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"Tag, You're It!": Using Social Media "Tags" to Help Solve the Problem of Church Classification in Sociology of Religion

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Chapter One: Introduction

At a nightclub in Los Angeles on a Sunday night around 7:00pm, the music is pulsing, while a crowd waits in the colorfully lit lobby. The doors open and the music continues pound until a band arrives on stage. Plugging in his guitar, the bandleader invites the people to sing about God, and so starts Urban Mosaic, a church at a nightclub in the middle of downtown L.A.

My thesis is on the way that tags, or keywords, and tag clouds, visual representations of tags can be a way to harmonize the need for theory and interpretation.

My research for this project follows two broad strokes, qualitative classification and types of Evangelical churches. As mentioned earlier, my interest in this project started with my proposition of using the social metadata, tags or keywords to define content like thick descriptions. But is tagging a good way to categorize data? It sounded promising at the time that tagging might be a good way to bridge the gap between interpretation and positivism. But is there a reason to create a new system, or are there significant problems of classification that pose issues of accuracy and validity? Arguing classification theory will not go anywhere without data to categorize. Having an interest and done research on Evangelicals, I discovered that Evangelicals are not just one big group, but also a diverse fragmentation of various theologies, political beliefs, and church service styles. The term "Evangelical," and other terms like "Emergent" are so generalizing there was no nuance to the individual churches. This is were tagging and Evangelicals came together. Why not use tags to categorize churches, movements, and beliefs to establish definitions that are rich, like thick description, so theory can be produced?

Over the course of the project, tagging has emerged as a classification system that can solve the issues with traditional classification. Examples include time-sensitive definitions that can tract change of over time. Tagging leads to the reduction of the need for the "Other" category

by giving a voice to all the phenomena in a given observation. And provide for porous and flexible definitions, where terms can be added and subtracted to provide a fitting definition. This project is a way to start the conversation about new ways of doing classification.

For this project I have done archival and participant observation. Participant observation is crucial to producing a thick description to work from for tagging. I have done research at Mosaic Church, which meets at the Mayan Theater in downtown L.A on Sundays at 7:00pm. Participant observation often requires at least a year's worth of research, however, I was able to attend only a handful of times over the past year. One observation was done for another project, which I ended up choosing another church to study. One observation was pulled from a book on Generation X religion, coded, and used for the project. No interviews were done for the project.

As researchers, we have the duty to place ourselves within the frame of the research and determine where we stand in relation to our subjects. It is important for this information to be available to all. One of the first things I should explain is my religious background. I grew up Catholic, so Mass was always highly structured and ritualized, even in a causal environment. Attending a church service in a nightclub can be jarring and question what exactly does a church service supposed to look like. Another part of my background and personal identity is the fact I am openly gay and currently in a relationship with a man. Evangelical pundits and leaders have been quite vocal about how homosexuality is "destroying" America. But being openly gay and studying the Evangelical movement, I my eyes have been opened to the multitude of opinions, beliefs, and expressions, the pundits and leaders seem to "represent." Evangelicals, like all subcultures, have a diversity that knows no bounds and to discover this has established my role in breaking down stereotypes in academia that have wedged themselves into the discourse. My background in academia I have a background in Anthropology and Theatre Arts and Design and

this project borrows heavily from Information Science and Internet Technologies. It is important to work from a multitude of perspectives because one perspective may only solve part of the problem.

My thesis follows the structure of a social science paper. Chapter Two and Three are extended literature reviews, chapter two focusing on methodology and classification and Chapter Three focusing on three Evangelical church styles, New Paradigm, Seeker, and Emergent and how they fit with their respective generations at large. Chapter Four is when discussion of what tagging and tag clouds are, the tagging of the church services and its tag clouds, followed by a discussion of tags and finally the conclusion of the piece.

Chapter 2:

Qualitative Politics:

The Politics and Problems of Classification in Qualitative Data Analysis

In order to create meaning we create categories[1] to organize the empirical data from our everyday lives. In qualitative research, the processes of classification are used to shift through the data and present a cohesive narrative of scholarship. There is a sense that categories are objective. However, this process is not neutral and involves the researcher's subjectivies about what was written down at the field site to what it has been classified as. It is important to look at the processes in which scholars create categories from their data to see if the categories are fitting the data rather than the other way around.

In this chapter, I seek to explore very broadly what categories and classifications are, how to classify and categorize social scientific qualitative data, and lastly to discuss the problems and politics of classification and categorizing. My data is largely pulled from Anthropology and Sociology. Some of my research comes from Information Science and the medical fields; because this data is flexible enough to be applied to the social sciences.

Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star argue that a classification system has three attributes: homogeneous principles (standard procedures), mutually exclusive, and the system continues functioning. In order for a system to work, the way the data needs to remain in a standard way.[2] An example would be organizing shirts by their position in the rainbow, red shirts going first and at the end would be the purple shirt. Systems must be mutually exclusive to provide clear distinctions of what is in the category and what is not.[3] A solid red shirt cannot be a solid blue shirt and thus cannot be placed with the blue shirts. The third characteristic is the system must be able to continue producing classifications for new data, like a new animal or a new journal article on the Emergent church.[4] When a new green shirt is purchased, it is placed between the yellow shirts and the blue shirts. However, these are the ideal attributes. One can take the shirts out of the closet and put them in a box for storage, even though they are still

organized in a rainbow. A red shirt might also have blue stripes. The new green shirt might be put in the purple section because the person is tired and does not care at the moment, which can be a problem because now green is the same as purple. While colors, for most people, are easy to identify, this example of conflation of meaning can lead to misunderstandings when data such as animal taxonomy when two terms can stand for one particular animal. This will be a problem encountered when discussing tagging.[5]

Bowker and Star argue there are two different types, not to be confused with the attributes above, of classification principles, Aristotelian and Prototype. Aristotelian classification operates on the binary of characteristics; it exists or does not exist. The categories that come out of the system can be monothetic, one variable (tells time or not) or polythetic, two or more criteria (tells time *and* circular). This system provides concise data bits that are easy to use in statistical and other forms of modeling.[6] Prototype theory is a broad picture of the ideal or prototypical subject and applies it to the data to see if it fits the prototype the observer has in their mind. This can create multiple levels between what the prototype is. For example, take an Eames chair, to a person who is not a design enthusiast, it is a nice looking, maybe odd looking *chair*, but those who have the knowledge about furniture design, they can use a more refined prototype of Eames Lounge. This refined nature of the prototype can be different across cultures. Bowker and Star show an example on how Americans think the prototypical furniture pieces are a chair and a sofa, while in Germany the pieces are a table and a bed.[7] Prototype theory will later be used to help define the church I am using in this thesis.

Both Aristotelian and Prototype theories fit the Weberian concept of the ideal type. The ideal type is similar to Prototype Theory since they both use a very broad mental concept of an item. However, it uses the binary of the Aristotelian principle, to compare the ideal type of

subject "x" how empirical "x" deviates from the ideal.[8] Weber notes in his 1949 book, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (quoted in Bailey 1994), "In its conceptual purity, this mental construct (Gedankenild) cannot be found *empirically* anywhere in reality. It is a utopia."[9] However, D. Martindale challenges how deviancy can be determined relative to the ideal type, when the ideal type cannot exist empirically.[10] But, the ideal type according to Bailey needs only two characteristics, "(a) possessed all the relevant features or dimensions of the type; (b) exhibited extreme clarity on all features."[11] This will create a category that is stationary and will be able used as a yardstick for the empirical phenomenon. Bailey goes on to say an ideal type does empirically exist. However, it does not exist in its purist form and this ideal type only needs to be effective in classification and not reality.[12]

In order to understand the problems and politics of classification, one must have a general understanding of the methodological process I am framing my argument. I have chosen grounded theory[13] because it heavily focuses on the coding/classification process, which refines data through recognizing sociological patterns and developing theory.[14] This makes the process more inductive rather than deductive or a process of verification. However, it is not a rejection of deductive research or verification, as all three are needed to strengthen theory.[15] According to Anselm Strauss, one of the developers of grounded theory, it is a more of a style of research rather than a separate framework because a lack of allegiance to types of data, subject areas and theoretical perspectives such as feminist thought. However, the ideas of American Pragmatists John Dewey, George H. Mead, and Charles Peirce did inspire this approach, which emphasizes the need for action on abstruse situations and the necessity of designing a specific methodology to solve these situations. The Chicago School of Sociology provided the emphasis of ethnographic techniques and on the subjects' understanding of the world.

Grounded Theory was originally used in a study about dying. While no doubt the methodology is flexible enough to be used in other applications, it was created specifically for this study.[16] It is quite possible the remnants of the parameters used in the study are affecting contemporary studies on a variety of topics. This creates issues because when methodology is said to be theory free, it stops the process of questioning one's data collection and analysis and without this questioning, the results can become misconstrued.

To collect qualitative data it is necessary to seek out living subjects. There are two main qualitative research methods, participant observation and interviewing. Participant observation is when one goes into the field and interacts with the subjects while taking notes. There are several levels of participation. There is nonparticipation where one is a "neutral" observer with no way of interacting with the subject at hand, or as Ninian Smart labeled this approach "bracketed realism."[17] This would be like watching a movie at the theater, since there is no intentionally disruptive interaction with the actors on screen.[18] The next step up is passive participation, where the researcher just observes and takes notes, without inhabiting the roles set up by the culture but can affect the actors' behavior.[19] Active or full participation is when the research inhabits the roles of the culture and learns how to "fit in," providing an in-depth look at the culture, from the inside.[20]

Making a record of observations is key in doing fieldwork. Field notes are the dataset in which the codes are designated from. There are several ways to do them and there is no "right" way. Personally, I like writing down bits and pieces of information from my observation to put down what happened immediately and not have to remember what the small detail was. My notes get longer when I have the time to write everything down without worrying there is going to be a sudden change in what I am writing on. It is typical for researchers to do an observation

and then later on write down everything in sentences rather than just words and phrases. This is typically done in when the researcher does not have the opportunity to be writing notes and being accepted into the culture they are studying.[21] Personally, I combine the two and work from both, since I gain more exposure to the data's themes such as the worship experience following a Seeker model rather than an Emergent model.

Once one has some data to work from, data analysis can begin.[22] In order to have categories in which one fills in, first the researcher must look over their data to pull questions and general themes that emerge. It is good to have broader categories at the beginning and allow for the data to refine those categories.[23] However, it is unproductive to have too few categories when beginning, otherwise the categories will be too broad and impossible to work with.[24] The categories cannot be intentionally and systematically forced, which opens the data up to manipulation.[25] However, one does not know which data will be actually used in the project.[26] While coding for the chapter, I used general categories to split my data and then refined them to strengthen my argument.

With categories to work from, next is the actual process of coding the data. Codes can be used as reference markers or as a variable with a specific value. [27] It is a multistep process, which begins with coding the data without any filters, coding everything from "professional lighting system" to "dependence on superior" to "drum set". The idea is to get all the "meat"/key points out of the write-ups rather than knowing exactly what "cut of meat" it is. While coding it is important to find in-vivo codes, terms and categories the subjects use to describe their world, such as "twink" and "bears," which are in-vivo codes in the gay community for what subtype a gay man "belongs" to. Strauss writes, "'in vivo codes tend to the behaviors or processes which will explain to the analyst how the basic problem of the actors is resolved or processed. These

codes fracture the data directly because they represent analytic categories as used by the researcher.'"[28]

Once the first level of coding has happened, coding can become more focused on what starts to emerge from the data. During the coding process, notes or "memos" are taken about each databit used, to track the rationale of why the scholar is including the code and theme of the code. This will shape the core category, the category that links the data with the overarching theory.[29] As I will mention below, it is important for the core category to be an axis for the data to settle in relation to and that relationship to be explored, rather than just picking which parts of the data fit into the category.

Another form of coding is making a domain analysis. This is done by taking bits of data and placing them under a category that has a semiotic relationship with a larger term known as the cover term.[30] An example from my own research is using the cover term of "performance" and placing the data bits of my observations from the churches, like "lifting one's hands in the air during the singing," under the cover term. These domains are then added to the data pool and further analyzed.

There are times when categories/codes need to be modified to keep data synthesis moving. When categories become too big, such as "Christianity," it becomes important to break it down into smaller segments to make it manageable and coherent. However, they must segment in the same way the classificatory system dictates, much like when a social group divides.[31] However, it is not productive to have too small categories/codes, in this case one would splice categories together. This would take down the number of categories to work with and make it more manageable.[32] If separate data bits are being grouped together in similar categories, it is best to put the similar categories together because it is obvious they have similar definitions that

were not apparent at the beginning of the process, hence why it is important to keep coding process open to change.[33]

After the first round of data analysis, it is a good idea to place the codes one has discovered or created into what is called a codebook. This is a list of all the codes with a definition fitting the type of data a researcher is working on. When going back to code the data again, these codes can be applied and refined against the new data.[34] Two different definitions of the same code can cause issues in the coding process so the researcher has to be specific on the term and the definition they are using.[35] Often times, multiple coders, who after several coding sessions will determine on what they agree, will create codebooks together. There are also computer-based programs that analyze data sets, like fieldnotes, for specific codes, however, the programs lack the knowledge to pick up on subtle things that only a human researcher could catch.[36]

Once most of the data has been coded, there will be data that is left over that does not either fit in the paper or is extemporaneous. The conscious is to toss the data out. If the data has no role in the paper, there is no reason to save the data, unless another project is done with the data. This would be like if a scholar was working on a project about New Paradigm churches and found some data on Seeker churches, Strauss would say to throw out the data on Seeker churches out because it is not relevant to the project.[37]

There are several issues with the classification of qualitative data. The largest problems revolve around the fact categories are static and "Other" category. Other problems include the issue with category names, human emotions can and the classification system, itself, can create complications to categorization.

Categories are static entities, when social phenomena are dynamic. The International Classification of Diseases, a set of medical classifications used to track disease rates, is updated every ten years.[38] The sheer size of the data pool that would need to be rewritten when new data is added does not allow for fast updates to the system. Smaller systems, such as definitions of types of churches, are more flexible to work with. For example Donald Miller produced a church classification called New Paradigm in the early to mid 1990's.[39] While the definition may be adequate for classifications today, the definition does not fully cover the new features churches have added since the definition has been added to the discourse. The new data may change the nature of the classification,[40] but this means the object of the classification has changed. If the classification does not reflect the most current data, then the object is treated as historical data, rather than current data. This will end up misrepresenting the object and will allow flawed research.

The other significant issue is with the omnipresent "Other" category. Participant observation produces a certain amount of data that can be seen as irrelevant to the project. This could be something like a color of the stage lighting to gender issues. Anselm Strauss says to completely disregard the data for the time being, if not, just throw it away. However scholars should heed Bowker and Star's advice that one does not know what data is going to be relevant.[41] Then why should anything be cut from the data pool, when it could be the potential key to the category? If this databit changes everything, does not that say something about the nature of the category instead?[42] By getting rid of the "Other," a portion of the phenomenon is disregarded and can lead to an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon one is trying to explain. This is not to say, the entire phenomenon needs to be included in the project. It means the view of the phenomenon should be as wide as possible given the project. Also by

disregarding a piece of an observation that is not "relevant" is also a missed opportunity to discuss why the irrelevant piece of data is manifesting itself in the observations. Now the resulting write-up should not be an entire ethnography on the one society, rather all the data should have been at least been analyzed in relation to the dominant theme of the project.[43] What is important is to realize the core category should be an axis on with the rest of the data in relation, not a magnet that selects the most relevant pieces of data and then dispose of the data.

Can the concept of "Other" be avoided in the first place? According to Bowker and Star, it cannot be avoided. When one categorizes something, the views of the leftover data are effectively silenced because they do not fit the definition. However, the "Other" *must* be placed into another category in order to be ethical. If it is left in silence, the "Other" can become disenfranchised, ignored, and oppressed. This can lead to problematic analysis of social phenomenon and in the context of the social world, oppression of peoples that have been labeled "undesirable."[44]

The name and the definitions of classifications can pose a predicament. Durkheim writes, "Certainly, the word can help us to give a greater unity and consistency to the assemblage thus formed; but though the word is a means of realizing this grouping the better once its possibility has been conceived . . ."[45] Words can both unite, limit and give power at the same time. The same word can have different meanings in the same project, providing room for similar but different categories.[46] However, it is crucial for the author to be clear when using the term. Unclear definitions can be just as uninformative as biased or incorrect data. Things can become complicated when different people label the same things in different categories. Bowker and Star use the different ways a set of tools can be classified. Creating a topological definition, a

definition that has a multitude of ways the phenomenon can be sorted into, can easily solve this.[47]

Even the system can create complications when classifying data. Large amounts of coding can create coder fatigue and cause incomplete data sets, which ends up skewing the results, even if the data is removed from the data pool.[48] If the system is not user-friendly, workarounds will be used to fit the users not the designers of the system.[49] This can lead to the system breaking. If the schema is not working, the categories can become to a higher level of criticism. This brings up an interesting dilemma. But if the schema is too controlled by the designer, the user's breaking of the system can be an indication the system is problematic and needs to be critiqued. As Paulo Freire writes, "Thinking critically about practice, of today or yesterday, makes possible the improvement of tomorrow's practice."[50] Whose classification is the best, the designer of the system or the user's? It would be the user's data because their data shows there is a problem with the definitions set out by the designer. By identifying the issue, the schema can be more effective.

Durkheim and Mauss propose another issue with classification that is less obvious, the emotion of the researcher. They write, "…it is this emotional value of notions which plays the preponderant part in the manner in which ideas are connected or separated. It is the dominant characteristic in classification."[51] When I am excited, data seems to fit my thesis, but once I come back to my data when I have settled down, most of the data does not fit as neatly as before. It is a problem that can be rectified quickly by looking at the data multiple times.

To further complicate the problems of methodology, there are four frameworks to work within the Social Sciences: Positivism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism, and Radical Constructivism. Since my thesis is debating between Positivism and Hermeneutics, the two will

be discussed at length below. Each framework has its own methodological preferences and worldview. Positivism has had a long history in the Social Sciences. The main gist of positivism revolves around collecting facts by scientific methods.[52] By using scientific methods, terminology must be precise and the truth must be open to questioning. It is mostly seen as quantitative framework. However, qualitative methodologies can be used if the method is controlled tightly. Positivism fits classification nicely as it opens the data up to be analyzed much easier. The goal of positivism is to create scientific laws. Examples of a positivistic approach in the Social Sciences would be an experiment to figure a person's response to a stimulus. But can human behavior/culture/society follow the laws set out by scholars?[53]

Followers of hermeneutics would say no to the above question. They believe scholars should embrace the particular and understand the data from the subject's point-of-view. Trying to create laws reduces the richness of the individual human experience to cold data. [54] With this idea in mind, the dominant methodology is qualitative research rather than quantitative research. The rejection of quantitative research is in large part due to its supposed reductionist nature. Reducing opinions to numbers and then inputting into equations to find how they are correlated does confirm the reductionist nature. However, it is important to realize the numbers are representations of opinions and other data. In fact, the two methods are asking two different parts of the same question. Quantitative research looks at amount of children of a certain population. Qualitative research looks at why this population has a higher fertility rate.

