

Where the Hippie, Hipster and Hallelujah Meet: Romanticist Culture in Contemporary Dutch Protestant Christianity

Johan Roeland and Katie Vlaardingebroek
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

ABSTRACT

This article discusses ethnographic research conducted at a Dutch Christian festival in 2017: *Graceland Festival*. The festival showed a wide diversity of religious beliefs and backgrounds, ranging from more traditional evangelical and reformed forms of Christianity to anti-religious, holistic, or experimental expressions of faith. The authors provide a sociological analysis to account for the shared-ness encountered at the festival, arguing that it is to be found in terms of cultural orientation rather than religious beliefs. The authors trace this cultural orientation back to Romanticism with its values of authenticity, self-expression, counterculture, and aestheticized lifestyle. Two distinct expressions of Romanticist culture encountered at the festival are discussed in more detail: Christian hippiedom and Christian hipsterism.

A DAY AT GRACELAND FESTIVAL

Graceland Festival, Vierhouten, the Netherlands, the 19th of August 2017. In the fresh morning air, people are sitting in front of their tents or walking to the main festival terrain. The campsite is situated around a small lake in an open area surrounded by trees and heathland. Last Friday night after dark, all the visitors gathered here on the grass holding glow-in-the-dark sticks, guided by people with glow-in-the-dark tribal patterns painted on their faces. These performers handed them feathers, a symbol

of one of the main themes of the festival: resilience or ‘feather-power’ as the Dutch word ‘veerkracht’ literally translates to. While the people held hands, a spoken-word artist explained the explicitly non-dogmatic dogmas of *The Big Experiment of being a Secular Christian*, the overall theme of the festival. The circle of people then was reshaped to create the contours of a body, for, it is explained, together they are the body of Christ. This image is captured through the glow-in-the-dark-sticks by a drone flying overhead.

Now, on this early Saturday morning, such dramatized ritualism seems far away. Children run around in wellies, and families and groups of friends sit outside their tents having breakfast. By the lake, a group of women is practicing yoga while other people are reading their Bibles. On the grassy slope overlooking the campsite, the word ‘Graceland’ is spelled out in big white letters. Tomorrow at this time, Graceland Festival will host a secret LGBTQ+ breakfast. Only the (LGTBQ+) visitors that sign up will be given the locations in order to create a safe space for those who have experienced rejection and criticism in their own (or previous) churches. In the distance, you can hear the sound of an acoustic guitar and the falsetto vocals of singer-songwriter Rogier Pelgrim, who is playing on the Forest-stage: a large podium with bohemian carpets and big leafy plants as its main decor. In addition to acoustic singer-songwriters and folk-inspired pop, this festival hosts a wide variety of genres throughout the weekend, played by artists who all in some way render the distinction between Christian and secular music problematic. Whereas last year the festival still predominantly booked big US Christian artists, such as Leeland and Gungor, this year they have consciously decided to platform small and local artists. From Broeder Dieleman, who sings poetic songs in Dutch dialect, to Ntjam Rosie, a Dutch-Cameroonian who previously performed at the North Sea Jazz Festival.

At different points on the route from the camping terrain to the Forest Stage, people come across white plastic tents with ‘One person chapel – come inside’ written on them. These chapels are part of the many interactive art installations that function as playful forms of contemplation on the festival terrain. Other examples are a wooden confessional box, three-minute pop-up sermons, and a church chapel bike. The artists who created these installations used a combination of irony and play in their attempts to find new ways of triggering thought and emotion. Inside the white ‘One person chapel’ tents, one can find conceptual artwork based on one of four keywords: God, secularization, Jesus, and spirituality. In each tent, there is auditory stimulation in the form of music or a spoken contemplation, a question for reflection, and a bucket where visitors can leave their notes. The ‘tent of secularization’ is filled with three headless mannequins wearing wedding dresses. Plastic bottles filled with red and blue paint hang above them and, through slow dripping, stain the dresses. The sign reads: ‘The Bride of Christ.’ On the notes left in the bucket, visitors have written down their responses: ‘Cool’; ‘At first, I was happy that institutionalized religion was losing its power, but you get neoliberalism in return. From bad to worse’; ‘Everyone is searching. Let’s find our connection in this. It’s all safely in the hand of God anyway. He will bless the relationships we start.’

Outside the main indoor stage, which is situated in a big barn called the Sun Hall, the terrain is slowly filling up with stalls. People are selling Christian hip-hop-inspired streetwear, handing out information about an evangelical college, and promoting a reformed newspaper. Next to a campervan, a group of elderly ladies in brightly colored and beaded outfits are knitting with recycled plastic. The campervan is run by the non-religious Agnes, who knits with recycled materials in order to promote sustainability. This

desire to live green is a recurring theme at the festival. At the same time, this 'hip' sustainability is also being challenged. One of the speakers, a meat farmer, gives a talk entitled 'Give us today our daily meat.' And the snack bar sells meat snacks till late in the night.

To the right of the Sun Hall, people are starting the day with some quiet time, helped by the Walk of Life Labyrinth, which is run by the so-called Pop Temple. Guided by ambient electronic pop music, the labyrinth takes participants from LP disc to LP disc while presenting interactive reflections on the big questions of life. For more conventional methods of meditation, there is a tent for quiet contemplation on the top of a hill, with big sofas, tapestries, bohemian carpets, old icons, and paper and pens for creative prayer through art and writing. The Christian Spiritual Centre offers yet another form of contemplation; it 'wants to reintroduce people to the power of touch' that, according to the Centre, has been lost in our church-centered focus. An icon in the tent looks down peacefully on the massages, oils, aromatherapies, and smell-based meditations. Just next to this tent is the children's tent, where a small team of volunteers and evangelical performers are entertaining the young ones. In terms of demographics, the biggest age group at the festival is the 20-45 age group, a good part of which can be found drinking coffee in the bookstore or enjoying an early morning beer at Tongval, a Christian brewery. There are roughly 660 people attending the festival. There is also a large number of volunteers, which takes the total in attendance up to 800 people.

In a burlesque-inspired circus tent, Cirque d'Espoir, the theatre and comedy acts of last night are replaced in the morning by a group of people gathering for an early church service. The service is organized by PopUp Kerk (litt. PopUp Church), which is run by a famous and partly infamous pastor and activist. Yesterday afternoon the same tent hosted the scriba of the PKN, the biggest protestant church in The Netherlands. Church planters, churchgoers, and Christian believers-without-belonging all gathered to discuss the (lack of) future of the church. Now Cirque d'Espoir is the home of a Eucharist-centered church experiment. Or not, as it turns out, for before the service can even start, the group has to carry a long table to a nearby car park to do church where, according to the organizers, it should be done: in the public domain, among and (ideally) with non-believers. The parking-lot service consists of the breaking of homemade bread, a breathing meditation, a short reflection on the nationally appointed Bible text of the week, and an interactive prayer exercise where people are invited to write confessions on the stones of the car park. The wine is then opened at noon, and the bottles are soon emptied before everyone continues their day.

Most of the small group of around fifty people will be back at the Cirque d'Espoir again tomorrow when the morning service will be organized by the Pub Church. Similar to PopUp, their service is based on meeting one another around a table for casual yet deep conversations and a glass or two of wine, prosecco, or beer. Opposite the circus tent, people are buying coffee, smoothies, or organic ice cream outside the book tent, which hosts the many different experts and theologians that have been asked to give talks or participate in debates and open QandAs. The topics that are being discussed include Peter Rollins-inspired understandings of the crucifixion, pacifism in Christianity, vegetarianism and fair trade coffee, social activism in the face of the refugee crisis, the future of the church, and the connection between Taoism and Christianity. The bookshop itself offers a variety of products, from Bibles, Christian contemplative prayer books, Christian novels, and theological books by the likes of Peter Rollins, Brain McLaren, and Rob

Bell, to cookery books and coloring books for grown-ups. Rustic blue buckets hang from the ceiling and function as an alternative to lampshades.

