Emerging Evangelicals: An Ethnographic Study of a Christian Community House in Tauranga, New Zealand

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Abstract

Contemporary global evangelical Christianity, as exemplified by the Emerging Church movement, is a phenomenon which has many established and emergent trends. This is a study of how the young Christian residents of the Upper Room community house in Tauranga, New Zealand, and their wider institutional and socio-religious contexts, think about and live out this new style of evangelical Christianity across a range of contexts. This emergent religiosity differs markedly from what is typically thought to make up the evangelical style of Christianity, and is starting to take hold globally. My investigation explores how the residents embody contemporary global evangelical trends including non-denominationalism, community, small groups, and relational discipling and outreach. I investigate how these trends are of significance to the ways that the residents interact with one another, as well as others outside of the household. This research contributes to anthropological research on evangelical Christianity, with this new style of evangelicalism only just beginning to be acknowledged within the field. I also add to previous discussions in anthropology of the contemporary global evangelical aspects of megachurches and non-denominationalism. I argue that evangelism is an internal and external process, with my inclusion of the discipling of Christians challenging analyses based only on evangelisation of non-Christians.

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Abbreviations

AoG – Assemblies of God

BBC – Bethlehem Baptist Church

CMS – Church Missionary Society

COVID-19 – Corona Virus Disease identified in 2019

GYC – Global Youth Culture

MBC – Mount Baptist Church

NLM – No Longer Music

P/e – Pentecostal/evangelical Christianity

SMS – Steiger Missions School

SNZ/A leader – Steiger New Zealand/Australia Regional leader

TSCF – Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship

YWAM – Youth with a Mission

Chapter 1:
Introduction

"The anthropology of Christianity must balance the analysis of distinct groups – their histories, beliefs, practices, and tensions – with attention to the socio-religious contexts that frame them … especially vital for new Christian movements, where there is a self-conscious attempt to claim a distinctive identity and purpose" (Bielo 2009, 220)

This thesis examines how a group of young Christian adults living in a community house interact with one another, as well as others outside of the household, and how theologically and ritually, the members of the house are powerfully shaped by dominant and emergent trends within contemporary global evangelicalism. I will be analysing the daily lives and experiences of individuals living in Upper Room community house (hereafter referred to as "Upper Room", not its real name) in Tauranga, New Zealand, while also investigating the wider socio-religious contexts within which the house and its residents are embedded. From an institutional perspective, the community house is most immediately shaped by the influence of the large global mission organisation called Steiger International and its domestic expressions within the Steiger Tauranga City Team and the Steiger New Zealand ministry. With regards to Bielo's (2009) quote above, I see Upper Room, as well as Steiger, as embodying a new style of global evangelicalism that consciously distinguishes itself from an earlier wave of evangelical practice and belief. The global expansion of Pentecostal/evangelical (P/e) Christians can be seen in my research through the many national evangelical ministries that have been established by Steiger International.

The core argument of the thesis is that Upper Room community house, and the wider communities of Steiger Tauranga, Steiger New Zealand, and Steiger International, all embody crucial trends of a contemporary global style of evangelical Christianity that is postmodern and relational. As alluded to above, these trends are both established and emergent, and include: the identification of and focus upon a particular group of people to be evangelised; parachurch organisations; inter-denominationalism; non-denominationalism; 'Capital C Church' and the community of Christians; small groups and the small group movement; relational discipling; megachurches and contemporary worship; relational outreach; and the value of relevance. Of these factors, small groups and non-denominationalism are of particular relevance due to being key themes in various chapters, and will be introduced shortly. The 'Emerging Church' movement is also of major

significance in that it is an umbrella for many of the above factors. This phenomenon, which I will draw on as my analytical framework, will also be discussed shortly. I would first like to provide some background on the anthropology of Christianity, touching on anthropological research into Pentecostalism/evangelicalism (P/e), as this is the field of knowledge within which this research is positioned.

The Anthropology of Christianity

> *"... the anthropology of Christianity is a burgeoning subfield, reflecting a growth that has undoubtedly been led in its early stages by hugely increased interest in P/e* [Pentecostalism/evangelicalism]*"* (Coleman and Hackett 2015, 9)

Bielo (2009, 230) notes that the anthropology of Christianity as a "self-conscious enterprise" arrived "in earnest" in 2003 with a special issue of the journal *Religion* edited by Joel Robbins. This special issue is significant to the field as it highlighted two difficulties that "stand in the way of developing a viable anthropology of Christianity … [1] [the] unique cultural and historical relationship between Christianity and anthropology, one which has tended to make Christians into 'repugnant cultural others' … [and] [2] the difficulties of conducting substantive comparative research on a cultural object such as 'Christianity' without unduly reifying, essentializing or normalizing that object in the process" (Garriott and O'Neill 2008, 382). Robbins' (2003) seminal text was soon followed by other important early contributions from Cannell (2006), Engelke (2007), Engelke and Tomlinson (2006), Keane (2007), Smilde (2007), Bialecki (2008), Bielo (2007, 2008), Elisha (2008), Hann (2007), Howell (2007), Garriott and O'Neill (2008), Robbins (2007), and Scott (2005), throughout the decade (Bielo 2009).

As recorded by Bielo (2009, 230), anthropological research into Christianity has included studies on the globalization of prosperity theology (Coleman 2000; Wiegele 2005), motivations for conversion and sustained commitment (Keller 2005; Robbins 2004), the moral and social implications of semiotic ideologies (Engelke 2007; Keane 2007), the localization of transnational Christian discourses (Howell 2008), and practices of reading and scriptural hermeneutics (Bielo 2009a, b), amongst many other important themes. Cannell (2006, 8) notes that "Christianity was for many years marginalized in the ethnographic account". With 'community' being an important theme in Christianity, attention to this concept in the anthropology of Christianity is also worth noting. León Gómez (2019, 3) states that "Contemporary studies offering an anthropological or sociological analysis of communities are scarce". 'Intentional community', a community "consciously formed with a specific purpose in mind" is "a natural object of study for

anthropologists" (Brown 2002a, 3). Hovland (2016) asserts that the anthropology of Christianity has not investigated and observed conversations around problems of religion and space very well. With my research focusing on an intentional community, operating in the space of the Upper Room community house, I seek to bridge some of the gaps in the literature highlighted by the above authors.

Specifically, research on Pentecostalism/evangelicalism has been carried out on belief and conversion, diasporas, gender, language, materiality and media, personhood, and intersections with economic and political practice, but most notably on rupture (Coleman and Hackett 2015). Coleman (2010, 115) notes that "one of the most notable aspects of the burgeoning contemporary 'anthropology of Christianity' is that it contains so many examples of Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity, two areas that were largely ignored by many anthropologists a few decades ago". Of the above dominant themes, my research focuses most directly on belief and conversion.

Evangelicalism

Bebbington (1989) famously presented the basic tenets of evangelicalism as Conversionism, Activism, Biblicism, and Crucicentrism. Conversionism can be defined as "the belief that lives need to be changed" (Bebbington 1989, 3), and implies "the conviction that humans need to be turned away from sin and toward belief in God" (Coleman and Hackett 2015, 14). Activism can be defined as "the expression of the gospel in effort" (Bebbington 1989, 3), and indicates "the need to work at a number of levels, ranging from social reform to spreading the 'Good News' and its associated salvation to others" (Coleman and Hackett 2015, 14). Biblicism can be defined as "a particular regard for the Bible" (Bebbington 1989, 3), or as meaning that "Christian[s] should see scripture as the ultimate guide in life, encouraging a close relationship to sacred text and potentially implying skepticism toward 'merely' human traditions and institutions" (Coleman and Hackett 2015, 14). Finally, Crucicentrism can be defined as "a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross" (Bebbington 1989, 3), atonement for sin, or as "literally 'cross-centred,' expressing the notion that Christian existence is focused on Christ's death and subsequent resurrection" (Coleman and Hackett 2015, 14).

In this thesis, I will show how Upper Room and the wider Steiger communities exemplify trends and patterns of contemporary global evangelicalism that often go far beyond Bebbington's frequently used definition. I will specifically draw on the postmodern, evangelical 'Emerging Church' movement as an analytical framework, and will illuminate

its central emphases and themes within my ethnographic research. In my thesis I have found it vital to use the Emerging Church movement as an analytical framework, with the term 'evangelical' bearing certain negative connotations in New Zealand and globally, and Steiger and Upper Room refraining from using the term.

The Emerging Church Movement

The lives of Upper Room residents and the wider institutional fields within which they are positioned, exemplify what is called the Emerging Church movement, a key development within contemporary evangelicalism. The Emerging Church movement (an emic term used by the proponents of this movement) is:

> … a modern religious movement that developed primarily in the UK and the United States in the late twentieth century in order to counter the dominant institutional expressions of religion and provide an outlet for what movement insiders would call a more 'authentic' and 'relevant' faith (Packard 2016, 318; see also Todjeras 2019; Wollschleger 2012, 2015; Gibbs and Bolger 2005; Guest and Taylor 2006; Hunt 2008; Moritz 2008; Porter 2020).

Packard (2016) notes the rise of the mega-church movement, and a decrease in trust among young people towards social institutions and religious leaders, both in the United States and Europe, as socio-historical events which precipitated the development of the Emerging Church. The Emerging Church movement is difficult to define (Cooper 2017; Martí and Ganiel 2014; Bielo 2009; Drane 2006; DeYoung and Kluck 2008), and is sometimes referred to as a 'conversation' for those on the inside, with the movement still evolving, and its adherents defying definitions imposed by observers. Cooper (2017, 404) states that "Definitions threaten to reduce, restrain, or systematize" the Emerging Church movement. However, the most frequently used definition is the following provided by Gibbs and Bolger (2005, 44-45):

> Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures … Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.

I have chosen to use the term 'postmodern' throughout my thesis to refer to both the time period that the Emerging Church movement sees itself as functioning within (Gibbs and Bolger 2005; Willey 2019; Bargár 2015; Bader-Saye 2006; Todjeras 2019; McKnight 2006 as cited in Cooper 2017), and the attitudes and worldview that go along with this. Willey (2019, 87) views the Emerging Church movement as "a postmodern challenge", Bargár

(2015) puts forward that the postmodern context is fundamental to shaping the identity of the Emerging Church movement, Bader-Saye (2006, 14-15, 16) sees all in the Emerging Church as "understand[ing] themselves as emerging out of postmodern culture, or … emerging from the ruins of modernity" and notes that "the emerging conversation tends to be more effective at engaging postmodernity in pragmatic ways than in reflecting on it theoretically", Todjeras (2019, 290) describes the Emerging Church as having a "postmodern religiosity", while McKnight (2006) determines that Emerging Churches are "missional communities emerging in postmodern culture" (in Cooper 2017, 408). To understand postmodernity, it is vital to first understand its relative term, 'modernity'.

Theological dictionaries situate modernity as beginning with the Enlightenment, and roughly encompassing the period of Western history from the fifteenth century to the present (Espín and Nickoloff 2007; Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling 1999). However, Roberto S. Goizueta argues that modernity is "distinguished less by a specific time period than by a particular worldview; it is not so much a date as a mindset" (in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 890). Modernity is defined by "a confident affirmation of the autonomous, rational individual as the foundation of society" (Roberto S. Goizueta in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 1064), and as being a cultural worldview "dominated by science, consumerism, conquest, rationalism, mechanism, analysis, and objectivity" (McLaren 2002, 53).

Temporally, postmodernity is noted as referring to "the late twentieth-century Western society" (Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling 1999, 93), "the contemporary period in Western societies insofar as the various social, political, cultural, and religious features of these societies may be understood as differing from and superseding the features that characterized modernity in the West" (Roberto S. Goizueta in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 1064), and as "the significant social and cultural changes that have occurred in western societies since the 1960s" (Ward 2013b, 174). More broadly, postmodernism refers to the "entire complex of social, political, cultural, and religious characteristics, and to the worldview they reflect" (Roberto S. Goizueta in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 1064). Postmodernity is said to radically call into question "the very possibility of autonomy and rationality and, thus, the claim of the modern individual to a historical existence as a substantive, coherent self, or subject", with the self being conceived of as an artificial construct, and being, in reality, "a plurality of 'selves'" defined by the "complex web of interrelationships" (Roberto S. Goizueta in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 1064). Roberto S. Goizueta also states that "postmodernity's claim to have superseded modernity remains an

object of contention" (in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 891), with Kimball (2003) similarly positing that postmodern represents a change in worldview moving from the values and beliefs of the modern era to the new postmodern era, and is beyond modernity, but does not reject all modern values and beliefs.

The Emerging Church movement is relevant to my research on the residents of Upper Room, with previous research positioning it as fitting well with many "younger evangelicals" (Webber 2002), those in the age group of young adults in their mid-twenties and often up to the late thirties, and with millennial evangelicals, and some "postevangelicals" (Tomlinson 1995) (Markham 2010 as cited in Rivera-Puddle 2016; Ward 2013a; Packard 2016; Bader-Saye 2004, 2006; Wollschleger 2015; Todjeras 2019; Guest and Taylor 2006; Moritz 2008; Gallagher and Newton 2009; Porter 2020), and, as being very prominent in New Zealand (Ward 2013a; Gibbs and Bolger 2005; Packard 2016; Moritz 2008; Hammett 2009; Gibbs 2005). These facts relate to my work on the Steiger communities, including Upper Room, as these communities have a focus on young adults, and are present in New Zealand.

Additional aspects of the Emerging Church movement which are also of relevance to my research on Upper Room and the wider Steiger communities are a prioritisation of the 'Kingdom of God' perspective and non-denominationalism; seeing a difference between 'church' and 'Church'; inter-denominationalism; an emphasis on creativity; being outside the established church culture; tending to be small groups, being normally leaderless, making decisions based on consensus, and being prone to insularity; placing importance on community, relationships, and authenticity in discipleship and outreach; disagreeing about the size of megachurches and contemporary worship; critiquing conservative and manipulative evangelistic practices; aiming to be relevant in outreach; and weaknesses in the area of evangelism. These additional aspects will be explored more fully in the following chapters.

