

1 Colonialism, colonisation and Greater Britain

Greater Britain – the English-speaking settler colonies of the British empire which we are more likely now to refer to as the British world – was an idea as much as a set of territories.¹ For the free Christian churches of the peoples of Great Britain and Ireland, it was also a mission field. This is a novel idea and one which I hope to argue throughout the course of this book. Chapter 1 begins by examining the idea of Greater Britain, first as a concept in the writing of Charles Wentworth Dilke (1843–1911), and then as it was taken up by the churches who adopted the term as their own in the last decades of the nineteenth century. It also introduces topics raised in subsequent chapters which examine the arrangements and organisations that were marshalled across the empire in order to provide religious services for colonists. In subsequent chapters, this book considers the development of missions to British settlers, including the colonial missionary societies (Chapters 3 to 7), missionary training colleges for colonial clergy (Chapters 8 to 10), church emigration societies (Chapter 10), and Christian colonisation (Chapters 11 and 12). Together, these provisions for the colonial churches helped shape the powerful, shared sense of British identity that suffused the British world and to which Dilke was able to give a name.

In 1897, the English Baptist pastor and writer, John Clifford (1836–1923), completed a tour of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, during which he was swept up in the elaborate colonial celebrations for the Queen's diamond jubilee.² Experiencing at close hand the wave of colonial devotion to the Queen, he confidently predicted a great coming federation of Greater Britain, which would be made up of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Dominion of Canada and Newfoundland,

¹ For settler loyalism and the 'imagined British world', see C. Bridge and K. Fedorowich, eds., *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London, 2003); S. Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace: The Demise of the Imperial Ideal* (Melbourne, 2001); P. H. Buckner and R. D. Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary, Alberta, 2005).

² J. Clifford, *God's Greater Britain. Letters and Addresses* (London, 1899).

United Australasia, United South Africa and United Hindustan.³ To his British Nonconformist readers, Clifford was delighted to report the extent to which the colonists had successfully cast off the burden of the 'Romanising Anglican Establishment', and had extended Christ's kingdom by democratic and social reforms.⁴ An admirer of Kipling (whose verse he liked to quote), Clifford preached fervently about the prospects for even greater unity ahead: the whole world was becoming one through the redeeming power of Jesus Christ in the British empire. His published letters give us some idea of the power of his preaching on this theme:

One insistent Voice reaches us at home; let us heed it! Go preach the Gospel to every Englander, and persuade him to accept it before he leaves for the new worlds of Africa, or India, of Canada or the Southern Seas, so that wherever he goes he may carry with him the saving energies of the Redeemer.⁵

At one level, Clifford's enraptured sermon offers transparent and enthusiastic endorsement for British, and indeed for specifically English, imperialism. However, religious rhetoric needs to be carefully deconstructed, and it must be emphasised that Clifford's enthusiasm was reserved for a religious rather than a political empire, though clearly he saw no real conflict between the two.

In the late nineteenth century, Nonconformists such as Clifford were among the many enthusiastic advocates of the cultural promise of the English-speaking lands of the British empire. For all the churches, the empire created opportunities for the construction of transnational spiritual networks that aimed to transcend the cultural constraints and legal proscriptions of the past. Like Clifford, Anglicans, Catholics and other Nonconformists were keen to take advantage of the empire to extend the geographical and spiritual boundaries of their churches. John Wolffe has suggested that religious leaders expressed this awareness of the British world through events such as the Lambeth Conferences, which called Anglican bishops from throughout the world to assemble in London every ten years beginning in 1867, as well as travel by church delegations.⁶ At the close of the century, many Protestant churches held their own worldwide meetings in Britain, which drew delegates from Australasia, Canada, Asia, America and Africa, and encouraged similar aspirations.⁷ For Catholics, the nineteenth International Eucharistic

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶ J. Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843–1945* (London, 1994), p. 220. For Nonconformist enthusiasm for empire, see J. Cox, 'Were Victorian Nonconformists the Worst Imperialists of All?', *Victorian Studies*, 46 (2004), pp. 243–55.

⁷ E.g. the 'Pan-Presbyterian' Councils held in 1888, 1892, 1896 and 1901; Congregationalists met in London (1891), Boston (1899), Edinburgh (1908), Boston (1920)

Congress, held in London in 1908, was an opportunity to celebrate the imperial credentials of British Catholics.⁸

The common Christianity which suffused Greater Britain was, for the most part, assumed to be a 'generic' Protestantism, which encompassed imperial loyalty and the celebration of uniquely British (or Anglo-Saxon) virtues of freedom, tolerance, justice and civic duty.⁹ In this modified form, it continued earlier visions of Britain as a Protestant nation heroically resisting the Catholic menace of Spain, France and Ireland, which Linda Colley, in an influential thesis, has suggested was integral to the British state forged in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ The Evangelical Anglicans who founded the Colonial and Continental Church Society, considered in Chapter 5, were so entranced by the idea of Greater Britain that they incorporated the term in the title of their journal, the *Greater Britain Messenger*. In 1876, the following poem was recited at the close of a sermon delivered on behalf of the Colonial and Continental Church Society, in the hope that it would inspire listeners to respond to the religious needs of colonists:

Rest not! but heed thy brother's cry of anguish
For 'living bread' across the stormy sea.
Shall famished souls in 'Greater Britain' languish
When God has sent His messengers to thee?

Haste! where as yet no heaven-pointing tower
Reminds the settler of a better world;
Go! teach his sons the source of England's power,
The 'Spirit's sword', the Gospel-flag unfurl'd!¹¹

Though directed at an Evangelical Anglican rather than a Baptist audience, this poem sums up sentiments that are similar to those expressed

and Bournemouth (1930). The equivalent meetings of the Church of England included the Lambeth Conferences of bishops (from 1867), the Missionary Conferences of the Anglican Communion (1894) and, subsequently, the Pan-Anglican Conference (1908); the Methodists gathered in 1881 (London), 1891 (Washington) and 1901 (London); the first Baptist World Congress was held in London in 1905.

⁸ *New York Times*, 6 September 1908.

⁹ C. Hall, K. McClelland and J. Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 47. See also H. McLeod, 'Protestantism and British National Identity, 1815–1945', in *Religion and Nationalism in Europe and Asia*, ed. P. Van Der Veer (Princeton, NJ, 1999), pp. 44–70.

¹⁰ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1770–1837* (New Haven, CT, 1992), p. 3. For discussion, see A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 61; K. Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 146; S. Pincus, "'To Protect English Liberties': The English Nationalist Revolution of 1688–1689", in *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650–c.1850*, ed. T. Claydon and I. McBride (Cambridge, 1998), p. 76; R. Strong, *Anglicanism and Empire* (Oxford, 2007), p. 20.

¹¹ *Greater Britain Messenger*, no. 1 (April 1876), p. 7.

by Clifford: the gospel was the source of England's power; British settlers had spread throughout the whole world; the Gospel flag, as much as the British flag, should be their source of unity. Embedded in hymns, sermons and tracts, texts such as these assumed that Britain's overseas settler colonies formed part of a wider Christian realm, a cultural community that both transcended and reinforced other, more political bonds.

As for 'God's Empire', preachers sometimes referred to this as well. However, there was an important theological tradition that considered all empires to be tainted with a burden of sin, if not actually evil.¹² Christ had said, 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18: 36), and this was generally taken to mean that Christians, especially professional Christians such as missionaries, should stay out of politics. In a sermon preached in 1866, the English Baptist, Octavius Winslow (1808–78), a descendant of one of the Pilgrims who escaped the English yoke by fleeing to America on the *Mayflower* in 1620, spoke of God's rule extending over the four kingdoms of nature, providence, grace and glory: 'These are not separate and independent sovereignties, but are parts of one perfect whole – divisions of one great empire, God's sceptre ruling alike over each and all. We may confirm and illustrate the unity of God's empire, by the spiritual conversion of His people.'¹³ In this view, conversion, not conquest and colonisation, was the way to hasten the coming of Christ's kingdom or perfect God's empire on earth.

These two alternative visions of empire, one more or less spiritual, the other a vehicle for the expression of a British nationalism that transcended religious, political, racial and class difference, could hardly be reconciled in a single ideology. However, for churchmen in the imperial age, the ideal of 'Greater Britain' provided an opportunity for doing so.

Greater Britain

The term Greater Britain is as old as the first British settlements of America where it was used to refer to the combined territories of the first British empire. However, according to Duncan Bell, the concept

¹² H. M. Carey, 'Religion and the "Evil Empire"', *Journal of Religious History*, 32 (2008), pp. 179–92. For 'the Empire of Christ and the Empire of Britain' in relation to India, see J. Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940* (Stanford, CA, 2002), pp. 23–51.

¹³ O. Winslow, *The Lord's Prayer: Its Spirit and Its Teaching* (London, 1866), p. 206. The term 'God's Empire' is used in a similar, purely religious sense by J. Vaughan, *Sermons Preached in Christ Church, Brighton* (London, 1867), p. 3.

of Greater Britain (if not the term itself) was first formulated in the 1830s and 1840s in the wake of the Canadian rebellions (1837 and 1838). It was not until this time that it was felt necessary to articulate an ideology that favoured closer union between colonies and metropole since, before then, the colonies lacked a separate apparatus of government. Additional impetus for change came with the much-increased emigration to the British settler colonies that followed the end of the French wars. Between 1815 and 1840, about 1 million people left the British Isles; from 1847, the depopulation of Ireland (from 7.7 million in 1831 to 4.3 million in 1936) began, and, between 1850 and 1900, emigration from Britain to the colonies exceeded 7 million people. So immense was the impact of this global outpouring that James Belich has dubbed it the 'settler revolution', arguing that it was responsible for the creation of an Anglo-speaking, transnational superpower whose influence remains dominant in the world today.¹⁴

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the major colonies of settlement gradually became independent of British rule so that, by 1872, there were ten self-governing colonies: Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Canada (Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), New Zealand, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland and, most recently, Cape of Good Hope.¹⁵ There were also important, if smaller, settler populations in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia as well as parts of India and South America. While rebellions in Canada and the Boer War (1899–1902) were challenges to the ideal, it could generally be assumed that British settlers overseas were loyal supporters of Britain – independent in many respects, but forming part of a common cultural sphere.

