6 The Netherlands, a peculiar religious landscape?

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"I pray to God, in whom I do not believe, that He, if He exists, will help my friend, who does believe in Him"

Joop (17)

Summary

The Netherlands is reputed to be the most secularised country in Europe. Is this still the case? During the fifties of the last century the Netherlands was, after all, a very denominational country, which cannot be said of it nowadays. In what situation do the adolescents of today find themselves in this respect? Does the perspective of secularisation apply to them or should it be said from a postmodernist perspective, that there is a case of 'believe without belonging'? Up until now, the results of various analyses of Dutch empirical information concerning 816 adolescents are vague and diverse. Vast numbers of adolescents are turning away from the institute church and religion. Any kind of connection they have with religion is interpreted as being very pragmatically agnostic. If religion or faith is actually able to help them, then they are willing to accept it. In general, girls are more open to religion than boys. Religious plurality is positively appreciated, in the sense of: each his own religion, there seems to be little room for communication. Religious education should concentrate on the personal social life especially and on the significance of religion in this. At the same time, they feel that religion and the church do not really belong in society. Xenophobia, neuroticism and a negative attitude towards religion are linked in their case but whether or not these enhance one another is not clear, this would require further study.

1 Theory

1.1 Denominational society: a short history

The Netherlands is known as the most secularised country in Europe (Halman, 2005; Greeley ,1995; Janssen,1999). This has not always been the case. Up till the sixties of the last century, the Netherlands was a denominational pillarized society (Post,1989; Thurlings,1978). The large ideological movements in the country each formed a world of their own. There were three large socio-political groups: the Roman Catholic, the Protestant and the socialist. One's whole existence was allowed to be guided by the individual principles, faith and ideology within the socio-political group. All social and cultural life was centred on this. The Catholics lived in the South of the Netherlands especially, the Protestants in the middle and North and the socialists in the big cities in the West. Holland, as the part of the Netherlands above the big rivers the Rhine and the Meuse is called, is of old a Protestant nation, since the iconoclastic fury in 1566, when many Catholic church treasures were taken by the Protestants and icons in the churches were destroyed. At that time it was only possible for Catholics to practice their faith in secret. It was not until 1850 that the Episcopal hierarchy in the Netherlands was restored and Catholics began their fight for emancipation. They were given back their own churches and also built many new ones. They established schools, built their own hospitals, had their own newspapers and later their own radio and television broadcasting corporations and of course, their own political parties, which gained more and more power. In the Netherlands, since 1900 the confessional parties have almost always participated in governments. The most significant struggle was the school funding controversy that was not settled until 1917, through the complete emancipation (pacification) of

confessional (Catholic and Protestant) and public education that was equally financed by the government. This system is still in existence. Approximately 60% of schools are confessional, in the meantime expanded with Jewish and Islamic schools (Dijkstra & Dronkers,1997).

On the one hand, life within the 'pillar' was simple because it was clearly structured and organised, and on the other, it was also extremely confining due to the lack of freedom it offered. During the sixties the first cracks in the socio-political and religious groups became obvious (Thurlings, 1978). Increasing prosperity following the period of recovery from damage caused by war and the authoritarian structures and increasing materialism of society evoked protest amongst the post-war generation (the so-called baby-boomers) growing up. They had a nice life, were given a good education and became more and more aware of new developments in science and technology. The church and religion were no longer necessary for a life of freedom and happiness. Socialism proved that these institutions were sooner an impediment to development. In this way the socio-political and religious groups were gradually broken open from the inside and out. Initially, the Second Vatican Council brought freedom and openness within the Catholic Church, but at the same time it revealed just how oppressive the structures of the church had been. And when the 'Aggiornamento' in the Dutch Catholic Church did not happen fast enough and was again hindered by Roman authority, many left the church, disillusioned. To start with they sought an alternative in leftist socialism, later, when it turned out that this was also not able to offer what they had hoped for, they became lost and philosophically individualised.

Development within the Catholic and Protestant churches does not coincide. The exodus from the Catholic Church started earlier followed by the Protestant churches a few years later, although this did occur faster (Van der Ploeg, 1985).

The church was no longer needed to clarify and solve social issues (salience), it was also no longer needed to experience meaning and be happy (meaning), and finally it also no longer provided a social safety net (belonging) (Geerts,1975).

Things have moved fast in the past half-century. Figures are proof of this. In 1958, 24% of the population stated that they did not count themselves as belonging to a church or religious community. In 1999 this had increased to 63%. Of the generation born after 1960, this is at that time 73%. Since 1958, the share of Catholics among the population has decreased from 42% to 18% nowadays (Becker, 2000).

Since 1809, the year the first census was carried out in the Netherlands, the number of Catholics has risen from almost a million to almost 5 million in 1960. Round the turn of the century, 1900, there was a decrease. It must be mentioned that there is a difference in the official counts in council and religious registers and the numbers found in surveys. In 1996, this difference was more than 13%. Apparently it still takes more effort to deregister than it does to tick a questionnaire indicating that you are not a member (Sengers, 2003).

Prognoses point out that in 2010, 67% of the population will be non-religious. Thirteen percent of the population is expected to be Catholic in 2010.

Within the churches, too, much has changed. Religious participation has drastically decreased. In 1970, 63% of Catholics attended a church service at least once a month, in 2005 this was only 12%. At the same time, it seems that the number of people who attend 'something resembling a church service' is increasing. In 2003, this was 23% of the population and in 2010 this is expected to be 35% of the population. Evidently, people search for other ways to express their desire to experience meaning. This coincides with the fact that the teachings of the church are also being questioned more and more with regard to content (Becker, 2000).

The (prognosis) figures, which date from 2000, seem to have been overtaken by time. Research that took place in 2002 shows the following. In 2002, of the 12-24 year olds, 47% was non-denominational, 25% Catholic and 16% Protestant, 11% belonged to, among others, the Islam - 5.3% of the population was Muslim - (statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb) and other philosophical movements. Eleven per cent of these adolescents goes to church weekly and 73% never. (Jeugd, 2003).

During the denominational period, Christian churches had great influence on the perception of life and meaning of adolescents. At school, in church and in daily life they were confronted with statements from the church on what to think and do and above all on what was good and what was evil. The religious education of children was at that time the task of the primary school. The

school was often connected to the local parish church and so the chaplain or priest gave confirmation lessons at school. The chaplain was often also the moderator of the local football club and scouts and band and rifle club. There was a high level of social control within this denominational community and the power of the church was clearly visible (Sengers, 2003). The parish priest saw to it that many children were present and also recruited candidates for priesthood from these families. The seminaries were full. There was even a surplus of priests, who then also travelled the world as missionaries. In 1954, the Dutch bishops made a statement in the political area, which forbade Catholics to vote for socialist parties, read socialist newspapers and listen to the socialist radio broadcasting corporation. The importance attached to statements made by the church is drastically decreasing. In 1998, 77% of the population believes that religious leaders should refrain from making political statements, 70% believes that politics and religion do not belong together, 80 % that in the choice of a school the religious basis only plays a third of a role. Of the church members, 58% believes that they are not obliged to obey church regulations. As far as anti-conception is concerned, figures are much higher. When considering the subjects on which the church should comment, then its own members feel it should make itself heard on poverty and discrimination, but that it should remain silent when it comes to personal moral issues (euthanasia, abortion, sexuality, divorce). A mere 29% of the population subscribes to the remark made by Dostojewski that without God there is no morality (De Hart 1999). A study conducted in 2003 among adolescents, shows that there is very little confidence in the churches, together with politics they come last, whilst there is much more confidence in Human Rights groups and in the police and newspapers (Van der Tuin, 2005). There is a shift taking place in the bearers of morality, - these are no longer the churches -, it is more and more often – in this post-modern society - the individual himself who forms a conscience from various bearers, just as he patchworks a philosophy for himself from existing philosophies (Alma & Janssen, 2000).

Thus far the facts. So does secularisation mean that there is no room for religion in modern Dutch society? I wish to go into more detail on the term secularisation in order to explain this.

Two perspectives: secularisation and post-modernism

The current situation of faith and the philosophy of life can be perceived in two ways: a secularisation perspective and a post-modernism perspective (Fischer, 1998; Roebben 1996; Schwab, 1997; Hermans, 2001). The term secularisation is used here to indicate that the institutionalised form of faith and religion (the church) is disappearing. With the term post-modernism is meant the new form in which religiosity occurs in society (Van Harskamp, 2000; Swatos, 2000; Davie, 2000; 2002; Hervieu-Léger, 200).

Secularisation is described as being the process whereby the significance of the institutionalised forms of faith and religion has decreased and that these institutions are threatening to disappear. In the process of rationalisation, all kinds of functions that religion and the giving of meaning fulfilled in classical society have been modernised, in other words, they have either disappeared or been taken over. Van der Ven refers to this as institutional differentiation: the church and religion have become independent and isolated institutions amidst other institutions; and as cultural generalisation as a result of differentiation, whereby, in the area of values and meaning, the church and religion are being confronted with an increasing abstractionism of these, therefore making it harder for them to contribute their own specific values and meanings (Van der Ven, 1995). Secularisation does not yet mean that religion and faith disappear as a form of giving meaning.

