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SPIRITUAL GUIDES:

Supporting adults who nurture the spirituality of children

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MSc CSci CMath

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Practical Theology

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Abstract

This research considers the role of those who support voluntary youth leaders in their responsibility to nurture spiritual development in children and young people. It discusses particularly those who work in organisations with an ethos of supporting such spiritual development and at the same time of welcoming members of many faiths and encouraging their full participation in their various faith traditions. The specific context of the research is the work of the Guide Movement and, in particular, of Girlguiding in the United Kingdom. The research addresses the current challenges but also the enormous value of providing for young people a multi-faith space in which it is genuinely 'OK to do God'. It discusses the issues which leaders are raising and some suggestions which trainers have made for addressing these.

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For a lifetime of friends in the Guiding Movement

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work
and that the work has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Introduction

This research considers the training and nurture given to adult volunteers whose work includes support of spiritual development of young people in organisations which welcome members of many faiths and which explicitly include spiritual development of their members in their ethos. The specific context of the research is the work of the Guide Movement and, in particular, of Girlguiding in the United Kingdom. The inspiration for this research came from experience as long-serving leader and trainer of leaders within Guiding. It came during reflection on challenges inherent in sustaining the ethos of supporting individual spiritual development and simultaneously welcoming members of many faiths and encouraging their full participation in their various faith traditions. This ethos has been fundamental to the Movement since its foundation. In Western Europe, it must now be sustained in a society which is more multi-cultural at local level; where traditional practice of religion is less common and where statutory schooling is cautious in its approach to ‘teaching’ spirituality. How does Guiding sustain this ethos? How does it support its adult leaders in doing this?

The thesis is presented in two parts. The first presents research into the foundation and history of the Guiding and Scouting movements. Chapter 1 discusses the life of the founder Robert Baden-Powell and the family, societal and religious influences which contributed to his own faith and to his decision to develop youth movements with this ethos of spiritual growth in a context deliberately embracing many faiths. Chapter 2 discusses the foundation and very early history of the movements. This is followed by a more detailed history of two themes: the development within Guiding of the arrangements for leader training and the evolution of the exact wording of the Guide promise with examples from a number of member nations. These are core Guiding themes for this research. Chapter 3 discusses the development of Guiding, particularly but not exclusively, in Britain in the context of the history and changing society of the first century of its existence. The second part of the thesis presents the field-work element of the research. Chapter 4 starts with a statement showing how British Guiding currently gives expression to the core values of the Guiding movement as it enters its second century. This is followed by consideration of six specific societal developments and their influence in British Guiding. The chapter discusses writing in the current literature of practical theology and its pertinence to these issues. Chapter 5 presents the field work; both reasons for the chosen methodology and the results obtained from it. Reflection, review and recommendations from the research are presented in Chapter 6.

The direct relevance of the material presented in Part 2 to the research question outlined above is self-evident. It is, however, appropriate to discuss briefly here the purpose and, particularly, the substantial extent of the material presented in Part 1. Both in the many discussions which gave rise to the idea of this research and throughout the responses received, it became increasingly clear that two issues played a major role in a large proportion of the situations where difficulties arose. One was public or even internal misconceptions about Guiding ethos and policy in the relevant areas and particularly the history of those policies over the lifetime of the Guiding movement. The other was a number of major misconceptions about the intentions and even about the stated aims of the founder and about the factual details of his personal life-circumstances which informed, or might be presumed to have informed, his intentions. The first article of the constitution of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts¹ states:

The Fundamental Principles of the World Association are those of the Girl Guide/Girl Scout Movement as expressed in the Original Promise and Law laid down by the Founder²

Thus these two issues are and remain directly related to each other. The importance and continuing direct significance of these matters and hence of the related misconceptions became increasingly apparent as research into the relevant history progressed. As discussed throughout Part 2, the detailed history researched and presented in Part 1 provides a necessary foundation for the argument because it became clear that often a lack of information, or worse sometimes complete misconception, about these matters formed a factor in several of the most troubling challenges which occasionally arose

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the professional doctorate degree: Doctor of Practical Theology. The regulations of this degree require that four substantial papers are submitted and assessed before the major part of the research is carried out.³ The remainder of this introduction places this work in the context of writing in wider areas of practical theology by presenting a brief summary of the more general, earlier sections of the literature review noted below⁴. The later and more specifically relevant sections of the review are not outlined here but are developed further throughout the thesis.

¹ www.WAGGGS.org

² WAGGGS 2008 p7

³ The full papers are available. Two of these papers, a general literature review (Stimpson 2011) and a field work research proposal (Stimpson 2012), are referenced in the thesis. In both cases, naturally, the material is developed but work contained in these earlier documents is simply summarised. The full presentation is not repeated.

⁴ That initial literature review first gives an overview of the breadth of writing within the discipline of practical theology. This is followed by discussion of human anthropology and formation with reference to the theological context. Two sections then consider the work of key authors writing first of methods of deliberate support and development of human spirituality and, in the next section, of such work specifically with children and young people. An appendix highlights relevant issues of similarity and difference in this field: for example gender, age and unusually challenging circumstances.

The first section of that literature review reflects on the nature of practical theology. It discusses its origins in the work of Schleiermacher and its basis developing from pastoral theology. It also notes that within the history of theology, as an academic specialism so named, it is comparatively new. As Elaine Graham⁵ observes, in his Theological Schema, Schleiermacher refers to practical theology as the crown of the discipline with philosophical theology being the root and historical theology the body.

Only recently have the boundaries of practical theology, as an academic study with wider application, begun to find consensus. In consequence, authors include a diverse range of subjects within its scope. Perhaps the clearest and certainly one of the shortest comments on the nature of Practical Theology comes in the question with which Dorothy Bass opens the collection of papers edited jointly with Miroslav Volf and entitled *Practicing Theology*. She attributes it to her students: *But what does that have to do with real life?*⁶

The review comments on contemporary placing of theology in culture both in preaching and more generally citing particularly David Lyall⁷ and Pete Ward⁸. It speaks of the development, within the wider world, of the formal introduction of the figure of the reflective practitioner⁹ encouraging or, indeed, requiring people to reflect on their professional practice, the reasons behind what they do and the ways in which they work. Admittedly it is a practice with which most professionals have long engaged but without the need to demonstrate this formally. This professional practice has a clear parallel with reflective practices in practical theology. Indeed for many professionals who are also people of faith there can be no distinct dividing line.

More directly specific to this research, the paper discusses the connectedness between *practical* and *theology* in ministry to children and how this has varied in history. The choice of whether

⁵ Graham 2002 p59, citing Schleiermacher 1966 *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* Trans T N Tice, Richmond VI, John Knox Press. Graham observes (p60) that Schleiermacher *argued for the essential unity of theory and practice, by stating that the practical should be given preferential status in assessing the authenticity and validity of the truth-claims of theological discourse*. She notes (p61) that the discipline was long confined to a comparatively narrow interpretation: *....for 150 years after Schleiermacher, his legacy dominated: as the discipline in the service of Christian ministry, the focus of practical theology was more or less exclusively upon the activities of the ordained pastor*.

⁶ Volf & Bass (Ed) 2002 The review comments on the fact that faiths and philosophies through history have usually claimed to have everything to do with life. It notes the words of Aristotle and of scripture, in particular, and considers relevant writing by Alisdair MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1981 p195ff) It draws distinction between those such as Ellen Charry (Charry 1997 p3ff) who write starting from scripture and proceed to the practical and those such as James K Smith (Smith 2009 p99ff) who start in the marketplace and proceed to the theology.

⁷ Lyall *Tone-Deaf to Mystery: Worship, Preaching and Pastoral Care* appearing in Forrester & Gay (Ed) 2009 p107,

⁸ Ward 2008 p48ff,

⁹ see for example Bolton 1999

one should start with the theology and proceed to the practical or start from the practical and proceed to the theology has troubled Christendom throughout its existence and certainly from long before there was a subject termed 'practical theology' to discuss it. In many ways this mirrors the disputations concerning the pre-eminence of *theoria* or of *praxis* in the schools of Plato and Aristotle. The need to find a balance in any given situation has often been challenging and can be fiercely disputed. Seeking consensus on an accepted position of the balance point long troubled many world faiths

In recent decades, unlike earlier in at least Christian history, the procedure of starting from the 'practical' and proceeding towards the 'theology' has been particularly prevalent in the descriptions of work with and of young people and children sometimes, regrettably, to the exclusion of ever arriving at the 'theology' at all. This had a variety of consequences. One of the most unfair was the injustice that it showed to the spiritual awareness and insights of the young. It is almost certainly in part the effect of the emergence of practical theology as an acknowledged academic discipline and the simultaneous broadening of its field of influence that has led recently to a reversing of this trend. Many currently writing about, and indeed for, young people are again showing appreciation of the awareness of the transcendent demonstrated by the young and their interest in the things of theology even when their interest in the things of organised religion is less marked. Dean writes:

Post modern youth view mystery as a possibility to be explored, a totality to be experienced. They understand reality by interacting with it, probing its dynamic potential. Consequently post modern youth study quantum physics, holistic medicine, the Green Movement. They conspire not to dissect mystery but to experience it, and to let it move them to a new place.¹⁰

It is echoed in a simpler comment on the reality of practical theology from a much younger speaker:

Why does God live in heaven if he's not dead?¹¹

In the introduction to their book *Theological Reflection, Methods*, Graham, Walton and Ward comment

Over the past twenty years the history and identity of pastoral and practical theology has been subject to intense revision. Broadly, this period has seen an epistemological shift from a discipline that regarded itself as supplying practical training for the ordained

¹⁰ Dean 2004 p199

¹¹ Cocks 2002 p73

ministry, often within a clinical or therapeutic context, to one that understood theology as critical reflection on faithful practice in a variety of settings.¹²

Here they capture a shift in the definition of practical theology from specific practical professional activity to a more all-embracing matter of theological reflection on practice. From this definition comes the setting of this research within the discipline of practical theology.

The second and third sections of the literature review speak of human anthropology and formation and of the nurture of human spirituality. They speak of the perceptions of human development and telos from the perspective of Homo sapiens as the most developed animal species available for study as this is reflected in work of anthropologists such as Bronowski¹³ and zoologists such as Morris¹⁴. This is compared with the different cultural and historical perspectives presented by philosophers¹⁵. The review notes particularly the work of David Hay¹⁶ who is both theologian and zoologist and mentions some of his rejoinders to comments by the biologist Richard Dawkins¹⁷. The discussion then considers writing on human spiritual nurture noting and contrasting particularly the work of theologian Ellen Charry¹⁸ and philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre.¹⁹

The question of nurture leads directly to pedagogy and its practical dimensions. Smith²⁰ makes the point that people learn most effectively when they are fully involved with their learning. He speaks of engaging all the senses and of the importance of repetition and of enjoyment in the learning process. This is surely known by all whose role is 'teacher' in the widest possible use of that term - from Matthew Arnold and his 'purple robes' to Montessori and 'learning by doing' and even (Matthew 13:34): 'Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing.' This is in stark contrast to:

Now what I want is the facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but the facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts: nothing else will ever be of any use to them.....²¹

¹² Graham et al 2005 p2

¹³ Bronowski 1974

¹⁴ Morris 1971

¹⁵ see for example Smith 2009 p47ff and p86ff

¹⁶ Hay with Nye 2006 p136

¹⁷ Dawkins 1976

¹⁸ Charry 1997 the whole book follows this theme but noting particularly pvii and p218ff

¹⁹ MacIntyre 1981 again the whole book follows this theme but perhaps of particular interest are p195ff - the inherent obligation to teach the young; p154ff - the contrast between encouragement of learning by (didactic) teaching or by repeated practice and p112ff - teaching rules the reasons for which are no longer relevant or understood or accepted

²⁰ Smith 2009

²¹ Dickens 1854 *Hard Times* – opening paragraph (available in Bantam Classics 1981)

Such a view of teaching, opposed by Dickens in *Hard Times*, no longer carries widespread belief as general pedagogy in any subject area although it may sometimes carry belief as a practical means to a desired end. Smith takes time to advocate the introduction of practical activity and relevant project work into university teaching. Bonnie Miller-McLemore writing of *Practical Theology and Pedagogy* takes time in an extended and thoughtful discussion of her subject to comment on such minor issues as:

In many practical theology courses, our anthropologist will discover desks and chairs oddly rearranged....²²

Moving²³ from university education where the balance between ‘scholarly activity’ and training for professional practice is ever debated and considering work with children and with those adults who lead them, nurture must indubitably embrace the intensely practical. Otherwise the audience will simply walk away, or if that seems impossible, disengage. Robert Baden-Powell most certainly knew this and advocated it in all things including, specifically, nurture of the things of faith.

Later parts of the literature review paper consider authors writing of work with young people and children. This work is not summarised here as it recurs through the thesis alongside, naturally, many additional references including work published since 2011.

Practical theology includes diverse areas of study and styles of approach. Many relate to the recent reawakening in the West of interest in the spiritual and the transcendent. Some give overviews and new perspectives on many centuries of writing on human anthropology and formation. Others write of both ancient and very new pedagogies aimed at the development of spiritual growth. Some of these naturally discuss work specifically with children and young people. The majority of this writing relates either to teaching within a specific faith community or, more rarely, to the place of spirituality in general secular schooling. Little appears in the literature about the role in the spiritual development of their members, of voluntary youth organisations particularly those welcoming young people of many faiths. Even less has been reported about the support given to the voluntary leaders of such groups. This research questions the ways in which people seek to encourage the development of spiritual awareness and faith within voluntary groups of children from a mixed variety of faith traditions. In particular, it asks how we can best support those voluntary leaders who try, amongst many other responsibilities, to

²² Miller- McLemore *Practical Theology and Pedagogy: Embodying Theological Know-How* appearing in Bass & Dykstra (Ed) 2008 p177

²³ As one coming to this study from a different academic discipline, I confess surprise that Smith and Miller-McLemore, both writing very recently, still see a pedagogical norm even in university in which they find that these matters call for comment.

nurture this. This specific area of work has received little attention in the literature. A study based on personal practical knowledge and experience over an extended period but clearly drawing on these closely related sources should be both of interest and of use.

Part One

1 Origins

This chapter explores the upbringing and life circumstances of Robert Baden-Powell. It describes the societies in which he lived and discusses the influences on his developing views both of God and faith and of educational practice and the nurture of young people. It indicates how these views were carried forward into the movements which he founded.

Robert Baden-Powell (22 February 1857 – 8 January 1941)

Robert Baden-Powell (B-P) was born in mid-Victorian Britain and into a respectable, middle-class, Church of England family. Many have made some or all of the further assumptions: that he was a son of the vicarage, educated at an English public school and then at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. Two of these presumptions are false and the other decidedly misleading.

Robert was the son of Rev Baden Powell (no hyphen) who served for some years as vicar of Plumstead. However as early as 1827, thirty years before Robert's birth, Powell was holding an academic position at Oxford University. Robert was not a son of the vicarage. Further, Powell died of a heart attack in 1860. As discussed later Robert was undoubtedly influenced by the views of his father and by the liberal theology of many of his father's friends who remained friends of the household. However Robert can have had few actual memories of his father. A more accurate factual statement would be that he was brought up with six brothers and sisters in a single-parent household.²⁴ A piece of writing by Robert has survived from this period and is quoted by de Beaufort, one of his biographers:

‘I will have the poor people to be as rich as we are, and they ought by rights to be as happy as we are. You must pray to God whenever you can. But you cannot be good with only praying, you must try to be very good.’ These words are written under the heading ‘Laws for me when I am old’ by R S S Baden-Powell, just after his eighth birthday.²⁵

It is true that Robert was educated at an English public school. In 1870 he entered Charterhouse School as a gown-boy; that is with a free place.²⁶ While he was at the school it moved from premises in London to rural Surrey. Writing later in *Boys' Own Paper*, Robert confessed:

Our playing fields were on the plateau top of a hill, whose steep sides were clothed with a regular jungle of brushwood and copse. And there I used to sniggle (sic) away and set

²⁴ Powell's widow must also have at least considered her responsibility for the four children of Powell's earlier marriage. Robert's mother was Powell's third wife, he having been widowed twice.

²⁵ de Beaumont 1953 p79

²⁶ There were previously plans that he should enter Fettes College, Edinburgh, presumably through the good offices of his maternal uncle, Professor Piazzzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland

snarcs for rabbits.....I learned to make a tiny non-smoky fire, such as would not give me away to prying masters.....I got these early notions ofobserving sign and reading its meaning in the woods when I was at school.²⁷

He was perhaps not the stereotypical public school boy of his era. This detailed observation of the natural world would have a profound effect on his personal faith and on both the training methods and the spiritual ethos of the movements which he founded. On leaving school, Robert failed to enter Balliol, his brother's college at Oxford.²⁸ While his family were considering for him his next move (he would have entered the university as an unattached student) Robert saw an advertisement for an open examination for direct commissions in the army. Success promised two years at Sandhurst. He entered and passed in the first six places out of seven hundred.²⁹ The first six on the list were excused preliminary training and received their commissions in three months. Robert was not educated at Sandhurst because the army deemed that he need not be. An immediate consequence was that he entered overseas service two years younger than other newly commissioned officers with whom he served and inevitably without some aspects of Sandhurst ethos which the others would have imbibed.

Robert Baden-Powell's upbringing and education were in some senses in the norm of Victorian respectability. They also contained radical departures from this; some public, others carefully hidden. For example his mother kept a box on the hall table from which the children took pocket money as they needed it, leaving a receipt. They were accountable to the family as a whole.³⁰

Both Robert and his sister, Agnes, inherited much from each of their parents which later became apparent in the ethos of the global movements which they led. Their mother was left widowed with seven (surviving) children under fourteen and in a stratum of mid-Victorian Society which required that she support them within the considerable restrictions enforced by what was then considered respectable. Despite some assistance from her brother (Professor Piazzzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland), this cannot have been an easy task. She accomplished it with consummate skill, her daughters³¹ as well as her sons receiving good educations and, more strikingly, a childhood involving much outdoor exploration and largely unsupervised pioneering. Robert was not brought up to expect the girls to stay at home. Agnes was brought up not even to consider it - and yet their upbringing was undoubtedly 'respectable'. If the example of their

²⁷ Kerr 1976 p15

²⁸ *ibid* p17 Dr Jowett observed that he was 'not quite up to Balliol form'

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ Gardner 2011 p21

³¹ Gardner 2011 p23 Agnes' mother, Henrietta, was an early committee member of the Girls' Public Day School Trust. It was a disappointment that there were not family funds to send Agnes to one of the new schools belonging to GPDST. However, as Gardner comments in some detail, Agnes had an outstanding academic education at home. (Agnes' two sisters died in childhood. She was largely brought up in a household of six brothers.)

mother did much to influence brother and sister in the attitudes described above, the influence of their father is seen clearly in their attitudes both to *educational method* and to *liberal theology*. Powell was an Anglican clergyman who served for some years as a parish priest. He was also an outstanding mathematician and in 1827 he was appointed to the Savilian Chair of Geometry at the University of Oxford. In 1834 this recently appointed, and comparatively young, senior academic was among the *Noetics*, those who ‘had the courage to vote for the admission of Dissenters to the University’³². Two other instances illustrate his views and his influence. Professor Powell led reform of the school teaching of geometry which at the time consisted mainly of rote learning of the books of Euclid, often with little understanding. An examiner complained that a student had reproduced the proof perfectly *except that in his diagrams he drew all the triangles as circles*.³³ Powell was determined that students (including school students) should start with the reality which they saw and then proceed to the theory which followed from it. This view, considered a trifle revolutionary by some of his mathematical colleagues, largely caused him no problems in this field. However Powell also wrote fairly extensively as a liberal theologian and this was the era of Darwin. He wrote in support of budding evolutionary theory before publication of *On the Origin of Species*³⁴. The year after publication in 1859 of Darwin’s work, Powell wrote supportively in *Essays and Reviews*³⁵; a volume which was famously denounced as inspired *by the evil one himself* by a vocal group of opponents including the then Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce.³⁶ Owen Chadwick, writing of *Essays and Reviews* in his history of the Victorian Church, names Powell as one of four (out of seven) of the authors who ‘were already notorious for publishing unwelcome books of divinity’.³⁷ Robert’s father was not afraid to differ from the established view. More generally, and with more direct pertinence to this research, elsewhere Powell wrote:

Men must live and act before they speculate; and when they speculate they feel and fancy before they investigate and measure – they wonder and imagine before they reason and analyse.³⁸

There is surely some parallel here with James K A Smith’s thesis that people are hearts before they are heads:

³² *ibid* p16

³³ Wilson 2002 *Thomas Hirst (1887): Ah why was Newton ever born?* Lecture given by Robin Wilson at Gresham College as part of the *A 1000 Years of Mathematics* study day on 21 November 2002 (www.gresham.ac.uk/lecturesandevents/)

³⁴ Darwin 1859

³⁵ Parker 1860 editor

³⁶ The argument resulted in the famous interchange between Huxley and Wilberforce at the British Association debate in Oxford in 1860. Powell was to have been on the platform at that debate. He died of a heart attack a few days earlier.

³⁷ Chadwick 1970 p76

³⁸ Powell 1859 p11 (Introduction to the first of this series of essays.)

In contrast, we need a nonreductionist understanding of human persons as embodied agents of desire or love.....³⁹

There is an even more striking parallel with the words of Ivy Beckwith quoted fully in the next chapter. Writing 150 years later, Beckwith also speaks of the need to *experience something before they learn about it*.⁴⁰

In adult life Robert first served for almost thirty years in India and in South Africa. His childhood and school life were within the Church of England but embraced a broad theology. Following his father's noetic example he was comfortable in an environment including many Christian traditions. By the time he returned from overseas service he was ready to found youth movements which welcomed young people of every faith. (His views on each of atheism and agnosticism are discussed later.) His writing on spiritual matters reiterate two main themes: 1) find God in the natural world and 2) serve God and serve others.

The *Headquarters Gazette* of 1909 describing the initial arrangements for Girl Guiding states simply

Training – The religious training will be similar to that for the Boy Scouts, entirely unsectarian.

1. Spiritual. Knowledge of God through Nature Study
2. Practical. Duty to others, by daily good turns, chivalry, charity, etc⁴¹

Writing for the young people of the movements he stresses a simple message. In 1908 in yarn 22 of *Scouting for Boys* he writes

Religion seems a very simple thing: 1st Love and serve God, 2nd Love and serve your neighbour.⁴²

In 1912, writing with his sister, for the Girl Guides

Religion is a very simple thing: 1st To believe in God; 2nd To be good to other people.⁴³

and in the first edition of *Girlguiding* in 1918

Religion seems a very simple thing: 1st To trust in God, 2nd To do good to other people.⁴⁴

³⁹ Smith 2009 p47 The passage continues: *This Augustinian model of human persons resists the rationalism and quasi-rationalism of the earlier models by shifting the center of gravity of human identity, as it were, down from the heady regions of the mind closer to the central regions of our bodies. In particular, our kardia – our gut or heart.*

⁴⁰ Beckwith 2004 p31

⁴¹ Kerr 1976 p28 citing Headquarters Gazette of 1909

⁴² Baden Powell R 1932 p174

⁴³ Baden-Powell A & Baden-Powell R 1912 p382 yarn 32

⁴⁴ Baden-Powell R 1918 p67

In each case the words are then extended in scope with practical examples and actions. For example yarn 22 continues

No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys his laws. So every Scout should have a religion. In doing your duty to God always be grateful to Him. Whenever you enjoy a pleasure or a good game, or succeed in doing a good thing thank Him for it, if only with a word or two, just as you say grace after a meal. And it is a good thing to bless other people. For instance, if you see a train starting off, just pray for God's blessing on all that are in that train.....It is something to be good, but it is far better to do good.⁴⁵

and the handbook of 1912 with

Besides worshipping Him in church the knights of old always recognised His works in the things which He made such as animals, plants and scenes.⁴⁶

This theme of seeking and finding God in nature runs throughout B-P's writing. In his autobiography he comments

... through living in continued contact with Nature a fuller and higher appreciation is developed of its order and of its Creator.⁴⁷

The practical value of such education.....It is essential to (a man) if he would gain knowledge of material facts or if he would read the character or enter sympathetically into the feelings of other men; if he would enjoy the many little pleasures that Nature offers to the discerning eye; and indeed if he would make full use of the talents which God has given him.⁴⁸

An early biographer, Marguerite de Beaumont, paraphrases him saying

When our eyes are open we shall begin to learn something of the calls and customs of animals and birds and the wonders of the stars, and the beauties of the flowers, hills and sunsets. Through all this we shall get a realisation of God the Creator.⁴⁹

and his last message to Scouts includes

Nature study will show you how full of beautiful and wonderful things God has made the world for you to enjoy. Be contented with what you have got and make the best of it. Look on the bright side of things instead of the gloomy one.⁵⁰

In his book *Between Science and Religion* F M Turner writes in detail of the changing relationship between religion and scientific naturalism during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He comments:

⁴⁵ Baden Powell R 1932 p174

⁴⁶ Baden-Powell A & Baden-Powell R 1912 p382 yarn 32

⁴⁷ Baden-Powell R 1933 p109

⁴⁸ ibid p132

⁴⁹ de Beaumont 1953 p57

⁵⁰ Cited in Baden-Powell R 1933 (revised edition 1941) p214

.... during the second half of the century numerous men of science, partly because of early debates over geology and partly because of the necessity of finding employment, relinquished, if they did not openly renounce, the time-honoured belief that the scientist's occupation complemented that of the clergy by discovering God in nature. From the 1850s onward scientists consciously moved towards greater professionalism involving social and intellectual emancipation from theology.....⁵¹

Both Powell and his wife, Henrietta, moved in academic circles. Even after Powell's death, household parties involved distinguished scientists from many countries; friends and colleagues both of Powell and of Henrietta's brother. These gatherings and friendships extended into Robert's adult life.⁵² At a time of considerable public (media?) discussion about the relationship between science and religion, Robert and his siblings had the benefit of hearing considered debate between those who were well informed in both areas. Turner comments further:

Various studies.....have revealed one crucial fact about Victorian science – namely, that there was little agreement among scientists themselves as to what exactly constituted the method of science.⁵³

In the final *Closing Considerations* of his book, Turner observes:

A culture dominated by scientific experts would not necessarily be more emancipated than one dominated by the clergy. The discovery and dispersal of knowledge required a plurality of intellectuals cooperating with one another, tolerating one another, criticizing one another and recognizing their own limitations.⁵⁴

Robert and his siblings had the advantage of discovering this early. Following the example of both parents they were taught to embrace a liberal breadth of view on this matter as in others. This is inherent in the methodologies which underlie both Scouting and Guiding and which have served the movements well through a century of changes in public opinion in this as in much else.

When specifically addressing the adult leaders of the movements and adults outside the movement, Robert naturally writes more fully of the philosophy of Scouting and Guiding.

An organisation of this kind would fail in its object if it did not bring its members to a knowledge of religion, but the usual fault in such cases is the manner in which this is done. If it were treated more as a matter of everyday life and quite unsectarian it would not lose

⁵¹ Turner 1974 p12

⁵² Gardner 2011 p33 & following Gardner also comments on the close friendship between Agnes and Marconi. The letter of congratulation which she sent when his wireless experiments had *bridged the channel* in 1899 is extant and 'it is quite obvious that they were already well-acquainted'

⁵³ Turner 1974 p20

⁵⁴ *ibid* p251

its dignity and it would gain a hold. This organisation is inter-denominational, and also non-political. Prayers are restricted to the simplest form of non-sectarian worship. We do not assume the parents' prerogative of giving religious instruction, but insist on the observance of whatever form of religion the girl professes, and impress upon her the duty of daily practice of self-sacrifice and helpfulness to others.

Religion can and ought to be taught as a natural everyday quality in every proper person, and it can be well introduced to girls through the study of nature.⁵⁵

Religion

Two authorities from very different points of view have gone so far as to describe Scouting and Guide work as 'A new religion and a practical one'. One of these was a clergyman and a schoolmaster and the other a statesman of strong human sympathies.

We have not ourselves pretended to claim any such standing for the teaching, but we do find from experience that where rightly handled it can put the right spirit and the right grounding into children for developing religion through their inner consciousness instead of having theology imposed upon them through surface instruction of morality taught them through fear of punishment.⁵⁶

So far from being irreligious, it (Guiding) looks upon the faith of each individual child as the most sacred thing the child possesses, to be guarded against all interference.⁵⁷

Robert grew up in a Victorian society in which 'the fact remains that doubt and theological uncertainty percolated downwards into the ranks of ordinary believers to an extent unprecedented'.⁵⁸ Some commentators of the time expressed concern about this.

He (Mallock) was worried about 'the more and more popular form' of theological speculation, and by the fact that newspapers and periodicals 'addressed avowedly to a lay audience' were encouraging this trend.⁵⁹

Gilbert discusses various aspects of the question as to what extent concern was with the content of the theology and to what extent it was that the laity was being encouraged to discuss theology at all. Chadwick, writing of the last decades of the nineteenth century, comments that popular expression of religion included appreciation of a broadening range of literature (earlier as well as current) and even more of hymnody and that:

Liberal divinity helped men to receive the inheritance of the centuries. They were able to put tolerable meanings on words which in their original sense they could not share.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Baden-Powell A & Baden-Powell R (1912) p456 (Officers' responsibilities)

⁵⁶ Baden-Powell R 1918 p174

⁵⁷ Proctor 2009 p16 citing an early official publication Girl Guides Association 1927 *Religion and the Girl Guides* p9 London GGA

⁵⁸ Gilbert 1976 p177

⁵⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁰ Chadwick 1970 p169

The era's continuing maelstrom of media discussion of theological disagreements is a likely factor in Baden-Powell's call for a greater simplicity and gentleness in the introduction of children and young people to the things of faith.

However B-P leaves no doubt about his personal faith nor about his conviction that he was called by God to his work within Scouting and Guiding. Equally in expressing thanks to the adult leaders of the movements, he refers to their work in bringing about the kingdom of God.

ORIGIN OF THE BOY SCOUTS AND GIRL GUIDES

The amount of notoriety thrust upon me by the want of perspective in the reviews of the Boer War gave me some anxious thought. It was all so unexpected, unearned, and unsought. Could there be some higher purpose underlying it? Was it a call to me? Could it be utilised to some good end? If so in what way could I act upon it?⁶¹

Therefore, you who are Scouters and Guiders are not only doing a great work for your neighbours' children but are also helping in a practical fashion to bring to pass God's Kingdom of peace and goodwill upon earth. So from my heart I wish you God-speed in your effort.⁶²

What was, and remains, unusual about the movements which Baden-Powell founded was that they both welcomed members of all faiths and also specifically included the nurture of spirituality within their fundamental ethos. (Scouting and Guiding are the only major global youth organisations to do this.) From their foundation they have acknowledged the inherent spirituality of persons and, in particular, children and young people.

Leaders are required to encourage and support young members both in development of their spiritual awareness and in the formal practices of their own various individual faith traditions. These (voluntary) leaders also have responsibility to develop their own practice in these areas as adult leaders are also required to make or reaffirm the Scout or Guide promise. Equally from their inception a century ago, the movements have welcomed members from all faiths as outlined, for example, by the founder in this passage from the first edition (1918) of *Girl Guiding*.

.....So every Guide should have a religion. There are many kinds of religion, so when you meet a girl of a different religion from your own, you should not be hostile to her, but recognise that she is serving the same king as you, and that all who honestly feel that they can take the promise to do their best to 'do their duty to God' are welcomed in our Movement, knowing that having made this promise they will live up to the highest as they know it. In this way may brotherly (sic) love and unity be brought nearer year by year.....⁶³

⁶¹ Baden-Powell R 1933 p271

⁶² Wade 1975 p131 Appendix: A farewell note to my brother Scouters and to Guiders (found after B-P's death)

⁶³ Baden-Powell R 1918 p67

These words were published only a few weeks after the close of the 1914-1918 war. The horrors of then 'modern' warfare must surely have been in the mind of this Victorian soldier as he wrote. Many decades later David Herbert writing more widely of the various potentialities of faiths in current 'modern' society opens his book with reference to an event which had, as he wrote, occurred only a few weeks earlier: 'The events of 11 September 2001 make the issues addressed in this book more controversial, yet more important...' ⁶⁴ Forms of conflict change. The issues do not.

The last fifty years of the nineteenth century (and correspondingly the first 43 of Robert's life) saw huge changes for the position in England of its established church. Gilbert lists fourteen pieces of *ecclesiastical legislation* passed in Westminster in that period which relate to what he terms the 'gradual disestablishment' of that church. He further comments that this gives only a very partial picture as it relates to explicitly ecclesial matters and excludes much legislation on school education which 'raised some of the most serious and intense religious debates of the age'. ⁶⁵ Frances Knight goes further 'By 1870 the Church of England could no longer claim to be the Church of the English nation.' ⁶⁶ Chadwick notes that the term secularisation was being used by Victorians themselves from about 1870. However as he argues very fully: 'the difficulty is to form any precise idea of what is meant by the imprecise word'. ⁶⁷ The English society (and its attitude to Christianity) to which Robert returned after overseas service was developing fast but was still recognisable as the one which he had left. The opening years of the twentieth century were in Britain an era of even more enormous change. The first Sikh gurdwara in Britain opened in Putney in 1911. The first Islamic mosque opened in Woking in 1912. ⁶⁸ The changes both included, and gave rise to, a growing breadth of spiritual expression and at the same time a reduction in traditional church-going. ⁶⁹ Writing in the final chapter of his book *Providence and Empire 1815-1914*, Stewart J Brown's comments on the period 1896-1914 include:

For some, perceptions of the Christian, moral and civilising mission of empire were giving way to darker views of imperialism as an exercise in naked power for the exploitation of colonised people ⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Herbert 2003 pvii

⁶⁵ Gilbert 1976 p163ff (At this date in history these were largely seen as church-chapel disputes. They could be said to culminate in the civil disobedience which resulted from the religious provisions of the Balfour Act over the period 1902-1904: a period which corresponded with that in which B-P was formulating the exact basis of his youth training plans.)

⁶⁶ Knight 1995 p201

⁶⁷ Chadwick 1970 p423ff

⁶⁸ C G Brown 2006 p57 (Brown notes also that the Muslim Institute in the port of Liverpool had been opened in 1891 by a white convert to Islam)

⁶⁹ S J Brown 2008 p399ff

⁷⁰ *ibid*

Science was transforming conceptions of the physical universe and of humanity⁷¹

(Experiments in heredity led to)....the discipline of genetics and to new notions of biological determinism⁷²

Cultural anthropology.....suggested that the origins of all religion would be found in the myths of primitive people⁷³

Now in the 1890s came new religious beliefs – associated with ancient wisdom, Eastern religions, Celtic spirituality, magic and the occult, alternative medicines, reincarnation, theosophy and mysticism⁷⁴

It was the end of an era. Queen Victoria died on 22 January 1901. Again to quote Brown:

Hers had been a broad church Christianity....(with a)....sense of imperial responsibility under God.....The new king, Edward VII, did not share her views⁷⁵

Baden-Powell returned to Britain at this time after his service in India and Africa and so had more reason than many to be aware of eastern and African religions and faith practices. However it is also true that B-P was from a 'respectable' stratum of Victorian society. His father was indeed a *Noetic* and a *Darwinist* but also remained an Anglican priest. B-P could not accept the solely Christian basis of the Boys' Brigade⁷⁶ but commended the attention to religious duty. The section of the first edition of *Girl Guiding*⁷⁷ in which B-P states so clearly that girls of all faiths are welcomed in Guiding and should be united in brotherly (sic) love, is followed by a number of practical suggestions for strengthening spiritual development which, while they are very useful and can readily be adapted for use in groups of any or many faiths, nonetheless, in wording, show clearly his own High Anglican background. This was the end of the Victorian era. Chadwick chooses as the closing words of his history of *The Victorian Church*: 'the Victorians preserved a country which continued to accept the Christian ethic as the highest known to men'.⁷⁸ Like all people B-P was formed by his habitat and society but for him that habitat and society had a global element.

The 'Guides' from whom the association got its name were an Indian regiment:

This regiment was always stationed on the North-West Frontier, and was called GUIDES – because its duty was to go ahead and reconnoitre for others to follow. No-one who sets out on a duty of that kind dare be anything but physically fit. B-P was particularly struck with the cheerfulness of these men, and their courage. Years afterwards he used to say that it

⁷¹ ibid

⁷² ibid p379

⁷³ ibid

⁷⁴ ibid p381

⁷⁵ ibid p380

⁷⁶ Jeal 1989 p360

⁷⁷ Baden-Powell R 1918

⁷⁸ Chadwick 1970 p472

was a lesson in itself just to live with them. They could cook a meal under any circumstances. They were good at all kinds of signalling. They did not neglect those most important things – a knowledge of first aid and nursing. Above all, they had a simple faith in God.⁷⁹

For most of those men that simple faith was Hinduism. Writing in 1922 in *Rovering to Success*, his handbook for Rover Scouts ie young men of age 18 to 25, he speaks again on his theme of finding God in nature and he quotes scripture:

The Koran (sic) says – ‘Seest thou not that all in the heavens and all on the earth serveth God; the sun, the moon, the stars, and the mountains and the trees and the beasts and many men?’⁸⁰

In the same chapter he quotes Christian scripture. This includes Matthew 22:37 and so by direct implication he also embraces a central theme of Jewish teaching. However for a man of his background to have quoted, in 1922, the Qu’ran as exemplary in a handbook for British youth work shows something of the breadth of his vision.

Throughout his writing whether for young people, for adult supporters and questioners or more generally, for example in his autobiography, B-P writes with informed respect and support for all faiths. He also writes supportively of all who are seeking faith, exploring, trying to discern the truth. He supports the inclusion within the movement of those who are, in this sense, agnostic. However he gives no support to atheism nor to agnosticism in its strict meaning: belief that it ‘is not possible for human persons to know’ anything of the existence or form of God. He writes most specifically of this in *Rovering to Success*,⁸¹ a handbook which bears the subtitle *A Guide for young manhood, Religion, Sex, Gambling etc.* The text draws a parallel between life and paddling a canoe in treacherous waters, an analogy very much in keeping with B-P’s usual style. One section describes *Rocks: you are likely to bump on*. Five such rocks are discussed in some detail. They are in order of appearance: *horses* (gambling), *wine*, *women*, *cuckoos and humbugs* and *irreligion*. On the first three B-P writes much as one might expect in such a work, naturally allowing that some elements of his vocabulary and examples reflect the era of publication. The fourth is a more unusual element but certainly very helpful. B-P is, after all, the leader who appended an addition to the notice on the committee room wall giving the then ten Guide laws. His emendation ran ‘11) A Guide is not a fool.’ However it is the fifth potential *rock* which is of interest here.

