The Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, 1914),10.

superintendents were encouraged to have a clear 'missionary policy' for their school and Sunday schools were instructed to devote at least one lesson a month to missionary education, though it was recommended that they use a topic suggested by the WMS. In the Methodist church, a 'Sunday School Constitution' dating between 1905 and 1908 specifically recommended that "There shall be, wherever practicable, in connection with each Sunday School, a Missionary Society, for the collection of missionary money, the diffusion of missionary information, and the cultivation of a missionary spirit."³⁴ In the Anglican Church, "[s]ystematic giving to missions" was one factor by which Sunday Schools were measured against the agreed-upon "Standard for Model Sunday Schools" in 1913.³⁵ In many cases, these missionary societies were Junior Bands or other groups similar to the mission bands organized by the W.M.S., but the male church leadership attempted to wrest control over these groups from these largely independent female organizations.

Though the male-dominated Sunday school or religious education boards would not dare insult the efforts of the Women's Missionary Societies, they did argue

³⁴ Sunday School and Epworth League Board, "The Sunday School Constitution" [n.d.] Box 6, file 1 (scrapbook), Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

³⁵ Fifth Annual Report of the Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada [1913], pp 17, box 2, file 1, Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada Series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

that better-trained teachers were needed to teach missions to children and better methods were required in order to appeal to boys. An 1898 Report of the Presbyterian Committee on Young People's Societies argued that "[t]here was a general feeling that, in some way, the interest of the children, of say between the ages of ten and fifteen, should be drawn out towards the actual practical work of the Church. Already the mission bands in connection with the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, where such exist, are training the girls, and in some cases the boys, in the direction indicated; but in the case of a very large number of the children, and especially of the boys, no specific effort is made to lead them to understand that they have any share in or responsibility for such practical work."³⁶ Two decades later, in 1917, in a circular letter appealing for financial aid for the Methodist Summer training school for Christian Workers, Drs. Young and Bridgen argued that "[u]ninstructed and misdirected efforts, however well-intentioned, in Sunday School, Epworth League, Mission Circle and other church work, accomplish but a fraction of what might be done by more scientific methods and more accurate knowledge."³⁷ Of course, this meant that the church had deemed female W.M.S. volunteers unqualified for the task of teaching in missionary education. In a sense, the W.M.S. was a victim of its own success. Under Sunday school auspices,

³⁶ Report of the Committee on Young People's Societies [1898], 6. box 1, file 6, Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies Fonds, UCC.

³⁷ W.R. Young and W.H. Bridgen to "Dear Mr." [1917?] box 5, file 1 (scrapbook), Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

missionary education would be taught by qualified teachers in the Sunday session— more and more of whom would have been trained in the churches' training schools and would have taken one of the newly offered courses on appropriate methods of teaching missions to children.

In the Methodist Church, the Young People's Forward Movement for Missions (YPFMM), which originally had as its membership students and young people, began to focus on children in Sunday schools. It found itself at odds with the WMS, and in competition with the WMS for children's time, attention and funds. In a letter to Dr. Sutherland of the General Board of Missions, General Secretary of the YPFMM, Fred Stephenson, suggested that it was undesirable to be in competition with the WMS, and that perhaps the WMS should focus on cultivating wealthy women in particular "who are now spending much time and money on afternoon teas." Stephenson suggested that the WMS "could do [s]o much for this class of young women."³⁸ The implication was that children's religious education was such important work that it, like other aspects of religious education, ought to be under the direction of male leadership and the boards responsible for religious education, rather than the WMS, whose members were not up to date on the latest pedagogies and practices of religious educationists.

³⁸ Letter to Dr. Sutherland from Fred C. Stephenson [Toronto, December 18, 1909], box 19, file 1, Missionary Education Series, F.C. Stephenson Family Fonds, UCC.

The WMS did not give up, however, and well into the third decade of the twentieth-century, the relationship between the WMS and the YPFMM was described as “competitive.” However, the Board of Christian Education made arrangements in 1931 and 1932 to promote the affiliation of the WMS with Canadian Girls In Training Groups, and to allow junior Groups in the Sunday schools to serve the WMS in mission bands as well.³⁹ In the Presbyterian church, too, the boards responsible for religious education recommended that the WMS cooperate with other agencies responsible for children’s education so that the mission bands could be brought in line with the other forms of mission study. In “affiliating” and “cooperating” with the various women’s missionary societies, the boards of religious education were ensuring there was no longer competition with the women’s missionary societies for children’s time, attention, and pennies. In a sense, the boards managed to pull the whole missionary education enterprise under their control.

It is no surprise that there was competition for children’s allegiance in missionary education. Children raised significant amounts of money which, depending on their affiliations, could go directly to the General Board of Missions or to the WMS in support of female missionaries. Indeed, though churches appealed for money for a

³⁹ “Statement Number II to the General Council Commission on Missionary Education by the Secretary of Young People’s Missionary Education” [June 16th, 1933], pp 1, box 17, file 12, Missionary Education Series, Stephenson Family Fonds, UCC.

variety of church schemes, it was the churches' missionary work that appealed to children best. In 1920, Junior, Girls' and Boys', and Young People's societies of the Methodist Church in Canada alone, together raised over \$200,000 for local, missionary and other purposes, with the most money going to missionary work.⁴⁰ Today, that would amount to \$2,320,000 in simple purchasing dollars.⁴¹ In the early 1930s, when competition with the WMS was only beginning to be resolved, the WMS still received through the junior groups and mission bands over \$54,000.⁴²

There were more important reasons why churches sought control over children's missionary education. Male leaders of the boards of religious education deemed missionary education a crucial part of a well-rounded religious education, and as an important component of what it meant to be a Christian citizen. As a result, they insisted that the responsibility for this part of children's religious education could not be placed on female volunteers who had no formal training. Under the direction of the Sunday school, missionary lessons could be graded according to the pupils' age and

⁴⁰ Report of Young People's Societies for all the Conferences for the Year ending April 30, 1920 [1920], Box 1, File 4, Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Funds, UCC.

⁴¹ Measuring Worth Website, <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/relativevalue.php> (Accessed August 22, 2014).

⁴² "Statement Number II," 7.

stage of development. Moreover, by putting missionary education in the Sunday school, it was thought, both boys and girls could attain the ‘missionary spirit.’

As we have seen, part of the problem was that the WMS mission bands held little appeal for boys. In the Anglican Church, under the direction of the Sunday School Commission, sex differences in missionary club membership were a concern. Because of these differences, by 1914, the Church was proclaiming it had a “boy problem.” The problem was evidenced by the fact that “three out of four of our Sunday School boys are lost to the church” and by confirmation statistics, which showed “that boys and men are far less effectively dealt with than girls and women and that a large number of male candidates lapse within the first year.”⁴³ Part of the solution to the boy problem, it was thought, lay in missionary organization for boys. Noting that WMS methods were effective, but mainly for girls, one tract explained, “The splendid work done by the Woman’s Auxiliary for the girls was an evidence of what could be accomplished with young people through systematic organization... [but] it was because of a neglect of this

⁴³ The Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, *Missionary Organization for Boys* [1914], pp 3, box 2, file 3, Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

field in the past that it is necessary to start a special movement to arouse the men of our Church to a sense of their responsibility in that work for which the church exists.”⁴⁴

One difference between girls’ and boys’ missionary education was in the suggested practical work for boys; leaders emphasized more ‘manly’ items that boys could make and send to missions. In contrast to girls who sewed for missions, the recommended activities for boys included covering magazines with strong paper for distribution in lumber camps and rolling bandages for medical work.⁴⁵ The Anglican “Leaflet of Instruction for Members of Boys’ Missionary Clubs” offered another way Church leaders thought they could appeal specifically to boys. Addressing boys directly, the leaflet used militaristic language to describe children’s mission work. It explained to them, “And now you belong to what might be called the Boys’ Regiment of the great Missionary Army of the Church, for each one of these Boys’ Missionary Clubs, no matter in what part of this great dominion it may be, forms one company of this regiment.” Attempting to show boys the importance and extent of this army, the brotherhood it represented, and attempting to appeal to their sense of patriotism, the leaflet continued, “[Your work] is like a life line thrown out to a ship in a storm. But it

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁵ The Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, *Missionary Organization for Boys*, 21.

does not only reach out to the missionaries at work, it also twines about all the different missionary clubs and classes of boys scattered throughout the Dioceses of our country and binds them together.”⁴⁶ The churches, like other organizations dealing with children in this period, were capitalizing on post-war discourse that linked militarism with masculinity.⁴⁷

