



THE
GEORGIAN
GROUP

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RELIGION IN THE GEORGIAN TOWN

Jonathan Barry

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS CONFERENCE have pointed to the pluralist character of life in the Georgian town, and the anxieties, as well as the cultural opportunities, created by this condition. The aim of this essay is to discuss the impact of religious diversity on the life of the towns, but also the effect which the variety of religious experience in the towns had on the character of Georgian religion. I shall limit myself to the years before 1789, since the twin effects of industrialization and radicalism altered drastically the issues which urban religion raised. I shall also talk very generally about towns, and groups within towns, despite the differences in the religious experiences both of individuals and of different kinds of towns. Clearly there was a profound contrast between the role of the church in a cathedral city, such as Wells or Lincoln, and its place in a port like Hull or town such as Birmingham with no diocesan presence. Towns with a generous medieval legacy of parishes, such as Norwich or Bristol, adjusted to population growth in a different manner from the new manufacturing centres with only one or two ancient parishes. The character of nonconformity also varied considerably from region to region, and the impact of Methodism was felt very unevenly, taking strong root in Bristol, London and Newcastle, but not making much impact on many Midlands and Southern towns until after 1789. It is a mark of the neglect of eighteenth-century religion by historians that no systematic comparisons of these kind have ever been attempted, and this essay will not attempt to do so.

Instead I wish to explore an issue which, though apparently of the 'why did the dog not bark' variety, nevertheless raises fundamental questions about urban religion in the Georgian period. Anyone considering the future of the English towns in 1714 would certainly have predicted that the religious disunities within the urban community would play a profound role, and pessimists would have had good reason to suppose that the towns might be torn apart by religious conflicts. The first part of this essay considers why this was so, while the rest of the essay attempts to explain the decline in the intensity of religious conflict. The standard assumption that this was caused by a decline in religious feeling is examined, and an alternative approach, proposing a change in the character, rather than the intensity, of religious experience is proposed. The changing character of religion was a response to the urban experience of religion, reflecting the need for the towns to evolve a form of religion less damaging to urban life.

RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS

Proof that religious divisions were etched deep into urban life at the accession of George I may seem otiose given the highly visible character of the disputes in the years 1710–16. The riots associated with the trial of Sacheverell were succeeded by frequent contests, both electoral and physical, during 1710 and 1713, and then by a wave of attacks on meeting houses following the accession and coronation of the new, non-Anglican, monarch. Although the Jacobite rebellion attracted little overt support in the towns, and there were some urban

disturbances against Catholics, urban violence against dissenters continued to predominate until 1717 or 1718. It was only through strenuous use of the new powers of the Riot Act, and the unconstitutional avoidance of elections in 1718 through the Septennial Act that some order was restored.

It might be argued, however, that these disturbances reveal only the willingness of the urban mob to make trouble on pretence of religion, abetted by a minority of religious extremists. Recent work on crowds and popular politics in the period has tended to cast doubt on this interpretation, showing widespread involvement in such disturbances by established members of the rival churches and linking this to the vitality of Whig and Tory partisanship among all classes. On a more analytic level it is possible to point to a number of features of religious life in the period which made it very likely that both Anglicans and Dissenters would attract strong support from a wide spectrum of the urban community.

It is a commonplace that nonconformity appealed chiefly to the 'middling sort', such as artisans and shopkeepers, most of whom were concentrated in the towns. Over the fifty years of persecution and toleration since 1662, the middle-class and urban bias in nonconformity had been growing steadily more marked. It was much more difficult to sustain a minority faith in the countryside, where members were scattered and open to strong social pressures to conform. These pressures intensified as the influential group of nonconformist gentry in 1660, mostly Presbyterian, gradually drifted back to Anglicanism or bred Anglican heirs. It was particularly hard for the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, with their stress on a learned, paid ministry to sustain their rural presence. In the towns, however, a sizeable congregation could be ensured, amongst whom were normally a number of rich merchants or professional men who could bolster the meeting's finances and provide a vital element of managerial skill in the difficult task of keeping a meeting-house going. Moreover in a town the minister could find a range of by-employments suitable for a learned man, most obviously a teaching career, catering both to his congregation and others. Although there are some signs that even in towns the social range of congregations was becoming more restricted, the development should not be exaggerated. Within nonconformist ranks there was a general contrast between the Presbyterians and Quakers, with a nucleus of really wealthy members, and the humbler Baptists and Congregationalists, but all sects included a sizeable class of poor people. As a consequence nonconformists numbered between ten and twenty-five per cent of the urban population, compared to their national showing of only six or seven per cent.

