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# Religion and the Demographic Revolution

WOMEN AND SECULARISATION IN CANADA, IRELAND, UK AND USA  
SINCE THE 1960s

**Callum G. Brown**

STUDIES IN MODERN BRITISH RELIGIOUS HISTORY

Volume 29

RELIGION  
AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION

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IRELAND, UK AND USA SINCE THE 1960s

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# RELIGION AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION

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CANADA, IRELAND, UK AND USA  
SINCE THE 1960s

CALLUM G. BROWN

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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## Preface

This is the second in a trilogy of histories of religious decline, each deploying a different methodology—discourse, demography and testimony.

In the first book, *The Death of Christian Britain* (2001), I wrote using mostly discourse analysis about the dominance of Christian culture in Britain from 1800 down to the 1950s, and how this effectively stalled secularisation in industrial and urban society. This happened through the transformation of Christianity from an *ancien régime* of the early modern period that demanded parish-based obedience, to a discursive Christianity of the nineteenth century that internalised religious discipline. Accompanying this was a move from demonisation of women's dangers to religiosity, to discourses of adulation to exemplary feminine piety. The short end of the book, which gained more attention in some circles than the earlier larger part, pointed to the 1960s as when popular obedience to these discourses broke down in Britain, instituted by a young female revolt which broke the dominance of Christian culture.

In this second book, I turn to statistics and demography. The basis of the present volume is that discourses, and popular revolt against them, change the way people lead their lives. The major demographic decisions of life in modern society have long been strongly influenced by women, but in the sixties in many nations came effective female control over those major demographic decisions. These decisions are heavily connected to religion and the moralities derived from it. At the same time, twentieth-century female aspiration to education and equality of opportunity, and to build an empowered identity—the drive to change female self-hood—culminated in the 1960s in clashes with traditional religious discourse and its backers (principally conservative Christians). At the heart of this book are two ideas: first, that the really big decisions of demography until the 1960s were determined by individuals, mostly women, heavily influenced by religious factors; and second, that the legacy of the sixties has been a secularisation that involved women rejecting traditional religious determination of those decisions. In short, secularisation has been, and continues to be, a demographic revolution.

Studying demography is in no way a revolt on my part against cultural history or the fruits of postmodernist method. Rather, it is a recognition that religion is too important to be seen solely as making people church-goers, and discourse-circulators and genuflectors. This will be reinforced

## PREFACE

in the third book, which is intended to complete the cycle of analysis of Christian culture's decay by turning to the neglected topic of how people have lost religion in the last sixty years of the twentieth century, using autobiography and oral testimony. In both of these new books, I turn from single-nation to transnational history. I bring to the subject a European gaze informed by the deep secularisation of that continent. Only by looking at both demography and personal testimony can the impact of discourse change be charted in its full variety in the North Atlantic world.

### *Statistical note*

This book uses correlations (Pearson's rank correlations) extensively. The original correlations (those by the author) in the text are accompanied, where they apply, by \*\* (signifying significant at the 0.01 level) or \* (significant at the 0.05 level), with the 2-tailed Sig figure following in brackets. The lower the Sig figure, the stronger the significance of the correlation.

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I was a year into the research before I discovered the work of Ron Lesthaeghe, and was cheered that I had arrived at the same ideas from a different starting point. I had already rehearsed my arguments in various quarters, and I thank those who responded to them: at the conference on secularisation in the sixties at McMaster University, Ontario, October 2009; in lectures on 'The People of No Religion' to the Workshop of the *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* in Bonn in September 2010; to the Tim Curtis Memorial Lecture at University of Central Lancashire in November 2010; to the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at University of Victoria BC in March 2011; and at my lecture on 'Singleness, sexuality and secularisation' to the Church of Scotland general assembly Commission on Sexuality, June 2008. I owe a special thanks to Humanist and atheist groups who invited me to speak and with whom I went through my analysis: the BC Humanists; the Humanist Association of Toronto, the Victoria Secular Humanists; members of the Victoria Unitarian Universalist Church and the Lancashire Humanists; and the Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee branches of the Humanist Society of Scotland. Meanwhile, Kris Inwood and Elizabeth Ewan put me up in Guelph, enabling me to use the university library there, whilst Ed and Linda Jay provided important diversionary hospitality on two trips to BC.

Individual scholars have engaged with my ideas and responded to research queries: Lynne Marks of University of Victoria, Tina Block of Thompson Rivers University, Peter Flatt of Redeemers University College, Ontario, Sonja Luehrmann of Simon Fraser University, Michael Gauvreau of McMaster University, Nancy Christie of University of Western Ontario, Stuart Macdonald of Knox College, Toronto and Zoe Colley of University of Dundee. I am grateful for assistance on issues concerning

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A first draft of the book was generously read and critiqued in full by Lynne Marks, Jim Tomlinson and Kasper van der Veen, and various chapters and sections by Lynn Abrams, Michael Gauvreau and Simon Szreter. They stopped me from committing methodological and textual errors; all remaining flaws are mine alone. Boydell's typesetter Samantha Matthews skilfully laid out the book and sorted out the mess, whilst the desk editor Megan Milan efficiently checked manuscript and cover. Lynn as always kept me sane and improved the text, but this time, despite the 'horrible' statistics, also acted as extra proof-reader: no greater love hath a woman. Finally, though he has not read this book, Hugh McLeod has been my mentor since we first met by a bookstall at the Social History Conference in Chester in 1982, and, despite one of us being wrong on the sixties, I would not have got this far without him.

## Introduction

### Overview

In the 1960s, there began three of the greatest social and cultural changes of the Western world. The first was secularisation in the form of the rapid decline of Christianity, most evident in Europe, Canada and Australasia, and which may spread across the world's peoples and faiths. The second was a demographic revolution both in those territories and elsewhere, in which family structure was revolutionised by plunging fertility and marriage rates that may lead the world eventually from population growth. The third was the revolution in women's identities, a transformation in the social construction of gender involving the search for autonomy in sexual expression, education and economic life—an impulse which may, too, spread far across humanity. The hypothesis of this book is that the incidence and spread of these three trends from the 1960s were intimately and causatively interconnected. All three phenomena were sudden though not uniform in their impact. This volume will test their connectedness in four nations—Canada, Ireland, UK and United States—which over the last fifty years have represented different, often seemingly contradictory, points on the journey towards a secular society.