Getting boys interested in missions was essential, since under the religious education boards, the goals of missionary education were much broader in aim than they were under the control of women’s groups. A variety of pedagogical and educational tracts emphasized that the goal was to instil a ‘missionary spirit’ in children, one tied to the larger educational aims of the whole Sunday school programme. The most comprehensive of these tracts was Ralph E. Diffendorfer’s *Missionary Education in the Sunday School*.⁴⁸ Diffendorfer was secretary of the interdenominational Missionary Education Movement in the United States, but his methods and theories influenced

⁴⁶ Sunday School Commission of the Church of the Church of England in Canada, *Leaflet of Instruction for Members of Boys’ Missionary Clubs* [n.d.], box 2, file 4, , Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the efforts to educate young Ontarian boys in the ideals of manliness and militarism on the eve of the First World War, see Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁸ Ralph E. Diffendorfer, *Missionary Education in the Sunday School* (Toronto: The Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, 1914).

leaders in the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican churches in Canada. In fact, this particular tract was published in Toronto by the Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada in 1914 and was recommended for the use of Sunday School teachers by the Sunday School Commission. Diffendorfer's tract demonstrates how Missionary Education was modernized to suit the educational goals of twentieth-century Protestant churches and to meet the presumed needs of children of different age groups. Diffendorfer and the Protestant leadership agreed that "the missionary life and spirit are natural and essential characteristics of all Christian living."⁴⁹ Arguing for the need of a special Missionary Committee in each Sunday school, Diffendorfer argued that they would "seek to naturalize the missionary spirit and the work of missions in the lives of the members of the Sunday School."⁵⁰ Influenced by a theological emphasis on service to society, Diffendorfer recommended that children study missions and gain knowledge, but also that they learn early to donate money to the cause, which "will show them what money is for," and to partake in acts of personal service, so they learn that "some needs of the world can be met by the giving of thought, word and kindly deed."⁵¹ Because of the "very close connection between activity, conduct and

⁴⁹ Ralph E. Diffendorfer, *Missionary Education in the Sunday School*, 5.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 10.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 13.

character,” stressing children’s duty to work in service to society was “one of the Sunday School’s greatest educational opportunities.”⁵² Given his commitment to age grading, it is not surprising that Diffendorfer also recommended specific missionary lessons and activities for children of each age group, with lessons suited to their capabilities.⁵³

To church leaders and teachers, this missionary spirit could be attained only through learning about missionary work, studying other cultures, and understanding how Christianity would better the world. Visual educational materials were used to make learning about missions more exciting: Maps filled in black and white to differentiate heathen from Christian areas of the globe were studied; and dramatics were employed to imitate the religious and cultural differences that could be found in each place. Diffendorfer deemed dramatics a very effective tool, and suggested that “the missionary, in his contact with strange peoples, and the reaction of the heathen mind to the gospel message often yield really dramatic situations which may be most vividly presented to the school.”⁵⁴ The best Sunday schools might have a lantern slide, so children could see different parts of the world on display. They might also have a mite-

⁵² *ibid*, 14.

⁵³ Ralph E. Diffendorfer, *Missionary Education in the Sunday School.*, 33-43.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 26-27.

box at the entrance to the classroom, in which students could donate their pennies to some orphan in India, or towards building a school for 'Indian' children in Canada's West. Schools in larger cities, like Toronto, might even engage pupils in pageants, so white children could dress like and imitate 'other' children from abroad, as some children did at a pageant hosted by Massey Hall in February 1924 to commemorate sixty years of Methodist missionary work in Japan.⁵⁵

Children, parents and Sunday schools could also purchase consumer goods with religious educational value. For example, the Methodist church created its own version of many girls' favourite toy – the doll – in an attempt to teach girls a missionary message through play. For seventy-five cents, an eight-inch 'missionary doll' and an accompanying story book could be purchased. The doll and the accompanying 'Story of the Sing Yet family' was intended to teach Juniors "Chinese life and superstitions, The need of the Gospel, Methods of mission work, and Some of its wonderful results."⁵⁶

While historians of teenagers and youth have acknowledged the churches' attempt to curb older girls' and boys' unhealthy consumerism and their questionable forms of leisure by providing them with Christian alternatives, the 'missionary doll'

⁵⁵ *Toronto Daily Star*, (February, 1924), 24.

⁵⁶ "Missionary Helps, Suggestions and Literature"[n.d.], box 3, file 1(scrapbook), Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds, UCC.

offers historians a reminder that younger children, too, were deemed to need wholesome and Christian alternatives to consumer goods and commercial entertainment. Indeed, the 1911 report of the Young People's Forward Movement for Missions (YPFMM) stated that "the aim is to develop the instincts of love and sympathy." Though children may not be able to grasp fully the administration and needs of the mission fields, "Through the use of African, Indian and Japan Object Lessons and the Chinese Dolls," it argued, "The children learn how the children in these lands live and play and know some of the things they need." The report concluded that these object lessons and toys with missionary education value "will help them to keep out prejudices" and may even influence adults in the families of the children. It suggested, "No limit can be set to the influence of children or the possibility of their future development."⁵⁷

Of course, we might suppose that these lessons produced more feelings of prejudice than of charity, and that, despite their modern methods they harkened back to an older imperialist and racist worldview. According to church leaders, the aims of these lessons were much broader. The result of children's missionary education would be "a broader view of the world, a broader conception of Christianity, a broader vision of the plan of Christ, a deeper interest in that plan, a more intelligent petition, and a more

⁵⁷ Young People's Forward Movement for Missions Annual Report [1911], box 2, file 1, Young People's Forward Movement for Missions series, Stephenson Family Fonds, UCC.

practical activity on behalf of the Kingdom...”⁵⁸ As noted earlier, it was through practical activity that churches expected to keep children attracted to the church. The missionary club and service activities in the Sunday school provided children with the space, opportunity and encouragement to engage in practical work for God. By participating in such activities, children were told they were already missionaries, working for the extension of God’s Kingdom from home.⁵⁹

This broader definition of missionary education meant that nearly all aspects of Christian conduct were deemed to be ‘missionary.’ The 1924 *Canadian Junior Manual* suggested that missionary education “is not a thing apart from religious education,” but is “a vital part of it and interwoven in all its teachings.” Indeed, missionary education was described in much the same terms as religious education was more generally for Juniors, as we saw in the previous chapter. The *Manual* suggested that the goals of Missionary education ought to be: (1) to give children a sense of world brotherhood, and give them a clear sense of understanding that Jesus has left us to complete His work of extending His Kingdom to the ends of the world; (2) to add to this teaching a knowledge of other races, their conditions, needs and ideals, which included heroic stories of real

⁵⁸ Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, *The Missionary Department of the Sunday School*, 2.

⁵⁹ Sunday School Commission of the Church of the Church of England in Canada, *Leaflet of Instruction for Members of Boys’ Missionary Clubs*.

missionaries and what their work accomplished; (3) to provide for the children's training in social Christian living so that they may learn to think in social rather than in selfish terms and to lead them to face four square the common tasks and needs of their daily lives with other people; (4) to include opportunities for carrying out un-selfish class or group enterprises, which could include activities for the benefit of the church, community, or home or foreign missions. The *Manual* stressed that, together, fulfilling these aims should result in the development of "Christian Citizens who regard the missionary movement of the Church as their own responsibility, helping and giving, not as a duty to some worthy organization, but because it is their share in the joint enterprise of the extension of the Kingdom."⁶⁰

Though it may be tempting to argue that this new emphasis on missionary education was a response of the church to its always-insufficient missionary funds, part of the appeal of Missionary Education to church leaders was that it was expected to form in children a habit of Christian living. Harold J. Sheridan, author of "Knowing Our Pupils: A Course of Study on Growing Life," published for the use of teacher training in the Standard Leadership Training Courses, demonstrates this goal. Borrowing from psychologists who suggest "there is no religious instinct that exists distinct and apart

⁶⁰ The Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, *Canadian Junior Manual for Teachers and Parents* (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1924), 44.

from other native tendencies,” the author argued that there was a case to be made that “[h]abits of prayer, philanthropy and social living, are built up in the same way as are habits of attending the movies, reading the newspaper and buying candy.”⁶¹ Protestant churches believed that by getting children to work for missions, by fund-raising or selling goods they sewed, baked or made, they were preparing them for life service to God and society.