As a term in common use, 'Greater Britain' was popularised through the writing of Charles Wentworth Dilke (1843–1911) whose account of his youthful travels in 1866 and 1867 was a Victorian bestseller.¹⁶ Dilke considered the preface to *Greater Britain* to be the best thing he ever wrote, largely because of its articulate defence of British colonisation, something he called 'the true as against the bastard Imperialism'.¹⁷ While *Greater Britain* and its sequels are mostly unabashed apologies

¹⁴ Figures from C. E. Carrington, *The British Overseas: Exploits of a Nation of Shopkeepers*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 501–11; J. Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World* (Oxford, 2009).

¹⁵ D. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire, Nation, and the Future of Global Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ, 2007), p. 3.

¹⁶ C. W. Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English Speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867*, 2 vols. (London, 1868).

¹⁷ Cited by S. Gwynn and G. M. Tuckwell, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke*, 2 vols. (London, 1917), p. 96.

for British imperial expansion, Dilke was under no illusions about the moral cost of colonisation; he referred to the Anglo-Saxons as 'the only extirpating race' and subjected their treatment of native people in America and Australia to harsh criticism.¹⁸ Dilke himself was not an advocate either of imperial federation or Anglo-Saxon supremacy; in *Problems of Greater Britain* (1890), he took pains to emphasise the differences as well as the common bonds which held the different parts or 'states of Greater Britain' together.¹⁹ Indeed, Dilke regarded Greater Britain as a commodious term, and under that umbrella he included colonies and territories from both the older and the newer British empires: Newfoundland, Canada, the United States, the West Indies, Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific, South Africa and India – a much more heterogeneous group than simply the majority British settler colonies. What he admired was the energy, enthusiasm and possibility created by British influence over this swath of territory, not its uniformity or submission to British norms.

The notion that the Anglo-Saxon people formed a union that crossed political and national boundaries and included core cultural values was one that proved enormously fruitful in the decades that followed the publication of Dilke's book. Greater Britain was celebrated in songs and music, exhibitions and conferences, manuals for settlers and emigrants, and through publications which surveyed the history and expansion of the white, Christian, English-speaking British empire.²⁰ Perhaps because the term was later taken up by more radical enthusiasts for the imperial idea and, in the 1930s, by fascists such as Oswald Mosley,²¹ 'Greater Britain' has come to be associated with the most strident excesses of Anglo-supremacy. However, this was not necessarily the case. For many religious and humanitarian thinkers and writers, Greater Britain was linked to the expansion of all that was best in British culture: its language, morality, system of law and constitution, the love of justice and religious and political liberty. Bell has argued that discussion of Greater Britain and especially the idea of a closer political and cultural union with settler Britons was an ideal that was discussed and embraced by public intellectuals across the political spectrum – from

¹⁸ Dilke, *Greater Britain*, p. 561.

¹⁹ C. W. Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, 4th edn (London, 1890), p. 4.

²⁰ For songs and music, see Felix Burns, *Greater Britain Dance Album* (London: J. H. Larway, 1910); George R. Ceiley, *Greater Britain ... War Song* (London: Weekes & Co., 1915); Clarence Collingwood Corri, *The Sons of Greater Britain ... in Gay Piccadilly* (London: Hopwood & Crew, 1901); *The Greater Britain Exhibition, Earl's Court London* (London: Spottiswood & Co., 1899); G. Gordon Brown and G. Noel Brown, eds., *The Settlers' Guide: Greater Britain in 1914* (London, 1914).

²¹ O. Mosley, *The Greater Britain* (London, 1932).

proto fascists who argued in favour of British world domination and political federation, to humanitarian idealists for whom imperial union was anathema.²² What these thinkers had in common was the conviction that British or, more narrowly, English or 'Anglo-Saxon' values, might profitably be transported across the world. For some thinkers this vision was almost entirely secularised and rooted in racial and cultural hierarchies that bore little connection to religious ideals. For many others, religion provided significant props to the overall project.

Greater Britain was one solution to the problem created by British expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century – how to shape a national identity in the absence of a convincing internal or external Catholic threat. While 'Protestant Britain' had been an effective vehicle for a warrior island state, it was of less use in the changed conditions of the post-Napoleonic world in which religious divisions were an impediment to good order and government. In the British empire, multiple rather than unitary nationalism became the norm and Britishness supplied a new overarching identity that supplemented rather than supplanted older ethnic and religious loyalties. The Britishness encapsulated in the term 'Greater Britain' was all the more effective as a vehicle for colonial identity because it provided nationalism without government or religious establishment (though some people had aspirations in this direction).²³

These ideas reflect the seminal influence of Benedict Anderson, who stressed the contingent character of the nation, which he defined as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.²⁴ Anderson considered that nationalism was the most important modern heir to two earlier cultural systems, namely, the religious community, including the medieval notion of 'Christendom', and the dynastic realm.²⁵ In other words, nationalism was a kind of secular religion. Nevertheless, because he defined nationalism as the precursor rather than the collaborator to the creation of the nation state, Anderson's thesis about the cultural construction of national identity has some limitations as a tool for the religious historian. Even

²² Bell, *Greater Britain*, p. 11.

²³ On the death of Queen Victoria, it was proposed that King Edward VII should take the title 'King ... of Greater Britain beyond the seas'. For the defeat of this suggestion, see P. A. Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2008), p. 89. For a scheme to create a governing structure for Greater Britain, see B. H. Thwaite, *The Electoral Government of Greater Britain* (London, 1895). On the history of a federated empire, see J. E. Kendle, *Federal Britain: A History* (London, 1997).

²⁴ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edn (London, 1991), pp. 5–6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

in modern secular states, religion and nation are constantly interacting with one another in multiple ways and should never be considered isolated phenomena.²⁶ Adrian Hastings came closer to the mark when he argued that religion, like language, was a component of all nationalisms.²⁷ This was true for Greater Britain as it was for earlier imagined communities of the peoples of the Atlantic World. Throughout British North America, Australia, New Zealand and southern Africa, the settler churches carried with them the burden and aspirations of the fused ethnic and religious communities of their home societies. In these new Britains, older religious ethnicities did not entirely disappear; rather, under the imperial umbrella, the churches accommodated English Anglicanism, Welsh Nonconformity, Irish Catholicism or Scottish and Irish Presbyterianism, in modified forms.²⁸ In general, the sort of religious nationalism promoted through events such as the feasts of the patron saints of England, Scotland or Ireland was thoroughly sanitised before being endorsed by the churches for consumption by the faithful. However, it was one of the mechanisms through which British imperialism continued to sustain a dialogue with its Christian and ethnic roots in Great Britain and Ireland.

Defining the religious character of Greater Britain more precisely than this is something of a challenge. However, unlike Britons in the eighteenth century, Greater Britons in the new century tended to define themselves less by their belligerent Protestantism than by their religious toleration and love of liberty. Just as Great Britain had freed her slaves, so she had granted full rights of citizenship to Catholics, Jews and Nonconformists. The ending of war with France also defused tensions which demonised the Catholic 'Other' and aggravated sectarian hostility at home. It was also significant that, as the British empire expanded, it incorporated more and more non-Christians while providing ample opportunities for Scots, Welsh and Anglo-Irish of all faiths to participate and prosper.²⁹ Even the despised colonial Irish could be redefined as part of the white, Christian ruling class in opposition to the subject heathen races of India, Africa and Asia.³⁰ This involved significant

²⁶ For examples, see Michael Jeismann, 'Nation, Identity and Enmity', in *What Is a Nation?: Europe 1789–1914*, ed. T. Baycroft and M. Hewitson (Oxford, 2006), pp. 20–4.

²⁷ Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*, p. 31.

²⁸ For comments on religious aspects of Irish, Scottish and Celtic nationalism, see the essays in O. D. Edwards, *Celtic Nationalism* (London, 1968).

²⁹ C. Williams, 'The United Kingdom', in *What Is a Nation?: Europe 1789–1914*, ed. T. Baycroft and M. Hewitson (Oxford, 2006), p. 278.

³⁰ For whiteness and the Irish in America, where they were defined against Afro-Americans, see N. Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (London, 1995). For the

realignment of earlier animosities, notably those between Catholics and conservative Protestants. However, in adjusting its religious character, Greater Britain followed the same trajectory as that of civil religion in America. In his witty and insightful essays on religious nationalism, Conor Cruise O'Brien suggested that American civil religion transmuted from 'pan-Protestant' to 'pan-Christian' in the interval between the American Civil War and the late twentieth century so that it eventually embraced Catholics such as Senator Joseph McCarthy.³¹ Wryly, he observed that in the 1950s Americans 'discovered that the Antichrist had changed his address, moving from the Vatican to the Kremlin'.³²

While the generation of a powerful common enemy was essential to the reorientation of religious nationalism in America, in the United Kingdom political change paved the way much earlier. Following the constitutional revolution, which included the passage of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828), Catholic Emancipation (1829) and the Reform Act (1832) at home, and the passage of the New South Wales Church Act (1836) and the secularisation of the Canadian clergy reserves (1854) in the colonies, there was a radical change to the standing of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, which had previously dominated the political and religious union of Great Britain and Ireland. Mandler argues that a new understanding of the English national character emerged in the 1830s, one which reflected a religious consensus which was not linked to a specific church and was more tolerant, earnest and pluralist than any in the old regime.³³ In 1851, the death knell of Britain as a Protestant nation was popularly believed to have been tolled with the erection of an English Catholic hierarchy. The ensuing moral panic reflected a seismic shift in the standing of the Catholic Church in Britain. The shift was even more marked overseas. In Greater Britain, there would be neither official Protestantism nor Church establishment, but neither would there be, as in the American republic, a free marketplace for all denominations.

Dilke himself provided an interesting commentary on religion in Greater Britain, although he was far from conventionally pious. By the time he headed off to 'follow England around the world', he was

nineteenth-century invention of whiteness as a 'new religion' transcending ethnicity, race and religion, see M. Lake and H. Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 247, quoting W. E. B. DuBois.

