

Believing without Belonging. A Liverpool Case Study / Croyance sans appartenance. Le cas de Liverpool.

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BELIEVING WITHOUT BELONGING A LIVERPOOL CASE STUDY

Cet article reprend les éléments de deux études antérieures. La première «Believing without Belonging: Is this the Future of Religion in Britain» (Davie 1990b et Davie 1993) propose un cadre pour comprendre les principaux traits de la religion dans la Grande Bretagne d'aujourd'hui. Elle insiste en particulier sur l'absence de religiosité active presque partout dans le pays. La seconde étude «“You'll Never Walk Alone”: The Anfield Pilgrimage» (Davie 1992) semble contredire ce qui précède; elle montre la très grande expressivité de la religiosité dans une ville britannique bien particulière, Liverpool, à un moment d'intense émotion. La tension entre les études est résolue par le fait que l'on considère la seconde comme étant l'exception qui confirme la règle; une exception qui révèle l'importance de la mise en contexte pour une juste interprétation de la relation entre Croyance et Modernité.

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Este artículo incorpora los elementos de dos estudios anteriores. El primero «Believing without belonging, is this the future of religion in Britain ?» (Davie 1990b y Davie 1993) propone un marco para entender los principales rasgos de la religión en la Gran Bretaña de hoy. Insiste en particular sobre la ausencia de religiosidad activa en casi todo el país. El segundo estudio «You'll never walk alone: the Anfield Pilgrimage» (Davie 1992) parece contradecir lo que precede; pone de relieve la gran expresividad de la religiosidad en una ciudad británica muy particular: Liverpool, en una época de intensa emoción. La tensión entre los estudios se resuelve por el hecho de que se considera el segundo como una excepción que confirma la regla; una excepción que nos enseña que no se puede interpretar de forma válida la relación entre creencia y modernidad dejando de lado el contexto.

The editor of this issue of *Archives on Belief and Modernity* has asked me to bring together two previous pieces of work within the overall perspective of the issue. The first “Believing without Belonging: Is this the Future

of Religion in Britain ?” (Davie 1990b; see also Davie 1993) suggests a framework within which to understand the principal features of religion in contemporary Britain. More particularly it stresses the lack of *active* religiosity in Britain (1), not least among young people and in many working class areas. The second piece, “‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’: the Anfield Pilgrimage” (Davie 1992a) appears to contradict this, in that it documents the highly expressive religiosity of one particular British city, Liverpool, albeit at a time of heightened emotional tension. Central to this expression of religiosity was the football fraternity; that is young working class males – not normally noted for their piety – who found innovative as well as traditional ways to express their sentiments after a tragedy in which 95 of their fellow supporters lost their lives.

Is it possible to bring together two pieces of work with such very diverse emphases ? The answer to this question is problematic. The conclusion, surely, must be that the Liverpool case study forms an exception that proves the more general pattern suggested in the first article. And for two reasons. Liverpool’s religious life – like so many other features of this city’s existence – is simply out of step with most of mainland Britain (for a full discussion of this, see Waller 1981, Parkinson 1985, Davie 1987, Sheppard and Worlock 1988). In addition, the Hillsborough tragedy has to be seen as a moment of great crisis when people reveal what is normally kept carefully hidden (2). This would be so whatever the city in question. The point to underline, however, is that what was revealed in this particular case depended on an exceptionally strong sense of communal identity in the city of Liverpool; an identity constantly reinforced by a distinct and developed popular culture.

The article is structured as follows. The first section outlines the sequence of events in Liverpool in the days and weeks following the Hillsborough tragedy. The second section attempts a sociological analysis of what was happening in this situation, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between organised religion and the football world. The concluding section returns to the theme of *Belief and Modernity*, underlining the fact that both Liverpool’s religion and its sporting life – like so many other aspects of the city’s existence – have been able to resist the individualised nature of modernity outlined in the “Believing without Belonging” article, which remains, nonetheless, the dominant focus of religiosity in contemporary British society.

Hillsborough (15 April 1989) and its aftermath

The English football (soccer) season comes to a climax each spring when its two major competitions – the League and the Cup (3) – reach their most exciting moments. Among the high points, the two F.A. Cup semi-finals have a particular significance; they are the penultimate matches of the major knockout competition, played by tradition on a neutral ground (thus denying to both teams a home advantage). So it was that Liverpool met Nottingham Forest on 15 April 1989 at the Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield. The choice of Hillsborough was unremarkable; it repeated a similar choice made the previous year, for Sheffield provides a geographically convenient venue for teams and supporters coming from Liverpool and Nottingham. The Hillsborough stadium

was considered one of the best in Britain (4). No one anticipated anything other than a spectacular match played in the very best conditions. The weather, a bright spring day, was perfect.

