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Calvinist Pluriformity Challenges Liberal Assimilation:
A Novel Case for Publicly Funding
Alberta's Private Schools, 1953-1967

John L. Hiemstra

Between 1958 and 1967, neo-Calvinist immigrants resisted the assimilating pressure of Alberta's liberal-inspired public school system by arguing that public funding should be extended to independent schools. This essay analyzes how neo-Calvinist ideas about the nature of society, the place of religion in public life, the purpose of schools, and the state's task in regards to plurality directly challenged mainstream thinking on these issues. The essay argues that the neo-Calvinists believed their new idea of a pluriform public order created space for Albertans to imagine public policies that could escape the assimilating tendencies of mainstream liberalism.

Entre 1958 et 1967, les immigrants néo-calvinistes ont résisté aux pressions assimilatrices du système libéral d'écoles publiques de l'Alberta en affirmant que les fonds publics devraient également financer les écoles indépendantes. Le présent article analyse comment les idées néo-calvinistes portant sur la nature de la société, la place de la religion dans la vie publique, la raison d'être des écoles et la tâche de l'état en matière de pluralité ont directement influé sur la façon de penser du grand public sur ces sujets. L'article avance que les Néo-calvinistes croyaient que leur nouvelle idée d'un ordre public pluriforme permettait aux Albertains d'imaginer des politiques publiques qui pourraient échapper aux tendances assimilatrices du libéralisme conventionnel.

I n 1967, the first government cheques supporting Alberta's private or independent schools[1] arrived in the mail, a development almost unthinkable for the previous century. The majority in Alberta—hereafter referred to as mainstream Alberta—long believed public funding should be reserved exclusively for public schools. The principal leaders in the fight for public funding emerged from the neo-Calvinist Dutch immigrant community—hereafter referred to as the neo-Calvinist community—most of whom arrived after the First World War. They believed equitable public funding should be given to all bona fide schools whether they were public, separate, or independent. This difference over the propriety of publicly funding private schools can be attributed in part to a clash of majority and minority interests. At heart, however, the struggle was rooted in deeper disagreements centring on divergent world views and clashing public philosophies.

Both the mainstream and minority players in this struggle were Protestant Christian, but they disagreed fundamentally over key ideas such as the nature of society, the place of religion in public life,[2] the purpose of schools in society, and the role of the state in regards to plurality. The respective world views and public philosophies of these communities led them to advocate very different policy approaches to diversity and schooling. This essay analyzes the ways in which the neo-Calvinist world view and the idea of public pluriformity challenged and critiqued the majority's liberal, assimilating approach to school policy between 1953 and 1967.[3]

The conflict over public funding for independent schools in Alberta was a classic tale of David versus Goliath. Alberta's independent school sector at the time was tiny, involving about 21 schools (Digout 1969, 32). The neo-Calvinist immigrant community, which led this struggle, numbered only about 11,000 out of the provincial population of 1,332,000 in 1961 (see *Yearbook* 1961).[4] Most of the neo-Calvinists were members of the Christian Reformed Church or other smaller Reformed denominations (Ganzevoort 1988, 101-102). Not only was the neo-Calvinist community small, but its form of Calvinism was alien to most Albertans. It had been shaped by Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) along with other Dutch Reformed leaders who sought to update the Calvinist idea of God's sovereign care of creation in order to address a rapidly modernizing culture. Kuyper's willingness to reform Calvinism when it appeared wrong or antiquated led critics to refer to him as a neo-Calvinist.[5]

Mainstream Alberta's Views of Society and Schools

After the First World War, Alberta was an ethnically and religiously diverse society, although mainstream thinking had been strongly shaped by Anglo-Protestantism and liberal public philosophy. Before becoming a province in 1905, the area of present-day Alberta was part of the North-West Territories. It had developed a fully funded non-sectarian public school system, while tolerating and carefully controlling a funded Catholic system, and restricting and disadvantaging private schools. Mainstream Alberta continued to defend this school system against demands for change from new linguistic, religious, and ethnic minority groups between 1905 and the 1950s. Even so, Alberta's constitutional power, as well as historical precedent, left room for public funding of independent schools.[6] Alberta's approach to school policy was decisively shaped by three influences: the evolving composition of the population, early Anglo-Protestant nationalism in the province, and liberal public philosophy.

First, the growing religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity within the North-West Territories significantly contributed to the widespread acceptance of an exclusionist and assimilatory school system. While Aboriginal nations initially dominated the population, heavy European immigration and the subsequent devastation of the Aboriginal way of life reduced this community to 3% of the population by 1911. The French portion of the population had equalled the English segment in the early 1880s, but soon thereafter slipped into minority status. Meanwhile, continuing immigration from various parts of Europe produced further religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in the North-West Territories. Balancing this diversity, however, was the reality that Anglo-Protestants numerically and politically dominated the region. By 1914, "over half the population of Alberta could trace their roots to Britain," whether they came from Ontario, the United States, or directly from Great Britain. These Anglo-Protestant immigrants were familiar with Canadian-style customs and institutions, and, as the new cultural elite, they fashioned Alberta's "dominant economic, political and social institutions" (Palmer and Palmer 1990, 79). Ever aware of their weakening perch at the top of society, this Anglo-Protestant elite adopted an exclusionary and assimilatory school system as the means to manage minorities within a plural society.

Second, mainstream Alberta was deeply influenced by Anglo-Protestant nationalism as it constructed the institutions—including a public school system—to manage a plural society. Early leaders in the North-West Territories were overwhelmingly participants in Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches that were originally rooted in Great Britain. These leaders were convinced that the Protestant faith was the highest and most advanced form of Christianity. When joined together with other features of British culture—such as parliamentary democracy and the free market—Protestantism would drive the engine of progress. They believed that only through the propagation of these beliefs could Canada ensure its participation in the progress of civilization. Deeply convinced of the superiority of their Anglo-Protestant way of life, these churches "saw it as their special duty to both 'Canadianize' and 'Christianize' immigrants. In their view, getting immigrants to join their Protestant churches was synonymous with Canadianizing them" (104).

Anglo-Protestant ideology had initially been developed in Upper Canada (present-day Ontario) and transplanted by immigration to the West. This ideology was then used to identify potential immigrants, Palmer and Palmer argue, based on "how quickly they could be assimilated" (79). The first premier of the North-West Territories, F.W.G. Haultain, and first superintendent of public schools, David J. Goggin, for example, fought to shape a society undivided by

language or religion. Cecil Race describes their commitment to assimilation: "For both men national schools were a vital agency for developing and preserving a national identity. In their thinking, Canadian unity demanded cultural uniformity, but a cultural uniformity defined by them to be a Canadianization occurring within the value system of the Anglo-Saxon majority and sustained by a respect for the British Empire" (1978, 54). The elite established English-language, non-sectarian Protestant public schools to absorb the children of newcomers into their cultural norm. Public schools were seen as the central means of manufacturing this unified society in the North-West Territories and later Alberta. The elite opposed both denominational separate schools and bilingualism as divisive and counterproductive. Extending public funding to independent schools for linguistic, religious, or ethnic minorities was therefore antithetical to Anglo-Protestant nationalism.

