
WHEN GOD IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

PROMISES OF INDIVIDUALITY WITHIN A NEW RELIGIOUS
MOVEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

JESSE P.J. STAEL

MASTER'S THESIS

27-06-2013

When God is Your Best Friend: Promises of Individuality within a New Religious Movement in
Christianity in the Netherlands

Jesse P.J. Stael
s0711756

MA Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology
Leiden University
Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. J.H.J. Florusbosch
27-06-2013

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am a Christian, but I didn't grow up in church. In fact, I've only been a Christian for a few years now, and I don't even like calling myself that. I like calling myself a believer in Jesus. For a while I wondered why that is? Why is it that I like calling myself a follower of Jesus Christ, but not a Christian?

I have come to realize it has to do with the fact that my way of exercising faith, meant getting involved in a personal relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I didn't know it also meant inheriting the legacy of Christianity. This was something I had not prepared for.

As I started meeting more and more people who were believers like me, I came to realize that there was a whole new and undiscovered world opening up for me. A world inhabited by churches, ministries, organizations and movements, all part of the same realm, yet all moving independently too. In my search, I concentrated on finding places where I felt I could be myself and grow as an individual, and where I could develop my relationship with God through being surrounded by like-minded people.

In this journey, I went to many different places and met many different people, some who had grown up in church, others who just like me, had just begun finding their way around. But to me, the people I always found most interesting to talk to, were those who were willing and striving to develop their relationship with Jesus and in this connection work on their persona, their character and what ultimately makes them unique; their individuality.

I conducted my fieldwork at the Kingdom centre, in Amsterdam. There, I met a lot of great people who were all very helpful in providing me with the data I needed. Some even went as far as telling me their life stories, however personal, emotional and heart wrenching they were. These stories shaped my academic and personal mind and I am therefore grateful for having been told them. Up until this day, these stories are in the back of my mind as I complete this thesis. I have and will continue to cherish them.

I also want to thank those who granted me the opportunity to participate in the activities that took place at the Kingdom centre. This greatly benefited my research and really helped me confirm the data I collected from the interviews. Through the trust people put in me as a researcher, I was able to do my job well. In the end, I think that their transparency and generosity in the way they provided me with information, really benefited the completeness of the data collected.

This doesn't mean that in some passages, I have not had to be brutally honest about certain aspects of the Apostolic and Prophetic movement. Certain aspects that I felt were important to my research and essential in answering the guiding question of my thesis. My intention, with this research is and always has been to portray the movement neither in a positive nor a negative way, but in a way that reflects reality, the way I perceive it.

My research focuses on certain aspects that intrigued me about the Apostolic and Prophetic movement. Certain aspects that I collected most data from through my group of respondents. This research therefore, doesn't necessarily present the Apostolic and Prophetic movement on a whole. But it does present certain aspects that are a reality to some.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgements	III
Table of Contents	V
Introduction	6
Chapter 1. Relevant Theories	8
1.1 Anthropology of Christianity	8
1.2 New Religious Movements	9
1.3 Notions of Belonging	10
1.4 Individualism & Individuality	12
1.5 Prayer	14
1.6 Conclusion	16
Chapter 2. Methodology	18
2.1 Ethics	22
Chapter 3. In Search for the Love of the Father	25
Chapter 4. Becoming all you are Meant to Be	34
Chapter 5. Falling Out	42
Conclusion	50
References	54

INTRODUCTION

For Christians who are striving to develop a personal and deep relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and through this want to work on their persona, their character and individuality, there are various places they can go. One of those places, and a prime example of a group of people fully committed to their religious convictions and helping others in deepening their relationship with the Holy Trinity, is the Kingdom centre in Amsterdam.

The Kingdom centre houses two churches and various initiatives. All of these initiatives are part of the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, which is a new religious movement in Christianity. With advertisements such as *Become all you were meant to be* and *Walking in your destiny* and the portrayal of God as a deity who loves you for who you are and not for what you do. The Kingdom centre promotes its promise of individuality. This promise, that everyone can be themselves, the way that God intended them to be, while working towards making Jesus dominate the world, is what draws in hordes of people. People who wish nothing more but to be acknowledged for their worth.

My research was conducted in the Kingdom centre and focuses on specific cases when the member's expectations towards the promises of individuality turn into disappointments. Hence, the guiding question of this thesis:

How do (potential) members of the Kingdom centre deal with their expectations and disappointments regarding the promises made of individuality by the Apostolic and Prophetic movement?

Although it has always been a part of the anthropology of Religion, the anthropology of Christianity has been reemerging as of late and it shows its definite relevance in the study of new religious movements (Jenkins 2012). Nowadays, although the anthropology of Christianity focuses on many different subjects, according to Jenkins (2012) some of the most prevalent subjects currently tackled by it are religious movements, modernization and individualism.

Not only in the anthropology of Religion, but in society as whole, the search for individuality, spirituality (and the combination of the two) and the subsequent search for a God that is not distant but near, are established subjects.

As mentioned, my research too focuses on a new religious movement and the exercise of individualism. This is why my research is both relevant for the field of the anthropology of Christianity and moreover the anthropology of Religion. It is also relevant for society on a whole,

since individualism, modernity, and the growing number of people searching for a spiritual encounter, is prominent and therefore worth looking into.

A work that greatly inspired me was *When God talks back*, by T.M. Luhrmann. It describes her years doing fieldwork at her local branch of the vineyard church, a church part of the American Evangelical movement. She focuses on understanding the way in which members of the evangelical Vineyard church, see God as a someone who is involved and longs to be involved in every aspect of their lives. Luhrmann's focus is on prayer, and the way in which prayer is understood in the Vineyard church. Additionally, it focuses on, where the image of a God as a personal God originates from and where it is going. In *When God talks back*, she perfectly describes how people in the church function in the movement, how they integrate, how unity is created and how God is accepted. Yet one of the things I believe is missing (and this is something I feel lacks in the Anthropology of Christianity more often) are the opposites of the stories of successful integration, unity, and a shared image of God. Namely, the story when integration, unity and sameness fails.

For what happens to all those who enter the church, yet somehow fall out again? What happens to those who want to be the member of a movement, but for some reason can't seem to stabilize their relationship with the movement? What happens to those who experience God so personally, He doesn't correspond with the image of Him portrayed in the movement? Maybe these *failures* tell a very interesting story. A story awaiting to be told. A story still untold.

CHAPTER 1. RELEVANT THEORIES

The guiding question in this thesis is how (potential) members of the Kingdom centre deal with their expectations and disappointments regarding the promises made of individuality. I believe that the following four concepts are key in answering this question: new religious movements (NRM's), notions of belonging, individualism (and individuality) and prayer. In the next section I will explain the theoretical relevance of these concepts and clarify how these concepts relate to each other. Even though some of the concepts touch on the same area and overlap, I will give a clear overview starting with new religious movements as the central concept, followed by the concepts of notions of belonging and individualism (and individuality), before arriving at my final concept, prayer. But first I will give a quick overview of the field of the anthropology of Christianity.

1.1 ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is a subject that for a long time has been neglected by anthropologists. Maybe calling too close to home for some, it didn't seem to interest anthropologist as much as others religions did (Jenkins 2012). However, there's been a definite resurgence, with many researches being conducted on contemporary new religious movements (NRM's) (Pentecostal, Evangelical and Fundamental) and mission studies. Works that give a good overview of the different voices present in the anthropology of Christianity and its focus, can be found in collective works edited by Vilaca and Wright (2009) and Cannell (2006). In particular the latter, combined with the works of leading scholar Joel Robbins (2004), extensive research has been conducted over long periods of time to give new insights in the way in which Christianity applies to society today. His work, and especially his focus on prayer will return in my thesis as well (Robbins 2001) (under the header "Prayer" in this chapter).

In the past, the anthropology of Christianity has offered insight on colonial practices and missionary practices and on how the indigenous adapted to modern society (Jenkins 2012). Currently though, with present day events not being colonialism anymore, the anthropology of Christianity deals with wider topics, of which a few interesting subjects to this thesis are modernization, individualism and (new religious) movements (Jenkins 2012). A good example of this is Luhrmann's study on the Vineyard church (2012).

The concept NRM's (short for new religious movements) is of major importance in this thesis. This is due to the fact that through appreciating what the term new religious movement entails, we can begin to understand the other concepts that follow.

New religious movements are what is a sub-group of social movements. A social movement itself is a type of group actions. The size of a movement can change (it can have but a few members or have a worldwide following), but we ordinarily speak of large organizations or groups of people that have joined arms in resisting social and political issues. Their goal is social change (Nash 2005). Escobar (1992) argues that social movements emerge out of the crisis of modernity. They strive and search to establish a new order within society. Through this process, they produce views on politics and society that differ from the existing understanding.

A new religious movement on the other hand, refers to a spiritual, philosophical and/or ethical group of modern origin that is grounded on distinguishing themselves from other groups of people that share the same religion, such as Christianity for example (Saliba 2003). They do so by discerning themselves from these established denominations and creating their own views on subjects they find of vital importance. In this process, they create ideologies and views that can diver greatly from the traditional and customary views present in the religion they are part of, at times resulting in the NRM creating its own unique religion (Harskamp 2000, Introvigne 2001).

The term new religious movement itself has been brought into existence by scholars of sociology, anthropology and religion in order to create a term more neutral than the term "cult" (Saliba 2003). The term new religious movement, seems more unbiased and neutral, which is preferred by most in this day and age (Melton 2004:2002).

Also, the continuous growth and persistence of religion hasn't gone unnoticed, with Sherkat (1999) arguing that within the social sciences a renewed interest in religion has emerged. According to Sherkat (1999:369) this is due to the fact that where religion was thought to disappear and fade in the West as numbers rapidly declined in the 20th century, it has refused to wane and continuous to exercise great influence on all facets of society and life. Facets like social space and capital, politics, education, family and business relations. He too notes, that currently new religious movements take up an important part of the religious landscape. They continue to grow, both in size, amount and relevance. Sherkat argues that NRM's have been able to grow because they are good at presenting familiar ideas from familiar religious denominations to a group of people that are frustrated with the traditional denominations. NRM's present these familiar ideas in a new and fresh way.

In the case of my thesis, this overarching religion is Christianity. In Christianity, groups that separate themselves from their denominational heritage and form new religious groups, hold

onto most of the customs and traditions present in their parent body (churches). They disagree on relatively few points (Melton 2004:22), while presenting them in new, different and previously non-existing ways.

The Apostolic and Prophetic Movement has grown out of the Charismatic, Pentecostal and Evangelical tradition. The movement shares the belief that many traditional churches dismiss the five-fold ministries (Apostolic, Prophetic, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers) and therefore can never experience spiritual growth (for more on the concept of five-fold ministries, see Peters 2005). The international "Apostolic and Prophetic" movement has been named the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) by C. Peter Wagner, a leading missiologist (Ross 2005). The Apostolic and Prophetic movement is a movement, that although it is part of the religion of Christianity, it tries its hardest to separate itself from other larger denominations, while creating their own unique characteristics (as mentioned by Saliba 2003). In this quest, they search to change the landscape of Christianity forever, and strive for religious and social change, as mentioned by Nash (2004) as one of the key defining characteristics of a new religious movement. My own research is on the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, as the way it is practiced in the Kingdom centre.

On the other hand, there is one thing I'd like to add before we conclude this section. Namely the fact that the term new religious movement has also come under fire as of late. Gallagher (2004: 13) explains that the usage of the term has proved to pose some problems as well, with scholars utilizing the term, only to change it back to "emergent religion" and "first-hand religion", in order not to be mistaken for cult-apologists. I agree with Gallagher and I believe that to a certain extent, he makes a valid point. However, since alternatives are scarce and since I'd like to steer clear of the terms sect and cult (for they bring with them considerable baggage) I've decided to use the term new religious movement. Another reason for the usage of this term, is the fact that the new religious movement I have conducted my research on, refer to themselves as a movement.

1.3 NOTIONS OF BELONGING

For the initiatives active in the Kingdom centre to be part of the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, is part of their identity. Their Christian heritage is part of this too. All these characteristics are what makes their identity, or their notions of belonging (Geschiere & Jackson 2006).

The term notions of belonging refers to the concept of identity. But, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000:34) argue, the concept of identity is not effective in its task to function as a good analytical tool. They argue that the concept of "identity" has contradicting meanings and is filled with

vagueness and is therefore not up to the job to present the combination of a group's characteristics. To me personally, and this has also been the deciding factor in choosing for notions of belonging instead of identity in my thesis, is the fact that the term refers to identity as being layered and existing out of various characteristics. The term identity itself, has the predisposition to sound linear and singular (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:34), as if identity is something fixed and doesn't change with the movement's ever evolving development. Perhaps, this has to do with the fact that the word "identity" itself, is a noun that is singular, instead of plural unlike the term *notions* of belonging. Because of this, identity has the tendency to sound linear, whereas notions of belonging include the fact that what makes a person's identity, are the combination of characteristics.