Following the format of the previous sections, part five starts with a summary page which begins

⁷⁹ de Beaumont 1953 p19

⁸⁰ Baden-Powell R 1922 p177 (The translated reference is to Qu’ran 22:18)

⁸¹ Baden-Powell R 1922

IRRELIGION

The dark side of this rock is the danger of atheism and irreligion. The bright side is its realisation of God and Service to Brother Men. To this the study of Nature is a direct help.

Atheism is being pressed on young men. Irreligion is prevalent. Religion is essential to happiness.⁸²

The text of the chapter then begins

There are a good many men who have no religion, who don't believe in God; they are known as atheists. In Great Britain alone there are nine societies of these. They are welcome to have their own opinions in this line, but when they try, as they are always doing, to force those ideas on other people, they become enemies of the worse sort.

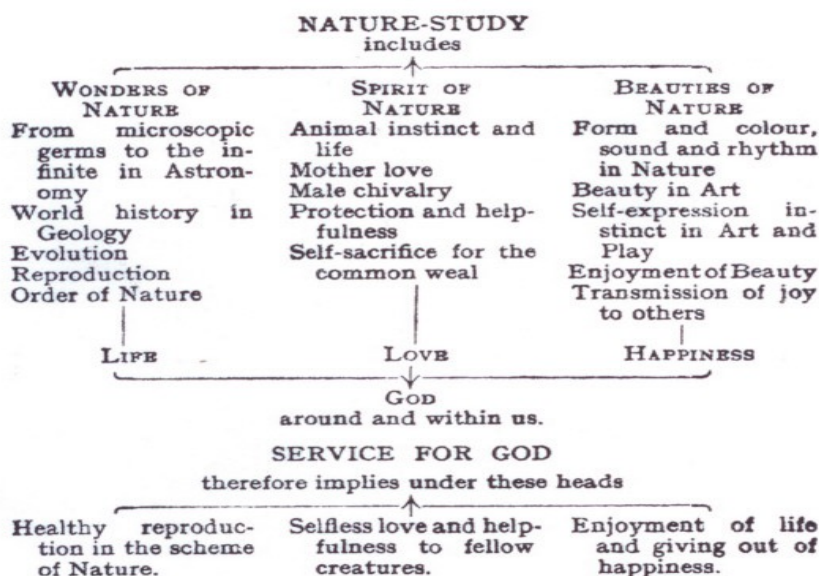
Some of these societies directly attack the religious belief of others in a very offensive way, but I believe that by doing so they are, as a matter of fact doing more good than harm to the religions concerned, since it makes people buck up and sink their own differences in order to combine together to repel these attacks.⁸³

The whole chapter is of interest. It strikes some very current notes almost a century after it was written both for Guiding and Scouting and for society as a whole. However its main relevance to the theme of this section is that it shows clearly how far B-P's broad mindedness was prepared to stretch and where the boundary lay. It also reiterates very fully his theme of the apparentness of God in nature. Nature for B-P embraces the entire physical world including the full range of modern scientific and medical discovery. It includes the human experiences of personal creativity and of appreciation of beauty. It includes the *spirit of nature* for example *mother love*, *male chivalry* and *self-sacrifice*. He demonstrates his points with a diagram.⁸⁴

⁸² *ibid* p174

⁸³ *ibid* p175

⁸⁴ *ibid* p197



Baden-Powell believed that the existence of God was evident from his experienced creation and that religion was essential for happiness. His *last message to Scouts* ends

I have had a most happy life and I want each and every one of you to have a happy life too. I believe that God put us in this jolly world to be happy and enjoy life. Happiness doesn't come from being rich, nor merely from being successful in your career, nor by self-indulgence. One step towards happiness is to make yourself healthy and strong while you are a boy, so that you can be useful and so can enjoy life when you are a man.

Nature study will show you how full of beautiful and wonderful things God has made the world for you to enjoy. Be contented with what you have got and make the best of it. Look on the bright side of things instead of the gloomy one.

But the real way to get happiness is by giving out happiness to other people, try and leave this world a little better than you found it and when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate you have not wasted your time but have done your best. 'Be Prepared' in this way, to live happy and die happy - stick to your Scout Promise always - even after you have ceased to be a boy - and God help you do it.

Your friend,

B-P⁸⁵

He founded movements which embrace all faiths; which require that all members work to develop their beliefs, respect the beliefs of others and participate in the practices of their own faith tradition. He wrote

⁸⁵ Cited in Baden Powell R (1933–revised edition 1941) p214

The funny thing is that there has been more fighting and quarrelling in the world over religion than any other cause. It is worse than funny, it is ridiculous, but at the same time true that the more we care for our own religious beliefs the more narrow-minded we seem to become towards the religious ideas of other people.

We forget that we are all sons of the same Father and that we are all striving to do his will, though it may be in different ways.

There is one thing, however, that I feel sure of myself, and that is that God is not some narrow-minded personage, as some people would seem to imagine, but a vast Spirit of love that overlooks the minor differences of form and creed and denomination and which blesses every man who really tries to do his best, according to his lights, in His service.⁸⁶

The movements' methods are practical, inclusive and cross-cultural. They always involve experience in the outdoor world but not to exclusion of other activities. They always involve small group (patrol) activities and are youth-led. This has worked well across the world and across a century which has seen huge changes. How are these methods working in current changing societal norms? Can Scouting and Guiding continue to demonstrate a lead as global organisations which welcome those of every faith and support them as individuals in the development of their spiritual awareness? Can it demonstrate that the promotion of both spiritual values and faith observance can lead to a situation where, in Baden-Powell's words, 'In this way may brotherly love and unity be brought nearer' rather than to one of increasing religious bigotry and potential for violence? As former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, observed:

If religion is not part of a solution, it will certainly be part of the problem.⁸⁷

Robert Baden-Powell has frequently been presented as a respectable Victorian imperialist; a military officer of good Anglican family. He was certainly a man brought up in a single-parent family with six siblings. He failed to get into university and did not attend conventional training at Sandhurst. In his books he quoted the Qu'ran as well as the Bible and he argued against Mussolini, supporting the priority of spiritual development and global brotherhood over patriotism. His writings on pedagogy and youth training were far beyond the norm of his time. Thus Guiding was founded by a complex figure who had already declined a senior post in the Boys' Brigade because of the limitations he felt to be inherent in its solely Christian ethos. It was founded by a radical who, in Edwardian Britain, when faced, unexpectedly, by a number of girls marching smartly into the area with the hundreds of Boy Scouts at the rally of 1909, responded to them personally and positively with 'you may join in the closing parade'. Robert

⁸⁶ Baden-Powell R 1922 p195

⁸⁷ Sacks 2002 p9

Baden-Powell was certainly a man many decades ahead of his time. His knowledge of leadership skills and his determination that young members of Guiding both could and should be largely self-governing are major factors in the continuing global success of a movement which has repeatedly demonstrated the facility to adapt to changing circumstances without change of ethos or intent.

2 Development

This chapter first describes the foundation of the Scouting and Guiding movements and their general development in the first few years of their existence. This is followed by more detailed description of continuing development of two very specific themes within global Guiding: methods of adult leader training and precise wordings of the Guide promise. These two topics are of basic significance to this research. They are also basic to the ethos of Guiding and are areas where any change proposed by a member nation requires approval of the World Association (WAGGGS). Later more general history of Guiding is described in the next chapter.

Foundation history and intent

Early in the twentieth century Robert Baden-Powell founded the youth movements Scouting and Guiding. Biographers of Baden-Powell and historians of Scouting and Guiding vary in their views of the ethical framework and methodologies of these movements as they do in their interpretation of Baden-Powell's aims and intent. These matters are discussed in more detail later. However they are silent on the question of why he chose to found a youth movement at all.⁸⁸ The explanation appears to be simply that he had no such intention. In his autobiography he writes:

After writing my book *Scouting for Boys* I naturally thought that boys' organisations would use it for their work and there would be little more for me to do in the matter. But before very long, in the spring of 1909, I realised that quite outside such organisations, hundreds of boys were forming Scout Troops on their own.

It was in 1909 that King Edward had had (sic) his talk with me regarding the movement. Although it was then only in its embryo stage His Majesty saw such promise and possibilities in it as encouraged me to try to push on with it... An invitation was sent out to all Scouts to meet me on a certain day at the Crystal Palace and this resulted in a parade at which over 11,000 scouts made their appearance... I saw that I could not do both soldiering and Scouting. I must drop one or the other... The King questioned me (on the situation) and I put myself in his hands to say which course I should take. Eventually he agreed that the Scout experiment was the more important.⁸⁹

Robert Baden-Powell was inspired to create a training programme (not an independent organisation) for boys based on *Scouting methods*.⁹⁰ Little is known of exactly what triggered this inspiration but in her history of the movements Rose Kerr writes from personal recollection and comments that in the years from 1903 following his return to Britain after active service in India and South Africa:

⁸⁸ see for example de Beaumont 1953, Wade 1975, Jeal 1989 and Kerr 1976, Girlguiding UK 2009, Gardner 2011

⁸⁹ Baden-Powell R 1933 p288

⁹⁰ see Baden-Powell R 1899

The idea was taking shape in his brain of launching some scheme of training for the boys...⁹¹

In 1906 he sent a draft memorandum of his ideas, entitled *Scouting for Boys*, to ‘some of the leading men of the country’. In this he describes the aims and practices of scouting as it later developed. However he also writes:

This scheme is intended to be applicable – and not in opposition – to any existing organisations for boys, such as schools, boys’ brigades, messengers, cricket clubs, cadet corps etc, or it can supply an organisation of its own, where none of these exist – for there are one and three quarter million boys in the country at present out of the range of these good influences, mostly drifting towards hooliganism for want of a helping hand.⁹²

The replies were encouraging and led him to proceed first to the experimental camp at Brownsea Island and from there to the foundation of the Scouting movement. He described Scouting methods in a series of ‘yarns’. These were published as a fortnightly series in 1908 and later gathered in the book *Scouting for Boys*⁹³.

A number of existing schools and youth groups started to use the methods⁹⁴. Following an approach from its founder, William Smith, B-P provided training materials based on these techniques for the developing Boys’ Brigade⁹⁵. However, despite being encouraged to fulfil a wider role in that organisation, he declined on the grounds of the limitation which he felt was inherent in its solely Christian basis⁹⁶. B-P was determined that his Scouting organisation should embrace all faiths and all traditions within each faith. It was perhaps inevitable that this policy would be opposed by some, particularly in churches and Christian organisations such as YMCA, who otherwise were entirely supportive of Scouting’s methods and aims. Others, and certainly the majority in such positions, took the more liberal view. However at the time this fundamental principle of including young people of all faiths was indeed vigorously challenged by a few individuals⁹⁷ and completely misunderstood by rather more; this situation prevails for both Scouting and Guiding to the present day⁹⁸ and is discussed more fully in later chapters. B-P was equally determined that amongst Scouting’s prime aims should be strengthening of the religious beliefs of boys and young men encapsulated in the promise that they should ‘do their best to do

⁹¹ Kerr 1976 p23 (first published 1932) B-P contributed the foreword to this book and so was presumably happy with its content.

⁹² *ibid*

⁹³ Baden Powell R 1908 (in book form 1932)

⁹⁴ Kerr 1976 p20

⁹⁵ The Boys’ Brigade was founded in Glasgow in 1883

⁹⁶ Jeal 1989 p360

⁹⁷ see, for early examples, Procter 2009 p60 and Jeal 1989 p404

⁹⁸ Personal direct observation, also discussion with other trainers and, specifically, in discussion with the Director of Guiding Development in the UK and with the Head of Adult Training at WAGGGS

their duty to God'. This ethos was formally stated in the resolution passed by the International Scout Conference in 1924:

The conference declares that the Boy Scout Movement is a Movement of national, international and universal character, the object of which is to endow each separate nation and the whole world with a youth which is physically, morally and spiritually strong.....It is universal in that it insists upon universal fraternity between all scouts of every nation, class and creed. The Scout Movement has no tendency to weaken but, on the contrary, to strengthen individual religious belief. The Scout Law requires that a Scout shall truly and sincerely practice his religion and the policy of the Movement forbids any kind of sectarian propaganda at mixed gatherings.⁹⁹

When asked in later years about the foundation of the sister organisation, he said 'I did not found the Guides. They founded themselves.'¹⁰⁰ The girls copied their brothers, obtaining uniforms and books by the simple expedient of putting only their initials on the mail order forms. It is sometimes forgotten that in those early years, this pattern was followed in most countries. As Scouting (for boys) spread across the globe, in each country girls copied their own brothers rather than girls of other nations. Only later, as both movements grew, did it become more usual for Guiding to be introduced to new areas by Guides coming from elsewhere. The Guides first came to public notice at the Scout Crystal Palace Rally of 1909.¹⁰¹ The girls did not stay away. Nor did they gather outside the venue with placards of protest. They simply donned their illicit uniforms, formed rank and joined the parade marching smartly into the arena. No-one stopped them. B-P said afterwards that his only concern was that if girls joined then the boys would stay away. At the time he said 'You may join the closing parade at the end.' A young patrol leader of the time, interviewed many decades later, at this point in the interview gave the wicked grin achieved only by those who have passed their three score years and ten and observed 'and I knew - we were in'¹⁰². Baden-Powell realised that the best way forward was a separate organisation. The details are given in the *Boy Scout Headquarters Gazette*¹⁰³ of 1909. This would have two potential advantages. It would remove the worry of boys staying away from a scout organisation infiltrated by girls and it would, to some extent at least, allay worries of Edwardian mothers that their daughters were turning into tomboys. He asked first his sister,

⁹⁹ Baden Powell R 1963 page x

¹⁰⁰ However in the January 1909 edition of *The Scout* he had written: 'Also I have had greetings from many patrols of Girl Scouts, for which I am very grateful. They make me feel very guilty at not having yet found time to devise a scheme of scouting better adapted for them; but I hope to get an early opportunity of starting upon it. In the meantime they seem to get a good deal of fun and instruction out of 'Scouting for Boys' and some of them are really capable Scouts.' *The Scout* 16 January 1909 number 40 volume II and cited in *1910 and then?* by Cynthia Forbes c1987

¹⁰¹ Kerr 1976 p13

¹⁰² *One Hundred Years of the Girl Guides* first shown BBC4 2009, DVD - Clan Productions 2009 producer Rosalind Bain

¹⁰³ Kerr 1976 p24

Agnes, and, later, his wife, Olave, to lead this new organisation¹⁰⁴. The new Guiding movement retained the same promise as Scouting. The only modification lay in one of the laws, permitting girls to 'sing' rather than 'whistle' when 'in difficulties'. Hence Guiding, like Scouting, was founded as an international movement embracing young people of all faiths but explicitly including within its ethos both their general spiritual development and the duty placed upon them to fulfil the practices of their varied faith traditions to the best of their ability - whilst living together in friendship and cooperation. This is summarised in the paragraph from the first edition of the handbook *Girlguiding* quoted previously.¹⁰⁵

As early as 1912, Guiding units had been formally recognised in seventeen nations across five continents¹⁰⁶ and, given the known history in these nations, there can be little doubt that informal groups were already forming elsewhere but had not yet reached the stage of formal recognition. The records for those early years are naturally very informal but, for example, Kerr¹⁰⁷ writes of Guiding in India by 1916 embracing girls and women from Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Christian communities.

Guiding spread across the globe with incredible speed, which meant that girls from a rich diversity of faiths were part of the movement from the early years.¹⁰⁸

In the century of its history, the Guide movement has spread to 146 nations. Some of these national organisations call themselves 'Girl Guides' and others 'Girl Scouts'. International conferences were held from 1920 onwards and the 1928 conference agreed to the formation of the *World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts* (WAGGGS). Two fundamental requirements for membership laid by WAGGGS upon potential member nations are that membership of their association is voluntary and that it is open to all girls and women who are prepared to make the Guide promise¹⁰⁹.

The history of two aspects of Guiding is of particular relevance to this research. One is the wording of the promise as it varies over time and in different member countries. The other is the training methodologies embraced and, in this context, particularly the methods of training adult leaders. Individual member nations have responsibility for the exact wording of the promise and laws for their own members. They also have responsibility for their training schemes for adult leaders and for the training and licensing of those who train the leaders. In carrying out these

¹⁰⁴ *ibid* p30 & p80

¹⁰⁵ Baden Powell R 1918 p67

¹⁰⁶ WAGGGS 1958

¹⁰⁷ Kerr 1976 p188

¹⁰⁸ *Girlguiding* UK 2009 p25

¹⁰⁹ WAGGGS 2008 p9

responsibilities they must follow requirements of WAGGGS both with regard to content of the promise and methodologies of their training schemes.

Training methodologies

The basic training methodologies used in both Scouting and Guiding are those described in Baden-Powell's manual *Aids to Scouting*¹¹⁰ and reworded for a younger readership in the yarns of *Scouting for Boys*. They include games, practical challenges and, particularly, outdoor life and activities. Guides and Scouts have always worked in small groups (patrols) with a group leader chosen by themselves and from among themselves. The young people are self-governing to greatest extent that is possible for their various age groups. The associations require that these methodologies also be applied in training adult leaders but before discussing this it is appropriate to consider first a little more about training children and young people.

At the time of their first publication, B-P's methods were generally greeted as revolutionary. Of course they were not but certainly they were not the norm for their time and place. For comparison, Maria Montessori opened her first school in Rome in 1907. Her work was first translated into English in 1912¹¹¹. Like Montessori and many educational reformers before and since, B-P did not subscribe to the theory that *children should be seen and not heard*. He advocated and practiced a much more interactive and *child-centred* approach. A century later Ivy Beckwith writing of ministry with children observes the same phenomenon:

Generation Y is experience oriented. These kids find meaning and value in immediacy and in living in the moment. They want to experience something before they learn about it. Their mantra for life is 'I want to try it'. Only then will they decide if they like the experience or not.¹¹²

Young people and their needs do not change greatly.

As a training scheme for boys, B-P's methods were, if unusual, acceptable. For 'young ladies' it was another matter entirely. Histories of the movement¹¹³ comment in some detail on the tact which was needed by leaders of Guiding in those early years. Perhaps the most telling comments occur in the autobiography of Olave Baden-Powell, wife of Robert and herself a young woman in the period in question. Her comments are particularly telling simply because the relationship between Agnes and a new sister-in-law some 31 years her junior was not always

¹¹⁰ Baden-Powell R 1899

¹¹¹ Montessori 1912

¹¹² Beckwith 2004 p31 (Generation Y are, she explains the 'post-postmodern' generation, p21)

¹¹³ For example Kerr 1976 and Girlguiding UK 2009

cordial, especially as Olave took on more leadership roles in the association. Olave does however praise Agnes on this point saying

She was a very gifted woman and extremely clever.....Before 1914 the dead hand of Queen Victoria still rested heavily on anything to do with the female. Whilst encouraging young girls to take a first tentative step towards independence, Agnes had at the same time to allay the fears of their parents that guiding might be in any way ‘unwomanly’¹¹⁴

The girls loved the new movement and were determined to be part of it. Both Robert and his sister Agnes are recorded as having exercised great diplomacy in those early years as they contrived to steer a path between retaining the active, challenging and outdoor methodologies which the girls embraced so enthusiastically, the concerns of respectable Edwardian mothers and the very different expectations of working girls who, in those days, had indeed by Guide age mostly already left school and joined the workforce. Several early units met in factory canteens during breaks¹¹⁵. It is all too easy to forget when considering the development of youth work at this period that youth organisations were designed for young adults already in the workforce. The common school-leaving age in England and Wales in this era was twelve¹¹⁶ and comparatively few young people actually remained in school full-time for as long as that.¹¹⁷

In her original handbook¹¹⁸ for the girls ‘Miss Baden-Powell’ inserts tests and training in such topics as needlecraft, childcare and nursing; as much to deflect criticism of the movement as for their obvious practical relevance. However, whilst some things are added, nothing is removed. Cooking and laundry work were already there in the boy’s scheme. Proficiency badges such as boatswain, electrician, flyer and rifle-shot remain exactly as for the boys. (As the first, and for some time only, woman member of the Royal Aeronautical Society, Agnes enjoyed flying and was glad to encourage her girls to do likewise. At cessation of hostilities in 1945 and then in her mid-eighties she expressed the wish to learn how to fly *this new flying contraption called a helicopter*.¹¹⁹)

¹¹⁴ Baden-Powell O 1973 p123ff

¹¹⁵ Girlguiding UK 2009 p41

¹¹⁶ The Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act 1893 had raised the statutory minimum leaving age to eleven. This was raised to age twelve by the amendment of 1899. The age was not raised to 14 until implementation, in 1921, of the Education Act 1918 (The Fisher Act). In Scotland however the statutory school leaving age was raised to 14 in 1901.

¹¹⁷ In this era my maternal grandmother, in common with her friends, went into the mill as a half-timer at the age of eight, attending school in the afternoon only. She became a full-time spinning lass at age twelve. My paternal grandmother from a farming community was working on the farm much younger.

¹¹⁸ Baden-Powell A and Baden Powell R 1912

¹¹⁹ Gardner 2011 p8

As discussed earlier the determination and informed diplomacy of both Agnes and Robert in those early years of the movement must surely owe much to their mother¹²⁰. Equally their advocacy of practical educational methods and the breadth of their liberal theology show the clear influence of their father. The upbringing of Agnes and of Robert was at the same time highly academic, utterly respectable and quietly revolutionary. From there they founded their world-wide movements.

History of leader training

Initial guidance for the movement's leaders is included in Agnes' first handbook¹²¹ for the girls, *The Handbook for Girl Guides*, where she notes that: *Any paragraphs printed in italics in this book are addressed to Instructors*. The first sentence which appears in italics reads: *Instruction in Guides' work should be given as far as possible through practices, games and competitions*. Thus from the first girls were able to read what their leaders had been told and were in a position to object if they felt that this was not what was happening. They still are and they still do. However most of the instruction and guidance in that book concerns the learning of practical matters; matters where 'learning-by-doing' is an obvious methodology even if it is not always used in the wider world. Two other issues rapidly led to a call for training procedures for leaders. One was the pedagogical challenge to untrained volunteer leaders raised by the need to support precisely such issues as spiritual development by *practices, games and competitions*. The other was concern expressed by some about lack of uniformity in practice. On this subject, the movement's greater worry has often been those who are demanding uniformity where no uniformity is needed.¹²² None-the-less in some areas more guidance was appropriate and as society has become more codified (for example in matters of health and safety legislation and charity finance law) it is clearly necessary that leaders should be made aware of matters of relevance. In her 1932 history of the early years of the association, Rose Kerr opens her chapter on leader training, speaking from her own direct experience:

In the early days of Guiding, training was never thought of. Each Guider read *Scouting for Boys* and *How Girls Can Help to Build up the Empire*¹²³, and then went and followed out the suggestions therein contained by the light of her own intelligence. As intelligences varied very considerably, so did the standard of Guiding – the marvel is that there were not many more eccentricities than actually existed.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Kerr 1976 p15

¹²¹ Baden-Powell A and Baden Powell R 1912

¹²² Discussion with respondents - but note that the words of an exasperated commissioner 'If it doesn't say you can't then you can' made in connection with a query about the *Guiding Manual* some twenty years ago have now passed into common usage across the organisation among its trainers. This suggests that the issue is still alive.

¹²³ Baden-Powell A and Baden Powell R 1912 (subtitle)

¹²⁴ Kerr 1976 p159 (first published 1932)

The first formal training arrangements for leaders in the United Kingdom came with a training camp at Windy Sayles¹²⁵ in 1915. This was heavily oversubscribed by leaders from all over the United Kingdom; this despite, or possibly because of, the fact that the country was at war. The programme was largely practical and included ‘hay-box cookery, laundry work, signalling, medicinal properties of common herbs, rifle shooting, bridge-building and camp-fire yarns’.¹²⁶ The women reported that they enjoyed themselves immensely and clearly learned much beyond the practical skills outlined in the programme. They proposed the setting up of a ‘school’, the object of which should be

to unite Girl Guide officers all over the world for the purpose of mutual help and encouragement – thus to provide a common body of knowledge upon which each member can draw for the benefit of her own company¹²⁷

The Girl Guide Officers Training School (the Goats) opened in London on 12 October 1915¹²⁸. Kerr gives descriptions of the activities and of the surprise of some new attendees at being asked to pretend to be Brownies, or even caterpillars (!), and to sit on the floor. However they reported both that they had thoroughly enjoyed themselves and they had also learned a great deal using these techniques which would now, of course, be dignified by such terms as *role play* and *team-building exercises*. Within two years it was also possible to study by ‘correspondence class’; these *distance-learning* arrangements being for those unable to attend in person. Kerr notes that those who attended in person received their qualification once they had completed the entire series of classes; the distance-learning section of the class had to submit a written examination paper which must surely have been a strong incentive to attend in person if at all possible.¹²⁹

This was the start of officially organised training and it was from the start presumed to be a global responsibility across the movement. In her writing of the early experiences of leader training, Kerr comments on three particular challenges: choosing the geographical location of training events, potential exhaustion of a comparatively small body of trainers¹³⁰ and difficulties which can arise when an enthusiastic, but less than entirely appropriate, leader puts herself forward as a leader trainer. Enormous efforts have been made to address these challenges across the century of Guiding history. Many improvements have been implemented. They are,

¹²⁵ Windy Sayles – the home of Mrs Blyth in Boxmoor – see Kerr p160

¹²⁶ Kerr 1976 p160

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Ibid p161

¹²⁹ Ibid p162

¹³⁰ *Trainer*: an experienced leader holding a validated qualification, licensing her to train adult volunteers within Guiding. This qualification is reappraised every three years. Trainers are required to be current leaders. They are, therefore, required to have made and reaffirmed the Guide promise. Licensed British trainers may, and usually do, train leaders across the United Kingdom. They may also train leaders in any member country of the World Association; for obvious practical reasons this happens less frequently.

however, issues which, by their very nature, continue to arise. The first two are entirely pragmatic problems to which the answers will always be a matter of best compromise. The third can be more challenging in two aspects. One is essentially pedagogic. The leader who is superb with a group of children and leads an excellent Brownie unit is not *necessarily* equally superb at working in adult training. This is by no means to deny that there are many women who do both extremely well but the tasks do call for different skills. The other aspect is the need to ensure that a trainer is using training methods within the ethos and ethical basis of Guiding and, indeed, is promoting correct and current policy. Nowhere is this more vital, or more challenging, than in aspects of the programme relating to the nurture of spirituality and support of faith practice. As discussed later, this challenge is growing with changing and more diverse societal norms and more local religious pluralism. It was for these reasons that there developed from this very early date, a system of training and qualification for these leader trainers within Guiding. The system was, and remains, strenuous, particularly when it is remembered that these women are volunteers who, in order to retain their training licence, are required also to remain active in the volunteer leadership roles for which they train others – all this naturally in addition to the demands of workplace, home and other responsibilities. However, again to quote Rose Kerr, writing in the language of her time but with universal truth:

Training is the very core of the Guide Movement, not so much because of the instruction given, but because of the standard set. Any tendency, whether good or bad, among the picked body of trainers, quickly spreads to the whole Movement and this is why we must be perpetually on the watch to see that the right people are chosen for qualities of brain and character, and that they themselves are given opportunities to learn and grow.¹³¹

For all trainers this can be a challenging thought perhaps particularly in the areas addressed here.

Each member nation of the world association must have a scheme of qualification for its leader trainers. This scheme must follow the guide-lines of WAGGGS and must be submitted to that body for approval and in respect of any changes. The World Association's current requirements are contained within *Policy and Guidelines: adult training, learning and development*. This policy document opens:

WAGGGS actively promotes the training, learning, and development of adult members to fulfil their roles and achieve the Mission of WAGGGS. This policy endorses the Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting Method as a means of enabling adult members to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to ensure the delivery of high quality Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting educational programmes¹³².

¹³¹ Kerr 1976 p167

¹³² WAGGGS 2012 p1

The policy therefore returns the discussion to *Guiding method* and so, in the context of this research, to the issue expressed earlier: *the pedagogical challenge to untrained volunteer leaders raised by the need to support precisely such issues as spiritual development by practices, games and competitions*. It is to concerns in this broad area articulated by fellow trainers that this research is addressed.

History of the wording of the promise: introduction

It has already been noted that the Guide movement at its inception took the same promise as Scouting:

On my honour I promise that I will do my best
To do my duty to God and the King
To help others at all times
To obey the Guide Law

The constitution of the World Association states that:

The Fundamental Principles of the World Association are those of the Girl Guide/Girl Scout Movement as expressed in the Original Promise and Law laid down by the Founder¹³³

The *Spirituality Toolkit* produced by WAGGGS expands on this in module 1 citing the decisions of the World Conference of 1972:

The recognition of a spiritual dimension to life is one of the universal core values of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. These values are at the heart of the Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting Movement.

The Promise and Law of all National Organizations that belong to WAGGGS must contain the essence of the fundamental principles defined at the 21st World Conference in 1972. The Promise of each Association must express a spiritual dimension as detailed below:

'The essence of Duty to God is the acknowledgement of the necessity for a search for a faith in God, in a Supreme Being, and the acknowledgement of a Force higher than man, of the highest Spiritual Principles.'¹³⁴

The tool kit contains both extended explanation and contextual material and also training materials suitable for both adults and young members. Its contents and usage is discussed later. It was developed by a team of WAGGGS members including representatives of five major world faiths: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

¹³³ WAGGGS 2008 p7

¹³⁴ WAGGGS 2000 module 1 p2

History of the wording of the promise: United Kingdom

Guiding is naturally concerned to retain contemporary language which is accessible to all its members and with this in mind there have been, in the United Kingdom, several changes to the above wording down the century: some trivial, others perhaps more contentious amongst the membership. In the first few years of the movement official records show the phrase ‘do my best’ appearing and disappearing with regularity. However from 1921 it was here to stay and is now part of the promise often stressed when discussing with a potential new member the commitment inherent in the spirituality clause. It was only in 1967 that the monarch, by then, of course, the Queen, was transferred from the clause relating spirituality to that involving citizenship. ‘Serving the Queen’ was now alongside ‘helping others’ and not grouped with ‘duty to God’. There was very spirited discussion of this change!¹³⁵ In 1994 the phrase ‘do my duty to God’ was replaced by ‘love my God’. At the time two reasons were given for this change. One was the need to replace the word duty with a phrase more readily understood in contemporary society. The other was the hope that, by introducing the word *my*, the inclusive nature of Guiding would be more publicly transparent. Over the last two decades there has been on-going discussion both inside and outside the movement as to whether this change has clarified or obscured meaning. The phrase ‘love my God’ is used in different and, in some cases quite specific, ways by various different traditions within different faiths. Experience has also shown that it can be understood in a variety of ways in secular society. Some commentators do seem to have forgotten that the requirement in wording the promise is for a brief phrase using words which are meaningful to all members including the youngest.

During the course of this research one of the regular membership consultations on the precise words used in the promise in the United Kingdom has taken place. The new wording agreed for the first clause of the promise is:

I promise that I will do my best
To be true to myself and develop my beliefs¹³⁶

In choosing this form the United Kingdom has followed the lead given by Australia and discussed in the next section. The formulation is accepted by WAGGGS as meeting the requirements of the World Sisterhood of Guiding as specified above. The exact heading to this section is significant. All changes noted in these two paragraphs of history are changes of *wording* of the brief encapsulation of ethos which is the promise. There has been no change of

¹³⁵ Direct Observation: I was a young leader at the time

¹³⁶ Girlguiding 2013a p31

ethos or of policy. The varied range of reactions to this recent change is discussed in later chapters along with some possible consequences for leader training.

History of the wording of the promise: global perspectives¹³⁷

As Guiding spread across the world, individual nations naturally made some adaptations to the exact wording of the promise to suit local circumstances. Initially these wordings were simply noted at World Headquarters as each new nation was granted first *tenderfoot* (now affiliate) and then full membership status. After the close of the 1939-1945 war, there was renewed widespread interest in the global nature of the movement. Attempts were made to produce books in a readable and interesting style which included, in a structured format, information about all member countries including the wording of the promise and law. From 1957 to 1997, these books were officially published by WAGGGS and entitled *Trefoil Round the World*.¹³⁸ A new edition, listing all member information alphabetically, was produced every three years after each of the triennial world conferences when new members were admitted. Since 1997, the information has been available on-line via the WAGGGS site¹³⁹.

A detailed study of the changes, many very minor but none the less significant, sheds considerable light on thinking about those aspects of the promise involving both spirituality and citizenship. This is illustrated here by a very small number of examples each taken from *Trefoil Round the World*¹⁴⁰:

In 1957 the promise in Lebanon read:

On my honour, with the help of God, I promise to do my best to serve God and my country, to follow my religion, to help other people, to obey the Guide Law

By 1997 this had become:

With you all, trusting in God who loves me, I promise to do my best to make others happy, to be useful to my country and to live according to the Law of all Guides of the world

In the Indian subcontinent, both India and Pakistan (West and East) retained the original wording after the division of 1947 and in 1957 each still used:

¹³⁷ In writing of any global organisation issues of working with translated documents are bound to arise. These are, perhaps, particularly acute when speaking as here of a simple affiliation of charities each led by volunteers. English translations quoted, for example of the exact wording of the promise in different countries, are those provided by the various countries themselves.

¹³⁸ WAGGGS 1958 – the three-sectioned leaf of the trefoil plant is used as a symbol of the movement and its threefold promise. It appears on its badges and flags.

¹³⁹ www.wagggs.org

¹⁴⁰ WAGGGS 1958 and following editions as dated above (National information appears in these publications in alphabetical order often without use of pagination)

On my honour I promise that I will do my best:
 To do my duty to God and my country
 To help other people at all times
 To obey the Guide Law

However India added the foot note:

For Buddhist and Jain Guides the word 'Dharma' may be substituted for 'God'

In 1956 Pakistan adopted a new national constitution and became an Islamic Republic. In 1971 secession of East Pakistan resulted in the new country of Bangladesh. By 1997 the promise in Pakistan had become:

I promise that I will do my best,
 To do my duty to God and Pakistan
 To serve mankind and participate in nation building activities
 To obey the Guide Law

(For Buddhist Guides and Brownies, the words 'my religion' may be substituted for God in the first part of the promise.)

In 2013 the promise in Pakistan reads:

I promise that I will do my best:
 To do my duty to Allah Taala* and Pakistan,
 To serve mankind and participate in nation-building activities,
 To obey the Guide Law.

*The words 'My religion' may be substituted for Allah in the first part of the Promise and that of Bangladesh:

On my honour, I promise that I will do my best:
 1 To do my duty to God, and my country.
 2 To help other people at all times.
 3 To obey the Guide Laws.

Over the same period India had not changed the main wording but had broadened the footnote to be inclusive:

The word 'Dharma' may be substituted for 'God' if so desired.

Many nations now include such a footnote.

This same historical period in Europe included the return to WAGGGS of many founding and early member nations; first those where Scouting and Guiding had been banned by fascist governments in favour of a compulsory youth organisation (for example Hitler-Jugend), later

those who had suffered a similar fate under communism. These old friends received a joyous welcome. They frequently brought with them flags and uniforms carefully hidden by their grandmothers and great grandmothers. The enthusiasm of youth in the support of a cause in which it believes is real. That is why the aims to which this enthusiasm is directed are of such importance. These nations also took the opportunity for a move to more contemporary expressions of the promise, for example the Polish promise now reads

It is my sincere wish to serve God and Poland with the whole of my life, to give my willing help to other people and to obey the Scout and Guide Law

Later in the century 'new' European nations joined the movement bringing their various traditions:

Slovak Republic On my honour I promise that I will do my best:
 To love my native country and to be faithful to it at all times
 To fulfil my own duties and to adhere to the Girl Scout Law
 To help all my neighbours with all my heart and soul
 Help me, God!

Slovenia On my honour I promise that with divine help
 I will conscientiously serve God and my native land, help other people
 and obey the Guide Law

In 2012 rewording came from Australia:

I promise that I will do my best
 To be true to myself and develop my beliefs
 To serve my community and Australia
 And live by the Guide Law¹⁴¹

This very open wording of the first clause was received across the world with some protest as was its acceptance by WAGGGS as appropriately expressing that part of the Guiding promise. It is interesting that on their national website the Australian Guides preface the promise statement with the words:

Every girl and adult that is a member of Guiding throughout the world makes a Promise. The words may be slightly different from country to country but the spirit and meaning of the words are the same wherever Guiding exists.¹⁴²

Thus they declare very expressly that intent which they are accused by some of breaking. This phraseology has recently been followed by the United Kingdom. It will be interesting to see which other nations, if any, follow this lead. Certainly the change will increase challenges facing leader trainers rather than reduce them.

¹⁴¹ www.girlguides.org.au

¹⁴² *ibid*

The above are a small number of examples. Others are discussed later in various contexts. Political and constitutional change, and often accompanying social upheaval, continues and will continue to create changes. Other issues include the challenges to nations, newly independent from 'colonial' status, to develop their Guiding in a way appropriate to their new independence both on the world political stage and as newly independent members within WAGGGS. An even bigger challenge has been met by some national organisations, notably South Africa, faced with maintaining the ethos of sisterhood under a government expressly opposing this whilst, at the same time, formally supporting continuation of Guiding there. An extended discussion of these aspects of social history and its interaction within Guiding is given by Proctor in her book *Scouting for Girls*¹⁴³. World Guiding also has a number of long-standing formal relationships with the United Nations. For example it has been awarded ECOSOC consultative status, sends a delegation of young women to meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and is supporting the *UN Millennium Campaign* particularly with its *Global Action Theme* educational programme and awards. Further detail about these arrangements and current joint initiatives are available on the WAGGGS website¹⁴⁴. Like any global organisation, Guiding has met and continues to meet many challenges to its worldwide ethos and integrity. These are often reflected in local changes to the exact wording of the promise. However expression of the movement's core values is given on behalf of all members by the words of the constitution of WAGGGS which open this section. As stated in the second article of that constitution, they express the principles 'laid down by the founder'.

¹⁴³ Proctor 2009 p139ff

¹⁴⁴ www.wagggs.org

3 Inheritance

This chapter traces the history of Guiding from 1918 to its centenary year 2010 with reference to the changing societies in which it developed. The detail concentrates largely on the situation in the United Kingdom and, more generally, Western Europe. However Guiding has always been a global movement and wider influences are not ignored. The chapter starts with short descriptions, in chronological order, of different eras of the century. This is followed by discussion of three relevant broad development trends throughout the period: education, exceptional needs and gender expectations; international relations, changing communications media and culturally diverse society; religious pluralism, secularisation and individualism. These themes inform discussion of current practice in the next chapter.

1918-1939

The *inter-war* years saw Europe recovering from the horror and mourning of one world war, passing through an era of jubilation and light-heartedness followed by one of economic disaster to the shock of finding itself again at war.