Liberal public philosophy was the third influence shaping mainstream Alberta's approach to school policy and its opposition to public funding for independent schools. Anglo-Protestant nationalism had absorbed key liberal conceptions. As part of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, liberalism was developed to oppose the dominant organic and hierarchical conception of society found in traditional public philosophy. In England, liberals rejected this traditional philosophy because class, tradition, and authority seriously constrained individual freedom. Power, prestige, and position within society, they argued, ought to be allocated solely on the basis of individual merit. They rejected absolute monarchy, privileged nobility, mercantilist control of the economy, and an established church while advocating a minimalist "night-watchman" state, individual freedom, private property in a market society, and private religious freedom.

The liberal rejection of an established church in England, and later in Upper Canada and the Maritimes, was particularly important for the shaping of the Alberta school system. The first, widely acknowledged impact of liberalism was its redefinition of the role of church and state. The rise of European nation-states after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) had led to the development of state-based, rather than empire-based, established churches. These state-based established churches, however, still reflected a Constantinian idea of church and state. The Constantinian model assumes that good Christian rulers establish a state church in order to generate and propagate the Christian values required to ensure the development and unity of the nation. In contrast, liberals wanted the churches to limit their focus to happiness in the next life and to stay out of public affairs. The state, in turn, was to focus on happiness in this world and to keep out of religious beliefs and ecclesiastical affairs. This liberal redefinition of the roles of church and state was accompanied by a key epistemological assumption,

that reason is potentially common and accessible to all and thereby provides society with a means of transcending the divisions of sectarian religion.

The second, less acknowledged impact of liberalism was its redefinition of the role of schools. Having rejected the Constantinian idea of the role of an established church, liberals needed a replacement for the established church's role of propagating and generating public values. Liberals turned to the common school—rapidly growing in importance due to the industrial revolution's need for mass education—to fulfill this role (Glenn 1987; Wagner 1995, 55-69). Ironically, they transferred the essential functions played by the established church in the older Constantinian model to the common school system, creating, in effect, a new liberal version of Constantinianism. Now, however, schools were being asked to generate and propagate rational Enlightenment values as the means to unify the nation and ensure progress. The importance and urgency of the school's role led liberals to accept as necessary vices the same coercive and assimilatory characteristics in their state-run schools as traditional conservatives accepted in the Constantinian idea of church and state.

The Impact of Liberal Public Philosophy on Schooling in Alberta

In the Canadian setting, liberal public philosophy was intimately intertwined with Anglo-Protestant nationalism. Roman Catholic and traditional Protestant ideas of society, state, and schools, however, also challenged liberalism and eventually achieved accommodations within the various provincial school systems. In *Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective*, Ronald Manzer identifies four basic types of "educational regime" that were produced in nineteenth-century Canada by conflicting "political ideologies of church and state in education" (1994, 33). These educational regimes continued to operate into the 1960s when Alberta's private-school funding debate transpired (165).

First, the most consistently liberal type of regime is the *non-sectarian public school system*. A strict liberal understanding of the separation of church and state characterizes this system. In this regime, Manzer argues, a government department rather than an ecclesiastical body has authority over local board-run schools. Clergy are forbidden to play any kind of authoritative role within the school system (e.g., as teachers, trustees, or inspectors). Churches are also prevented from sectarian engagement with the schools (e.g., instruction in religious dogma or creeds). Even so, public schools were not originally assumed to be fully secular but to advance some version of non-sectarian Christianity (1994, 55). British Columbia adopted this regime in 1872 while Manitoba replaced its earlier *dual confessional school system* (see below) with this regime in 1890.

The next two types of educational regime were created when liberals were forced to enact "substantial compromises with religious conservatism" (Manzer 1994, 65). The second type of regime, *non-sectarian public schools with minority denominational districts*, was developed in Upper Canada, which later became Ontario. Like the first regime, this system features public schools that are funded and indirectly controlled by a government department; schools generally incorporate non-sectarian Protestant practices. Now, however, separate denominational schools are permitted for Catholics but are under strict supervision by a majority-controlled government department that oversees curriculum and texts, testing and inspections, and teacher training and certification. The North-West Territories gradually revised its school system to this regime in the late nineteenth century, and it was formally passed on to the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905 (255, 54-59).

Compromise between liberalism and religious communities also produced the third type of regime, *de jure non-sectarian, de facto reserved public schools*. This regime historically emerged in the three Maritime provinces when they officially forbade sectarian practices such as "teaching denominational doctrine and using denominational prayers and books." Only non-sectarian Protestantism was permitted in the public schools. In practice, however, compromises were worked out with religious minorities in which some schools were reserved for Roman Catholics. They were permitted to engage in sectarian practices such as employing members of religious orders, wearing religious garb, and holding Catholic religious exercises before or after regular school hours (Manzer 1994, 57-59). This regime allows religious minorities a measure of control over local schools in the unique circumstances where they are significantly concentrated in isolated geographical regions.

Liberalism had little influence on the fourth regime, *concurrent endowment of confessional systems*. This regime is unique in that the state's role is restricted to public funding while ecclesiastical authorities retain effective control of school administration and curriculum (Manzer 1994, 53). Two distinct versions of this regime were developed in Canada. After 1867, Quebec developed the *dual confessional school system* in Montreal and Quebec City, where the non-governmental Council of Public Instruction was divided between Catholic and Protestant committees, each operating on an equal footing. The older department of education was dissolved, and the council was given power to make all important educational decisions. Manitoba and the North-West Territories also initially adopted this regime. A second version of this regime, *the multi-denominational school system*, was developed by Newfoundland and entrenched in the Canadian constitution when it became a province in 1949 (54). This regime left

authoritative control of the major aspects of education in the hands of each church that chose to run schools (e.g., Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, the Salvation Army, Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Pentecostal Assemblies). All schools operated on equal legal footing.[7]

Under all four regimes, independent schools were strongly discouraged until the 1960s since they were believed to weaken the public schools' ability to produce the beliefs required to unify society. Private schools were gradually and grudgingly permitted to exist, partly out of liberal respect for religious freedom, although some private schools were created to perpetuate class privilege rather than practice religion. For all intents and purposes, however, the mainstream public or denominational separate school systems in each regime functioned like assimilation-isolation mechanisms in which minorities who rejected the beliefs of mainstream schools were forced either to assimilate in these schools or else isolate in private schools that were denied public funding.

