PART III

CIVIL RELIGION IN A GLOBAL ERA
CHAPTER ELEVEN

IN AND OUT OF PLACE: VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS LOCATIONS IN A GLOBALISING WORLD

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The perception of religion as “out of place” rests on an underlying assumption that there is a way in which religion could (and should) be in place. The concepts of both civil religion and nationalism can suggest that there is a place for religion that is closely tied to a particular society or nation. There are, however, several other ways in which religion and society might be related, just as there are several ways they might not be related. At a time when the diverse processes associated with globalisation are increasingly crossing, penetrating, negotiating and undermining the integrity of national boundaries, it is not surprising that what can be seen as “religion in place”, from one perspective, can be seen as “religion out of place”, from another perspective.

Using Max Weber’s (1949) concept of “ideal types”, this chapter considers a variety of ways in which religion might be located with reference to the state, the society and the individual. These relationships fall into three broad groupings: the criteria determining whether religion is “in place” or “out of place” are based on responses to three related but separate questions. What is the legal/political relationship between church and state? What are the socio-cultural relations between religion and the society? What are the different theological criteria for conferring a religious identity upon an individual?

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2 The concern in this chapter with the placing (in or out) of religion arose from my addressing the original working title of this book, which was Religion Out of Place. Civil Religion, Nationalism and Globalisation.