

*Patrick Pasture*

## Religion in Contemporary Europe Contrasting Perceptions and Dynamics<sup>1</sup>

Confronted with the question of reflecting on the role of religion in contemporary Europe – in this article largely confined to Christianity – two contrasting themes come to mind: Firstly, the place of religion in the debate on the history and future of Europe, and secondly, the story of what I call the ›great transformation‹ of the post-war period, which includes the de-Christianization of large parts of Europe, the ›pluralization‹ as a result of the emergence of non-Christian faiths and spiritualities, and the blurring of the boundaries between the secular and the spiritual. For a long time there was hardly any connection between both perspectives, particularly as religion had actually disappeared as an issue in European history since the French Revolution: Virtually all history textbooks on Modern and Contemporary Europe published between 1960 and 2000 – in blatant contrast to textbooks on earlier periods – ignored religious issues. But that situation has spectacularly changed since the closing of the last millennium. Not only did historians (re)discover religion as a major theme in the history of Modern and Contemporary Europe, it also became an important question with regard to European identity.

In the following article, I will first formulate some general observations with regard to the role of religion in the discourses on Europe, and subsequently in the next paragraphs focus on the ›great transformation‹ that the European religious landscape underwent. This discussion will be largely inspired by Grid-Group Cultural Theory (GG-CT).<sup>2</sup> In the last paragraphs, I will address some questions with regard to the process of European integration and Europe's position in the world.

### I. RELIGION IN THE EUROPEAN SELF-PERCEPTION

Traditionally two major narratives dominate the discourse on the role of religion in modern and contemporary European history, one on the secularization of Europe and the separation of Church and State, and the other, much less prominent though and rather as part of a much broader discourse, on diversity and tolerance. Especially popular European histories cherish the idea of European diversity in national and cultural traditions, among which religion is just one – actually rarely emphasized –, as well as its philosophical heritage of tolerance and respect for the individual liberties, among which the liberty of expression and religious practice. These are again strongly put forward in the contemporary post 9/11 debates to demarcate Europe from the present resurgence of fundamentalism, espe-

1 (Different) Parts of this article have been presented as papers at workshops at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bonn, and during a workshop on »Transforming the Religious Landscape of Europe« in Höör (Sweden), and the text benefited from comments expressed on these occasions.

2 See for a development of the theoretical aspects *Patrick Pasture*, Christianity in a De-traditionalising World. A GG-CT Interpretation of the Transformations of the 1960s, in: *Erik Sidenval* (ed.), Transforming European Religion – Secularisation in the long 1960s, forthcoming. For a general introduction into the methodology, see *Michael Thompson/Richard J. Ellis/Aaron Wildavsky*, Cultural Theory, Boulder 2000, and *Richard Fardon*, Mary Douglas. An Intellectual Biography, London/New York 1999.

cially, though not exclusively, of Islamism.<sup>3</sup> These narratives about religion in Europe, however, serve mainly to confirm Europe's self image, and the concrete arguments referred to in these discourses seriously need to be put into perspective.

Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen once astutely observed that European scholars tend to emphasize religion in studying non-western civilizations, and ignore religion when speaking about their own (at least as regards the modern and contemporary era – in ancient, medieval and early modern European history, religion also plays a central role).<sup>4</sup> Underlying this European attitude is the association of modernity with secularism and the conception of Europe as the cradle of modernity, a view that not only condemns other civilizations to a more ›primitive‹ status, but today also prevents the effective integration of Moslems within Europe.<sup>5</sup> In a tradition firmly backed up by the major European social thinkers – from Marx and Weber to Durkheim and Spencer – Europeans have believed that religion belonged to the world of tradition and superstition, and would gradually dissipate or at least marginalize into the private sphere with the advance of modernity, defined either as rationalization (the advance of science and rational explanations of the unknown), urbanization, or the result of functional differentiation.<sup>6</sup> Though the secularization thesis as a master narrative for explaining long-term religious changes has fallen from grace<sup>7</sup>, the conviction that religion resurfaced as a dominant factor in Europe after the French Revolution goes contrary to some of the most profound *idées reçues* of modern times, in particular the idea that religion is irrational and that modernization, however defined, inevitably leads to a marginalization of religion.<sup>8</sup> But there can be no denial that religion remained – or *became* – a major factor in European collective identities, even if indeed large parts of Europe became de-Christianized. Certainly the Bolshevik Revolu-

3 European intellectuals, incidentally to some extent in contrast to their American colleagues, equate in this respect Christian fundamentalists and fanatic Muslims. American thinkers usually distinguish the two, aware of the evangelical contribution to the democratization of America and perhaps also somewhat better informed of Islam than European intellectuals, even if the latter surely will argue the opposite is the case. E. g. *Richard Dien Winfield*, *Modernity, Religion, and the War on Terror*, Aldershot 2007.

4 *Amartya Sen*, *A Passage to China*, in: *The New York Review of Books* 51, December 2, 2004, No. 19.

5 *Stuart Hall*, *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power*, in: *Bram Gieben/Stuart Hall* (eds.), *The Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies*, London 1992, pp. 275–331; *Carol A. Breckenridge/Peter Van der Veer*, *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, in: *idem* (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, Philadelphia 1993, pp. 1–22; *Talal Asad*, *Formations of the Secular. Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Stanford 2002.

6 See e. g. *Ray Wallis/Steve Bruce*, *Secularization: The Orthodox Model*, in: *Steve Bruce* (ed.), *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, Oxford 1992, pp. 8–30, here: p. 11; *Olivier Tschannen*, *Les théories de la sécularisation*, Genève 1992.

7 *David Nash*, *Reconnecting Religion with Social and Cultural History: Secularization's Failure as a Master Narrative*, in: *Cultural and Social History* 1, 2004, pp. 302–325.

8 So crudely most advocates of the secularization thesis would not formulate it, though *Steve Bruce*, *Religion in the Modern World. From Cathedrals to Cults*, Oxford 1996, goes a long way to it. How strong this idea existed has been explicitly recognized by *Peter L. Berger*, *The De-secularisation of the World: A Global Overview*, in: *idem* (ed.), *The De-secularisation of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Washington/Grand Rapids 1999, pp. 1–18. A re-actualization of secularization theory in *Pippa Norris/Ronald Inglehart*, *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge 2004. See also *Detlef Pollack*, *Säkularisierung – ein moderner Mythos? Studien zum religiösen Wandel in Deutschland*, Tübingen 2003. For a somewhat similar assessment as mine see *José Casanova*, *Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration*, in: *Timothy A. Byrnes/Peter J. Katzenstein* (eds.), *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 65–92.

tion in 1917 and the advance of deeply secular, even outright anti-religious communist regimes after World War II put an end to the position of power of the churches that fell ›behind the iron curtain‹, though the current restoration of the Orthodox Church in contemporary Russia and the prominent role of the Catholic Church in the events in Eastern Europe of the late 1980s and 1990s, especially in Poland, demonstrates that even decades of persecution did not manage to eradicate religion from the hearts and minds of the people. Hence, religious adherence and church participation in Western (democratic) Europe turned into the best predictor of voting behaviour until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup>

In the slipstream of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and Napoleon's armies, a fundamental opposition arose between the Christian churches and secularist's arguments for a radical separation of Church and State. The churches initially lost much terrain, but gradually regained a great deal of their influence. They witnessed a series of revivals and managed to win the popularity of many, though certainly not everywhere, especially not in major cities and industrial areas – though that also was not an inevitable rule, far from it.<sup>10</sup> Especially the Catholic Church again obtained political clout thanks to the actions of mostly ultramontane laity in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Where the Catholic Church did succeed, her grip on the faithful in many ways surpassed any influence she ever had in Europe. Secularists, far from illustrating the decline of religion in Central and Western continental Europe (that is except the British Isles) actually defined their identity in opposition to the churches, hence demonstrating the latter's importance *a contrario*. Moreover, they imitated the churches' traditions and practices up to the point where they developed into secular ›quasi-religions‹.<sup>12</sup> That was, needless to remind, also the case with communism, which created its own rituals, traditions, martyrs and myths.<sup>13</sup> In Scandinavia and Britain, state churches continued though they largely refrained from political intervention, gradually imposing ›a wall of separation‹ upon themselves between the worldly reign of the prince and the Kingdom of God.<sup>14</sup> While these state churches did indeed increasingly lose the devotion of many of the faithful,<sup>15</sup> religion remained part of the national identity – either in the British model of ›believing without belonging‹ or the

9 David Broughton/Hans-Martien ten Napel (eds.), *Religion and Electoral Behaviour in Europe*, London/New York 2000.

10 See Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848–1914*, Basingstoke 2000, and Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe*, Oxford/New York 1997, for general overviews.

11 Christopher Clark/Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Cambridge 2003; Emiel Lamberts (ed.), *Een kantelend tijdperk. De wending van de Kerk naar het volk in Noord-West-Europa/Une époque en mutation. Le catholicisme social dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Europe/Ein Zeitalter im Umbruch. Die Wende der Kirche zum Volk im nordwestlichen Europa (1890–1910)*, Leuven 1992; Emiel Lamberts (ed.), *The Black International. L'internationale noire 1870–1878. The Holy See and Militant Catholicism in Europe. Le Saint-Siège et le Catholicisme militant en Europe*, Leuven 2002.

12 John E. Smith, *Quasi-religions: Humanism, Marxism and Nationalism*, London 1994.

13 Michael Ryklin recently pleaded for considering Communism as a form of religion: Michael Ryklin, *Kommunismus als Religion. Die Intellektuellen und die Oktoberrevolution*, Frankfurt/Leipzig 2008.

14 Staf Hellemans, *Zuilen en verzuiling in Europa*, in: Uwe Becker (ed.), *Nederlandse politiek in historisch en vergelijkend perspectief*, Amsterdam 1993, pp. 121–150. See also the case studies and the introductory chapters by John T. S. Madeley, *European Liberal Democracy and the Principle of State Religious Neutrality*, in: *idem/Zsolt Enyedi* (eds.), *Church and State in Contemporary Europe. The Chimera of Neutrality* (Special Issue of *West European Politics* 26, 2003), London 2003, pp. 1–22; John T. S. Madeley, *A Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Church-State Relations in Europe*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 23–50.

15 Cf. Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe. A Memory Mutates*, Oxford 2000.

Scandinavian ›belonging without believing‹<sup>16</sup> – and free churches competed effectively for the souls of the people. Even if the number of agnostics and atheists increased everywhere in Europe, religion remained an important factor in the lives of many and continued, albeit in different ways, to play a major role in the public sphere. Even recurrent warfare, including two world wars, finally did not alter these basic patterns of division, in which religion constituted the core issue besides the nation-state, rather than ethnicity, class or race more commonly associated with the modern age.

The latter observation brings me to a second powerful narrative with regard to European identity in which religion is crucial. Diversity and pluralism are often called features of Europe – hence the prominence of the question of European societies ›converging‹, so dear to scholars of European integration.<sup>17</sup> This diversity however is mostly associated with the predominance of nation-states. As the secularization narrative suggests, in traditional histories nationalism is often represented as a ›secular religion‹, succeeding to ›traditional‹ religion.<sup>18</sup> Here religion is also viewed as opposed to any expression of modernity – rationalism, science, emancipation, indeed secularism – while nationalism, at least in its liberal phase, is considered as a fundamental ingredient of modernity.<sup>19</sup> However, today this view seems to be eclipsed by arguments about the intertwining of nationalism and religion as well as about the modernity of religion.<sup>20</sup> In that perspective, religion obviously only reinforces the idea of Europe being a divided continent. The religious division of Europe goes back to the early stages of Christianization when Eastern and Western Christianity separated, but obtained a new significance from the Reformation. Particularly the Romantics cherished the idea that since the Reformation, Europe had lost its innate unity, these ›beautiful shining times, when Europe was a Christian land‹ (Novalis)<sup>21</sup> – a phrase that, not by accident, also recalls the premise of secularization, that also refers to a mythical ›age of faith‹. In a long term perspective then, Europe

16 Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, London 1994; Ole Riis, *Patterns of Secularization in Scandinavia*, in: Thorleif Pettersson/Ole Riis (eds.), *Scandinavian Values: Religion and Morality in the Nordic Countries*, Uppsala 1994.

17 In general one could refer to the work of Hartmut Kaelble (e.g. *The European Way: European Societies during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Oxford 2004); François Guedj/Stéphane Sirot (eds.), *Histoire sociale de l'Europe. Industrialisation et société en Europe occidentale (1880–1970)*, Paris 1997. With regard to religion see e.g. Friedrich W. Graf/Klaus Große Kracht, *Einleitung. Religion und Gesellschaft im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, and Hans G. Knippenberg, *Europäische Religionsgeschichte: Schauplatz vom Pluralisierung und Modernisierung der Religionen*, in: Friedrich W. Graf/Klaus Große Kracht (eds.), *Religion und Gesellschaft. Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, Köln 2007, pp. 1–44 and 45–72 (English translation of the latter Hans G. Knippenberg, *Europe: Arena of Pluralization and Diversification of Religions*, in: *Journal of Religion in Europe* 1, 2008, pp. 133–155).

18 As is the view of scholars as diverse as Emile Durkheim as well as Benedict Anderson, Carlton Hayes, Elie Kedourie, Joseph R. Llobera and Anthony Smith.

19 Cf. Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, London 2001; *idem*, *Nationalism and Modernism. A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*, London/New York 1989.

20 Peter Van der Veer/Hartmut Lehman (eds.), *Nation and Religion. Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, Princeton 1999; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt/Dieter Langewiesche (eds.), *Nation und Religion in Europa. Mehrkonfessionelle Gesellschaften im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt/New York 2004; Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge 1997.