Notions of belonging refers to numerous characteristics such as selfhood, ethnicity, ancestry, biological characteristics, but also individuality and uniqueness which are two terms interesting for my research and for this thesis. The concept of notions of belonging focuses on understanding the individuals' cultural and social environs (Giddens 1991). It refers to what makes one person different from another, while also looking at what characteristics binds people together, creating sameness (Erikson 1980). Sameness is another one of those terms, like individuality and uniqueness, that is interesting for my research for it looks at the commonalities associated with groups (Jacobson-Widding 1983). I will therefore refer in particular to these three terms when mentioning notions of belonging in this thesis.

As I mentioned earlier under the header of new religious movements, Escobar states that social movements materialize out of the crisis of modernity. They look and work towards creating a new social order in the society they are part of (1992). This is also the way I approached the concept of notions of belonging during my research and the writing of this thesis. I feel that it is of vital importance to on the one hand uncover what role notions of belonging of an individual plays to the individual and to the group (I will elaborate on this under the header "Individualism and individuality") while on the other discovering what joins people and what makes their unity unique.

Moreover, the idea of the crisis of modernity, and other concepts and terms that refer to this day and age in which we live are incorporated into the term of notions of belonging, for the social context or milieu is something that affects the individual and vice versa (Giddens 1991).

To illustrate, Geschiere & Jackson (2006) argue that in the age of globalization (another term coined to define present time), people are increasingly searching for where they belong and who they are as individuals and as a group. This search is related to the surfacing of new religious movements. Luhrmann (2012: 312) for example, says that this day and age (which she refers to

as the late modern world) has been of vital importance in the revitalization of American Evangelical religious movements that stress on the closeness of God and his desire to have a deep and personal relationship with his people (see chapter 3: in search for the love of the Father, for a more elaborate explanation as to what this 'Late modern age' entails according to Luhrmann). Robbins (2004: 117-119) states that religious movements such as the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (shortened to P/C) can be seen as one of the great success stories of the current age of cultural globalization. He says that in Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, the role of the Holy Spirit is clearly defined and of vital importance as to why this movement and these type of movements are such a success story of globalization.

He states that through the focus on the works of the Holy Spirit, people all over the world are granted the opportunity to begin their own ministries regardless of their denominational embeddedness (Robbins 2004:130). This is due to the fact that they believe that the Holy Spirit has come down to earth and can give to everyone who accepts him divine knowledge. This role of the Holy Spirit and the absence of Him in the traditional churches, is what leads the Apostolic and Prophetic movement to the idea that the five-fold ministry (the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) has not been effectively applied, which is the main cause for the stagnation of the church's growth. They believe that only when a person can effectively discern through the gifts of the spirit, that the five-fold ministry can be effective (as mentioned by Peters 2005 too), and the church can grow.

This, according to them, is especially true in the case of the prophetic ministry (as mentioned by Peters 2005 too). They believe that the prophetic ministry is something that needs supernatural involvement, since the prophet needs the word of God on a person or situation to prophecy. Since I have conducted my fieldwork amongst a group of people that see themselves as part of the Apostolic and *Prophetic* movement, you will continuously see the works of the Holy Spirit and the receiving of direct words from God, play an important role in the anecdotes I have provided. In chapter 5 especially, some time will be spend on uncovering the effects, both positive and negative, that public prophesying can have on the individual. This will show the way in which the supernatural and the spiritual has been incorporated into today's new religious movements in Christianity, and to what effect. Therefore, as you can see, the crisis of modernity (Escobar 1992) and its subsequent characteristics is something that affects the person and his or her notions of belonging.

1.4 INDIVIDUALISM AND INDIVIDUALITY

As stated before, notions of belonging refers to many different characteristics, among others individuality and uniqueness, which are particularly interesting for my thesis. In my research,

the role of individualism and individuality play an important role too. The two terms aren't interchangeable and I will therefore now explain where they differentiate.

To begin, individualism refers to the historicocultural conceptualization of what the self entails and comprises notions such as the moral autonomy of a person, his or her rationality, self-knowledge and spirituality whilst being part of society or a group (and in my case a movement)(Barnard & Spencer 2007). Therefore, one of the characteristics of individualism refers to the careful balancing of one's privacy whilst having responsibilities to a group (Lukes 1990). As a result, an important aspect of individualism is the contract that the individual has with society or the group of people he is part of. This voluntary contract refers to the responsibilities the individual feels towards this group of people, and the limitations imposed on the development of his character by the group, when his development needs to suit their demand (Lukes 1990).

In my research and in this thesis, when talking about individualism, I refer to the term as the demands that the movement has towards the individual. Namely, what the movement believes an individual should be, what their image of being an individual entails and what not. This is in contrast with what the image is that the individual himself has of what he as an individual should be.

On the other hand, there's individuality. Although it is a concept with many controversies and an intricate debate, one of the important aspects of *individuality* and the way it is used in this thesis, is the agency that an individual has regarding himself (Rapport & Overing 2000: 190-192). To that extent, individuality goes beyond the cultural norm of what individualism comprehends and what the group of people the individual is a member of, believes being an individual entails. Individuality here, underlines the individuals uniqueness, even if and when they are part of a group, a movement or society as a whole (Rapport & Overing 2000, Barnard & Spencer 2007). In the case of individuality, they still preserve autonomy and agency. This is the way in which I will use individuality in this thesis. Namely, as a counterpart of individualism. Individuality will be used as having the characteristic that the individual has agency over himself and the development of his character, regardless of what the image of the group is.

Regarding my research, promises of individuality are raised by the Apostolic and Prophetic movement among their members. These promises include being able to be yourself, developing your own unique skills and talents, your dreams and your personal relationship with God, even if it means that people might have a different opinion on things.

These promises raise expectations of individuality among members. However, this doesn't mean that what the individual perceives as individuality, is the same idea that the group has. Therefore in my research and my thesis, the promises of individuality by the movement are in fact the notions of individualism constructed by the group. When you combine this with the notion of a deeply-personal God who amongst all else desires a unique personal relationship with you (Luhmann 2012: 35), makes for an interesting case. On the one hand being one's own person is encouraged, while on the other hand, the movement can restrict and limit the individuals journey of individuality. For example when the image of God and agency by the individual begins to shift towards unwanted directions. This thesis, focuses on this tension; the tension between what the group believes an individual is and should be (here closely linked to individualism) and individuals own notion of what he is and should be as an individual (closely linked to the concept of individuality).

However, what is important to realize is that there have been many other scholars who have searched to understand the concept of individualism and individuality, with some writing the latter concept off as being a mere construct of the West (Carrithers 1985). The lack of individuality supposedly found by scholars in societies and cultures different than the West suggests this. Furthermore, notable scholars such as Cohen (1989) and more recent Rapport (1993) suggest that we are all people who are autonomous and with agency, while also very effective at role playing and fitting in when needs be. This issue, although highly interesting, is something that will not be tackled in this thesis.

1.5 PRAYER

Prayer is part of one's notions of belonging as a Christian and the notions of belonging of a new religious movement. Because prayer is such an important aspect directly connected to the experience of religion, prayer is able to both say something about the individual and about the group. Therefore, shining a light on what defines prayer and how it is perceived and put into practice, can give us a clear understanding of the tension between the group and the individual and individualism and individuality.

Many scholars argue that prayer is of prime importance to the experience of faith (Di Nola 1961, Weber 2002:23-24). There are those who have called prayer at the heart of religion (Scarlett 2006), without which communication with God cannot exist. Fascinating works by John R. Bowen (2008), Marrancini (2008), and Durkheim (Idinopolus & Wilson 2002) all look at prayer, not only in the Christian tradition, but in other religions too. To illustrate, John R. Bowen (1993), has done exciting research on the way in which prayer plays a big part in the idea of healing in Islamic societies. But for my own research I want to focus solely on prayer in

Christianity. I have decided to solely focus on prayer in Christianity and not compare it to prayer in other religions, because I am concentrating on a very specific new religious movement (Apostolic and Prophetic movement) in Christianity for this thesis.

Joel Robbins, a leading scholar in the field of the anthropology of religion, argues that one of the most striking features of Christian groups is the way in which prayer plays a central role in their everyday life (2001: 903). Robbins notes that there is a large variety of contexts and ways in which people pray. They pray alone and in groups, they pray for their food, for the relief of sin, health and prosperity, etc. Because prayer is a constant in many people's lives, prayer is innovative and flexible as a practice and a routine, adapting to the situations (2001: 903-904). Moreover, I see Robbins as arguing that this emphasis on prayer originates out of the protestant emphasis on speech instead of ritual.

Some have even gone as far as suggesting that the act of prayer outlives the church experience. They argue that prayer and the act thereof, is inherited not only by church goers, but also by households of which it's members don't attend church anymore. These scholars suggest that even when people have ceased going to church, prayer can still continue to play an important role in their everyday lives (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi 1975).

Luhrmann's book on prayer *When God Talks Back* has been important to my research in understanding the way in which prayer is perceived and practiced by church members. After reading her extensive research, I came to realize the importance of prayer as the primal way for Christians to communicate, not only to God, but also to others, for prayer can be classified as a *genre* in anthropology.

Prayer is one of the cornerstones of religion, and one intertwined in all aspects thereof. Luhrmann says that evangelicals use ancient prayer practices in order for them to experience God (2013:301). She argues that prayer is a method, a technique and a practice (2012:164).

"...DELIBERATE, REPEATED USE OF INNER VISUAL REPRESENTATION AND OTHER INNER SENSORY EXPERIENCE, WITH INTERACTION, INTERWEAVING, AND SENSORY ENHANCEMENT- HAS BEEN CENTRAL TO THE TRADITION OF CHRISTIAN PRAYER. IT IS CENTRAL TO EVANGELICAL PRAYER."

- Luhrmann (2012: 184).

But, she also argues that prayer is a observable fact that can be classified as a *genre* in anthropology. This meaning that as an outsider, you can view prayer as a group activity. A person who is a member of a movement or group and through that is a member of a *genre*

community, can through hearing and seeing and recognize through speech and behavior, that a person is praying and belonging to the same community (2012:157).

This aspect, namely seeing prayer as part of a genre, is interesting, especially when it is weighed against individualism. In chapter 4 titled *Becoming all you were meant to be*, the idea of prayer as genre vs. individualism will be looked into more thoroughly. Furthermore, what I will do is uncover the tensions among members from the Apostolic and Prophetic movement regarding prayer as a deeply personal experience vs. prayer as a genre.

As you will read in the following chapters, prayer is central to many of the examples I give. Many of the anecdotes and many of my observations can be linked back to prayer. In the following chapter titled *Methodology*, I will further explain how one of my initial questions during interviews was *what is prayer to you?* I did this because I fairly quickly realized what a central role prayer plays in the lives of my respondents. I began to see that through asking them about prayer, my respondents would begin to tell me about their intimate relationship with God.

1.6 CONCLUSION

As mentioned before, the guiding question in this thesis is how (potential) members of the Kingdom centre deal with their expectations and disappointments regarding the promises of individuality made by the Apostolic and Prophetic movement.

The Kingdom centre houses various initiatives, that see themselves as part of the Apostolic and Prophetic movement. This movement is a type of new religious movement (NRM), as referred to by Saliba (2003), Melton (2004) and Gallagher (2004). In my research (see the data chapters 3&4&5), you will see how notions of belonging relate to the notions of individuality with on the one hand uniqueness (Giddens 1991, Geschiere & Jackson 2006) and on the other hand sameness, as mentioned by Erikson (1980) and Jacobson-Willing (1983).

But the main focus of this thesis will be on how the tension between individualism (Lukes 1990) and individuality plays out. For my research revolves around a NRM that believes God is deeply-personal, and one who appraises you for being an individual (and therefore praises your *individuality*) (Luhrmann 2012). Moreover, the Kingdom centre advertises as wanting to attract people and create individuals (see chapters 3&4). However, because they are a group, they strive to keep the group together, and search for unity too, in this case, since they are a new religious movement, against the larger denominations present in Christianity (Harskamp 2000).

The tension between what the group promises of individuality, their subsequent image of what an individual is and should be (here closely linked to individualism) and individuals own notion

of what he is and should be as an individual (closely linked to the concept of individuality) plays a vital role in this thesis.