Manzer's four school regimes help explain the ways in which Alberta's school system has been shaped by liberal public philosophy over the years. The influence of liberalism was weakest in the dual confessional school system that the federal government created in the North-West Territories in 1884. Control of schooling was left in the hands of confessional bodies. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, mainstream territorial leaders fought to institute non-sectarian public schools in order to propagate their Anglo-Protestant nationalist and liberal values. They only managed, however, to achieve a compromise: a non-sectarian public school system with minority denominational districts. This reflected federal pressure to accommodate Catholic minority rights. The federal government reaffirmed and entrenched this regime in the *Alberta Act, 1905*.[8] Over the next 50 years, Alberta leaders maintained this regime, often with the hope of revising it to a non-sectarian public school system. In practice, however, provincial leaders often resorted to mechanisms found in the de jure non-sectarian, de facto reserved public schools regime in order to accommodate new minorities, such as Hutterite communities, in the public schools. By the 1950s, when public funding for independent schools registered as a political issue, Alberta still operated its non-sectarian public schools with minority denominational districts and continued to justify this regime with liberal public philosophy.[9]

Neo-Calvinist Views of Mainstream Society and Schools

While Dutch immigrants arrived in Alberta as early as the nineteenth century, the vast majority arrived between 1940 and 1960. The neo-Calvinist community composed only one-fifth of all Dutch immigrants (Ganzevoort 1988, 72). Like most immigrant groups to Canada, the neo-Calvinists developed distinctive ideas about themselves, Canada, the religious direction of mainstream schooling, and the tolerance of the public school system. When the neo-Calvinists arrived, they immediately began to evaluate the surrounding society and to chart out possible cultural responses.

Neo-Calvinist Perspectives on Canada

Central to the neo-Calvinist evaluation of Canada was the group's novel under-standing of the breadth and importance of religion. In *Being Young in a Young Land*, a 1957 Dutch-language booklet aimed at neo-Calvinist youth in Canada, Remkes Kooistra[10] argues that religion is the deepest ground of conviction; it is central to all of the world and life. In contrast to liberalism's privatized religion, Kooistra argues that one religion or another will always direct human activity: "We are always religiously active, but not always engaged in a worship service. Or, one can also say, that our life is always directed by our belief, like an arrow on a bow, but therefore we are not always busy with the function of worship itself" (1957, 29; my translation).

Kooistra analyzes deeply entrenched practices within Canadian culture in light of this view of religion. Canadian churches have tended to be theologi-cally feeble and weak in attendance, he argues. The root of this weakness is that Canadian Protestant churches are polarized between moralistic Methodism and secularizing modernism. Neither side engages the full range of Canadian cul-ture for Christ. While Canada has "less strident turning against God" than the Netherlands, he notes, Christian organizations still have far more impact on Dutch culture (1957, 29). Christians must ask themselves, Kooistra concludes, "whether the Canadian way of life is also a Christian way of life" (43). Inherent in Kooistra's critique is the assumption that the failure of Christians to overtly address leading Canadian cultural issues meant that these issues were therefore being shaped by non-Christian beliefs.

This belief in the central shaping role of religion went hand in hand with the neo-Calvinists' initial assumption that Canada was in many ways young and pli-able.[11] A 1950 Dutch-language promotional book (*Canada: Land of Freedom, Open Spaces, and Unfolding* by T. Cnossen) read by many immigrants before leaving the Netherlands claimed: "Canada is a country almost empty, with little history; it is

flexible, pliable and mouldable; Dutchmen have the wherewithal to help shape and mould it to the glory of God" (qtd. in Peetoom 1983, 88). This conception encouraged a triumphalistic attitude in some neo-Calvinist immigrants. In a study of the history of neo-Calvinist schools in Canada, for example, Adriaan Peetoom pictures one strand of the early immigrant mentality as follows: "Dutch emigrant ships transported conquerors, Orthodox-Calvinists who from their own point of view were armed with determination to subject this virgin land to what they saw as God's will. They came to make Canada not necessarily a model of what they had left, but a country along lines of 'Christian Principles'" (1983, 84).[12]

As time went on, the neo-Calvinists' understanding of religion led them to deeper analyses of Canada. They began to develop a variety of religiously defined organizations to spearhead Christian cultural action, including Christian schools. The Christian Action Foundation (CAF), for example, was "dedicated to the proposition that Christ as King of all spheres of life demands united Christian action in areas such as political, educational, economic and labour" (*Christian Vanguard* 1963, 4). The CAF emerged as a leader in the drive for public funding for independent schools. The community also invited key neo-Calvinist professors[13] and other leaders of the American-based National Union of Christian Schools[14] to speak in Alberta and assist them in understanding the underlying religious commitments and institutional structures of Canadian society.[15]

The neo-Calvinists' cultural explorations soon led them to recognize that Canadian society viewed itself quite differently from their former society. The CAF played a crucial role in helping them understand that the society they left had seen itself in terms of communal religious plurality, not liberal individualism. The Netherlands allowed the Roman Catholic and neo-Calvinist communities to participate fully in public life on an equal basis with liberal and socialist movements (Lijphart 1975; Hiemstra 1997). This gave religious-ideological communities public space in which to develop schools, universities, unions, broadcasting, and social services. This religiously defined plurality comported well with the neo-Calvinists' belief that all people operate out of one or another religious or ideological world view. Significantly, neo-Calvinists had supported this type of public pluriformity long before the Netherlands adopted it.

The neo-Calvinists learned that mainstream Canada had individualized and privatized religion while emphasizing the public saliency of linguistic and ethnic plurality under the influence of liberalism. As a consequence, most Albertans failed to comprehend what neo-Calvinists wanted in promoting their idiosyncratic ideas of Christian schooling, politics, economics, and media in

public life (Van Belle 1991, 329-32). The assumption that religion was private and that Canada was primarily a linguistic and ethnocultural mosaic ironically led mainstream Canada initially to favour Dutch citizens as ideal immigrants because they were believed to be an ethnic group that was easy to assimilate (Porter 1965, ch. 3). Van Belle and Disman argue that the majority thought that "the dominant characteristic of this ethnic group is religion and, since religion is considered a private matter by the Canadian establishment, the [neo-Calvinists] could not possibly pose a threat to the public sector by practising their way of life. They could be Reformed in private and Canadian in public" (1990, 22). The reality proved far different. The neo-Calvinists' sweeping view of religion meant they had little interest in common immigrant practices such as starting ethnic or language clubs (Ganzevoort 1988, 22); and since they did not view themselves as primarily an ethnic Dutch group, they were not easily absorbed into Canada. William Peterson already noticed this in 1955 when he stated that Canada had "facilitated the immigration of a group [neo-Calvinists] whose strict piety makes it relatively impervious to alien cultural influences" (189). Mainstream society also soon recognized, Ganzevoort notes, that the neo-Calvinist immigrants actually held "ideas in opposition to prevailing liberal and secular thinking" (1988, 101).