The timing, severity and outcomes of secularisation, demographic revolution and women's liberation have varied enormously. In a minority of European regions, the impact of the 1960s was muted and delayed. In most of North America (principally the United States) the short-term crisis of the 1960s was real enough for the churches and for gender tradition, but the consequences turned out to be less severe than in Europe; religious decline seemed to stall amidst the so-called 'culture wars'. In some nations and provinces, liberal revolutions in religion and gender issues in the sixties were far-reaching in their results in the ensuing decades. But things were different in most of South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America; religious crisis was weaker or took a different form to secularisation. In communist countries like the Soviet Union, former Eastern bloc countries in Europe, in China (PRC) and Cuba, the crises were little felt in the 1960s; yet, where communism has collapsed, atheist ideology has



left a legacy into the twenty-first century of widespread popular religious inactivity and indifference.<sup>1</sup>

The greater European world (covering most of Europe, North America and Australasia) led both crises of religion and gender roles. The transformation has been most vigorous in mainland Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, France and most of the Nordic countries, but in addition, though later to develop, it has been astonishingly sweeping in the traditional strongholds of Catholicism in Spain and Italy. Change has also been transformative in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, whilst in the United States the sixties had a major impact (one which indeed led the world in some regards), but which was more complex, less nationally sweeping, and, in the medium term, not so convincing as to the extent of religious decline. But in most of Europe, the consequences of the 1960s were the rapid, unrelenting and so far unstopped decline of the major Christian churches, accompanied by the almost universal decline, tending to a collapse, of Christian influence in the state, and the dissolution of Christianity from the everyday culture, family life and meaningful identity of most people. Meanwhile, some places have seen much less or more delayed religious change: Ireland, Northern Ireland, Poland, the Balkans, and the southern European states of Malta, Greece and Cyprus.<sup>2</sup>

The picture is complex. But there are demographic and religious patterns to be explored within it. In order to do this on a scale of quantitative comparison that retains the ability to explore detailed social and religious history, four territories have been selected which represent both nations

<sup>1</sup> A useful world survey is to be had from Grace Davie, *Europe: The Exceptional Case: Parameters of Faith in the Modern World* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002). Literature on the success of atheism in Eastern Europe and USSR varies in its judgement. For the optimist position, that atheism became well-established and resilient, see Olaf Müller, 'Religion in Central and Eastern Europe: was there a re-awakening after the breakdown of communism?', in Detlef Pollack and Daniel V.A. Olson (eds), *The Role of Religion in Modern Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 63–92 at p. 80; and Sonja Luehrmann, *Secularism Soviet Style: Teaching Atheism and Religion in a Volga Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011). For the pessimists, see David C. Lewis, *After Atheism: Religion and Ethnicity in Russia and Central Asia* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999); Paul Froese, 'Forced secularization in Soviet Russia: why an atheistic monopoly failed', *Journal for the Social Scientific Study of Religion* vol. 43 (2004), pp. 35–50; Paul Froese, *The Plot to Kill God: Findings in the Soviet Experiment in Secularization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Yves Lambert, 'A turning point in religious evolution in Europe', *Journal of Contemporary Religion* vol. 19 (2004), pp. 29–45 at pp. 43–44.

<sup>2</sup> For a highly informed general historical overview of European religious change from 1945 to 1989, see Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 132–154. For a sociological commentary, see David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 47–113.

and provinces at different stages of religious crisis in and after the 1960s: in ascending order of secularisation, Ireland, Northern Ireland, the United States, Canada, England & Wales and Scotland.<sup>3</sup> Within each there are sub-territories (states, provinces, counties) which offer diverse religious and demographic scenarios. The idea is to explore the statistical relationships between forms of religious change (principally religious decline and growth of no religionism) and demographic, economic and educational indicators; the relationships will be explored by both timeseries and snapshot analysis. The existence of relationships will help in envisaging religious change as part of a demographic phenomenon. Other nations could doubtless be tested in the same way, especially within Europe.<sup>4</sup> But these four nations offer within one main language tradition diverse religious and demographic test cases.

## Religious history

The interpretation of what happened in Europe and North America in and after the 1960s consumes many academics. It is the subject for special rumination amongst historians of politics, ideology, youth, women, popular culture and religion. The results of this reflection are felt by many to be more than usually significant because of the cultural investment now placed in these aspects of sixties' life. Many religious studies' scholars make reference to the sixties for evidence of religious crisis and the rise of new religious movements splintering ecclesiastical cultures,<sup>5</sup> but it has been the work of historians that has tackled the issue of the sixties most deeply.<sup>6</sup> Women's historians have looked very closely at the fifties as the last

<sup>3</sup> The order here is provisional and, of course, problematic, depending on measure and on ways of reading the religious statistics.

<sup>4</sup> These nations were chosen for being predominantly English-speaking, thus facilitating ready intelligibility of statistical data and secondary literature.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon Lynch, *New Spirituality: An Introduction to Belief Beyond Religion* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), pp. 17–18; Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1993); Reginald W. Bibby, *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), pp. 48–58.

<sup>6</sup> Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Patrick Pasture, 'Christendom and the legacy of the sixties: between the secular city and the age of Aquarius', *Review D'Histoire Ecclesiastique* vol. 99 (2004), pp. 82–117; Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950: The Undoing of a Culture* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2002); Kurt Bowen, *Christians in a Secular World: The Canadian Experience* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004); Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

decade when the doctrines of domesticity and religious respectability were vigorous, and at the sixties and the early seventies as when women's liberation and sexual revolution tore both apart.<sup>7</sup> But there is far from unanimity about what changed in the sixties, as we shall encounter in Chapter 2. The divisions are as great on issues of sex as of religion.

