In this article I wish to suggest some possible themes, problems and sources for the study of youth work history in New Zealand, relating those suggestions to some of my own researches and, more especially, to the more recent projects in this field overseas, both published and in prospect. The Turnbull Library, possessing already, for instance, the records of the Young Women's Christian Association[5] and the Boys' Brigade in New Zealand (Inc),[6] has demonstrated an on-going commitment to collect and provide research opportunities in what will undoubtedly become an expanding field of enquiry. The Library's holdings in the records of individual churches and congregations in Wellington (with their Bible Class, Christian Endeavour, Sunday School and other 'sub-groups'); of CORSO and other recreational, religious, social welfare and similar bodies also provide a wealth of material for social historical enquiry into the concerns, aspirations and pastimes of young New Zealanders in the twentieth century.[7]

There are, it is true, more cogent reasons for pursuing this line of historical enquiry than those of the simple expediency—so long a tradition in much New Zealand historical writing—of following stimulating overseas research. Admittedly, such overseas research has produced in very recent years some interesting findings on the socialisation of young people—one of any society's major preoccupations—and therefore about the peculiar experience of being (or becoming) an American or a Scotsman or whatever. Joseph F. Kett's *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977) is one very recent parallel—although covering a wider spectrum—to Springhall's work in the United Kingdom, and is a book based upon a much longer tradition and commitment to intensive local, state and national historical writing on youth work and related themes than has been the case elsewhere, even in Britain.[8]

The Boys' Brigade was spawned in working-class and lower-middle class Glasgow of the early 1880s and has retained since a strong—outwardly at least—Scottish 'flavour', whilst spreading to some sixty to seventy countries in the intervening ninety odd years. It is still the stronger boys' organisation in Scotland and Ireland. The Boy Scout movement, however, remained, especially in its infancy, more obdurately 'English' but—not surprisingly considering the number of 'unemployed' ex-British Army and colonial officers who became its leaders—managed to transplant some of its Edwardian mystique and ritual very successfully throughout the Empire. Of German youth movements, their roots and proneness to social manipulation much, too, might be (and has been) written.[9] My initial surveys of the literature have shown that New Zealand, too, has spawned some unique and unexpected experiments in the