This tension between individualism and individuality, crystallizes through the concept of prayer. As mentioned before, prayer is the prime way for any believer to communicate and get involved into a relationship with God (Luhmann 2012) (Robbins 2001). Therefore, through understanding the way in which prayer is perceived and has been given shape by the initiatives active in the Kingdom centre and its members, we can understand the way in which individualism, individuality and notions of belonging is been given form. In my thesis, prayer and things related to is an example (but not the sole example) of one of the aspects of religion through which these tensions can be explored.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, you can be fully prepared to go into the field. That doesn't mean you don't have a hard time figuring out how to apply the techniques you so carefully selected. On paper, the methods I picked (in-depth qualitative interviews and participant observation), looked quite easy to put into practice. But, they presented me with challenges, both methodologically and ethically.

When I entered the field, I knew exactly what questions to ask, what subjects to talk about and what subjects to avoid. I knew who I wanted to talk to and why and why not to others. I had planned in-depth interviews with my respondents and I had written down some questions on paper which I believed were relevant and useful. They were simple questions like:

How long have you been Christian?

How did you first find out about the Kingdom centre?

Who is God to you?

What would you like people to know about Him?

what is prayer to you?

All these questions were set up to make my respondents feel at ease whilst sitting off in a corner somewhere and having a recording device shoved down their throats. Some were created for me, so I could make sure we touched on all the topics vital to my research, sort of like a checklist. But most of the questions were made to generate an answer that would lead to a conversation. I knew that it was important to converse and create a dialogue for unlike quantitative interviews, qualitative interviews need to go beyond the questions the researcher asks. I needed to make sure they felt safe in sharing their lives (Robben 2007: 161-162). Therefore, in-depth interviews are of vital importance (Hiller & Diluzio 2004:2-3). In fact, it needs to answer questions the researcher hasn't even thought of. In-depth interviews need to broaden the horizons of the research and cross into uncharted territories. Only then, when intimate experiences, emotions and secrets are shared, can the researcher be certain his in-depth interviews paid off. The moment you see these people as objects for experimentation or objects of justification (Deloria 2012: 200), data will turn out bad. For when that happens, it is about the person and not about the research. That's the moment when original, highly-interesting data is not collected.

Yet the questions I had prepared, didn't seem to be doing their jobs, for whenever I asked my respondents the questions I had scribbled down, the conversation stagnated. Every time I asked

one of the questions listed, my respondents were more focused on replying to the question correctly, than to conversing with me. Moreover, I began to realize that my population group was very good at answering questions correctly. They used a certain type of lexicon and rhetoric, part of their heritage as Christians and ultimately as evangelists. They said things like *“What God wants...”* and *“What the Father longs from us is to...”* and *“God longs from us to...”*; answers geared towards explaining what according to them God says. These type of answers were provided even to the more personal questions like *“who is God to you?”* or *“what is prayer to you?”*

But I was more interested in the follow up; namely what they and how they felt. Sometimes that didn't come and sometimes it did, when they answered my questions in the following way; *“What the Father longs from us is to worship him 24/7...so that is what I try to do.”* But even then it felt to me like they were more concerned with answering my question correctly and using God as leverage to convince me that in fact they were doing so. These type of answers were of some use to me, for they mostly provided me with an insight in their lives, background and subculture. But a large chunk of information was lost in translation.

This obstacle I had stumbled upon, has largely to do with their heritage. In the Christian tradition, people are trained in the art of rhetoric from an early age. They are trained to be evangelists at heart, so they know how to give clear and perfect explanatory answers that sound good and make sense and draws the receiver in. Therefore, the one best to explain, is the best evangelist. So everyone esteems to become a teacher of some sort, in order to explain and instruct someone about their religion. However, teaching often means that there is person with knowledge (the teacher) and one person who is without knowledge (student) and who wants to obtain it. This often leads to a hierarchal dynamic, where the teacher has power over the student. And this is what I began to recognize during my interviews: whenever I asked my respondents a question, they began teaching me.

I therefore quickly decided not to start off with the questions I had. Instead I decided to use them solely as guidelines as I began talking to my respondents about how they were doing, what their upcoming week looked like and ultimately, how they were going to spend it with God. Moreover, whenever I had interesting conversations with anyone about anything (this could be about prayer, church politics, their private lives and their personal relationships with others) I simply asked them if I could record it. I said that what they were telling was going to help me understand my research. Yes, from time to time I did get distrustful, hesitant looks from my respondents. Then again they mustn't have found it too peculiar, for in the end they almost all agreed. I think there are three reasons for this. Firstly, this technique caught them off guard and people just kind of rolled along with it. Secondly, I knew when to ask people if I could record our

conversation, and when not to ask it. However, the last reason is most important: because there was a group of people that I knew before the research had started, others had heard of me, and were more willing to be open with me. If I had not known some people going into the field, the first two reasons I gave for why people almost all agreed, could have been less effective (Berreman 2012). Because I was immersed in the social setting (Borchgevink 2003: 95-96) also before hand, this technique proved very effective.

Besides interviews, another technique vital to my research was participant observation. For me, there was a learning curve to that as well. At first, I thought that participant observation largely meant participating in activities. Only later, I began to realize this was only part of it. I quickly realized the importance of talking to my respondents before, during and after the activities about what they believed they were doing. I began to see that when I asked my respondents before-hand, they gave me a clear, explanatory and ultimately unexciting answers. During the given activity however, I began to see the real reasons for why an activity was done one way and not another. As I went through the experience with them, I began to see how my respondents behaved and dealt with situations and real people. After the activities, and when they were enjoying the result or busy cleaning up, some fell back into giving me the clean-cut answers they had provided me with in abundance earlier. But most were too exhausted to give the politically correct answer. Instead, they spoke their minds. And at those times, they were most interesting to listen to and I felt I could connect.

I did my research in the Kingdom centre, Amsterdam. The Kingdom centre is a factory-sized building (it used to be a coffee factory) and houses 2 churches (God's House being the largest of them), an Iranian church (on Sundays they rent space, I did not include them in my research), and a youth movement called HEART. It also provides space for Christian conferences (such as the Father Heart School, see chapter 3) and concerts and courses such as *Authority of Prayer* by st. Walking in your destiny. By choosing an actual physical location, I hoped to make a clear demarcation of my research field and create the possibility to draw an understandable conclusion (Gupta & Ferguson 2012).

God's House is an Apostolic and Prophetic church (although they call themselves a 'centre' too) led by Andre and Agnes Wieringa. HEART is a youth movement lead by Sjors van Vliet. Although two separate organizations, they do overlap as Sjors is part of the leaders team of God's House. God's House has existed for over seven years and has grown and is still growing exponentially. Currently there are about two to three hundred people that attend the church. During conferences and concerts, often organized by God's House, the Kingdom centre attracts even

more people. HEART on the other hand is much smaller, with currently about 30 teenagers and adolescents coming to the various gatherings and activities.

I conducted 16 in-depth interviews. Because I knew some people from the church before hand, I needed no key informant to get into touch with people, although Sjors from HEART did help me out with providing names of people I might be interested to talk to.

Besides the in-depth interviews I have many more recorded conversations that I had with people before and after services, during prayer meetings, house meetings, bible study groups, courses (the Authority of Prayer course (see chapter 3 & 5)) and conferences. Of the people I talked to during those times, some were the same I had interviewed (in-depth) before. Others I talked to this one off time. I was interested in talking to people who either had just visited the Kingdom centre once, and were contemplated coming more often, or who had been coming for a while and were trying to integrate in the group (and sometimes were members of God's House). Another group of people were those who had made a mindful decision not to be part of the Kingdom centre. I went to a lot of various activities, and these activities are a good way of categorizing notable respondents; respondents who have provided me with information that I feel represents others in their category, and who will return in the data chapters.

❖ HEART.

In total I corresponded with ten people directly. I have recorded in-depth conversations of many of them. During, before and after activities I have recorded and collected data too. Most notable respondents are: Sjors van Vliet, Ramona Makelaar and Sara (leaders of HEART). Notable members are Gary and Daniela.

Except for Sjors (he is in his early forties), people who I talked to from HEART were between the age of 18-33.

❖ Authority of Prayer.

In total I corresponded with many from the group (the group existed out of about a dozen people). Particularly during the course itself and when I talked to people about their experiences, I recorded our conversations. Most notable members are: Ronnie, Wim and Lars (coaches of the course and affiliated with st. Walking in your destiny). Notable, recurring participants are; Dawn, Bert and Maarten.

Here the age demographic was considerable higher, with me being by far the youngest. Ages 40-70.

❖ God's House.

In total I corresponded with about 20 people. This and the HEART respondents group was by far the largest group of people I interviewed. Notable respondents were: Henk, Maria and Sjors (part of the church leaders team, with Sjors being part of both). Other notable respondents are: many members of HEART, people who followed courses and those from bible study groups. Also, official members of God's House (such as Dawn, Gary, Laura among others) and others like Lara (artist), Nadine (then girlfriend of Gary) and Johanna (artist).

Ages 18 and up.

❖ Conferences and concerts.

During conferences and concerts but even services, I began to meet people who had good friendships with those from the Kingdom centre, but who were not official members of this or any other church. Notable respondents include: Anneke, Harold, Lea and Stefan.

Ages 40-55.

Almost all my respondents were Dutch, with some being partially English (hence Dawn and Gary). Lara is from Belarus. Also, some of my respondents were (part) Surinamese, such as Sara and Lieke.

2.1 ETHICS

It is not always easy to find a good balance between being honest about your research and trying to get the best results. Two weeks into my research, the course *Authority of Prayer* started. The coaches stressed that it was important to show up for each session (four in total) and contribute by pushing our boundaries and being personally involved. Now, although these two points are understandable and reasonable, I had this nagging feeling inside of me that I couldn't shake. I thought about it a great deal, even calling my girlfriend in the process (she was doing research too, but in Romania) and I told her that although I had enrolled in the course, I personally felt little for it. I've never been one to visit courses. I don't really like having to spend a full day with a group of people that I don't know and having to be personally involved when I don't want to.

In hindsight, I did enjoy the course, even on a personal level. But when I received that first email that specified the goals of the course, I wasn't too sure whether this would be my thing. I contemplated just grinding it out: I'd show up and shut up, pretend I was pushing boundaries, while in fact I was only there to get the information I needed and get out again. At first, this seemed like the best option. But as the dust settled, I began to realize that perhaps it wasn't. Not

only would the four Saturdays prove even longer and more exhausting, I would also not be honest with my respondents about my intentions.

I felt that if I wasn't personally involved, like they had asked me to, I was abusing their trust and I was using them as tools for my research. Then how could I justify the data I collected? I'd surely would not be presenting a complete and fair image of them. I'd hear and jot down what they were saying literally, but I wouldn't take the time to hear what they were actually trying to say. No, that wouldn't be fair, nor would I truly learn about them, like I had so craved for during my qualitative interviews.

Ultimately, my girlfriend told me there was only right decision I could make: I needed to state clear to those who were giving the course that I was participating as a researcher first and as a fellow Christian second. Therefore, it could occur that I wouldn't participate in every activity, if I didn't want to. I agreed with my girlfriend and in doing so, took a gamble, for I knew that if the course organizers didn't agree, we'd have a (big) problem. They were probably not going to change their minds and in turn I wasn't going to change mine. But I stuck to the belief that if something doesn't feel right, you shouldn't do it. And it worked. I told them my predicament, and surprisingly, they were ok with the decision I made. I caught a lucky break. And this permitted me to be open and transparent to everyone in the course from that point on.

This decision is what ultimately made a crucial difference. From the point when they accepted that I was participating as a researcher first and foremost, took the edge off of it for me, which made it possible for me to relax. In the end, I actually really enjoyed the course on a personal as well as a professional level.

As I explained earlier, one of the techniques I applied when talking to people, was to ask them in mid-conversation, if I could record what they were telling me. If the conversations were personal, I told them I'd change their names in my research and that the research wasn't going to be widely publicized. They agreed with me more often than not and the conversation carried on on the same foot. Because I was open about my research, its goals and my personal interest, people accepted me. Honesty *is* what gets you the extra mile with people.

Then again, you need to be wise about honesty. Sometimes being honest can translate into being upfront, which in turn can cause friction. When you tell people what your intentions are in the greatest of details, they might start worrying about whether or not they should trust you. This is because when you provide your respondents with a great amount of details, you give them the idea that their answer (about for example if you can record the conversation), a yes or no, is too

simple. Yet, what you want them to do is simply trust you that you will handle the data wisely and discreetly.