21 Novalis, *Die Christenheit oder Europa, 1799*, quoted in Haupt/Langewiesche, *Einleitung*, in: *idem*, *Nation und Religion in Europa*, p. 11. See also René Rémond, *Religion et société en Europe. La sécularisation aux XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris 1989, and Mary Anne Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity. The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789*, Berlin/New York 2004, pp. 37–38.

is perceived as a continent ravaged by religious and nationalistic wars, but strangely enough also the civilization that has overcome this fragmentation, at least with regard to religion, by developing the principles of religious freedom and toleration.<sup>22</sup> These therefore became considered quintessential elements of European, increasingly *Western* identity and self-perception, which should distinguish it from, especially, the East and, today in particular, the Islamic world.<sup>23</sup>

This popular image at least needs nuance, however. Firstly, the emphasis on religious diversity appears rather odd compared to far more diverse regions such as South and Southeast Asia or, in many ways, North America: after all, most of this European diversity consists of variations of one single faith, Christianity – few consider other faiths as Islam and even Judaism (let alone Paganism or Esoterism) as European religions.<sup>24</sup> This exclusion, even widespread also in academic circles, certainly should be put into perspective, as each of these faiths shares a long history of presence on European territory, contributed greatly to the development of European culture, and was intertwined with all major events that marked the continent's history.<sup>25</sup> Judaism in particular was the religion of a great minority and interwoven with all aspects of European history and culture. Islam has always been the religion of many Europeans, but the perception of Islam was often hostile. The Ottoman Empire acted as a European power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the empire of the »sick man of Europe« shrunk to a tiny corner at the far east of the continent, and became less and less perceived as part of Europe.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, Christianity by and large dominates the religious landscape in Europe, and I will in this article mainly concentrate on this religion. Even the secularist-Christian divide from a distance seems far less profound as it appears from within the continent: it never appeared to colonized Asians and Africans as a relevant factor to them, nor does it to the Islamic world today, either outside or inside the continent.<sup>27</sup> This is not just a question of distance or lack of knowledge as it may appear to Europeans themselves: in reality European colonizers rarely displayed a clear distinction between the religious and the secular. And even if the colonial state did define itself as a secular institution, colonizers were followed by Christian

22 *Perez Zagorin*, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*, Princeton 2003; *Knippenberg*, *Europäische Religionsgeschichte*.

23 *Winfield*, *Modernity, Religion, and the War on Terror*; *Samuel P. Huntington*, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York 2002 (orig. 1996); *Rémond*, *Religion et société en Europe*; *Perkins*, *Christendom and European Identity*.

24 Cf. the astute observations in *Jytte Klausen*, *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe*, Oxford 2005, p. 136 and passim.

25 Examples of the association of Europe with »Christendom« and the exclusive grounding of European identity in the »Judeo-Christian tradition« (in which »Judeo« does not refer to the modern and contemporary Jewish contribution to European culture and identity, but to the Jewish roots of Christianity) include *Perkins*, *Christendom and European Identity*; *Knippenberg*, *Europäische Religionsgeschichte*; *Rémond*, *Religion et société en Europe*. Cf. *Gerard Delanty*, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality*, New York 1995, and *Philip Jenkins*, *God's Continent. Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*, Oxford 2007, who rather considers Europe a »laboratory of new forms of faith« (p. 19) with Christianity and Islam as major forces alongside secularism.

26 *Asli Çirakman*, *From the »Terror of the World« to the »Sick Man of Europe«: European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth*, Bern 2001; *Delanty*, *Inventing Europe*; *Joos Vermeulen*, *Voorbeeldige vijanden, wantrouwe neven. Turken en Europeanen*, in: *Idesbald Goddeeris* (ed.), *De Europese periferie*, Leuven 2004, pp. 213–246; *Jenkins*, *God's Continent*.

27 The ambiguities of existing ties between Christianity and European states run throughout *Jytte Klausen's* ground-breaking assessment: *Klausen*, *The Islamic Challenge*. See also *Bassam Tibi*, *Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe: Political Democracy vs. Cultural Difference*, in: *Byrnes/Katzenstein*, *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, pp. 204–224.

missionaries, blowing away all theoretical distinctions that may have been so important in European eyes – though admittedly anti-colonial political leaders, being educated at European elite schools, did recognize the opportunities that (especially Protestant) missions could bring them in acquiring the skills to withstand the Western imperialist colonizers.<sup>28</sup>

The Westphalian Peace (1648) is credited for laying out the basis of religious pluralism, as it facilitated the evolution towards religious tolerance and privatization of religion,<sup>29</sup> but the Westphalian principle of »*cuius regio, eius religio*« (introduced by the Treaties of Augsburg, 1555), actually created confessional states which associated state, confession, and territory, and established fairly homogenous, largely mono-confessional regions with relatively clear-cut religious boundaries. With the exception of the multi-confessional Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, they separated Catholics from Protestants – admittedly the latter, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anabaptists, splintered into countless national and regional variations, ranging from small local religious communities and dissenters, to established national churches.<sup>30</sup> As Benjamin Kaplan recently argued, however, the growth of tolerance in Europe was far from a unilateral process towards »enlightenment«. <sup>31</sup> Religious tolerance in the Southern Netherlands, for example, was largely based upon commercial interests and a cautious balance of power within the Dutch Republic, and implied social segregation and remained confined to the private sphere.<sup>32</sup>

The long-drawn-out implementation of tolerance in Germany since the 18<sup>th</sup> century resulted from a mixture of conviction and political calculations, in particular in response to Prussian territorial expansion and migration by commercial elites which undermined the homogeneity of some particularly prosperous places. Gradually the divisions between Lutherans and Calvinists dissipated. The Congress of Vienna (1815) redrew the political map of Europe, in particular of the German lands, without much consideration for religious boundaries, thus »joining what those at Augsburg and Westphalia had so carefully kept asunder« (Margaret L. Anderson).<sup>33</sup> In many German states Lutherans and Reformed Churches (Calvinists) united, constituting Unified Churches following the example of Prussia in 1817. However, out of the different »cultures of piety«, emphasizing personal piety and belief (*Bekennntnis*) over confessional adherence (*Konfession*), new divisions arose which gradually underpinned opposition between utopian dissenters and the established church. Confessional divisions in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century would increase again and become politicized, as confessional identities – continuously redefined though – often, though certainly not always nor everywhere, became important markers of collective identity in some religiously mixed areas. If that is enough, as Olaf Blaschke argues<sup>34</sup>, to

28 Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914*, Manchester 2004, p. 317.

29 Knippenberg, *Europäische Religionsgeschichte*; Madeley, *European Liberal Democracy*; David Nexon, *Religion, European Identity, and Political Contention in a Historical Perspective*, in: Byrnes/Katzenstein, *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, pp. 256–282; Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*.

30 José Casanova, *Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration*, pp. 65–92; Nexon, *Religion, European Identity, and Political Contention in a Historical Perspective*.

31 Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, MA/London 2007.

32 For a state of the art in English see R. Po-Chia Hsia/H. F. K. van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, Cambridge 2002.

33 Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Afterword: Living Apart Together in Germany*, in: Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800–1914*, Oxford 2001, pp. 319–332, here: p. 320.

34 Olaf Blaschke (ed.), *Konfessionen im Konflikt. Das zweite konfessionelle Zeitalter zwischen 1800 und 1970*, Göttingen 2002.

speak of a second confessional age, remains the subject of appreciation, as the meaning of confession changed and, except in rare instances, physical violence among the Christians largely disappeared from the armoury (though not from the imagination).<sup>35</sup> The important thing about the infamous 19<sup>th</sup> century ›Culture Wars‹ between the Catholic Church and secularists for example, as Margaret Lavinia Anderson reminds us, »is that they were not wars«. <sup>36</sup> Religion was *not* the motor behind the major conflicts in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries either,<sup>37</sup> until the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, in which religion was one factor besides others, the importance of which remains the subject of debate.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, violence continued to characterize the relationship between Christian and non-Christian religions, as the Jews in particular experienced, culminating in the holocaust. The latter was much less an isolated phenomenon than the traditional *Sonderweg*-historiography suggests, but the culmination of a perverted desire for ethnic and indeed religious ›purification‹ proper to the project of modernity.<sup>39</sup> »Intolerance is, therefore, the natural incli-

- 35 A very critical assessment of Blaschke's thesis in *Benjamin Ziemann*, Säkularisierung, Konfessionalisierung, Organisationsbildung. Dimensionen der Sozialgeschichte der Religion im langen 19. Jahrhundert, in: AfS 40, 2007, pp. 485–508. On the changing meaning of the confessional divisions see *Lucian Hölscher*, Les changements religieux. Étude d'histoire sociale et des mentalités (du XVIIIe siècle à 1945), in: *Paul Cologne/Rudolf Lill* (eds.), Histoire religieuse de l'Allemagne, Paris 2000, pp. 23–55, here: p. 31; *Lucian Hölscher*, Konfessionspolitik in Deutschland zwischen Glaubenstreit und Koexistenz, in: *idem* (ed.), Baupläne der sichtbaren Kirche. Sprachlichen Konzepte religiöser Vergemeinschaftung in Europa, Göttingen 2007, pp. 11–52; *Lucian Hölscher*, The Religious Divide: Piety in Nineteenth Century Germany, in: *Walser Smith*, Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, pp. 33–47, as well as *Anderson*, Living Apart Together in Germany. On the end of confessional violence see *Claude Langlois*, La fin des Guerres de Religion. La disparition de la violence religieuse en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, in: *French Historical Studies* 21, 1989, pp. 3–28.
- 36 *Anderson*, Living Apart Together in Germany, p. 326 (afterword). Cf. *Clark/Kaiser*, Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe.
- 37 It surely is not superfluous to make this observation. I was recently asked to organize a session on religion in the framework of a conference on War and Society in 20th century Europe. The suggested theme was »Religion as a Driving Force behind the Wars of the 20th Century«. This is not to say that religion played no role whatsoever in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts, only that it was not the most important factor: Neither the First, nor the Second World War were, for example, strictly speaking religious wars (one can even doubt if the Spanish Civil War was one). On the association of religion and violence as part of secularism see *Asad*, Formations of the Secular, pp. 8–12.
- 38 See esp. *P. H. Liotta*, Religion and War. Fault Lines in the Balkan Enigma, in: *Raju G. C. Thomas* (ed.), Yugoslavia Unravelling. Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention, Lanham 2003, pp. 87–116; *Ger Duijzings*, Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo, London 2000. *Vjekoslav Perica*, Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism, Oxford 2002, however, holds the churches far more accountable for the Yugoslavian wars.
- 39 *Heather Rae*, State Identities and the Homogenization of People, Cambridge 2002; *Madeley*, A Framework for the Comparative Analysis. This perspective should be completed with studies on the development of extreme violence and genocide, such as *Enzo Traverso*, The Origins of Nazi Violence, New York/London 2003; *Jon Stratton*, ›It Almost Needn't Have Been the Germans‹. The State, Colonial Violence and the Holocaust, in: *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6, 2003, pp. 507–527; *Zygmunt Bauman*, Modernity and the Holocaust, Ithaca/London 2001; *Josep R. Llobera*, The Making of Totalitarian Thought, Oxford 2003; *Detlev Peukert*, The Genesis of the ›Final Solution‹ from the Spirit of Science, in: *Thomas Childers/Jane Caplan* (eds.), Reevaluating the Third Reich, New York 1994, pp. 234–252; *Peter Imbusch*, Moderne und Gewalt. Zivilisationstheoretische Perspektiven auf das 20. Jahrhundert, Wiesbaden 2005; *Volker R. Berghahn*, Europe in the Era of Two World Wars. From Militarism and Genocide to Civil Society 1900–1950, Princeton 2006; *Arne Johan Vetlesen*, Yugoslavia, Genocide, and Modernity, in: *James Kaye/Bo Stråth* (eds.), Enlightenment and Genocide. Contradictions of Modernity, Brussels 2000, pp. 151–183; *Michael Mann*, The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing, New York/Cambridge 2005.

nation of modern practice«, Zygmunt Bauman acknowledges<sup>40</sup>, but religion was arguably not the source of it.

So at last did Europe develop a philosophy of religious tolerance. Particularly since World War II, Europe considers human rights, including religious liberty, as cornerstones of civilization and civility, and the EU for example has regularly reiterated the importance of religious freedom on occasions when some European states considered restricting the rights of religious minorities in the 1990s.<sup>41</sup> All Christian churches share this principle, the Catholic Church explicitly since Vatican 2 and the encyclical *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965) – Christian Democracy already since around 1900.<sup>42</sup> If religion is once again being emphasized in the Europe of today, and particularly in the sense of creating a culture of remembrance of its religious sources, it does so by stressing the contribution of the Christian churches to the advancement of European culture and values, actually effacing the memory of religious wars.<sup>43</sup> Actually more important is the separation of Church and State, which in Europe mainly means that clerical hierarchies respect the autonomy of political decision-making processes and offer occasional symbolic support for the regimes – solemn celebrations on independence day, for example – in exchange for the religious liberty for oneself and some direct or indirect (financial) support for religious institutions, the concrete modalities of which vary widely.<sup>44</sup>

The latter points at the continuing integration of churches within national frameworks in modern Europe, which in some ways even increased in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as political regimes compelled churches to accommodate them. Hence important differences existed between national churches, in Western Europe as well as behind the Iron Curtain, where the churches were always marginalized. So the Catholic Church either in Spain, the FRG, the Netherlands or Italy, as well as in Poland or Hungary adopted quite different positions on a range of issues, with regard to inner-church life as well as to politics, and followed quite different patterns. Nevertheless, religions and churches are also transnational forces, and paradoxically the transnational dimensions, indeed somewhat contrasting with the national integration, equally increased.<sup>45</sup> That is most clearly the case with Roman Catholicism, which has considerably tightened the bonds between the national churches and Rome since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and elevated its spiritual leader to an (in some respects) even »infallible« leader.<sup>46</sup> The strategy was strongly backed up by laypersons that

40 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 8 and 53–74. Likewise José Casanova states that »ethno-religious cleansing, in this respect, stands at the very origin of the early modern state«: José Casanova, *Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration*, pp. 65–92, here: p. 65.

41 Zsolt Enyedi, Conclusion: Emerging Issues in the Study of Church-State Relations, in: *Madeley/Enyedi, Church and State in Contemporary Europe*, pp. 218–232, esp. pp. 223 f.

42 Étienne Fouilloux, Intransigence catholique et monde moderne, in: *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 96, 2001, pp. 71–87.

43 Danièle Hervieu-Léger, La religion dans la constitution du lien social européen, in: *Eurozine*, 2006–08–17, p. 9 (orig. *Transit* 26, 2004).

44 Cf. Enyedi, *Emerging Issues in the Study of Church-State Relations*.

45 Vincent Viaene, International History, Religious History, Catholic History: Perspectives for Cross-Fertilization (1830–1914), in: *European History Quarterly* 38, 2008, pp. 578–607; *Lamberts, The Black International*.

