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Book section

Original citation:

Originally published in Hvithamar, A., Warburg, M. and Jacobsen, B. A. (eds.), *Holy nations and global identities: civil religion, nationalism, and globalisation*. International Studies in Religion and Society (10), Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009, pp. 235-251. ISBN 9789004178281

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Chapter 11

In and Out of Place: Varieties of Religious Locations in a Glocalising World¹

Eileen Barker

The perception of religion as “out of place” rests on an underlying assumption that there is a way in which religion could (and should) be *in place*.² The concepts of both civil religion and nationalism can suggest that there is a place for religion that is closely tied to a particular society or nation. There are, however, several other ways in which religion and society might be related, just as there are several ways they might *not* be related. At a time when the diverse processes associated with globalisation are increasingly crossing, penetrating, negotiating and undermining the integrity of national boundaries, it is not surprising that what can be seen as “religion in place”, from one perspective, can be seen as “religion out of place”, from another perspective.

Using Max Weber’s (1949) concept of “ideal types”, this chapter considers a variety of ways in which religion might be located with reference to the state, the society and the individual. These relationships fall into three broad groupings: the criteria determining whether religion is “in place” or “out of place” are based on responses to three related but separate questions. What is the legal/political relationship between church and state? What are the socio-cultural relations between religion and the society? What are the different theological criteria for conferring a religious identity upon an individual?

Church/State Relations: The Political Connection³

The variety of more or less formal political relations between state and religion have been variously described and analysed from a number of perspectives. For present purposes, however, only two points need to be made. First, the variety of potential

¹ I would like to thank the Nuffield Foundation and Leverhulme Trust for their generous help in funding the research upon which this chapter is based.

² The concern in this chapter with the placing (in or out) of religion arose from my addressing the original working title of this book, which was *Religion Out of Place. Civil Religion, Nationalism and Globalisation*.

³ Church here refers to the religion(s) of a country, whether it is associated with churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, shrines, gurdwaras or any other places of worship.

relationships is considerable; and, second, these options do not necessarily function in practice in the manner in which they are predicted to do in theory. Religion, in one way or another, may be official in one place but unofficial in another. A few examples can illustrate this diversity.

Sometimes religion trumps the state, at other times the state holds all the cards, and in yet other situations the two realms are more or less balanced or almost entirely separate. One obvious scenario in which religion holds the upper hand is when, as in Saudi Arabia or contemporary Iran, the state is defined as a theocracy, ruled by God. The less devout or more sceptical, however, might suspect that the fate of the country is in fact determined according to the interests of the ruling elite. A different scenario occurs when there is an Established Church. The church may be strong and powerful or it may be relatively weak, with little influence on political decisions, which is more frequently the case in contemporary Western societies, as with the Church of England. Alternatively, a country, according to its constitution, may have no established religion, yet its "National Church" is recognised as being of special importance and able to exert some considerable, if unofficial, influence on the political scene. This has become increasingly the situation in Russia over the past two decades. Further, different scenarios exist as a result of conditions, such as those in Germany, in which the state favours two or more religions, or as in Lithuania and the Slovak Republic, i.e., countries that instituted a hierarchy of accepted religions that can enjoy a sliding scale of influence and privilege.

Sometimes a country declares itself to be a secular state, but there is one particular religion that plays a significant role in affairs of state, as is the case in both Israel and Turkey. It may be that a nation's Constitution decrees that there is to be a clear separation of church and state, and yet, as in the United States of America, there is an energetic combination of religion and politics, with forceful lobbies promoting a vast array of religious interests. France adopted a different position, in 1905, when it enacted a strict law of *laïcité*, with the avowed intention, thereby, of enabling all religions (and secular ideologies) to flourish without state interference. Alternatively, there are atheistic nations, such as North Korea, actively promoting a secularist ideology. Some of these countries, for example China and Vietnam, permit certain specified religions a limited freedom, while others have suppressed any religious practices whatsoever (as in Albania during the rule of Enver Hoxha). There is, however, abundant evidence that no state has successfully entirely eliminated its

citizens' religious sentiments. Once the external controls are lifted or weakened, religion has a tendency not only to re-emerge in the public arena, but also to reveal that it was never completely excluded; it managed to survive under even the most stringent conditions of repression and persecution. It had found a place even when, officially, it had none.

