

**Mitteilungen der  
Ernst-Troeltsch-Gesellschaft**

herausgegeben im Auftrag des Vorstandes  
der Ernst-Troeltsch-Gesellschaft von  
Friedrich Wilhelm Graf

**Band 18**

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## Ernst Troeltsch's Lasting Contribution to the Historiography of Christianity

*Arie L. Molendijk*

### Introduction

“Despite the efforts of doubters, sceptics and adversaries, the most influential general account of religion in modern Europe, and in the modern world, remains the theory of secularisation”.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding its obvious shortcomings, secularization is still the reigning paradigm, if the fate of religion in modernity is discussed. This raises the question of why secularization theory is so persistent. The foremost answer is that it is the master narrative, by which many of us have learned to perceive religion in the modern world. It is the paradigm which shapes our view of religion in the modern world. Moreover, it fits in all too well with the very real phenomenon of dechristianization that Western Europe experienced in the last four decades. The cognitive and moral claims of the old religion are no longer convincing to many westerners, including scholars and intellectuals. Apart from the fact that the conviction that religion is on the wane is so deep under the skin of many westerners, the range of the theory – or better theories – of secularization is very broad indeed. If one only takes a look at the entry “secularization” in dictionaries, one is already impressed by the huge variety of concepts and theories of secularization that is presented.<sup>2</sup> Should one determinable aspect be refuted, there are countless other aspects or elements of the thesis to quickly take its place. The enormous range of the theory makes it almost impossible to falsify it.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Cox: Master Narratives of Long-Term Religious Change, in: Hugh McLeod & Werner Ustorf, eds.: *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000*, Cambridge 2003, 201–217, 201.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. Marramao: *Säkularisierung*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. by J. Ritter & K. Gründer, vol. 8, Darmstadt 1992, 1133–1161.

The secularization theories draw on the juxtaposition of religion and modernity (science, rationalization). Most of the time the relationship between the two is described as an antagonistic one. An influential older handbook of the “scientific” study of religion started with Reinhold Niebuhr’s famous question: “why has religious faith persisted for three centuries after the first triumphs of modern science?”<sup>3</sup> His answer was that religion secured the basic trust we need to survive in a world of contingencies. The question may have been put in a rather crude way, but the functional understanding of religion as the caterer for the “ultimate contingencies” (*Kontingenzbewältigungspraxis*), above all death, is still popular.<sup>4</sup> Even if we reject such a general, and – sometimes – even acultural understanding of religion, and would opt for a more contextualized, historical approach, we should not overlook the fact that religion and modernity are intricately connected with each other. Strongly put, you could say that “religion” is essentially the problem and, to some extent, even the creation of modernity. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 was probably the last major occasion at which public reference was made to the *Respublica Christiana*, the “Christian Commonwealth”. This understanding was gradually replaced by the notion of Europe,<sup>5</sup> and religion was perceived as a domain in its own right.

The perception of religion as a distinct sphere of human culture is related to major developments in the modern western world. The revolutions of the late eighteenth century eventually led to the separation of Church and State in most western countries. The creation of the modern nation of equal and free citizens became only possible when religious difference no longer played a dominant role in the public sphere. From this point of view the disappearance of the old status quo, in which religion and political authority were intimately connected with each other, led in time to some sort of autonomization of religion, which consequent-

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in: J. Milton Yinger: *The Scientific Study of Religion*, New York, London 1970, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Hermann Lübbe: *Vollendung der Säkularisierung – Ende der Religion?*, in: Ders.: *Fortschritt als Orientierungsproblem. Aufklärung in der Gegenwart*, Freiburg i.B. 1975, 169–181, esp. 177–178; Hermann Lübbe: *Religion nach der Aufklärung*, Graz etc. <sup>2</sup>1990, 149–178.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Davies: *Europe. A History*, Oxford, New York 1996, Introduction.

ly could be studied in its own right.<sup>6</sup> Peter van Rooden has argued that the creation of the modern nation state brought about – at least to some extent – a transformation of religion from the visible social and hierarchical order to “the inner selves of the members of the moral community of the nation”.<sup>7</sup> This alleged relocation of religion with the break-down of the confessional state would be the beginning of an alternative master narrative.

In this essay, however, I don’t want to present an alternative master narrative of my own, but see what we can learn from Ernst Troeltsch in this respect. How did this master of historical narrative plot the history of modern Christianity in general and Protestantism in particular? Troeltsch was one of the pioneers of what we call – in retrospect – the modern sociology of religion. Scholars such as Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Troeltsch considered religion to be an important element of social life that influenced other domains such as politics and economics (and the other way around). Troeltsch was well aware of the metamorphoses of Christian religion in the modern western world that had such dramatic consequences for the established churches, including the Lutheran church to which he belonged, but he could not imagine a society without religion. In the following I will take up – in a free fashion – some of his basic insights in the history of western Christianity. Perhaps he did not give a clear-cut master narrative of religious history, but he surely tried to describe and explain the major transformations of Christianity in modernity.

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<sup>6</sup> Arie L. Molendijk & Peter Pels, eds.: *Religion in the Making. The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion*, Leiden 1998; Arie L. Molendijk: *The Emergence of the Science of Religion in the Netherlands*, Leiden 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Peter van Rooden: *Secularization and the Trajectory of Religion in the West*, in: Henri A. Krop, Arie L. Molendijk, Hent de Vries, eds.: *Post-Theism. Reframing the Judeo-Christian Tradition*, Leuven 2000, 169–188, esp. 181; cf. Arie L. Molendijk: *A Challenge to Philosophy of Religion*, in: *Ars Disputandi. The Online Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 1 (2000–2001), <http://www.roquade.nl/ad/cgi-bin/2001/index.html>.