³¹ C. C. O'Brien, *God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), p. 38.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³³ P. Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven, CT, 2006), p. 67.

already expressing serious reservations about the divinity of Christ and he was never a believer in British engagement in missionary work.³⁴ Yet, despite his personal religious reservations, he did not question the centrality of the churches to the cultural fabric of the empire, and he commented on religious matters shrewdly and thoroughly. Issues which concerned him included the status of Catholicism in regions with high Catholic emigration from Ireland, the influence of missionaries on native populations, and the colonial standing of the Church of England in the wake of the removal of the props provided by establishment. In Canada, he expressed anxiety about the rapid increase of the Irish Catholic population and the threat this posed to British Protestantism. Without stating his sources, he stated that the 'Fenians' (radical Irish republicans) were 'strong' in Toronto and 'not unknown' even in Montreal. However, he confidently predicted that the Dominion would be saved from a Catholic established church because of the lack of union between French and Irish Catholics.³⁵ In New Zealand, he reflected settler hostility to the influence of missionaries and declared that the 'Maori Church of Englandism', introduced by the CMS, was a failure.³⁶ In Australia, he noted the strength of Nonconformity, observing that the Wesleyans, Catholics and Presbyterians were stronger than other denominations (presumably he was thinking especially of the Church of England). Greater Britain was also more religiously diverse than he seems to have anticipated. In Melbourne he noted the incongruity, to his eyes, of the jostling together of religious buildings, where the Wesleyan church, the Chinese joss house and the Catholic cathedral stood in close proximity.³⁷

Dilke tackled the thorny issue of colonial church establishment in the book that he produced as a sequel to his original survey.³⁸ He pointed out that many colonies had either never had an established Church, or had chosen to abolish it together with any ongoing financial assistance for religious purposes. Overall, he was fascinated by what the potential consequences of this might be.³⁹ The impact of colonial disestablishment was also of interest to the novelist Anthony Trollope (1815–82), who visited New Zealand and the Australian colonies from 1871 to 1872. With some amazement, Trollope observed: 'every branch of the Christian religion is now supposed to stand on equal footing, and to have an equal title to whatever support the State may be able and

³⁴ Gwynn and Tuckwell, *Charles W. Dilke*, vol. 1, p. 61. Dilke was pious as a young man, and, on at least one occasion (21 January 1883), he attended church with Gladstone. See Gwynn and Tuckwell, *Charles W. Dilke*, vol. 1, p. 514.

³⁵ Dilke, *Greater Britain*, p. 61. ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 321. ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

³⁸ Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 581.

willing to give.⁴⁰ Neither Dilke nor Trollope speculated on the political effects of Church disestablishment, though Dilke suggested that it ensured that the colonies were less marked by sectarian divisions.⁴¹ At the same time, Dilke condemned colonial governors who stirred up rivalries about ecclesiastical precedence and gave his approval to Cardinal Moran, the Catholic archbishop of Sydney, for objecting to the attempt to give precedence to the Anglican bishop of Sydney, Dr Alfred Barry.⁴² In his view, the privileges of the Church of England were something which should be left behind once British settlers had created their own societies beyond British shores.

Nonconformists were in no doubt that the lack of establishment increased rather than decreased the loyalty of the British people in the colonies. They were also aware that it opened up the field to other churches. In 1913, when the theologian Walter Frederick Adeny (1849–1920), former principal of Lancashire Independent College, led a visit to Congregationalist churches in Canada, New South Wales, New Zealand and southern Africa, his activities were promoted as ‘the day of opportunity for Colonial Missions’.⁴³ This optimistic view is in marked contrast to those expressed by the first Congregationalist delegation to visit the colonies, which was undertaken by Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet for the London Missionary Society. From 1821 to 1829, they toured the Society’s stations in the South Pacific, Java, China, India, Africa and Madagascar, suggesting plans for the future – plans which did not include missions to colonists.⁴⁴ On Adeny’s visit, the Congregationalist magazine, *British Missionary*, called for generous support for ‘the cause of Christ in the British empire’, reflecting that ‘Christians in the Homeland ... have no adequate conception of the spiritual destitution of thousands of our fellow-countrymen scattered throughout Greater Britain’.⁴⁵

In ways such as this, Dilke’s terminology was embraced by the colonial missionary societies and used to extend their aspirations for a Christian empire in which all the churches would have fair and equal representation. While class continued to divide Britons at home, across the seas

⁴⁰ A. Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, 2 vols. (London, 1873), vol. 1, p. 120.

⁴¹ Dilke, *Greater Britain*, p. 599.

⁴² *Ibid.* Moran’s example was later recalled by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when he gave ecclesiastical precedence to the Catholic archbishop of Dublin, Cardinal Paul Cullen, at official events in Dublin Castle. I thank Dr Colin Barr for bringing this to my attention.

⁴³ ‘Tour of Church Leaders’, *British Missionary* (April 1913), p. 31.

⁴⁴ D. Tyerman and G. Bennet, eds., *Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Reverend Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet Esq.*, 2 vols. (London, 1831).

⁴⁵ ‘The Editor’s Corner’, *British Missionary* (April 1913), p. 43.

they were united by a shared morality and religious commitment which was seen as a major advance on the divisions of earlier eras.⁴⁶

Religion and imperialism

What was the nature of the relationship between the churches of Great Britain and Ireland and the British empire? There has been perennial debate about this question, both while the empire was expanding and now, when it has been mostly reduced to an uneasy memory. In discussing the rise and fall of the idea of the British empire, Thornton has argued that the connection between religion and imperialism was very indirect and bore only a modest connection to expansion of the British commercial empire.⁴⁷ He notes that the missionary David Livingstone advocated commerce in association with commerce for Africa, but not white settlement (though it is not clear how this was to be achieved). Andrew Porter, in a long series of pivotal empirical studies, has done much to demonstrate that missionaries in the field and their supporters at home, while they could hardly avoid implication in the great movement of the age, were among the most persistent and articulate critics of imperialism.⁴⁸

Yet missionaries were only one aspect of the religious character of the empire. Besides giving support to missions and the moral uplift of native people, religious people with access to power promoted the idea that the British empire should itself be subject to moral governance. The churches provided important ideological support for imperial expansion. They generally regarded the empire as a force for good, and missionaries facilitated the extension of its boundaries even if they opposed colonial settlement in some circumstances, notably New Zealand.

To enter the debate about the nature of the relationship between religion and imperialism, we therefore need to define both terms with care. Imperialism is a notoriously slippery concept,⁴⁹ and increasingly it has

⁴⁶ Mandler, *English National Character*, p. 67.

⁴⁷ A. P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies: A Study in British Power* (London, 1959), p. 15. For commercial aspects of Christian expansion, see B. Stanley, 'Commerce and Christianity: Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842–1860', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), pp. 71–94.

⁴⁸ See especially A. N. Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester, 2004), pp. 316–30.

⁴⁹ D. K. Fieldhouse, *Colonialism 1870–1945: An Introduction* (London, 1981), p. 1. For an attempt to track the meaning of this term historically, see R. Koebner and H. D. R. Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840–1960* (Cambridge, 1964).

been replaced, as in the subtitle to this book, by colonialism.⁵⁰ Edward Said defined imperialism as ‘the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory’,⁵¹ and argued that Christianity was essential to it. In a lecture delivered in Ireland in 1988, he argued that: ‘At the heart of European culture during the many decades of imperial expansion lay what could be called an undeterred and unrelenting Eurocentrism. This accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories; it studied them, classified them, verified them; but above all, it subordinated them to the culture and indeed the very idea of white Christian Europe.’⁵² For Said, colonialism was something that happened after imperial regimes were set in place: ‘Colonialism’, he states, ‘which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory.’⁵³ It follows from this that anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism are distinct activities. Said regarded himself as an anti-imperialist, in that his resistance to the imperial condition was addressed to its core ideas, not just the creation of colonies which were accidental to the imperial condition. Nevertheless, he disagreed with the concept of Christian anti-imperialism. While there was a vigorous European debate, which might trace its origins to Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566), about the economic and moral dangers of planting colonies, for Said this internal criticism should not be equated with the anti-imperialism of resistance movements that defeated European colonisers in the modern age.⁵⁴ In this view, the British empire lacked an autonomous anti-imperial movement, despite the anti-colonialism espoused by humanitarians who lobbied for an end to the Atlantic slave trade, reforms to the conduct of British policy in India, or, as we will see in Chapter 11, the impact of colonial settlement on aboriginal people in British settler colonies.

Other theorists, writing after Said, have found it useful to draw distinctions between different kinds of colonialism in order to take into account the fact that imperial rule is not exerted in a simple way, but is nearly always complicated by factors such as resistance from those who are being colonised and by the rivalry of other potential colonisers. Nicholas Thomas has emphasised the need to analyse colonialism as a condition in its own right, with many local variables, not

⁵⁰ S. Neill, ‘Colonialism and Missions’, in *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission*, ed. S. Neill, G. H. Anderson and J. Goodwin (London, 1970), p. 121.

⁵¹ E. W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993), p. 8.

⁵² E. W. Said, *Yeats and Decolonization: Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (Derry, 1988).

⁵³ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 9. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

simply as a response to the imposition of imperial rule.⁵⁵ Despite conceptual challenges, there has also been a concerted effort to try to recover the experience of imperialism from what Reynolds called 'the other side of the frontier'.⁵⁶ There is now a flourishing literature that considers colonialism from a 'subaltern' perspective, a term for a junior military officer originally adopted by the Italian socialist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) for those subordinated classes who have been excluded from history.⁵⁷ Generating a voice for the subaltern has been an important project for post-colonial critics whose main interest lies in the historiography of resistance to imperial rule from the point of view of indigenous and native subjects.⁵⁸ With its origins in Gramsci's theories of the need for resistance to the hegemonic power of the bourgeois culture and its religious norms, it is not surprising that subaltern theorists have generally seen Christianity as hopelessly mired in the expansion of imperialism and hardly worth studying. In another attempt to add complexity to these key terms, Fieldhouse distinguished between 'colonialism' as an ideology, especially when applied to territories where small numbers of Europeans exerted power over much larger populations of non-European people, and 'colonisation' in which there is substantial settlement which displaces or replaces the native population.⁵⁹

Applying some of these conceptual tools to the analysis of the settler churches and their relationship with British colonialism, there are clear advantages in making use of Fieldhouse's colonialism/colonisation distinction. Colonisation is what happened in the first British empire when settlers first encountered indigenous people before rapidly overwhelming them and replacing them as the majority population. This occurred in the settler colonies of the second British empire, which are the subject of this book, in places such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and, to some extent, southern Africa. Colonialism, on the other hand, is what happened to India, most of Africa, and Asia. Again, however, there are complications. The first is the tendency to reduce processes that in fact

⁵⁵ N. Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁵⁶ H. Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (Ringwood, 1982).