Certainly, the overwhelming importance of money in children’s missionary education provided a Christian alternative to the range of commercial amusements and consumer goods that children’s pennies, nickels and dimes could now buy. By emphasizing the contrast between happy healthy children in Canada and the sorry state of children elsewhere around the globe, the churches hoped children would see the spiritual value of money, and think twice about where to spend the dime they might receive as a gift or as an allowance. However, under the leadership of the boards of religious education, the goal of missionary education was broadened to the extent that missionary education could easily be mistaken for wider lessons on Christian citizenship, service, fellowship and kindness. When missionary education is placed in the context of this wider theological emphasis on service to society, it becomes clear that all these efforts were not only intended to draw funds and support to the churches’

⁶¹ Harold J. Sheridan, *Knowing our Pupils: A Course of Study on Growing Life* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1932), 83.

missionary societies. Rather, missionary education and the attainment of the 'missionary spirit' became central to the goals of religious education.

Conclusion

Missions, and conversions abroad, were too 'far away,' and could not hold mass appeal in this age of practical, hands-on Christianity. Emphasis had to be placed on the practical side. The missionary clubs set up by the WMS provided a good precedent and model for the boards of religious education. Their format clearly appealed to children, especially girls, and in them children demonstrated that they were willing workers for missions. By reformulating missionary education to form a major part of training for Christian citizenship, the male-dominated boards and committees of missionary education were able to wrest control of missionary education from female volunteers. Missionary education became too important, in the eyes of the church, to leave it up to untrained voluntary workers outside the purview of the Sunday school to do such work.

By the early twentieth century, churches had taken advantage of the groundwork provided by WMS volunteers in religious education to make missionary

education conform to their new goals. For children, churches stressed practical, active work on behalf of the church, and thus linked children's recreational and social activity to religious life. Moreover, by fusing lessons about missions with wider lessons about friendship, neighbourliness, and service, the church guaranteed that supporting missions would remain a key component of Christian citizenship. Instilling this 'global vision,' then, was part and parcel of Protestant churches' attempts to become more relevant in an increasingly secular social world. By emphasizing service to society over personal moral codes, Protestant churches hoped they would bind children to the church in the same way that the church sought to bind itself to the world: by making Christianity central to modern culture and social life, not separate from it.

In the process of reframing missionary zeal as a component of Christian citizenship, religious educators also perpetuated the role of religion in colonialism. Though the language about missions in Sunday school lessons gradually changed to include 'friendliness' or 'neighbourliness,' the central message was still the same. Though now taught by trained teachers in pedagogically sound ways, missionary education continued to promote children's obligations to the "less fortunate" and it reiterated and rearticulated children's superiority by situating them as helpers, consumers and citizens as opposed to those elsewhere, outside and "other."

Chapter 6

Assessing the Impact of Modernization in the 1930s: Religion as Child's Play?

Christian educators must have been quite pleased with the results they had achieved in the field of religious education by the early 1930s. The adults who pushed for new, progressive methods, better trained teachers, and better organized Sunday schools had accomplished much. They had successfully convinced clergy, lay church leaders, and parents that religious education was too vital to children's own well-being, too crucial for the well-being of both nation and Christendom, to leave to non-experts. Sunday school curricula had been updated to reflect modern pedagogy; the Uniform lessons – once the pride of interdenominational Sunday School associations throughout North America – were now widely acknowledged to be inadequate and out-dated. A programme of training children both on Sundays and in through-the-week meetings was well-established. Enrolment statistics demonstrated that churches were successful at convincing parents to add their baby's name to the cradle roll and then to keep their children in Sunday School and the schools' auxiliary midweek organizations, at least until they were teenagers. Sunday school enrolment peaked to a level in 1932 that would

not be matched until the postwar baby boom.¹ Indeed, by the early 1930s, religious educators could boast that they had successfully developed a programme of training fit for twentieth-century Christian citizenship, one that encompassed tens of thousands of Protestant children from cradle to confirmation.

However, the very success of the Protestant religious education programmes left some critics and promoters wondering if they had gone too far in some respects. This chapter examines two concerns that arose in response to the success of the Sunday School and its auxiliary organizations. First, this chapter examines one of the first concerns that churches faced as a result of the Sunday School's success: officials worried that the Sunday School had effectively supplanted the home and parents in children's social and religious nurture. This had been a concern all along, but from the mid 1920s to the mid 1930s, Protestant church leaders became more vocal about their claim that parents had shirked their religious education duties.

This chapter then examines the rise of junior congregations, and suggests that they arose in response to fears that the overwhelming stress Sunday Schools had placed on the Social Gospel and Christian citizenship had effectively minimized the importance of worship among Protestant children and youth. Church leaders reported

¹ Kevin Neil Flatt, "The Survival and Decline of the Evangelical Identity of the United Church of Canada, 1930-1971" (PhD diss, McMaster University, 2008), 132.

that many children did not attend church services, choosing to leave the church after Sunday school was dismissed. This was especially common among children whose parents did not attend. Some ministers and local religious education leaders responded to this problem with the establishment of junior congregations. Junior congregations were designed to ensure that children did not forget worship and prayer in the process of learning how to be good citizens. Thus, the junior congregation movement demonstrated the success of stressing active Christianity – in a sense, it expressed a concern that the social gospel had been too successful. Church leaders feared something had been lost in the process. However, junior congregations also finalized the separation between adults and children in the sphere of religion. They helped to make the religion of the child separate and different from the religion of adults. Indeed, religion had been so divided in the institutional structures of twentieth-century churches that children's religion was seen as something different, discrete and detached from the religion of adults.

The Problem of Parents

As early as 1918, the Sunday School Commission of the Anglican Church suggested that the very success of the Sunday school instigated failure elsewhere: in the home. In its report on "The Sunday School and the Home," the Commission brought

attention to a problem that, though not new, was more urgent. “One of the objections brought against the Sunday School Movement, in the days of Robert Raikes, was that it was subversive of family religion,” argued the Commission. In those days, it pointed out, the children who attended Sunday school came from families in which religion was practically non-existent, so the problem was not a dangerous one. However, “the growing strength of the Sunday School Movement and the fact that the Sunday School is now an officially recognized department for teaching religious truth has, undoubtedly, increased this danger and has made it all the more necessary that the religious function of the Home should be emphasized and the true relation between the Sunday School and the Home kept clearly in mind.”² In the eyes of the Commission, then, the very success of the Sunday School as an agency for religious education led to new concerns, especially the danger of supplanting home religion.

The Anglican Church believed the answer to this problem could only be achieved in two ways: first, in a “revival of the religious life of the home” and, second, by “creating of a better understanding of the work the Church aims to do, through the Sunday School and other agencies, in behalf of the child and the relation of this work to the work of the Home.” Adding to this latter point, the Commission argued that there

² Minutes of the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada [1918], pp 17, box 2, file 1. Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

was a need to show parents “that the Sunday School can never be, in any sense of the term, a substitute for the Home, that its real purpose is to work in co-operation with the Home towards the attainment of the desired results.” In the view of the Commission, however, parents had been too happy to leave all responsibility for religious teaching up to the church and Sunday school.³

Of course, as was mentioned in Chapter 1, the Sunday School was a centre of the community, bringing together adults and children for special events, holidays, and picnics. As we saw in Chapter 2, the cradle roll and nursery classes in the Sunday school sought to link up the Sunday School with the home life of the child, and bring the parents into a relationship with the Sunday school early in their child’s Sunday school career. However, from around the age of five years, in the beginner class, the child was largely learning religion with peers, rather than with his or her parents. Religious educators had hoped that parents would still participate, by asking their children what they had learned in school, reading over the Sunday school lessons that were sent home with them, and by encouraging prayer and Bible reading at breakfast and before bed at home. But the many church pamphlets that urged parents not to neglect home worship and not to forget their crucial role in their children’s religious education suggest that churches were not optimistic about parents’ sense of responsibility in these regards.

³ Minutes of the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada [1918].

