

Stephen Jackson

*Religious Education and the Anglo-World: The Impact of Empire, Britishness, and Decolonization in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand*

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Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020. 98 pp.

In his *Religious Education and the Anglo-World*, Stephen Jackson (Sioux Falls University, South Dakota, USA) is concerned with the provision for religious education in the school systems that emerged in Australia, New Zealand, and English-speaking Canada. These settler colonies developed a transnational British identity with Protestantism as a central tenet. Issues peculiar to each jurisdiction influenced the structure of education but one theme was common to all: rivalry between Protestant denominations spurred the establishment of essentially secular systems with elements of common Christianity embedded in them while Catholic opposition led either to publicly funded separate schools or private institutions operated by religious orders. From the 1960s to the 1980s, or what Jackson calls the period of decolonization, non-European immigration, secularization, and a general decline in religious observance challenged the traditional position of Christianity in school and led to programs of teaching about religion.

Apart from a couple of brief passing references, there is no attention to two aspects of religious education in the three jurisdictions that deserve examination: the role of Christian missionaries in educating and evangelizing the Indigenous populations, and the successful agitation by sectarian private schools—supported by right-wing politicians—for some measure of public funding in recent decades.

Jackson writes well, knows his subject matter, and has a talent for summarizing and explaining complex arrangements. But his work is limited in scope, says nothing particularly original, and does little to advance his claim that historians of education ought to engage in comparative and transnational studies. *Religious Education and the Anglo-World* is a modest volume: With no more than 76 pages of text, it is even shorter if the space allocated to notes at the bottom of each page is subtracted. There is no index, but a bibliography of the secondary sources employed is provided. With an asking price of €96 or \$140 Canadian, it will not cause a stampede to the bookstores.

**Brian Tittley**

University of Lethbridge