46 Staf Hellemans, Transformation der Religion und der Grosskirchen in der zweiten Moderne, in: *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 99, 2005, pp. 11–35; *idem*, How Modern is Religion in Modernity?, in: *Judith Frishman/Willemien Otten/Gerard Rouwhorst* (eds.), *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation. The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism*, Leiden 2004, pp. 76–94; *Christopher Clark, The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars*, in: *Clark/Kaiser, Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, pp. 11–46;

developed extensive and powerful transnational European networks: Ultramontanism became an immensely important and penetrating socio-cultural and political movement that deeply transformed Catholic Europe. They contributed to the development of national and transnational Catholic social and political movements, including Christian democracy but also Catholic Action. Such movements to a large extent homogenized devotional practices, private as well as public (such as demonstrated during pilgrimages, Eucharistic crusades, or Maria devotions).<sup>47</sup>

Catholics and Christian Democrats, for a variety of motives also strongly supported the idea of European integration – not the least as it forcefully recalled the old ideal of Christendom<sup>48</sup> –, and created transnational tools to promote European unity, even if organizing Christian Democrats in a transnational European party proved another matter.<sup>49</sup> Protestants have a long tradition of developing transnational communication networks in which intellectual traditions as well as devotional practices circulated. In the modern era these surely continued, but were perhaps particularly oriented towards either North America or the overseas missions. Within Europe, the works of great Protestant theologians certainly circulated widely, but the integration within the national states prevailed, certainly within the Germanic countries. The establishment of Protestant international associations was hampered by the theological divergences which rather inflated the centrifugal forces within Protestantism even more. The establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1947 remained far removed from creating a truly unifying bond, even if its symbolic meaning should not be underestimated. The least ›transnational‹ is no doubt the Orthodox Church, though its domestic orientation is far less a constant feature of its history than appears, judging its present emphasis on autocephaly.<sup>50</sup>

## II. SOME BASIC PATTERNS IN MODERN EUROPE

As comes to the fore in the above, the roots of the religious landscape in modern Europe go back to the Treaties of Westphalia. The French Revolution added an important dimension to the socio-political and religious divisions of Europe by considerably deepening the Church-State divide and creating a strong and popular anti-clericalism. The contours of anticlerical protest in France, between *jurings* and non-*jurings* clergy, while matching older divisions with roots in the Reformation, still remain relevant today.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the traditional European religions entered a crisis of existence, but soon after the Napoleonic wars they experienced a ›rebirth‹. This rebirth, which can be interpreted as a ›modernization‹ in the sense that it adapted to the modern conditions and engaged with the modern world – even if rejecting it explicitly –, affected them in different ways and certainly did not lead them to re-conquering the whole population.

*David Blackbourn*, The Catholic Church in Europe. A Review Article, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33, 1991, pp. 778–790.

47 *Clark*, The New Catholicism; *Lamberts*, Een kantelend tijdperk; *idem*, The Black International.

48 *Perkins*, Christendom and European Identity, p. 24 and passim.

49 *Philippe Chenaux*, Une Europe vaticane? Entre le Plan Marshall et les Traités de Rome, Bruxelles 1990; *Wolfram Kaiser*, Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union, Cambridge 2007; *Daniel Philpott/Timothy Samuel Shah*, Faith, Freedom and Federation. The Role of Religious Ideas and Institutions in European Political Convergence, in: *Byrnes/Katzenstein*, Religion in an Expanding Europe, pp. 34–64; *Scott Thomas*, The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century, New York 2005.

50 See esp. *Timothy A. Byrnes*, Transnational Religion and Europeanization, in: *Byrnes/Katzenstein*, Religion in an Expanding Europe, pp. 283–305, esp. pp. 292–296.

But it did give them a much stronger impact on the personal life of the faithful, as well as political clout. Protestants, especially Lutherans, largely accommodated modern political institutions as well as with rational worldviews, and did not develop an anti-modernist counterculture as Catholics and Reformed Churches did. The latter in Europe opted for pietistic forms of retreat rather than the assertive engagement with the world that we observe in the United States, especially with the development of fundamentalism. The Roman Catholic Church in Europe modernized in a different way, by developing into a highly centralized, assertive, massive and strongly communicative bulwark against what it considered to be the threatening modern world. But that image of a beleaguered anti-modern fortress, that both its adversaries and the Church itself cherished and cultivated, conceals both the multitude of strategies followed to cope with its external challenges and very important internal divisions.<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the resurgence of religion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the association of women with religion, alongside men who continued to dominate the ecclesiastical power structures and the public sphere. According to some scholars, Christianity softened its image and ›feminized‹. Associated with sentimentalism and emotion, the latter term expresses a highly questionable essentialist and in some respects anachronistic view on gender divisions, but as a term referring to the strong appeal that the new Christendom had on women, it certainly points to an important reality. Women indeed constituted the bulk of the churchgoers and pilgrims – but men had other ways to engage in their faith – as well as of those who committed their lives to Christ.<sup>52</sup>

The barbaric 20<sup>th</sup> century, with its totalitarian ambitions and wars, created more than one challenge to the established churches. The interwar years were characterized by deep social and political divisions, among which religion loomed large. The totalitarian regimes of the 1920s and 1930s and the world wars in particular disrupted the communities and the moral foundations of society, but it was precisely that which gave the churches the opportunity to launch effective moral crusades once the war was over. Hence, after World War 2 Christian churches again manifested themselves as key factors in the reconstruction, even if they needed to cope with the remains of their lenient attitude during the war.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the churches had a deplorable war record, even if they had been perse-

51 *Staf Hellemans*, *Strijd om de moderniteit. Sociale bewegingen en verzuiling in Europa sinds 1800*, Leuven 1990; *idem*, From ›Catholicism Against Modernity‹ to the Problematic ›Modernity of Catholicism‹, in: *Ethical Perspectives* 8, 2001, pp. 117–127; *Patrick Pasture/Wilhelm Damberg*, Restoration and Erosion of Pillarized Catholicism in Western Europe, in: *Leo Kenis/Jaak Billiet/Patrick Pasture* (eds.), *The Transformation of Christian Churches in Europe*, Leuven 2009, in press.

52 *Tine Van Osselaer*, *The Pious Sex. Catholic Constructions of Masculinity and Femininity in Belgium c. 1800–1940*, unpublished PhD in History, KU Leuven 2009; *Tine Van Osselaer/Thomas Buerman*, *Feminization Thesis. A Survey of International Historiography and a Probing on Belgian Grounds*, in: *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 103, 2008, pp. 497–544; *Patrick Pasture*, *Beyond the Feminisation Thesis. Gendering the History of Christianity in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century*, to be published in *Jan Art et al.* (eds.), ›Dieu changea de sexe? Christian Feminisation and Masculinisation in Western Europe 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> c., forthcoming. Cf. *Bernhard Schneider*, *Feminisierung der Religion im 19. Jahrhundert. Perspektiven einer These im Kontext des deutschen Katholizismus*, in: *Trierer theologische Zeitschrift* 111, 2002, pp. 123–147; *Imtraud Götz von Olenhusen*, *Die Feminisierung der Religion und Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven*, in: *Imtraud Götz von Olenhusen* (ed.), *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen. Katholikinnen und Protestantinnen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart/Berlin 1995, pp. 69–88.

53 A solid overview of the role of the churches during World War II is still missing. A first overview in *Andrew Chandler*, *Catholicism and Protestantism in the Second World War in Europe*, in: *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 9: *Hugh McLeod* (ed.), *World Christianities c. 1914 – c. 2000*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 262–283; *Lieve Gevers/Jan Bank* (eds.), *Religion under Siege*,

cuted (especially in Nazi Germany) and some clerics had shown remarkable signs of moral courage. Nevertheless, both Protestant and Catholic hierarchies had either collaborated with fascist regimes or, at the very least, shown little reaction against oppression in general, particularly anti-Semitic policies and the genocide. But religious laypersons had suffered much and some had chosen the way of the resistance which enabled them to come to the rescue of their respective churches. This cleared the way for the most remarkable phenomenon of post-war European politics, the breakthrough of Christian Democracy. Christian Democracy developed into a powerful socio-political movement, aiming at a ›transformation‹ of society according to its *Weltanschauung*, that transcended denominational boundaries and as such departed from any clerical and confessional connotations that had often prevailed in Catholic politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – and in some cases, as in Spain, until the 1970s. In continental Western Europe – in particular in Austria, the Benelux-countries, Italy, Switzerland and West-Germany (the FRG) – confessional social organizations and institutions also mushroomed with regard to education and social care, which underpinned and (mostly) benefited from the extension of the welfare state. Christian Democratic parties and confessional organizations contributed considerably to the shaping of welfare policies, which even lead to the development of a particular type of welfare state.<sup>54</sup> Their influence was probably less direct though than easily assumed. More important than their immediate political impact was the mediation skills of the Christian Democrats, or simply the fact that their very presence in the welfare politics fundamentally modified the political power game.<sup>55</sup>

This breakthrough of Christian Democracy illustrates the persistence of religion in society, raising serious questions as regards the so called ›secularization of the public sphere‹, while it also puts the impact of the churches into perspective. Indeed, Christian Democracy could not be considered the party of the (or rather *a* particular) church or denomination, and also illustrates the predominant role of the laity. Post-war Christian Democratic parties found inspiration in Christian personalist thinking but were not accountable to church authorities – the reason why Statys Kalyvas considers them as a form of secularization.<sup>56</sup> Most authors however see Christian Democracy mainly as an illustration of the influence of Christian beliefs in society.<sup>57</sup> Even when Christian Democrats abandoned their exclusive ties to the Catholic Church and their confessional program, they in practice continued to embody a Christian presence in politics, particularly with regard to ethical and moral issues but also in defence of clerical interests. They for example supported religious education and advocated financial support for religious institutions.

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2 Vol., Leuven/Paris 2007, though many contributions in the latter volume lack critical distance and unilaterally emphasize the persecution the churches fell victim to. Nevertheless see in the last-mentioned book vol. 1: The Roman Catholic Church in Occupied Europe (1939–1950): *Patrick Pasture*, Christian Social Movements Confronted with Fascism in Europe: Consistency, Continuity, or Flexibility in Principles, Strategies, and Tactics towards Social and Economic Democracy, pp. 283–314. See also *Benjamin Ziemann*, Religion and the Search for Meaning, in: *Helmut Smith* (ed.), Oxford Handbook of Modern German History, forthcoming.

54 *Gösta Esping-Andersen*, The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism, Cambridge 1990.

55 *Kees Van Kersbergen*, Social Capitalism. A Study of Christian Democracy and the Welfare State, London/New York 1995; *Patrick Pasture*, Building the Social Security State. A Comparative History of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, in: *Lex Heerma van Voss/Patrick Pasture/Jan De Maeyer* (eds.), Between Cross and Class. Comparative Histories of Christian Labour in Europe 1840–2000, Bern/New York 2005, pp. 251–284.

56 *Stathis N. Kalyvas*, The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe, Ithaca/London 1996, p. 261.

57 E. g. *Martin Conway*, Introduction, in: *idem/Tom Buchanan* (eds.), Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918–1965, Oxford 1996, pp. 1–33. A review of recent literature on Christian Democracy in *Wolfram Kaiser*, Review Article: Christian Democracy in Twentieth Century Europe, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, 2004, pp. 127–135.

Particularly in Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium the Catholic Church explicitly supported Christian Democratic parties, though she increasingly respected the autonomy of the political and refrained from intervening publicly from the 1960s onwards.<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore the churches had a tremendous impact on daily life. In large parts of Europe, religious institutions were omnipresent and coloured not only the major transitions in life – birth, youth, marriage, sickness and death – but also the daily dealings, weekly rhythms and occasional festivities at local level: what Wilhelm Damberg aptly baptized the *société paroissiale* with regard to Catholics.<sup>59</sup> Confessional educational and cultural associations worked strongly to impose a highly confessional and associational culture, which designed how people – men, women and children – saw themselves as part of society (with often major political implications) and behaved in public as well as in private.<sup>60</sup> Hence, in countries and regions where several competing socio-ideological cultures existed – confessional, but also secular and anticlerical – separate *milieux* developed, with relatively few contacts, but in their opposition also very much alike. Sometimes, when the political divisions pervaded, they had developed into ›pillars‹, politically integrated networks of domain-specific organizations associated with one political party.<sup>61</sup> In late Imperial Germany as well as during the Weimar Republic, in (Flemish) Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland, as well as Italy after World War II, large parts of society ›pillarized‹. Essential to this socio-political system was that it allowed stabilizing deeply divided societies, allowing the elites to control political conflicts.<sup>62</sup>

Of course, societies never completely ›pillarized‹ and individuals always negotiated their own arrangements that often transgressed the confinements of the ideal type. Certainly at local level the ›lived reality‹ was far more complex and nuanced – one reason why historians today often object to the use of general terms like *milieux* and pillarization.<sup>63</sup> Certainly some social milieus and regions were more affected than others: the countryside more than big cities, and workers and peasants more than elites and the middle class. Moreover, also within confessional *milieux* the strong association between politics, social action and religion always raised intense opposition. In the Catholic world for example, this opposition could come from very divergent origins. The clerical hierarchy often opposed social Catholicism and Christian Democracy as they did not want to share their authority. Likewise the leaders of the laic associations were resilient to clerical obedience, something the latter tried to counteract by launching the Catholic Action as a lay apostolic movement under strict clerical control (something in which they did not

58 See esp. the country studies Michael Gehler/Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945*, London 2004; Conway/Buchanan, *Political Catholicism in Europe*; Emiel Lamberts (ed.), *Christian Democracy in the European Union (1945–1995)*, Leuven 1997.

59 Wilhelm Damberg/Patrick Pasture, ›Restoration and Erosion of Pillarized Catholicism in Western Europe‹, in: Leo Kenis/Jaak Billiet/Patrick Pasture (eds.), *The Transformation of Christian Churches in Europe*, forthcoming.

60 Even if overlaps and transgressions existed and both men and women had functions in both the public and private spheres, expectations for men and women diverged considerably.

61 The following assessment of pillarization is largely based on Staf Hellemans' magisterial study: *Strijd om de moderniteit*, and *Hellemans, Zuilen en verzuiling in Europa*.

