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International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research (ISSN 1355-2554)

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Citation Details

Citation for the version of the work held in 'OpenAIR@RGU':

ANDERSON, A. R., DRAKOPOULOU-DODD, S. L. and SCOTT, M. G., 2000. Religion as an environmental influence on enterprise culture – the case of Britain in the 1980s. Available from <i>OpenAIR@RGU</i>. [online]. Available from: http://openair.rgu.ac.uk

Citation for the publisher's version:

ANDERSON, A. R., DRAKOPOULOU-DODD, S. L. and SCOTT, M. G., 2000. Religion as an environmental influence on enterprise culture – the case of Britain in the 1980s. <i>International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research</i>, 6 (1), pp. 5-20.

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Anderson, A. R., Drakopoulou-Dodd, S. L., & Scott, M. G. (2000). Religion as an environmental influence on enterprise culture—The case of Britain in the 1980s. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 6(1), 5-20.

RELIGION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE ON
ENTERPRISE CULTURE: THE CASE OF BRITAIN IN THE 1980s

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Professor Mike Scott sadly died in February 1998 before completing revisions to this paper. His co-authors trust that their final revisions would have met with his approval.”

RELIGION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE ON ENTERPRISE CULTURE: THE CASE OF BRITAIN IN THE 1980s

INTRODUCTION

Despite the broadness of the concept of Entrepreneurship (drawing its insights from Economics, Sociology, Economic History, Psychology, Social Anthropology and Economic Geography) it is perhaps curious that the last decade of entrepreneurship research has seen an inordinate focus on new firm (and especially job) creation, and within that an emphasis largely on supply side, agent-centred, or "push" factors such as entrepreneurial traits and motivations, Deakins (1996). This may not be unrelated to the needs of policy makers to find a panacea for rising unemployment. There has been a relative neglect of demand side, structure-centred, or "pull" factors (Aldrich and Wiedenmayer, 1991), and of environmental settings, although insights especially from population ecology are beginning to have an impact (Aldrich, 1990). Of particular relevance is the concept of environmental munificence (Specht, 1993), the extent to which an environment is abundant in appropriate resources. However, there is no clear evidence to date of the relationship between munificence and, for example, new firm formation rates, nor of the mechanism by which such a relationship may be operating. Burrows (1991), for example, notes how little we understand the link between enterprise discourse and entrepreneurial development. Further detailed studies of specific munificence factors are clearly required. Yet such studies of entrepreneurial environments are relatively rare and difficult to carry out because of the complexities of multi-disciplinary approaches. Further, in the absence of any meta-theory of entrepreneurial environments, each study is specific to a time and place, and generalisations may be difficult. (See, for example, Scott and Anderson's [1993] attempt to understand the changing environment for rural entrepreneurship in Scotland.)

This paper is an attempt to explore one macro aspect of munificence, the role of religion as a support for the enterprise culture. Environmental Munificence is the abundance of demand and other necessary resources available to new business, Castrogiovanni, (1991). Thus munificence is the extent to which an environment can support a new business and allow it to grow and prosper, Child and Kieser (1981).

Aldrich (1979) notes that environments provide or withhold resources, so that as Schell and Davaig (1981) demonstrate the more supportive the environment the greater the likelihood of enterprise. Similarly Jack and Anderson (1998) show how in a well developed infrastructure, a munificent environment, entrepreneurs can be expected to respond to, rather than to influence their environment. The paper briefly reviews Weber's classic (1930) Protestant Ethic as an example of the creation of a culturally munificent environment. Whilst obviously this study could not hope to replicate the range of Weber's thesis, it does demonstrate that the contemporary Spirit of Capitalism extant in an enterprise culture retains some of aspects of the Protestant Ethic identified by Weber.

