This is the first of a series of articles on the history of youth work in the UK by Allan R. Clyne, a PhD student at the University of Strathclyde where he is researching the relationship between Christianity and youth work. He has also worked with young people in both Christian and secular environments, with churches, voluntary organisations and in the statutory sector.

A Genealogy of Youth Work's Languages: Founders

Introduction

A 'genealogy', as suggested by Michel Foucault, is a method of understanding the past that enables us to see the changes which have shaped our present discourse. It is a way of viewing a discourse's heritage—not its history, but its mythology; an interpretation of that past which strives to remain truthful to that past, yet acknowledges the gaps, misinterpretations and sacralised narratives that inform and misinform our present understanding. In acknowledging the complexity and incompleteness of this task, 'genealogies', Foucault says 'are uncovered through a combination of 'erudite knowledge and local memories' (1980:98, 2004:16): 'Genealogy… operates on a field of entangled and confusing parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times… it depends on a vast accumulation of source material' (Foucault 1977a:139). What I present here might be better considered as one dimension of youth work's genealogy, that of its language. I begin by setting out the significance of language to a discourse. To do so I have adopted MacIntyre's concept of language and translation, a concept of change he shares with Foucault and which I explain in some detail. I follow this by using the texts of youth work to look at what is accepted to be youth work's foundational moment and its founders. This reveals an important aspect of youth work's first or foundational language; that it was a Christian language.

MacIntyre's idea of language and its translation

In his book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988) MacIntyre proposes that different perspectives are narrated through different languages, languages created

from specific worldviews. While his work is centred on theories of justice, his discussion around language in use has wider significance. MacIntyre's view is that a language is more than just the words we use to describe something; it is foundational to the shaping of a discourse. He writes:

> Every tradition is embodied in some particular set of utterances and culture and thereby in all the particularities of some specific language and culture. The innovation, elaboration, and modification of the concepts through which both those who found and those who inherit a tradition understand it are inescapably concepts which have been framed in one language rather than another. (1988:371)

When youth leaders in the 1890s described their practice, they, just like youth workers of the present, use a particular language to do so. It is not simply that youth workers describe their practice in a specific language; it is that these words actually shape the discourses. For example, in recent times the language of UK youth work has included terms such as voluntary participation, empowerment, and non-judgementalism. These do more than describe practice, they form its discourse i.e. any endeavour would struggle to be recognised as youth work unless it in some way conformed to these ideals. MacIntyre's understanding of languages also recognises they are not fixed forever; they can and do undergo translation. Below I suggest there are a number of forms of translation.

Forms of translation

The translation from one language into another is not a smooth process. MacIntyre (1988) suggests that, while some things are translatable because they say the same thing in both languages, the translation of one language into another also encounters words, ideas and concepts which remain as-yet untranslatable. The translator has to strive to construct different and new images to enable these to be translated, recognising that some things will remain untranslatable. The untranslatable takes on a greater significance when the language being translated is a language of belief, and where it is being translated into another language which has an incompatible set of beliefs. The translation from a sacred to a secular language is just such a movement.

There might be said to be two forms of translation, the first of these I have termed minor translation.

Minor translation

Minor translation occurs when there is a 'translation of use but not meaning' (MacIntyre 1983:171). To use MacIntyre's example, it is when the expression 'God help us!' is no longer a prayer, but a cry of exasperation. The meaning of the words has not changed, but in a new milieu, the expression has changed its function. This is an example of what I will call minor translation. The second form of translation, I have called major translation.

Major translation

Within this form of translation there is a more complex type of change. The actual descriptive words and terminology used in the new language may be very different from the original one. What occurs is a transfer of 'epistemological ideals' (MacIntyre 2007:19); the originating ideals are not lost but translated into a very different language. For example, in the major translation from a Christian language into a secular one, originating ideals are not lost but are secularised; there occurs, according to MacIntyre, a 'secularization of Christian morality' and, in the process, it is expanded into a wider narration of 'serving your fellow man' (1983:150). According to MacIntyre, Marxism, psychoanalysis and Christianity are all redemptivist ideas. Marxism was once referred to as 'the story of salvation in the language of economics' (Fetscher quoted in Bentley 1982:80). Macintyre suggests that Marxism shares many similar ideals and purposes with Christianity. Christianity understands liberation in eschatological terms, Marxism presents it as a social ideal in the immediate future, whereas psychoanalysis has an individualistic redemptive emphasis.