With the emphasis on qualitative research classification becomes harder to do because of the flexibility of the meanings and the emphasis on the particular. In Anthropology, the champion of this movement is Clifford Geertz, who has discussed "[the] task of the

anthropologist is not only to unravel the meaning of written and verbal messages she or he has collected in the field, but also to understand what whole cultural scenes…"[55]

Postmodernism and Radical Constructivism are two approaches that challenge both hermeneutics and positivism. Postmodernism follows hermeneutics more closely by rejecting universal truths and ways to knowledge and stress the time-sensitiveness, unfinished-ness, and confined authority of data collected.[56] Again, classification becomes problematic because of its nature to create a historical definition and reliance on a closed set of data. However, this assumes classification cannot be fluid enough to change constantly. Radical Constructivism, another framework of research, questions the reality of the data. A scholar's research is produced in the mind of the scholar and is not a "real" version of what happened during research.[57] To extend this forward to a larger degree, the entire discourse would collapse, but it poses a valuable argument about the nature of the academic pursuit of studying human behavior.

During the walkthrough of coding, I mentioned "in-vivo" coding or the categories the subjects use. To the subjects, these categories are "'cognitively real,'" shaping their daily lives.[58] W. H. Goodenough, referenced by Allen Imershein, advances it is not sufficient to just to study the categories, but to study how these categories actually function in the society.[59] Bringing the focus back to the coding process, when scholars start to label native categories over with their own categories it inherently changes the authenticity of the data, which goes against the idea of faithfully representing the subject. The phenomenon is no longer understood inside of its "history."[60] An example of this is when two Anthropologists produced with a code list of about 10,000 words, however, they did not want to use their own definitions, so they asked three native coders to select the codes they felt related to the events the scholars were looking at. To keep the code, two of the coders had to agree. This cut the list to about 800 words, but it also helped

establish what was important to the natives.[61] This prompts the question, who has the finial word? Scholars must balance their research with the feelings and desires of the people on the ground. Without the people on the ground, there is no research.

       The creation of codes establishes a narrative that effects how other codes and what codes are deemed relevant. In the classification schema, there is preferred narrative to what the end result should be. The example Bowker and Star give for the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), is what was the cause of death. While multiple narratives exist in the system, one is preferred to be the main story to simplify the *raison d'être*.[62] For a nursing classification schema quoted from the Nursing Intervention Classification' second 1994 newsletter (quoted in Bowker and Star 1999), the narrative is to give a name to the things they can do, so "we can control it, finance it, teach it, research it, and put it into public policy."[63] But what is also important is what is not included in the narrative and why it was not included in the schema.[64] It is also incredibly important to understand who is shaping the narrative as well. In an article on artistic taste making, Paul DiMaggio identifies three different actors shaping artistic categories. The first one is controlled by the market, in which the art is coded according to what genre of art is popular at the moment.[65] Like the ICD, members of a profession make a schema for the profession itself. This is important because they intimately understand what is needed in the definitions and what is not. Issues arise when the state/outsiders start making administrative classifications that can be oppressive and problematic for the professional.[66] One specific version of this problem is the issue when scholars, "the state," apply administrative classifications to churches, which does not match the professional classification of the churches, which can cause conflict between scholars and churches.

Classification is a complex process, one that needs to be looked at more critically then it has been. There are flaws and politics that surround it. While ideally they would be solved, but there would be problems and politics that surround the corrections. The best anyone can do is create a system that is designed for a particular data set, one that represents the subjects the best way possible, without the illusion of creating a perfect schema that solves every problem of classification.

My thesis utilizes several of the topics discussed above and incorporates them into the idea and rationale for tagging. The system I intend to use is ongoing. The incorporation of new data is crucial. Without new data, the classification only represents a snapshot of one time in history. This recognition of time and incompleteness is typical of a postmodern framework. The system bridges the gap between Hermeneutic's desire for interpretation and Positivism's desire for theory. When the process of tagging has been done, prototype classifications are then made, in which the next chapter will discuss the prototypes I will be using for my project.

Notes

[1] When discussing "categories" I am specifically discussing the "bin" in which data has been complied and sorted in. "Classification" is the tricky word because it can mean both the "bin" and the process of sorting data into the bin. For clarity I will use "Classification" as the process of sorting data.

[2] Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences,* Inside Technology, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 10.

[3] Ibid., 10-11.

[4] Ibid., 11.

[5] Ibid., 11-12.

[6] Ibid., 62.

[7] Ibid., 62-63.

[8] Kenneth D. Bailey, *Typologies and Taxonomies: An Introduction to Classification Techniques*, Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 17.

[9] Ibid., 17. Italics mine.

[10] Ibid., 18-19.

[11] Ibid., 19.

[12] Ibid., 19-20, 22.

[13] Personally, I find grounded theory to be the best way to conduct social research as not to overly bias the sample toward the desired result, although it is not or should not be thought as immune to this problem.

[14] H. Russell Bernard and Gery W. Ryan, "Text Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods," in *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology* ed. H. Russell Bernard (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 607-608.

[15] Anselm L. Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis For Social Scientists* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11-13

[16] Ibid., 5-6.

[17] James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 1980), 59. Gaston Espinosa, "History and Theory in the Study of Mexican American Religions," *Mexican American Religions, Spirituality, Activism, and Culture*, eds. Gaston Espinosa, Mario T. Garcia, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008) 42.

[18] Spradley, *Participant Observation*, 59.

[19] Ibid., 59-60.

[20] Ibid., 60-61.

[21] Ibid., 69-70.

[22] However, data collection should not end until there is no new data being discovered.

[23] Ian Dey, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists* (London: Routledge, 1993), 96-98, 100, 105.

[24] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out,* 159.

[25] Dey, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 98.

[26] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out,* 116.

[27] Bernard and Ryan, "Text Analysis", 613-614.

[28] Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis*, 33.

[29] Ibid., 21, 28-36.

[30] Spardley, *Participant Observation*, 88-93.

[31] Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, trans. Rodney Needham (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1963) 52.

[32] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 235.; Dey, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 139.

[33] Dey, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 147.

[34] Bernard and Ryan, *Text Analysis*, 607-611; 613-14; 616.

[35] Dey, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 122-123.

[36] Bernard and Ryan, "Text Analysis", 617-618.

[37] Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis*, 279-280.

[38] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out,* 136.

[39] Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 9, 19-20.

[40] Ibid., 60.

[41] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out,* 116.

[42] Ibid., 151.

[43] Data like the color of the lights on stage can be weeded out for data analysis unless there seems a specific reason the lighting was used. Obviously this can be used for ethnographic richness in the write up.

[44] Ibid., 5-6.

[45] Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, 8.

[46] Dey, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 122-123.

[47] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 116-117. This approach will be examined in Chapter 4.

[48] Ibid., 155-156.

[49] Ibid., 159.

[50] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, trans. Patrick Clark, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 44.

[51] Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, 86.

[52] Thmoas Schweizer, "Epistemology: The Nature and validation of Anthropological Knowledge," in *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard, (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2000), 43.

[53] Ibid., 45-46.

[54] Ibid., 47-48.

[55] Ibid., 48.

[56] Ibid., 49.

[57] Ibid., 50.

[58] Allen W. Imershein, "The Epistemological Bases of Social Order: Toward Ethnoparadigm Analysis," *Sociological Methodology* 8, (1977): 14. Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, 84.

[59] Imershein, "The Epistemological Bases," 6.

[60] Ibid., 45. Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 7.

[61] Bernard and Ryan, "Text Analysis," 619.

[62] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 102-103.

[63] Ibid., 243.

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[64] Ibid., 104.

[65] Paul DiMaggio, "Classification in Art," *American Sociological Review* 52, no. 4, (1987): 450.

[66] Ibid., 451-452.

Chapter 3:

A New Seeking Paradigm Emerging From Two Generations:

Three Styles of Doing Church by the Baby Boomers and Generation X

Evangelical Christianity is a high-profile religion in America. They are involved in almost everything from politics to what is shown on the television. The most vocal of them appear on political opinion shows, radio shows, and their own television networks. And their opinions get widely distributed to various outlets, where the masses comment for or against their claims. By the intense focus on the most outspokenleaders, the churches on the ground and Evangelical Christianity tend to be lumped together, as if everyone was the same. However, that is not true. There are many types of Evangelicals and churches, three of which I describe below, New Paradigm, Seeker, and Emergent. All three of these were shaped by their respective generation, New Paradigm and Seeker shaped by the Baby Boomers and Emergent by Generation X, or the first set of children from the Baby Boomer generation.

With the Baby Boomers being a large cohort of Americans, it is no surprise they have brought change to the religious institutions in America.[1] The Boomers largely rejected the mainline Protestantism of their parents and have sculpted conservative Protestantism into something that reflects their values and their outlook on life.

The Baby Boomers are the children of the generation that fought in World War Two. After the war, many soldiers got married, settled down, and had children. This cohort of children who were born between 1946 to 1964[2] number about 76 million in the US.[3] They grew up during the Vietnam War, student protests, several high-profile assassinations, and several social movements in the 60s and the 70s. In the 80s and the early 90s, they started to settle down and establish families.[4] During these periods of turmoil and relative calm, the religious landscape changed with the Boomer's worldview and into something uniquely characteristic of the generation as a whole.

This first section of this chapter will outline the generation in terms of events and movements and then will discuss the religious characteristics of the Boomers during their lives. The section will move onto information about the two Evangelical movements that came out of the Boomers, New Paradigm and Seeker. As the Baby Boomers are a large cohort, this chapter is by no means a complete view of the entire generation and their religious lives.

The Sixties were full of events that help shape the country and the generations that lived through them. While it is easy to just define the Sixties as the time between 1960 and 1969, the *zeitgeist* extended the boundaries ten years, making the Sixties the time between 1955 and 1975.[5] While the problems of the Sixties did not exactly start in the 1950's, the seeds were being planted with the emergence of the Civil Rights movement, the rise of Elvis Presley and Rock and Roll, and the politics of the Space Race and the constant threat of the Bomb during the Cold War. These threats worried Americans, but Americans kept their heads up to these through.[6] However, how would they fair when the upheavals of the Sixties played out on their brand new television sets?

The first major upheaval of the sixties was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. The shooting disrupted the idealistic notions of peace could be achieved and consumerism and forced people to look at the idea that all they have gained might be taken from them with a gunshot.[7] Boomers, who were children at the time, were deeply impacted. They often mentioned this as the event that defined the Sixties and banished the illusion of peace and prosperity their families tried so hard to cultivate. Four years later, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy would lead to further unrest and wash away the ideals of the older generation of the "good life."[8]

The Vietnam War is firmly placed in the nation's history. With Lyndon Johnson's amplification of troops in Vietnam, students on the nation's campuses started to protest the nation's involvement. While the protests were fairly peaceful, there were exceptions, like the protests at UC Berkeley, the shooting at Kent State, and the bombing of University of Wisconsin.[9] While the focus on the protests were on Vietnam, but it was also about challenging the mores that society had placed on them.[10] It would be incorrect to call them hippies because the hippy movement was fairly apolitical and chose to drop out of the mainstream culture, whereas the student movement was still enmeshed in the culture, abate upset with it.[11]

When the Boomers were surveyed in the mid-Eighties, the results showed they felt a degree of distance from all institutions, both private and public. With charismatic leaders being shot, questioning of everything and economic shortfalls, it is easy to see how people might want to distance themselves from things that might be taken away from them, materially or mentally. This distrust is more embedded in the Boomers then Generation X or the Baby Busters. According to the data, Boomers do not join many social activities of their parents did.

The Women's movement also created tension during the Sixties. In the beginning of the decade, the birth control pill was put on the market and within a few years many women used it as a way to limit the number of children that were born to them and to be become more sexually active. The publishing of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan in 1963 helped women feel empowered to take charge of their lives. With the book and the pill, women could exercise agency and have a career.[12]

The Civil Rights movement that started in the mid-1950s continued into the decade. What is notable is that literature on the Baby Boomers only touch on Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement as it belonged to another segment of the population. This prompts the

question: are the movements and even the concept of the generation are primarily white and middle class? Are the movements touched here are only experienced indirectly by the Baby Boomers? They were no doubt affected by the Vietnam War directly, but the assassinations were experienced largely over the television, which were rising in popularity. But it is also important to note that none of the leaders of these movements, excluding the student organized movements, were Baby Boomers themselves. The Boomers were the troops of the leaders and many were just influenced by the events that occurred during the Sixties and early Seventies.[13]

The Baby Boomers' unique brand of religion, or more accurately, spirituality, reflects the Boomers themselves. According to Robert Wuthnow, their parents "dwelled" in the sacred spaces of churches, synagogues, and temples, while Boomers "seek" forms of religious expression from "'A to Z.'"[14] Roof and Wuthnow talk about how spirituality is an experienced form of religion and not just something to believe in.[15] The events listed above have helped shape the Boomers' spiritual practice of religion. King's message of freedom and inclusion sparked questions about what religion was actually teaching and whether or not those teachings were in sync with the Boomers' values. Feminist thinking started to seep into the conversation and the various women in the Bible were brought to the forefront, such as the Virgin Mary in Christianity and Lilith in Judaism, to show that women have always had a voice in God's community.[16] But keeping the conversation on just Christianity or religion limits the expressive definition of spirituality. Spirituality becomes practiced through secular forces like movies, Alcoholics Anonymous, even through experiencing the natural world, where the "sacred space" can be anywhere at anytime.[17]

What is also important about Boomers and their form of religion is during their teenage and college years they largely dropped-out of organized religion.[18] A minority of Roof's sample

of those who dropped out returned to organized religion. When returning, Roof found that

Boomers tend to follow three themes, family and raising children in some type of faith, a

personal quest for some type of meaning and community. After having children, there is often a

desire to see the child have some type of moral code instilled while growing up. Of the people

that returned to the fold, a majority of returnees were married and had children.[19] It is also likely

for the wife to influence the husband to return to the faith.[20] In each group of Christianity in

Roof's study,[21] roughly 67 percent dropout and 25 percent of the dropouts return, although they

might switch denominations or religions such as Evangelicalism or Catholicism.[22] However,

even the idea of returning to a faith tradition is rooted in the idea of how affected they were by

the 1960s. Roof writes, "*Those most caught up in the values-shifts were not just more likely to

drop out, they are less likely to have returned to the churches and synagogues.*"[23]

  With a rough sketch of the Baby Boomer, now the focus will shift to the ways they have

shaped Evangelical Christianity. Two similar movements have established themselves in

America's religious sphere, New Paradigm and Seeker. The Seeker definition can fit within the

boundaries of New Paradigm. However, they are often thought of as separate entities, each with

their "flagship" churches. New Paradigm will be first addressed due to the expansiveness of the

definition and then Seeker will be explored.

New Paradigm Churches

  New Paradigm churches are not identified as "New Paradigm" on a church website. The

grouping of specific churches and an analysis lead to a definition by Donald Miller in his 1997

book *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium*. The name was

seemingly inspired from R. Stephen Warner's article, "Work in Progress Toward a New

Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States," which documents a new way to analyze churches in the U.S.[24]

Miller argues that New Paradigm churches meet 12 criterions around three cultural themes that are unique to the New Paradigm attendees: Therapeutic, Individualistic and Anti-Establishment.[25] The three themes, according to Miller, are found in the events of the Sixties, thus affecting the Boomers first hand.[26] The first theme he discusses is Therapeutic. With the distrust of authority figures, like governmental officials during the Vietnam War, the attendees desire something more authentic, rather than buffed and polished, this way they can open up and start to heal wounds. This theme also includes the attendees' preference for sermons that they can apply to their day-to-day problems, replacing the more theological sermons from other denominations. The second theme is Individualistic. This theme incorporates the shifting role of the parishioner, shifting from just believing to a now *personal* practice that one must account for. Personal practice can be used for the different ministries a church provides. The last theme is Anti-Establishment. This theme goes back to the idea Boomers do not have a large trust of institutions as a group. However, this is not to say they reject institutions. The idea of a large bureaucracy behind a church and controlling the leadership strings is not well received, especially with those who come from a Catholic or Mainline Protestant background, who have seen the problems associated with Vatican II and intradenominational squabbling. The idea of a church being self-governing would inspire some amount of trust among Boomers because it holds someone accountable, not getting tied up in the bureaucracy where nothing ends up changing.[27]

The 12 criterions that Miller outlines must be filled to some degree to be considered a New Paradigm church. The first two center on the fact this is largely a Boomer phenomenon.

The New Paradigm church has to be started post-1965 and a majority of attendees must be born after 1945, which is the start year of the Boomer generation.[28] While the establishment date is easy to find and compare, the attendees' birthdates are harder to keep track of, especially if one is looking at a megachurch, which the number is about 2,000+ weekend attendees.[29] However, survey data, like that from *The Baylor Religion Study*, show that the average age of attendees at non-denominational churches[30] is roughly 47, which means Boomers predominatly make up non-denominational churches.[31]

The next group of qualities of a New Paradigm church focus on clergy. Seminary training is not required for preaching in most New Paradigm churches. New Paradigm's complements this by valuing lay leadership within the church; although typically some type of biblical and theological training about the church's message is carried out to be sure everyone is in line with church teaching and of good character.[32] In order to exude the idea of authenticity and realness, the pastors are open about their lives and try to appear humble. To do so, they dress in causal attire, which matches their attendees' style of dress, whose different styles are appreciated.[33] Their sermons are also focused on the Bible and often people can be seen bringing their Bibles to church to follow along with the pastor.[34] All of these criterions bring back the idea of the Anti-Establishment and Therapeutic cultures of the Baby Boomers identified by Miller, because the clergy are accountable within the church, they appear to just be a regular person not some holy figure that is better then the congregants, all of this allows Boomers to feel comfortable enough to open themselves up.