Jane Hampton writes:

When the First World War ended, Guides were considered so reliable by the War Office that a contingent was taken with the British delegation to France. British Guides ran errands at the Palace of Versailles for the Paris Peace Conference in June 1919 and sixteen Ranger Guides were invited to witness the signing of the treaty.¹⁴⁵

In London the *Guides* (sic) *Peace Rally* filled¹⁴⁶ the Albert Hall on 4 November 1919 and B-P received a resounding cheer as he asked assembled Guides if they would play their part in *the small unselfish deeds which led to peace and greater understanding between people*.

Between 1914 and 1918 membership of Guiding grew rapidly. World membership had passed 300,000 by 1920.¹⁴⁷ It is impossible to judge how much was a consequence of the circumstances of war and how much a result of only-to-be-expected growth of an organisation naturally establishing itself in the few years after its foundation. The close of hostilities in 1918 brought large numbers of women who had served the war effort looking for something to replace that role, in many cases with very different expectations of what might be possible than they would have held before the war. It also left a vast army of women who would never marry for those

¹⁴⁵ Hampton 2010 p14

¹⁴⁶ Hampton 2010 p14 quotes an attendance of 8000. An early biography of B-P quotes the figure as 13000: *The Story of Baden-Powell* p49 prepared by *The Boy Scouts Association* c1941

¹⁴⁷ WAGGGS 1st Biennial Report 1929

who would have been their husbands had not returned. Both circumstances had significant effects for Guiding. History records that women who had found one form of liberation in the requirement to work for the war effort were divided between those who pursued, as far as circumstances allowed, their new found abilities to be part of the workforce into the era of peace and those who rejoiced in returning to their pre-war life style with the majority seeking some form of compromise in between. The press (and history books) headline the extremes of these issues largely ignoring the middle ground as is, perhaps inevitably, usually the case.¹⁴⁸ More seriously, the discussions also largely ignore the fact that the majority of young women had always worked. These were the working girls of textile mills, growing mass-production-line light (lighter) industries, out-sourced home industries and of the service sector then largely private and uncontrolled. For these young women the immediate concern was the raising, in 1921, of the school leaving age¹⁴⁹ which prevented them from working and contributing to the family income as their elder sisters had done. This occurred in a post-war era when many households were adjusting to survival without a father's income. The Guide section became a section with a roughly even mix of school children and working girls in the same decade that the majority of their leaders became single working women newly able to exercise their vote.¹⁵⁰ In between came the Rangers maintaining the role of bridging the gap as young women grew into adulthood in a very different society from that known by their mothers and, in some cases perhaps more critically, by their fathers. The economic crash of the late 1920s affected all sections of society. The obvious immediate consequences were financial.¹⁵¹ Perhaps a more significant long term result was a shattering of the feeling of security and certainty for the future which had been slowly being rebuilt. The dream of a war to end wars and promise anticipated in the League of Nations slowly waned. However in 1931 global Guiding did celebrate the milestone of seeing membership figures pass one million.¹⁵²

The thirties saw a gradual but apparently remorseless and inevitable building to war in Europe and subsequently more widely across the world. International Socialism, Communism and Fascism vied for prominence in many nations. Ideological arguments reached one watershed in the Spanish Civil War. Although formally a civil war, supporters went from many nations to join the battlefield. For Guiding and Scouting these years also meant enforced closure in countries where a government backed compulsory youth organisation was introduced. Writing in her autobiography, Olave Baden-Powell speaks of a visit with her husband to Italy in 1933.

¹⁴⁸ Black 1996 p308

¹⁴⁹ In England and Wales, the statutory minimum school leaving age was raised from 12 to 14 by the implementation in 1921 of the Education Act 1918 (the Fischer Act). In Scotland the statutory age had been raised to 14 in 1901.

¹⁵⁰ In the UK the franchise was extended to women over thirty in 1918 and to women of twenty one and over in 1928.

¹⁵¹ Black 1996 p290

¹⁵² WAGGGS 2nd Biennial Report 1931

She first comments on an audience with Pope Pius XI in which the Pope commended the 'magnificent work of Scouting and Guiding - a great family carrying out the ideal of unity'¹⁵³.

She then continues

It was ironic that, following hard on the Pope's endorsement of our work, Robin¹⁵⁴ should go straight to an interview with Mussolini.....Robin and the Duce had a cordial meeting but Robin could not agree with the Mussolini's assertion that the Balilla¹⁵⁵ was an improvement on Scouting. It was, Robin pointed out, compulsory instead of voluntary; super-nationalistic rather than international; that though it attached the same importance as Scouting to physical fitness, it omitted any spiritual emphasis. Moreover, instead of developing individual character, it turned out youngsters all to one mould. Robin deplored the emphasis laid on nationalism and militarism. Although he believed in service to one's country, that service, he felt, should never be used as an instrument of aggression.¹⁵⁶

It is worth quoting that passage in entirety not only because it details B-P's opposition to Balilla but also because it speaks so clearly of B-P's priorities. Later in the chapter, Olave describes the meeting of her husband with von Schirach¹⁵⁷ arranged by the German ambassador Joachim von Ribbentrop 'with a view to establishing friendship between the Hitler-Jugend and British Scouts'.¹⁵⁸ She comments: 'I am glad to say that my husband was cautious and far-seeing enough not allow his scouts to become embroiled.'

Speaking of this era in the second volume of the official history of The Girl Guides Association, Alex Liddell chooses to summarise the work of *Mrs Streatfield*¹⁵⁹:

In 1938 alas! numbers began to decrease. In some countries national youth movements given every possible encouragement by their governments – money, publicity, propaganda – were sweeping through Europe. They were equally open air and adventurous, having admittedly borrowed methods of training from Scouting; they boasted colossal numbers, being more-or-less compulsory, and encouraged an easier loyalty to nation and leader as opposed to God and your neighbour.....¹⁶⁰

This question of an easier loyalty was to recur as the century progressed in political upheavals of a variety of colours. It continues and will continue to do so. For B-P at least, spirituality came before citizenship; both are important but God comes first.¹⁶¹ After citing *Mrs Streatfield*, Liddell herself then continues:

¹⁵³ Baden-Powell O 1973 p185

¹⁵⁴ Olave usually referred to her husband B-P as Robin

¹⁵⁵ Balilla – the Italian compulsory youth organisation of the time

¹⁵⁶ Baden-Powell O 1973 p185

¹⁵⁷ Baldur von Schirach was appointed by Hitler in 1933 as Jugendführer des Deutschen Reiches (Youth Leader of Germany)

¹⁵⁸ Baden-Powell O 1973 p187

¹⁵⁹ Mrs Eric Streatfield writing as Kitty Baine - Baine 1946

¹⁶⁰ Liddell 1976 p9

¹⁶¹ B-P was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize of 1939. However no Peace Prize was awarded in 1939. Liddell 1976 p17

Luckily the children paid very little attention to this depressing talk.....There were more international gatherings than ever, as if people felt that the time for friendship was all too short...¹⁶²

In 1938 Lithuania hosted a camp to celebrate what Liddell, writing in 1975, describes as ‘her twentieth (and almost her last) year of independence’.¹⁶³ Her independence restored, Lithuania was welcomed back into global Guiding in 1990.¹⁶⁴

A World Camp took place as planned in July 1939 in Hungary and was named by the girls Pax-Ting (Peace Parliament). It welcomed four thousand girls of 32 different nationalities.¹⁶⁵ The organisers clearly showed determination and courage in going ahead with the arrangements at that date. The girls and young women remembered friendships formed and experiences shared with those who would soon be declared ‘the enemy’ by their various nations. Many of those friendships were resumed in later years. The WAGGGS biennial report for the period comments:

During that fortnight all was sunshine and happiness, fun and friendship. Not one of those who attended it can ever be sufficiently thankful for the mercy of providence, which allowed it to be carried through to its triumphant conclusion.¹⁶⁶

The report adds this comment from the French members who had been present, made as the report notes ‘in the dark days after the outbreak of war’:

How happy we are to have had this memory – and this hope – for what has once been will surely be again.¹⁶⁷

Another noteworthy fact, related to the era but not specifically to approaching hostilities, was the sheer scale of travel arrangements.¹⁶⁸ Looking back from a present time when foreign travel and long-haul flights are for many a commonplace, it is easy to forget just how unusual and demanding the organisation of these events must have been. The (volunteer) leaders were women of both determination and skill. Then, as now, arrangements also had to be made for funding the travel of those girls from nations which could not hope to bear this expense themselves.

¹⁶² Liddell 1976 p9

¹⁶³ *ibid* p11, see also WAGGGS sixth biennial report (1 July 1938 – 30 June 1940)

¹⁶⁴ www.wagggs.org – (Lietuvos Skauciu Seserija)

¹⁶⁵ Liddell 1976 p11

¹⁶⁶ WAGGGS sixth biennial report (1 July 1938 – 30 June 1940)

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*

¹⁶⁸ Black 1996 p293 - Black notes that a *flight* from Cape Town to London took nine days in 1936 and from Adelaide to London took fourteen days and that these were ‘far less than sailing times’. (The limited weight of fuel which aircraft could carry was a major factor in necessitating that journeys be made in a long succession of *short hop flights*.) Most participants would not at that date have even considered flying.

1939-1945

Britain's entry into war in 1939 brought immediate consequences of conflict to the whole population in a way not experienced in earlier wars. Conscription of *mobile women*¹⁶⁹ rapidly deprived the movement in the United Kingdom of the presence of many of its leaders. Young patrol leaders came into their own and did so with distinction. During global war members of the movement served their countries but also their sisters in many ways. This was true in all member nations including, and often at very great individual risk, those where the movement was officially suppressed. The story of this war service is told in official histories.¹⁷⁰ A fuller picture is sometimes obtained from less formal sources. In 2010 Guiding celebrated its centenary and many books were published at this time: the official centenary history; books about specific aspects of Guiding history written with the association's knowledge and support - and others which came as more of a surprise to formal committees of Guiding. One of these was *How the Girl Guides won the war* by Janie Hampton¹⁷¹. The title gave rise to concern in some quarters about the content and style of the book. Was Guiding going to be laughed at? There was no cause for concern for it was the author who had been surprised. In the introduction she writes:

When I began writing this book, my perspective was that of a flower-child of the 1960s, who shunned uniforms and rules. I intended to write a satire on Guides and Brownies, making fun of Ging-Gang-Goolies and dyb-dyb-dob.¹⁷² But the more stories I read, and the more former Brownies and Guides I met, the more I came to realise what an important part of twentieth century history the Guide movement was. Much to my amazement, I saw.....¹⁷³

Hampton goes on to write a detailed and well researched account of the movement in war time from simple salvage collections in cities and help with evacuees in the countryside to the more challenging emergency outdoor cooking for whole neighbourhoods on derelict sites after air raids using skills developed in Guide camp and then to remarkable acts of determination and cheerfulness such as the activities of the 1st Chefoo Brownie Pack and Guide Company, British boarding school pupils who continued their regular weekly meetings throughout four years of

¹⁶⁹ Hancock and Gowing 1949 p437ff - Women served in the forces and in industry from the start of the war. As requirements grew in industries deemed most essential, notably munitions and aircraft production, those who were termed *mobile women* could be directed to other parts of the country where need for such workers was greatest. The circumstances giving exemption from this enforced mobility (not from war work) were significantly tightened in 1942.

¹⁷⁰ see for example Liddell p1976 p12ff and, more recently, Girlguiding UK 2009

¹⁷¹ Hampton 2010

¹⁷² Ging-Gang-Gooly: popular camp fire song (such songs are written deliberately with nonsense words for use at international camps where no one language predominates): dyb-dyb-dob (do your best – do your best – do our best) : chant from the cub scout section frequently but erroneously attributed to Guiding.

¹⁷³ Hampton 2010 page xiv

internment in a Japanese concentration camp after the bombing of Pearl Harbour.¹⁷⁴ She also describes many acts of heroism, one of the most notable being of Polish Guides smuggling young children out of Warsaw through the sewers of the occupied old city.¹⁷⁵ Some areas of service started in time of war continued and developed well into the years of peace.

The World Association continued to operate. The Director's report for 1940-1942 opens:

The World Bureau, in spite of the difficulties with which it has been confronted, and the inevitably restricted scope of its activity, has nevertheless contrived to continue in its functions and even to develop in new directions..... With regard to correspondence, letters and messages of various kinds and through various sources continue to reach us from our friends.....and even though.....in stricken countries organisations as such have ceased to function, we know perfectly well that all that our Movement stands for – with its Promise and its Law – has remained rooted where it was originally planted – in the hearts and minds of countless thousands of young people and their leaders the whole world over.¹⁷⁶

As early as 1941, plans were being made for major work of restoration which would be needed when fighting ceased. In Britain, the Guide Association became a member of COBSRA (Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad).¹⁷⁷ Guide International Service (GIS) teams were formed and began training. Liddell describes some of the obstacles which Guiding encountered with officialdom to get even so far:

All societies had to be officially approved and, as always, forms had to be completed in triplicate. In spite of a carefully worded letter offering teams of adult workers, and asking for application forms, the authorities appeared to believe that we were proposing to send Packs of Brownies into the devastated areas. 'This is no work for children' was the only reply, and the forms were not enclosed.¹⁷⁸

The misunderstanding was eventually resolved, not without difficulty. The training was strenuous but this was expected and is not recorded as having presented any insuperable obstacles. Slight difficulties with officialdom continued however:

In January 1944, volunteers qualified for all specified work were standing ready, when a directive arrived which included the following bomb-shell: 'The aim should be not more than four women in one team....and either the leader or deputy leader should be a man.' Miss Ward remained unmoved. Following the precept of Admiral Nelson she turned a blind eye. 'That's today's news,' she said 'Now let's get on with some work.' No more was heard of sex discrimination.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ *ibid* page xvii (After speaking with their *Brown Owl*, at the time of interview aged 93, Hampton discovered that they also had the advantage of having their sports organised by fellow internee Eric Liddell.)

¹⁷⁵ *ibid* p279 – The Bronze Cross, the movement's highest award for gallantry, was awarded after the war to the Guides of Poland as a whole. The same award was made to the Guides of Malta.

¹⁷⁶ WAGGGS seventh biennial report (1 July 1940 – 30 June 1942)

¹⁷⁷ COBSRA later became incorporated into United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Abroad – WAGGGS eighth biennial report (1 July 1942 – 30 June 1944)

¹⁷⁸ Liddell 1976 p26

¹⁷⁹ *ibid* p28

With the relief effort underway, Liddell describes the work of GIS teams in the devastated areas of Europe. She also recalls the call for teams to work in the *far east* (the Pacific rim) and surprise evinced by the authorities that Guiding should already have teams trained and standing by in Australia and New Zealand. The Guides could clearly conjure up teams from nowhere. A far fuller, as well as more personal, account of the work of GIS is given in *All Things Uncertain*¹⁸⁰ by Phyllis Stewart Brown. Brown chaired the GIS training team throughout the time and was herself acquainted with all the volunteers. More personally, the privilege of speaking as a friend¹⁸¹ with some of those who served gives an even clearer impression of the life-long effect on these women of the devastation and trauma which they experienced; this even where passage of time and advancing age may have blurred memory for detail. A notable, rare example of a public interview is given by Stella Cuncliffe for the documentary created by the BBC to mark the centenary of Guiding. Stella served with the GIS team who were the first to enter Belsen.¹⁸² In her recent book, *A Promise Kept*, Jenny Ramsay's personal recollections give a wide perspective on service in GIS.¹⁸³ The young women who served in this way were also those who led Guiding into the second half of the twentieth century. The harrowing scenes which they had known inevitably affected their outlook and their determination to promote the global friendship and sisterhood fundamental to Guiding.

1946-1965

In any nation directly involved in conflict on its home territory, post-war years are years of reconstruction and rehabilitation; this is true for 'winners' and 'losers' alike. In Britain the end of conflict brought jubilation. It brought the promise of *Homes fit for Heroes*, the National Health Service¹⁸⁴, an Education Act in England and Wales (1944) offering longer and more appropriate secondary schooling for all.¹⁸⁵ Inevitably, many promises were long delayed in implementation. In Britain rationing continued for some food items until 1954. The job of clearing bombed sites and building homes for heroes was a long one especially in countries with natural resources destroyed and a fit (male) labour force depleted. The fifties and early sixties brought to schools and to Guiding a generation of children born after the end of the war but

¹⁸⁰ Brown P S 1966

¹⁸¹ Thank you my friends

¹⁸² *One Hundred Years of the Girl Guides* first shown BBC4 2009, DVD - Clan Productions 2009 producer Rosalind Bain.

¹⁸³ Ramsay 2009

¹⁸⁴ National Health Service Act 1946 (England & Wales); National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1947; Health Services Act (Northern Ireland) 1948

¹⁸⁵ In Scotland, plans to raise the school leaving age from 14 to 15 in the late 1940s were never ratified although an increasing number of young people stayed on beyond the minimum leaving age.

remembering clearly shopping with ration books¹⁸⁶ and living, often in fairly crowded conditions, at grandma's house until destroyed housing stock was replaced. A post-war baby boom only exacerbated the situation. It is interesting to reflect that the flower-children of the sixties were largely of this generation and early upbringing. This was a generation of grandparents who had watched their own children and the children of their friends move straight from school to war service. They had known the horrors of waiting for news; of seeing some of those children return seriously wounded and others never return. Those of their children who returned were now starting their working life or training for careers after the delay which war service had imposed. These were the grannies who were often left literally holding the babies of the post-war baby boom and who in significant numbers provided a large part of the early upbringing of those who would later launch the youth culture peace movements of the sixties.

In addition to delay in house building, building of new schools and modernised hospitals created delays in implementation of other social legislation. Indeed while the new style grammar schools and secondary modern schools developed largely in existing buildings, the technical schools (the third and vital part of the tri-partite proposals of the 1944 Act) depending much more on new buildings and specialised facilities, largely never arrived. The system rarely, if ever, had opportunity even to try to operate as planned.

The preceding paragraphs note some practical aspects of life in post war Britain: practical issues which were mirrored in the other countries of Europe and, indeed, the wider world. On the global scene the formation of the United Nations Association carried with it hope, previously expressed in 1918, of a war to end wars and a new era of peace. This remained and, of course, remains an unrealised dream. The hope however was strong and, again, a new generation were determined to build a better world than that built by their parents and grandparents. This era also saw increasing numbers of nations establish governments with ideologies formally within the Communist Party. Iron and Bamboo Curtains began to be erected. Communist governments followed the example of their fascist predecessors by establishing compulsory youth organisations (Red Pioneers) and banning Scouting and Guiding. The issue, noted earlier, of an *easier loyalty* arose again – in one sense at least from a rather different perspective.¹⁸⁷ In the same era, Scouting and Guiding was re-established in countries such as Austria and Italy. The international aspects of Guiding regained prominence and many friendships could be openly renewed. WAGGS began the triennial publication of *Trefoil Round the World* noted in the last

¹⁸⁶ Sugar and sweeties were among the last food commodities to go 'off ration'. My small friends and I remember it well.

¹⁸⁷ B-P's comment on Balilla, that it *omitted any spiritual emphasis*, becomes of even greater relevance in relation to the 'official atheism' of communist regimes.

chapter. World membership grew steadily, passing 3 million by 1954 and 5 million by 1960.¹⁸⁸ Guiding was, and remains, the largest association for girls and young women in the world.

1966-2010

Unlike the dates delineating previous sections, the date 1966 is a somewhat arbitrary¹⁸⁹ boundary between the immediate post-war era and the youth culture decades. It is certainly true that throughout the sixties, society changed enormously and in a way which was to have more cultural significance for Guiding and for young people generally than a succession of political and legislative changes. The change is summarised in this quotation from the closing sections of Jeremy Black's *A History of the British Isles*:

This element of choice, and the need to shape and cater for it, combined to ensure a whole range of social shifts, among the most striking was the emergence, from the 1950s, of the youth consumer and the development of cultural and consumer fashions that reflected the dynamism and volatility of this section of the market. It is easy to focus on rock, pop and drug culture transmitted via the Beatles and the Sex Pistols, psychedelia and punk, but more significance can be attached to the wish and ability of youth first to create an adolescent identity – not to be younger copies of their elders – and secondly, and more specifically, to reject the opinions of their parents; the pop culture was only one manifestation of this. The willingness to try different foods, to holiday in different places, to move from parental religious preferences, to go on to higher education, or to purchase property, were as interesting and possibly more important.¹⁹⁰

Guiding (and Scouting) responded with changes to uniform which respected contemporary fashions; with an exciting and challenging outdoor programme; with new modes of service; with international opportunities and by embracing the (then) new media! A Guiding team broke the youth relay record time for swimming the English Channel.¹⁹¹ Scots Ranger Guides and Rover Scouts formed a central part of the Glenshee Ski Rescue Service¹⁹². At UK level the Rangers and Rovers made a daring venture into new media by making their own promotional film *Perpetual Spring*.¹⁹³ From a historical perspective, what is interesting about all this activity is precisely that it was not new. Uniform has evolved down the century. Members have had opportunity for adventurous activity and service since the movement's foundation. They have swum and climbed and flown – whether or not this was generally considered acceptable for

¹⁸⁸ WAGGGS Biennial Reports numbers 13 and 15

¹⁸⁹ The date reflects what I recall as a delineating moment in my own adolescence. I accept that others of my generation, depending on their interests and also their home area, would pick a range of dates through the sixties. This was an era, not a moment, of change.

¹⁹⁰ Black 1996 p312

¹⁹¹ *One Hundred Years of the Girl Guides* first shown BBC4 2009, DVD - Clan Productions 2009 producer Rosalind Bain.

¹⁹² Robertson 2000 p28 Also personal discussions with Elaine Ross

¹⁹³ *One Hundred Years of the Girl Guides* first shown BBC4 2009, DVD - Clan Productions 2009 producer Rosalind Bain.

young ladies. They made broadcasts on the wireless in the early 1920s.¹⁹⁴ Current day Rainbows talk to their Spark friends in Canada using Skype.¹⁹⁵ However in the late sixties and the seventies, the youth scene was both new and news and public media rediscovered Guiding. Global membership numbers soared passing 8 million by the mid eighties.¹⁹⁶

As the century progressed many nations across the globe established or re-established their independence and became full independent members of WAGGGS. Appropriately, they developed their Guiding to suit their own circumstances and culture but always within the basic requirements of the World Association. One of the more challenging rules for some countries was ‘One Member Organisation only can be recognised in any one country’¹⁹⁷ – it was challenging indeed but it worked – in those nations where several Guiding organisations continued to exist, these cooperated to form federations to represent them at world level. More countries also returned to Guiding as curtains and walls fell in the latter part of the period and indeed as several nations divided or re- divided.

As quoted earlier, Jeremy Black notes that in this era it was acknowledged that young people were rejecting the views of their parents at least in part, simply because they were the views of their parents. This phenomenon has surely always been part of growing to adulthood but it became the expected thing to do. Significant numbers of young people had income to support a youth consumer market. As soon as producers realised that such a market existed its growth became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Few young people had strength of character to resist following the taste of the crowd in, for example, fashion or music regardless of their actual preferences and regardless of what they could afford. It is concerning that this phenomenon of the earlier half of the period had by 2010 spread, especially for young women, to embrace body image generally.¹⁹⁸ Hot pants and platforms had progressed via tattoos and piercings to plastic surgery as fashion statements with greater risk, especially if carried out in back-street premises for reasons of economy or privacy or both. They also present far greater difficulty in reversal. The concern that young women should be encouraged to be their personal best and not follow the crowd has always been a concern of the Movement and it is undoubtedly true that some girls found (and find) relief in the less competitive and all female atmosphere. More of how the association tries to bridge the gap between remaining *relevant to today’s girls* and *caring for the individual*, both fundamental statements in the Guiding ethos, is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁹⁴ Baden-Powell O 1973 p159 Olave describes an early BBC microphone as *a thing like a jam jar on a tripod*. She notes a broadcast made in August 1923. Public broadcasting in the UK first started in 1922.

¹⁹⁵ Rainbows and Sparks are the youngest members of Guiding in their respective countries and are aged 5 and 6

¹⁹⁶ WAGGGS *Trefoil Round the World* (Appropriate current figures recorded in each triennial edition)

¹⁹⁷ www.wagggs.org Membership requirements

¹⁹⁸ www.girlguiding.org – see Girls’ Attitude Survey 2013 - What Girls Say About Equality for Girls

One phrase in Black's description has particular relevance to this research – *to move from parental religious preferences*. For most young people in Britain in the sixties and seventies, such a move would mean away from formally organised religion and for the vast majority of those that organised religion was Christianity.¹⁹⁹ Those young people are the parents or even grandparents from whose preferences their own children are now moving away, in some cases and in several world faiths towards fundamentalism and so in precisely the opposite direction from that in which their parents moved.²⁰⁰ However overwhelmingly in the UK the trend remains towards an interesting combination of secularism with some kind of spirituality.

Before moving to discussion of three general trends, two other issues require mention: environmental concerns and technical media developments.

The second half of the twentieth century saw growing public concern about *green issues*. It was to be expected that most girls and young women would whole-heartedly embrace the idea of care for the environment. Equally this love and knowledge of the natural world had been part of the ethos of Guiding since its foundation. The Guide law states 'A Guide respects all living things and takes care of the world around her.'²⁰¹ However it is an interesting development that, while the girls until recently would frequently cite this as the easiest of the laws to keep, more recently large numbers have been citing it as the most difficult.²⁰² It is surely not the actual difficulty which has increased but the standard perceived as necessary by young people growing up in a world scared by the possible effects of climate change and aware of increasing concern about scarce energy sources.

It is frequently noted that the second half of the twentieth century showed rapid development in both the capabilities and the availability of communication media. Rebel adolescents from 1964 onwards listened to Radio Caroline broadcasting *back-to-back* current popular music from far enough off shore to avoid the UK legislation governing public broadcasting and bandwidth allocation.²⁰³ The piracy was part of the appeal. The first commercial radio station licensed to operate nationally within the United Kingdom²⁰⁴ was Classic FM which went on air in 1992. By then a very different repertoire was the one expected to draw audience and advertisers. Perception of who had the spending power had changed yet again. However by the early

¹⁹⁹ Taylor 2003 p 83 and following

²⁰⁰ Sacks 1991 p75 and Williams 2012 p124

²⁰¹ Girlguiding UK 2013a p34

²⁰² Personal direct observation and discussion with other leaders. Adult members however most usually cite 'A Guide makes good use of her time'. It is difficult to convince some adults that they are allowed time to themselves.

²⁰³ Changes in regulation made Radio Caroline illegal only from 1967

²⁰⁴ The Sound Broadcasting Act 1972 made provision for licensing of local radio stations but with very tight controls over both programme mix and transmission power.

nineties, radio was almost irrelevant as part of the youth scene. As the century progressed the development of public access to the internet and the range of less expensive and more portable and varied forms of information communications technology (ICT) changed the world of communications and media both radically and rapidly. The challenge now is to get the attention of people away from their screens and interacting with those around them. There is genuine concern expressed that computer and mobile communication device use has become a serious problem of addiction. Certainly keeping appropriately up to date without over-reaction is a challenge for any organisation. The bigger challenge is encouraging people to continue to talk with each other, to take exercise and generally to maintain balance in their lifestyles. There is much popular comment that this is particularly an issue for those working with young people but no real evidence to suggest that this is actually the case.²⁰⁵ The issues just discussed provide some of the downside of the prevalence of personal ICT. The positives are clear. A particular positive for a global organisation like Guiding is the ease of personal communication with friends across the world. Guiding prides itself (and always has) on being *relevant to today's girl*. One of the current challenges is to encourage girls to enjoy talking with their Guide friends on the other side of the world but also to enjoy talking and working with those sitting beside them.

Education, exceptional needs and gender expectations

Guiding, at least in England and Wales was designed for an age group already in the workforce. In the early years, the movement welcomed a mix of both working girls and girls of the same age from a different section of society attending private schools, mostly the comparatively new foundations of the Girls' Public Day School Trust. The mixture was deliberate. It mirrored the mix of boys at B-P's original experimental camp at Brownsea Island; an experiment which had proved B-P right in his expectations of success.²⁰⁶ Throughout the century the statutory minimum school-leaving age was raised in stages, eventually in the early 1970s reaching age 16 across the United Kingdom²⁰⁷. The Guide section is now a section of school girls. Across the same time span senior secondary schooling in England and Wales has changed in stages from almost entirely single gender establishments (often based on earlier GPDST schools) to a situation where the great majority of schools are co-educational. The detail of the history is different in Scotland. However the general trends of a rising statutory school leaving age and an ever increasing proportion of schools being co-educational both remain true.²⁰⁸ As the century progressed, across the United Kingdom increasing numbers of young people remained at school

²⁰⁵ Observing behaviour on any train or bus suggests that the addiction is fairly evenly spread. Concerns about executives checking their emails several time each day when on holiday are being discussed in current public health forums.

²⁰⁶ Kerr 1976 p24

²⁰⁷ There have been further changes since 2010 but these are not within the scope of this chapter.

²⁰⁸ Black 1996 p273

beyond the minimum age and increasing numbers entered further or higher education.²⁰⁹ The pattern acted out in the Guide section in the early years of the 20th century is now being acted out in Ranger Units.

One area in which both Guiding and Scouting were clear leaders was in their attitude to young people with disabilities or other exceptional needs. The expectation was clear: the movements were open to everyone prepared to make the promise. Very early photographs show Guide Units carrying out a range of activities, including camping, and among their members are those using not only wheelchairs but a variety of other aids. This was expected. It was also what happened. What is surprising, if not almost incredible, from the perspective of the twenty-first century, is just how far ahead of its time Guiding was in this matter. In the early part of the twentieth century there was little provision for the education of children who were 'different'. The provision which existed was in separate special schools and followed the medical model of attending to defect, illness and problem. While specialists argued about the inadequacy of this model, little was done about the far greater problem of the total inadequacy of sufficient provision of any sort to meet even perceived need. In the second half of the century, the 1944 Act addressed certain aspects of education for children with *special needs*. However, its approach here was not as liberating as it was for education in general. Special schools were still seen as the most appropriate way to educate children with special needs, although limited recognition was given to provision of education in mainstream schools. The 1944 act still referred to children who 'suffered from a disability of mind or body', and so focused on special schools as catering for 'handicapped' children. However education authorities in England and Wales now had an obligation to make appropriate provision. In immediate post war Britain and with a massive change in policy to implement for the majority, it is fair to say that while all had the obligation most had neither the resources nor the inclination.

It was in this era that Trefoil School was established near Edinburgh. During the Second World War, Guides had volunteered their services to the City of Edinburgh in order to help a group of 'special evacuees'. These evacuees were in the language of the times 'physically handicapped' children. None of the children had been at school or in hospital and therefore no provision for their evacuation had been made by any authority and it fell to these volunteers to provide a home and to care for them. The house found was in St Abbs in Berwickshire. In her history of Guiding in Scotland, Elizabeth Robertson²¹⁰ comments that it was the evacuees themselves who enquired what was to happen to them at the end of the war. The decision was taken to open a

²⁰⁹ *ibid*

²¹⁰ Robertson 2000 p17, 22

school for children with exceptional needs and the Trefoil School came into being. It operated as a school until, in the 1970s, social care and educational reforms placed the responsibility for education of children with 'Special Needs' in the sphere of local authorities. The finance to support this initiative followed the individual child and therefore the aspiration of local authorities was to keep the children within their own areas. Clearly this was of benefit to the children however it meant that Trefoil School lost most of its revenue virtually overnight. Trefoil School became Trefoil Centre providing holiday accommodation for those with similar challenges in their lives to the challenges which faced the original school's pupils.

The Para-Olympian Barbara Howie speaks in the BBC documentary²¹¹ produced for the Guiding centenary. Barbara uses a wheelchair. She comments that in her childhood, as recently as the late 1950s, for this reason alone the expectation of the local authority was simply that she would not be educated. Determination on the part of her mother led to the provision of a teacher for two hours a week. Even this provision was removed when she reached secondary age. Barbara attended Trefoil School.

In the 1960s and 70s attitudes to special education in general started to change, and behaviourist initiatives made teaching of children with learning difficulties seem more accessible to teachers in mainstream schools. These ideas helped to promote the possibility of inclusion of children with special educational needs.²¹² The Warnock Report in 1978 was based on the findings of a committee set up to review the provision for children with mental and physical disabilities. The Committee's research suggested that only 2 per cent of the school population required separate educational provision, but that there were another 18 per cent of children who would require special provision in normal schools. Warnock argued that this 18 per cent had always been there, but that there had not been a consistent effort to integrate these children in the system.²¹³

In Guiding the mix was there from the start. The girls became friends with those who were different in these ways as in many others. They worked and played together. This undoubtedly contributed to the growth, not least the spiritual growth, of them all. It obviously also gives extra challenges to leaders and those who train them. The practical challenges are the easy ones. It is

²¹¹ *One Hundred Years of the Girl Guides* first shown BBC4 2009, DVD - Clan Productions 2009 producer Rosalind Bain.

²¹² Clegg & Megson 1968 p14ff

²¹³ www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/warnock/ The Warnock Report formed the basis of the 1981 Education Act's policies (enforced in 1983) on special educational needs (SEN), which introduced a quite different approach to the definition of children with SEN: *A child will have a special educational need if s/he has a learning difficulty requiring special educational provision. The 'learning difficulty' includes not only physical and mental disabilities, but also any kind of learning difficulty experienced by a child, provided that it is significantly greater than that of the majority of children of the same age.* The Act went further in stating that the education of children with SEN should be carried out in ordinary schools where possible.

indeed challenging to provide meaningful spiritual nurture and activities for a girl who perhaps can not speak or who thinks in ways different from and opaque to the majority of people. However as Rebecca Nye comments:

But in fact it is apparent that the more difficult children's life circumstances are, the more spiritual sensitivity and spiritual hunger they may have.²¹⁴

This is not to imply that those with exceptional needs necessarily consider that they have difficult life circumstances. However these children, like all children, often have much to teach the adults about spiritual strength as, of course, do leaders who work with such major challenges in their own lives.

The third part of this section speaks very briefly of changing gender expectations. For many countries of the world, the twentieth century was one of significant change in society's expectations of the role of women. The franchise was extended to women. The variety of roles for women in the workplace was extended. There was call for *equality*, although there was little agreement on what equality actually meant in this context. Methods of contraception were developed which placed the possibility of control in the hands of women for the first time. Most universities changed regulations to allow for women to be admitted and to graduate under identical conditions to those relating to men. The list could be continued almost indefinitely. Much legislative change was to forbid overt or overtly expressed discrimination against women or specifically against married women. Significant change in the reality was sometimes but by no means always the consequence. This legislation came in an era which saw a slow but growing trend of similar changes in attitudes to other groups: for example those of different ethnicity, age group or (dis)ability. Ironically (but perhaps inevitably) it also came in an era which saw some governments and regimes practising and promoting such discrimination explicitly. (Challenges which the movement in South Africa experienced, for example, in maintaining its principles during the apartheid era were discussed briefly in the previous chapter.) Some effects of legislative changes are discussed in the next section.

For Guiding the challenge was, as always, to remain *relevant to today's girls* and at the same time *to care for the individual*. In a period of history which has seen enormous societal change, Guiding's ethos and stated mission has always been to encourage girls to achieve their individual best in the immediate circumstances in which they find themselves. The emphasis is on the practically possible as well as the ideal. Naturally the two are not always the same thing. In the period between approximately 1965 and 1985 particularly, the publicity given to various streams

²¹⁴ Nye 2009 p70

of the feminist movement in the United Kingdom, led many girls and women to be concerned about just what was expected of them. It led others to considerable irritation because they thought that they already knew. The opportunity to discuss and work out these matters in a quiet and practical environment with other girls and women was welcomed. There was no pressure for conformity. Respect for the views of the others was the taught norm. However Guiding certainly maintained an ethos summarised by a speaker on the centenary BBC programme: *I can do it – and if I don't know how I can learn.*²¹⁵ It is interesting that precisely these opportunities for exploration just mentioned in the context of the varied expectations of different varieties of feminism are also the ones recently named²¹⁶ by Guides as being welcome in current society with respect to exploring the varied faiths of their friends and those around them.

Guiding is a movement in which some Edwardian schoolgirls were taught to fly²¹⁷; some girls who used wheelchairs joined their units in camp in an era when their local councils said these children were uneducable²¹⁸; at the time of partition, Indian and Pakistani Guide leaders met and embraced each other with the World Chief Guide in no-man's-land at the border while both sets of frontier guards looked the other way²¹⁹; Jane showed an internet film clip to a charity-supporters' meeting in a Guide hall known to everyone to be totally Wi-Fi resistant²²⁰. Guiding supports the development of girls and young women. It helps if legislation does not get in the way and when those in positions of power do not promote discriminatory practice. These are wrongs, sometimes horrendous wrongs, which have been fought and which people must continue to fight. However when working with young people, simply going against society's expectations is not always such a problem.

International relations, changing communications media and culturally diverse society

The first one hundred years of Guiding's history occurred in a world which was experiencing an unending series of wars. Two major conflicts which history has termed World Wars were followed by a series of conflicts more territorially confined but no less disastrous for those affected. (The 1978 World Conference was held as scheduled in Tehran despite the looming

²¹⁵ *One Hundred Years of the Girl Guides* first shown BBC4 2009, DVD - Clan Productions 2009 producer Rosalind Bain.

²¹⁶ See interview findings presented in later chapter

²¹⁷ Gardner 2011 p8

²¹⁸ *One Hundred Years of the Girl Guides* first shown BBC4 2009, DVD - Clan Productions 2009 producer Rosalind Bain.

²¹⁹ Baden-Powell O 1973 p261

²²⁰ Jane (name changed) is one of our own Senior Section members. The hall full of adults chorusing *that won't work in here* makes the occasion memorable.

probability of the Iran-Iraq War.²²¹ Memories and stories of Pax Ting must have been reawakened at least for older delegates.) Weapons have become more efficient and fairly readily available. Guerrilla tactics are increasingly an accepted norm. Many nations gained, or regained, independence. Other nations divided usually in hope of finding a peaceful way forward. A variety of ideologies vied with each other in public and political arenas. At the same time more widespread concern became expressed about inequitable distribution of global resources, particularly food, health care and education, between nations. In the second half of the period, the United Nations Organisation made effective interventions in many cases but problems did not go away.

The detail was, naturally, specific to the era. However none of this was basically new in human history. What was really new was that far more people were aware of it. The major change was in public communications. When Guiding was founded, Marconi was still exploring the full possibilities of wireless audio communication. At its centenary celebrations, Guiding's nations were connected by video link and Skype at the many venues – efficiently, readily and reasonably inexpensively. Perhaps more significant, current young members expected nothing else. Guides used to correspond with members across the world as pen pals; an exchange of letters taking several of weeks. Now contacting a link unit²²² in Russia produces a reply complete with *selfie* in a few minutes. The girls see that they are talking with other girls in jeans and blue t-shirts – obviously ‘real people’. When Guides in Britain gave support to a Wateraid project to build school toilets in Nepal²²³, graphic illustrations of progress could be provided easily. A different side of this ease of communication is that children as well as adults are more aware of the disasters and distress of people across the world than ever before, both from personal communications and from public media. This awareness affects their spiritual growth with concern and questioning. ‘If God exists can he/she/it/they possibly care?’ *If I were God I’d say sorry*²²⁴ is the title of a book aimed at 12 to 16 year olds and attempting to discuss these challenging questions. For many teenagers and indeed for many adults, the title says it all. This is expressed more generally by theologian Mona Siddiqui:

In a globalised and technologically connected world, what happens on the streets of London reverberates in the mountains of Yemen; what matters in the revolutionary squares of Cairo provokes the debate about nation and state in the West.²²⁵

²²¹ www.waggs.org

²²² Scotland was designated as a link support country for Russia (the Russian federation) as it re-starts Guiding after a break since 1918. Russia was previously a very early member of the world Guiding.