Play was abandoned after six minutes. That afternoon 94 people – most of them young and all of them Liverpool supporters – died, watched not only by a capacity crowd but by a television audience numbered in millions. Too many had been let into one end of the ground, and those at the front were crushed against the perimeter fences just as play was about to begin (5).

The aftermath of this tragedy forms the subject matter of this section. If the match itself was part of a well-established sequence of events in the English football calendar, what followed in the next few days was totally without precedent. In coming to terms with their grief, Liverpool people found innovative and unusual ways to express themselves, ways that drew from the depths of the city's culture. Their behaviour – the spontaneous decisions of numerous individuals – affirmed, above everything, an essential solidarity in grief, resulting in a distinctive religiosity expressed in actions as well as words. I will argue that it could not have happened elsewhere in Britain.

What, then, did happen in Liverpool in the days immediately following the disaster? Walter (1991) has given us an invaluable catalogue of the mourning rituals that emerged in this most atypical of British cities. He divides these into categories – formal and informal, civic and political, sporting and religious – but adds an immediate caveat; “These categories will mislead if the reader is not aware how religious, civic and footballing rituals were intertwined”. (1991: 608-9) The different facets of Liverpool's life were, as ever, difficult to disentangle. Informal merged into formal as conventional boundaries – those dividing religion from sport for example – were crossed and recrossed all the time.

The list in Walter's article is considerable and should be consulted directly for any detailed study. One episode must, however, detain us: the Anfield pilgrimage. For it was this, above everything, that astonished the world. How did it come about?

Nothing was, or could have been, organised at the outset. But people (still in shock) found comfort in coming together on the day after the tragedy (a Sunday). They came, primarily, to their churches, to the Roman Catholic Cathedral or to Anfield, the home ground of Liverpool Football Club. Gradually these spontaneous and individual gestures became more organised. All over the city the dead were remembered in the Sunday worship of the parishes in which they had lived. In the early evening, a Requiem Mass was held in the Metropolitan Cathedral; it was packed to overflowing. But throughout the day more and more people came to Anfield; so much so that at noon the Cub opened its gates officially and began the daunting task of shepherding – of providing care for – the endless stream of mourners who came to the ground. It seemed that people just wanted to be together, and at Anfield rather than anywhere else.

Sunday was just the starting point; in the days that followed the stream of mourners grew into a flood. By the end of the week, an estimated one million people had filed through the ground, twice the population of the city. The “pilgrims” – as they were called (*Catholic Pictorial*, 23 April 1989) – queued for hours to get into the stadium, where they were gently marshalled,

and – if they so wished – counselled with great sensitivity. The “counsellors” included the expected (religious personnel and trained social workers), but also the less expected (professional football players and their wives). Here, and elsewhere, there were some remarkable reversals of role.

The following extracts give at least some idea of what it was like to be at Anfield in the week following Hillsborough. They also convey the *unexpected* nature of what was going on. The first two paragraphs are extended (and separate) quotations from an unpublished paper written by a sociologist present at Hillsborough on the day of the disaster, herself a participant in the Anfield pilgrimage. The first is rich in ethnographic detail; the second introduces a more sociological focus:

The most visible response in this first week was the visit of over a million people to Anfield, Liverpool’s home ground. Large crowds had already gathered outside the ground when club officials opened the gates at noon on Sunday and began admitting people. By five o’clock the Kop end of the ground, where home supporters always stand, had become a shrine bedecked with flowers. The visitors continued to arrive from all over the country over the seven days of official mourning, queueing for hours in silent solemnity. The field of flowers gradually grew towards the centre of the pitch, whilst the concrete steps behind the goal were transformed into a carpet of scarves, pictures and personal messages. Scarves were also hung on the metal barriers, many of which became dedicated to the fans who had stood behind them week after week. Schoolfriends penned the names of their lost classmates on the walls outside and inside the stadium. These messages expressed personal and communal grief as much, if not more than, any of the official ceremonies could have. For many people, visiting Anfield – Liverpool’s homeground – brought their grief to the surface.