Several attempts to rectify the problem were suggested by Anglicans, Methodists and by the later United Church, but Presbyterians appear to have taken the lead on the problem, even urging the Anglican Church in a 1918 letter to address the issue “believing that if the churches in Canada would make a simultaneous effort in this direction, much more would be accomplished than if only one church undertook it.”⁴ The Presbyterians issued a series of “Home Religion” pamphlets and encouraged Sunday Schools to establish Parents/Teacher meetings and a parents’ or mothers’ class “to consider the vital questions that arise in the home.”⁵ One year later, in 1919, the Presbyterian Publications department in Toronto sought to address the problem with a new technique, oddly similar to the temperance pledge. The idea was to have elders in the church issue cards to parents which they were expected to sign and who, “by their signature” one pamphlet for ministers explained, “undertake to conduct family worship regularly in their homes.”⁶ The ideal time to conduct the card-signing campaign, it was thought, was immediately after a sermon had been preached on the issue of home religion, hoping that the mix of a stirring sermon and a signed pledge would solve the

⁴ Minutes of the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada [1918]

⁵ Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Local Church and Home Religion: For Ministers, Sessions and Other Leaders in Religious Education* (Toronto: Committee of the Forward Movement, 1919), 3-4.

⁶ *ibid.*, 2.

problem. The benefit of this tactic, it was thought, was that “it brought before the minds of the people in a tangible and definite manner” the matter of worship in the home.⁷

The results of the card-signing campaign are unknown, but the continued emphasis on the importance of home religion into the 1930s suggests that the problem had not been solved.

The Rise of Junior Congregations

In the 1930s, Christian leaders began to express a concern that, in some ways, the success of the Sunday school program had instigated a decline in faith and worship more generally. Church leaders feared that children raised in the Sunday school from birth had become more attached to the Sunday school than to the church or to religion. Was so much stress placed on the Sunday school that children believed *attendance* at Sunday school was enough, or that activities in the Sunday School were, in fact, their ‘religion’?

Unlike in Catholic communities, where partaking in devotional rites and practices outside the walls of church buildings marked young and old alike as

⁷ Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People’s Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Local Church and Home Religion*, 2.

Christians, Protestants relied primarily on a personal relationship with God. How did Protestant children express their inner faith? Special “Sunday best” outfits marked children out as good Christians, as did their Sunday school prizes for good attendance (often a “Golden Text” or even a Bible) or their Sunday school or Explorers’ insignia. But besides these outfits and prizes, demonstrating their inner faith in public ways was largely accomplished by attending and participating in Sunday school and partaking in service activities that took place there.

Oral history memories of Sunday Schools from the early twentieth century suggest that, indeed, some children equated religion with attendance at Sunday school. Lucie Scott,⁸ born in 1900 in Fordwich Ontario, was asked in a 1980 interview if religion had been important to her when she was a little girl. Her answer was “Yes, I used to go to Sunday School.” When pushed further by the interviewer to discuss what kinds of values the church stressed, she responded “Well, I don’t know. We had, we always tried at home, to live a good life, you know. That’s about what I can tell you.”⁹ Another girl, born in 1901 in Minto township, was asked whether religion had been important to her as a girl. In response, she replied: “That’s a difficult question to ask

⁸ All names from this collection have been changed to pseudonyms to comply with University of Guelph McLaughlin Archive’s restrictions on use of this collection.

⁹ Lucie Scott, transcript of an interview conducted by Catherine A. Wilson et al. *Huron County Oral History Project*. University of Guelph McLaughlin Archives, 21.

because I really don't know. I felt, because I'd always been expected to go, I felt it was important. And yet, sometimes I have wondered if, if I really thought it was as important as perhaps I do now. I went because I was expected to go."¹⁰ Both described their religion in terms of attendance.

Other reflections on Sunday School stressed the social rather than the religious aspects of attendance. One interviewee seems to have placed more weight on the certificates she earned in her Presbyterian Sunday School and on her participation in the Sunday school orchestra than she did on religion or faith. When asked if she had attended Sunday school, Valera MacDonnell, a Presbyterian, responded, "Oh yes, we got our certificates every year, for perfect attendance." Valera stressed the aspects of rote learning that were still in use, emphasizing the rewards and certificates they earned her: "We learnt more in those days, than we do now in Sunday School, at least I think so, we learnt the Bible. We'd learn the psalm, and then we'd go to the Minister's home and we'd get certificates with stars for the Lord's Prayer, and stars for the Ten Commandments, and stars for Beatitudes, etc. We had a very good minister who took an

¹⁰ Rebecca Cornwell, transcript of an interview conducted by Catherine A. Wilson et al. *Huron County Oral History Project*. University of Guelph McLaughlin Archives, tape 2, pp 5.

interest in the Sunday School.”¹¹ Valera also explained that she took violin lessons as a girl, and her violin teacher had started an orchestra in the Methodist Sunday School. Even though “we were really Presbyterians,” Valera explained, “[h]e was Methodist, so I decided to go to the Methodist Sunday School”. When the Presbyterians found out, according to Valera, “they said if I come back to the Presbyterian that they’d start a little orchestra in our own Sunday School.” Reflecting how Sunday School attendance had successfully become normalized for some children, she said it was for some reason “natural for me to go to church, and I don’t know, I don’t know. Now I don’t know why I would want to go so bad.”¹²

These early-twentieth-century experiences are similar to those uncovered by Neil Sutherland in a later period, in the 1920s and 1930s. His research reveals that children often associated the church as a place for children, perhaps women too, and that children also often viewed it as a social, rather than a religious undertaking. One boy recalled Sunday school as “just a place to socialize and a chance to wear good

¹¹ Valera MacDonnell and Ruth MacDonnell, transcript of an interview conducted by Catherine A. Wilson et al. *Huron County Oral History Project*. University of Guelph McLaughlin Archives, 37.

¹² *ibid*, 39.

clothes,” and another as a place for “social not spiritual, fun things.”¹³ These kinds of opinions and assessments help to explain church leaders’ growing concern that the Sunday School was seen by children and parents as an end, rather than as a means to an end.

The emphasis on social Christianity, on preparing for a life of Christian citizenship, did mean that worship had been deemed secondary to other outward signs of faith. Demonstrating care for others, a sense of world friendship, and partaking in helping activities at home and in the community were the main ways by which Protestant religious educators judged children’s religious conviction. However, in Protestant denominations, worship is something that happens on the inside. A.J. William Myers pointed this out in a training manual for Sunday School teachers. In the section on worship, he asked, “What is worship? Usually, we think of saying prayers, singing hymns, using scripture, and so on.” But, he pointed out that such outward examples were meaningless without a motivation from within. After all, he explained, “One may be going through all these forms and cursing in his heart.”¹⁴ Judging children’s behaviour and action was the only way to really assess their inner religious

¹³ Quoted in Neil Sutherland *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada From the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto: university of Toronto Press, 1997),71.

¹⁴ A. J. William Myers, *Teachers of Religion: A Course on the Principles of Teaching* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1932), 70.

conviction. Nevertheless, church leaders worried about a decline in children's participation in the public service of worship. To some degree, they thought, the Sunday School was to blame.

Religious educators in the United Church came to fear the implications of a lack of integration between the church and the Sunday school. There had always been some concern about this; the Presbyterian Moderator of the General Assembly of the Sabbath School Committee in 1900 argued that that "the small number of those who pass from the schools into communion of the Church" was particularly discouraging. He pointed to the relation between church and Sunday School as one cause: "It is unfortunate when Church and School run in parallel lines without close connection, as if the school were not part of the church." He cautioned against the view that the Sunday School was effectively a children's church. After all, he said, "The Sabbath School is not a Church but a school."¹⁵ These concerns grew stronger in the late 1920s and in the 1930s, when religious educators feared that children no longer valued worship and that parents did not care whether their children attended church services.

¹⁵ Quoted in circular letter from WW Peck to Synodical Sabbath School Secretary [October 15, 1900], box 1, file 1 (scrapbook), Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies Fonds, UCC.

But worship, after all, was not the religious educators' field of expertise; it was up to the theological colleges to train ministers to lead their flocks in the service of worship. However, religious educators could insist that even the service of worship needed updating to accommodate childhood. "The service of worship is a corporate act of the whole congregation," argued the United Church Board of Christian Education in 1935, and "there is immeasurable value for children in sharing in this experience of corporate worship."¹⁶ They suggested that ministers accommodate worship to children's needs in the form of Junior Congregations. One form of Junior Congregations popular in Canada was to have a completely separate service in a separate room at the same time as that of the adult service. But religious educators preferred the second popular form of Junior Congregation, whereby children could attend church for congregational worship and, after the hymn but before the sermon, withdraw to attend the Junior Congregation. The Junior Congregation would then provide instruction, expressional activities and preparation for worship.¹⁷

The need for separate worship and sermons for children was sparked by a concern that the child, raised in large measure by the Sunday School, was no longer

¹⁶ "Junior Congregations and Relationship of Sunday School and Church Services" [1935] box 59, book of Minutes 1934-36, Minutes of the Board subseries, Administrative Records series, UCCBCE, UCC.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

“church-conscious.” Though it does not appear to have taken up Junior Congregations as the United Church did, the Anglican Church nevertheless felt the need to remind parents that “The Sunday Church School is not a substitute for the Church.”¹⁸ Children’s leaders insisted that worship was crucial because it “gives worshipper [sic] hope – courage – strength – adjusts relationships – visualizes ideals – without worship no person (child or adult) can live the more abundant life.”¹⁹ Children’s religious education leaders studied the Junior Congregation movement, which arose initially without their input, in response to local conditions.