Therefore, it is important as a researcher not to frighten your respondents. As a researcher, you often hold a certain power over them, because they are most likely in awe with your doing. Therefore I chose to go about approaching my respondents carefully, instead of being too upfront and brutally honest with them. I knew, that even if I didn't exactly tell them what my intentions were, they could trust me that I was going to go about everything inconspicuously and with respect. This almost always worked, but again, this had largely to do with my unique position as a researcher already having gained trust by a portion of his research population beforehand.

CHAPTER 3. IN SEARCH FOR THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

The Kingdom centre is part of a new religious movement (the Apostolic and Prophetic movement) that believes God wants a deeply-personal relationship with his followers. The Apostolic and Prophetic movement within the Kingdom centre, is a NRM (Saliba 2004, Melton 2004) that stresses that the individual (and *individuality*) is of main importance (Luhmann 2012). This first data chapter focuses on understanding the way in which the Apostolic and Prophetic movement within the Kingdom centre, attract members and why these members are attracted to the movement.

“When I was sixteen years old my father told me he wasn’t my biological father,” Dawn began telling us, the group of people that had been attending the *Authority of Prayer* course for the last four weekends. We were in a group of about twenty people (including the coaches) and we were all eagerly listening to Dawn’s heart wrenching story.

We were sitting in the prayer room. The coaches had told us to get a feel of the atmosphere in there. “If you pray in the same place every day, the atmosphere changes. It becomes God’s place,” Ronnie, one of the three coaches said. Thus, we were sitting on the floor covered with mats, and we had taken the pillows that were laying around and had placed them behind our backs as we leaned against the walls. That’s when Dawn began sharing the story of her past. She said she felt this was the right moment to tell us. The atmosphere was indeed open, she had concluded.

“I’ve never had a chance to get to know my real father. He passed away before we could meet,” she continued to explain. “If that wasn’t bad enough, the man who I used to call father, said my biological father never loved me.”

She wiped away a tear then and said; “But I never believed that. I don’t think you *can’t* love your own child. I am sure any father in the world loves his own child, no matter what the circumstances. But since I’ve never known my real father, I’ve never known what fatherly love is. This is why I came here. Because if there is one place where I’ve heard you can find it, it is at the Kingdom centre. Because here you learn about how God loves his children, no matter what the circumstances.”

In her book *When God Talks Back*, T.M. Luhmann (2012) gives us an insight into how American evangelicals understand God as a deeply personal God, one who has overwhelming love for us and who always searches for a deep personal relationship with each and every one of us.

“The remarkable shift in the understanding of God and Jesus in the new paradigm churches of modern American Christianity is the shift that the counterculture made: towards a deeply human, even vulnerable God who loves us unconditionally and wants nothing more than to be our best friend.” (2012: 35).

Dawn, as were many others with her, was definitely searching for such a connection. Not only during the course of *Authority of Prayer*. But also during the services of God’s House, activities at HEART and conferences, I constantly met people who were searching to invest in their personal relationship with God. They all believed that the Holy Trinity (God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit) wants a relationship with us. A relationship that needs investment from both sides. They all believed that God wants to be part of our everyday lives, not just during Sunday services or prayer time. Instead, he wants to be part of everything we do; in our midnight hour, when we picks up the kids from school, when we drop them back off for soccer practice, when we cook and even when we watch television. The people I met talked about a God who wanted to be involved. A God who was longing for relationship. He didn’t want to be a distant divinity, who sat somewhere away from the world, and who scrutinized our every move. No, he wanted to be present in all the things important to us.

One of the first questions I always asked my respondents was; why? Why would God want to be part of our everyday life?

“Because he loves us, he loves you,” Lara, a 30 some year old artist from Belarus, residing in Amsterdam told me. “He loves you and he want to show *that* love to you. Because love is something you do. It is something you invest in. And that is who our God is; a God who wants to be part of your life as much as he wants to be part of mine, because he wants to invest in you and in the things that you find important.”

Lara was an artist, who I met during God’s House church services. She was a visual artist, who enjoyed attending God’s House because of the relaxed environment during services. She isn’t the only one who gave this reason for visiting the Kingdom centre. Like her, many others, especially those I met during the services of God’s House, gave this as a good reason for their attendance. “I like dancing and singing,” a girl named Nadine told me. “I dance sometimes during services. I stand off to the side, and dance when I feel the Holy Spirit longs me to.”

God’s House is the main organization active in the Kingdom centre. It was their ministers, Andre and Agnes Wieringa, together with other’s from the church team and outside investors, that had bought a closed down coffee factory and fixed it up, turning it into a place where various

Christian activities could be housed. The building has been open for little over a year now and it currently houses God's House (an Apostolic and Prophetic Church), HEART (a youth movement), an Iranian church on Sunday afternoon's, and offers space for foundations such as st. Walking in your destiny to give courses, hold meetings and organize conferences.

The purpose of the Kingdom centre, is closely related to the goal of God's House, namely to give teachings that according to them equip people with the knowledge and the experiences, that strengthen them as individuals and as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. This is so that the kingdom of God can prevail not only in their lives, but also in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and the world, hence the word "Kingdom".

Closely related to this, is the idea that in order for people to become strong and assertive Christians, they need to understand and recognize the overwhelming power of God. Moreover, they need to understand that everyone has a goal in their lives.

"Everyone has a goal in their lives. Some know what they want to become, others don't. But what we all have in common is that we search for it, for without it we wither," Sjors van Vliet, the leader and initiator of HEART, the youth movement, told me. "But people need to learn to be strong. They need to be able to take critique, they need to be able to listen and ask advice. Especially young people; they definitely need guidance. That's what HEART is for."

Everyone has a destiny and getting closer to that destiny, keeps you healthy and makes you a strong and confident individual. This is the common idea at the Kingdom centre. God's House's tagline "*Become all that you were meant to be*", confirms this thought and Sjors' comment. It shows, how initiatives in the Kingdom centre focus on the individual. Individualism, which should not be confused with individuality, is the conceptualization of the person or self and their moral and intellectual autonomy. It stresses on the worth of a person's self-knowledge, spirituality and rationality (Lukes 1990). In the case of this research, the characteristic that is particularly stressed on about individualism, is the fact that it refers to the voluntary contract the individual signs with the group of people he surrounds himself with, in my case the movement. Therefore, in this thesis when talking about individualism, I will refer to it as the notion of individuality as viewed by the group not the individual himself.

The idea of a God as being a living, deeply personal God ties right in with this notion of individualism. Luhrmann (2012: 35) argues that a shift has occurred in how God is viewed. His image has shifted from being a distant divinity, to a close, best friend. According to Lara, a best friend takes a personal interest in you and in the things you do. "A best friend is interested in what you do, why you do it and how you do it. He or she wants to be part of every aspect of your

life, for sharing is an important aspect of a good, worthwhile friendship,” she mentioned one day over coffee as church service had ended. Lara is a visual artist, and I had the chance to visit her studio. She showed me her work and told me about the deeply personal subject matter of her material.

“To me, people are important. This is what keeps my work fresh. It’s about the struggles of individuals, like refugees or other people with problems. People that need help, but can’t find it.”

She wasn’t the only artist I met. In fact there were a couple more, among which Johanna who was a painter, and whose art revolved around people as well. There was one drawing she showed me of a dozen or so faces of people of different ages, with different ethnicities and different social backgrounds.

“I made this drawing under guidance of the Holy Spirit. It’s about all the people that live in Amsterdam. All the people that are different, yet we are all children of God.”

The idea of having a personal relationship, comes to a fore in basically all the conversations I had with people in the Kingdom centre. “At first I talked to God, on Sundays and during moments set apart specifically to pray to God,” Dorienee, a young woman in her early twenties and recently engaged, told me during our in-depth interview. She is currently active in HEART and one of her tasks is to explain to the youth of HEART how to involve God in their lives. Therefore what she had to say, was of great interest to me (further information on HEART will be provided at the end of this chapter). “But now, I have come to realize I can talk and pray to God whenever I want. Because he is everywhere and he is interested in me.”

She and others went on to explain, how they talk to God not only in church, but also while being at work, in the car while being stuck in a traffic jam, or in the laundry room while doing the laundry. The idea is that you can talk to God because he is everywhere (Luhrmann 2012: 324). Moreover, you can talk to God because he *wants* to be everywhere with you. He acknowledges you as a person. The things you do in your life, however small and insignificant they may seem, are of importance to Him, tying in with the idea of individuality.

“This is what we tell people. God is with you whenever and wherever. Because He wants to be,” said Dorienee.

T.M. Luhrmann (2012:322-323) refers to this type of God as a modern God. Luhrmann argues that in present day society, a society which she refers to as postindustrial, highly literate and information saturated, the right circumstances are created for this type of a God to emerge.

But she also argues that the emergence of this type of God can be traced back to a time in American history, when the whole of the U.S.A. was in tumult (Luhmann 2012:16). During the time of the cold war and the arms race, the war in Vietnam and Korea, the civil rights movement and the beat generation, a portion of the latter movement found in Jesus Christ the promise of a new and better world. These people are what we now refer to as the Jesus People Movement; a group of youngsters dressed like hippies and referring to Jesus as a loving, intimate and involved friend. During those times, with the world in post-traumatic stress after two devastating world wars, and the subsequent threat of another war, the image of God and Jesus Christ shifted and became that of divinities wanting to be involved in everyone's life and to make the world a better place by their love (Luhmann 2012:16-21).

Various factors can contribute as to why exactly Jesus was chosen as the martyr for the youth of a generation who had witnessed first or second-hand what devastating effects war had on family-life, society and politics. A frustrated generation who had had to live with the results of another generation's quarrels and who believed they could solve the problems in society where their parents and elders had largely failed. But they also felt they were not being included in the discussion.

Jesus fit their struggle perfectly, as he too was misunderstood. He was not about wrath; he was about reconciliation. He had died for us, he was our martyr. He was crucified for our humanly sins. However, even though Luhmann (2012) marks the Jesus People Movement as a movement with a profound impact on the way in which Jesus is viewed today by portion of evangelical churches, this is not to say that this was the start of the change in the image of Christ. If we look back through time, the image of God has changed and shifted constantly. From the Reformation and the struggle between the Protestants and the Catholics in 16th and 17th century Europe, to America during the Civil War (Luhmann 2012: 34) or from the first progressive movement, we see the image of God changing towards a benevolent, close and not-distant deity.

For example, a book we all know for its importance in the abolition of slavery and written during the first progressive era in the U.S.A., namely *Uncle Tom's cabin* has a little girl named Evangeline (hence: evangelism) as one of the main characters. Throughout the novel, she talks about the abundance of love God has for mankind. When, at the end of the book she is dying and someone asks her what she sees in the other world, she replies: "Oh! love,—joy,—peace!" (Stowe 2000: 256).

Therefore, the whole notion of God and Jesus as being intimate and ready to pour out love, is something not new, but something that still, even now, seems to gain followers and momentum.

Luhrmann (2012:322-323) argues that in present day society, a society which she refers to as postindustrial, highly literate and information saturated, the right circumstances are created for this type of a God to emerge. Therefore, the process of God becoming increasingly more personal, is not new, but due to the current age, is gaining momentum.

The reasons for people participating in the *Authority of Prayer* course varied. But for all the reasons were deeply personal. Dawn is just one example of someone attending the course in order to find new ways of communicating differently with God. They all wanted to get more deeply involved with God and they all believed that the Kingdom centre was the place to go to.

Another example is Bert (whom I met during the Authority of Prayer course), who said that he really needed to let God work in his life.

“We as people have the tendency to over rationalize everything. When something happens, we try to search for answers. We are very controlling. If you let God into your life, he fixes things. That’s what I am here to learn.”

Where Dawn is an extreme case of searching for fatherly love, Bert to me here illustrates, the reasons why people attended the course. The age group of the course was higher (between 40-70) and they all wanted to experience Christianity as a religion filled with spirituality and let go. Let God work in their lives, instead of them working to find God in scripture and through persistent prayer:

“I grew up in a church (the Orthodox church) where religion was reading the bible and reciting prayers as though they were mantra’s. I grew so tired of not feeling personally involved. It was like playing church. Not being the Church,” Bert explained.

I heard many similar accounts during the course of the day when I attended the Authority of Prayer course. All in attendance were desperately seeking for reconciliation of faith and religion with their emotions, for the simple reasons Bert gave. Dawn mentioned as well: “I want to feel God, not know about Him. I want to interact. I need spirituality, instead of religion.”