Many of the same considerations are relevant to the strength of Anglicanism in the towns. The ministers, for example, often acted as school-teachers, as well as performing as chaplains and lecturers to various town institutions, such as almshouses and town societies. Both Anglican and dissenting ministers found the intellectual life of the towns, with their growing numbers of bookshops and clubs, much more congenial than the isolated life of the country clergy, especially as the rural gentry increasingly spent their time in the towns as well. The chief problem facing the urban church was the inadequacy of many formal stipends, following on the collapse of enforcement of tithes on urban property since the Reformation. But this was often offset by the generosity of congregational support, and it was less of a hardship to forego agrarian profits during this period of low food prices. It was much easier to practise pluralism without sacrificing one's standards of pastoral care within an urban setting than across the countryside, and the ambitious cleric was well-aware that influential patrons might notice a skilled speaker. London, in particular, with its bevy of city lectureships, attracted an army of young clerics, and many of the church's future leaders started in this fashion. All the work done on the frequency and fullness of religious worship in this period indicates that the highest standards were maintained in the towns.

A superior supply of religious services does not, of course, ensure higher standards of lay religiosity, nor that religion was as central to the bustling life of the town as to the quieter

countryside. But religious affairs were so deeply entwined in urban life that it is hard to see the Georgian town as a secular place. Ignoring the important economic and social role of the church in many cathedral cities, it is clear that urban government was closely linked with religion in many respects. Formally, at least, membership of urban government was restricted to Anglicans, and between 1711 and 1718 the loophole of Occasional Conformity was removed, excluding even Presbyterians from power in most towns. The Anglican basis for urban magistracy was made visible in the elaborate round of church-going and sermon-attending followed by most town councils, and extended to the general public on major holidays and thanksgivings. The pulpit was still a central part of the propaganda machine of government, and of rival parties.

Not all towns had fully-fledged Corporations, but they all came within the parish structure, and many of the basic functions of urban government were conducted at parish level, particularly if there was no higher level of institutions. It was impossible to disentangle the secular and religious aspects of parish affairs, evolved as they were from the assumption that church and state were indivisible. Once there existed a sizeable body of townspeople outside the Anglican fold, the Anglican monopoly of parish government was bound to be a controversial question. Not only were finances being raised from all groups to be spent in part on church affairs, but many of the secular functions of the parish, such as poor relief, education and moral discipline raised sensitive issues of power and propaganda. Not only could these institutions be used to encourage the people into the Anglican fold, but the values they inculcated might raise doctrinal controversy. Often the nonconformist sects sought to provide for their own in such matters, and the Baptists and Quakers evolved a tight-knit community life largely separate from the rest of the community. This made them very resentful of paying for parish matters. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, preferred to leave poor relief and similar matters to the parish, but were all the keener as a consequence to be represented in parish government. For their part the Anglicans were very distrustful of the motives for nonconformist participation in parish affairs, fearing that they would give unfair advantage to their co-religionists.

The two decades before 1714 had seen a number of attempts to solve these dilemmas by evolving alternative institutions outside the parochial and denominational setting, as well as successive Tory attempts to use the powers of Convocation and Parliament to re-establish the Anglican hold on local affairs. Corporations of the Poor had been created in major towns, removing poor relief from parish hands and, in some cases at least, allowing all ratepayers a say in management. Societies for the Reformation of Manners were established to replace the moribund church courts and bring together citizens of varied religious stances who shared concern about the impact of urban life on religion and morality. Education often seemed the best solution to these problems, and the charity school movement sought to use the very urban device of subscription societies to reach the urban poor. By 1714, however, most of these efforts had broken down, often because it proved impossible for the different religious groups to work together, and even where institutions had survived they were increasingly monopolized by one side or the other of the religious divide, or had become pawns in the power games of the differing groups. The existing structures of urban life were still much stronger than any voluntary philanthropy.