A 1935 study of the topic revealed that though they had been established in some Presbyterian or Methodist churches as early as 1914, the peak period for the establishment of Junior Congregations was between 1928 and 1934. Great variation characterized the stated motivations for establishing Junior Congregations in local churches: most stressed the need to encourage children to attend church and not just the Sunday School, the desire to instruct children in ways more suitable than the sermon,

¹⁸ General Board of Religious Education, *The Home and Worship* (Toronto: General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada Church House, n.d.), box 56, item 276, Pamphlet and Printed Materials series, General Board of Religious Education Fonds, GSA.

¹⁹ Findings of a Group of Forty Children’s Leaders Representing Sunday Schools and Mission Bands [1928], pp 7, box 17, file 9, Missionary Education series, F.C. Stephenson Family Fonds, UCC.

and the desire to encourage parents of younger children to attend the church. Some less common reasons cited were: to relieve the overcrowded conditions in the church auditorium, to provide a session for adults free from the disturbance of children, and because “someone suggested it.”²⁰ There was also significant variation in the age groups invited to participate in Junior Congregations. Some took children as young as 18 months and others placed no age minimum or maximum. In the main, the target age range appears to have been between pre-school and the teen-age years. All but two of the 132 Junior Congregations studied had a separate children’s worship period regardless of whether children had participated in adult worship with their congregation prior to the children’s service. The goal was to make the Junior Congregation as similar to the adult worship service as possible, though the inevitable problem of soundproofing meant that children’s congregations were often prohibited from singing so as not to disrupt the adults. In 1934, the end of the peak period, 437 Junior Congregations had been established Canada-wide; in them were nearly 22,000 children.²¹

The explosion in Junior Congregations signifies a backlash to the overwhelming focus on character, citizenship and service in children’s religious

²⁰ Report of the Committee on Junior Congregations and Study of the Sunday School in Relation to Church Services [1935] box 59, book of Minutes 1934-1936, Minutes of the Board of Christian Education Subseries, Administrative Records Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

²¹ “Religious Education Statistics”[1934] box 59, book of minutes 1934-1936, Minutes of the Board of Christian Education Subseries, Administrative Records Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

education and a renewed emphasis on worship and reverence. This may have been a result of the economic depression, which, according to Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, helped to instigate a resurgence of personal piety and a push towards rediscovering inner faith.²² Since children's religious education material was so slow to change, it is impossible to know whether economic conditions sparked the Junior Congregation movement. Children's Sunday School curriculum continued to stress an activist, practical Christianity. Yet, Netannis Semmens, Children's Work Secretary in the United Church, hinted that there was a confluence of new concerns in the 1930s. She began her 1934 report on children's work with a reflection on the times: "Against a background of complex and bewildering world conditions which have been reflected to some degree in the lives of all during the past year, one has discerned in many church school leaders of children a new earnestness in their task and a desire to see it in relation to other forces which are shaping the lives of boys and girls; a growing concern over the welfare of the children under their care and a desire to discover how the Church may supply the conditions of growth which will make possible for children the possession of

²² Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 224.

abiding realities, immune to circumstance and misfortune.”²³ Frank Langford, reflecting in 1931 on the past year, also pointed to a greater desire among United Church adherents to connect with the church more deeply:

The past year has been marked by increasing interest on the part of our people in religion and the Church. From all the Conferences have come reports of larger attendance at all the services of the Church and more ready response to the appeal of the Christian message and the challenge for church membership. Young People’s Work has shown marked advance in practically every Conference. In general it seems safe to say that while money is scarce and many congregations have been compelled to work on a reduced budget, yet the real work of the Church is prospering.²⁴

Thus, the depression probably had some impact on the development of Junior Congregations, but it was not likely the only reason. After all, some Junior Congregations had been established over a decade before the depression hit. It is more likely that a variety of factors contributed to the growth of Junior Congregations across the country, and that the economic depression was just one of many influences that spurred their rapid growth. Other factors were also at play. Religious educators were well aware that public schools were now teaching character development and civics

²³ Report of Netannis Semmens, Children’s Work Secretary [April 1934] box 59, book of Minutes 1932-24, Minutes of the Board of Christian Education Subseries, Administrative Records Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

²⁴ Reports on Departments of Work under the Direction of Rev. Frank Langford [1931] box 3, file 1, Annual Reports and Files of the Board Executive subseries, Administrative Records series, UCCBCE, UCC.

lessons, making much of the Sunday School's social teachings less obviously religious in orientation. A reemphasis on worship might have been the churches' attempt to stress the continuing importance of the church in a context that saw a host of other institutions and organizations, including schools and children's organizations, stressing a message of social service and Christian citizenship very similar to that which the Sunday Schools had been teaching for decades.²⁵

By separating children from adults in public worship, the Junior Congregation movement further divided religion into discrete subsections. Except for the very beginning of the worship service, children's relationship to the church was separated, in both form and in space, from that of their parents and other adult church members. This was a concern for children's leaders. In its investigation of Junior Congregations, the committee responsible highlighted several concerns raised by the 132 church leaders who responded to the committee's questionnaire about Junior Congregations. Some of the disadvantages listed included the sense that might develop among children that the minister belongs less to the child than he does to the adult, the sense that religion was

²⁵ R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, "The Christian Recessional in Ontario's Public Schools," in Marguerite Van Die ed., *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 275-293; Ken Osborne, "Education is the Best National Insurance: Citizenship Education in Canadian Schools, Past and Present." *Canadian and International Education* 25, 2 (Dec. 1996): 31-58.

different for adults and children, and the “lack of unity in family interests.”²⁶

Nevertheless, children’s leaders were convinced of the movement’s advantages and they continued to promote its use in local churches.

Conclusion

In the end, although the Junior Congregation movement solved the problem of the lack of coordination between Sunday School and church and the problem of children equating Sunday School with church, it also contributed to the growing gulf between the religion of childhood and the religion of adulthood. This separation had been in the works for decades, as the field of religious education came to be dominated by trained children’s religious education experts. The problem of parents’ non-involvement in their children’s religious education may, in part, be explained by the fact that by the 1920s and 1930s, children’s religion had been deemed distinct and as something so important that parents could not do it effectively without proper training from experts.

²⁶ Report of the Committee on Junior Congregations and Study of the Sunday School in Relation to Church Services [1935].

Conclusion

Beginning in the 1890s, churches in Ontario created a programme of training in religion and social service for the youngest members of the Protestant community. Drawing on theories in the fields of child study, psychology, and educational science, a new field of “religious education” came to dominate the field of religious training. In their attempt to shape childhood in ways fitting for a modern Canada, religious educators stressed active, practical Christianity more than personal moral codes. This dissertation has demonstrated how the rise of the social gospel and the growing importance of children to the church were integrally related.

While many historians have suggested that the social gospel movement precipitated a decline in church influence, and even helped to secularize church leaders, this examination of childhood religion offers an important corrective to that narrative. The social gospel influences in children’s Sunday School and mid-week organizations suggest that the churches were in fact expanding their faith base into the 1930s. Relying on new fields of expertise in education, they developed a programme to train children to see the world as their workplace, their community as their field of influence. The hope was that the rising generation would not only feel allegiance to their local church and their larger denomination, but also that they would also, both as children and later as adults, apply the lessons they learned on Sundays to their life each day of the week.

Sunday Schools were training new generations of children to see that their religion was not only still relevant, but that it was all the more vital in the modern context.

Children were not shielded from the modern world by their churches and Sunday schools. Even as babies, they were rounded up and listed on rolls, counted, visited by church workers, sent mass-produced cards on their birthdays and holidays, and given a certificate attesting to their future roles in the world. When they were a little bit older and could attend the beginners' session of the Sunday school, they were urged to see the world around them, appreciate nature, and find ways to be friendly and helpful to those in their community. By the time they were juniors, children were told they were Christian citizens and that they ought to be fully engaged in bettering their communities by being "doers of the word." In Sunday sessions, juniors learned about the Christian social order. In their midweek explorer groups, wearing uniforms and insignia, children studied "other" children in Canada and across the globe, learning about the problems they faced as well as what the church was doing to "solve" those problems. In through-the-week activities, community celebrations and picnics, sports, games and ceremonies, children were taught to see the church and Sunday school as part of the wider community, part of modern life.