## Universal History?

Troeltsch and his friend and colleague Max Weber talked – without much restraint – about world history and “universalgeschichtliche Probleme”. In the preface to his collected essays on sociology of religion Weber put the whole research program precisely within this framework: “A product of modern European civilization, studying any problem of universal history, is bound to ask himself to what combination of circumstances the fact should be attributed that in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having *universal* significance and value”.<sup>8</sup> By comparative religious studies Weber wanted to contribute to an understanding of developments in the western world. Whether he thought that the process of rationalization would necessarily lead to the disenchantment of the world and the end of religion, is an issue of debate.<sup>9</sup> Recent research shows us a much more nuanced and differentiated Weber, who dissolved universal history in a plurality of various cultural histories.<sup>10</sup>

Troeltsch attributed to Weber a heroic scepticism regarding religion.<sup>11</sup> The famous ending of Weber’s “Science as Vocation” would be a fine ex-

<sup>8</sup> The *Protestant Ethic* was included in the first part of the three volumes of his essays on sociology of religion. On this occasion Weber wrote the preface and added a final note, which both refer to universal history. A translation of the preface is to be found in: Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (1930), London 1974, 13–31, here 13 (italics original) [= GARS I, 1]; cf. p. 284, where Weber described his essays on sociology of religion as “some comparative studies of the general historical relationship [‘universalgeschichtliche Zusammenhänge’] between religion and society”.

<sup>9</sup> To give one example out of the immense literature on Weber: Volkhard Krech & Gerhard Wagner: *Wissenschaft als Dämon im Pantheon der Moderne. Eine Notiz zu Max Webers zeitdiagnostischer Verhältnisbestimmung von Wissenschaft und Religion*, in: Gerhard Wagner & Heinz Zipprian, eds.: *Max Webers Wissenschaftstheorie. Interpretation und Kritik*, Frankfurt a.M. 1994, 755–799.

<sup>10</sup> Wolfgang Schluchter: *Religion und Lebensführung*, 2 vols. (1988), Frankfurt a.M. 1991, vol. I, 98f.

<sup>11</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* (= GS III), Tübingen 1922, 565–572.

ample of this attitude.<sup>12</sup> Without trying to unravel their personal and intellectual relationship,<sup>13</sup> it is definitively not too bold to claim that Troeltsch had a much higher opinion of the role of (Christian) religion in late modernity than Weber. Another evident difference is the fact that Troeltsch confined himself mainly to western – Christian – religious history, whereas Weber claimed an overall perspective, which included the “world religions”.<sup>14</sup> This was not only a matter of scope of research, but also of principle. The possibility and the meaningfulness of universal history *stricto sensu* was denied by Troeltsch. Humanity as such has no unity and therefore no uniform development.<sup>15</sup> Talking about such a non-existing subject is telling metaphysical fairy tales. To take European-American history for the history of the world is a token of colonial and missionary

<sup>12</sup> Max Weber: Science as Vocation (Wissenschaft als Beruf, 1919), in: From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology, ed. by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, London 1970, 129–156.

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Graf: Friendship between Experts. Notes on Weber and Troeltsch, in: Wolfgang J. Mommsen & Jürgen Osterhammel, eds.: Max Weber and his Contemporaries, London 1987, 215–233; Friedrich Wilhelm Graf: Distanz und Nähe. Einige Bemerkungen zum “Weber-Paradigma” in Perspektiven der neueren Troeltsch-Forschung, in: Gert Albert et al., eds.: Das Weber-Paradigma. Studien zur Weiterentwicklung von Max Webers Forschungsprogramm, Tübingen 2003, 234–251; cf. Wolfgang Schluchter & Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, eds.: Asketischer Protestantismus und der “Geist” des modernen Kapitalismus, Tübingen 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Max Weber: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Die Wirtschaft und die gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen und Mächte, Nachlaß, Teilband 2: Religiöse Gemeinschaften, ed. by Hans G. Kippenberg, Tübingen 2001, esp. 87, where Kippenberg quotes a letter of Weber to his publisher from December 30, 1913. Weber wrote that he just finished a manuscript on the relationship between economics and forms of community (“Gemeinschaftsformen”), such as the family and religion. A sociology of doctrines of salvation and religious ethics is part of it, and Weber added that this is more or less the same as Troeltsch did (presumably in his *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*) now extended to “all religions”. “[Ich] habe eine geschlossene soziologische Theorie und Darstellung ausgearbeitet, welche alle großen Gemeinschaftsformen zur Wirtschaft in Beziehung setzt: von der Familie und Hausgemeinschaft zum ‘Betrieb’, zur Sippe, zur ethnischen Gemeinschaft, zur Religion (*alle* großen Religionen der Erde umfassend: Soziologie der Erlösungslehren und der religiösen Ethiken, - was *Troeltsch* gemacht hat, jetzt für *alle* Religionen, nur wesentlich knapper) endlich eine umfassende soziologische Staats- und Herrschaftslehre”.

<sup>15</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: Der Historismus, 705–707.

arrogance. Instead, Troeltsch proposed to narrow down universal history to western history, including the history of (North) America (and Russia), and to accept the possibility that the former colony will outdo the old colonial powers.<sup>16</sup> He coined the concept of “europeanism” (*Europäismus*) and looked for the – thriving – forces of the western world (“Hebrew prophetism, classic Greekness, ancient imperialism, and the western Middle Ages”).<sup>17</sup> Important in this context are not Troeltsch's speculations about these forces (which are, paradoxically, all pre-modern), but the way he tried to mediate between actual historical research and speculative philosophy of history. It is called a second-order or reflective historicism, because it accepts the historicity of our thinking and takes its own point of view as historically mediated into account.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Many present-day world histories agree with Troeltsch on the issue that eurocentric accounts have to be avoided, but that as from the end of the eighteenth century world events became more interconnected and interdependent, attempts to understand the world as a whole do make sense; cf. for a fine specimen of “world history”, which does take religion into account, C.A. Bayly: *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914*, Malden, MA etc. 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Der Historismus*, 765ff. (“hebräischer Prophetismus”, “klassisches Griechentum”, “antiker Imperialismus”, “abendländisches Mittelalter”); cf. John Higham: *Hanging Together. Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, ed. by Carl J. Guarneri, New Haven, London 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Die Krisis des Historismus* (1922), in: Ders.: *Schriften zur Politik und Kulturphilosophie*, ed. by Gangolf Hübinger (= Ernst Troeltsch: *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 15), Berlin, New York 2002, 433–455, at 437: “Es bedeutet die Historisierung unseres ganzen Wissens und Empfindens der geistigen Welt [...]. Wir sehen hier alles im Flusse des Werdens, in der endlosen und immer neuen Individualisierung, in der Bestimmtheit durch Vergangenes und in der Richtung auf unerkanntes Zukünftiges. Staat, Recht, Moral, Religion, Kunst sind in den Fluß des historischen Werdens aufgelöst und uns überall nur als Bestandteil geschichtlicher Entwicklungen verständlich”. The historical perspective has, according to Troeltsch, relativistic consequences, which he tried to contain. In any case, it means a severe blow to “eternal truths” and authority as such. On Troeltsch's historicism, see Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, ed.: *Ernst Troeltschs “Historismus”* (= *Troeltsch-Studien* 11), Gütersloh 2000; Friedrich Wilhelm Graf & Hartmut Rüdiger: *Ernst Troeltsch: Geschichtsphilosophie in praktischer Absicht*, in: Josef Speck, ed.: *Grundprobleme der großen Philosophen. Philosophie der Neuzeit*, vol. 4, Göttingen 1986, 128–164; Friedrich Wilhelm Graf & Hartmut Rüdiger: *Religiöser Hi-*