With the pastor and the institutions relevant to Boomer's lives, the worship must be too. The worship is contemporary with up-to-date music styles rather than traditional hymns and organs. With this there is the criterion that worship should involve the body, not just the mind.[35]

This directly relates to the shift from dwelling/religious of just having faith in the tenants and it being enough to the seeker/spiritual of practicing the faith, as Wuthnow's book describes.[36] Receiving the Holy Spirit, whether through a variety of outlets such as speaking in tongues, or divine inspiration/vision, is emphasized to varying degrees.[37] This again emphasizes the bodily worship experience. This also emphasizes the Anti-establishment theme because everyone can experience "the gifts of the Holy Spirit" equally. In some churches, the "gifts" might only be available to those who have met certain requirements, such as having been baptized.[38] In order to supplement the weekly sermon, small groups are formed to provide services, camaraderie, and Bible study. This is consistant with the emphasis on the Individual because it is here where the personal accountability comes into play most strongly.[39]

Seeker Churches

Seeker is similar to New Paradigm's definition. The intent behind the worship is much different. Seeker services are designed to be friendly to the "unchurched," those who either were never into religion or dropped out.[40] Willow Creek Church (WCC) is often thought as the church that has defined the Seeker model due to their large influence on the American Church through their Willow Creek Association (WCA) materials and conferences,[41] although churches like Rick Warren's Saddleback Valley Community Church or Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral are also famous examples of the Seeker model.[42] The Seeker model will be broken into three different sections: the strategy, the beliefs, and finally the worship structure.[43]

Seeker churches are often labeled "shopping mall churches" because there is a large amount of services under one roof and because the church structures tend to look like a shopping mall. Bob Buford, a Texas businessman who started The Leadership Network, a group for large churches, wrote:

small neighborhood churches are 'like corner grocery stores,' which have been eclipsed by the emergence of massive grocery and discount outlets and the omnipresent shopping mall…large churches with diverse programming are replacing the neighborhood church as the primary vendor of religious goods.[44]

Like shopping malls, Seeker churches are often run and marketed like a business. The goal is to bring people to the church and experience the service and hopefully convert. In order to get people into the seats every weekend, churches use traditional marketing methods such as television advertisements. They also produce surveys in order to understand what the surrounding area would like to see included in the church. This then leads to a profile of whom they are not reaching. The models vary from church model but touch on the fact it is male,[45] Baby Boomer, white, suburban, and white collar.[46] The senior pastors of these churches make it clear they are not trying to turn their church into a business that sells a product, but use business methods to evangelize people who do not go to church. However, Sargeant is quick to point out religion is a *service* that requires a close relationship and churches use marketing and business strategies to keep the "unchurched" coming back eventually converting and tithing.[47] Churches have become tightly controlled machines using business techniques and the leadership is reading business literature like Peter Drucker's *The Effective Executive* and Kenneth Blanchard's *Leadership and the One Minute Manager*. As the church grows, the senior pastor role is changing from active ministry to one that manages the church, thus requiring the junior pastors to be the pastors on the ground dealing with individual congregants. With the extensive ministries, in order to get things done, the sermon for any Sunday is prepared several months in advance to be sure everyone is in sync.[48] There is a trend that does require a pastor to earn a theological degree.[49] However, there is a movement to have pastors licensed, which focuses

more on the practical applications of being a pastor than on the theological, though the theology is also important.

With the extensive use of business ideas, business magazines have profiled WCC and it has received the attention of Harvard Business School. Peter Drucker, however, makes it clear the techniques WCC is using are just the basics of marketing, which are being heavily employed by the church.[50]

A good technique is to have a strategy outlining the steps it will take to reach a desired result and Seeker churches are no different. The strategy, again, varies with whose "Seeker model" the church subscribes and how they adapt the model for their congregation.[51] The first step is for members to form relationships with the unchurched, share a witness and bring them to church. The next steps involve getting the unchurched to attend regularly, commit themselves to Jesus and to eventually join a small group. Once and only when they involved with the ministries, they should tithe to the church. Moving from each step may be a non-controlled thing by the church or classes that are offered by the church could benchmark the process. By graduating the commitment levels, it allows the unchurched to proceed at their own pace and not forcing them upfront to make a large commitment, which is something Boomers prefer to do because it is more democratic and relies less on authority figures telling how fast they should go.[52] It should be noted churches try to keep everyone together, not separate out according to the commitment level and keep the churches "safe, anonymous, contemporary, relevant, and enthusiastic."[53]

To provide for felt needs of the people, such as day-care for children to recovery programs, a church may offer many choices that are more practical in nature. This includes providing gym classes to summer camps to personal finance courses. A church must adapt

themselves to the needs of the people, if they do not people will not come to hear the message the church wants to spread. This is not to say they do not have any courses on the Bible or the church's message, but they are framed in a way that is fun, interesting and relevant. Offering fun courses can be practical for the church as they can find new people to work in the various ministries.[54] At Willow Creek they prefer to hire within the church in order to accurately judge candidates and not have to spend time teaching the new hire the ropes of the church.[55]

Small groups are often deployed to keep the church personalized, while keeping the wide array of options. Almost all seeker churches that were surveyed by Sargeant offered small groups for its members to join. The small groups are often Bible studies, men's and women's groups, and youth groups. Support groups and twelve-step groups for a variety issues are offered, but not as regularly as other groups mentioned. The group is largely responsible for the "pastoral care" element of the church. With thousands of attendees, the pastor(s) would be overwhelmed with pastoral care, whereas the groups, which range about 8 to 10 people, can be the support within the church.[56] In this small group setting, God becomes more personal and willing to help out with personal problems. According to Wuthnow, quoted in Sargeant, "'the sacred comes to be associated with the small insights that seem intuitively correct to the small group, rather than the wisdom [that has] accrued over the centuries in hermitages, seminaries, universities, congregations, and church councils.'"[57]

The beliefs of Seeker churches can be traditional and conservative,[58] but are repackaged in a Seeker-friendly way.[59] Seeker churches try to make Christianity palatable and often try to distance themselves from the controversial segments of American Christianity that are often vocal in the media.[60] With the Boomer's desire for some type of therapeutic action like professional counciling and wish for fulfillment,[61] the messages at Seeker churches have

adapted. The emphasis is on a nurturing Christianity that embraces all peoples.[62] Sin and its punishment are talked about, but in a way not meant to scare people off. Then it is emphasized that belief in Jesus can lead to atonement of one's sins because he died on the cross for their sins. By being a follower of Jesus, one can become fulfilled and receive Jesus' bounty.[63]

The messages above are discussed in the sermon. To have a successful sermon there are a few characteristics that it needs to have. It typically should not contain elaborations on theology, doctrine, or the Bible itself. The sermon should be culturally relevant and be able for the attendees to apply it to their lives. From years of attending Catholic mass every weekend and often struggling to sit through ten minutes, it is not surprising that church leaders see these three things as "irrelevant."[64] Lee Stroebel, Willow Creek's teaching pastor,[65] has said, "'The most effective messages for seekers are those that address their felt needs. Unchurched Harry and Mary want to know if a book that's centuries old can really give them practical assistance in the trenches of their daily lives.'"[66] With this focus on the practical nature, themed sermon series are used. These can range from a series on God's love to marriage, but keeping the focus on Biblical passages.[67] What is also important for a successful sermon is the emphasis on cultural relevancy. The sermon must connect with the people in the pews and cannot be removed from their daily lives. But popular culture must not determine the message; religion should be the lens to look at pop culture.[68]

The senior pastor of Willow Creek, Bill Hybels, has told many senior pastors that it is important to have great preaching. This means the pastor must be open and honest about their own shortcomings. They must reveal their emotions and be close to their congregation, like using the pastor's first name, not "Pastor X."[69] Hybels often speaks in a conversational tone, simplifies

the language and often uses humor to lower the defenses of Unchurched Harry.[70] This all goes right back to the therapeutic cultural value of the Baby Boomers.[71]

If the way the message is being presented in the sermon, there will be a change in the way services are put on.[72] The model is simple, music, sermon, drama, and then announcements. However, each of these is tightly controlled and everything relates back to the theme chosen for the day, with the overall goal of making attending Willow Creek fun so people will want to come back and bring their friends.[73]

The music is designed to be current and upbeat. The congregants only have to sing once and the music is designed to be simple and easy to follow, although there are technically three songs. The words are listed in the program for people to reference.[74] The other two times when music is used, it is an instrumental piece and it is a vocalist without any singing from the congregation.[75] An important component to the service, from the music to the total experience, must be excellent. The vocalists are highly trained and often have to go to several rehearsals at the church during the week. What is also important is the fact they are to look generally attractive and wear the proper outfit.[76]

Part of the worship experience is the experience of excellence, which will allow "Unchurched Harry" to open up to the message being received. Nancy Beach, the programming director, believes that by being exposed to high quality entertainment, Unchurched Harry will want the same quality when he goes to church. As mentioned above, the music experience is tightly controlled and polished. There are no technical problems and the stage is well lit. The idea is to tug at Harry; his excitement builds because of a professionally lit stage and relaxes because he is not worried about the sound being off or the actors being bad. But not only is providing an excellent time is on the mind of the programming staff. By allowing Harry to be

anonymous, he is allowed to just observe, relax and observe the service. No demands are put on

Harry and there is no time frame he has to operate at according to Willow Creek. This is to let

the messages imbue and eventually Harry will come around to the messages presented. To have

the messages steep further into Unchurched Harry, Willow Creek uses the American love of

deep emotions to get their messages across.[77] Clearly, this could raise some potential issues with

the issue regarding whether or not they are using the programming ethically or not. Beach is

quoted, "'You *just know* when you're going for the emotions too much.'"[78] When pressed by the

skeptical Prichard, the staff mentioned the Willow Creek device of truth, Integrity, and Restraint.

It should be mentioned that after reading the chapter, Beach went on to say, "'I wish I could have

thought it all through more when interviews. It is *so* important to us that we do not manipulate

people through the arts."[79]

Baby Busters

The Baby "Busters" or Generation X is the generation that is immediately after the Baby

Boomers. The years of birth surround the middle of the 1960s to the early 1980s,[80] making them

the children of the early to mid Boomers. Generation X is a unique generation that could be

described as having a youthful rebellion past their twenties. Piercing and tattoos become ways to

express themselves. Sex is considered a causal thing and being LGBT is no longer an issue.

Some still live at home with their parents because there is no way to support themselves, due to

the lack of resources spent on the generation. They are considered to be cynical, or more realistic

about life and what leaders that value "…honesty, realism, and authenticity" and not the *Leave it*

to Beaver idea of pretending to have a perfect life. Political parties are shunned because

Democrats and Republicans are viewed as trying to get their own way and not for the good of the

society.[81]

Gen Xers' lives have been shaped by change in family dynamics. Divorce rates shot up high during their early years, and 40 percent of the generation lived in a household without one of their parents. This was also the first generation to commonly have working mothers, so no one was home afterschool, creating the term "latchkey generation" for the kids who spent time at home without their parents. When the parents would come home they would be too tired to spend "quality" time with the kids. Even the "nuclear" family was not immune from the change. The values that had permeated the Boomers, like those from the feminist and civil rights movements, and affected the raising of the children. Even the bad economy has impacted what type of benefits the family receives, if at all. With the change in family dynamics, Xers have turned to their friends for comfort and will often describe them as family.[82]

With the early Xers now in their mid 40s and the later Xers around their late twenties and early thirties, the big life events, like marriage and childbearing, are occurring. But are they? Xers on average are waiting to marry until the late twenties, early thirties, where it used to be early twenties for both the bride and the groom, in the middle of the 20th Century. The number of children per family has dropped. In 1976, slightly more then 35 percent of families included four or more children, whereas today less then 15 percent of families includes four or more children. Nearly 20 percent of families do not have any children in the year 2000. The average age of women who have had their first child has steadily risen to just under 25 years of age. It is unclear exactly how Xers' family lives have contributed to the change in age when life course events are done, although this is not the place to speculate.[83]

Like the Baby Boomers, Generation X is defining their religious identities. However, this is not in the same sense, because while there is a church style associated with Gen X and Emergent, they are defining religion more by what they are not doing rather then what they are.

Firstly, Generation X are not attending as regularly as they were in 1976. Roughly 20 percent of 21 to 45 year olds have never gone to church; compare that to roughly 13 percent in 1976. This 7 percent jump is statistically significant. Compare that with the "Every Week" group which experiences a 5 percent decrease.[84] So what could be going on with the statistics? Since they are not settling down in their early-to-mid-twenties, going to church is simply off the agenda. People who have settled down and married and are more likely to go to church almost every week. Women who are married are the most likely to go to church because women in general go to church in higher numbers, however, Wuthnow does not mention why women are attending more then men. What makes this observation unique is the simple fact the ones that are married are older than before.[85] If the average age of a women when she gets married has risen over the years, in 1976 the average age was slightly higher then 20, but around 2000 the age when getting married for the first time is around 25.[86] Within that five-year gap, the 25-year-old, will not be accustomed to going to church every weekend, especially if they dropped out of religion for several years. What is also interesting is the fact there are more people that are not getting married, although they may be living together, which has implications that will be discussed below.[87]

Marital status is one predictor. The number of children is an important factor in religious attendance. While again, women are more likely to go church every weekend, even if they have no children. However, compared to the 1970's there is a roughly 6 percent drop in going every week. As women have more children the percentage of church attendance rises until about two children and gently goes down. In men, the number of children the more likely they are attending church on a weekly basis. In fact, when a family has three or more children, men and women are attending at almost the same rate.[88] As with marriage, women are having children later in life.

Around 1960, women where having their first child around 21 or 22, but in 2000, the first child was born around 25.[89] Again this gap of at most three years might a time where religion and church going is not thought about, which might lead to the person to drop out altogether. When looking at both variables together the results are interesting. Women, between 30 and 39 and are not married, who have children are far more likely to attend church services the most often, then any of the groups represented in the sample provided by Wuthnow.[90] Looking at the graph that shows religious attendance with married couples with and without kids, the rates are higher overall. Except for men 21 to 29 years old, married people with kids are far more likely to attend a church service every weekend.[91] However, it is important to realize, until the numbers are confirmed as being statically significant, all these patterns are merely representative of the sample and not the general population.

The reasoning behind all of this is mostly common sense. When one gets married, most people have it in a church and often the church will require some type of formal instruction about what marriage is all about. Since women, in general, attend more often then men, the married wives will bring their married husbands and raise the number of men attending regularly. But what happens when couples do not get married? They are not likely to attend church with the same regularity of those who are.[92] One of the shortcomings of the graphs Wuthnow provides is the absence of the statistics on the couples who are not married, but living in a committed relationship. While there is data that discusses unmarried couples, it is unclear if they are just single parents or unmarried couples. When one has children it may be come important to raise them with the moral teachings of a certain religion. If the children are going to be baptized, there are often classes that the parents have to go through in order to go through to be sure the parents

will help grow a strong environment. Also there might be added pressure from religious parents and grandparents to baptize the baby in a certain tradition.[93]

This data indicates that there seems to be a decline in church attendance. While this may be true, the generation is not anti-religion and are still attending, just not at the rates of what they used to be. As seen above, Xers have an interesting dynamic to them. They were the first generation to really have two working parents, so they were home alone after school, so they nurture their relationships. Xers are considered cynical, but realistic about life. And they are about self-expression, but getting tattoos or boldly parading the fact they are LGBT. Now take those characteristics and start to shape religion around those values and you have something that does not look like a New Paradigm[94] or Seeker church.

Gen X wants something different. They want something they can experience, not only through the body but through the mind too. To this generation, one does not have to choose between the two, because "worship is that moment when we are one: in Christ, in nothingness, in nirvana."[95] This also includes trying out a variety of options before committing to one, or committing to none. These experiences are not just limited to traditional religions like Buddhism, Christianity, but experiencing different subcultures, such as the Goth culture and Rockabilly culture, which have all the trappings of religion.[96] Generation X is taking the old, like Gregorian chant, and mixing it with the new, creating new moods and settings. This is a unique take on religion that one is not going to find in a megachurch in the suburbs. By reforming their worship and their religion, Generation X is *creating* a community, not just *finding* a community.[97]

The Emergent Church

The Emergent Church is a great reflection of all the elements Generation X is incorporating into their forms of religion. It is postmodern and Scriptural, by breaking down the

barriers in the Bible to find the Truth that is contained within it. It is participatory, which allows for the creation of a shared space with likeminded individuals.

The Emergent church grew out of the ideas of Jacques Derrida of deconstructionalism and churches' need to bring in Generation X into the churches. A collection of youth ministers, like Doug Pagitt, Mark Driscoll, Dan Kimball, and many others, attended a conference in which Brad Cecil would produce a timeline that would reference several postmodernist philosophers, like Derrida, to point out the time in which we are living is a mix of the Enlightenment ideas and the Middle Ages mysticism. This conference was about how best to attract 18 to 35 year olds, or namely Generation X. A network of Emergent pastors would form until 1999, when Doug Pagitt would leave the group and planted Solomon's Porch in Minnesota. There would be a falling out with Mark Driscoll over issues such a women leadership and his general behavior in the same year. The group, Leadership Network, found an ally in a Baby Boomer named Brian McLaren, who was publishing a book in 2000 about similar concepts of overhauling church because modernism was not answering the needs of the population.[98] McLaren's book would take off and would go on to write several books about even more problems with the traditional message of Christianity and how to reconcile the problems with the postmodern world.[99] As the movement has grown, a monthly meeting of Emergent leaders has formed called the Emergent Village. The Emergent Village has spaces in the physical world and the virtual world to connect leaders of the movement together and discuss.[100]

Emergent is hard to pin down as evidenced by the quote criticizing Emergent; "…the emergent church is like 'nailing Jell-O to the wall.'" [101] Emergent does have some structure to it, but there are no prescribed dogma on what one church has to do to call itself Emergent. Out of my research there are three big criterions that define the church, Postmodern, Participatory, and

Emphasis on Scripture. Postmodernism and the Emphasis on Scripture are related, so they will be looked at together. The section on the participatory nature of Emergent will look at some of the ways that Emergents do church.

The word that has been mentioned quite frequently in the last few pages is "postmodern." "Generation X is the postmodern generation." "Emergent is postmodern." But what does that leave one with? Deconstruction is not about an entirely negative exercise, but one to reduce down to the "Truth."[102] Emergent is concerned with reducing and producing dialogue about the Bible in order to find the Truth, or God.[103] They do not just take passages from certain places and then say this interpretation is the only right way and everyone else is wrong, but dialog with other interpreations. This falls into the Liberal vs. Conservative debate, which they try to distance themselves from, because who has the better interpretation of the Bible?[104] This rejection of both conservative and liberal theologies is due to the fact they both produce a meta-narrative to the Bible, which postmodernism rejects.[105] They also focus on everything, the good and the bad, which Jones attributes to "the legendary angst of Gen Xers."[106] But when others focus on the "bad" passages, they make them morality tales when in fact the passage may not be at all about morality.[107] However, Emergents often get hit with the criticism of making everything relative because, as critics argue:

> God intended real, objective meaning in the Bible. Put otherwise, it is an error to suggest that scripture has no *real* value beyond subjective moment of 'inspiration' of the human authority its narratives and propositions only connect with reality in the author's original intent and this must be the goal of interpretation.[108]

Emergents counter that most Christians are relativists, because they do not follow all the dictates from the Bible and that the above argument is moot.[109] With this a change in the message, there will to be some type of shift in the expression of the material.