Foucault also writes regarding the nature of this form of translation. He recognises that, in a landscape where the language of 'sin' and 'transgression' has been translated and replaced by that of 'social injury' (Foucault 2002b:53), any talk of sin will strike a discordant note. He also suggests that a translation is also a catalyst for expansion. Foucault gives an example of this when he sets out his interpretation of the evolution of 'pastoral power'. For Foucault (1999 [1979]) pastoral power is predominantly an

expression of Hebraic thought. Although he acknowledges that this image of the leader as shepherd does appear in some Greek thinking, he suggests that when it does it has a completely different image. When the idea of pastoral power becomes narrated within a Christian framework it changes again; the relation between shepherd and sheep becomes highly individual and is strongly associated with the guiding of individual conscience, and requiring individual self-examination. In the secular environment a further change occurred. In the past, 'pastoral power' was limited within the discourse of faith as being 'salvation–orientated' (Foucault 2002a:333) but it has, in recent times, 'spread and multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institutions' (Foucault 2002a:333). Now salvation has a multiplicity of meanings, including health and well-being: 'a series of 'worldly' aims took the place of the religious aims of the traditional pastorate' (Foucault 2002a:333). Foucault called this move 'Reactivation' (1977b:134): 'the insertion of discourse into totally new domains of generalization, practice and transformations' (1977b:134). He suggests that pastoral care: 'suddenly spread out into the whole social body' (Foucault 2002a:335). Bloch makes a similar point:

> The goal of all higher religions was a land in which milk and honey
> flow as really as they do symbolically; the goal of the content-based
> atheism which remains over after religions is exactly the same—
> without God but with the uncovered face of our *absconditum* and of
> the salvation-latency in the difficult earth.' (1986:1315)

To understand if Bloch's view is true for youth work, we must in the first instance understand its past, the language in which it was originally narrated and its foundational moment.

Youth Work's foundational moment

It is beyond dispute that the discourse of youth work had its foundational moment in the mid-to late-nineteenth century (Barbour 1951, Davies 2010, Davies and Gibson 1967, Jeffs and Smith 2010, Milson 1970, Smith 1988). In 1863 Arthur Sweatman (1985 [1863]) delivered a paper at a conference in Edinburgh (Springhall 1986), where it is generally accepted that the expression 'Youths' Clubs' was used to

articulate a new form of work with young people to the wider public for the first time (Booton 1985, Pelham 1890, Smith 2001). As with any foundational moment, these clubs did not simply appear by magic, they emerged within a particular social milieu.

Eagar (1953) provides us with four of the most significant drivers which led to the establishment of youth work: the development of the belief in 'Useful Knowledge', the ideal that 'Soldierly Impulse' provided a basis for good character, a commitment to the benefits and role of 'Virile Recreation' in the construction of character, and 'The Temperance Drive'. In addition he also provides us with what he considers to be the endeavours which birthed youth work: Ragged Schools and Boy's Homes, Youths' Institutions, the University Settlement Movement and setting up of Home Missions. Percival (1951), writing at around the same time as Eagar, acknowledges the significant influence of people like Elizabeth Fry, Hannah More, and Robert Raikes, reflecting the influence of temperance, Sunday school education and the Ragged Schools as sources of youth work.

While within this article I focus on Christianity's role in the birth of youth work, it is also important to acknowledge other influences: changing views on what it was to be young, imperialism, industrialisation, urbanisation, social changes, and moral panics and fears were all shapers of that birthing moment (Eagar 1953, Jeffs 2000, Musgrove 1964, Rosenthal 1986, Springhall 1977, Springhall et al. 1983). All these are important areas for research, yet it is my contention that important though the above were, it was Christianity which was the catalyst for action, and provided youth work with its foundational language. Smith (1998) describes a type of evangelicalism which came into being around this time as 'world transforming'. Earlier Percival quotes from a magazine of the time: 'The Evangelicals, the Christian Socialists and the Anglo-Catholics each in their turn played a dynamic part in the story' (1951:105). Yet within modern youth work, Christianity's role is often overlooked or viewed with suspicion (see, for example Bunt and Gargrave 1980, Davies and Gibson 1967, Jeffs and Smith 1989, Milson 1974, Popple 1988).

