An Analysis of the Transition of Sunday School from Society-Based to Church-Based in the Nineteenth Century

Abstract
This thesis is an examination of Sunday School and the transition of the institution from a society-based program to a church-based program. Primary emphasis is given to Sunday School’s placement under church leadership and the change in purpose that impacted Sunday School’s functionality. Although there were many contributing factors for this transition, this thesis proposes that two—the rise in wide-spread mass education and the shift from paid to gratuitous teachers—are significant factors which contributed to the shift of Sunday School from society to the church. Religious education became one of the main purposes of Sunday School when it transitioned into the church.

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Geographical isolation from schools and dispersed religious congregations spurred the development of religious correspondence education in the United States in the 19th century. For example, the Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly in western New York state began in 1874 as a program for training Sunday school teachers and church workers. From its religious origins, the program gradually expanded to include a nondenominational course of directed home reading and correspondence study. Its success led to the founding of many similar schools throughout the United States in the chautauqua movement.

The regime had envisioned that the 50,000 landlords who possessed estates of more than 110 hectares would thrive without serfs and would continue to provide loyal political and administrative leadership in the countryside. The government also had expected that peasants would produce sufficient crops for their own consumption and for export sales, thereby helping to finance most of the government's expenses, imports, and foreign debt. Neither of the government's expectations was realistic, however, and emancipation left both former serfs and their former owners dissatisfied. The new political and administrative leadership in the countryside was not always loyal, and the government's expectations of peasant productivity were not realized. The potato crop failed two years in a row and there was a terrible famine that year.

The nineteenth century. Not long before this century began, Britain had lost its most important American colonies in a war of independence. When the century began, the country was locked in a war with France, during which an invasion by a France army was a real possibility. Soon after the end of the century, Britain controlled the biggest empire the world had ever seen. One section of this empire was Ireland. It was during this century that the British culture and way of life came to predominate in Ireland. In the 1840s, the potato crop failed two years in a row and there was a terrible famine.