The neo-Calvinist penchant for seeing religion as more fundamental than ethnicity or culture is evident in their mid-1960s analyses of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Reverend Louis Tamminga, a founder and leader of the Christian Action Foundation, lamented the commission's failure to tackle the deeper religious level of Canada's cultural problems. All cultures are religiously directed, Tamminga argued, since religion is really "the full diversity of life's utterances as manifestations of man's obedience to underlying abiding norms." Canadian culture was "rapidly losing its [Christian] rootage," he concluded, because the liberal principle of "separation of church and state" had gone to the "ill-fated extreme" of a "separation of religion and life" (1964c, 4-5). In a follow-up *Christian Vanguard* editorial, Tamminga noted that the tensions between Quebec and the rest of Canada also had "significant religious roots. The commission, however, shies away from these factors and continues on their basic assumption of strict neutrality, as if man's basic religious commitment plays no role in his cultural manifestation" (1965a, 12).

Neo-Calvinist Perspectives on Public Schools and Religion

The neo-Calvinists' growing recognition that Canada did not view public life as first and foremost a religious plurality shaped their approach to Alberta's public schooling. They disagreed with the majority view that religion is private and limited to devotional practices alongside otherwise neutral rational schooling. Neo-Calvinist leader S. Woudstra argued in 1964, for example, that the "spirit of unbelief has become increasingly dominant" in public schooling and that these schools were thus unsuitable for neo-Calvinists. The simple presence of Christian teachers in the public system did not remedy this fault, he argued, because "children are taught every subject apart from its relationship to God." Adding a bit of "religious instruction" did not solve the problem because "the Bible must be permitted to speak on every subject." Woudstra felt that, "The purpose of Christian education is not to shield Christian children from the evil influences of the world around them for as long a period as possible ... but to prepare the child for a full-orbed Christian life in this world" (13-15). Public schools failed to achieve this central objective, he concluded, even though they should be praised for placing high-calibre education within reach of all students.

Tamminga affirmed Woudstra's assessment that public schools essentially sidelined religion. Although Article 390 of the *School Act* required some form of Bible reading in public schools (unless the local board opted out), he noted, this meagre measure constituted a fundamentally unhealthy approach to Christian education. He stated, "The Bible is forced by the very wording of this article ... into a secular framework, since it is assumed that the Bible is a worthwhile book, but merely as one of the many worthwhile things which the human mind can produce. This defeats the very purpose for which God gave us His Word. It claims sole allegiance and it offers complete redemption when fully accepted" (1964a, 6).

The neo-Calvinists argued that Alberta's school legislation was an important contributor to the weakness of Christianity in public schools. Andrew Wierenga noted in 1963 that the *Alberta Act, 1905* set up the "two branches of the public school which … were called Protestant and Roman Catholic." The first school in existence in any district was deemed public, even if it was Roman Catholic, while the second was deemed separate. Wierenga argued, however, that "the de-religionization which has taken place in the Protestant branch in what has now become known as the public school in Alberta, has resulted in the mono-lithic public, so-called neutral, school system" alongside a "minority Roman Catholic separate school system." Although this was perhaps not the "intended product" of this legislation, the resulting public school system was not really neutral but contrary to Christianity (6-7).

The neo-Calvinist critique of religion in Alberta public schooling occurred in the context of a Canada-wide debate on this subject. The public was divided between several different positions on the role that religion ought to play in public schools. These ranged from removing religion entirely from public schools in the name of the "separation of church and state" (Tarr 1963, 14), to teaching religion in an impartial and "non-sectarian" way (Gillies 1961, 25), to teaching a general "Hebrew-Christian view incorporated in the ancient literature of the Bible" (Arrett 1959, 52).[16] None of these mainstream approaches, however, fundamentally broke with the liberal assimilation-isolation approach to public schooling, which assumed that schools ought to generate and perpetuate beliefs that unified a free democratic nation within Canada. Only a few Canadians, including leading philosopher George Grant, characterized the fiery national school debate as fundamentally a religious tension between liberalism and Christianity (1963, 194-95). His analysis was so similar to the neo-Calvinists' argument that they reprinted his article in summary form in *Christian Vanguard* (Blake 1963) and distributed it widely in their community and to all Alberta MLAs.

Independent Christian Schools as Answer to Public Schools

The neo-Calvinist community developed a two-fold response to the rise of what they viewed as a competing religions within schools and the corresponding assimilationist structure of the public school systems. First, they initially retreated from public schools to develop independent schools that they believed to be authentically Christian and free of inappropriate government direction and control. Second, they agitated for a pluriform public order that would equitably reintegrate and fund all schools within the province.

The neo-Calvinists turned down free public education in favour of starting Christian schools in several communities across Alberta, including Lacombe in 1945, Edmonton in 1949, Lethbridge in 1962, Calgary in 1963, and Red Deer in 1968. The idea of forming independent Christian schools was only one of three responses to public schools found within the larger Protestant Dutch immigrant community. T. Cnossen identifies three competing approaches operating within this larger community. The first approach was to pursue integration into mainstream Christianity and institutions. While this approach was common among the larger Dutch Protestant immigrant group, only a small minority of neo-Calvinists took it. This approach led to participation in public schools and gradually to full assimilation. A second approach involved seeking isolation in pietistic Dutch enclaves. A larger minority within the neo-Calvinist community

took this option, which supported the founding of an isolating style of independent schools. The third approach, most directly based on the neo-Calvinist world view, involved "working within society for change but from the strength of adherence to Calvinist principles and institutions" (qtd. in Prinsen 2000, 177).[17] This transforming approach also supported the founding of independent Christian schools. The vast majority of the neo-Calvinist community accepted these latter two approaches, and in spite of disagreements, Peetoom notes, Christian schools soon became "a priority almost as high as churches" (1983, 99).