Anthropological research on the Emerging Church, specifically in the United States, has been carried out mainly by Bielo (2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2017), who conceptualises it as a movement of cultural critique. Bielo (2009, 219) looks at the "four points of dialogue" which characterise the Emerging Church's status: 'post-foundational' theology, 'ancient-future' worship, 'missional' evangelism, and a general posture of 'deconversion'. The points of 'ancient-future' worship and 'missional' evangelism are of most relevance to my research, due to the prominence placed on the ways of the early church, and the emphasis on 'relevant' outreach by Steiger communities. Bielo (2009, 220) sees research on the Emerging Church

as taking on "further intrigue in light of the recently developed 'anthropology of Christianity'". He (2009, 231) believes that all anthropologists of Christianity must ask the question: 'do new Christian movements challenge the existing order of discourse or do they maintain the agenda and field of play set by the existing discourses?'. Bielo (2012, 258) studies how evangelicals in the Emerging Church "seek a faith where human-human relationships are a precondition for human-divine relations to flourish", and sees that a desired sense of community is achieved by emerging evangelicals creating ritual structures that foster a highly relational religiosity. This article is relevant to my research through my focuses on 'relational discipling' and 'relational outreach'.

Aside from the works of Bielo, there is a dearth of anthropological research on the Emerging Church movement, which is why the literature I draw on is mainly from Christian writers, who carry clear ontological and religious biases, often perceiving the Emerging Church as a means through which the global church may grow instead of interrogating its anthropological or sociological dimensions. I maintain an awareness of these biases throughout the thesis. Bielo's research looks at patterns in the Emerging Church movement on a broader scale than my research, which is more locally specific. More widely, anthropologists of Christianity, and specifically of evangelical Christianity such as Coleman and Hackett (2015), refer to Bebbington (1989) to analytically examine the phenomenon of evangelical Christianity. Many of the specific aspects I look at are not addressed by existing literature as they are emergent realities not yet covered systematically by anthropologists.

Now I will outline some key elements of the Emerging Church movement: 'small groups' and the 'small group movement', and 'non-denominationalism', which I see as crucial to understanding the lives of the Upper Room residents. Other aspects of the Emerging Church movement mentioned earlier will be considered in detail through the course of the following chapters in my thesis.

Key elements of the Emerging Church movement

Within the evangelical world, 'small groups' can be defined as "voluntary, intentional gathering[s] of three to twelve people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship" (McBride 1990 as cited in Atkinson and Rose 2020, 548). Atkinson and Rose (2020, 547) highlight that:

> The use of small groups for Christian formation and leadership development can be traced from New Testament times (Jesus and the Twelve), to the Reformation (the early Anabaptists), to the post-

> reformation Pietistic movement (led by Philip Spencer), and to John Wesley's eighteenth-century system of disciple-making groups.

The small group movement is one which increased from the 1960s onwards due to the growth of megachurches, and the charismatic renewal, among other influences (Walton 2011). Additionally, Dougherty and Whitehead (2011, 93) note that small groups are "a prevalent feature of the Protestant megachurch movement", established to keep the values of community and relationships intact. On its evangelical connection, Ward (2013a, 78) states that "… charismatic and Pentecostal churches embraced the small group movement more readily than other churches". Willey (2019, 86) additionally sees small groups as an aspect of "every large Evangelical church".

Both small groups and the small group movement, as key dimensions of the Emerging Church and contemporary evangelicalism, are relevant to Upper Room and the churches that the residents attend. The above description of small groups encompasses the Upper Room residents intentionally gathering to achieve their shared goals of discipleship and evangelism, something I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 3. With the small group movement being one which increased in the 1960s (influenced by the charismatic movement), and one which was prevalent in megachurches (such as the churches I discuss in Chapter 4), it is also an aspect worth investigation. In Chapter 4, I discuss how, because Upper Room can be considered a small group in and of itself, the small groups that the residents' churches offer are of little interest to the residents.

Another crucial attribute of the Emerging Church movement and of the lives of Upper Room residents is non-denominationalism. Non-denominationalism is the practice of a Christian not formally aligning with a specific denomination, as well as the rise of churches and styles of worship that are not specific to any denomination. Various sources highlight that many non-denominational Christians typically adhere to an evangelical style of Christianity (Nash n.d.; Anderson 2013), and attend megachurches (Fath 2008; Turner and Salemink 2014). Other relevant literature describes evangelicalism as a cross-denominational renewal movement (Cray 2002), and as "… not confined to any one denomination, nor … a denomination in its own right" (McGrath 1994, 77). There is, therefore, something intrinsically non-denominational about evangelicalism.

As will be demonstrated throughout the thesis, many of the Upper Room residents view themselves as Christian but do not want to identify with any particular denomination. Instead they involve themselves in inclusive megachurches (which are often publicly non-denominational), and see themselves as part of the broader Christian community (referred to

as the 'Church Capital C'), aspects that I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4. Non-denominationalism is also of relevance to parachurch organisations (discussed further in Chapter 2), such as Steiger. Furthermore, parachurch organisations and the Church Capital C are of significance to the Emerging Church movement.

Methodology

Participants

My research was carried out with the eight residents of Upper Room, as well as one previous resident. These residents are a mixture of young men and women and their ages range from 18 to 31. Other participants in my research included the leader of the Steiger New Zealand ministry and the Steiger Tauranga City Team, titled the Steiger NZ/Australia Regional leader (SNZ/A leader), the Steiger Tauranga community house facilitator, and the Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship (TSCF) Waikato and Bay of Plenty Team Leader.

I recruited my participants through being close friends with a previous resident in the community house, and through having visited the community house on various occasions. Through this friendship and these visits, I discovered the existence of the Upper Room community house, and became intrigued about daily life in this setting. Several of the residents were already known to me and, when I raised the idea of this research with them through phone calls and Facebook messages, they gave support for it. From my pre-existing contacts in the house I sought to recruit other participants within the house on the same basis. I then contacted the house facilitator on the advice of my friend who was moving out of the community house. The community house facilitator was interested in the proposition, and wished to meet with me and the SNZ/A leader to discuss it further. When I met with them, they gave me permission to conduct research on the residents of Upper Room as they had all provided provisional consent, and given their support. Contact with Upper Room residents and Steiger New Zealand representatives was all established in advance of carrying out this research, and my research activities were conducted only after I had received ethics approval (with participants all receiving a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1), and signing a Consent Form (Appendix 2)).

All Steiger and Upper Room participants in this study have been given pseudonyms, and personal details or identifying characteristics have not been revealed, in order to protect and anonymise their identities. Consistent with the topic of my research, the pseudonyms given to participants are Biblical names. Furthermore, the community house has also been given a Biblical pseudonym, Upper Room, to protect and anonymise its identity.

Positionality

In my research I am an insider as I am in the same age category as the Upper Room residents. We share the 'youth language', and so I can more easily understand them, linguistically, culturally, and psychologically. However, there could also be disadvantages to being an insider in that I may have taken for granted certain interactions, or information given on what Steiger calls the 'Global Youth Culture', capitalised as per the Steiger website, (GYC), a topic to be unpacked in greater detail in the thesis.

I could also be considered an insider with some community house residents, due to being from Tauranga. Through my understanding of the area of Tauranga I am intimately familiar with the same spatial world as my participants, including an awareness of the relative positioning of their churches.

Despite the synergies noted above, I nonetheless consider myself an outsider due to not sharing the same religious ontology as any of the participants in my study, and being a secular humanist. I am in a similar position to the contributors in Coleman and Hackett's (2015, 11) edited volume, who the editors say "come from different religious backgrounds, and most would probably define themselves as agnostic or atheist in religious orientation". There are a range of benefits that derive from a secular researcher investigating a religious world. For instance, Arnold (2006, 275-276) states that "the training of anthropologists provides them with insight that may be threatening to social structures of Christian organizations" which can lead to "critiques that challenge the cultural assumptions of the American evangelical subculture and those of Christian institutions such as the church, para-church organizations, missions, and confessional colleges", and that such critiques "are important for the church because the Christian community needs to be more accountable and responsible in understanding how its culture affects its ministry, evangelism and biblical interpretation". As I do not share the same religious ontology, I also required participants to provide me with greater depth in their answers, due to something being not initially known to myself as an outsider, and was able to be personally detached and more objective.

Regarding how insider Christians perceive the researcher, Coleman and Hackett's (2015, 9-10, italics in the original) quote is relevant:

> Members of P/e [Pentecostalism/evangelicalism] often maintain their own, strongly held understandings of why an anthropologist has come to work amongst them: the fieldworker may explain that s/he has come to gather social scientific data, but informants may be equally convinced that God has sent *this* person to them and that it is their duty to convert someone who seems so keen to ask questions and participate in worship.

Ethnographic research

In my research I employed an ethnographic methodology anchored in participant observation, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and an analysis of relevant literature. Aside from the interviews, participants were not asked to do anything out of their ordinary routines. One Upper Room resident noted that "I like that we can just do things as we do, and then you get a perspective … you're seeing it the most out of anyone else, and I think that's really cool" (Reuben).

Participant Observation

I conducted participant observation through immersing myself in the residents' everyday lives, including in activities and events such as church services, flat meetings, the Women's Discussion Group outreach, Oktoberfest celebration, dinners with guests, ColourCollide performances, birthday parties and sleepovers, and guest-staying various weekends at Upper Room. I was also added to the Upper Room flat chat on the Signal app. I conducted my fieldwork intermittently from September 2020 to January 2021.

When staying I would contribute towards hospitality costs for food, power/internet, and board by giving a $20 contribution (koha) each weekend I stayed, as well as helping out with chores. After staying for a number of weekends I began to be seen as a part-flatmate, and would sometimes get asked, somewhat jokingly, when I was moving into Upper Room. I dealt with various moments of internal conflict in times such as these, where I felt at risk of becoming one of 'them', but had to keep my distance and hold my own as 'the researcher' and not 'the researched'. In being seen as a part-flatmate I was added to the FlatTrack app, designed by a resident, for the community house's grocery shopping, and on various occasions was provided with a spare key for the house. On numerous occasions residents noted that they enjoyed my presence, I was welcome to stay whenever, and they were grateful for my input in the community house. Effectively, in the end, I became a part of the community without living in the house. My role in the community was also evident to my friend that had previously lived at Upper Room, in her seeing that the residents embraced me, and that I was in on jokes and events of the community that she was not anymore.

The first weekend I guest-stayed at Upper Room I slept in the music room on an air mattress. However, as people moved out I was invited to sleep in one of the main bedrooms on a mattress (as in Figure 1).

Figure 1: Guest-staying sleeping arrangements at Upper Room community house

As with Black's (2015, 140) study, my participant observation required "partial absorption and acceptance into the culture … Acceptance necessitated extended periods of time spent in developing relationship, having conversation, building trust and observing behaviors and customs in order to best describe the essence of group life and experience".

Focus Group Discussions

I planned to meet with the eight Upper Room residents in a focus group setting at least twice in the research (to begin and end my data collection); however, this happened only once. This was due to both time constraints and as this single focus group discussion, and the semi-structured interviews that followed, provided me with sufficient data. This focus group was held in the lounge of Upper Room with all eight residents. In this discussion I asked the residents about how community is constructed and performed in the community house, touching on the community in Tauranga, and also about their thoughts on the GYC. Through first observing them as a focus group I was able to see how they interacted with each other, and follow leads from these observations.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with all participants. Using this method both allowed a consistent approach to all participants and promoted continuous dialogue with each participant. Research participants were interviewed over the course of three months (September – November 2020). Interviews took between half an hour and four and a half hours, and were audio recorded and transcribed. The content of interviews featured a mixture of questions about certain aspects of Steiger (origins, philosophy, values, focus on the GYC, evangelism, and participants' roles), the community house (development, thoughts on community living, residents' relationships with each other, and its outward

focus), the participants' Christian faith (introduction to and importance of), the secular world (thoughts on this, and their role in its conversion), and participants' thoughts about quotes from relevant literature based on these aspects.

I also offered participants the chance to discuss other relevant information with regards to these questions. The majority (six) of my interviews with Upper Room residents were held at their community house, with the remaining two being held at a café and a park. For three other participants, semi-structured interviews were held at their houses, and one at the University of Waikato Tauranga campus. Jamieson (2002, 10) notes that when interviews are conducted in interviewees' homes "in a relaxed conversational manner" the researcher is "able to pick up on the hesitations, gestures and underlying feelings of the interviewees and explore these for a richer understanding of experience and faith journey".

Thesis Overview

The thesis structure represents a gradual expansion and widening of contextual scope, beginning with a discussion of the wider national and international socio-religious contexts, followed by an ethnographic description of Upper Room before extending outward to consider the formal ritual life of its residents within their respective churches, and, finally, investigating the relationship of house residents with the wider society around them.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 looks at positioning the Upper Room community house within the socio-religious contexts of the local (Steiger Tauranga City Team), national (Steiger New Zealand), and international (Steiger International) Steiger teams and communities, as well as within local, national, and international connections to evangelical Christianity. Steiger International's origins, Missions School, its focus on the 'Global Youth Culture', its values, its role as a parachurch organisation, and its national ministries will be explored. This chapter also briefly looks at the growing secularism in New Zealand, as well as the charismatic movement of the 1960s – 1980s and its influence on Christianity in Tauranga, to position Steiger locally with the Steiger New Zealand ministry and the Steiger Tauranga City Team. In this chapter, the evangelical concepts I explore are: the identification of and focus upon a particular group of people to be evangelised, parachurch organisations, inter-denominationalism, and non-denominationalism (some of which are central features of the Emerging Church movement).

Chapter 3 specifically investigates the setting of the Upper Room community house introduced and facilitated by the Steiger Tauranga City Team, and looks at how the residents of the house 'disciple' one another. I begin by looking at the setting and social organisation

of the community house through exploring the concept of intentional community and the community house's establishment as part of Steiger's strategy for reaching the 'Global Youth Culture', and investigating its flat meetings and dinner fellowship. The trends and patterns of contemporary global evangelicalism that are exemplified in the lives of the residents explored in this chapter are non-denominationalism, small groups, and 'relational discipling'. The Emerging Church movement is also discussed in further detail in relation to these trends and patterns.

Then, in Chapter 4, I observe the settings of the churches that the Upper Room community house residents regularly attend, and look at how evangelical Christian elements in these churches are experienced by the residents. These elements include the concepts of the 'Church Capital C', megachurches and contemporary styles of worship, and the small group movement (all of which were influenced by the charismatic movement). I will provide brief descriptions of the three churches attended by residents: Bethlehem Baptist Church, Mount Baptist Church, and Lifezone, all located in Tauranga City. Connections to the Emerging Church movement will be made through looking at the earlier-discussed elements.

