This is the third and final 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: Translators

Introduction

By the 1960s the Youth Service was said to be in a dilapidated state (Chataway 1967, Hawes 1966, Leighton 1972, Robertson 2005), so a government committee was established, which drew up a report specifically designed to address this. In 1960 it published *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (Ministry of Education) – The Albemarle Report or just 'Albemarle.' The Albemarle Report is significant because it became the fulcrum around which the youth work discourse in the United Kingdom (UK) was to be shaped and articulated. It re-empowered the professionalization of youth work, reformed its aims, and provided it with a new language. It thereby played a pivotal role in the translation of youth work's older theistic language into its current secular one; a form of translation I have called a *major translation* (Clyne 2016).

Before highlighting this major translation as it appears in the language of Albemarle and other youth work writers of the period, I begin by summarising the nature of a major translation. Finally, I demonstrate that, despite this significant change in language, there is strong evidence to show that youth work's now secular discourse still owes much to its Christian roots.

Major translation

Language both describes our world and creates our interpretation of it. Translation is part of a language's complex journey through time. It is how it evolves as it articulates the changing world and social environment of which it is part. It both forms and is reformed by changing world views, beliefs, ideals, values and morals which it seeks to express. It is responsible for shaping our understanding and our

interpretation of the things we deem important. Translation is something distinct from transposition, where the language from one period is simply lifted from its context and placed into another over 150 years later.

After its foundation, youth work's initial Christian language underwent a series of translations – what I have termed *minor translations* (Clyne 2016). It was translated from being exclusively Christian into mono-theism, particularly into the Jewish faith, and into three strands of Providential Deism – Deism, Christian belief, and Christianity – as a national philosophy. During these translations, the language of youth work largely maintained its theistic emphasis. While the interpretation of expressions such as God, religion, Christian and spiritual, changed over time, they continued to be core aspects of the language of youth work. However, in the 1960s youth work's language underwent a major translation.

Two examples of major translations are given by Foucault; one is where the language of 'social injury' replaces an earlier religious one of 'sin' and 'transgression' (2002b:53). The other is the evolution of the idea of 'pastoral power'. Initially it was bound nearly exclusively to the Christian faith. However, recently, it underwent a significant translation into the secular language of 'health and wellbeing' (2002a:333). What occurs in this translation is a transfer of 'epistemological ideals' (MacIntyre 2007:19), where, MacIntyre suggests, Christian ideals are not lost but are secularised; a 'secularization of Christian morality' (1983:150). For example, it might be argued that youth work's current commitment to individual 'empowerment' is a translation of its pre-1960s focus on 'character-building', an endeavour often defined in theistic language.

For youth work, this major translation took place in the 1960s, a period when, in the UK 'social salvation was being divorced from religious salvation in an unprecedented way' (Brown (1994:67). Smith (1997:28) wrote, 'A new secular ideology was created for the new youth service, one far removed from the values of the national voluntary organisations of the day'. In Albemarle, youth work lost the theistic continuity of its older language, and adopted a new secular one (McLeod 2010).

The Albemarle Report

According to Eggleston, '[Albemarle] remains the most convenient and certainly the most reliable guide to the "official" ideology and values of the service' (1976:59), and is highly important to the way youth workers in the UK understand their profession (Barr et al. 1996, Coburn and Wallace 2011, Davies 2010, Frizell 1967, Furlong et al. 1997, Jeffs 1979, Scottish Community Education Council 1982, Scottish Community Education Council 1985, Scottish Education Department 1962, Scottish Education Department 1968, Smith 1988, Smith and Erina 2002).

Its concern that the existing Youth Service was unwilling to try new things (Ministry of Education 1960:11) and its drive for increased professionalization provided the impetus and space for new and significant institutions and voices to be heard. The National College for the Training of Youth Leaders was opened in Leicester in 1961 (Jeffs 1979) and was where modern youth work writers – including Bernard Davies, Joan E. Matthews and Owen Watkins – taught. The role of The National College is significant since it was considered 'the first amongst equals' (Jeffs 1979:49), where most youth workers were trained (Chataway 1967), and by the 1970s an estimated one-third of all full-time youth workers in the UK were said to have graduated from it (Hamilton-Smith and Brownell 1973, Jeffs 1979), 40% of whom worked in the statutory sector (Jeffs 1979). According to Jeffs (1979), by the 1970s the power of the National College in providing youth work with its secular language was evident. This, along with the development of other training establishments, the growing importance of Local Authority youth officers, and the creation of the Youth Service Information Centre, which opened in 1964, all provided space for a new generation of youth workers to voice their thoughts, ideas and research on youth work.