Three great divisions split the treatment of the religious past. The first is that between historians and sociologists. Historians of religion derive mostly from the long tradition of ecclesiastical (or church) history, which is a scholarship that traditionally focuses on the evolution of church institutions, policies and their effectualness in managing church resources to sustain religious ideas, conformity, participation and loyalty amongst the people. The tradition expanded methodologically from the 1960s and 1970s as scholarship in the social history of religion combined study of church policy with assessing popular religion. The result was the development of a cultural history of religion which has been much more responsive to developments in media, discourse and people's experiences.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, sociologists have generally been rather different in their historical approaches. Advocates of the theory of secularisation treat historical change as little short of inevitable and unilinear—from a humankind dominated by a religious world view to one that is not, a change wrought in the main by Enlightenment and modernisation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup>

The second treatment, often though not exclusively associated with Christian scholars, has tended to observe little secularisation in the modern world, emphasising instead the continuities in religious trends between the early modern and late modern worlds. This has been associated with religious sociologists in Britain such as David Martin and Grace Davie, and with an American tradition in both religious sociology and religious history especially developing since the 1970s, notably around scholars such as Robert Wuthnow, Wade Clark Roof and Rodney Stark.<sup>10</sup> The writing

<sup>7</sup> J. Ronald Oakley, *God's Country: America in the Fifties* (New York: Dembner Books, 1986); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008, orig. 1988); Sheila Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream: Remembering the Sixties* (London: Verso, 2001); Finola Kennedy, *Cottage to Crèche: Family Change in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2001), esp. pp. 81–122; Myrtle Hill, *Women of Ireland: Century of Change* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2003), pp. 138–148.

<sup>8</sup> Notable early examples are Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850–1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 71–220; Sarah C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark c.1880–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society: A Sociological Perspective* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966); Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> For examples of the work of these scholars, see David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe:*

of religious history of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is not merely divided between disciplines (of history and sociology primarily) but between the advocates of religion (notably evangelicals) and the others. In Canada, the leading sociologist in the field for thirty years has been Reginald Bibby who openly espouses that his work of sociological investigation is intended to assist the churches.<sup>11</sup> In his insightful analysis, Robert Wuthnow addresses the churches: 'Yet leaders of religious organizations need to understand how their organisations are being affected if they are to have any chance of making appropriate responses.'<sup>12</sup> Other leading scholars write with explicit religious points of view—most notably in his oral history work, Christian Smith.<sup>13</sup> There is an explicit standpoint amongst religious sociologists (and some historians as well) that their academic study is an 'applied' one, providing advice to churches. This trend is especially noteworthy amongst American and some Canadian scholars. There may be no flaw in this, though a 'declaration of interests' would sometimes be helpful. But there is often an analytical consequence: that when evidence of religious or church decline is encountered, what is happening is not secularisation but 'backsliding'—a fall-off that can be rectified, a mid-course correction on the long haul of an ultimately triumphant Christian history. There is a tendency to assume in 'applied work' that the churches can (as well as should) do something to make a difference to advance the religion's path, or that evidence of alienation from religious participation is something cyclical, temporary and not evidence of alienation from religion *per se*. For instance, Robert Wuthnow analyses the decline of churchgoing amongst young American adults between 1970 and 2000, and suggests that this shows that they 'apparently do not feel as comfortable or interested in attending religious services as they did a generation ago'. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke have put the case that low churchgoing in Europe is the result of 'the ineffectual efforts of their churches, and that faced with American-style churches, Europeans would respond as Americans do'.<sup>14</sup> This analysis

*A Memory Mutates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Roof, *Generation of Seekers*; Wuthnow, *Restructuring of American Religion*.

<sup>11</sup> His 1993 book was dedicated 'To those who value faith and believe in its potential to enrich lives', and noted that his participation in sociological investigation 'this time is characterized by less restraint and more passion'. 'The times call for honesty and directness; churches are dying at a time when the culture needs what they historically have had to offer.' Bibby, *Unknown Gods*, p. xiii.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*

is problematic. From a European gaze, the impression is given in the American academic study of religion that US society is ‘naturally’ religious, and that any evidence of decline does not alter that; it stresses *a priori* that religious change is comparatively minor, not fundamental—that it is not *secular* secularisation, but correctable. Now, there may be good arguments to be made that evidence of religious decline is temporary (or the fault of the churches), but they need to be weighed against alternative explanations. And many international scholars will have difficulty with the argument of Stark and Finke that the Enlightenment created a social-scientific study of religion based on atheism, and that only with the arrival of persons of faith in recent decades has a ‘truly’ scientific approach emerged.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, religious sociology has been greatly influenced by the idea that recent secularisation may be something else—adaptation, transformation, or even the concealment of religion. This has caused the conceptual paradigms of religious change to multiply in recent years. Amongst the most influential has been Charles Taylor, who has argued for the great surge since the Enlightenment in Western humankind’s search for the authentic in religion (thus undermining the previous *ancien régime* of ecclesiastical authority), meaning that the ‘secular’ is actually, still, the ‘religious’. There has been the burgeoning concept of a ‘spiritual revolution’, where the idea of religion has been displaced by that of spirituality; when tested sociologically, it has proved very difficult to record its influence above the statistically negligible. There has been the widely publicised idea of ‘desecularisation’, put forward by one of the former leading theorists of secularisation, Peter Berger, and attracting support from those in Europe and elsewhere who think that evidence of religious decline may be evidence of religious survival. One of Berger’s supporters, Grace Davie, has put forward a succession of ideas, notably that people in Europe are ‘believing without belonging’ (though believing is also sliding rapidly in Europe), and of ‘vicarious memory’ (where the religious has an influence in society which, though small, is widely understood and admired by the secular); each of these ideas have been attacked by some other sociologists, and none seem likely scenarios in Europe.<sup>16</sup> Ideas have been proliferating: that

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 237–238.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 1–23.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Taylor, *The Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007); Peter Berger, ‘The desecularization of the world: a global overview’, in Peter L. Berger (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe*, pp. 1, 24–37. Critiqued in Steve Bruce and David Voas, ‘Vicarious religion: an examination and critique’, *Journal of Contemporary Religion* vol. 25 (2010), pp. 243–259. See also Rodney Stark, ‘Secularization, R.I.P.’, *Sociology of Religion* vol. 60 (1999), pp. 249–273, and the response by Steve Bruce, ‘Christianity in Britain R.I.P.’, *Sociology of Religion* vol. 62 (2001), pp. 191–203.