The post-modernism perspective or globalisation perspective (Hermans, 2001) concentrates on the challenge presented by the changing situation of faith and religion in our society. Pluralism in the cultural as well as religious sense means that established religious institutions need to reflect on what they have to offer in the form of meaning. That they need to communicate with other institutions, whereby the contingency of their own meanings is the departure point. Pluralism is a feature of our society, but also of religions and of Christianity (Van der Ven & Ziebertz, 1994).

Secularisation: religiosity in decline?

The figures mentioned above indicate that the Church and Christianity are losing their status as an institution in the Netherlands. When applied to adolescents the following can be concluded: the adolescents of today in the Netherlands are in no way whatsoever involved in the church, neither in the activities of the church nor in what the church represents in the form of faith. They give negative answers to questions such as: do you belong to a church, do you believe in God, the father of Jesus, do you believe in heaven, hell, Mary's virginity, the sanctity of marriage, that Jesus is actually present in the sacred host and any other questions of this kind. These words and images no longer mean anything to them, they do not feel attracted by them, cannot comprehend them and reject anything that has to do with them.

Parents and educators may ask themselves the question: for what reason have we educated until now? If we have brought our children up to become actively involved members of a church or religious community, then this has turned out to be an unattainable goal. Moreover, this concerns us, too. If the situation continues as it is, Christianity will disappear, certainly at least in its present form. Because may I pose the question: just how is Christianity experienced in this day and age, what was it like four years ago, and 100 years ago, and 500 years ago, during Luther's protest, or at the time of Charles the Great and Charles the Fifth, or in the Rome of popes and antipopes, or at the time of the very first Christians? It has not always been the same, has it, it has continually been threatened, uprooted, unbalanced, renewed, changed and it will always be like this. And it is always the next generation that introduces the renewal, the decay or the revival, with the understandable resistance, unwillingness and concern of the older generation: "Unsere Zeit ist eine Zeit religiösen Verfalls. Die permanente Vitalität des Religiösen ist verloren gegangen. Die Volksmasse ist entweder abergläubisch oder religiös gleichgültig geworden. Die Elite der Gesellschaft ist agnostisch oder skeptisch, und politische Führer sind Heuchler; die Jugend steht in einem offenen Konflikt mit der etablierten Gesellschaft und mit der Autorität der Vergangenheit; man experimentiert mit orientalischen Religionen und Meditationstechniken. Der grösste Teil der Menschen ist vom Verfall der Sitten angegriffen." The quote appears to be very relevant to our times and even to apply to our own modern society, too. However, it was quoted by Tacitus, 2000 years ago. Nothing has changed. It is as though the same questions arise.

In the secularisation perspective, faith/philosophy of life and church membership are connected. Research in the seventies and eighties indicates that there is no question of interest in faith or religion outside the framework of religious institutions (Felling, Peters, Schreuder, 1991). This has certainly changed throughout the years.

Post-modernism: plurality as a challenge?

A post-modernism perspective leaves room for a different interpretation of present-day developments. The term 'believe without belonging' aptly characterises these developments (Heitink & Stoffels, 2003; Stoffels & Dekker, 2003; see also chapter 1 of this book). A study carried out in 2000 by the Dutch Socio-Cultural Planning Bureau shows for example that amongst the non-religious, a growth in the number of central religious beliefs can be observed between 1991 and 1999; in 1999, 52% believes in life after death (was 42%); in heaven 32% (was 23%; in hell 15% (was 7%) and in miracles 30% (was 19%). At the same time, one must ascertain that interest in the philosophy of life expressed in: talking or reading, watching or listening to a TV or radio programme on the subject, is minimal and still declining by 2.2 times a year to twice a year in 1999. Amongst religious adolescents, thus, perhaps those who were in Toronto in 2002 and Köln in 2005, there has been a marked increase in belief in life after death, in heaven, hell and miracles: 74% to 82%; 69% to 82%; 36% to 50% and 49% to 65%. However, when it comes to interpretation this presents a problem because it is possible to compare the answers to the same question presented in two different years, but it is impossible to know whether, in the meantime, people have come to interpret the same question differently. What does one understand to be heaven and hell, to be a miracle, and what does one imagine life after death to be like? According to Pope John Paul II, the meaning of hell has become much worldlier. It is to be found anywhere where violence and injustice, sin and lawlessness reign. Hell is the social coldness of our society from which God has withdrawn.

In a religious sense the Netherlands is a special case, because it takes the forefront in Europe, is the religious experimental field (Janssen, 1998). Comparatively speaking, it has the largest

number of (small) religious movements, accommodates the largest number of non-religious, shows the greatest interest in New Age and religious Dutch people participate most in religious activities. At the same time, adolescents are only remotely involved in the institutional church. For example, at the World Youth Days in Toronto in the summer of 2002 only 600 of the 800.000 youths present came from the Netherlands, in Köln – which is not far from the Dutch border - in 2005 there were around 3000. Is it possible to connect the presence of the Pope and that of large numbers of adolescents at such a manifestation directly with traditional forms of faith? When I consider this then it can be assumed that the adolescents present are believers; that they meet there to experience and possibly share their faith and perhaps even to confess their faith to the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the pope; the events in Köln and earlier in Rome during the funeral of John Paul II are, therefore, a manifestation of the Church? In any case, this is the explanation given by church leaders.

However, there is more to it. The presence of so many adolescents in this context evokes the question as to what faith means to adolescents. Behind this, and I continue to associate, is the thought that faith means a great deal to those adolescents who were in Köln and that this is somewhat strange, considering experience here in the Netherlands. There is reason for concern and surprise. Surprise at so much involvement in faith of adolescents elsewhere in the world and concern about the fact that this is not the case closer to home.

Indeed, in the Netherlands there is a difference between the adolescents with a Protestant-Christian background and those with a Catholic one. The former group is much more visibly involved in its own denomination. They gather at the EO jongeren dagen (Evangelical Broadcasting Company youth days)[1], where 50.000 adolescents in a huge stadium listen to gospel bands, to evangelists and sing, pray and dance together.

The Catholic adolescents in the Netherlands are totally different. There were hardly any present in Toronto and Köln and only very few when similar events took place in their own country. As far as church membership goes, in research that was carried out in 16 European countries, they come bottom of the list. Dutch adolescents are in a position of their own in Europe (Janssen, 2000; 2003; Janssen & Prins, 1998).

Significance of religion in the modern world: Contingency

What is the purpose of religion in people's lives? Why do people believe, have a philosophy of life? At this point, I would like to make a number of comments with regard to this. I have already mentioned Geerts, who indicates that religion and philosophy fulfil three functions, those of salience, meaning and belonging. The functions of belonging and salience have disappeared in the modernism perspective (Van der Tuin, 1999). What remains is the function of giving meaning. Religion gives meaning 'when people need words, actions, gestures and thoughts at times when they do not know what to say, what to do or what to think' (Paul Valéry). This happens especially when the normality of existence is breached by intense moments of happiness or sadness. Moments that are not planned, that are unanticipated and that simply happen, freely and unintentionally. It is at times like these that fundamental questions of life and death, of good and evil, of future and time, of who I am and what I mean to others, of why I am who I am, are forced upon us. These questions stem from the contingency of existence, from the perception of our existence being none other than what it is. Religion is no longer the co-ordinating, uniting factor providing an answer to all these questions. Nowadays, we are confronted with a kind of giving meaning market which offers us a multicoloured supply. 'Traditions that have been handed down appear fragmented next to one another and next to new philosophical items of cultural significance' (Boeve, 1999). Post-modern man picks out what suits him best and puts together his own philosophy of life on the basis of elements taken from these goods: patchwork (De Hart, 1990; Janssen , 2003).

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[1] The EO (Evangelical Broadcasting Company) is a Christian broadcasting corporation whose members are especially orthodox Protestants. The corporation organises an annual assembly for adolescents; this day of music, dance, meeting together, evangelisation and preaching attracts more and more adolescents each year. In 2001 the manifestation took place in the Arena in Amsterdam. The adolescents that attend the day are often members of Protestant church groups, other than that they barely differ from their contemporaries in behaviour and appearance. The music played is modern.

2 Research context

Research question

The general research question is formulated as follows: *how is the religiosity of (Dutch) adolescents' expressed in the micro- (personal), meso- (institutional) and macro- (Dutch) areas?*

The three different levels of the social environment of these adolescents are analysed according to a number of aspects.

First, on the individual level, religious socialisation is discussed. To what extent have these adolescents - the children of parents who experienced the great exodus from the churches and who themselves admit to a limited involvement in the church - been brought up with religion? Do they continue in this fashion or do they choose their own path and can one speak of a different, new form of involvement in faith and philosophy of life? Attention is paid to their own religious practices, in particular.
-    The question as to religious experience,
-    their opinion on this based on the perspective of others and
-    their own perspective is studied in more depth.

Finally, there is the more cognitive link: what are their philosophical views. A detailed list with different views has been designed to discover this. The question in this case is the extent to which these adolescents share these views. The post-modern view of faith and philosophy of life is one of patchwork behaviour. Following on from this is the question as to whether and how adolescents knock together their own philosophy of life, based on traditional views?

In the meso-area, the study focuses on the question as to where adolescents stand in relation to the church and in relation to the religious education they received at school. As far as the situation in the Netherlands is concerned, religious education at schools is no longer explicitly given based on or aimed at a particular denomination, but is general education concerning philosophy of life. The purpose of this subject is to teach pupils how to think philosophically and to participate in inter-philosophical communication within society.