The understanding of God as deeply personal, and connecting your emotional self with faith is what all activities in the Kingdom centre are about. This is the case with HEART too, of which previously mentioned Sjors and Doriene are leaders. HEART is a foundation and youth movement, that focuses on teenagers from 12 to 16 and from 16-25. They organize bi-weekly gatherings for the first age group during Sunday services, and monthly *Glory Cafe* evenings on Saturdays for the latter. The idea is that through getting to know yourself and building a good healthy relationship with God and others, you will be equipped with the right tools to lead a

successful life with Jesus. All the activities, such as the *Glory Cafe* activities, are built around the central idea of creating a relaxed atmosphere where people can be “themselves”. According to them, this is the only way of maintaining a healthy relationship and deepening your journey with God.

“FOR ALREADY A FEW YEARS NOW, HEART EXISTS. IN FACT, A FEW YEARS AGO WE HAD AT LEAST A COUPLE OF HUNDRED KIDS COMING TO OUR GATHERINGS. WE WERE SUCCESSFUL. VERY SUCCESSFUL. BUT THEN, FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT, THEY ALL VANISHED. WE REALIZED THEN THAT OUR MISTAKE WAS THAT WE DIDN’T INVEST IN RELATIONSHIP. NOW, WE SEE THAT THE ONLY WAY OF HELPING OUT THE YOUTH, IS TO CREATE A STRONG AND INTIMATE ATMOSPHERE, WHERE RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER AND AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS IS AT THE CENTRE. THAT’S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN MAINTAIN AND GROW.”

- *Sjors, leader of HEART.*

Sjors says it’s important to place Jesus at the center of our lives. This quote is interesting that way, for it shows what according to him is the longing that this generation of young Christians has. But it also shows that he is very conscious that in order for a foundation such as HEART to prosper, it is important for them to adapt and change their way of conducting business. Only this way can they appeal to the consumer. Here, Sjors says that him and his team, realized that the only way in which HEART could still function, was to shake things up, and change the outset of the program. They needed to raise the expectations of the youngsters, in order for HEART to start growing again. These expectations are an intimate atmosphere, where relationship is at the heart of the matter and where the individual is acknowledged. Activities such as *Glory Cafe* cater to this customer, by raising the expectations that it’s a place where you can be yourself, and where you can share your own intimate feelings and passions. This is combined with the idea, that this is what God longs from us. It caters to the thought that Jesus loves first and wants to get to know you, and that that is the basis of faith. This is their selling point. This is their basis to grow. However, this thesis will focus on the members of the Kingdom centre, instead of the initiators and their plans for church growth. Church growth and marketing which is tackled in the anthropology of Christianity under the term “Religious marketplace” (Moore 1994), is something that is highly interesting, but due to lack of time due to the fact that this is a one year master, I’ve decided to mention it here, but not elaborate on it further.

“My family and me, we were so fed up with the way things went at our own church! My parents probably wouldn’t use the same phrasing, but we were so tired of having no wiggle room in the

things we undertook. We wanted to be involved in the church, but we also wanted to have more input and share our knowledge. That is why we came here. We wanted to learn about the Father's love for us." This is what Tim told me when we got to talking one Sunday after church Service. Tim is a 26 year old construction worker and talented drummer, who moved with his entire family from the reformed church to the Apostolic and Prophetic church of God's House. "To give you a quick example," he said. "I for one am a drummer and I used to play in the church band. But they only wanted to sing Dutch "Opwekking" (revival) songs. They said that the English songs didn't fit in with the services. Now, this is just an innocent example, but to me it felt like there was no room for me to breathe. It had to be *that* way and not any other. That's how it went at my church. The problem is that if you there's no wiggle room for you to do the things *your* way, it doesn't motivate you to be involved. Because any time you use your God given talents, you are judged because of it. You are taught to be passive, because if you do something that is out of the ordinary, if you do something with passion, from your heart, you are not doing it their way. And you are *not* following the word of God, for their way is the word of God, so they believe."

I subsequently asked him to compare his past experience with the new experiences he had at the Kingdom centre.

"The first time we visited the Kingdom centre, was when we heard about the Father Heart Conference. The Father Heart Conference is a five day event that focuses on understanding God's love for you. It is very much about realizing that who you are is good enough. You don't need to be this or that. You need to be what God wants you to be. We started going to God's House soon after it had finished, because we heard that every church service was like that conference; Straight and to the point. But most importantly; free spirited."

Through this example, we have come to see how the promises the Kingdom centre makes, hit a certain nerve with a certain group of Christians. Tim, someone who presents to me the type of young person you will encounter in the Kingdom centre, shows that his reason for visiting the Kingdom centre, directly correlates with his search for freedom as an individual. He is representative for the group of young adults, who all search to be acknowledged as individuals and their capabilities. He represent the young adults to me, because he explains very clearly what he searches for. But another example that supports his case, is Nadine who is 22 and who as I previously mentioned enjoys dancing amongst other things. "I am really finding my place here at the Kingdom centre. Papa (Other word for God as Father) introduces me to all these people and this is what I always wanted. People who I can relate to and talk to."

Here again, in this example you see how she too searches for people who accept her for who she is. She enjoys the relaxed atmosphere and her personal freedom. She and Tim crave for the same thing, like so many youngsters at the Kingdom centre. “You won’t easily find a place like the Kingdom centre,” Wouter a young man of 19 told me. “The fact that before the church service starts, the band can play an improvise and stretch their songs if they feel the need to, is already a testament to that!”

The various initiatives in the Kingdom centre all centre around attracting the individual (“become all you were meant to be”, st. Walking in your destiny, Father Heart School) through promises of individuality (as explained by Rapport & Overing 2000). They do so through proclaiming that God wants to have a relationship with you in your life, similar to how Luhrmann (2012) explains God’s image as perceived by the Vineyard church in the USA. This is the way the Kingdom centre present itself, and this is the way in which they attract people. By being a place where the focus is on the individual, they are able to grow as a movement, for this is their unique characteristic (Saliba 2003). In search for the individual, they make promises of individuality (Rapport & Overing 2000), which is their way of attracting newcomers. But with every promise they make, they need to deal with the expectations they raise among people: and they make big promises. Sometimes, these promises are delivered on. Sometimes they are not.

CHAPTER 4. BECOMING ALL YOU ARE MEANT TO BE

This chapter deals with the moment when promises are made and expectations amongst (potential) members are raised, but aren't met. This chapter focuses on the way in which the Kingdom centre perceives sameness based on the theory of sameness as explained by Erikson (1980) and Jacobson-Willing (1983) that strengthen their common goals as an NRM as defined by Saliba (2003) while advertising and promoting individuality (Rapport & Overing 2000). In the conclusion of this chapter, the argument is made that while they say they are promoting individuality, they are in fact promoting individualism, as defined by Lukes (1990).

"When I came to the Kingdom centre, it felt like a whole new world opened up for me," Ramona Makelaar, a 25 year old student told me. She is an interesting case for, like Doriene in the previous chapter, she works for HEART, while unlike Doriene, she is not sure of her place in the movement.

"Both my parents were raised Catholic and because of their strict upbringing, religion had left a bad taste in their mouths. So, I grew up in an environment where religion wasn't part of life. When I became Christian a couple of years back, I knew no one else who was religious. I wanted to share my experiences with others, but there was basically no one to share it with. I wanted to find a place where I would be empowered to involve Jesus in my day to day life. I believed I had found this when I came to the Kingdom centre."

Ramona went on to explain how she had experienced the first couple of months at the Kingdom centre. She said she was attracted by the way the Kingdom centre presented itself. She liked the personal approach, which translated to her as a place where she could be active.

"I had a meeting for my church's membership with Andre and Agnes (the ministers of God's House) and they asked me if I wanted to be involved in the church. If so, what would I like to do? I said I did and told them I wanted to work with the youth, and they referred me to HEART and its organizer Sjors van Vliet."

I asked her if it had mounted to something. She told me then that things weren't that easy. "Sjors rightfully told me that he needed some time to decide on the direction he wanted to steer HEART in. He said he needed some time to get to know me first. But I also soon began to realize that also in this church, like the other churches I had gone to in my short life as a born again Christian, being yourself, isn't the same as being yourself in the outside world. Being a member of a Christian church, means there are rules to follow. Norms and values like no sex before

marriage, no drugs, alcohol, even smoking in most cases is frowned upon. In my case, since I just turned Christian, I grew up with very different norms and values and opinions on things. Which makes it nearly impossible for me to do the right thing according to the church.”

I comprehended what Ramona was telling me. A days or two before our conversation, I got to talking with someone roughly around the same age as me (24). I knew she was in a relationship with someone in the army. I asked her how her “boyfriend” was doing. She replied: “Not boyfriend; husband.”

I was surprised by this girls defensive attitude. But when Ramona explained to me the preceding, I began to see what weighty effects certain norms and values have in the Kingdom centre.

“If you don’t follow up on all the expected norms and values, some might portray you as a rebel. If you don’t follow and agree with all the different norms and values, you are not following the word of God,” she said. “This has to do with the fact that they (the church) believe that the different norms and values they have adopted, are derived from the word of God. In my case, since I never grew up in the church, what I believe God is saying to me, is very different from what they hear him say.”

She told me that she was pleasantly surprised when she was allowed to work for HEART, for she was living together with someone while not being engaged. Sjors van Vliet, said that although he didn’t necessarily agree with the fact that she was living together with someone while not being engaged, he felt like Jesus wanted him to open and loosen up.

Later, Sjors and I got to talking about this. “I have come to learn that whenever you say yes or no to someone because they don’t exactly follow your line of thinking, you judge them for what they do. You don’t see the person behind it. Jesus wants me to open up and allow the person to reach me.”

But, even though Ramona had Sjors on her side, things were still very complicated.

“On the other hand,” Ramona told me. “the fact remains that if one person agrees and accepts you for who you are, it doesn’t mean another person does. For there are still many people, that do feel like I am living in sin because I am living together with someone while not married nor engaged. And this fact overshadows some of the work I can do. There is always a certain image I need to aspire to, but can’t live up to here. Ultimately, this has an effect on my authority as a leader, while working for HEART.”

What is interesting is that for Ramona, working within the structures means she needs to strip down her personality and individuality. She says that being herself, limits her ability to function within the group and ultimately the Kingdom centre. This is something that you'll see reoccur in the struggle of other members that are part of the movement within the Kingdom centre as well.

As I explained, I am myself Christian too but not part of any particular church and when converted at the age 20/21, I met a guy named Jason. He was a couple of years younger than me, but a head taller and sporting a large orange beard. He was a friendly, ambitious, twenty-some year old young man that knew a lot of people and who in turn a lot of people knew. His reputation as a "true man of God" preceded him. He was very active within *NSL*, a Dutch Christian student organization, the *Levenstroom*, a large evangelic church in the Netherlands and *Going on a Limb*, a project that he, together with friends, had started up for Christian youngsters.

But last year, Jason killed himself. He committed suicide by jumping off a building in his hometown. He was dead instantly. No ambulances, no hospitals were needed. He had killed himself and there wasn't anything anyone could do. The news came to me over the telephone and it knocked the wind out of me. I still remember how I went out for a walk in the park behind my house that evening. I was almost sleepwalking, feeling numb and staring up to the top of my apartment building, wondering why and how he'd done it. I realized it took a lot of courage to leap off the top of a building.

Strangely enough, almost a year later, during the second month of my research I ran into this guy named Gary. He was in his late 20's (although he seemed younger) and we got to talking about this and that until we by accident came upon the subject of suicide. He told me how last year he had lost a Christian friend who had jumped off a building in his hometown. I soon realized who he was talking about. He was talking about Jason!

Just like me, Gary had known Jason and had been utterly shocked by his decision to end his life. But unlike me, Gary had gone to Jason's funeral. Later on in my research, as well as when I started writing this thesis, Gary became to me the symbolization of the youngsters I met during the fieldwork. Although he himself was in his late twenties, he hung around with people younger than him. Many of the people he hung around with, were like him; Forever in conflict with themselves over the fact that they hated themselves for feeling so trapped in their own self image and their image of God. They tried to break away from God as one who judged, and instead tried moving towards a loving, caring God.

"I WISH I COULD BE BOLD. I WISH I COULD REALLY BELIEVE WHAT JESUS IS TELLING ME. BECAUSE SOMETIMES I AM SO TRAPPED. I

FEEL THAT EVERYTHING I DO, I AM DOING WRONG BECAUSE I
DON'T INVOLVE JESUS. I WISHED THAT FOR ONE DAY THE VOICES
IN MY HEAD WOULD EASE DOWN AND I COULD SEE CLEARLY
WHAT JESUS WANTED ME TO DO."

- Interview with Gary

"I didn't even know Jason that well," Gary said. "But during the service, I listened to people talk about him and praise him for having been so young and ambitious. How he had been such a great musician, how he'd been such a creative person, how he could hear the Lord so clearly and all that other shit. I thought to myself: that's me. Or at least all that God wants me to be." Gary proceeded to explain that many, many people had come to the funeral. The church had been packed.