⁵⁷ A. Gramsci, 'Notes on Italian History, 1934–5', in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith (London, 1971), pp. 52–3.

⁵⁸ G. Prakash, 'Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism', *American Historical Review*, 99 (1994), pp. 1475–90; G. C. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Urbana, IL, 1988), pp. 271–313.

⁵⁹ Fieldhouse, *Colonialism*, pp. 4–6.

took place over a long time and went through many phases, into a single category. Another is the status of colonies such as New Zealand, Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, in which British settlers arrived in significant numbers but not so many as to completely overwhelm the native inhabitants. Does this constitute colonialism or colonisation?

Overall, it is probably better to consider colonisation as one phase in a series of imperial encounters which might begin with first contact, progress through engagement with temporary travellers, pioneers and beachcombers, and which might include colonial settlement as one stage of a broader imperial engagement. The churches were engaged with the progress of colonisation in all its phases. Chaplains, missionaries and bush parsons arrived as pioneers; bishops, and missionary and colonial church societies succeeded them and planted churches; they were often the first on new frontiers and the ones with the greatest call on resources from home to sustain their supply lines. While they never stopped complaining about the need for more money and personnel, the churches had distinct advantages over other imperial institutions. There was intense competition between them for colonial territory: Catholics competed with Protestants; Methodists competed with Anglicans and secured an effective alliance with Presbyterians and other Nonconformists; church parties and sects struggled with each other, and different ethnic churches had competing claims to the same people. Nevertheless, they could also draw on local sources of income and many clerical personnel, male and female, were prepared to work for very low wages. They rapidly adapted to new colonial conditions and became important players in colonial nationalist movements. They formed strategic alliances with the political parties that emerged in the fledgling colonial democracies: Anglicans with the conservatives, Nonconformists with liberals and Catholics in the labour movement. For the churches, moreover, colonialism continued well after the departure of more overt institutions of imperial power, such as the British army, navy and colonial administration.⁶⁰

Contemporary theory turns out to be much better at explaining oppositional modes of colonialism, particularly opposition between people of different race and religion, than explaining the factors that allowed the colonisers to cohere in their new territories, or the colonised to embrace colonial values, including Christianity. As Dilke recognised, the settlers who came to occupy Greater Britain shared a high

⁶⁰ For this thesis, see especially Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace*. On settler colonialism, see Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 (2006), pp. 387–409.

degree of cultural cohesion to the extent that they thought of themselves as 'British subjects' long after their subjection to the British crown had become nominal at best. Despite significant differences in their class, ethnicity, religion and place of origin within Great Britain and Europe, Irish, English, Scottish and Welsh colonists happily embraced new identities as British Americans, Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans. Certainly, South Africa, with its large Dutch Calvinist population, would eventually rebel, but it is much more surprising that rebellion was averted everywhere else and British imperial patriotism flourished for so long. We need a theory that helps to explain this.

It is useful to begin by recognising the dimensions of the colonial missionary project. The physical scale of the religious colonisation of Greater Britain was vast, even if we need not go so far as Seeley who called the growth of Greater Britain 'the greatest English [*sic*] event of the eighteenth and nineteenth century'.⁶¹ Church settlement began in earnest in the 1830s with the support of colonial missionary societies, which were created by almost all the churches and continued more or less unabated until the end of the century. Tables 1.1 to 1.6, mostly taken from colonial and imperial census data and from Carrington, provide data on the size of the British settler population and its religious settlement. In 1839, a reasonable estimate of the 'British Overseas' was calculated by R. M. Martin to be about 1.2 million people including 900,000 in British North America, 130,000 in Australia, 60,000 in the West Indies, and 56,000 garrisoned with the army.⁶² By 1901, Carrington estimated that the British population had reached approximately 10 million shared among the two older dominions of Canada and Australia and the two newer ones of New Zealand and South Africa as well as smaller populations in Newfoundland, Southern Rhodesia, Kenya and India. This increase was achieved mostly by emigration, especially from Ireland and Scotland, whose population was transferred to Great Britain, America and the British settler colonies.⁶³

The demographic effect of emigration from Ireland and Scotland was especially striking, giving the empire what Ferguson has called its 'enduringly Celtic tinge'.⁶⁴ In 1821, the population of Ireland was

⁶¹ J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London, 1883), p. 12.

⁶² R. M. Martin, *Statistics of the Colonies of the British Empire* (London, 1839), abstracted by Carrington, *British Overseas*, p. 506.

⁶³ E. Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600* (London, 2004).

⁶⁴ N. Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London, 2004), p. 71. For detailed study of the demographic impact of settler emigration, see E. Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600* (London, 2004).

Table 1.1 *Populations of England, Scotland, Ireland and major settler colonies, 1801–1911 ('000s)*

	England and Wales		Ireland (whole island)	Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Southern Africa ^a	
		Scotland					Cape Colony	Natal
1801	8,893	1,608						
1811	10,164	1,806						
1821	12,000	2,092	6,802					
1831	13,897	2,364	7,767					
1841	15,914	2,620	8,178					
1850							285	121
1851	17,928	2,889	6,554	2,436	405	22		
1856							267	
1860					1,146	80		
1861	20,066	3,062	5,799	3,230				153
1865							583	
1871	22,712	3,360	5,412	3,689	1,648	248		290
1875							721	
1880					2,232	528		
1881	25,974	3,736	5,175	4,325				403
1890					3,151	667		
1891	29,003	4,026	4,705	4,833			1,308	544
1901	32,528	4,472	4,459	5,371	3,765	808		
1904							5,175	
1910					4,425	1,050		
1911	36,070	4,761	4,390	7,207	4,455		5,973	

^a The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 through the merger of the colony of Cape of Good Hope and Natal, and the two Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

Source: British and Colonial Censuses, 1801–1911 (B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988)).

6.8 million, which was about one-third of the total population of Britain; by 1901, it had fallen to 1.45 million, which was only one-tenth. The impact of the departures in the overseas colonies was also remarkable. By 1911, the British and Irish population of Australia exceeded that of Ireland, and, in 1921, both Australia and Canada had larger British and Irish populations than either Scotland or Ireland.⁶⁵ It is estimated that total emigration from the British Isles to places outside Europe in the nineteenth century was between six and 7 million. There were particular peaks of output in the 1850s, when the

⁶⁵ Carrington, *British Overseas*, pp. 507–11. See Figure 1.1.

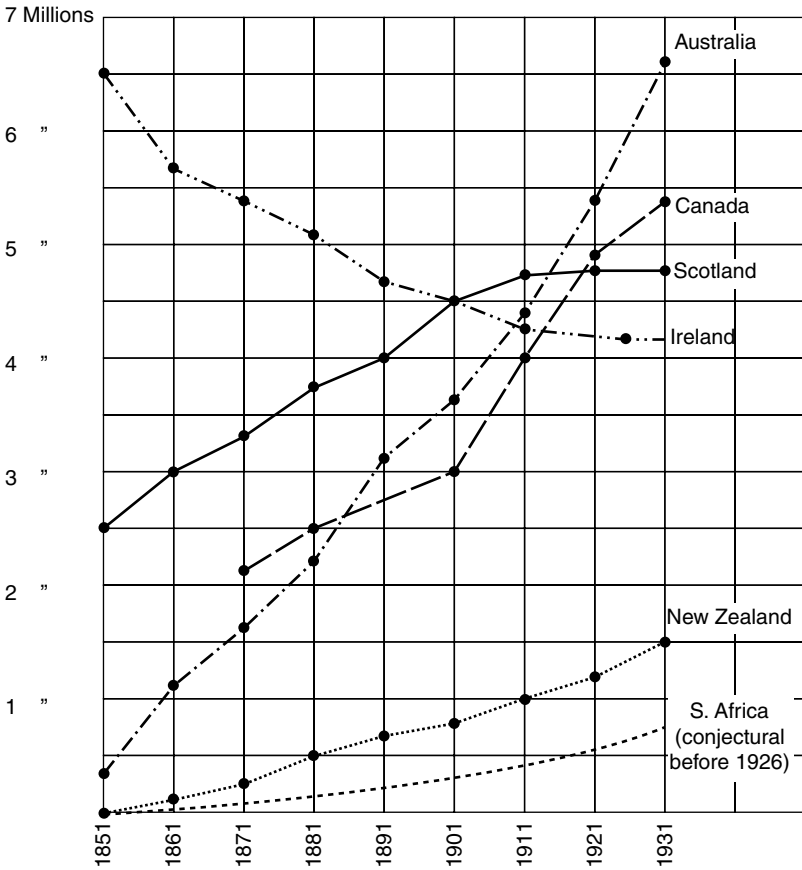


Figure 1.1 Population of British origin in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa compared with Ireland and Scotland. Source: C. E. Carrington, *British Overseas*, p. 507.

Irish abandoned Ireland and the Australian gold rushes drew emigrants south, and again in the 1890s, when the opening up of the Canadian wheat lands drew hundreds of thousands to Saskatchewan and the provinces of the northwest.

For the millions who participated in the great British *Völkerwanderung* of the Victorian era, the churches were among the most pervasive and enduring cultural institutions that the emigrant English, Irish and Scots chose to transplant and rear in colonial soil. To staff the new churches required a clerical army to be despatched by the various colonial missions set up by the churches for this purpose. Despite the scale of this project,

the churches aimed to ensure that they left no frontier unattended by spiritual ministers; astonishingly, by the time of the imperial census in 1901, it was reported that the proportion of clergy to population throughout the settler colonies was more or less the same as it was in Britain itself.⁶⁶ In Chapters 3 to 7, I will try to make a direct calculation of the scale of investment that this represented for the different churches. However, by any measure it was a weighty and globally significant event.

There has been increasing interest in the role played by religion in different phases of British overseas expansion.⁶⁷ However, the bulk of published work has concentrated on the role of missionaries in those parts of the empire where British settlers remained in the minority.⁶⁸ As Porter notes, there are now three voluminous – but largely independent – bodies of historiography with which imperial religious historians must engage: the history of missions, the secular history of the British empire, and the autonomous histories of the national churches planted in the wake of missionary or colonial settlement.⁶⁹ There is also an ongoing debate about the relationship between religion and imperialism, especially the extent to which missionaries ought to carry responsibility for the ongoing impact of European empires in the developing world.⁷⁰ Yet, in all this, the settler churches have tended to disappear as an object of study.