Troeltsch's way of dealing with historicism, however, is not the topic here. It is relevant insofar as even this final, grand *tour de force* on the "problems of historicism", which aimed at a new "cultural synthesis" (*Kultursynthese*), showed a clear awareness of the – European - context of the whole undertaking. Actually, the voluminous book on historicism contained a lot of methodological and theoretical reflection, and did not so much present a global history of (western) civilization. Although Troeltsch was accused by contemporary professional historians of giving only rough historical outlines based on secondary literature, he did not overlook the various, different historical contexts he was discussing. He even invented new instruments to describe religious history and to understand the various Christian religious groups and how these were related to modernity, which was analyzed as a complex of related, but highly diverse phenomena, as well.

#### Christianity and Modernity

Various monographs have been written about Troeltsch's view of Christian religion and modernity.<sup>19</sup> The following is the attempt to throw some light on the general direction of his thought on the topic and to see what type of narratives about religion in the modern world he told. Modernity starts, according to Troeltsch, with the Enlightenment, which is – intellectually spoken (although it is more than an intellectual movement) – the critique of tradition and authority. This line of thought is complemented in various ways. Foremost, in an historical way by introducing subsequent modernities, such as German idealism and the vaguely indicated

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storismus. Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923), in: Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, ed.: *Profile des neuzeitlichen Protestantismus*, Band 2/2 (Kaiserreich), Gütersloh 1993, 295–335.

<sup>19</sup> Gerhold Becker: *Neuzeitliche Subjektivität und Religiosität. Die religionsphilosophische Bedeutung von Heraufkunft und Wesen der Neuzeit im Denken von Ernst Troeltsch*, Regensburg 1982; Egbert Stolz: *Die Interpretation der modernen Welt bei Ernst Troeltsch. Zur Neuzeit- und Säkularisierungsproblematik*, Hamburg 1979; cf. Horst Renz, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, eds.: *Umstrittene Moderne. Die Zukunft der Neuzeit im Urteil der Epoche Ernst Troeltschs* (= *Troeltsch-Studien*, vol. 4), Gütersloh 1987; Trutz Rendtorff & Friedrich Wilhelm Graf: *Ernst Troeltsch*, in: N. Smart, et. al., eds.: *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, vol. 3, Cambridge etc. 1985, 305–332.

“nineteenth century”, which is characterized by the growing power of a “democratically tinted” imperialism and capitalism.<sup>20</sup> Both forces lead to a stress on the earthly life (*Diesseitigkeit*), which poses a threat to traditional religion. Eventually, Troeltsch told a long story about the trajectory – or better still trajectories – of religion in the west. This thoroughly historical approach leads him to refine and extend his view of modernity and religion.

There is no simple way to define modernity; essentially, if this word is permitted, it is multi-faceted phenomenon that can only be understood by the use of a broad spectrum of analysis. One of the main devices Troeltsch used is listing characteristics of modernity, which may vary according to the theme that is treated. He mentioned for instance: the growth of mobility, the rise of life expectancy, innerworldliness, the growing influence of technology and the sciences, the dominance of capitalism, the power of the bureaucratic welfare state, individualism and the ideals of personal self-realization and autonomy.<sup>21</sup> The denial of (supernatural) authority implies, according to Troeltsch, individualism and innerworldliness, but the idea of autonomy as such, he stressed,

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Arie L. Molendijk: Zwischen Theologie und Soziologie. Ernst Troeltschs Typen der christlichen Gemeinschaftsbildung: Kirche, Sekte, Mystik (= Troeltsch-Studien, vol. 9), Gütersloh 1996, 123–131.

<sup>21</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: Das Wesen des modernen Geistes (1907), in: Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte und Religionssoziologie (= GS IV), Tübingen 1925, 336f.; Ernst Troeltsch: The Essence of the Modern Spirit, in: id.: Religion in History, Minneapolis 1991, 237–272, 271f.: “[T]he spaciousness of all states and relationships, together with growing populations and improved means of transportation and communication that tend to standardize everything; an individualism that aims at a maximum participation of the individual in the values of life, and a corresponding independence; a secularity that is active chiefly in the positive shaping of the world and that amalgamates the religious values with those of civilization; the tremendous intensification of criticism and of the capacity for scholarly reflection; the astounding technological conquest of nature and its exploitation through a rationalized economy; a humane attitude that looks essentially for the good in humanity and seeks to develop it; the massive growth of the state, which encompasses every sphere of reality and aims at maximal national unity; a universal vision that stresses continuity and the intrinsic vital unity of the world-process; and, finally and above all, the freedom of an inwardly experienced necessity that opposes all purely external supernatural obligations; that is, moral and intellectual autonomy”.

is rather empty and compatible with a large range of world views, including a Christian view of life. It is not helpful to focus on the critique of religion as the distinct mark of the Enlightenment or to describe modernity in terms of the rise of (modern) paganism. On the contrary, Troeltsch was looking for the contribution of various Christian groups and principles to the rise of the modern world.<sup>22</sup> This does not mean that the modern world was perceived as the product of Christianity, but it would be wrong, in Troeltsch's opinion, to construe here a mere contradiction.