62 Seymour Martin Lipset/Stein Rokkan, *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction*, in: Peter Mair (ed.), *The West European Party System*, Oxford 1990, pp. 91–138; Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, New Haven, CT 1977.

63 Helmut Walser Smith/Chris Clark, ›The Fate of Nathan‹, in: Walser Smith, *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany*, pp. 3–29, esp. p. 10. Cf. Christopher Clark/Wolfram Kaiser, *Introduction. The European Culture Wars*, in: *idem*, *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, pp. 1–10, here: p. 6.

always succeed at though).<sup>64</sup> Theologians and philosophers such as Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier in France emphasized the existence of two ›spheres‹.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the concepts of pillarization and *milieu* remain useful metaphors to describe a reality many Europeans somehow experienced. Pervasive cultural systems existed also outside so-called ›pillarized‹ countries. Britain as well as Scandinavia knew similar closed sub-cultures, even if they lacked the political dimension.<sup>66</sup> Incidentally, in Portugal and Spain a rousing but also suffocating Catholicism backed up the authoritarian regimes of Salazar and Franco, though this association also fuelled the profound divisions of the Iberian Peninsula, as was the case with the Orthodox Church in Greece. Governments behind the ›iron curtain‹ tried similarly, not always as successfully, to impose a closed common culture after 1947, incidentally banning religion from the public space. Religion strongly survived semi-publicly in Poland, but had far more difficulties in most countries where it was confined to a semi-clandestine existence in the private sphere of individual homes. In the former Yugoslavia, religion would only become a strong dimension of national and political identities after the death of Tito in 1980, and particularly after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989. The ›awakening‹ of religious and ethnic identities had catastrophic consequences. These are often seen as an illustration of the destructive power of both religion and ethnicity, but one cannot help but wonder whether the fact that these were suppressed and somehow cut off from the main developments of the mainline churches explains their violent character.<sup>67</sup>

### III. CONTOURS OF A CRISIS

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that relatively stable world, with religion as a major dimension of life, has all but vanished. Striking and revealing of the depth of the change is that when interviewed today, people find it hard to understand their proper behaviour and even more difficult, in their own eyes, to explain it to contemporary investigators: »That's the way things went, by then« is the common phrase ordinary people mostly use to express that bewilderment. Many intellectuals since the 1960s bitterly distance themselves from that period, when the faithful appeared as meek sheep, vehemently criticizing the suppressive Church. Somehow, as Peter van Rooden demonstrated in a brilliant assessment of the Dutch situation, ›the sixties‹ – a mere concept rather than a chronological indication, the exact dividing line situated somewhere between 1958 and the mid 1970s – constitute a barrier in the memory and recollection of the past, no longer intelligible.<sup>68</sup> Van Rooden's observations no doubt equally apply to other countries as well, though further study is needed to establish which and to what extent. According to some scholars, the crisis of memory itself is both the cause and the best expression of what actually

64 *Patrick Pasture*, Modèles internationaux d'action ouvrière catholique, in: *Bruno Duriez/Étienne Fouilloux/Alain-René Michel* et al. (eds.), *Chrétiens et ouvriers en France 1937–1970*, Paris 2001, pp. 245–257.

65 For a recent synthesis see *Gerd-Rainer Horn*, *Western European Liberation Theology 1924–1959. The First Wave*, Oxford 2008.

66 *Hellemans*, *Zuilen en verzuiling*.

67 An answer to that question extends the scope of this article. I will attempt to do so elsewhere.

68 *Peter Van Rooden*, Oral history en het vreemde sterven van het Nederlands christendom, in: *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 119, 2004, pp. 524–551 (a rough English translation is to be found at the author's website, URL: <[http://www.xs4all.nl/~pvrooden/Peter/publicaties/oral%20history.htm#\\_ftnref11](http://www.xs4all.nl/~pvrooden/Peter/publicaties/oral%20history.htm#_ftnref11)> [9.6.2009]). On the chronology of the 1960s see esp. *Hugh McLeod*, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, Oxford 2007; *idem*, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 3, 2005, pp. 205–230.

happened. The French sociologist of religion Danièle Hervieu-Léger redefined religion as a chain of memory: Its essence was indeed the transmission of traditions and beliefs that were handed over from generation to generation, through education in schools and families.<sup>69</sup> The destruction of the countryside and break up of the traditional family structure, as a result of increased affluence and modern communications, explains the collective amnesia European societies characterizes since the 1960s. It leads to what she calls the »exculturation« of Catholicism,<sup>70</sup> but obviously this sense of amnesia and exculturation not only affects religious memories, but all *Weltanschauungen* and the culture as a whole. It will, in Hervieu-Léger's logic, inevitably affect the former »East« European countries as well, as is indeed already effectively happening, even in Poland. Hence individuals stop participating in religious rites, thus provoking the continuing decline of church participation. It would also explain why religious renewal appears so difficult in Europe.

The decline of religious participation is no doubt the most obvious feature of the religious crisis. Church attendance, which, at least for the Catholic Church, became the key indicator of Christian life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>71</sup> has declined almost everywhere since somewhere in the fifties/early sixties (though much less in Southern Europe), notwithstanding considerable variations in participation levels between different countries.<sup>72</sup> To what extent the decline since the sixties constitutes an acceleration of a long term trend remains difficult to grasp, because long term data for most countries are few and far between, and difficult to interpret. Callum Brown, with regard to Britain, highlighted particularly the declining numbers of young women, but data for other countries, as far as they give separate figures for men and women, are less clear.<sup>73</sup> Changes in class composition may also have had a determining impact on church participation. The de-Christianization of the working class constitutes a true mantra during the whole modern period, repeated with new vigour in the aftermath of World War II and again in the 1960s, though the apostolic and even political motives of these complaints are obvious. One may actually wonder if large parts of the industrial working class were ever effectively Christianized. Moreover, it may be that workers did abstain from institutional integration within a church often hostile to their aspirations and culture, but continued other, less institutionalized forms of religiosity, while still often appealing to the churches for »rites of passage«.<sup>74</sup> Also church affiliation, another indicator particularly in Protestant and pluralistic countries, has shown a similar downward trend and an increase in disaffiliation since the 1950s, while at the same time non-believers and atheists manifested themselves clearly without

69 Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *La religion pour mémoire*, Paris 1993 (Religion as a Chain of Memory, New Brunswick 2000).

70 Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Catholicisme, la fin d'un monde*, Paris 2002, pp. 96 f., 268, 277, 285 f. and 312 f.; Yves Lambert, *Dieu change en Bretagne. La religion à Limerzel de 1900 à nos jours*, Paris 1985.

71 Van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*, pp. 35–49.

72 Andrew M. Greeley, *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium: A Sociological Profile*, New Brunswick, NJ 2004; McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe*.

73 Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain. Understanding Secularisation 1800–2000*, London 2001. Cf. Karel Dobbelaere/Jaak Billiet, *Late 20th Century Trends in Catholic Religiousness: Belgium Compared with Western and Central European Nations*, in: *Kenis/Billiet/Pasture, The Transformation of Christian Churches in Europe*, forthcoming; McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*; Andrew M. Greeley, *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium: A Sociological Profile*, New Brunswick, NJ 2004; McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe*.

74 Jan De Maeyer, *The Formation of a Christian Workers' Culture in Pillarized Societies: Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, c. 1850–1950*, in: *Heerma van Voss/Pasture/De Maeyer, Between Cross and Class*, pp. 81–102. De Maeyer incidentally observes that the Catholic Church actually managed to win back part of the working class in the 19th century (p. 85).

retinue. Vocations also dried up, starting soon after the war, among men as well as among women.<sup>75</sup> Sociologists have developed tools to measure belief in key concepts of Christianity, what particularly in the Scandinavian countries, where church attendance had already been quite low since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, became a sign of secularization or, rather, de-Christianization.<sup>76</sup>

Each of these criteria can be discussed by pointing at the changed meaning of practices as well as words.<sup>77</sup> No doubt indeed that going to mass any given Sunday in a highly secularized context such as Berlin or Brussels has a totally different meaning as the same behaviour fifty years ago in a remote village in Brittany, just as saying that believing in the resurrection of the body has a different meaning. Concluding that the decline in participation rates and affiliation could be interpreted differently than as signs of de-Christianization, however, would be nonsense. Nevertheless, decline and de-Christianization do not tell the whole story, even if these images dominate the picture in Europe. A view on the United States not only reveals a quite different reality there, but points at different ways of interpretation and may help to uncover other dimensions of religious change. Many authors noticed a ›spiritual‹ awakening in the United States along with a growth of evangelical and conservative churches and denominations in the 1960s and an increased political impact of the evangelical right since the 1980s.<sup>78</sup> In Europe, conservative and evangelical reactions to the evolution of the mainline churches were formed, such as the *Bekennnisbewegung* in Germany<sup>79</sup>, but these remained comparatively marginal at least until the 1990s when, for example in the Netherlands, the evangelicals experienced a relative breakthrough.<sup>80</sup> This should raise some important questions with regard to this very different situation between Europe and the United States. Most scholars, however, – based on sociological and philosophical assumptions that consider ›secularization‹ the inevitable corollary to modernization – have rather tried to ignore or downplay the importance of the American developments or focused on the inverse question, why America was so different from Europe. Hence their interest in American ›civil religion‹, which they saw as a ›religion without religion‹ and thus a form of secularization.<sup>81</sup>

75 Sweden constitutes an exception to the rule: *Eva M. Hamberg*, Christendom in Decline. The Swedish Case, in: *Hugh McLeod/Werner Ustorf* (eds.), *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 47–62.

76 *Greeley*, Religion in Europe; *Davie*, A Memory Mutates, Oxford 2000; *Riis*, Patterns of Secularization in Scandinavia. Updated data in *Detlev Pollack*, Religion und Moderne: Zur Gegenwart der Säkularisierung in Europa, in: *Graff/Große Kracht*, Religion und Gesellschaft, pp. 73–104.

77 Cf. *Callum G. Brown*, The Death of Christian Britain. Understanding Secularisation 1800–2000, London 2001.

78 The literature is sheer endless. See *Patrick Pasture*, Christendom since the Sixties: Between the Secular City and the Age of Aquarius, in: *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 97, 2004, pp. 82–117, for an overview.

79 *Siegfried Hermle*, Die Evangelikalen als Gegenbewegung, in: *Siegfried Hermle/Claudia Lepp/Harry Oelke* (eds.), *Umbrüche. Der deutsche Protestantismus und die sozialen Bewegungen in den 1960er und 70er Jahren*, Göttingen 2007, pp. 324–351; *Ursula Krey*, ›Der Bruch mit der Gehorsamstradition‹. Die 68er Bewegung und der gesellschaftliche Wandel, in: *Bernd Hey/Volkmar Wittmütz* (eds.), *1968 und die Kirchen*, Bielefeld 2008, pp. 13–34, here: pp. 22 f.

80 *Pieter R. Boersema*, The Evangelical Movement in the Netherlands. New Wine in Old Wine-skins?, in: *Erik Sengers* (ed.), *The Dutch and Their Gods. Secularization and Transformation of Religion in the Netherlands since 1950*, Hilversum 2005, pp. 163–179.

81 E. g. *Knippenberg*, Europäische Religionsgeschichte. Recently some studies initiated a different approach: *Hartmut Lehmann*, The Christianization of America and the De-Christianization of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and: Zwischen Dechristianisierung und Rechristianisierung. Fragen und Anmerkungen zur Bedeutung des Christentums in Europa und in Nordamerika im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, in: *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 11, 1998, pp. 9–20 and 156–168;

Increasingly, however, it has dawned that Europe may be the exception rather than the rule.<sup>82</sup> Realizing this makes the question about why Europe is so different all the more pertinent as America strongly permeated Europe's popular culture in other domains in the post-war period.<sup>83</sup> So why then did the ›Fourth Great Awakening‹ (Robert Fogel) not, or at least only to a limited extent, cross the channel, while American charismatic Christianity effectively make headway in Latin America, Asia and Africa?<sup>84</sup> The question is all the more intriguing as in the wake of the Cold War a religious offensive was set that aimed at converting Europeans to American views on the role of religion in society, among which existed a more radical separation between church and state as a condition for religious renewal.<sup>85</sup> Billy Graham, for example, attracted millions in football stadiums in Britain, Scandinavia and the Netherlands in the early 1950s, but apparently his impact evaporated as soon as he had lifted his feet from European soil.<sup>86</sup> Notwithstanding sup-

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*Hartmut Lehmann*, The Role of Religion in Germany and America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, in: *Elisabeth Glaser/Hermann Wellenreuther* (eds.), *Bridging the Atlantic. The Question of American Exceptionalism in Perspective*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 69–82; *Pasture*, *Christendom since the Sixties*; *Wilhelm Damberg/Antonius Liedhegener* (eds.), *Katholiken in den USA und Deutschland. Kirche, Gesellschaft und Politik*, Münster 2006; *Hartmut Lehmann* (ed.), *Transatlantische Religionsgeschichte im 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2006; *Peter L. Berger/Grace Davie/Effie Fokas*, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations*, Aldershot 2008; *Benjamin Ziemann*, *Sozialgeschichte der Religion. Von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart*, Frankfurt/New York 2009; *Mark E. Ruff*, *Das Gespenst der Amerikanisierung: Die deutschen Kirchen und die USA*, in: *Detlef Junker/Phillipp Gassert/Wilfried Mausbach* u. a. (eds.), *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges*, Bd. 1: 1945–1968, München 2001, pp. 823–832.