"And you know what I felt when I saw all those people?" he asked. "I felt envy, deep seated jealousy. The guy is fucking dead and I am jealous."

There was a moment of silence. "I know that somewhere deep inside of me, something tells me I can be proud of the way I am," Gary continued. "I know Jesus is waiting for me to walk with Him and enjoy life with Him. Free from the spirit of religion. Free from the feeling that I need to do something to be in his favor. And me and my friends pray, we are like Jason, and it scares me. We pray, walk in the Spirit, soak and perform miracles in the name of Jesus. But at the end of the day, why is it that I feel so all alone, without a friend who accepts me for who I am, with all my obvious flaws?"

I nodded, and it was then that I realized that all of what Gary had said, made sense to me, at least regarding my research it did. For what Gary was telling was the same thing that Ramona had told me a week or two earlier. Ramona had talked about all the various rules that existed within Christian churches. Rules that according to the churches were derived from the received word of God. Rules, norms and values everyone was expected to follow and that created a complex image that she felt she couldn't live up to, even if she tried. This was the same image, that Gary was referring to. Someone else, namely Dorienee had told me that she had found her solution in exercising the voices in her head, as Nadine put it too. She had found a way of doing right before God. It happened to her when she got engaged. "The moment I did that, namely become engaged, I felt spiritual doors opening up for me. Suddenly my gifts and talents were freed, because I was walking in God's will."

After my first interview with Gary, I took a couple of days to think about what he had said. Not only was I surprised by Gary's feelings of jealousy and envy towards Jason, but there was something else in his anecdote that I felt was off. A few days later, when I knew what it was, I

called Gary up and we met for a beer in a pub in the centre of Amsterdam. There, I posed him the following question:

“Why is it that all the people present at Jason’s funeral talked about his accomplishment, and not his person?”

Gary thought for a moment and replied: “That’s exactly the reason why I came to the Kingdom centre. The jealousy I felt towards Jason haunted me for a long time. I felt that by doing things people wanted me to do, people would love me more. But later I saw, that this had been Jason’s downfall and ultimately his death. No one really cared for who he was. Everyone was friends with Jason because he was so talented this and so talented that. Not because of him! Jason probably only did all the things he did, because he wanted relationship in the first place. I see that now and I too need that relationship he was so craving for. This is why I currently visit the Kingdom centre, trying to figure out if this a place where I *can* be myself.”

In Gary’s example, there are a couple of things we can learn. First off all, Gary focuses on his understanding of God and Jesus as a loving deity. Moreover, he says he knows Jesus wants nothing more from him but to be himself. He sees Jesus not only as perfect, but most importantly perfect in His relationship with him. In spite of all your imperfections, Jesus loves you no matter what. Secondly, another part of this anecdote, illustrates the pressures Gary feels with regards to the Christian community he dwells in. It becomes clear that the image of Jason; the image of a young man in the prime of his life and investing all his time in the Christian community, is highly regarded. On the other hand, according to Gary and Ramona and others, there seems to be little room for a person with flaws, for flaws say something about the areas where a person doesn’t listen to God.

When I interviewed my respondents, a large portion of my interviews were on prayer. This was because talking about prayer offered me an accessible way of talking to my respondents about their everyday lives and about their relationship with God. What’s so interesting is that prayer is the prime way of communicating with God. Therefore it must be inherently personal. On the other hand, even here it seems as though prayer is seldom strictly personal, as a large aspect of what prayer is, is a group effort.

Luhrmann’s (2012) work is a large influence on my research and has its main focus on prayer. Her idea of what prayer is exactly, is broad. She says that the general consensus among evangelicals of what prayer is, is the following:

“WHEN YOU ASK EVANGELICALS...THEY SAY YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DESCRIBE EXPLICITLY YOUR SENSE OF GOD’S GREATNESS, SPELL OUT YOUR FAILINGS, THANK GOD FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR YOU, AND THEN BRING HIS ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU THINK YOU NEED. THIS IS WHAT AN OBSERVER MIGHT CALL THE CONTENT OF PRAYER.” (2012:157).

On the other hand, she also says:

“NONEVANGELICALS MIGHT ANSWER THE QUESTION BY DESCRIBING BEHAVIOR. ANTHROPOLOGISTS POINT OUT THAT PRAYER IS A GENRE. TO CALL PRAYER A GENRE MEANS THAT SOMEONE WITHIN THE GENRE COMMUNITY WHO HEARS OR SEES ANOTHER PERSON PRAY WOULD INSTANTLY RECOGNIZE THE BEHAVIOR AS PRAYER.” (2012: 158).

If this is true, then prayer is more than a personal conversation. In fact, prayer is something that is recognized by the group of people around you. From my experience in the field, I have come to realize that prayer *is* a group effort. Not only does prayer often happen together, prayer (how to pray and word choice) is something that varies from church to church and from group to group in the church. To give an example; a select group of people in the church may experience the Holy Spirit working in them during services, stirring the depths of their souls during prayer, which results in them exclaiming words and sounds like: *Shebenga, Whoopsie, Babababa and yes even boing!* When they do exclaim these words, it is often picked up by bystanders who start laughing and who then reply with their own odd wording. The idea is that these words are so weird and illogical it must be the Holy Spirit getting you to utter, well, spontaneous nonsense. On the other hand, during my research I came to realize, that in fact these words aren’t always spontaneous, with one person often using the same unique phrasing over and over again. Like Gary, he had a fondness of saying *Rabababapapa*. Moreover, groups of people used the same type of odd wording, whereas other groups would use other words and different intonation.

In addition, often during services it’s the same people that experience the Holy Spirit through trembling, shaking and uttering strange words. During these services and afterwards, these groups of people who have shared in this experience search for each other on the church floor. Therefore I have come to realize that although the words might be uttered by an individual, they are understood on a group level and encouraged. Another example of the way in which prayer is decided partially on a group level, is the case of Maarten, a 43 year old businessman, (I met him during the *Authority of Prayer* course) who had come to the Kingdom centre because he felt that as a businessman he wasn’t recognized for his talent and work for God at the original protestant

church he came from. He said that he had a hard time adapting to people screaming, crying and even throwing their hands up in the air during prayer, something that others like him (those who came from other denominational background) felt too.

“I was used to sitting in church and seeing everyone clasp their hands together, lower their heads, close their eyes and pray. When I came here, people were falling in the spirit (falling down or backwards when a wave of the Holy Spirit hits you) and were throwing their hands in the air, screaming and speaking in tongues.”

New religious movements like the Apostolic and Prophetic movement that the initiatives in the Kingdom centre are part of, move away from the customs of the larger denominations and reject aspects of other institutions, in order to develop unique characteristics, rituals and ideas (Saliba 2003). This is true in the case of prayer too. For in the Christian community, when new churches arise, one of the essential things that change, is their perception of God (Melton 2004). This is also the main reason why churches fall out with each other and why new ministries spring up; because they believe that their image of God is not being done justice by the community they were originally part of (Melton 2004: 22) . Now, prayer and the way prayer is done, shows the image the church has on God and religion. It shows both the way in which a group of people believe God wants to communicate with them and what their exact image of God is (Luhrmann 2012). But this brings up one nagging problem, for many of my respondents; how can God be personal, if He is community property?

At the Kingdom centre, the Holy Trinity is seen as a trio of deities that love you for who you are and who are anxiously waiting for you to talk and communicate with them. They want you to immerse in them, like they have immersed in you. They long from you to invest in them, the same way they invested in you. This is a deeply personal image of God (Luhrmann 2012: 35) and the main way of communicating with the Holy Trinity, is through prayer.

Yet, what we have just uncovered that while one part of prayer is viewed as personal, another part is community property and therefore collective and ultimately impersonal. The image of God is controlled by the people around you, for they tell you if God replies, when he replies and how and with what words he replies.

And then I ask: How can God be personal, if you already know what he is going to say, how he replies and what he longs from you?

And it's this is where stories like those of Ramona, Gary and perhaps even Jason hit hard. While it is a definite noble cause by movements such as the Apostolic and Prophetic movement to cater to the individual, this doesn't mean they can deliver on this promise. In fact, in the examples I

gave, there seems to be the general consensus at the Kingdom centre that although the individual is acknowledged, most of what the individual does is community property and until the individual conforms to the image of God and a good Christian as viewed by the other members of the Kingdom centre, you are not accepted for who you are. Furthermore, if you do not follow up on what the church longs from you, you are not only in disagreement with the church leaders, but also with God, for their image of God is intertwined and connected with the way in which they handle things.

The fact that on the one hand people strive for a personal relationship with God, while on the other, they feel threatened by the church when they discover their own individuality and agency (as mentioned by Rapport & Overing 2000). For when they become their own person, they clash with the movement. This is because as they develop their own character, it causes friction with the movements search for sameness (Erikson 1980). Especially for people who have grown up outside of church and whose norms and values and outlook on life, often vary so wildly, from the views existent in the church, fitting in with the church seems at times nearly impossible. There seems to be confusion between the movement and its members regarding individualism and individuality (Lukes 1990). Individuality is promoted by the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, which advertises the agency and autonomy of an individual. Yet what the movement actually promotes is *their take* on individuality, namely individualism. For an aspect of individualism refers to the cultural norm, and the perception of in this case the movement of what individuality is (Barnard & Spencer 2007). This distinction, especially when not recognized by members is the inevitable source of frustration that hampers the movements relationship with its members and vice versa.

CHAPTER 5. FALLING OUT

This chapter follows the way in which my respondents, make decisions in the light of the discovery that there is a difference between individualism and individuality based on Lukes (1990) and Rapport & Overing (2000) as practiced at the Kingdom centre. This chapters looks at the characteristics (Saliba 2003) of the Apostolic and Prophetic movement and how they attempt to create sameness (as defined by Erikson 1980) while dealing with a certain group of members within the movement that are disappointed and confused by the movements' broken promises.

"I am reading this book right now," Harold told me. "It has a section dedicated to understanding the symbolism of the cross in Christianity. The writer himself is Jewish and he brought it to my attention that the adoption of the cross as *the* symbol of Christianity is rather peculiar to say the least."

Whenever I talked to Harold, his eyes lit up when he found someone to tell these sort of things to. "Tell me this..." he said. Jesus died for us on the cross, and now we all wear a cross around our necks. What would have happened if Jesus was shot through the head? Okay, they didn't have guns back then, but you get my point right? What if he was stabbed to death? Would we now be wearing a knife around our necks?"

I remembered nodding and thinking about it. I am Christian myself and I tried to figure out what my opinion was regarding the symbolism of the cross. I don't have any crosses at home, nor images of a suffering Christ. Perhaps this is due to the simple fact that I didn't grow up with these symbols, so they carry little meaning to me.

"What people don't get is that the cross is an object of torture. Yes, we wear it to show and to realize Jesus' suffering for us. But do we really need to be reminded that way? Why can't we be reminded by his love?"

Harold was a man in his early fifties. His relationship with the church wasn't an easy one. "I grew up believing that God scrutinized my every move. He would look over my shoulders, see what I was doing and if he didn't like it, he'd jot it down. I could feel his constant weight. However in church, they referred to him as The Father. But he didn't feel like a father to me. He was a distant, authoritarian figure. To me a father loves his children."

Then Harold told me the following. "I don't like playing football, I don't like watching it either," he began. "But when I was younger (I must have been somewhere in my early twenties) I had a dream. I dreamed I was on a deserted beach and I was playing ball, with no one other than Jesus.

We played soccer for what must have been a long time and we had a blast! To top it off, after we were done playing (I don't know who won by the way), we sat down in the sand and had a beer together."

I asked him what the dream meant to him.

"Well, first of all, I don't like soccer, but I did like it when I was playing it with Jesus. That's interesting," he chuckled. "I think it made me realize what kind of relationship He wanted to have with me and what kind of relationship I wanted to have with Him."

Harold is currently not part of a church. He hasn't been part of any church in over three decades now. Not even of God's House, even though he is well-acquainted with many of the people there; he knows half the staff and shares a good relationship with them. With Andre and Agnes from God's House and Wim, one of the coaches from the *Authority of Prayer* course, he has worked together on various one-off activities. But he isn't a member of God's House. For although at God's House, the image of God is of one who deeply loves everyone and who is close not distant, Harold still feels he doesn't fit in.

"It's like; every church I go to, I return disappointed. Things start out good, but then you start realizing people have a narrow world view. Things go bad from there. You start off feeling like you don't have to do anything and just enjoy. But then, as you get to know more and more people, you realize everyone is expecting something from you. You suddenly find yourself with thousands of obligations. And then you realize that the image the church portrays of God whose first and foremost a relaxed God who loves you and enjoys your company, is something they themselves don't really understand."