The Emergent style of worship can be said to be a cross between the tradtitional and the modern. Like noted above, Emergent is hard to pin down because there is no one right way of doing it, but there is something specific behind them that the service must strive to do.

Unlike church models concerned with fine-tuning conventional evangelical approaches by employing more effective methods, emerging churches actively reimage how people do church and how they perceive and understand the kingdom of God and Christian theology. To put it another way, in contrast to seeker-sensitive or purpose-driven church models that ask a tactical question, 'How can we present the gospel more effectively in our contemporary culture?' emerging churches ask an existential question, 'What should the people of God look like in this culture?'[110]

So what does this look like? At Dan Kimball's church in Santa Cruz, California, can provide interesting insight into an Emergent service. He emphasizes two points; aesthetics and the environment are crucial and should be customized to the community and not just lifting an already existing model and placing it onto a community that will not respond the service. He suggests incorporating all of the senses into the services. The visual is important because it sets the tone for the service and includes the community in the production of the service. Kimball does use drama, but it is focused on a Scripture passage, rather then it being about daily occurrences when Christianity can solve the issue.[111] Within the Emergent movement there is a return to more liturgical elements of worship,

Lighting candles, displaying religious art and symbols, burning incense, touching and even kissing religious objects, anointing with oil, kneeling (and prostrating!), doing *lectio divina*, sitting in long periods of shared silence, and even celebrating a weekly Eucharist are common among emergent Christians.[112]

According to Kimball, including communion in the service is a way to emphasis worshiping with all the senses and not just with a select few. By engaging all the senses, it allows for an experiential worship experience.[113]

New Paradigm, Seeker, and Emergent are just three styles of Evangelical Christianity, which is a large tent of various different theologies and church styles. These are by no means a complete look at the three presented here, nor are the definitions representative of all the churches that are labeled underneath. This is why there should be another way to categorize churches. Churches could get mislabeled or the definitions may not hold over the evolution of a church's existence. As I will argue in the next chapter, scholars should consider using tags, or folksonomies, to help interpret new religious movement like the Emergent Church.

Notes

1 Baby Boomers will be referred to as Boomers throughout the chapter.

2 This can be further split into early (1945 to 1954) and late (1955 to 1964): Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual journals of the Baby Boom Generation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 1, 34.

3 Ibid., 1.

4 The author was born during the late 80s to early Boomer parents.

5 Mark Lytle, "Making Sense of the Sixties," *Irish Journal of American Studies* 10, December 2001: 1.

6 Ibid., 3.

7 Ibid,. 3.

8 Roof, *A Generation of Seekers*, 37-39.

9 Lytle, "Making Sense of the Sixties," 3, 5.

10 Roof, *A Generation of Seekers*, 38.

11 Lytle, "Making Sense of the Sixties," 4.

12 Roof, *A Generation of Seekers*, 48-50.

13 Lytle, "Making Sense of the Sixties," 7.

14 Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in the Americas Since the 1950s* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 80.

15 Ibid., 15-17; Roof, *A Generation of Seekers,* 67, 159.

16 Ibid., 60-66.

17 Wuthnow, *After Heaven*, 17; Roof, *A Generation of Seekers*, 67-72: I suspect this is the reason why church groups that meet in secular venues can negotiate the lack of a formal space, as the theology is tied to experience not the space.

18 Roof, *Generation of Seekers,* 55.

19 Ibid., 164-165, Figure 6.1.

20 Ibid., 165.

21 Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Conservative Protestant

22 Ibid., 176, 178, 179, Figures 6.3, 6.4, 6.5.

23 Ibid., 171; Italics his.

24 Donald Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium*,(Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 1: 233n1. Much of the language from this "new paradigm" is economic in nature. However Warner believes that the economic language is not required, and just the focus on a church's disestablishment nature, which Miller does; R. Stephen Warner, "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States," *The American Journal of Sociology* 98, 5 (1993): 1053.

25 The twelve criterion as written in the book: "1) they were started after the mid-1960s; 2) the majority of congregation members were born after 1945; 3) seminary training of clergy is optional; 4) worship is contemporary; 5) lay leadership is highly valued; 6)they have extensive small group ministries; 7)clergy and congregant usually dress informally; 8) tolerance of different personal styles is prized; 9) pastors tend to be understated, humble, and self-revealing; 10)bodily, rather than mere cognitive, participation in worship is the norm; 11) the 'gifts of the

Holy Spirit' are affirmed; 12) Bible-centered teaching predominates over topical sermonizing." Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism,* 20.

[26] Ibid.20-21.

[27] Ibid., 20-22.

[28] Ibid., 20

[29] Kimberly Karnes, et. al., "Mighty Fortresses: Explaing the Spatial Distribution of American Megachurches," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 46, 2 (2007): 263; It is also important to note the number of members and number of attendees can be vastly different.

[30] Which can include New Paradigm as New Paradigm churches have hid their denominational labels. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism,* 1-2: Vineyard and Calvary Chapel are denominations, although which different structures then traditional denominations. Ibid., 19, 153-155.

[31] Baylor University. 2005. *The Baylor Religion Survey*. Waco, TX: Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion.

[32] G. A. Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services: Evaluating a New Way of Doing Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 32.

[33] Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, 20.

[34] Ibid., 13, 20.

[35] Ibid., 20.

[36] Wuthnow, *After Heaven,* 1-84.

[37] Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, 20, 202-203.

[38] Ibid., 20, 147.

[39] Ibid., 20, 21.

[40] Ibid., 1-2; Kimon Howland Sargeant, *Seeker Churches: Promoting Traditional Religion in a Nontraditional Way* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 19.

[41] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 10.

[42] Ibid., 4, 31. Both Saddleback and the Crystal Cathedral both have something similar to the WCA, which shows how to use the Saddleback or Crystal Cathedral model for other churches

[43] A focus on Willow Creek will be applied for this section, due to the amount of data available.

[44] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 107.

[45] "Unchurched *Harry*" and "Saddleback *Sam*" are just some of the titles of the segment the churches are trying to reach. At WCC "Unchurched Harry" is further divided into three archetypes, "Hostile Harrys," "Curious Harrys," and "Sincere Harrys." The idea is to take "Harry" through the different archetypes and become churched. Prichard, *Willow Creek Seeker Service*, 75-77.

[46] Ibid., 110-111.

[47] Ibid., 112.

[48] Ibid., 127-128.

[49] Miller, *Reinventing American Christianity*, 141. 165.

[50] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 42, 61-66.

[51] Different Seeker church models include Willow Creek's "Seeker-sensitive" model and Rick Warren's "Purpose-Driven" model, Ibid., 113.

[52] Ibid., 112-113; Roof, *A Generation of Seekers*, 207.

[53] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 114.

[54] Ibid., 116-118.

[55] Prichard, *Willow Creek Seeker Service,* 32-33. This has kept several of the original members of the church in leadership positions.

[56] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches,* 118-122.

[57] Ibid., 121. Whether cell groups are good, is not something that a scholar can really answer, although Wuthnow seems fine making a call. Going further into the section, Wuthnow is not convinced small groups are something that is a good thing for the health of the church due to the fact it could create theological differences within the church; Ibid., 121-122.

[58] Ibid., 79.

[59] This will not focus on the theological issues; rather the section will show how a conservative faith is molded into a Seeker-friendly package.

[60] Ibid., 89.

[61] Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, 21.

[62] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 88-91. The role of women in the church is vague at best. However there are women in leadership roles, just not in the senior pastor role. Ibid., 91. None of the books touch on the seeker position on homosexuals.

[63] Ibid., 93-98; Prichard, *Willow Creek Seeker Service*, 176, 178-179.

[64] Ibid., 81.

[65] Prichard, *Willow Creek Seeker Service*, 16.

[66] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 77.

[67] Ibid., 82-83.

[68] Ibid., 80.

[69] Prichard, *Willow Creek Seeker Service*, 116-121.

[70] Ibid., 125-136.

[71] Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, 21.

[72] Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 57. With Willow Creek's model being used by countless seeker churches, the way worship is done at Willow Creek will be presented here.

[73] Prichard, *Willow Creek Seeker Service*, 83-89.

[74] During my research at churches in the Southern California area, the lyrics are often projected on a screen. However, these examples have been observed since 2009, so the possibility of Willow Creek today using projections is high. In the overall movement, Seeker churches are incorporating video presentations into their services, although just shy of half of the churches using video are less then five years old at the time the book was written. Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 70.

[75] Ibid., 84-87.

[76] Ibid., 86, 102. It should be mentioned, Willow Creek does a weekly drama, which is very popular among Seeker churches. Only 2 percent report not using dramas at all. Sargeant, *Seeker Churches*, 69.

[77] Prichard, *Willow Creek Seeker Service*, 101-112.

[78] Ibid., 114 Italics his.

[79] Ibid., 115. Italics his.

[80] Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thrity-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 3; Donald E. Miller and Arpi Misah Miller, "Introduction: Understanding Generation X: Values Politics, and

Religious Commitments," eds. Richard W. Flory and Donald E. Miller, (New York: Routledge 2000), 3.

[81] Miller and Miller, "Introduction," 5-7.

[82] Ibid., 3-5.

[83] Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers*, 21-28.

[84] Ibid., 52-53, Figure 3.1.

[85] Ibid., 54-55.

[86] Ibid., 23, Figure 2.

[87] Ibid., 22.

[88] Ibid., 56-58, Figure 3.3.

[89] Ibid., 26, Figure 2.5.

[90] Ibid., 63-64, Figure 3.6.

[91] Ibid., 64, Figure 3.7.

[92] Ibid., 54-56.

[93] Ibid., 56-58.

[94] New Paradigm has broad criterion, except for the one about the emphasis on the Holy Spirit, that most churches could fit in someway.

[95] Miller and Miller, "Introduction," 11.

[96] Ibid., 9.

[97] Ibid.,9-12.

[98] Tony Jones, *The New Christians: Dispatches From the Emergent Frontier*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 41-43, 48, 49, 67.

[99] Shayne Lee and Phillip Luke Sintiere, *Holy Mavericks: Evangelical Innovators and the Spiritual Marketplace* (New York: New York University Press, 2009) 92-93.

[100] Jones, *The New Christians*, 27, 222.

[101] Ibid., 39

[102] Stephen Hunt, "The Emerging Church and its Discontents," *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 29, 3 (December 2008), 290.

[103] Ibid., 152.

[104] Ibid., 140-141.

[105] Hunt, "The Emerging Church and its discontents," 290.

[106] Ibid., 144.

[107] Ibid., 146.

[108] Hunt, "The Emerging Church and its discontents," 294. Italics his.

[109] Jones, *The New Christians,* 123-129.

[110] Lee and Sintiere, *Holy Mavericks*, 86.

[111] Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 146-147.

[112] Patrick Malloy, "Rick Warren Meets Gregory Dix: The Liturgical Movement comes knocking at the Megachurch Door," *Anglican Theological Review*, 92, 2, (2010): 447.

[113] Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 178.

Chapter 4:

Metachurch:

Using Social Metadata to Categorize

Evangelical Church Services

As discussed in Chapter 2, classification is problematic. The definitions of social phenomena are often static entities. They are created at a specific point in time and it can be difficult to change down the road, when the phenomenon has changed.[1] Then there is the ethical problem with the omnipresent "Other' category and scholar's relation to it. When data is categorized, some of it will be leftover because it does not fit the definition of the category, at minimum, not producing a full view and at worst, effectively silencing and suppressing data.[2] Since the project of categorization is a human endeavor, one's emotions and ideologies can play into what certain data can fit into the different categories. When one is in a good mood definitions tend to fit, but when looked at again in an even mood, certain phenomena might not really fit with definition of the classification.[3] The words that one wishes to use for the categories can lead to issues as well. If they are unclear or if words have multiple meanings, misunderstandings can occur and create issues of validity such as "apple," which could refer to the fruit or the type of computers.[4] Then there can be issues with the classification structure itself and how user friendly the system is. If it is not user friendly, the system will be dropped or the users will rework the system, which might change the narrative of the classification system, which destabilizes the validity of the system.[5] These are just some of the problems associated with classification as it is.

Looking at the above problems, they can be fixed. This is not to say a new categorization method will be free of problems. However, if some of these issues can be resolved, like creating dynamic classifications and giving every part of data a classification that allows it to "speak," then progress can be made to create classification schemes that significantly strengthen scholarly work, rather than open it up to significant critique over small details.

This chapter will seek to explain tagging and tag clouds and how it can be applied to church classification through a case study on the Los Angeles-based Mosaic. It argues tagging can be a better system to classify churches, by allowing the classification to be time-sensitive, a minimization of the "Other" category and pliable and porous definitions. This contributes to my larger thesis by providing evidence for the use of tagging a classification schema. In order to show how metadata can be a useful in the classification of churches, one must have an example of this process. As seen in Chapter 3, there are at least three different types of Evangelical churches, New Paradigm, a scholar created definition, Seeker, a popular Baby Boomer form, and Emergent, postmodernist Christianity for Generation X. By using tagging, scholars can see if what the church is, how it is evolving too over a period, and correct any mistakes that happen to exist in the discourse. It should be noted this study is limited to the church service, not on the theology of the church. However, given there are certain service styles and theologies for each church, it is possible that the tags can be representative of the church style.

For example, take the classification of churches, which I am examining in this project. Scholars can use terms that seem to fit the church, when in fact the term does not take into account the nuances of the individual church, or group of churches. There are some general terms that can be used to blanket a whole movement, like "Fundamentalist" and "Evangelical." But like a stereotype, the terminology does not take into consideration of the variations that exist within the category, such as "Pat Robinson" and "Jimmy Carter" for "Evangelical". In the social sciences, as much as scholars try, there are no absolutes in human behavior and society because somewhere someone is behaving in another way, such as liberal Evangelicals, but scholars are defaulting on stereotypes in order to help make their arguments. This is a problem. This opens up

data to critiques that threaten the integrity of academic research. In order to help solve these problems, there needs to be a more nuanced way of approaching categorization of churches.

In order to improve the box, one must be outside of the box otherwise the box insulates scholars from the outside and grows wary of the outside. As cliché the "outside the box" example is, it shows how scholars need to learn to adapt and reconfigure the strategies to approaching old and new problems that arise. In order to solve the above issues, I propose we turn to Web 2.0, also known as the Social Internet, which describes how the Internet has changed from information storage, to a place where people use the Web to communicate. Instead of a hierarchical model, tiny group of people controlling the content, the grassroots model has expanded and allows anyone with an Internet connection to create content and then post it for the world to see, provided there is the right infrastructure in place and maintained. An example of this would be someone uploading a video of themselves singing onto YouTube or someone posting a Facebook status and allowing people to give feedback.[6] This creates a more democratized space in which many people can interact, provided they have access to the space. I want to take this space and apply it to classification, through the use of "tags," or user-created folksonomies, or taxonomies created by the users. The users set the meanings of the taxa in the folksonomies, not by others.

Tags are simply user chosen keywords given to a piece of content[7] that are posted on the Internet. Tags are a form of metadata, data that is used to describe and catalog data. Said another way, metadata is the data behind the video or booklisting to organize it in a larger database.[8] What is important is the keywords are user-created. There are no set tags that can be used for "Banana," although there might be a large group of tags that are commonly given to "Banana," such as yellow, food, fruit, tree, green, long, and spotted. Like the lay/expert dynamic of

Prototype classification principles, the language will vary in each community due to the community's needs and desires. Tags can also be phrases so an example could be "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." Tags are *ad hoc* and the meaning of the tag is only at the purview of the user, not according to a set of predefined views, making them a folksonomy, rather than taxonomy, which has set definitions for each keyword.[9] This allows for a space that is democratized and not authoritarian.[10] Figure 1 shows an example from my blog with the different tags on the side of the picture. When content becomes aggregated together, the tags often form what are known as tag clouds. They are simple visualizations of tag frequencies (figure 2), with the most frequent tags somehow set off by font size or style and then arranged in different ways to make it more artistic. Tag clouds do not show the connections between each of the tags, but rather is just a lump of data.[11]

There are some basic problems with tagging. Clicking on tags, which have multiple meanings, can create problems while searching. Take for example "windows." It might be talking about the plural form of "window," an architectural element that one can see what is on the opposite side of the open space, or the tag could reference the Microsoft operating software. If a user clicks "windows" on a blog post like in Figure 1, the results will produce blog posts that reference both types of "windows." However, one cannot click multiple tags to search the multiple terms at the same time, due to the limits of the programming. If the search results produce a search box along with the results, the user can input more tags to narrow down the search, instead of shifting through all the results that were produced.[12] Solving this problem seems difficult, especially when one does not know other relevant terms to use. However, this issue relates to the problem below.