Outside the bookshop and the circus tent, the people of De Kerklozen (litt. The Churchless) are interviewing visitors for their podcast. The Churchless is a social platform for Christians who have consciously decided to break off contact with the church, temporarily or indefinitely. At the same time, a young man with long hair tied up in a man bun, ripped skinny jeans, a flowing shirt, and lots of necklaces is collecting people's testimonies and experiences with the Holy Spirit for a booklet he is developing in order to evangelize amongst his peers. A small boy who is walking past gets distracted by the flashing disco ball and the sounds of the song 'Jesus Christ Superstar' coming from one of the white tents. Inside the tent is filled with different statues and images of Jesus: Jesus as Robin Hood, Jesus as Captain America, Jesus nailed to a rainbow-colored cross, and the question: 'Who am I?' The replies left behind read: 'Our Saviour!', 'Freedom fighter', 'Love', 'The force', 'The undercurrent', 'Peace', 'Jesus was a rebel', among many other descriptive accounts. Only twenty meters further on, there is a big cardboard church standing near the Forest Stage, splashed in paint and inscribed with the words 'The ugly church.' Visitors have left many notes of criticism on the institute of the church. Passers-by can read these to the music of the band Half A Mile that has started playing traditional worship music to an excited audience. [\[1\]](#)

FROM PILLARIZATION TO THE PRIORITIZATION OF AESTHETICIZED LIFESTYLE AND SELF-EXPRESSION

The story above is based on field notes we took in the summer of 2017 at Graceland Festival, a small Dutch Christian festival in the woods near the village of Vierhouten. At this festival, we encountered a religious diversity that is relatively uncommon, at least historically speaking, in the Dutch religious landscape. From roughly the late nineteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century, the story of religion in the Netherlands was a story of pillarization, defined by Helleman as the process of 'mobilizing a large section of a country's population and thoroughly knitting it together, by building a pervasive subculture and by setting up a vast interrelated network of organizations, resulting in a segmented and powerful bloc.' [\[2\]](#) In the Netherlands, this led not only to socialist, liberal, Catholic, and protestants pillars but also to denominational fractures within the protestant pillar. These fractures occurred along the lines of religious belief, resulting in a dispersed protestant landscape. Although things started to change from the 1960s onwards due to the forces of secularization and the rapprochement of different religious groups and organizations, traces of pillarization are still visible in the segmented way Protestantism is organized in the Netherlands today.

In the post-war era, the evangelical movement turned out to be one of the counterforces to pillarization. The Dutch evangelical movement, which was heavily influenced by the developments in the UK and US, brought (young) people from different protestant denominations together around a shared concept of the 'ecumenism of the heart.' Although this may have assisted the rapprochement of different protestant denominations, it can equally be argued that evangelicalism created an alternative pillar. [\[3\]](#) This evangelical pillar is defined by a couple of key elements, which include a conservative theology centered

on biblical authority and the atonement of the cross; conservative ethics especially related to issues of sexuality and gender; commitment to mission; the call to conversion; and an experiential approach to worship. [4]

Against this particular background, it is noteworthy that Graceland Festival combines both traditionally evangelical and reformed forms of Christianity and anti-religious, holistic, and experimental expressions of Christian faith. Equally interesting is the wide diversity in the religious beliefs and institutional backgrounds of those drawn to the festival, as we can conclude from a survey conducted among the visitors of the Graceland Festival. During the festival, a survey was conducted among 123 visitors (roughly 20% of the total group) by those who were involved in organizing Graceland. Although the survey does not meet the methodological standards of academic research, we nevertheless draw on it for illustrative purposes. As we understood from this survey, 25% of the visitors attend an evangelical congregation, while the second largest group (17%) consists of people who are churchless. 40% of the visitors (strongly) agree with the statement: 'I find more of God outside the church than within it.' To the statement 'The Bible doesn't have to be (literally or historically) true to have value in life,' 43% (strongly) disagrees, whereas 37% (strongly) agrees. Similarly, 34% (strongly) disagree with the statement: 'God is not a person, but the source of love,' whereas 30% (strongly) agree. And even though 79% (strongly) disagree with the statement: 'I don't believe Jesus actually rose from the dead,' 11% do (strongly) identify with that statement, showing just how broad the theological diversity is within the group of people that are attracted to Graceland Festival.

In a religious landscape that has been organized amongst the lines of religious belief for such a long time and in which historically theological disagreement often led to denominational fractures, Graceland Festival seems to be a bit of an anomaly. Friction both within and between religious beliefs is tolerated at the festival. This goes so far as to even include approaches to the Christian faith that are deemed offending or sacrilegious. When, for example, a few of the evangelical volunteers came across an art installation of Jesus nailed to an LGBTQ+ cross with the song 'Jesus Christ Superstar' playing, they felt angered and wanted to talk with the artist. This dialogue between the artist and the volunteers was written down by a journalist who was reporting on the festival. [5] We draw on his verbatim for illustrative purposes:

'One of the evangelical volunteers says: 'Things like [the song] Jesus Christ Superstar makes me feel uncomfortable. I think it's derisive. At the same time, your [addressing the artist] work makes me reflect on what I believe. Why do I not agree with it? (...) The artist responds: 'But is a chapel-like this one only meaningful if you agree with it? I understand that it creates friction; I hear that a lot. But I do want to make things that cause friction. I believe that when it grinds and irritates, more divine things will emerge than if I provide you with ready-made answers (...) The volunteer replies: "I have a different [religious] vision than you do. I stand here, and you stand there, but that is okay. We can still journey together.'

There seems to be a different cultural logic operating at Graceland Festival. A logic that enables diverse Dutch Christians to participate in a festival in a way that seemingly defies the strict boundaries based on the belief that have characterized pillarized Dutch Christianity and the Dutch evangelical landscape that one of the authors studied more than a decade ago. [6] In our attempt to sociologically identify Graceland Festival we link up with James Bielo's approach to the Emerging Church Movement in the USA – a theologically diverse countercultural expression of progressive Christianity that we will discuss in more detail later

on. Bielo argues that, when ‘new forms of religious identity come into being,’ [7] in particular forms that organize themselves outside the established religious structures, ‘available categories’ of Christian identity might be unhelpful to understand these forms. [8] Moreover, underlying assumptions of what a religious identity is might become problematic since conventional vectors in defining this identity that have worked for older expressions of Christianity might no longer work for contemporary ones. Bielo argues that the scholarly efforts of defining religion might be ‘handicapped by a Tylorian version of “culture” that anthropologists have wrestled with since the late 1800s.’ [9] He continues: ‘This approach emphasizes, and therefore must delimit, matters of group-ness and shared-ness.’ [10] Furthermore, within the Tylorian notion of culture, this shared-ness is assumed to be formed around the dimension of ‘belief.’ [11] As our field research shows, Graceland Festival challenges these assumptions.