²²³ UN research had shown that girls, particularly older girls, are more likely than boys to drop out of school if no toilet facilities are provided. (Boys of all nations are generally more content than girls to *nip out the back*.) For this reason, as a female organisation, Guiding chose this project as part of its *Change the World* centenary project.

²²⁴ Kirkwood 1996 – Kirkwood is writing from a Christian view point but his observations have a wider relevance.

²²⁵ Siddiqui 2015 p158

Another major change over the century is the far greater cultural diversity which many people experience at local level. Peoples have become steadily more mobile. War, political upheaval, economic challenge and natural disaster have led whole groups to migrate from their homeland. Others, in happier circumstances, have simply chosen to travel in order to broaden their experience. For some this is a holiday or a gap year. For others it can be several years of work or study in another culture for reasons which range from simple interest to hope of improving career prospects. Across Britain many children are growing up in completely multi-cultural societies and schools and many of these societies have been so mixed for two or sometimes several generations. Equally some areas are hardly touched by change of this sort. It is one of the challenges to Guiding's leader trainers that they must work appropriately with this diversity of leader experience and, indeed, must be aware of how their own experience on their home patch may be influencing their training.

Religious pluralism, secularisation and individualism

From 1910 the landscape of faith practice in Britain became more diverse and the traditional practice of any faith became less common. As noted in Chapter 1, the first Sikh gurdwara in Britain opened in Putney in 1911. The first Islamic mosque opened in Woking in 1912.²²⁶ However for the early part of the period Judaism was the only faith in addition to Christianity which was fairly widely represented across urban Britain. With significant waves of immigration starting in the 1960s, other historic world faiths started to have major representation at least in some areas of the country. As numbers increased, these faiths demonstrated the same intra-faith differences that had always beset both Christianity and Judaism: doctrinal differences between varied traditions in the faith and arguments about the position of the borderline between doctrinal imperatives and cultural norms. These intra-faith issues can be at least as challenging to youth leaders working in an area of diverse faiths as any caused by actual main-stream faith differences – if not more so. Over the same time span, a diversity of other philosophies and practices were gaining more adherents, or possibly simply more adherents who were prepared to speak about their beliefs publicly.²²⁷ In her autobiography, Olave Baden-Powell speaks of exploring both Spiritualism and Christian Science.²²⁸ (She comments that she found one helpful and the other not.) This was in the 1920s and her writings suggest that these explorations were common amongst mature *ladies* of her own class background. This spiritual searching had

²²⁶ Brown C G 2006 p57

²²⁷ These were developments of the trends already noted in Chapter 2 (Chadwick 1970 – closing chapter, Gilbert 1976 p177 and following) and predicted in the closing section of S J Brown's *Providence and Empire* (Brown S J 2008)

²²⁸ Baden-Powell O 1973 p156

become almost a cultural norm for the group and often took place in parallel with conventional (Anglican) church observance. Later in the same chapter she muses:

In times of grief and doubt I have turned to God for strength and comfort, but what is Truth? Maybe soon I shall know.²²⁹

At the start of the 21st century Dean echoes this searching in her words about youth ministry:

Adolescents reject the post modern assumption that there is no such thing as truth. The problem is not that there is no truth but that there are so many truths to choose from. The test of post modern faith is discerning which truth matters most.²³⁰

In the later 60s and through into the 70s began an era of wide-spread youth exploration of eastern traditions, notably some strands of Hinduism and Buddhism. Led by the example of such groups as the Beatles, significant numbers headed for India and Tibet in search of this elusive Truth. Spiritual exploration had in some cases become almost a media-supported cult. Recently, as many authors have commented²³¹, openly expressed spiritual seeking has become more widespread across the population and at the same time practised adherence to main stream religious faiths has diminished. As support for a philosophy of individualism has grown and the public's inclination to *join things* has diminished, the curious situation has arisen that many give the impression that the world's historic religions are the one place where people are quite sure that they will *not* find experience or knowledge of spirituality.²³² Speaking specifically of Christianity, Pritchard comments:

It's strange that the church should find itself so beleaguered and diminished at a time when people are so articulate in expressing their feelings of spiritual need.....²³³

In his book *The Persistence of Faith* Jonathan Sacks²³⁴ discusses this phenomenon across many world faiths.

Much more recently in Britain a more pragmatic element has been added to the complexity as a number of smaller faith groups have formally registered as 'religions' so as to obtain the protection available under law and charitable financial status. This is not to denigrate in any way this perfectly proper action. However it certainly adds yet another layer of meaning to the question of what is a faith tradition for a movement which has always welcomed members of all faiths presumably including those faiths which did not exist formally anywhere in the world

²²⁹ *ibid* p157

²³⁰ Dean 2004 p103

²³¹ see for example Davie, Heelas & Woodhead 2003 p5ff and Brown S J 2008 p381ff

²³² Brown C G 2001 p5

²³³ Pritchard 2009

²³⁴ Sacks 1991

when the movement was founded. It also adds to the confusion felt by leaders in some areas and the challenges faced by their trainers. The standard is that laid down by WAGGGS and discussed and quoted more fully in the previous chapter:

The essence of Duty to God is the acknowledgement of the necessity for a search for a faith in God, in a Supreme Being, and the acknowledgement of a Force higher than man, of the highest Spiritual Principles.²³⁵

This statement naturally causes even more questions when discussing atheism, agnosticism, humanism and secularism. The situation is made more complex because there is little agreement about the exact meaning of any of these terms. Certainly there has been much discussion in other contexts recently about the distinction between humanism which was considered to embrace human spirituality in some form and secularism which was not.²³⁶ The Guiding rule remains: anyone is welcome in Guiding who is prepared to make the promise. It is for WAGGGS to decide whether that promise in the form of words proposed by a particular member nation meets the requirements of the core ethos of the movement. In one sense, at least, the decision for the local unit leader is an easy one.

A final development, discussed more fully later, should also be mentioned briefly here. For several decades now in Britain, the proportion of those following the observed practices of any faith has been falling. Equally formal public practices of faith in some schools and in civic society are rare. Many younger leaders have absolutely no experience from which to start when approaching the topic of corporate spiritual observance. This has been true for some years. However most recently there has been a shift in some public perception moving religion from the category of absurd to that of pernicious. Both points of view have always existed but there has certainly been a switch in the balance. A question now causing general concern among many leaders in Guiding is ‘Is it OK to do God here?’²³⁷ The answer is yes. Indeed it is in some senses obligatory – but in ways requiring more sensitivity than ever before.

The first part of this chapter has traced the history of Guiding through the first century of its existence. The later part of the chapter explored the development of three broad trends which have particular relevance to Guiding and to this research:

²³⁵ WAGGGS 2000 module 1 p2

²³⁶ see for example Williams 2012 p283

²³⁷ The phrase ‘Do God’ is commonly attributed to Alastair Campbell and his intervention to prevent the then Prime Minister addressing a faith-based subject – see for example www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1429109/ It has since been used by several authors including Burton and McCabe (2009) and Carey and Carey (2012). However it was already in common usage by young people. This was doubtless a cause of its popularity.

Guiding is inclusive in its welcome to girls and women. Therefore the first broad trend considers issues of changing approaches to gender, to education and to those with exceptional needs. Guiding is a global movement embracing international sisterhood. Therefore the second trend discusses international relations, cultural diversity and changing communications media. Guiding is explicit both in its intention to nurture the spirituality and faith practice of each of its members and in its inclusivity. This aspect of Guiding's ethos is the main background to this research. Therefore the third trend considers issues of religious pluralism, of secularisation and of individualism. The next chapter will discuss how Guiding in the United Kingdom is meeting current challenges to its ethos and practice raised by developments in these three areas. It will introduce factors which led to this research and to the questions asked.

Part Two

4 Current Practice

This chapter outlines current policy and practice in Guiding in the United Kingdom in areas of direct relevance to this research. It discusses formal requirements of the Movement, both national and global, and observed current practice and interpretation of these requirements in British Guiding. It then describes various areas of societal and contextual change and how they are affecting perceptions and practices of leaders in Guiding and those who train them. The second part of the chapter is presented, for clarity, as a series of distinct issues but with understanding that factors involved in these issues interact in complex ways. Any responses to one will have consequences for others.

While these issues affect society and hence Guiding world-wide, discussion here relates specifically to the United Kingdom as focus constituency of this research. Several of these matters, notably gender expectations and religious fundamentalism, impact on Guiding in some member nations with a severity unimaginable to most British leaders. Obviously these are issues of serious concern to Guiding. They are simply not the issues addressed in this research.

What is Guiding?

What does it stand for? What does it do?

Guiding is a global movement which is inclusive in its welcome of all girls and women who are prepared to make, or to consider whether they should make, the promise. Membership is voluntary.²³⁸ Guiding values the spirituality of its members including the youngest and seeks their spiritual development. This search for spiritual growth is encapsulated in the promise in all member nations.²³⁹ Guiding claims the sisterhood of all its members. Guiding helps its members grow as individuals. It expects sisterhood but does not impose uniformity. Guiding works on the small group (patrol) system with each group of young people themselves choosing a leader from among themselves. Young members are self-governing and make their own choices to the greatest possible extent that their age and capabilities allow. Guiding is fun!²⁴⁰ Guiding method is based on practical (scouting) experiences and activities. Leader training

²³⁸ WAGGGS 2008 p9

²³⁹ WAGGGS 2000 module 1 p2; WAGGGS 20008 p7

²⁴⁰ Girlguiding 2013a p112

should be based on the same practical methods of experience and activity.²⁴¹ In the United Kingdom this ethos is currently summarised in the ‘five essentials of Guiding’,²⁴²

Guides share commitment to a common standard
 Guides care for the individual
 Guides work together in small groups
 Guides make their own decisions
 Guides have a balanced and varied programme

The promise

The threefold Guide promise embraces growth in spirituality, citizenship and service. The wording of the promise of any member nation must be submitted to WAGGGS for approval when first applying for membership and again at the time of any change, for example to embrace more contemporary language. The choice of whether or not to make the promise is the decision of the girl herself.²⁴³ Younger members (Rainbows and Brownies) may attend and participate in all aspects of the programme without choosing to make the promise if that is their wish (or a requirement of their parents). However it is very rare indeed for them not to wish to make the promise. Young women in the two older sections can attend and participate but the more advanced badges and awards in these sections do require that the recipient has made and reflected upon the promise. Unit leaders and assistant leaders must make or reaffirm the Guide promise before qualification. All members reaffirm their promise when moving to a new section.

Leader training

Those who formally train leaders in Guiding must be qualified and that scheme of qualification must be approved by WAGGGS.²⁴⁴ Trainers must be current leaders in section(s) for which they train. In the United Kingdom their training licence is reappraised every three years. All leaders are expected to take part in regular training and updating. New leaders work on a specific training scheme.²⁴⁵ The basic content of that scheme has changed little over the years although the format and presentation has evolved steadily. It includes knowledge of Guiding; administrative procedures; safety and security and most importantly, how to work with girls of

²⁴¹ WAGGGS 2012 p1

²⁴² Girlguiding 2013a p12

²⁴³ *ibid* p30

²⁴⁴ WAGGGS 2012 p1

²⁴⁵ Girlguiding 2013b

the relevant age group(s), to plan and organise activities; to encourage self-governance and to lead activities which make the promise real and relevant.

What has changed formally?

Everything written above about policy and ethos has been true throughout Guiding's existence and remains true. The value base and basic methods have not changed and remain true to those laid down by the founder. However Guiding is firm in its intent always to be relevant to today's girl. For example initially uniform was based round a skirt or dress but for some decades now, uniform in the UK has included the option of wearing trousers and this is by far the more popular option with all ages. It is even longer since the ability to plait one's own hair ceased to be mandatory for Brownies! Both of these were formal changes which were not without challenge at the time of the change. More controversial have been the periodic changes to the wording of the promise. The introduction of more contemporary language has proved even more concerning to some than the introduction of more contemporary clothing. These rewordings remain within the same, required, ethos of developing spiritual awareness and observance of personal faith practice. However they involve a central part of Guiding more sensitive, more precious and probably also more prone to misunderstanding than any other. More about changes and indeed non-changes is included in the various discussions below

What is changing informally?

Leaders have always been required to support girls within the society in which those girls are growing up and finding their way. This means that leaders must in some senses change their approach over the years to meet contemporary demands. Both formal records and less formal unit log-books²⁴⁶ show an evolving programme of activities and approaches which demonstrate that they have done so with success.²⁴⁷ However as Guiding enters its second century, leaders attending trainings and similar adult events are commenting, informally but with concern, that they feel that many relevant aspects of societal experience and expectation are changing more rapidly than was true in earlier eras of Guiding's history. Whether this is factually true can be debated. Indeed it is difficult to see how such a broad statement could be quantified in any meaningful way so as to establish its accuracy. The relevant point is that the perception has been expressed by leaders as a matter for concern in their Guiding leadership and they have asked for advice and support. Equally some have observed that publicity given to many, in all walks of

²⁴⁶ Available in national and local Guiding archive collections

²⁴⁷ Fifty years of personal observation also indicates that they have done so with enthusiasm

life, who perhaps misjudged a situation and were considered to have got things wrong, is unnerving. This chapter considers some relevant areas in detail and discusses ways in which leader trainers might help. In this way it explains the background which gave rise to this research.

Six broad, pertinent and developing issues in British Society

Each of the six sections which follow starts with a single paragraph summarising the relevant issue. These are largely based on discussion in the previous chapter. In each section the second paragraph describes various relevant reactions and questions within local Guiding. These are largely based on questions and concerns raised personally by Guiding leaders at training sessions and other events. They were either made to or observed by trainers during such occasions²⁴⁸ and reported at trainers' meetings and discussions. It was the increasing number (and geographical spread) of *personal communications* on these subjects which gave rise to the idea of this research. All six issues presented here went on to arise in various forms within the research findings and are discussed and referenced more formally in that section of the thesis. For each of the six sections which follow, these two introductory paragraphs are followed by discussion of the issues in their theological context and with reference to (recent) writing in practical theology.

Particularly in the context of this section, but also elsewhere, specific acknowledgement should be given to Rowan Williams' recent book *Faith in the Public Square*²⁴⁹ in which Williams reflects on the theological issues underpinning many debates in contemporary society; debates which are mirrored in these various Guiding contexts. Equally some specific aspects of the discussion are particularly informed by Charles Taylor's work *Varieties of Religion Today*²⁵⁰ written a decade earlier but still of considerable pertinence. A third acknowledgement should be given to the new publication *My Way – A Muslim Woman's Journey*²⁵¹ by Mona Siddiqui. Siddiqui's discussion here provides, as expected, further considered and interesting theological reflection on the many relevant issues in society. It also, very pertinently to this research, provides them from the perspective of one who grew up as a 'girl from a minority faith' in a country not that of her birth. Her work presents some very relevant specific recollections and discussion.

²⁴⁸ As a long-serving Guiding trainer obviously many of these comments were made to or observed by me personally during such occasions. However their significance is that many trainers were reporting the same concerns and questions.

²⁴⁹ Williams 2012

²⁵⁰ Taylor 2003

²⁵¹ Siddiqui 2015

1 The changing cultural mix of society

Many areas of the United Kingdom are becoming more cosmopolitan but some are not.²⁵²

Leaders in some areas lead units including members from many cultural backgrounds and a variety of world faiths. Usually these girls know each other well. They are at school together and play together. For many it is what they have always known. These days, it is most common for these young women to have been born in the local community. They are not foreigners or visitors. Personal experience and informal discussion with other leaders based in such long-standing cosmopolitan communities strongly suggest that, happily, these units simply get on with their Guiding and do so very well. For these communities, cultural mix is not a *change* either for the girls or for the majority of leaders. They remember nothing else. A few units are in areas which mean that they welcome significant numbers of asylum seekers or refugees and again are entirely accustomed to this situation. Naturally, any unit may from time to time welcome a member arrived from overseas permanently or for a temporary period. Many of these girls (and adults) will already be members of Guiding and are delighted, and perhaps comforted, to find something which they know and some ready made friends whilst trying to settle in a strange land. Equally there remain localities with some units where these particular issues simply do not arise. Many of the questions posed came either from leaders in communities which were recently becoming more diverse or from leaders who had themselves moved from one situation to another and were meeting questions which were new to them.

Issues raised here which prompted this research

Occasionally challenges can arise at events including many units and hence perhaps led by leaders who are completely unfamiliar at a practical level with possible relevant issues. The most common problems are an unnecessary level of fuss or quite unnecessary worry on the part of the leader concerned or both. Trainers regularly spoke of this but consistently commented that very rarely indeed was there a *real* practical issue. The research findings confirm this with no reports at all of actual problems and with confirmation that leaders are aware of the relevant association sources of practical guidance. Yet a general concern remains about *getting it wrong* or giving offence. Leaders worrying, let alone worrying unnecessarily, is something to be avoided if possible and much of the responsibility for alleviating this lies with trainers. Far more challenging problems may arise because a unit has developed a longstanding tradition which was

²⁵² See for example Black 1996 pp 316, 319, 323 and Brown C G 2006 p293 and following. In the closing sections of his *A History of the British Isles*, Jeremy Black discusses the general nature of this situation. C G Brown reflects on some of the more specifically religious aspects of the question.

entirely appropriate as Guiding practice as long, but only as long, as it was acceptable to all members of the unit and voluntary.²⁵³ An obvious, but by no means the only, example of this is 'church parade' which has *never* been acceptable as a *compulsory* Guiding activity. It is, of course, quite acceptable to invite and indeed to encourage those girls who wish, to attend a religious observance of their own faith. However this is not compulsory and therefore should not attract praise for attending or penalty for failure to do so. There is currently much misunderstanding around this issue; some of it within Guiding but much more outside the movement. Again this is not a new issue. Handbooks throughout the history of the movement have stressed the policy and the policy has not changed. In a handbook of 1933 prior to addressing his main theme, the author finds it appropriate to restate that policy with particular clarity:

If the Group is composed of members of one particular form of religion, it is the duty of the (leader) to encourage the attendance of all members.....

If the Group is composed of members of various forms of religion they should be encouraged to attend the services of their own form of religion.....²⁵⁴

Again trainers must explain correct policy without adopting either of the extreme and equally erroneous positions. They face particular difficulty, as do the leaders whom they are supporting, when a long-standing and much appreciated tradition is involved. The issues described above are general. A third point suggesting this research involves questions asked by leaders who are newly facing practical issues as the neighbourhood in which they lead slowly becomes more diverse. Another pertinent but unexpected issue arose in responses. Trainers when acting in this role are naturally expected to promote correct Guiding policy. When questioned all indicated that they were fully aware of this and accepted it as appropriate practice. Equally all were aware of the necessity to refer to appropriate sources when faced with a question to which they did not immediately have the answer. However interviews revealed that a small number of trainers, mostly those whose background and personal Guiding experience lies in more rural communities, were simply unaware that Guiding in the UK and, more particularly, WAGGGS actually had policy and guidance on some of these issues. This is obviously a very different

²⁵³ A rare exception occurs in a very few *closed sponsored* units. These are units sponsored by a particular organisation for girls in their own community. The most obvious examples are units in children's hospitals and in boarding schools which restrict their membership to current in-patients/pupils for obvious reasons. However there are a small number of remaining historic *closed sponsored* units where the sponsoring organisation is a religious body with some additional rights in the direction of religious observance. The proportion of such units is now tiny. The fraction of those which exist, who chose to exercise this right is even smaller and is decreasing. Neither are these the units involved in the issues discussed above. However their existence should be mentioned for completeness.

²⁵⁴ Leonard 1933 p14

matter from knowing that policy exists but not what it says. The difficulties inherent in addressing this unanticipated finding are discussed more fully in the research outcomes.

Discussion

In his recent book *Faith in the Public Square*, Rowan Williams opens his chapter on multiculturalism with the comment ‘We seem to be worried about multiculturalism but we seem to be equally unclear about what the word means.’²⁵⁵ He goes on to explore various interpretations of the term and various reactions to aspects of it. An example which can be particularly pertinent to youth organisations is the dichotomy between those who rejoice in celebrating the variety of festivals, music, cuisine and costume of many cultures and those who see this as a challenge to national identity. He observes that at civic level there becomes a risk that:

Public life will inevitably tend to make diversity publicly invisible or at least simply decorative when it becomes visible (celebrations of ethnic diversity as no more than a manifestation of the level of general tolerance shown by public administrators).²⁵⁶

and he comments:

If we can distinguish between a multiculturalism that is a simply a minimal public tolerance for eccentric or exotic private diversities and a multiculturalism that brings into public democratic debate the most significant motivating elements in people’s convictions about human dignity and destiny, we shall have moved on significantly from some of our current deadlocks.²⁵⁷

Certainly in the Guiding community, leaders face the challenge of trying to achieve both of these aims.²⁵⁸ Children (and adults) enjoy celebrating with their friends. Guiding teaches respect for diversity and many leaders have noted that children, particularly young children, largely do not seem to *see* differences among their friends. Leaders face the challenge of maintaining this acceptance and friendship while not avoiding that discussion, in age-appropriate language, about significant motivating elements. They are helped by the fact that young people largely are not afraid to discuss such issues with their friends. Ivy Beckwith discusses this openness to discussion in her book *Postmodern Children’s Ministry*²⁵⁹ Trainers have noted that many leaders commented on the fact that young people are aware of the diversity of ‘truths’ embraced by their friends and neighbours. In a variety of wordings and situations these leaders confirm Dean’s

²⁵⁵ Williams 2012 p99

²⁵⁶ Williams 2012 p103

²⁵⁷ *ibid* p108

²⁵⁸ see also Wingate 2005

²⁵⁹ Beckwith 2004 p31ff

observation, cited in the previous chapter²⁶⁰ that the need is to discern which truth matters most. However for most of them, as Rebecca Nye²⁶¹ suggests, this arouses interest rather than generating fear or concern. (Obviously leaders also have the duty to support the occasional young person for whom such discussion will give rise to considerable concern or distress.) Leaders need to be made aware of the various Guiding resources available which help. Some need to be supported to find the courage to explore these issues. Some need to be reassured that they are allowed to do so. Some simply find that:

Sometimes children become fearless guides exploring terrain as yet unknown.....²⁶²

2 The changing experience of faith practice and observance

There is less traditional religious observance both personal and in civil society²⁶³

Increasing numbers of adults in British society have no experience of being a member of any practising faith community. At the same time much civil society no longer includes even the briefest religious observance. All schools throughout the United Kingdom are required to give time to reflection but, except in denominational schools, this can sometimes embrace ethics and good citizenship without direct reference to the spiritual.²⁶⁴ Thus increasing numbers of leaders face the challenge of nurturing spirituality and, perhaps more challenging, leading acts of corporate spiritual reflection with little experience (good or bad) on which to base their practice.

Issues raised here which prompted this research

A major cry which prompted this research was ‘I don’t know where to begin?’ (The entirely different cry of ‘I don’t know if I should’ is discussed later.) This section is concerned with those leaders who know that Guiding includes spiritual observance and, indeed, includes the need to teach the girls how to lead corporate spiritual observance and who wish to do so but whose starting point is ‘what is it?’. This is an area where trainers also vary in their confidence to approach the topic, perhaps particularly in more cosmopolitan neighbourhoods. At least trainers are more aware of the various association resources available to support this aspect of Guide training. One interesting comment however, was heard many times before the start of the

²⁶⁰ Dean 2004 p103

²⁶¹ Nye 2009 p8

²⁶² Cocks 2002 p20

²⁶³ see for example Brown C G 2006 p4 & following, Sacks 1991 p8, Williams 2012 p2 & following, p43

²⁶⁴ see for example Curriculum for Excellence briefing 16 Religious Observance (Time for Reflection), Education Scotland 2014 (www.educationscotland.gov.uk) National Occupational Standards also address these issues for statutory youth work – see nos.ukces.org.uk – standard LSIYW1.1.4.v2 *Encourage the spiritual development of young people*

research and it was reiterated in the responses to it. This was that those who were felt to have led the most helpful and appreciated sessions on this subject were those who had also made it clear that they felt secure in their own faith. This was often the case even when that faith varied from the faith, if any, of those making the comment. There is a big issue to be explored here.

Discussion

In discussing this issue, it is perhaps helpful to start with two quotations from Guiding sources. The first was written very recently in 2011:

Some members (of Guiding) will be active members of a worshipping community and that background will give them ongoing support and encouragement as they seek to deepen their own relationship with God. Others may be exploring spirituality and its wider context. Many leaders are unsure what spirituality means.....²⁶⁵

However it is informative to note that, written over sixty years earlier, appears:

It is common knowledge to-day that many boys have no true instruction in the faith of any religious denomination; we are not concerned at the moment with the reasons for that. It is not quite so obvious, but none the less true, that many of our Scouters themselves are wandering somewhat perplexedly in a rather ungodly wilderness.²⁶⁶

This paragraph appears at the start of a book written in 1948 for both Scouting and Guiding and formally endorsed by the chief commissioners of both associations. The content of the book confirms that these issues are not new and neither is the fact that those responsible for adult support within the movement are concerned to know how to help. The solutions proposed in the book of 1948 would need considerable translation to be appropriate and acceptable in the Britain of 2015. The fact that there is an issue to be addressed and that the duty of spiritual nurture accepted by Guiding's leaders is indeed challenging remain constant. It is perhaps even more demanding in the new societal situations described in the other sections of this chapter. In this Guiding simply reflects its changing social context.

Writing a decade ago, Charles Taylor comments: 'We used to live in societies in which the presence of God was unavoidable.....the various invocations of God were inseparable from public life'²⁶⁷ However he goes on to note that 'but there was more than one form of this in our past'²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Girlguiding UK 2011 p33

²⁶⁶ Thurman J 1948 p9

²⁶⁷ Taylor 2003 p64

²⁶⁸ *ibid*

In their book *The Spirit of the Child*,²⁶⁹ David Hay and Rebecca Nye discuss perceptions of the distinction between the meanings of the words *religion* and *spirituality*. The book starts with a general discussion about human spirituality before going on to their particular themes of the spirituality of children and the place of spirituality in the education of children. In the introduction to the revised edition, Hay writes:

In the short time that has passed since the publication of the first edition, spirituality has surged into much greater prominence in the social and political life of our world. At the same time, recent research clearly shows that the traditional relationship of spirituality with institutional religion has come to seem dubious to many young people particularly in Western countries.²⁷⁰

Many writers discuss the fact that overt spiritual searching is currently growing steadily in Western Europe. They also comment on the fact that this is occurring in the face of decline in traditional public faith observance.²⁷¹ Perhaps the point is that much contemporary faith observance is neither traditional nor public. However as Taylor closes his book:

Many people are not satisfied with a momentary sense of wow! They want to take it further, and they're looking for ways to do so.²⁷²

For some leaders as well as many children achieving that sense of wow is the place to start:

Post modern youth view mystery as a possibility to be explored, a totality to be experienced. They understand reality by interacting with it, probing its dynamic potential. Consequently post modern youth study quantum physics, holistic medicine, the Green Movement. They conspire not to dissect mystery but to experience it, and to let it move them to a new place.²⁷³

For all people that exploration is sometimes a very individual and personal thing but equally:

There are certain emotions you can have in solidarity that you can't have alone, the experience mutates into something else by the fact that it is shared²⁷⁴

Mona Siddiqui, speaking of worshipping with those of other faiths, comments:

It is about knowing that you are sharing sacred space and time with someone else who belongs to God and turns to God.²⁷⁵

To quote David Lyall, admittedly out of context but none-the-less with pertinence:

²⁶⁹ Hay with Nye 2006

²⁷⁰ Hay with Nye 2006 p13

²⁷¹ See for example Brown C G 2006, Pritchard 2009, Sacks 1991

²⁷² Taylor 2003 p116

²⁷³ Dean 2004 p199

²⁷⁴ Taylor 2003 p28 (Jonathan Sacks goes further speaking of dire consequences of *now living through the discontents of individualism*: Sacks 2015 p41ff)

²⁷⁵ Siddiqui 2015 p70

Participation refers both to a communion in the divine life and to a sharing in the communal expression.²⁷⁶

Lyall is writing specifically in a church context. For many in British Guiding today there is no church (nor mosque, synagogue, temple or other corporate faith) context. Nurturing spirituality is inherently, at least in part, a communal process and Guiding continues to provide a space for this not only for those members who are, as quoted above, *active members of a worshipping community* but also for those who, in a society much of whose public space vows itself secular, have not (yet) found anywhere else to go for this experience.

3 The changing view of religious fundamentalism?

Some aspects of religious fundamentalism are currently hitting the news headlines²⁷⁷

All major world religions include a variety of traditions and in all cases some of these promote a more liberal interpretation of that faith's doctrines than others. This can lead to intra-faith conflict or disagreement. Some extreme examples are termed, in this context critically by the media, as fundamentalism. They may involve complete lack of tolerance of other faiths or even of other opinions within the same faith and may involve violence in defence of their point of view. Two aspects of the situation are currently critical for youth work in Britain. One is that these strands of a faith can be particularly attractive to some young people and approaches are often designed to be so. The other is that in a society far less well informed about the teaching of any faith than was previously the case, the claims of such groups can be assumed by the public to typify the faith concerned in general and the public behaviour of such groups can be assumed to be the specific teaching of that faith in general – as many such groups would themselves claim that it was.

Issues raised here which prompted this research

Families holding these religious views are unlikely to allow their children to join a youth movement which embraces such universal views of spirituality and faith development. In earlier discussions, trainers had not reported questions from leaders about concerns involving specific individual young people in their units and no such references arose in the research findings. The concern expressed is more general and has centred on two issues. One is a general public/media concern that any youth organisation which mentions God or religion is deliberately promoting

²⁷⁶ Lyall 2009 p107 *Tone-Deaf to Mystery – Worship, Preaching and Pastoral Care* in Forrester D B & Gay D (Ed)

²⁷⁷ see for example Brown C G 2006 p298ff, Williams 2012 p16

bigotry and intolerance if not violence. The other is the difficulty of presenting a fair view of the teaching of the world's faiths when local or global actions by an extreme group are giving an entirely different impression. These are clearly difficult issues for trainers to address but should not be ignored. Again interesting comments arose in the research findings.

Discussion

In the final section of *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain* which explores British religious life in the last quarter of that century, Callum Brown notes:

By the 1990s, increasing militancy amongst the shrinking churches was becoming evident, including the rising influence of fundamentalism.²⁷⁸

Here he is clearly speaking specifically of Christian fundamentalism. His discussion becomes more general as the chapter continues. Perhaps his most interesting point in the specific context of this research is that he speaks, in a number of places in this chapter, of the position and reactions of voluntary youth organisations making his observations appear general but always and only citing examples from the Boys' Brigade. This is a Christian foundation which, as Brown rightly and relevantly comments, discussed in the 1970s the organisation's overtly Christian aims and 'decided in 1976 to reaffirm Christianity'.²⁷⁹ Brown continues 'This reluctance to absorb the non-Christian drove a wedge into many plans for integration.....and this in part laid the basis for a late-century rise of religious militancy' Elsewhere he observes 'Youth Leaders were stumped'.²⁸⁰ He again cites only a Boys' Brigade officer and comments that membership of the BB fell by 42% between 1960 and 1982. This is true but the membership of Guiding²⁸¹ grew during that period suggesting that not all Youth Leaders were stumped. In was shortly after this period that Guiding reworded the first clause of its promise to insert before the word God the preposition *my* in the hope of making its multi-faith foundation and ethos more transparent. This largely was successful but regrettably it was not always so. Brown writes as a historian of religion. Rowan Williams writes as a theologian. Speaking of fundamentalism in the introduction to *Faith in the Market Place* he observes:

To say that fundamentalism represents a secularising moment is to recognise that there has been a dissociation here between language and time, so that the primary task (function) of religious utterance is to describe authoritatively and to resolve problems. It is not easy to

²⁷⁸ Brown C G 2006 p278

²⁷⁹ *ibid* p297

²⁸⁰ *ibid* p279

²⁸¹ Total membership figures for Guiding in the United Kingdom: 1960 – 594,491 and 1982 – 833,294 (source Girlguiding archives)

restore to this kind of religious ethos the awareness of subject and object alike ‘being seen’ which I have suggested as basic to the non-secular vision.²⁸²

To move from this scholarly language to a volunteer leader working for an hour a week with a small group of children could easily appear absurd but as that leader and her unit try to explore their perception of the spiritual together they are surely at least moving in the right direction if only by tiny steps. Williams speaks of the missing place of wonder, of arts and of imagination in the philosophies of both secularism and fundamentalism. He observes that there is a way of ‘seeing’ others beyond our way of seeing and beyond theirs. The children speak of stickers and songs and growing plants. They chat together about what matters in life and about mystery. Together they discover that we are all different and at the same time all alike and that there is a place for wonder and for exploration together of big questions. In an interesting way both Williams and the children reflect the views expressed by B-P in the discussion and diagram cited in chapter 1.²⁸³ Towards the end of his chapter entitled *Faith and the Enlightenment* Williams discusses *why fundamentalism, in any faith, is quintessentially a modern thing*.²⁸⁴ It is a modern thing the claims and effects of which young people currently have to face and consider.

4 The changing views on individualism?

Individualism is currently a widely accepted philosophy of Western Society²⁸⁵

In society there is now a general view that it is not only good to *do your own thing* but also that this is your right. This has the clear immediate interpretation of a right of individual expression. It also embraces complex clashes between people’s rights within community and their perception of responsibilities to as well as from that community.²⁸⁶ Three aspects might be expected to have a particular and direct effect on voluntary organisations and, specifically, on youth organisations: there is more demand for ‘rights’; there is more expectation of inclusion; more parents are articulate in expressing their views and wishes.

Issues raised here which prompted this research

Guiding has always promoted individual development and *cared for the individual*²⁸⁷ as part of its ethos and policy. In a significant sense this issue is simply a matter of society catching up with the Guides. Major examples are those of equality of opportunity regardless of gender or of

²⁸² Williams 2012 p16

²⁸³ Baden-Powell R 1922 p197

²⁸⁴ *ibid* p124

²⁸⁵ see for example MacIntyre 1981 p195ff and Sacks 1991 p14ff

²⁸⁶ Williams 2012 p165

²⁸⁷ Girlguiding 2013a p12

exceptional support need which are discussed in the previous chapter. However an issue which has arisen, rarely but with serious anger when it has occurred, is the demand of a parent for a child to be included but for the *policy* to be changed to allow that inclusion. The issue usually concerns the first clause of the promise but occasionally the second clause (citizenship) is problematic. It must be said that often individual problems are caused by local practice and tradition meaning that a leader or commissioner has been unaware of the full provisions of policy. For example there are formal agreed variants to clause two for a member temporarily visiting from overseas or who is a refugee or asylum seeker and who is making or reaffirming her promise in a British unit. Equally the fact that younger girls can attend and participate without choosing to make the promise can provide a solution in some cases. This is perhaps particularly important in some rural situations where Guiding is the only children's/youth work provided. However Guiding is formally a club with the right to set its own criteria for membership. These include acknowledgement of human spirituality and the intention to promote spiritual development of all members. A related point to raise here is that some parents, accustomed both to free school education and state-provided youth groups, are unaware both that Guiding is a voluntary (and global) organisation and that its leaders are community volunteers who have themselves made the commitment inherent in the Guide promise. This can occasionally lead to quite unreasonable misunderstanding and consequent distress. It is stressed that both issues appear to be extremely rare.²⁸⁸ However they can be so serious when they do arise that it is vital that trainers are aware of relevant policy. Perversely, trainers, simply because they are required to be aware of general policy and act on it in their own units, are perhaps the least likely leaders to have experienced this problem which is causing such distress to others.

Discussion

A useful starting point for discussion here is given by Williams' distinction between two forms of secularism; forms he terms *procedural* and *programmatic*²⁸⁹. As policies of a state or other authority he makes the distinction between *procedural*:

public policy which declines to give advantage or preference to any one religious body over others.....without guaranteeing any single community a legally favoured position against others²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ It is notoriously difficult to *prove* a negative. People simply do not record that something has not happened. However these events when they do occur should involve at least the local County Commissioner if not Regional or National Commissioners. Equally they usually involve media attention. On basis of personal discussion with a number of those with such responsibilities and of personal observation of media reporting I conclude that such events are rare indeed. Additionally after three decades as a trainer and in an adult support role in Guiding, I estimate that I have met about three thousand leaders from across the United Kingdom personally. I can only remember two such cases discussed with me. Most leaders who have worked in Guiding for a lifetime give no indication that they have experienced such unpleasant problems.

²⁸⁹ Williams 2012 p2

²⁹⁰ *ibid*

and *programmatic*:

in which any and every public manifestation of any particular religious allegiance is to be ironed out and any signs of such private convictions are rigorously banned from public space²⁹¹

Serious challenges to the spiritual basis of Guiding usually come from the mistaken opinion that Guiding is (or perhaps that it should be) a public space and its leaders public servants in this formal sense. However less formal challenges and objections can also be extremely distressing to all involved and it is vital that leaders are supported in knowing what their role does and does not involve in this field.

These are exceptional situations. The everyday situation for all in Guiding is to support individual viewpoints while promoting an ethos of respect, enquiry and tolerance. The challenge can come, as anywhere, when one individual's view is that it is inappropriate to tolerate the specific view of another of those present. This is not new to global Guiding but society's increasing expectations about individual rights can increase the challenge. Again to quote Williams:

Inter-religious conversation and encounter seeks to avoid assumptions both of 'zero-sum' conflict and of the possibility of a final dissolution of real otherness. For this to happen, there has to be a secure space for genuine exchange and exploration: there has to be a 'civil space' for religious communities to meet one another. This is in some ways a distinctively modern challenge...²⁹²

For many Guiding provides this *civil space* in a society where, for young people particularly, such space is not readily available.²⁹³ A different but equally relevant aspect of individualism is perhaps best summarised:

The injunction is, in the words of a speaker at a New Age festival: 'Only accept what rings true to your inner self'.²⁹⁴

In that section of *Varieties of Religion Today* which closes with the quotation above, Taylor observes that there is the view that:

The religious life or practice that I become part of not only must be my choice, but must speak to me; it must make sense in terms of my spiritual development as I understand this.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ *ibid* p3

²⁹² *ibid* p132

²⁹³ This was also a frequently repeated comment in research responses and is discussed in the next chapter.