Christianity is reorganising out of denominations into informal groupings, that the parish is being replaced by a mixture of mega and micro churches, that religion is to be found embedded in popular culture, and so on. Many of these ideas have been swept up in vast reinterpretations of modern secularisation in Britain.<sup>17</sup> For Christian sociologists especially, there is a drive to show that no matter what the data might show—how many churches are closing, denominations are going bust, and popular opinion is running against religious ideas on abortion, contraception and assisted suicide—what is happening in Europe is anything but religious decline.

Despite the tendency of Christian scholars in Britain to apply American anti-secularisation perspectives, there is a tension between European and American treatment. Scholarship on Europe tends to be more dominated by scholars who accept that secularisation has been happening, while that on the United States is more dominated by those who do not accept this. A sociologist like Robert Putnam in 2000 chronicled the decline of religion as part of a general crisis in community organisation and participation in the USA in the late twentieth century, with a deepening divide between the religiously committed and indifferent, but not a secularisation process as such—an interpretation keenly grasped by religious commentators on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>18</sup> Then in 2010 Putnam, with David Campbell, went on to accept that there has been religious decline that, albeit slower, has become since the 1990s one of an accumulative nature (that some commentators might see as evidence of a likely imminent sudden secularisation).<sup>19</sup> Even within Putnam's work, there is a tension between on the one hand a narrative that highlights religious decline and rise of no religionism, and on the other hand a narrative of sustained high religiosity accompanied by social changes that cause a fall-off in religious community activity that, notwithstanding, is by European standards staggeringly slow. For many American scholars, this has led to attempts to re-read European 'secularisation' along American standards and suppositions. Some American scholars deploy a 'free-market' model to explain organised religion's problems, and, in applying this to Europe, blame the restrictions imposed by state religion and established churches there for the difficulties of religious entrepreneurship.<sup>20</sup> In the main, few European academics have reciprocated; one

<sup>17</sup> Jane Garnett, Matthew Grimley, Alana Harris, William Whyte and Sarah Williams (eds), *Redefining Christian Britain: Post 1945 Perspectives* (London: SCM Press, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), pp. 65–79; for a rebuttal of this idea in the UK context, see Steve Bruce, 'Praying alone? Church-going in Britain and the Putnam thesis', *Journal of Contemporary Religion* vol. 17 (2002), no. 3, pp. 317–328.

<sup>19</sup> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), pp. 70–133.

<sup>20</sup> José Casanova, 'The religious situation in Europe', in Hans Joas and Klaus Wiegandt



of the few sociologists is Steve Bruce who has argued that secularisation is happening in the USA despite the considerable evidence to the contrary and the strength of American Christian sociology in arguing the opposite.<sup>21</sup> In these ways, religious history sits in a series of tensions in which academic, continental and faith-based divisions render social-scientific study without much evidence of consensus on even the basic ‘facts’ of the social history of religion in the Christian North Atlantic over the last seventy years. There is little agreement on what has been and is happening to religion in the Western world; the study of religion has little consensus, nor agreement even on the basics: is religion declining, growing, or staying the same?

### Demographic history

Whilst historians of culture and religion have been ruminating from different standpoints about the nature of the events of the 1960s and the ensuing decades, with many sceptics of any major significance to the sixties, demographers have been much more certain. They have offered clear-cut analysis of what has happened in their domain of interest. Leading the interpretative analysis has been Ron Lesthaeghe.

Demographers identify two major changes that interest them in the Western world (Europe, USA, Canada, Australasia principally).<sup>22</sup> The First Demographic Transition (FDT) of 1870–1945 witnessed a shift towards smaller families, resulting (in their view) principally from changing economic costs and benefits to parents of having children, combined with a changing cultural environment, which stressed the desirability of small family size.<sup>23</sup> The nature of these demographic changes is seen to have

(eds), *Secularization and the World Religions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), pp. 206–228; Andrew Greeley, ‘Unsecular Europe: the persistence of religion’, in Pollack and Olson (eds), *The Role of Religion*, pp. 141–161; Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, ‘Religious economies and sacred canopies: religious mobilization in American cities, 1906’, *American Sociological Review* vol. 53 (1988), pp. 41–49; Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005, 2nd edn, orig. 1993); Rodney Stark and Laurence R. Iannaccone, ‘A supply-side reinterpretation of the “secularization” of Europe’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* vol. 33 (1994), pp. 230–252.

<sup>21</sup> Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 204–228. The notable exception amongst historians is McLeod, *Religious Crisis*, and his earlier *Piety and Poverty: Working-class Religion in Berlin, London and New York 1870–1914* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> The idea of a Second Demographic Transition was first mooted by Ronald Lesthaeghe and D. van de Kaa in a Belgian publication in 1986.

<sup>23</sup> Ron Lesthaeghe, ‘The unfolding story of the Second Demographic Transition’, paper

enhanced and intensified the nuclear family, by making it smaller and far, far more prosperous. Indeed, there is an underlying impetus in this demographic worldview that the very prosperity of the Western world in the first half of the twentieth century was based on this downsizing of the family, leading to suburbanisation, comfortable and spacious homes designed for mother, father and two to four children, and declining residency of grandparents, other relatives or lodgers. The impact of the FDT was to increase social cohesion.<sup>24</sup> A stronger identification with the homogenous family type developed, emphasising the moral virtue of the marriage with children. Part of this process was to make the purpose of childrearing change—from expanding the economic potential of the family through children's extra earnings, to the individual gratification of the parents.