In our explanation, we keep working with the concept of shared-ness, in contrast to those theories of religious change that dismiss the ‘social forms’ of contemporary religion in an effort to deal with religious fragmentation. [12] However, we argue that at Graceland Festival, shared-ness is founded not in religious belief but in cultural orientation. We will argue that this cultural logic consists of a shared prioritization of aestheticized lifestyle over belief, self-identified ‘countercultural’ tribes and networks over institutionalized religion, creative self-expression and exploration over collective truth, and authenticity over conformity. This particular logic explains the sense of community, togetherness, and shared-ness on the one hand and the opposing religious views and seemingly paradoxical elements encountered at Graceland on the other.

As we will argue, this logic can be traced back to the cultural movement of Romanticism, in line with authors such as Charles Taylor, [13] Paul Heelas, [14] and Collin Campbell, [15] who all claim that Romanticism has a profound impact on the contemporary and future direction of many cultural phenomena, including religion. [16] We present two conceptual lenses from which to understand the influence of this Romantic culture on the type of Christianity encountered at Graceland Festival in more detail: hippiedom and hipsterism. Both cultural expressions originate historically from the US and found their way into Europe. More than mere superficial aesthetic forms, hippiedom and hipsterism encompass a number of ethical and theological values that, in the context of the Graceland Festival, bring about a specific, Romanticized form of Christianity.

Before analyzing the cultural orientation found at Graceland Festival in more depth, a few words on methodology. This article is based on ethnographic research conducted by both authors during the 2017 edition of the Graceland Festival. We were invited to participate in the festival as speaker and external consultant (Vlaardingerbroek), and moderator (Roeland). We participated as ‘insiders’ who both had a personal history within Dutch (innovative) Christianity. However, we were also involved as researchers who had a theological and sociological interest in the developments within the Emerging Church Movement. [17] In our ethnographic research at Graceland Festival, we combined participant observation, experiential observation, [18] and informal conversations with festival visitors, volunteers, and people involved in the organization of the festival. Moreover, we studied multiple texts related to the festival, including the aforementioned survey, all the textual and visual material produced by the festival organizers, and the media responses to the festival. As a case study of one particular festival, the research is limited. However, in our understanding of Graceland Festival, we built on our previous ethnographic

work on evangelicalism,[19] the Dutch religious pop- and festival culture,[20] Dutch evangelical media culture,[21] and Dutch Christian hipsterism.[22]

SITUATING GRACELAND FESTIVAL: AN EXPRESSION OF THE EMERGING CHURCH MOVEMENT?

Graceland Festival, which first took place under its current name in 2015, has been framed in the Dutch media as the successor to Flevo Festival: a big, well-known yearly evangelical music festival that had its first edition in 1978.[23] Due to decreasing visitor numbers, the last edition of Flevo took place in 2012. A follow-up was organized by a small group of former Flevo volunteers, initially under the name Flavor Festival, and from 2015 onwards as Graceland Festival. Due to the historical links with the Flevo Festival, as well as a number of typical characteristics, such as the synthesis between popular culture and religion and the tapping into a Christian experience culture, one might think of Graceland as another initiative of the wider Dutch evangelical movement. However, as might already be concluded from our fieldwork report above, there are many aspects and elements of the Graceland Festival that suggest rather a breaking with or at least a distancing from Dutch evangelicalism. Despite the fact that evangelicalism has never been a homogenous movement, it is known for its strong ambivalence towards theological and moral diversity and its efforts to advocate a clear, unambiguous, and coherent theology, ethics, and religious practice[24] - and the diversity encountered at Graceland simply does not match up with those characteristics.

In many respects, Graceland Christianity fits the descriptors of the Emerging Church Movement (ECM) as formulated by, among others, Marti and Ganiel and Bielo.[25] ECM is understood as a countercultural and anti-institutional ‘movement of cultural critique,’ [26] which has (at least historically speaking) evangelical roots.[27] The movement attracts a demographic that is similar to the demographic sketch we found within the survey data.[28] Within ECM pluralism and openness to a wide diversity of religious (and secular) traditions and repertoires is deemed important as a reaction to the conservative, excluding and homogenic evangelical mainstream.[29] Furthermore there is an embracement of so-called progressive values and an emphasis on social justice issues as a reaction to the ‘conservative political agendas’ of the evangelical mainstream,[30] and an appreciation of doubt ‘as an inevitable and even healthy aspect of faith’ as a reaction to the absolute certainties of evangelicalism.[31] In the ECM contingency and deconstruction are deliberately embraced as a reaction to the corporate institutionalization that defines much of today’s evangelical church organizations.[32]

The Emerging Church Movement was briefly popular among progressive evangelicals in the Netherlands around the turn of the century. A couple of leaders, religious entrepreneurs, and churches explicitly identified with the Emerging Church Movement and tried to set up a number of churches and church activities that were inspired by developments in the UK and the USA. However, at the moment, the term ‘Emerging’ is hardly used anymore. As far as we know, neither the organizers nor the participants of the Graceland Festival identify as ‘Emerging.’ So, while we see many similarities between the Emerging Church Movement as described by, among others, Marti and Ganiel and Bielo, and Graceland Festival, the label as such is hardly used by those involved and by the Dutch media.

The question of whether or not Graceland should be identified as ‘Emerging’ not only troubles those observers that try to nail down the religious identity of the festival [33] but also raises highly interesting and relevant sociological questions relating to the particular challenges of identifying such a contemporary phenomenon, or set of phenomena. This is especially the case when the objects of sociological study resist both the institutionalization of faith and scholarly definition. [34] The bigger question raised by Graceland Festival and similar modern religious expressions is: How can we identify a religious phenomenon now conventional identity markers have become contested?

In this article, we provide a tentative answer to this question by suggesting that in order to sociologically explain and describe this festival in more depth, it is helpful to search for the specific shared-ness of Graceland Festival not in terms of religious identity or belief, but rather in terms of cultural orientation. Our argument is that Graceland Christianity is quite heterogeneous and leaves room for many expressions of faith because it centers the Romanticist values of (aestheticized) lifestyle, authenticity, self-expression, and a countercultural identity above specific religious beliefs or practices. Here, we once again draw on the survey. For it is remarkable - considering the lack of agreement on matters of religious belief - how the majority of the visitors who partook in the survey (strongly) agreed with the importance of Romanticist values such as the religious and spiritual freedom to explore (93%), authenticity, self-actualization and self-reflection (in all three cases circa 90%), and creativity (75%).

SURPASSING RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES: THE SHARED VALUES OF ROMANTICISM

In order to contextualize this shared Romantic cultural orientation, we draw on the work of Charles Taylor. In *A Secular Age*, Taylor argues that Western post-sixties culture is characterized by ‘the understanding of life which emerges with the Romantic expressivism of the late-eighteenth century.’ [35] Once the exclusive privilege of the intellectual and artistic elites, this ‘expressive individualism’ has become a common phenomenon. The now widely available Romantic search for one’s authentic self-expression places the notion of authenticity within the domain of aestheticized lifestyle. One’s authentic self, in other words, is to be realized in the specific and - ideally - unique choice of clothes, furniture, furnishings, consumer goods, and other material commodities. Rather than being mere functional objects, material commodities are now considered, among many other things such as music, art, places, media, interests, literature, etc., as an extension of one’s individual identity. As Taylor observes, this contemporary ethic of authenticity has infiltrated everywhere, including the religious realm. It can be found in contemporary forms of post-traditional spirituality, but also *within* the developments of Western Christianity. [36]

These Romanticist values were clearly present at Graceland Festival, as the field notes illustrate. Graceland offers a temporal lifestyle-oriented sociality, a tribe, [37] that is open to individual expression and beyond ‘traditional’ religious belonging to a particular church or religious tradition. By staging mostly alternative artists (who themselves often embody the aestheticized lifestyle) and offering lifestyle commodities as an identity extension (dress, food, music, merchandise, and local beer, among other things), the festival centers around aestheticized lifestyle fabrication. The panel discussions, with an emphasis on audience participation and the participatory art installations mentioned in the field report, are a few examples of

the openness and even encouragement of (religious and/or spiritual) self-expressivism. Another example is the performance work of spoken-word artist Droominee (Dreaminister), who spent many hours seated in a chair on a small outside stage with a pot of tea. Visitors walking by could take their place in the chair, drink a cup of tea with him and share a story. On the basis of this encounter, the Drominee then created a personalized spoken word poem for the person to creatively express his or her (faith) journey. Self-expressivism here is closely interwoven with creative and artistic means of expressing and an end-product which is experienced as authentic. In this, we see the notion of the theologian as an (experimental) artist helping people to find their own authentic expression of faith.