- 82 *Peter L. Berger* (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Washington/Grand Rapids 1999; *Grace Davie*, *Europe. The Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith in the Modern World*, London 2002.
- 83 On the American influence see *Kate Delaney/Ruud Janssens* (eds.), *Over (T)here: Transatlantic Essays in Honor of Rob Kroes*, Amsterdam 2008; *Alexander Stephan* (ed.), *The Americanization of Europe. Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*, New York 2006; *Chantal Metzger/Hartmut Kaelble* (eds.), *Deutschland – Frankreich – Nordamerika. Transfer, Imaginationen, Beziehungen*, München 2006; *R. Laurence Moore/Maurizio Vaudagna* (eds.), *The American Century in Europe*, Ithaca/London 2003; *Robert W. Rydell/Rob Kroes* (eds.), *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869–1922*, Chicago 2005; *Victoria de Grazia*, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe*, Cambridge, MA 2005; *Reinhold Wagnleitner*, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, Chapel Hill, NC 2007; *Detlef Junker*, *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War 1945–1990*, Cambridge 2004; *Anselm Doering-Manteuffel*, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1999; *Rob Kroes*, *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture*, Urbana / Chicago 1996; *Emily Rosenberg*, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion 1890–1945*, New York 1982; *Carl Guarneri*, *America in the World: United States History in Global Context*, New York 2007.
- 84 *Philip Jenkins*, *The next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Oxford 2007. Pentecostalism is perhaps the best example, see *David Martin*, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, London 2001.
- 85 *R. Laurence Moore*, American Religion as Cultural Imperialism, in: *idem/Vaudagna*, *The American Century in Europe*, pp. 151–170. For the meaning of religion in American post-war foreign policy see *William Inboden*, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945–1960*, Cambridge 2008.
- 86 *Laurence Moore*, American Religion as Cultural Imperialism. See for Britain particularly *Callum Brown*, *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain*, London 2006, pp. 188–202, for the Netherlands *Boersema*, *The Evangelical Movement in the Netherlands*, pp. 163–179, here: p. 165. Boersema observes some lasting influence of Graham on the formation of the Dutch evangelical movement though.

port from the highest Church authorities and Catholic charismatic opinion leaders, even the Catholic charismatic movement hardly managed to get a foothold in most of Catholic Europe in the 1970s–1980s–1990s (with the possible exception of Italy and Spain though). Protestant Evangelical renewal movements did get a foothold in the UK, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands, as well as with some immigrant groups elsewhere in the 1980s and ‘90s, but it seems more a domestic development and even if there must have been contacts with the United States, their extent and impact seem rather limited. Apart from the Catholic Charismatic movement – which originated in the United States – and the particular issue of the impact of the American episcopacy and theology on the Roman Catholic second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church was even less influenced.<sup>87</sup> Grace Davie referred to the rigidities of the (especially continental) European media and the institutional links of the mainline churches with political regimes, which leave little room for religious renewal, to explain the lack of ›Americanization‹.<sup>88</sup> This situation seems to have changed in the 1990s, with the liberalization of the media and an increased acceptance of the autonomy of the secular by European churches. Then also Christian charismatic and healing practices were introduced into Europe, often by African migrants.<sup>89</sup> How important these are remains still hard to evaluate though.

#### IV. PLURALIZATION, DESINSTITUTIONALIZATION AND BLURRING BOUNDARIES

In some respects though, the developments in Europe since the 1950s do mirror what happened across the Atlantic. The most obvious feature of the changed religious landscape is the increased pluralism, the result of on the one hand new religious expressions and on the other hand of immigration, as migrants bring with them their own religious traditions – that will not, however, remain unchanged: The question of the ›Europeanization of Islam‹ for example became a major theme in the literature on Muslim minorities in Europe, as the Americanization of immigrant religions is a major theme in the scholarly literature on American immigration.<sup>90</sup>

The sometimes peculiar religious practices of migrant Catholic Italians, Spaniards and Poles in North-Western Europe initially set them apart, but since the 1960s these distinctions slowly evaporated. Apart from Catholics and some Buddhists – South-East Asian boat refugees as well as Tibetans and Nepalese for example –, Hindus and Sikhs (quite important in the UK), by and large most immigrants in post-war Europe were Muslims, albeit from different national and ethnic backgrounds: Turkish and Kurdish in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands; North-African in the same countries plus Spain and France; South-East Asian in the Netherlands (Indonesia) and South Asian in the UK, to the point that migrant and Muslim had become almost synonymous since the 1960s. In further contrast to North America (where Moslems constitute only a small and decreasing percentage of all migrants) Europeans continue to have difficulties in thinking of these im-

87 *Simon Coleman*, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity*, Cambridge 2007; *Árpád von Klimó*, *Katholizismus und Popkultur. Beatmessen in Italien und Ungarn in den 1960er Jahren*, in: *Graf/Große Kracht*, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, pp. 353–374.

88 *Davie*, *Religion in Modern Europe*, esp. pp. 98–114 (and *passim*). See more extensively *Berger/Davie/Fokas*, *Religious America, Secular Europe?*.

89 *Jenkins*, *God’s Continent*, pp. 93–102.

90 *Tibi*, *Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe*; on the US see *Catherine L. Albanese*, *Exchanging Selves, Exchanging Souls: Contact, Combination and American Religious History*, in: *Thomas A. Tweed* (ed.), *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, Berkeley/Los Angeles etc. 1997, pp. 200–226; *Jenna Weissman Joselit*, *Parade of Faiths. Immigration and American Religion*, Oxford 2001.

migrants (independently from their legal status) as belonging to the national community.<sup>91</sup> Hence, even though these constituted important and lasting minorities, they often remained isolated and rarely expanded far beyond the immigrant communities themselves. To what extent a process of ›Europeanization‹ occurs, remains subject to debate.<sup>92</sup> For the immigrants, faith remained a source of certainty and identity in an often hostile or at least not always very welcoming environment: integration was a particularly difficult process that took several generations. Whether Muslims follow the fate of the largely Catholic Mediterranean and Eastern European (Polish) immigrants in North-western Europe in the 1950s and gradually lose their distinctiveness remains difficult to predict: the negative reactions they experience are probably no more extreme than those that previous migrants had to endure in the 1950s, but paradoxically modern communication methods may today lead to isolation as they maintain a continuous link with the country of origin and the wider Islamic community. The latter may infuse the Islamic identity with Arabic influences that may be very different not only from Europe, but also from the religious culture of the migrant's country of origin.<sup>93</sup> Hence young Muslims consciously opt for a ›purified‹, ›authentic‹ form of Salafist, mostly Wahhabi Islam which distances them from the more popular religious practices of their parents.<sup>94</sup> Moreover this transnational Islam is directed by non-European institutions such as the *Diyanet Isleri Başkanlığı*, the state office for religious affairs of Turkey, and especially from Saudi Arabia, that fund mosques and send Imams to Europe, and nurture a pan-Islamic identity (›Turkish‹ in the former case of the *Diyanet*, Wahhabi in the case of Saudi Arabia) of European Muslims which impedes national integration, while also preventing the development of a ›Europeanized‹ Islam that can accommodate itself with semi-secularist state systems as they actually exist in Europe.<sup>95</sup>

Religious pluralism results also from the appearance of New Religious Movements, including New Age. Notwithstanding a great deal of research in the 1990s, their numbers, impact and meaning are difficult to measure, but without doubt remain meagre when compared to the United States. European Values Studies hardly give them any real impact, but the surveys may not be fully adequate to grasp their real significance – something we will return to in a moment.<sup>96</sup>

91 José Casanova, Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration, pp. 65–92.

92 Konrad Pedziwiatr, Publicizing, Secularizing and Integrating Islam in Europe, in: Gabriel Motzkin/Yochi Fischer (eds.), Religion and Democracy in Contemporary Europe, London 2008, pp. 171–177; Tibi, Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe; Felice Dassetto/Brigitte Maréchal/Jorgen Nielsen (eds.), Convergences musulmanes: aspects contemporains de l'islam dans l'Europe élargie, Louvain-la-Neuve 2001; Felice Dassetto, La construction de l'islam européen. Approche socio-anthropologique, Paris 1996.

93 Tibi, Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe; Sara Silvestri, Does Islam Challenge European Identity?, in: Lucia Faltin/Melanie Wright (eds.), The Religious Roots of Contemporary European Identity, London/New York 2007, pp. 14–28.

94 See in general Dassetto/Maréchal/Nielsen, Convergences musulmanes; Dassetto, La construction de l'islam européen, as well as the fine case studies offered by Nadia Fadil, Submitting to God, Submitting to the Self. Secular and Religious Trajectories of Second Generation Maghrebi in Belgium, unpublished PhD in Sociology, KU Leuven 2008, and Mieke Groeninck, Belang van islamitische rituelen, waarden en gebruiken door drie generaties Marokkaanse vrouwen in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek: een casestudie, unpublished Masterthesis in History, KU Leuven 2009.

95 Tibi, Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe; Klausen, The Islamic Challenge. See also Hastings, The Construction of Nationhood.

96 A state of the art in Jean-François Mayer, New Approaches to the Study of New Religions in North America and Europe, in: Peter Antes/Armin W. Geertz/Randi R. Warne (eds.), New Approaches to the Study of Religion, vol. 1: Regional, Critical and Historical Approaches, Berlin/New York 2008, pp. 408–436.

The first thing that strikes the eye with regard to changes in the religious landscape, however, remains no doubt the crisis that struck the Catholic Church in particular in the 1960s. This crisis was not only expressed in the general decline of participation, but also in the increasing dissidence not only of a few leftist intellectuals, but also from the broader public, in the clerical exodus – with considerable numbers of clerics throwing off the cowl, sometimes quite publicly, sometimes organizing themselves in church-critical pressure groups (!) –, as well as in a certain ›de-clericalization‹. This de-clericalization reversed a more than a century old process of *Verkirklichung*<sup>97</sup>, and expressed itself firstly in the ›democratization‹ of the Catholic Church<sup>98</sup>, offering local episcopacies a greater voice in the Church and recognizing the role of the laity. It was particularly visible in the dress of Catholic clergy, who in many countries – though not everywhere and not always to the same extent – abandoned the cassock and the clerical collar, which emphasized its distinctive character. However, as is well known, the basic contours of clerical power did not fundamentally change, and already with Paul VI (1963–1978) the democratizing trend was halted and a ›backlash‹ initiated. That was also the case with regard to the position of women. In some respects, the tension between reformers and conservatives, especially in Germany and the Netherlands, were like a ›culture war‹ fought in the media. Though most attention went to the ›progressives‹ and the general impression was that the Church did not fulfil the expectations of renewal and ›aggiornamento‹, one can doubt if the contemporary media uncovered the underlying dynamics. They certainly did not reveal the divergence between the political activists and the Catholic Charismatics – innovative in spirituality and rituality but conservative in theology and politically moderate – with the latter finally gaining the upper hand in the 1980s.<sup>99</sup> Remarkably only a small group of extreme conservatives provoked a real schism – the Society of St. Pius X of the French Archbishop Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre in 1988. Even if there was much sympathy for the Charismatics, the Catholic hierarchy seems to have been unable to find an answer to the divergent demands of the (ever diminishing) faithful in Europe, losing their moral authority and legitimacy: their warnings and prohibitions were mostly ignored by the flock.<sup>100</sup> However, notwithstanding their reserves, most ordinary people still seem to turn to the church to mark the major transitions of life. Path-dependency, in particular the continuing state support in most countries and their role in organizing the ›rites of passage‹, largely explains why mainline churches nevertheless continued to play a major role on the ›spiritual marketplace‹, and alternative forms of spirituality, either collective or individual, remain rather marginal.<sup>101</sup> Distancing themselves from the hierarchy and refusing the church

97 *Franz-Xaver Kaufmann*, *Kirche begreifen: Analysen und Thesen zur gesellschaftlichen Verfassung des Christentums*, Freiburg 1979, and *Heinz Hürlen*, *Zukunftsperspektiven kirchlicher Zeitgeschichtsforschung*, in: *Ulrich von Hehl/Konrad Repgen* (eds.), *Der deutschen Katholizismus in der zeitgeschichtlichen Forschung*, Mainz 1988, pp. 97–116, esp. pp. 110 ff.

98 This democratization is part of what Danièle Hervieu-Léger called the ›expansion of democratic culture outside the political sphere‹ typical for the late 1960s, which also affects families, which become ›relational‹ instead of hierarchical. *Hervieu-Léger*, *La religion dans la constitution du lien social européen*, p. 7.

99 *Hugh McLeod*, *European Religion in the 1960s*, in: *Hermle/Lepp/Oelke*, *Umbrüche*, pp. 23–50; *Pasture*, *Christendom since the Sixties*.

100 On this subject see esp. *Denis Pelletier*, *La crise catholique. Religion, société, politique*, Paris 2002.

101 See *Davie*, *A Memory Mutates*, esp. on ›vicarious religion‹, and different essays in *Gerald Parsons* (ed.), *The Growth of Religious Diversity: Britain from 1945*, London 1994, as well as *Ziemann*, *Religion and the Search for Meaning*, for Germany.

a ›total‹ engagement, ›believers‹ turn into consumers of faith rather than church members, let alone devotees.<sup>102</sup>

A second major development, and a remarkable similarity with the American case, is the blurring of the traditional denominational distinctions, and even between religious and secular movements. Firstly, the differences between the denominations decrease leading on the one hand to a rapprochement, whilst on the other hand to the creation of new alignments. This led to a general ›deconfessionalization‹, a loosening of the impact of confessional differences on society. This development was anticipated by most laics, however, as after World War II they reacted against confessional divisions. Increasingly Catholics and Protestants joined forces in interdenominational ›Christian Democratic‹ parties and social movements. Protestant and Catholic parties collaborated and in the Netherlands merged in 1980, following the example of the German CDU.<sup>103</sup> Even more relevant for the deep social transformation that was happening, is the increasing parallelism in world-views, discourses, practices and even public appearances between churches and secular movements. Boundaries with the secular evaporated as insights from sciences penetrated the religious institutions, especially when these engaged in political activities or in activities such as counselling, psychotherapy and healing.<sup>104</sup> Of course religions in past times had also been involved in extra-curriculum activities outside of the religious sphere – also in politics and science –, but mainly because the religious sphere was defined as far more encompassing, which means that in the eyes of for example the Catholic Church, involvement in politics or science did not imply a transgression of boundaries. The contemporary paradox is that on the one hand religion was more narrowly defined than ever, focusing on the ›spiritual‹ dimension as sole core of faith, while on the other hand the religious-spiritual self consciously transgressed its self-imposed boundaries.<sup>105</sup> While churches, confessional socio-political associations and Christian Democratic parties increasingly parted ways, the churches again raised their voice with regard to ethics, both individual and social, and in the 1980s in politics. Paradoxically then, what the Catholic Church lost in moral authority with regard to sexuality, it gained with regard to social ethics.<sup>106</sup>

The interest of the churches in social issues made them move towards secular movements, even socialists, once their mortal enemy. Hence; Socialist and Christian militants and social organizations found themselves shoulder to shoulder, if not hand in hand: in the Netherlands for example, Socialist and Catholic trade unions merged in 1977. This evolution had been in preparation since the immediate post-war years (and had antecedents in the 1920s), when Left Catholics strived towards an ›open‹ Christendom, but broke through with Political and Liberation Theology in the sixties.<sup>107</sup> Remarkably though,

102 *Hellemans*, Transformation der Religion; *Benjamin Ziemann*, Zwischen sozialer Bewegung und Dienstleistung am Individuum. Katholiken und katholische Kirche im therapeutischen Jahrzehnt, in: *AfS* 44, 2004, pp. 357–393.