Religion and Society: Socio-cultural Relations

A second approach for describing the place religion holds in a society does not have underlying legal connotations such as those described in the previous section. The different types can be recognised by anyone; they tend, however, to be formulated by scholars, rather than by the individual members of a society or even the politicians, although the latter may be aware of the potential of different options and might attempt to manipulate these.

Here we draw on a number of thinkers, starting with Rousseau, who have described ways in which this kind of relation might be realised in a society – one, but only one, option being what Rousseau and Bellah, following him, call civil religion.

(1) Rousseau's Religion of Man

“The pure and simple religion of the Gospel” is how Rousseau (1968: 181) conceptualised his “religion of man”. This is a religion that has none of the external trappings normally associated with religious practices and institutions. It is a private, inwardly directed religion. Its followers do not seek this-worldly rewards, but desire only to lead good, honest lives, accepting whatever their lots may be in this life, in the hope that in the next life they will be received into paradise.

As much as Rousseau respects the moderation and incorruptibility of such believers, he concludes that by distancing themselves from the body politic, and despite their willingness to fulfil their civil duties, they have removed one of the principal means of holding society together. “I know”, he writes, “of nothing more contrary to the social spirit” (*ibid.*, 182). Whereas a follower of the “religion of man” will fulfil his duty and accept whatever God's providence bestows upon him, Rousseau warns that this man will be unconcerned with the fortunes of the state and disinclined to stand up against those who, unlike him, are not truly religious, but rather who are disrupting the lives of others in the pursuit of their own evil ends.

Furthermore, Rousseau adds, while the “religion of man” may produce obedient soldiers prepared to serve their country, they are soldiers “without a passion for victory; they know better how to die than how to conquer” (*ibid.*, 184). To those who might question this conclusion by arguing that the Christian troops who fought in the Crusades were powerful and valiant soldiers, Rousseau’s riposte is that “since the Gospel never sets up any national religion, holy war is impossible among Christians” (*ibid.*, 185). Those who fought in the Crusades, therefore, were not really Christians – they were, rather, citizens of the church, fighting for its spiritual homeland, and, as such, they are better described as following a “religion of the citizen”.

(2) *Rousseau’s Religion of the Citizen*

The “religion of the citizen” is not susceptible to the weaknesses that Rousseau sees in the “religion of man”. From a political perspective, it is a theocracy, and from a social perspective it might be described as a type of national (or even nationalistic) religion, given that a key characteristic is that it is established in a single country.

It gives that country its Gods; ... it has its dogmas, its rituals, its external forms of worship laid down by law; and to the one nation which practices this religion, everything outside is infidel, alien, barbarous; and it extends the rights and duties of man only so far as it extends its altars. (*ibid.*, 181)

Historically, Rousseau classifies the religion of the early Pagans as this type. As they would not have agreed to subordinate themselves to someone who was just another human, men originally had no kings, but were ruled by Gods (*ibid.*, 176); and as two alien societies could not obey the same master (and two warring theocracies could not follow a single commander), each state kept to its own Gods, and no distinction was made between its Gods and its laws. As long as this situation continued, there were no wars centring on religion.

The provinces of the Gods were determined ... by the frontiers of nations. The God of one people had no rights over other peoples. The Gods of the Pagans were in no sense jealous Gods; they divided the empire of the world between them. (*ibid.*, 177)

Consequently, since each religion was associated exclusively with the laws of the state that prescribed it, and since there was no means of converting people, except by subduing them, the only missionaries were conquerors (*ibid.*, 178). However, when the Jews refused to recognise any God but their own, this was taken as a sign of rebellion by their conquerors – a problem that was exacerbated with the emergence of

later faiths such as Christianity and Islam, and, Rousseau contends, has continued to be exemplified ever since.