However out-with the youth work discourse the influence of Christianity on what we would today term the social services is recognised (see Bebbington 2002, Brew 1968, Bruce 2002, Harris 2004, see Prochaska 2006, Prochaska 1980). Hendrick (1990) suggests that most of the work with young people which developed in the 1870s and 1880s was built on the foundation of Christian charitable works, and its chief protagonists were from established religious groups. Springhall writes, 'it was… the more evangelical Christians—whether Nonconformist or Anglican—who were to have the most forceful impact on late Victorian attitudes towards the training of the young' (1986:155). While the dominant environment that shaped youth work was clearly Christian, we turn to youth work's founders to uncover their personal perspectives.

The founders of the youth work discourse

Recently, Bright (2015) provided a list of those he considered to be some of the founders of modern youth work: Jane Addams, Lord Robert Baden-Powell, Dr Thomas Barnardo, Revd. Samuel and Mrs Henrietta Barnett, Sir Basil Henriques, Lily Montagu, The Hon. Thomas Pelham, Emmeline Pethnick, Charles Russell, Sir William Smith, Maud Stanley, Arthur Sweatman and Sir George Williams. Earlier, Percival (1951) gives an important place in the development of youth work to Mary Jane Kinnaird, Emma Robarts and Mary Elizabeth Townsend. Around the same period, Brew highlights the importance of William Smith, Baden-Powell, John Stansfeld, Lily Montagu, Alec Paterson, Basil Henriques (Brew 1957:88, 1968:119). In a more recent publication, Dawes (1975) provides yet more names, including Alexander Devine, William Hartley (Canon) Carnegie, Norman Chamberlin, Quintin Hogg, Ernest M. S. Pilkington, John Stansfeld. Similarly, Springhall (1977) mentions others including Walter Mallock Gee, Albert Edward Goldsmid, John Hargrave and Leslie Paul, John Brown Paton and Edward Westlake.

If those named above are placed into two generational groups, those that were born before 1856 and those who were born in or after that year, we can separate youth work's founders from its shapers.

Henry Solly (1813–1903), although a Unitarian minister was said to have an orthodox Christian view of the Trinity (Young 1992). Jane Kinnaird (1816–1888), Emma Robarts (c1818–1877), founders of the Young Woman's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) were both evangelicals. Three Scots: George Williams (1821–1905), founder of the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.), William Smith (1854–1914), founder of the Boys' Brigade and Arthur Kinnaird (1847–1923), who also played a role in establishing the three organisations above all shared an evangelical perspective. Maude Stanley (1833–1915), Arthur Sweatman (1834-1909) and Thomas Pelham (1847-1916), who was considered to have written the first handbook for youths' clubs (Eagar 1953) and John Stansfeld (1854 – 1939), were all founders of Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs and all were claimed to be evangelicals. Others, like John Barnardo (1845–1905), Quintin Hogg (1845–1903), one of the founders of the Polytechnic, and John Brown Paton (1830–1911) founder of the Boys' Life Brigade, were also described as evangelical.

The Anglican influence within youth work's foundational moment can also be seen in Mary Elizabeth Townsend's (1841–1918) formation of the Girls Friendly Society. Samuel Barnett (1844–1913) and Henrietta Barnett (1851–1936) were key in the formation of the Settlement Movement. Walter Mallock Gee (1845–1916) established the Church Lads' Brigade, the Anglican equivalent of the Boys' Brigade. Clearly not all were Christian: Albert Edward Goldsmid (1846–1904), the founder of the Jewish Lads' Brigade, was a Zionist Jew.

Finally, to these we might add another significant voice, Berman Paul Neuman (1853-c1942) author of *The Boys' Club: A Manual of Suggestions for Workers* (1900), a book considered to be of significant influence (Bunt and Gargrave 1980; Russell and Russell 1932).