The importance of freedom for individual (spiritual) self-expressivism is equally reflected in the strong sense of tolerance at the festival and in its conscious refraining from a Christianity that painfully excludes people on the basis of 'deviant' beliefs, practices, or preferences. This was frequently mentioned during the Friday evening debate on the church, in which many people criticized the homogenization that, in their experience, often takes place in the church. Both the organizers of the festival as well as many visitors shared painful stories of exclusion from Christian congregations on the basis of, for example, their sexuality. The viscosity, tendency towards institutionalization, and conservatism of organized Christianity are equally criticized by the people of The Churchless podcast and their guests. Here self-expressivism is connected to the perceived countercultural identity. This countercultural notion of the individual who opposes the conformity of the institutional church was visibly present in an art installation that was mentioned before: the paint-splashed cardboard church with the words "The ugly church" painted on it. In terms of self-expressivism, it is interesting to mention that visitors were encouraged to add their own comments and experiences to the cardboard church. The artist himself had written the following poem on the church:

Don't give me love with an old book of rules

That kind of love's just for fools

And I'm over it

And my reasons for walking away

My reasons for wanting to change

My reasons for everything are lost with you

I have tried

But I don't fit

Into this box I'm living with

Well I could go wild

But you might lock me up

Church itself is not rejected by all Gracelanders, for as the survey illustrates, the majority of visitors (60%) go to a church service every week, and 24% still goes once or twice a month. However, there is a sense in which the festival is trying to be countercultural regarding the middle-class Christian culture, which is often experienced as being not as warm-hearted, tolerant, communal, and open-minded as it should be. As a reaction to this institutional Christianity, Graceland engages with Christianity in a wide range of new approaches based on innovation, experiment, play, deconstructionism, nostalgia, irony, cynicism, quest, exploration, skepticism, provocation - all approaches that prevent religion from consolidating. [38] Within the culture of authenticity, religion and religious identity need to be constantly recreated in an almost artistic act to remain authentic expressions of (changing and growing) faith.

At this point, we need to address the argument that these characteristics are (merely) an expression of festival culture as such. Festivals, in general, are all about aestheticized lifestyle, [39] in which there is a focus on aesthetic consumption and on the need to create life into an aesthetically attractive whole. [40] Festivals, as a modern expression of tribalism, are temporal, fluid, ephemeral, empathic and celebrating, lifestyle-oriented communities that are open and tolerant to individual expression and freedom. This is an important observation: compared to more traditional forms of religious organization, the festival is less inclined to consolidate. The more interesting and relevant observation, however, is the fact that for some religious movements, the festival becomes a preferred social form, and festival culture is the preferred cultural expression of faith. The festival format lends itself to the expression of Romanticist values, but similarly, Romanticist values inform the preference for the festival as a new religious space.

To further explore the influence of Romantic culture and its values on the Graceland Festival, we have set out two distinct expressions of Romantic lifestyles we encountered during the field research: hippiedom and hipsterism. We present these two expressions as preliminary explorations of the distinctly specific ways in which contemporary Romanticism is found and expressed at the Graceland Festival, starting with hippiedom.

HARMONY AND HOLISM: HIPPIEDOM AT GRACELAND

Dark-red, bohemian patterned carpets, and tapestries combined with potted plants, feathers, beads, a combination of mixed and different colored materials, which all share a tendency to be soft and flowing: both within the décor and liturgical props used at Graceland, the hippiedom aesthetic was widely present. This was equally the case in the new Graceland house brand, as found on the website and the program leaflets, which feature illustrations of brightly colored people in flowing patterned clothes surrounded by leaves and flowers.

Hippiedom originated on the US West Coast in the 1960s as a tribal movement that rejected capitalism and materialism, fused holistic spirituality with the use of recreational drugs, experimented with new cultural forms of relationships and living arrangements, and rebelled against the conformist status quo. [41] Its

spiritual legacy was taken up by the New Age movement that, when the hippie counterculture started to decline in the 1970s, filled the spiritual 'gap that hippiedom had left.' [42] While there were differences between the spirituality of the hippies and the New Age movement, such as its focus on individual rather than social transformation, [43] the New Age was attuned to the holistic ethos of the hippies. Holistic spirituality became widely available and accepted in the decades to come, not only in the so-called New Religious Movements and popular spirituality as found in yoga and mindfulness but also in a consumer culture with its attention to well-being, health and balance. Both hippiedom and New Age spirituality have had a considerable impact on the Dutch religious landscape, offering alternative repertoires to a heretofore predominant Christian country.

While hippiedom has often been depicted as incompatible with Christianity, the case of the Jesus People, the 'Jesus hippies' of the sixties, shows that there were fusions between hippiedom and (evangelical) Christianity. [44]. However, these fusions were not without tension, critique, and paradoxes. For example, holistic spirituality has been highly criticized and even presented as being demonic by groups of Christians, evangelicals in particular. Hence the heated online discussions that occurred when Graceland Festival shared that they would be incorporating yoga came as no surprise to those involved.

Hippiedom was found at Graceland Festival both in ethics and aesthetics. The hippie aesthetic is characterized by a richness of colors and textures: warm and vibrant colors, velvety materials, beads, feathers, flowing fabrics, and bare feet. At Graceland, this aesthetic was visible in, among other things, the festival's promotion material and the opening ceremony, in which feathers were waved communally as an expression of resilience. It was found in the tent of the Christian Spirituality Centre (CSC). Multiple speakers and visitors were dressed in hippie-inspired outfits, from elderly ladies in flowing skirts knitting with plastic to young men with long hair, flowing shirts, and necklaces. Hippie expressions such as walking around barefoot and wearing flowers in one's hair were found among children and adults alike. This hippie aesthetic, as made visible in the lifestyle choices, is interwoven with the other characteristics of contemporary hippiedom. In relation to Graceland Festival, we will discuss three elements: an emphasis on sensorial stimuli, holism, and ecology.

In the hippie aesthetic, there is a certain richness of sensorial stimuli, visually in the vibrant colors; and tactually in the use of distinct fabrics, feathers and beads. This attentiveness to sensorial stimuli became most apparent in the CSC tent, where incense, fragrance, and touch were used as therapeutic tools to enhance one's spirituality. The tent for prayer and contemplation used soft pillows and blankets combined with different materials for self-expression to create a place for embodied prayer. The different art installations also played with the senses and invited the visitor to touch, feel, hear and see with more intensity. This emphasis on sensorial stimuli and embodied presence is not exclusive to hippiedom but also found within evangelicalism. [45] However, Graceland offered forms of embodiment that were linked to holism.