Chapter 5, the final substantive chapter, widens the setting to the world outside of the Upper Room community house, local churches, and the Church. Here I discuss the evangelism of the Upper Room residents and the wider Steiger communities, and their outreach efforts towards non-Christian members of the 'Global Youth Culture'. I begin by discussing Steiger's main thoughts on these non-Christians. I will make further connections between Upper Room and the wider Steiger communities to the Emerging Church movement through main trends and patterns of contemporary global evangelicalism that they say they exemplify, namely the emphasis placed on the evangelical value of relevance, and outreach that is relational. I will show that in reality there are weaknesses of evangelicals in the area of evangelism.

Chapter 6, my concluding chapter, summarises the main arguments of my thesis, discusses how my research has contributed to the anthropology of Christianity and understandings of Christianity in New Zealand, and provides some personal concluding reflections.

Chapter 2:
Socio-religious contexts of the community house

"… reaching a lost world is not something any one church or organisation can do on its own" (Lee 2004, 12)

The aim of this chapter is to show how the Upper Room community house, established by the local Steiger Tauranga City Team (of the Steiger New Zealand ministry), is positioned at the intersection of a variety of global and local spheres of Christian influence. This chapter begins by discussing Steiger International within a global context, including its origins, its Missions School, its focus on the 'Global Youth Culture' (GYC), its values, its existence as a parachurch organisation, and its ministries. I will then delve into the historical contexts of Christianity, nationally in New Zealand through looking at the growing secularism, and locally in Tauranga, through looking at the charismatic movement of the 1960s – 1980s. By doing this, the positioning of Steiger locally can be examined.

Steiger International

Steiger's origins

According to its manifesto, Steiger International is a "rapidly-growing, worldwide mission organization that is called to reach and disciple the Global Youth Culture for Jesus" (Steiger n.d.e, [no longer available at this URL]). It was founded in the Netherlands in the early 1980s by Americans, David and Jodi Pierce, who were spending their nights 'crying out to God' in the forest, and who wished to reach people 'on the fringe' (Ezra, a Steiger representative). Its beginnings centred on a Bible study on a barge in Amsterdam, at Steiger (the Dutch word for pier) 14, and an evangelistic music and theatrical production group, No Longer Music (NLM), who dramatised Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection, in night clubs, city squares, and festivals. Consistent with evangelical initiatives globally, the purpose of both of these ventures was to reach out to people who were 'corrupted' by materialist, secular lifestyles and thereby thought to be in need of saving through a personal encounter with the 'real Jesus', one who is relevant, and to communicate the Gospel as something which is not a dead, empty tradition of the past, but rather is about a "radical dude" (Ezra). While the Bible study group, which began in 1983, was initially aimed at reaching punks and anarchists, NLM and the subsequent creative evangelism of Steiger are aimed at reaching what they call the Global Youth Culture (discussed in more detail below),

a focus since 2003. NLM is used as a "tool to communicate the Gospel of Jesus to these young people" and serves as a "pioneer" and a "catalyst" for Steiger's mission (Steiger n.d.b).

Steiger Missions School

One of the ways Steiger aims to reach the GYC is through teaching creative individuals how to use their 'gifts' to preach the Gospel. Steiger's website states that:

> In 2003, in response to the need to raise up the next generation of radical missionaries, imparting to them the lessons and principles learned in over 20 years of front-line ministry, Jodi Pierce started the Steiger Missions School. As a direct result, a worldwide missions organization focused on reaching the Global Youth Culture was born (Steiger n.d.b).

Steiger Missions School (SMS) is located within a small town, Krögis, in Germany, and has three emphases: (1) "seeking God through prayer and study of the Word in an undistracted environment", (2) "teaching and discussion on evangelism and discipleship to reach the Global Youth Culture", and (3) "powerful, engaging action as students participate in some of Steiger's front line missionary work" (Greenwood 2019, 156). The school offers lectures on the GYC from Monday to Friday, on Saturdays creative outreaches are held in the nearby city, and on Sundays students take part in a 'seeking God' time in solitude. During the 10-week course, the students also take part in a 'media and internet fast', where they can use their electronic devices only once a week, for one hour. A shorter two-week version of SMS, called a Compact School, is also offered. Within my study, various residents of the Steiger Tauranga community houses have been students at SMS. One of two Upper Room residents that attended SMS noted that it is "all about how to use your art in a mission environment. How to be an artist, and a missionary basically".

As touched on in Chapter 1, Steiger exemplifies aspects of the Emerging Church movement. The Emerging Church similarly places an emphasis on the creativity of its evangelists in following the creative power of God (Kimball 2003; Hammett 2009; Taylor 2005; Webber 2002). Rick Warren refers to those in the Emerging Church as "cultural-creatives who think and feel in postmodern terms" (in Kimball 2003, 7). Additionally, Taylor (2005, 61, 69) says that "There is room in the theology of the emerging church for the creative power of God", and that "We are being called by both culture and Christian faith to download creativity". These statements show how the various Steiger communities could be viewed as an emerging church, through their emphasis on creativity.

Steiger and the 'Global Youth Culture'

So, what is the Global Youth Culture, and how does Steiger perceive it? Director of Steiger Europe, Luke Greenwood (2019, 42-43, 18-19), defines the GYC, which is the focus of its mission, as "the predominant and mainstream culture of young people in every city around the world", and "The current urban generation, connected by consumerism, social media, and the entertainment industry … [which] hold[s] the same values, listen[s] to the same music, watch[es] the same movies, and shar[es] the same posts". Ezra added that the GYC are "young adults … 17-35". Kimball (2003, 59) similarly argues that people raised in the "post-Christian era (beginning c. A.D. 2000)" are "shaped by a global, pluralistic atmosphere" and have "instant exposure to global news, global fashion, global music, and global religions". Steiger believes that the GYC is "largely influenced by one predominant worldview: secular humanism [where] God is dead and … [they] are at the centre … and consumerism is … [their] religion" (Greenwood 2019, 19). Steiger believes that secular humanism is "the perfect partner for the consumer drive of this global culture … [and that] consumerism encourages and is encouraged by secular humanism" (Greenwood 2019, 55-56). In my interview with Ezra he noted that the young adults in the community houses are also part of the GYC. Steiger's definition of the GYC is a vast reduction and oversimplification of an immense diversity of young people's lifeworlds globally. As such, it is more productive to view the GYC as an ideological instrument fashioned by Steiger to construct a target for its evangelisation efforts.

Steiger considers that those 'on the fringe' within the GYC exhibit certain cultural, social, or economical differences or are marginal because they are "considered to be too different from the status quo" (Phoebe). Phoebe noted that people 'on the fringe':

> … can be really lonely and so as an organisation we want people to know that they are loved and accepted (by us but most of all by God who created them) no matter how different they are or how hard their life has been.

Through its definition of and focus on the GYC, and its desire to reach people 'on the fringe', Steiger is actively creating a 'lost generation' that needs to be saved, thus legitimising its evangelical efforts.

Steiger's treatment of a very wide variety of cultural expressions under the monolithic term Global Youth Culture reduces youth to a single form, and their diversity to sameness. Through my positionality as a young adult, and as an anthropology graduate, I can see that although there are similarities, there are also differences in perspectives and positions within the GYC, as is the case in any cultural group. Additionally, because Steiger has an understanding of the identity crises and developments that young adults deal with,

this gives it, as well as other similar parachurch organisations, a means, motive, and opportunity to target this age group.

Steiger's Values

Steiger's targeting of the Global Youth Culture rests on five core values that show an evangelistic nature. Steiger's values of Seek God, Courage, The Cross, Holiness, and Relevance align very closely with the basic tenets of evangelicalism outlined by Bebbington (1989), discussed in Chapter 1. These values form a broad theological framework through which Upper Room operates, as manifest within the *Community House Agreement* (Appendix 3) that states that "The Steiger Community houses believe in the values of the greater Steiger community" and the lives of Upper Room residents.

Regarding the value of **Seek God**, Greenwood (2019, 152) notes that "The foundation of everything we do stems from a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ", and that Christians can passionately seek God through diligent prayer, in-depth study of the Bible, and heartfelt praise and worship. In looking at another of its values, **Courage**, Steiger advocates that this "… comes from a deep trust in God and His promises developed by diligent study of His word and daily commitment to seeking Him". This value was visible at the Upper Room community house, as can be seen in Figure 2.

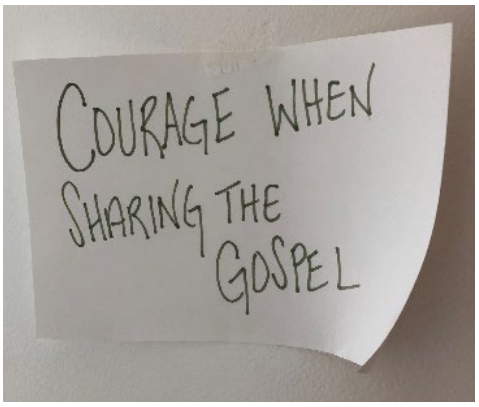

Figure 2: Poster in Upper Room community house

Regarding its value of **The Cross**, Greenwood (2019, 152) states that Steiger aims to "demonstrate the power of God by lifting up the cross outside of the church". Another of Steiger's values, **Holiness**, is based around living a holy and pure lifestyle through the desire to obey and serve God, and being accountable for sins (Greenwood 2019, 153). Steiger's remaining value is that of **Relevance**: "to relevantly … communicate the message of the Cross in a language that the Global Youth Culture can understand" (Greenwood 2019, 152). I will explore the value of relevance further in Chapter 5, with this being the main Steiger

value that I observed being carried out by Upper Room residents. All of these defining core values mark Steiger as a strongly evangelical organisation.

The values of The Cross and Relevance, in particular, can be linked to Steiger's existence as a parachurch organisation, with Ezra saying that parachurches exist to serve and partner with the Church, and to help the Church to be more relevant.

Steiger as a parachurch

"In terms of Steiger, we're not a church … I think generally they call us a parachurch"
(Ezra)

Steiger is a parachurch organisation. The term 'parachurch' is defined as "along side of the church" (White 1983, 19), or as "*beside* or *beyond the church*" (Willmer, Schmidt, and Smith 1998, xii, italics in the original). The term 'parachurch' describes "Christian organizations that work beyond the church yet often work for the same goal – the advancement of the Gospel" (Willmer, Schmidt, and Smith 1998, 25). Further, Wilson-Hartgrove (2008, 145) describes parachurches as coming "'alongside' churches but [being] independent of them".

As a parachurch, Steiger is aiming to bridge the gap between The Church (the wider Christian community both nationally and globally) and The Global Youth Culture, as can be seen in Figure 3 below. Steiger is not a church or denomination itself, but advances Christian evangelical objectives both in support of and beyond established churches. As Steiger aims its operations beyond the church, it has the opportunity to disseminate and promote Christian teachings and values outside of church walls, in a way that it considers is relevant and more easily accessible to non-Christians.

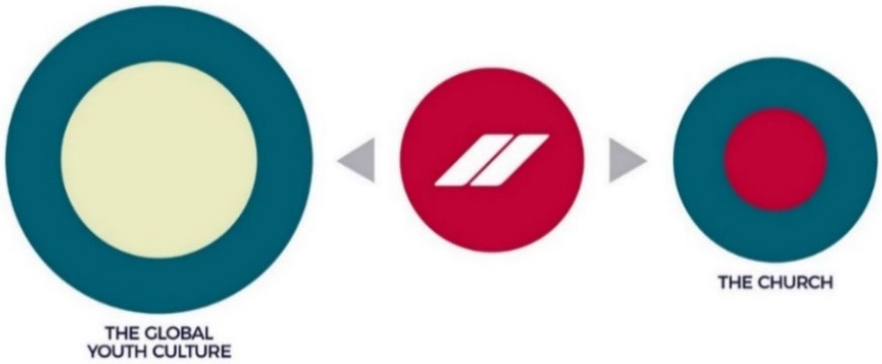

Figure 3: Steiger (in the middle) as a parachurch bridging the gap (Steiger n.d.c, [this image is no longer available])

Parachurches have "mushroomed, particularly since the end of World War II" (Willmer, Schmidt, and Smith 1998, xii). White (1983, 18) notes that in the 1960s:

> … many [church] pastors viewed the parachurch as a temporary phenomenon or a small irritant needed to spur the church to renewal. Today the exploding number and power of parachurch groups appear to be a permanent and growing fixture in the evangelical community as it approaches the twenty-first century.

Within the literature, parachurch organisations are described as being non-denominational, inter-denominational, and evangelical (Scheitle, Dollhopf, and McCarthy 2017; Morenammele and Schoeman 2020; Brown and Silk 2016; Jamieson 2002; Willmer, Schmidt, and Smith 1998; White 1983).

Parachurches can be considered as non-denominational in being described as "providing religious goods and services outside of any congregational or denominational sponsorship" (Scheitle, Dollhopf, and McCarthy 2017, 505), or as inter-denominational due to "… includ[ing] people from many denominational backgrounds" (Jamieson 2002, 17), and "speak[ing] for believers in all denominations" (Willmer, Schmidt, and Smith 1998, 33). Non-denominationalism can be seen in Steiger International not being connected to a particular church, or a particular denomination, and many of its members, including many of the Upper Room residents, being non-denominational Christians. Non-denominationalism can also be seen in the concepts of 'the Kingdom perspective' and the 'Church Capital C', discussed in interviews with various participants, as well as in relevant literature (White 1983; Willmer, Schmidt, and Smith 1998). Ezra said that "we say Church … capital C, as in believers around the world … I call it a Kingdom view, as in 'this is God's kingdom'". I will look further into this idea of having a community of Christians, the difference between Church and church, and the significance of these to the Emerging Church movement, in Chapters 3 and 4. Steiger is considered as an inter-denominational organisation in that, along with some of its members being non-denominational, others come from a range of Christian denominations. Ezra stated that "we're inter-denominational … all in the same team".