The macro-level concerns their attitude towards religious plurality in a multicultural society. In the Netherlands, the Catholic denomination is the largest, followed by the Protestant Churches and then the Islam. All other world religions in the Netherlands occupy a very minor position.

As far as the Netherlands is concerned, I concentrate on a more specific question for the analyses. What are the indications of a post-modernity perspective with regard to faith and philosophy of life in the Netherlands. Can one talk of 'believe without belonging'? The process of secularisation in the Netherlands is a complex one (Janssen, 1998). One can no longer speak of a univocal aversion to religion. In society religion is visible in many different areas and many different forms: in massive mourning rituals following serious events (in the Netherlands, for example, a fire in a pub that led to the death of 14 adolescents and the terrible mutilation of many others, an explosion at a fireworks factory, killing a number of people and destroying a whole housing estate); in huge silent marches after yet another case of senseless violence (violence through pure aggression, leading to the death of innocent people, their only fault being that they pointed out the unsociable behaviour of their aggressors). The huge participation in annual remembrance days for the Second World War also has an almost religious character. This manifestation of civil religion is also known as the annual 'civil Holy Week' (Janssen, 1998). According to Janssen, there are three factors that play a role in the position of religion in the Netherlands: 1) the large and ever-increasing number of smaller religious institutions; 2) a process of supply and demand between the large majority outside these institutions and the institutions themselves; and 3) an aloof government which subsequently becomes a point of reference itself.

Random sample and method of gaining data

In order to gain data teachers of religious education/philosophy of life were approached. These were mainly teachers who were known to the department of Practical Theology of the Faculty of

Theology and Religious Studies at Tilburg University. All contact was held through e-mail. The gathering of data took a period of approximately a year (February-November 2003), from the first contact up till the time the last questionnaire was sent in.

Those teachers who agreed to co-operate allowed pupils to fill in the questionnaires in the framework of their lessons. They did not request permission to do so from parents or the school management. The schools that participated are situated all over the country, both in urban and rural areas, in the predominantly Catholic south and the more mixed but mainly Protestant and non-religious west and east. Schools from the far north are not included in the study.

The response is more than 50%, which is reasonably satisfactory, despite the fact that those teachers personally occupied themselves with the questionnaire. It was difficult to motivate pupils to voluntarily complete the questionnaire outside school hours. The schools with a high response in particular gave the pupils the opportunity to fill in the questionnaire during school hours. Ultimately 816 pupils provided usable questionnaires. [2]

Although the schools all have a particular confessional basis, it is noticeable that they do not acknowledge this on their websites. A number of schools do indicate that they are based on Christianity, but they prefer to express that their identity is derived from more than Christianity alone; humanist values and concrete values such as respect and openness are expressly mentioned. Eight schools are Roman Catholic, they account for 579 of the respondents (=71%). Four of the schools are Protestant with 88 respondents (=10%). The other two are either general (74 respondents) or ecumenical (75 respondents). Therefore, there is a particularly large share of Roman Catholic schools. This is not reflected in what the pupils say of themselves. 316 pupils indicate that they do not belong to a religious community, 374 pupils state that they are Catholic and 74 Protestant. Of the remaining pupils 25 indicate that they are of a different denomination, without actually specifying which.

Foreign pupils are not distinguished in the study, and this was also not requested. However, there is some indication of this in the fact that 12 pupils state they are Muslim, 1 Buddhist and 1 Hindu. The average age is 17; the random sample includes 57% girls and 43% boys. Most of the pupils are in the last stage of the HAVO (46%) or VWO (43%), the higher levels of secondary education.

3 Empirical Findings

3.1 Individual religious practice (micro)

Religious socialisation

The adolescents that took part in the study all attend denominational schools. For most, the choice to attend such a school is not inspired by philosophical motives. A little over half says they belong to a Christian institution. Yet, two thirds of the respondents is baptised. On a national level, in 2004 17.8% of the live-born children were baptised in a Catholic Church, which is a decrease of 3% in 5 years. Participation in remaining religious activities decreases with age. Fifty-three percent took their first communion, but only 5.6% were involved in the church at the time of the study (tab 6.1d). For that matter, this is a tendency that is also shown in other religious studies carried out, among others, by KASKI, an institute that studies the participation of Catholics in other religious practices. Recent research indicates that the national figures are a little higher. In 2004, 86% of baptised Catholics took their first communion and 54% did their confirmation (www.ru.nl/kaski).

The home environment is mentioned as being slightly religious, whereby mothers are clearly considered as being more religious than fathers (fathers 42.2% and mothers 52.3%). Other figures confirm this. Mothers attach more importance to passing on faith (f: 18.9% and m: 21.5%) and participation in church services (f: 17% and m: 19.6%), according to the adolescents, although the differences remain small.

In comparing these figures with the image these adolescents have of themselves, it can be seen that 27.5% consider themselves to be religious and that 53.3% even sometimes goes to church, which is more than one would expect considering the importance attached to this by parents.

Does this mean that there is a shift in the tendency towards secularisation? Or is this a result of a different way of bringing children up, whereby the fruits of freedom, self-responsibility and negotiation between parents and children are indeed becoming obvious in the individual choices children make. Evidently, children no longer automatically choose to follow the same path as their parents.

Degree of secularisation

What is the result of religious socialisation and education? What is the situation with regards to the church involvement of these adolescents? Those adolescents who have left institutional religion behind them (41.8%), although their mothers still had a connection with God, form the largest group. The next group consists of those adolescents whose mothers were no longer religious and who projected this onto their children (27.9%). The group that, just as their mothers, is still religious, is particularly small (11.9%). The most interesting group is that which includes adolescents who, despite their upbringing, admitted to participation in the church, the so-called new religious. However, this is an extremely small group, 1.8% only (see tab 6.1 f).
The figures indicate that secularisation, understood as exodus from the churches, is still continuing. In 2004, 825 people joined the Roman Catholic Church, the so-called new Catholics. Contrary to what church leaders want us to believe, the church is not growing. Not amongst adolescents either.

Religious practices

Almost half of those questioned never go to church and 32% goes once or twice a year, at Christmas and probably Easter (tab 6.1a). This is also the tendency nationally. The number of churchgoers decreases each year, even church attendance at Christmas is dropping, although to a limited extent. Marrying in church (35.1%) and having children baptised (35.2%) is still relatively important to this group. The percentage of church weddings has also decreased by 3% in the past 5 years and now accounts for 9% of all marriages. In 2004, 26% of all those who had passed away had a Catholic burial or cremation. This question was omitted when questioning the adolescents. It is surprising to note that when it concerns others, a religious ritual at a burial is considered very important (63.3%). The study did not go into whether this also applies to themselves, so this remains open. The idea of religious socialisation, which is somewhat diverse, is strengthened even more in its diversity concerning the perception these adolescents have of how faithful and religious their parents are.

The majority says they never pray, 28% prays every now and then. Meditation, whatever is meant by that, is hardly practised at all. They do call themselves believing, but religious to a lesser extent. These figures are surprising. Research carried out by Janssen and Prins indicates that adolescents often practice some kind of praying. The questioning in this study was not directly aimed at prayer but rather at the question as to what adolescents do when they are alone. Evidently, a direct question concerning prayer and meditation puts them off and immediately evokes images of the church and obligation. Believing is interpreted as being more open than being religious. One always believes in something; being religious means that one belongs, belongs to a particular institute, has much more to do with content. Believing does not evoke an immediate connection with the institute church.

Religious education

In the Netherlands, the subject religious education is only taught at particularly denominational schools (tab 6.5). But at these schools it has lost its denominational character, in other words, it is no longer exclusively connected to the traditions of one of the churches; the content has become generally philosophical. The subject is therefore now called the 'philosophy of life' in almost every denominational school. Most of the adolescents that took part in this study attend Catholic or Protestant schools. Almost 60% of Dutch schools are denominational. These schools are wholly subsidised by the government but are privately run. Teachers who have had a theological education teach the subject.

What is the purpose of religious education, in the opinion of the pupils themselves? We have distinguished between the various objectives attached to the subject. On the one hand, there is the religious orientation: an introduction to the faith of the church. On the other, there is the orientation towards the world in which religion functions. The first is more affective personally (in faith, to church), the second is more cognitively objective (about religion, for life, societal education). It is hardly surprising that the second approach is the way pupils view the objectives of the philosophy of life. It is more objective, distanced from their own lives, aimed more at society and the position of religion in this. They are not particularly interested in being introduced to the faith of the church and this is also not done in the subject philosophy of life. Indeed, it appears that opinions differ somewhat; there are great standard deviations. This reflects the fact that discussions are taking place on the objectives of the subject philosophy of life, not only amongst the teachers, but clearly amongst the pupils, too.

Opinion on the bible

The last aspect of religious socialisation is the opinion on the Holy Scripture. This question concerns the bible only in the Dutch context, as there were only a few Muslims amongst the respondents. There are still very few Muslims in higher secondary education in the Netherlands. This is partly due to the language problem, although an increasing number of foreign adolescents from the generation born here are attending this type of education. The bible is only considered by 3.4% to be the fundamental Word of God, 27.7% regard the bible as being a book inspired by God and written by people. This is a surprisingly high figure. The bible is considered merely as a normal book by a minority of 15.4%. More than 35% has no opinion on the subject (tab 6.1.e). The bible remains a book that cannot really be ignored, it holds wisdom, unique wisdom that is.