The Second Demographic Transition (SDT) started in the mid-1960s and has been continuing since, and has demographic features in marked contrast to that of the first. It is linked to a rising flexibility in marital relationships, with divorce increasing significantly and the meaning of divorce changing (from where children stopped divorce to where the breaking of bad marriage took precedence over other issues). Nuptiality changed, with a dramatic rise in illegitimacy from the 1960s (after reaching a widespread nadir in the 1950s), accompanied by a rise in age of marriage and decline in proportion ever-married. Whilst FDT was characterised by strengthening marriage bonds, SDT exhibited the reverse. Lesthaeghe comments: 'The outcome in Western Europe, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand was a succession of legal liberalizations in the wake of a singularly rising demographic trend. And ... the onset of the rise in divorce was probably the very first manifestation of the accentuation of individual autonomy in opposing the moral order prescribed by Church and State.'<sup>25</sup>

The contrast between FDT and SDT continued. Lesthaeghe notes a range of features of the first of these: fertility becomes increasingly confined

presented at the Conference on 'Fertility in the History of the 20th Century—Trends, Theories, Public Discourses, and Policies', Akademie Leopoldina and Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie, 21–23 January 2010. Online at [www.vub.ac.be/SOCO/Lesthaeghe.htm](http://www.vub.ac.be/SOCO/Lesthaeghe.htm) (accessed 2 March 2011). R. Beaujot and A. Muhammad, 'Transformed families and the basis for childbearing', in K. McQuillan and Z. R. Ravanera (eds), *Canada's Changing Families: Implications for Individuals and Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 15–48 at pp. 17–19.

<sup>24</sup> Lesthaeghe, 'Unfolding story'; R. Lesthaeghe and K. Neels, 'From the First to the Second Demographic Transition: An Interpretation of the Spatial Continuity of Demographic Innovation in France, Belgium and Switzerland', *European Journal of Population* vol. 18 (2002), no. 4, pp. 325–360; Michael S. Teitelbaum, *The British Fertility Decline: Demographic Transition in the Crucible of the Industrial Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 3–5.

<sup>25</sup> Ron Lesthaeghe, 'Unfolding Story'.



to marriage, contraception affects mostly fertility at older ages and higher marriage durations, mean ages at first parenthood decline, and among married couples childlessness is low (with only wartime and deep economic crises undermining this general situation). The ‘baby-boom’ and the marriage boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s are the last typical demographic features of the FDT, with reliance on imperfect contraception—*coitus interruptus* was largely the method used until the 1960s by the working classes and rhythm by the higher educated or more religious couples, fuelling the demand for better contraception. By contrast, Lesthaeghe notes the opposite characteristics of the second transition, starting with what he calls ‘a multifaceted revolution’ composed of three main elements: a *contraceptive revolution* (with the invention of the pill and the re-invention of IUDs, all perfected and socially learned by women very rapidly), a *sexual revolution* (in which sex outside of marriage was the major change, leading to generational conflict over its meaning, and decline of ages of first sexual intercourse), and the *gender revolution* (characterised by a pressing wish for biological autonomy). ‘Women were no longer going to be subservient to men and husbands, but seize the right to regulate fertility themselves. They did no longer undergo the “fatalities of nature”, and this pressing wish for “biological autonomy” was articulated by subsequent quests for the liberalization of induced abortion.’ The three revolutions, Lesthaeghe notes, fitted ‘within the framework of an overall rejection of authority and of a complete overhaul of the normative structure’ in which ‘Parents, educators, churches, army and much of the entire State apparatus end up in the dock.’ The outcome was rapid rise in mean age of female first parenthood (to unprecedented levels in several Western European populations).<sup>26</sup>

The geographical application of this process of FDT and SDT is wide. Lesthaeghe includes in most of his descriptions Western Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. He attributes the FDT to a period of economic growth in 1860–1960 focused on material aspirations through rising household real income, improvement to working and housing conditions, rising standards of health and life expectancy, rising education, and the creation of a social-welfare safety net. These were processes in Europe backed, he argues, ‘by all ideological, religious or political factions (also known as “pillars” since each of them integrates a political party, a cluster of labor unions, news media, and social services into a loosely tied organizational network)’. In this, the churches were central: ‘For the religious pillars (Catholic, Protestant and later on Christian-democrat) these views were based on the holiness of matrimony’, heightened by a fear that industrialism was leading to immorality, social pathology and atheism. Liberals and socialists equally supported the family as the basis for a new order, all based

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

on a gendered division of labour within the family and total investment in the ‘propagation of the breadwinner–housewife model’. By contrast, Lesthaeghe attributes the SDT model as being founded on ‘higher order needs’, topped by the highest human need of all—‘self-actualization’, which is sought by individuals after lower order needs have been broadly satisfied.

The coming of the SDT initially seemed to be limited to Northern and Western Europe, but from the 1980s it spread south of the Alps and Pyrenees. In Central and Eastern Europe, the collapse of the communist regimes in 1989 led, he says, to all the SDT features emerging ‘simultaneously’ (cohabitation, rising age of first marriage, illegitimacy ratios, and a collapse of total fertility rate, which kept falling through into the new millennium). In Portugal, Spain, Italy, Malta and Greece, similarly, the SDT became evident after the 1980s. Excluded countries included Ireland, but here the SDT became evident after 2000 (especially in relation to illegitimacy). Lesthaeghe also asks whether SDT will spread to non-Western populations, and concludes that the evidence for Western trends for the postponement of fertility and for cohabitation is strong. Yet, Lesthaeghe makes clear that the model of SDT he describes is not ‘a teleological grand script with a standard scenario’: ‘Just the opposite is true: it is a more general narrative that leaves room for many different sub-narratives’. He suggests that the USA is divided into three sets of states: the first where SDT has not yet taken off (the southern, Appalachian, Great Plains and conservative mountain states like Utah and Idaho); a second where both cohabitation and fertility postponement hold the middle ground (the bulk of states), and a third set where SDT has split states into two groups depending on whether they are at the vanguard of either postponement of parenthood or cohabitation (northeastern seaboard states were advanced in fertility postponement, whilst liberal mountain states [Colorado, Arizona and Pacific states] were the most advanced in relation to cohabitation).