### Church, Sect and Mysticism

Troeltsch defended the view that Christian individualism itself did much to break the power of the old state churches.<sup>23</sup> Individualism is characteristic of Christianity as such, but was reinforced by the Reformation, and, especially, by sectarian groups such as the Anabaptists and so-called free "mystical" or "spiritualist" groups, which emphasize the importance of lay piety, tolerance, and personal religious experience. The trajectory of Christian individualism is, evidently, connected with the old-famous Church-Sect-Mysticism typology. The attempt has even been made to read the typology as a periodization of the history of Christianity.<sup>24</sup> This is a bit far-fetched, but one should not overlook the diachronical aspects of the types, which are immediately relevant for his view of modernity and religion.

<sup>22</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt* (1906–1913), ed. by Trutz Rendtorff in Zusammenarbeit mit Stefan Pautler (= Ernst Troeltsch: *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 8), Berlin, New York 2001; see, especially, the main booklet reprinted here: *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (1906, 1911), 183–316; transl. as Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress. A Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World* (1912), Philadelphia 1986.

<sup>23</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Das Wesen des modernen Geistes*, 332: "Der christliche Individualismus hat dem modernen die ersten Anstöße gegeben und größtenteils die Kirchen zerbrochen, ehe Staat und Gesellschaft daran dachten"; cf. Ernst Troeltsch: *The Essence of the Modern Spirit*, 267.

<sup>24</sup> Theodore M. Steeman: *Church, Sect, Mysticism, Denomination. Periodical Aspects of Troeltsch's Types*, in: *Sociological Analysis* 36 (1975), 181–204.

The types are, ultimately, rooted in different basic soteriological convictions. The institution (*Anstalt*) is rooted in the notion of grace (the church as guardian of the *depositum fidei* and the sacraments which mediate salvation); within the association (*Verein* – the sect-type), salvation is attained by the ethical performance of the individual, whereas the loose mystical groups stress the personal communion with God.<sup>25</sup> Even if the third type caters well for more diffuse and individualistic forms of Christian and – even – non-Christian religiosity, it is according to Troeltsch deeply embedded in the Christian tradition.<sup>26</sup> He himself had a certain predilection for the mystical type, but saw it not as the future form of Christianity, which would still need strong, but flexible, institutions. The culture of compulsion, which characterized the old churches, is no longer accepted, which means that they must be radically transformed. The churches are, thus, “loosing their hold on the spiritual life of the nations,

<sup>25</sup> For a short overview of the typology see Ernst Troeltsch: Stoic-Christian Natural Law and Modern Secular Natural Law (1911), in: id.: Religion in History, 321–342, 324–326: “The essence of the church-type is that it considers salvation as something given with the divine decree, as something that in principle is already realized. Independent of personal achievement and perfection, all salvation is based on the grace that has been embodied in the religious community by means of a redemption both finished and consummated. [...] Characteristic [of the sect-type] is its rigoristic demand for an unconditional application of the evangelical ethic and, in particular, of the Sermon on the Mount. [...] [I]t demands the actual overcoming of sin, the living up to the divine commandments; and it believes in the full redemption only of those in whom grace has become a recognizable force supporting the practice of a Christian life. To the sect, the religious community is not a general, all-inclusive institution into which one is born and whose powers of grace reach out by means of the influence of the church, the clergy, and the sacraments. The sect seeks to gather mature and personally convinced Christians into a holy community [...]. Mysticism aims at the immediate, present, and inward quality of religious experience, at the immediate relationship with God that leaps over or complements traditions, cults, and institutions”; cf. Arie L. Molendijk: Zwischen Theologie und Soziologie.

<sup>26</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon, 2 vols., London, New York 1931, 729ff. Troeltsch referred, among other things, to the Fourth Gospel and “Pauline Christ-mysticism” (733). The title of the original book was: Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen, Tübingen 1912 (= Gesammelte Schriften, vol. I) (= GS I).

and many of their functions are now being exercised by educationalists, writers, administrators, and by voluntary associations”.<sup>27</sup>

These functional losses could be described in terms of “secularization”. Although Troeltsch did not defend some sort of secularization thesis, he considered the “secularization of the state” (the separation between state and church) to be “the most important fact of the modern world”.<sup>28</sup> The modern state is free to pursue its own – innerworldly – legal, political, military and economic objectives. The sovereignty of God is replaced by that of the state. This means the end of the medieval *corpus christianum*, the close cooperation of state and church. Consequently, religion turns into a separate domain and the church (gradually) loses its privileged position. Principally, there is no obstacle to new competitors on the religious market, and a plurality of churches (religious groups) can develop. It becomes a matter of personal choice to join a particular religious community.<sup>29</sup>

Against this background we must understand Troeltsch’s distinction between Old and New Protestantism. The term New Protestantism means not only the free, liberal Protestantism, which Troeltsch himself favoured, but has a more general meaning: the Protestant churches which function on the basis of the secular state.<sup>30</sup> Old Protestantism – foremost Lutheranism and Calvinism – is almost by definition a pre-modern phenomenon. It is evident that Troeltsch did not consider the Reformation

<sup>27</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 1008 (= GS I, 982): “Die Seelen der Völker entgleiten den Kirchen, und ein guter Teil ihrer Funktionen ist an Schule, Literatur, Staat und Vereinswesen übergegangen”.

<sup>28</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit* (1906/1909/1922), ed. by Volker Drehsen (= Ernst Troeltsch: *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 7), Berlin, New York 2004 (original editions in: *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, ed. by Paul Hinneberg, Teil I, Abteilung IV, I. Hälfte: *Geschichte der christlichen Religion*, Berlin, Leipzig 1906, 253–458; second, revised edition, Berlin, Leipzig 1909, 431–755), 341.