In this new environment Albemarle put aside youth work's older language of 'training people for citizenship' (Ministry of Education 1960:39), with its focus on spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development and a commitment to the ideals of 'service,' 'dedication,' leadership', and 'character building'. Albemarle suggested that, whilst

these were positive values, they were no longer relevant for this new time; (Ministry of Education 1960:39) and in their place provided youth work with a new language of 'Association, Training and Challenge' (Ministry of Education 1960:37) – a change which appears to have been widely accepted at the time (Leighton 1972:28, Maclure [1965] 2005:260):

> The speed with which youth workers embraced the new thinking was testimony enough to its validity. If some older more experienced leaders were reluctant to abandon that other three-part aim to which they had long been faithful—the mental, spiritual and physical growth of the young—they at least reserved judgement and joined, for the most part enthusiastically, in the race to 'get with it' and to provide a youth service for a modern Britain. (Hawes 1966:5)

Popple's observation in the 1980s, reveals both the depth of this major translation, and the attitude of many towards youth work's older theistic forms:

> Historically youth work has its roots in liberal philanthropy with large dollops of Christianity and nationalism mixed into a recipe of rescue, and fear of the great unwashed. Since the 1960s however, youth work has strived to justify its existence with a stated interest in person-centred work. Social education is the vehicle for this concern and youth workers have been expected to shape their practice upon a foundation of psychology and group work. (1988:133).

At the centre of these observable changes was Albemarle; a principle force in the translation of youth work's language.

The End of youth work's theistic continuity

Watkins' observation that:

> The conviction that good youth work could be done by people of no specific ideological commitment, Christian or otherwise, was

> encouraged by the [Albemarle] Report's statement that "it is on the whole better for principles to be seen shining through works rather than for them to be signalised by some specific spiritual assertion". (1971:9)

points towards a change of attitude within youth work. For some, its older language was seen as being manipulative and corrupting (Bunt and Gargrave 1980, Davies and Gibson 1967, Jeffs and Smith 1989). Milson believed that by the 1970s the overwhelming perspective amongst community workers was that the Christian faith was fictitious (1974:121). In this period, two new youth work motifs were also promoted by the National College: non-judgementalism and non-directive learning (Ewan 1972, Jeffs 1979), both of which were to become core components of any subsequent understanding of professional youth work. More recently, we can see an attempt at maintaining the 'non-directive learning' heritage, with Wylie suggesting that today it would be called 'empowerment' (2003:16).

Youth work's secular language

In 1967 Davies and Gibson published their book, *The Social Education of the Adolescent.* In it, the role of the youth worker is clear: they have a professional duty not to be influenced by their personal perspective:

> … the adult, whatever his own personal beliefs and values, is not in a position, in so far as he is a designated social educator, to allow his own attitude and response to a young person to be affected by his approval or disapproval of the young person's behaviour, beliefs or values. (1967:166)

While this does not prevent the adult stating their views, it does, however, exclude them from presenting them as 'the answer' or the 'right view', since the principle of self-determination overrides, except in exceptional circumstances (Davies and Gibson 1967:167). They suggest that the aims of youth work are to be developed by what they term the 'sources of sanction' (1967:148) including the society, the community in which the young person lives, the young person and the personality of the worker.

These sources of sanction make no reference to God, religion, spirituality or the church; the sacred and the transcendent are absent from this new youth work language, its aims, sentiment and vocabulary. Rather, its new language is constructed within an immanent, secular frame, where the place of religion is confined to the private life of the worker. Matthews wrote, that 'the youth worker has an ethical responsibility not to proselytise or promote ideologies to which the young people have not committed themselves' (1966:18).

Within post-Albemarle youth work, the place and role of the Christian faith had to be negotiated within certain secular boundaries (see Hubery 1963, Keeble 1981, Leighton 1972, Matthews 1966, Milson 1970). The near complete disappearance of youth work's older theistic language, and its commitment to a transcendent God, is evident in two significant publications: Leicester and Farndale's *Trend in the Services for Youth* (1967), where it is evident that many religious groups continue to be considered valid partners in the Youth Service, but where the church becomes the provider of a service, rather than a spiritual source. It makes no reference to the place of God, Christianity, faith or religion within the new environment. Similarly, in Batten and Batten's book *The Human Factor* (1970) which contains thirty-nine youth work case studies, none deal with religious or spiritual issues that young people may face. Those which address youth clubs run by churches focus completely on practical problems.

