

A New Way of Being Church: A Case Study Approach to Cityside Baptist Church as Christian Faith “making do” in a Postmodern World, by Steve Taylor.

Excerpt from Chapter 2

Thirdly, my participant observation is that many of leaders of the “alternative worship” around the world have grown up in the Charismatic movement. Alongside their potential experiences of routinisation, one should be aware of the contemporary context of these leaders. Cohen, Nachman and Aviad argue that today’s de-centred context has produced “soteriological entrepreneurs,” young people who use their skills to create new religious experiences.¹ Young people are shaped by a new media culture, which includes a democratisation of the arts.² With the introduction of new technologies, people on their home computers can produce their own music, graphics, websites and video loops. Turner argues that “going outside the normal confines of society is the way to acquire powers not normally available within it, and those who enter this liminal state together experience a spontaneous bonding and community that Turner calls *communitas*.”³ Chapters Three and Four will outline the way that Cityside has moved outside the normal confines of its Evangelical and Charismatic society and the way that it values creativity and community. Hence, the advent of Cityside and other alternative groups might be partially explained by this notion of “soteriological entrepreneurs.” In light of the routinisation of the Charismatic, and in a contemporary context that offers new technologies and encourages the democratisation of the arts, are “soteriological entrepreneurs” at play? These three factors suggest a movement in routinisation, and that perhaps “alternative worship” is a response to these contextual factors related to the Charismatic movement and to more widespread cultural changes.

Excerpt from chapter 8

I have set Cityside within a de-centred context. Equally, disruption is a key element in the development of practices of pilgrimage.⁴ Cohen argues for a number of types of tourist; from recreational and

¹ Erik Cohen, Nachman Ben-Yehuda, and Janet Aviad, “Recentering the world: the quest for ‘elective’ centers in a secularized universe,” *The Sociological Review* 35, no. 1 (1987).

² See Paul E. Willis et al., *Common Culture. Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990).

³ Ian Reader and Tony Walter, eds., *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1993), 11.

⁴ According to Reader and Walter, eds., *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*.

diversionary, through to experiential, experimental and existential.⁵ He views the latter three types as a form of spirituality he describes as a pilgrimage. Experiential “pilgrims” search for meaning in the other as a response to feeling de-centred from the culture. Experimental “pilgrims,” or what Cohen calls seekers, sample different alternatives in the hope of finding meaning. Existential “pilgrims” have experienced a sense of rupture from their current reality and become committed to another spiritual centre. In each of these, de-centredness is essential to pilgrimage. For Coleman, “pilgrimage is an act of returning the displaced self to a sacred centre.”⁶ Similarly, Turner argues that pilgrimage is a “liminal” experience and suggests a correlation between the contemporary experience of de-centredness and contemporary interest in pilgrimage.⁷ Further, for Turner, this marginal state of liminality is rich in meaning that is “conveyed largely by nonverbal symbols.”⁸ The Cityside labyrinth, when viewed as pilgrimage, offers an intuitive, wholistic path in which to process these experiences of de-centredness. Thus, as Cityside, the labyrinth can be interpreted as an imaginative practice in response to a de-centred context. It becomes a “making do” in which an ancient path is appropriated to centre identity in urban Auckland. All of this remains in the rubric of “making do” through imaginative space, as pilgrims “reconstruct[s] the sacred journey in the imagination.”⁹

⁵ Cohen, “A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences.” See earlier discussion of Cohen et al in Chapter Two and Chapter Seven. For another perspective on tourism as spiritual, see Nelson Graburn, “Tourism: The Sacred Journey,” in *Hosts and Guests. The Anthropology of Tourism*, ed. Valence L. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989). For a discussion of Protestant pilgrimage, see Gwen Kennedy Neville, *Kinship and Pilgrimage. Rituals of Reunion in American Protestant Culture* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁶ Coleman and Elsner, *Pilgrimage. Past and Present in the World Religions*, 35. They describe the labyrinth at Chartres, a pattern that Cityside’s labyrinth draws from, as “a symbol of the pilgrim’s path in this life and of the road to salvation in the next.” Coleman and Elsner, *Pilgrimage. Past and Present in the World Religions*, 112.

⁷ Victor Witter Turner, “The Centre out There: Pilgrim’s Goal,” *History of Religions* 12 (1973). For a critique of Turner, see M. J. Sallnow, “Communitas Reconsidered: The Sociology of Andean Pilgrimage,” *Man* 16 (1981).

⁸ Turner, “The Centre out There: Pilgrim’s Goal,” 213. We will explore the importance of images at Cityside in the next section. A further correlation between Turner’s work on pilgrimage and Cityside presents itself. For Turner, the shrines of pilgrimage are often present on the outskirts of a city. We will explore Cityside in relation to marginality in the next chapter.

⁹ Coleman and Elsner, *Pilgrimage. Past and Present in the World Religions*, 6.