<sup>29</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantisches Christentum*, second edition, 347 f.; cf. note 51 below.

<sup>30</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantisches Christentum* (Nachträge 1922), 535: “Neuprotestantismus bedeutet also nicht bloß freien, liberalen, fortschrittlichen, kritischen Protestantismus, sondern die protestantischen Kirchen auf dem Boden des weltlichen, wie man in Frankreich sagt, laicisierten Staates”.

the beginning of the modern world. Much to the outrage of contemporary German historians and theologians, he characterized Old Protestantism as “simply a modification [transformation] of Catholicism”.<sup>31</sup> Luther and Calvin inherited from Catholicism the basic idea of the church as a “wholly authoritative, purely Divine ordinances [institution] of salvation”.<sup>32</sup> Despite obvious mystical tendencies in Luther's work, this idea shaped the actual policy of Lutheran church formation, and that is what counts in Troeltsch's view.

The typology is a tool that enables Troeltsch to analyze the fundamental sociological structures of Christian forms of community. The types are ideal types, which implies that one often encounters ‘mixed’ forms, for instance, the church type with some sectarian traits, as is evident from his analysis of Calvin and Calvinism. “Calvin, for his part, approached the notion of sect on its strong, dominating, and social reform side by adopting the idea of holy religious communities and of the enforcement of their sanctity”.<sup>33</sup> Troeltsch admired (and overestimated) the Calvinistic potential for social reform and economic activity<sup>34</sup> in comparison to the alleged quietism of Lutheranism. In conclusion: Troeltsch was primarily interested in religious ideas which had a direct social and ethical impact. The typology selects those Christian ideas which determine the different principles of Christian organisation. Having understood various sociological structures of churches, sects and groups, the next

<sup>31</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress*, 41; = *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, 232f. [B 31f.]: “Aus der kirchlichen Kultur des Protestantismus kann kein direkter Weg in die kirchenfreie moderne Kultur führen. [...] [D]er Protestantismus – und insbesondere sein Ausgangspunkt, die Kirchenreform Luthers – [ist] zunächst nur eine Umbildung des Katholizismus”; cf. o.c., 226 f.

<sup>32</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress*, 43; o.c., 235 [B 34]: “die alte Grundidee einer durch und durch *autoritativen rein göttlichen Heilsanstalt*” (italics original).

<sup>33</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Calvin and Calvinism* (1909), in: *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, 134.

<sup>34</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 608 (= GS I, 651): “It is the very essence of the genuine Calvinistic spirit, and it has bred that sober utilitarian, energetic, and methodical purposive humanism [“Zweckmenschentum” = goal-oriented type of man] which labours on earth for a heavenly reward, which in its secular form is only too well known to us to-day”.

step was to analyze how these institutions and groups were related to the “world”. Correspondingly, the two main research goals of his great work *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups*, were the following. First, Troeltsch inquired “into the intrinsic sociological idea of Christianity, and its structure and organization”.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, he researched the relation between this sociological organization and the “social”, i.e., the state, the economic order and the family.

#### The Transformation of Christianity

Troeltsch tried to lessen the gap between the Old and the New Protestantism to some extent by pointing, for instance, to (spiritualistic) elements in Luther, which – although factually suppressed – are seeds of modernity. But more often than not the differences were stressed. Referring to the ideas of the Dutch theologian and prime minister Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), Troeltsch emphasized the new traits of Neo-Calvinism, contrasting it with the old “Protestantisms”.<sup>36</sup> “Neo-Calvinism . . . requires the Christian-Liberal organization of the State and of Society, independence and freedom for the individual, equality of opportunity as well as in the eyes of the law (*Gleichheit des Rechts und der Lebensmöglichkeiten*), the organization of international peace, and the conquest of the struggle for existence by means of self-discipline and active social help through associated effort (*tätige soziale Vereinshilfe*). . . . The patriarchal conservative elements of the Christian ethic have receded, and the aspects of social reform and love of liberty have come to the front”.<sup>37</sup> The role of associations and the principle of free churches make Calvinism and “related” sects, such as Baptists and Methodists, extremely successful.

The success of Pietism – which is one of the major and, at the same, most complex issues discussed in the *Social Teachings* – is for the most

<sup>35</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 34 (= GS I, 14).

<sup>36</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress*, 38; = *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, 230 [B 29].

<sup>37</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 688 [= GS I, 790]; cf. Ernst Troeltsch: *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, 227 [B 27 f.].

part explained by its sectarian traits.<sup>38</sup> Pietism is for many believers a good alternative to the high state church, because it is more directly adjusted to the spiritual needs of “common” people, who are much more directly involved in their own religious group. It sets free a lot of religious energy and striving. “[I]t displays a great deal of genuine, warm, and self-sacrificing piety, but it also displays that pettiness of religious groups which compensates for their detachment from the world by a still more thorough spiritual pride; affecting to despise worldly influence, they strive to attain it by personal scheming and intrigue, and they give vent to their passions in all kinds of religious bickerings”.<sup>39</sup> Troeltsch explained Pietism in typological terms by saying that it represents the sect-ideal within the churches, but he also noticed that it did not always remain within these confines, but led, in fact, to separation, as was the case with Labadism in the Netherlands and Methodism during the English Revolution.

In his analysis of the contribution of Christianity, especially Protestantism, to modernity, Troeltsch used a two-fold strategy: on the one hand, he singled out the novelty of modern culture compared to the world of medieval Catholicism and that of Luther and Calvin, and he claimed that the foundations of modern society, economy, the arts and the sciences, et cetera, have developed independently from Christianity. On the other hand, he maintained that “modern” ideas of individualism and personal freedom are also rooted in the Christian tradition. Sectarian and mystical groups, the “step-children of the Reformation”<sup>40</sup> that facilitated the transition of the Christian religion to modernity, deserve special mention. In a way, they are the missing link between the Old and the New Protestan-

<sup>38</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 714 ff. (= GS I, 827 ff.); cf. Arie L. Molendijk: *Zwischen Theologie und Soziologie*, 105–108.