Whilst typically research has explored the "harder" aspects of environmental munificence, aspects such as the number of business opportunities or the financial environment, this paper focuses upon the softer aspect of an "enterprising environment". One reason for this alternative focus is the problem of the lack of prediction which exists even in the harder versions. As Bygrave and Hofer (1991) point out population ecology models, such as Hannan and Freeman's seminal work (1977), may provide a forecast the probability of births and deaths within a system they cannot predict the fate of individuals. Moreover they also note that they know of no instance where population ecologists have made accurate predictions about future births and deaths in any industry! The "soft" perspective articulates Reynolds (1991) point that non-economic factors are important reflections of entrepreneurial activity. He identifies such factors as the legitimacy of entrepreneurship, the opportunity for social mobility, ideology and the potential to resolve status incongruence to achieve status recognition through entrepreneurship. Thus as Glade (1967:251) argues the "opportunity structure" is both an "objective structure of economic opportunity and a structure of differential advantage in the capacity of the system's participants to perceive and to act upon such opportunities". So that as Castogiovanni (1996) notes higher level environmental forces... are expected to have transitive influences on organisations through their impact on lower level forces.

One key aspect of these non-economic aspects appears to be the legitimacy of entrepreneurship which has varied over time. Aristotle, for example saw it as illegitimate (1924:20) "for it is unnatural, and a mode whereby men gain from each other" but Burrows (1991) claims that the discourse of the enterprise culture has become the major articulating principle of the age. Stewart (1991) argues that cultural factors such as legitimacy, and social organisation such as social structures and processes are conducive to the

legitimation of enterprise. Reynolds (1991) goes on to note that government policy is a significant causal influence in the presence of entrepreneurship. The state is considered an active participant in enterprise in its role as an autonomous actor in the societal processes. Taken together these views provide the background to this exploration of the role of religion as an environmental influence within the enterprise culture.

Specht's (1993) paper provides a useful starting point, she notes that environmental munificence factors include "support of socio-political elites", "cultural acceptance", and the "support of the government". Where such factors provide positive support for entrepreneurship, they can be anticipated to exert a positive influence upon the rate of new firm formation by:

- i) raising the profile of entrepreneurship within a society, and thereby exposing more members of that society to the possibility of starting a firm.
- ii) raising the status of entrepreneurship within a society, thereby offering a route for upwards social mobility, and increasing the attractiveness of new firm formation.
- iii) raising the level of practical governmental support for would-be entrepreneurs, by reducing barriers to new firm formation, and providing rewards for entrepreneurship.
- iv) providing a more general level of cultural reward, or approval, to those who live out the values of enterprise.

The 1980s in Britain saw an environment rich indeed with support from government and the socio-political elite for new firm formation, (Deakins, 1996). Cultural acceptance of entrepreneurship was also at a markedly high level (Burrows 1991). As is now well known around the world, this period is associated with the government of Margaret Thatcher, and was a time of considerable institutional change, typically characterised as an attempt to roll back collectivism and state dependency, and to create a fresh "enterprise culture".

The clear output of this era was an impressive net increase in the number of small businesses (500 every working day for a decade [Department of Employment, 1990]), and an increase in the proportion of the working population who were self-employed (from 9% to 12% [Johnson, 1992] ¹). These data can be

seen as evidence for the influence of a supportive cultural environment. It is also true to say that the period was one of considerable downsizing of large (and public sector) organisations, technological change and a shift from manufacturing to service sector - all factors conducive to SME sector growth (Storey, 1994). However the question of the relationship - causal or otherwise - between the enterprise culture and the economic restructuring of Britain has been a matter of considerable disputation, as Burrows (1991 p2) has illustrated. But whether one takes the view of the sociologist or of the industrial economist, it is clear that the encapsulating political changes wrought by Margaret Thatcher were of central importance. They attacked the old institutional base whilst creating new mechanisms for change to take place². Even those who would deny a directly causal link between the enterprise culture and the remarkable increase in self-employment in the 1980s nonetheless concede that the rhetoric of the Thatcherite enterprise culture served as a meaning-system to mediate and interpret the profound socio-economic changes experienced (Curran and Burrows 1991, Burrows, 1991). Whether as instigator, interpreter, or catalyst of the decade of enterprise, therefore, the Thatcherite enterprise culture played a role of no little importance.