From the extensive list above, the overwhelming influence of Christianity in the lives of the founders of youth work is clearly evident. This is perhaps a reflection of the social environment of that period; since the second half of the nineteenth century, three quarters of social endeavours were said to be evangelical in 'character and control' (Bebbington 2002:120). Thomas Pelham wrote what was considered to be the

first handbook for Boys' Clubs (Eagar 1953); *The Handbook to Youths' Institutes and Working Boys' Clubs* (1889) and, for him, the purpose of the club Bible class was to 'bring home to boys, however rough, the vital truth that Christ died for their redemption' (Eagar 1953:242). Stansfield's Oxford and Bermondsey Boys' Club, was also strongly evangelical 'it was on Christianity that the club life was built and through Christianity that these boys of the gutter were transformed into men of great virtue' (Henriques 1951:xv). This is not insignificant, as Henriques maintains that this club shaped the whole Boys' Club movement. This salvic intent was an inherent part of youth work's foundational language as found in its literature.

Youth work's foundational language

In this literature we encounter Pelham's (1889, 1890) ideal of the Bible class seen in the quote above: Stanley's desire 'that on the foundation of [the Christian] religion our girls' clubs should be built.' (1890:145). Similarly, Neuman advocates for 'The intelligent study of the Bible as part of the ordinary club programme, the creation of a religious atmosphere in the club, and the power of personal influence' (1900:19). We see it too in Russell and Rigby's aim that the boys' club was to 'teach them religion and to help them learn that service to God is the highest service… ' (1908:21) and Moor's acknowledgement that purpose of the Y.W.C.A. was for 'souls won for Christ and lives lived for God—these things are the very raison d'étre of the Association— are fruit for eternity' (Moor nd [c1910]:46). Youth work's foundational language is clearly Christian, yet what is also clear from this literature is that these Christian endeavours were not narrowly salvationist, they were also framed by a genuine desire to make the lives and prospects of these young people better.

Conclusion

In drawing this article to a conclusion, I have presented an image of youth work's foundational moment as being significantly formed by individuals who held a Christian worldview. These individuals went on to create youth movements and clubs for boys and girls which conformed to their perspective and sought to propagate a Christian message. They had a transcendent view of the world; requiring youth work

to function with an eye to both the temporal and eternal good of the young person. Consequently, in turning to youth work's foundational moment, the influence of Christianity is difficult to avoid. Yet it was a form of Christianity which was, within the parameters of its time, holistic; while emphasising personal salvation it also sought to be personally and societally transformative. Evangelicals put a considerable energy into fighting what they considered to be social ills, as Bruce observed:

> Against considerable opposition from industrialists, evangelical reformers stopped women and children working in the mines, gradually increased the minimum age at which children could be employed in hard and dangerous work, ended the payment of wages in kind, restricted the length of the working day, humanized the prisons and stopped men being paid their wages in pubs. In an attempt to reduce the debilitating amounts of alcohol drunk by the urban working class, Quakers promoted drinking chocolate as an alternative to gin and beer and found ways of making tea affordable. Evangelicals also founded schools, lending libraries, penny savings banks, housing associations and mutual insurance societies. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that most of the constraints on the rights of employers to exploit ruthlessly their workers were the work of evangelicals, inspired by a shared vision of a better society. (2002:97)

To that list we might add youth work. Around one hundred years after its foundation Brew observed:

> It is true that much of the [youth] work was tinged with patronage and flavoured with a kind of piety which is distasteful today, but that it made an incalculable contribution to the lives of many young people in an age when few cared for them is indisputable and should not be lightly dismissed. (1968:88)

To conclude, that youth work's foundational language was Christian is beyond dispute. Those who, in Foucault's, words might be call the 'founders of [youth work's] discursivity', those who gave youth work its foundational Christian language, who are 'unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for other texts… they… have established the endless possibility of discourse' (Foucault 1991:114) were Christian. Just as we recognise youth work's foundational moment to be in the mid- to late-eighteenth century, we should also recognise that its foundational Christian language spoke of youth work in terms of spiritual salvation alongside personal and social redemption, and in doing so they gave youth work its foundational shape.

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