²⁹⁴ Taylor 2003 p101

²⁹⁵ *ibid* p94

This is not new but in an individualist society it is becoming the more general viewpoint.²⁹⁶ Again to quote Taylor: ‘What is new is that this kind of self orientation seems to have become a mass phenomenon.’²⁹⁷ It is also true that:

.....more people accept what would earlier have been seen as untenable positions.....for example they combine Christianity with Buddhism or they pray while not being certain they believe. This is not to say that people didn’t occupy positions like this in the past: just that it now seems to be easier to be upfront about it.²⁹⁸

Guiding has been embracing diversity since its foundation but in an individualistic society members are indeed even more likely to be upfront about their views. In her book *Postmodern Children’s Ministry*, Ivy Beckwith observes:

Millennials seem to believe intuitively that each person should do what is right for him; that each person should discover his own truth, his story of the world, and live that out with integrity.²⁹⁹

A further challenge of living in a society which is both diverse and individualistic can be considered to be that:

The central religious assumption that there are moral absolutes which are given not chosen has been sent into cultural exile.³⁰⁰

From here it is only a small step to Alisdair MacIntyre’s observation that:

Indeed the power of the liberal individualist standpoint partly derives from the evident fact that the modern state is indeed totally unfitted to act as moral educator of any community.³⁰¹

Perhaps the responsibilities of Guiding and Scouting are even bigger than society realises.

5 Changing views and expectations on the roles of girls and women

Society is increasingly confusing in messages it gives about its expectations of girls³⁰²

²⁹⁶ As discussed in the introductory paragraphs of this chapter, wording of the promise has been revised from time to time to embrace more contemporary language whilst remaining true to the foundational ethos of Guiding. It is certainly true that the two most recent changes of 2013 and 1994 were made in hope of making the inclusive but individual ethos of Guiding more evident. The same is true, but less immediately explicit, of the revision of 1967. (Background to these rewordings is discussed more fully in chapter 3)

²⁹⁷ *ibid* p80

²⁹⁸ *ibid* p107

²⁹⁹ Beckwith 2004 p13 (Beckwith takes the definition of millennials as those born between 1980 and 2001)

³⁰⁰ Sacks 1991 p17

³⁰¹ MacIntyre 1981 p195

³⁰² Girlguiding 2013c

On one hand Western Society more than ever before is declaring that equality of opportunity between genders is ethically right and should always be the intention behind both policy and action. On the other hand there is currently an apparently ever increasing stress in the media and in advertising on body image and related themes. There are few ‘girls only’ spaces remaining.

Issues raised here which prompted this research

Equality of opportunity has been an aim both for Guides and of Guides since the first patrols marched into the Crystal Palace Scout Rally in 1909.³⁰³ As discussed in the previous chapter, Guiding did much to support girls during the era of very public, confusing and conflicting demands of the feminist movements in the sixties and seventies. More recently Guiding, as the largest organisation for girls and young women both in the United Kingdom and in the world, has carried out considerable formal research around the topics of issues related to body image, mental health and girls’ concerns about conflicting expectations.³⁰⁴ Guiding is one of the few remaining organisations to provide a ‘girls only’ space. Girls of all ages continue to say how much they appreciate this.³⁰⁵ It provides both a place to discuss topics which many girls (and women) might be hesitant to discuss in mixed company and, perhaps even more important, a place where girls can do daft things and play daft games and even just chill without the inhibitions introduced by a male audience. The ‘girls only’ space is also welcomed by parents from some cultural backgrounds as a situation where their (adolescent) daughters can develop their independence in a place which even more traditional members of their family or cultural community find acceptable.

Discussion

In their book *All we’re meant to be*, Scanzoni and Hardesty comment:

All of us come at Scripture, tradition, reason, and even our own religious experiences with certain assumptions and biases.³⁰⁶

This statement is not only clearly true but also surely pertinent to the nurture of spirituality in an organisation embracing persons of all faiths. However the book’s subtitle *Biblical feminism for today* raises very different questions; for example to what extent is current core writing of feminist theology directly relevant to any single gender organisation, to discussion of interfaith

³⁰³ Kerr 1976 p13

³⁰⁴ see specifically Girlguiding 2013c – full survey results for all research projects carried out in the last 5 years are available at www.girlguiding.org.uk following the link to *campaigns and research*

³⁰⁵ Girlguiding UK 2011 p6

³⁰⁶ Scanzoni and Hardesty 1992 p16

issues, to research confined to practice in the United Kingdom. While in no way dismissing some of the main points raised by feminist theologians, there are more general theological topics which are more pertinent and more pressing. Perhaps the major relevant issue with much writing in feminist theology, however, is a central presumption of a single common female experience. This is criticised by Linda Woodhead, in *Spiritualising the Sacred: A Critique of Feminist Theology*:

It seems, in other words, that what the various feminist theological claims about women's distinctive experience all have in common is a reductionist tendency. They all try to bring women's identity under practical and theoretical control and to circumscribe it.³⁰⁷

She comments further:

My gender identity does not close the question of who I am, but opens it. Attempts to achieve closure by speaking of my essentially 'oppressed' or 'relational' identity are therefore misplaced.³⁰⁸

She then goes on to discuss development and transcendence of human identity as a vital part of faith and spiritual exploration.³⁰⁹ In a movement embracing diversity and committed to caring for and developing the individual, to speak of a single and common women's voice or women's experience is rarely helpful. Of course there are women's issues where the views of a large global organisation for young women are of enormous relevance and indeed power. The research of the organisation into these issues has been discussed earlier³¹⁰ as has the role of WAGGGS in various United Nations committees and initiatives.³¹¹ However at a local level spiritual development like mental and physical development is a very individual thing and members come with very different experiences. Perhaps the comments which members of Guiding from the pioneering Agnes Baden-Powell onwards would most whole-heartedly endorse are those with which Woodhead opens and closes her critique:

When I first became aware of feminist theology in the early 1980s..... It was enormously refreshing to hear women's voices in theology, voices willing to identify themselves as women and to claim their right to do theology.³¹²

Its (theology's) outcome is not predictable in advance, but the hope must be that the entry of women into theology will help revivify it at a time when it desperately needs a new injection of energy. My disappointment with feminist theology to date is that it has too often proved a distraction from this crucial and exciting task.³¹³

³⁰⁷ Woodhead 1997 p199

³⁰⁸ *ibid* p200

³⁰⁹ *ibid* p200 (Woodhead is writing in a Christian context and so writes specifically of transcendence through the grace of Christ. The more general point remains valid and relevant to spiritual nurture in Guiding.)

³¹⁰ see for example Girlguiding 2013c

³¹¹ www.WAGGGS.org

³¹² Woodhead 1997 p191

³¹³ *ibid* p209

As noted above, the provision of a ‘girls only’ space provides a helpful environment for many discussions. Particular examples include the various practical issues which arise in all faiths at the treacherous interface of doctrinal imperative and cultural expectation. Many of these issues are specific to the behaviour of women in various communities and it is frequently helpful to girls to discuss them with other girls and discover that these matters are indeed in some senses universal.³¹⁴

More generally Guiding’s experience and public respect in providing for girls of all circumstances are perhaps indicated by the following two quotations from Guiding sources describing activities separated by a century:

I am directed by the Prison Commissioners to inform you that sufficient time has now elapsed since the Girl Guide Movement was introduced into the Aylesbury Borstal Institution for Girls in April last, to enable them to come to the conclusion that it has been a great success.³¹⁵

.... through innovative projects such as starting up a (Guide) group for young mums.....³¹⁶

6 Changes in media activity and both public and personal communication

There is more communication media activity of all kinds

As already discussed, communications technology has been one of the fastest changing areas of life in the last half century. Public media coverage is more widespread, more immediate and, in the West at least, accessible to all. Social media have given almost everyone who chooses a voice in the (semi) public arena. Yet the non-truth encapsulated in the old catchphrase: *It must be true it was in the papers* remains; a human tendency to believe something seen in writing remains regardless of whether the format is print or digital. This raises questions of both accuracy and authority as discussed below. The modern versions of the adage that *the first duty of the reporter is to sell the paper* also remain true. There is indeed no point in accurate reporting if no one reads what is reported. It is acknowledged at many training events given by media personnel for public relations representatives of Guiding and other voluntary bodies, that it is almost impossible to get good news reported in the media.

³¹⁴ I well remember a young liberal Muslim Scots-born Guide whose grandmother (but not her parents) was being pressing on the subject of head covering, finding both humour and relief in being told of the efforts made half a century ago by my own grandmother to ensure that I, as a small girl, wore a hat to church. I suspect that the Guide also saw possible light at the end of a very long tunnel.

³¹⁵ Girlguiding UK 2009 p39 *Letter from the Prison Commission 17 November 1919*

³¹⁶ Girlguiding UK 2011 p6 (More detail in *The Switch Project Evaluated* – Girlguiding 2009a p1)

Issues raised here which prompted this research

Some leaders are fearful having seen media coverage of individuals who are deemed by that media to have got things wrong. Is it OK to 'do God' or shall I get into bother? What am I allowed to do? A second and related issue arises, in Guiding as elsewhere, when leaders or parents base presumptions about policy, particularly changes of policy, on discussions followed in social media. A common plea from those requesting training for their region's leaders is for 'something that will make them look at the official website and stop making assumptions or worse creating by-laws'. Another interesting point which was raised a number of times in the research findings came from leaders who are in such professions as teaching or health care. These women often meet the same girls in their Guiding and in their professional capacities and are balancing conflicting demands about what it is acceptable and appropriate to say in each role while, at the same time, they try to present a consistent picture to the children in their care. This is particularly difficult when working with the youngest members who can not reasonably be expected to understand the reasons for any distinctions. This is undoubtedly a growing concern.

Discussion

Discussion of this subject in practical theology predominantly falls into two areas. One is concerned essentially with missiology and local or demographically specific culture; with the need for faith organisations to meet people where they are (and often with the fact that in this respect they do not). This is not simply about observable practicalities but also about underlying presumptions of how information is both experienced and communicated by individuals. This is one of the underlying themes of Pete Ward's *Participation and Mediation*, subtitled *A Practical Theology for a Liquid Church*³¹⁷. The other area is concerned with the wider societal consequences of the same theme. In *Religion and Civil Society*, David Herbert discusses how changes in control and availability of public and social media have affected the spread not only of information but of the sources and authorities from which people take their beliefs and rationales for action.³¹⁸ Both of these are big issues and both have consequences for Guiding as for the rest of society. A rather different perspective on this issue has implications for the concerns raised in section 3 of this chapter. It is noted by Mona Siddiqui:

When it comes to any issue that is 'overtly religious', the media, by its very nature, tries to encapsulate often in short pithy sentences whole areas of ethical and theological thinking.

³¹⁷ Ward 2008 particularly p18ff - much of the book has this as one underlying theme

³¹⁸ Herbert 2003 pp33, 40 and 153ff

The result is that often the political, religious and ethical complexity of any situation is somewhat lost and yet the media's huge reach dramatically influences the way people then understand a faith.³¹⁹

However the issues raised by Guiding leaders both informally before, and in response to, this research are not predominantly these. They are more personal. In a sense they could even be considered more selfish. A century ago, a leader who made a comment on a faith based (or any other sensitive) subject which was perhaps considered injudicious by some, was unlikely to experience more than a brief local argument. The local commissioner had a hard copy of *Girl Guiding* and what the text said at least was not in dispute. Now all leaders are aware of stories in the media pillorying those whom someone else has deemed to have got things wrong. Added to this, of course, is a genuine concern about giving offence in a fast-changing society. Further, there is conflicting information readily available on all sides and it is not always easy to determine correct, appropriate procedure. These situations have consequences for all leaders. There are also many leaders balancing the conflicting professional demands mentioned above. These are issues which leaders have told trainers are looming large in their attempts to provide the spiritual nurture of young members which their Guiding role demands of them. They are therefore issues for Guiding leader trainers and issues for practical theology.:

Over the past twenty years the history and identity of pastoral and practical theology has been subject to intense revision. Broadly, this period has seen an epistemological shift from a discipline that regarded itself as supplying practical training for the ordained ministry, often within a clinical or therapeutic context, to one that understood theology as critical reflection on faithful practice in variety of settings.³²⁰

Why this research?

The opening paragraph of this thesis outlines the broad factors which gave rise to the idea of the research. In presenting field-work methodology, findings and consequent reflection, the remainder of Part 2 describes many aspects of these factors, and considers varied responses to them and differing perceptions of their relative significance. This chapter has considered six areas of societal change in some detail. Personal experience and discussion with fellow trainers indicated that these issues were being raised by leaders with increasing frequency and increasing concern. Although, as must again be stressed, they are part of the experience of a small minority of leaders, the size of that small minority appears to be increasing. Discussion among trainers

³¹⁹ Siddiqui 2015 p158

³²⁰ Graham, E, Walton H & Ward F 2005 p2

about the best ways to address some of these issues was a major factor giving rise to this research.

5 Field Study Design and Results

Introduction

This field study considers training and support given to adult volunteers whose work includes nurture of spiritual development of young people in organisations which welcome members of many faiths but which include spiritual development of their members as explicit in their ethos. The specific context is the work of the Guide Movement and, in particular, of Girlguiding³²¹ in the United Kingdom.

Information and opinion was collected largely from trainer colleagues. It relates to support given to adults whose volunteer role within Guiding includes nurturing spiritual development of young people. This study provides first-hand data on a topic little addressed in academic literature. It gives more precise guidance from experienced practitioners on changing challenges in this field currently faced by leader trainers. How does Girlguiding support and train adult leaders in their responsibility to nurture young members in understanding and practice of the first clause of the Guide promise? What new challenges are arising as society evolves? What are examples of good practice? Can these be better disseminated?

Context and Perspectives

Organisational

Data collection is confined to Guiding colleagues. Guiding is a long-standing major global youth movement³²² which welcomes members of all faiths and includes nurture of spirituality within its fundamental ethos. Leaders should encourage young members both in development of their spiritual awareness and in formal practices of their various faith traditions. Leaders must themselves make or reaffirm the Guide promise and so must consider their own practice in these areas. From its inception the Movement has welcomed members from all faiths. However current mobility of populations has significantly increased the likelihood that individual local units will include young people with a mix of faith traditions. Many local leaders now face the

³²¹ In 2012 the Guide Association in Britain changed its operating title from *Girlguiding UK* to simply *Girlguiding*. Thus both forms are correctly used in this thesis, in various formal references and in entries in the bibliography, depending on the date in question.

³²² Approximately 10 million members in 146 countries

challenges of fulfilling the obligations described earlier in a plural local setting rather than simply describing the global nature of Guiding and meeting members of different faiths at occasional world gatherings.

Theological

As noted earlier³²³ a number of practical theologians discuss the spiritual awareness and searching of childhood. Most consider the response of faith communities to this searching. A few discuss the role of schools in developing spirituality. Little appears in the literature about the role of voluntary youth organisations, particularly those embracing young people of many faiths, in spiritual development of their members. Even less is reported about support given to their leaders. This research forms an introduction to a study of practical theology of these areas.

Summary

In the UK Guiding must sustain its ethos in

- i) secularised populations where more are ‘un-churched’ or even ‘anti-churched’ (‘anti-faithed’?!)
- ii) populations of diverse faith
- iii) some areas with significant intra-faith diversity/conflict

These three issues, each challenging, can interact to create an even more confusing picture.

Required evidence

This research concerns current experience of trainers as they work in this role. Inspiration for it came from experience as a long-serving leader and trainer of leaders within Guiding. It came during reflection on challenges inherent in sustaining the ethos of supporting individual spiritual development and simultaneously welcoming members of many faiths and encouraging their full participation in their various faith traditions. This ethos has been fundamental to the Movement since its foundation. In Western Europe, it must now be sustained in a society which is more

³²³ A considerably more detailed review of this work is given in the Literature Review successfully submitted in Part 1 of this degree – see Stimpson 2011

multi-cultural at local level; where traditional practice of religion is less common and where statutory schooling is cautious in its approach to ‘teaching’ spirituality. What are the practical ways in which Guiding sustains this ethos? How does it support its adult leaders in doing this?

From the start it has been clear that there is no existing pool of primary evidence. The research must first include collection of current primary data. Defending this statement presents the necessarily challenging position of trying to *prove a negative*. Certainly appropriate colleagues at both UK and World Headquarters have no knowledge of any related academic research. This confirms factually that there has been no request made to them for ethical permission to carry out such research. More significantly it confirms that no-one has requested their help with such research. Literature searches have produced nothing of immediate, direct relevance although, expectedly, much that is significant on related issues. Neither academic colleagues nor Guiding friends and fellow leaders are aware of academic work in this very specific field. On this basis it seems reasonable to conclude that the first need is to collect primary evidence. An advantage is that there are no concerns about validity or relevance of other people’s data. It does mean that there is no historical data of direct relevance. For historical information the research is reliant on people’s memories with the inevitable caveats concerning accuracy and completeness.³²⁴

Locations of evidence

The evidence is with trainers. The only way to obtain it is to ask them. The only real question is: ‘which are the *best* ways to do this?’ This question is discussed in some detail in the following two sections. Before proceeding to that discussion, other sources of information are noted. Some factual material can be obtained from archival and current policy documents. This concerns such matters as developments in the exact wording of the promise; formal discussions of policy statements on spirituality and equally on adult training; requirements placed on national member organisations by the world body and proceedings of world and regional conferences. Colleagues at both headquarters are enthusiastic about the research and have already been generous with their very limited time. Information may be available from personal documents and other material made public for the first time for the centenary celebrations in 2010. Additional sources include focus groups at the national Trainers’ Conference and at other trainers’ events. It remains true that most of the evidence must come from the practitioners and that therefore it is significant that:

³²⁴ As researcher I have two advantages: my own age means that for half of the history of the organisation I have my own memories, personal records and books; older colleagues are enthusiastic to contribute their recollections – albeit possibly with rose-tinted glasses.

Praxis is more than practice, for it recognises that no human activity is value-free³²⁵

This is frequently for the good but its implications are relevant and must be considered.

Methodology

In one sense the methodology of this study is pre-determined as *action research*. It is research carried out amongst close colleagues of the researcher into an important aspect of their work upon which changing societal norms at least superficially appear to be placing increasing challenges. In this it fits the simple definition given by Judith Bell in her introductory book on research in the social sciences:

It (action research) is applied research carried out by practitioners who have themselves identified a need for change or improvement³²⁶

Frequently *action research* is carried out with anticipation of formal ‘institutional change’. Here no such formal *institutional* change was anticipated as necessary. Trainers within the Guide movement work within guidelines which reflect its ethos. However they have wide autonomy in the training methods which they choose. Following the practice of all good teachers they routinely choose a variety of styles appropriate to those being trained, to topics under discussion and to their own preferred delivery modes. An outcome far more likely than any need for formal change is thus a wider sharing of effective practices developed empirically by individuals or groups of practitioners on a completely informal basis according to changing local circumstances. Another aim of the research was to establish the extent to which trainers consider that they are successful in helping leaders to support spiritual development of young members. It also aimed to discover how leaders express their feelings to trainers about this responsibility and about the help which they are given. A further hope was to make a brief and necessarily largely anecdotal investigation into how, if at all, the situation has changed or is perceived as changing over the years.

In discussing methodologies in social research, some add a further element to their definition of Action Research, indicating that it is a cyclical process. Clearly any activity seeking improvement in professional practice may have such a cyclical element. Good practice must constantly adapt to changing settings for its applications and, often, to new or changing resources

³²⁵ Ballard & Pritchard 1996 p70

³²⁶ Bell J 2010 p6

and facilities. This specific research is, in one sense, a single intervention taking the opportunity to examine practice on a comparatively large scale in a situation where many practitioners have expressed the view that major societal change made such an investigation appropriate. As discussed elsewhere the findings will be distributed throughout the organisation. They should be a support in developing good and effective practice and so become part of the already ongoing cyclical process of developing excellent adult training processes within Guiding.

The methodology is also, in one narrow sense of that term, ethnographic:

But ethnography centers (sic) on the participant observation of a society or culture through a complete cycle of events that regularly occur as that society interacts with its environment.³²⁷

The researcher is certainly a long-time participant in and observer of the society under investigation. In one sense much *action research* is necessarily ethnographic. The positive in this instance is that very familiarity. However the facts that the population under investigation is very small and participants are individuals who, appropriately, act with autonomy and individuality in their role means that there are considerable limitations on the degree of generalisation which is useful. This is by no means to state that no useful generalisation is possible. Within the ethos of the movement, Guiding trainers use a diversity of methods. It is precisely the detail of this diversity which is under investigation. There are general theories relating to education and training of adults and, equally, theories relating to nurture of human spirituality. These theories are well researched and documented and hence not the issue here.

It could also be considered that in the unstructured part of interviews, elements of narrative enquiry and life story interviews emerged. There was no intention deliberately to use these techniques. However knowledge of many trainers involved indicated that for some respondents any unstructured interview would develop in this direction. For most Guiding trainers, work in this field is a significant part of their life and faith. For a small number it is perhaps the most significant. For these women the responsibilities of the researcher inherent in the technique of life story interviews are important: sensitivity, protection of vulnerability and additional care in interpretation of data.

Focus groups were a request from the organisation, not a deliberate choice. UK Guiding, enthusiastic about this research, requested that relevant focus groups be led at trainers' conferences. One positive outcome was that this gave access to many interested trainers. The

³²⁷ Ibid p15 citing Lutz 1986: p108

word ‘interested’ also demonstrates the potential possible hazard. The groups were self selecting from conference delegates. The researcher had no control over the group membership and it certainly could not be considered unbiased. However, groups were made up of trainers, people who have experience and expertise in the field. The opinions expressed are obviously of considerable interest and value. These focus groups happened. They were not the main technique of this research but they certainly make a positive contribution.

It remains the case that the central methodology is *action research*.

A further view on the methodology of *action research* is of relevance. This research was carried out within a study in practical theology. In the concluding chapter of their book *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, Swinton and Mowat argue convincingly that research in the context of practical theology is always action research.

For the practical theologian, all qualitative methods are necessarily action-oriented. Even the most observational method is used with an action orientation aimed at providing information that will inform the development of faithful and transformative practices.³²⁸

Methods

A pilot study took place within Strathclyde Region, the researcher’s own current local area. It involved a combination of questionnaire with both structured and unstructured interviews.³²⁹ This was very successful in producing both appropriate specific information across which comparisons could be made and descriptions of experience, opinion and suggestion from practitioners. These gave, in a manageable format, a wide range of interesting material to consider. This material informed further progress in this research as well as being disseminated through trainers’ channels within the organisation. A earlier description of this pilot project is quoted here:

The intention of this study is to collect information and opinion from Guiding colleagues. The preliminary project was confined to work within the local area of Strathclyde. The geographical bias was deliberate. Selecting so small a sample must introduce bias of some kind. Deliberately selecting this geographical grouping meant that a 100% sample still gave a project manageable in the allocated time. The bias is overt. Due account of it can be taken.

A questionnaire was sent to all trainers who are members of Strathclyde Trainers’ Support Group (100% sample – 95% return). Interviews were held with each trainer based in

³²⁸ Swinton & Mowat 2006 p258

³²⁹ Copies of relevant proforma are given in Appendix 1

Glasgow City. Structured interviews were followed by open discussion. The questionnaire was designed to ask primarily factual questions. This made it simple to answer and facilitated the very high response percentage. There was space to expand on answers and approximately half the respondents chose to comment very fully on their experiences and reflections. This alone suggests that the topic is seen as of current importance. Interviews gave opportunity to explore further matters of interest.

The pilot produced much useful (and readily useable) information. The same techniques were therefore used as major methods of the larger study. Some questions were added in light of the pilot as discussed below. However existing questions were not changed so this does not invalidate use of the pilot responses as one part of the final data set. The procedure was repeated with trainers living in two other Guiding regions. These were selected to give cultural contrast and enable three data sets together to give a reasonable cross section of Guiding within the UK.

Guiding trainers belong to the Support Group nearest their home but train across the UK. Regions chosen as samples therefore reflect the home location of the trainers rather than their training experience. Noting the pilot result, central representatives commented, with some surprise, that those based in Strathclyde were very largely comfortable working in a diverse society. They suggested that trainers themselves living in less diverse areas might respond very differently. The wider project reflects this concern amongst other things.

The Guide Region of Strathclyde is a predominantly urban area centred on and surrounding the cosmopolitan city of Glasgow. The two further regions selected were Anglia and Northern Scotland. The Guiding Region of Anglia extends diagonally from Oxfordshire in its south west to Norfolk in its north east. It is a region of market towns and agricultural communities superimposed with dormitory communities for major cities notably Greater London and the West Midlands, these cosmopolitan areas themselves lying outside Anglia. The final region chosen contains Northern Scotland and the Northern and Western Isles. This reflects the views of those from very different communities. The areas are sufficiently compact to enable the practice of the first study to be continued and a 100% sample to be approached for the questionnaires and sub-regional interviews. Preliminary informal approaches suggested that it was reasonable to expect a similarly high response percentage. Immediate bias in sample selection was thus avoided. The three regions together give a spectrum of the breadth of societies in the United Kingdom. Any similarities and differences are of interest in addition to the importance of what remains constant across all regions. Trainers generally train across the United Kingdom. Following interview responses received in the pilot study, the questionnaire was extended to ask respondents to comment on any relevant differences in experience of training in their local region and elsewhere. The three investigations provide new primary data.

In very preliminary discussions, the Director of Adult Support at the World Association has expressed support and, indeed, enthusiasm for the possibility of obtaining a more global perspective by providing a brief set of questions which her, largely volunteer, staff would take with them on advisory visits to the trainers of various member countries; these visits being the ones already scheduled for the research period. There is enormous challenge in formulating questions in a way which would survive translation, not risk inadvertent offence in a potentially sensitive subject area and give useful responses which would also survive translation. This could be a fascinating addition to the research but for reasons of practicality and with regard to time-constraints it is deliberately not included. This extension is being considered as a possible part of later research.

The process outlined above sought direct feedback from approximately one quarter of trainers in the UK, gave a high response rate and, for the reasons outlined, a reasonably representative sample. Additional sources include:

Focus groups at major trainers' events

Current and archival information from national and global Guiding

Evaluation reports of the recent Switch Project, *Promoting Inclusion and Growing Guiding*³³⁰

Key actor interviews with, among others:

Director of Adult Support at *WAGGGS*

Head of Guiding Development at Girlguiding

Lead Volunteer for the Switch Project

Data from the focus groups is presented along with that from questionnaires and interviews. Specific information from the other sources appears at various points in the discussion where relevant. Distributing questionnaires directly to all trainers through the association's existing on-line resources is a readily available possibility. However experience both of very low return rates and strong tendencies to 'tell the organisation what it wants to know – or should want to know', combine to make this an unreliable tool for a question of considerable sensitivity. This is despite the, at first sight, advantage of inclusivity.

General issues of ethics and reflexivity

³³⁰ Girlguiding 2009a

Various issues of statistical ethics including sample validity are included in the section headed 'Methods'. This section first notes some points of ethics in social research of specific relevance to this context. It then considers the inadvertent, unrecognised or deliberate bias which anyone can bring to their work or to their responses.

The formal ethics statement for this research included the following:

Note: Whilst the proposal relates to work within a youth organisation, the research involves support given to adults by adults. There is no intention to contact young members directly.

The project has been discussed informally with many trainers and has their enthusiastic support. Formal approval to proceed has been given by Girlguiding UK³³¹ (contact Jo Hobbs, Head of Guiding Development, Jo.Hobbs@girlguiding.org.uk)

The main methods of data collection will be personal interview and email questionnaire amongst trainer colleagues; methods used successfully in the pilot study. The researcher has direct access to all Scottish colleagues. Contact with colleagues elsewhere formally requires use of a gatekeeper. Girlguiding has agreed to this.

This addresses three obvious issues. Possible consequences of use of gatekeepers are discussed further in the section on research findings. In their book *Ethics in Qualitative Research*,³³² Tina Miller et al speak of the *familiar ethical principles of protection, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity*. Formal documentation relating to the last three of these is given in Appendix 1. There are always practical issues in protecting confidentiality and anonymity when reporting any fairly unusual (but consequently very pertinent) research findings especially in a comparatively small constituency. These are discussed in some detail at relevant points in the presentation of results. Possible need for protection of particular vulnerability for a few respondents is discussed in the section on methodology.

There remains the issue of *protection*; sometimes expressed as a possible threat, or perception of threat, to respondents as a consequence of opinions expressed. Obvious facts to record here are that the respondents are volunteers not employees and that the researcher holds exactly the same volunteer role as the respondents. Another significant point is that, as already recorded, trainers work with considerable autonomy and what was being sought was not institutional change but a wider sharing of good ideas and good practice. Also respondents were being asked, largely, about the reaction of others to their work and not about their personal views on policy. However

³³¹ As already noted, in 2012 the Guide Association in Britain changed its operating title from *Girlguiding UK* to simply *Girlguiding*. Thus both forms are correctly used in this thesis, in various formal references and in entries in the bibliography, depending on the date in question.

³³² Miller 2012 introduction p1; see also Oliver 2010 chapter 2

even more convincing facts relating to this issue are that the research was a response by one of their own team to something which participants had been seeking for some time and that they responded with enthusiasm contributing extended comments to more general questions as well as useful answers to more factual questions both in questionnaire and at interview.

The points noted above include some advantages which arise from the fact that respondents are all enthusiastic volunteers who have already chosen, in reaffirming the Guide promise as adults, their commitment to the ethos of Guiding. Some possible challenges which might be considered to arise from this fact are discussed below.

Those involved in this study are colleagues; trainers of leaders within the movement who have made the Guide promise and reaffirmed it as adults. They spent time obtaining their training qualification and now give time to train leaders in addition to their leadership roles. The study investigates how they carry out their training role and how questions may have changed over time. These are women who devote considerable time to Guiding as volunteers. It would be surprising to receive any response which is not supportive of Guiding in general. This is an inevitable part of action research amongst such colleagues.

The research involves a comparatively small group of colleagues who have worked together often for many years. This brings both challenges and advantages to collection and interpretation of data and of opinion. These challenges and advantages will inevitably be part of this project. The pilot study gave experience of addressing these issues in a local environment where they are obvious. This informed handling of similar but less overt issues present when working with the larger group.

One additional possible issue results from the fact that trainers are, appropriately, drawn from 'experienced' leaders. Inevitably this population has a considerable, though by no means complete, overlap with the population of 'older' leaders. Are they atypical? The samples include all trainers and prospective trainers within the areas concerned. They are, therefore, typical of trainers including younger trainers. The research concerns the practice of trainers acting as such. The questions relating to issues raised by leaders include those raised by all leaders including the youngest. Could trainers as a group have an atypical expectation or desire about how the movement should develop in the part of its ethos discussed here. All that can be

cited as factual protection are the guidelines of the movement both globally and nationally.³³³ Probably the fact that trainers are required to be current leaders is the greatest protection. *Our young people keep us right.*

Generation Y is experience oriented. These kids find meaning and value in immediacy and in living in the moment. They want to experience something before they learn about it. Their mantra for life is 'I want to try it'. Only then will they decide if they like the experience or not.³³⁴

Personal issues of viewpoint and reflexivity

All observations in the previous section are also true of the researcher. The research comes after long reflection on the issues whilst experiencing Guiding leadership personally in a number of very diverse communities and over several decades. Commitment of the researcher to global Guiding is clearly stated. The opportunity given by the professional doctorate to explore these issues in the context of an academic study in practical theology is both deeply appreciated and informative. A full personal statement is given at Appendix 2.

Dissemination

Organisational

When informed of this proposed research both Girlguiding UK and the World Association responded not only with agreement and offers of practical support but also with vigorous enthusiasm. These are clearly issues of growing challenge to many leaders and dissemination of good practice is important. Already in place within the organisation are well tried channels for dissemination of information to all trainers and other interested parties. Full use will be made of these.

Theological

As mentioned earlier, little appears in the literature of practical theology about the role in the spiritual development of their members, of voluntary youth organisations which welcome young

³³³ A more convincing assurance for me personally is that Guiding trainers, regardless of age, are a group of the most dynamic and forward-looking women whom I meet in any context. I do not see any worrying evidence that we are stuck in a rut

³³⁴ Beckwith 2004 p31

people of many faiths. Even less is reported about the support given to their voluntary leaders. This project will form an introductory study of the practical theology of these areas including reflection on aspects of childhood spirituality, methods of supporting spiritual nurture and inter-faith studies.

Limitations on project scope and suggestions for the future

Many excellent suggestions have already been made for useful extensions to this work. These include:

Within UK Guiding, seeking opinion from leaders who are not trainers and/or seeking directly views of young members

Within WAGGGS, broadening the scope of research to global Guiding

Within youth organisations, seeking opinion and techniques of practice from other youth organisations including both the faith specific and the specifically secular and both those formally structured and those which are not

Within theology, more detailed consideration of methods of nurturing childhood spirituality as it has changed through history and/or as it varies in different faiths

All of the above would make fascinating studies. Aspects of each of them informed this research. Many could be pursued using similar research techniques with due adaptation for issues such as need for translation, working with organisations as an ‘outsider’ and, in the case of young members, with more stringent ethical clearance. The final suggestions are somewhat different in style and include a far greater proportion of research amongst historical texts. However the specific proposals described here represented a project which could reasonably be achieved in the allocated time frame by a part-time researcher who works for the charity as a part-time volunteer and has no financial budget although some limited access to use of resources. The results should be of practical use to Guiding and of interest to the theology of children’s ministry.

Results

1 Quantitative Data from the Questionnaire

Sample size and return rate

The questionnaire³³⁵ was sent to all trainers (100% sample) in the geographical sample areas selected. The sample numbers and return rates were

Anglia excluding Oxfordshire	15/37	40%
Oxfordshire	8/10	80%
Northern Scotland	4/6	67%
Strathclyde	20/21	95%

As noted, the request was sent directly to both groups of Scottish colleagues. Access to colleagues outside Scotland required use of a gatekeeper, a process expected to produce a lower return rate. The apparent anomaly of Oxfordshire can be explained by the fact that this was the area of Anglia Region where interviews were carried out so again trainers were responding to someone whom they had met rather than to a stranger at second hand.³³⁶ In all four areas the return rate is encouragingly high for a general questionnaire.

Data from question1 (factual individual information about training role)

Most data gathered by this question were as anticipated. Specialisms were spread fairly evenly across sections and trainers were likely to have more experience of training locally to their home than further afield. There were, however, two unexpected findings. The Scottish samples included a far higher proportion of very experienced trainers. Twelve of the Strathclyde sample had held a training licence for more than 15 years as had three of the four trainers from Northern Scotland. By comparison only two of the Anglia returns and none of those in Oxfordshire showed this length of experience. The other distinction is even more striking. The Strathclyde trainers were much more likely than those in the other samples to have trained outside their area and, to an even more significant³³⁷ extent, more likely to have trained outside the United Kingdom.

³³⁵ Copies of all proforma are given in appendix 1

³³⁶ It is also relevant that two of these trainers know me personally as a colleague and were able to introduce me.

³³⁷ Within this chapter the word *significant* is used in contexts where it is accepted both in its general and in its technical statistical meanings. (Numerical calculations of *level of significance* are not appropriate in this work and are not presented.)

Anglia excluding Oxfordshire (15)	3	1
Oxfordshire (8)	2	0
Northern Scotland (4)	1	0
Strathclyde (20)	11	7

The first column of figures indicates those who have trained outside Anglia/Scotland³³⁸ respectively. The second gives the number who have trained for Guiding outside the United Kingdom. Thus over half of trainers based in Strathclyde have trained outside Scotland and one third has trained outside the United Kingdom. Some correlation would be expected between the greater experience of Guiding training mentioned in the previous paragraph and probability of training more widely in global Guiding. However the figures are such that this can not of itself be the whole explanation. This completely unanticipated finding does have significance for the research. As will be discussed in more detail, there were several issues relating to local community diversity where the Strathclyde-based trainers expressed themselves more comfortable than their colleagues from elsewhere in handling the situation and coping with questions. The initial presumption was that this was likely to reflect the cosmopolitan nature of the area in which they carried out Guiding in their own units. However it is apparent that many of these women also bring to that local Guiding and to their training generally, a more global experience. Their local and their global experience and their comfort in training on issues of diverse faith and culture presumably react with each other in complex three-way causality.

Data from question 2 (training requests)

All respondents would accept requests to train specifically on the five essentials and all but one confirmed that they would accept requests to train specifically on ‘the promise and the girl’. (That one is a notable exception since need to train on this topic and to be observed and assessed doing so is a specific requirement of obtaining a training licence.) The large majority of respondents gave the same reply to the question relating to the promise and the adult. Only four across the whole return of 47 responses expressed hesitancy and none said that they would definitely decline such requests. However responses relating to the many-faith nature of Guiding were much more varied. Over half of Strathclyde responses were positive with only two of the remainder giving a definite ‘no’. Only two Anglia responses were positive but equally only three

³³⁸ Guiding in the UK is divided into nine areas for administrative and support purposes. Six are the English ‘Regions’ of Anglia, London & SE, Midlands, NE, NW and SW. Three are the ‘Countries’ of Scotland, Ulster and Wales. These ‘Countries and Regions’ have parallel positions with regard to such matters as training. There is no Girlguiding England as a parallel to Girlguiding Scotland or Girlguiding Cymru

were negative with others occupying the middle ground. (One of those responding positively felt it appropriate to note that she lives on the border of the region with London and so, as she puts it, 'the subject often comes up'.) The Oxfordshire returns were equally spread across the three responses; those from Northern Scotland contained no middle ground three saying a definite no and one a definite yes.

The following section asked how often respondents had actually trained on the four specific topics. Answers here largely reflect how often training on these topics had actually been requested by local areas although other factors including trainer choice are obviously relevant. Here the first three topics showed roughly even responses both within and across groups. For the final section relating to multi-faith issues, over half of Strathclyde-based trainers indicated that this subject had been specifically requested and delivered in the period under consideration; of these, many indicated that they had delivered such a session several times. Of the 27 other respondents only eight indicated that they had actually delivered such a session at all and in all cases only once. At this point it is appropriate to reiterate that the samples indicate the home location of each trainer and not where the trainings take place. For many trainers there is a strong correlation between the two but this is not true for all trainers. In addition to broad training responsibilities, Guiding trainers may also hold a certificated specialist role. Only a small proportion of trainers choose to do so. One of a wide range of such specialisms is *Spirituality in Guiding*. Both Scottish trainers currently holding this specialist endorsement live in Strathclyde. These trainers are likely to have delivered sessions on this subject more widely and therefore more often. This obviously skews the results. However numbers are such that it by no means explains the whole picture. Even removing these two, it remains true the Strathclyde based trainers have addressed this subject more often than those from elsewhere.