The range of potential influences which may interact with any (other) munificence factor in a society is extensive. Furthermore religion, or specifically the outcomes of religious belief, are difficult to chart, given that the more wide ranging a theory, the more difficult its effect is to test empirically. Whilst religion has historically been a central part of human experience, (Giddens, 1995) it has also been argued to have become a less central force in modernity. Nonetheless, a 1991 (Economist Publications) study showed that in the UK 71%, and in the USA 93%, of the sample believe in God. Although only 13% in the UK and 43% in the States attend church at least once a week, this evidence suggests a continued importance of religious belief. Moreover, whilst secularisation is indicated by a reduction in church attendances these cannot be taken as a direct consequence of a reduction in religiosity, they may simply be a disenchantment with the formal church. A further issue arises in terms of influence when we consider that religious belief may an *outcome* of social change. Feuerbach (1957, but originally 1841) argued that religion consists of ideas and values produced by human beings in the course of their cultural development. For Karl Marx, religion "the opium of the people" was the "heart of a heartless world" but remained a carrier of guiding ideals. "We should not fear the gods that we have ourselves created" (Kamenka, 1983). Thus the importance of religion may exist dynamically, first as a legitimising force for

courses of action, but secondly as a *post hoc* outcome of a need to legitimise necessary actions (Parsons and Smelser, 1956). Accordingly it seems reasonable, despite secularisation, to assume that religion has an impact upon the legitimisation of enterprise, and that it will be useful to trace out the effects. It is perhaps ironic that in spite of increasing secularisation within British Society, contemporary politicians seem more enthusiastic than ever to establish their Christian credentials. This is counter-intuitive, given the finding of leading sociologists of religion that, “as formal religion has declined so has the specific detail and salience of religious images, thinking and behaviour outside the church”, (Bruce 1995, p71, see also Bruce 1992)

This preliminary study, for reasons of manageability and coherence, has restricted itself to two inter-related subjects of study - Thatcherism and Religion. Both these subjects, for reasons discussed, above appear to have impacted upon the Enterprise Culture of the 1980's. In choosing these environmental factors this paper aims to uncover as fully as possible the interaction between them, and to attempt to derive more general lessons for entrepreneurial research, including :

- Adding to the understanding of the influence of religion on enterprise (and vice versa)
- Demonstrating the significance of a metaphysical paradigm to certain environmental munificence factors
 - Illustrating the significance of environmental munificence factors for enterprise formation

RELIGION AND THE THATCHERITE ENTERPRISE CULTURE

Max Weber's (1930) study the Protestant Ethic was part of a massive study of world religions. Indeed Giddens' (1995) claims that no scholar before or after had undertaken a task of such scope. The element of interest for our purpose was Weber's link between socio-economic change and religious belief. He first noted that Protestants, especially Calvinists, were over-represented as successful entrepreneurs. “Business leaders, and owners of capital, are overwhelmingly Protestant”,(1930:35). This allowed him to develop his argument that Protestantism created the conditions, munificence in our terms, which fostered business.

Central to his discussion was what he called rational capitalism, reproductive entrepreneurship with the rational outcome of developed businesses. The essence of his argument was that the skills and social formations of business development were, by chance, congruent with the practices of Calvinism. For example, he noted that hard work, honesty and thrift were identified with the “this worldliness” of Calvinism. Protestants in following their religious calling had a moral duty to work hard and to avoid conspicuous consumption. This contrasted with other religions where spirituality could only be achieved in an “other worldliness”, such as in a monastery. Hence the followers of this faith, in practising their religion, the Protestant Ethic, were creating this new Spirit of Capitalism. In working hard they acquired wealth but had a moral duty not to be profligate, hence business were founded and expanded by the reinvestment of earnings.