Though some scholars have argued that the SDT is a continuation of the FDT, and thus there is one demographic transition, the twin-transition model is convincing for its identification of distinctive demographic features and, most importantly, for distinctive cultural characteristics lying behind each transition.<sup>27</sup> Lesthaeghe comments on the distinction between the second and first demographic transitions: ‘the linchpin of the FDT system has totally eroded: collective behavior is no longer kept on track by a strong normative structure based on a familistic ideology supported by both Church and State. Instead, the new regime is governed by the primacy of

<sup>27</sup> For a review of the single-transition argument, and a refutation of it, see Ron Lesthaeghe and Johan Surkyn, ‘The Foundations and Diffusion of a Second Demographic Transition’, c.2007, conference draft online at: [http://www.vub.ac.be/SOCO/ron/WhenHistoryMovesOn\\_finalpdf.pdf](http://www.vub.ac.be/SOCO/ron/WhenHistoryMovesOn_finalpdf.pdf) (accessed 4 February 2012).

individual freedom of choice.<sup>28</sup> For the SDT, demography was changed by a range of factors. One Lesthaeghe cites briefly is women's changing desires; he says that the need for self-actualization clashed with the pillars, shifting society towards self-expression, in which 'the quest for more symmetrical gender relations' fitted. At the same time, he cites religion prominently.<sup>29</sup> He comments further of the far-reaching nature of the SDT: 'Parents, educators, churches, army and much of the entire State apparatus end up in the dock. The entire ideational reorientation, if not revolution, occurs during the peak years of economic growth, and shapes all aspects of the SDT.'<sup>30</sup> However, Lesthaeghe's religious data used to gauge secularisation are sparse, either in the form of the Values Surveys (based on questions posed to people about their beliefs) and mostly used in one country, Belgium. Though Morrison showed in a US study that the characteristics of SDT advanced further amongst non-black people not aligned with conservative churches,<sup>31</sup> what is missing are detailed data on religious belonging, church worship and habits.<sup>32</sup>

Few religious historians approach their subject with demography in mind, and those that do tend to limit their purview. The relationship between religious non-belief and demography has been broached before. Thirty years ago, J.A. Banks explored the links between Victorian secularism and the birth-control movement, through examining demographics and the desire of middle- and working-class people for greater prosperity through control of their fertility.<sup>33</sup> Religious history interest has tended to be more limited, and mostly in the USA. A leading American religious historian, Robert Wuthnow, has looked at demographic issues as part of the context for religious change in the United States since the Second World War.<sup>34</sup> And in a study of the post-baby-boomer generation he has paid significant atten-

<sup>28</sup> Ron Lesthaeghe, 'Unfolding Story'.

<sup>29</sup> Ron Lesthaeghe and Chris Wilson, 'Modes of production, secularization, and the pace of fertility decline in Western Europe, 1870–1930', in Ansley J. Coale and Susan Cotts Watkins (eds), *The Decline of Fertility in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 261–292 at pp. 261, 270–273, 291–292.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. For a review of SDT, see R.L. Cliquet, 'The Second Demographic Transition: fact or fiction?', *Council of Europe Population Studies* no. 23 (1991), especially pp. 54–55 on secularisation.

<sup>31</sup> Emory Morrison, 'Conservative churches and fertility innovation: a cultural-ecological approach to the Second Demographic Transition among nonblacks in the United States', *Journal for the Social Scientific Study of Religion* vol. 48 (2009), pp. 103–120 at pp. 114–116.

<sup>32</sup> Teitelbaum concluded for Britain that religious and other cultural variables showed little demonstrable impact on fertility in the FDT (though he noted the lack of religious data); the best regression (causation) results came with education, urbanisation, infant mortality; Teitelbaum, *British Fertility Decline*, pp. 159–160, 166, 180–182, 216, 218.

<sup>33</sup> J.A. Banks, *Victorian Values: Secularism and the Size of Families* (Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

<sup>34</sup> See for example, Wuthnow, *Restructuring of American Religion*.

tion to one of the demographic changes to be examined in this volume—namely, the delay in marriage. However, his examination is limited in that it does not look in any detail at other associated demographic changes, does not relate one demographic change to another, and, most critically, does not explore the nature of the relationship between religious change and demographic change as a measurable connection. In addition, his study tends to associate the development of the demographic change of delayed marriage to the post-baby-boomers—instead, as stressed here, of associating the origins and nurture of the demographic change with the baby-boomers of the long 1960s, and he does not associate these changes directly as the origins of a secular revolution.<sup>35</sup> Evelyn L. Lehrer has almost single-handedly delved deeply into contemporary linkages between religion and demography in the United States, and we shall encounter her work in Chapter 5. Other North American investigations have sought to explore to some limited extent relationships between religious and demographic variables.<sup>36</sup> One British religious studies scholar, David Voas, has made significant reference to the fertility transition, and from it suggested that it is being followed by a ‘secular transition’, drawing parallels with how the second may follow the model of the first; however, beyond a reference to Uruguay offering an ‘intriguing’ case where, after the fertility transition of the late nineteenth century, it was ‘now remarkably secular’, he doesn’t develop in a systematic way a suggestion of a link between the two.<sup>37</sup>

Demographers have thus adopted a model of religious connections to the FDT and SDT. This has occurred without significant engagement from historians of religion. Their method has been overwhelmingly demographic; their consideration of the religious dimension has been rudimentary. An intellectual gap has been left to be filled.

### Thinking about demography and secularisation

The religious historian approaches demography in order to explain religious change, whilst the demographic historian approaches religion to explain population change. Demography is especially interested in possible ‘religious’ influence in fertility decline, notably in the First Demographic Transition starting in the late Victorian period. This can be seen in the

<sup>35</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers*, pp. 21–36, 62–65, 136–139.