We can try to measure this change in focus in imperial religious history in a simple way. In Porter's 2002 bibliography of imperial history,⁷¹ the section on religion and belief has 1,490 items. Of these, there are 72 items that concern general imperial religious history, compared with 685 on religion and belief in particular colonial territories, 646 on missions and another 84 on education and primary sources. In other words, there are ten times as many works on missions or national religious

⁶⁶ *Census of the British Empire, 1901* (Westminster, 1906), p. xxxi.

⁶⁷ For reviews of recent work, see T. Ballantyne, 'Religion, Difference and the Limits of British Imperial History', *Victorian Studies*, 47 (2005), pp. 427–55; H. M. Carey, 'Introduction: Empires of Religion', in *Empires of Religion*, ed. H. M. Carey (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 1–24; J. Gascoigne, 'Introduction: Religion and Empire, an Historiographical Perspective', *Journal of Religious History*, 32 (2008), pp. 159–78. Andrew Porter, 'Evangelical Visions and Colonial Realities', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Histories*, 38 (2010), pp. 145–55.

⁶⁸ The literature on British missions is vast. Major surveys include J. Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (New York, 2008); N. Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire, Oxford Companion to the British Empire* (Oxford, 2005); Porter, *Religion Versus Empire*; A. N. Porter, 'Missions and Empire, c.1873–1914', in *World Christianities, c.1815–1914*, ed. S. Gilley and B. Stanley (Cambridge, 2006).

⁶⁹ Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?*, p. 7.

⁷⁰ N. Etherington, 'Missions and Empire', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 5, *Historiography*, ed. R. W. Winks and A. M. Low (Oxford, 1999), p. 304.

⁷¹ A. N. Porter, *Bibliography of Imperial, Colonial, and Commonwealth History since 1600* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 479–533.

history as there are on colonial church history. Secular imperial history has also changed its emphasis. Older survey histories of British settlement such as Carrington's gave generous coverage to religious questions; Carrington also wrote a biography of John Robert Godley, the leader of the Canterbury settlement, which is considered in Chapter 11.⁷² An appreciation of the relevance of ecclesiastical history to the study of the empire was also axiomatic for pro-imperialists such as Jose, even though he regarded the churches and their missionaries as an impediment to settler ambitions.⁷³ However, the new multi-volume histories of the British empire tend to leave it out almost entirely, something unthinkable to an earlier generation.

These historiographical changes reflect a tendency to associate the history of Christianity with the history of the white settler empire, a field which has in recent decades become marginalised within imperial history itself. This paradigm shift is very evident when contrasting the old *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, which appeared in thirteen volumes between 1929 and 1959, and its successors such as the five-volume *Oxford History of the British Empire*, edited by Roger Louis and published from 1999 to 2001, and the separately edited companion series which is still proceeding.⁷⁴ While the earlier project still assumed British beneficence and gave majority space to the settler dominions, they have been displaced in contemporary, revisionist histories of the British empire written since the 1960s. The new imperial history, this implies, is not about planting the Anglo-Saxon race in the Americas and the Antipodes, but about the British confrontation with other races in India, Africa and Asia. Reform and religious evangelisation were seen as either chimerical achievements or hypocritical and self-serving justifications for the advance of British power.⁷⁵ For Seeley and the generation which followed him, the central story concerned the expansion of 'England' and English institutions (including the churches) around the world.⁷⁶ By the 1990s, this had become so marginal that studies of Australia, Canada and Ireland all appeared as companion volumes to the main narrative history of the British empire. In some cases, the churches did not even appear in the margins. The Oxford companion

⁷² C. E. Carrington, *John Robert Godley of Canterbury* (Christchurch, 1950); Carrington, *British Overseas*.

⁷³ A. W. Jose, *The Growth of the Empire: A Handbook to the History of Greater Britain*, 2nd edn (London, 1909).

⁷⁴ W. R. Louis, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1998–2000).

⁷⁵ C. A. Bayly, 'The Second British Empire', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 5, *Historiography*, ed. R. W. Winks and A. M. Low (Oxford, 1999), p. 63.

⁷⁶ Seeley, *Expansion of England*.

volume on Canada, for example, does not have a separate chapter on religion. While the work of Belich, Bell and the proceedings of the 'British World' conferences, first held in Cape Town in 2002, make it clear that revisionism is underway in relation to the settler contribution to empire, the churches – the most significant cultural face of the 'settler revolution' – have yet to be reintegrated into the imperial story.⁷⁷

Religion and race

One consequence of this shift in the weight of scholarly preoccupation is that imperial religious history, and indeed imperial history in general, has become dominated by the discussion of race. Where they are not left out altogether, religious figures are generally identified with the forces of racist colonial oppression. Missionaries continue to be defined as agents for the 'colonisation of the mind' who institutionalised and legitimated Western cultural hegemony through their control of missions, schools, bible translation and publishing houses.⁷⁸ One study refers to missionaries as 'surrogate imperialists' whose writing was characterised by an obsession with gender, race and class, while they pursued opportunities for 'social advancement' and an 'exotic career' denied them at home.⁷⁹ Such interpretations reflect contemporary Western concerns about the colonial past and its legacy, but they provide no more than a partial view of the Victorian missionary movement.

While the debate about race is – quite properly – central to the study of foreign missions, it has a different significance in relation to the history of the settler churches. Because the British victory over native people in settler colonies was so overwhelming, once the frontier had passed and urbanisation began the vast majority of the 7 million British people who emigrated to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa rarely engaged spiritually with the indigenous inhabitants of the countries they had invaded. There are significant exceptions to this, especially in New Zealand and South Africa, where Christianity was

⁷⁷ Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire*; Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Bell, *Greater Britain*; Bridge and Fedorowich, eds., *British World*; Ward, *British Embrace*.

⁷⁸ For defences of missionaries from the charge of commercial and cultural imperialism, see A. N. Porter, "'Commerce and Christianity': The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Slogan", *Historical Journal*, 28 (1985), pp. 597–621; A. N. Porter, "'Cultural Imperialism" and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 25 (1997), pp. 367–91; Porter, *Religion Versus Empire*; D. L. Robert, ed., *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914* (2008), pp. 2–3; Stanley, 'Commerce and Christianity', pp. 71–94; B. Stanley, 'Conversion to Christianity: The Colonization of the Mind?', *International Review of Mission*, 92 (2003), pp. 315–31.

⁷⁹ A. Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 6–8.

planted as much by missionaries as the colonial churches. However, whiteness was the majority condition of British settler societies and, as Patrick Wolfe has argued, since settlers 'came to stay' they tended inevitably – regardless of good intentions and Christian principles – to be both genocidal and monocultural.⁸⁰

In these historical circumstances, it is problematic that some colonial theorists have only been able to imagine models of colonialism in which Europeans impact upon colonial subjects who are predominately non-European.⁸¹ The anthropologist John Comaroff, for example, subdivides what Said called 'imperialism' into a number of different modes, including state colonialism, settler colonialism, and the civilising colonialism of the mission. However, he does not acknowledge that colonialism was a process that acted just as profoundly on settlers themselves as it did on the original inhabitants of colonised territories. The assumption that imperial religious exchanges were always conducted across – rather than within – racial categories needs to be interrogated. This does not mean that race is irrelevant to the history of the settler churches, or that colonial theory cannot provide us with tools to understand the way they acted cohesively to sustain the power of the British imperial project. The colonial churches and missions were imperial institutions and, as we will see, they rarely intervened to contest its power once colonisation was fully underway. This should not be lost from view, particularly by historians writing about Christian missions from a background within a particular confessional tradition, which probably still constitutes the majority of scholarly contributions to the field.

A sure remedy against the risk of confessional bias in imperial history is to engage with its non-European critics. In her foundational study of religious colonisation among Baptists in the West Indies, *Civilizing Subjects*, Catherine Hall acknowledged a debt to Frantz Fanon (1925–61).⁸² Fanon was a physician and psychiatrist whose experiences with victims of French colonial oppression and torture in Algeria in the 1950s inspired some powerful writing on their behalf, including *Black*

⁸⁰ Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 (2006), pp. 387–409.

⁸¹ J. L. Comaroff, 'Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa', in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (Berkeley, CA, 1997), pp. 179–81.

⁸² C. Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Oxford, 2002); Hall, McClelland, and Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation*, p. 51. For additional discussion of Hall's use of Fanon, see Catherine Hall, Simon Gikandi, Thomas C. Holt and Philippa Levine, 'Discussion: Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867', *Journal of British Studies*, 42 (2003), pp. 505–29.

Skin, White Masks (*Peau noire, masques blancs*, 1952) and the posthumous *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les Damnés de la terre*, 1961). In the earlier book, Fanon confronted the impasse created by the mutually constrained categories of black and white, each sealed in their own respective ‘whiteness’ and ‘blackness’ with no prospect, except possibly through psychoanalysis, of acknowledging a common humanity.⁸³ The apocalyptic language of the title of *The Wretched* (or ‘damned’) of *the Earth* is sustained by Fanon in his interpretation of the essentially dualistic and final nature of decolonisation which, he stated, is ‘always a violent phenomenon’, requiring the creation of a new order, with its own language, humanity and history to replace the old. Summing up what is required, he quotes from the parable of the labourers (Matthew 20: 1–16): “‘The last shall be first and the first last’”: Decolonisation is the putting into practice of this sentence.⁸⁴ In the exaggerated encounter that takes place across the frontier, Fanon has argued that there is only good and evil; it is a Manichaeic world, in which the settler postulates the native as the source of all evil. The Manichaeism of the settler, in which all institutions share, generates in its turn a Manichaeism of the natives that leads inevitably to violence.

For Fanon, the Christian religion is deeply complicit with the colonising power: ‘The Church in the colonies is the white people’s Church, the foreigner’s Church. She does not call the native to God’s ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor.’⁸⁵ Religion is always culpable for the creation of the burden of false national and other cultural identities, and divides those who might otherwise unite against a common oppressor: ‘Inside a single nation, religion splits up the people into different spiritual communities, all of them kept up and stiffened by colonialism and its instruments.’⁸⁶ Paradoxical divisions between colonised peoples are created by the accidental rivalries of Catholicism and Protestantism, or the incursions of Islam and American Evangelicalism and the African responses to it – diversions, as Fanon sees it, from the anti-colonial struggle. The conclusion to this angry book is simultaneously a call to arms, but also a call to the Third World to create an alternative to the European stasis, something better than the achievement of the United States, a former European colony which had become a ‘monster’.⁸⁷ Fanon has generally been followed by those who have attempted to discuss the religious constitution of whiteness and its association with racial prejudice in historical arenas such as

⁸³ F. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London, 1986), pp. 10–12.