Weber’s work has been criticised in a number of terms, however for our purposes the critique by Eisenstadt (1968) is worth noting. Eisenstadt’s discussion focuses upon the transformative capacity of religion. We may consider the earlier discussion on the two way dynamic of religious belief where we noted that religion, in addition to be a condition of munificence, may also be a response to changing circumstance. In terms of the Enterprise culture we should therefore be aware of this issue. Nonetheless the objectives of this paper are much narrower than Weber’s seminal work, we only wish to draw attention to the religious element, we do not wish to argue that it was either a necessary or sufficient condition for the enterprise culture.

Religion suggested itself for a number of reasons as one of the two phenomena to be studied. Firstly, the importance of Christianity in shaping Western history and attitudes should not be underrated. Weber’s celebrated theory of the role played by Protestantism in the creation of not only a work ethic, but the very spirit of capitalism, (1930) indicate this was likely to prove a fruitful area of research. Tawney’s later critique of twentieth-century Christian (Tawney, 1964) social thought (“piety imprisoned in a shrivelled mass of desiccated formulae”) and its failure to respond to the ethical challenges of capitalism, emphasise the importance of any contemporary attempts to develop a genuinely religious enterprise ethic (Wright, 1987, p51). In particular, it would be interesting to examine to what extent the modern spirit of capitalism - or enterprise culture - has been influenced by modern Protestantism.

Secondly, that there is some religious content in the philosophical paradigm which supports Thatcherism is suggested by the way in which the Enterprise Culture is described by contemporary commentators . Bechhofer & Elliott write of the petite bourgeoisie as a modern priestly sect, the sacerdotal elite of the enterprise culture. (Bechhofer & Elliott, 1986:133 -134 See also Scase & Goffee, 1986 :148) Ritchie notes the religious-theological aspect of enterprise, describing it as "some self- transforming spirit of enterprise experience". (Ritchie 1987) Terms like 'Evangelism', 'Believer', 'Convert' and 'Faith' are often used in relation to entrepreneurship. The writings of the enterprise movement itself contain a significant number of explicitly theological apologia, which will be reviewed below.

Thirdly, leading participants in the creation of modern Christian religion, whether churchmen or lay people, were by their very nature involved in an on-going process of self-analysis and debate which often finds its way into written, published material. This facilitated bibliographic, theoretical research, by providing a suitable large body of secondary data to examine. Finally, in Britain at least, the Churches had become increasingly active in alternative, or community-based enterprise. This suggested that entrepreneurship of some kind was at work within modern Christianity, and that modern Protestantism may itself be being moulded by the enterprise culture.

The Thatcherite Enterprise Culture also suggests itself as an appropriate set of environmental munificence factors for this type of study . We have noted above that it incorporates at least three of the factors identified by Specht: "support of socio- political elites", "cultural acceptance", and the "support of the government"

The Thatcherite Enterprise Culture is also discrete, well documented, and has declared itself to be demonstrably relevant to the environmental influence under review. (c.f. Thatcher's own explicit and celebrated "Sermon on the Mound" in Edinburgh, which set out a religious grounding for her entrepreneurial vision).

The Thatcherite Enterprise Culture is a collection of political beliefs, centred around the concept of dynamic free markets, in which the role of enterprise and the entrepreneur assumed a special symbolic and functional significance. The dominance of Thatcherism in 1980s Britain meant that these beliefs were not

only transformed into legislation, but that they gained a widespread currency in the nation as a whole. Ritchie's description of what "believers" in this Enterprise Culture adhere to is insightful and worth citing in full, as the Thatcherite creed of enterprise:

"Every man has 'entrepreneurial' potential; small businesses are the time-honoured natural engines of economic growth and prolific new job generators too; ...the modern Britain of the 1960's and 1970's sadly neglected these salutary home-truths; and ... their 'new Britain', inspired with some 'vision that works', is fast becoming another 'enterprise society' just like the USA and its counterparts." (Ritchie, 1987:4)

By 1987, when Ritchie was writing, over a hundred pieces of legislation had been passed with the aim of assisting small firms and promoting enterprise. Enterprise had become a "halo" word, imbued with warm and positive feeling for much of Britain. The promotion of the icon of the small-business owner-manager was peculiarly important. The values said to be represented by such people were seen as morally positive in their own right: thrift, hard-work, independence, self-responsibility, wealth-creation, family-orientation: living examples of Victorian capitalist principles.