Religious experiences

The next aspect of the meaning of religion on a personal level is the significance of religious experiences (tab 6.2). How do these adolescents deal with religious experiences? Various experiences are mentioned in the questionnaire. Three questions are asked about each experience: is it possible that these experiences are authentic, would you like to have such an experience, have you ever had such an experience? The adolescents recognised the authenticity of each of these experiences as they apply to others. They have no great desire to experience them themselves and even less actually have. There is one exception: the experience that God could help in an actual situation. This is something they would like to experience, although they do not really believe that it is possible; in any case, they have never had such an experience. The adolescents obviously respect religion and philosophy of life, although the percentages differ between 52.1% to 19.3%. However, the figures indicating the desire to have such an experience are considerably lower, ranging from 39% to 7.8%.
In taking a closer look at the various experiences, a distinction can be made between those that are more abstract (somehow religion gives life meaning) and those that are more concrete (God is very real). The three abstract experiences have a higher score as far as their authenticity is concerned (49%) than the three more concrete 'experiences of God' (30.5%). This coincides with what Vermeer discovered in an earlier study (Vermeer, 1999). He suggests that a plausible answer to the theory on the problem of suffering must meet two requirements: it must have a consistent logic and offer an abstract orientation. This holds true for the abstract experiences of meaning. After all, they suppose that religion offers certainty in life, offers a sense of security, that it helps one not to lose heart. Therefore, the experience that religion is able to help people not to lose heart in certain situations in life is viewed as being the most authentic (52.1%).
Rather, the 'experiences of God' indicate that God offers concrete help in certain situations, that the meaning of life is dependent on His immediate proximity. Incidentally, this is considered by the adolescents to be the least authentic experience (19.3%), which they also do not wish to experience. Evidently, they believe that life itself provides meaning. God and religion can add to this, or put it in a particular framework, but it is not possible for life to be meaningless without God. If this is one's opinion then it means that one has little respect for those who are unfamiliar with God (Van der Ven, 1998). Therefore, they neither wish to have such an experience (only 7.8% do), nor have they had it (6.4% has).

The experience of God helping them in an actual situation is one that they would most like to have (39%). In a certain sense, this goes against the principle of rationality. Nevertheless, rational or not, it would be quite nice if something like a God who actually helps me did exist. If faith were so simple, then they would be prepared to accept it. The assumption that it would give them an advantage is more important. Having these experiences provides a much more constant image. The majority has not had them (an average of 12%, omitting the experience of the meaningless of life without God, which is 6.4%).

Experiencing God is more complex than deriving meaning from a philosophy of life, the latter is much more rational and therefore, more plausible, especially if it is not the only factor that gives meaning. After all, when the suggestion is made that existence has no meaning without religious experience, then this is also considered as less authentic and less desirable. The experience that faith can help one not to lose heart is indicated as being the most positive in every aspect. They deal with religious experiences pragmatically especially.

Religious world views

The majority of these adolescents do not regard religious experiences as being particularly authentic; the large majority has no desire to become involved and has never had any experience of that kind. There is still some openness for the more rational abstract experiences, but if these become concrete, they no longer count as being authentic. The only aspect that is appreciated in any way is the more pragmatic experience of a God that actually helps. This concerned the affective attitudinal aspect of faith and the philosophy of life.

The following section concentrates of the cognitive attitudinal aspects: .faith as a rational view on existence and the meaning of existence. Respondents were presented forty-five statements about faith and the philosophy of life, which were taken from fourteen fundamental philosophical concepts, as described in detail in chapter 2. The analysis concentrates on the theoretical concepts first. In what way do the adolescents view these? What is the nature of their philosophical way of thinking, viewed from its traditional contours? Are they atheistic or agnostic, or is pragmatism again overtly present? Are Christian opinions included in their way of thinking (tab 6.3)?

First, I wish to concentrate on the theoretical concepts. How are these incorporated in their ideas? Next, I applied a components analysis in order to discover whether and in what way the concepts are mixed in their ideas. Do they exist amongst these adolescents in their pure form? Or do these indicate that they assemble their own philosophy of life: patchwork behaviour (de Hart, 1990; 1994)?

The analyses based on the theoretical concepts result in the following picture. Only 5 of the concepts were given a positive score. PRAGMATISM is at the top of the scale of 1-5. This is the philosophical view in which the emphasis is put on one's own responsibility. I do not need God to be able to live. If I make the most of it, then my life has meaning. Which is in fact confirmation of the above: this does not so much concern faith and religion, but rather daily life itself; if faith can be of any significance, excellent, not too concretely, but pragmatically. Life itself holds meaning. The next concepts with a positive score are closer to one another (within 1.0 on a scale of 5) but are at a distance of 0.7 from the pragmatic. This shows just how pragmatically philosophical these adolescents are.

The concept of UNIVERSALISM comes first. This indicates that all religions have the same God, all lead to the same God. Why does this concept score amongst adolescents? Does this have anything to do with indifference, with the opinion that everything amounts to the same anyway, an attitude that can be observed amongst many adolescents? However, the question remains as to whether it is still possible and worthwhile to distinguish between religions. On the other hand, is this the adolescents' way of expressing that all religions are condemnable because they are too distanced from the world and from daily life? Alternatively, and this seems the most plausible: religion is only about God, not about what the various contending religions make of God? These adolescents seem to have gone beyond the ecumenical, to have an eye for the essence.

METATHEISM, which also received a positive score, declares that God, the centre of all religions, cannot be expressed in words. We are unable to grasp the concept of God. Thus, the metatheistic idea can be associated with the definition that religions are mistaken, or in any case incomplete because they can never approach God himself.

Naturalism is the next view. The essence of this concept is that ultimately life is governed by its own law, not a power from above or the outside, rather, nature itself governs itself. This is abstracted from the concept of God. God is not a person, but a strength that can be found within nature itself or that even coincides with nature.

The last concept with a positive score is that of AGNOSTICISM. It can be doubted whether there is any such thing as a God, but beyond this, whether it is of any significance to discuss this at all (Houtepen, 1997). The respondents give every other view a negative score. NIHILISM is right at the bottom of the list, followed at a distance of 0.5 by PANTHEISM, CHRISTIANITY and IMMANENTISM. It is not wholly surprising that NIHILISM is at the other end of the continuum of positive - negative, opposite to PRAGMATISM. NIHILISM states that life has no purpose and meaning. Evidently, these adolescents experience too much purpose in and to life that they disagree with this outlook. It is an extremely pragmatic attitude to blindly accept meaning that occurs, to take life as it comes without asking oneself whether this has any meaning.

The remaining views are close to one another in the negative area, CHRISTIAN conceptions included. Statements such as 'to me God is the God of the bible' and 'there is a God who revealed himself through Jesus Christ' are not subscribed by the adolescents (position 11). HUMANIST statements such as 'God is something that is within us' or the IMMANENTIST statement 'every person is a part of God', or a PANTHEIST statement such as 'God is in everyone, God is everything' are not positively subscribed. All these statements more or less assign God a concrete position, in a person, in me, in man and this seems, for these adolescents who are willing to leave open the possibility that there is 'something', to be too concrete. Still, it is surprising that DEISM is so vague that it is not even in the data.

Up until now the different views reflected have been studied empirically as separate theoretical concepts. In order to gain insight in the patchwork behaviour of these adolescents, an open component analysis of the data has also been carried out. The data has been studied in order to discover the adolescents' views. Are there any outlooks that connect the theoretical concepts and that lead to new ones. The results of the calculations produce a picture that is reflected in tables 6.10 a-c. The 14 views have been reduced to 9, and it must be added that 10 of the 45 items have been omitted. DEISM remains an extremely vague view, 3 of the items have been omitted. This analysis confirms the results of earlier analysis. PRAGMATISM and AGNOSTICISM join to form one view: 'it is impossible for me to say anything about a higher power, so I have to make something of it myself'. This is the best way to characterise this view.

At the bottom of the list of views these adolescents have, is the group of CHRISTIAN, HUMANIST and IMMANENT views. This is not unusual. The God of Christianity is a God who became human, who is close to man. In Christianity, it is up to you to do something. This is connected to the humanist view that God is a different manifestation of the good in man and that, deep down each person is a God. Christianity wants to be near to life and profoundly humane, so it is quite strange that adolescents negatively assess these concepts. Evidently, they are unable to deal with these statements, which are both ambiguous and vague and which can be interpreted in various ways. It appears as though Christian ideas merge into general vagueness and apparently have little to offer.

The general picture gathered from the analyses of the views is that these adolescents think little of views on existence that go beyond the surface, that have any kind of transcendent or immanent connotation. They are totally involved in life, take it as it is and derive purpose and meaning from it.

Is this really patchwork behaviour? Certainly, adolescents look for things that suit them and that fit best with their feeling on life. This is everyday life, concrete and realistic, not woolly and here and now is what matters: pragmatically agnostic.