The final two quantitative questions in this section showed no surprises. The majority of sessions delivered by any trainer relate to general programme training; to ideas for the unit meeting and programme suitable for the age group concerned. Respondents indicated that they would always make reference to the promise and five essentials in general programme training. The large majority indicated that this reference would usually be explicit. Several marginal comments were on the lines of 'this is central'. The majority indicated that they would usually or sometimes mention the diverse faith nature of the movement. Four (all Strathclyde) said that they would make a point of always doing so. Four (divided across all three other areas) said that they would never do so.

Data from question 4 (questions and challenges)

The first two sections of this question asked whether information on these subjects given in a training session had ever been challenged and whether questions had been received from individuals on these subjects. There was no significant difference between responses from different sample areas. In each case and for all topics specified, approximately one third of trainers had received challenges and about half had received questions. The other two sections in this question asked whether the responses given in these situations had been accepted as appropriate and as helpful (different questions). Oxfordshire and Northern Scotland reported consistent 'yes' to both questions. Strathclyde reported a single questioner who was dissatisfied in both senses and on all topics but trainers otherwise gave positive answers. Anglia reported only one non-satisfied questioner; surprisingly the question related to the five essentials – not usually a source of contention. However trainers do appear to be dealing competently with individual questions on these issues regardless of whether they would choose personally to train on them more generally.

2 Narrative Data from the Questionnaire

Comments in question 2 (willingness to accept requests to train on specific topics)

Comments on various sections of question 2 fall into two distinct groups. The first relate to earlier sections and come from respondents who felt it appropriate to comment on their answers to the multiple choice questions. Several gave (quite unnecessarily apologetic) reasons for not accepting invitations to train specifically on issues relating to the fact that Guiding embraces many faiths. They said that they did not feel well enough informed or that it would take them too long to do necessary research to tackle the issue properly. These are, of course, variants of the same reason. They are not surprising. What is interesting is that trainers felt it appropriate to comment – in effect they felt the need to justify themselves on this topic. A number of others, however, added comments relating to training on the promise and spirituality generally, clearly embracing all aspects of these early sections of the question. These can readily be summarised by quoting one 'I always enjoy training on these subjects'. Possibly the most interesting aspect of reviewing comments added to multiple-choice sections of this question was simply that there were no such comments on returns from Anglia. This was the group who were responding to a stranger through a third party. Was the reason simply that? They wrote fairly fully in the later open sections of the question.

Later sections of question 2 invited comments on the position of the promise in various training situations. The responses were many, enthusiastic, diverse and in some cases very imaginative. Some of the detailed ideas along with suggestions for how they could be shared with other trainers are discussed in the next chapter. The wealth of ideas stems from a conviction which was quite clearly expressed by a majority of trainers. These examples from two respondents typify others:

The promise always underpins planning for training.

This is the whole ethos of Guiding.

Many involved major themes discussed by Baden-Powell³³⁹ in his original handbooks: natural world, global sisterhood, inclusion, helping others - each with a variety of current day applications. Some were more diverse and stemmed from the particular experience of the trainer or from specific local issues. Perhaps the most imaginative came from a trainer who currently spends her training time leading sessions on how to use Guiding's most recent on-line membership records and recruitment package. (This is by no means a universally popular piece of software with leaders.) What is interesting is her conviction that as this is training within Guiding, it should indeed be linked to the promise.

Comments in question 3 (perceived changes over time)

This question asked about possible changes over time. Some responses were on lines anticipated; either indicating that little that was basic had actually changed or indicating changes relating to the societal expectations. Responses on these lines were few and were approximately equal in number between 'yes' and 'no'. The large majority of those who chose to respond to this question replied that their training had changed over time because of their personal growth and experience. A fairly full but typical comment is

I have become more confident as a trainer. My own understanding has developed. Training on these subjects has been good for my own development.

The well-known adage that the best way to learn something is to teach it clearly has relevance here as elsewhere.

Comments in question 4 (questions and challenges received)

³³⁹ For general discussion of these themes see for example Baden-Powell R 1918, ibid 1922, ibid 1932

As noted above multiple-choice answers to this question were overwhelmingly positive. A number of respondents commented that questions led to open discussion which was helpful; that leaders were happy to receive advice; that commissioners³⁴⁰ in particular were glad to have the opportunity for relaxed and confidential discussion. Some questions related to difficulties raised by an (often mis-informed) individual or organisation outside Guiding. These are discussed in the next chapter. Some were internal, relating to Guiding policy applied in comparatively unusual situations. These were always recorded as having been resolved satisfactorily to the relief of all parties. One was a strikingly unusual example of an intra-faith issue affecting relationships between leaders. The trainer reporting this also took part in an interview and the subject is discussed below.

Comments in question 5 (perceived local variations)

Very few respondents chose to comment on this question. Three (2 Anglia & 1 Northern Scotland) said that they found leaders from more rural areas were more reticent in discussing such issues as spirituality. These three women were from among the most experienced trainers from their respective areas and so presumably had a better basis from which to make a comparison. None offered any suggestion as to why this comparative reticence might be the case. One Anglia trainer commented that

Village units and village communities are often closely attached to their parish church and it is often taken for granted that the girls are Christian.

Another, again more experienced, trainer observed:

Anglia does have pockets of ethnic difference. It is always a joy to train the more enlightened.

Comments in question 6 (opportunity to present other pertinent issues and comments)

This open question provided opportunity for more general comments and most respondents made full use of it. This certainly suggests that the whole area of this study is one of interest and concern for trainers. Some comments related to specific incidents and these are addressed in context in the next chapter. However some more general points are recorded here.

Several respondents have a specific role as ‘commissioner trainers’; they train those leaders whose responsibility is the oversight and care of all leaders in their districts. Some respondents

³⁴⁰ Commissioners: adult volunteers with specific responsibility for all leaders of units within a geographical area. Many but not all commissioners are also unit leaders.

commented that completing the questionnaire had made them realise how comparatively rarely they had discussed these matters with commissioners in the sense not of problem-solving but insofar as the promise and personal spiritual development applied equally to commissioners themselves. They commented that making or renewing the promise should be a ‘mountain top moment’ for adults as well as girls.

One commented on an event for new prospective trainers:

There was a common consensus that the values expressed by the promise were an important factor in the trainers’ commitment to Guiding.

However the same respondent observed without comment that ‘County meeting always starts with Christian prayer’.

Some openly expressed on their own behalf the concern with which they were trying to help other leaders:

How can I support a girl with understanding the promise when I struggle with some aspects myself? I am still deciding.

A significant number of more general comments in this space effectively added a ‘layer to the stack’: The leader has a duty to support the girl and to grow herself. The trainer has a duty to support the leader and to grow herself. Some trainers have yet to find out where they should look for support. At an administrative level, the answer to this question is provided by ‘trainers’ support groups’ which, in principle, meet regularly in every area and attendance at which is expected of trainers and required of prospective trainers. Such groups were not mentioned at all in any response or interview. This interesting omission is discussed further in the next chapter.

Comments in question 7 (request for more extended personal information)

Perhaps the most interesting reflection on this section is that all respondents completed it fully. Not surprisingly they indicated a wealth of other Guiding responsibilities and experience. They also indicated experience of working with children and young people in a wide range of other settings both faith-based and explicitly not so.

In response to question 7j the great majority indicated that they considered themselves to be ‘A person of faith’ and about two thirds of these also indicated that they were a practising member of a faith community. Almost all also agreed that they considered themselves to be ‘spiritual

seekers'. These responses were all as anticipated. Three divergent views stand out. All had declined to place themselves in the 'other' category provided. (Perhaps this confirms success of the Guiding principles of inclusion and caring for the individual.) They had written their message clearly and largely in the space between the questions. The three responses were:

I'm still deciding

CofE non-practising

NO

In many ways these three women between them represent a large body of the leaders whom Guiding trainers are serving. One comment from the final part of this final question:

Being a Senior Section leader helps enormously in my own spiritual understanding. They ask the questions and we all find out the answers.³⁴¹

This perceptive observation reflects the ethos of sisterhood in Guiding as girls and women learning together – as the respondent surely well knew and appreciated.

3 Data from the supplementary questionnaire

As discussed earlier, during the five year period of this research, Guiding in the United Kingdom consulted on and implemented one of its periodic reviews of the wording of the promise. The consultation was announced and initiated after the large majority of the questionnaires had been returned and the interviews completed. It is obviously possible or, at least, could be considered to be possible, that this change could have significant effects on some aspects of the research. For this reason a brief supplementary questionnaire was sent to all those who responded initially and for whom contact information was known (41 of 47). This questionnaire, included in Appendix 1, asked whether trainers had led training events relating to the promise in the approximately 18 months since the changes and whether they had other comments on the changes which related to training. Five trainers responded immediately and fairly fully. After two reminders a further seven replies were received. Personal discussion with a large number of colleagues who did not make a formal response, elicited comments on the lines that the rewording had not given rise to any significant changes to their previous comments about training experience. They could see no reason for making a formal response to this effect and, not surprisingly, could not be persuaded to do so. Of the twelve returns received, five said that

³⁴¹ As a Senior Section leader of long standing I whole-heartedly concur.

they had no direct experience of relevant training in the period under consideration. Of these, two made comments on relevant experience outside a formal training situation. Seven had relevant direct training experience of whom five chose to comment fairly fully.

Three themes appeared in most responses: there had been lively debate in trainings; there was concern about absence of relevant materials and activities especially for younger girls; in some cases there was concern about knowing what was still (sic!) allowed. All three of these themes were broadly welcomed because they encouraged and allowed for serious discussion. These comments from four different respondents reflected several others:

Leaders welcomed more in-depth discussion at the county weekend.

It's been a great excuse to revisit a topic which had become quite stale.

The openness of the new wording makes it easier to discuss the promise.

The new leaders were positive and the more established welcomed discussion.

Trainers had used new materials produced by Girlguiding to support the change and also shown leaders that activities in long-standing publications could still be used with a little adaptation in some cases. There were comments that leaders seemed more than usually hesitant to do this until told that they might. Fear of offending was present. Several trainers, including those most whole-heartedly supporting the rewording, commented that it was particularly difficult for Rainbow leaders. One commented that the phrase 'think about my beliefs' does not immediately suggest practical activity to some leaders of six year-olds. However another commented that the wording for Rainbows 'gave scope for discussion with parents which can be a good start to a girl's Guiding journey'.

Naturally not all comments were so happy. Three trainers spoke with sadness of individual older leaders who were friends who had left over the change. A single respondent expressed her personal distress: 'I no longer feel able to train on the promise specifically although I try to be positive in general programme sessions.' This respondent continued however 'no leader agrees with the new wording'. This statement is clearly untrue but it reflects the fact that there are areas of distress and anger at the change. Trainers will, for some time, need to approach the topic with even more than usual sensitivity. Many of them remember the need to do this after the last rewording and some even the one before that. To take a positive slant, these feelings certainly show the significant place which the promise holds in people's lives and Guiding.

Some responded with comments about confusion over specific issues: ‘Confusion over church parade still needs unpicking’; ‘does the new wording mean that prayer is banned?’ and more generally ‘some are not fully aware of the facts!’ Again some questions arose from external reaction. These are discussed in context in the next chapter.

A major concern raised was that of convincing many leaders that Guiding continued actively to embrace all faiths; that mentioning God was not banned but indeed that mentioning God was required - in courteous (and age-appropriate) ways. There was a fear that while it had been difficult to convince some leaders that Guiding was not (and never had been) a specifically Christian movement, it would be considerably more difficult to convince some leaders that Guiding is not (and never has been) a secular organisation and that discussion of all faith positions and appropriate individual and corporate spiritual practice is not only permitted but required. This of course leads to the even greater challenge of teaching some leaders how to do this.

This section ends with longer quotations from three different respondents which speak for themselves:

Personally I like the wording, but I do find some people so narrow minded, and as a Christian, who does go to church weekly, I find it offensive that other Christians can not accept that there are other belief systems out there and that by having a more open Promise means that people are open to discuss these differences and maybe expand on their own understanding of what they believe.

The changing of the wording in the Promise has made me look at it more closely and the impact on my delivery of training is that I have explored other faiths including from a spiritual point of view more often so that I am sure of what I am delivering. In the short term there is and has been the grumblings of ‘why?’, ‘It’s not the Promise I made....’ and so on. I would and do respond that Guiding is a movement and in order for it to maintain its high profile and standing, we must embrace the fact that we are a multi – cultured and multi-faceted society and that Guiding offers something for everyone. Girls are far more accepting of change and take it in their stride – they take it on board with very little question ~ they see a lot of things as black and white and very little grey – that appears as they and we get older. For me the changing of the wording does not affect the value base of Guiding. I firmly believe what it offered girls in 1910, is still the same for the girl today albeit it is ‘wrapped up’ differently so to speak.

There are many leaders who are grateful for the change in wording as they do not follow a particular faith and felt the use of the word God was not useful to them. They can with integrity now make their promise. It does not change the values of Guiding as the promise is to be taken alongside the laws and is not actually a standalone thing. So no matter your spiritual stance/ ideas/ wisdom for living the laws are acceptable to every leader. There are of course leaders who feel that faith/religion is no longer part of the Guiding but then it never was! We need to work hard with those leaders to help them understand that they can

hold onto their faith and expose girls to it at some level. What they can't do (and never could do) is make an assumption that the girls think the way they do.

4 Data from three additional questionnaires

(Responses contributed from three trainers from outside the sample areas whose comments are particularly pertinent because of their other Guiding roles and experience.)

Data discussed so far was received from trainers based in the geographical sample areas specified. Three additional questionnaires were completed. These were requested by three trainers who, hearing about the research at various trainers' events, were very supportive of the work and wished to have an opportunity to contribute. All three hold, or held very recently, senior roles in Guiding in the United Kingdom and so bring a wide perspective to their comments. They remain trainers and are commenting on the same set of training-related questions as the other respondents. These responses were made recently and so after the reworded promise had been in use for some time.

Not surprisingly, these respondents felt happy and confident training across the range of subjects indicated. They had dealt with a variety of questions and challenges. (The leaders at any event would generally have been aware of these trainers' other roles but not always necessarily so.) All indicated that their answers were accepted as appropriate – one commenting 'appropriate because they are grounded in policy and I can reference the wider worldwide movement to give examples'. Their answers were generally accepted as helpful but as one commented 'not always if I am not seen to agree with them'. One respondent uses the phrase 'again relating to a reluctance to view the spiritual basis as being broad in reality not just in theory' which encapsulates much of what other trainers were expressing or trying to express. One of these respondents was able to add a further imaginative example on the need for the promise to underpin all training explicitly. She referred to running sessions for commissioners and the need to explain that the promise 'is a fundamental part of Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary training'.

In the open questions these three respondents naturally spoke from a wide experience of Guiding. The large part of their comments in these sections centred on two subjects: the increasing diversity of faith traditions within Guiding in many local areas and the increasing number of members who are articulate in expressing a philosophy and spirituality outside any acknowledgement of faith tradition. One thing which each makes clear is that she considers that

these two situations present very different challenges to trainers, leaders and to Guiding more generally.

One of these respondents is, using her words, ‘a Guider from a minority faith’. She comments that ‘as a girl of seven’ she was the only girl of her faith ‘in her Brownie pack (which met in a local church)’ and that ‘nothing was ever said or done that made me feel uncomfortable or made me compromise my faith. The Brown Owl³⁴² did every thing she could to make me feel so welcome.’ This respondent concludes the paragraph (which has not been quoted in full solely to protect anonymity) with ‘So as a very young girl I made up my mind that I wanted to devote my voluntary life to Guiding’.

This trainer leads units who meet in the social hall of her own place of worship. These units include girls of many faiths.³⁴³ Elsewhere in her responses, she comments

I feel in a strong position to deliver trainings on multi- (and no-) faith Guiding.

She continues

I believe in the promise as the centre of our organisation to both girls and adults as something that unites us with membership throughout the world. The promise helps to protect the unique ethos of Girl Guiding. I also believe that it helps girls and women to be happier and more fulfilled by adhering to the promise.

The only negative note in this very full response comes towards the end when she speaks of recently attending a national conference for Guiding leaders all holding roles in addition to those as unit leaders and so women of reasonable experience and responsibility within the movement. She speaks of the care that was taken before the event to contact her about any special requirements which she might have and about whether she was comfortable about the arrangements for times of spiritual reflection. She adds that everything was appropriately arranged. However she expresses anger and concern about the behaviour of one colleague from a different (mainstream) ‘minority faith’ who, having also been consulted beforehand, ‘created a bit of a fuss’ complaining that the reflection was being held. She comments

I felt quite embarrassed by her complaints and I stood up and defended the organisers. Everyone applauded me.....Guiding is very sensitive to individual people’s beliefs, always has been and always will be. I feel that we have always been way ahead of other organisations in open attitudes to every person, valuing each person for whom and what they are and welcoming all.

³⁴² Brown Owl: the name given by the children to Brownie Leaders at that time

³⁴³ I know this simply because I have visited the units several times. Personal details of ethnicity and faith tradition are not held on the Girlguiding membership data base but are simply known to the unit leader. (This policy is under review.)

It happens that another of the three trainers whose responses are discussed here was at the same event and one of the organising team. Quite independently she comments on the same incident with appreciation of the support expressed to the team.

All three respondents also comment on challenges which can arise when a very restricted interpretation of human spirituality or simply (and more usually) longstanding local tradition, lead to a feeling of exclusion by some who do not express that spirituality within a faith tradition. One also discusses the more challenging position of those who are ‘active as atheists’. (In this context Williams³⁴⁴ gives an interesting discussion of different understandings of the term atheist. The ethos of Guiding can embrace many Humanist expressions of spiritual searching but not the extreme ‘Secularist’ position that human spirituality simply does not exist.) The respondent addressing this topic most fully is also the respondent with, by far, the widest experience and seniority in British Guiding.³⁴⁵ She writes:

The forums for young women at UK level- Innovate were the first place that I discovered young members who were active as atheists and demanding that the Promise be changed- I consider that the context of explaining the spiritual dimension is the root of the issue. Over the years it became conflated with a narrow interpretation of duty to God equals attending Church Parade. We lost the international setting which reflected respect for all faiths and from those open to seeking a faith which I consider was the original and true base for the movements of Guiding and Scouting.

Elsewhere in her response she comments on her work as a commissioner trainer:

When working with commissioners we are looking at seeing the value base in practice and handling the process of new people joining whether they are adults or girls so it is usually in this context I am working with the broad spirituality topic.

She discusses the difficulty of encouraging people to recognise the spiritual. In different parts of her response she makes each of the following comments:

I have found people do not talk about the spiritual dimension but when they talk about special moments in their Guiding experience – known as mountain top moments there is an element of spirituality- they only recognise it if it is pointed out!

I was part of an adult walking holiday on Arran in summer 2013 – which was 24 leaders in Guiding and during that week there was a strong sense of fellowship /spiritual discussion as a result of enjoying experiences together from a shared value base.

However she also observes

³⁴⁴ Williams 2012 p281ff

³⁴⁵ She also notes that she personally is a practising Christian

I attended the UK service of thanks and recognition at Westminster Abbey in 2014 and reflect that this speaks powerfully to several generations of adult volunteers as a context for their voluntary service.

The three trainers whose responses are discussed in this section are current unit leaders. They may, and sometimes do, train unit leaders. Because of their other Guiding roles they are naturally in considerable demand as commissioner trainers and this is the area to which they devote much of the time which they have available for training. This affects the type of questions which they will most usually address as trainers. Two of them bring special experience to their responses; one because of her faith position and one because of her Guiding background. This is reflected in the depth with which they have replied to particular issues. It also makes it appropriate openly to quote their informed responses fairly fully as appears above. However it remains true that there is general commonality across these three responses. All three make the points discussed in the second paragraph of this section. All three centre their remarks on the two issues outlined in paragraph three and all three comment that these two issues present different challenges to trainers.

5 Narrative data from the interviews

Interviews took place with all trainers in Oxfordshire and in Glasgow City. The interviews were face-to-face and were individual with one exception; three of the Oxfordshire trainers were, for purely practical reasons, interviewed together. The interview questions are given in Appendix 1. At the start of each interview, the following statement was given:

These questions relate to spiritual basis of Guiding and, in some cases, specifically to the promise and the girl, the promise and the adult, the five essentials, mixed faith Guiding.

Comments on questions 1 and 2

(Summary of relevant training experience and interest)

These two questions simply reflected earlier sections of the questionnaire. All trainers said that they were happy to train on these subjects including mixed faith Guiding. Two commented, with concern, that these topics were rarely requested except at sessions for new leaders and that established leaders did not always seem to realise that changes of approach over the years might be appropriate in this area as in all others. One commented that faced with a session topic ‘the

promise', she would always 'tweak it to make it broader'. One spoke of training leaders in Ghana and in Thailand where groups included women of many faiths. She spoke of the experience of being the one from a minority faith particularly in Thailand where the majority faith was Buddhism. She commented that there had been no problems at all. All said that in general programme training they always include reference to these topics. They used, variously, words like 'this is....central/fundamental/essential/the crux (sic!) to Guiding'. About a third gave unprompted explanation of their inclusion of mention of mixed-faith Guiding. They commented that how you did this depended on local context but that mention was necessary to correct misconceptions. One also took the opportunity to comment that the majority of issues were about culture rather than faith. One Rainbow trainer (who also leads and trains in Guide section) took the opportunity to regret the fact that the Rainbow promise was differently worded saying that the Rainbow section still sometimes felt 'cut off' after 25 years of existence. Several Rainbow trainers commented that there remains the challenge of new leaders in that section who do not realise that as adults they personally make the same promise as all adults in Guiding and not that used by the children. Three comments from different individuals on these questions:

You sometimes need to think on your feet if it gets controversial.

Feeling comfortable about discussing these things helps others feel comfortable.

It's my passion.

The last of these was the response to 'Do you enjoy training in these areas?' Generally there was no distinction between the two sample areas. The only slight difference is perhaps expressed most clearly in a comment from an Oxfordshire trainer speaking of challenges from leaders when training on these topics. As she phrased it:

Coping with the 'don't knows' is easier than coping with the 'actively other'.

A number of other responses hovered round this question and the impression given was that, of the very small number who commented on this at all, others in Oxfordshire would tend to agree with her while those in Glasgow would say exactly the opposite. The numbers are too few and the references were too vague to attribute statistical significance to this. What was made clear was that trainers were agreed that the two challenges were certainly different.

Comments on question 3

(What activities do you use/demonstrate/suggest? How are they received?)

All of the trainers reacted initially by giving a list of examples. This long list of possible practical activities was impressive and is discussed in generality in the next chapter. (Other methods will be used to disseminate the detail to other trainers.) More general comments included that speaking of these matters should ‘occur naturally and not be contrived’ and that one should ‘build confidence on experience’. In saying this, these women are, of course, echoing the words of Baden-Powell a century ago³⁴⁶. Equally many referred to the sisterhood of Guiding across the world. Two respondents commented that trainers needed to do more on this topic for adults themselves. They said that too much was left to commissioners. One spoke at some length and was obviously unhappy about what she saw as the failure of a particular commissioner to ‘promote the promise’. However responses to this question clearly included an element of the concern expressed in the previous two, that adults in Guiding get little training on these matters after their initial qualification unless they are active in Guiding in additional roles to that of unit leader. Again to close this section with two quotations:

The best way to train on the Five Essentials of Guiding is

one essential at a time

and, in initial answer to question as printed

I have a folder full of these. I wish I had it with me.

Faced with a concrete question, Guiding trainers usually respond immediately, enthusiastically and pragmatically.

Comments on question 4

(Are you familiar with *The educational framework of Guiding* and *The WAGGGS spirituality toolkit*

Have you used any of the training material provided in the appendices? How useful have you found it?)

This was the question which presented a clear distinction between the two samples. All respondents said that they were familiar with the first (UK) document and about half, equally divided between the two samples, said that they had used the training material. Several commented that the material was easier to use with older girls. All in the Glasgow sample were familiar with the WAGGGS document and again about half had used it. Less than half of the Oxfordshire sample was aware of the WAGGGS document. Again about half of these had used it. The others had no knowledge of the document. More surprisingly (and giving rise to

³⁴⁶ Baden-Powell A & Baden-Powell R (1912) p456ff

considerably more concern) three could best be described as amazed when shown the document and appeared to have no idea that there was central guidance and, indeed, ruling on these matters. Several who had used the training materials commented that they were *not as well known as they deserved to be*. An interesting observation came from one respondent who has trained leaders in Russia as well as in Britain. She commented on using the WAGGGS material with adults saying that in the UK the leaders need a '*practical hook*' to get started whereas the Russians '*went straight into the abstract stuff quite happily*'. (She also commented on a distinction between older leaders who remember communist rule and younger ones who do not and 'take concept of religious freedom for granted – and so do not know what it is'.)

Comments on question 5

(When training specifically on promise/law/essentials, would you deliberately mention the fact that Guiding embraces many faiths?)

About two thirds of the trainers gave a definite 'yes' to this question the others saying that it depended on the context. The discussion echoed that given in question 2. Comments were along the lines of 'because there are misconceptions about' and 'because a default is assumed'. Some respondents observed that the need to be explicit was becoming more urgent. Another made the point that occasionally it was not necessary to say anything because the diversity in the room made that matter self-evident.

Comments on question 6

(How do you cope with reflections embracing many faiths without its becoming a 'no-faith reflection'?)

The main comment occurring throughout the responses to this question was that the participants, be they girls or adults, should do the choosing and planning. Trainers listed a variety of suitable resources including both those produced by Girlguiding and others. Some suggested their own units' titles for such times of reflection including '*Thoughts and thanks*' and '*Pause for thought*'. Three observed that they had found themselves in the position of leading such a time with a single member of a different faith present: a situation which they had not anticipated. (Two were with members of Guide section age; one was with adults.) In all cases the trainer had invited this member to make a contribution while at the same time giving the opportunity to withdraw if that was preferred. In all cases a contribution was offered and everyone appreciated the outcome. One of the three did comment that handling these situations well 'depends on your own

confidence'. Gentle probing of whether she meant confidence in her Guiding experience or confidence in her own faith position produced a period of silent thought followed by the comment 'I can't see a distinction.' Several respondents commented that making space for such times of reflection regularly in every unit meeting was important. Concern was expressed that the rewording of the promise made some leaders feel that they were not allowed to do this. The fear of 'getting it wrong' had increased rather than diminished.

This question produced similar answers from all respondents. However two, each working with Brownie age members, produced interesting, related asides. One remarked that while away on Pack Holiday, her own girls had surveyed materials provided to put together a reflection and observed 'but there's no Bible'. These girls were of a mixture of ethnicities and attended a non-denominational school in central Glasgow. The other, more generally, observed that girls having chosen (or written) appropriate words for a reflection then (without being asked) made them into a prayer adding 'Dear God' at the start and 'Amen' at the end. This trainer is the one who gave her personal position as in the most general position of spiritual seeking of any in the sample. She had spoken of this at some length. Her comment on this action of the children was 'I can't think where they get it from. They don't get it from home and they certainly don't get it from school. It seems to be instinctive.' There was some envy in her tone.

Comments on question 7

(When training or responding to questions in this broad area do you find that your own faith position helps or gets in the way or neither of these?)

At the simple quantitative level, about three-quarters of the answers to this question were *it helps* and the others were *neither of these*. No-one said they found the situation in any way problematic.

Some expanded making comments (four different respondents) such as:

It helps because you show respect and are not mocking.

It can be useful if there are misconceptions about (her own tradition's) issues.

Yes it helps but not as a bias.

It depends where your own head is at the time.

The trainers who, as noted above, had spoken of the work in Ghana, Thailand and Russia, each reiterated at this point that their own faith position had been no problem in those situations. One respondent summarised the comments of many others with:

It affects the person I am. It's always there.

Comments on question 8

(During your time as a trainer, have things changed over time? Are there significant differences between different geographical areas?)

In the interview samples, no-one spoke of difference over geographical areas. Most saw little long-term change over time. One commented 'There are peaks and troughs but no overall drift'. Some noted the greater need for care with political correctness and changes in the law. Two commented on a change in the level of background knowledge of leaders. The two comments were in opposite directions. One commented on experiencing a greater demand for training on these topics after what she termed '*media incidents*'. As with the related question in the questionnaire, many commented that the major change over time was the increase in their own confidence.

Comments on question 9

(The value base of Girlguiding UK states that:

*Guiding seeks to promote girls' spiritual, social, emotional, physical, intellectual and moral development*³⁴⁷

The membership requirements of WAGGGS include:

*The recognition of a spiritual dimension to life is one of the universal core values of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. These values are at the heart of the Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting Movement. The Promise and Law of all National Organizations that belong to WAGGGS must contain the essence of the fundamental principles defined at the 21st World Conference in 1972. The Promise of each Association must express a spiritual dimension as detailed below: The essence of Duty to God is the acknowledgement of the necessity for a search for a faith in God, in a Supreme Being, and the acknowledgement of a Force higher than man, of the highest Spiritual Principles.*³⁴⁸

Do you have any comments on whether the current wording of the promise (in the UK) appropriately reflects this basis?)

All agreed that the answer to this question was yes. Two commented specifically and with appreciation on the stress on 'searching' and not on 'having arrived'. One such response came

³⁴⁷ The Guide Association 2001 *The Educational Framework for Guiding* p4, London, The Guide Association

³⁴⁸ WAGGGS 2000 *Exploring Spirituality – Resource Material for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts* p2, London WAGGGS

from the trainer mentioned at the end of the comments on question 6 and was expressed with some relief. (This leader is one of the least experienced trainers in the sample. She had not previously been aware of this WAGGS statement.) There was further complaint about the different wording of the promise for Rainbows from the same respondent who had expressed this view earlier. Two spoke of the specific word ‘duty’:

Many today have no concept of the word duty and not just the meaning of the word.

The essence of duty is no longer understood.

Comments on question 10

(Have you received ‘difficult questions’ from leaders which you think are relevant to this study? Are you willing to share them?)

Perhaps inevitably the subjects raised here related to very specific issues. To some extent it is difficult and perhaps unfair to summarise and generalise them. In some cases the generalisation simply does no real justice to the issue. In some, a considerable degree of generalisation is required solely to protect anonymity – in a relatively small constituency of reasonably close colleagues. (This is, of course, frequently an issue for Action Research.)

In four cases a generalised point can be made relatively easily. Three of these concern issues over which there has recently been much discussion within Guiding and some within the public media. These three can be summarised by the following:

‘Can I be a Guider (sic) if I don’t believe?’ – All trainers mentioning this one referred both to the acceptability of spiritual searching and to the phrase in the promise ‘do my best’.

There were issues about the difficulty in finding the appropriate *manner* of replying to questions about church parade. (Specifically NOT an issue of knowing the facts)

The fact that ‘meeting in the church hall’ (or the social hall of any other place of worship) is not of itself a problem. Many groups including other children’s groups meet in such halls and no assumption is generally made about exclusivity. Problems can come if consequently leader or relevant cleric makes unfounded assumptions on practice.

Each of these points was raised in some form by several respondents. Each is well-known to be an issue for Guiding in some circumstances. Each is discussed more fully elsewhere in the thesis.

The fourth general point is one introduced in the previous chapter. It relates to those leaders in such professions as teaching and nursing and the difficulties which can arise in some situations

when trying to present a consistent picture to a girl, particularly a very young one, between what is said by the leader acting as such and any constraints on what she may say in a professional capacity. This was raised with considerable concern by two trainers and mentioned by others. One example involved the death of the parent of a five-year-old and is discussed in detail in chapter 6. This growing dilemma for some leaders has not generally been addressed by Guiding trainers.

Other comments reflected various questions from outside Guiding and again are addressed in the next chapter.

Comments on question 11

(What do you think would be the useful directions for the expansion of this research over the next three years?)

Many respondents gave answers reflecting those already listed at the end of the discussion of research methodology. Others suggested very specific groups with whom it would be interesting to pursue these questions. Two used this question to suggest groups who could, in their opinion usefully be informed of the results of the research. Due note has been taken of all the suggestions.

Comments on question 12

(Is there anything which you would like to add?)

Not surprisingly much of what was raised here had been presented by others in response to different questions. Two specific incidents and three quotations stand out.

One trainer commented on a concern which she received from a leader in a small industrial town where the leader had done her best to make Muslim girls welcome. She had checked carefully the evening of mosque school and moved her Guide meeting to another night. The imam immediately changed the night of mosque school to clash. This was repeated three times. However another trainer noted with shame the experience of a Church of Scotland minister (male) who had moved the night of the (specifically Christian) Girls' Brigade twice with exactly

the same intent. Most respondents reported good relations with local clerics of all faiths and that this was the experience of almost all the leaders whom they trained. In all areas of life you can meet troublesome individuals – who consider themselves, no doubt, to be acting in good faith.

Another respondent reported a particularly unpleasant situation where the leader of a Brownie unit had complained about the behaviour of the leader of the related Guide unit. Both women belonged to the same congregation of very conservative Christian tradition in whose hall the units met. The units were open, welcoming girls and assistant leaders of many faiths and backgrounds. This was not the problem. The Brownie leader's single complaint was that the Guide leader herself did not always attend the congregation's mid-week prayer meeting. The argument was that thus, as a member of that congregation, she was not fulfilling 'the requirements of her own faith tradition' and ought not to be a leader in Guiding. The complaint was made to the Guiding authorities not to the church ones. The trainer reporting this did observe that the complainant had at least read the Guiding manual accurately before making her charge! Discussions about both sisterhood and the phrase 'to do my best' were mentioned. (This issue was not resolved at the time of interview.)

Each of the trainers reporting the above incidents appeared relieved to have got them 'off their chest' to an informed outsider. Each went on to say that the incident remained in their memory precisely because it was so very unusual and unsolvable. Each in its own way (!) also illustrates the centrality in Guiding of individual spirituality and inclusivity and the lengths to which some leaders will go to support this.

In contrast three quotations (from three different respondents) stand out as positive:

Ethos and values – that's why they come.

Schools seem to be going back to spirituality

Don't be so scared of treading on eggshells that you say nothing

The last was quoted by a trainer who was also a trainer tutor as advice which she gave both to leaders and to new trainers.³⁴⁹

6 Data from workshops at trainers' conference 2013

³⁴⁹ She also made it perfectly clear that she was making the observation personally to which I can only respond 'I have already promised that I will do my best....'

An invited workshop was held at the trainers' conference of 2013. This was three months before revision of the wording of the promise. At the time of the conference the membership consultation was already in progress. The consultation had been announced but not commenced at the time when delegates were invited to choose between the workshops on offer. The workshop was repeated twice with twelve delegates (maximum permitted) on both occasions. It has already been noted that delegates were self-selecting and therefore in no sense a 'random sample'. The sessions included two more general discussions (reported below) followed by various practical activities.

For the first of two discussions delegates, in small groups, were provided with sheets³⁵⁰ giving relevant short quotations; six from Guiding sources and one from National Occupational Standards for Youth Work. They were asked to discuss these. All found them interesting. All found them relevant. For groups of experienced trainers, it was slightly concerning that to a significant proportion of the delegates, many of the extracts came as a surprise. In most cases (not quite all) there was no concern about the content. The documents reflected the ethos which the trainers expected in Guiding. The concern was that many were unaware of these sources of statements of official policy. When faced with challenging questions, trainers are expected to be able to refer to the organisation's policy and if necessary to cite appropriate policy documents. The general consensus in both sessions was that the trainers would have found it helpful to know about this information sooner. The organisational issue raised here for a large and voluntary body is, of course, much easier to state than to resolve.

In the second general session delegates were asked to reflect personally on three societal issues. After a short time these topics were again addressed in small groups. Comments, either personal or group views, were then recorded on graffiti sheets round the room. The sheet headers were: *secularised populations*, *populations of diverse faith* and *intra-faith diversity/conflict*. (Throughout this research it has been necessary to exercise care and avoid any confusion caused by a minority of respondents who make no distinction, at least in vocabulary, between what are inter-faith and intra-faith issues; those who, for example, term Protestantism and Roman Catholicism as different faiths. In conversation it was usually possible to determine the meaning by context. For the graffiti sheets it was hoped that providing sheets for both issues would clarify the situation.) Individual handouts gave a short explanation of the use of these terms as well as introductory information explaining reasons for the activity. For each of the three topics,

³⁵⁰ Copy included in Appendix 1

two sheets were provided one requesting 'positive aspects/experiences' and the other 'challenges'. The first two issues received many responses under both headings. Not surprisingly fewer trainers commented on intra-faith issues. Those who did were mostly from areas where these topics are, or recently have been, seen as issues locally. Comments from the graffiti sheets clearly reflected the inevitable variety of starting points of delegates. Many state the reasonably obvious: for example that we can learn from each and that in some areas Guiding has challenges in making its inclusive welcome clear. (For some of course that very inclusivity is a barrier.) Some would not find universal agreement: many faiths coming together to worship one God; diversity confirms beliefs and develops faith. The concern among many Senior Section leaders about the Wicca tradition makes a notable appearance. Other comments centre on the role of trainers in supporting leaders in a situation which for some is outside their own practical experience. The majority of comments are given below with only *near duplication* omitted for brevity. All comments including any punctuation are quoted exactly.

Secularised Populations - positive aspects

Guiding provides an opportunity to begin to introduce a spiritual dimension

Role model of unit leader

Engages discussion/conversation/exploration

Personal choice is seen as a right

Secularised Populations - challenges

Complete lack of knowledge of faith/spirituality so how do you start a discussion

Perception that we are a white Anglican organisation

Connotations of venue?

Adult agenda

Extremists shout loudest

Populations of Diverse Faith - positive aspects

Engaging in conversation

Learning about others

Learning from each other

Girls get to understand that you don't all have to be the same to get on

It provides an opportunity for girls to explore and express their own beliefs

Respect for Guides observing Ramadan

Different faiths coming together to learn about one God!

It confirms beliefs and develops faith

Populations of Diverse Faith - challenges

Fitting in all the festivals

Encouraging girls to join

External prejudice against some faiths

Who/what God means to each faith

Leaders need confidence to explore what promise means to each girl

*Working myself in a very 'white British' (99.6%) area how do I support these leaders?
In trying to satisfy all we upset everyone
Questions round tackling girls' interest in witchcraft/vampire set*

Intra-faith Diversity/ Conflict - positive aspects

*Having diversity within a unit gives girls and leaders a better understanding
Finding common ground
Girls gaining knowledge from friends
Following a different faith group into the venue
Eastern Europeans moving into the area – eg Polish Guides demonstrating how they value their belief*

Intra-faith Diversity/Conflict - challenges

*Getting them to come together – probably more of a problem with the parents than the girls
Making parents know that we are open to all
To establish what we have in common
We risk losing any reference to faith/God*

Many of these comments inform discussion in chapter 6. Possibly even more interesting than these are comments appearing on evaluation forms for the session. The delegates agreed (95%) that the session was enjoyable, interesting, informative and helpful and it was 'not annoying'. (Five different questions) There were then considerably more comments than is usual on such forms in space for 'any further comments'. A selection, each taken from a different form:

explored ideas I hadn't thought of

useful to think about this away from the unit

It is a concern that units I know personally totally avoid this issue

unexpected but thought provoking

more time needed to explore this more deeply³⁵¹

While these are indeed positive comments on the workshop, it is perhaps slightly concerning that a group of experienced trainers, who had chosen this topic from a number of options, were so surprised by the content.