These contentious issues at a local level gave added depth to the religious divisions within politics, since the Whigs and Tories were clearly identified with opposing positions on such questions as occasional conformity, nonconformist education and the Acts needed to create Corporations of the Poor. The Tory ministry from 1710 had paid particular attention to these questions, and the succeeding Whig ministry pushed through the repeal of many of their measures. Although political allegiances were also influenced by wider questions, such as the fears of popery and absolutism, it was no coincidence that the churches were the most

important bases of political organization in the early Georgian town. Their ministers and officials were key propagandists and agents for political groupings. The frequent elections in the decades up to 1715 repeatedly brought out the political dimension of church allegiance, as most, though by no means all, of the towns were parliamentary seats. The fact that eighty per cent of seats were in the boroughs heightened the concentration of religious animosity in the towns, where the propaganda of each side was also most able to have an impact.

Despite these explosive materials, however, the violent scenes of the mid-1710s proved the end, rather than the start, of a trend. Religious allegiances remained the most important determinants of party allegiance until 1760 at least, and in many cases well after that, and there were often bitter, struggles at elections where religious slogans, at least, played a major part in controversy. Recent work has rightly stressed the continuing vitality of party in the localities, and the ability of such apparently unlikely topics as Jewish Naturalization to rekindle the fears of 'the church in danger' as late as 1753. Nevertheless it is striking that on the religious issues most affecting local life there was remarkable little change, or even pressure for change, in the half-century after 1718. When these issues were revived it was generally by the tiny minority of unitarian liberals, joined in the 1790s by the radical wing of Methodists. Unlike the nonconformist groups identified earlier, however, these pressure-groups were restricted to particular social classes and also, by and large, to particular kinds of towns, notably the new manufacturing centres. The issues they raised failed to strike a chord with fellow dissenters in towns across the country, or to divide towns down the middle. Apparently the different religious groups had learned to live together in the towns, despite the failure to solve the issues raised earlier. How can this have happened?

THE DECLINE OF RELIGION

Despite the rearguard actions of some ecclesiastical historians, most historians would probably reply, echoing the general perception of eighteenth-century religion, that the main factor was a decline in the intensity or importance of religion, both at popular and elite level. The churches lost their hold over the ordinary people, while the religious life of the respectable was increasingly watered down into a routine matter of worship and social decorum.

The failure of the existing churches to satisfy popular religious impulses is usually examined in the context of the Evangelical Revival from 1737, notably the various forms of Methodism. Two central features of Methodist organization are emphasized to show the inability of establishment Anglicanism to meet popular needs. The first is the contrast between Methodist itinerancy and the inflexible Anglican parish structure, unable to cope with urban growth and the movement of population into industrial areas. The second is the 'enthusiastic' style of evangelical preaching, in contrast to the moderation and elegance of the ordinary minister. The dependence of the town clergy on their congregations and fashionable patrons, together with their own education and gentlemanly status, inclined the ministers to talk over the heads of the poor, while both clergy and Anglican laity distrusted enthusiasm because of its associations with dissent and the recurring memory of Civil War radicalism.

Important as both explanations are, one must doubt whether they can offer a sufficient explanation for the trends considered here. The reaction against enthusiasm had been proceeding since 1660, indeed many would argue that the post-Reformation church had never succeeded in recapturing the popular mind with its educated ministry. Popular Anglicanism in the seventeenth century appears to have revolved around the prayer book and the church's association with the major festivals and rites of passage, and there was no change in this aspect of Anglican religion in this period. On the other hand the decisive population shifts which certainly overwhelmed the Anglican church after 1789 can hardly explain earlier

trends, especially as the studies made of church life in the new towns suggest a considerable element of new building and adjustment to new needs, even if slowly and cumbrously. Apart from the London suburbs none of the early Georgian towns were of a size and character to leave a large number of possible attenders unable to attend a church if they had wished to do so.

The decades after 1720 are generally agreed to have seen a considerable shrinking in the nonconformist population, certainly in relative terms and possibly in absolute numbers as well. We should be careful of reading too much into figures for church membership, because it is clear that many people were merely 'hearers', possibly still Anglicans as well, and not recorded in membership figures, but there does seem to have been a decline in fully-committed members, which gave grave concern to many contemporary dissenters. Historians have been inclined to portray the dissenting communities as falling inevitably into the cycle of 'sectarian decline', whereby they lost their evangelical fervour, retained only members from the social class most at home with their style of religion, and relied for recruitment largely on their own children and marriages, so reinforcing their introspection and lack of attractiveness to new recruits. The Quakers and Presbyterians of this period certainly manifest many of these features. As we have seen these congregations were heavily dependent on the good offices of their richer members, who tended to set the tone for the meeting. The poorer sects, faced with the problem of church finance, often had to sell or rent pews to support their ministers, so possibly excluding the poorest.