Although the pietistic and transforming approaches came together on the strategy of forming independent Christian schools, they disagreed on the motives for doing so and tended to want quite different schools. Those seeking to isolate in pietistic enclaves wanted Christian schools to protect their children "from influences that ran counter to the influences of home and church." Those endorsing the transformationalist approach wanted schools to "equip children to 'take up their task in the world,' a phrase used frequently" (Peetoom 1983, 123).[18] Sometimes, both motives were present within the same community and even in the same person. Often, they left an "unresolved tension," Van Brummelen notes, "between the parents' desire to protect children from an evil society on the one hand and their aim to prepare them to be reformers of that society on the other" (1986, 263). In general, however, the transforming Christian motive set the leading tone for these schools. The schools' overall aim, Van Brummelen concludes, was "to provide an alternative to the secular cultural 'religion' of the public school" (265).

The overriding thrust of the independent Christian schools became the desire to create a substantially different way of life that could both challenge and serve mainstream society and schooling. In a 1965 article, for example, Fred Cupido argued that Christian schools are distinctive not because they are "places of withdrawal," "moral reformatories," or places in which to "cultivate little preachers." Rather, "In our schools young people are prepared for their life's calling, whether this calling will be in business, science, technology, or the fine arts, but then, a preparation which takes the Word of God, Holy Scripture, as the starting point and key of knowledge" (7).[19]

The recurring emphasis of neo-Calvinist schools was to operate out of an integrally biblical perspective. In 1958, for example, the Edmonton Society for Christian Education brief to the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta argued,

> As Calvinistic Christians we believe that the child which must be educated is God's child, and that this most fundamental fact must never be ignored or toned down in his training in school. In addition, we believe that God's

children must be taught to know and to appreciate God's truth respecting all things. This requires, we believe, the recognition of the Bible as His infallible revelation, and the world as His creation and its history as His great work. Still more, we understand all of this redemptively, that is to say, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and we feel constrained to confess His Name everywhere, and especially in the sphere of education." (1958, 5-6)

For the transformationalist majority in the neo-Calvinist community, Christian schooling could not be reduced simply to adding Bible readings or prayers to the regular secular provincial curriculum, as it had tended to be for Protestant schools since the North-West Territories *Ordinance of 1884*.[20] This was clearly illustrated in the 1965 neo-Calvinist response to the United Church moderator's worry that "if religion in [public] schools is prohibited it will mean that other groups will rightfully demand funds for setting up separate religious schools" (qtd. in Tamminga 1965b, 7). Tamminga objected vehemently to his logic, calling it a "colossal misunderstanding" of the neo-Calvinist position: "Christian day schools—thank God—have a firmer basis than that. They were instituted for the sole purpose of letting God's Word shine in the *whole* curriculum. It is not so much Bible instruction that makes them 'Christian,' but rather that *the whole teaching is permeated with biblical principles; the basis, the framework, the norms, the ideals, the purpose, the methods, are all meant to be biblical*" (1965b, 7; my emphasis). This distinctive understanding of how the Bible ought to shape day-to-day schooling was also clearly evident in the Christian Action Foundation's brief to the Alberta Cabinet in January 1966:

Education is more than the transmission of facts. Education trains a student to understand and interpret man and the world. This training does not take place in a vacuum, but is undeniably carried out on the basis of and within the framework of a whole way of life and attitude. Education, as a process, must take place in an atmosphere in which the intellectual development of the child is properly understood in the framework of his total destiny....

Christian schools ... are schools where children receive an education based on the Bible, the infallible Word of God. We assert that the Bible reveals that man has been created in the image of God to live and labour as His servant in this world. We feel that our children must be taught to understand life as the service of God. They must be prepared to take their place in society, as citizens equipped to serve God and their nation.

It is obvious, that religion is not a mere addendum, something which can at will be added to education. Christian education does not merely

consist of reciting prayers, reading Bible passages, or telling Bible stories. Important as they are, by themselves they do not make a school system Christian. Christian education takes its starting point in the Word of God and in that light seeks to instruct students. Hence we assert that the purpose of education, its contents and methods, must be scripturally directed. (1-2)

While this idea of biblically directed schooling won widespread approval in the neo-Calvinist community, the implications of this approach for the actual practice of schooling—as is true for all philosophical approaches to schooling—were not always clear. A major problem was the serious shortage of trained Christian teachers. Another problem, Peetoom notes, was that "These immigrants were not sophisticated advocates of Christian schools. Their own history had not made it necessary to think about the essence of Christian schooling for a long time, if ever. Christian schools were simply taken for granted in the old country ... their school evaluation antennae were programmed for a specific set of cues" (1983, 106-107). Lacking professional Christian teacher training, some parents fell back on the more obvious religious cues such as "hymn singing, Bible stories and doctrinal teaching" (110). Sometimes, the items in Canadian schools that made neo-Calvinist parents uneasy were simply unusual cultural practices. Peetoom argues; "Canadian schools focussed on events and festivals that were new to them: North American Christmas, Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving. They could not sing the songs their children were learning, even the religious ones. Add to this the use of non-metric measuring system and high school biology classes that taught evolution, and they had reason to feel acutely ill at ease" (111).[21]

Although some early practices of the neo-Calvinist schools were parochial, participation in the schools was never intended to be restricted to one ethnic community. Significant efforts were made by the neo-Calvinists to involve other like-minded Christians in these schools, although this met with mixed results. No neo-Calvinists argued that their schools should perpetuate Dutch culture, language, or folklore. As far as records show, Peetoom concludes, "no Dutch was ever used as the language of instruction, no Dutch history was taught." The bottom line was that in this new country, "the Christianity of the schools ... would be their distinguishing feature" (113). In fact, Ganzevoort notes, many neo-Calvinists argued for "God-centred, quality education ... based on reformed traditions" not only for themselves but "for the whole Canadian community" (1988, 98).

The majority of Albertans who were aware of the new Christian schools viewed them through the eyes of liberalism with its assumptions about privatized religion. Mainstream Albertans failed to grasp why newcomers would

want religion to play such a large role in schooling rather than restricting it to devotions or doctrinal classes. They simply could not understand why public schools were not good enough for ethnic Dutch immigrants. The Christian schools were viewed as products of Dutch custom, not of a unique Christian world view and lifestyle.[22] Consequently, debating public funding for independent Christian schools based on freedom of religion in the public realm made little sense to mainstream Albertans. They concluded that Dutch immigrants should quietly take their place as an ethnic community within the larger cultural mosaic of Canada and not pose an alternative religious vision for the public realm by communally founding new institutions (Van Belle 1991).