Other parachurch organisations and movements which have relevance to my research on Steiger are the global mission organisation, Youth with a Mission (YWAM), and the New Zealand evangelical Christian student movement, Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship (TSCF). Wollschleger (2015, 108) highlights that "religious movements do not just operate in relation to the world but also in relationship to each other", which can be seen in the connections that Steiger has to both YWAM and TSCF. These two organisations/movements are also both focused on young people, as well as discipleship and evangelism. A resident of Upper Room said of YWAM that "They're another bunch of people who do outreach working towards the same purposes" (Ada). More specifically,

YWAM and TSCF are linked with Steiger Tauranga and Upper Room. While the Oxford (South Island) ministry of YWAM has joined with Steiger Tauranga to carry out evangelism in the form of street interviews and community potlucks in Tauranga, the Waikato/Bay of Plenty TSCF team has joined with Steiger Tauranga on projects including *The Mark Drama*, and an evidence-based display of *The Resurrection: Hoax or History?* Various Upper Room residents have connections with YWAM through taking part in Discipleship Training Schools or attending gap years they held, and another has been involved with TSCF while studying at Toi-Ohomai Institute of Technology in Tauranga. Young people are highlighted by Brown (1996) as being a focus of some inter-denominational or non-denominational movements, and by White (1983) as a target of some parachurches.

Steiger International's Ministries

Steiger operates through various 'ministries' and 'city teams'. Reflecting its international status, it has ministries in the United States of America, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Finland, Ukraine, Belarus, Lebanon, and New Zealand, with new teams starting in Portugal, Russia, and Kazakhstan, as can be seen in Figure 4 below. Steiger's ministries are run by city teams, with the national ministries operating as figureheads, or banners, for the city teams. A Steiger city team has many significant roles, a number of which are of particular relevance to this research. Steiger's website states that Steiger city teams: "establish a regular, relational presence in the secular scene", "engage in regular creative evangelism", "create spaces that foster discipleship relationships that act as a bridge to the local church", "host large-scale, evangelistic events", "establish a network of church and ministry partnerships", and "invest in young leaders and influencers" (Steiger n.d.d).

Figure 4: Steiger International's ministries (Steiger n.d.a, [this image is no longer available])

Historical Context of Steiger in New Zealand

As noted above, Steiger International has a ministry in New Zealand. One of the city teams that falls under the Steiger New Zealand banner is the Steiger Tauranga City Team. Before talking about these local Steiger ministries and teams, I will set them up historically and contextualise them within the backdrops of secularism in New Zealand, and the charismatic movement of the 1960s – 1980s in Tauranga. These two historical processes will explain the contexts in which Steiger operates.

Secularism in New Zealand

"[New Zealand] *is best described as a secular country with a Christian cultural heritage"*
(Geering 2007, 32)

Early colonisation of New Zealand was shaped powerfully by Christian interests, beginning with the arrival of the (evangelical) Church Missionary Society (CMS), in 1814 (Kauffman 1990; Nauck 2014), and followed by the arrival of Wesleyans, Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Baptists, Brethren, Salvation Army, Seventh-day Adventists, Churches of Christ, Quakers, and Mormons (Nauck 2014; Brown 1996). New Zealand has often been referred to as 'God's Own Country', derived from a poem written by Thomas Bracken, and popularised by New Zealand's longest serving prime minister, Richard John Seddon. Around 100 years ago, going to church on Sunday was a normal part of life in New Zealand, with there being "a rare family who did not have some connection with the church" (Ward 2016, 172).

Until the mid to late 1960s, Christianity had a large influence on the lives of New Zealanders (Troughton 2016; Ward 2013b, 2016; Lineham 2017). However, since the 1960s New Zealand has become increasingly secular, with Geering (2007, 29) pointing out that "It is sometimes claimed … [to be] the most secular country in the Western world … [through its extrication of] itself from its Christian past rather more than any other country shaped by European culture". This can be seen in Figure 5 below. Other academics, such as Troughton (2016, 11), add that "in global terms, the New Zealand situation is relatively unusual", and evangelical Christian commentator, Stuart Lange (in Nauck 2014), highlights that "Two centuries on [from 1814], Christianity in this country faces a very different cultural context. Many New Zealanders now have very little exposure to Christianity, and have little or no idea what the Christian faith is about". Academics have put the increase in secularity in New Zealand down to "new rights movements and cultures of protest and experimentation challeng[ing] existing authorities, including religious ones" (Troughton 2016, 13), and

"cultural and social changes … individualism, privatism, relativism, pluralism, and anti-institutionalism … [and] suburbanization" (Ward 2016, 175).

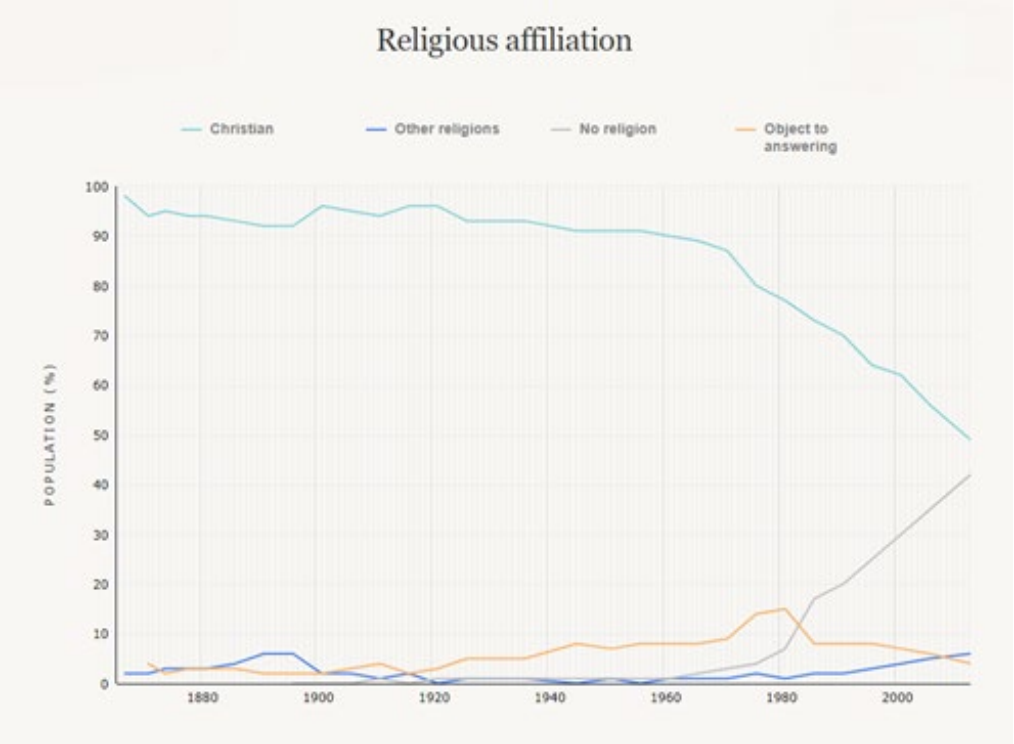

Figure 5: Religious affiliation in New Zealand 1867-2013 (Walrond n.d.)

In consulting New Zealand Census figures, I noticed quite dramatic changes that have taken place since 2001. In the 2001 Census, 29.6% of New Zealanders identified as having 'no religion' which increased to 48.2% in 2018, and in contrast in 2001 58.92% of New Zealanders identified with a Christian faith which decreased to 36.5% in 2018. In the 2018 Census, New Zealanders who did not affiliate with a religion outnumbered those who affiliated with Christianity for the first time (Stats NZ n.d.; Stats NZ 2019; 1 News 2019; Wikipedia n.d.). As can be seen in the above quotes and in the data, both academic and religious sources note the secularity of contemporary New Zealand. On this, an Upper Room resident, Micah, believes that "It's not that more people have turned away from the church, it's more people are honest about the fact that they're not really Christian". Lange states that:

> In the context of today, New Zealand Christians face new challenges of living their faith well, and of explaining it more effectively to others. How well they rise to that challenge will help determine the future of Christianity in Aotearoa New Zealand (in Nauck 2014).

I will address these challenges in Chapters 3 and 5 respectively. With these challenges being relevant to the group of New Zealand Christians that I am researching, the secular context in which they operate, as I have just discussed, is illuminated.

Impact on Tauranga of the charismatic movement of the 1960s – 1980s

The western Bay of Plenty has *"long been … open to the fresh move of God"* (Coad and Knudsen 2010, 20)

Along with New Zealand more broadly having a Christian heritage, the city of Tauranga specifically also has a history where Christianity has played a large role, with the city and the surrounding western Bay of Plenty being referred to as "New Zealand's Bible Belt" during the 1980s and 1990s by the media (Coad and Knudsen 2010; Jeanette Knudsen, email communication, November 20, 2020; Peter Lineham, email communication, June 22, 2021). Jeanette Knudsen (in email communication), a Mount Baptist Church (MBC) congregant and co-author of *Fire at the Mount: The Story of Revival at Mount Maunganui Baptist Church* (Coad and Knudsen 2010), noted that this term being used to describe Tauranga is a result of the charismatic movement, and the consequent growth of evangelical and charismatic churches, which includes two of the churches in my study: Bethlehem Baptist Church (BBC) and MBC. Other churches in Tauranga which grew during this period of expansion and intensification are Tauranga Anglican Holy Trinity Church, Ōtūmoetai Baptist Church, Tauranga Assemblies of God (AoG) (rebranded as City Church and C3), Elim Church, Tauranga South Baptist Church (now Centre Point), and St Peters Church (Jeanette Knudsen, email communication, November 20, 2020). Both BBC and Lifezone, another church in my study, are situated in suburbs in Tauranga with Biblical names – Bethlehem and Judea. These suburbs got their names from Christian missionaries who tried to help resettle many Māori whose land was confiscated during the New Zealand Wars (Bay of Plenty Times 2014; McCloy 2006).

Within New Zealand, and Tauranga specifically, churches in the 1960s – 1980s experienced a "fresh spiritual awakening" (Kauffman 1990, 209) and "significant force in church renewal" (Keeley 1985, 189) in what was called the charismatic movement. Davidson and Lineham (1987, 324) highlight that in New Zealand the charismatic movement "affect[ed] the mainstream churches to a degree paralleled in few other western countries". This global movement originated as the uptake of Pentecostalist Christianity, namely, the charismata or spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit, and a more experiential and enlivened worship through the use of more contemporary music and instruments, developing small groups and emphasising church as community, as well as closer and more intimate personal relationships (Dowley 1977; Ward 2013a; Janzen 2013; Jamieson 2002), by non-Pentecostal, mainstream Protestant churches and denominations, from the 1960s onwards.

With many Christian denominations being present in New Zealand at this time, some experienced this differently to others. Baptist churches are regarded as being "the church influenced the most by the charismatic movement" (Ward 2013b, 187) with numbers growing rapidly from the middle of the twentieth century, "taking advantage of an evangelical surge" (Lineham 2017, 17). Additionally, Brown (1985, 108) posits that there was a "presence of charismatic Christians in 'practically every [Baptist] church'". This was not without initial misgivings and strong opposition to begin with, however (Ward 2013b). Open Brethren churches' feelings were extensive and divisive, in a way that no other church assembly in New Zealand was, with some being tolerant and others being opposed (Lineham 1982). Lineham (1982, 27) says that at the time "Brethren observers interpreted it as a movement inspired by the Devil … it was an instrument of Satan himself". The movement also "induced considerable strain among Brethren" and "overall, there was some diminution of membership" (Brown 1985, 108). However, over time, a "softening of attitudes", "tolera[nce] [of] the movement", and "willingness to learn from it" came about (Brown 1985, 108). Churches of these denominations are touched on later, due to Upper Room residents' attendance at them.

Despite the charismatic movement's impact on local church life, it did not have as much impact on the increasing secularity of New Zealand society more generally. It is highlighted in Davidson (1997, 173), that "religious pluralism and a substantial secularisation of New Zealand life, worked against a wholesale return to evangelical Christianity even when warmed up by classical Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Renewal". Reed (2014, 67) highlights that in the United States "by the 1990s and the beginning of this century … Evangelical churches … beg[an] to lose members". This decline in Evangelical Christian adherence can also be seen in the statistics from censuses in New Zealand from the later years of the charismatic movement, and the following decades. In 1986, those who referred to themselves as evangelicals or had nonconformist denominations in Tauranga was 7.88% of the population. This decreased to 6.94% in 1991, 6.1% in 1996, 6% in 2001, and 5.97% in 2006 (Peter Lineham, email communication, June 22, 2021). Lineham also noted that, at the same time, the major Christian denominations were in dramatic decline. It appears that, although the charismatic movement caused an explosion of Christian activity during the 1960s to 1980s, the fruits of the renewal movement have somewhat declined. I suggest that Steiger's operation in Tauranga, through the establishment of community houses, is an attempt at reversing this trend in Tauranga.

Kevin Ward (2013b, 191) describes the charismatic movement as "… counter to the established church culture" and a movement that aimed to bring dynamism and charisma into the church and do away with routinisation and rationalisation of church life in the West (Ward 2013a). I see the Emerging Church movement as also counter to the established church culture, and following in the footsteps of the charismatic movement, but in a postmodern time as opposed to modern. As Steiger is "counter to the established church culture" in its presence as a parachurch, it could be considered as an emerging church. I believe that both the charismatic movement and the Emerging Church movement also engage in a critique of the surrounding religious marketplace. When considering Steiger as an example of an emerging church, the possibility of its presence in Tauranga, and more widely New Zealand, reigniting evangelical Christianity makes the connections between the charismatic movement and the Emerging Church movement of great significance. I have found that the increasing trends towards secularism within Tauranga and New Zealand contextualise Steiger's operations with more rationality and a sounder analytical basis than the reasoning given to me by Steiger representatives.

Steiger New Zealand

In my interview with Ezra, I was told that Steiger New Zealand was established in 2012, following a 'Moses conversation' he had with God. Ezra noted that he felt that God was calling him back to his home country, from Steiger's key base in Germany, to set up a ministry. Both he and Phoebe added that the high youth suicide rate in New Zealand was another reason that ministry would be beneficial in New Zealand, believing that this high rate is reflective of people having no hope, being broken and lonely, and in need of community. Due to believing that young New Zealanders need community, the first City Team set up by Steiger New Zealand, in Tauranga, has a strong community focus. The idea of 'reverse mission' is relevant to Steiger's treatment of New Zealand as a mission field, in that in reverse missions the missionised return to the missionary's country to evangelise (Fraser Macdonald, email communication, May 3, 2021).