<sup>39</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 715 (= GS I, 828): “Er zeigt viel echtes, warmes und opferwilliges Christentum, aber auch die ganze Kleinlichkeit geistlicher Gruppen, die für ihre Weltabgeschiedenheit durch einen um so gründlicheren Hochmut sich entschädigen, den scheinbar verschmähten weltlichen Einfluß durch allerhand persönliche Beziehungen dann doch wieder hinten herum gewinnen wollen und ihre Leidenschaften in allerhand geistlichem Krakehl austoben”.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress*, 68; = *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, 267 [B 62].



tism.<sup>41</sup> The concepts of free religious association, liberty of (religious) conscience and basic human rights have their roots in sectarianism and mysticism.<sup>42</sup> It is not easy to determine the precise contribution of each group discussed by Troeltsch to the emergence of these modern principles. In various contexts he referred, among others, to the Anabaptists, the Quakers, mystical spiritualism, “Pietistic Calvinism with a radical bent”, and also to old-Calvinist ideas of sovereignty and the right to revolution.<sup>43</sup>

The English Revolution, Troeltsch told the assembled German historians in their 1906 meeting in Stuttgart in his lecture on the meaning of Protestantism for the emergence of the modern world, was the event, in which this amalgam gained its enormous historical momentum. The “great ideas” of the separation of state and church, the toleration of various religious groups, the principle of free religious association, and the freedom of conscience and opinion originate in this period of time. This marks the decline of a culture of state-church compulsion and the begin-

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<sup>41</sup> In this context the importance of the intimate connection between Calvinism, especially in its “Puritan-Pietist-ascetic” form, and the sects, should be noticed as well; cf. Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 989 (note 512) (= GS I, 957 f., note 512): “I believe [...] that through my presentation of the sects, and especially in the clear distinction between mysticism and the sect-type, I have in some particulars made *Weber’s* idea [concerning the affinity between Calvinism and the sects on the one hand and capitalism on the other, ALM] clearer, and also that through the manifestation of the sectarian elements in primitive Calvinism I have made the fusion of Calvinism with the sect-type more intelligible” (italics original).

<sup>42</sup> The work of Georg Jellinek: *Die Erklärung der Menschen- und Bürgerrechte. Ein Beitrag zur modernen Verfassungsgeschichte*, second edition, Leipzig 1904, has been extremely important for Troeltsch in this respect; cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Graf: *Puritanische Sektenfreiheit versus lutherische Volkskirche. Zum Einfluß Georg Jellineks auf religionsdiagnostische Deutungsmuster Max Webers und Ernst Troeltschs*, in: *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte / Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 9 (2002), 42–69.

<sup>43</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Protestantism and Progress*, 68; = *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, 268 [B 62f.]. This last phrase “altcalvinistische Ideen vom Revolutionsrecht, von der Volkssouveränität und vom christlichen Staate” is missing in the English translation.

ning of modern, church-free, individual culture.<sup>44</sup> In his later work, especially in the *Social Teachings*, he made a – not unsuccessful – attempt to disentangle this amalgam, by making a distinction between the sect- and the mystical-type. Freedom of association, it will turn out, is distinctive of the sect, freedom of conscience of the mystical type. The Anabaptists opted for toleration, but not for freedom of conscience within their own circle.

“Mysticism is a radical individualism, very different from that of the sect. While the sect separates the individuals from the world by its conscious hostility to ‘worldliness’ and by its ethical severity, binding them together in a voluntary fellowship . . . mysticism lays no stress at all upon the relation between individuals, but only upon the relations between the soul and God”.<sup>45</sup> It will be evident, that the term “mysticism” is not used by Troeltsch in a traditional technical sense. It simply emphasizes the personal relationship with God, which can do, in principle, without the historical, authoritative, and ritual elements in religion. Paramount examples are Sebastian Franck, Sebastian Castellio, Dick Volckertszoon Coornhert, and large parts of modern German philosophy of religion. The presumed sociological character of the mystical-type is controversial; it is doubted, whether mysticism implies some sort of factual community which sociologists can study.<sup>46</sup> Troeltsch, however, maintained that the

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 267f. [B 62f.]: “[A]us dieser gewaltigen Episode verblieben die großen Ideen der *Trennung von Kirche und Staat, der Duldung verschiedener Kirchengemeinschaften nebeneinander, des Freiwilligkeitsprinzips in der Bildung von Kirchenkörpern, der (zunächst freilich relativen) Überzeugungs- und Meinungsfreiheit in allen Dingen von Weltanschauung und Religion.* [...] [H]ier ist das Ende der mittelalterlichen Kulturidee bewirkt, ist an Stelle der staatlich-kirchlichen Zwangskultur der Anfang der modernen kirchenfreien individuellen Kultur getreten” (italics original).

<sup>45</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 743 [= GS I, 864]; cf. 742–745, for a discussion of the differences between sect and mysticism; differences which Troeltsch himself had overlooked in his earlier work.

<sup>46</sup> Ferdinand Tönnies in his review of the “Soziallehren”, in: *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 39 (1914), 8–12; reprinted in: Ferdinand Tönnies: *Soziologische Studien und Kritiken*, vol. 3, Jena 1929, 432–438, 436: “Die unsichtbare Kirche aber ist ein soziales Gebilde überhaupt nicht; sie hat in keinem Sinne ein objektives Dasein, ist daher auch kein möglicher Gegenstand soziologischer Erkenntnis”; cf. Arie L. Molendijk: *Zwischen Theologie und Soziologie*, 64.

mystical type had sociological value: group formation is occurring in these circles and individualism is an extremely important sociological fact, as well.<sup>47</sup>

### The Uses of the Typology

If one asks for the use of Troeltsch's typology, the first answer probably is that it is a historiographical tool that is used to highlight historical diversity and to specify the particular contribution of various religious groups to modern developments. The typology concerns not only principles of organization (e.g., the sectarian principle of voluntary association), but also more general principles, such as the separation between Church and State, freedom of conscience, and other liberties as well. In sum: it enables him to give a structural – sociohistorical – history of western Christianity.