Contemporary comment, however, generally focused on the theological splits which racked the churches after 1720, notably the debates which eventually pushed most Presbyterian churches towards Unitarianism, while those who could not accept this became, effectively, Congregationalists. These divisions not only weakened the evangelical thrust of dissent, but produced in the unitarians a theology the very antithesis of popular religiosity. Even within nonconformist congregations the new theology seems to have appealed to the elite, forcing many ordinary members to secede. The academies which the dissenters had established in towns across England, together with the Scottish universities, created a liberally-educated ministerial élite whose enlightened theology was far in advance of their congregations, except those laymen privileged to attend the same schools. The full force of these developments, however, was not felt until the 1760s, and many congregations appear to have been oblivious to the theological niceties, then as now. Many of the early converts to Methodism and evangelical dissent appear to have been disaffected members of the older congregations who welcomed a new form of nonconformity, and we lack hard evidence for any decisive decline in old dissent until after 1740.

Accounts of the declining popular appeal of the various churches frequently dwell on the contrast between the kind of religion demanded by polite culture, cool, rational and decorous, and the fervent, emotional, superstitious nature of popular religiosity. In pursuing the former the churches sacrificed the latter. But historians have also suggested that the church was coming to play an increasingly minor role in the polite culture of the towns, as other elements of provincial cultural life blossomed. Until 1700 the churches had retained a central role in the dissemination of news and ideas; now this was challenged by the expansion of the provincial press and the London periodicals, read in the coffee-houses and by clubs privately. The sermon had not only provided news and opinion, but also the literary and dramatic highspot of the week in the hands of a skilful preacher, but now there were provincial theatres and visiting lecturers. The most sophisticated music was no longer to be heard in church but in the playhouses or at concerts. The surge of new building in classical style in the towns, including grandiose public buildings, left the churches, once dominant architecturally in the town landscape, seeming increasingly old-fashioned, while their unadorned interiors could not offer the same visual attractions as the interior decorations of private houses, or the growing range of printshops and itinerant exhibitions of art. The

commercialization of culture was leaving the churches behind, and the prosperous were devoting increasing time to these pursuits and beginning to invest them with the significance previously reserved for religion.

Although, as we have seen, early efforts to use voluntary association to meet urban needs often foundered on denominational jealousy, there were an increasing range of philanthropic organizations established thereafter which did manage, though sometimes uneasily, to bridge, the sectarian divisions in the name of charity. The most prestigious examples were probably the Infirmaries, but other urban problems such as debt and prostitution were also tackled. As an increasing number of specialized societies emerged, so the political role once filled, *faute de mieux*, by the churches, was increasingly taken over by specific political clubs. This was a self-reinforcing process since the shelving of religious issues made it more likely that people would organize on non-religious grounds, but this in turn lessened the identification of parties with distinctive religious stances.

The last point, however, begs the question of how the process began, and many of the developments described above could as easily be characterized as effects, rather than causes, of declining interest in religion. Certainly many contemporaries saw the growth in luxury, as they characterized these cultural shifts, as growing from a religious laxity amongst the well-off. But there was no reason why the churches could not adapt to the changing styles of Georgian culture, and often they did so. A little-studied aspect of the Tory drive to re-establish the Anglican church after 1700 was an outpouring of funds to equip the churches with the latest cultural trappings, such as organs, altar-pieces and a magnificent array of brass, silver and wooden ornaments and church fittings. The baroque or rococo exuberance of these decorations may seem to us to sit uneasily both with the medieval inheritance and with the new 'preaching-boxes' built in classical style, but they were evidently popular at the time with a public used to such a mixture of the austere and the fanciful. Town churches were much more likely to benefit from these additions than their rural counterparts.