Children were taught to see their religion not as something private and personal, something to be kept to oneself, but as part and parcel of who they were. In this sense it

was hoped children would not just learn and apply the lessons they learned, but that they would internalize them. An anecdote included in a 1932 manual for Sunday School teachers offers an interesting way to think about these goals of the modern Sunday school. The anecdote describes the story of a boy from a country church who noticed the front of his church was in desperate need of a coat of paint. A well-trained teacher saw in the child's idea an opportunity for a Sunday School lesson. She decided to engage the juniors in a study of the importance of the church, its place in the community, how it should be kept, and what it should provide. The class then designed a model of the ideal church, including a space for themselves. As part of their study, they visited some churches and they read about more. In the end, the class was able to raise enough money to repaint the church, but the effects of their efforts were even wider. The author explains, "At the morning services they explained all they had done and presented the money. Needless to say the congregation rose to the occasion and the whole church got a new dress; the grounds and basement were cleaned up; the Juniors had a new, proprietary interest in the church. An interest was aroused which issued, later, in an educational building in which each department had better facilities for its work."¹

The usefulness of the anecdote to contemporary teachers is that it demonstrated the child's internalization of the lessons he had been taught in Sunday school, and the

¹ *Trained Teachers of Religion* [1926], pp 28, box 21, file 1, Leadership Education subseries, Functional Committees Series, UCCBCE, UCC.

wider effects of his actions. Whether or not the anecdote is true (the author merely introduced the story as one of a few “cases”), it demonstrates the ideal result of the Sunday lessons. First, no one alerted the boy to find the problem with the church paint. The boy found this opportunity for service all on his own. The boy, described in the anecdote as a “junior,” would have been learning how he could improve his society through active, practical work. He found in the church’s peeling paint an opportunity to put these lessons to practice. Second, his interest in improving the church building demonstrates his care for others and for the world around him, two lessons that were reinforced in the boy from beginner age, when “Christian character” was stressed to children. Third, the story illuminated the ways in which a child’s actions could spark the interest and involvement of others around him. The real value of the anecdote is not that the church got a fresh coat of paint in the end, but that the boy’s actions brought the whole community together to improve the church for the benefit of all. The methods the teacher used in the story— study, field trips, building models, and fundraising – also highlighted how good pedagogy yielded good results.

Children’s engagement with the world demonstrates the importance of studying the history of childhood outside the institutional structures of home and public school. Even children younger than the teen age were engaged in peer socialization outside of public school, and they were assuming responsibility for bettering their community –

both the community in which they lived, and their imagined community of Christian citizens beyond the confines of town or city borders. The increasing emphasis on what was “age-appropriate” was not an attempt to shelter children from what was beyond their years, but to get them to understand, in their own terms, the importance of good character and happy service. Though to some degree childhood remained an age at which the young were to be protected, preserved and sentimentalized throughout this period, it was not, at least among these Protestant children in Ontario, a time of insulation.

Children’s recollections, letters and activities demonstrate that the church and Sunday school formed an important part of their lives. Though there was a fear that children began to equate attendance at Sunday school with religion itself, this fear speaks to the ways that the churches had successfully naturalized religion in many Protestant children in these years. Part of that process of naturalization, we have seen, depended on reinforcing children’s ‘natural’ roles in the world, a product of their white skin, English language, and relative privilege.

As with all forms of citizenship, Christian citizenship depended on exclusionary practices. Though in the Sunday school and church these exclusionary practices were sometimes subtle and sometimes completely unambiguous, they reinforced and buttressed many existing inequalities. Though girls were not taught in particularly

different ways from boys, Sunday school lessons drew on and contributed to existing gender norms. Religious educators were well aware many of their lessons' messages would hold different meanings for girls than they would for boys, and no attempt to disrupt those common-sense understandings was attempted. The class bias of much of the religious education material is also clear. Despite religious leaders' claims that they were attempting to foster in children an understanding, free of prejudice, of the "brotherhood of man," Sunday school lessons presupposed a distinctly middle-class child readership. Similarly, Sunday school lessons that identified non-white or non-Anglo groups as problems to be solved simultaneously reinforced existing prejudices against "other" groups and marked out child-readers as the ones with the power and privilege to solve those problems.

Though neither children nor adults ever managed to Christianize the world as a result of all of these efforts, in many ways, the success of the Protestant churches after the Second World War demonstrates the achievements of religious educators' efforts in the 1920s and 1930s. When those children in Sunday School grew up to have children of their own in the 1950s and 1960s, they sent them off to Sunday school in record numbers. Never before did Sunday schools have such high levels of enrolment. Postwar adults, many of whom grew up attending Sunday School, going to mid-week Junior Explorer meetings, and raising funds and sending goods to mission stations, continued

their associational work as adults. The years from 1946 to 1960 are characterized by John H. Young as “A Golden Age” in the United Church. He describes the period as one of increasing enrolment in adult as well as children’s groups, increasing church membership rates, the rapid establishment of new congregations and new church buildings, and increasing financial donations from the laity.² Doug Owram, too, has pointed to this period as one of church (if not “religious”) revival. The United Church, he shows for example, built four times as many new churches in the ten years between 1947 and 1957 as it had in the previous twenty years.³ Owram also highlights the important role children played in the postwar revival: “Much of the revival had to do specifically with children. To these parents, religion was the ultimate formal organization by which societal values could be transmitted to a new generation.” After all, he points out, “that was how they had been raised.”⁴

Despite decades of effort, religious education leaders never managed to stop the dramatic decrease in Sunday School attendance among teenagers. The Sunday School, even in the “Golden Age” of the postwar period, remained primarily an

² John H. Young “A Golden Age: The United Church of Canada, 1946-1960” in Don Schweitzer, ed. *A History of the United Church of Canada*. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 79.

³ Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.), 105.

⁴ Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 106.

institution of young childhood. Part of the goal of this dissertation has been to highlight the value of scholarship on young childhood and the value of paying even greater attention to age. In the twentieth century, children were not only increasingly separated from adults. They were also regularly and systematically differentiated from one another by subtle age variations. These differentiations and gradations are part of what made the Sunday school in the twentieth century conspicuously modern.

This dissertation has also stressed the need for more scholarship on the subject of children's religious lives. A study of Catholic children's lives in Ontario and in the rest of Canada would yield an interesting comparison to the case of childhood in Protestant Ontario. In this period, children's religious identities and subjectivities gave them an importance beyond their status as future church members and future adults. As we have seen, religion expanded children's worlds and responsibilities beyond what historical records of the usual kind might tell us. The study of children's religious lives thus offers one way to examine the worlds and spaces – real, imagined, and prayed about – in which children situated themselves.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary SourcesArchival Records

United Church Archives of Canada (Toronto, Ontario)

United Church of Canada Board of Christian Education Fonds

Department of Children's Work Series

Administrative Records Series

Functional Committees Series

Methodist Church (Canada) General Board of Religious Education Fonds

Presbyterian Church in Canada Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies Fonds

Methodist Survey Commission Fonds

F.C. Stephenson Family Fonds

Missionary Education Series

Young People's Forward Movement for Missions Series

General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church in Canada (Toronto, Ontario)

General Board of Religious Education

Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada series

Pamphlet and Printed Materials Series

General Board of Religious Education Series

Inter-diocesan Sunday School Committee Series

University of Guelph McLaughlin Archives (Guelph, Ontario)

Huron County Oral History Collection

City of Toronto Archives (Toronto, Ontario)
Alexander W. Galbraith Fonds

West Toronto Junction Historical Society (Toronto, Ontario)
Growing up in the Junction 1900-1930 Collection

Elgin County Archives (St. Thomas, Ontario)
Scott Studio Fonds

Private Collections

Wilma Margaret Halliday Family Papers (Toronto, Ontario)
Scrapbooks

Periodicals

Palm Branch

The Counsellor

Sunday School Guardian

Children's Record

Letter Leaflet

Church Evangelist

Northern Messenger

The Child's Own

Canadian Church Juvenile

Epworth Herald

Newspapers

Toronto Daily Star

Toronto Star

Edmonton Journal

Leamington Post and News

Websites

Ourontario.ca, www.ourontario.ca

Girl Guides of Canada website, www.girlguides.ca

Pamphlets and Published Primary Sources

1933 Year Book. York Bible Class. Toronto, 1933.

Architectural Commission of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *The Planning of Parish Halls and Buildings for Religious Education.* Toronto: General Board of Religious Education [n.d.].