Steiger New Zealand set up the Tauranga City Team in 2013 with the creation of its first community house. A resident of Upper Room (Micah) characterised this first community house, as well as the other two Steiger Tauranga community houses, as siblings, to show a familial connection, but also differences, among the community houses. I have found their characterisations useful in this sense, and so have employed them in my thesis. The first community house was given the name of 'the Star Golden Child' (by Micah), due

to it being the original community house, and the one that Steiger Tauranga focused on. On his initial visit to the location of what would become the first community house, Ezra said that "it was empty … we prayed, and it was like a holy moment … I said 'Where do I sign?'". I will talk about the community houses in my discussion of the Steiger Tauranga City Team below.

Steiger also has a city team in Wellington, which was set up in September 2019. With the inception of Steiger New Zealand, there were considerations of a city team being set up in Wellington first, due to it being "New Zealand's creative space" and being home to a large youth population (Ezra). However, due to financial and strategic reasons, Steiger Tauranga was set up first. I was informed during my research that Steiger Wellington is considering following in the footsteps of Steiger Tauranga in setting up community houses.

Steiger Tauranga City Team

Steiger's city teams are "dynamic, multi-gifted, and multi-denominational missionary team[s] …, specialised in reaching the Global Youth Culture of … key urban centre[s]"
(Greenwood 2019, 149)

Tauranga was chosen as the site for the first Steiger city team in New Zealand, due to the SNZ/A leader having many connections through his local church, BBC, which helped strategically and financially. To justify its strategic approach, Steiger needs to operate within what it sees as a morally defunct world, where it locates the GYC. During the focus group discussion that I had with all Upper Room residents, the 'urban centre' of Tauranga was described as "lacking community" (Micah, Philip, Jemima, and Ada), and as "not a very youth-friendly city" (Micah, Ada, and Keziah). With Steiger Tauranga being very community-focused, there is an emphasis on creating a sense of community and connection for the youth and young adults that choose to stay in this ever-growing city which is often thought of as 'retirement central', and is viewed as being "very broken just below the surface" (Ezra). Ezra stated that "On the surface, Tauranga looks successful but regardless of financial position or geographical location there are many who are struggling with the very real challenges [of depression, suicide, addiction, self-harm]", which became evident to Steiger Tauranga through the results of their art exhibition, *Diaries of Despair*. By presenting Tauranga as a city that is 'not very youth-friendly', 'lacking community' and 'broken', Steiger Tauranga is providing justification and legitimacy for its evangelistic enterprises of connecting these young adults through the power of the 'Good News'. Greenwood (2019, 142) says that "The Global Youth Culture faces a crisis of relationship. And genuine community around the Word is the answer. A community centred on the gospel

is often someone's first encounter with authentic relationships". David Hodgkinson, Waikato and Bay of Plenty Team Leader of TSCF in New Zealand, noted that "I think they [Steiger] have a high emphasis on community, and friendship, and just doing things together". In linking the Emerging Church movement to this focus on community, Webber (2002, 51, italics in the original) notes that younger evangelicals "yearn to *belong to a community*".

When Steiger Tauranga first started up, there was an emphasis on hosting backpackers via couch-surfing at the first community house, as an outward focused strategy. Ezra said that "Because of the beach and the many orchards in our region we attracted a huge amount of backpackers", and that "in Christian realms we say things like 'God's called us to the nations to share this good news message', man they're on our back doorstep in New Zealand". They also noted that their initial thoughts focused around owning a backpacker hostel and getting through as many people to talk to as possible, but then realised that "bigger is not necessarily better, cos it's very much about relationship … that's a key thing in this global youth culture … They know if you're actually authentic, or if they're just a number". The first community house also held weekly community dinners as forms of outreach, in the sense that they were open to the wider community. The impact of COVID-19 and the closing of New Zealand's borders meant that this house was vacant for the majority of 2020 and, as it was no longer economically sustainable to keep it running, it closed down in December 2020.

The second community house set up by Steiger Tauranga was characterised as 'The Middle Child', and as one which feels "way more normal" than either Upper Room or the first community house (Micah). As with the first community house, the second has always been run with a number of residents being Steiger missionaries. At one stage, the outreach of the second community house was to be assisted through its garage being converted into a creative space, highlighting the influence of the wider Steiger International's use of creative evangelism. The third community house set up by Steiger Tauranga was Upper Room, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has traced out the broader institutional, social, and religious contexts that surround the Upper Room community house, through investigating the origins of Steiger International, Steiger New Zealand, and Steiger Tauranga, as well as by looking at the increasing secularisation of New Zealand, and the influence of the charismatic movement of

the 1960s – 1980s in Tauranga. The evangelical Christian concepts, some of which are central features of the Emerging Church movement, of parachurches, non-denominationalism, inter-denominationalism, and the identification of and focus upon a particular group of people to be evangelised (namely the 'Global Youth Culture'), show how Upper Room and the wider Steiger communities exemplify important trends and patterns in contemporary global evangelicalism.

In the next chapter, I will specifically investigate Upper Room and discuss how the residents 'disciple' one another. I will explore both the setting and social organisation of Upper Room, as well as investigate trends and patterns of contemporary global evangelicalism, non-denominationalism, small groups, and 'relational discipling', exemplified in the lives of its residents. In discussing these trends, I will make further connections to the Emerging Church movement.

Chapter 3:
Discipling Christians in the Global Youth Culture within the community house

"A home centred on Christ is a window for a watching world" (Dixon 2011, 182)

In this chapter I will look at how 'discipling' is carried out by members of the Upper Room community house. I have chosen to use the term 'discipling' to describe how Christians in the community house are morally instructing and guiding one another to be, what they consider to be, more like Jesus. I also use this term on the basis of its usage in relevant literature, and in order to set it apart from 'evangelising', a term I will use to describe how Christians reach out to non-Christians. I begin by exploring the setting of Upper Room, including a look at the young adults that reside there, how the house can be thought of as an 'intentional community', and its establishment as part of Steiger's strategy for reaching the 'Global Youth Culture' (GYC). I will also look into the quotidian functioning and social organisation of Upper Room through its leaderless leadership and consensus decision-making, flat meetings, and dinner fellowship. Following this, I will identify and elucidate three trends and patterns of contemporary global evangelicalism that are exemplified in the lives of Upper Room residents: non-denominationalism, small groups, and 'relational discipling'. Within these trends, broader links to the analytical framework of the Emerging Church movement will be investigated.

Setting of Upper Room community house

The house and its residents

Inconsistent painting on the exterior of the house, a road sign not facing the correct way, a view of the estuary: from the outside (Figure 6) the community house looks just like any other ordinary house in Tauranga, but what goes on within the house is a mixture of both sacred and profane. During my fieldwork (September 2020 to January 2021), Upper Room housed eight residents (five male and three female) between the ages of 18 and 31, from various areas around New Zealand, including Hawke's Bay, Canterbury, Waikato, and Bay of Plenty. Some had familial links to countries other than New Zealand, and some were related to each other through marriage or kinship.

Figure 6: Exterior of Upper Room community house (Steiger Tauranga n.d.)

Residents of Upper Room have had a range of experiences with their Christian faith throughout their childhood and youth life stages, and all were raised as Christian. Church attendance was referred to as a habitual Sunday experience when the residents were children, and attending Christian youth camps was a common experience. Various residents have been baptised, attended Christian gap courses and schools, and one studied theology. Additionally, two residents were studying at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, a Christian tertiary education organisation. Residents belonged to Bethlehem Baptist, Lifezone, or Mount Baptist churches.

Most residents of Steiger Tauranga's three community houses had links to Steiger before moving in, either through being Steiger missionaries, having links with the Steiger Missions School, attending the same churches as Steiger Tauranga representatives, or through attending Steiger Tauranga's evangelistic events. There are a few cases of residents moving into the community houses as a result of Steiger's advertising on the Christian Accommodation New Zealand website. Having Steiger Tauranga as a parental figurehead of this 'family' means that the community houses are part of a hierarchy within which they are accountable (Ada). The *Community House Agreement* (Appendix 3), which all Steiger community houses are bound to and structured by, notes that residents are to "abide by [the mission, purpose, values, expectations and policies of] the Steiger Community House", to "actively participate in the community", and to "submit to the local leadership of Steiger". This agreement is drawn up by the SNZ/A leader, and read and signed by all incoming Steiger Tauranga community house residents, showing that they will work towards the values outlined in it. The agreement is both a rental and a mission values expectations agreement.

This agreement resembles the lease agreement followed by The Riddle House in anthropologist James Bielo's (2012) study. Bielo (2012, 271) states that "The lease agreement for tenants includes a minimum set of expectations: one must be a professing Christian, agree to evenly divided daily and weekly chores, participate in nightly dinners, and participate in daily prayer rituals". Similarly the *Steiger Community House Agreement* includes that "We are a community that commits to developing our personal relationships with Christ by spending time in prayer, bible study and community", that "We are a community that wants to have good habits of serving each other" by "cleaning as you see needs, not because you are asked, but because you love your community and respect your fellow flatmates" with there being a roster for who cleans and cooks and when, and that "Flatmates will let each other know if they won't be there for dinner, within a reasonable time".

Upper Room was characterised as "the rebellious younger sibling trying to be different from its family" (Micah), being the last community house set up by Steiger Tauranga and the only one without any Steiger missionaries living in it. Micah said that "there's a little bit of disconnect between us and Steiger in that way" and that this house is "a little bit different or separate". I touch on this disconnect in Chapter 5 on outreach, and in my concluding chapter (Chapter 6).

Upper Room as an Intentional Community

Tomlinson and Engelke (2006, 14) note that "faith is perhaps inextricably intertwined with intentionality", and Hovland (2016) highlights further that intentionality is a core concept for evangelicals. Upper Room functions as an 'intentional community' that shares housing, is spiritually-based, is urban, and houses all members in a single residence (Metcalf 2004). The intentionality of the community living is evident in the importance placed on the *Community House Agreement* (Appendix 3).

Intentional communities are said to "differ from the society that surrounds them, because they are intentional and because they are communal" (Kamau 2002, 17). More specifically, Christian intentional communities are defined as "group[s] of people deliberately sharing life in order to follow more closely the teachings and practices of Jesus with his disciples" (Janzen 2013, 12).

Sympathetic Christian observer, Janzen (2013, 98), notes that "we do not all come to [intentional Christian] community with healthy souls but rather come with a mixed history

of wounds that have been healed and some that have not". The reasons he gives for individuals joining intentional communities include:

> … for fellowship and support in a countercultural calling, to grow in discipleship of Jesus by drinking from a larger pool of wisdom and good judgment, for mentoring and leadership development, for emergency care in times of crisis, and because it is energizing to make friends with others of "our own tribe" (Janzen 2013, 174).

Brown (2002b, 165) claims that intentional communities form through people attempting "to regain their psychic equilibrium". For various Upper Room residents, the community house has played a part in this process. Many residents pointed out that moving into Upper Room coincided with their need to grow personally and, as they were moving into a new 'season of life' (Ada and Reuben), their need to feel stable, supported, and to help with their mental health (Aaron and Keziah), and some claimed that they felt that God had 'called' them there (Philip, Jemima, and Jethro).

The "wounds" that Janzen (2013) is referring to could be considered as "hurting lives …, lack of purpose, and dysfunctional family relationships" which Gardiner et al. (1997, 181) refer to as "gates of entry" to Christianity for young people. This statement is manifest in the lives of Upper Room residents, with some experiencing being fostered or orphaned, or having broken families, and some experiencing depression or anxiety, abuse or addiction. Residents therefore also fall under the description of 'on the fringe' given by Phoebe in Chapter 2.

The establishment of community houses as a strategy for reaching the 'Global Youth Culture'

Along with Upper Room being an 'intentional' community, there is 'intent' in the community houses being established as a strategy for reaching the Global Youth Culture. Steiger Tauranga is one of the few Steiger International city teams which focuses on community houses, and is unique in that it has established more than one. Greenwood (2019, 144), provides the following description of Steiger's community houses:

> A few of our Steiger team in a city choose to live together and open their home to others. This creates a centre for the action of the mission, a meeting place for friends and people interested in the message. We often host open mic nights, parties, and small concerts in the home. People who are interested in learning to follow Jesus can also move in and be part of the community. This is discipleship seven days a week in an informal and relational way as the team lives together, shares the bills, eats meals together, prays together, and studies the Bible together.

Community houses have been employed as a strategy for reaching the 'Global Youth Culture' (GYC) by Steiger Tauranga. One Upper Room resident stated that Tauranga's community houses are "probably one of Steiger New Zealand's … most promising, and most effective … missions … even though [they are] directed more towards existing Christians" and she thinks the community houses "really do help in forming that community, and that authenticity" (Shiloh), with the discipling of Christians showing more promise than the evangelising of non-Christians in Steiger's New Zealand ministry. Steiger Tauranga representatives believe in the "healthiness" and "authenticity" of Christian community living, and that Christian young adults grow in their Christian faith and community-mindedness through their investment in these community houses.

The "discipleship" that Greenwood (2019) is referring to in terms of "eat[ing] meals together" and "pray[ing] together" can be seen in Upper Room's focuses on 'dinner fellowship' and 'flat (prayer) meetings'.

Social organisation of Upper Room community house

Along with the 'flat (prayer) meetings' and 'dinner fellowship', Upper Room's social organisation also includes a focus on democratic and consensus decision-making and 'leaderless leadership', both characteristics of emerging churches. Gibbs and Bolger (2005, 215, 192, 45) note that for emerging churches "consensus decision making is the norm", with these groups "experiment[ing] with the idea of leaderless groups" and "lead[ing] as a body". In terms of their decision making, Upper Room residents make sure that they are unanimous on a decision before proceeding. One resident noted that "We will often wait on a decision, pray about it together as a community, and only when it becomes a unanimous yes or no, then we proceed with it" (Shiloh). Regarding their leaderless leadership, in a casual conversation one Upper Room resident noted how the idea of no leaders or everyone being leaders is good in theory, but not in practice. I noticed a lack of leadership, initiative, direction, and structure, as well as residents becoming stressed with other residents' problems due to various residents' indecisiveness and lack of personal mentors. Bargár (2015) puts forward that leaderless leadership in emerging churches may not be tenable from a long-term perspective.