⁸⁴ F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London, 1967), pp. 28–29.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32. ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129. ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

post-bellum United States, and South Africa.⁸⁸ While Fanon's passion commands respect for his ideas, they were formed in a time of war, and challenges arise when attempting to translate them to other historical contexts.

The principal difficulty with adopting Fanon's uncompromising model of colonialism is that it assumes there was a binary relationship between colonisers and colonised, and between the metropole and periphery. This has considerable polemical force, but it rarely corresponds to the messy arrangements that characterised both the frontier and its aftermath. The difficulties increase in the case of cultural institutions such as the churches. While most churches employed rhetoric that boosted Anglo-Saxon and British virtues at the expense of heathens and pagans, the argument that all colonial religions were therefore vehicles for British cultural hegemony is not sustainable. A simple tool such as the census data on religion in the colonies of British settlement can illustrate the complexities of the interaction between race, mission and Church in colonies of British settlement.⁸⁹ In many colonies, including the West Indies, Cape Colony and New Zealand, church membership was strongly differentiated by race and, where this can be measured, class and occupation. In Cape Colony in 1898, for example, while no church was exclusively white or black, the majority Dutch Reformed Church (NGK), which made up 31.3 per cent of the total population, held over 60 per cent of the white population but less than 7 per cent of the 'coloured' (as this was defined by the census).⁹⁰ On the other hand, the Methodist Church, which was the NGK's main rival in terms of adherents, held the majority of the coloured population (52.8 per cent). There are also striking variables in the denominational adherence of the Dutch and the British settler people, reflecting profound cultural divisions between these colonial populations in the Cape. The churches, in other words, rapidly adjusted to the local conditions and became engaged on both sides of the frontier.

It is also important to avoid the assumption that white settlers formed a cohesive cultural bloc. This was rarely the case – to the perennial dismay of Christian leaders. Division took many forms, some imported from the old world, others manufactured in the crucible of the new. The long-standing struggle between 'imperial Anglicanism' and Nonconformity, which is so marked a feature of the religious politics of the American

⁸⁸ For whiteness and religion in associated with racial prejudice, see E. J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865–1898* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2005); M. F. Brewer, *Staging Whiteness* (Hanover, NH, 2005), p. 4.

⁸⁹ See Tables 1.1–1.6. ⁹⁰ For data from Cape Colony, see Table 1.4.

colonies in the eighteenth century, takes new forms in the nineteenth as state subsidies to the Church of England were reduced or abolished.⁹¹ According to Vaudry, the character of Canadian Anglicanism was influenced by Irish Evangelicalism, especially in Quebec, as well as the numerical importance of both French and Irish Catholicism.⁹² American and English rivalries played an important role in the development of Methodism in Canada, as we will see in Chapter 6. While Irish Catholicism was to triumph in much of the English-speaking empire, this was achieved at the expense of English Catholicism in Australia and New Zealand, and was limited by French Catholicism in British North America. In the latter, the separate spheres of Francophone and Anglophone Catholicism ensured that, even though in 1901 Catholics made up 41 per cent of the Canadian population, they were unable to translate this demographic into a united Catholic voice on political and social issues. For all the churches, factors such as their relationship to the state, the scale and ethnic character of emigration, the character of the resident European and native populations, and interaction with other churches, ensured that the culture and politics of the local churches differed both from each other and from the churches at home. In short, it was never a simple case of 'us' and 'them'.

While it is a term that is too convenient to discard, 'religion' is not an especially helpful category of historical analysis for British imperial history. We must talk instead about churches and their ethnic and political character as well as the way in which these porous and malleable institutions were adapted to their colonial setting. Colonial religious institutions also change over time. In the first British empire, the established churches were part of the imperial state, but this relationship was slowly dismantled in the course of the nineteenth century to be replaced with something quite different. As historians such as Robert Grant have stressed, the churches need to be considered along with writers, artists and cultural agents who played their parts in 'imagining the empire'.⁹³ The empire in these formulations had its political,

⁹¹ For aspects of 'imperial' Anglicanism, see P. M. Doll, 'American High Churchmanship and the Establishment of the First Colonial Episcopate in the Church of England: Nova Scotia, 1787', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (1992), pp. 35–59; P. M. Doll, *Revolution, Religion and National Identity: Imperial Anglicanism in British North America* (2000); Strong, *Anglicanism and Empire*; J. F. Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* (Detroit, 1984).

⁹² R. W. Vaudry, 'Evangelical Anglicans and the Atlantic World: Politics, Ideology, and the British North American Connection', in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G. A. Rawlyk (Montreal 1997), p. 154.

⁹³ R. Grant, *Representations of British Emigration, Colonisation and Settlement: Imagining Empire, 1800–1860* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 27–58.

physical and material sides, but it was also a spiritual realm, God's empire, which requires detachment, nuance and sophistication if we hope to do its representation historical justice.

Religion and the settler empire

A disparate coalition of thinkers contributed to the creation of a religious model of the British settler empire.⁹⁴ In the early part of the nineteenth century, this included those radical conservatives who were sufficiently rattled by the French Revolution to propose a return to the verities of the old religion. Chief among these was Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) who argued that a 'national Church' could provide an essential spiritual dimension to the state, an idea that was readily extended beyond Britain's island boundaries.⁹⁵ He also proposed that the 'Clerisy of the nation, or national Church' originally included 'the learned of all denominations'.⁹⁶ In the 1830s, Coleridge's ideas about the religious character of the British state and its intellectuals were taken up and developed by the educator Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), who promoted the idea of civil service at home and abroad as both mission and patriotic duty.⁹⁷ W. E. Gladstone and his circle did the most to advocate the idea of the national Church as an ideal for Britain and her colonies, a political vision we can trace through the creation of the Colonial Bishops' Fund (1841) and beyond. It permeates much of his thinking about the 'English-speaking people', which was for Gladstone as much a cultural and religious as a political ideal.⁹⁸

Unsurprisingly, the Society for Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), the oldest missionary organisation of the Church of England, had the clearest idea of Greater Britain as a field of spiritual labour. This was expressed over many years in the annual sermons and publications of the societies and their benefactors,⁹⁹ but there were a number of more

⁹⁴ For the debate about the non-settler empire, see, for example, Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain*, ch. 8.

⁹⁵ S. T. Coleridge, *On the Idea of the Constitution of the Church and State, According to the Idea of Each* (London, 1830), in *Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge*, vol. 10, ed. J. Colmer (Princeton, NJ, 1976).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 193.

⁹⁷ T. Arnold, 'The Church and the State', in *The Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Arnold*, ed. A. P. Stanley (London, 1845), pp. 466–75; T. Arnold, 'National Church Establishments', in *The Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Arnold*, ed. A. P. Stanley (London, 1845), pp. 486–92.

⁹⁸ F. H. Herrick, 'Gladstone and the Concept of the "English-Speaking Peoples"', *Journal of British Studies*, 12 (1972), pp. 150–6.

⁹⁹ For the Ramsden sermons, which have been delivered annually in Oxford or Cambridge since 1847 on the theme 'Church extension in the colonies and dependencies of

ambitious attempts to write the complete spiritual history of the empire. In 1900–1, G. Robert Wynne (1838–c.1906), archdeacon of Aghadoc and canon of St Patrick's cathedral, presented the Donnellan Lectures at Trinity College Dublin on the theme: 'The Church in Greater Britain'.¹⁰⁰ This was highly recommended to all 'Christian Imperialists' by the *Church of Ireland Gazette* which suggests something about its target audience.¹⁰¹ The lectures themselves were not very distinguished; they consist mostly of potted summaries of the histories of the Church of England and the SPG, and Wynne does not bother to explain what he means by Greater Britain except that it refers to 'the subject of the planting and growth of the Colonial Church among our countrymen abroad, and among the various heathen tribes with which they are brought in contact'.¹⁰² In the event, the lectures cover early missions from the British Isles, with subsequent chapters on the American colonies, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies and South Africa, and 'lesser colonial possessions' including British Honduras, Bermuda, Fiji, British New Guinea, West Africa, the East and Central African Protectorate, Mauritius, Ascension, the Straits Settlement and Hong Kong, with a quick mention of the work of the bishop of Jerusalem who had oversight over Anglican clergy and missionary work in the Holy Land and Egypt, and, in South America, the bishop of the Falkland Islands and the bishop of Argentina. By a process of elimination, therefore, it would seem that, for Wynne at least, Greater Britain implied those parts of the empire where there were sufficient numbers of English settlers to provide a foothold for the English Church.

A more radical view of English Christianity linked symbiotically to the worldwide spread of the English race was promoted by the Reverend Henry William Tucker (1830–1902), prebendary of St Paul's cathedral, London, honorary secretary of the CMS and former secretary of the SPG.¹⁰³ His survey history of Anglicanism was entitled *The English Church in Other Lands* (1886). This covered, in eight chapters, missions to colonies where there had been significant English settlement: the United States; Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario;

the British Empire', see R. Strong, 'The Church of England the British Imperial State: Anglican Metropolitan Sermons of the 1850s', in *Church and State in Old and New Worlds* ed. H. M. Carey and J. Gascoigne (Leiden, 2010) (in press).

¹⁰⁰ G. R. Wynne, *The Church in Greater Britain: The Donnellan Lectures Delivered before the University of Dublin, 1900–1901*, 3rd edn (London, 1911).

¹⁰¹ *Church of Ireland Gazette*, 12 February 1904.

¹⁰² Wynne, *Church in Greater Britain*, p. viii.