3.2 Religious institutions (meso)

Churches in modern life

The first important question on the meso level, on the level of the social midfield is that as to the meaning and position of the Church as an institute. Table 6.4 reflects opinions about the position of the church in modern life. To what extent does the church have a plausible position currently, in the social as well as the personal area? Statements such as the following were presented: The

church does not deal with issues of modern society, The modern person can find what he or she is looking for within the faith of the church. They were formulated both positively and negatively. The table shows that the negative statements are subscribed to and that the positive ones are rejected to approximately the same extent. The picture is a consistent one. In the personal as well as the social area, these adolescents observe that the church misses and has missed the connection with the modern world and they do not expect the church to make this connection in the future either. After all, the church does not occupy itself with the questions this modern world and the adolescents in it struggle with. The inconsistencies of modern life are not solved within the perspective of the church. The question is whether adolescents grasp onto other ideologies in order to get answers. Dutch research shows that there is no real alternative for the major religions. On the other hand, the so-called alternative philosophies of life are to some extent popular but this often coincides with interest in the major religions (De Hart & Becker et al., 1997). This makes it interesting to find out what the pupils think about the position of religion in modern life (tab 6.7). In this case, too, the questions are formulated both positively and negatively. The results show that the adolescents carry out an internal discussion, as it were; they disagree with themselves. The positive answers are rejected to approximately the same extent as the negative ones and the spread is the greatest in the negative answers. In their view, the role religion plays in society will become less and less important but at the same time they do not believe that the need for religion will disappear altogether. Religion is a relict of the past, but modern society only evokes more questions with regard to religious meaning, according to their answers. Although they agree that the churches are no longer of any significance in modern society, they are uncertain about the meaning of religion.

3.3 Religious Pluralism (macro)

The Netherlands is a pluralistic society in a religious and cultural sense. Often more than 100 different nationalities can be found living in large towns and the pupils that attend the schools there come from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. Catholic and Protestant schools are attended by many pupils who are either Catholic, Protestant, from other religions or non-religious. The schools that took part in this study are those that offer higher secondary education (respectively HAVO and VWO), which is the highest form of secondary education in the Netherlands. On the whole, these are still attended by the white, indigenous population. The social and financial position of most immigrants and asylum seekers often makes it impossible for them to participate in this level of education. The distinction between social classes still exists in schools. Study shows that there is little contact between the various cultural, religious and ethnic groups and that they have an extremely limited knowledge of each others background. The knowledge they do have is gained mainly through what is read and observed from a distance. These pupils acquired their information from the philosophy of life lessons (tab 6.6).
The fact that they are not confronted with other religions in their direct environment undoubtedly marks their attitude towards these, which is moderately positive. They do not consider the presence of various religions in society to be inappropriate. At this point, it must be mentioned that this study took place before the murder of the filmmaker Theo van Gogh, which was evidently a religious murder. The murder had a great influence on the attitude of society with regard to the Islam, at least insofar as this was portrayed by the media. What the figures would show now, we can only suppose.

Relation between religions

The next question goes a little deeper into the issue concerning religious pluralism, namely, how can one view the relation between the various religions (tab 6.8)? Where do they lead? To truth or to salvation? Moreover, is that truth and salvation the same for all religions. Four possible relations are distinguished: MULTI-RELIGIOUS, namely, a more or less peaceful co-existence of religions, because they are all different paths to the same truth; INTER-RELIGIOUS, that is to say, religions are only able to find the truth by entering into dialogue with one another; MONO-RELIGIOUS means that one's own religion is the best path to truth; and finally, CONFESSIONAL RELIGIOUS means that one's own religion is the one and only path to truth. For these pupils MULTI-

RELIGIOSITY is an option, but little more than that. The other possible relation between religions is assessed negatively. It is difficult to explain why the pupils have this opinion. One of the most important aims within the subject philosophy of life is the encouragement of dialogue between religions. Pupils are taught how to participate in this dialogue, not only by acquiring knowledge about the major religions but also by learning the communicative skills that are needed for dialogue. Does this mean that the results of this study indicate that education has failed in this aspect, or rather that these pupils, partly due to the fact that they have little contact with other religions, cannot imagine what a communal path to truth implies? What must also be taken into account is that religion is often understood as being something that is extremely personal and that is neither shared with nor communicated to others. 'Every person should decide for himself' is a rather widely accepted attitude.

3.4 The data regarded from a number of background variables

Although the random survey is quite homogeneous, - the adolescents concerned are all taken from the highest years of denominational secondary schools and come from approximately the same social middle and upper class - there are a number of factors which, as background variable, could cause a distinction in the various views (tab 6.9).
In the conceptual model these are gender differences and the degree of secularisation and some individual variables such as personality characteristics, attitude with regard to foreigners and personal life orientations such as those that are distinguished in book 1 of this study.

Gender differences

The first relevant background variable is gender. Fifty-seven percent of the group respondents is comprised of girls. Is there a difference in the religious views and actions of girls and boys? Teachers in particular experience girls as having a greater interest in religion and everything that has to do with it. They are more open towards it. Is this confirmed in the figures resulting from this study?
These tables show the significant results only. Girls practise their religious involvement more than boys (tab 6.9a-1); there is no difference in the number of times they go to church but they do pray more often; they consider religious experiences to be more authentic and more desirable for themselves, but have not had these any more often than the boys (tab 6.9b-1). They assess the relevance of churches and the role religion plays in modern life a little less negatively. They assess religious pluralism a little more positively and think that religions should be able to co-exist just as many legitimate paths to truth. Besides this they, more than the boys, are of the opinion that the subject philosophy of life is important for personal social development and one's own life (tab 6.9c-1).
It is justifiable to conclude that girls, in comparison with boys, have a more open attitude concerning everything that has to do with faith and philosophy of life.

Degree of secularisation

The second demographic background variable is the degree of secularisation of these adolescents. As has been described in chapter 2 and in the above, the degree of secularisation ranges from secularised up to the second generation to religious up to the second generation. The group of new religious is extremely small. It is particularly interesting to evaluate the figures of the secularised adolescents based on the question of whether this involves 'believe without belonging'. This latter group is the largest. To what extent can one talk of religious activities? Have they left their parents' faith behind them but does some openness for that faith remain? This variable seems to offer some insight in the religious practises and experiences of these adolescents and therefore on the micro-level. The extent to which one is secularised has no effect on views on religious education, pluralism and the relation between religions.

The group of religious children from religious mothers is, as was to be expected, the group that practises religion most and is also most open to religious experiences. Yet, here too, a clear distinction can be perceived between practise, which is considerably lower than their openness to the experiencing side of religion. They are not overtly willing to call themselves faithful and do not go to church regularly. They do, however, pray more often, which is something one does silently and often in the sheltered environment of one's private life. The secularised group also prays occasionally. This confirms the results of an earlier study that was carried out in the Netherlands (Janssen & de Hart & den Draak, 1990).

The second-generation religious adolescents approach the experience side of religion, the religious experience, most openly. They view this as authentic, more desirable for themselves than the other groups and the majority has had an experience like this before. The group of new religious adolescents and those who have left their parents' faith behind them are almost on the same level in this respect. They are of the opinion that religious experiences are authentic (53% vs. 63%), desirable for themselves; the first generation of those secularised to a greater extent than the new religious (33% vs. 13%), and have also had them (6% vs. 14%). The second generation of those secularised is open to religious experiences and of the opinion that they are religious.

This leads me to cautiously conclude that, in this generation of adolescents, the contours of a post-modern perception of faith are apparent. A perception that is more personal and that has less to do with the outward appearance of faith. This is somewhat confirmed in the fact that the state of secularisation has nothing whatsoever to do with the aspects studied of the meso and macro-level of faith and religion. All the adolescents that took part in this study have approximately the same opinion on these. These attitudes are not influenced by their degree of faith and church involvement, but possibly much more on the basis of their own personality characteristics and are sooner the result of personal rational consideration rather than of their religious opinions. The significance is marginal (Janssen & Prins, 1998).

Personality characteristics

The personality characteristics were measured with an instrument that was developed by Hans Eysenck. This instrument makes a distinction between a person's emotional stability and social stability. Each dimension has two poles. The emotional poles are those of stable and neurotic. Someone is stable if they have a high degree of emotional self-control. Someone is known to be neurotic if they are subject to great fluctuations in their emotions. The social dimension involves the poles of introversion and extroversion. This concerns qualities such as communication, aggression control and taking risks in life. Extroverts have great communication skills, are optimistic and gladly take risks. Introvert personalities are cautious, not aggressive and carefully plan their activities. The dimensions NEUROTICISM and EXTROVERSION have been included in the analyses as background variables. It is expected that these coincide with certain religious views. The dimensions neuroticism and introversion in particular are connected to a positive relation towards religion. Religion gives the neurotic opportunities to channel his emotions and meets the needs the introvert person has to maintain a focus on a secure, planned future: after all, salvation is guaranteed.

Fifteen percent of the random sample scores somewhat neurotically and 76% scores high on the extroversion scale. The analysis results in only one correlation, between a pragmatic faith and extraversion. This correlation can be explained on the basis of the idea that the extrovert personality takes life as it is and rises to it, and he himself decides what the purpose and meaning of life is and does not allow it to depend on God or any other higher power. The fact that there is no relationship whatsoever within this Dutch random sample seems to indicate that religion is not particularly strongly intertwined in the individual personality but that it is subject to all sorts of doubts. Therefore, in combination the opinions of PRAGMATISM and AGNOSTICISM have the highest score amongst these Dutch adolescents.