Secondly, an analysis of the historiographical use of the typology reveals Troeltsch's interest in the impact of religious *ideas and institutions* on society. This does not mean that he overlooked the influence of economic, political, and social factors on religion.<sup>48</sup> He aimed at an integral cultural history of Christianity, which takes the reciprocal relations between – in Karl Marx's terms – basis and superstructure into account. But, surely, it was of extreme importance to Troeltsch to maintain that the Christian religion was an independent variable that could not be reduced to, let's say, economics. The ideal types of church, sect and mysticism, in a way, guaranteed this independence of the Christian religion, which was – apparently – basically a pluriform phenomenon. The types represent fundamental aspects of the Christian religion and the ways it has evolved.

Thirdly, a view of development is implicated in the typology. As said above, it would be too simple to say that the three types stand for three phases in history, the experiential, individualistic "mysticism" being the last one. In this respect, Troeltsch gave no linear master narrative. He told several stories, about new forms of Christianity, typologized as sect

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Arie L. Molendijk: *Zwischen Theologie und Soziologie*, 72–76.

<sup>48</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Das stoisch-christliche Naturrecht und das moderne profane Naturrecht* (1910) (= GS IV, 166–191), 167: "Bald zerscheitern die ideellen Gesetzgebungen an den Naturgesetzen der Gesellschaft oder werden sie zu den verwickeltesten Kompromissen gezwungen".

and mysticism, and about the transformation of the old church institutions, which were constructed by “compulsion and relentless insistence upon rigid conformity to a uniform type of doctrine and organization” and presently have to allow for much more tolerance, if they want to survive.<sup>49</sup> The fact that Troeltsch is critical of the old ecclesiastical “culture of compulsion” (*Zwangskultur*) does not imply that now we have entered the new splendid era of religious freedom. A religious market based on free choice easily leads to a chaotic diversity and divisiveness (*chaotische Zerspaltenheit*).<sup>50</sup>

Fourthly, the typology is used to formulate the ecclesiastical ideal of the flexible German *Landeskirche* or *Volkskirche* which integrates a variety of Christians under the same roof. Troeltsch was not blind to the success of American Christianity, which was clearly based on the principle of voluntary association and the competition between religious groups,<sup>51</sup> but he strongly favoured a churchly institution that is capable of containing a large diversity of Christians. Interestingly enough, Max Weber also denied that sectarianism was a viable option for Germany.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 1010 (= GS I, 982f.).

<sup>50</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *Religion*, in: D. Sarason, ed.: *Das Jahr 1913. Ein Gesamtbild der Kulturentwicklung*, Leipzig, Berlin 1913, 533–549, 534.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Arie L. Molendijk: *Zwischen Theologie und Soziologie*, 132: “Prinzipiell nun haben die protestantischen Kirchen auf die Verselbständigung des Staates Troeltsch zufolge mit einer Verselbständigung der Kirche reagiert, die ein neues Kirchenverständnis mit sich bringt. Wenn man auf die staatlich gesicherte Einheitskirche verzichtet, dann wird die Kirchenbildung im Prinzip freigegeben, sind die Kirchen im Plural faktisch legitimiert. In Analogie zur Lehre des Staatsvertrages tritt anstelle des alten Anstalts- und Stiftungsbegriffes der neue Korporationsbegriff. Aus der Kirche wird eine Religionsgemeinschaft, die aus den konstituierenden Einzelgemeinden zusammengesetzt ist. ‘Damit sind die Prinzipien des modernen Individualismus auf die Kirche selbst mehr oder minder streng allseits übertragen worden. Die religiöse Überzeugung ist Gewissenssache, und niemand kann zu ihr gezwungen werden; das Recht der Konfessions- und Religionslosigkeit ist schließlich zugestanden. Die Kirchen beruhen auf der Korporation der in ihrer Gewissensüberzeugung Übereinstimmenden und können in beliebiger Zahl nebeneinander existieren’”. The quotation is taken from *Protestantisches Christentum*, 347–348.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Max Weber in a letter to Adolf Harnack (5.2.1906), *Max Weber: Briefe 1906–1908* (= MWG II, 5), Tübingen 1990, 32f.: “Es ist eine innerlich schwierige und tragische Situation: *Niemand* von uns könnte *selbst* ‘Sekten’-Mensch, Quäker, Bap-

Sects did not give much for learned (theological) scholarship: they stress religious needs and not general cultural values.<sup>53</sup> But, one is tempted to ask, is not this precisely an explanation for the attraction of “sectarian” groups? Has not the voluntary principle in the modern world proved to be stronger than Troeltsch thought? Even the old western European churches are by many considered to be nothing more than associations. Is not the pursuit of the “unity of the heterogeneous” (*Einheit des Heterogenen*)<sup>54</sup> doomed to fail in a context of radical plurality?

#### After Troeltsch

In this section I will touch upon the question what historians can learn from Troeltsch’s work, but, first, a few comments on its limitations are due. The history of modern Christianity given by Troeltsch is very much a history of Protestantism. Large parts of Christian religious history – prominent examples being the Anglican Church and Eastern Christianity

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tist etc. sein, *Jeder* von uns muß die Überlegenheit des - im Grunde doch - *Anstalts*-Kirchentums, gemessen an *nicht*-ethischen und *nicht*-religiösen Werthen, auf den ersten Blick bemerken. Und die Zeit für ‘Sekten’ oder etwas ihnen Wesensgleiches ist, vor Allem, historisch vorbei. Aber daß unsre Nation die Schule des harten Asketismus niemals, in *keiner* Form, durchgemacht hat, ist, auf der andren Seite der Quell alles Desjenigen, was ich an ihr (wie an mir selbst) hassenswerth finde, und vollends bei *religiöser* Wertung steht eben - darüber hilft mir nichts hinweg - der Durchschnitts-Sektenmensch der Amerikaner ebenso hoch über dem landeskirchlichen Christen bei uns, - wie, als religiöse Persönlichkeit, Luther über Calvin, Fox e tutti quanti steht” (italics original). For both Weber’s and Troeltsch’s view of sects the trip they made together to the USA in 1904 has been important; cf. Hans Rollmann: Meet me in St. Louis. Troeltsch and Weber in America, in: Hartmut Lehmann & Guenther Roth, eds.: Weber’s “Protestant Ethic”. Origins, Evidence, Contexts, Washington 1993, 357–383.