That there is some clear collection of ideas and policies of paramount importance to the Thatcherite agenda is the near-unanimous view of commentators. Margaret Thatcher moved ideas and ideology back to the centre of British politics, since "the 1980s has seen a marked increase in overt ideological conflict. Ideas clearly matter" (Tivey and Wright, 1989:ix, See also Young & Sloman, 1986 :58, 60). This alteration in political practice is reflected in the collection of beliefs, ideology and action which gave rise to the term "Thatcherism" which may be defined as

"the distinctive ideology, political style and programme of policies with which the British Conservative party has been identified since Margaret Thatcher became its Leader" (Gamble,1990:20).³

Freedom of opportunity, free market economics, enterprise, individualism, anti-collectivism, Victorian Values: these are among the concepts which form the heart of Thatcherism (see, e.g., Riddell, 1985: 7, Thatcher, in Young 1993 :103). Replicated in action in the three Thatcher administrations, they are summarised below-

The characteristics of the Thatcherite enterprise culture.

Promotion of Freedom of Choice and "Opportunity"

Adherence to Free Market Economics

Promotion of Self-Responsibility

Diminution of Social for Individual and Familial Setting and Duties

Idealisation of the Entrepreneur and Enterprise

Rediscovery of "Victorian Values", such as thrift and hard work

Anti-Collectivism

Reduction of Government Involvement in the Economic & Industrial Spheres

Strong State as concerns Law and Order

The Insistence on a Moral and Theological Justification for all of the Above

This was a crusade indeed, fuelled by a profound sense of moral rectitude, and passionately pursued. The morality upon which Thatcher stood so firmly, convinced that it was indeed the high ground, was thoroughly religious in content and nature. This was a peculiarity in a modern British politician, but appears to have set a trend to be perpetuated by her successors, most notably Tony Blair, (see Durham,

1997 for a discussion of this trend). Whilst Thatcher's religious beliefs will be briefly examined below, let us end this section by reminding ourselves of how seriously the ethical underpinning of her work should be considered:

'I am in politics because of the conflict between good and evil, and I believe that in the end good will triumph' (Thatcher, 1984 in Young ,1991:352)

EXPLICIT RELIGIOUS JUSTIFICATION

The Thatcherite Enterprise Culture was probably the most entrepreneurial Spirit of Capitalism ever to blow across the face of modern Britain. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that so many of its chief protagonists sought to validate and legitimate their work by reference to traditional (Protestant) religion. Indeed, in many cases, explicit statements are made to the effect that theological and moral beliefs were driving the Thatcherites to "create" the enterprise culture. In addition to the writings and speeches of Margaret Thatcher, other notable Thatcherites instrumental in the development and creation of the enterprise culture have engaged in explicitly religious defences of their policies, sometimes in considerable detail and at some length. These include Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Harris of the influential Institute for Economic Affairs, Brian Griffiths, former head of Mrs Thatcher's policy unit, and Digby Anderson, director of the Social Affairs Unit (Anderson, 1984; Griffiths,1984i, in Anderson, ed., 1984ii; Harris, 1984 in Anderson, ed.; Joseph, K and Sumption, J 1970:5-6).

In speeches and her memoirs, Thatcher has described how her Christian belief shaped her political views, and her strict Methodist up-bringing has also been much commented upon ⁴. She herself has explicitly stated that "I believe in 'Judeo-Christian' values: indeed my whole political philosophy is based on them" (Thatcher 1993 p509).