<sup>36</sup> One such is Eagle, who explored churchgoing and demographic characteristics in two years; Dave E. Eagle, ‘Changing patterns of attendance at religious services in Canada, 1986–2008’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* vol. 50 (2011), pp. 187–200 at pp. 194 and 198.

<sup>37</sup> David Voas, ‘The continuing secular transition’, in Pollack and Olson (eds), *The Role of Religion*, pp. 25–48.

work of J.A. Banks, where secularism becomes a species of intellectual change within Victorian Christian reasoning in favour of reducing family size—but not for reducing their religiosity.<sup>38</sup> Largely for this reason, the religious historian has not had that much concern with demography. But a mechanistic view of ‘religion’ as a causation in demographic change which leaves the religiosity of the people untouched meets a different context after 1960 when both demography and religiosity change a great deal.

Religion matters because it shapes people’s lives. It shapes vital demographic decisions they make—when and with whom to have sex; the number of sexual partners they have; the gender of the sexual partners; whether and when to get married and at what age; the decision to have children and, again, at what age and whether or not to have a child before, outwith or without marriage; the number of children to have; and what methods of contraception and termination are permissible to control birthing. The rendering of these cases in this way should not be taken to imply that the decisions are clear-cut or always on the one side or the other; far from it, the decisions are complex with complicated and potentially diverse outcomes for an individual of a given religious tendency. Notwithstanding this, there are strong trends showing that religious disposition tends to influence certain demographic behaviour.

To make such opening remarks may appear facile to some readers. It may seem facile on two different (and indeed opposing) levels. On the first level, religion appears to be self-evidently a predictor of demographic behaviour. People stand astride foundations of their societies (are there any exceptions?) in which community, family and state rituals of family formation govern the major milestones in their lives, through conventions and sometimes laws which dictate or encourage the individual to subscribe, and at the root of those conventions and laws are religious justifications and support for their retention. This is so obvious as to be unremarkable. On the second level, there will be those in the social sciences who see religion as marginal to the issues involved in the observance of the *rites de passage*. For them, ritualised behaviour is a product of community, family and state action; for them it is the rules of human societies rather than the rules of a god which prevail in demography.

Each of these statements of facile regard for the link between religion and demography requires separate comment. Religion as the ‘taken-for-granted’ wallpaper of societies is the view of scholarship groups of different character. One is the group of historians, sociologists and anthropologists who

<sup>38</sup> Banks, *Victorian Values*, pp. 75–96. Secularism in this regard becomes not a movement (let alone a mass movement) away from religion, but a reformulation of particular Christian doctrines on family and fertility. For a critique of Banks, see Simon Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 46–52.

study past societies, ones before the twentieth (though usually including the first half of the twentieth) century. For many of them, the object of study is the manner by which the past is ‘a different country’, peopled by humans with a peculiar irrationality called religious belief. ‘All our ancestors were literal Christian believers, all of the time’, wrote Peter Laslett in 1965 of early modern English people (and re-published three times since, without qualification or amendment).<sup>39</sup> This is the statement of difference, of our ancestors being of a different mettle to us (whoever ‘us’ might be conjectured to be). For this group, those whose lives are governed by religious belief have a scientific simplicity in which religion is a literal faith sitting beside the structured orderliness of an obedient hierarchical society in which everyone from peasant to lord knows his place (and her place, which will be different in a different way from his). Hierarchies abound in the vision of past societies held by such historians—the hierarchies of clergy and laity, of regality and commoners, of social rank, of gender, and of age. The hierarchies are held together by civil institutions, of which one is the church, a building erected on the lord’s land at the lord’s expense, at which, every Sunday there was a parade of the hierarchies on serried stools, boxed pews and rickety lofts, allocated by the lord’s ground steward. A society so ordered by structures makes religion another structure. It thus attains a social-scientific status ‘above’ that of mere faith. This world is a world of order, obedience and simplicity in which individuality is not held at a premium, and ‘freedom’ was a concept surrounded by so much humming and hawing as to make it pointless for the majority.

The second group which holds to religion as the background wallpaper are the ‘golden agers’. These are the people—many religious and church historians, the faith-full, and social conservatives too—for whom the well-ordered past of simple respectable families was a social and religious good. It was a past in which, though there be much which deserves our condemnation for indeed being in the past, there was nonetheless much to admire by way of individual moral probity, wholesomeness in family matters, and uprightness in the eyes of God and Crown. The significance of religion in governing demography lies not in its irrationality or unnaturalness, but in its being the well-ordered way desired by God. As something gone (or going), it is something to be regretted, recalled with wistfulness, and summoned again for our future by suitable endeavours. The recall of the society being fondly remembered may not be a mirror image of that lost, these golden agers admit, but something akin to it becomes possible by envisaging it as a political rather than religious project—by enforcing laws

<sup>39</sup> Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 71. Laslett’s view enjoys support from Steve Bruce, ‘The pervasive world-view: religion in pre-modern Britain’, *British Journal of Sociology* vol. 48 (1997), pp. 667–680 at p. 667, 675–676.



on certain types of instruction in school, by passing laws against some behaviour, by harassing the offspring of the libertines who have undermined the golden age.