Holism can have many different meanings, yet mostly it refers to the particular quality of interconnectedness: the interconnectedness between mind and body, spirit and nature, and creation and creator or creating force. Harmony, balance, non-dualism, and 'all-is-one' are part of the idiom. At Graceland, we noticed the holistic attention to the body in the yoga sessions and in the CSC tent. A holistic

approach to the notion of God was found in one of the notes left in the interactive art installation, which had 'God' as its lemma:

'Who is God? No idea. Something, It, Being, Light? That which I can't conceive of in any way. My senses and feeling, my soul and love can make me feel God, so let's get to work with those tools and for the rest trust, and boy oh boy what is trusting a chore. That's when you need someone else to help you.'

This little note uses rather mystical terms to name God; it mentions the body and the senses as epistemic tools in knowing God, and it shows a seeker mentality. Similar spiritual or holistic language for God, such as 'the higher power,' 'the source of all life' and 'Being itself,' was used in the different (church) services. These examples show how individuals at Graceland Festival were syncretizing elements of holistic spirituality, such as its terminology and Christianity.

Holism can also refer to an openness towards other religions, in which the 'other religions' are usually limited to the Eastern spiritualities as discovered by the West in the context of nineteenth and twentieth-century Romanticism. Often, there is a tendency towards perennial wisdom and universalist salvation, in which it is believed that the mystical strands – the spirituality – of all major religions share the same core. Within this shared spiritual wisdom, the way to 'the divine' or God is through the intuitive self. [46] At Graceland, this holistic approach was taken by the philosopher of religion Just van Essen, who presented a Perennial view on Taoism and Christianity, in which the latter had much to learn from the former. In holistic spirituality, the Romanticist values of self-expression and authenticity are related to undertaking a spiritual journey inwards, becoming more true to one's spiritual core and intuition. Within this understanding of spirituality, the best route to a harmonious world is working on inner growth and happiness. [47] Reflection, creative prayer, meditation, aromatherapy, and yoga are all ways in which the individual can connect deeper with oneself and thus with the world and God.

Graceland gave room to holistic spirituality, but again, some aspects were contested. Notions such as 'the impersonalization of transcendence,' the 'sacralization of the self,' and monistic conceptions of God were deemed problematic by some of the visitors and people involved. The values of openness, connectedness, and universal wisdom and goodness were also placed in ironic juxtaposition with the strict and sometimes seemingly random demarcation points of what is justified as Christian spirituality. Although at the CSC tent different homeopathic and New Age-inspired therapies and meditations were being offered as beneficial and even necessary components of a Christian lifestyle, the woman running it made it clear that yoga was not something Christians should be engaging in. Yoga – just as tarot cards – was something she disapproved of, and she was not the only visitor to hold this view. This shows the sensitivity of this syncretism of holistic spirituality and Christianity.

The final element of hippiedom we encountered at the Graceland Festival was the emphasis on ecology both within the festival program as well as the lifestyle of its visitors. The survey illustrates the importance of this theme, with circa 66% stating that they are actively trying to live in a sustainable and ecologically friendly fashion. The festival offered lifestyle choices to this end, from the highly aestheticized fair trade, vegetarian, and/or vegan food stands to talks and panels on vegetarianism, fair trade coffee, and sustainability. The bookshop offered multiple cookery books related to sustainable living. Finally, the above-mentioned plastic-knitting project paid attention to the recycling of materials. The banner of this

project includes the holistic language of connectedness: “The core of sustainability is love. Love for yourself, for others, and for your surroundings. This is only possible when you are connected with each other.” The holistic belief in ultimate oneness and universal love translates into an ethic of treating the (natural) world with love and respect. Not all visitors, however, felt comfortable with this holistic language. For many, the importance of an ecologically friendly lifestyle was expressed in a different discourse: the discourse of stewardship. So, although hippiedom is clearly present at Graceland Festival as an aestheticized lifestyle, it is certainly not uncontested, especially when it fuses Christianity and holistic spirituality.

THE ARTISAN AND THE INDUSTRIAL: HIPSTERISM AT GRACELAND FESTIVAL

Rustic wooden tables, DIY (do it yourself) industrial style bucket-based lamps, LP-based new monastic contemplation, bald men with impressive beards, minimalistic and geometrically inspired Christian tattoos, locally brewed craftsman’s beer, a kitsch Jesus dressed like Robin Hood, a vintage radio. Besides the aesthetic elements stemming from hippiedom, these aesthetic expressions also showed the presence of hipsterism at the Graceland Festival.

The term ‘hipster’ is a concept originally imported from US culture where it started as a ‘counterculture of avant-garde values and a style that explicitly distinguished itself from the dominant mainstream (white) culture.’ [48] The term can be traced back to Mailer, who, in 1957, introduced the hipster as an ‘American existentialist’ who rebels against the dullness of conformist consumer culture. [49] In doing so, Mailer built on the old Romantic’ bohemian idea’ of the quest for an authentic experience. [50] The rise of hipster culture is understood as a reaction to the ‘cultural decadence or fatigue’ caused by mass production after the second world war. [51] The notion of ‘the authentic self’, which is so central to hipster culture, can be understood in light of this development in terms of ‘non-conformity to mainstream culture.’ [52] As Schiermer states: ‘The authentic has to be found in places where no one else looks.’ [53]

However, as the 1960s progressed, US capitalism itself started to change and be affected by the cultural changes, which led to the development of ‘hip consumerism’ and image-based capitalism. [54] Counterculture became in itself mass-produced. This pattern repeated when hipster culture resurfaced in the 1990s in the US and European countries such as the Netherlands in the indie movement. [55] The derogative associations of the term ‘hipster’ in our modern-day use - which is also often reflected in the scholarly literature on the topic [56] - reflects this tension: the hipster sees himself as countercultural, but is, in fact, the ‘instantiation of the neoliberal consumer-citizen.’ [57] There is tension here between the ideal and discourse of ‘authenticity’ on the one hand and the consumerism and homogeneity of hipster culture on the other. As a result of these cultural associations, the hipster does not want to be called out as one, as researcher Michael found in her research on Dutch and European hipsters. [58] This is the (polemic) irony of the irony-loving hipster. However, at this point, it is important to note that this paradox of commodified counterculture and mass-produced symbols of authenticity is not limited to the contemporary hipster. It is a central part of our current neoliberal culture of authenticity. [59]

The phenomenon of the ‘Christian hipster’ has been even less researched and defined than hipster culture as such. On the basis of Vlaardingerbroek’s ethnographic research, we believe that the internal

logic of 'authenticity' is based on a combination of a romanticized understanding of the raw confrontation with 'the industrial' and an equally romanticized understanding of the rich tradition of 'the artisan.' An aesthetic example of this at Graceland Festival was the handmade wooden tables (the artisan) lit by bare light bulbs in metal buckets (the industrial). As a reaction to globalization, mass-production, and the cultural saturation this caused, [60] both the visibly industrial, such as the bare bulb, and the handmade are seen as being more 'real.' This notion of 'real' is linked to the visibility of the process by which the object came to be; nothing is smoothed over or hidden, and therefore it is deemed authentic. The hipsterian notion of authenticity seems to be localized in the movement from the product to the process, which happens through (aesthetic) deconstruction. As such, in hipster aesthetic, we find a combination of natural elements, textures, and pre-industrial techniques - wood, plants, the locally sourced or brewed - juxtaposed with deconstructed (post)-industrial vintage products and objects - bare lightbulbs, metal lamps, LP discs.