Liverpudlians were innovative in expressing their grief in this and other ways. Their public expression of grief was not only functional in reinforcing the social solidarity of the community, it was also one of the few ways people *could* grieve. Though deeply shocked, most people had not been personally bereaved. They could not attend the family funerals and yet they needed to express their grief. Visiting Anfield helped the community because it allowed people to acknowledge publicly what they were feeling. It was unusual but entirely acceptable to see young men crying. (Eyre 1989)

The next extract offers a slightly different approach. It takes up the theme of *pilgrimage* portraying Anfield as a third Liverpool Cathedral. In so doing, it exemplifies once again the impossibility of dividing the sporting from the religious in Walter’s catalogue of mourning rituals.

Liverpool became a Three Cathedral City on Hillsborough Sunday.

In addition to the Metropolitan and the Anglican, we added the Anfield Cathedral with its two acre liturgically green sanctuary and the Kop altar bedecked with countless flowers and festooned with red and blue “stoles” and “albs” which had been sacrificed by the laity in memory of their dearly departed.

The cloisters approaching the Anfield Cathedral were crowded all day Sunday, the only sound breaking the silence being the tread of the pilgrims’ feet approaching the main door of the Cathedral, the Bill Shankly gates, there to offer their gifts and messages. (*Catholic Pictorial*, 23 April 89).

The use of such imagery to describe Anfield was not restricted to the religious press. The memorial edition of the *Liverpool Echo* (28 April 1991), for example, reported that the “greatest football ground in the world became Liverpool’s third cathedral as around a million pilgrims flocked to pay tribute to the Hillsborough dead”. The cover of this edition displayed in colour the

carpet of flowers at Anfield, alongside three black-and-white faces; those of the Catholic Archbishop, Derek Worlock, the Anglican Bishop, David Sheppard and the Club Manager, Kenny Dalglish. These three faces seemed to sum up the city and its loss.

The stress on a *third* cathedral is important. Anfield became an additional – not an alternative – place of worship in Liverpool. Indeed at four o'clock on the day following the disaster, Anfield closed its gates, allowing the "congregation" to make its way to the Requiem Mass in the more conventionally religious setting of the Metropolitan Cathedral. Here, though, they found a huge, red, football banner (complete with the city's Liver Bird emblem), made through the previous night by a Roman Catholic sister. Under it, the congregation were leaving football regalia rather than Christian gifts, whilst outside – during the mass hastily organised to accommodate the thousands unable to squeeze into the Cathedral itself – a similar pile of offerings accumulated beneath an altar covered by a Liverpool banner which had served as an altar cloth. If, in popular parlance, Anfield had become a shrine, events in and outside the Metropolitan Cathedral sanctified the symbols of football. Conventional boundaries had, it seemed, collapsed altogether.

A final description of the Anfield pilgrimage (the phrase is used quite explicitly) in the week of official mourning is taken from an article by the Liverpool Bishops. The article describes the scene within the stadium; it then acknowledges the ambivalence of many – especially outsiders – to what was going on:

Over the goalpost and crush barriers hung red and blue scarves, with flags and banners portraying the Liver Bird emblem and the inevitable assurance that "you'll never walk alone". On the turf below lay a field of flowers, more scarves and caps, mascots and souvenirs, and, incredibly, kneeling amidst wreaths and rattles, a plaster madonna straight from a Christmas crib.

Blasphemy, unhealthy superstition, tawdry sentimentality? Or a rich blend of personal mourning, prayerful respect and genuine faith? (Sheppard and Worlock 1989)

Which was it? Blasphemy, superstition, sentimentality; or personal mourning and genuine faith? The following offers a partial explanation for such contrasting views.

The Bishops describe the atmosphere at Anfield as being like the days before a funeral when visits are paid to the home of the bereaved; when the family recall together the person they have loved and exchange stories about the bereaved, stories based on shared memories. The sense of family, of mutual support, of the need to be together is the most important aspect of such activity; it is moreover, a notoriously difficult thing to experience vicariously. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many non-Liverpudlian visitors left Anfield not only bewildered, but, at times, critical of what seemed – from the outside – like "tawdry sentimentality". In contrast, the people of Liverpool, together with Liverpudlians returning to the city from elsewhere, found the Anfield experience enormously reassuring. They were both, after all, part of the family.

This sense of a family, of belonging, is the key to understanding the Anfield pilgrimage. It is a sentiment that has persisted, despite everything, in Liverpool in contrast to many other parts of the country. One focus through which to examine this persistence lies in the complex links between football

and religion in Liverpool; links which pervaded the response to the Hillsborough tragedy.