Demography and religion will appear to have low connection for those coming from another, very different, point of view. Social science does not exclude those who see the past as a different country or as a golden age, but it has a more vigorous (if not also more numerous) band of historians, sociologists and anthropologists who see the decline of religion as part and parcel of the rise of the modern age. The idea that modernisation and secularisation have been intimate bed fellows, advancing hand-in-hand over the long march of Enlightenment history, is a principle that lay at the heart of the birth of modern sociology in the late eighteenth century, and continued to recline there pretty much undisturbed until the 1980s and 1990s, and is reinvigorated from time to time by scholarship. This notion is planted deep and well-manured in social-science thinking, even when not at the forefront of analytical or research activity. The consequence of its hold upon the social-science mind is that religion has functions, a mechanistic role, which, when lost in modern machine-based society, become gradually and inevitably marginalised from the mind and, though lingering awhile in social convention and state structures, will ineluctably recede from humankind's purpose, thought and symbol. In this way, the notion that religion may act upon demography will be seen dismissively in a variety of arguments—that it is only an historical survival, a cultural residue, a romantic attachment (as in the church wedding) and not a real driver of demographic behaviour. Religion doesn't *drive* demography; no, it can't, because people are not driven by religion but by the hidden impulses behind change. Demography is something driven by other, more scientific factors. And in this regard, both the sociologist and the demographer, both historical and contemporary, will be much more enamoured of scientific thinking to explain demography. The dominance of statistics, tables, graphs, correlations and regressions has a tendency to reduce human behaviour to a law-based thinking in which the perennial search is for the rules which govern population shift. Demographic change became understood like secularisation as the merciless machine of modernity, driven in a pitiless neutrality alike by natural and human disasters, industrialisation and urbanisation, and factory owners seeking biddable workers in cahoots with middle-class evangelicals pursuing sobriety-inducing and respectability-chasing causes. Religion survived as labour training, not as belief. If the pre-industrial peasant's mind had been fooled into religion by ignorance, the factory worker's mind became fooled into religion by the culture of compliance and docility fostered by the Victorian chapel, the Edwardian domestic magazine, and the inter-war *Daily Express*. Left unexplained is how, in the 1940s and 1950s, a ferocious puritanism was foisted by the quiescence of war-exhausted adults, reclining in their suburban, snoozing respectability,

upon the war child who went to church or Sunday school and abstained (as we shall see in Chapter 4) from sex in a sea of ignorance.

Two parallel chains of intellectual thought extend from the birth of social science in the 1790s and 1800s to the present day—or close to the present day when the links have been rusting. On the one side, the population thinkers stretched from parson Thomas Malthus through Victorian statistician Ernest Ravenstein to the Cambridge Population History Group and its legacy of demographic historians; and beside it, the theorists of modern cities and secularisation stretched from kirk minister Thomas Chalmers through government census compiler Horace Mann and Karl Marx, on to the devotees of ‘God is dead’ in modern secularisation theory. Between these two chains, imprisoned between them, rests the gradual changes of demographic modernity—falling church marriage, rising illegitimacy, women not marrying until later, not having children until later or not at all, sex with multiple partners before marriage becoming standard and unremarked, coupled with teenage pregnancies and all sorts of other reputed ills. In the social sciences, there is agreement between social conservatives and liberals that modernity has been creating a gradual erosion of social convention; for the conservatives, for ill—for the liberals, some of it at least for the good. With the progress of individual freedom and multi-culturalism, gender equality and the sexual revolution, modernity creates social progress or breakdown—take your pick. For good or ill, there is an essential intellectual agreement here, the liberal and conservative in a firm concurrence (and one that used to involve the late lamented Marxist historian and sociologist too). Modernity has progressed social change in the long term with spurts (and yes, the liberal, conservative and Marxist could disagree on what and when were the spurts), but overall as a continuous shift through the ages of commerce, capital and communism (well, the European-style welfare state at least). With ‘the end of history’<sup>40</sup> in 1989 or thereabouts (accompanied by arguments for the culture wars, the clash of civilisations and desecularisation), the name of the age may have become more open to dispute, and in that intellectual imbroglio the modernity-secularisation double chains have become rattled if not broken in academic as well as political thought, opening the way to an interesting re-insertion of religion into the narrative of contemporary history. But the chains survive—not intact for sure, but secularisation and modernisation, secularity and modernity, keep half of sociology alive (if deeply confused).

So, the notion that religion matters because it shapes people’s demographic lives has not exactly had a wildly enthusiastic press in historical

<sup>40</sup> The argument of Fukuyama that the fall of communism marked the end of the social, cultural and political evolution of humankind. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).



or sociological scholarship. This absence of consideration extends into the other realms—ecclesiastical history, evangelical history and cultural history. Discourse analysis has not exactly found much room for the population graph. A great deal separates ecclesiastical history and cultural history, but each tends to neglect demographic history, though for different reasons. Ecclesiastical history is apt, certainly in its European variant, to stress a legacy of a past—in the medieval and early modern world—when the church was a dominant (often *the* dominant) institution of state and people's lives, providing 'the golden age' as a kind of starting point from which the history of religion is one of long, lingering, decline (the loss of church power in state and popular life, the loss of church lands—the original meaning in English of 'secularisation'—and the diminution of popular religion by degrees). The American religious history tradition has a different overarching grand narrative: of minorities escaping persecution, drawing European huddled masses in their wake to an industrialising giant, in which religion had to re-attract the people to church and faith. So, the post-eighteenth-century religiosity curve is upwards for America, downward for Europe. Except in the vaguest descriptive way, neither has had much place for demography as a concomitant of faith change.

For its part, cultural history was born largely out of mid twentieth-century economic and social history, a spinoff (in the 1970s and 1980s) reacting (like ecclesiastical history) against the materialist conception underlying both the statistics of economic history and the class-struggle descriptions of social history. Fear of figures (both their difficulty for the layperson and their deterministic implications) has tended to keep demography out of religious history. There are of course exceptions to this rule. There are religious historians who count, and count very well, and religious statisticians who dedicate their lives to producing data measuring religious and church change; Robert Wuthnow is one historian who has moved closest to a fully demographic analysis of religion in the post-war United States, whilst Peter Brierley has devoted much of his life to collecting, publishing and analysing statistics of church adherence and practice in UK.<sup>41</sup> But specific linkage between religious and demographic data by religious specialists in historical analysis has been relatively rare. Transnational work on demography and religion is rarer still.

<sup>41</sup> For example, the Glenmary institute in USA, and in Britain the work of Clive Field and David Voas, notable in the British Religion in Numbers (BRIN) website. See Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers*. Peter Brierley's work starts with *Prospect for the Eighties: From a Census of the Churches in 1979* (London: Bible Society, 1980).