Aspects of the Enterprise Culture particularly singled out for theological defence include the doctrine of freedom of choice, explicitly linked with the Christian doctrine of the same name. Without freedom of economic choice, it is argued, man would not be in a position to choose right or wrong for himself, nor to thereby win his own salvation (Thatcher 1989 p70, Opitz 1970 p93, Pomian-Sczedincki and Tomsky

1984 p117). Self-love is justified in language which is familiar from the Puritans onwards, and which maintains that as long as one loves others as much as oneself, the Christian imperative is being met (Thatcher 1977 p107). Self-love is also viewed as being concomitant with love of one's family, both of which are set against more communitarian theological positions (Novak 1982 p167). Wealth-creation is seen as a morally praise-worthy activity inasmuch as it enables the wealth-creator to engage in voluntary charity, provides jobs and wages for others, and creatively engages in man's divine commission to act as steward for the earth's resources (Thatcher,1989: p126, p252, Griffiths 1984 p52,). Hard-work in the pursuit of wealth is justified by reference to an exhortation from St Paul ("if a man will not work he shall not eat" - Thatcher 1989 p252) , and by use of the Imago Dei doctrine which says that man made in God's image should labour as his maker did/does (Griffiths 1984 p51). Strong laws are needed to curb man's essential wickedness (Thatcher 1989 p69). The fallen, corrupt, sinful nature of the world of man is such that attempts to legislate socially benevolent utopias are doomed to failure (Thatcher 1989 p64, p68, Griffiths 1984 pp44-45). Not surprisingly, given the foregoing, the Tory party is seen as embodiment of the nation's religious tradition:

"The Tories began as a Church party, concerned with the Church and the State in that order, before our concern extended to the economy, and many other fields which politics now touches. Religion gives us not only values - a scheme of things in which economic, social, penal policy have their place - but also our historic roots" (Thatcher,1977)

SUBLIMINAL AND IMPLICIT RELIGIOUS JUSTIFICATION

As well as these explicit religious justifications, the language used to describe the enterprise culture is often also religious in nature, prompting the notion that subliminal religious justification of enterprise was being sought or assumed. If regular and instinctive use of religious or sacred language in this context can be shown, then the interaction between belief and enterprise in the minds of key protagonists can be inferred.

One example of this tendency will suffice. Opposition to collectivism, and Marxist state collectivism in particular, is a hallmark of the Thatcherite Enterprise Culture. State controls of the market place create market imperfections, prohibit enterprise, innovation, and self-responsibility. Yet the language used to refer to this opposition is starkly religious, even where no direct reference to faith or the Church is made. Thatcher herself, as well as commentators, describe their joint commitment using expressions like:

- "crusade for freedom" (Thatcher,1993:776),
- "the cause" (ibid.),
- "co-religionists in this reassertion of their faith" (Young & Sloman,1986:129)
- "crusading missionary spirit" (Young,1993 :225), and
- "members of the same church...defying the infidel " (ibid. p225),

Contemporary commentators also use religious language to describe other aspects of the Enterprise Culture, as was noted above.

What these examples demonstrate is that beyond the explicit appeals to faith and statements of belief which are openly stated to have shaped enterprise values, one encounters the extensive use of religious language to describe the Enterprise Culture. Whether consciously or not, religious legitimisation and justification are sought or implied whenever such language appears. In the minds of enterprise believers and commentators alike, a theological and religious underpinning for the cultural construct is assumed, promoted and peddled.

CHURCH-LED CRITIQUES OF THE THATCHERITE ENTERPRISE CULTURE

Lest it be thought that this new "Enterprise Culture" was wholeheartedly accepted, it is worth noting that throughout the 1980s several leaders of the British Churches, including very senior Bishops and Theologians, engaged in extensive public conflict with the Thatcherite Enterprise propagandists. Many of the writings emanating from the Enterprise Theologians were in fact written in response to the moral, social, and theological condemnation of these critics. Amongst their number can be found Bishop David Jenkins, Bishop David Sheppard, Dr Alistair Kee, the "Faith in the City" Report produced in 1985 by the

Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission, and John Vincent, who was elected President of the British Methodists in the mid 1980s.

In broad terms, this school of thought, often driven by the writings of church leaders living in areas of multiple deprivation, is characterised by a strong identification with the Old & New Testament position on the primary importance of care for the Poor, who are the Children of God, and to whom the New Testament Gospel speaks in a special way.