A sense of belonging: religion and football in Liverpool

It is easy to become sentimental about both religion and football in Liverpool, though they undoubtedly embody much that is positive in the city's life. Not least they bring to Merseyside a welcome taste of success, a sense of leading the way nationally, even internationally; a not inconsiderable factor in this most problematic of British cities. Moreover both religion and football provide shape and focus in the lives of countless individuals as well as communities; they continue to attract an unusually high proportion of the city's population.

Having said this, it is important to remember that for the greater part of this century, Liverpool's religious life, and in certain respects its football as well – though less so than in Glasgow – was profoundly divisive. For well into the post-war period Liverpool, like contemporary Belfast, looked at the world through sectarian spectacles and adjusted reality accordingly. In the last ten years or so, we have become so used to seeing church leaders on Merseyside appear in twos, if not threes, that we forget that this is a relatively recent phenomenon. Two generations ago, the church leaders did not even speak to one another, let alone lead joint acts of worship. Such antagonisms have gradually subsided for a variety of sociological – as well as episcopal – reasons (Waller 1981, Davie 1987, Sheppard and Worlock 1988), but too much self-congratulation must be avoided. For neither the mainline denominations nor the footballing fraternities have been at all successful in attracting the sizeable ethnic population of the city. In this sense, both Liverpool's indigenous religious life and its football, remain, to a considerable extent, exclusive; they reinforce, rather than overcome, the persistent lines of division within the city.

Both positive (belonging) and negative (excluding) aspects of Liverpool's football life are well expressed in the following:

The crowds at Anfield and Goodison Park celebrate their sense of being Liverpoolian, an identity bound up with decade upon decade of heels dug in against the odds, of perennial survival that is not quaint or glamorous at all. It is a matter of profound tragedy that running through those Saturday afternoon exhibitions of solidarity there is a distorting streak of brutality which confuses working-class Liverpoolian staying power with ignorant, lumpen white power. It is a definition of whiteness that underpins the isolation of black Liverpool from the humour, the poetry, the music, the football. (Hill 1989:78).

And, de facto, the institutional churches did little better, though the rhetoric was rather different:

Institutional religion was seen in the same connection as all the other institutions of society. Organised religion did not appear to have any place in such a hurt community. Its members would tell you plainly that they saw few if any black people in positions of leadership in the Churches. (Sheppard and Worlock 1988: 170)

It is easy to emphasize the working class identity, the essential community of Liverpool expressed through religion and football (Walter 1991), whilst forgetting profound divisions along racial lines. Sentimentality merely clouds the issue.

A second misconception is equally misleading; that is to see religion and football – no longer torn apart by a pervasive sectarianism – as rivals of each other. Two lines of thought, both of them incorrect, converge here. The first extrapolates too far from an analysis of football in religious terms; an approach which, though sound in itself, drifts all too frequently from analogy to assumed incompatibility. The second fails to see that *both* religious practice *and* football attendance are subject to similar pressures from the wider society; they are not competing against other, but against shifting cultural patterns. A whole range of social activities have suffered from this shift.

First the question of analogy. Sociologists who analyse football as if it were a religion, whether in Liverpool or elsewhere (Coles 1975, Taylor 1990), construct frameworks which enable valuable and accurate perceptions about charismatic individuals (notably Bill Shankly or Kenny Dalglish), about sacred places (Anfield), about anthems (“You’ll Never Walk Alone”) and about rituals or pilgrimages (the week by week attendance at matches and the detail associated with this). Durkheimian theories underpin this kind of work, which emphasizes a functional, rather than substantive, approach to religion. Such thinking is often accompanied by theological references to death (defeat) and resurrection (victory). These analyses are undoubtedly helpful; they provide insight into certain rhythms and patterns of life which pervade a whole range of communal behaviour. The approach becomes problematic, however, when analysts – and by no means all of them are guilty – begin to see football not so much as analogous to, but as a substitute for, or rival of, organised religion, for this kind of extrapolation is misleading to the point of inaccuracy.

One very obvious point is often overlooked in this connection: football and organised religion are not – and probably never have been – competing for the same constituencies. The average football crowd attracts disproportionate numbers of young, working class males (conspicuously absent from church for several generations); religious attendance, on the other hand, is skewed towards older, middle class women. It is simply not true to say that the fall in religious attendance since the war, or even before this, is in any way due to attendance at football matches. Younger working class males have always had rather different priorities. The occasional religious service may lose out to a big game televised live; so too will the local sports fixtures.