<sup>53</sup> Max Weber: “Kirchen” und “Sekten” in Nordamerika. Eine kirchen- und sozialpolitische Skizze, in: Die Christliche Welt 20 (1906), 558–562, 577–583, here 582; revised: Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus, in: GARS I, 207–236.

<sup>54</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: Die Zufälligkeit der Geschichtswahrheiten, in: Der Leuchter. Jahrbuch der Schule der Weisheit (1923), 31–61, 44; cf. John Higham: Hanging Together. Unity and Diversity in American Culture, New Haven, London, chapter 7: Pluralistic integration as an American Model (cf. NYRB, 28.02.02, 39).

– are not or only superficially treated. Furthermore, it is possible and necessary to criticize his view of the various Protestantisms. The sharp contrast he drew between dynamic Calvinism and quietistic Lutheranism is criticized. Various readjustments have to be made.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, we find in Troeltsch's work a variety of perceptive remarks. I am not prepared to give here a balanced appreciation of Troeltsch's contribution to the historiography of Christianity. Instead, I would like to end with a few remarks, which put the strong sides of Troeltsch into perspective.

Without reducing religious history to ideas or mentalities, Troeltsch's cultural history of Christianity takes the importance of religious ideas and their interplay with (other) factualities into account. The same applies, of course, to Weber's *Protestant Ethic*. Historical change can not only be explained by reference to economic and political developments, but by motivational factors as well. Concerning the Middle Ages Troeltsch summarized his point of view as follows: "To the extent that medieval social teachings became practical realities and accomplished something significant, they stemmed by no means from religious conceptions alone but from the ancient Greek cultural heritage, the Roman art of government, Germanic law, and new conditions emerging with the times. The really significant contribution, in fact, was the relatively unified correlation of a system of life and thought, which entered the imagination and standards of the masses and created a common psychological sphere".<sup>56</sup> The question in the context of this essay is not whether this is true or false, but it shows Troeltsch's awareness of the interplay of various factors, including motivational religious ideas.

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<sup>55</sup> Louise Schorn-Schütte: Ernst Troeltschs "Soziallehren" und die gegenwärtige Frühneuzeitforschung. Zur Diskussion um die Bedeutung von Luthertum und Calvinismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt, and Walter Sparr: Preußische Religion und lutherische Innerlichkeit. Ernst Troeltschs Erwartungen an das Luthertum, in: Friedrich Wilhelm Graf & Trutz Rendtorff, eds.: Ernst Troeltschs Soziallehren. Studien zu ihrer Interpretation (= Troeltsch-Studien, vol. 6), Gütersloh 1993, 133–151 and 152–177.

<sup>56</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: Die Sozialphilosophie des Christentums, Gotha 1922, 33; Ernst Troeltsch: The Social Philosophy of Christianity, in: id.: Religion in History, 210–234, 233.

He was – as noticed above – not primarily interested in ideas, but in those ideas that had factual impact. In the phrasing of Charles Taylor, Troeltsch was not primarily interested in sets of ideas, but in (modern) religious imaginaries, which enable religious practices and make sense of them.<sup>57</sup> The religious imaginary enables the practices of believers, who most of time don't know the theory involved in a particular imaginary. Like Taylor, Troeltsch stresses the importance and even priority of ideological factors in enabling practices, and he paid special attention to the mediation of ideas. The typology is a good example of mediation, because Troeltsch argued that various (soteriological) ideas determine the basic pattern of how religious communities function. Not only is the structure of a religious group to be understood on the basis of formative religious ideas, but this very structure predisposes to certain beliefs and ways of life, too. The individualistic mystical type, for instance, did not mediate ideas concerning the state or the economy, but “within the sphere of the sex ethic and of the family . . . this type of thought displays features which are peculiar to itself”.<sup>58</sup> It can hardly be denied, that some sort of revolution in these spheres has taken place in the twentieth century.<sup>59</sup>

It would be wrong to assume that Troeltsch thought that the mystical type represents the only truly modern – individualistic and subjectivized – form of religion. Yet, the concept can be used to cater to this development in modern religious history. Various volatile and free-floating forms of religiosity or spirituality can be included and analyzed under this heading. The phenomenon of the privatization of religion can also be related to this type, but, as Troeltsch knew very well, it would be wrong to claim that this was the fate of religion in modernity. The separation between Church and State in the Enlightenment period does not forbid a *public* role of religion. As José Casanova has shown, churches can adapt themselves to the new paradigm by evolving from state-oriented into society-oriented institutions.<sup>60</sup> However, it is evident that not all forms of reli-

<sup>57</sup> Charles Taylor: *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Durham, London 2004, esp. 2 & 23.

<sup>58</sup> Ernst Troeltsch: *The Social Teaching*, 801 (= GS I, 941).

<sup>59</sup> Trutz Rendtorff: “Meine eigene Theologie ist spiritualistisch”. Zur Funktion der “Mystik” als Sozialform des modernen Christentums, in: Friedrich Wilhelm Graf & Trutz Rendtorff, eds.: *Ernst Troeltschs Soziallehren*, 178–192, 191.

<sup>60</sup> José Casanova: *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago, London 1994.

gion adapt themselves to the new paradigm. "Strong religions"<sup>61</sup> – as they are called nowadays – and fundamentalisms presently dominate the public discourse, and the rise of these forms of religion will probably contribute more to the dissolution of the secularization paradigm than the many intellectual critiques which were ventured in recent decades.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby & Emmanuel Sivan: *Strong Religion. The Rise of Fundamentalism around the World*, Chicago, London 2003.

<sup>62</sup> Earlier versions of this text were presented at the conference on Master Narratives in Amsterdam (April 2002) and at the Annual Meeting of the Nineteenth Century Theology Group of the AAR in Philadelphia (November 2005). For the correction of my English I am most grateful to Walter E. Wyman.