In terms of purposefully discussing issues and making decisions together, the regular flat meetings, attended by all residents, play a large role. The *Community House Agreement* (Appendix 3) states that these will be held weekly and include "accountability, prayer, and

weekly updates". One resident said that they helped to "keep each other accountable, and to keep it real!" (Jemima).

I attended eleven flat meetings between September 2020 and January 2021. These always followed the same structure. In the first part, each resident shared their highlights and lowlights and what God had been teaching them that week, and were prayed for by a fellow resident (who acknowledged their feelings, and requested guidance for lessons being taught, and for upcoming events). In the second part of the meeting, practical decisions were made about the community house. Some residents attempted to introduce an additional third part based on outreach efforts and prayer for the community house; however, this didn't last long as these residents moved out not long after.

Specifically in the section on what God had been teaching the residents, discussions included: gratitude, grace, patience, thankfulness, coping with change and growth, responsibility, that they need to read, connect with, and take more from the Bible, ministry, that their beliefs still aren't completely grounded, taking a Sabbath, community and servant-heartedness, and living in the spirit. Frequently, various residents had no idea what God had been teaching them that week. These discussions feed into the idea of the Upper Room residents discipling one another in that they raise what Christians consider as attributes of Jesus.

In the few meetings where the third part was included, residents said that they were: "intentionally sharing the gospel", wanting to "help people", are part of a united collective and God's body, wanting "to love, to bless others, to be a lighthouse", they said that they have the space and the resources but are wanting to know what their outreach is and what they are being called to do, and see their existence as Christians as an outreach. These comments show the evangelical nature of the Upper Room residents through the usage of Christian terms ("gospel", "bless", "God's body", "being a lighthouse", and being "called"), and provide background on their style of outreach which is focused on "helping" people, and "loving" others, and show how the residents are questioning how they should conduct outreach.

I came across the idea of 'dinner fellowship' in Jacobsen and Jacobsen (2003), which I thought perfectly described the coming together of residents over dinners, with fellowship referring to "hanging out" with others (Ezra). Jemima said that community could be seen at Upper Room "in the daily coming together, as much as we can, usually it's dinner and food where we come together … share life with each other". In this light, Taylor (2005, 103)

notes that "Community can be fleshed out … in the sacrament of eating". Steiger Tauranga's community houses have a strong focus on eating together regularly, with this being the time that most residents are present at the house and can share stories from their daily lives, such as interactions and new knowledge that they have acquired. Ezra said that "There's kinda this intimacy that happens over food" due to the experience of sharing something with each other that people both enjoy and are doing together.

Dinner fellowship can also include hospitality and invitations to people from outside to join in on a meal and real-life discussions. Gibbs and Bolger (2005, 119) see sharing a meal with others as being "a welcoming act of hospitality", emphasising inclusion. Further, Yoder (2001, 15, 20) points out the anthropological meaning of eating together, where for most cultures "common meals have special meanings" and that "in many settings eating together 'stands for' values of hospitality and community-formation". I shared various dinners with the residents, and with guests including Steiger New Zealand representatives, potential flatmates, and visiting backpackers (most of which were eaten at the dinner table shown in Figure 7). I also attended Upper Room's holiday celebration dinners, and their Oktoberfest celebration.

Figure 7: Dinner (table tennis) table at Upper Room community house

I will now move on to discussing various aspects of contemporary global evangelicalism that the Upper Room residents portray: non-denominationalism, small groups, and 'relational discipling'.

Non-denominationalism

Non-denominationalism is a leading characteristic of contemporary evangelicalism (McDermott 2010; Brown 1996). For the majority of the Upper Room residents, non-denominationalism is an important part of their religious identities, viewing themselves primarily as Christians but not wanting to identify with any particular denomination, to allow for a wider perspective than a denomination would provide, or because they lack knowledge of the history of, and distinction between, denominations. Moreover, residents are actively trying to participate in a generic globalised Christianity, as opposed to localised, denomination specific versions.

Along with descriptions given in Chapter 1 of the evangelical movement being intrinsically non-denominational, Hutchinson and Wolffe (2012, 15) note that a "wide range of denominations and religious groups … would be at least loosely classified as evangelical" (see also Hovland 2016, 333; Cooper 2017, 411; Tomlinson 1995, 5; Bielo 2013). The characteristically diffuse character of the evangelical movement shows striking parallels with the emerging church movement. As Hammett (2009, 224) notes, the Emerging Church movement "spans many denominations, and denominational differences do not seem to be an important point of division or discussion among those in the movement". Some proponents of the Emerging Church see that "the church universal is more fitting" than a specific denominational church (Debbie Blue as cited in Gibbs and Bolger 2005, 37). This sets evangelical Christianity as not being a denomination in its own right.

The non-denominational inclinations of evangelicals and emerging church proponents alike is shown quite clearly in the statements of Upper Room residents, and marks them out as belonging to this contemporary modality of Christianity. Upper Room residents said "I wouldn't consider myself denominational" (Reuben), "I would identify myself as a follower of Christ … I guess you could say non-denominational" (Jemima), "I think Christianity is about following Jesus and the denominations are just divisions between the people who follow Christ" (Philip), "I wouldn't umbrella myself under a particular denomination" (Shiloh), "I'm a Christian … no denomination" (Ada), and "I don't really [fit with any particular denomination]" (Micah).

Some residents said they "find that there's a bit of a danger to identify with one particular church" (Jemima), or "find it really stupid that we have all these 'Oh I'm this very particular brand of Christianity'" (Micah). With evangelicalism not being a denomination in its own right but rather a trans-denominational movement (Espín and Nickoloff 2007), it is applicable to both the non-denominational residents, and the inter-denominational nature

of Steiger International. Phoebe noted that Steiger isn't evangelical because it has a lot of different denominations. Due to seeing evangelicalism as non-denominational, I found this strange.

Small Groups

It will be recalled from Chapter 1 that 'small groups' in the evangelical context refer to "voluntary, intentional gathering[s] of three to twelve people regularly meeting together with the shared goal of mutual Christian edification and fellowship" (McBride 1990 as cited in Atkinson and Rose 2020, 548). Richards (1975, 265) believes that in Christian small groups "self-revelation and sharing are encouraged", it is easy to "see both individual strengths and weaknesses" and "come to care for others", "trust between the members develops more rapidly", and "relationships deepen". Upper Room can be seen as a small group, due to fitting the above definition, and these small group aspects.

Small groups are a prominent feature of contemporary global evangelicalism as exemplified by the Emerging Church movement. Gibbs and Bolger (2005) highlight that emerging churches tend to be small groups, or networks of small groups, with Webber (2002, 148) adding that small groups are a commitment of younger evangelicals, and a setting which allows Christians to be "better able to commit to long-term relationships with a specific group of people".

A drawback of small groups, and the Emerging Church movement more widely, is the proneness of these groups to insularity. Williamson (2011, 130-131) says:

> Small groups can create an environment in which Christians mix only with like-minded friends and not at any depth with Christians who challenge them and their experience of life. Furthermore, if a small group has been together for a long time, it can become resistant to change and uncomfortable about new people joining. To remain healthy, small groups need carefully to avoid becoming exclusive. Another danger of small groups is they have the potential to become inwardly focused on the needs of the group rather than on God's call for all Christians to be involved in his mission in the wider world.

Walton (2011, 106, 113) also highlights that some small groups "are more occupied with the group members themselves, promoting mutual help, empathy and encouragement", and "need to be regularly reminded of … [their] missional calling". Searcy (2010) notes that "Small groups that focus on serving their own members rather than on reaching out to others quickly become inwardly focused and stagnant" (as cited in Mbacham-Enow et al. 2019, 48). Similarly, Kaldor et al. (1994, 137) say of church congregations that there needs to be an awareness of "high levels of belonging … [that] could generate a barrier to outsiders

joining". Gibbs and Bolger (2005), Janzen (2013), and Bargár (2015) are also aware of the possibilities of small Christian communities becoming insular, monochrome, self-centred, exclusionary, or disengaged with the society around them.

The voices of Upper Room residents and Steiger representatives highlight these themes quite clearly. Ezra noted that within the community house "you have this beautiful community, and you really do genuinely care for these people, but then the danger is you wanna protect it". The need to have hobbies and relationships outside of the community house, and finding balance while living in the house, were additionally highlighted by multiple residents. One resident said "it's definitely very important to have a community outside of the house otherwise it can become very closed-off and you're not really getting much communication with other people" (Shiloh). Another noted that you'd become stuck if "one place is your whole life" (Ada), and another said that "it is really important to have a break … a change of environment" (Jemima). Keziah said that "you definitely have to have stuff outside the house, cos otherwise it becomes so unhealthy, so fast". Phoebe said that "I feel like you need people on the outside sometimes … because conflict will come up, or you might feel peopled out, and you don't know what to do". Some residents feared that because they put so much energy into the house they don't have the energy to put into relationships outside of it, causing insularity. With Upper Room fitting definitions and aspects of small groups, and also being prone to insularity, it therefore embodies several dimensions of the Emerging Church movement.

'Relational discipling'

I have coined the term 'relational discipling' to refer to the way that Upper Room residents seek to grow in relationships with one another and grow in faithfulness while living in the community house. The process of discipling is a key feature of contemporary evangelicalism, with prominent Emerging Church proponent Kimball (2003) noting the importance of knowing what the word 'disciple' means.

The term 'discipling', which is being used within the evangelical world to describe new processes and understandings of evangelism as an *internal* process, was not recognised within the anthropological literature I reviewed, hence my use of Christian literature in my discussion here. 'Discipleship' is defined by Christians as "Following Jesus" and as "first and foremost a lifetime commitment to Jesus" (Regina A. Boisclair in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 352, 353), as well as "committing one's whole life to God. Jesus is the model for discipleship, with the cross as its symbol and his servanthood its pattern" (Selman and

Manser 1998, 44). Discipleship is also described as "… the gradual lifelong process of growing closer to Jesus in personal intimacy and becoming more like him in character" (Mulholland 2004, 80). Participants in my research defined 'discipling' as "growing alongside" each other, and "helping [each other] in their faith, and as they learn more about God" (Phoebe), learning "to live according to His values" (Ada), and trying to live their lives as Jesus would (Aaron). Ezra said that the Steiger community houses showed "what it looks like to actually serve like Jesus talked about serving".

The term '*relational* discipling' captures the specifically interactive, reciprocal dimensions of discipling in Emerging Church literature, as well as literature on discipleship and intentional Christian communities; relational discipling is derived from Beagles' (2012) "relational discipleship" that is prominent in discipleship literature and models. Carson (2005, 27) notes that postmodernism, a time period within which proponents of the Emerging Church movement see it as functioning, is focused on "relationships, love, shared tradition, [and] integrity in discussion" in the domain of religion. This connects to my earlier discussion of postmodernity as viewing the self as "a plurality of selves" defined by the "complex web of interrelationships" (Roberto S. Goizueta in Espín and Nickoloff 2007, 1064). The relationship focus can be seen further in Bielo (2012), who notes that a "highly relational religiosity" is an aspect of emerging evangelical communities, and in Gibbs and Bolger (2005, 122) who note that "People discover who they are … in authentic relationships with other people". Leonardo Boff notes that intentional Christian communities have a relational character (in Veling 1996).

Emerging churches are said to follow the paradigm of "belonging" before "believing"/"becoming" (Belcher 2009; Carson 2005; Myers 2003; Devine 2009; Webber 2002). This stands in contrast to "believing"/"becoming", before "belonging", which was highlighted in modernity, but stands in a similar form to that of the early church (Weyers and Saayman 2013; McDermott 2010; Kimball 2003). During modernity often people were born into churches and thus "belonged" straightaway before "believing". Carson (2005, 146) says that those in the Emerging Church "Invite people to belong, welcome them aboard, take them into … [their] … story …, and the 'becoming' may well follow". The connections between the ways of the early church and the emerging church highlight: Bielo's (2009) second point of dialogue that characterises the Emerging Church's status, 'ancient-future', with worship being understood as a communicative event, rather than as a way to convert non-Christians; and, the importance that both place on community and relationships.

The descriptions above of postmodernity and the Emerging Church, and intentional Christian communities, reveal a focus on relationships and love that describes the nature of relations and the strong emphasis on community, which are aspects of discipleship in Upper Room. When carrying out fieldwork, I noticed the friendships that exist within the community. One resident (Jemima) said that the community house is "a place to create memories" and referred to the residents as brothers and sisters in Christ. The life stage that Steiger sees all residents as being in, young adult, means that activities which are spontaneous, including movies, games, and outings, are enjoyed by the majority of the residents. One resident said, "I enjoy spending time out of my room", and that the interactions in the house are "very fun" (Ada). Another resident said that being young adults also gives them the ability to invite other people from their age group to come over and hang out (Micah).

As Upper Room is both a space where young Christians can grow their faith, and where young non-Christians can be introduced to the faith, the paradigm of "belonging" before "believing" fits well. Phoebe said of the community houses:

> With community … if you're welcomed into someone's home and you feel accepted and loved, you're gonna be more open to talking about real things than you would if you just walk into a place … you see as religious, and condemning.

'Relational discipling' is also a relevant concept to discuss in relation to my research on Upper Room, with various Christian sources (Janzen 2013; Ward 2013a; Knabb and Pelletier 2014) highlighting that being in community fosters discipleship. Janzen (2013, 182) posits that:

> The kind of disciples that Jesus sent his apostles (and us) out to make can only be made in community … It must be a life where we serve, love, correct, and forgive each other in daily interaction, where our true selves cannot hide from one another.

In Upper Room, I observed the 'serving' aspect of discipleship, in the support of, and teamwork with, each other, and the 'loving' aspect in the friendship and trust of, and the honesty, openness, and social interactions with, each other. Residents also noted feeling a sense of togetherness and belonging while living at the community house.

In looking at some of the ways 'serving' and 'loving' each other could be seen, 'support' in the community house comes with loving, listening, and feeling for one another, and "in all things trying to show care" (Reuben). I saw the residents supporting one another in flat meetings, and in activities both in and out of the community house. With regards to 'belonging', one resident stated that the community house is a place where people can build

"a sense of belonging" (Philip), with the house being where residents feel comfortable, settled, and close to others.