One of the places in which hipster culture was present at Graceland was the sitting area of Tongval, a Christian brewery run by bearded men with rolled-up sleeves, revealing their Christian tattoos. In this way of presenting and formulating their identity, these beer-brewers can be said to combine the image of the creative artisan craftsman with the raw and rough industrial laborer. Interestingly enough, during the festival, the social act of drinking alcohol is central to multiple experimental (morning) church gatherings. This Christian beer and wine culture seem to be closely linked to Christian hipsterism and potentially shows how alcohol has become the symbol of informal, 'authentic' intimacy in a context that is skeptical of visibly instrumental uses of culture and setting.

This logic of the authentic is not limited to the aesthetic organization of the outside world but is also reflected in the way one's identity and faith is structured - and here we distance ourselves from the unhelpful dichotomy between 'aesthetic' or 'style,' and 'substance' that we found in McCracken's work on Christian hipsterism. [61] Furthermore, the hipster notion of authenticity was not only found in the set-up of Christian events but also reflected in the theological and liturgical content used during these events. During the Saturday morning Eucharist on the parking lot described in our field notes, a translated poem by Pádraig Ó Tuama was used:

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (...) In the name of meaning and feeling, and I hope you don't screw me... In the name of darkness and light and ungraspable twilight (...) In the name of beauty and beaten and broken down daily. In the name of seeing our creeds and believing in maybe, we gather here, a table of strangers, to speak of our hopeland and talk of our danger... To make sense of our thinking, to authenticate lives. To humanize feelings and stop telling lies. In the name of philosophy, theology, and who gives a damn? (...) In the name of the straight, the queer, and the sometimes bisexual. (...) In the name of the unknown, the alien and the holy in exile.

In this prayer, we find a rhetoric of paradoxical and ironic juxtaposition which emphasizes the holiness of the unholy, broken, crude and ambiguous, and combines the structure of a blessing with swearing and sexuality to create authenticity. Here we find in the semantic form 'the cheap, stingy and gaudy' aspects with which hipster culture plays, [62] and which are a part of the Romanticized notion of confronting the realness of the (post)-industrial world. This is combined with the centralization of the theologian as a (de- and reconstructing) artist and artisan. Another example of this Dutch hipster theology can be found in the

work of spoken-word artist Drominee (Dreaminister), who was involved in multiple liturgical services at the Graceland Festival. He is known for prayers such as ‘Blessed are those who fuck-up’ and works closely with the founder of the PopUp Church and theologian Rikko Voorberg, who published the book *The Pastor Learns to Swear*, for sale in the festival’s bookshop.

Rather than an emphasis on harmony and the balanced self that characterizes the understanding of authenticity within (Christian) hippiedom, the Christian hipster seeks authenticity in confronting oneself with the brokenness of the world and in the self through playfully experimenting with Christian traditions, symbols, and rituals. The Dutch hipsterism, as embodied by Rikko Voorberg and the PopUp Church, purposefully draws only on one source, Christianity, in an almost stubborn and sometimes seemingly provocative manner. [63] The Christianity of their youth is continuously fought with, deconstructed, and reclaimed in a more relevant form, although any dogmatic truth claim about its (sole) veracity is avoided at all costs, and interreligious dialogue is actively sought. Theologically speaking, the influence of postmodernism and the American protestant radical theology is unmistakable. This is further illustrated by the centrality within PopUp Church of the work Peter Rollins, whose books are for sale at the festival’s bookstore.

Whereas in hippiedom, mankind is seen as inherently good, the hipsterism we encountered at the festival and the Saturday service focus on human brokenness. However, in a context in which facing up to the real and broken is seen as authentic and liberating, and the old and artisan is seen as a rich source to play with, the seemingly sin-focused protestant theological language that, for example, Voorberg uses, loses its theologically-heavy edge. This is especially the case when combined with a continuous relativist ambiguity in any claims concerning orthodoxy and the occasional swear word, as Voorberg illustrated when referring to God in the opening of the Eucharist ceremony at Graceland Festival: ‘God, the high power, Being itself, the source of all life, or what the fuck it might be.’ If hippiedom is centered around the individual sensation of something feeling fully right and therefore being good, hipsterism in a theological sense is centered around the individual sensation of something feeling slightly wrong and confrontational, and therefore being good. This is epitomized by a graffiti sign in the field, surrounded by broken and splintered pottery and plates in wooden frames hanging in the trees. The sign, a quote from Leonard Cohen, reads: ‘There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.’

CONCLUSIONS AND PARADOXES

In this article, we have attempted to make sense of the religious diversity encountered at the 2017 edition of the Dutch Graceland Festival. We argued that the common denominator and organizational principle of Graceland Christianity are not to be formulated in terms of *religious beliefs* but rather in terms of *cultural orientation*. This cultural orientation has its origins in Romanticism and consists of a shared prioritization of aestheticized lifestyle over belief, a countercultural tribal sociality over institutionalized religion, creative self-expression and exploration over collective truth, and authenticity over conformity. This particular logic explains the sense of community, togetherness, and shared-ness on the one hand and the opposing religious views and seemingly paradoxical elements encountered at Graceland Festival on the

other. In many respects, our analysis links up with Taylor's Romanticist ethics of authenticity, which, as he argues, has deeply altered Western present-day culture and religion.

While it can be argued that the search for authenticity can result in a very individualized and fragmented religious orientation in which nothing is shared anymore except for individuality itself, Graceland Festival shows that the festival as a fluid, temporal and lifestyle-oriented social form brings people together by accommodating the search for authenticity. Two distinct expressions of Romanticist lifestyles that we encountered at the Graceland Festival have been further explored in this article: hippiedom and hipsterism. Both expressions embody the ethos of authenticity, yet in a different way. Hippiedom opts for a holistic, converging understanding of authenticity and a broadening of spiritual sources (including elements of Eastern spirituality). In contrast, hipsterism offers a deconstructive, diverging understanding of authenticity and an at times fractious deepening of spiritual sources by de- and reconstructing one's own tradition.

Although hippiedom and hipsterism are both visible expressions of Romanticism-influenced Christianity at Graceland, the festival is not the exclusive domain of Christian hippies and hipsters. Some participants combine elements of hippiedom, hipsterism, and Dutch evangelicalism, creating a mixture of different aesthetics and theological positions. Our analysis is based on one elaborate case study, and we are tentative in generalizing on the basis of our research. More research is needed to determine the extent to which our analysis has wider applicability within the study of the Emerging Church Movement and the extent to which Graceland Festival is part of a broader Romanticist Christian movement. With regards to the latter, we see the developments discussed in this article in other religious initiatives in the Netherlands as well: festivals, pop-up churches, pub churches, Christian breweries, new media platforms, and other initiatives. That being said, although Dutch Christianity has a keen interest in these initiatives, visible in, for instance, media coverage, we have to keep in mind that these initiatives are mostly developed and consumed by a mostly young, innovative, urban, and highly educated creative class.

Critical questions can be asked about the durability of a potential Romanticist Christian movement. A movement so aimed at authenticity and innovation might have an intrinsic tendency towards differentiation and fragmentation caused by a lack of organization. Seeker mentality, the preference for small intimate settings, the distrust of mass phenomena, and the high intellectual threshold, among other things, might render the ideal of community and diversity an abstract eschaton. Moreover, the values of diversity and inclusiveness that are highly appreciated among these Christians strongly contrast the demographic fact that Graceland Festival is especially popular among a specific part of the Dutch Christian population: the white, highly educated, political left-wing, middle-class population. [\[64\]](#)

On the other hand, it can be argued that many of the elements we discussed above and the type of festival-sociality that we described fit seamlessly into the wider social and cultural changes that are captured in terms such as 'late-modernity,' 'post-modernity,' and 'post-industrial' and in the developments of pluralization, individualization, liquidation, and de-institutionalization that are often associated with these terms. Graceland Festival can be said to have integrated the contemporary Romanticist social-cultural developments in the West, and as such, seems well adapted to these. Therefore, it is also possible that the Romanticist-inspired Christianity we encountered will thrive - both as a festival-based form

of Christianity, as well as an inspirational repertoire that will permeate many forms and expressions of (Protestant) Christianity in the Netherlands.