Calvinist Public Pluriformity

While creating Christian independent schools was the first neo-Calvinist response to secularism and assimilation in public schools, the second response was to argue for a pluriform public order that equitably reintegrated and funded all schools within the province. Using independent schools to challenge the public system was not new in Alberta. Independent or private schools had existed prior to the province's creation of non-sectarian public schools with minority denominational districts; but private schools had been forced into legal limbo and received no public funding for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. The new element neo-Calvinists brought to the independent school movement was the alternative public philosophy developed by Abraham Kuyper. In the nineteenth century, Kuyper developed the idea of a pluriform public order in order to counter the hegemony of liberalism and secularism within Dutch schools. The Pacification of 1917 incorporated this approach to schooling into the Dutch constitution. Thus immigrants who left the Netherlands after the First World War had direct experience of a national school system in which two thirds of the schools were private, one third were public, and all schools received equal public funding (Hiemstra 1997, 31-50).

Fred Cupido, a neo-Calvinist activist, applied Kuyper's idea of a pluriform public order to Alberta. He argued that two extreme positions had emerged in the liberal debate over religion and public life: on the one hand, "government will attempt to dominate and control religious activity" within society; and on the other hand, "political or religious conviction are assumed to have nothing to do with each other and must be kept distinct and separate." He continued, "Western democracies have been so frightened by the controlling force of a state religion over all areas of life that, in pursuit of freedom from this influence, they have entirely lost sight of the *intrinsic connection* between religious

conviction and political life" (1963, 7). In opposition to both positions, Cupido argued that Christians need to "proclaim God's ordinances for all areas of human life" including politics and government (1963, 14).

Cupido's assertion that religion cannot be separated from public life may leave the impression that the neo-Calvinists advocated an intolerant theocratic view in which ecclesiastical authorities direct the state. In fact, their religious beliefs led them to another conclusion. They argued that the state has a God-given calling independent of the church. Citizens are responsible for discerning and acknowledging the distinct nature of the state's calling and, by so doing, help limit the scope of governmental action. In contrast, Tamminga argued, the dominant idea of the state in Canada effectively plays an unlimited role in schooling: "It has become universally accepted that *the state* educates our children. The state raises taxes, the state finances schools, the state determines the curriculum, the state sets the standards, the state also designs the philosophy and principles which must govern the teaching process." The state has "stepped far beyond its legitimate boundary," he concluded, and has taken on tasks that God has given to other spheres in society, such as schools, parents, and churches (1965c, 3). Behind Tamminga's argument is the neo-Calvinists' belief that the full range of societal responsibilities are differentiated into various unique callings and given to distinct institutional and associational authorities. They referred to this as the principle of *sphere sovereignty* or *differentiated responsibility*. This principle led the neo-Calvinists to argue for free schools rather than state or parochial schools. They believed that neither the state nor the church as outside authorities should run schools. Thus the Edmonton Society for Christian Education stressed, "We prefer to speak of our schools as 'free, Christian schools,' since they originate with school societies consisting of people who have voluntarily associated themselves in order to attain an educational objective" (1958, 3).

Another significant ramification of the principle of sphere sovereignty was that, in many areas of life, it opened up space within civil society for different religious and philosophical answers to the God-given calling of spheres, such as schools. While the neo-Calvinists did not necessarily agree with all philosophical and religious approaches to schooling, they did argue that the state's responsibility was limited to ensuring justice for all schools, not to censoring the religious or ideological approaches of some schools. On this score, the neo-Calvinists rejected the liberal idea of a state-dominated, assimilation-isolation school system. They argued that public school systems were intolerant because they enforced a superficial uniformity on the entire school population. All schools should be free schools and treated equitably and fairly. Christian Action

Foundation leader John A. Olthuis argued, "The state has no right to make it impossible for parents to exercise their parental responsibility of educating their children by making public funds available only to school systems based upon certain philosophies. The philosophy of the public school system is neutrality, a philosophy in fact of secularism. If a group of parents feels the system of education provided by public funds does not give their children the particular orientation with respect to a world and life view that they desire, they should, provided their system meets the legal technical and academic requirements, be provided with public funds to set up their own system of education" (1964, 3-4).

Implicit in this neo-Calvinist critique of liberalism was the rejection of all forms of the Constantinian model in which a state imposes its preferred religion or ideology through an established church or, in the liberal version, through a public school system. It was on this point that the neo-Calvinist critique stung the most. They rejected mainstream Alberta's belief that public schools were essentially neutral and tolerant. The 1966 Christian Action Foundation brief to the Alberta Government asserted,

> … attempts to erase fundamental differences in the name of a superficial uniformity are not conducive to a true unity. The claim, that the differences between Roman Catholics, Jews, Protestants and secularists do not affect education, results from the failure to take these various faiths seriously. This idea stems from the long standing, but false notion, that public affairs can be ordered according to a principle common to all rational creatures. In his so called personal life, the individual has a great measure of religious freedom. However, it is falsely assumed, that religion should not enter the market place, where men deal with education, government, labour and industry. In these matters the individual has supposedly joined the community, where he suddenly agrees with all men. (5)

The neo-Calvinists advocated that Alberta adopt a pluriform public order to replace the current liberal assimilating order. Notably, this did not mean neo-Calvinists sought to dismantle public schools or to demand they uniformly teach neo-Calvinist beliefs (Edmonton Society for Christian Education 1958). To do so would have meant simply adapting the liberal version of Constantinianism to accomplish neo-Calvinist ends. Rather, they argued that schools reflecting the current dominant beliefs had every right to exist, in order to serve those parents wanting this approach for their children. The government's task, they argued, should never involve forcing one viewpoint on all but rather ensuring basic educational standards are met in all schools and requiring that a school have a minimum

number of children in order to receive public funding (Tamminga 1964b). According to the principle of sphere sovereignty, the state had these important but limited tasks to fulfill with regard to schooling. The neo-Calvinists believed that their public philosophy would establish "pluriformity for the sake of freedom" (Christian Action Foundation 1966, 5).

The Neo-Calvinist Cultural Strategy

Putting the neo-Calvinists' pluriform public philosophy into operation required several cultural strategies, some of which grew directly out of their distinctive assumptions. First, the neo-Calvinist community engaged in intense political lobbying, a common and widespread political practice in democracies. The Christian Action Foundation played a central role in this activity, informing and educating politicians, the media, and other influential persons.[23] Various Christian school societies and individuals also played crucial roles in this province-wide lobbying effort (Digout 1969; Hop 1982, 82-90; Prinsen 2000, 208-17). The CAF mailed the *Christian Vanguard* to all Alberta MLAs for five years prior to achieving public funding. This magazine included a variety of articles on the injustices that neo-Calvinists believed independent schools suffered. The CAF lobbied MLAs to create "a growing understanding in these men with respect to parental rights in education, different philosophies of education, and injustices with respect to the present system of Government financing of Education" (Olthuis and Visser 1966). Finally, they submitted briefs to various governmental bodies.