103 See the overviews in *Lamberts*, Christian Democracy in the European Union, and *Gehler/Kaiser*, Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945.

104 *Benjamin Ziemann*, The Gospel of Psychology: Therapeutic Concepts and the Scientification of Pastoral Care in the West German Catholic Church 1950–1980, in: *Central European History* 39, 2006, pp. 79–106.

105 On the changed meaning of religion see *Talal Asad*, Genealogies of Religion. Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam, Baltimore/London 1993.

106 *Pelletier*, La crise catholique; *Silvio Ferrari*, State Regulation of Religion in the European Democracies, in: *Motzkin/Fischer*, Religion and Democracy in Contemporary Europe, pp. 103–112.

107 *Horn*, Western European Liberation Theology; *Gerd-Rainer Horn/Emmanuel Gerard* (eds.), Left Catholicism 1943–1955. Catholics and Society in Western Europe at the Point of Liberation, Leuven 2001.

also in Europe conservatives and employers proved more effective and general in this kind of operation than advocates of ›progressive‹ alliances, even if these dominated the media.

The blurring of boundaries also affected the denominations themselves. Formal ecumenism is just one, and in my view, only minor feature of it. The rapprochement in outlook and even theology between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism goes much further. That the Catholic Church has especially, since the Second Vatican Council, shown a remarkable convergence with Protestantism, comes to the fore in the predilection for the Word of God and the Bible and in its more austere rituals, architecture and style. Protestant churches also lost their distinctiveness, even traditionally ›conservative‹ churches such as the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (not to be mistaken for the main Protestant denomination the Dutch Reformed Church).<sup>108</sup> At grassroots level, but also among clergy, theologians of different confessional background became quite popular among ›progressive‹ Christians base-groups, such as the Catholics Romano Guardini, Edward Schillebeeckx and Hans Urs von Balthasar, the Protestants Robert Bultmann, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and above all the Anglican bishop John A. T. Robinson (*Honest to God*, 1963), followed by the generation of ›God is death‹ theologians.<sup>109</sup> Also collective expressions of piety, such as pilgrimages, already became increasingly interdenominational in the late 1960s.<sup>110</sup> The opening of borders also comes to the fore in what has been called the ›Easternization of the West‹, referring to the penetration of religious traditions originating from South and East Asia in Europe and, especially, the US. This ›Easternization‹ not only progressed through the appearance of Hinduism and especially Buddhism, still quite limited in Europe, but also deeply influenced New Age-movements as well as some mainline Christian denominations.<sup>111</sup> Eastern meditation practices for example have become quite common among Catholic men and women.

That observation brings me to a next aspect of the blurring boundaries. It is indeed an indication that for individuals the traditional socio-religious boundaries lose their meaning of distinction. Name giving illustrates this process very well, such as the popularity of traditionally Jewish first names among Catholics since the 1960s. Sometimes parents value such names for their ›biblical‹ character, sometimes they are totally unaware of their significance, which illustrates both the blurring of boundaries as the underlying collective amnesia. Likewise, mixed marriages constitute less and less a problem. Moreover, in religiously mixed areas – though far less anywhere in Europe than in the United States – interdenominational practice becomes less and less an issue, as the faithful moved from one denomination to another, not only, as a British Baptist noted in 1982<sup>112</sup>, when one

108 Gerard Dekker, *De stille revolutie. De ontwikkeling van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland tussen 1950 en 1990*, Kampen 1992.

109 McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*; *Pasture*, *Christendom since the Sixties*; Bart Latré, *Strijd en inkeer. Geschiedenis van de kerk- en maatschappijkritische beweging in Vlaanderen (1958–1990)*, unpublished PhD thesis in History, KU Leuven 2009, offers an interesting case study of progressive Catholics and their influence in Flanders (Belgium).

110 Ziemann, *Religion and the Search for Meaning*.

111 Colin Campbell, *The Easternization of the West: A Thematic Account of Cultural Change in the Modern Era*, Boulder/New York 2007; *idem*, *The Easternization of the West*, in: *Jamie Cresswell/Bryan Wilson* (eds.), *New Religious Movements: Challenge and Response*, London 1999, pp. 35–48; *Graf/Große Kracht*, *Einleitung*, p. 29. On the ›Easternization‹ thesis see the pertinent remarks of *Malcolm Hamilton*, *The Easternisation Thesis: Critical Reflections*, in: *Religion* 32, 2002 July, pp. 243–258.

112 L. G. Champion in *Keith W. Clements* (ed.), *Baptists in the Twentieth Century*, London 1983 (referred to in *Keith Robbins*, *England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales: The Christian Church 1900–2000*, Oxford 2008, pp. 438–441).

changed one's place of dwelling, but also depending on the personality of the preacher and the mood of the day. As participation declines, this practice is most revealing as it concerns the most engaged. The success amongst Catholic youth in the ecumenical centre in Taizé offers a case in point: how many of the devout Catholic boys and girls that attend the ecumenical initiative would ever bother that it is in origin a protestant monastery? Hence people ›pick and choose‹ from what is offered on the religious market. This cannot be dissociated from the remarkable decline of religious knowledge (a process that I call declension, referring to a concept used in American sociological literature) attested by sociological research, but from a historical perspective can also be viewed as a (indeed radical) transformation of the way of believing – which for Karel Dobbelaere is a sign of secularization anyhow.<sup>113</sup> However, religious symbols also find their way into purely secular applications, as was the case in pop culture which ›shamelessly‹ appropriated religious symbols for commercial ends.<sup>114</sup> All these phenomena once again point at the remarkable ›amnesia‹ of modern times, by which the ancient religious concepts lost their symbolic significance and meaning and are testimony to the blurring of the boundaries between the secular and the religious, between the secular and the sacred itself. Hence the deity is perceived less as the ›total other‹, yet alone the almighty, but rather as a close friend and familiar figure with whom one communicates at any given moment – especially developed in New Age-like religious expressions where the boundaries between the supernatural and the natural world evaporate, up to the point of becoming an up-to-day version of pantheism.

The reduced group consciousness underlying this development also underpins one of the main, though perhaps least acknowledged dimensions of the religious transformation of mainline churches, in particular the Catholic Church, which is the end of the missionary ideal. In the wake of the decolonization process – though it should not simply be equated with it – major churches abandoned their missionary ideal of conversion, disparagingly called ›saving souls‹. How blurring boundaries actually underlie the de-›missionization‹ is illustrated, paradoxically, by the Catholic home missionary apostolate of the late 1940s in France, which emphasized the task of the Catholic militant to transgress the boundaries of Christendom and go into the secular world, to act as yeast in the dough. While initially conversion still was the objective, it soon proved impossible to maintain it in practice, as it was incompatible with the underlying symbolical perspective of openness and transgression – what I called elsewhere the ›paradox of the apostolate‹.<sup>115</sup> In the 1960s, the Catholic Church all but abandoned the missionary objective: the stream of devoted missionaries dried up – instead came development aid workers. To be sure these to some extent and viewed from a certain perspective continued the work of the missionaries as propagators of Western/European ideologies and practices. But the point is that they no longer aimed at converting. Hence, no attempt was made either to win over to Christianity the millions of non-Christian migrants that wandered into European societies – while less than a decade earlier, Christian missionaries had swarmed abroad to convert the ›pagan‹

113 Karel Dobbelaere/Wolfgang Jagodzinski, Religious Cognitions and Beliefs, in: *Jan van Deth/Elinor Scarbrough* (eds.), *Beliefs in Government*, vol. 4: The Impact of Values, Oxford 1995, pp. 197–217; Karel Dobbelaere, Towards an Integrated Perspective of the Processes Related to the Descriptive Concept of Secularization, in: *Sociology of Religion* 60, 1999 Autumn, pp. 229–247.

114 Lynn Schofield Clark, Introduction: Identity, Belonging, and Religious Lifestyle Branding (Fashion Bibles, Bhangra Parties, and Muslim Pop), in: *eadem* (ed.), *Religion, Media, and the Marketplace*, New Brunswick 2007, pp. 1–36. See also Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, Euro-Gott im starken Plural? Einige Fragestellungen für eine europäische Religionsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 3, 2005, pp. 231–257.

115 Patrick Pasture, Modèles internationaux d'action ouvrière catholique, in: *Duriez/Fouilloux/Michel et al.*, *Chrétiens et ouvriers en France*, pp. 245–257; Gerard/Horn, Left Catholicism.

Africans, Asians and Indians.<sup>116</sup> Likewise, public manifestations such as pilgrimages, *Kirchentage*, and celebrations no longer served to display a pompous and triumphant church heading towards a bright future, but humble manifestations of a seeking community, in which dialogue and openness prevailed.<sup>117</sup>

#### V. FROM ›LIQUID RELIGION‹ TO A NEW STABILITY IN EUROPE?

It is clear that by the 1980s the European religious landscape was totally transformed. CC-CT shows that the symbolic boundaries had especially dissipated – between denominations, but even between the sacred and the secular – which contributed greatly to the pluralization of European society, but that there also was a crisis of ›vertical‹ (grid) relations, expressed in all sorts of institutional disaffiliation affecting not only ordinary faithful, but also clergy. The interconnected nature and intensity of the changes incidentally explain to a large extent the strong media focus on the crisis.<sup>118</sup> This change corresponds to a wider social transformation, of which in particular the end of the Cold War needs to be emphasized, leading to the reshuffle of the East-West divide on the continent, and a new phase of globalization, which fundamentally challenged European certainties. Both its dominant position in the world economy and its alleged superiority of values are increasingly questioned, not the least by a militant Islam.

The evolution towards ›low grid/low group‹ situations in some Western European countries is essentially a form of individualization. In the first place individuals lose their sources of social attachment, which also means that they are disconnected from the sources of collective identity and memory and of the socializing religious institutions that sustain them. But secondly, this implies that individuals themselves also become ›responsible‹ for their religious beliefs, that they became actors rather than followers. Hence religious identities are constructed individually, aloof from the religious institutions and contexts, with ›bricolage‹, religious patchwork, as the typical result.<sup>119</sup> This process is prone to create new, individualized spiritualities and a strong interaction and hybridization with the ›secular‹ environment. The transformations of New Age and some Christian renewal movements in Britain, the Netherlands and Scandinavia, and in particular among some immigrant communities, indicate that also in Europe such opportunities exist. They are expressed in various esoteric and nebulous forms of spirituality and individual ritualistic practices, adequately labelled ›invisible‹ or ›liquid religion‹.<sup>120</sup> This blending of secular and sacred symbols has also been interpreted as a ›re-enchantment‹ in every-day life<sup>121</sup>,

116 *Valeer Neckebroek*, *De stomme duivelen. Het antimissionaire syndroom in de westerse kerk*, Leuven/Leusden 2002 (second edition).

117 See also *Ziemann*, *Religion and the Search for Meaning*.

118 Cf. *Benjamin Ziemann*, *Opinion Polls and the Dynamics of the Public Sphere: The Catholic Church in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1968*, in: *German History* 24, 2006, pp. 562–586.

119 See *Karel Dobbelaere*, *Assessing Secularization Theory*, in: *Antes/Geertz/Warne*, *New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, vol. 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches, Berlin/New York 2008, pp. 229–253, esp. pp. 246–249.

120 *Thomas Luckmann*, *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society*, London 1967; *De Groot*, *Three Types of Liquid Religion*. See also *Paul Heelas/Linda Woodhead/Benjamin Seel* et al., *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, London 2005; *James C. Kennedy*, *Recent Dutch Religious History and the Limits of Secularization*, in: *Sengers*, *The Dutch and their Gods*, pp. 27–42.

121 *Michael Saler*, *Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review*, in: *The American Historical Review* 111, 2006, pp. 692–716; *Joshua Landy/Michael Saler* (eds.), *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age*, Stanford 2009. Likewise *Graham*

though religious symbols can also be used in purely secular context, completely stripped from any religious connotation.<sup>122</sup> The American example illustrates most clearly that a situation of interrupted traditions does create space for more permanent spiritual renewal besides new alignments and associations, as for example Pentecostals and conservative evangelicals testify. Some Eastern religions, Buddhism in particular – individualistic, anti-dualistic, relativizing truth –, seem particularly appealing for the (post) modern Western mind.<sup>123</sup> Though compared to the United States the effect of all this may not be overstated, especially on the continent<sup>124</sup>, they all illustrate a renewed search for individual spirituality.

But at the same time this situation creates opportunities for divergent developments, among which are movements that go against the grain. Individuals can indeed choose other options and opt for stability, security and structure. They can make conscious choices for continuity, within the existing traditions, as in the case of the young ›second‹ and ›third generation‹ European Moslems referred to earlier.<sup>125</sup> Hence a low grid/low group situation actually may generate different, often opposing reactions. The increased attention in many parts of Europe for ›values‹ may indicate a more general restoration of hierarchical patterns, which also opens up space for *religiogenese* and the supernatural beyond the pantheistic religiosity associated with New Age. It seems the seekers of the 1960's apparently finally want some stability – what Staf Hellemans calls »longing without belonging«.<sup>126</sup> These developments demonstrate also the possibility of religious traditions arising that recreate strong organizations, that structure themselves hierarchically or/and isolate from the outside world, becoming more exclusive, such as ›sects‹ and fundamentalisms. Hence fundamentalism is often considered the only possible successful religious answer to the new dynamics of a global post-secular society.<sup>127</sup> But actually it is only one possible answer, incidentally for Christians as well as for people of different faiths.