NOTES

1. For a visual representation of Graceland Festival 2017, see the Graceland Festival 2017 Aftermovie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhQWxu2X090> (accessed June 4, 2021).
2. Staf Hellemans, "Pillarization (Verzuiling). On organized 'Self-contained Worlds' in the Modern World," *The American Sociologist* 51 (2020): 124-125.
3. Which is suggested in one of the most elaborate studies into the Dutch evangelical movement, Remco van Mulligen's PhD-thesis entitled *Radicale protestanten (Radical Protestants): Remco van Mulligen, Radicale protestanten: Opkomst en ontwikkeling van de EO, de EH en de ChristenUnie en hun voorlopers (1945-2007)* (Amsterdam: Buijten and Schipperheijn Motief, 2014).
4. For a more extensive description of evangelicalism in The Netherlands, see (in Dutch) Hijme C. Stoffels, *Wandelen in het licht: Waarden, geloofsovertuigingen en sociale posities van Nederlandse evangelischen* (Kampen: Kok, 1990); Johan Roeland, *Selfation: Dutch Evangelical Youth Between Subjectivization and Subjection* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press/Pallas, 2009); Miranda Klaver, *This is My Desire: A Semiotic Perspective on Conversion in an Evangelical Seeker Church and a Pentecostal Church in The Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press/Pallas, 2011); and the aforementioned study by Van Mulligen (Van Mulligen, *Radicale*).
5. This verbatim report was used (with permission) in a magazine on innovative Christianity created by Graceland Festival in collaboration with one of the authors: Katie Vlaardingerbroek et al. (eds.), *Beeldenstorm - Over de Kunst van Geloven* (Amsterdam: Plateau, 2017). Translation by authors.
6. Roeland, *Selfation*.
7. James S. Bielo, "The 'Emerging Church' in America: Notes on the Interaction of Christianities," *Religion* 39 (2009): 219.
8. Idem: 220.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Cf François Gauthier, "Intimate Circles and Mass Meetings: The Social Forms of Event-Structured Religion in the Era of Globalized Markets and Hyper-Mediatization," *Social Compass* 61, no. 2 (2014): 263.
13. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2008).

14. Paul Heelas, *Spiritualities of Life: New Age Romanticism and Consumptive Capitalism* (Malden, MA, Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).
15. Collin Campbell, *The Easternization of the West: A Thematic Account of Cultural Change in the Modern Era* (Boulder, London: Paradigm, 2007).
16. Throughout this article, we will use the terms 'Romantic', 'Romanticist' and 'Romanticized' interchangeably to refer to this notion of Romanticism.
17. Bielo, "Emerging." Gerardo Marti and Gladys Ganiel, *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity* (Oxford, etc.: Oxford University Press, 2014).
18. Roeland, *Selfation*, 80.
19. Roeland, *Selfation*.
20. Johan Roeland, Miranda Klaver, Marten van der Meulen, Remco van Mulligen, Hijme Stoffels, and Peter Versteeg, "'Can we Dance in this Place?' Body Practices and Forms of Embodiment in Four Decades of Dutch Evangelical Youth Events," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 27, no. 2 (2012): 241-256.
21. Miranda Klaver, Johan Roeland, Peter Versteeg, Hijme Stoffels, and Remco van Mulligen, "God Changes People: Modes of Authentication in Evangelical Conversion Narratives," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 32, no. 2 (2017): 237-251; Katie Vlaardingerbroek, "When Christ meets Coldplay: De Evangelische Beweging, Jongeren en Popular Culture," in *Typisch Evangelisch: Een stroming in Perspectief*, ed. Laura Dijkhuizen and Henk Bakker (Amsterdam: Ark Media, 2017): 189-199.
22. Katie Vlaardingerbroek, *Reclaiming the Christian Hipster: The Role of 'the Countercultural' in New Innovative Missional Developments in The Netherlands* (Bachelor-thesis, University of Glasgow, 2018).
23. See a Volkskrant article from August 19, 2018, "Onvoorwaardelijke gastvrijheid op progressief christelijk Graceland" (<https://www.volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/onvoorwaardelijke-gastvrijheid-op-progressiefchristelijke-graceland-we-willen-geen-nieuw-flevo-festival-zijn~bbf2d3ce/>) and a Trouw article from August 14, 2015, "Na Flevo is er nu Graceland" (<https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/na-flevo-is-er-nu-graceland~b60cecf/>) (both articles accessed June 2, 2021).
24. Roeland, *Selfation*.
25. Marti and Ganiel, *Deconstructed*; Bielo, "Emerging."; James Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity and the Desire for Authenticity* (New York, London: New York University Press, 2011).
26. Bielo, "Emerging," 219; cf. Marti and Ganiel, *Deconstructed*, 176-179; cf. Josh Packard and George Sanders, "The Emerging Church as Corporatization's Line of Flight," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28, no. 3 (2013): 441.
27. Marti and Ganiel, *Deconstructed*, 21.
28. See Marti and Ganiel, *Deconstructed*, 23. 68% of the 123 visitors were highly-educated. This percentage is more

than twice as high as the national average at the time. The visitors of Graceland Festival were politically (Christian) left orientated (74.4%), and a relatively high number of people worked in the creative industry or educational sector (40%).

29. Marti and Ganiel, 163-164.

30. Idem, 166-167.

31. Idem, 167.

32. Packard and Sanders, "Emerging."

33. As is shown by the newspaper articles that we mentioned in footnote 23.

34. Marti and Ganiel, *Deconstructed*, 5, 8.

35. Taylor, *Secular*, 475.

36. Cf. Roeland, *Selfation*.

37. Cf. Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE, 1996).

38. Cf. Marti and Ganiel, *Deconstructed*.

39. Cf. Andy Bennett and Ian Woodward, "Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging," in *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor and Ian Woodward (Farnham, UK, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014): 14.

40. Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, 2d edition (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE, 2007), 66.

41. Scott MacFarlane, *The Hippie Narrative: A Literary Perspective on the Counterculture* (London: McFarland, 2007). Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (Oxford [etc.]: Blackwell, 1996). Paul Heelas, *Spiritualities of Life: New Age Romanticism and Consumptive Capitalism* (Oxford [etc.]: Blackwell, 2008).

42. George Chryssides, *Exploring New Religions - Issues in Contemporary Religion* (London: Continuum, 1991), 342.

43. Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 136

44. Richard Bustraan, *The Jesus People Movement: A Story of Spiritual Revolution among the Hippies* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014).

45. Roeland, *Selfation*, chapters 6 and 7.

46. Cf. Linda Mercadante, *Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but Not Religious* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

47. *Ibid.*

48. Ico Maly and Piia Varis, "The 21st-century Hipster: On Micro-populations in Times of Superdiversity," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 19, vol. 6 (2016): 637-653.

49. Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," in *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1957).

50. Cf. Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 13.

51. Bjørn Schiermer, "Late-modern Hipsters: New Tendencies in Popular Culture," *Acta Sociologica* 57, vol. 2 (2014): 167-181.