Because of its theocratic nature, the “religion of the citizen” meets with Rousseau’s approval in so far as it makes the homeland the object of its citizens’ adoration and it teaches citizens that the service of the state is the service of the tutelary God; to die for one’s country is to become a martyr, and to break the law is to be impious. However, Rousseau does not unequivocally support this type of religion in that he declares it to be based on error, lies and deception, burying what he considers the true worship of God in empty ceremonial. Furthermore, it invites exclusivity and bloodthirsty intolerance “so that men breathe only murder and massacre, and believe they are doing a holy deed in killing those who do not accept their Gods” (*ibid.*, 182).

(3) *Rousseau’s Religion of the Priest*

The third type of religion described by Rousseau is the “religion of the priest”, which gives men “two legislative orders, two rulers, two homelands, puts them under two contradictory obligations and prevents their being at the same time both churchmen and citizens” (*ibid.*, 181). By introducing the concept of another Kingdom (the Kingdom of God in Heaven) and by drawing a sharp distinction between the theological and the political, the “religion of the priest” undermines the concept of the state as a single unity, and thereby, according to Rousseau, “has made any kind of good polity impossible in Christian states, where men have never known whether they ought to obey the civil ruler or the priest” (*ibid.*, 179).⁴

Believing that everything which destroys social unity is completely worthless, Rousseau assumes that the divisive “religion of the priest” is so manifestly bad that it would be a waste of time to embark upon the pleasurable task of demonstrating this fact. However, he does suggest that there is a type of social religion that avoids the negative excesses of the “religion of the citizen”, while retaining its more positive functions.

⁴ Mohammed is praised for bringing unity to his political system, although Rousseau states this was later undermined.

(4) *Rousseau's Civil Religion*

The ideal, according to Rousseau, is when citizens follow a religion that makes them love their duty to the state and fellow citizens – but the precise contents of that religion, he argues, should be no concern of the state. It is, thus, the sovereign's function to ensure a profession of faith “not as religious dogmas, but as sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be either a good citizen or a loyal subject” (*ibid.*, 186). The positive dogmas of this “civil religion” must be simple and few in number: “The existence of an omnipotent, intelligent, benevolent divinity that foresees and provides; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of sinners; the sanctity of the social contract and the law” (*ibid.*, 186).

To these Rousseau adds a single negative dogma: “no intolerance”. Intolerance, he proclaims, is something that belongs to the religions we reject. Given this sentiment, it might appear somewhat paradoxical that Rousseau also declares that the sovereign can banish from the state those who do not profess this faith, not because of impiety, but because they will be antisocial beings. Anyone who professes to believe but does not behave as though he does, should be put to death for having committed what Rousseau considers the greatest of all crimes: that of lying before the law.

In short, Rousseau's argument is that all religions which themselves tolerate others must be tolerated, provided only that their dogmas contain nothing contrary to the duties of the citizen. While nationalism in the sense of honouring and serving one's nation (a civil religion) is a positive position, an exclusive national religion (that of the citizen) is not.

(5) *Durkheim's Cult of Man*

The elementary forms of religious life found amongst Australian aborigines, and as described by Durkheim (1968), overlap in many ways with Rousseau's “religion of the citizen”. Both depict societies comprised of a single religion promoting internal cohesion, with what Mary Douglas (1970) later would call a strong group structure.

Durkheim, however, sees religion as more specifically presenting a mirror image of the particular tribe or society, as represented by its totem. Like the pagan societies about which Rousseau writes, there is a particular god (or pantheon) for a particular society. “If religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion” (Durkheim 1968, 419). Religion is created by society and it is society divinized.

But as a society becomes subject to an increasing division of labour, with increasing specialisation and differentiation, Durkheim argues that a “cult of man” emerges in which the god to be idealised and worshipped is man.