If and to what extent the mainline churches in Europe correspond to these evolutions is hard to say. The avatars of the Catholic Church give some indication. The developments of the 1960s and '70s first of all generated a situation of internal fragmentation and pluralization.<sup>128</sup> Individuals who remained faithful still decided themselves what to believe and what not. They tried to influence liturgy, which became increasingly varied in practice. In particular religious services marking the ›rites of passage‹, in particular baptism, marriage, first and second communion, and even funerals, were increasingly designed by the people themselves rather than following standard packages offered by the clergy – in this respect, that also lost status.<sup>129</sup> At grassroots level, in the parishes,

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Ward, *Christ and Culture*, London 2005 (expanding on insights derived from Michel de Certeau) speaks about a ›re-mythologizing‹ of the real.

122 See above.

123 Campbell, *The Easternization of the West*.

124 Cf. Pollack, *Religion und Moderne*; Karel Dobbelaere/Jaak Billiet, *Late 20th Century Trends in Catholic Religiousness: Belgium Compared with Western and Central European Nations*, in: Kenis/Billiet/Pasture, *The Transformation of Christian Churches in Europe*, forthcoming.

125 See note 92.

126 Hellemans, *From ›Catholicism against Modernity‹*, p. 124 (the idea of »longing without belonging« was originally formulated by Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York 2001, p. 252).

127 Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, Cambridge 1997; Jocelyne Cesari, *Muslims in Western Europe after 9/11: Local and Global Components of the Integration Process*, in: Motzkin/Fischer, *Religion and Democracy in Contemporary Europe*, pp. 153–167.

128 Urs Altermatt, *Vom geschlossenen katholischen Milieu zur Pluralisierung des Katholizismus*, in: *Trajecta* 13, 2004, pp. 40–62; Pasture/Damberg, *Restoration and Erosion of Pillarized Catholicism in Western Europe*.

129 This process has been brilliantly analyzed with regard to funerals in Flanders by Jan Bleyen, *De dood in Vlaanderen. Opvattingen en praktijken na 1950*, Leuven 2005.

some initiatives at spiritual renewal were taken throughout the 1980s and 1990s, though they mostly remained associated with some local charismatic figures, often regular clergy. In Germany the Catholic Church developed some new social services, to appeal to the new ›consumption-believer‹.<sup>130</sup> It seems a general development that churches continue to offer a broad variety of spiritual and religious services, not the least of which the ritual framing of rites of passage, a domain in which the churches maintain an almost monopoly (though it has started to erode).<sup>131</sup> Some churches followed the example of the United States and managed to incorporate discourses and practices on physical and mental healing into their spirituality, tapping into contemporary culture of well-being and happiness.<sup>132</sup> Notwithstanding the legitimacy crisis it experienced, the Catholic Church opened up to some forms of renewal in the 1980s, mostly charismatic in nature and rather confirming hierarchical patterns. Especially John-Paul II – to what extent this applies to his successor, Benedict XVI, remains to be seen – effectively initiated a ›conservative‹ re-orientation, which on the one hand emphasized ›traditional‹ values and power-relations, but also tried to revive a new spirituality. John Paul II did manage to mobilize thousands of young people, even if this mobilization may not have had the desired long-lasting results. Nevertheless, one should note that the conservative orientation of the Church did not only contribute to weaken its authority, but also generated support and even enthusiasm, as associations such as Opus Dei and Communione and Liberazione testify. These often proclaim to be heirs of old traditions, even if they actually live in alienation from the bodies that do continue the existing tradition. Such more exclusive movements also emphasize mission again. Here they encounter new religious movements, among which particularly evangelical and charismatic, that originate outside Europe but start proselytizing the autochthonous as well as the migrant population.<sup>133</sup> The conservative as well as evangelical and charismatic churches also appealed to new kind of militants; in the case of the Catholic Church faithful who have either rejected the new church orientation since Vatican II, only some of whom rallied behind the schismatic Mgr. Lefebvre, or reacted against its implementation.<sup>134</sup> Another, in some ways even opposed reaction is the increasing demand for ›authenticity‹ and personal engagement demanded by churches, reacting against what these perceive as a consumer mentality of the flock. Hence candidates for communion or weddings need to follow Catholic ›engagement‹ courses, which no doubt deter those only interested in a solemn fest.

The end of the Cold War gave churches a stronger voice in the public domain, as before 1989 they were perceived as part of the Western camp (notwithstanding continuous

130 Benjamin Ziemann, Die katholische Kirche als religiöse Organisation. Expertenberatung und Reformdiskussion in Deutschland und den Niederlanden, 1950–1975, in: *Graf/Große Kracht, Religion und Gesellschaft*, pp. 329–352; Ziemann, Zwischen sozialer Bewegung und Dienstleistung am Individuum, pp. 357–393.

131 Staf Hellemans/Willem Putman/Jozef Wissink (eds.), Een kerk met toekomst? De katholieke kerk in Nederland 1960–2020, Zoetermeer 2003.

132 David J. Bos, ›Woe the Pastor who becomes a Psychologist!‹. The Introduction of Psychology in Hervormde Theology and Ministry, in: *Sengers, The Dutch and their Gods*, pp. 101–124; Nancy A. Schaefer, Exporting a US Gospel of Health and Wealth: An American Evangelist in Europe, in: *Hans Krabbendam/Derek Rubin* (eds.), *Religion in America. European and American Perspectives*, Amsterdam 2004, pp. 275–289; Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity*.

133 Priscilla Choi, *Crossing Boundaries: Conversion from Islam into Evangelical Christianity*, ongoing PhD research in Cultural Anthropology, Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre, KU Leuven.

134 On the new militancy in general see Callum G. Brown, *Secularization, the Growth of Militancy and the Spiritual Revolution. Religious Change and Gender Power in Britain, 1901–2001*, in: *Historical Research* 80, 2007, pp. 393–418.

efforts both in the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church claiming to represent a ›third way‹). The struggle of *Solidarność* especially gave the Catholic Church, in the figure of Karl Wojtyła – Pope John-Paul II –, the opportunity to have its voice heard strongly again throughout the West. The Church not only proved an important local political factor, but appeared a major player on the world stage, at a decisive moment when the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the then USSR imploded. Globalization as well as European enlargement hence contributed to a greater impact of the major churches and religion in general in the public domain – confirming what Klaus Eder, ignoring though the political significance churches had before the 1960s, calls the post-secular age.<sup>135</sup> Globalization, which to a large extent generated the transformation of the religious landscape in the post-war period, may hence also drive further changes towards a new, more structured and perhaps even more stable religious landscape – which no doubt would look quite different again compared to the previous one, but in which some continuities will be recognizable.

The developments described here, admittedly in quite general terms, transgress national and denominational boundaries. Religious movements, either so-called ›New Age‹, old religions coming from elsewhere, or ›traditionalist‹, usually organize at a transnational scale and operate across borders. That may indeed lead to an increased convergence within Europe – and beyond. The borders between Catholic and Protestant countries in the ›central belt‹ of Europe especially evaporate quickly, as well as between East and West. The transformation of the socio-religious landscape seems to take very similar forms: falling integration in mainline churches among large strata of the population; the continuing relevance of mainline churches as markers of the great transitions in life; the emergence of some new, hybrid and highly individualistic forms of spirituality which are neither traditionally ›religious‹, nor purely secular<sup>136</sup>; sometimes the remarkable success of traditionalist religious expressions, offering perhaps security and shelter in a changing world.<sup>137</sup> The similarities are reflected in social patterns such as family composition and attitudes towards premarital sex as well.<sup>138</sup> Likewise, state-church relations, which are being restated overall in Europe, converge as well. The demise of the ancient ›church-of-state‹ systems has entered its final stage, as after the authoritarian systems – of which Francoist Spain and Portugal constituted the last bastions – also democratic Protestant established churches seem about to lose their established position (as in Sweden, 1999), as they appear maladjusted to the increased pluralization of *Weltanschauungen*. But the way state-church relations seem to be heading to seems rather to be towards complex relations of various forms (within one country) of conditional support for certain religious expressions, with not all faiths treated exactly the same way, not that of secularist systems, as existed in the former communist East European countries or France. The overall

135 Klaus Eder, Europäische Säkularisierung. Ein Sonderweg in die postsäkulare Gesellschaft? Eine theoretische Anmerkung, in: Berliner Journal für Soziologie 12, 2002, pp. 331–344 (Eurozine, 2006–07–07); Giancarlo Bosetti and Klaus Eder, Post-secularism: A return to the public sphere (interview), in: Eurozine, 2006–08–17 (orig. Reset 90, 2005). See also Jürgen Habermas, Secularism's Crisis of Faith: Notes on Post-Secular Society, in: New Perspectives Quarterly 25, 2008, pp. 17–29. On the impact of European integration and enlargement see below.

136 This raises the problem of the definition of religion. See in this respect the observations of Liliane Voyé, A Survey of Advances in the Sociology of Religion (1980–2000), in: Antes/Geertz/Warne, New Approaches to the Study of Religion, vol. 2, pp. 195–228; Hellemans, Transformation der Religion, pp. 11–35.

137 For Germany (the former GDR): Ziemann, Religion and the Search for Meaning; Detlef Pollack, Von der Volkskirche zur Minderheitskirche. Zur Entwicklung von Religiosität und Kirchlichkeit in der DDR, in: Hartmut Kaelble/Jürgen Kocka/Hartmut Zwahr (eds.), Sozialgeschichte der DDR, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 271–94.

138 Cf. Hartmut Kaelble, Sozialgeschichte Europas. 1945 bis zur Gegenwart, München 2007.

convergence includes in particular traditional Protestant, Anglican and Catholic countries. If it includes also Orthodox countries is less clear, though, as Silvio Ferrari observed, it is significant that none of the post-communist countries where Orthodoxy dominates has opted to adopt the Greek state church system.<sup>139</sup> Whatever Islamic doctrine may (or not) say<sup>140</sup>, Muslims in Europe seem to do fairly well going along such systems, though one should not underestimate the power of the diverse strands in Islam that reject European secularism and strive towards an Islamification of Europe.<sup>141</sup>

## VI. BACK TO EUROPE

As can be concluded from the above, speaking about religion in a context of European *Zeitgeschichte* is more problematic than may appear at first sight, as there exist some particularly deep-rooted narratives that obscure more than they reveal. A revision is needed, and will have important consequences for the way we look at Europe in a global context. A major step in this direction is recognizing that the European path to modernity is just one, and that there exists multiple modernities.<sup>142</sup> However, European modernity itself needs a reinterpretation as well, for one as its major interpretations still do not sufficiently take into account the importance of religion, and in particular the complex interaction between religion and modernity: the modernization of religion and the contributions of the churches to the development of modern European society.<sup>143</sup>

While its Christian character has mostly been ignored by leading European intellectuals, outsiders – those colonized and migrants in particular – often associated Europe, colonialism and Christianity. In the post-war years especially, Christian churches and associations endeavoured to break this association, as the result of changed views on the role of the Christian mission and of emancipation, but perhaps also as a way to escape from the collapse of colonization. Many Christian organizations, such as the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions<sup>144</sup>, tried to break with their exclusive West-European past and emphasized their ecumenical and ›third way‹ character, but it is significant that if they succeeded at the end of the road they abandoned their explicit Christian references. However, for different reasons this dissociation proved not always very effective. The Cold War, for one, firmly situated the churches as well as the Christian Democrats in the Western camp, even if they also often increasingly tried to maintain a ›neutral‹ position.

139 Ferrari, *State Regulation of Religion in the European Democracies*, pp. 107–108.

140 Tareq Ismael/Jacqueline Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, London 1985; Jan-Erik Lane/Hamadi Redissi, *Religion and Politics: Islam and Muslim Civilisation*, Aldershot 2004; Antony Black, *The West and Islamic Religion and Political Thought in World History*, Oxford 2008. A different perspective in Michael Novak, *The Universal Hunger for Liberty: Why the Clash of Civilizations is not Inevitable*, New York 2004.

141 Tibi, *Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe*; Cesari, *Muslims in Western Europe after 9/11*; Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*.

142 For a general introduction see Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Multiple Modernities* (special issue of *Daedalus* 129, 2000); Gerhard Preyer, Introduction: The Paradigm of Multiple Modernities, in: Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Multiple Modernities – A Paradigm of Cultural and Social Evolution* (special issue of *ProtoSociology. An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 24, 2007), pp. 5–18; esp. with regard to religion in Europe Peter J. Katzenstein, *Multiple Modernities as Limits to Secular Europeanization?*, in: Byrnes/Katzenstein, *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, pp. 1–33 (and passim in this volume).

143 Hellemans, *How Modern is Religion in Modernity?*; Hellemans, *From ›Catholicism Against Modernity‹ to the Problematic ›Modernity of Catholicism‹*.

144 Patrick Pasture, *Histoire du syndicalisme chrétien international. La difficile recherche d'une troisième voie*, Paris/Montréal 1999.

However, Christian Democrats played a major role in the European integration process and strived towards (their vision of) a ›Christian Europe‹.<sup>145</sup> They accepted the separation of church and state, but that did not prevent the Catholic hierarchy from asserting its full support to European integration and, moreover, from raising its voice for or against certain political movements (mostly against socialists and communists in the 1950s, occasionally nationalists) or in moral issues in the following decades. The result was of course a continuing close association of Europe with Christendom and in particular even Roman Catholicism.

In the meantime, the process of European integration has had its own consequences. Noticing the impact of Christian Democracy on the post-war formation of the European communities and the need for a common European identity, historians already began to question the significance of Christianity for European integration in the 1990s.<sup>146</sup> The Catholic Church strongly emphasised the profoundly ›Christian‹ nature of the continent after the Fall of the Iron Curtain. The Church consecrated the European institutions to Our Lady of Fatima in June 1992, demonstrating how she identified Christian with Catholic, and organized a European pressure group. Protestants, Orthodox, or Jews reacted less than lukewarm.<sup>147</sup> German Lutherans struggled with their nationalistic past; some even opposed the formation of the FRG, in which Catholics constituted a far stronger minority than in the former German Empire, as a blow to continental European Protestantism.<sup>148</sup> They only reluctantly made the turn towards a ›Western‹ democratic system. Also Anglicans perceived European integration as a Catholic endeavour, one more reason for the British to remain less than lukewarm about the European Communities.<sup>149</sup> Ecumenism was one of the central motives that drove Protestants to unite at European level.<sup>150</sup> Hence, after some years of informal meetings most mainline Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from West and East Europe constituted an ecumenical fellowship,

145 *Chenaux*, Une Europe vaticane?; *Kaiser*, Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union; *Philpott/Shah*, Faith, Freedom and Federation; *Scott Thomas*, The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century, New York 2005, pp. 167 and 169.