03:04
11th Apr 2011

tags:
statue
france
paris
musee d'orsai
women
globe
nude
pretty
1800's
power
empowerment
artist x
image: download

Figure 1 A sample blog post with tags. Picture taken by Steven Losco ©2005
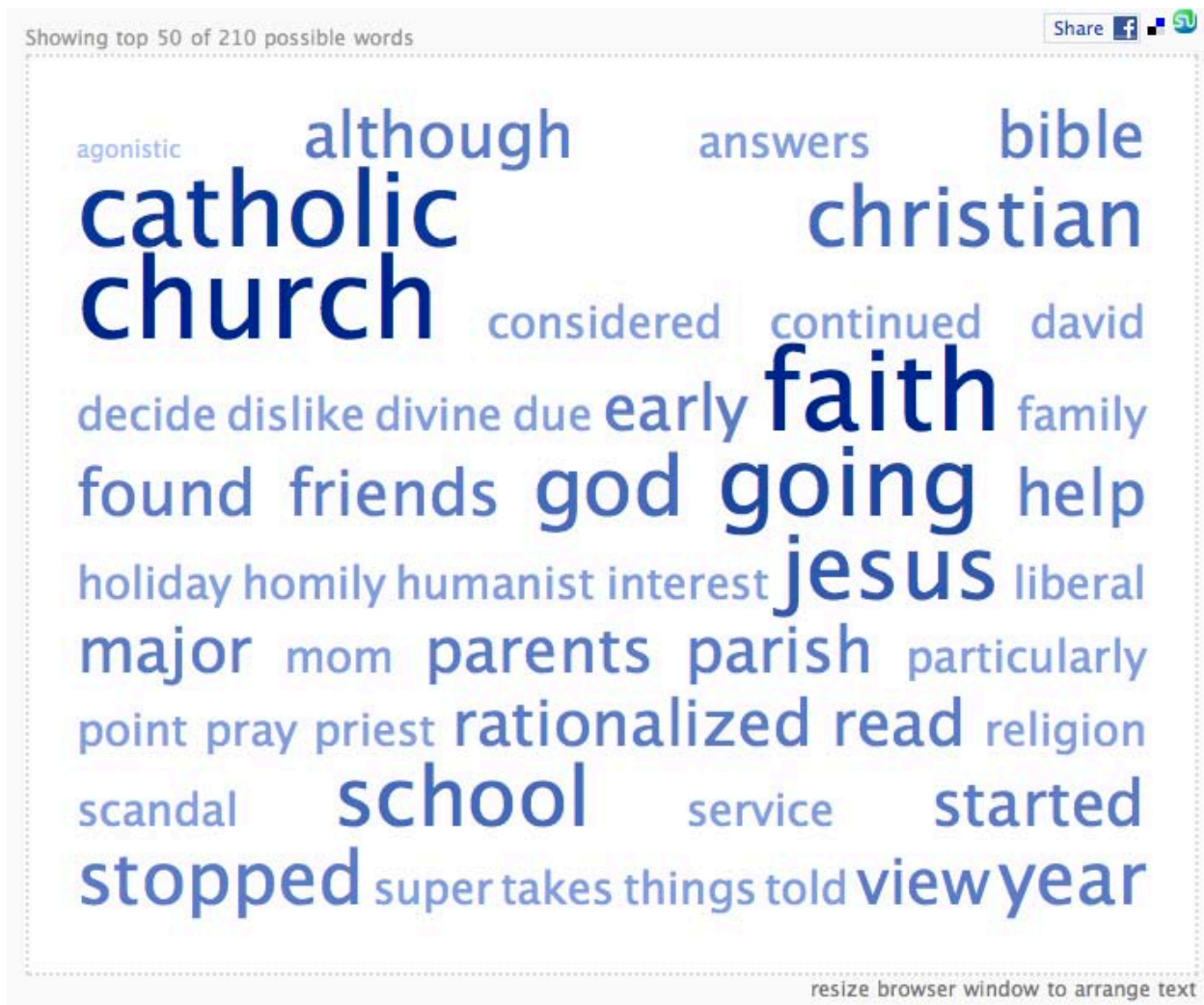
Figure 2 A sample tag cloud of 50 terms in a faith autobiography for class. Tag cloud provided by tagcrowd.com

When one is looking at the tags on the post, it is easy to see how all the tags relate. However, when aggregated with *x* number of posts, the relationships between them can become confusing and to establish relationship between them all becomes challenging, especially when one wants to narrow the search down, but does not know the appropriate terms. Of all the problems, of tagging this one is seems the easiest to solve. Flickr, a photosharing website owned by Yahoo!, uses an application to cluster words that often get tagged together to help the user

find what they are looking for faster and roughly solving the issue above with the multiple

meanings. On another website, del.icio.us, a website where one can tag favorite websites, a

website's tags tend to harmonize after a hundred submissions so one can find relevant terms to

help sort through the "windows" problem. Web developers are working on a way to include

semantic information inside tags to also alleviate this problem.[13]

Different words that correspond with each other also create issues with tagging. Since

there are no central rigid definitions to the keywords one uses, results that might be similar to the

post may go unseen because the user used another term of the post. This includes abbreviations

or misspellings, so "San Francisco," "San Francsco" and "SF" will produce three different set of

results, unless some of the posts were tagged with a combination of the three because technically

the three tags are different, even though they all mean the city in California. Not only will

abbreviations and misspellings create problems, but also plural forms of tags can produce

different search results. A way to solve this is to tag spam, which the user posts all the variations

to a certain tag, say "cup," which could include "cups," "container," "glass," "plastic,"

"plasticcup," "redcup," "pimpcup" and "mug." Although, tag spam can become overwhelming

when there are too many variations or irrelevant tags such as "dog" added to a picture of a

"cup."[14]

History of Mosaic

The sample church I will be using is Mosaic, a church in Los Angeles, meets at different

locations around Southern California. The campus I visited was at the Mayan Theatre at 7:00pm.

I will draw on three observations over two years for two separate studies, but not combined.[15]

Two observations were done a year later for this project. According to Gerardo Marti's account

in his book, *A Mosaic of Believers*, the history is an oral one. Only eight people of all the

interviewees where at Mosaic for over 20 years at the time of writing, so details later than those years can become fuzzy at best and missing at worst, although he does interview people who were involved with the church at one time.[16]

The church started as First Southern Baptist Church of East Los Angeles for white Southern and Midwestern transplants in 1943. Over the following years, a small church building was purchased. By the 1960s, the number of congregants started dropping and the church lost two pastors in quick succession and started looking for a new pastor. They found "Brother" Phil Bowers[17] from Fuller Seminary. He was quite popular with the congregation and many university students started to attend church services. Brother Phil changed the name of the church to "The Church on Brady," reflecting the street where the church met each weekend. Brother Phil also started working with the Hispanic community near the church leading more people to attend church. By 1976, English-speaking Hispanics started to become a prominent ethnic group in the church. However, they did not come from the immediate area, due to the area's high Mexican immigrant and Spanish-speaking population. During the late 1970s and 80s, Brother Phil brought in students from universities and seminaries around the country[18] to help run the church and this brought tensions between the white students and the Hispanic families due to issues of time commitments to the church. The families were upset because they wanted to help with the church, but were constrained by commitments to their families. This was unlike the white students, who did not have families and thus could contribute more to the church. The church seemed to attract a few members from other ethnic groups and several leaders including Brother Phil's second in command, Susan, who was African American.[19] Brother Phil and Susan would eventually help grow the church; however, leaders that were trained at seminaries were increasingly filling the leadership positions that were being created and not members of the

community who desired to fill the roles. This would bring the tensions between the Hispanic population and church leadership. Over time, Hispanics and other minorities would start to occupy lay leadership roles due to the church's apparent sensitivity to the issue.[20]

After a taxing church building experience, many families left due to the "rising cost" of attending, Brother Phil and Susan were able to use the theatre experience of Dave Auda, who came in to attract new members. The productions would become popular and bring in crowds over 1500 people. As the Nineties would approach, Brother Phil was ready to move to another role in the church. Susan would have the opportunity to meet Erwin McManus. Erwin would start to reshape the church by accident when he would step on Brother Phil and Susan's standard practices. Eventually, McManus would go on to be part of the pastoral staff, and church attendance grew rapidly among younger and more diverse populations. The church would rebrand itself in 1997, when the Mosaic service became a popular place for people of many backgrounds to come and worship together. With the elders wanting to change the name of the church, Mosaic was the popular choice. Eventually Brother Phil left due to the tensions that were rising between what McManus wanted to do and what Phil had done over the years such as change the name and build a new church structure. In 1998, McManus would begin holding services at a nightclub in downtown L.A., which flourished and inspired McManus to open more campuses for people to worship in the surrounding Los Angeles areas.[21]

Before launching into a full analysis of Mosaic's Urban location, it bears reminding that my analysis is of the service, not the theology of the church. This is not to be dismissive of theology because it does shape what is going to be and how it is going to be presented. However, the definitions of the churches in Chapter 3 place emphasis on "the doing of church" rather than the theology, which seem to be variations of conservative Protestantism theology.

Tagging Mosaic

Urban Mosaic meets every Sunday night at the Mayan Theater nightclub in downtown Los Angeles. The church rents out the club on Sunday nights. The club is adjusted for the service, mostly to make room for seating. The service is about an hour long, give or take ten minutes depending on the sermon. During all of the observations, the structure of the service was fairly consistent, although there was a notable difference in the service in first observation compared to the other two. An ethnography of Mosaic[22] in the book *Gen X Religion* edited by Richard Flory and Donald Miller was read and coded, similarly to my fieldnotes in order to show how the church service has changed from 1998-2002 to 2010 and 2011.

While attending Mosaic for the first time, I was puzzled. Coming from a Roman Catholic background, a church service in a nightclub did not seem possible and it did not feel like church. A year later, coming back to the nightclub there was a shift of my perception. I felt like I was attending church, just in a nightclub. Three possible explanations can explain the shift, 1) I was nervous about doing research the first time and with the new idea of church in a nightclub the service was jarring, 2) I have more of an understanding of Evangelical scared space and how it is not bound to a place but the person, or 3) there was an actual shift in the emotional tone of church service. As I have analyzed my feelings and perceptions it is a combination of all three. Reflecting on my third visit, since I moved to a more open space, in which I felt exposed confirming the fact the first observation was due to unease and not used to the idea of church in a nightclub or at any location then the other then a church. My shift in understand the concept of scared space occurred the next weekend when I attended another church in a refurbished warehouse near an airport. When the senior pastor, Erwin McManus took to the stage, he seemed to be worn out, as if he had been extremely busy in the past year. It is important to note,

McManus is no longer the pastor to each of the campuses. So there must be a shift in his role in the church, which has impacted what is expected at the campuses. With McManus shifting roles, different pastors have run each campus. Different pastors mean different styles, which would mean there is a shift in the service dynamics.

I will first give a brief overview of the services of which I have attended.[23] A brief recount of LaDawn Prieto's observation, from the Flory and Miller book, will be done to show what was done on the Urban location before my 2010 observation. After the overviews, I will discuss three to five major tags each of the services. There are too many tags, both macro and micro, for each coded observation/reading to include. Finally, I will produce three tag clouds of all the data that has been coded to show the evolution of the service and ultimately the church.

The Mayan theater in downtown Los Angeles is home to the Urban Mosaic church service on Sunday nights. The church music had an Independent undertone and if the lyrics were not religious, the music sounded secular. The band and bandleaders sounded professional, as if they worked in the music industry. After the band finished its set, the stage is cleared off for the sermon. During the 2010 service, another band played a funny song that had nothing to do with religion. Afterwards the pastor and his wife came on stage to do the sermon. There was a funny video shown and then the first of "Love Bites" an interactive segment where people would tell the audience who they love because that particular Sunday was Valentine's Day.

During the first 2011 observation, Hank Fortener, the pastor for the campus gave the sermon, while at the other observations Erwin was the sermon giver for the Sundays.[24] It is not clear whether Erwin McManus is the constant sermon giver or just gives the sermon every few weeks. None of the sermons did much obvious deconstructing of the Bible or of theology. At the second 2011 observation, McManus did voice some dislikes of terminology in the Christian

narrative, but never expanded on his feelings.[25] The service ended after the sermon, with collection cans passed out, the closing set, and the announcements.

The service described in "An Urban Mosaic in Shangri-La" by LaDawn Prieto is vastly different then the three observed. Set up around the nightclub were pieces of art done by attendees who are artists. Dance and drama pieces were used to convey the sermon topic for the particular week the author uses.[26]No dancing or dramas occurred during my three observations. There was the band that came out to play before the sermon at the 2010 observation. However, it did not relate to the sermon, unlike Prieto's observation. Even the worship band, during all three observations, the lyrics did not seem to match. There seems to be a big disconnect between my experiences and the book's. This suggests there was a change that was significant and requires a time sensitive definition to see when the change occured.

It should be said there are limitations to my observations. I attended a few services due to participant observation's demand on my already busy schedule. My findings here are merely a way to start the conversation about using tagging as a new way to categorize and define churches. My claims about the church need months, if not years, of fieldwork to accomplish an accurate picture of the process of change over time.

I will first discuss the tags for the reading from *Gen X Religion*, "An Urban Mosaic in Shangri-La." The big tags that I want to focus on are "ARTS," "EMERGENT," and "NPLABEL." The tag "ARTS" refers to the use of the arts in other ways then just worship music. Simply put, the tag refers to the dancing and the fine arts that were described being at the service because it goes beyond just having a worship band. The use of the tag is mainly to show there was something else then the worship band that used the arts. This could be like the observation above, with dancing and use of the fine arts, or another band that does something

separate from the main worship band, like in the 2010 observation. "EMERGENT" is a tag that defines the style of the service. Having the arts in a church service does not make the church emergent. However, at this service the church goes out of its way to incorporate its attendees' work with the worship experience, which is something that Emergent churches try to do. Also the age group that the service attracts is Generation X, "20S30S." [27] It is interesting though the author of the chapter labeled the church New Paradigm, in which the "NPLABEL" stands for. Looking at the 12 criterions, Mosaic does fit, except for the emphasis on the Holy Spirit.[28] However, at least at this service emergent fits better, whereas New Paradigm is a catchall that most churches can fit into. Marti, who also classifies Mosaic as New Paradigm,[29] and Prieto are both connected to Donald Miller at the University of Southern California, suggesting there could be a connection to Mosaic being labeled as New Paradigm.

In the 2010 observation the tags that really stand out are "PARTICIPATE," "EMERGENT," "NOHANDS," and "SEEKER." Several microphones were placed around the club and at various points in the night people got up and told the audience whom they loved, "PARTICIPATE." This goes along with the Emergent idea of making worship collaborative, "EMERGENT."[30] However, the service happened on Valentine's Day, so this participation in the service could tied to this and not to the overall structure of Mosaic's service. If this one element of the service was Emergent, what was the rest of the service? The rest of the service was "SEEKER," due to its rough following of the Seeker structure.[31] The music has simple, easy-to-follow lyrics and set in a style people respond to, or the codes of "RELVMUSIC" and "SIMPLELYRICS".[32] Although the space of Mosaic is secular, there is no attempt to make it a religious space in a traditional way by posting up religious imagery. The logo does have a cross, but it is not projected around the space.[33] This could be tied to the logistics of bring in a cross

and other religious representations. Although it does not explain why they could not just project crosses and other religious representations. It is interesting because if it was about not bringing in holy items into a secular space that is a place of sin, like a nightclub, then why hold church there in the first place? As a former Catholic, the raising of hands in the air strikes me as different. It has been something that I notice, or not notice in this case, "NOHANDS." As tags can be anything I deem related or relevant to the phenomenon, this tag can be included, even if it is not immediately relevant to church classification.

The first observation of 2011 provided some interesting developments revolving around "SEEKER," "PRAYERROOM," "HANKPASTOR," "NOSINGING," and "EUROAMERMAJ." Like I mentioned above, the service is fairly a "SEEKER" style service with the different trappings of the Willow Creek service, although there are differences between the two considering the audience. The doors open to music, which at Mosaic is a DJ playing electronic music, with no apparent Christian theme to it. Once the worship band is on stage, they play a three-song set.[34] The lyrics are simple, easy to follow, and projected on all the screens in the theater. Singing is encouraged, however, it is hard to hear over the loud music, hence the code "NOSINGING." The band leader did have to exhort the crowd to get them to participate, however, it is unclear if this was successful, "EXHORTBAND." The leader did talk about his beliefs during the set in between songs, which is similar to Willow Creek.[35] Afterwards, Hank Fortener, the pastor the campus came on stage to do the sermon/scripture portion, "HANKPASTOR." There is another shift from Willow Creek, with the morning, or in this case, evening message being apart of the scripture portion and not a separate address like at Willow Creek. There was no drama, unlike Willow Creek. Apparently, Mosaic did use dramas, but it seems they have not used them in at least a year.[36] After the sermon there was the collection and

then the announcements. What is important is how the guests are told not to donate because the volunteers tithe in order to be involved with the church. The idea of guests and those who have not committed to the church not donating any money is something that Willow Creek believes in and make it a point to counter the idea "'The church is money hungry.'" Whether this is effective or not is not clear.[37] A room on the second floor was reserved as "Sacred Space"/"PRAYERROOM" for people to pray with church volunteers. It was the first time I have seen some type of private alter call at Mosaic. On my return the next week it was gone, suggesting it could be something that is offered once and a while. What was very surprising is the lack of diversity. Marti's thesis is about how Mosaic is a diverse place. However, I saw a majority of Euro Americans, a small group of Asians and two African Americans during the whole service, hence the tags "EUROAMERMAJ," "ASIANMIN," and "AFRAMERMIN." No Latinos/Latinas were observed.

With the second and last observation in 2011, the tags that stand out are "BIRACIAL," "TECHISSUES," "MEN," and "ERWINPASTOR." During this service, I sat in the balcony and noticed many more Asians then I had previously seen during my observations. This could have been one of reasons there never seemed to be a large diversity of people. However, the dominant groups really revolved around Euro Americans and Asian Americans, suggesting a "BIRACIAL" dynamic, rather then a multiracial one. This means 1) the types of services Mosaic is doing now no longer has the broad appeal, 2) the diversity is at the other campuses, 3) or I am not observing the other races. "TECHISSUES" was a surprise, considering they have been at the location for over 10 years, the headset Erwin was using was going in and out and the tech staff, seemed slightly overwhelmed. The tech staff for this service seemed exclusively "MEN," although this could be merely a self-selection because the week before there was a female stagehand.

However, if this is not merely self-selection then there could be a belief that I have not encountered at Mosaic. What was also notable about this service is the fact Erwin was the service's pastor, "EWRINPASTOR." As mentioned above, it is not clear if he gives the sermon and Fortener runs the day to day, or if Erwin was just dropping in. The crowd did not seem fazed by Erwin coming on stage, so there could be some type of regularity to Erwin's sermon giving at Urban Mosaic.