52. Maly and Varis, "Hipster," 638.

53. Schiermer, "Hipsters," 169-170.

54. Frank, *Conquest*, 26-27.

55. *Idem*, 28 and 35.

56. Mark Greif et al., *What was the Hipster? A Sociological Investigation* (New York: n+1 Foundation, 2012); Micheal Reeve, "The Hipster as the Postmodern Dandy: Towards an Extensive Study," <http://www.academia.edu/3589528/The-hipster-as-the-postmodern-dandy-towards-an-extensive-study> (accessed October 18, 2017).

57. Maly and Varis, "Hipster," 650.

58. Janna Michael, "It's Really not Hip to be a Hipster: Negotiating Trends and Authenticity within the Cultural Field," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 15, vol. 2 (2015): 163-182.

59. cf. Frank, *Conquest*; Taylor, *Secular*, 473 and 483.

60. Schiermer, "Hipsters."

61. Brett McCracken, *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010)

62. Schiermer, "Hipsters," 170.

63. Vlaardingerbroek, "Reclaiming".

64. Especially in a time in which race and racial justice have become a most important concern in the academic study of religion, this demographic fact raises questions about the tensions between the ideals of diversity and inclusiveness and the reality of a festival such as Graceland that is predominantly white. Graceland seems not to be an attractive or welcoming space for non-white (migrant) Christians, reflecting a wider division within Dutch society between white religious (non-urban) communities and non-white, urban migrant communities. Moreover, the 'cultural appropriation' of Eastern spiritualities without any engagement with non-white populations, as found

in hippiedom, raises questions about cultural power and the religious other: does this particular interest in Eastern spirituality reflect a genuine beginning of an interreligious dialogue to which partners equally contribute, or is it an expression of what Lucia calls 'neocolonial logics of white possessivism' (Amanda J. Lucia, *White Utopias: The Religious Exoticism of Transformational Festivals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020, 10)? We cannot answer these questions on the basis of our present research. We stress, however, the urgency of the topic of race and religion for the study of religion in the Netherlands. To the best of our knowledge, the attention to this topic is still limited in our country - in contrast to, for instance, the United States, in which a couple of excellent studies have been published in recent years on race and religion in general, and race and Christianity in particular. See, among others, Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (New York: Liveright, 2020) and Gerardo Marti, *American Blindspot: Race, Class, Religion and the Trump Presidency* (Lanham, etc.: Rowman and Littlefield 2020). On whiteness, religious exoticism, and festival culture, see Amanda Lucia's aforementioned *White Utopias*.

REFERENCES

- Bennett, Andy, and Ian Woodward. "Festival Spaces, Identity, Experience and Belonging." In *The Festivalization of Culture*, ed. Andy Bennett, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward, 11-26. London, New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Bielo, James. "The 'Emerging Church' in America: Notes on the Interaction of Christianities." *Religion* 39, no. 3 (2009): 219–232.
- Bielo, James. *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity and the Desire for Authenticity*. New York, London: New York University Press, 2011.
- Buistraan, Richard. *The Jesus People Movement: A Story of Spiritual Revolution among the Hippies*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.
- Campbell, Collin. *The Easternization of the West: A Thematic Account of Cultural Change in the Modern Era*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007.
- Chryssides, George. *Exploring New Religions - Issues in Contemporary Religion*. London: Continuum, 1991.
- Featherstone, Mike. *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London [etc.]: SAGE, 2007.
- Frank, Thomas. *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Gauthier, François. "Intimate Circles and Mass Meetings: The Social Forms of Event-Structured Religion in the Era of Globalized Markets and Hyper-Mediatization." *Social Compass* 61, no. 2 (2014): 261-271.

Greif, Mark, Kathleen Ross, and Dayna Tortorici. *What was the Hipster? A Sociological Investigation*. New York: N+1 Foundation, 2010.

Heelas, Paul. *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity*. Oxford [etc.]: Blackwell, 1996.

Heelas, Paul. *Spiritualities of Life: New Age Romanticism and Consumptive Capitalism*. Oxford [etc.]: Blackwell, 2008.

Hellemans, Staf. "Pillarization (Verzuiling). On organized 'Self-contained Worlds' in the Modern World." *The American Sociologist* 51 (2020): 124-147.

Klaver, Miranda. *This is My Desire: A Semiotic Perspective on Conversion in an Evangelical Seeker Church and a Pentecostal Church in The Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Pallas/Amsterdam University Press, 2011.

Klaver, Miranda, Johan Roeland, Hijme Stoffels, Peter Versteeg, and Remco van Mulligen. "God Changes People: Modes of Authentication in Evangelical Conversion Narratives." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 32, no. 2 (2017): 237-251.

Kobes Du Mez, Kristin. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York: Liveright, 2020.

Lucia, Amanda. *White Utopias: The Religious Exoticism of Transformational Festivals*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020.

MacFarlane, Scott. *The Hippie Narrative: A Literary Perspective on the Counterculture*. London: McFarland, 2007.

Maffesoli, Michel. *The Time of the Tribes. The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1996.

Mailer, Norman. "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster." in *Advertisements for Myself*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1957.

Maly, Ico, and Piia Varis. "The 21st-Century Hipster: On Micro-Populations in Times of Superdiversity." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 19, no. 6 (2016): 637-653.

Marti, Gerardo, and Gladys Ganiel. *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity*. Oxford [etc.]: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Marti, Gerardo. *American Blindspot: Race, Class, Religion and the Trump Presidency*. Lanham etc.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020.

McCracken, Brett. *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010.

McLeod, Hugh. *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*. Oxford, New York [etc.]: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Mercadante, Linda A. *Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious*. Oxford [etc.]: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Michael, Janna. "It's Really not Hip to be a Hipster: Negotiating Trends and Authenticity within the Cultural Field." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 15, vol. 2 (2015): 163-182.

Miller, Timothy. *The Hippies and American Values*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Mulligen, Remco van. *Radicale protestanten: Opkomst en ontwikkeling van de EO, de EH en de ChristenUnie en hun voorlopers (1945-2007)*. Amsterdam: Buijten and Schipperheijn Motief, 2014.

Josh Packard and George Sanders, "The Emerging Church as Corporatization's Line of Flight." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28, no. 3 (2013): 437-455.

Roeland, Johan. *Selfation: Dutch Evangelical Youth Between Subjectivization and Subjection*. Amsterdam: Pallas/Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

Roeland, Johan, Miranda Klaver, Marten van der Meulen, Remco van Mulligen, Hijme Stoffels, and Peter Versteeg. "Can we Dance in this Place?": Body Practices and Forms of Embodiment in Four Decades of Dutch Evangelical Youth Events." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 27, no. 2 (2012): 241-256.

Schiermer, Bjørn. "Late-Modern Hipsters." *Acta Sociologica* 57, no. 2 (2014): 167-181.

Stoffels, Hijme C. *Wandelen in het licht: Waarden, geloofsovertuigingen en sociale posities van Nederlandse evangelischen*. Kampen: Kok, 1990.

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Thomas, Owen C. "Spiritual but not Religious: The Influence of the Current Romantic Movement." *Anglican Theological Review* 88, no. 3 (2006): 397-415.

Vlaardingerbroek, Katie. "When Coldplay Meets Christ." in *Typisch Evangelisch*, ed. Laura Dijkhuizen and Henk Bakker, 189-197. Amsterdam: Ark Media, 2017.

Vlaardingerbroek, Katie. *Reclaiming the Christian Hipster: The Role of 'the Countercultural' in New Innovative Missional Developments in The Netherlands*. Bachelor-thesis, University of Glasgow, 2018.