Xenophobia

The degree of XENOPHOBIA is measured using a scale in which the subject concerns opinions on the presence of foreigners. As far as Dutch adolescents are concerned, they score above

average (3.1) on the scale of 1-5. Dutch adolescents are a little fearful of the presence of foreigners. At the same time, the large standard deviation of .81 indicates that there is a relatively great diversity in the answers. People from outside Europe are counted as foreigners especially, although this is not included as one of the questions in the questionnaire. There is a correlation on every level of the religiosity studied. In the personal micro area, there is a negative correlation with religious experiences. The xenophobe personality considers these neither authentic nor desirable for themselves. They pray less and regard themselves to a lesser extent to be religious. There is a positive correlation with the religious views of NIHILISM, ATHEISM and CRITICISM. On a personal level, an attitude of rejection with regard to the foreigner seems to correlate with a critical attitude of rejection with regard to religious experiences and views. This idea is also confirmed on the meso and macro-level. In their opinion, there is no room for the church and it has no significance in either modern society or for themselves. Religious education also has little significance for their own and social life, in their opinion. They also, of course, have a negative attitude towards religious pluralism and negatively assess the significance of religion in modern society, rejecting multi-religiosity.

Fear of foreigners appears to be connected to their less positive attitude towards religion, after all, religion is also a stranger in life, breaks through familiar daily existence. Indeed, God speaks to man from the outside, is a stranger amongst us. Another possible explanation is that these adolescents have the tendency to associate religion with foreigners, thus identifying it with the Islam. After all, this religion has been most talked-about in recent years. Rarely do they hear about Christianity in their environment.

The correlation between life perspectives, values and political attitudes with religious attitudes

In the first book the life perspectives, values and political attitudes of these adolescents was discussed in detail. It is interesting to observe the way in which these non-religious attitudes are connected to religious ones. Three variables have been selected. The variable life perspective reflects the presence-pragmatic attitude: 'the only thing that counts in my life is the way I live it today'. The second variable stands for the current values of looking good and also having a good life in 20-30 years time. The third variable indicates political disinterest: 'I do not care which political party is in power'.

The variable LIFE PERSPECTIVE has a negative score on the micro-level with the question of whether one considers oneself to be religious; faith, precisely because it is so vague, does not fit into a pragmatic view of existence and religious experiences are also not considered to be credible in this view. An immanentist view that the divine is deep within me also does not harmonise, rather does a critical and atheistic view. Pragmatism leaves no room for anything as vague as faith and religion.

This negativity with regard to religion is confirmed at the meso and macro levels. There is no room in modern society for the church and religion, religious pluralism is not considered to be positive for society and religious education is not of importance for the personal and social life. A striking correlation is the one with the view that the relation between religions is considered denominational especially. Pragmatic reflection of one's own life correlates with a pragmatic involvement in the relation between religions: my opinions only, for example, as a church member, are relevant and correct.

In this case, the correlation strongly coincides with that found between xenophobia and religious attitudes. Evidently, a presence-pragmatic attitude implies a pragmatic attitude with regard to foreigners. It must be kept in mind that the adolescents studied have practically no direct contact with foreigners due to their social position. They are obviously happy with this situation and wish to keep it so.

The variable VALUES, in which especially the trendy modern attitude towards life is reflected, that exhibits hedonist characteristics and attaches great value to modern technology and the shaping of one's own body and life, correlate with the negative view on the position and significance of the church and religion in modern society. There is no room for the church and religion in the

shapable future. Of course, this pragmatic view of values coincides with a pragmatic religious view, that of pragmatism.

The political variable, in which political disinterest was measured, only correlates with views on religious education. Adolescents who have little interest in politics are of the opinion that it is not necessary for religious education to provide orientation on life or society; they are quite capable of doing this themselves. Religious education should teach about faith especially.

Summary of the findings

The picture presented by the empirical analysis varies greatly. Yet, a number of trends can be distinguished. These must be interpreted with cautiousness, as they can only be perceived in small groups.

- The religious socialisation of these adolescents has not automatically resulted in a continuation of the tendency towards secularisation, without being able to speak of a religious revival. The majority of the group has left the church and religion behind them.
- They can be considered as non-practising, only attending a church service at Christmas. Yet they still attach importance to a religious ritual at, for instance, someone else's funeral, but the question is whether the same applies to them.
- They do believe, but preferably not in church.
- Religious education at schools should be taught in a detached and informative way.
- The bible is seriously considered as an important source of wisdom.
- Religious experiences that pragmatically support courage in life are considered the most authentic and desirable.
- Their religious view can be summed up as being pragmatic-agnostic and certainly not vaguely immanentist humanist.
- There is barely room for religion and the church as an institute in modern society.
- They are moderately positive towards religious plurality and are of the opinion that the peaceful co-existence of religions is the only option.
- Girls are more open when it comes to religion.
- Secularised adolescents are also positive with regard to 'something like religion'.
- The analysis of the correlation between religious attitudes and the background variables life perspectives, values and political attitudes results in the following picture, namely, that a presence-pragmatic view of the future, a negative attitude with regard to foreigners and a hedonist view of values coincide with a negative attitude towards religion and the church.

4 Discussion

The question was, has the Dutch adolescent gone beyond secularisation? Is post-modernity, understood as the disappearance of an institutional form of religiosity and the rise of a more personal individual experiencing of religion, a 'believe without belonging' truly a challenge to adolescents?
The indications for this should include: an eclectic, patchwork form of religiosity, a great degree of secularisation, an evasion of institutionalised religion, a positive view on the role religion plays in modern society, an open attitude towards religious pluralism, the view that religious education makes a contribution to life and society.
The figures indicate that there is a slight tendency to answer the questions positively. Dutch adolescents seem to have gone beyond secularisation, have reached the point where they view religion in a new and open way. The world youth days give reason to assume that there is an interest in religion and those who support religion. However, this does not mean to say that there is interest in the church.

Based on the secularisation perspective, a negative path can be traced up to the present, but this concerns the figures only. The majority of these adolescents is secularised, has turned away from the church. The analyses presented in the first book on Life Perspectives show that these

adolescents have least faith in the church (Van der Tuin, 2005). At the same time there is a new, cautious openness for 'what faith is ultimately about'. Religious experiences are not categorically rejected, they pray, they believe in 'something'.

The post-modernity perspective involves the interpretation of facts. What is the situation concerning the quality of religion and the church? To what extent are the stay-behinds involved in the church? If the church were to become more sectarian, that is to say, revert more and strictly to its departure points, it would become more vigorous and smaller, if not it will become smaller but not more vigorous (viewed from the rational choice theory). Thus, the church should make this its policy. It would appear that Roman Catholic leadership has chosen to take this path, judging by its reaction to number the adolescents at the World Youth Days among the new generation of true Roman Catholics. But, what are the indications of this, besides the fact that there were 800.000 enthusiastic adolescents in Köln, amongst them just 3000 Dutch adolescents? It is clear that the threat of a community, that is losing on the outside in its views, followers and standing, leads to fundamentalism and it is this trend in particular that brings the group closer, on the defensive towards the outside world (Sengers, 2003).

For the time being these figures provide little substantiation for the view that there is believe without belonging. At the very most this could apply to a small group, which is not easy to trace. It will include girls especially as they are more open to religion.

Adolescents in the Narthex: a pedagogic outlook

The relation religion and philosophy of life (and church) on the one hand and society on the other can be described based on the Narthex. The Narthex is the vestibule of the church. It is the place where one enters the church and where one leaves it. It is the place where one crosses (cleanses) oneself each time with consecrated water. One enters holy ground and leaves to go out into the world. The Narthex is dark, the light that falls into it, comes from outside, not from within the church, when the front door opens. Thus, the Narthex is the link between inside and out. The path leading outside is free, the people's world. The path leading inside is open, too, the world of God and the divine. Both join in the Narthex, cross one another's paths. This is where they collide and meet. In the Narthex all sorts of experiences impose themselves upon one, depending on whether one goes from outside to in or from inside to out. In each movement one takes something with one and leaves something behind. I apply the idea of the Narthex as a metaphor, in which the church merely acts as background.

People's lives reach their high and low points on boundaries, on the boundaries of life and death, of joy and sadness, of love and hate, of meaning and meaninglessness, of good and evil, of God and man, of past and present, of present and future. When we reach these boundaries our existence falls to one side or the other, does not continue as it has done, takes a turn for good or for worse. Thus, the Narthex portrays the boundary experience between God and man, between the divine and the profane, between sense and senselessness, between depth and superficiality. The world meets God and God meets the world, in the Narthex (Roebben, 2005). In our modernised or already post-modern society, man is searching in a new way for the meaning of life. This search is neither specific nor systematic, but rather, heuristic. The idea of proclamation and conveyance of a doctrine is replaced by the idea of the gathering of fragments. Man slowly gathers meaning. Meaning is no longer professed in post-modern times of broken-down automaticity and all-embracing meanings. Meaning is no longer static either, once meaningful is not always meaningful. Meaning changes with time, with context, with experience. Therefore, in addition to the image of those who patchwork, of the hobbyist who pieces together his own meaning of life, the image of the switching spectator can also be applied. Switching between meanings, pausing at those that stand out, concentrating for a while before switching again from one channel of meaning to the next. Thus, meaning is not automatically sought and found in the great traditions of meaning, and certainly not as all-embracing meaning. The religious has become personal, God is sought everywhere, except in Church.

