

RELIGION IN THE BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Christianity has contributed to the evolution of culture, politics and social development of the United Kingdom. The objective of this article is to analyse the impact of Christian faith in education in the UK. This text focuses on the period the beginning of which is marked by the 1944 Education Act and its main aim is to present and analyse the major changes that took place in the post-war period and are influencing the British system of education in connection with religious education (formerly known as 'religious instruction').

Christianity, from its very early times has closely been attached to the state-building efforts of the sovereigns and Anglicanism has become an important British identity marker [Gilley and Sheils, 1994]. Right after the Elizabethan settlements religion was taught, advertised and propagated at every level of British society. Despite the fact that Britain developed into a modern, heavily industrialized and scientifically enlightened capitalistic society by the turn of the 19th and 20th century, the generally accepted and propagated world-view remained rooted in Christian morality and teaching. The Church has traditionally been active in providing education for centuries enforcing and recreating 'a natural right' to express an opinion in questions concerning and influencing further development of education [Harrison, 2009]. By the end of the 19th century, due to the rapid industrial development and urbanisation the British society radically transformed and the Church alone could not cope with the demands. Since 1944, non-denominational Christian religious education is legally compulsory in state primary and secondary schools in England and Wales. The school day is supposed to start with an act of collective worship and religious lessons should be provided, which concentrate on Christianity as the main religious tradition of the country. Alberts states that "Until the mid-1960s, religious education in England was about Christianity only" [p. 87]. It is also important to emphasize, however, that the so-called Cowper-Temple Clause states that "no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in the schools" as Jackson underlines [p. 87]. The 1944 Education Act as Albert adds "transfers the responsibility for Religious Education from the churches to the state, which means, for example, that the Religious Education teachers do not need approval from the church any longer" (p. 88). The act requires religious education to be taught according to an agreed syllabus which must be the result of an agreement among the Local Educational Authorities, representatives of the Church of England, other denominations and the teachers' organisations. The 1944 Act is seen as an important landmark since this first provided compulsory education for all children between the ages of 5 and 15. This also introduced the tripartite system in state education first grouping schools into three main categories: grammar schools, secondary modern schools and technical schools. Beyond the basic tripartite system, the 1944 Education Act recognised country schools and

voluntary schools, which were further divided into: voluntary controlled-, voluntary aided-, and special agreement schools. As Paul Meredith claims, “The vast majority of country schools [...] were non-denominational in terms of collective worship and religious education” [p. 157]. On the other hand, voluntary schools were established, financed and managed by church authorities “and the precise nature of requirements for religious education and collective worship depended upon whether the school was voluntary controlled, special agreement or voluntary aided” [ibid, p. 157].

The inclusion of the statutory obligation for religious education was a new feature in the 1944 Education Act, which declares that religious instruction “shall not include any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination” (s.26). This act contributed to the transformation of other syllabuses in England and Wales so that the changes reflect the needs of a multi-ethnic and multinational society that Britain already was in the 1970s. Multi-faith syllabuses include non-religious worldviews and strive to offer the students a more comprehensive overview of the religions of the world – and of the UK – they can get in contact.

The 1979 elections in the United Kingdom brought the victory of the Conservatives and Margaret Thatcher became the prime minister. The new government was committed to reforms and education could not be an exception from that. The reform was manifested in the development of a ‘national curriculum’ that would be applicable for all state-maintained schools allowing competition and comparison of the schools. This idea was manifested in the 1988 Education Reform Bill, “which may legitimately be regarded as the most comprehensive reform of the school education system in England and Wales since 1944” according to Meredith [p. 159]. As Meredith states, it was the first time that the new regulation “made provisions for a national curriculum for secular education” [ibid, p. 159]. It declared, among others, that collective worship in non-denominational schools should be broadly of Christian character, when ‘broadly’ meant that though the character of it should reflect the broad Christian traditions but should not concentrate on the teaching of one particular denomination. These provisions still represent the bases of religious education in England and Wales. Thus, a greater emphasis is put on the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of the given area allowing the students to gain a better insight into the religious diversities and different world-views.

Religious education is thus statutory for all registered pupils, though subject to a right to parental withdrawal under section 71 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act. As Meredith underlines “while the national curriculum is formulated centrally by the Secretary of State, the religious education syllabus is locally determined, subject to certain statutory constraints, and may take into account the particular ethnic and cultural complexion of the area concerned” [p. 161]. It is also important to clarify that not every act of collective worship has to be of ‘broadly Christian character’.

Regardless the series of criticism that have appeared in connection with the different education acts that controlled this area the British system of education seems democratic, well organized and expresses the will and effort of the different

governments to ensure balanced education for the next generations providing the widest possible range of information while supporting the right for free choice.

Literature

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Summary

This paper discusses some aspect of the evolution of religious education in the United Kingdom. The authors objective is to provide a brief overview of the factors that contributed to the contemporary relationship of state, religion and education.

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СИТУАТИВНИЙ ПІДХІД ДО ПІДГОТОВКИ МАЙБУТНЬОГО ВЧИТЕЛЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ

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Постановка проблеми. Оволодіння іншомовним спілкуванням в умовах сучасної школи має певні проблеми. Насамперед, вони зумовлені мережею годин, визначених навчальним планом, проте мета повинна виконуватись, чому мають сприяти доцільно дібрані засоби. Відомо, що таке засвоєння мовлення здійснюється на досить обмеженому мовному матеріалі, до оволодіння яким необхідно ставитися не як до мети навчання, а як до засобу розв'язання комунікативних завдань. Як зазначає Г.В.Колшанський, незалежно від рівня