¹⁰³ Tucker also wrote memoirs of the lives of colonial bishops, including Edward Field (1877) and George Augustus Selwyn (1879), tracts for emigrants such as *A Word to Intending Colonists* (1897), and other missionary works.

northwest Canada; the West Indies; South America; Australia; New Zealand and the Pacific; and South Africa; with five more chapters on foreign missions on the east coast of Africa, the west coast of Africa, the East Indies and China, Japan and Borneo. The meaning of his subtitle ('The Spiritual Expansion of England') is developed in the conclusion. Here, Tucker links the outward spread of the English-speaking race and what he accepts as the inevitable triumph worldwide of their institutions, speech and thought, to the spread of English religion, which he conceived as not necessarily exclusively that of the Church of England: 'In all these lands, whither the Anglo-Saxon race drifts and settles, Christianity, imported, perhaps with all its differences and divisions, from Great Britain, will supply the people with spiritual life.'¹⁰⁴ Although it might be divided at home, diversity and adaptation to colonial conditions would be the greatest strength of the coming Catholic Church of England which, like Constantine, would bring Christian unity to the empire. He goes on to express a 'wild day-dream' that one day a great English Church, forged in the colonial furnace, might lead a new Reformation of the churches of the old world, conquering first the papacy, then Orthodoxy and the distinguished apostolic churches of the east, which he dismisses as 'corrupt churches which now cling with tenacity to their traditions, but show little zeal or other signs of life'.¹⁰⁵ It is notable that Tucker seems to intend to leave Protestant Europe to its own devices – but otherwise plans a spiritual assault, led by colonial shock troops, on the greater part of the landmass of Europe and the Middle East. Imperial ambitions for English religion probably never reached dizzier heights than this.

For more secular popularisers of colonisation, British religion – often expressed in somewhat vague terms it must be admitted – was appreciated as a unifying force that could assist in the dissemination of British social and ethical values. From about the 1860s, these ideas were affected by the impact of a wealth of new intellectual ideas, including German higher criticism and the rationalist rejection of what an articulate minority saw as superstitious elements within Christianity. In place of the national Church, which many saw as failing to provide moral and intellectual leadership to the world, progressive imperialists and broad churchmen within the Church of England advocated the transplantation of the national culture and British institutions.¹⁰⁶ At Oxford,

¹⁰⁴ H. W. Tucker, *The English Church in other Lands or the Spiritual Expansion of England* (London, 1886), p. 214.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 214–15.

¹⁰⁶ For Seeley's views of Coleridge, see J. R. Seeley, 'Ethics and Religion', *Fortnightly Review*, 45 (1889), pp. 501–14, discussed by D. S. A. Bell, 'Unity and Difference: John

the historian John Robert Seeley (1834–95) was one of those who saw the empire as a site for the spiritual advance of unity and righteousness under the British flag. Seeley was influenced by Coleridge, Arnold and Maurice and their aspirations for the Church of England to send the light of civilisation through the world, but he came to see the existing churches as inadequate to the task of serving the imperial state. While he continued to argue that religion had a vital role to play, Seeley advocated that it be served by a ‘new clerisy’, and updated Coleridge’s original ideal to include bureaucrats and secular scholars like himself. He looked to a Universal Church of the future that would be defined not by national religion but rather by universal civilisation.¹⁰⁷ These ideas were also promoted by imperial organisations such as the Empire Day Movement, the League of Empire, and the Round Table, which aimed to facilitate the creation of an organic, moral union between Britain and her colonial offspring.¹⁰⁸ All of these organisations drew their strongest support from the white self-governing dominions of South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with leadership in Britain itself coming from the press, the churches and the universities.

Like Greater Britain, the new clerisy imagined by Seeley was the lineal heir of an earlier religious ideal; its members were part priests and scholars, part public intellectuals.¹⁰⁹ Civic religion of the imperial age incorporated both historical events and secular and religious symbols into objects of veneration. To Frederick Alexander Kirkpatrick (1861–1953), for example, whose *Lectures on British Colonization and Empire* were published under the auspices of the League of the Empire, it was appropriate to end his survey with a reflection on two national monuments which he assumed were able to summarise the glory of the British nation: Nelson’s flagship, *Victory*, anchored in Portsmouth Harbour, and Westminster Abbey, ‘the ancient sanctuary which contains the tombs of many men who have done their part in the history of Great Britain and of the British empire’.¹¹⁰ Westminster Abbey was of course a dedicated Christian church, but it was increasingly regarded as the central shrine to the British nation. In the nineteenth century, it came to hold the bodies of William Gladstone (1809–98), Charles Darwin (1809–82) and

Robert Seeley and the Political Theology of International Relations’, *Review of International Studies*, 31 (2005), pp. 559–79. R. T. Shannon, ‘John Robert Seeley and the Idea of a National Church’, in *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain*, ed. R. Robson (London, 1967), pp. 236–67.

¹⁰⁷ J. R. Seeley, *Natural Religion* (London, 1891), p. 191.

¹⁰⁸ D. Judd, *Balfour and the British Empire: A Study in Imperial Evolution, 1874–1932* (London, 1968), p. 321.

¹⁰⁹ B. Knights, *The Idea of the Clerisy in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1978).

¹¹⁰ F. A. Kirkpatrick, *Lectures on British Colonization and Empire* (London, 1906), p. 114.

Table 1.2 *Canada: principal religious denominations of the population, 1871–1901*

Denominations	1871 adherents	1881 adherents	1891 adherents	1901 adherents	1901 (%)
Catholic, Roman	1,492,029	1,791,982	1,992,617	2,229,600	41.51
Methodist	567,091	742,981	847,765	916,886	17.07
Presbyterian	544,998	676,165	755,326	842,442	15.68
Anglican	494,049	574,818	646,059	681,494	12.69
Baptist	227,898	275,291	302,565	316,477	5.89
Lutheran	37,935	46,350	63,982	92,524	1.72
Not specified	17,055	86,769	89,355	43,221	0.80
Other sects	37,949	26,018	46,009	33,023	0.61
Mennonite	—	21,234	—	31,797	0.59
Congregationalist	21,829	26,900	28,157	28,293	0.53
Jewish	1,115	2,393	6,414	16,401	0.31
Catholics, Greek	18	—	—	15,630	0.29
Pagan	1,886	4,478	—	15,107	0.28
Disciple	—	20,193	12,763	14,900	0.28
Brethren	15,375	8,831	12,911	12,316	0.23
Buddhists	—	—	—	10,407	0.19
Salvation Army	—	—	13,949	10,308	0.19
Evangelical	4,701	—	—	10,193	0.19
Doukhobor	—	—	—	8,775	0.16
Seventh-Day Adventist	6,179	7,211	6,354	8,058	0.15
Latter Day Saints (Mormon)	534	—	—	6,891	0.13
Confucian	—	—	—	5,115	0.10
United Brethren (Moravian)	694	—	—	4,701	0.09
Friends (Quaker)	7,345	6,553	4,650	4,100	0.08
Agnostic	—	—	—	3,613	0.07
Holiness (Hornerite)	—	—	—	2,775	0.05
Christian Scientist	—	—	—	2,619	0.05
Universalist	4,806	4,517	3,186	2,589	0.05
Unitarian	2,275	2,126	1,777	1,934	0.04

Source: Canadian census, 1871–1901. *The Canada Year Book 1911* (Ottawa, 1912).

See also F. H. Leacy, ed., *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 2nd edn (Ottawa, 1983), Series A, pp. 164–84. Names of denominations follow those used in the Census.

David Livingstone (1813–73), along with its older complement of kings, queens and churchmen. In Edinburgh, the High Kirk of St Giles, with its memorials to churchmen, aristocrats and writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94), was also a national church for Scots of all faiths.

Table 1.3 *Australia: principal religious denominations of the population, 1891, 1901*

Denominations	1891 adherents	1901 adherents	1901 (%)
Church of England	1,234,213	1,497,576	39.68
Catholic, Roman ^a	713,847	855,799	22.67
Methodist	397,366	504,101	13.36
Presbyterian	351,920	426,105	11.29
Baptist	72,278	89,838	2.38
Lutheran	70,826	75,021	1.99
Congregational	72,715	73,561	1.95
Indefinite ^b	54,036	45,071	1.19
Object to stating	39,400	42,131	1.12
Other non-Christian	43,138	38,132	1.01
Salvation Army	33,431	31,100	0.82
Churches of Christ	14,842	24,192	0.64
Other Christian	19,402	21,823	0.58
Protestant (undefined)	29,865	20,558	0.54
Hebrew	13,805	15,239	0.40
No religion ^c	8,084	6,779	0.18
Seventh-Day Adventist	713	3,332	0.09
Unitarian	3,889	2,629	0.07
Catholic, Greek	623	1,314	0.03
Totals	3,174,393	3,774,301	100

^a Includes Catholic (undefined).

^b Includes Freethinker, No denomination, Agnostic, Unspecified.

^c Includes Atheist, Others.

Source: Australian census, 1891, 1901. *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1901–1912* (Melbourne, 1913), p. 140.

At the height of the imperial age, these religious visions of empire, which were mostly Anglican or post-Anglican in origin, could and did mutate into something more menacing. Imperialism was no longer justified as a pragmatic political expansion for commercial gain, but as a spiritual enterprise through which the blessing of British rule would bring order and morality to the world. An enthusiasm for ‘England’s mission’ united such disparate figures as the missionary David Livingstone, statesman W. E. Gladstone and the imperialist Cecil Rhodes, in a common creed.¹¹¹ This did not happen unobserved or unlamented. In 1936, Jawaharlal Nehru commented that the British assumption of racial destiny and contempt of those

¹¹¹ C. C. Eldridge, *England’s Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli 1868–1880* (London, 1973), p. 242.

Table 1.4 *Cape Colony: church membership and ethnicity, 1898*

Denominations	White adherents	%	Coloured adherents	%	Total	%
NGK	145,831	60.37	23,662	6.95	225,517	31.33
Methodist	23,189	9.60	179,878	52.80	203,067	28.21
Anglican	34,416	14.25	41,739	12.25	89,650	12.46
Presbyterian	9,055	3.75	13,526	3.97	30,679	4.26
Congregationalist/ LMS	3,749	1.55	38,539	11.31	41,409	5.75
Lutheran	5,108	2.11	40,428	11.87	44,111	6.13
Catholic, Roman	14,965	6.20	2,543	0.75	17,508	2.43
Baptist (German and English)	5,237	2.17	390	0.11	67,777	9.42
Totals	241,550	100	340,705	100	719,718	100

Source: Cape Colony census, 1898. R. Elphick and T. R. H. Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History* (Oxford, 1997), p. 55. Colonial Secretary's Office, *Statistical Register of the Cape of Good Hope, 1898* (Cape Town, 1899).

who differed from them about Indian problems had 'something of the religious temper'.¹¹² At its most militaristic, Rudyard Kipling expressed the devotion inspired by the realm of Greater Britain in poems such as *The Young Queen* (1900), written to celebrate the birth of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. The refrain gives repeated homage to the 'five free nations' of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India. Kipling's *Song of the White Men* (1899) chillingly combined the white militarism and religious conviction in propaganda for the Boer War:

Now is the faith that the White Men hold
When they build their home afar –
Freedom for ourselves and freedom for our sons
And, failing freedom, War.¹¹³

The direct consequence of British patriotism in the colonies was to be the creation of a loyal imperial fighting force that could be marshalled

¹¹² Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography* (London, 1936), p. 428, cited by Thornton, *Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*.