Bartlett, S.T. *The Junior League Handbook.* Toronto: William Briggs, 1897.

Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Local Church and Home Religion: For Ministers, Sessions and Other Leaders in Religious Education.* Toronto: Committee of the Forward Movement, 1919.

Board of Sabbath Schools and Young Peoples' Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Forward Movement and Christian Education: A Survey of the Work of Christian Education and its requirements for the next five years, prepared by the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young Peoples' Societies November 1918.* Toronto: The Committee of the Forward Movement of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1918.

Bushnell, Horace. *Christian Nurture*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1861.

Children's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada. *Canadian Junior Manual for Teachers and Parents*. Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1924.

Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church, the Board of Social Service and Evangelism, and the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies of the Presbyterian Church, *County of Huron Ontario. Report on a Rural Survey of the Agricultural, Educational, Social and Religious Life*. [Toronto?], 1914.

Diffendorfer Ralph E. *Missionary Education in the Sunday School*. Toronto: The Sunday School Commission of the Church of England in Canada, 1914.

Fifth Annual Report of the Woman's Auxiliary to Diocesan, Domestic and Foreign Missions of the Church of England. Diocese of Toronto. Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1891.

General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, *Organizing and Equipping the Sunday School: Up-to-date Ideas Suitable for Your School*. Toronto: General Board of Religious Education, [n.d.].

Hall, G. Stanley. *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education, Volume 1 & 2*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904.

Hymns and Songs for Junior Missionary Meetings with Opening Exercises. Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1892.

Jackson, J. N. *The Importance of Mission Bands. Paper prepared and read by Mrs. G.N. Jackson, at the annual meeting of the Manitoba and North-West Branch of the W.M.S.* Toronto, [1898?].

McIntosh, W.R. ed. *Canadian Problems*. Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, [c.1910].

- Mumford, Edith E. Read. *The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of a Child: A Study of Child Life*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915.
- Myers, A. J. William. *Teachers of Religion: A Course on the Principles of Teaching*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1932.
- Pidgeon, George C. *Nation Building: A Review of Home Missions and Social Service*. Toronto: The Board of Home Missions and Social Service, [1917?].
- Presbyterian Committee on Religious Education, Methodist Department of Temperance and Moral Reform, and the Presbyterian Board of Social Service and Evangelism, *The City of London, Ontario: Report on a Limited Survey of Educational, Social, and Industrial Life*. Toronto, 1913.
- Robertson, J.C. *New Standard Teacher Training Course Part Four: The School*. Toronto: R. Douglas Fraser and William Briggs, 1917.
- Sheridan, Harold J. *Knowing our Pupils: A Course of Study on Growing Life*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1932.
- Sabbath School Association of Ontario, "*Reflected Rays*" *Being a Record of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Provincial Sabbath School Convention*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1900.
- Sudlow, Elizabeth W. *The Cradle Roll Department*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1915.
- United Church of Canada. *United Church Record of Proceedings and Year Book 1925*. Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1925.
- United Church of Canada. *Year Book 1926 and Record of Proceedings of the Second General Council, Montreal, 1926*. Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1926.

Articles and Chapters in Books

- Adamoski, Robert. ““The Child - The Citizen – The Nation: The Rhetoric and Experience of Wardship in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia.” In *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, edited by Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn, and Robert Menzies, 315-335. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2002.
- Baehre, Rainer. “Victorian Psychiatry and Canadian Motherhood.” *Canadian Woman Studies* 2, no 1 (1980): 44-46.
- Barman, Jean. “Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children.” In *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, edited by Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland and J. Donald Wilson, 57-80. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1995.
- Boudreau, Michael. “‘Delinquents Often Become Criminals’: Juvenile Delinquency in Halifax, 1918-1935.” *Acadiensis* 39, no 1 (Spring 2010): 108-32.
- Boylan, Anne. “Sunday Schools and Changing Evangelical Views of Children in the 1820s.” *Church History* 48, no 3 (September 1979): 320-333.
- Buckley, Suzann. “Ladies or Midwives? Efforts to Reduce Infant and Maternal Mortality.” In *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s*, edited by Linda Kealey (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1979), 131-149.
- Bullen, John. “Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario.” *Labour/Le Travail* 18 (Fall 1986): 163-187.
- _____. “J.J. Kelso and the ‘New’ Child Savers: the Genesis of the Children’s Aid Society Movement in Ontario.” In *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada*, edited by Russell Smandych, Gordon Dodds and Alvin Esau, 135-58. Winnipeg: Legal Research Institute, 1991.
- Chambers, Lori. “Adoption, Unwed Mothers and the Powers of the Children’s Aid Society in Toronto.” *Ontario History* 89, no 2 (Autumn 2006): 161-82.

- Christie, Nancy. "Young Men and the Creation of Civic Christianity in Urban Methodist Churches, 1880-1914." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 17, no 1 (2006): 79-105.
- Dirks, Patricia. "Finding the Canadian Way: Origins of the Religious Education Council of Canada." *Studies in Religion* (Summer 1987): 303-316.
- _____. "Getting a Grip on Harry": Canada's Methodists Respond to the 'Big Boy' Problem." *Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers* 7 (1990): 67-82.
- Dodd, Diane. "Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-34." *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 1, no 8 (1991): 203-30.
- Gidney R.D. "Elementary Education in Upper Canada: A Reassessment." *Ontario History* LXV, 3 (March 1973): 169-85.
- _____ and W.P.J. Millar. "The Christian Recessional in Ontario's Public Schools." In *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Marguerite Van Die, 275-293. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Glassford, Sarah. "Practical Patriotism: How the Canadian Junior Red Cross and its Child Members Met the Challenge of the Second World War." *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 7, no 2 (Spring 2014): 219-242.
- Gleason, Mona. "Embodied Negotiations: Children's Bodies and Historical Change in Canada, 1930 to 1960." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34, no 1 (Spring 1999): 112-138.
- _____. "Size Matters: Medical Experts, Educators, and the Provision of Health Services to Children in Early to Mid-Twentieth Century English Canada" In *Healing the World's Children: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Child Health in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Cynthia Comacchio, Janet Golden, and George Weisz, 176-202. Montreal & Kingston: Queen's University Press, 2008.

- Gossage, Peter and Danielle Gauvreau, "Canadian Fertility in 1901: A Bird's-Eye View." In *Household Counts. Canadian and Household Families in 1901*, edited by Eric W. Sager and Peter Baskerville, 59-109. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.
- Greer, Allan. "The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada." *Ontario History* 67, 3 (September 1975): 169-83.
- Heron, Craig. "The High School and the Household Economy in Working Class Hamilton, 1890-1940." *Historical Studies in Education* 7, no 2 (1995): 217-259.
- James, Cathy. "Reforming Reform: Toronto's Settlement House Movement, 1900-20." *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no 1 (2001): 55-90.
- Knowles, Norman. "Christ in the Crowsnest: Religion and the Anglo-Protestant Working Class in the Crowsnest Pass, 1898-1918." In *Nation, Ideas, Identities: Essays in Honour of Ramsay Cook*, edited by Michael D. Behiels and Marcel Martel, 57-72. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Marks, Lynne. "'A Fragment of Heaven on Earth'? Religion, Gender and Family in Turn of the Century Canadian Church Periodicals." *Journal of Family History* 26, no 2 (April 2001): 251-271.
- Marr, Lucille. "Church Teen Clubs, Feminized Organizations? Tuxis Boys, Trail Rangers, and Canadian Girls in Training, 1919-1939." *Historical Studies in Education* 3, no 2 (1991): 249-267.
- _____. "Sunday School Teaching: A Women's Enterprise. A Case Study from the Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church Tradition 1919-1939." *Histoire Sociale/ Social History* 26, no 52 (November 1993): 329-344.
- Maynard, Steven. "'Horrible temptations': Sex, Men, and Working-class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890-1935." *The Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 2 (1997): 191-235.
- Menzies, Robert, Robert Adamoski, and Dorothy E. Chunn "Rethinking the Citizen in Canadian Social History." In *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical*

Readings, edited by Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn, and Robert Menzies, 11-42. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2002.