The second strategy the neo-Calvinist community used—developing distinctive Christian organizations—directly reflected their world view. They rejected the individualism central to the liberal idea of Canadian society. The "witness and appeal of the individual" will not suffice, Tamminga argued: "the Christian *community* must present a *united* front, and fight *unitedly* for a common cause" (1963, 4).[24] The belief that Jesus Christ was Lord of life translated into the belief that they should form confessionally based institutions to serve society. In Alberta, they established a variety of distinctive Christian organizations: churches, Christian schools, the Christian Action Foundation in politics and labour, the *Christian Vanguard* in media, and many others.[25]

The third strategy the neo-Calvinists employed was to work co-operatively with others even when, on some levels, they disagreed. Since the neo-Calvinists believed that everyone operates out of one or another religiously defined world view, there is no recourse in public life to a common rational foundation as a basis for co-operation. Different groups may arrive at overlapping policies and practices, but they usually do so for different religious or ideological motives. Nevertheless, this policy overlap can serve as a basis for strategic co-operation and

coalitions with a wide variety of people and communities. An outstanding example of strategic alliances across religious and ideological lines occurred in the Association of Private Schools and Colleges of Alberta (APSCA).

Soon after APSCA was founded in 1958, it sent a brief to the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta. APSCA did not ask for public funding, nor did it "protest any action of the Department of Education" (1958, 4-5). Rather, APSCA asked only for "legal recognition": that is, clarification of the legal status of their schools, which they found to be inadequate and unclear. Only one of the twenty-four schools signing this brief was a neo-Calvinist Christian school.[26] As late as 1962, the Education minister noted in the legislature debates that "the Association of Private Schools has never requested public support for private schools and have indicated they are not looking for it" (*Calgary Herald* 1962b).

Digout lists the reasons that APSCA objected to any form of public assistance. Most were based on versions of the typical liberal ideas about how religion ought to relate to public life. Sidney Vincent of Mt. Royal College argued, for example, that he "strongly believed there should be separation of church and state" and "there should be no public funds for single denominations" (Digout 1969, 55). Other independent schools argued that public funding would undermine the independence of their schools. Some Lutheran Church representatives opposed public aid because of the "church-state conflict" (Digout 1969, 55). The critical point to note is that most private schools in APSCA voluntarily agreed with the Alberta government's policy of withholding funding from independent schools.

The overlap in policy positions between this group and the neo-Calvinists began to develop in the wake of two developments. First, the neo-Calvinist members of APSCA strongly argued for a view of religion, schooling, and public life, allowing other independent school traditions to imagine new ways of viewing this question. For example, the Edmonton Christian School representative, William Vanden Born, initiated a motion in APSCA on 17 November 1962 that the government grant accreditation to private schools and "their proportional share of public funds" (Digout 1969, 53-54).[27]

This motion was defeated, but the APSCA members engaged in extensive debate over the neo-Calvinist reasoning for government funding for independent schools. The second development that pushed along the overlap of policy positions involved the rapidly growing costs of private schools during this decade. An APSCA questionnaire of its 21 member schools in 1963 garnered 13 replies; 11 of these schools mentioned financial difficulties as a special problem. Surprisingly, all 13 respondents now said they would be willing to accept government support (Digout 1969, 58, 32, 25). Based on these developments, APSCA ended up sending a brief to the Alberta government on 21 May 1964

formally requesting public funding as the neo-Calvinists had long argued.

Conclusion

Revision of Alberta's independent school policy began on 29 March 1966 in the Alberta Legislature. A majority voted 34-16 to adopt Donald S. Flemming's private member's motion to extend financial support to private schools.[28] Although neither the premier nor the Education minister supported the motion, backbenchers departed from the historic provincial position to support a change in school funding policy. In 1967, the Cabinet implemented the legislative motion by granting an annual per-pupil grant of $100 per year to private schools that met the government's conditions. Alberta become the first Canadian province to extend public funding to independent schools.

Flemming later reported that the policy change was largely due to the efforts of the neo-Calvinist community.[29] In contrast, mainstream education lobby groups had been surprisingly silent during the debate over public funding for private schools. Prior to the legislative adoption of public funding, several powerful educational lobby groups had let the government know that they opposed this policy, including the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Trustees' Association. Digout reports, however, that they "did not attempt to solicit political support for their stand until after grants to private schools had already been approved" (1969, 4). Soon after the funding was approved, Flemming reported to Christian school supporters "a general increase in opposition to support of private schools among members of the Legislature" (1967).

Was the new funding scheme congruent with either the liberal or neo-Calvinist public philosophies? The 1967 policy change fell far short of the equitable financial treatment of all qualified schools that the neo-Calvinists had advocated. Alberta's independent schools received inferior levels of per-student funding. They also continued to be legally marginalized as private institutions, even though they argued that they contributed to the public good of educating Alberta citizens. The *School Act* was silent on the existence of independent schools, and their funding was channelled through ad hoc Cabinet orders-in-council. An increase in government regulations also accompanied the new public funding. The neo-Calvinists considered some of these regulations to be appropriate, although others appeared to be inspired by assimilationist sentiments. For example, the government extended to private schools some of the very same mechanisms it had used to try to control Catholic schools in 1905. The government controlled independent school programs, Van Brummelen argues, by

authorizing them to exist only if they offered "instruction in courses prescribed or approved by the Minister or courses substantially the same" (1986, 285).[30]

At the same time, however, public funding of private schools required major compromises within the liberal view of schooling and religion. Public funding of independent schools directly challenged Alberta's agenda of using schools to assimilate minorities and into its mainstream liberal values. It also challenged the secularization that was rapidly occurring in Alberta's public schools. The winds of change marked by this funding measure eventually forced open the door for new pluralist policies, such as the creation of alternative religious and philosophic programs within public school systems.

Notes

1. I use the term *private* interchangeably with *independent* in this essay, since the historical participants used both. The term *independent* or *free* best captures the neo-Calvinist's viewpoint while *private* school was preferred by mainstream liberal society.
2. The formulation *religion and public life* is preferable to *church and state* since it is a broader, more flexible concept and does not carry the assumptions of the liberal historical thesis concerning the separation of church and state (see McIntire 2002).
3. The period 1953-1967 was selected for this study because John Olthuis Sr. first approached Alberta Premier Ernest Manning for public funding for Edmonton's Christian School in 1953 and private schools first received public funding in 1967.
4. A total of 185,000 Dutch immigrants came to Canada between 1947 and 1970. Of the 408,000 Dutch Canadians in Canada in the 1981 Canadian census, 67,000 were Christian Reformed and primarily neo-Calvinist, less than one-fifth of the total Dutch-Canadian group (Ganzevoort 1988, 72, 115). Statistics Canada records Alberta's population in 1961 as 1,332,000.
5. Kuyper was a prominent religious and political figure in Dutch life for most of the last half of the nineteenth century and served as prime minister between 1901 and 1905. An excellent sample of Kuyper's writing is *Lectures on Calvinism* (1975). Heslam (1998) offers an excellent introduction to his world view and theology. For Kuyper's view of schooling, see Hiemstra (1997).