This does not return to the Early Church's glorification of poverty in itself, however, which is roundly condemned as a degradation which prevents people from achieving their full potential, and brings with it great suffering. Indeed, one of the chief desires of these writers is that by participation in creative and rewarding work, all people will be materially, ontologically and socially fulfilled.

Other key themes of these church opponents of the Thatcherite Enterprise Culture include justice, fairness, a right to participation, environmental responsibility, attacks on racism and a deep discontent with the individualism which separates neighbour from neighbour. An explicit influence on these writings has been the Liberation Religion of Latin America, which has adopted Marxist historical analysis to create a religion of, by and for the Poor. Although some alternativists strongly reject the Marxist affiliations of Liberation Religion - including Sheppard and Jenkins - all recognise the power and applicability of the Religion for the Underside of History which the Latin American Catholics have developed.

ACTION AND REACTION

Strong themes in these works are the importance of the Incarnation, which is that part of religion dealing with God becoming man, in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Their position is that the Incarnation, and especially Jesus's ministry to the poor, provides a clear signal that one is under a religious duty to act in a similar way in the "real world". This contrasts with the religion of the Enterprise Apologists, who refer back to ancient doctrines which teach that the physical world is utterly evil and that no attempted interventions in it can succeed. This belief in the duty to mirror the care of Christ for the poor and marginalised, has led, ironically, to large-scale involvement by the polemicists and their supporters, in

'alternative' enterprise. Community Businesses, Training Workshops, Credit Unions, Food Co-ops, Fair Trading Companies, Community Centres, and Nurseries have all been created across the country by church groups strongly opposed to Thatcherite Enterprise, yet seeking to serve their community in a practical way to alleviate the worst excesses of poverty. It is a fascinating paradox that those most opposed to the enterprise culture have worked the most creatively and entrepreneurially of all church leaders and members. At the heart of this activity is a strong belief that the Incarnation necessitates involvement in the "here and now", quite different from the laissez-faire providentialism of the Enterprise Theologians.

These alternativists, indeed, extend the concept of entrepreneurship beyond an individualistic ideology of new firm creation, moving beyond "the notion of small businesses into a much wider range of small scale efforts at innovation, modification, and experiment. We need to add to the notion of self-help in getting on in a narrowly industrial and profitable way and developing this in the direction of social self-help" (Jenkins 1988 p31). Although many examples of this involvement could be presented, Dunn et al's 1986 survey of such activity in the North East of England is typical in describing a Youth Business Initiative Scheme, Traidcraft (then relatively small scale), a day centre for the mentally ill, Start-Up Workshops, and YTS Training Workshops.

For the purposes of this paper, what this alternative enterprise indicates is that even amongst its opponents, the cultural effects of the Thatcherite Enterprise Culture are sufficiently strong to result in organisation formation. It also draws attention to a two-way flow of influence between religion and the Church on the one-hand, and the enterprise culture on the other. That is, not only does the enterprise culture draw upon religion to legitimate and explain itself, but the Church draws on the vehicle of entrepreneurship, as articulated by the Enterprise Culture of the day, to express its contemporary mission.

As a footnote to the points of interaction between the Thatcherite Enterprise Culture the Church and religion, it is worth noting briefly the beginnings of a new theological school which has reared its head in recent years. Several theologians have attempted to carry out a process of accommodation, or synthesis, with the Enterprise Culture, with the aim of revitalising the modern Church. Sedgewick (1992) and Atherton (1992) for example, draw upon the creativity of enterprise, and the possibilities it offers for