Harold therefore became to me and my research an example of the kind of people the church could not bind. He became a prime example of those that stood on the sidelines, with one foot in the church, and one in the world. Unable and perhaps unwilling to combine the two. His attitude towards the church is clear-cut and this is what I came across more often. "I also thought it was pretty cool Jesus wanted to drink a beer with me," he added.

But there were more people, like Stefan for example:

"The fact that in the Church there is so much judgment is beyond me. There was a time when I too visited churches. Now however, when I hear the stories of the hordes and hordes of people that are dissatisfied with the Church and leave it, I don't know whether to laugh or cry," Stefan, a man in his early fifties too, told me.

“Moreover, they so often use the Holy Spirit as an excuse not to think rationally. I hear about these churches and they do whatever they want to do, not thinking about the consequences their actions have on people. They simply do this or that because the Lord tells them to. Not for one minute thinking about the consequences their actions have on people,” he added. “I too want to see the Church grow, yet I’ve been forced to work for Jesus *outside* of the Church, because in the church I can never get anything done.

In the previous chapter, we discussed how members of the Apostolic and Prophetic movement feel they need to live up to a certain image. In the Kingdom centre and the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, like other movements and churches, there is a clear demarcation of who God is and what his characteristics are. Following this, it is discussed by the church leaders that if one of His characteristics is for example is being without sin, the next thing people need to agree on is what that means. Once they have figured out what it means to live without sin, a list of sinful actions are drawn up, that the church members are asked not to participate in. Subsequently, this means that if you as a member want to be part of the movement and you long to have a successful run in the church’s organization, you need to live a clean life. The definition of a clean life belongs to the church leaders and your fellow church members. They can tell you if what you are doing is right or wrong, because they *know* God. For according to them they have a personal relationship with God.

This balancing of one’s own norms and values with that of others, isn’t really different than when you for example get hired for a new job. Also then, you need to carefully balance your own way of handling situations, with the norms and values of your working place. But, there is one crucial difference. The fact is, that according to new religious movements such as the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, Jesus is personal and wants to share his most intimate moments with you. Sharing intimate moments however, mean that you share secrets, emotions and longings that are restricted to your relationship with him. This is deeply personal. Because of this deeply personal aspect of the relationship with Christ that everyone experiences, everyone has the feeling, that they know who Jesus is, what he stands for and how he approaches you. Therefore, anyone at anytime can inspect what you are doing, and share his or her opinion as the *universal truth* as spoken by Jesus. This is the one crucial difference.

Whether its alcohol consumption like that of Harold’s beer drinking in his dream, the discussion of sex before marriage, living together before being engaged, what types of music you listen to, or bigger things such as opinions formed on gay marriages, church growth and sickness and healing, strong opinions exist throughout the church and all of them are seen as the truth through revelation by the Spirit.

“If you fit yourself into an existing structure, you don’t *have* to lose your identity,” Lars said, someone who joined the coaches from the “Authority of Prayer” for the last two sessions. “That’s a common misconception. If somebody else has built something, it is a noble cause to help him. If because you feel you are your own person and you don’t see yourself as fitting in, then that’s not necessarily God’s intention and will.”

The very first thing that the coaches of the course said on the first day of the course, was that this course was not designed to teach. It was designed to hand out tools, and to ask from its participants to push their boundaries. You needed to be personally involved. That was the only way they could help you. It personally felt like this was something new to me. For in the next few lessons, although there was a portion of the course dedicated to prayer, the main portion of the course had its focus on your personal experiences and feelings and how to grow in your relationship with God.

But, the quote by Lars as written above, was taken from the moments in the course dedicated to talking about the role of the individual in the church. Here it seems Lars attempted to explain the balance between being an individual and being part of a church. Yet, the question remains whether this is sufficient for those church members who have a hard time fitting in, despite their best intentions. Namely, in that case the answer that is provided by the coaches in regards to the individuals frustration, is that in order to function within a community (which is what God longs from us, according to them) is to eliminate certain beliefs, attitudes and aspects of their individuals character. Therefore, the above mentioned quote is an open invitation for the individual to realize that although the individual is important, its second to the community of the church.

“I met an old church friend of mine,” Andrea, a woman in her early fifties explained me. “We hadn’t seen each other in a long time. It must have been at least a few years. We were very happy to run into each other after all this time, that was until he asked me what church I was going to. I said that at the moment, I wasn’t connected to any church. That’s when the conversation stopped being fun.”

Another example that a respondent gave me, was Carla, Harold’s wife.

“SOMETIMES PEOPLE COME UP TO ME AND ASK ME WHAT CHURCH I GO TO. I BELIEVE THAT THE CHURCH IS US. YOU AND ME TALKING ONE ON ONE. THE CHURCH IS THE PEOPLE WE CARE ABOUT, CARE FOR AND SHARE OUR LIVES WITH. IT’S NOT A BUILDING, OR AN ORGANIZATION. PEOPLE DON’T GET THIS WHEN I TALK TO THEM. THEY SAY; YOU NEED SOMEBODY WHO CAN TELL

YOU IF YOU ARE GOING IN THE RIGHT OR WRONG DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE. THEY SAY YOU NEED SOMEBODY WHO YOU CAN SHARE YOUR INPUT WITH. THEY SAY THAT THIS IS WHAT GOD WANTS.”

The first month I was doing research, God’s House was fasting for forty days. A large portion of the church had united together to pray in the month of January onto February. Some fasted by not eating, others fasted by not taking in sugar, while others stopped logging in on Facebook or tried spending more time with their children, instead of watching television.

The general idea among my respondents was that if by taking control over certain aspects of their lives that they felt they held no power over, they hoped to be more focused on God. In order for them to hear Him more clearly that way. In some cases, fasting was even used to try and get an answer to their burning questions from God. A young woman in her early thirties named Laura said at the end of the forty days of fasting:

“I HOPED THAT DURING THAT TIME GOD WOULD SHINE A LIGHT ON MY FUTURE. I HOPED HE WOULD CLEAR UP WHAT MY FUTURE WOULD HOLD. YET DURING THAT TIME THERE WAS NO WORD I RECEIVED. IT FRUSTRATED ME BADLY.”

As with the case of fasting, although it is done on an individual level, it is done with a group of people. This group of people doesn’t necessarily strengthen the means to an end, but it does offer a certain type of support to the individual who is trying to better him or herself or to help them focus on God. In early February, I was standing around with a group of people when someone who had done the 40 days of fasting by not watching television, asked the others if they too had participated. Although her question was sincere, it struck me that many of the people who were present and who had not participated in the fasting, threw up their walls.

“I didn’t know we were fasting,” Lothar said, a young man of 21. Yet I had talked to him a few days before and he mentioned that his mum, who was also a member, was fasting.

To me it illustrates one thing; whenever someone mentions something about the way they organize their life around God, by praying at set hours, by going for long walks, by listening to ministry podcasts and fasting, there is a certain sense of guilt that befalls the others in the group. One respondent name Anneke, said to me:

“Whenever I hear people talk about the Youtube videos they watch of ministers such as Justin Abraham, Joyce Meyer or John Crowder, I get very self-conscious of the fact that I don’t watch them. I feel bad about myself afterwards. I feel like the next moment when I pray and I don’t receive word from God, it could have to do with my stubbornness to invest in him. It sometimes feels like I have missed the boat. Like everyone knows what their future is, while I don’t even attempt to try and figure out what *my* future is.”

What one's future hold, especially professionally, is something I have come to realize is a sore subject with many of my respondents, especially since they inexplicably connect the absence of a clear future and career ahead, to them failing to listen and hearing God. Not only Anneke and Laura, but many, especially the younger people I spoke to during fieldwork, had quit their studies before finishing, were unemployed and living on the dole. Also Gary, who had started multiple studies, but finished none, was living on the dole and trying to make ends meet.

"I KNOW THAT JESUS WANTS ME TO RELAX, SIT BACK AND ENJOY LIFE. BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT HE WANTS ME TO USE THE TALENTS HE GAVE ME. IT BREAKS ME APART. IT MAKES ME SO ANGRY WITH MYSELF THAT I CAN'T EVEN WATCH A MOVIE, READ A BOOK OR LISTEN TO MUSIC WITHOUT HAVING THIS NAGGING THOUGHT IN MY HEAD, PLAYING LIKE A BROKEN RECORD: IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT? OR IS THIS WHAT YOU FEEL YOU HAVE TO DO? IS THIS WHAT GOD WANTS FROM YOU? OR IS THIS SATAN WHISPERING IN YOUR EARS?"

It wasn't always easy to hear Gary going over his thoughts again and again. I sometimes wished he'd snap out of it, because to me he seemed a smart, sophisticated and talented guy, who when he was relaxed, was a great joy to be around. But as a I began to know him better, I began to see he couldn't function in an ordinary life. He was at my house once, and the whole day long he was doing nothing. Not watching television, playing games, listening to music or anything. He tried to, but couldn't. For every time he did one thing, he didn't know if it was God's will and if he was living a sinful life.

There was Jessica too, who quit her studies because she felt her current job wasn't what "Poppa" wanted from her. "I have a hard time finishing my thesis. Every time I start writing I can't get any words onto paper. I began to see that what Poppa was telling me, was to quit. I realized then, that I had made the wrongful decision a few years ago, not to include God into the decision making process, when I started searching for what studies I wanted to do."

Then there was Alfons, a friend of Gary who said he was doing "nothing at the moment because I can't hear Jesus' voice, which is because I am not where he wants me to be ". And Rita who was sitting at home with a burnout.

Then there was Laura who had hoped that through her fasting she'd receive word from God regarding her future. Although she had a job, she was very unsure about her future, which tormented her. But something interesting happened with Laura, that makes her case all the more interesting. Namely, one day, during church services, Agnes Wieringa prophesied over her. She said that Laura would, in the future, get an important PR job, and that she would be the face

of a new generation of Christians. Laura was quite new to the church back when Agnes prophesied over her, and Laura told me later that she didn't really know what to do with all this, telling me that up until now she hadn't been at all interested in any PR job.

There was someone else, Tim, the talented drummer, who was told by Agnes during services, much like Laura, that he would become important in the business world. He is currently a construction worker, and he told that he too had no idea what to do with the word Agnes had provide him with.

"I am not saying that what she said is wrong, I am not sure if it's about wrong or right. It needs to click with me, if it doesn't now, maybe it will in the future, or maybe it won't at all."

He seemed not too focused on the prophecy. Instead he chuckled a bit when he told me about it, saying he really didn't know if he'd ever be a business man. In the end, he decided to see what would happen; he would just continue to work hard like he always had and keep his eyes open for opportunities. Like Laura, Tim was also new to God's House.

There are two different interesting aspects to all this: first of all what is interesting is that both of them were singled out by the church minister during church service, and prophesied over. That combined with the fact that they were potential new members, both in their late 20's early 30's is interesting. This is also the reason why I chose to shine a light on their predicaments, for to me they illustrate a recurring process I've witnessed over the course of my fieldwork.

This "public prophecy" is interesting for one can question whether prophecies are used to tie people to the community. But, these deeply personal thoughts and experiences, as uttered and confirmed or dismissed through prophecy become public property and therefore impersonal. In the case of Laura, it seemed as though after the prophecy, everyone wanted her in their team. She was asked to be part of the worship team, asked to be part of bible study groups and asked to be part of the group of people leading HEART.

Moreover, what makes these public private prophetic messages so interesting is that they can set up the receiver for disappointment. In the case of Laura, I wonder whether she would have liked Agnes to have approached her privately. I think it can well be the case that some of those who receive prophecies like public announcements, would prefer to have been told privately. Also, if the person believes that what was proclaimed was not what they had in mind, they have to deal with a divide between them and the rest of the church that now see them as a businessman or PR manager. Through presenting prophecy in this way, personal and potentially sensitive information is distributed as public property. For even if the person in question might feel it doesn't "click" with them (a popular way of explaining how prophecies should be received), then they still need to deal with a group of a couple of hundred people, who have all

heard what God had to say to them and wants from them. This has the negative effect that if later on, you might feel the prophecy was wrong and you decide to divert from the path, others in the church might feel you are being a rebel and not living according to the word of God. And this is where the balance between a personal God who you share your most intimate secrets with while functioning with a community, seems irretrievable lost.

Therefore, in the example of prophecies, but also in the other examples given, you can see how a person's individual properties become part of the public domain and taken up in the movement, in order to create sameness as explained by Erikson (1980). It is done to create a group of people that move into the same direction and against the larger denominations present in Christianity as mentioned by Harskamp (2000). The aggressive measure for sameness, not only affects individuality as explained by (Rapport & Overing 2000), but also contradict the image of God as an involved deeply-personal deity as found in Luhrmann (2012). In some cases, for members of the movement, their functioning within the church is irretrievable lost.