The next step is to glance at the evolution of Mosaic's service through its tags by using tag clouds. Tag clouds are simply an illustration of the frequency of each tag. More frequently occurring words or tags will be in a big font, and tags or words that occur less frequently are in a smaller font.[38] There are three clouds, each representing three time frames, for all the observations.[39] The first tag cloud uses the tags of the book observation and the 2010 observation, Figure 3. The second cloud adds the first 2011 service and the third adds the second 2011 data set, Figures 5 and 6 respectively.
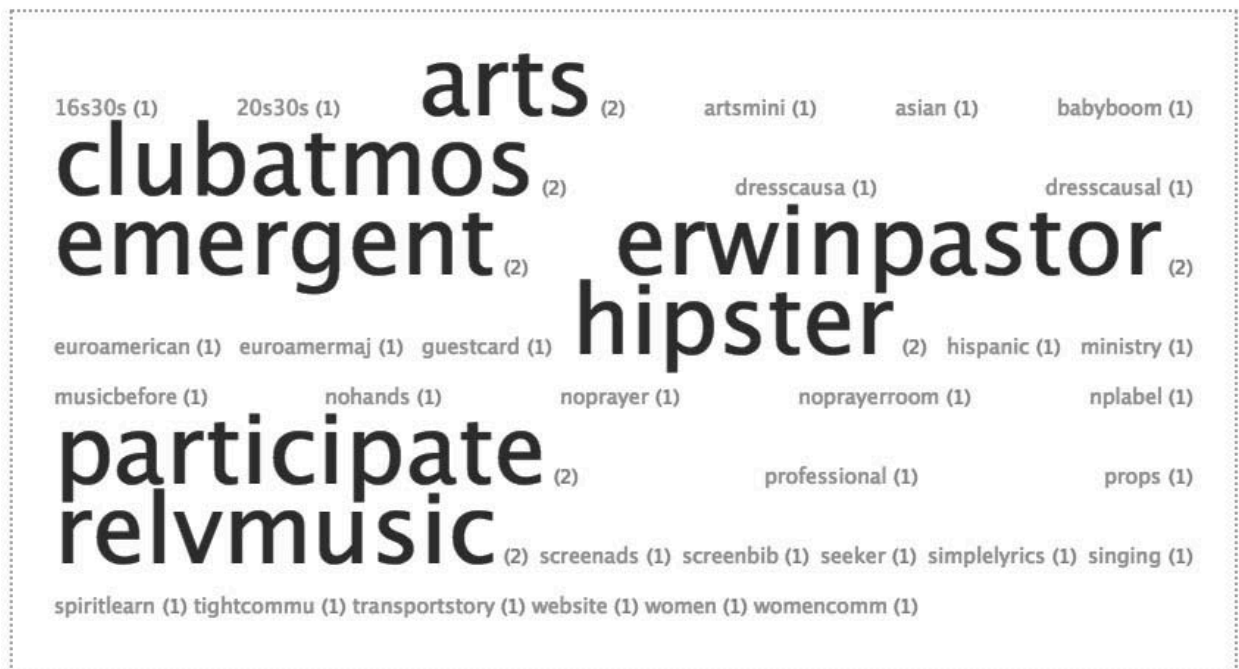
Figure 3 Tag cloud #1. Tag cloud provided by tagcrowd.com.

Figure 3 shows the first cloud tag. The largest tags have been used to tag both observations. The tags "NOPRAYER" and "NOPRAYERROOM" are an example of one of the limitations tagging has. I mean the same thing; however, when I was doing the tagging I was not precise about coding for the same words and left off "ROOM" for the first tag, thus resulting in two different tags coding for the same thing. In Figure 4, I changed the tag to "NOPRAYERROOM" so that way the tag cloud can be accurate in counting two tags of "NOPRAYERROOM." As one can see, the big words are all over the place and suggest that the two services are alike in eight different ways. The relevant church classification criteria tags center around the idea of the service being "EMERGENT" with an emphasis on the "ARTS" and "PARTICIPATE"/participating in the creation and execution of the service. Remember these are

Figure 4 Tag cloud # 1.5, corrected. Tag cloud provided by tagcrowd.com.

only two services at different points in time, however, they have eight characteristics that are fairly similar. There seems to be an "EMERGENT" element going on in the service because of

the emphasis on experiential worship, with the dancing and lay member's artwork at the service

in the book and the "Love Bites" segments in the 2010 observation. A limitation of this, though,

is the 2010 observation could actually be an anomaly in 51 weeks worth of data.
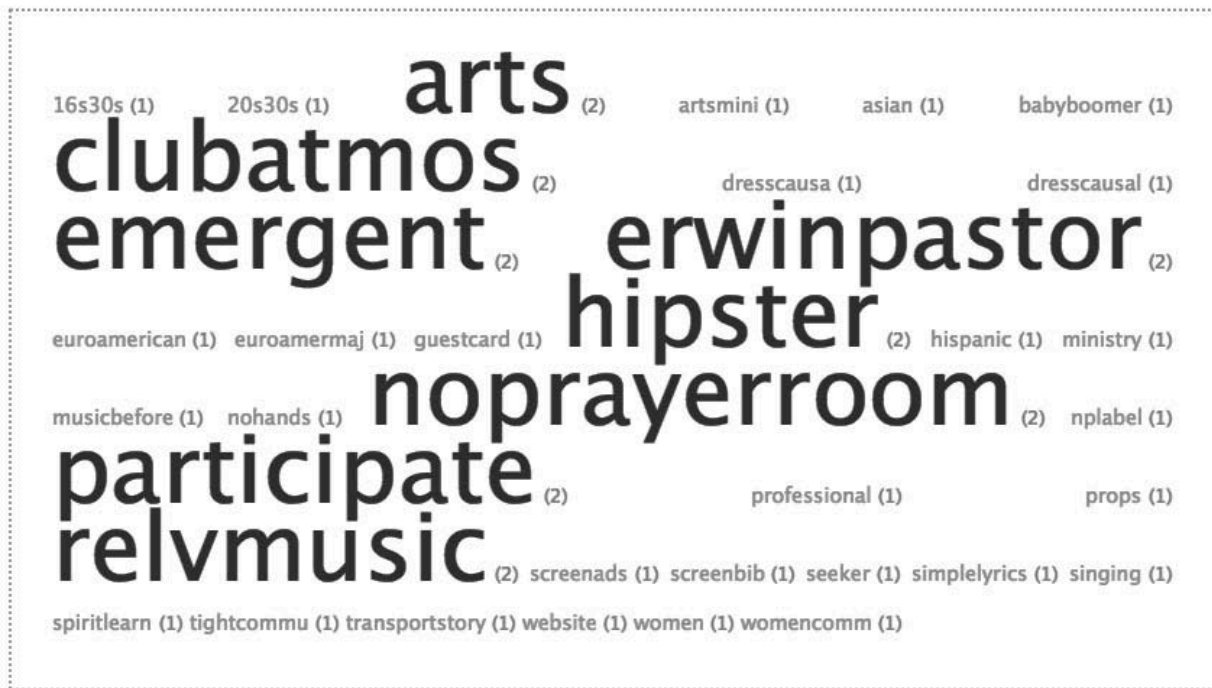
The second cloud, figure 5, is much bigger due to the amount of new tags from the first

2011 observation. At the first glance, three terms pop right out, "CLUBATMOS," "HIPSTER,"

and "RELVMUSIC." All of those terms can tell you about what the service is like, who is going

to be there, and what type of music is going to be played there. The more difficult part is trying

to shift through all the tags that have been in two out of three observations. Some tell information

that can be used in church classification like "ARTS," "EMERGENT," "SEEKER, and some

information that is not useful like, "NOHANDS," "SCREENADS," and

"TRANSPORTSTORY."[40] If one just looks at the useful data, "SEEKER" service elements are

more prominent then in the previous services as evidenced by its increase in frequency. Euro

Americans are more of a dominant group, although this could be true about the first service as

well, but there is no way of knowing. Also increasing in frequency is the tag "BABYBOOMER."

This was an interesting discovery at the services because considering the location of the church

and the target audience is "20S30S"/twenty- and thirty-somethings. It should be noted that the

2010 observation I saw several teenage-looking congregants "16S30S." However, what age one

might look, might not actually be what they are. At the 2011 observation for this tag cloud, there

was a lack of any type of arts during the service, so it stays at a frequency of two. There are ways

to change the color of the newest tags to display,[41] but the program used for this project did not

color code them. The next tag cloud, it will be easier to see what are the elements that get used

the most in my data set because those elements that were not present in the 2011 observations

will be in a smaller font.

16s30s (1) 20s30s (2) aframermin (1) arts (2) artsmini (1) asian (1) asianmin (1)
babyboomer (2) baptism (1) biblegosjohn (1)
clubatmos (3) dresscausa (1) dresscausal (1)
emergent (2) equal (1) erwinpastor (2) euroamerican (1)
euroamermaj (2) exhortband (1) exhortpastor (1)
guestcard (2) hipster (3) hispanic (1)
ministry (2) missions (1) musicbefore (2) nodeconst (1)
nohands (2) noprayerroom (2) nosinging (1)
participate (2) prayerroom (1)
openanecote (1) professional (2) props (2)
relvmusic (3) screenads (2) screenbib (1)
screenbible (1) seeker (2) seekerlabel (1) simplelyrics (2) singing (1)
spiritlearn (2) techissues (1) tightcommu (1)
transportstory (2) website (2) women (1)
womencomm (2)
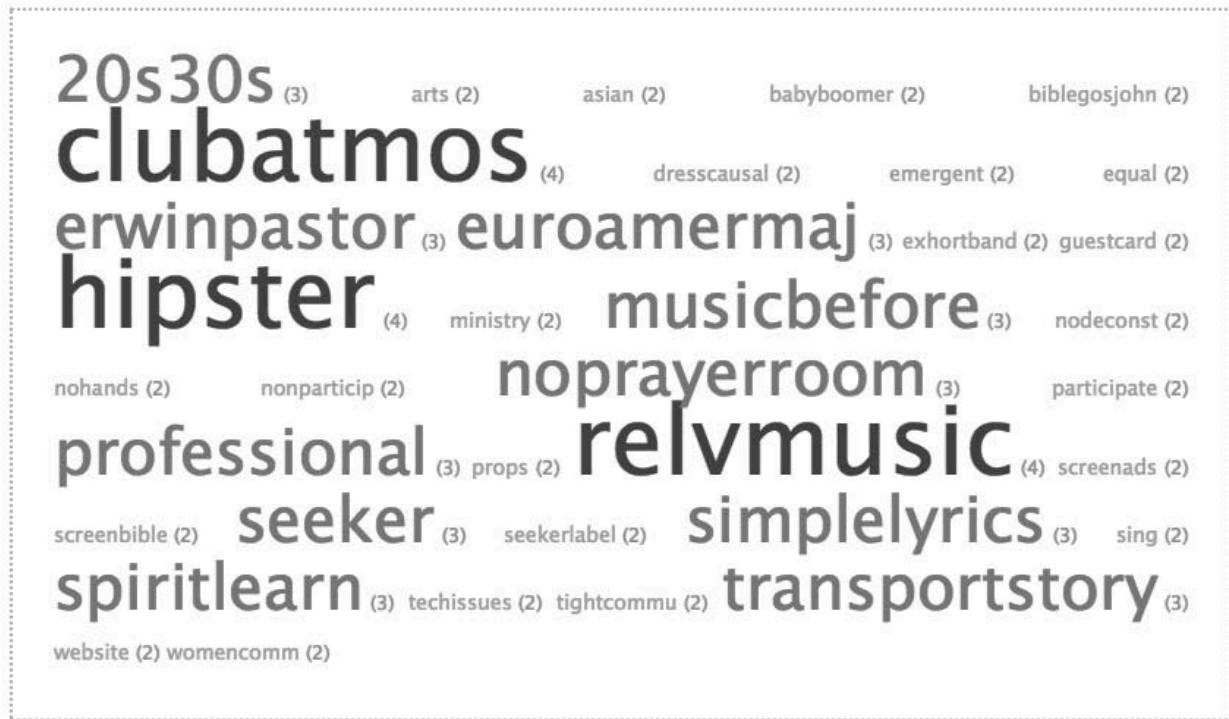
Figure 5 Tag cloud #2. Tag cloud provided by tagcrowd.com.

Figure 6 Tag Cloud #3. Tag cloud provided by tagcrowd.com

The last tag cloud, figure 6, shows how the tags help define these four observations.[42]

Again the three tags mentioned above are still present giving a good idea of who will be there,

what it will be like, and what type of music will be played. "CLUBATMOS" sort of has to be

there because the actual building is actually a nightclub. Nevertheless, they make use of the

technology and with other churches using the same professional lighting in church spaces, there

is a larger tend of a club atmosphere being used to energize people during the service as

observed at the other services. If we look at the emergence of "SEEKER" as a tag and the

decline of "EMERGENT" there seems to be a shift in the labeling of the church, along with the

rise of tags that help support the "SEEKER" being tagged frequently. What is unique about

Mosaic being seeker is the age demographic, because this age group and slightly older are

members of Generation X, which is more attracted to "EMERGENT." One also sees the

emergence of what the services might include, like "TRANSPORTSTORY," which is a tag

about what types of anecdotes the pastor uses. To look back up at Figure 5, many of the miscellaneous tags like "WEBSITE" are now small and are easier to shift away from the data pool. Even tags that were big in Figure 4, like "ARTS," are now small in size, perhaps indicating a shift in the way church is done over time. What is more important here is the idea of tags and tag clouds being useful to track change of a definition, in this case would be the definition of church service, over time and that being evident in only four data samples.

Comparing all three of the tag clouds to each other there seems to be a change in what is emphasized in Mosaic's services over the years. It seems to start as an Emergent style with the emphasis on lay participation by doing art and the overall use of the arts during the service. Over the years there are Emergent flavors still used in the services, but how often they are used and when it disappeared from the services is unclear because of the lack of constant and continuous data. Since this service did have elements of a Seeker style church service, the set of three songs in a relevant music style with simple lyrics, the topical sermon and overall the way to worship is sitting and listening to the sermon. The Emergent elements could have been just added for Valentine's Day. This forces a question; can a church service have two different ways of doing church in the same space? From this observation, perhaps they can. While Emergent is somewhat a reaction against Seeker and the ideas of "sanitizing" Christianity for a mass audience, [43] the mix of service elements adds up to a unique church service, which Mosaic is known for. [44] There are definitely seeker elements, like having no visible symbols except for the church logo, which is not splashed around in the service. The music is designed to appeal to a certain group and the lyrics are kept simple to keep the entry point to the service low enough that everyone can enter the sacred space regardless if they are new to the faith or not. In general, Mosaic's message is not quite as seeker-friendly as say Willow Creek or Saddleback, but there is no sense of

deconstructing the faith and distilling the answer after discussion, as Emergent churches tend to do.[45]

Fast forward a year, the service is now much further away from the Emergent beginnings and far more of a Seeker style church service. The sermon is not a Seeker topic like: "How to have a Biblical relationship" but it is not "Deconstructing Jesus' family tree in the Gospel of Luke according to Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge"* that characterize Emergent sermons. Admittedly, the service sounds more New Paradigm then Seeker or Emergent. This is due to the fact New Paradigm churches are like Seeker churches in that they focus on making people feel comfortable, but New Paradigm sermons do focus on scripture, like Mosaic. Like I mentioned above, Mosaic sermons do not deconstruct the text in my observations, so it would not be an Emergent church. However, upon glancing at the 12 criterions established by Donald Miller, eleven fit, but the one about the emphasis on the Holy Spirit does not. In order to be New Paradigm, according to Miller, "…twelve characteristics, *all* of which must be present to some degree, distinguish new paradigm churches…"[46] Seeker and Emergent also tend to fit all the criteria except for the one about the Holy Spirit, suggesting New Paradigm is both too broad and narrow as a category. It is too broad because most contemporary churches fit into every criterion because they are established after 1965, attended by Boomers, their children, and now their grandchildren, causal dress is standard in most churches, worship is contemporary, among other things. However, this broadness gets caught on the 11th criterion, "the 'gifts of the Holy Spirit' are affirmed," thus making this a narrow definition.[47]

Looking at the broad strokes of the classification of Mosaic, it is a bit messy. The church has evolved from Emergent-like to Seeker-like, but when and where this transition started is unclear. While averaging out between 1998 and 2010 could work to give a date when the shift

occurred. This would place it around 2004 to 2005, right when Marti first published his book, where he says the church is both New Paradigm[48] and Emergent,[49] possibly meaning the church changed after that point, to a more Seeker style. However, in his reasoning why the church is not Seeker, it comes off a bit facetious, "Mosaic is not a spiritual shopping mall with well-ordered programs and calendars but a changing kaleidoscope of projects, events, and activities."[50] Yes, Mosaic may not be an overly programmed church, but it has enough options for a variety of people, as evidenced by the ads that are shown before the services at Urban Mosaic, which is commonly found in Seeker churches. He also does not bring up the issue about the size of the church, which is only around 3,000 in 2009. So there would not be the same amount and variety of options.[51]

Overall, Marti does do a comprehensive look at Mosaic, which is not often the case with many researchers' books. Often there will be a focus on one element of the church like in Prichard's *Willow Creek Seeker Churches* and his focus on idea of marketing and almost "de-Christianizing" of Christianity. In Marti's book, he goes from history to theology to demographics to what the church is doing and how they are doing it. However, the trade-off of having large-scale access to Mosaic is the fact Marti was a pastor at Mosaic before doing the study,[52] so access was easy to grant. This brings up the problem of the insider/outsider dynamic. One hand, there is all this data that scholar's might not have access to, but Marti might be trying to protect Mosaic's reputation by categorizing it a certain way, or just not being critical enough to achieve any real theory. He does write a short appendix about his methodology and telling the reader how he will make sure to distance himself from the data. While reading it, I could not help but think the fact he is trying so hard to justify his data's validity that it further questions the

validity of his data. It is like when someone wants to be taken seriously, but they cannot be taken seriously because they are trying so hard.

The main limitation of my project is the amount of data. As it stands, I have an observation from roughly the beginning of the services at Mosaic, then to February 2010, and then to February 2011 for both observations. If I had data for each year up since the service started, the date and the nature of the transition would be clearer and thus provide a more accurate representation of the church.

The next limitation, is the fact the tags that I do use have concrete definitions behind them. Rather then folksonomies, they are taxonomies because there is a right and wrong way to use the tag. When trying to work with other scholars, using different sets of folksonomies can create issues because what one scholar tags "GRACE" another scholar will code it "FORGIVENESS." Obviously referencing code dictionaries could solve this and then changing one's tags to be more consistent with the larger project could solve this issue, although it would still loose the flexibility of the folksonomies. Would changing folksonomies into taxonomies be that problematic and would not taxonomies start whole issue of categorization all over again? Yes, but with tagging being democratic, scholars can use different tags to explain their take on the same phenomenon. However, a problem can occur with there are x amount of definitions of "TAG" being used for a project. The addition of numbers and then letters to the end of the code, "TAG#" can easily solve this problem.

Tagging seems to have solved a few of the issues with categorization, like flexible and dynamic definitions, a lessening of the amount of data placed into the "Other" category. First tagging can allow for more dynamic definitions. As seen above as more data is added to the tag cloud the frequencies of certain tags will change and thus meaning there is a change in the way

the phenomenon works. Color-coding would make the tags easier to read and to see what is new and what was an old tag. Another way tagging can provide dynamic categories is through a collaborative effort of scholars and lay scholars. As I mentioned several times, theology is not my area of expertise so if I was attempting a full scale recategorization of Mosaic I would want to bring in a theologian, a religious studies scholar, and/or a member from the church to collaborate. As more data is added the definition becomes more holistic and accurate. According to my reading it takes about a hundred sets of tags for a website on del.icio.us, a social bookmarking website, to stabilize the definition, so a lot of data is needed.[53] Having a dynamic category is just the beginning of what problems tags can solve.