6. Under section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, each Canadian province was granted primary jurisdiction over schooling.

7. Quebec began to move to a predominantly linguistic regime in 1997, Manitoba to a non-sectarian regime in 1890, the North-West Territories to non-sectarian public schools with minority denominational districts in 1901, and Newfoundland switched to a primarily non-sectarian system with a process beginning in 1997.

8. Section 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905* adapts paragraph 1 of section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* by guaranteeing the structure and religious rights established in the 1901 ordinances of the North West Territories.

9. See Education Minister Anders Aalborg's classical liberal defence of Alberta's public school system in the *Calgary Herald* (1962b). Aalborg opposed a legislative resolution offering faith-based private schools separate school status. For the range of responses to the motion, see *Calgary Herald* (1962a).

10. Dr. Kooistra had a ThD degree and was pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in Red Deer, Alberta. Over the years, Kooistra distinguished himself as an astute critic of Canadian cultural life.

11. Kooistra also concludes that "Canada is a young country" as a constitutional state, as a federal arrangement, in economic development, its national fine arts, and in popular style (1957, 19-20). It is not surprising that Dutch immigrants initially might have seen Canada as "newer" than the Netherlands. Through their eyes, Canada truly was a new land, full of wilderness and potential in comparison to the almost totally reconstructed character of the Dutch landscape, with its dikes, polders, canals, farms, cities, and industry.

12. Peetoom bases his analysis on a thorough reading of Dutch immigrant publications, such as *Calvinist Contact*, the weekly news periodical read by many neo-Calvinists in Canada. Harry Kits also notes that "Neo-Calvinist immigrants saw Canada as a young country with no strong identity as yet. It was thus malleable and open to Dutch Calvinist, anti-secular influence" (1988, 24).

13. Dr. H. Van Riessen and Dr. Calvin Seerveld spoke to student conferences in 1962 in Banff. In 1963, speakers included ethics professor Dr. F.H. Von Meyenfeldt and again Dr. Calvin Seerveld, on "A Christian Critique of Literature." Dr. Maarten Vrieze, later a sociology professor, served as minister of evangelism in Edmonton in 1963. Dr. Paul Schrotenboer spoke to Alberta neo-Calvinists in February 1963, and Dr. Evan Runner in September 1965.

14. See Prinsen (2000, 218-37). The National Union of Christian Schools, District 11, was later renamed Christian Schools International, District 11, and in 2001 adopted the name Prairie Association of Christian Schools (*www.paocs.ca*).

15. Neo-Calvinists sought to do an "architectonic critique" of society, by which they meant a thorough analysis of the religious and ideological beliefs driving a society as well as of its institutional "architecture"; see Kuyper 1991. In 1966, Maarten Vrieze wrote *The Community Idea in Canada*, one of the first attempts to do an architectonic analysis of Canadian society. Also see Seerveld (1967).

16. The Catholic Bishops of Ontario submitted a brief to the provincial premier asserting Catholic school rights, precipitating a stormy debate about minority religious school rights across Canada. See *The Globe and Mail* (1962a) and the debate in following weeks, especially *The Globe and Mail* (1962b).

17. For helpful analyses of the various divisions within the Dutch Calvinist communities in North America, see Bratt (1984), Wolterstorff (1974), Zwaanstra (1973), Vryhof (1994), and Kits (1988). It should be noted that the neo-Calvinists seeking to live consistently with their principles were not always unified on the best means for achieving these principles. A minority "objected to the separatism implied by a parallel school system" and argued "that an attempt should be made to change the existing public schools into more Reformed institutions." Another smaller minority "believed whatever the shortcomings of the Canadian public school system, deficiencies could be remedied by home instruction and the guidance and help of the church" (Ganzevoort 1988, 98).

18. Peetoom discusses the "protection approach" (1983, 123-28) and the "transforming approach" (128-32); also see Van Brummelen (1986, 263-65).

19. Significantly, there is no evidence suggesting neo-Calvinists started schools simply to provide higher quality or elitist schooling for their children.

20. *The Ordinance of 1884* restricted religious practices in both Protestant and Catholic schools. Section 84 said, "No religious instruction, such as Bible reading or reciting, or reading or reciting of prayers, or asking questions or giving answers from any catechism, shall be permitted in any public or separate Protestant or Catholic school" during regular school hours. This provision was dropped for Catholic schools in the *Ordinance of 1885*, but restored for all schools in the *Ordinance of 1892* (Goresky 1944, 83).

21. Peetoom notes that Canadian public schools were "different in other respects as well." The immigrants were used to "drill, recitation and memorization" while Canadian schools "were more modern and much more pleasant places for children" (1983, 111-12).

22. Vreugdenhil (1975, 81) makes this comment about Ontario, but these same arguments were heard in Alberta.

23. The Christian Action Foundation "received authority to act on behalf of several Christian organisations in a co-ordinated way" (National Union of Christian Schools, 1964).

24. On neo-Calvinist views of individualism and collectivism, see Olthuis (1963a; 1963b).

25. Other Christian organizations are discussed in Ganzevoort (1988) and Groenewold (1991).

26. This was the Edmonton Christian School; the only other neo-Calvinist school in existence was in Lacombe (began in 1945). At the 10 December 1958 meeting of the Alberta district of the National Union of Christian Schools, which included several school societies that did not yet have a school, Kooistra urged "that all our Christian School Societies join the association [APSCA]" (National Union of Christian Schools 1958).

27. See National Union of Christian Schools (1963); the minutes report that it was Vanden Born who brought the motion to APSCA "regarding a proportional share of grants from the provincial government for private schools as well as for public schools." He noted that "support for this motion is doubtful."

28. Donald Flemming, Calgary MLA, played the central role in securing two-thirds majority support for his motion. Mr. Henk Verheoff played an outstanding role in the Calgary area lobbying MLAs and advocating just school policy.

29. Flemming reported to the District 11 meeting of the National Union of Christian Schools in Lacombe on 8 April 1967 that "this per-pupil-grant stems from your school movement" (also see Digout 1969, 108-11).

30. In fact, this requirement already existed prior to public funding. In 1966, MLA Gainer criticized public funding for independent schools along these lines: "Why are they [private schools] being established ... when the curricula they will have to accept from the Education Department is identical with that of the separate and public schools?" (Alberta 1966, March 29).

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