- McIntosh, Robert. "Constructing the Child: New Approaches to the History of Childhood in Canada." *Acadiensis* 28, no 2 (Spring 1999): 126-140.
- McLeod, Julie. "Educating for 'world-mindedness': Cosmopolitanism, Localism and Schooling the Adolescent Citizen in Interwar Australia." *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 44, no 4 (November 2012): 339-359.
- Myers, Tamara. "Local Action and Global Imagining: Youth, International Development, and the Walkathon Phenomenon in Sixties' and Seventies' Canada." *Diplomatic History* 38, no 2 (2014): 282- 293.
- Osborne, Ken. "Education is the Best National Insurance: Citizenship Education in Canadian Schools, Past and Present." *Canadian and International Education* 25, no 2 (Dec. 1996): 31-58.
- Paisley, Fiona. "Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire." In *Gender and Empire*, edited by Phillipa Levine, 240-259. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Pedersen, Diana. "'Keeping Our Good Girls Good': The YWCA and the 'Girl Problem', 1870-1930." *Canadian Woman Studies* 7, no 4 (Winter 1986): 20-24.
- Prang, Margaret. "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-39." *Canadian Historical Review* 66, no 2 (1985):154-184.
- Reid, Jason. "My Room! Private! Keep Out! This Means You!": A Brief Overview of the Emergence of the Autonomous Teen Bedroom in Post-World War II America." *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 5, no 3 (Fall 2012), 419-443.
- Sánchez-Eppler, Karen. "Raising Empires like Children: Race, Nation, and Religious Education." *American Literary History* 8, no 3(1996): 399-425.

- Scott, Joan. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.
- Sherington, Geoffrey. "'Suffer Little Children': British Child Migration as a Study of Journeyings between Centre and Periphery." *History of Education* 32, 5 (September, 2003): 261-476.
- Stearns, Peter N. "Challenges in the History of Childhood." *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no 1 (Winter 2008): 35-42.
- Strong-Boag, Veronica. "Intruders in the Nursery: Childcare Professionals Reshape Years One to Five, 1920-1940." In *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, edited by Joy Parr, 160-178. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982.
- _____. "Today's Child: Preparing for the 'Just Society' One Family at a Time." *Canadian Historical Review* 86, no 4 (2005): 673-700.
- Stranger-Ross, Jordan. "An Inviting Parish: Community without Locality in Postwar Italian Toronto." *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no 3 (September 2006): 381-407.
- Thomson Gerald E. "'A baby show means work in the hardest sense': The Better Baby Contests of the Vancouver and New Westminster Local Councils of Women, 1913-1929." *BC Studies* 128 (Winter 2000/2001): 5-36.
- Thorn, Brian T. "'Healthy Activity and Worthwhile Ideas': Left- and Right-Wing Women Confront Juvenile Delinquency in Post-World-War-II Canada." *Histoire Sociale/ Social History* 42, no 84 (November 2009): 327-59.
- Turkstra, Melissa. "Working-class Churches in Early Twentieth Century Hamilton: Fostering a Distinctive Working-class Identity and Culture." *Histoire Sociale/ Social History* 41, no 82 (November 2008): 459-503.
- Van Die, Marguerite. "Revisiting 'Separate Spheres': Women, Religion, and Family in Brantford." In *Households of Faith: Family, Gender and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, edited by Nancy Christie, 234-263. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.

Young, John H. "A Golden Age: The United Church of Canada, 1946-1960." In *A History of the United Church of Canada*, edited by Don Schweitzer, 77- 95. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012.

Books

Airhart, Phyllis. *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2014.

Allen, Richard. *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.

Arnup, Katherine. *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.

Axelrod, Paul. *Making a Middle Class: Student Life in English Canada in the Thirties*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.

_____. *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Baillargeon, Denyse. *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009.

Baillargeon, Denyse. *Making Do: Women, Family, and Home in Montreal During the Great Depression*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999.

Balcom, Karen. *The Traffic in Babies: Cross-Border Adoption and Baby-Selling Between the United States and Canada, 1930-1972*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

- Berrol, Selma. *Growing up American: Immigrant Children in America Then and Now*. Boston: Twayne, 1995.
- Bradbury, Bettina. *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993.
- Brouwer, Ruth Compton. *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.
- Burke, Sara Z. *Seeking the Highest Good: Gender and Social Service at the University of Toronto: 1888-1937*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Campbell, Lara. *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Christie, Nancy and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.
- Christou, Theodore Michael. *Progressive Education: Revisioning and Reframing Ontario's Public Schools, 1919-1942*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.
- Chunn, Dorothy. *From Punishment to Doing Good: Family Courts and Socialized Justice in Ontario, 1880-1940*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Comacchio, Cynthia. *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.
- _____. *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006.
- Cook, Ramsay. *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.

- Cook, Sharon Anne. *“Through Sunshine and Shadow”: The Women’s Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995.
- Curtis, Bruce. *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871*. London, ON: Althouse, 1988.
- Cross, Gary. *The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children’s Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- _____, *Kids’ Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Cunningham, Hugh. *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*. London: Longman, 1995.
- Danylewycz, Marta. *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987.
- Denisoff, Dennis. *The Nineteenth Century Child and Consumer Culture*. Burlington VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008.
- Dubinsky, Karen. *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
- Fraser, Brian. *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988.
- Gagan, Rosemary. *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992.
- Gidney, Robert D. *From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario’s Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- _____, and W.P.J. Millar *How Schools Worked: Public Education in English Canada, 1900-1940*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012.

- Grant, John Webster. *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- _____. *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- Gleason, Mona. *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Hayes, Alan. *Anglicans in Canada: Controversies and Identity in Historical Perspective*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Hillyard Little, Margaret. *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Katerberg, William. *Modernity and the Dilemma of North American Anglican Identities, 1880-1950*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001.
- Kee, Kevin. *Revivalists: Marketing the Gospel in English Canada, 1884-1957*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.
- Kelm, Mary-Ellen. *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998.
- Ladd-Taylor, Molly. *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- Levine, Philippa. *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.
- Marks, Lynne. *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Marshall, David. *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- McKillop, A.B. *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979.
- Miller, James. *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Milloy, John. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999.
- Mitchinson, Wendy. *Giving Birth in Canada, 1900-1950*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
- Moss, Mark. *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Myers, Tamara. *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.
- Orsi, Robert. *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Owram, Doug. *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Paris, Leslie. *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp*. New York: New York University Press, 2008.
- Parr, Joy. *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982.
- Perry, Adele. *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

- Prentice, Alison. *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.
- Rutherford, Myra. *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002.
- Sangster, Joan. *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002.
- _____. *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Schrum, Kelly. *Some Wore Bobby Sox: The Emergence of Teenage Girls' Culture, 1920-1945*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.
- Semple, Neil. *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.
- Shore, Marlene. *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, The Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Strigley, Katrina. *Breadwinning Daughters: Young Working Women in a Depression Era City, 1929-1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.
- Stamp, Robert. *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.
- Stearns, Peter N. *Childhood in World History*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Strange, Carolyn. *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Strong-Boag, Veronica. *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939*. Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman, 1988.

- Sutherland, Neil. *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.
- _____. *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Valverde, Mariana. *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991.
- Van Arragon Hutton, Anne. *Uprooted. The Story of Dutch Immigrant Children in Canada 1947-1959*. Kentville, NS: North Mountain Press, 2001.
- Wall, Sharon. *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009.
- Warkentin, John. *Creating Memory: A Guide to Outdoor Public Sculpture in Toronto*. Becker Associates: Toronto, 2010.
- Westfall, William. *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.
- Woollacott, Angela. *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Yoo, David. *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
- Zeiler, Viviana. *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Unpublished Dissertations and Theses

- Alexander, Kristine. "The Girl Guides, Imperialism and Internationalism in Interwar England, Canada, and India." PhD dissertation, York University, 2010.

Kevin Neil Flatt, "The Survival and Decline of the Evangelical Identity of the United Church of Canada, 1930-1971." PhD dissertation, McMaster University, 2008.

Kniec, Patricia. "Among the Children: Sunday School Teachers and Evangelical Womanhood in Nineteenth-Century Ontario." Master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 2008.

Macfarlane Mary Anne. "Gender, Doctrine and Pedagogy: Women and 'Womanhood' in Methodist Sunday Schools in English-Speaking Canada, 1880 to 1920." PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1991.

Mitchell-McKee, Leila. "Voluntary Youth Organizations in Toronto, 1880-1930." PhD dissertation, York University, 1982.