The problem of the "Other" is important. "Othering" has led to all sorts of problems when used unethically, like racial discrimination, because it distances "us"/"good" from "them"/"bad". If giving only certain objects or people definitions it effectively silences the rest because they are not included with the objects that have visibility.[54] However, with tagging, more things can be given a voice, especially when done collaboratively. Will tagging get everything? Probably not, it is the basic problem of participant observation research. Now in the classification of churches, is missing a few things going to be unethical? Probably not, but in certain cases it is unethical to not get everything, because without giving voice to the disenfranchised, the population can be controlled by an outside source and possibly harmed. The power to determine what is "Other" is great and it is imperative to recognize, especially through their point-of-view everything so it does not slip into a category that is easily controlled.

The last few problems that are a part of the general problem of classification pose a slightly different problem. Tags are just as likely to be the result of human emotions. However, tag clouds might be able to weed out things that are a result of human emotions. This is

complicated by a tag that was the result of emotions getting stuck in the brain of the scholar and it continues to "show up" in the data. The best course around this would be to rely on the collaborative element, although scholars should never default on other scholars to keep their work from error. The problem of semantics is the problem of tagging to which I have addressed above. To deal with the issue of user-friendliness, the whole idea of tagging is to continually add data and if a tag does not work for the scholar, another term can be added to the list of tags.

My intention was to render a new category for Mosaic. But as the project has progressed, the ability to accurately recategorize started to look difficult because there is simply too little data to make a generalized assertion. However, the project has yield promise and provided a way to start the conversation about church classifications and new ways to approach fundamental methodological problems in the scientific study of religion. This is not to say tagging is only good for using it in religious classification. In fact, it would be useful to see how tagging could be applied across a variety of subjects in the social sciences. Some disciplines and fields that rely on more quantitative data would have a harder time applying this to their research because it allows for too much variation. Other scholars in qualitative research also may not like tagging because it has the flavor of positivism (i.e. because it is reductionistic) to it because it relies on precise definitions and does not have enough variation in interpretation. However, I remain firm in my belief that it may provide an alternative way of analyzing qualitative data, which may be of service to scholars in the future.

Notes

[1] Kenneth D. Bailey, *Typologies and Taxonomies: An Introduction to Classification Techniques*, Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 8.

[2] Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences,* Inside Technology (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 5-6.

[3] Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, trans. Rodney Needham (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 86.

[4] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 116-117. This issue will come more into play later on this chapter.

[5] Ibid., 102-103, 159.

[6] John G. Breslin; Alexandre Passant; Stefan Decker, *The Social Semantic Web* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), 21-25.

[7] Such as a blog post, video, or an entire website.

[8] Priscilla Caplan, *Metadata Fundamentals for All Librarians* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2003), 2.

[9] Arguably, this project is creating taxonomies, although two users could tag the same thing, but have two different meanings.

[10] Gottfried Vossen, Stephen Hagemann, *Unleashing Web 2.0: From Concepts to Creativity* (Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 2007), 183-184.

[11] Breslin, Passant, and Decker, *The Social Semantic Web,* 140.

[12] Ibid., 141

[13] Ibid., 142,143, 144; Vossen and Hagemann, *Unleashing Web 2.0*, 190.

[14] Breslin, Passant, and Decker, 142; Vossen and Hagemann, *Unleashing Web 2.0*, 188, 193.

[15] I was scouting for a potential church to do a study on about the use of the arts during a service. However, I ended up choosing Rock Harbor church in Costa Mesa, so only one observation was done.

[16] Geradrdo Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church* (Bloomington, ID: Indiana University Press, 2005), 39.

[17] Marti never gave any type of note that he changed the name of this one particular individual. According to Jim Wilson, the pastor's name was Tom Wolf, not Phil Bowers. Jim Wilson, *Furture Church: Ministry in a Post-Seeker Age* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 44.

[18] Marti never discusses from what schools Brother Phil recruited.

[19] It is unclear if Susan was a pastor or not.

[20] Ibid., 40-46, 48. It is interesting how biracial the church seems to be when Marti's overall thesis is about the church being multiracial. Granted this is when the church is first forming, but it seems like he is stretching to show how diverse the church is. It is also hard to figure out what exactly is political correctness and what was actually going on. Marti's objectivity is a problem due to his being a leader within the community because it could lead him to think less critically then other scholars.

[21] Ibid., 46-55.

[22] When I use "Mosaic," I am referring to Urban Mosaic unless otherwise stated.

[23] I have included the full-length fieldnote writeups in Appendix A.

[24] A fictional name has not been used for Hank Fortener because he self-identified and is identified on church literature as being the pastor of the campus.

[25] Since my area of expertise lies in the sociological data not the theological, I could be wrong about the theology in the sermons. This nicely points out the importance of working in a transdisciplinary and collaborative environment.

[26] LaDawn Prieto, "An Urban Mosaic in Shangri-La," in *Gen X Religion*, ed. Richard W. Flory and Donald E. Miller (New York, Routledge, 2000), 57-60, 63-64.

[27] Prieto, "An Urban Mosaic in Shangri-La," 63-64; Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 147.

[28] Donald Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 20.

[29] Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers,* 36-37.

[30] Tony Jones, *The New Christians: Dispatches from the Emergent Frontier* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 180-185.

[31] It is important to mention that the message of Mosaic is not really seeker-sensitive, or at least to the effect Willow Creek Church goes to but focusing on topics like "Having a Biblical Marriage." Mosaic does not openly advertise itself as a Baptist church. Kimon Howland Sargeant, *Seeker Churches: Promoting Traditional Religion in a Nontraditional Way* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rugters University Press, 2000), 59-61.

[32] Ibid., 66-69.

[33] Ibid., 61.

[34] G. A. Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services: Evaluating a New Way of Doing Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 84-87.

[35] Ibid., 87.

[36] Prieto, "An Urban Mosaic in Shangri-La," 63.

[37] Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*, 88.

[38] Breslin, Passant, and Decker, *The Social Semantic Web,* 140.

[39] To see the tags for each service and their definitions please see Appendix B.

[40] This is an unavoidable problem because it is ultimately up to the user what tags they want to use and their goal. Tags like "TRANSPORTSTORY" are tags that mostly provide some type of ethnographic richness to an otherwise sterile data pool.

[41] "US Presidential Speeches Tag Cloud," Chirag Mehta, last modified January 23, 2008, last accessed April 21, 2011, http://chir.ag/projects/preztags/.

[42] Due to the high volume of tags that have a frequency of one when all four cases are included, they were left out to clearly show the terms that had a frequency of two or more.

[43] Jones, *The New Christians*, 109.

[44] Prieto, "An Urban Mosaic in Shangri-La," 58.

[45] Ibid., 109-110.

[46] Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, 20. Emphasis mine. "The twelve criterion as written in the book: 1) they were started after the mid-1960s; 2) the majority of congregation members were born after 1945; 3) seminary training of clergy is optional; 4) worship is contemporary; 5) lay leadership is highly valued; 6) they have extensive small group ministries; 7) clergy and congregant usually dress informally; 8) tolerance of different personal styles is prized; 9) pastors tend to be understated, humble, and self-revealing; 10)bodily, rather than mere cognitive, participation in worship is the norm; 11) the 'gifts of the Holy Spirit' are affirmed; 12)

Bible-centered teaching predominates over topical sermonizing." Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism,* 20.

[47] Ibid.*,* 20.

[48] Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers,* 36-37.

[49] Ibid., 192-195. He does not officially say Mosaic is Emergent but compares Emergent churches to Mosaic.

[50] Ibid., 36.

[51] Ibid., xi.

[52] Ibid., 205.

[53] Breslin, Passant, and Decker, *The Social Semantic Web,* 143.

[54] Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 5-6.

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Appendix A:

Fieldnote Writeups

Observation #0 for **Thesis** (Original Project for RLST 199)

Mosaic at the Mayan Theater

Los Angeles, CA

February 14th 2010

Observation Time: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Website research

In order to gain a little familiarity with the church I viewed their website the night before the observation. The website provides the basic information on what the church is all about. Overall the website seems to project a very causal, not polished attitude. Now this could be used to show the church is a congregation that stresses informality. The entire website seems to be formatted as a blog and allows comments on every article on the site. However, there where not many people commented, except for the Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.) page which several questions were asked and responded by the head pastor and other church volunteers in the comments section. Many of the pages' layouts were visually messy and many pages were not complete or up to date so it felt like the website was more of a formality to have, but the emphasis of the church is rather on the lived experience so the website seems to be just an informational source. No photos of anyone were on any of the church website, except for periphery sites for their cell groups.

In my brief literature review, just to prep me for things to search for, the church stress being involved with the arts. There were several online magazines that were, one being a comic book featuring a woman superhero, a Hispanic man, and an African-American girl. However the page on which this was, had a different color header and links suggesting that this is an old

feature of the website that has been retained to show how creative the church is. The other magazine on the website was on the bottom of the page and shared personal stories of the church congregants. However, like the comic book, the age displayed of the magazine was three years and 3 months old. When clicking on the artisans link, I thought the pages would be filled out and up to date unlike the rest of the website. Most of the pages for the arts were just a few sentences long and a couple of them were still under construction. However, two pages linked to outside websites, the comedy and a spoken word community outreach program. The comedy group was responsible for one of the Doritos commercials during the Super Bowl so it was displayed prominently on their page. The troop really downplayed their association with Mosaic because on further examination of the website they are heavily involved with the larger secular community, such as providing improve lessons and going to public schools to perform.

One other feature I believe that is important to note is how all the sermons dating back quite a few years were available as downloadable podcasts. In a way one doesn't have to go to church at all. One can just download it from the website and listen to it anytime, anywhere. I wanted to get a sense of the church's teaching on homosexuality and through some searching, was able to find the podcast in question. I felt the pastor's message was liberal enough to feel comfortable to wear my rainbow bracelets and that I would not be the only gay person in the congregation. Although, he sort of neither rejected or accepted homosexuality, so it was easier to feel comfortable.

The podcast also provided insight on the pastor's preaching style and found him to be a preacher that did not moralize, which is largely an issue with my generation when it comes to preaching styles. He also seemed very causal, more like giving a motivational speech rather than

preaching, which I found refreshing due to the many years of seemingly being lectured at during the Catholic mass.

Field Research

The service took place at Mosaic's Mayan Theatre/Nightclub, an upscale secular venue rented out. As the name suggests, the nightclub façade and interior are covered in sculpted Maya-ish glyphs. The interior was shaped sort of in a wedge. There was an "dance" seating section with fold out chairs, perhaps this was the normal place for dancing during regular nights. Underneath the balcony was the bar area. At the front of the railing there were stairs to get down to the lower dance area. There were several rows of chairs in front of the railing. At least of the right side, looking at the stage, were a few tables. Behind the chairs, in the very back were tall tables and stools. This is the location in which I thought I could get a better view of the service, which turned out being more a disadvantage because people blocked my view of the stage, although not of the screens, when people were standing up. If I return to Mosaic I will sit somewhere more centrally located in order to get a better view of the crowd and the stage while people are performing. The bar was converted into a table for "ConnectionHotSpot", a place to pick up flyers for the many ministries the church provides for its worshippers. The alcohol was covered with a painted wooden plank. However, snacks and drinks were available in the lobby to buy before and during the service. On two of the sidewalls were round screens for projections, which were used during the service, as well as one above the stage, although it looked temporary. If I had more time before the service I would have looked around more, however the doors were closed until 7, while everyone had to wait in the interior anteroom. The anteroom was a very nice room with several couches and multicolor halogen lights making the room feel like a

nightclub rather than a place to worship. Since Mosaic does not permanently occupy the building, they had a truck painted with cool designs outside the door in the next door parking lot, that I believe transports the sound equipment, folding chairs, and any other thing they brought to the theatre.

I arrived at the club around 6:30 pm after having an adventure to get downtown from Claremont. Outside the club there were three greeters of people in their 20s, with a velvet rope giving authentic club experience. While I had to get something to eat before I actually went into the club, I was directly across the street and was able to do some observations of the activity in front. When I went back to the club I was greeted by the three, two men, one woman, with the oldest man wearing a wooden cross. I grabbed on of their small bulletins, a folded half-sheet of paper with the logo of the preaching series for the week, "Love Actually". Inside, as par for Evangelical churches, had a commitment card expressing your desire to allow Jesus into your heart, find out more information about Jesus, to be baptized, and what I want to get involved with. What was different though, was the question what are things you like to do. This church really tries to cater to every interest their congregants have, which makes them more involved with the church and thus getting involved with Jesus. The bulletin also had up coming events in the general church community, there are multiple locations, and the Mayan nightclub location community. The crowd was stylish, but they were not super expensive. If I had to put them into a social group they were "young urbanite" crowd, who like folk rock, multiple ear piercing, shop at stores like American Appeal and Urban Outfitters. Everyone was fairly causal, although the older members of the crowd were dressed slightly nicer. The pastor and his wife were both dressed causal, with the pastor wearing jeans.The crowd age seemed to be between sixteen to about mid-30s. The middle-aged attendees looked to be the parents of the younger teen members.

There were many couples that were married who self-identified during the open-mic love messages. A handful of the married people had brought their babies with them in strollers. Most people seemed to have formed friendships with each other, although there were many singles standing towards the back of the anteroom away from the room. There seemed slightly more women attending the service, which seems to follow the norm for evangelical services. In my reading the author stressed Mosaic was a multicultural church, but the crowd was mainly white with very few minorities.

Once most people were seated, the lead singer of the band came onto the stage. When she came out onto stage, she was projected up onto the screens, but once she started the lyrics of the songs she was singing were projected onto the stage. The graphics behind the lyrics were very professional looking. From her comments after the second song, they use songs regularly so the congregants can learn them. The sound quality was very professional and I would not be surprised if the singer was a recording artist, because she clearly has the talent. During the singing, one lady in front of me pulled out a camera and had her friend, who could look over the crowd, take a picture. This is not normal behavior during a religious service and I wonder if this is a common feature during the Mosaic church services when the performing arts are on display. During the opening song almost everyone stood, although throughout the singing people would sit down. It was hard to hear people singing, so I did not know if I should have sung or not, once I heard people singing I tried to sing, but I felt self-conscious and just l sort of just lip-synched along. I was surprised at the low number of people raising their hands to the sky. I wonder if it was the setting, I couldn't see the people, or if that style of worship is not promoted. While the band played fog was pumped into the theatre to give the worship more of an authentic club feel.

Professional lighting lit the stage in a pink/purple color scheme. During the services, the stage was just lit with a white light and the rest of the audience was lit with a blue.

After the opening songs everyone sits down, a man wearing a beanie came out on stage to give a quick announcement and introduces another band that played a silly secular song to the crowds amusement. Afterwards, the pastor and his wife come onto the stage and sit in armchairs. The wife starts the ball rolling with an update about the Super Bowel commercial and takes some comedic jabs at her husband. After she is done, she introduces the "Love Bites" segment, a fifteen second declaration of love to a human, because "everyone loves God." Only a few people go, mostly women, and then the pastor takes over and begins his sermon, which gets interrupted by the desire for another expression of love, this time with many takers. He continues on and finishes, and other expression of love takes place, with lots of takers, and then the he says a final prayer, the guy with the beanie comes back on stage announces more things and mentions they are looking for a film crew to produce a film and discusses some charity needs for Haiti. After the blessing took place a lot of people exited the building. I left after the announcements had occurred and tried to find where I needed to pick up the bus to go home.

I was surprised at the lack of an alter call at the service. I normally see that in many Protestant/Evangelical churches and was surprised that it was not done here. Partly, it might not be done because of the awkwardness of the layout in the club, or the church wants to foster the small cell groups that can attend to those needs easier and so the service can be quick. It is interesting that I find Evangelical services feel far faster from the Catholic mass. Part of it is the ease of the pastor to speak and keep you interested, another part of it is not so fragmented into so many sections like the Catholic mass, and lastly the service is a lot of fun and one doesn't want

to check their watch every five minutes waiting for it to end. Even the pastor's wife mentioned

church should be fun and not boring because God lives and thrives in the fun not the boring.

I really could not come up with any conclusions, in part because I could not see but also I

am so new to the style of the service that I do not see patterns emerging. It could also be the

phenomena, of the arts being an extension of worship besides hip worship music, simply did not

manifest itself at this particular service. If I decide to continue with this church I will sit

somewhere I can see better to observe and I will get more information and will participate more

in the service.

Observation #1 for **Thesis**

Mosaic at the Mayan Theater

Los Angeles, CA

February 20th 2011

Observation time: 6:50 pm to 8:10 pm

The service took place at the Mayan Theatre, as indicated by the name the venue is covered in Mayan-ish 3-d reliefs both inside and outside. The interior is shaped roughly like a wedge with the innermost point being the stage. The background of the stage is a projection screen that displays the lyrics to the songs and the passages of the Biblical text for the day behind it when the pastor was reading it. Along the sides there are large circle projection screens where ads played before the service. During the service the pastor was projected up on both. Right before the stage is what I reference as the Front Orchestra. This area is full of folding chairs for people to sit. Moving backwards the next section is Rear Orchestra. This area is on the main level, whereas the Front Orchestra is a half floor down a short flight of stairs. There is seating along the rail in three rows of normal chairs. In the back on the left side there are high tables and stools. This is where I sat during the service. It is a good spot to focus on the stage; however, it is hard to see the people down in the front orchestra. On the right side there was a group of people, on what appeared to be stools, it was mentioned during the final comments that they would hold the "After Party", which is for first-time attendees about matters of faith. Between the two sitting areas was the Spiritual Connection, a booth designed to get people involved with the church ministries. The lobby was lit with multi-color hydrogen lights. On one side a coffee bar was set up where a large population of attendees got coffee and brought it in to the main theater. Directly above there was another lobby where people were invited to pray with prayer ministers. There

were signs around the front lobby calling it a "Sacred Space." Another short flight of stairs led to the Balcony. I have not been up to the balcony, however, I will make it a priority to do next week's observation from there.

The doors to the main theater opened at 6:50. A DJ played electronic music with no apparent theme and there were no references to Christianity. Nearing 7 downstairs sitting still had many seats open. However, during the first couple of songs, large groups of people came in and filled the spots. Many people seemed to know one another and where engaged in conservation even while the first song was still playing. The demographics leaned towards white and mid to late 20's, 30's. However, what was notable there was a significant population of baby boomers. A few of them were "hip" and some of them seemed to be aging Jesus Freaks. Except for a few exceptions, most were dressed in upscale urban clothing, purchased at Urban Outfitters and similar stores. They struck me as hipsters, but lacked the attitude. A few people where dressed nicely (i.e. tie and slacks).

The band walked on stage about 7:03. The bandleader had long hair, goatee, and scruff. He wore a brown/tan cardigan, with a white v-neck undershirt. The band was similarly dressed in hoodies and t-shirt. The leader did say he was gone for a month, so it sounds the band is the regular band for the service. For the first song, I could not hear anyone singing. The leader had to exhort the audience to sing during the second song. Apparently the tech crew was having issues because multiple times the lyrics projected where not the lyrics the band was singing. The lyrics were simple and where repeated multiple times. After the set was done, there was only scattered applause until the pastor exhorted the attendees to shout, "You're awesome." During the set, fog was diffused into the theater and the moving heads moved around.