A second – and, for the argument of this article, crucial – factor reinforces this interpretation. Churchgoing and football attendance *both* prosper in this atypical city, which has been unusually successful in resisting pervasive national trends in this respect. In Liverpool, it is not a question of either religion, or football, but of both. Moreover a very wide spectrum of the city’s population will be well informed about, if not actively involved in, both activities.

The national picture is rather different. Indeed it invites much wider reflection about the changing nature of contemporary British society. For it is important to realise that the fall in churchgoing – not on the whole accompanied by a drop in religious belief (Davie 1990a, 1990b) – and the diminishing gates at professional football matches share with a whole range of other

institutions their struggle to maintain allegiance (Beckford 1992). Political parties (of all political persuasions) and trades unions are, for example, finding life equally difficult. There are national rather than local trends that represent a significant cultural shift; a shift towards to a more individualised, detached consumer directed society. We need to ask why Liverpool should find itself more able than most to resist these trends; why, in other words, a sense of belonging (exemplified in both sport and religion) continues to pervade this rather unusual city.

There can be no doubt about the facts. Merseyside (the area immediately around and including the city of Liverpool) boasts one of the highest church-going rates in England (Brierley 1991), a figure very largely explained by the exceptional proportion of Roman Catholics in the city. Paradoxically, this presence – the consequence of massive Irish immigration in the mid 19th century – has helped to maintain attendances on both sides of the religious divide. If nothing else, sectarianism ensured – and in Northern Ireland, continues to ensure – high levels of religious activity. More recently active and effective ecumenism, spearheaded by the Liverpool Bishops, has enabled a persistently high profile for religion on Merseyside; a profile that enjoys very positive national, indeed international, publicity.

Football attendances are equally buoyant. Once again a certain rivalry between the city's two clubs (Everton and Liverpool) is not without effect in this respect, but the old adage – nothing succeeds like success – is the most obvious explanation for continued support, indeed for capacity gates (hence more rather than less financial security for the clubs). And there can be no doubt about recent success; the statistics speak for themselves. Since 1970, Liverpool have won the League championship no less than eleven times, the F.A. cup on three occasions and the League cup (under various names) on four, as well as six European titles. The gaps in the League championship were twice filled by Everton who have also won the F.A. cup once and the European Cup Winners Cup. No other English city has a comparable record.

Such is the prestige of football on Merseyside and its all-absorbing quality that persistent questions about conflicting loyalties are, it seems, inevitable. Surely football on Merseyside has earned an extraordinary – a religious – status? Such questions are understandable enough, but they miss the point. The following anecdote (from the article by the Liverpool Bishops already quoted) offers a valuable corrective. It also brings us back to the situation immediately following the Hillsborough tragedy:

In the days since the Hillsborough Disaster this particular taunt about football and religion has been frequent, though couched in many forms and not always meant unkindly. Yet we were taken aback last week when a distinguished visitor to the city asked if our churches were *jealous* of football as a religion. This time we were spared the need to reply by a Director of Liverpool Football Club...

"Football is not a religion", he said firmly. "It's an important part of our life. And here in Liverpool there is no real gap between religion and life. They go together". He paused before adding definitively, "That includes football". (Sheppard and Worlock 1989).

The Director of Liverpool F.C. has said it all. There is no gap in Liverpool between religion and life, and life includes football. The Anfield pilgrimage needs to be seen in this light; it cannot be categorised conventionally.

The symbolism was, perhaps, completed one year later when the first anniversary of the Hillsborough tragedy fell, to the day, on Easter Sunday. (It seemed almost inevitable that this should be the case). Once again the public Memorial Service at Anfield and the private dedication of the Hillsborough Memorial incorporated elements from Liverpool's unusually rich heritage in both religion and football. The three church leaders led the ecumenical service; Rogan Taylor of the Football Supporters' Association read the lesson; 95 roses were blessed in memory of the dead; and Mrs Nessie Shankly, the widow of Bill Shankly, unveiled the Memorial on which their names were inscribed. A sense of belonging was affirmed within which private grief was respected. In that it reflected the inextricable links between religion and football in the life of Liverpool, the Memorial Service reinforces one theme within this article.

The second theme returns us to the broader question of Belief and Modernity. It will form the concluding section of the paper.