This major translation however, was not universal, with the Boys' and Girls' Brigade maintaining their Christian continuity, and the ethos of the Boys' Club movement retaining its theistic aspect (see Kirk 1980). Yet, for the youth service in general, and professional youth work in particular, its original theistic language is gone; although Christian voices are still evident, they have become part of a secular landscape. McLeod (2010) suggests that, while society has become secular, Christianity continues to sit in the background, facilitating many activities and endeavours. While the more obvious aspects of youth work's original pre-Albemarle theistic tongue – God, religion, spirituality – are lost, other less obvious traits remain, with many of its epistemological ideals being successfully translated, such as youth work continuing to

be understood as a creative enterprise providing social or pastoral education (Maclure [1965] 2005, Ministry of Education 1960:36, Watson 1967).

Youth work's translated practice

Foucault's idea that the religious model of pastoral power has been translated into health and wellbeing is one translation that occurred within youth work. Post-Albemarle, youth work continues to be an endeavour focused on the social and pastoral care of young people (Davies 1979, Maclure [1965] 2005). Jeffs and Smith claim that welfarist or issue-based youth work (1989, 1988) comes from a pre-Albemarle religious source. Smith suggests that there is a 'direct line' from these welfarist endeavours back to the 'child-savers of the nineteenth century' (1988:56). Perhaps this is what enables Murdock to protest that post-Albemarle youth work continued to act like 'a secularised missionary project, spreading the enlightenment of middleclass values and behavioural styles among the culturally heathen' (Murdock 1976:20). Similarly, the ideals of non-directive learning and, later, empowerment can be related back to the earlier language of character-building. So just as youth work's practice continues to be shaped by this major translation from its theistic past, it is also shaped, and linked to this past, by a translation of its values and virtues.

Youth work's translated values.

Youth work has a widely accepted set of values (Banks 2006, Jeffs and Smith 2005, Wheal 1999), which include respect for persons, the promotion of well-being, truth, democracy, fairness and equality. If we return to youth work's pre-Albemarle language, we can see that the values of justice and equality were central to the youth work narrative because of its foundational understanding of each person's equality before God:

> It is absolutely contrary to man's conception of justice to believe that a child of the rich is more precious to God than the son of the poor, and that he is more endowed on account of his wealth with more of a Divine Spirit. The soul of each is indistinguishable. Both

are God's children… both are human, and yet both are Divine.
(1933:2, 1943:2)

The sociologist, Bruce, wrote that 'equality in the eyes of God laid the foundations for equality in the eyes of men and before the law. Equal obligations eventually became equal rights' (2002:11). The philosopher, Taylor, also suggests other ideas have survived translation into a secular language; the idea of there being a 'universal will to beneficence or justice' is a kind of 'secularized agapē' (Taylor 1992:367). He further suggests that there is a 'complex and bi-directional relationship between Christian and secularized moral sources' (Taylor 1992:399).

Similarly, democracy, as we understand it, has its source in the birth of nonconformist religion (De Gruchy 1995), which created the right of the individual to freedom of religion and freedom of thought, and provided a good education for those traditionally excluded from accessing that opportunity. Its anti-clericalism was, in effect, a form of democratisation from within the church, since inherent within the non-conformist expression of faith was an idealism and commitment to social activism.

While any associations cannot be pressed too far, Jones and Rose (2001) suggest that early in the nineteenth century, non-conformist clergy in Wales were providing educational opportunities for young people to improve their status in society and Nicholls (2012) suggests that youth work finds its antecedence in the democratic fight of the Levellers. He argues that Christ was one of the four powerful influences on British youth work (the others being Marx, Freire and Gramsci), suggesting that youth work has a radical inheritance. However, the reality is that, while it may have been a distant catalyst, the birth of youth work from within establishment evangelicalism (Clyne 2016) meant that its educational emphasis focused on individual betterment rather than social reform (Bruce 1995, Robertson 2005). Nevertheless, Nicholls is right about the importance of the Christian influence, since youth work's heritage reveals that it was the redemptive Christ, not the radical Christ, that shaped the discourse. This is why the educational pedagogy for individual betterment and productive citizens remained the emphasis of Albemarle (Ministry of Education

1960), why youth work theory prefers Carl Rogers to Paulo Freire (see Kirkwood 1991, Smith 1994, Taylor 1987) and why empowerment, a form of individualised secular salvation, remains one of youth work's most significant motifs.