After the set, the stage manager who opened the lobby doors placed a stool and a table with a basket of bread, on the stage while the pastor, Hank, came on stage and launched into his sermon with a little anecdote about "working out" and working out their scripture reading. When he started to reference the Bible passage, he told everyone to take out their Bible, which most people had. The selection was long, the passages were projected on the screens, by line. When the passage mentioned only men, he added "women and children." He added some light humorous commentary to the passage. Personally, I found him not very engaging. He used a car accident story to illustrate a low point of his life. What makes this significant is the fact it was a car accident story was used at the previous service that I attended last year. Since a large theme in the sermon was about bread, he brought loaves of bread. He threw them from the stage into the audience to help remind the receivers about the sermon. When he mentioned a collection was going to happen, he told the guests they did not have to donate any money, it was covered by the volunteers that tithe to the church. It was not entirely clear if the money just went to the campus or the whole church. He did mention something about the money going to support missions. After his announcement, I took the time to leave to catch the bus.

End 8:10

Impressions – written on the way back to Claremont

Okay. I'm seeing seeker all over the place. Like in my notes it is turning into a young seeker service. I was stunned at the ambivalence to the music. Also lots of baby boomers then before, which is interesting to note. The pastor wasn't great. Less participation then last time. Granted this is off-holiday. Again very white, a group of Asian and one African American females sitting next to me. Lots of friend groups, large in size. Lots of people drinking coffee drinks. One

volunteer was African American. There wasn't a sense of deconstruction in anything. Overall, it was kind of bland. Also didn't seem to recognize anyone, granted it was more then a year ago. High turnover? Wait one man, baby boomer, wearing cross t-shirt. This time I could see more easily then last time. They <u>changed</u> the service because this did not have the same feeling. It <u>felt</u> like <u>church</u> unlike the last time. It lost its edge. The band was the same quality, professional sounding, but what was up with the low level of applause? Is the sound growing stale? Didn't feel highly controlled. Felt on the fly. Something was off tonight. We will see if this feeling continues. If it does then we are on to something. Also looking at the flyer Hank is running the campus, not Edwin, so this could be why there is such a change in the style. Like I said before he isn't a great speaker. Sermon was focused on text, not really "this is relevant for your day to day" seeker message. It was also less participatory.

Observation #2 for **Thesis**

Mosaic at the Mayan Theater

Los Angeles, CA

February 27th 2011

Observation time: 6:53 pm to 8:01 pm

For this observation I moved to the balcony. This vantage point reveled more of the theater that I have not seen. The balcony went as far as the rear orchestra. In the middle of the front balcony was the control booth. There were as many as six <u>men</u> in the booth. Two of them had headsets like the stagehand from last week had on. One man looked like the Mayan's sound guy, however, it is unclear if that is true. Most of the techs looked like they are around my age may be a little older. One was wearing a Tennessee (University/College?) orange shirt. One man was older, late 40s to 50s. He seemed to be the one in charge or the new crewmember. Behind them was a railed off seating section potentially where the VIPs would sit during secular shows. There were no formal "seats" upstairs. It was just a staircase with carpeting with smaller stairs on them. The plank of the stairs/chairs was wide enough to sit with legs crossed. In the rear balcony the seating situation was the same. Two railed booths on the sides of the walls, similar to the seating area in the middle. A few people sat in these. There was a fog machine and fan set up on both sides to disperse the fog evenly during the song portion, however, they stopped after a short while during the performance. On the light bar was a giant screen people to watch the service and follow the lyrics. Sitting in this area I felt more exposed to people watching my research activities. I think this was the same feeling when I first went to Mosaic. The rear orchestra allows for more privacy. The front rows of the balcony allow for a good view of the front lowered

orchestra. Unlike last week there was no "Sacred Space" upstairs. Moving upstairs, there were many more Asians, which puzzled me. On the ceiling was a large Mayan sculpture and was lit by purple lights. Several places the paint was peeling away or just looked in disrepair. The crowd was about my age to 30's. The FO was mainly white. Not many Hispanics or blacks.

Before the service: The people were friendly, however, busy with their established friends. No one seemed to understand "Excuse me" which was odd. There were Girl Scout cookies and a cold beverage set out, along with the coffee bar. While in the lobby, two men "beeped" on my "gaydar." It is an inexact science and I cannot specifically say what set them off. One of them turned out to be the drummer for the band. While showing opening some people seats, an usher also beeped, although I cannot remember if that was the first guy that set my "gaydar" off.

While waiting for the service to start, the DJ played the same kind of music that had a hip-hop-ish/Electric beat to it. One of the tracts did have vocals but they did not seem to having anything to do with Christianity. Unlike the last time, ads were not playing, just the logo of the current sermon series.

The band was the same group, along with the "gay" drummer. This time the leader was playing with an electric guitar rather than an acoustic, although he switched for the last song. He wore a blue v-neck shirt with skinny jeans and sneakers. His hair is really think and in some places clumps, although not in dreads. They played three songs. The first was about God and His support. The second song was about searching and God filling his believers. This was a repeat from last week. The third emphasized brokenness. Again this was a repeat from last week. Like mentioned above, this played on the acoustic guitar. The audience gave applause to each of the songs, although the last one was bigger. However, this is when the front orchestra was full,

which it was not full during the first song. 8-9 people used their hands in devotion to God, either hands in the air or as one girl did it to the floor, but it was outstretched.

The transition between the music to the sermon was not smooth and something happened technically that I could not figure out. This delayed the sermon a tiny bit.

When Edwin came on stage I was confused I didn't know if he was Erwin or someone else, because he was not Hank from the pervious week. He was wearing a worn black wool cardigan, a black v-neck shirt, worn black skinny jeans, and foppish black work shoes. He looked significantly older since last year and worn out. A quick prayer and followed with a little passage. He did not say anything about needing to bring a Bible, unlike last week with Hank. I did see Hank wondering around upstairs during the music portion. Edwin spoke at length about Jesus being the gate/door into safety that will comfort, but will not take away sickness and death. He mentioned that "saved" has a connotation that he does not like, but did not expound. He used a personal example of going inside a bathroom easily, but having to break down the door to get out. He mentioned this was like addiction, although again did not expand on. He also used the example of missing the closing of an airplane door. There was no deconstruction of the text. Due to his headset cutting in and out, a microphone was brought on by a stage hand. He also something to the effect, religion does not save, but once again did not explain. The pastor goes to the Old Testament and does some expounding on the topic there. He wrapped up with a prayer.

When mentioning the collection, he asked for the guests to fill out the commitment card to stay connected to the church and to check the box, committing their life to Christ and then joining them at the After-Party.

Impressions – written on the way back to Claremont

So. The service was roughly the same, a tad shorter. Edwin was the pastor. Perhaps they switch

every other weekend. Still seeing seeker all over the service. Sitting upstairs made me feel mire

exposed as a researcher. People upstairs did not have Bibles. The group upstairs was

predominantly Asian. Why upstairs? Due to height? Late attendance? Baby Boomers missing

from what I could see. There were hands in devotion to God standard and pointing down. This

time could hear singing. The same songs were used except for the first. Even with Edwin there,

no sense of deconstruction. It felt normal. Now, it could have been me not being used to the idea

of church in a nightclub the first time. It felt like church at a random venue. Interesting my

gaydar when off three times. If we remember to be a volunteer → you need to follow Christ and

church teachings → you cannot be gay. The first one I don't think was a volunteer but the other

was the drummer. The guy in FO with the red and blue plaid caught my eye in terms of fashion.

There seems to be little statement in the clothing. That is the difference between hipsters and this

group of people. People looking good for the sake of looking good. And since Urban Outfitters is

trendy, they will shop there. This is a gross generalization, but something I noticed. Otherwise

the message is "I'm hip." This church is fairly biracial and not multi-racial. They must have a

new tech team as the headset kept going in and out and last time with the projections. Same

band. Is Mosaic growing too old? Edwin looked exhausted. A lot of people are doing similar

services. Could this be why it is more seeker now? Possibly got criticized about Emergent?

Something changed and it is not Hank. The change is more structural/institutional. I almost felt

things were better last week. May be it was the rush of finding something new. It still was not

parciptory. Will there be a leadership change? Edwin has led for 20+ years. There was "Sacred

Space" this time. I know something is missing. I almost want to say the <u>joy</u> is missing. Edwin

was funny, <u>but</u> not to the larger degree of a year ago.

Speculations

1. Once was emergent, now moving to seeker

2. Seeker with emergent traits, so got labeled as Emergent

3. Language was Emergent in 90's, but is now Seeker in '10

4. Was always seeker.

Appendix B:

Tags, Tag Clouds, and Definitions

Observation #1 Codes

SCREENBIBLE, SPIRITLEARN, PRAYERROOM, TIGHTCOMMUN, EUROAMERMAJ,

20S30S, BABYBOOMER, NOSINGING, EXHORTBAND, NOHANDS, DRESSCASUAL,

ASIANMIN, EXHORTPASTOR, AFRAMERMIN, MUSICBEFORE, TECHISSUES,

OPENANECOTE, SCREENADS, HANKPASTOR, NODECONST, RELVMUSIC,

TRANSPORTSTORY, BIBLEGOSJOHN, DRESSFORM, EQUAL, SEEKER, NONPARTICIP,

HIPSTERS, MISSIONS, PROFESSIONAL, MINISTRY, CLUBATMOS, WEBSITE,

GUESTCARD, WOMENCOMM, BAPTISM, PROPS, SEEKERLABEL, SIMPLELYRICS

Observation #2 Codes

NONPARTICIP, ERWINPASTOR, ASIAN, NODECONST, TIGHTCOMMU, SEEKER,

MINSTRY, EUROAMERMAJ, GAYDAR, MUSICBEFORE, DRESSCAUSAL, SCREENBIBLE,

HANDS, BIBLEGOSJOHN, TECHISSUES, OT, SING, BIRACIAL, HISPANMIN,

NOPRAYERROOM, SPIRITLEARN, EQUAL, NOADS, MEN, 20S30S, HIPSTERS,

RELVMUSIC, PROFESSIONAL, EXHORTBAND, CLUBATMOS, FLYER,

TRANSPORTSTORY, SEEKERLABEL, SIMPLELYRICS

2010 Observation Codes

16S30S, BABYBOOMER, TRANSPORTSTORY, WOMEN, PARTICIPATE,

NOPRAYERROOM, EMERGENT, SCREENBIB, SCREENADS, ARTS, SINGING,

TIGHTCOMMU, MUSICBEFORE, DRESSCAUSAL, NOHANDS, HIPSTER, SPIRITLEARN,

RELVMUSIC, PROFESSIONAL, SEEKER, CLUBATMOS, ERWINPASTOR, MINISTRY,

WEBSITE, GUESTCARD, WOMENCOMM, EUROAMERMAJ, SIMPLELYRICS

Coding of "An Urban Mosaic in Shangri-La" by LaDawn Prieto in *Gen X Religion*

PARTICIPATE, RELVMUSIC, ARTS, DRESSCAUSA, HIPSTER, NOPRAYERROOM,

PROPS, EMERGENT, ARTSMINI, 20S30S, ASIAN, EUROAMERICAN, HISPANIC,

ERWINPASTOR, NPLABEL, CLUBATMOS

Code Definitions

16S30S	Age of crowd older teens to 30s
20S30S	Age of crowd 20s to 30s
ARTS	Use of the arts in another way then just worship music
ARTSMINIST	Arts ministry mentioned
BABYBOOMER	Presence of Baby Boomers
BAPTISM	Baptism mentioned
BIBLEGOSJOHN	Used a passage in the Gospel of John
BIRACIAL	Primiarly biracial in nature
CLUBATMOS	Club-like atmosphere
CONTACT	Contact information given
DJPLAYBEFORE	DJ playing music before the service
DRESSCASUAL	Dressed casusally
DRESSFORM	Dressed in buttondown and slacks or nice dress
EMERGENT	Elements of emergent service observed
EMERGLABEL	Labeled as Emergent
ERWINPASTOR	Erwin McMantis as Pastor
EXHORTBAND	Band leader trying to get the audience to do something
EXHORTPASTOR	Pastor trying to get the audience to do something
FLYER	Flyer passed out

GAYDAR	Author's "gayadar" observed potential LGBT-ers
GUESTCARD	Guest card passed out
HANDS	Hands lifted in devotion observed
HANKPASTOR	Hank Fortener as pastor
HIPSTERS	Attendees filled hipster sterotype
MINISTRY	Ministries mentioned
MISSIONS	Missions mentioned
MUSICMINIS	Music ministry mentioned
NEWPARADI	New Paradigm church service
NOADS	No ads during the service
NODECONST	No deconstuction of Christanity
NOHANDS	No hands in devotion seen
NONPARTICIP	No participation other than singing
NOPRAYERROOM	No place to pray with others
NOSINGING	No singing or cannot hear singing
NPLABEL	Labeled as New Paradigm
OPENANEDOTE	Pastor opening with a personal anecdote
OT	Old Testament referenced to
PARTICIPATE	Paricipation beyond singing and listening to sermon
PRAYERROOM	A designiated place to pray with others
PROFESSIONAL	Some aspect of professional quality
PROPS	Props were used to demonstrate sermon
RELVMUSIC	Worship music in a relvent style of music for the congregation
SCREENADS	Screens projecting ads for church before the service
SCREENBIBLE	Screen projecting Bible passage
SEEKER	Elements of Seeker service observed
SEEKERLABEL	Labeled as Seeker
SING	People heard singing
SPIRITLEARN	Learning about faith

TECHISSUES	Techincal problems
TIGHTCOMMUNITY	Multiple Friend groups
TRANSPORTSTORY	Story about transporation that is relevent to sermon
VOLUNTEER	Volunteer's used and or mentioned
WEBSITE	Refered to website
WOMENCOMM	Women's community mentioned.
AFRAMERICAN	African American attendees observed
AFRAMERMAJ	African Americans are the majority
AFRAMERMIN	Only a few African American attendees observed
ASIAN	Asian attendees observed
ASIANMAJOR	Asians is the majority
ASIANMIN	Only a few Asian attendees observed
EUROAMERICAN	Euro American attendees observed
EUROAMERMAJ	Euro Amercians are the majority
EUROAMERMIN	Only a few Euro Americans attendees observed
HISPANIC	Hispanic attendees observed
HISPANMAJOR	Hispanics are the majority
HISPANMIN	Only a few Hispanic attendees observed
EQUAL	Ratio of men to women about equal
MEN	Men more prevalent
WOMEN	Women more prevalent

Tag Cloud B.1a: *Gen X Religion* reading and 2010

Observation

Tag Cloud B.1b: Corrected form of

B.1a
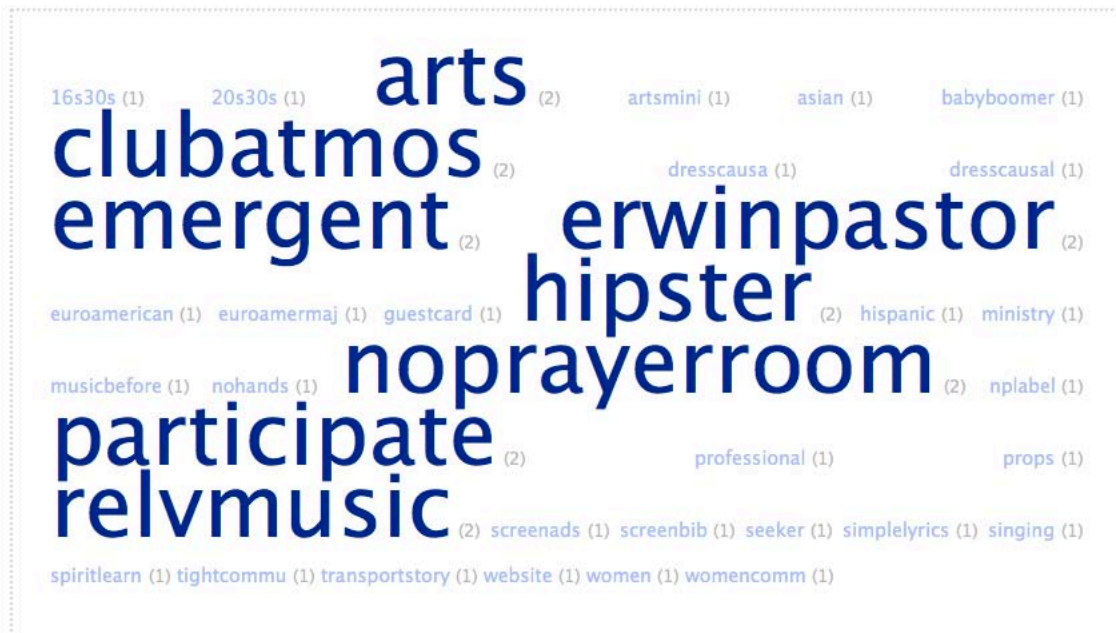
Tag Cloud B.2: Pervious set of tags and Observation 1 in

2011

16s30s (1) 20s30s (2) aframermin (1) arts (2) artsmini (1) asian (1) asianmin (1)
babyboomer (2) baptism (1) biblegosjohn (1)
clubatmos (3) dresscausa (1) dresscausal (1)
emergent (2) equal (1) erwinpastor (2) euroamerican (1)
euroamermaj (2) exhortband (1) exhortpastor (1)
guestcard (2) hipster (3) hispanic (1)
ministry (2) missions (1) musicbefore (2) nodeconst (1)
nohands (2) noprayerroom (2) nosinging (1)
openanecote (1) participate (2) prayerroom (1)
professional (2) props (2)
relvmusic (3) screenads (2) screenbib (1)
screenbible (1) seeker (2) seekerlabel (1) simplelyrics (2) singing (1)
spiritlearn (2) techissues (1) tightcommu (1)
transportstory (2) website (2) women (1)
womencomm (2)

Tag B.3: All observations and reading. Only pictured are tags with a frequency of

two

20s30s (3) arts (2) asian (2) babyboomer (2) biblegosjohn (2)
clubatmos (4) dresscausal (2) emergent (2) equal (2)
erwinpastor (3) euroamermaj (3) exhortband (2) guestcard (2)
hipster (4) ministry (2) musicbefore (3) nodeconst (2)
nohands (2) nonparticip (2) noprayerroom (3) participate (2)
professional (3) props (2) relvmusic (4) screenads (2)
screenbible (2) seeker (3) seekerlabel (2) simplelyrics (3) sing (2)
spiritlearn (3) techissues (2) tightcommu (2) transportstory (3)
website (2) womencomm (2)