146 Hence there were some particularly important conferences organized mainly in the framework of broader research programs on European identities, in particular »Identités et conscience européenne au XXe siècle (1989–1993)« and »Les identités européennes au XXe siècle. Diversités, convergences et solidarités (1993–1999)« co-ordinated by the Institut Pierre Renouvin in Paris, mainly in France and Italy in the early 1990s, e. g. on Protestantisme et construction européenne, Brussels 8–12 September 1991; Christianisme et identité nationale, une certaine idée de l'Europe, Klingenthal 27–30 May 1993 (proceedings published Paris 1994); Quale federalismo per quale Europa. Il contributo della tradizione cristiana; Gazzada 21–23 May 1994, and Le facteur religieux dans l'intégration européenne, Milano 21–23 November 1996, culminating in the pioneering collective volume *Alfredo Canavero/Jean-Dominique Durand* (eds.), Il fattore religioso nell' integrazione europea, Milano 1999. See also the volumes on Christianity, Christian Democracy and European integration referred to earlier.

147 *Liliane Voyé*, Religion in Modern Europe: Pertinence of the Globalization Theories?, in: *Nobutaka Inové* (ed.), Globalization and Indigenous Culture, Tokyo 1997, pp. 155–168; *Jean-Paul Willaime*, Les religions et l'unification européenne, in: *Grace Davie/Danièle Hervieu-Léger*, Identités religieuses en Europe, Paris 1996, pp. 291–314.

148 Martin Niemöller quoted in *Doering-Manteuffel*, Wie westlich sind die Deutschen?, p. 105; *Ziemann*, Religion and the Search for Meaning.

149 *Robbins*, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, pp. 464–468; *John Nurser*, Le Chiese del Regno Unito e il progetto ›Europa‹, in: *Canavero/Durand*, Il fattore religioso nell' integrazione europea, pp. 189–206.

150 On the European Protestant ecumenical associations see *Hans-Ulrich Reuter*, Die Europäische Ökumenische Kommission für Kirche und Gesellschaft (EECCS) als Beispiel für das Engagement des Protestantismus auf europäischer Ebene, Stuttgart 2002.

the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in 1959, followed by the European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society (EECCS) in 1964. Increasingly this ecumenism also included Catholics, as the Council of Catholic Bishops' Conferences in Europe and other churches started to meet regularly from 1971 onwards. One of the endeavours of these associations was to promote unity and peace among Christians, among others in Northern Ireland. Churches also influenced the European communities and established channels of influence. European enlargement from the 1970s onwards and the fall of the Iron Curtain both increased the interest for religion in Europe and led to further cooperation and a deeper convergence between Europe's mainline churches.<sup>151</sup> Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Europe concluded the Leuenberg Agreement in 1973. The Church of England in the first place associated with continental European Lutheran churches, culminating in the Meissen agreement with the German Evangelical Church (1988) and the Porvoo Agreement with the Baltic and Scandinavian Lutheran churches (1992), which led to very concrete forms of collaboration between British and continental dioceses. Also the Baptists, already strongly involved in transnational activities within the World Council of Churches, experienced a similar ›Europeanization‹, especially since the move of the International Baptist Theological Seminary from Switzerland to Prague in 1997.<sup>152</sup> Most Protestant churches are now members of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, which came out from the Leuenberg Church Fellowship. Hence ›ecumenicalism‹ is sometimes promoted by religious leaders as a possible model for coping with European political, ethnic and religious diversities. More in general, religion is advanced as one way of creating a common bond between Europeans, as a means to ›give Europe a soul‹, as was former European Commission President Jacques Delors's explicit motivation to start a systematic (albeit informal) dialogue with faith communities as well as secularists in 1992.<sup>153</sup> By doing so Delors broke with a deep-rooted secularist paradigm that considers religion and democratic citizenship to be mutually exclusive, initiating a completely new approach to religion, at least in the European context, that emphasizes the important contribution religions can have on a democratic society by grounding citizenship.<sup>154</sup>

However, the attempts of the Catholic pope John-Paul II towards a new ›evangelization‹ and, even more, Benedict XVI views on Christian Europe, revived some old divisions, particularly between the Catholic and the Russian Orthodox Church, occasionally also with Judaism and Islam. Particularly the sense of threat experienced from an alleged more militant Islam, however, appealed to another opposition, that between a Christian Europe and Islam, which may drive Christians of different denominational orientation into each others' arms. However, for the moment the Christian churches rather try to build bridges with the Islamic world, arguing for an inter-faith dialogue of pluralism and mutual respect, to the irritation of contemporary anti-Islamic intellectuals and politicians

151 *Philpott/Shah*, Faith, Freedom and Federation; *J. Christopher Soper/Joel Fetzer*, Religion and Politics in a Secular Europe: Cutting Against the Grain, in: *Ted G. Jelen/Clyde Wilcox* (eds.), The One and the Many: Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective, Cambridge 2002, pp. 169–191.

152 *Robbins*, The Christian Church 1900–2000, pp. 464–468.

153 *Bérenghère Massignon*, L'Union européenne: Ni Dieu, ni César, in: *Eurozine*, 2008–01–28 (orig. *Esprit* 2007, No. 3/4).

154 See in this respect the pioneering volume of *Gabriel Motzkin/Yochi Fischer* (eds.), Religion and Democracy in Contemporary Europe, London 2008, in particular the chapters by *Lucian Hölscher*, Civil Religion and Secular Religion (pp. 55–62); *José Casanova*, The Problem of Religion and the Anxieties of European Secular Democracy (pp. 63–74), *Peter Van der Veer*, The Religious Origins of Democracy (pp. 75–82), as well as *Jean Bethke Elshtain*, Religion and Democracy, in: *Journal of Democracy* 20, 2009, pp. 5–17.

such as Ayan Hirsli Ali or Geert Wilders in the Netherlands.<sup>155</sup> Paradoxically, while during the opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU religion looms large<sup>156</sup> – even if seldom made explicit –, Turkey's Islamist AKP Party has converted into a most surprising advocate of EU membership.<sup>157</sup>

The increased clout of political Islam and the Islamic terrorist threat inspired Samuel Huntington to emphasize the common Christian heritage of the West already in 1993 and to draw the Eastern borders of Europe »where Western Christianity ends and Islam and Orthodoxy begin«.<sup>158</sup> Here, Huntington incidentally breaks with a long-standing more inclusive American view of Europe which traditionally includes Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, in contrast to (especially continental) Europeans who exclude it from their historical representations of Europe.<sup>159</sup> While few leading European scholars explicitly endorse Huntington's thesis, many, even strongly secular intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, equally emphasize the Christian-humanist heritage, especially opposing the possible affiliation of Turkey to the EU.<sup>160</sup> At the same time, supported in this by the Holy See, *some* Christians (particularly Catholics) appear more militant again in the debate on European identity, for example with regard to the reference to its Christian past, heritage and values in the EU constitution. Paradoxically, the opposition with Islam generated a fusion between those who emphasize the Christian heritage on the one hand, and the promoters of secularist-Enlightenment values on the other hand. Hence, even Benedict XVI during his visit to Paris in December 2008, while recalling the Christian heritage of Europe, also recognized that the »Church-state separation is one of the signs of the progress of humanity«<sup>161</sup>, not only a declaration of support for French State-Church relations, but also addressed to the Islamic world, for which the unity between faith and politics is (believed to be) indissoluble. Such views bring the pope to the same position as an outspoken anticlerical such as Jürgen Habermas. Certainly they will both be »bien étonnés de se trouver ensemble«.<sup>162</sup> Both – Habermas and Ratzinger – epitomize a specific and opposing view on Europe's past. Whether either of them will indicate a direction for the future, remains to be seen.

155 *Massignon*, L'Union européenne: Ni Dieu, ni César. Cf. *Johan Sanctorum* (ed.), De islam in Europa: dialog of clash?, Antwerpen 2008. Other names often quoted are Paul Cliteur and Joost Zwagerman in the Netherlands, Bernard Henry-Lévy, Caroline Fourest and Philippe Val in France, and Geert Vanistendael and Wim Van Rooy in Belgium, to name just a few.

156 *Asad*, Formations of the Secular, pp. 161–165.

157 *Philpott/Shah*, Faith, Freedom and Federation, p. 59; *Casanova*, Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration, pp. 71–74; *M. Hakan Yavuz*, Islam and Europeanization in Turkish-Muslim Socio-Political Movements, in: *Byrnes/Katzenstein*, Religion in an Expanding Europe, pp. 225–255. Compare the highly critical remarks of *Tibi*, Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe.

158 *Huntington*, The Clash of Civilizations. In the 1993 article it reads »As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other, has re-emerged«: URL: <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19930601faessay5188/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations.html>> [9.6.2009].

159 Based on a quick and admittedly far from exhaustive reading of some major atlases and textbooks.

160 *Grace Davie*, Global Civil Religion: A European Perspective, in: *Sociology of Religion* 62, 2001, pp. 455–473, esp. pp. 467 f.

161 URL: <<http://www.zenit.org/rssenglish-24581>> [9.6.2009].

162 Although a certain convergence is detectable in the famous conversation that *Habermas* and *Ratzinger* published together: *Dialektik der Säkularisierung: Über Vernunft und Religion*, Freiburg 2007.

## VII. CONCLUSION: FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE SPECIFICITY OF EUROPE

A final issue that needs to be taken up, albeit briefly, concerns the specificity of Europe – a question that cannot be addressed without a comparative view on other parts of the world. What then obviously strikes first is the dominating legacy of Christianity, itself heir of ancient Greek and Judaic cultures.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, Christianity even in modern and contemporary times has eclipsed the importance of other cultural traditions such as Judaism – that in the cultural representation has been largely reduced to its almost eradication during the Holocaust – and Islam, that has literally been marginalized: demoted to an ephemeral existence at the margins of the European continent or associated with migrant minorities that are hard to ›integrate‹. Christianity incidentally means Western Christianity, as Orthodoxy in the post-war period has been pushed outside Europe's core as well – the successive enlargements of the EU do not yet seem to have produced a new sense of community.

Certainly secularism is another major feature of Europe, though its origins cannot be dissociated from its Christian social context; many even believe that secularism is the product of Christendom.<sup>164</sup> Secularism became a powerful new *Weltanschauung* that permeated major political ideologies of the modern era – liberalism, socialism, also Nazism – and is considered by many as a cornerstone of modernity. Especially since World War II, secularism seems to have triumphed in Europe, as comes to the fore not only in the secularization and de-Christianization of the continent, but particularly in the evident association of modernity and secularization in the eyes of the leading intellectual and cultural elites in most of Europe that we emphasized in the first paragraph. In this respect, the contrast with the United States and indeed the rest of the world is particularly striking. The secularist lens to view European history has however obscured observation. Historians and social scientists tended to ignore the remarkable ways by which mainline churches in Europe ›modernized‹ and found new ways to continue to have a profound impact on politics and society. In Catholic and Reformed Europe especially, though in different ways also in Scandinavia and Britain, the mainline churches were not locked into the private sphere, even if their impact on the private lives of the faithful could be sizeable. After all, belief had to be interiorized, be ›authentic‹ – mere performance of practices was less and less sufficient. Through various channels churches did influence the way modern European societies were organized, even if clerical hierarchies increasingly refrained from political interference. The result was an ›unstable stability‹ during which forces towards secularization and religious modernization balanced out each other, with ups and downs for each.

Since the 1950s, that relatively stable world has melted into thin air. Gradually individualization and deinstitutionalization gave way to a pluralistic religious landscape that tends to look like North America. Mainline churches lost much terrain, though they continue to provide comfort to many, especially during the great transitions of life. Surprisingly they returned as political actors on the European scene, especially in the 1980s. However, they lost too much of their social relevance to be able to fill, as some politi-

163 Which does not imply that I want to reduce Europe's historical identity, as is so often done, to its Greek-Judeo-Christian heritage. Europe's identities are composed of many legacies, including Judaism, Islam, Celtic and Germanic traditions, and is continuously recomposed as a result from inner developments (the development of rationalism and the Enlightenment, for example) and confrontations with the ›external‹ world – not least colonialism.

164 The story has been told and reinterpreted again and again. See particularly *Mark Lilla*, *The Stillborn God. Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*, New York 2007; *Charles Taylor*, *The Secular Age*, Cambridge, MA/London 2007; *Asad*, *Formations of the Secular*.

cians seem to hope, the cultural gap that characterizes the countries of the EU and to create the much longed for common bond for a true European citizenship.

In the wake of colonization, Europe has to some extent exported its ideologies and worldviews. With regard to religion, one cannot escape the fundamental paradox, present in every colonial enterprise but in very different ways and proportions, that on the one hand it presented a vision of modernity and modernization in which secularism featured as an essential component, while on the other it exported its Christian religions. Hence Christianity created strong bonds between the colony and the metropolis, the dissolution of which profoundly changed both. In addition, Europeans radically modified the religious landscapes in their colonies: like in Europe they emphasized – and often exploited – religious differences, which encumbered these countries with gigantic problems once they gained independence. Moreover, autochthonous religious reformers were deeply influenced by what they learned about European religions as well as secular ideologies, which deeply influenced colonial and postcolonial religions. Research into the complexities that result from these often paradoxical situations has only begun, so one can only guess the impact of it. At the very least we do know that religion played a major part in decolonization processes. In the framework of this article, the impact on the former European colonial empires might be more relevant, though they cannot be completely dissociated – if only because of colonial and especially postcolonial migration to Europe.<sup>165</sup> Mainly given the important numbers of Muslims in Europe and the current role of Islam in the post-colonial ›awakening‹, the question of Islam is obviously the main issue here. Here again, Europe should no doubt get rid of its tradition of searching for homogenization and opt for an inclusive approach. In this way, the United States may offer a source of inspiration.

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165 *Peter Van der Veer*, *Imperial Encounters. Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, Princeton 2001; *Susan Thorne*, *Religion and Empire at Home*, in: *Catherine Hall/Sonya O. Rose* (eds.), *At Home with the Empire. Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 143–165; *C. A. Bayly*, *The Birth of the Modern World. 1780–1914. Global Connections and Comparisons*, London 2004 (offers a truly global perspective on the 19th century).