Originally society is everything, the individual is nothing. Consequently the only social feelings are those connecting the individual with the collectivity; society is its own aim. Man is considered only an instrument in its hands ... But gradually things change. As societies become greater in volume and density, they increase in complexity, work is divided, individual differences multiply, and the moment approaches when the only remaining bond among the members of a single human group will be that they are all men ... [S]ince human personality is the only thing that appeals unanimously to all hearts, since its enhancement is the only aim that can be collectively pursued ... [it] thus rises far above all human aims, assuming a religious nature. (Durkheim 1952, 336)

(6) *Bellah's Civil Religion*

In many ways, Robert Bellah's conception of civil religion, as a “public religious dimension [which] is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals”, is an elaboration of the civil religion outlined by Rousseau (Bellah 1967, 4). However, there are also significant differences, partly because Bellah is considering a particular civil religion – the one found in the United States of America. However, while it is clear that Bellah's civil religion is particular to the USA, it is also clear that it is not tied to any one specific religion. It transcends any particularity, but embraces a circumscribed generality and, by doing so, it reinforces and legitimises the political regime.

While actors in the political scene may not publicly endorse or appeal to their personal denominations, as members of their personal denominations they can claim membership of the civil religion and thereby justify what it is that they are doing in its name. The President's oath of office “extends not only to the people but to God” (*ibid.*, 4), the other side of the coin being that they are bound by the rubrics of the civil religion so long as they are in office (*ibid.*, 8).

Bellah makes it clear that the separation of church and state does not mean the political realm is denied a religious dimension (*ibid.*, 3). Religion is conceived as being wider than church, and politics is conceived as wider than state, with civil religion relating *both* to the political society *and* to private religious organisations (*ibid.*, 3). This clearly can have positive functions for uniting the nation – that is, as long as private beliefs are encompassed by the civil religion. At the same time, civil

religion is not the same as ‘religion in general’, and it has to be specific enough to America for it to be saved from empty formalism and, thus, capable of serving “as a genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding” (*ibid.*, 8).

However, while most Christian denominations – Protestant, Catholic and, perhaps, Jewish⁵ – may be embraced by American civil religion, obviously not all systems of beliefs held by all American citizens are included. Some individuals such as atheists, most Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, and pretty well all members of new religions (the Nation of Islam, the Church of Scientology and Wicca for example) are excluded according to the general understanding of the mainstream society. Others, such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, are more likely to exclude themselves.⁶ The boundaries determining which religions are “out of place” may shift with social changes, such as successive waves of immigration and gradual transformations in cultural values, but at any one time there are relatively well-defined borders recognised at either a conscious or unconscious level by citizens on either side of the boundary. It is an indication of the effectiveness and specificity of American civil religion that those whose private (but publicly known) beliefs lie outside the national sacred canopy are extremely unlikely to be elected President. At the time of this writing (2007), while there is an ongoing debate whether Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church), stands a chance of being elected as President, there seems to be general agreement that a secular humanist or even an agnostic would stand no chance at all. The idea of a Muslim running for the office is not even discussed.

(7) *Bellah’s Global Civil Religion*

Bellah traces the evolution of American civil religion, that is, the country developed from a dependent colony to an independent United States, gradually acquiring a system of democracy and other values that he believes have become the envy of less developed countries. And, since World War II, America has come to see itself as having to accept responsibility for fighting “tyranny, poverty disease and war itself”

⁵ Bellah (1968, 12) cites Robert Lowell’s analysis of the Gettysburg Address as being “Hebraic without being in any specific sense Jewish. The Gettysburg symbolism ... is Christian without having anything to do with the Christian church.”

⁶ Jehovah’s Witnesses, although law-abiding so far as their religious beliefs allow, do draw the line at voting or saluting the American (or any) flag; and are prepared to go to prison rather than bear arms. During the Nazi regime, thousands died in concentration camps although, unlike Jews or Roma, they could have been released had they agreed to swear allegiance to the regime.

(*ibid.*, 17). Nonetheless, Bellah warns, America has found itself relying on its military power rather than its intelligence, and without “an awareness that our nation stands under higher judgement, the tradition of civil religion would be dangerous indeed” (*ibid.*, 17).