In looking at 'openness and honesty' Moritz (2008, 28) highlights that, for Emerging Christians, "a willingness to be intellectually accountable and interpersonally vulnerable in the midst of authentic community" is required. Jamieson (2002, 146) adds that:

> The creation of a safe space in which difficult things can be said, brought out into the open and explored, is an important environment for many people's journeys of faith and understanding of God at work in their lives. This is a place where doubts can be listened to and allowed to be, without anyone trying to change the person's mind or put them right.

Upper Room's promotion of honesty, openness, and vulnerability can be seen in the following quotes: "one massive thing that they [the other residents] have helped me in, is being open and honest, and showing vulnerability" (Shiloh), and "living in community does bring up those things that we struggle with the most … and they're all very in the open so much more when you're in community" (Ada). A previous resident stated that:

> I think if I hadn't lived in the community house, I wouldn't be able to share like I am now … it gives you a certain type of bravery … when you live with the knowledge that the point of it is to be supportive … so you have to share … otherwise you can't contribute and people don't trust you.

This ability to be open and honest, and show vulnerability, was put down to the residents spending so much time together, and so growing relationships and trust. One resident said that "it's about building a sense of camaraderie and relationships where you feel more trusting so that you can be more vulnerable. So then through that vulnerability you can change in the future" (Micah). This willingness of the residents to be "interpersonally vulnerable in the midst of authentic community" (Moritz 2008), highlighted above as being a requirement of Emerging Christians, further relates Upper Room to my analytical framework of the Emerging Church movement.

With regards to 'teamwork', the community aspect of discipleship has links to Biblical scripture around the "body of Christ" (Webber 1999; Janzen 2013), with this being a metaphor for unity in faith (Church) (Selman and Manser 1998, 30). One resident stated that "there is a deep satisfaction of this teamwork" (Philip). Janzen (2013) posits that the relationships Christians have with one another help the body of Christ to function. Another resident said that "in the New Testament … it kind of compares the church to the body of Christ, where if one part suffers, the others suffer as well" (Jemima). A further resident discussed this verse in the following way:

> Each of us can be a part of God's body … the eye doesn't tell the foot "you're useless", cos each of us has our role, and each of us has our strengths. So, if we were all a hand, how could we see. If we're all a foot, how could we smell … we are all part of that, to actually be a whole being (Ada).

Furthermore, one resident pointed out that "when you're living in community, and you're all following Jesus and what he has said in the Bible, all the stuff that is said … kind of starts to make sense" (Philip).

The 'serving' and 'loving' each other aspects of discipleship in 'community' being shown at Upper Room demonstrate that the residents portray the key contemporary global evangelical feature of relational discipling.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has investigated the setting, social organisation, and discipling of Christians within the Upper Room community house. The concepts of intentional community, leaderless leadership and consensus decision-making, flat meetings, and dinner fellowship were discussed in regards to the setting and social organisation of Upper Room. I then identified and elucidated trends and patterns of contemporary global evangelicalism that are exemplified in the internal dynamics of Upper Room: non-denominationalism, small groups, and 'relational discipling', linking each of these to the Emerging Church movement.

In the next chapter, I will investigate the settings of the churches that the residents of Upper Room regularly attend, and look at how the evangelical Christian elements of the Church Capital C, megachurches and contemporary worship, and the small group movement (all influenced by the Charismatic Movement) appear in these churches, and are experienced by the residents. I will also make further connections between the residents of Upper Room to the Emerging Church movement, through support of, or opposition to, the aforementioned evangelical elements in their churches.

Chapter 4:
Residents' experiences of church life in Tauranga

This chapter will focus on how the Christian worship of Upper Room community house residents embodies several crucial aspects of contemporary global evangelicalism. These aspects include the concept of 'Church Capital C' (which highlights parachurches and non-denominationalism), megachurches and contemporary worship, as well as the small group movement. The emergence of these aspects was influenced by the modern charismatic movement of the 1960s – 1980s. I investigate how the Upper Room residents exemplify these aspects, with some being supported, and others opposed or modified by them, connecting them further to the postmodern Emerging Church movement. I begin by giving a brief description of the three churches that the residents attend: Bethlehem Baptist Church, Mount Baptist Church, and Lifezone (Open Brethren).

Churches of the Upper Room residents

With churches in my research being of Baptist and Open Brethren denominations, I wanted to see how evangelical Christianity influenced the theology and worship of these denominations. In the literature, both Baptist and Open Brethren are described as being "conservative evangelical churches" (Ward 2013b, 72; see also Roxborogh 2000; Veitch 1996; Lineham 1993). Sutherland (2011, 69) says that "New Zealand Baptists were consistently clear that they were 'evangelical' and that some other Christian traditions or theological stances were not", Fields and Lineham (2008, 169) state that "Among many European people Baptists are viewed as 'the' evangelical denomination", and Lineham (2017, 374) posits Baptists as being "generally recognised as the mainstream evangelical denomination". In terms of Open Brethren churches, Lineham (2017, 301) states that Brethren were "a significant part of the evangelical community" in 20th century New Zealand. I will now introduce the two Baptist churches in my study, and then the Open Brethren church.

Bethlehem Baptist Church

Bethlehem Baptist Church (BBC) opened its doors in 1988 in The Bethlehem Hall, and saw the meeting of a "small group of people" studying the bible and worshipping (Bethlehem Baptist Church n.d.f; Bethlehem Baptist Church n.d.a). In 1995, the current Senior Pastor,

Craig Vernall, and his wife joined BBC. From small beginnings, this church is now large in the size of its building, and its congregation (over 2,500 people). An auditorium, which was added eight years ago to house Sunday services, is now being expanded further (shown in Figure 8).

Figure 8: Auditorium extensions at Bethlehem Baptist Church

When attending this church, I saw the congregation's demographic as mainly elderly, followed by families, and some younger people. BBC offers several Sunday morning and evening services which "celebrate God in song, scripture, and prayer" (Bethlehem Baptist Church n.d.g). Regarding its music, BBC states that "With the goal 'To provide opportunities for people to connect with God through music' – teams aim to creatively express praise and worship through various contemporary styles" (Bethlehem Baptist Church n.d.d), and that "music is an integral part of worship service here at BBC" as "God's people included music in worship from very early on" (Bethlehem Baptist Church n.d.e). Figure 9 below was taken from BBC's website.

Figure 9: Bethlehem Baptist Church (Bethlehem Baptist Church n.d.c)

BBC has strong associations with Steiger, and a number of Upper Room residents. David Pierce, co-founder of Steiger International, considers BBC as his home church in New Zealand. In a service that I watched in late 2020 on BBC's website, Pastor Vernall said that BBC has been "encouraged and strengthened by the ministry … [of] Steiger International" (this video is no longer available on BBC's website). Additionally, the SNZ/A leader also attends this church, and previously pastored there. With regards to Upper Room residents, BBC was linked to where some 'grew their faith' (Jethro), some grew up and saw all the renovations with "giant" auditoriums, cafés, and offices being added (Aaron), and was described as "a really awesome church … they have good teaching, they have pretty good community … they have more resources … they have a really great youth program" (Shiloh). I attended three Sunday services at BBC during my research.

Mount Baptist Church

Mount Baptist Church, shown in Figure 10 below, (MBC), is located close to the beach in the suburb of Mount Maunganui. MBC offers a traditional Sunday service at 10am. MBC is led by Pastor Ross Horton, who previously preached at BBC. In comparison to BBC, MBC has a much smaller congregation, who are mainly elderly, and a website with little information on its history, services, and values. The church building is also a lot smaller than BBC's building. Like BBC, MBC has a worship band; however, I noticed that it is not accompanied by the lights and sounds of BBC's worship band.

Figure 10: Mount Baptist Church (Google Maps n.d.b)

Two residents of Upper Room attended this church, and were in the worship band. Other links that MBC has to Steiger include that its Pastor and his wife attended the Steiger Missions School, and people linked to Steiger have conducted sermons there. One Upper Room resident who sometimes attends MBC said that he hasn't connected with anyone as

"it's a bunch of old people" (Micah). I attended MBC's services three times during my research, and searched its library for relevant literature.

Interestingly, MBC was listed (in Ng 1984) as the tenth fastest growing Baptist church in New Zealand from 1973-1983, possibly as a result of its involvement in the charismatic movement, with "the best combination for growth" being "middle of the road, conservative evangelical and charismatic" (Ng 1984, 13). MBC had a significant role in the charismatic movement within Aotearoa New Zealand in that it acted, in the eyes of MBC congregants and sympathetic Christian observers, as a "lighthouse on a hill, pointing the way to other Christians and church groups as to how to integrate the 'Charismatic Renewal' into congregational church life", and was a forerunner in the charismatic movement nationally (Coad and Knudsen 2010, 18).

In the present day, MBC is referred to as "very homely" and a "small family church" (Jemima), seen in Figure 11 and Figure 12. Despite its involvement in the charismatic movement, one Upper Room resident (who attends this church on occasion) said that "There's a few things that are still kinda stuck in its ways" (Micah), possibly as a result of its predominantly elderly congregation.

Figure 11: The interior of Mount Baptist Church

Figure 12: The interior of Mount Baptist Church

Lifezone

Lifezone church, previously known as Ōtūmoetai Bible Chapel, has been pastored by Steve and Carlene Murray since 2008. Lifezone is different to BBC and MBC as it is located in a large warehouse, in the Judea industrial zone (seen in Figure 13). Lifezone's services retain traditional elements such as being held at 9:30am on Sundays, but also incorporate modern elements in being available to tune-in to online, and with congregants "wear[ing] what makes [them] comfortable" (Lifezone Church n.d.b). The mixture of traditional and modern elements is possibly due to the more evenly mixed congregation of elderly people, families, and younger people. I see the size of the congregation as sitting somewhere in between the sizes of BBC's and MBC's congregations. In their services, it is stated that "our band will play high-energy, contemporary songs and the Bible-based message will be thought provoking and engaging" (Lifezone Church n.d.b). The Sunday morning services are held in a room called *Furnace*; this symbolises Lifezone's association with the charismatic renewal, with 'fire' being a common charismatic metaphor.

Figure 13: Lifezone Church (Google Maps n.d.a)

Lifezone is significant through its connections to various Upper Room residents, and a resident of the second community house established by Steiger Tauranga. I attended this church's services three times, and borrowed a number of evangelistic books from its library, some of which I refer to in my thesis.

Church Capital C: The Community

"The [C]hurch is primarily a people, not simply a place to meet. It is a movement and not an institution" (Gibbs and Bolger 2005, 90)

I now look at how BBC, MBC, and Lifezone exemplify important trends in contemporary global evangelicalism. An important trend in understanding global evangelicalism, for groups including the Emerging Church and younger evangelicals, is its move away from denominational identity towards a broader understanding of Christian faith, as discussed in Chapter 3's section on non-denominationalism. This understanding is borne out in my research through the ideas of the 'Church Capital C' and the 'Kingdom perspective', terms drawn from relevant literature and my semi-structured interviews.

In understanding contemporary evangelicalism, 'the church' and 'the Church' are distinct concepts. While the church with a lower-case c, or 'institutional church', (Carson 2005) refers to the buildings in which services are held, the Church with a Capital C, or 'universal' Church, (Jamieson 2002), refers to the Christian community more broadly, all Christians everywhere. Referring to Christians as belonging to 'the Church', as opposed to 'the church', allows for the normalisation of inter-denominationalism and non-denominationalism. Janzen (2013, 184) adds that the wider Church includes "congregations, denominations, parachurch organizations of many kinds, extending to the worldwide

fellowship of believers". For the Emerging Church, the idea that "Church" is "the place where weekly worship services are conducted" is devalued, and instead the idea that "Church is a way of life, a rhythm, a community, a movement" is emphasised, with focus placed on the Church as "a network of relationships" (Gibbs and Bolger 2005, 96, 236, 96; Kimball 2003). Younger evangelicals view the Church as "a visible community united with the entire history of the church and in union with the global community of Christians" (Webber 2002, 105). In this perspective, Church as a way of life takes precedence over a circumscribed institutionalised and localised identity (church).

With regards to the 'Kingdom perspective', which is part of the Church Capital C idea, missiologists and sympathetic observers of the Emerging Church movement, Gibbs and Bolger (2005, 61, italics added), say that "Emerging churches … do not seek to start churches *per se* but to foster communities that embody the kingdom". Additionally, Todjeras (2019) notes that theological concepts such as the "kingdom of God" dominate the Emerging Church's religious self-concept, as does Bielo (2013) who observes a "predominant theological focus among emerging evangelicals on 'the kingdom of God'".

The concepts of 'church', 'Church', and 'Kingdom' discussed above powerfully shape how Upper Room residents perceive and describe their lives as Christians. They also strongly influence the evangelistic framework of the wider Steiger organisation within which they are embedded. The distinction between the Church and the church is relevant within the context of my research as it stands to illuminate several key dimensions of contemporary evangelical Christianity including parachurches, and non-denominationalism. One resident stated that:

> We call the Church … Capital C Church, which is all the denominations of Christian churches … we are all under the Christian faith, so we all are part of that Church … [church] little c … is the buildings … Big C is the people (Ada).

Another resident noted that "the Church is the people, the Church is not the building … it's a much better way of thinking of it" (Reuben). Furthermore, Upper Room exists as a Church community, and the residents see themselves as embodying this concept. The statements of Gibbs and Bolger (2005), Todjeras (2019), and Bielo (2013) above are also relevant to Steiger with their emphasis on the Kingdom perspective, and their rare establishment of churches.

The concept of the Church Capital C is relevant to MBC in that, although titled as a Baptist church, there have been movements away from its identification with this denomination, particularly during the charismatic movement, as can be seen in the

statements below. The established term in the literature for discussing these processes is non-denominationalism, which I noted in Chapter 2 as being intrinsic to 'the Kingdom perspective' and the 'Church Capital C'. An Upper Room resident said that:

> The Mount Baptist is definitely a Baptist background, and they are affiliated with other Baptist churches. But in saying that, that church has a crazy kind of getting away from Baptist background … this Pastor came with the Holy Spirit, and just kinda ripped that [controlled and narrow-minded nature of the church] away (Philip).

Additionally, the changes in MBC's denominational affiliation can be seen in Coad and Knudsen's (2010, 19, 196, 207) statements: "They were a small group of Christians, without a rigid obligation to maintain the denominational status-quo and hierarchical traditions", that in the 1970s "The charismatic renewal took root and grew … in this atmosphere of opposition and confused thinking", and because it "was a melting pot of denominational persuasions".