CONCLUSION

Beckford (1992), in a paper already referred to, suggests that changes in the field of religion cannot be understood independently of the wider processes of change in society. Picking up an argument central to this article, he offers the following example of what he has in mind:

the important observation that religious believing seems to have become detached from religious belonging (Davie 1990a, 1990b) should be understood in relation to the parallel observation that virtually all voluntary associations have been finding it difficult in the last few decades to attract and retain members. ... In other words, "belonging" has been simultaneously losing its popularity in religion *and* in many other fields as well. The split between believing and belonging is therefore part of a broader change which happens to affect religious organisations amongst others. It is not a problem unique to religion and does not necessarily arise from the inner dynamics of religious organisations alone. (1992: 277).

This frame of reference is helpful in understanding both the Liverpool case and the wider context of modernity. For it is crucial to remember that Liverpool's political and economic life – as well as its sport and religion – very often run counter to the mainstream in Britain. Each of these facets of the city is, moreover, related to the others. Taken together, surely, they add up to an exception in British society; an exception in which the *collective* remains, for better or worse, a dominant feature. Or – to put this another way – in which believing without belonging (in its widest sense) is to some extent resisted.

An additional – reinforcing – factor can be found in Liverpool's unusually rich popular culture; an aspect of the city that persists despite – or, perhaps, because of – economic malaise (Henri 1991). It is, above everything, a celebratory culture; one that wears its heart on its sleeve and displays a depth of emotion rarely seen in most parts of the country. Much of it is Irish rather than English in origin. Outsiders are polarised in their reactions: some irreversibly attracted, others repelled. The first group revels in the theatre, the art, the music, the creative writing and the local humour. Others dwell on

the city's more negative qualities; the lack of moderation in all things (political as well as artistic) and the sentimentality of it all.

At no time was such ambivalence more sharply focused than after the Hillsborough tragedy, an event which by its very nature displayed Liverpool's emotions to the world. Whilst few withheld sympathy towards those who had been bereaved, many felt that the collective displays of mourning were both tasteless and unnecessary. Half-fascinated but half-appalled, the majority kept their distance, preferring a more discreet religiosity. The Anfield pilgrimage – essentially an explicit, conscious and collective acknowledgement of death – was, quite clearly, not to everyone's taste. This is one reason why I would argue that this episode is unlikely to be repeated in Britain, even in the aftermath of a disaster. It depended too much upon the city's exceptional character.

It is, in conclusion, tempting to pursue the argument of this article to its limits and suggest that the Liverpool example might be considered a case of "belonging without believing"; in other words it embodies a reversal of the normal British pattern. I would, however, hesitate to do this. It is true that the city has a strong and articulated sense of communal identity, an exceptional sense of belonging. This is one way in which Liverpool people have been able to resist at least some of the aspects of the individualism so prevalent in contemporary society. But does not this reinforce, rather than replace, the element of belief – albeit at times unorthodox belief? It would, indeed, be difficult to reconcile everything that happened in Liverpool in the aftermath of Hillsborough with conventional Christian teaching. On the other hand, such teaching was respected; it was "added to" rather than rejected in the emergent amalgam of faith which Liverpool people found such innovative ways of expressing.

Grace DAVIE
University of Exeter

NOTES

(1) Inactive religiosity, on the other hand, remains widespread. For it is becoming increasingly clear that a decline in churchgoing in British (indeed European) society does not mean a decline in religiosity per se. This is the major theme of the "Believing without Belonging" article.

(2) "Disasters" have, in this respect, become a valuable source of information for the sociologist of religion. Religious reactions to such events are expected and – for a short time at least – they become part of the public debate.

(3) There are two major competitions in the English soccer season. One of these is the Football League. Each team in the division plays every other team twice (once at home and once away). The champion team is the one with the most points (awarded for a win and a draw) at the end of the season. The second competition is the Football Association Cup, a knock-out tournament. The ultimate accolade for a team is to do like "double", that is to win both League and Cup in the same season. Liverpool is the only English team to have done this twice. The Hillsborough tragedy took place at the semi-final stage of the F.A. Cup.

(4) The technical deficiencies of the stadium are not discussed in this article. They have, however, been closely scrutinised in Lord Justice Taylor's official report on the Hillsborough tragedy (Interim Report, August 1989; Final Report, January 1990).

(5) Ninety-four people died on the afternoon of 15 April 1989. One further death occurred a few days later.

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