³⁵¹ With this one, as leader, I can only agree.

6 Reflection, review and recommendations

In the press as well as in ordinary conversation, speculation about the future of religion is widespread. In the academy, however, the topic is often evaded. It has not always been so.³⁵²

These are the opening sentences of *Predicting Religion*, a collection of papers published in 2003, edited by Gracie Davie, Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead.³⁵³ In an extended introduction³⁵⁴ the authors discuss writers of the past who spoke of the demise of organised religion citing Freud, Comte and Durkheim among others. They consider those who speak of the current *rude health* of religion in some parts of the world and the contrasting claims of secularisation and sacralisation theories. They discuss the role of religion in politics citing the overthrow of communism in Russia and the rise of militant Hinduism in India. They consider the role of developing concepts of religion and what they term *the rise of new, more amorphous forms of spirituality* especially in the west. They observe that

Religion may be in decline, but spirituality – perceived to be less dogmatic, more tolerant and flexible, and better suited to the pursuit of personal inner quests – is waxing.³⁵⁵

Discussion includes recent manifestations of ‘spirituality’ from those termed New Age to those which *shade off* into a search for *healing and energisation catered for in the High Street rather than in designated sacred spaces* and notes ‘well-being’ departments appearing in supermarkets and High Street pharmacies. The writers speak of practical consequences of this diversification including appropriate provision of spiritual care in health services and of both religious education and religious studies in schools. They cite those whose concern is that organised religion is a good and effective *bulwark against the forces of individualisation and the ‘bowling alone’ society*³⁵⁶ and contrast this viewpoint with that which sees decline of traditional forms of religion as a condition for an open, tolerant and pluralistic society.

Later in the introduction there is consideration of challenges to the presumption that a decline in outward religious observance (eg church-going) correlates with a decline in religious belief, pointing to other instances of current western society which illustrate that this is a non-joining culture.³⁵⁷ The authors discuss research which *elicited evidence of a rich though largely*

³⁵² Davie, Heelas & Woodhead 2003 p1

³⁵³ In coincidence, in the week following that in which I started to draft this chapter, the Radio Times led with an article *Time to get God – He’s the man – or woman – of 2015*. Radio Times 6-12 June 2015 p9

³⁵⁴ Authors of the extended introduction are listed as Woodhead, Heelas & Davie (ie in reverse order to that in which they appear as editors of the work as a whole). The work is referenced here accordingly.

³⁵⁵ *ibid* p2

³⁵⁶ *ibid* p3 (the phrase ‘bowling alone’ is from the title of Robert Putnam’s book *Bowling Alone - The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Putnam 2000)

³⁵⁷ *ibid* p5

invisible pool of personal spirituality which is rarely articulated in public – largely, they note, through fear of ridicule. They speak of dual - and even multiple - belonging. The introduction closes with a discussion of contrasting possibilities that an increasingly *homogenised* world will result in a ‘dedifferentiating’ ethic of humanity with a softening of difference or will result in exclusivity, hard-line extremism and warfare.

Woodhead et al write of world-wide religious diversity and development and of its consequences. Guiding has been a global and inclusive youth movement for over a century and naturally has experienced across the world that same range of changing religious expression as the society in which it has developed. As populations move and many neighbourhoods become more culturally diverse, larger numbers of leaders are facing this diversity locally in their own units. It was this phenomenon and the question of how these leaders were managing to sustain the spiritual basis of Guiding in these circumstances which, in large part, led to this research. However a second theme emerges from the research findings. Each of the phenomena described above has been mentioned by respondents to the research. Indeed some leaders appear to see all of them within one unit. (The warfare might mercifully, at least for leaders in the UK, perhaps better be termed major squabbles in this context.) Guiding leaders are less professionally constrained than teachers and health workers. They are also volunteers with a commitment to nurture spiritual growth. The research has confirmed occasional problems and usually suggested some possible solutions. However general conclusions are that things are going well both in the movement generally and in those microcosms of society which are local units. Perhaps there is still something here for society to learn from Guiding.

In this chapter of reflection, review and recommendations, discussion of the various findings deliberately follows the broad order in which the phenomena appear in the introduction to *Predicting Religion*. Naturally it draws on the writing of other authors. It also draws attention to many clear parallels with developing societal change in the era of the foundation of the movement. Before proceeding with this discussion however, two other points should be noted:

Predicting Religion was published in 2003. In 2012 Linda Woodhead working with Rebecca Catto edited a further series of papers entitled *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*.³⁵⁸ These papers update and expand some areas of the discussion. One paper has particular relevance to aspects of this research in that it discusses more fully presumptions of secularism in the public sphere and the influence of this on education. Reference to this particular paper will be made. However generally it is more appropriate here to follow the wider basis of the earlier work.

³⁵⁸ Woodhead L & Catto R 2012

The other point is simply one of important reiteration. The research set out to investigate how trainers were addressing issues of nurturing spirituality in 21st century Britain; how well their work appeared to be received by leaders and how well they felt they were succeeding in their task. The part of the Guide programme and ethos which most directly encapsulates the subject matter under consideration is the first clause of the promise; the clause relating to spirituality. During the five year pre-determined duration of this research Guiding in the United Kingdom implemented one of its periodic reviews of the wording of the promise and consequently implemented a change to that wording. It must be stressed again that this review and rewording were not anticipated, still less known to be planned, at the start of the research. The two are entirely independent projects. Inevitably the change has had effects on the findings and, to a lesser extent, on the methodology of the research. It has certainly made it more interesting. It has also made it more useful. However the core theme of **how** best to train adult youth leaders on their responsibilities in this area of spirituality is unaltered. Publicity surrounding the change, as with any change, has short-term implications. The precise words used in some activities must be adapted. Interest in the subject is currently abnormally high. The continuing long term challenge remains unchanged.

Predicting Religion opens with a discussion of those authors who spoke of the demise of religion. Certainly, as noted in chapter 4, there is currently, in Britain, less **traditional public** religious observance: personal, in civil society and in schools³⁵⁹. Increasing numbers of adults have no experience of being a member of any practising faith community. Increasing numbers of leaders are facing the challenge of corporate nurturing of spirituality and leading joint acts of spiritual reflection without any experience (good or bad) on which to base their practice. Stewart J Brown writes³⁶⁰ of drastically falling church attendance and competition by the growing leisure industries for people's time and attention. A D Gilbert³⁶¹ writes of debates over church influence in schooling at a time of heated argument about this subject. Each is writing of the early years of the 20th century, the era in which Guiding was first established. The current situation may be challenging but it is new neither to society nor to Guiding. The passage from an earlier handbook³⁶² which is quoted fully in chapter 4 also demonstrates that this is an on-going challenge. Even with the most positive of intentions, it is indeed challenging for a leader to teach girls how to lead corporate spiritual reflection from a personal starting point of 'what is it?' Trainers also vary in their confidence to approach the topic, perhaps particularly in

³⁵⁹ see for example Brown C G 2006 p4ff, Sacks 1991 p8, Williams 2012 p2ff, p43

³⁶⁰ Brown S J 2008 p398

³⁶¹ Gilbert 1976 p163ff

³⁶² Thurman J 1948 p9

neighbourhoods embracing many world faiths. At least trainers are more aware of various association resources available to support this aspect of Guide training. One interesting comment however, was heard many times before the start of the research and it was reiterated in the responses to it. This was that those who were felt to have led the most helpful and appreciated sessions on this subject were those who had also made it clear that they felt secure in their own faith. This was often the case even when that faith varied from the faith, if any, of those making the comment. There is a big issue to be explored here and the whole subject, possibly the most challenging demonstrated in the research, is revisited in a wider context at the end of the chapter.

Woodhead et al go on to speak of the rude health of religion in some parts of the world. In local Guiding units this is most likely to appear in the presence of members of strong faith who practise the traditions of that faith and possibly come from a diverse range of world faiths or traditions within a faith. Again this is not a new phenomenon. As previously noted, the first Sikh gurdwara in Britain opened in 1911 and the first Islamic mosque in 1912.³⁶³ S J Brown discusses the growing breadth of spiritual expression in Britain in these, the early years of Guiding's existence.³⁶⁴ However the phenomenon is now certainly more widespread. Guiding's welcome to members of all faiths now takes place in a much more cosmopolitan world. The most frequent observation here from research respondents was that the real issues are cultural not faith matters. The fear among some leaders of 'getting it wrong' was again noted by trainers - again with the comment that no-one had reported any actual 'real' problems. Leaders in Guiding have a duty to encourage those members who belong to a faith community to participate fully in it. Guidance and advisers are available if help is needed and trainers reported that most leaders were aware of this. However it was noted that much of the available guidance concerns factual material; for example dietary matters and observation of holy days. Increasing numbers of leaders now face the challenge of dealing with issues of spirituality and, in particular, times of reflection in units including members of many faiths and cultures. Their questions presented not so much a lack of awareness of resources available as a lack of confidence as to what was acceptable. (Questions about the theology of inter-faith worship and prayer are challenging and this is a topic which finds very limited consideration in the literature of inter-faith studies³⁶⁵.) It was agreed that things were far easier in a unit already of considerable cultural diversity than when one new family entered a unit previously of uniform cultural background. Respondents

³⁶³ C G Brown 2006 p57

³⁶⁴ S J Brown 2008 p399ff

³⁶⁵ Godin 2012

commented here that it was easy to make the newcomer feel welcome; more challenging to make her feel at home.³⁶⁶

In this Guiding reflects the general situation in society. Girls in culturally diverse areas meet at Guides the same friends as they meet at school. In matters of spirituality and of culture as in all matters they are finding a way forward together. Guiding gives them an arena in which it is acceptable to discuss and explore matters of faith together within the family of a global organisation which is seen to embrace many faiths without at all appearing to sideline or even exclude faith practice.³⁶⁷ This is a situation which many do not find elsewhere and to them it can come as a relief. Here, it is indeed 'OK to do God'. A number of comments indicated that this opportunity was welcomed by the girls, perhaps especially those of Guide and Senior Section age. What became apparent from responses was the lack of awareness of leaders, in both directions, that many units now do include such a cultural mix and that many, still truly reflecting their particular neighbourhood, do not. This has been true of Guiding throughout its history and throughout the world. It simply is coming closer to home for some leaders. Some are worrying about their ability to cope and both need and deserve reassurance. However, as in many things, anticipation is far worse than reality. When real children (with real parents) appear in the hall in front of them leaders cope well and know where to seek help if necessary. It is small unexpected things that really challenge. When a Brownie with limited English newly arrived in the city bursts into tears because her wobbly tooth has wobbled out, what a leader needs to know is the exact status of the tooth fairy in her culture. It is not easy to find out quickly! (The girl was not a new Brownie. She had made her promise in the country of her birth. Among strangers in a strange land, going to Brownies was something that she knew.)

Where, rarely, challenges were noted they were most often the result of misinformation or misapprehensions; these being usually, but not always, on the part of someone outside the movement. They were also usually the consequence of long-standing local practice in changing local circumstances which made that practice less appropriate or even no longer acceptable. (As noted in section one of chapter 4, these challenges can be particularly sensitive when much loved traditions are involved.) Those outside the movement do not always recognise that it has been inclusive of all faiths since its foundation. In the United Kingdom the two most usual misconceptions are that the movement is Christian or that it has no spiritual basis. However a Hindu colleague who recently returned to her small home town in north India faced there an

³⁶⁶ However note in this context the positive comments about her personal childhood experience made in section four of chapter 6 by the trainer 'from a minority faith'.

³⁶⁷ See for example comments of Charles Taylor and David Lyall discussed in section two of chapter 5

equally fixed certainty that the movement is entirely Hindu. All persons base their presumptions on what they know. Locally in Strathclyde with its sorry history in this field, most leaders have been informed that the movement is Roman Catholic and that the movement is Protestant – and occasionally been told both in the same street in the same week! The membership should know and live the truth of the situation. Two specific fairly common scenarios were mentioned by many trainers as creating situations of distress comparatively rarely but in circumstances where problems could reasonably readily have been avoided with a combination of tact and knowledge of appropriate policy.

One respondent from a rural English county observed: ‘In a small community everything still centres on the village church and the village school which in such a community is likely also to be a ‘church school’. It is very easy in this situation to assume that it is acceptable to expect girls to attend church on special occasions and mostly they will.’ Indeed mostly they will. The problem, when there is one, comes either with the nature of the invitation to attend or in the reaction to non-attendance. Wording the invitation to participate in a religious observance in such a way as to make clear the duty of those of that faith to attend and simultaneously making clear that others are very welcome but not required to be present is challenging.³⁶⁸ Many groups with a long-standing mixture of faiths in their membership manage this regularly. For others it is something which can cause concern. In areas slowly becoming more diverse, one vital need is that all appropriate people are aware of the movement’s actual policy.³⁶⁹

A different local situation was presented by a number of Scottish respondents. It is not uncommon for a church hall to be the meeting place of a unit of the Boys’ Brigade (for the boys) and Guiding Units (for the girls). As previously noted the Boys’ Brigade is an explicitly Christian organisation. What is far less generally known is that some aspects of the unit’s practice and leadership choice are not only the right but also the responsibility of the minister

³⁶⁸ One leader commented that because their (very mixed) unit met rent-free in a church hall she considered it a matter of common courtesy that all girls attend church for the monthly parade service. This service, taking place as part of normal morning worship, was organised by the Boys’ Brigade. The leader herself did not otherwise attend any church; nor did she, when gently questioned, express any particular specific faith belief. The exercise was a matter of courtesy and she saw it as nothing else. A leader starting from such a position may find it difficult to comprehend an objection to attendance coming from a faith-based perspective. This extended comment appears as a footnote because it comes in a sense as an anecdotal aside from the research. The comments were made to me personally in the local corner shop where the leader was buying sweets to give out at her next unit meeting as rewards to those girls who had turned up at church! She knows me slightly as a Guiding leader but nothing more. It happens that I know the minister concerned fairly well. He confirmed that there had been no pressure from him nor, so far as he was aware, from other church officials for the Guides to take part in this BB exercise although naturally those who attended were made very welcome. Unpicking a situation like this is anything but straight forward (and the corner shop is not the place to try to do it).

³⁶⁹ Obviously exasperated addenda to otherwise excellent but fairly conventional suggestions for further work were given by two interviewees both of whom have professional roles within the church (one each side of Hadrian’s Wall) – ‘you could try telling all the clergy’ and ‘talk to a group of vicars’. Both respondents are close personal friends and both comments were made partly in humour. However the point is made.

and Kirk Session of the church in which it meets.³⁷⁰ Over Guiding units these bodies have no direct authority or responsibility. From these facts the possibilities for misunderstanding are self-evident. A number of delicate situations were mentioned by respondents. The majority had been amicably resolved when the full facts were known. (In one case the full facts simply met with incredulity from all sides.)

After the most recent rewording of the promise in the UK, one of the more common questions received by Guiding headquarters was ‘Does this mean that Guiding is no longer Christian?’ The immediate (and entirely accurate) response of ‘It never was.’ was not always a help. Again this is not a new phenomenon. The attempt by Sir Francis Vane with support of the then Bishop of London to introduce (Anglican) Diocesan Scouts with an emended scout law *A Scout is a Brother to all **Diocesan** Scouts* (emphasis added) occurred as early as 1909 and led to a letter from Baden-Powell in which he states with, for him, more than usual vehemence ‘the meeting on Tuesday night proved to me what I had supposed viz that you have an entirely wrong conception of your duties as a commissioner.’³⁷¹ The movement’s policy of embracing all faiths while requiring each member to fulfil the practices of her own faith continues to produce a reaction of incomprehension from many. Usually when it is pointed out to those (including some parents) who are expressing doubt that it has always be true that, for example, the majority of Guides in Thailand are Buddhist and the majority of Guides in Iran are Muslim they accept this but are clearly left wondering what this has to do with the local situation.³⁷²

In their discussion of developing forms of religion, Woodhead et al speak of *the rise of new, more amorphous forms of spirituality*. Again this is not new. S J Brown comments:

Now in the 1890s came new religious beliefs – associated with ancient wisdom, Eastern religions, Celtic spirituality, magic and the occult, alternative medicines, reincarnation, theosophy and mysticism³⁷³

As discussed in chapter 1, Baden-Powell’s background was such as to make him more familiar with and more receptive to these diverse views. His insistence on the major role of observation and appreciation of the natural world in nurturing personal spirituality strikes an empathy with many (not all) such philosophies. Woodhead et al comment that such spirituality is often ‘perceived to be less dogmatic, more tolerant and flexible, and better suited to the pursuit of

³⁷⁰ see <http://scotland.boys-brigade.org.uk/regulations.htm#>

³⁷¹ Jeal 1989 p405

³⁷² Some people simply have no conception that Guiding is a national let alone international organisation. They see it solely as a local childcare provision or club. This is an area where some appropriate publicity might help.

³⁷³ S J Brown 2008 p381

*personal inner quests*³⁷⁴. However in a society where individualism is increasingly seen as a right, there can sometimes be an assertive element in the defence of the need to be non-assertive. Some respondents spoke of this reversal of the popularly held view where a member holding, to the point of evangelism, a more generic view of spirituality had attacked with an unjustified accusation of intolerance or evangelism one whose spirituality was expressed within a conventional faith tradition. These instances were rare although challenging when they occurred. A more commonly expressed concern was that of leading spiritual reflection which was felt to be helpful to all concerned and again this is revisited in the closing paragraphs of this chapter. For some leaders the acceptability or otherwise of the traditional promise ceremonies of some units posed questions³⁷⁵. It is perhaps concerning that some trainers expressing specifically, worries about being able to help leaders with these matters, were the same trainers who had been totally unaware of the existence of the WAGGGS material and specifically the WAGGGS training materials in the *Spirituality Toolkit*.³⁷⁶ Also relevant are the comments by the very experienced trainer in section 4 of the previous chapter about the inability of some leaders to recognise some forms of spirituality as spiritual expression.³⁷⁷ Before leaving this topic, three specific attitudinal issues on the part of some leaders are worthy of mention. Some leaders who happily respect the views of members from many major traditional world faiths find difficult to demonstrate similar respect to those whose spirituality is expressed outside a faith tradition. Conversely some leaders whose spirituality is expressed outside a faith tradition find it difficult to respect the more conventional faith practice of some members in any way other than by ignoring it. Thirdly, and much more specifically, a number of leaders from what they, at least, would consider more conventional backgrounds, expressed concern about Wicca and similar practices. Among a large selection of thoughtful, courteously expressed and general responses written on graffiti sheets by trainers during a workshop and noted in section 9 of the previous chapter, the only 'faith-specific' concern expressed was

Questions round tackling girls 'interest in witchcraft/vampire set' (sic)

³⁷⁴ Davie et al 2003 p2

³⁷⁵ Association policy states that the format (as well as the time and place) of a promise ceremony is the decision of the individual who is making her promise. It should be special for her. (There are obvious practical constraints.) It can and occasionally does, for example, take place during an act of public worship if this is valued by those concerned but a unit must not assume or even imply that this is a requirement for all members. Similarly a new member may preface her promise with the phrase 'In the presence of God' I promise..... if she chooses but the leader must ensure that this is not assumed to be obligatory for all and that it is clear that these five words are not part of the promise.

³⁷⁶ WAGGGS 2000

³⁷⁷ An interesting discussion from a school setting, of using experience of the outdoors in spiritual education is given by Susan Rowe and Susan Humphries in *The Coombes Approach*: Rowe & Humphries 2012

Several trainers reported receiving individual questions in this general area.³⁷⁸ The fact that Wicca is a formally registered religion in the United Kingdom comes as news to many leaders and as a concern to some – including leaders already happily working with and respecting many world faiths.

Woodhead et al comment at this point in their discussion:

It is likely that the trend towards a experiential RE (sic) or RS which focuses on a universalist spirituality that unites rather than divides people of different faiths and cultures, will retain its momentum, because of its ability to handle, or rather bypass, differences between traditions.³⁷⁹

In many ways this trend mirrors the writing of Baden-Powell in 1918 already cited in chapter 1.³⁸⁰ The difference comes in the phrase *or rather bypass*. In society currently there is often wariness and sometimes total avoidance of acknowledging the transcendent outside the bounds of places specifically of spiritual/religious practice. Statements, otherwise entirely appropriate, by governments, employers, schools etc that ‘all faiths will be respected equally’ so easily become in effect policies that all faiths will be equally ignored. It is much easier (and often quicker and so cheaper) if it is not ‘OK to do God’ or, at least, not here. Guiding does not have this option. It is an organisation which respects all faiths but which also requires that these faiths be practised openly. Religious faith is not simply a private matter. One reported result of the recent rewording of the promise (as with both previous rewordings) is that many leaders need to be reminded/reassured/instructed about this. The positive side of the change is that the matter is currently to the forefront of discussion in training sessions and elsewhere. Much confusion around this topic is caused by the diversity of interpretation of formal guidance across the school system.³⁸¹ This subject is discussed in the introduction³⁸² citing particularly the work of David Hay and Rebecca Nye³⁸³ and the research of the Bloxham Project.³⁸⁴ In *The Spirit of the Child*³⁸⁵ David Hay writes, with Rebecca Nye, about the spirituality of childhood and youth. The book is comparatively unusual among theological writing in including comments on the spiritual education of children specifically in school settings. The authors observe that young children are

³⁷⁸ Three of the four specific individual questions which I have received in my specialist advisory role have involved young Senior Section members and Wicca practice; in two cases alone and in one case in an interesting clash with a Shinto Guide

³⁷⁹ Davie 2003 p2

³⁸⁰ Baden-Powell R 1918 p67

³⁸¹ Adam Dinham and Robert Jackson discuss the current and historical complexities of this situation in their paper *Religion, Welfare and Education* published in *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* edited by Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto: Woodhead and Catto 2012 p273 and following

³⁸² see also Stimpson 2011

³⁸³ Hay with Nye 2006

³⁸⁴ www.bloxhamproject.org.uk/papers.htm 2011

³⁸⁵ Hay with Nye 2006 p48ff

indeed inherently spiritual and express concern that modern schooling and society often diminish that spiritual awareness even when this is not a deliberate intent.

Choosing not to nurture spirituality in the classroom is not the spiritually or religiously neutral position which it is often assumed to be. 'Spirituality' is so readily entirely subsumed into such subjects as 'moral education and citizenship'. These, clearly commendable in themselves, easily lose any reference to the transcendent or immanent and so lose entirely a particular significance of spirituality. It is not suggested that teaching and nurture of physical activity should be entirely excluded from schools and left until young people are old enough to decide for themselves whether they wish to exercise and which sport they would prefer to play. The potential effect on their physical health would be a major public concern were this the case. Still less is it suggested that literacy (reading and writing) should be left until young people are old enough to choose whether they wish to communicate with the written word and if so in which language. It is interesting to reflect on why spiritual development is frequently treated so differently from physical and intellectual development. There are obviously many reasons. They include the pragmatic: the subject is difficult to teach and worse to assess so it is difficult to obtain credit in league tables for trying. They include variations on the opposing views: human spirituality does not exist so why waste time and human spirituality is too important to be trusted to schools who will get it wrong. They can also include the concerns mentioned earlier relating to potential for bigotry, indoctrination or fostering violence. Probably, however, the most common concern in day-to-day practice in a cosmopolitan community is the fear of getting it wrong, giving offence or breaking the rules. Elements of these concerns are reflected in the findings of the study reported here. When (and how) is it OK to do God?

The challenges facing teachers in school also face paid and voluntary children's workers particularly but not exclusively those working in mixed faith or secular settings. Within the duration of this research the relevant National Occupational Standard (NOS) for Youth Work has been revised from:

Standard 10 *Encourage the spiritual development of young people* of which the overview reads

This standard is about working with young people to explore ethical, moral and cultural values, addressing the need to respect the beliefs and values of others. It includes exploring where young people are on their journeys through life and encouraging them to see themselves in terms of their relationships with others and the environment around them. This standard is for those involved in working with young people to explore their

ethical, moral and cultural values. It includes exploring the difference between spirituality, faith and religion.³⁸⁶

To become:

Standard 14 *Facilitate young people's exploration of their values and beliefs* of which the overview reads

This standard is about working with young people to facilitate the exploration of their values and beliefs, in relation to themselves and others. The exploration of values and beliefs can cover a broad spectrum of topics such as: community, cultural values, discrimination, environment, ethics, faith, global issues, health, ideological beliefs, inter- and intra- group or community conflict, morality, philosophical beliefs, political views, relationships, religious beliefs and spirituality, including convictions of non-belief. The standard includes enabling young people to increase the sense of their own value through self-awareness and to build their self-esteem. It facilitates young people to think critically about the values and beliefs they hold, how they have acquired these and to understand the positive and negative effects these may have on their lives and the lives of others. As youth work strives to make an active contribution to the development of a society with different characteristics and diverse views, the exploration of values and beliefs must be conducted within the context of promoting good relations and equality of opportunity for all. This standard is for all youth workers. It can be interpreted and applied as appropriate to the context in which youth workers operate and it is not intended to be restrictive or exclusive.³⁸⁷

There is, perhaps, an interesting change of focus. NOS are applicable in statutory youth services and are discussed in that context. Whilst not mandatory in organisations such as Guiding, their guidance is obviously of interest.

The school situation also gives rise to the clearest example of a concern which is a very serious worry for a comparatively small number of women. It is that of the leader who must present a consistent picture to a child whom she meets in both a professional and a Guiding role. The conflicting (and absolute) requirements which this can demand with regard to acknowledgement of the existence of God and of faith practice are real and challenging, perhaps particularly so when the child is very young. It is well illustrated in the detail of this personal example related by one interviewee. This trainer leads a Rainbow unit. She is also a primary teacher in a 'nondenominational' (secular) school. Not surprisingly many girls know her both as Rainbow leader and class teacher as well as friend and neighbour. The parent of one of these little girls died. The Rainbow leader naturally gave all the support which she could, including answering inevitable questions about where mummy was now and what we did and did not know about this. In this she reflected her own position; that of the child's family and one appropriate to Rainbows.

³⁸⁶ www.ukstandards.co.uk – Youth Work - standard 10 - overview

³⁸⁷ www.nya.org.uk – Youth Work – standard 14 - overview

Inevitably, as the little girl thought about things over the coming days various questions occurred to her and these, appropriately, were addressed only as they occurred. One question or, more accurately, request for confirmation of a previous answer arose in class. The trainer concerned gave the requested confirmation. However, as she remarked in interview *'All the time I was speaking I was aware that I was not allowed to say that in school.'* A number of respondents made comments about similar potential clashes and the diplomacy needed to address them. All professionals, of course, steer a careful course in this area. Leaders in Guiding are among those who may have the added challenge that the child who asks is too young to be expected to see why there is a delicacy. The child most reasonably expects consistency from the adult regardless of the role in which she is currently standing. Interviewees all confirmed that she also gets it! (Many leaders have 'day jobs', nursing, teaching, ministry, social work, where this could arise.) This issue is not likely to disappear soon and is largely outside Guiding's control. It would at least be helpful if trainers acknowledged the challenge and, on appropriate occasions, allowed time to discuss it.

The position of these leaders in some ways leads directly to the next area of discussion in *Predicting Religion*; that of the conflicting opinions about the benefits and disadvantages of individualism to society generally and to differing views which place organised religion in a variety of different positions in the argument. For Guiding two relevant negative issues expressed by respondents concerned potential for accusations of indoctrination and fear of victimisation on social media. The first is reported as a very serious worry for a very small number of leaders and is presumably created by styles of media coverage of youth recruitment by extreme elements claiming to represent various world faiths. The need is largely for reassurance and, if necessary, explanation that discussion of a range of views of a subject is not indoctrination but, indeed, precisely the opposite. The second worry is discussed in the last section of chapter 4; that of being pilloried on social media. This is certainly a concern in the minds of a significant number of leaders (spanning the full age range!) as they consider their approach to the sensitive subject of spirituality. However the real concern behind this was articulated by some. This is that other leaders dismiss their concern as either groundless or simply an inevitable part of modern life. Trainers can provide training on the secure, sensitive and confidential use of digital communications media – training which Guiding is already careful to provide for its young members. More importantly they can realise themselves and convey to all leaders that for many reasons people vary enormously in how strongly they wish to guard their privacy. Like any responsible youth organisation, Guiding has strict procedures to protect the privacy of the personal information of young members and to ensure, for example, that permission to take photographs is given both in writing by parents and at least verbally by young

members themselves. While the legal position is clearly different, the same courtesy should be extended to adult members.³⁸⁸ It could easily be argued that this matter is a side-issue to the research. The frequency with which the subject was raised by respondents suggests that for many it is at least perceived as of direct relevance.

The major positive point (which every respondent indicated far outweighed such problems) is that for over a century and across the globe, Guiding has been demonstrating that overt practice of different faith traditions can sit comfortably alongside participation and fun in a group who work together to grow as individuals in friendship and to develop their beliefs. It still works.

..... This freedom is both a virtue and a privilege because it is not universal. It has left me convinced that my faith in God has been strengthened by some of the soul searching I have done over friends. In a way, the history of my friendships has been a journey of faith as well. It has made me think about those who brought out the best in me, unsettled me or challenged my faith.³⁸⁹

These words by the theologian Mona Siddiqui capture the point well. It starts with the Rainbows' delight over 'different' sweeties which their Jewish friends bring to share because it is Purim. It includes a group of Brownie Sixers explaining to their leader that Madi³⁹⁰ will read from the Qu'ran at Christingle because *there's a bit in there about the Virgin Mary having Baby Jesus*.³⁹¹ It includes Indira enthusiastically contributing to the Easter Egg collection for visitors to the homelessness shelter as she explains about the Hindu understanding of the symbolism of eggs. It includes two Senior Section members leading an (excellent) group reflection for the first time and asking politely if any one would be offended if they said the Lord's Prayer.³⁹² It includes Medina's grandma who had arrived early to collect her, responding from the sidelines that there was nothing particularly Christian about the words of the Lord's Prayer. (There isn't, of course.) However it also includes a group of leaders pondering over how, after this precedent, they cope in the year when Purim falls within the season of Ramadan and a Brownie leader wondering how Hannah's mum who worships with that ultra-conservative Christian

³⁸⁸ Several leaders had cited occasions when this had not been true even at the most basic level: for example emails had been sent to large numbers with open address lists; adult group snapshots had appeared on social media without agreement. The major concern expressed was not that this had happened but that when concern had been raised this had been mocked because 'this was simply the way things are nowadays'. Guiding must, of course, keep up to date. It must also behave with courtesy and 'respect the individual'. (It should also present an example of good practice. Sometimes there will be no consensus as to what constitutes good practice in this fast changing field. Simply following the business guidance on what constitutes good organisational practice would be helpful in some cases.) The major difficulty is that the 'bad practice' discussed here is not that of the central organisation whose behaviour is, as expected, entirely appropriate but of individual volunteers who simply 'can't see what all the fuss is about'.

³⁸⁹ Siddiqui 2015 p56

³⁹⁰ In these, and all other, personal anecdotal illustrations, names (and occasionally details) are changed to protect anonymity. However all examples are true and all are from my personal experience. They illustrate some points with greater clarity than more formal writing.

³⁹¹ Qu'ran 19:16-21

³⁹² St Matthew 6:9-13

congregation who meet in the Victorian hall behind the supermarket is going to react when she comes to Christingle as she always does and hears the reading from the Qu'ran. It raises an interesting question of whether a leader for whom an Easter Egg is a symbol of *a stone which was rolled away* reacts to Indira's explanation differently from one for whom this is simply a community project to collect confectionary treats for those less fortunate. Anyway not all units are lucky enough to have a grandma like Medina's.

To move back from this personal anecdotal particular to the more general: all the evidence gathered suggested strongly that leaders working in the culturally diverse units where these things happened simply rejoiced in the variety and coped well with the occasional concerns that came with it. Several trainers whose own units were in areas of more cultural uniformity expressed an element of envy. However some leaders were undoubtedly worrying about how they would cope if this were to happen on their patch. Trainers commented that as far as possible they ensured that leaders and perhaps particularly commissioners were accurately aware of the full scope of the association's policy and advice on these sensitive issues. They noted that this could occasionally be difficult when training leaders from localities where no such issues have arisen and where, indeed, some local leaders can not imagine circumstances where they might ever arise. To make people aware of policy and procedures which they may need in the future but for which they can see no immediate or local relevance is a pedagogical challenge in any teaching scenario. However the claim outlined above that in Guiding girls and women continue develop their beliefs and their individuality in friendship and in diversity was confirmed in a variety of ways by questionnaire respondents, in interviews and in workshops. This subject gave rise to the happiest and most positive of the responses and several respondents made use of the appropriate space to write fairly extended notes to this effect. The only serious and fairly widespread concern expressed by trainers³⁹³ about this matter was that of finding ways of reassuring some leaders about their ability to cope with something which they had not yet had opportunity to experience personally.

In the latter part of their introduction Woodhead et al speak of the *largely invisible pool of personal spirituality which is rarely articulated in public*. They quote Kate Hunt³⁹⁴ in saying that many 'appeared highly appreciative of the chance to speak of their spiritual experiences' but that their enthusiasm was tempered by fear of ridicule and that they frequently 'lacked vocabulary to articulate *spiritual beliefs and experiences*'. Many trainers alluded to experiencing

³⁹³ Variations on this concern appear at various points throughout the research findings; perhaps notably in the interviews and in the responses to the supplementary questionnaire (sections three and five of chapter 6).

³⁹⁴ Hunt 2003 *Understanding the Spirituality of People who do not go to Church* published in Davie et al 2003 p159 and following

aspects of this in Guiding situations. They spoke of leaders noting the willingness and indeed enthusiasm of the young people to discuss matters of spirituality and of the fact that the young people themselves were generally enthused in their conversation rather than concerned or inhibited by the presence of a variety of views. In some cases they were also of course curious. In this, leaders reflect the same observations as those of Rebecca Nye³⁹⁵ discussed in Chapter 4. However trainers also spoke of the care needed in initiating such conversation in adult groups. In some cases this came from fear of giving offence. Regrettably in a few cases, it came from a presumption that whatever the diversity of views among the young people, all leaders must surely be coming from the perspective! Perhaps in some cases it came from a modern version of the etiquette which says that God is one of those things which is not discussed in polite company. Tragically perhaps in a few cases it did come from a fear of ridicule as Kate Hunt comments. Encouraging leaders to talk together about these things is one of the hardest challenges which trainers face. It is also one from which they must not run away if all leaders are to realise that encouraging this sort of exploration with the girls is indeed part of their role. They must also remember, perhaps to their relief, that quotation from the original instruction to leaders:

Instruction in Guides' work should be given as far as possible through practices, games and competitions.³⁹⁶

Some of the longest serving trainers in the survey commented that they had seen a gradual switch from scenarios where it was leaders who were not practising members of a faith community who hesitated to put forward their viewpoints to one where the opposite situation occurred, usually, it was noted, through *fear of walking on eggshells*. Each of these situations was described as extremely unusual and was reported precisely because of this. Generally, and as noted earlier, Guiding members both younger and adult welcomed a place where it was acceptable to discuss these things freely.

In the closing paragraphs of this chapter, discussion returns to the challenge to leaders in addressing issues of spiritual nurture and reflection in active, enjoyable and inclusive ways with their units – and to the challenge to trainers in supporting this. Again respondents stressed both that good Guiding practice demands that the lead should, so far as is possible, come from the girls and that these things usually work best when it does. Guiding has always required not only that time is given to the exploration of the spiritual through activity and observation but also to the exploration of the views of others through (age-appropriate) discussion. Among older girls, at least, this discussion will sometimes deliberately include discussion both of the perspective of

³⁹⁵ Nye 2009 p8

³⁹⁶ Baden-Powell A and Baden Powell R 1912 (first sentence after Foreword)

different faiths and the perspective of spirituality outside a faith tradition. Comments make clear both that this is frightening ground for some leaders and that it is incomprehensible ground for some others. (In both cases most leaders appeared to be moving forward confidently, learning with their girls.)

Trainers comment that there is a recent change in the major issue. For some time now, trainers have been meeting the challenge of advising the occasional leader who (still) made a presumption (usually Christian in the UK) about the religious background of her own unit while acknowledging the changing world around her and who restricted, not necessarily deliberately, discussion on that basis. These leaders could have particular difficulty in encouraging their girls to design and lead times of reflection with a broader basis. The new issue is that of supporting leaders whose own spirituality is not expressed within a formal faith tradition so that they feel secure leading and allowing their girls to lead discussion and reflection which allows acknowledgement of God. These leaders may be particularly prone to want to follow the example of much of society and ignore such matters as private and personal. This may be tempting but it is not Guiding. The ethos of the movement, nationally and internationally, is openly to support diverse spiritual seeking and exploration and this is inherent in its policies and practices³⁹⁷. The worries of both groups of leaders often involve a complex mixture of concern about how to do it, concern about how it will be received by both the girls and their families (fear of giving offence) and a concern about whether in doing this they are, perhaps, denying their own faith/philosophy.

Most trainers distinguished clearly between issues arising in units including members of many faiths and issues which could arise between those expressing their spirituality within or outside a faith tradition. Perhaps one of the pragmatic differences between the two situations is this. For units including girls of many specific faiths the issue is obviously urgent and unavoidable. It is therefore addressed and, evidence suggests, successfully addressed. These units discover how to do it. Units with no such obvious diversity can, although they should not, ignore this matter usually with no problem arising. However the second group of issues will arise in almost any unit. They also may not be as immediately apparent or as clearly articulated. The challenge must be addressed. As one interviewee expressed it, in matters of corporate spiritual exploration *'God(s) must be present but that presence not assumed axiomatic!'* Clearly this sentence could easily be demolished from a whole range of perspectives spanning the grammatical, the logical

³⁹⁷ *'The essence of duty to God is the acknowledgement of the necessity for the search for faith in God, in a Supreme Being, and the acknowledgement of a Force higher than man, of the highest spiritual principles.'* from *Exploring Spirituality – Resource Material for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts*, WAGGGS 2000 London

and the theological. (The speaker knew that perfectly well. She holds a theology degree and works in the field.) However curiously expressed the phrase gives an interestingly clear expression of a question which is not new for Guiding. As discussed in chapter 2, it is one of reasons why training arrangements were established for leaders in the movement. As discussed through this thesis it was a major reason for undertaking this research.