But just what is meaning, where is meaning given, why is meaning necessary, is meaning necessary, can one search for meaning? Man is continually caught between opposites, the opposites of love and hate, of life and death, of truth and lie, of acceptance and suppression. He is repeatedly faced with boundaries, the boundaries of his own capabilities to endure his

opposites. Latent foundation of human existence is living on the boundary, the boundary of the possible and the impossible, of transcendence and immanence, of the strange and the familiar. On the one hand boundaries offer protection against the unfamiliar, against attacks from the outside, they offer the security of the familiar, absorbance into the boundless; but at the same time boundaries keep others out, prevent change and renewal; boundaries are signs of fear. Existential experiences that occur on these boundaries are those of illness, suffering, death and failure: death separates all life, the boundary experience of illness holds the experience of life; boundary experiences are experiences of joy and love and of the beauty of art and nature. Boundary experiences are also experiences of not being the same as others, of strangeness, of limitation to one's freedom with regard to the freedom others have, freedom is limited by lack of freedom, just as my freedom limits the freedom of others. So others are experienced as foreigners, as those who threaten my existence.

Boundary experiences turn our familiar ways of thinking upside down, affect our self-understanding, challenge us, call on us to come out of our shells; but we are also able shut them out, protect ourselves from them or ignore them by concentrating on work, private life, consumption.

When we open ourselves to them, allow ourselves to be challenged by them, boundary experiences become truly contingent experiences, the experience of finiteness, that things are not what they are, but that they are continually changing. Thus, contingence evokes transcendence.

The adolescents in this sample experience this, too. Traditional religious opinions no longer provide them with frameworks in which and based on which they are able to deal with contingence. Rather, they search for an extremely pragmatic path: 'If God is able to help me, excellent, if faith and religion can offer me something to hold onto, great. But do not talk to me about the true existence of God, he does not exist, but there is 'something'. This seems to be the best way to describe their religious attitude.

Religious education that aims to support one's own view on life, including a lot of attention for life within society, is able to fulfil a great role in this, certainly if attention is paid to the purpose of religion, because they are quite interested in learning about this. The image of the Narthex could act as a guideline in religious education, because adolescents today do live so close to these boundaries, requesting meaning, and at the same time rejecting professed meaning.

(Translated from dutch by N.Idema)

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Table 6.1: Religious Practises

Table 6.1a: Worship Attendance, Religious Self-Esteem and Personal Religious Action (in %)

	never	once or twice a year	some-times	at least once a month	nearly every week
Apart from weddings, funerals and baptisms, how often do you go to a place of worship?	46.7	32.0	12.5	4.2	4.6

	disagree strongly	disagree	not certain	agree	agree strongly
I regard myself as a believer	19.3	24.8	28.4	21.2	6.3

	never	rarely	some-times	once a week	daily
Do you pray on your own?	47.9	23.6	13.0	2.7	12.7
Do you meditate?	83.6	8.9	4.6	1.6	1.4

Table 6.1b: Religious Socialisation (in %)

	belief absolutely	belief, but with doubt	doubtful	rather unbelieving	absolutely unbelieving
How would you describe your fathers belief and faith in God?	12.4	29.8	12.1	19.9	25.8
How would you describe your mothers belief and faith God?	17.6	34.6	12.5	17.0	18.2

	very important	fairly important	not so important	not at all important
How important is it to your Father that you adopt his faith?	5.2	13.7	26.9	54.3
How important is it to your mother that you adopt her faith?	5.9	15.6	29.3	49.2

	yes, they insist on it very strongly	not really, but they appreciate it	no, they leave me totally free
Does your father want you to attend religious services?	2.2	14.8	83.0
Does your mother want you to attend religious services?	3.4	16.2	80.5

Table 6.1c: Religious rituals (in %)

	very important	fairly important	not so important	not at all important
Should you later marry, would it be important to you that your future wedding takes place within the scope of a religious service?	9.5	25.6	39.3	25.6
Should you later have a child or children, is it important to you that you have them christened, baptised or dedicated?	10.1	25.1	29.3	35.5
Is it important to you that a religious service be held for a deceased relative/friend?	*25.4*	*37.9*	*23.2*	*13.5*

Table 6.1d: Religious affiliation (in %)

	yes	no
Have you been baptised?	67.8	32.2
Have you attended any preparation classes for Confirmation or for first Communion?	53.5	46.5
Did you participate in any group activity organised by the church, apart from Sunday services?		
in the age of 5-9 years	23.7	76.3
in the age of 10-14 years	16.6	83.4
15 until now	5.6	94.4

Table 6.1e: Understanding of the Holy Scripture (in %)

There are different ways of conceiving the Bible. Which of the following statements come closest to your own opinion?	
The Bible is the clear word of God and therefore literally true.	3.3
The Bible was inspired by God but it was written by human beings and it must therefore be interpreted anew in each age.	27.3
The Bible contains much human wisdom, but it is not in any way affected by God.	17.6

The Bible is just a book among other books.	15.2
I have no opinion on this matter.	35.7

Table 6.1f: Secularity

Values	Frequency	%
1 Religious in first generation "new religious"	15	1.8
2 Religious in second generation	97	11.9
3 Secularised in first generation	341	41.8
4 Secularised in second generation	228	27.9
Missing	135	16.5

Table 6.2: Religious Experiences
Percentage of „yes"-answers

	can be authentic	wishful for me	have made experience	
Many people say that their religion gives them a certainty in life that they otherwise would not have.	46.9	17.3	13.7	
Many people say that through their belief they have experienced the closeness of God.	35.5	18.1	11.4	
Many people say that God has helped them in a concrete situation.	36.9	39.0	12.7	
Many people say that their faith gives them a feeling of security that cannot be explained with the intellect.	47.8	21.6	10.3	
Many people say that their faith has often helped them not to lose courage in particular situations.	52.1	28.9	12.4	
Many people say that life would be meaningless without faith in God.	19.3	7.8	6.4	

Table 6.3 : Religious World View

	m	s.d.
1 Pragmatism	4.14	.75
2 Universalism	3.43	.88
3 Agnosticism	3.38	1.0
4 Naturalism	3.19	.86
5 Metatheism	3.06	.82
6 Cosmology	2.81	.77
7 Criticism	2.73	1.10
8 Atheism	2.71	1.11
9 Humanism	2.57	.93
10 Immanentism	2.55	.98
11 Christian	2.52	1.01
12 Pantheism	2.47	.97
13 Nihilism	2.06	.76

Table 6.4: Churches in Modern Life

	m	s.d.
Church-positive-micro	2.73	.83
Church-positive-macro	2.86	.92
Church-negative-micro	3.22	.87
Church-negative-macro	3.18	.90

Table 6.5: Religious Education

	m	s.d.
Education to church	2.30	1.10
Education in faith	2.00	1.10
Education about religion	3.59	1.08
Education for life	3.22	1.30
Societal Education	3.55	1.11

Table 6.6: Religious and Cultural Pluralism

	m	s.d.
Pluralism is positive	3.22	.83

Table 6.7: Religion in Modern Life

	m	s.d.
Religion-positive	2.96	.59
Religion-negative	2.89	.86

Table 6.8: Relation between Religions

	m	s.d.
Multireligious	3.09	.85
Intereligious	2.68	.69
Monoreligious	2.45	.91
Confessional	2.29	.90

Table 6.9a-1: Religious Practises by Sex and Degree of Secularisation

Religious Practises	Sex % high-group		Sec. % high-group			
	f	m	1.	2.	3.	4.
a. Level of worship			13.3	65.7	23.5	4.9
b. Level of Prayer	33.7	21.0	13.4	84.3	30.6	8.3
c. Are you a Believer?	63.0	48.0	73.3	92.0	64.5	25.8

Legend: Only highly significant differences (p < .001) are mentioned. Sec.: Degree of secularisation. % high-group: percentage of cases with high scores: a and b: answers sometimes or more; c: answers not certain or more. f: female, m: male. 1.: religious in first generation. 2: religious in second generation; 3.: secularised in first generation. 4.: secularised in second generation.

Table 6.9a-2: Religious Practises by Personality, Xenophobia, Lifeperspectives, Valueorientation and Political Attitudes

Religious Practises	Ext τ	Neuro T	Xen τ	Lfpt τ	Val τ	Pol T
a. Level of worship						
b. Level of Prayer			-.088			
c. Are you a Believer?			-.119	-.147		

Legend: Only highly significant differences (p < .001) are mentioned. Ext.: Extraversion. Neuro: Neuroticism. Xen: Xenophobia. Lfpt: Lifeperspective in Time. Val.: Valueorientation. Pol.: political attitude. τ: Kendall's Tau.

Table 6.9b-1: Religious Experiences by Sex and Degree of Secularisation

Religious Practises	Sex % high-group		Sec. % high-group			
	f	m	1.	2.	3.	4.
can be authentic	66.1	49.3	53.3	93.8	63.6	39.0
wishful for me	38.0	25.4	13.3	86.6	33.7	10.6
have made			6.7	70.1	14.1	3.5

Legend: Only highly significant differences (p < .001) are mentioned. Sec.: Degree of secularisation. % high-group: percentage of cases with high scores: a and b: answers sometimes or more; c: answers not certain or more. f: female, m: male. 1.: religious in first generation. 2: religious in second generation; 3.: secularised in first generation. 4.: secularised in second generation.