Bellah, however, is hopeful. He has a vision of the emergence of a viable and coherent world order. This, he argues, would require the incorporation of international symbolism into American civil religion – or, perhaps, American civil religion (“a light to all the nations”) becoming simply one part of a new civil religion of the world – a global civil religion that would be the fulfilment, rather than the denial, of American civil religion. So far, he believes “the flickering flame of the United Nations burns too low to be the focus of a cult, but the emergence of a genuine trans-national sovereignty would certainly change this” (*ibid.*, 18).

(8) *Huntington’s Clashing Civilisations*

An alternative perspective is offered by Samuel Huntington (1996), with his theory of the “Clash of Civilizations”. Although he is concerned with clashes *between* groups, rather than bonds uniting the groups, Huntington’s ideas are just as pertinent to the issue of the relationship between religion and society as are those of scholars who are primarily concerned with the cultural glue that unites within national boundaries. He does not share Bellah’s optimism about the possibility of a world civil religion, nor does he see the “cult of man” as providing an interwoven umbrella with the potential for uniting all humanity. Moreover, he does not recognise a sacred canopy reflecting and endorsing the nation state as fundamental. Nation states may remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, however; he argues that the great divisions among humankind will not be primarily ideological or economic, but between culturally defined civilisations – civilisations being “the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes them from other species” (Huntington 1993, 23).

Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition *and, most important, religion*. The people of different civilizations have different views on the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy. These differences are the product of centuries. They will not

soon disappear. They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes. (*ibid.*, 24, italics added)

Huntington points out that one of the most significant consequences of defining social units in terms of religion is that the boundaries are more intransigent and less negotiable than if they are drawn according to economic, political or even ethnic criteria. It is relatively easy to redistribute wealth or power; a person “can be half-French and half-Arab, and simultaneously a citizen of two countries. It is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim” (*ibid.*, 27). Furthermore, Bellah suggests that many of the ideas that developed through the triumph of the American civil religion (individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state) often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or even Orthodox cultures. “The very notion that there could be a “universal civilization” is a Western idea, directly at odds with the particularism of most Asian societies” (*ibid.*, 34). For the relevant future, Huntington concludes, there will be no universal civilisation, but instead a world with different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others” (*ibid.*, 48). Religion is considered “out of place” only when it deserts the cultural parameters of a particular civilisation, rather than when it transcends a particular nation.

(9) *Sen’s Cross-cutting Ties*

There have been many critics of Huntington’s thesis, from a number of different perspectives. Amartya Sen argues forcefully against Huntington’s focus on civilisations, both because it ignores the heterogeneities within civilisations, which, rather than being monolithic, are full of internal inconsistencies and conflicts (Sen 1999, 16), and because it underestimates the permeability of the boundaries. Cross-cutting relationships of trade, finance, the arts and migration undermine the potential for any serious clash of civilisations, with different individuals and groups having vested interests in preserving a reasonable relationship with those in other civilisations.

Rather than seeing society as having long been separated into traditional civilisations, Sen suggests that the current climate in the West, brought about partly through mass migration, is in danger of *creating* religiously based groupings. He warns against what he calls the “solitarist” fallacy (as exemplified by Huntington, and

certain communitarian and multi-cultural theories), which assumes that human identity is formed by membership of a single social or religious group. This results, Sen says, not in multiculturalism, but in “plural monoculturalism”, a system in which:

Muslim organisations are in charge of all Muslims, Hindu organisations in charge of all Hindus, Jewish organisations in charge of all Jews and so on. ... In downplaying political and social identities, as opposed to religious identities, the [British] government has weakened civil society precisely when there is a great need to strengthen it (Sen 2006).⁷