¹¹³ F. V. Livingstone, *Bibliography of the Works of Rudyard Kipling* (New York, 1927), p. 238. The poem was a successful one for Kipling and was picked up by many journals in 1900 under the original title 'The Faith-Cup of the White Men': *The Friend*, 2 April; *New York Tribune*, 17 May; *Daily Mail*, 1 June 1; and in the *Cornhill Booklet*, August 1900 with the title 'The Song of the White Man'; 'The Young Queen' appeared in *The Times*, 4 October 1900 and in *Harper's Weekly*, 13 October 1900.

Table 1.5 *New Zealand: principal religious denominations of the population, 1891–1911*

Denominations	1891 (%)	1896 (%)	1901 (%)	1906 (%)	1911 (%)	1911 adherents
Church of England	40.51	40.27	40.84	41.51	41.14	413,842
Presbyterians	22.62	22.78	22.87	22.96	23.33	234,662
Methodists	10.14	10.45	10.86	10.06	9.43	94,827
Baptists	2.37	2.28	2.08	2	1.99	20,042
Congregationalists	1.07	0.97	0.87	0.83	0.87	8,756
Lutherans	0.9	0.79	0.63	0.55	0.44	4,477
Salvation Army	1.5	1.5	1.04	0.95	0.96	9,707
Society of Friends	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04	412
Unitarians	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.09	0.13	1,316
Other Protestants	1.82	2.16	2.19	2.07	2.03	20,424
Roman Catholics	13.96	14.07	14.23	14.32	13.97	140,523
Greek Church	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.03	265
Hebrews	0.23	0.22	0.21	0.21	0.21	2,128
Buddhists, Confucians	0.63	0.48	0.3	0.17	0.15	1,501
Other [Christian] denominations	0.12	0.16	0.17	0.23	0.25	2,559
No denomination	1.32	1.22	1.07	1.04	0.9	9,177
No religion	0.25	0.27	0.14	0.19	0.55	5,529
Unspecified	—	—	—	—	—	2,416
Object to state	2.45	2.27	2.38	2.75	3.58	35,905
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	1,008,468

Source: New Zealand census, 1891–1911. M. Fraser, *Report on the Results of a Census of the Dominion of New Zealand ... 2nd April, 1911* (John MacKay, Government Printer, 1913), p. 27. Names of denominations follow census categories.

for the killing fields of the first imperial war, which was enthusiastically endorsed by the majority of the churches.

While Kipling was publishing the first versions of *The Young Queen*, the duke and duchess of Cornwall were completing a tour of ‘Greater Britain’ that culminated in the official inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901. On his return to the metropole from a journey of over 45,000 miles, the Duke could boast of never setting foot on land where the Union Jack did not fly. His journey had taken him to Gibraltar, Ceylon, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Mauritius, Natal and the Cape Colony, and Newfoundland and Canada; it was a tour of the whitest parts of the empire, which neatly bypassed imperial possessions in Borneo, New Guinea, India, Africa and British Guiana. Speaking in the London Guildhall on his return, the Duke declared that the strongest of all his impressions was

Table 1.6 *Australia and New Zealand: proportions of religious denominations in Australia and New Zealand according to census years 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901*

Year	State	Church of England (%)	Roman Catholics (%)	Presbyterians (%)	Wesleyan and other Methodists (%)	Congregationalists (%)	Baptists (%)	Jew, Hebrew (%)	All others (%)
1871	New South Wales	45.5	29.3	9.7	7.9	1.8	0.8	0.5	4.5
	Victoria	34.4	23.3	15.5	12.3	2.5	2.2	0.5	9.3
	Queensland	36.5	26.5	12.8	6.0	2.2	2.4	0.2	13.4
	South Australia	27.1	15.2	6.4	18.9	3.5	5.0	0.3	23.6
	Western Australia	59.0	28.7	2.1	5.6	3.6	0.2	0.2	0.6
	Tasmania	53.5	22.3	9.1	7.2	4.0	0.9	0.2	2.8
	New Zealand	41.8	13.9	24.8	8.6	1.3	1.9	0.5	7.0
	Australasia	39.1	23.1	13.6	10.5	2.4	2.0	0.4	8.9
1881	New South Wales	45.6	27.6	9.6	8.6	1.9	1.0	0.4	5.3
	Victoria	34.7	23.6	15.4	12.6	2.3	2.4	0.5	8.5
	Queensland	34.6	25.5	10.6	6.7	2.2	2.6	0.2	17.6
	South Australia	27.1	15.2	6.4	18.9	3.5	5.0	0.3	23.6
	Western Australia	54.7	28.3	3.4	7.0	4.3			2.3
	Tasmania	51.7	19.9	7.9	9.5	3.5	1.6		5.9
	New Zealand	41.5	14.1	23.1	9.4	1.4	2.3	0.3	7.9
	Australasia	39.1	22.2	13.4	10.9	2.2	2.2	0.4	9.6
1891	New South Wales	44.8	25.5	9.7	9.8	2.1	1.2	0.5	6.4
	Victoria	35.2	21.8	14.7	13.0	1.9	2.5	0.6	10.3
	Queensland	36.2	23.6	11.6	7.8	2.2	2.6	0.2	15.8
	South Australia	27.9	14.7	5.7	19.0	3.7	5.5	0.3	23.2
	Western Australia	49.7	25.3	4.0	9.2	3.2	0.6	0.3	7.7
	Tasmania	49.9	17.6	6.6	11.7	3.1	2.2	8.9	
	New Zealand	40.0	13.9	22.6	9.9	1.1	2.4	0.2	9.9
	Australasia	39.1	21.1	13.0	11.4	2.1	2.3	0.4	10.6
1901	New South Wales	46.6	26.0	9.9	10.3	1.9	1.2	0.5	3.6
	Victoria	35.8	22.3	16.2	15.2	1.5	2.8	0.5	5.7
	Queensland	37.5	24.5	11.7	9.5	1.7	2.6	0.2	12.3
	South Australia	30.3	14.8	5.2	25.5	3.8	6.2	0.2	14.0
	Western Australia	42.0	23.3	8.2	13.6	2.5	1.7	0.7	8.0
	Tasmania	49.6	17.9	6.8	14.8	3.3	2.8		4.8
	New Zealand	41.7	14.6	23.4	11.1	0.9	2.1	0.2	6.0
	Australasia	40.5	21.6	13.5	13.2	1.8	2.4	0.4	6.6

Source: Australian and New Zealand census. T. A. Coghlan, *A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand 1902-3* (Sydney, 1904), p. 886.

that of colonial loyalty and devotion to the crown, 'a consciousness of a true and living membership in the Empire'.¹¹⁴ He also spoke of a possible greater union, especially of military forces. The journalist with the *Morning Post* who accompanied the royal tour admired the imperial patriotism of Greater Britons: 'Australians as a body are more loyal to Great Britain than are the people of Great Britain themselves. Their patriotism is more fervent, and the Imperial sentiment is truer.'¹¹⁵ By the time we get to Kipling at the height of the imperial age, it is evident that, for a certain audience, imperial nationalism was threatening to supplant church-based religious devotion to a worrying extent. Even though we can probably assume that the 'faith that the White Men hold' was deployed as a striking metaphor, there is still more than a hint of blasphemy in Kipling's use of religious language to refer to British patriotism for a secular and military cause. Not surprisingly, imperialist excesses of this kind were decried by many within the churches. Nevertheless, the fact that Kipling found it appropriate to use religious language in this way alerts us to the extent to which the empire had a religious as well as a secular character.

Conclusion

Greater Britain was far more than a travel route or a political subset of the British empire: for the churches it formed a religious field which was cultivated on an imperial scale. As a mission territory, Greater Britain was largely coterminous with the second British empire, or that collection of territories settled by people who were mostly happy to call themselves British and who participated in an extended series of relationships with the British metropole that were at their height in the first decade or so of the twentieth century and have still not entirely been extinguished.

There are several issues that we need to pursue from this point. In the first place, what meaning did religion have for those settlers who took their churches from Britain and planted them in the colonies? There has been fine work done by religious historians and sociologists in this field.¹¹⁶ On the whole, they tend to argue that, apart from a few exceptional cases, emigrants and colonists were no more religious than the countrymen they left behind – but they were more enterprising and

¹¹⁴ E. F. Knight, *With the Royal Tour* (London, 1902), p. 409.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

¹¹⁶ H. R. Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860–1930* (Sydney, 1987).

adaptable. In the new world, it was possible to let go of older allegiances, to change churches, to marry a partner who was not of the same church, or to abandon church-going altogether. Nevertheless, while secularisation was an option, most chose instead to adapt and nurture the religious traditions of their homelands. Church-going for colonists was one of the ways that they articulated a new identity, one that reminded them of home, demonstrated where they had come from, and what they aspired to achieve. We will find repeatedly that settlers were deeply interested in religious issues and went to extraordinary lengths to transplant their churches to the new settlements. Social historians have done much to establish the commercial and secular characteristics of the great British emigration of the second half of the nineteenth century. However, this is not the whole story. Emigration and colonisation had a religious dimension, which is why it was so energetically promoted by church agencies, including colonial missionary societies. I have suggested in this chapter that religion also played a significant role in shaping the idea of Greater Britain, a settler realm without an established Church, but with a Christian ethos shaped by the British churches. The next chapter will consider the religious history of the empire and the context for the colonial mission of the churches which followed. For those who went out into the British world in the nineteenth century, there were to be more religious options than there were for Britons in the Protestant nation which settled the Atlantic world in an earlier age.