Two other powerful motifs, drawn from its earliest days also continue to be influential; voluntary participation (Ministry of Education 1960:48) and educational purpose (Ministry of Education 1960:103, Nicholls 2012). Regarding voluntary participation Davies wrote:

> The principle of young people's voluntary participation is a— perhaps the—defining feature of youth work. The basis for this position is not simply theoretical or ideological, as has sometimes been asserted—'conservative' or bloody-minded youth workers holding onto a belief which has passed its sell-by date. Rather it is rooted in the historical fact, and it is a fact, that such 'voluntaryism' has from the start shaped the development of the practice and especially its process. This was true even in periods when provision was largely dependent on the patronage of the privileged; and it continues to be true today within a state dominated Youth Service. (2005:12)

This commitment is also due to its particular Christian birth: 'It is little exaggeration to say that the Methodists (and other dissenters of this period) invented a new social form: voluntary association' (Bruce 1995:8). Brown concurs:

> The great invention of evangelicalism was the voluntary organisation. It turned the elite organisation of eighteenth-century charity into the backbone of urban-industrial society, providing spiritual, educational, recreational, evangelising and moralising opportunities for the whole population. (2001:45)

He goes on to suggest that by the mid-nineteenth century, this emphasis on voluntary association was adopted across all Protestant denominations and went on to become a foundational tenet of Christian work with young people.

From its establishment, similar emphasis is placed on the role of education (see Neuman et al. 1900, Russell and Rigby 1908, Sweatman 1985 [1863]):

> The work undertaken has an educational purpose... [and] the focus of the work is directed towards young people...For over 150 years... [these] elements [together with voluntary participation] have fused to delineate youth work and distinguish it from other welfare activities. It has been distinctive only when all these ingredients are present. Remove one and it becomes obvious that what is being observed may possess a resemblance to, but is unquestionably not, youth work. (1999:48)

According to Wolffe (1994) education was at the forefront of the strategy to Christianise society in the nineteenth century. Thomas Arnold's *Education for Christian Manliness* also shaped youth work from its beginning (Eagar 1953) and it was the informal Christian education as practised in the Oxford and Bermondsey Boys' Club that inspired Henriques (Henriques 1951).

Yet for these early youth work theorists, and for society as a whole, this educational focus had at its heart a religious emphasis:

> The teenagers with whom we are concerned need, perhaps before all else, to find a faith to live by. They will not all find precisely the same faith and some will not find any. Education can and should play a part in their search. It can assure them there is something to search for and can show them where to look and what other men have found (Great Britain 1944:44)

Faith development, particularly Christian or Jewish faith development was understood to be part of youth work's core responsibilities (see British Government 1939, King George's Jubilee Trust 1951, Youth Advisory Council 1943), and even although the theistic focus of this faith has been removed from youth work's professional discourse, there is evidence of its continuing importance to secular practice. Bunt and Gargrave suggest that 'In some ways the belief in the effectiveness of youth clubs is akin to the conviction of those whose religious experience is built upon the immovable bedrock of faith' (1980:6). Similarly Jeffs suggests that 'youth work was an act of faith, based on a belief, articulated by Kant, that 'the human being can only become human through education.' (2015:80).

So while it is clear that youth work's language underwent a major translation in the 1960s. It is also evident that many of its epistemological ideals were formed by, and through, its Christian origins, and some of these have survived despite its now secular expression of practice.

Conclusion

This article highlights how Albemarle might be considered as a linguistic fulcrum in the genealogy of youth work's language, empowering and validating the development of its new secular tongue. It also shows how many of its accepted givens can be traced back to its Christian source. MacIntyre (1988) makes a pertinent observation regarding the nature of translation, highlighting that, when a major language translation occurs, often the originating language is lost or becomes invisible to those who have been brought up in the new language. When this occurs, the new translation will become the final authority. According to MacIntyre, and significant for our understanding of youth work, 'the breakdown of the framework of theistic belief has left behind a family of concepts which now, as it were, have to find a status in isolation from the context in which they originated' (1983:150). In light of the case I present above it is arguable that, while youth work's theistic language has been lost, some significant aspects survived translation, and continue to shape the discourse. Generally unrecognised, youth work still carries within it, what MacIntyre calls, 'the ghost of the divine' (1983:155); it might even be said that it is a discourse which has,

to steal an expression from the Christian Missiologist David Smith, 'forgotten it has forgotten about God' (2013).

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