(10) *Colin Campbell's Shifting Civilisations*

While Huntington sees the focus of religious/political relations as surpassing that of the national, identifying seven or eight major civilisations, Colin Campbell (2007) paints the global scene with an even broader brush. For him, a basic distinction should be drawn between Western and Eastern civilisations, with the West encompassing all the religions of “The Book” – including Islam. Unlike Huntington, who postulates an increasing consolidation or strengthening of civilisations, citing such processes as “Asianization” in Japan, the “Hinduization” of India and the “re-Islamization” of the Middle East, Campbell writes about the “Easternization” of the West, arguing that Western civilisation has embraced an entirely new worldview since (roughly) the end of the Second World War. Belief in a transcendental personal god has been replaced by belief in an impersonal divine force; “dualistic materialism has been replaced by metaphysical monism as the dominant theodicy or worldview within the West” (Campbell 2007, 339).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present the intricacies of Campbell's challenging thesis, but it is worth noting that at least one respected scholar questions the relative stability assumed by the previous types by claiming that the whole of Western civilisation could change within half a century to the extent that it is “increasingly dominated by a worldview that is essentially Eastern in character, the traditional Western values and beliefs having been demoted to a secondary position” (*ibid.*, 319).

⁷ Quoted in Kenan Malik's review, *Prospect Magazine* 125, August 2006. http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=7583.

Theological Allocations of Religious Identity

Rather than delineating the formal relationships between the institutions of religion and the body politic as constructed by legislators, or the less formal socio-cultural constructions described by scholars, this section considers briefly a variety of ways in which religions themselves decree *who* is religiously in or out of place.⁸ These individual religious identities may or may not coincide with other socially constructed identities – a nation or society may play a significant role, but it may not. Individuals may opt in or out of religious space with more or less ease or difficulty.

(1) The Cosmic Religion

The cosmic religion, which overlaps with a large part of what has been called the New Age movement, dispenses with all boundaries. It affirms that it is the birthright of all humanity to be part of cosmic spirituality. Understandably, religions and societies that depend on strong boundaries can see such a worldview as threatening their very existence, for religion is not so much out of place as appropriating *all* space.

(2) The Global Religion

Although the name might suggest that the global location is similar to the cosmic religion, global religions require an acceptance on the part of the individual concerned to become part of the religion; once this has been done, members consider it part of their duty to proselytise and take their truth to the four corners of the earth. A clear distinction is drawn between true believers and non-believers, who may be separated into the saved and the damned. Various new religions and most branches of the Pentecostal Church fall into this category.

(3) The National Religion

The national religion has geopolitical boundaries. If one is a citizen of a particular nation, one is automatically expected to be a member of the National religion. For a national religion such as the Russian Orthodox Church (despite the fact that there are more members outside Russia than inside its geographical boundary), to leave one's

⁸ These types are described in more detail in Barker (2006).

religion can be considered not so much heresy as treachery. Both foreign and indigenous new religions are considered indisputably “out of place”.

(4) *The Religious Community*

This is a trans-national religion that may have strong roots in particular societies as a theocracy or a national religion, but it extends well beyond geo-political boundaries, sometimes overlapping with Huntington’s civilisations. The Roman Catholic Church is one such community, the Islamic Ummah another. As with a national religion, membership is usually through birth, with apostasy being denounced, although conversion may be encouraged.

(5) *The Cultural Religion*

Religions for which membership is culturally located are not necessarily bound by political or geographical areas, but by a shared culture that is not confined to religion alone, though associated with it. This differs from the previous type in that the appeal is not primarily religious. There is, for example, an expectation that English men and women belong to the Church of England; even if they never attend church and are not formally members.⁹ At the same time, it is not dependent on geo-political boundaries as much as the national religion, and it is perfectly possible to opt out and join another religion. In this sense, despite the fact that it is an established church, the Church of England is more like a denomination, while the Russian Orthodox Church fits more easily into the ideal type of a Church.

(6) *The Biological Religion*

The biological religion confers membership through birth, as though there were a special strand of DNA that transmits the religious gene from one generation to the next. In some religions, such as Orthodox Judaism, it is the mother’s line that carries the religion; in others, such Zoroastrianism, it is the father’s line.

(7) *The Religious Lineage*

The concept of a religious or spiritual lineage is common in both Hinduism and Buddhism, where devotees can be initiated into a “divine line” on the path to

⁹ In a random national sample administered in 1998, I found more non-members (29 percent) who *felt* they were ‘C of E’ than formal members of the Church (26 percent).

enlightenment by a teacher, guru or Master. There are also several African diasporic religions, such as Voodoo, Santeria or Candomblé, which operate with a religious lineage. Anthropologists use the concept of “fictive kin” to describe the creation of family relationships, where blood ties do not exist, enabling individuals to construct support structures to replace conventional bonds that have been destroyed. In contemporary Western society, one can find new religions offering almost instant enlightenment, with the allocation of membership to the lineage requiring remarkably little effort on the part of the novice.