Table 6.9b-2: Religious Experiences by Personality, Xenophobia, Lifeperspectives, Valueorientation and Political Attitudes

Religious experiences	Ext τ	Neuro T	Xen τ	Lfpt τ	Val τ	Pol τ
can be authentic			-.145	-.126		
wishful for me			-.111			
have made						

Table 6.9c-1: Religious attitudes by Sex and Degree of Secularisation

	Sex mean		Sec. mean			
	f	m	1.	2.	3.	4.
Religious World View						
Christian Pragmatism			1.93	3.80	2.63	1.89
Humanism			2.22	3.41	2.67	2.10
Naturalism Cosmology	3.06	3.37				
Immanentism			2.68	3.40	2.66	1.99
Nihilism	1.97	2.18				
Atheism	2.50	2.96	2.68	1.54	2.59	2.33
Criticism						
Agnosticism						
Universalism						
Metatheism	3.16	2.94				
Pantheism			2.57	3.50	2.55	1.91
Churches in Modern Life						
Church-positive-micro	2.87	2.59	2.71	3.42	2.83	2.33
Church-positive-macro						
Church-negative-micro	3.03	3.46				
Church-negative-macro	2.98	3.42				
Religious Education						
Education to church						
Education in faith						
Education about religion						
Education for life	3.47	2.96				
Societal Education	3.71	3.35				
Religious and Cultural Pluralism						
Pluralism is positive	3.43	2.95				
Religion in Modern Life						
Religion-positive	3.07	2.81	2.97	3.38	3.04	2.68
Religion-negative	2.65	3.18	2.31	2.29	2.84	3.20
Relation between Religions						
Multireligious	3.19	2.95				
Interreligious						
Monoreligious						
Confessional	2.20	2.44				

Legend: Only highly significant differences (p < .001) are mentioned. Sec.: Degree of secularisation. f: female, m: male. 1.: religious in first generation. 2: religious in second generation; 3.: secularised in first generation. 4.: secularised in second generation.

Table 6.9c-2: Religious attitudes by Personality, Xenophobia, Lifeperspectives, Valueorientation and Political Attitudes

	Ext τ	Neuro τ	Xen τ	Lfpt τ	Val τ	Pol τ
Religious World View						
Christian						
Pragmatism	.118				.145	
Humanism						
Naturalism						
Cosmology						
Immanentism				-.125		
Nihilism			.128			
Atheism			.158	.165		
Criticism			.136	.135		
Agnosticism						
Universalism						
Metatheism						
Pantheism						
Churches in Modern Life						
Church-positive-micro				-.120		
Church-positive-macro						
Church-negative-micro			.152	.173	.119	
Church-negative-macro			.159	.139	.103	
Religious Education						
Education to church						
Education in faith						.106
Education about religion						
Education for life			-.177	-.162		-.124
Societal Education			-.163	-.158		-.158
Religious and Cultural Pluralism						
Pluralism is positive			-.266	-.125		
Religion in Modern Life						
Religion-positive			-.131	-.150		
Religion-negative			.245	.244	.151	
Relation between Religions						
Multireligious			-.102			
Interreligious						
Monoreligious						
Confessional				.124		

Legend: Only highly significant differences (p < .001) are mentioned. Ext.: Extraversion. Neuro: Neuroticism. Xen: Xenophobia. Lfpt: Lifeperspective in Time. Val.: Valueorientation. Pol.: political attitude. τ: Kendall's Tau.

Table 6.10 aThe Dutch factoranalysis of religious world view

No	Con.	Item	C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
35	Imm.	Every person is a small part of God himself/herself.	.66	.67								
31	Hum.	God is not somewhere hanging above us, but inside us	,47	.64								
17	Hum.	God is another expression for the good in mankind.	.36	.63								
42	Pant.	God is everywhere in Nature and Nature is divine.	.55	.58								
03	Hum.	In my opinion, God is what is valuable in a human being	.56	.57								
07	Imm.	Every person has a divine spark in his/her deepest self.	.58	.55								
21	Imm.	The divine is something in our deepest self.	.45	.54								
15	Christ.	There is one God who personally concerned about every person	.66	.52								
28	Pant.	God is inside everything, God is everything	.64	.51								
29	Christ.	There is one God who has revealed himself through Jesus Christ	.51	.50								
44	Christ.	There exists a God whose kingdom shall come	.57	.50								
32	Nat.	In the end, our lives are controlled through natural laws	.59		.74							
04	Nat.	The only higher reality is represented by the powers of Nature	.38		.54							
18	Nat.	Life is just a part of Nature's development	.23		.44							
26	Uni.	Religions are different paths to the same God	.65			-.78						
40	Uni.	The religions all refer to the same God	.51			-.68						
12	Uni.	One God is given different names by the religions	.36			-.52						
36	Nih.	In my opinion, life is meaningless.	.66				.79					
08	Nih.	In my opinion, life has very little meaning.	.43				.65					
06	Cos.	We all participate in the higher reality of the cosmos	.49					.57				
05	Deis.	The world would not exist if there was no higher power	.46					.56				
13	Meta.	There is a higher being that we cannot describe in words	.51					.49				
39	Agn.	I do not know if there is a God or a higher being.	.40						.64			
11	Agn.	It is a great question if God exists or not.	.40						.58			
02	Pragm.	The meaning of life does not depend on God or a higher reality but on me myself	.42						.51			
16	Pragm.	Each person has to decide for him or herself what the meaning of life is	.29						.40			
24	Crit.	The word 'God' is still being used to deceive people	.68							.88		
38	Crit.	People have invented God in order to shirk responsibility	.61							.72		
23	Ath.	Believing in God is nonsense.	.60							.70		
10	Crit.	God has been made up by the churches for the purpose of subjugating people	.55							.69		
27	Meta.	What God or the divine is, lies outside our comprehension	.37								.58	
41	Meta.	God or the divine cannot be described in words	.34								.42	
34	Cos.	There is a sort of cosmic energy out of which we have arisen and to which will one day return.	.53									-.68
20	Cos.	The Cosmos gives and takes life.	.40									-.50
45	Cos.	Our earth originates from an interaction of cosmological powers	.35									-.48
		Eigenvalue		8.5	3.7	2.0	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0
		Reliability		.90	.61	.72	.64	.67	.62	.82	.47	.61
		Variance explained 62.6%										

Legend: Con.: Concepts. C.: Communality. Imm.: Immanentism. Hum.: Humanism. Pant.: Pantheism. Cos.: Cosmology. Nat.: Naturalism. Nih.: Nihilism. Uni.: Universalism. Deis.: Deism. Meta.: Metatheism. Ath.: Atheism. Crit.: Critizism. Agn.: Agnosticism. Christ.: Christianism.

Tabl 6.10 bThe Dutch factoranalysis of religious world view

1 Pragmatic agnosticism (3.81)
Agn I do not know if there is a God or a higher being.
Agn It is a great question if God exists or not.
Pragm The meaning of life does not depend on God or a higher reality but on me myself
Pragm Each person has to decide for him or herself what the meaning of life is

2 Religious Universalism (3.43)
Uni Religions are different paths to the same God
Uni The religions all refer to the same God
Uni One God is given different names by the religions

3 Naturalism (3.19)
Nat In the end, our lives are controlled through natural laws
Nat The only higher reality is represented by the powers of Nature
Nat Life is just a part of Nature's development

4 Metatheism (3.15)
Meta What God or the divine is, lies outside our comprehension
Meta God or the divine cannot be described in words

5 Cosmology (2.83)
Cos There is a sort of cosmic energy out of which we have arisen and to which will one day return.
Cos The Cosmos gives and takes life.
Cos Our earth originates from an interaction of cosmological powers

6 Deisme (2.81)
Cos We all participate in the higher reality of the cosmos
Deis The world would not exist if there was no higher power
Meta There is a higher being that we cannot describe in words

7 Atheistic Criticism (2.69)
Crit The word 'God' is still being used to deceive people
Crit People have invented God in order to shirk responsibility
Ath Believing in God is nonsense.
Crit God has been made up by the churches for the purpose of subjugating people

8 Christian humanistic immanentism (2.53)
Imm Every person is a small part of God himself/herself.
Hum God is not somewhere hanging above us, but inside us.
Hum God is another expression for the good in mankind.
Pant God is everywhere in Nature and Nature is divine.
Hum In my opinion, God is what is valuable in a human being
Imm Every person has a divine spark in his/her deepest self.   ,
Imm The divine is something in our deepest self.
Christ There is one God who personally concerned about every person
Pant God is inside everything, God is everything
Christ There is one God who has revealed himself through Jesus Christ
Christ There exists a God whose kingdom shall come

9 Nihilism (1.74)
Nih In my opinion, life is meaningless.
Nih In my opinion, life has very little meaning.

Table 6.10c Results of the Dutch factoranalysis:

	Mean	s.d.
Pragmatic agnostocism	3.81	.80
Religious universalism	3.43	.88
Naturalism	3.19	.86
Metatheism	3.15	.87
Cosmology	2.83	.85
Deism	2.81	.90
Atheistic citicism	2.69	1.0
Christian humanistic immanentism	2.53	.86
Nihilism	1.74	.95