Postmodern theories of religion

Introduction -

No truth, no meaning, no certainty – their theory of life.

Characteristics of post-modern society are:

ICT, consumerism, movement of people, risk and uncertainty, globalisation

These changes have impacted the culture of society in the modern age (Lyon)
Changed people’s identities, attitude to authority and their ideas of space and time.

Paragraph 1 (decline of dominant religious organisations) –

Sacred texts are available in many forms due to IT, causes rivalry between the dominant religion of the country, gives people the opportunity to educate themselves about different views.

Paragraph 2 (The rise of fundamentalism) –

Fundamentalist groups offer hope and direction in what seems to be an uncertain world. (HOLDEN)
People turn to them to resist the influence of the modern world, maintain their connection with the religion. (CASTELLS)

However, some groups have begun to embrace modern world technology, highly dependent on ICT to spread their message e.g ISIS. RADICALISATION/GROOMING

There has been a spread of new age movements, post-modern society encourages us to select beliefs which suits our chosen identity.

Paragraph 3 (David Lyon) –

Globalisation caused a movement of ideas and beliefs across national boundaries. Gives us instant access to previously remote beliefs.
Dismembers religion from real, oral churches and relocate it to the internet.
Symbols of religion are detached from their original location in church and can be found in the media, they then become a cultural resource that individuals can adapt for their own purposes.
The growth of consumerism leads to ‘spiritual shoppers’ where we choose beliefs to meet our needs and ones we find useful.
The large amount of narratives that are available weaken the claims made by traditional religions.
However, he doesn’t believe religion is being replaced, just being ‘re-enchanted’ with more unconventional belief systems being developed.

Paragraph 4 (Grace Davie) –

Religion isn’t declining, it’s just becoming more privatised – attendance is now a personal choice rather than an obligation. People hold beliefs but don’t go to church.

Some professionals practice the religion on behalf of a larger group of people eg. Weddings, funerals. – ‘vicarious religion’