CONCLUSION

The guiding question in this thesis is how (potential) members of the Kingdom centre deal with their expectations and disappointments regarding the promises made of individuality. This chapter will focus on the concluding statements that I am able to make regarding my research.

Upon entering the field, I met a lot of people that were attracted to the Apostolic and Prophetic movement as found in the Kingdom centre, for they wanted to feel acknowledged as individuals. Groups of all ages, but especially the younger age too (those between 18-25 and who visit HEART), all searched for the Church to recognize their individuality and their capabilities. Initially they found this in the Kingdom centre. The examples of Dawn, Tim, Gary and many others tell us of this search for a personal and deep connection with God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Activities such as the Father Heart School and the Authority of Prayer course, but also God's House church services and the gatherings by HEART, attract (potential) members and cater to their search for acknowledgement of their individuality. As a new religious movement they have created customs, rituals and views on spiritual, philosophical and/or ethical subject matters (Saliba 2003) that make them unique, and able to grow. They make promises of individuality (as defined by Rapport & Overing 2000), while keeping in mind their own notions of individualism. They keep in mind their own idea of individualism for various reason, among which the reason that in promoting one idea of individualism, holds the group together and creates sameness (Erikson 1980).

The moment the Kingdom centre and moreover the Apostolic and Prophetic movement starts to clash with their members is when their notion of individualism is different from the individuality of the members. This difference between individualism and individuality is interesting for it is a source of frustration for both sides. On the one hand, the church is frustrated with their members, because they are not doing what is asked of them. On the other hand, members can feel not acknowledged by the rest of the church for their individuality.

Before new members arrive at the Kingdom centre, there is a pre-conceived idea of what an individual is; the notion of the individual is created through social construct and what the movement regards as attributes of the individual, while keeping in mind the idea of sameness, which ultimately holds the group together. For the movement to grow, their notion of individualism is directly tied to the idea of sameness and common notions of belonging, as defined by Erikson (1980) and Jacobson-Willing (1983). One of the ways in which this idea of

sameness is articulated is through their presentation of who God is, what he stand for and how he communicates with you.

The Apostolic and Prophetic movement, as found in the Kingdom centre, proclaims that God is a deeply-personal God, one who likes you for who you are. They say He wants a deep, meaningful and direct relationship with you, one in which you can be yourself and grow towards him.

But there is a chance that the movement's idea of what individualism is can vary widely from the member's individuality and their notion thereof. The members are smacked right in the middle of this confusion of individualism and individuality (Lukes 1990). (Potential) members of the movement start to realize that as they become active in the church, that where they thought they had entered the church to develop a personal relationship with God, what eventually happens is different. Namely, although the Kingdom centre acknowledges God as one who wants a deep, meaningful and personal relationship with you, his approach towards you, his way of talking to you and most importantly what he says and does not say, is decided by the movement beforehand. Not by you as an individual with your own individuality. This is where the promises of individuality start to break. Stories such as Gary's and Ramona's illustrate perfectly, when and to what effect the promises of individuality cannot be met by the movement, and what detrimental effects it has on the members' functioning within the church.

Individuality is promoted by the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, which advertises the agency and autonomy of an individual. On the other hand, what the movement promotes in fact leans towards is their idea of individualism, which is a cultural norm, and which can differ wildly from their members' notions of what an individual is. This distinction, especially when not recognized by the members of the movement, is the inevitable source of frustration that hampers their relationship with the movement and vice versa.

This is also the point, when the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, needs to take drastic measures in order to assure their growth. What becomes apparent is that certain characteristics specifically developed in the birth of a new religious movement (Harskamp 2000, Saliba 2003), in this case the Apostolic and Prophetic movement, cater exactly to the need of the movement to guarantee their members that they are still worthy as individuals, while tying them to the community. The example of the prophecy of Agnes over Laura and Tim, show the characteristics of the word of prophecy as a unique part of this NRM in Christianity, at work in order to comfort their members that they *are* acknowledged as individuals, while making that information which is deeply-personal, now public property. This has the unfavorable consequence for their member, that their personal lives are publicly exhibited. Moreover, in this instance, God is suddenly not deeply-personal anymore as suggested by the movement, instead He speaks

publicly over a person's anxiety, struggles and future. This contradicts the very reason why the members of the movement decided to become part of the movement in the first place.

The guiding question of this thesis was: How do (potential) members of the Kingdom centre deal with their expectations and disappointments regarding the promises made of individuality?

We can conclude that (potential)members of the movement deal with their expectations and the subsequent disappointments regarding the promises of individuality, in various ways. In the beginning, due to their expectations they come to the Kingdom centre and follow the various courses present that they feel will aid them in their relationship with God and their discovery of self. Furthermore, they often attend the church services of God's House.

Initially, they try to integrate in the group, while also keeping their individuality. A good example hereof is the way in which prayer is exercised in union with the words uttered through the involvement of the Holy Spirit (see chapter 4). In this example you see how prayer is indeed applied to create union amongst people. The members of the Apostolic and Prophetic movement in the Kingdom centre, strive for a place where individuality is prominent and where God as someone who wants to be personally involved with you is present. But when the promises of individuality aren't met, some people tend to get discouraged leading them to leave the church. However, there is also a large group of people that is discouraged, and who (especially the youngsters) begin to try and meet the demands of the movements. Gary (see chapter 4) is a prime example of someone, who works hard at trying to meet the demands of the movement, so hard he can't function anymore. He, like many others with him, is fully dedicated to devoting every aspect of his life to God and to the movement, and to showing the movement what he is made of and capable of; all the while searching for acknowledgement. Additionally, there are is the example of Laura who was prophesied over (see chapter 5) and who now finds herself in the midst of a tumultuous situation, one she is desperately trying to break free of through fasting and searching for God, but not finding any answers.

What all the members have in common, is that they search for God in guiding them through the process where expectations aren't met. Some do through fasting, some through prayer, and others through lending a helping hand in the Kingdom centre and becoming more and more deeply involved in the movement. But all the while they believe they are searching for God to guide them through these proving times. In the example of Jessica (see chapter 5), she quit her studies for she believed that what she was doing, was not God wanted her to do. She felt she needed to stop, so that God would approve of her again. But where it seems that although many believe they are searching for the approval of God, they are instead still searching for approval by the movement.

In the literature available for the study of the anthropology of Christianity, we currently see that one of the trends follow the issues of modernization, individualism and the studying of movements (Jenkins 2012). As mentioned before in chapter 3, the idea of a God as a personal God, is something that has come out of modernity, out of the present day we live in, also mentioned by Luhmann (2012) in her work. Not only is God personally involved, the members are too for they search for acknowledged of their individuality. Therefore, my research fits right in there with understanding the way in which a new religious movements promote individualism and how they attract people, and the subsequent issues that arise. However, my research also adds something that I feel is absent in most of the literature in the anthropology of Christianity, namely the focus on the stories of failures instead of the stories of success. In my opinion, too many researches look at the way in which members integrate into a movement and how the inside mechanics work. But they rarely offer the reader the chance to be introduced to the people inside a church or a movement, that are not fitting in. Yet, shedding a light on this aspect (as my research does), offers the unique opportunity to learn more about churches and movements that aren't heading into one direction with one goal in mind. It tells us of the members who try to keep their individuality, while being part of the movement. This lacks in a lot of the literature, and this means that there are certain areas of research that are still awaiting to be uncovered. It is therefore that I hope that in the future, more and more research will be done on not only the stories of success, but also the stories of failure, and moreover the stories of everyone, whether they are positive or negative. Because that's the point when as a researcher we are able to describe reality and give a clear unprecedented image of reality that will greatly benefit the anthropology of Christianity.

REFERENCES

- Argyle, M., & B. Beit-Hallahmi (1975) *The Social Psychology of Religion* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Banard, A. & J. Spencer (2007) *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* Oxon, Routledge.
- Berreman, G. (2012) 'Chapter 9 - Behind Many Masks: Ethnography and Impression' in: A.C.G.M. Robben & J.A. Sluka (red.) *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader* Malden MA, Wiley-Blackwell: 137-158.
- Borchgrevink, A. (2003) 'Silencing Language: Of Anthropologists and Interpreters' *Ethnography* 4: 95-122.
- Bowen, J. R. (1993) *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
- Cannell, F. (2006) *The Anthropology of Christianity* Durham, Duke University Press.
- Carrithers, M., S. Collins and S. Lukes (1985) *The Category of the Person* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, A.P. (1989) 'Against the Motion' in T. Ingold (red.) *Anthropology is a Generalising Science or it is Nothing* Manchester, Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory.
- Brubaker, R. & F. Cooper (2000) *Beyond Identity* Los Angeles, Springer.
- Deloria, V. (2012) 'Chapter 11 - Custer Died for your Sins' in: A.C.G.M. Robben & J.A. Sluka (red.) *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader* Malden MA, Blackwell: 199-206.
- Erikson, E.H. (1980) *Identity and the Life-Cycle* New York, W.W. Norton.
- Escobar, A. (1992) Culture, Practice and Politics: Anthropology and the Study of Social Movements *Critique of Anthropology* 12(4): 395-432.
- Gallagher, E.V. (2004) *The New Religious Movements Experience in America* Westport, Greenwood Press.
- Geschiere, P. & S. Jackson (2006) Autochthony and the Crisis of Citizenship: Democratization, Decentralization, and the Politics of Belonging *African Studies Review* 49(2): 1-7.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Gupta, A. & J. Ferguson (2012) 'Chapter 24- Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference' in: A.C.G.M. Robben & J.A. Sluka (red.) *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader* Malden Ma, Wiley-Blackwell: 374-386.
- Harskamp, A. van (2000) *Het Nieuw-Religieuze Verlangen* Kampen, Uitgeverij Kok.

- Hiller, H.H. & D.L. Diluzio (2004) 'The Interviewee and the Research Interview: Analysing a Neglected Dimension in Research' *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 41(1): 1-26.
- Idinopulos, T. A & Wilson B. C. (2002) *Reappraising Durkheim for the Study and Teaching of Religion Today* Leiden, Koninklijke Brill, NV.
- Luhrmann, T.M. (2012) *When God Talks Back* New York, Alfred A. Knopf.
- Lukes, S. (1990) *Individualism* Oxford, Blackwell.
- Jacobson-Widding, A. (1983) *Identity: Personal and Socio-Cultural* Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell.
- Jenkins, T. (2012) The Anthropology of Christianity: Situation and Critique *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 77(4): 459-476.
- Marrancini, G. (2008) *The Anthropology of Islam* New York, Berg.
- Melton, J. G. (2004) 'Chapter 24- Beyond "An introduction in New Religions' in: J. R. Lewis (red.) *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements* New York, Oxford University Press: 16-36.
- Moore, R. L. (1994) *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* New York, Oxford University Press.
- Nash, J. C. (2005) *Social Movements: an Anthropological Reader* Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.
- Peters, B. R. (2005) *Folding Five Ministry into one Powerful Team* United States of America, Xulon Press.
- Rapport, N.J. (1993) *Diverse World-Views in an English Village* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Rapport, N. & Overing, J. (2000) *Social and Cultural Anthropology: the key concepts* London, Routledge.
- Robben, A.C.G.M. (1996) Ethnographic Seduction, Transference, and Resistance in Dialogues about Terror and Violence in Argentina *Ethos* 24: 71-106.
- Robbins, J. (2001) God is Nothing but Talk: Modernity, Language and Prayer in a Papua New Guinea Society *American Anthropologist New Series* 103(5): 901-912.
- Robbins, J. (2004) *Becoming Sinners: Christianity + Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society* Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Ross, C. (2005) *The New Apostolic Reformation: an Analysis and Critique* Capetown, University of Capetown Press.
- Saliba, J. A. (2003) *Understanding New Religious Movements* Oxford, AltaMira Press.
- Scarlett, W. (2006) 'Prayer' In: E. Dowling, & W. Scarlett (red.), *Encyclopedia of Religious and Spiritual Development* Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE Publications: 350-351.
- Sherkat, D. E. (1999) Recent Developments and Current Controversies in the

- Sociology of Religion *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 363-394.
- Stowe, H.B. (2000) *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Fairfield, 1stworldlibrary.
- Vilaca, A. & R.M. Wright (2009) *Native Christian. Modes and Effects of Christianity Among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas* Aldershot, Ashgate.
- Weber, M. (2002) *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* Los Angeles California, Roxbury Publishing Company.