reducing poverty, to propose a new "middle-way" theology which also embodies much of the Enterprise Culture. (This enterprise seems similar to Anthony Giddens attempts to develop a political “middle way” Giddens 1996,1998) Without entering into the detail of their position, their attempts suggest that on the theoretical, as well as practical, level, the Enterprise Culture has become a major influence upon the theological bedrock from which its key protagonists drew their supporting metaphysical paradigm. If this is indeed the case, then any future Enterprise Cultures which turn to theology for philosophical and ethical underpinnings will find a collection of beliefs altered by interaction with the very Thatcherite Enterprise Culture which the churches so reviled. If nothing else, this reflective process suggests the complexity of the way in which environmental factors impact upon each other. We have here an example perhaps of what Eisenstadt (1985) called “transformative capacity”, i.e. the ability of ideology to legitimise the creation of new institutions, and thus reshape the workings of society.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to examine the points of interaction between a key environmental munificence factor, and the tradition of Christian religion. Rarely in a modern European nation has the industrial and economic policy of a government been so subjected to theological criticism. Rarely has it chosen to so defend itself in extensive and explicitly theological terms. In particular, the development of a fully-articulated theology of enterprise, (as for example in the work of Griffiths), emphasises that the relationship between the ideology of enterprise and religion continues to be of relevance and interest.

A number of important points of interaction and influence discovered in this study, and these are summarised below:

FROM	Religion	Explicit Religious Justification
TO	Enterprise Culture	Subliminal/implicit Religious Justification
		Critiques
FROM	Enterprise Culture	Entrepreneurial action

The diversity and number of points of interaction indicates that metaphysical concepts were indeed a major part of the Thatcherite Enterprise Culture, itself an important environmental munificence factor in 1980s Britain. Although the religion of the Thatcherite Enterprise Culture has received relatively little attention from Entrepreneurship research, it is suggested in this paper that metaphysics has been of some importance in shaping the ideas of wealth creation and individualism held and propagandised by, the political elite - the governing leaders - of the decade. At the very least, these ideas in turn also influenced the British attitude to new firm formation. Entrepreneurship was raised in profile and in status, and was given practical support by the proponents of the enterprise culture. It was legitimated, used as an ubiquitous meaning system, given heightened cultural value. So pervasive did these ideas become, indeed, that the very theological critics reviewed in this study were found to have been paradoxically advocating and practising a form of innovative community-centred entrepreneurship. Indeed, the paradigm shift in New Labour's stance on the benefits of entrepreneurship, in conjunction with its emphatically, "Christian" position staked out by its key members, suggests that Thatcherite Enterprise Theology may have substantially influenced even her political opponents. If the increase in a general cultural approval of entrepreneurship has spread so pervasively, with its theological underpinnings intact, a substantial alteration in the UK entrepreneurial cultural munificence can be posited. In any case, the entrepreneurial philosophy and religious perspective of New Labour may be a valuable subject for future study.

The continued relevance of religion to the status, profile, and support for entrepreneurship within a given culture - 1980s Britain - has been illustrated, if somewhat briefly. Other researchers have come to similar conclusions with regard to quite different cultures. Nguyen and Redding (1993) note the importance of Confucian civilisation in shaping the nature of enterprise in emerging Asian economies. Baum et al (1992) argue that Israeli entrepreneurship can in many instances be interpreted as a backlash against the collectivist, Judaic management ethos. The research therefore suggests that further investigations into the effects of religion, ethics and religion on, for example, new firm formation merits further study. However, it is not clear that entrepreneurship studies as yet possesses a vocabulary or methodology appropriate to

the task. Future study of environmental munificence factors should also bear in mind such intangible influences on SME start-up, however esoteric and distanced from the actual entrepreneur they may seem.

FOOTNOTES

1 See also Hakim, 1988, Daly, 1991

2 The ideological adherence of the Thatcherites to (economic) freedom led them to enact a raft of legislation intended to ensure that “no external barriers shall prevent an individual from exploiting his talents. No law shall permit some men to do what is forbidden to others. No monopolist shall make use of his dominant position to deny to others rights which he enjoys himself” (Joseph and Sumption 1987 p29).

3 See also Krieger, 1986: 15-17; Young,1993:599

4 See, for example, on her Christian beliefs, Thatcher, 1977;1989:1993. On her Methodism, see Young,1993: 5 - 6, Young and Sloman,1986 :15,19

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