It was noted in chapter 5 that the first reaction of all interviewees to the question of how to train on these subjects was to produce a list of specific activities. Several also immediately produced a folder or box of necessary materials from their bag. This thesis is not the place to describe all this practical detail. It is, however, appropriate to note that ideas do exist in abundance and that efficient ways of better dissemination between trainers will be discussed within the association, probably using Trainers' Support Groups and Trainers' Conferences in addition to existing on-line contact groups. It is also appropriate to note again materials already referenced in chapter 5 produced by WAGGGS and by Girlguiding in the UK and to mention the publication *Senses – reflections and beyond*³⁹⁸ which provides a useful starting point for leaders new to this subject. However also relevant are the wide range of resources³⁹⁹ produced both nationally and by global Guiding describing activities which strengthen the sisterhood of the movement. These provide opportunities of service to each other and together to the wider world. On the basis of that wider service across faith boundaries, Guiding continues to demonstrate, as Baden-Powell predicted⁴⁰⁰, that open expression of diverse faith practice among friends working and playing together is a force for world peace and not for warfare. In this way it addresses the last of the point from the introduction to *Predicting Religion*⁴⁰¹ noted at the start of the chapter. Girls who for Guiding's centenary challenge raised funds to build a toilet block for a specific school in Nepal and have seen pictures of the girls who use it, are going to react quickly to help when an earthquake buries *their* school.⁴⁰² Senior Section members who have visited Sangam⁴⁰³ and been entertained in their homes by local Guides will have gained a deeper understanding of both cultural and faith practice as well as of interpretations of both hospitality and poverty. Leaders who visit the website of Syrian Guiding find that it continues to say:

Guiding is open to girls and young women from all ethnic groups and religious backgrounds. Guiding is mostly carried out in clubs and local communities and includes a

³⁹⁸ Girlguiding 2014

³⁹⁹ Many such resources are available via the websites www.wagggs.org and www.girlguiding.org.uk. Links to the websites of other member nations are provided via the WAGGGS site.

⁴⁰⁰ Baden-Powell R 1918 p67

⁴⁰¹ Woodhead et al in Davie 2003 p12

⁴⁰² The first bake-sale was under way before we leaders realised it was happening – thanks girls.

⁴⁰³ Sangam in Poone, India is one of four international Guide centres (five including Kusafiri) providing opportunities for service, exploration and fun.

cross section of girls and young women from various backgrounds and faiths. Muslims and Christians work in good harmony.⁴⁰⁴

At present most can only continue to hope and pray.

Guiding continues to provide a meeting place where spiritual seeking is acceptable and where things of faith, of transcendence, of wondering, of fathomless deity can be explored and discussed. Perhaps the girls and young women will indeed become *'fearless guides exploring terrain as yet unknown'*. Certainly many welcome an opportunity which they do not experience elsewhere. They are hesitant to discuss such things in school where teachers may be wary of the subject. They are hesitant to discuss such things with parents who are presumed infallible by the youngest and probably wrong by the oldest – in matters of faith as in much else. They are hesitant to discuss such things in church/mosque/synagogue/temple school where it can seem (and sometimes is) unacceptable to question. Guiding provides an open forum where contemporary friends and adults can walk together exploring these things but where, unlike most of the society they experience, 'It's OK to do God'.

⁴⁰⁴ www.waggs.org.uk – scouts syriens (accessed 7 November 2015)

Conclusion

This research has considered, in a specific context, the development of spiritual awareness and practice in children, the role of adults in its deliberate nurture and, in particular, the support given to such adults. It considers these matters in a situation which brings together young people of many faiths and where the adults concerned are volunteers of many faiths, that of the Guide Movement.⁴⁰⁵

Whether there should be any deliberate attempt at intervention in the developing spiritual awareness of children, let alone what form such intervention should take, are questions which give rise to heated debate. (Historically this was rarely the case for the first question. The second has frequently been contentious.) Debates vary but arguments fall into two groups: some relate to questions of whether *Homo sapiens* is an intrinsically spiritual species, whether spirituality is real and whether, if so, it is present in childhood; others centre round concerns of religious bigotry, indoctrination and potential for fostering extremism and violence. Broadly the first are issues of philosophy and physiology. The second are issues of sociology and politics. Both surely are issues of theology and for education. They lead to questions of whether support of developing spirituality of children is possible, laudable, essential or, indeed, the opposite of any or all of these. The work of a number of authors writing of the spirituality of children has been discussed. However it has been noted that most write of this in the context of nurture in a faith setting. Few, notably David Hay, write of school settings. There is even less mention of the role of youth organisations particularly of those specifically welcoming young people of all faiths.

As already noted the inspiration came from experience as a long-serving leader and trainer of leaders within Guiding. It came from reflection on challenges inherent in sustaining its inclusivity of welcome and its openly spiritual ethos. This ethos has been fundamental to the Movement since its foundation. In Western Europe, it must now be sustained in a society which is more multi-cultural at local level; where traditional practice of religion is less common and where statutory schooling is cautious in its approach to 'teaching' spirituality. How does Guiding sustain this ethos? How does it support its adult leaders in doing this? The fieldwork element of this research was confined to leader training within the United Kingdom. A variety of excellent suggestions for further work are discussed in the description of research methodology in chapter 5

⁴⁰⁵ See www.girlguiding.org.uk for the British perspective; www.waggs.org for information about the world-wide movement

The first part of the research includes the spiritual perspectives of the founder and the religious, historical, societal and biographical elements which formed the basis for his action in founding such a Movement and which influenced the ethos on which it was and continues to be built. This was followed by fieldwork among the leader trainers in UK Guiding. During the period of this fieldwork Guiding, after carrying out consultation within the membership and beyond, implemented one of its periodic rewordings of the promise to reflect more contemporary language but **no change in Guiding ethos**. Like any change, this naturally increased interest in the topic and may have influenced at least priorities in the minds of respondents as they considered the questions.

One of the most notable and significant findings was simply the enthusiasm with which the project was received (even before knowledge of the promise consultation). It was quite apparent from the responses that the issues were ones which had been giving concern to trainers for some time. Some of the matters raised were straightforward, for example better dissemination of training ideas between trainers; some were expected and will inevitably continue, for example consequences of external misapprehensions about Guiding policy; one was surprising, in discussing these challenges not a single respondent mentioned the role of trainers' support groups which at least suggests that these groups are sometimes failing in their prime purpose. It was also interesting that the three issues which trainers raised as clearly most significant did not change with the rewording of the promise. In annotated summary (and without implying any priority between the three) these general concerns are

- a) The need for better dissemination to all leaders of the actual, foundational and continuing spiritual but inclusive ethos of the movement and the role particularly of WAGGGS in global support of this.
- b) The need to convey to all leaders that spiritual nurture, observance and discussion within the unit must be such as to embrace those of every faith and those who express their spirituality outside a faith tradition. There should be clear explanation to all leaders that this can not be achieved simply for example, by an occasional church parade – although this is permitted in appropriate circumstances provided that it is made clear that it is entirely optional. Equally there should be clear explanation to all leaders that following the example of civil society generally and simply ignoring the subject of faith observance is not acceptable in Guiding.
- c) The need to convince all leaders that they both can and should cope with this and enjoy it!

In addressing these three issues practically, some suggestions are fairly obvious:

a) WAGGGS has an excellent website and produces materials specifically for young members and material about various major service projects all presented in straightforward (and age appropriate) language. It also, naturally, has such documents as its constitution and formal guidance documents about policy on such matters as the promise and on leader training. These formal documents were used in this research. Inevitably they are not the sort of documents which can or should be written in popular language. It was concerning that some trainers were not even aware that such material existed. More publicity about these matters which all members share globally using adult (but not formal legalistic) language could readily be distributed to all trainers and commissioners for example.

b) It is very simple here to say that the need is for information, permission and examples. However these can never meet all, or possibly even most, unit circumstances. Trainers must show leaders how to use these materials in their local setting. In some cases this may mean that trainers themselves need to be shown how to do this. It is worth quoting again from one questionnaire respondent

We need to work hard with those leaders to help them understand that they can hold onto their faith (or philosophy) and expose girls to it at some level. What they can't do (and never could do) is make an assumption that the girls think the way they do.

c) As always this can only be done by example. However it interesting to note respondents agree that Baden-Powell's practical suggestions still work, perhaps particularly his encouragement that spiritual matters should be an integrated part of the whole experience of Guiding, indeed of living. It is also appropriate to remind leaders in this context that *if it's not fun, it's not Guiding*. (Clearly this is never to be taken as a flippant comment on work in serious, demanding and sometimes tragic local or world circumstances. It is simply a strap-line encapsulating the positive nature of *Scouting method* and that persons work and learn best when actively involved in practical activity with friends.) A very recent WAGGGS publication *Learning to Thrive* notes that

We learn to: value others, appreciate diversity, listen, connect, make a difference, develop empathy, communicate.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶ WAGGGS 2014 p3

Guiding provides a meeting place where spiritual seeking is acceptable and where things of faith, of transcendence, of wondering, of fathomless deity can be explored and discussed. Many respondents commented that the girls had said that they valued this space: a space which many do not find elsewhere in a society which is often cautiously secular in its actions; a public sphere which feels, often wrongly, that to do nothing is a neutral position. Guiding provides an open forum where contemporary friends and adults can walk together exploring these things but where, unlike most of the society they experience, it remains 'OK to do God'.

In summary the research confirmed that things generally continue to go well. Four main areas of challenge were raised. Two of these issues have existed since the movement's foundation and by their nature always will. These are, first, public factual misconceptions about Guiding's principles and ethos and, second, those who wish to join, or wish their children to join, but cannot accept this ethos and want it changed. These are issues which afflict many organisations. Trainers and leaders must be alert to these possibilities and ensure that information which they present is accurate, complete and current. However there will always be someone who is misinformed and Guiding can be glad that in the UK these issues are rare. The other two areas are not new but are becoming more common and often more pressing. One is exemplified by the teacher in her anecdote. Conflict (potential, perceived or actual) between professional practice and faith-based behaviour is demanding greater thought from many people. Children quite properly expect consistency from an adult regardless of the context in which they meet her. This is an area which trainers should discuss and consider ways of supporting those leaders for whom it is an issue. (The simple opportunity to discuss the matter could be a start.) The final point raised is very simple and it potentially affects everyone. Society is changing very fast in the areas discussed here. Circumstances in which people 'got it wrong' receive much media coverage. Leaders in Guiding are coping extremely well. However, as noted earlier, *the most common concern in day-to-day practice is fear of getting it wrong, giving offence or breaking the rules. When (and how) is it OK to do God?* Many Guiding leaders are worrying needlessly that they are not able to cope in a fast changing world. They need information but mostly they need reassurance that they are doing well and that in Guiding it remains OK to do God in a sensitive and inclusive way. They are providing a unique space which girls need and value. To quote an Association strap line '*Guiding is relevant to today's girl*' and trainers need to find more ways to reassure all leaders, including themselves, that they can continue to get it right.

This research has addressed issues which rarely find any mention in academic writing in practical theology: those of spiritual nurture and support by volunteers of young people in organisations which are inclusive in their welcome of both young people of all faiths and those

who recognise their spirituality outside a formal faith tradition. As is inevitable in Action Research it has focussed in part on practical detail. The main organisational focus from this research is on even better dissemination of good practice and of good ideas. The theological and pedagogic focus starts with the breadth of vision of the founder; his determined and explicit inclusion of those of all faiths and his child-centred, activity-based learning approach to spiritual nurture as with other aspects of the programme.⁴⁰⁷ Both were very far from the norm of the time. Both were received with each of scepticism, horror or simple disbelief by various observers. Responses to the research have shown that by some they still are. Both were received with overwhelming enthusiasm by the young people of many nations and by large numbers of adults. Direct observation of the continued global growth and vigour of the movements and the specific comments made by respondents to this research confirm that they still are.

The nurturing practices which Baden-Powell described and which are detailed throughout this thesis are still effective. Many have written about the idealism of youth and about its desire for practical action and individual experience. A number of such authors have been cited here. To return to the closing part of the introduction by Woodhead et al⁴⁰⁸ which forms a basis of the last chapter, the question which arises is whether that idealism will end in extremism and warfare or peace and cooperation. Both currently and through history, there has been news of how the zeal for their faith and desire for action of young people can lead to violence. Guiding (and Scouting) continue to demonstrate that young people can also be nurtured in environments which strengthen their loyalty to their own faith and at the same time give them opportunity to work side by side with friends of different beliefs, respecting and helping both each other and their neighbours local and across the world.

Through over a century of changes in wording to retain contemporary language, the Guide law which has seen, by far, the least need for change is the one first expressed

A Guide is a friend to all and a sister to every other Guide

The girls understand it as first written and they embrace it. Across the globe they have done so in times of peace; in times of war and in times of disaster. Despite the ever-changing challenges of the twenty-first century world, the overwhelming response to and finding of this research are that Baden-Powell got his methodology right. Girl Guiding still works! - and millions of girls and women world-wide still enjoy the challenge, fun and fulfilment of being part of it!

⁴⁰⁷ Baden-Powell A & Baden-Powell R (1912) p456 and Baden-Powell R 1918 p174

⁴⁰⁸ Woodhead et al 2003

Appendix 1 Research Proforma

This appendix contains copies of: original and supplementary questionnaires; two covering letters; the completed standard format university ethical consent form relating to informed consent to participate and interview questions used in the more structured part of interviews. It also contains two documents used in workshops at the Trainers' Conference in 2013

Questionnaire questions

1 Factual information about your training role

You have received this questionnaire because you hold a training role in Girlguiding UK. Except where otherwise indicated, please give answers relating to your work in that role and not in any other training or teaching role which you may also hold.

- 1a Are you currently a: Prospective trainer ☐
Licensed trainer ☐
- 1b How long have you been in this role: 5 years or less ☐
6 -10 years ☐
11-15 years ☐
16+ years ☐
- 1c Which section leaders do you train: Rainbows ☐
(Please tick all which apply) Brownies ☐
Guides ☐
Senior Sections ☐
Commissioners ☐
- 1d Within the last five years, have you led trainings: In your home county ☐
(Please tick all which apply) In bordering counties ☐
Elsewhere in your country/region ☐
Elsewhere in the United Kingdom ☐
Elsewhere in WAGGGS ☐

1e Please comment on in which of these areas you most usually train:-

1f Is there any other factual information relating to your particular role as a trainer in Guiding which you wish to add?

2 Training requests

The following questions relate to the place of the promise, the five essentials and the mixed faith nature of Guiding in your training sessions.

2a Specific sessions – if asked to lead sessions dealing specifically with each of the following topics would you usually accept?

	Yes	Sometimes	No
The promise and the girl			
The promise and the adult			
The five essentials			
Multi-faith Guiding			

Please add any comments about the reasons for your answers.....

2b How often do you estimate that you have led such specific sessions in the last five years?

	Never	Once	2-4	5+
The promise and the girl				
The promise and the adult				
The five essentials				
Multi-faith Guiding				

2c How regularly do you estimate that you have made direct reference to the following items during in general programme training in the last five years?

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
The promise and the girl				
The promise and the adult				
The five essentials				
Multi-faith Guiding				

2d How regularly do you estimate that you have made an implicit reference to the following items during in general programme training in the last five years?

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
The promise and the girl				
The promise and the adult				
The five essentials				
Multi-faith Guiding				

2e If you have led trainings on very specific topics (outdoors, music, international etc) in the last five years, please comment on any ways in which you have made reference to the promise and laws or to spirituality more generally.

2f Are there any other examples of particular events, discussions or activities which have occurred and which you consider relate to the value base of Guiding and/or to issues of spirituality or faith.

2g Please add any other comments relating to your answers to these questions in section 2

3 Possible changes over time

3a As far as you are able to judge have your answers to the previous set of questions (section 2) changed during the course of the last five years?

Yes

No

Any comments on your answer.....

3b If you have been a trainer for more than five years: As far as you are able to judge have your answers to the previous set of questions (section 2) changed during the course of your years as a trainer?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Any comments on your answer.....

4 Questions and challenges

The following questions relate to your experience of receiving questions from individual leaders during or after training sessions or at other times and to possible challenges from leaders to information which you may have presented on these topics. They also ask whether comments received from leaders suggest that your answers and training in these areas have been received as both appropriate and also helpful – two different questions.

4a Has information which you have given during a training session on any of these topics ever been challenged?

	Yes	No
The promise and the girl		
The promise and the adult		
The five essentials		
Multi-faith Guiding		
The spiritual basis of Guiding		

Please comment on the circumstances.....

4b Have you received questions from individual leaders on any of the following topics?

	Yes	No
The promise and the girl		
The promise and the adult		
The five essentials		
Multi-faith Guiding		
The spiritual basis of Guiding		

Please comment on the circumstances.....

4c Were your answers generally accepted as appropriate?

	Yes	No
The promise and the girl		
The promise and the adult		
The five essentials		
Multi-faith Guiding		
The spiritual basis of Guiding		

Please comment on the circumstances.....

4d Were your answers generally accepted as helpful?

	Yes	No
The promise and the girl		
The promise and the adult		
The five essentials		
Multi-faith Guiding		
The spiritual basis of Guiding		

Please comment on the circumstances.....

4e Are there any other examples of particular events, discussions or activities which have occurred and which you consider relate to the issues in section 4 or which you think may be of interest to a study in these areas.

4f Do you wish to add any other comments to your answers to the questions in this section?

5 Local variations

When training on these topics, have you experienced any variations in response or questions depending on the geographical area or on the type (urban/rural/city) of area in which you were speaking? Please comment on these and any similar issues.

6 More general question

This study relates to the spiritual element of the ethos of Guiding and the role of trainers in supporting adult leaders as those leaders support the girls in this area. I have asked specific questions relating to the place in training of the promise, the five essentials and the mixed faith nature of the movement as these are the areas which most explicitly address that element. However it would be very helpful to hear of any other examples, experiences or conversations which have relevance to this topic. Please use this space to tell me about anything which seems relevant, even slightly, and which did not seem to fit anywhere else.

7 More about you

The following questions relate to your roles within Guiding other than specifically as a trainer and to your roles (both employed and voluntary) outside Guiding. It would be very helpful to have this information but if there are individual questions which you would prefer not to answer, please simply omit them and continue to the next question. For all questions please tick all answers which apply.

Within Guiding:

- | | | Yes | No |
|---|----------------|-----|----|
| 7a With which sections have you <u>ever</u> been a leader? | Senior Section | | |
| | Guide | | |
| | Brownie | | |
| | Rainbow | | |
| 7b Have you ever been a Commissioner? | | | |
| 7c Have you ever been an Advisor (if yes, please indicate in what subject)? | | | |

Outside Guiding:

- | | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 7d Do you work with children or young people in a faith specific situation?
(for example in church, mosque, synagogue or temple) | | |

Please explain.....

- 7e Do you work with children or young people in another multi-faith organisation?
(in addition to Guiding)

Please explain.....

- 7f Do you work in any capacity in a faith-based school?

Please explain.....

7g Do you work in any capacity in a non-denominational school?

Please explain.....

7h Do you hold any roles in adult organisations which you consider to be relevant to the topics of this questionnaire?

Please explain.....

7i Please comment on any similarities or differences between your role in these organisations and in Guiding which you think are relevant to the topics of faith, spirituality and/or “commitment to a common standard”.

7j Do you currently consider yourself to be:
(Please tick all answers which apply.)

- A person of faith
- A practising member of a faith community
- A spiritual seeker
- Other (please specify if possible)

7k Is there other information which you like to add or comments which you would like to make?

Thank you for your help. If you would like to discuss this work personally please do not hesitate to contact me.

Helen Stimpson
h.stimpson.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Questionnaire questions – promise rewording supplement

1 Factual information about your training role

You have received this short supplementary questionnaire because you returned a response to my previous request. As before, please give answers relating to your work as a trainer in Guiding and not in any other training or teaching role which you may also hold.

- 1a Are you currently a: Prospective trainer ☐
Licensed trainer ☐
- 1b How long have you been in this role: 5 years or less ☐
6 -10 years ☐
11-15 years ☐
16+ years ☐
- 1c Which section leaders do you train: Rainbows ☐
(Please tick all which apply) Brownies ☐
Guides ☐
Senior Sections ☐
Commissioners ☐

Questions relating to the rewording of the promise in 2013

These questions relate to experiences and perceptions of leader training since the most recent rewording of our promise in 2013.

1 Since the recent rewording of our promise have you led any sessions dealing specifically with any of the following topics?

	Yes	No
The promise and the girl		
The promise and the adult		
The five essentials		
Multi-faith Guiding		
The spiritual basis of Guiding		

Please add any comments about how things went.....

2 Since the most recent rewording of our promise have you led any general programme sessions which made specific reference to any of the following topics:

	Yes	No
The promise and the girl		
The promise and the adult		
The five essentials		
Multi-faith Guiding		
The spiritual basis of Guiding		

Please add any comments about responses or reactions.....

3 I would be interested to hear any thoughts of your own, or which have been expressed to you in your training role, about how this wording change may affect leader training leader both in the short term and in the longer term a) when discussing the promise as it affects both the adult and the programme for young members and b) when discussing the value base of Guiding.

4 Are there any other examples of particular events, discussions or activities which have occurred since this recent rewording and which you consider relate to the value base of Guiding and/or to issues of spirituality or faith.

Thank you for your help. If you would like to discuss this work personally please do not hesitate to contact me.

Helen Stimpson
h.stimpson.1@research.gla.ac.uk

To the Guiding Trainers of Strathclyde Regional Trainers' Support Group

I am currently enrolled as a part time doctoral student in practical theology at the University of Glasgow. My broad research interest is in how, particularly as trainers, we support our voluntary adult leaders in their commitment to encourage and support our young members both in their spiritual development and in the practices of their various and increasingly diverse faith traditions. (I should, of course, be happy to discuss this further with any of you.)

As a pilot study this year I plan to circulate a questionnaire to all trainers in the group and to conduct an interview with a small number of you. This was discussed at our autumn meeting. Before proceeding further I must obviously demonstrate formally to you all that I am following good professional practice both as a researcher and as a member of the Guiding Movement.

I do the first of these by confirming that I shall follow the university's prescribed ethical guidelines for such research. A copy of the appropriate form requesting your informed participation is attached. If you are willing to help me by completing a questionnaire you will be asked to return a named and dated copy of this form electronically with your questionnaire.

I do the second of these by confirming to you all that I have indeed:

- 1) Discussed this with my fellow trainers at both local and Scottish level.
- 2) Informed Girlguiding Scotland of my intention through the medium of my three-yearly licence renewal paperwork.
- 3) Obtained formal consent and, in addition, enthusiastic support from Girlguiding UK, specifically from Jo Hobbs, Director of Guiding Development.

I thank you in advance for the support which I know that I can expect from my fellow trainers.

Helen Stimpson
h.stimpson.1@research.gla.ac.uk

20 March 2012

To the Guiding Trainers of Strathclyde

In 2012 you were good enough to respond to the questionnaire relating to my research at the University of Glasgow. This was part of a five year research project of which I am just entering year 5. My broad research interest remains how, particularly as trainers, we support our voluntary adult leaders in their commitment to encourage and support our young members both in their spiritual development and in the practices of their various and increasingly diverse faith traditions. You will all be aware that last year Guiding implemented one of its periodic rewordings of our promise. I attach therefore a very brief supplementary set of four questions relating to training issues and the revised wording. I should be exceedingly grateful if you could all complete and return this. (I realise that some of you have retired from active training since 2012. However I should very much appreciate either any comments that you may have or, at least, a nil return. Thank you)

Before proceeding further I must obviously demonstrate formally to you all that I am following good professional practice both as a researcher and as a member of the Guiding Movement.

I do the first of these by confirming that I shall follow the university's prescribed ethical guidelines for such research. A copy of the appropriate form requesting your informed participation is attached. If you are willing to help me by completing a questionnaire please return a named and dated copy of this form electronically with your questionnaire.

I do the second of these by confirming to you all that I have indeed:

- 1) Discussed this with my fellow trainers at both local and regional level.
- 2) Informed Girlguiding Scotland of my intention through the medium of my three-yearly licence renewal paperwork.
- 3) Obtained formal consent and, in addition, enthusiastic support from Girlguiding UK, specifically from Jo Hobbs, Director of Guiding Development.
- 4) Received enthusiastic support from WAGGS, specifically from Linda Mutare, Head of Adult Training

I thank you in advance for the support which I know that I can continue to expect from my fellow trainers.

Helen Stimpson

h.stimpson.1@research.gla.ac.uk

15 November 2014

Interview Questions

These questions relate to spiritual basis of Guiding and, in some cases, specifically to

**The promise and the girl
The promise and the adult
The five essentials
Mixed faith Guiding**

1a How often are you asked to train specifically on topics in these area?

1b Are you likely to agree?

1c Do you generally enjoy training in these areas?

Prompts: why, what affects it, how comfortable?

2 How often do you include these areas in general programme training?

Prompt: why, why not?

3a What activities do you use/demonstrate/suggest?

3b How are they received?

Prompts: age groups, adults, practicalities, suggestions from trainees

4a Are you familiar with a) The educational framework of Guiding

b) The WAGGGS spirituality toolkit

4b Have you used any of the training material provided in the appendices?

4c How useful have you found it?

Prompts: age groups, occasions, (take copies?)

5 When training specifically on promise/law/essentials, would you deliberately mention the fact that Guiding embraces many faiths?

Prompts: why, why not, when

6 How do you cope with reflections embracing many faiths without its becoming a “no-faith reflection”?

7 When training or responding to questions in this broad area do you find that your own faith position helps or gets in the way or neither of these?

Prompts: varying circumstances

8a During your time as a trainer have things changed over time?

8b Are there significant differences between different geographical areas?

Prompts how, when, where, training outside UK

9 The value base of Girlguiding UK states that:

“Guiding seeks to promote girls’ spiritual, social, emotional, physical, intellectual and moral development”⁴⁰⁹

The membership requirements of WAGGGS include:

“The recognition of a spiritual dimension to life is one of the universal core values of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. These values are at the heart of the Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting Movement. The Promise and Law of all National Organizations that belong to WAGGGS must contain the essence of the fundamental principles defined at the 21st World Conference in 1972. The Promise of each Association must express a spiritual dimension as detailed below:

'The essence of Duty to God is the acknowledgement of the necessity for a search for a faith in God, in a Supreme Being, and the acknowledgement of a Force higher than man, of the highest Spiritual Principles.’⁴¹⁰

Do you have any comments on whether the current wording of the promise (in the UK) appropriately reflects this basis?

Prompts: changes to wording over years, different age groups, wording in other member countries

10 Have you received “difficult questions” from leaders which you think are relevant to this study? Are you willing to share them?

11 What do you think would be the useful directions for the expansion of this research over the next three years?

Prompts: questions, respondents, geography

12 Is there anything which you would like to add?

⁴⁰⁹ The Guide Association 2001 *The Educational Framework for Guiding* p4, London, The Guide Association

⁴¹⁰ WAGGGS 2000 “*Exploring Spirituality – Resource Material for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts*” p2, London WAGGGS

CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA

University of Glasgow College of Arts Ethics Committee

I understand that Helen Stimpson is collecting data in the form of questionnaires and interviews for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

I have read the attached description of the project including the detail of confirmation of support and consent from Girlguiding UK

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed by the contributor: _____ date: _____

Researcher's name and email contact:

Helen Stimpson

h.stimpson.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisor's name and email contact:

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doug.gay@glasgow.ac.uk

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G12 8QQ



Some historical notes

From the first edition of Girl Guiding

".....So every Guide should have a religion. There are many kinds of religion, so when you meet a girl of a different religion from your own, you should not be hostile to her, but recognise that she is serving the same king as you, and that all who honestly feel that they can take the promise to do their best to "do their duty to God" are welcomed in our Movement, knowing that having made this promise they will live up to the highest as they know it. In this way may brotherly (sic) love and unity be brought nearer year by year....."

(Baden-Powell R 1918 *Girl Guiding*, London, C Arthur Pearson)

From the International Scout Conference of 1924

"The conference declares that the Boy Scout Movement is a Movement of national, international and universal character, the object of which is to endow each separate nation and the whole world with a youth which is physically, morally and spiritually strong.....It is universal in that it insists upon universal fraternity between all scouts of every nation, class and creed. The Scout Movement has no tendency to weaken but, on the contrary, to strengthen individual religious belief. The Scout Law requires that a Scout shall truly and sincerely practice his religion and the policy of the Movement forbids any kind of sectarian propaganda at mixed gatherings."

**(Baden-Powell R 1963 *Scouting for Boys*, London, C Arthur Pearson)
(composite edition with historical notes)**



From the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work in the United Kingdom
 (Note: these standards are mandatory only for Statutory Youth Work
 and not for movements such as Guiding)

This standard is about working with young people to explore ethical, moral and cultural values, addressing the need to respect the beliefs and values of others. It includes exploring where young people are on their journeys through life and encouraging them to see themselves in terms of their relationships with others and the environment around them. This standard is for those involved in working with young people to explore their ethical, moral and cultural values. It includes exploring the difference between spirituality, faith and religion.

www.ukstandards.co.uk

LSIYW1.1.4 v2 Encourage the spiritual development of young people



On leaders and leader training

From the current Guiding Handbook

"Some members (of Guiding) will be active members of a worshipping community and that background will give them ongoing support and encouragement as they seek to deepen their own relationship with God. Others may be exploring spirituality and its wider context. Many leaders are unsure what spirituality means....."

Girlguiding UK: 2011 *The Guiding Handbook*, London, Girlguiding UK

But note that written over sixty years earlier and endorsed in a forward by our then Chief Commissioner as applying equally to Guiders we have:

"It is common knowledge to-day that many boys have no true instruction in the faith of any religious denomination; we are not concerned at the moment with the reasons for that. It is not quite so obvious, but none the less true, that many of our Scouters themselves are wandering somewhat perplexedly in a rather ungodly wilderness."

Thurman J: 1948 *God and the Open Scout Group*, London, The Boy Scouts Association



The ethos of the movement

The value base of Girlguiding states that:

"Guiding seeks to promote girls' spiritual, social, emotional, physical, intellectual and moral development"

The Guide Association 2001

The Educational Framework for Guiding p4, London, The Guide Association

The membership requirements of WAGGGS include:

"The recognition of a spiritual dimension to life is one of the universal core values of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. These values are at the heart of the Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting Movement. The Promise and Law of all National Organizations that belong to WAGGGS must contain the essence of the fundamental principles defined at the 21st World Conference in 1972. The Promise of each Association must express a spiritual dimension as detailed below:

'The essence of Duty to God is the acknowledgement of the necessity for a search for a faith in God, in a Supreme Being, and the acknowledgement of a Force higher than man, of the highest Spiritual Principles.'

WAGGGS 2000

"Exploring Spirituality – Resource Material for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts"
p2, London WAGGGS

Both of the documents quoted on this sheet include training materials related to the topic. Do you know them? Have you used them? Do you like them?



Graffiti Sheets - introduction

As trainers we live and work and lead in Guiding in very diverse communities. We train leaders who work in a variety of localities and may well in their day-to-day Guiding meet situations very different from those most common in our own community. These sheets ask you to comment on thoughts or experiences about both the challenges and the positive aspects to living and explaining the first clause of the Guiding promise and ethos including the phrase "do my best". The sheets discuss three matters which tend to interact in current British society. I have attempted to distinguish them from each other as follows:

Secularised Populations

Some girls will have no experience of attending any place of worship or religious observance.

For some families this will be a positive position. Some individuals or families are atheist or agnostic by informed decision. This decision underpins their philosophy and ethical code. Some, by no means all, believe that all faiths are not only false but also a force for evil in the world. A few may have had a very bad experience of a faith observance or tradition.

For many others in a secularised society it is simply a matter which has never been given thought

Populations of Diverse Faith

Major faiths in the British Isles currently are Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Paganism and Sikhism but there are many others.

Intra-faith diversity/conflict

There are a few areas of Britain where intra-faith (eg Roman Catholic versus Protestant or Sunni versus Shia) conflict is at a level that it can impinge on Guiding.

Appendix 2 Reflexivity – A Personal Statement

Potential issues of personal reflexivity are many. I am an insider researching an organisation for which I have been a life-time volunteer. I am an outsider working in a new (to me) academic discipline. I am a professional scientist experienced in the research techniques of that field. I am a Christian working on a study which explicitly embraces all faiths. I am termed a mature student. I am a woman who has spent a successful professional lifetime in a 'man's world' now researching a female organisation to which I have belonged since girlhood. What does reflexivity mean for me?

The issues of being both outsider and insider are considered throughout this work. Brief mention is also given to the question of age, a term made synonymous with maturity by university rubrics. There remain my positions as a woman, as a scientist and as a Christian.

I have had a successful and enjoyable career in a man's world. I have more than once been the only woman on the team. When I have, quite rarely, met discrimination, I have dealt with it as my mother and grandmothers taught me and often I have enjoyed that. This research investigates some aspects of work of women volunteers in an organisation for girls and young women. There are points where issues of gender are pertinent and these are addressed. There are others where the issue of gender is irrelevant and should properly be ignored. Undue stress is inappropriate and simply clouds the issues.

Girls of all ages have told us that they value spending time with no boys around.⁴¹¹

Are boys different?⁴¹²

As an experienced scientific researcher I must learn some new techniques but, more challenging, I must also learn a great deal of different usage of terminology. I must learn what is appropriate in this new discipline. As a student, in both senses of that word, I must learn what is considered good practice and indeed what is termed usual practice in this field. It is not that I must learn to defend my research methodology. I have always done that. I must learn to defend my research methodology to a different audience in different language. I can cope with issues of 'true sample', 'level of tolerance' and 'invalid presumption of causality'. I think that I can even translate these. What about personal opinion, subjectivity and the possible wish to fiddle the results? What I really fail to understand is why some theologians appear to think that these

⁴¹¹ Girlguiding UK 2011 p6

⁴¹² Nye 2009 p88

issues do not arise in science. No, they are not new issues to me but I realise that I have to write different, and possibly substantially more, words about them.

After several years, I have recently realised that much of the problem comes from an implicit presumption by academics working outside the sciences that scientists, particularly physical scientists, always use 'scientific method' in the philosophical sense of that term. I hate to disillusion anyone but..... In my own field of small particle physics most processes are, so far as we understand them, random. We may comment on group tendencies but in no way can we decide which individual nucleon will be next to decay or when it will 'choose' to do so. We know too that the observer will always tend to affect the observations. Schrödinger had a few words to say about that cat. Some parallels with research in the 'Arts' are surely evident. Scientists like everyone else can get bewitched by their own theories and not 'see' evidence which opposes them. People (and especially the media) hate to be told that something is random. They hate even more to be told that the answer is that 'we do not know' or, worse, 'we can not know'. This is an issue which theology and the physical sciences hold in common.

In their discussion of differences between qualitative research and scientific method Swinton and Mowat include a section (admittedly deliberately humorous and simplistic) entitled 'Can a scientist love his wife?'⁴¹³ My response has to be 'Can a scientist be a theologian?' without, of course, denying his or her professionalism as a scientist. The answer, I submit, is yes. In fact I suspect it helps. Thoughts from some masters:

The problem seems to lie in making an individual a victim of group statistical tendency, when they could well be an exception or an outlier.⁴¹⁴

I believe that the existence of the classical 'path' can be pregnantly formulated as follows: The 'path' comes into existence only when we observe it.⁴¹⁵

In the sharp formulation of the law of causality - 'if we know the present exactly, we can calculate the future' - it is not the conclusion that is wrong but the premise.⁴¹⁶

One thing is certain: Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle is not dead. Experimenters violate Heisenberg's original version of the famous maxim, but confirm a newer, clearer formulation.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ Swinton & Mowat 2006 p42

⁴¹⁴ Mathematics Today April 2011 p62

⁴¹⁵ Heisenberg 1927 (cited in translation). Throughout his 1927 paper, Heisenberg used the word *Unbestimmtheit* (indeterminacy), to describe the basic theoretical principle. Only in the endnote did he switch to the word *Unsicherheit* (uncertainty).

⁴¹⁶ Ibid

⁴¹⁷ Furuta 2012

The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. He who knows it not and can no longer wonder, no longer feel amazement, is as good as dead. A knowledge of something we can not penetrate, of the manifestations of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty - It is this that constitutes the truly religious attitude.⁴¹⁸

The only ethical principle which has made science possible is that the truth shall be told at all times.....and a false statement of fact made deliberately, is the most serious crime a scientist can commit.⁴¹⁹

What is truth?⁴²⁰

All of the above pertain to research in practical theology and in nuclear physics; indeed to research in the arts as in the sciences more generally.

In their book *Practical Theology in Action*, Ballard and Pritchard observe

...but theology's task in the end is to be a resource at the disposal of the people of God in their quest for obedience⁴²¹

There is one completely unexpected challenge which I find coming to an academic study in Practical Theology from a different discipline and as a 'mature' student. It is that many writers whom I meet in the field seem to start by writing of theology and after two or three sentences, or perhaps two or three pages, start writing of Christian theology with no acknowledgement that they have moved from the general to the particular. I now know the history, particularly the more recent history, of the term. I understand why it happens. The authors embark on a discussion of their theological theme and then suddenly insert a sentence such as 'Practical theology is theology in the service of the church' and I want to add 'or mosque, synagogue or temple'.

I am a Christian and, indeed, one with a licensed church role in children's ministry. I personally have no problem in placing this alongside my role in Guiding. I can see that some people might have. The challenge of 'celebrating diversity'⁴²² and simultaneously 'living faithfully' is large. Books have been written about it. Some claim that it can not be done and yet others claim that it should not be done. In different roles I train both children's workers within the church and Guiding leaders. Guiding leaders must support the developing spirituality of young people of many different faiths. They are themselves drawn from many faiths. Those working specifically in the church are, by definition, working in a single and inherently evangelical (small e!) faith

⁴¹⁸ Einstein 1956

⁴¹⁹ Dorothy Sayers 1968 p287 first published 1936 – in reference to C P Snow *The Search*

⁴²⁰ St John 18:38

⁴²¹ Ballard & Pritchard 1996 p72

⁴²² Wingate 2005

setting. Training locally, I frequently meet people who, like me, work in both roles. Many find no difficulty. A few struggle with desperate soul-searching about whether in doing the right (or perhaps they would say required) thing, they are indeed doing the right thing! I do not underestimate their challenge. Nor can I underestimate the challenge to trainers in trying to support these leaders. It is one of the basic causes for pursuing this piece of research.

At a course summer school we were asked to comment on why we did not include the fact that we prayed about our research in writing of our research methodology. Many and varied were the comments concluding with the suggestion that we should simply include God in the acknowledgements. It was deemed to be time to break for coffee! I wrote above that potential issues of personal reflexivity are many and I presented a list. I am all of these and none of these. Like all of us I am myself and the voice with which I speak is my own. At its highest, as for all of us, I stand where I am placed to serve, trying however inadequately to reflect my unique part of the mission of an infinite deity. As a mathematician, at least I am trained in coping mechanisms to manage inevitable human inability to comprehend infinity!

... is to be a resource at the disposal of all people of God in their quest for obedience?

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