(8) *The Individual Religion*

The individual religion emphasises personal choice and commitment. This type of religion does not engage in the kind of proselytising that one finds in the global religion of evangelical Christians, but is more likely to be of the opinion that “many are the ways”, and that it is the responsibility of each individual to find his or her way of developing a relationship with his or her god. The Society of Friends or Quakers provide an example of such a perspective.

(9) *The Inner Religion*

The inner religion celebrates “the Divine Spark within”. It overlaps with what is sometimes referred to as “the new spirituality”, sharing, perhaps paradoxically, several characteristics with the cosmic type, eschewing social boundaries based on religious distinctions. Indeed, many of those belonging to this type of religion describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious”.

(10) *The Virtual Religion*

As its name implies, virtual religion operates mainly or entirely on the Internet. Here individuals can construct their own credentials of membership, and these may bear little or no resemblance to their “normal” identities. Examples include CyberCoven.org, the Church of Virus,¹⁰ the Church of St Pixel¹¹ and, on a somewhat less serious note, the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster.¹²

¹⁰ <http://www.churchofvirus.org>.

¹¹ http://www.stpixels.com/view_releases.cgi.

¹² <http://www.venganza.org>.

Concluding Comments

Obviously, there are many other ways of drawing distinctions between the places religions are found, and clearly there are overlaps in the types that have been depicted, with several “real religions” crossing the boundaries between two or more categories. Ideal types, however, are intended to provide analytical tools with which we might examine compatibilities and incompatibilities of different phenomena and the dynamics of processes that may occur under changing circumstances.

There can be little doubt that the processes of globalisation disrupt religion in contemporary society in many ways. Some of these processes encourage the spread of national and civil types of religion, but there are several other options. Belonging to a global community may be experienced as a release for some; but it can be alienating for others. Further, there are clear indications that religion can act as a force for resisting globalising tendencies by offering firmly rooted identities in the particularities of “local localities” to counter the anonymity of global universals. The feeling that globalisation undermines a nation’s identity can encourage loyalty to a national Church that is seen as the bearer of the country’s past (and future) cultural heritage. This is clearly the case with, for example, the resurgence of Eastern European Orthodoxies and the demands that Thailand’s Constitution should name Buddhism as the national religion.

Although the values of individualism and freedom of choice have existed for centuries, and although the vast majority of the world’s population still follow the religion of their forefathers, people are increasingly changing or abandoning the religion in which they were raised. One reason for this is the breakdown of traditional behaviour patterns and the growth of individual mobility – both geographical and social. Children are increasingly unlikely to live in the same village or town as their parents or, due to a rapidly changing occupational structure, to have the same types of jobs. There were few biochemists, electronic engineers or call-centre agents in our grandparents’ time. Given their radically different experiences, it is not surprising that the answers to questions of ultimate concern that satisfied our grandparents are unlikely to satisfy our grandchildren.

Not only has globalisation brought about a demand for (or at least an openness to) alternative beliefs and practices, it has also increased the supply of potential options available to any one individual. Previously unknown patterns of migration and the unprecedented spread of the mass media (including the rise of the Internet)

are resulting in an unprecedented visibility of alternative beliefs and life-styles. The presence of these options may raise doubts and weaken beliefs. Alternatively, the challenge to previously taken-for-granted beliefs can result in their becoming stronger than they were before. Whatever the outcome, there is likely to be innovative consciousness raising.

Commentators have pointed to the variety of trends in contemporary society, some of them arguing that one particular trend is “The Trend” of the future. It can also be argued that, short of the use of guns or other violent means of control, the trend of the future will be towards increasing diversity. One thing, however, is clear: with increasing globalisation, religion is increasingly unlikely to stay in the same place, and for many this will be perceived as religion being out of place.

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