

Week 7

- Religious developments at the end of the 19th century: Urbanisation, secularisation, new movements
- Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe 1848 – 1914* (2000)
- Owen Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind* (1975)
- Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem. The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (2004)
- Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (1974)

Readings II

- Hugh McLeod, ed. *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities 1830 – 1930* (1995)
- S.J.D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline. Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire 1870 – 1920* (1996)
- Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (2001)
- Jeffrey Cox, *English Churches in a Secular Society* (1982)
- Pamela Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down. The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (2001)

Christianity in late 19th century

- From c. 1880 signs of reduced church attendance
- Also: reduction in knowledge of basic Christian beliefs
- Competition with other activities
- Public debates about new science; influence of Marxism and other agnostic ideas
- CofE remained established, but elsewhere in Europe Church-state relations changed

Secularisation

- How to explain this development?
- McLeod (2000) offers four types of answers:
- 1. Intellectual ('march of science')
- Sees origins in Enlightenment
- Progress conditioned by rise of natural sciences, biblical criticism, critical philosophies (Kant, Marx, Nietzsche)
- These ideas 'trickled down' to the masses
- Cf. O. Chadwick (1975), 14: 'Without the intellectual enquiry, the social enquiry is fated to crash.'

Secularisation II

- 2. Modernisation
- Focus on industrial revolution.
- Urbanisation; massive shift of population from villages to towns and cities.
- Highlights social rather than intellectual changes.
- Change in society from mainly agrarian, hierarchical society to urban, industrial and relatively democratic society.

Secularisation III

- In 1800 – no cities outside London with a population over 100,000
- 1837 (Queen Victoria's accession): 5
- 1891: 23
- Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield grew by 40% between 1821 and 1831.
- Tocqueville about Manchester in 1835: 'Here humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish; here civilization works its miracles, and civilised man is turned back almost to a savage.'

Secularisation IV

- Political attempts at improvements of living conditions from the 1840s, but inner city areas remained crowded.
- Civic pride in municipal areas (building of town halls as 'municipal palaces').
- General assumption that working classes became more irreligious (Horace Mann in 1851: 'unconscious secularists').
- McLeod: 'the poorest districts [of London] tended to have the lowest rates of [church] attendance, those with large upper-middle class and upper class populations the highest.' (*Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*)

Secularisation V

- But: industrialisation already began in 1800!
- First half of the century saw religion thriving.
- Industrialisation initially boost to religion, esp. independent/non-established Churches.
- Only later (from middle of century) evident link between life in cities, anonymity, individualism with adverse effect on communal religion.
- More recent research shows that working classes had religious connections in late Victorian Britain.

Secularisation VI

- 3. Postmodernity
- Argument in Callum Brown's book (2001).
- No 'real' secularisation in Britain until the 1960s, but then with a shock.
- 19th century: 'feminisation of religion':
- Religion remained important to female identity.
- Women largely kept the churches going and passed on Christian values to the next generation.

'Feminisation' of Religion

- Idea of separate spheres: man - work; woman - 'angels in the home'
- Men 'sullied' by exposure to harsh outside world; women kept 'purity' of the home.
- Crucial to evangelicalism: John Angell James (*Female Piety* 1853):
- 'Christianity has provided a place for woman for which she is fitted [the home], and in which she shines; but take her out of that place, and her lustre pales and sheds a feeble and sickly ray.'

Role of Women II

- Re-interpretation of Pauline thought in light of new social developments:
- ‘Woman scarcely needs to be taught, that in the domestic economy she is second, and not first, that ‘the man is the head of the woman.’ This is a law of nature written on the heart, and coincides exactly with the law of God written on the page of revelation. It is first of all an instinct, and then confirmed by reason.’
- ‘She generally knows her place, and feels her happiness as well as her duty to keep it. It is not necessity but even choice that produces a willing subjection. She is contented it should be so, for God has implanted the disposition in her nature.’

Secularisation and the competition of 'selling God'

- Fourth type of explanation: argues that more activities were offered in competition for people's time:
- Holidays became possible (seaside resorts); sport; allotments; clubs and societies.
- From 1890s: cheap bicycles available - possibility of outings into the country on Sunday.
- All four 'master-narratives' explain something but ultimately remain unsatisfactory.

Formation of new groups: Salvation Army

- Founded in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth.
- Originally Methodists, hence principle of 'preaching where the people are'.
- 1878 (year of name change to 'Salvation Army'): 127 paid evangelists; 700 voluntary workers.
- 1884: 1664 officers employed to run 637 stations.

Salvation Army

- Method:
- Address people in popular places (music halls, pubs, sports, betting places etc.)
- Contrast sin/salvation pictured in military categories: 'battle with the enemy'.
- No alcohol, tobacco, fashionable dress.
- Booth in 1876: Salvation Army is 'not a building or a chapel or a hall; it is not even a society but a band of people united together to mission, to attack, to Christianize an entire town or neighbourhood.'

Salvation Army II

- Key concepts: Faith and Holiness
- Relationship to evangelicalism (influence of American figures such as Charles Finney).
- Christians could be fully delivered from sin 'and all the powers, faculties, possessions and influences of the soul are given up to the glory and service of God.'
- Emphasis on holiness and sanctification as preconditions for entering the SA meant class or gender differences were less relevant.
- Early 20th century: social recognition (Booth received by Edward VII in 1904).