Religion in general and churches in particular in fact continued to play a central role in all forms of the cultural life of the towns. Not only did religion remain the chief subject of literature, music, painting and the like, but the churches' personnel continued to provide the core of the local intelligentsia and artistic community, even if now supplemented by itinerants from London and abroad. Organists, for example, usually arranged the first concerts and doubled as music and dancing masters. The clergy were often active in other cultural groupings and wrote much of what was published locally. The great bulk of local printing remained religious in orientation, and the reprinting of sermons was probably the single most important genre. Many of these sermons were preached at gatherings of town societies, for few of the philanthropic or civic bodies, however, non-denominational, would venture to hold a public dinner or procession without a church service or sermon, still usually Anglican. Although on the Continent some societies, such as the Freemasons, were strongly anti-clerical, even anti-Christian, in England such groups, whilst avoiding doctrinal issues, generally sought to associate themselves as closely as possible with the church, following the pattern established by urban government in its use of religion in civic ritual.

THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF RELIGION

Although the theories discussed in the last section throw much light on the changing position of religion in Georgian society, they do not seem to offer a sufficient explanation of the decline in religious animosity. In this last section I will sketch out an alternative interpretation which remains closer, in a sense, to the original problem, by suggesting that urban religious practice, and its political implications, were modified in order to avoid the very dangers of urban catastrophe outlined above. On the other hand I shall venture into some very speculative comments about changing views of the nature of religion, which can hardly be tested on this occasion.

In explaining the 'growth of stability' after 1715, historians have often noted that successive Whig ministers, notably Walpole and Newcastle, went out of their way to avoid provoking Anglican alarm, while both the Anglican hierarchy and the leaders of the dissenting community accepted that the untidy position which had emerged by 1718 was the best they could expect without provoking another political storm. Often this has been taken as an example of the Whig oligarchy fudging a settlement over the heads of the people, both Anglican and dissenting, in the localities. But recent work on towns in the years after 1715 suggests that the national leaders may have been following a trend of compromise already evident in the towns themselves, as the dangers posed by religious strife to town life became ever clearer. Although the local circumstances varied enormously, many towns saw an alliance of religious moderates emerge in the decade after 1715, both to settle local issues and to elect moderate MPs. Although such alliances were frequently fragile, dissolving according to local conditions, there was never again the same conjunction of national and local grievances felt across the country, and the Ministers were careful to ensure this remained the case.

Furthermore, as new generations grew up in towns where religious diversity was a fact of life, the laity, at least, appear to have taken ever greater advantage of the choice offered to them as religious consumers. The fact that Georgian religious history has been written almost entirely by denominational historians has encouraged us to paint far too sharp a picture of denominational divisions. Even at ministerial level there was increasing cooperation between the dissenting groups, apart perhaps from the Quakers, while the gap between Presbyterian and low Anglican was also narrow. Occasional conformity was not the sole prerogative of elite Presbyterians, but an established tendency amongst all ranks, and few congregations yet offered their own alternative rites of passage, leaving members to be married and buried, at least, as Anglicans. As we have seen, membership in nonconformist churches might mean many different things, and many people attended both Anglican and Dissenting meetings. Eighteenth-century autobiographies often show the young exploring a wide range of different religious practices, although they are generally written by those who finally settled in a particular sect and are therefore biased, in their outcomes, towards those who made a specific denominational choice. Many Georgians probably continued their youthful practice of sampling preachers of every kind. Hard though we may find it to credit, Georgians were avid fans of sermons, and all the different religious groups found themselves compelled to stress this aspect of worship to attract the public.

One effect of this emphasis on preaching was to lessen the disparity in style between different churches, whilst a public well-versed in the doctrinal differences between the churches appear to have become increasingly tired of debates over minor points, and to have yearned for a common denominator which would heal this rent in the urban community. Many of the philanthropic and cultural initiatives mentioned above were intended to fulfil an ecumenical function by bringing different denominations together within new organizations, not compromised by the old conflicts, on the basis of common values shared by all the Christian churches, and central to the well-being of the urban community. When these initiatives succeeded, their practical virtues threw into even greater relief the unfortunate rifts between the participants in their church life.

Historians have found it difficult to reconcile the two leading features of Georgian spirituality, namely a great stress on morality and good works, combined with a strongly pietist, even mystical tendency. The most famous examples of the former are the latitudinarian sermons of leading churchmen such as Tillotson, while William Law's *Serious Call* was only the most successful of a bevy of pietist manuals. A similar combination can be found in many of the nonconformist churches, for example the Quakers, who adopted a theology of quietism and inner spirituality together with an obsessive concern for the precise performance of moral and social duties. The two traditions may be reconciled, however, if we view the

primary impulse as an ecumenical one, offering the individual a form of spirituality which avoided those doctrinal questions and issues of church organization which divided the denominations, and emphasized the public face of morality on which all could agree, and the private experience of each believer. This form of Christianity offered as apolitical a form as was possible in any society where religion was a major political issue.

The chief criticism that can be made of such religion is the absence of an effective evangelical dimension. Historians are still very influenced by the hostile attitude of later evangelicals to the churchmanship of this period. It does seem likely that this kind of religion appealed primarily to the educated and reasonably prosperous townspeople, but we should not forget that they still formed a very substantial proportion of the affluent pre-industrial towns, and remained the chief supporters of all churches even in the Victorian period. Even the evangelical movements of this period depended much more than the standard image suggests on their support.

When we think of evangelicalism in the eighteenth century our minds normally turn to the Methodists, and their success in bringing the Word to outcast groups such as Cornish tinmen or Kingswood colliers. This is seriously misleading in two respects. In the first place the Methodists were only one example of a widespread revival of evangelical concern amongst all religious groups from the late 1730s. Secondly, the early success of Methodism itself was often greatest in the towns, and early Wesleyan and Whitefieldian organization revolved around strong support in London, Newcastle and Bristol. Membership of these churches remained relatively small until the 1790s, and came predominantly from the lower middle class and craftsmen, although there were important working-class groups involved and Methodist preaching undoubtedly reached a much wider audience than its membership strictly defined. In this, however, Methodism was no different from the other dissenting churches, as we have seen.

This is not surprising when we recollect that the Methodist movements were not intended originally to create a new denomination at all. John and Charles Wesley always viewed their movement as a non-denominational force intended to perform evangelical work and bring extra spiritual experience to people of all sects, while they themselves remained loyal Anglicans. They attracted many supporters from both Anglican and dissenting groups, and while some of these soon pressed for the establishment of separate church services and organization, many others fought hard to prevent any developments which would create a new denomination. It was only in the 1790s, after Wesley's death, that an irrevocable move towards separatism occurred. Indeed it seems likely that many early supporters of Methodism were attracted to it precisely because it appeared to offer an ecumenical movement for greater spirituality, transcending the denominational boundaries.

Several features of early Methodism can best be understood within this urban and ecumenical context. Religious historians have often pointed to the contradiction within Methodist thought between the inclusive evangelical impulse, encouraging the preaching of a powerful emotional message to the masses with strong emphasis on conversion, and the exclusive, sectarian character of many of their other activities. The Calvinist evangelicals retained the exclusivity of the elect, while Wesley's Arminian wing, though supporting the notion of universal salvation, in practice demanded an intensive level of commitment from those who wished to become 'perfect' through class and band membership which created an inner core of the godly. It was these groups whose religion, I would suggest, conformed closely to the general pattern of urban spirituality described above. Wesley himself noted the strong tendency of such people to stress personal piety and moralism, even mysticism, above the evangelical dimension.

Finally we should note that, despite intense suspicion at its inception, the Methodist movement maintained, until the 1790s, a strenuous political neutralism on party issues,

together with an emphasis on loyalty to the establishment in church and state. This has often been seen as the result of Wesley's own conservatism. The argument of this essay suggests that such an apolitical stance reflected the preference of the Methodist rank-and-file, most of whom dreaded the re-entanglement of religion in political matters. Only amidst the millennial excitements of the 1790s, and in face of government repression, did political radicalism revive among evangelical dissenters, and even then the great majority chose to deny all radical aims and emphasize their separation from political affairs.

CONCLUSION

Two main conclusions emerge from this survey of religion in the Georgian town. The first is that religion was, and remained, a vital factor in urban life, and that its changing nature should be seen as an alteration, not a decline, in spirituality. The second is that these changes resulted in large part from the impact on religion of the diversity of church life in towns. This offered both a challenge and an opportunity to assumptions about how religion should and could function. The evident dangers that disunity posed to the urban community were tamed by specific political action but also by an evolution in the way townspeople envisaged the impact of religion on society.

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