As can be seen in the preceding paragraphs, the Church Capital C and the Kingdom perspective, with their emphases on community and non-denominationalism, are of relevance to parachurches (such as Steiger), Upper Room, the Emerging Church movement, and MBC. Together they exemplify a new style of contemporary global evangelicalism.

Megachurches

Megachurches are a contemporary style of 'church' which sprang up nationally and globally as a result of the charismatic movement, and are a dominant feature of the global evangelical landscape. They are defined as churches which have congregations of at least 500 to over 1,000 (Fields and Lineham 2008; Jamieson 2002), and "Protestant church[es] that ha[ve] at least 2,000 weekly attendees" (Ellingson 2010, 247). Bielo (2009, 228) highlights that "the sheer size of these [mega]churches is incompatible in Emerging eyes with the dominant Evangelical tropes of building relationships, fostering intimacy, and being authentic". I will show how Upper Room residents connect to the Emerging Church movement based on their critiques of the size of the megachurches they attend or have attended, and their decisions to move away from them.

Megachurches have a mass-media feel through their usage of "slick websites and Facebook pages to reach out to potential followers", being electronic, and offering "part karaoke, part powerpoint" (Comaroff 2012, 43, 49); and "employ[ing] the latest in audio-visual technology in their worship services" (Ellingson 2010, 247). Webber (2002, 131) highlights that the "environment … [of megachurches is] much like a theatre, a worship that

is much like a presentation, a show in some cases". Kimball (2003, 40) also notes that "Worship centers have been transformed into contemporary auditoriums. You can now walk into a number of churches and find sound systems that cost thousands of dollars and PowerPoint presentations of Bible verses projected onto cineplex-sized screens". Bielo (2009, 228) adds that megachurches have:

> … become indexical of a particular style of Evangelicalism: multiple Sunday worship services, pop-infused praise music, folksy sermons reminiscent of self-help seminars, large staffs and a program for every need … churches easily mistakable for conference centres, a focus on everyday evangelism, desire for exponential church growth, and a pervasive sense of middle-class comfort.

Klaver (2015, 101) also highlights the link between evangelical churches and the 'electronic' feel in saying that they "create a distinct religious sensory environment through the integration of a contemporary musical idiom and the use of electronic media". The aspects of having Facebook pages and audio-visual technology, are relevant to all churches in my research. However, some aspects of megachurches don't apply to all, such as size.

Only BBC meets the size criterion of megachurches. Around half the Upper Room residents attend this large church, that is home to a 2,500+ people congregation. Due to its large congregation, each BBC service is usually attended by around 700 people. The size and setup of the interior of Bethlehem Baptist Church can be seen in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Seating and staging at Bethlehem Baptist Church

Along with residents who regularly attend BBC, a number of others have attended previously. Some previous attendees spoke negatively of the size of the congregation. One said that it is hard to get to know people in a church that big and that they thought that this

church "would be much healthier if it were smaller … it was just nuts, way too many people for trying to get to know everyone" (Reuben), while another said that the church was "One of those ones [where] … I don't feel connected to anyone … it's just a big place, with big lights" (Micah). A regular attendee surprisingly also spoke negatively of the size of the congregation in saying that "I struggle to meet people … because there's so many people, and you just sorta get crushed by it" (Aaron). These comments powerfully exemplify links of the residents of Upper Room to the Emerging Church, through their critique of megachurches as preventing the creation of relational community.

Ellingson (2010, 247) maintains that "mall-like setting[s]", and churches with "food court[s]" are also common marketing strategies of many megachurches to "effectively sell Christianity". He (2010, 248) states that "Megachurches reflect the move towards non-denominationalism" and that their influence "may presage a more widespread shift in the locus of religious authority and identity away from historic denominational traditions towards a more evangelical and generic Christianity". Lineham (2017, 267) adds that "Traditionally names of churches defined or hinted at the denomination … In recent years the newer churches have dropped denominational labels, and call themselves … a brand name like 'Life'". The warehouse setting, as well as the dropping of denominational labels, are common to many modern evangelical churches and reflect trends within global evangelical Christianity.

Lifezone church exemplifies these ideas. Lifezone houses its own café (Figure 15), and is set in a warehouse (Figure 16). One Upper Room resident said that "A lot of churches actually start in places like a warehouse … that way they can just gather in a place that already exists … like Lifezone" (Aaron). Lifezone's name also reflects Lineham's (2017) comment above.

Figure 15: The café of Lifezone church

Figure 16: Lifezone church situated in a warehouse of an industrial zone, Judea

Ellingson (2010, 250, 251) highlights that 'seeker' churches are a type of megachurch that is "willing to experiment with worship styles, architecture, and religious ideas in order to make Christianity appealing and authentic to a boomer and post-boomer population alienated or indifferent to organized religion", and tend to be "publicly non-denominational (even if they are formally affiliated with a denomination)". However, Ward (2013a, 150) states that "[mega]churches have less appeal to the post-boomer generations, who are looking more for community and greater participation". I gleaned that the lack of appeal of megachurches to the post-boomer generations and postmoderns may be due to the production or cinema vibe of these churches "where you sit in a comfy chair and you receive" (Jemima). For Upper Room residents, there is a tension in that although they are looking for intimate small group worship, some still see megachurches as attractive, in that they continue to attend despite their discomfort, and perhaps as they enjoy the technologically sophisticated,

entertainment style of worship. This shows that although residents may be partially positioned in the earlier form of evangelicalism, they are now moving into this new postmodern form. They are moving from megachurches to more interactive, small scale worship.

A key aspect of megachurches is their exuberant praise and worship. This new pattern of worship was formed through the influence of the charismatic movement of the 1960s – 1980s (Kauffman 1990). This contemporary, high-energy style of worship gives its congregations freedom to express excitement and affection (Comaroff 2012), a key attribute of Pentecostal/evangelical Christianity more generally, being primarily an affective-experiential tradition. The charismatic movement was "a singing movement, which has seen the creation of a whole new style of worship, free, spontaneous and bodily" (Keeley 1985, 105), and which introduced "People clap[ping] to music, rais[ing] their hands in worship, and expect[ing] to express their feelings" (Lineham 2017, 269). It is important to note that the charismatic movement, and the worship that defined it, was not "new" (Kauffman 1990) as it was already institutionalised in Pentecostal churches and, during the charismatic movement, merely got taken up by non-Pentecostal churches. Ingalls (2015, 1) states that "Music and worship practices have long served as key elements in the global reach of pentecostal Christianity … influencing churches across the spectrum of Christian belief and practice".

Sources note that worship bands, which began with pianists and organists, now include drummers, acoustic, electric, and bass guitarists, and vocalists (Kimball 2003; Klaver 2015; Ingalls 2015). Ingalls (2015, 6) posits that worship music resulted from "the incorporation of contemporary folk and rock styles in the late 1960s and early 1970s … [and is] generally performed in a soft rock, pop-rock, or gospel-influenced style … [by] a 'praise team' or 'worship band'". Similarly, Klaver (2015, 100) highlights that in the 1970s "the tradition of evangelical revival songs was transformed into the genre of contemporary 'worship music' – a synthesis of popular music and the charismatic/pentecostal experience". A network of megachurches which produces pop-rock worship music used in modern church worship around the world, and which is part of the growing international Pentecostal movement, is Hillsong. This Australian-led network "seeks to communicate a bright, contemporary, victorious Christianity" (Evans 2015, 182-183), "provides opportunity to enact an *embodied* and *emotional* participation in worship, one that is as physically involved as it is compelling and cathartic" and is "part of an ongoing elaboration of evangelicalism" (Martí 2017, 378, italics in the original).

BBC, MBC, and Lifezone all feature worship bands, which include guitarists, drummers, pianists/keyboardists, and singers, and play contemporary worship music that is strongly influenced by pop rock and soft rock. These bands were elevated on a stage in front of the congregation (exactly as in Figure 17). I noticed through attending these churches that particular songs featured regularly at their services, written by Hillsong church and other megachurch organisations. Both *King of Kings*, and *What a beautiful name it is* by Hillsong Worship featured regularly, along with *Build my Life* by Housefires, and *Tuhia* by Link. Figure 17 below also shows *King of Kings* being performed by BBC's worship band. In some of Lifezone's services I noticed that parishioners got involved in worship affectively, with "lifting up your hands … dancing and praising God in many different ways" (Ada).

Figure 17: Worship band performing onstage at Bethlehem Baptist Church

Although it can be seen that all three of the churches that Upper Room residents attend have worship bands that play contemporary worship music, the residents, and more widely the Emerging Church movement, are not enthusiastic about this style. As has been identified above, the Emerging Church is a movement away from denominations and megachurches. In the Emerging Church "there is a movement away from the rock band form of church where performers lead worship from onstage", with the Emerging Church seeing that "The performers become a distraction … they become the focus of attention" (Gibbs and Bolger 2005, 81, 170). Kimball (2003, 37, 137, 141) additionally sees that contemporary worship is by itself "by no means where we should focus all of our attention … [as it] is but one part of it" and works against the idea that "the band … are there to perform … [or] are 'above' those who attend", as well as "try[ing] to avoid the 'stage and audience' feel". He (2003, 138) asks, "who says we even need to see the worship band? Shouldn't the focus or worship be on God, not on the leader and the musicians?". Furthermore, younger evangelicals see worship as "more than music" (Webber 2002, 191). Webber (2002, 188)

reinforces various points I have mentioned regarding contemporary worship among evangelicals in saying that it:

> … refer[s] to a pattern of worship developed since the late 1960s … At its best it can be a moving experience of the Spirit. At its worst it's a show, a performance done for the people or to the people and seldom by the people. One form or another of this worship is found in the megachurches of evangelicalism, in boomer churches that want to reach the younger generation and in churches associated with Pentecostal or charismatic movements.

One Upper Room resident, who is in the worship band at their church, said that they don't think that the band should be on the stage, and that:

> Making it all about the scene kind of lifts that [music] up as if one ministry would be more important … I don't like that, because in the end it's all ministry, and serving one another … that it was put on the stage and kind of got uplifted to this production thing, made into a scene, I find it very problematic. And I find that's kind of far away from the Christian roots … in the end, music is not even needed. We could just sit there, and meditate and pray … it's so rockstar-like.

The idea that the megachurch praise and worship band style of music is a crucial part of contemporary evangelicalism is important to Upper Room residents though not due to a simple celebration of it but rather due to a criticism of it, as can be seen in the quote above. These thoughts link to the Emerging Church's and younger evangelical's thoughts, and this critique is a key part of the new form of evangelicalism associated with the Emerging Church. Upper Room residents have a complex relationship with existing evangelicalism in which, while they still participate in a few different aspects (including megachurches and contemporary worship), they are also moving away from this, an emergent process consistent with the ideology of the Emerging Church movement. This complex relationship can also be seen in the following discussion on the small group movement.

Small Group Movement

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the small group movement increased in the 1960s with the rise of the charismatic movement (Atkinson and Rose 2020). As BBC, MBC, and Lifezone had connections with the charismatic movement, the small group movement is of relevance.

The small group movement replaced the traditional Western Sunday school as "the primary strategy for Christian formation and disciple-making" (Atkinson and Rose 2020, 548). Williamson (2011, 130) says that through small groups, the awareness of the "importance of Christians belonging to a group small enough for them to be personally

known and supported in their faith" was raised. One Upper Room resident said that churches were "never meant to be large groups of Christians" and highlighted the importance of small groups (Reuben), which reinforces my discussion of residents' reactions against megachurches and other large churches.

Although Upper Room could be considered as a 'small group' in and of itself, as discussed in the previous chapter, small groups also play a major role in the life of the churches. For example, MBC, BBC, and Lifezone all offer versions of small groups in the form of 'home groups', 'life groups', and 'connect groups', respectively. On its life groups, BBC says they are where you will "experience real relationships that will grow your faith", with BBC being "a big place … [where] suddenly big becomes small" (Bethlehem Baptist Church n.d.b), while Lifezone says of its connect groups that "Life is better together" and that "Joining a group is the best way to build lasting relationships and learn more about what it means to follow Jesus" (Lifezone Church n.d.a). Myers (2003) states that the need to grow community, or to help people belong, are common reasons for churches to start small groups.

Walton (2011, 111) sees the cultural form of small groups in the 21st century as very different from "the study circle informing church small groups at the beginning of the twentieth century" and "the therapeutic and pastoral care ideas informing house groups in the 1960s onwards, let alone the classes and bands of John Wesley or New Testament households". Many Upper Room residents are not involved in a small group through their respective churches, which may be due to the belief that the community house already offers them what they would get out of their church's home group, life group, or connect group. In this light, one of the residents of the second community house told me that she doesn't need to go to her connect group anymore because the community house serves the same purpose. I could see this when I attended the life group of a previous Upper Room resident. As in Upper Room, members of this resident's life group were of a similar age and faith mindset to them. Additionally, as in Upper Room, although the members were of a similar mindset, there was very little mention of Jesus and scripture. When I attended this life group, members played board games together, talked, and snacked, which is also similar to how the Upper Room residents interact. Both in Upper Room, and in this life group, religion is not explicitly emphasised, but rather there is an underlying focus on relationships and life; however, religion is not entirely absent with there being a focus on community. Ward (2013b, 229) argues that those in the younger generation are "not so … interested in forms of community that happen when they meet together in organised religious activities" such

as the small group programs developed by churches. This may be due to these small group models encouraging what Myers (2003) calls forced belonging.

As can be seen in the preceding discussion, the small group movement coincided with the charismatic movement and its associated establishment of megachurches, requiring small groups to be established to keep the values of community and relationships intact. The small group movement affected all three churches that Upper Room residents attend, with them all offering versions of small groups. Similar to their responses to megachurches and contemporary worship, Upper Room residents' feelings about, and movement away from, these church-based small groups show how they portray a new style of evangelicalism that fits under the umbrella of the emerging church movement.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the Upper Room residents' experiences of contemporary global evangelicalism within their churches in Tauranga, influenced by the charismatic movement, through looking at the aspects of the Church Capital C, megachurches and contemporary worship, and the small group movement. In exploring both the Church, and the residents' churches, I have shown how Upper Room residents, and the wider Steiger communities, exemplify these trends. The Emerging Church's disagreement with the size of megachurches and contemporary worship, and agreement in seeing the Church as a community of Christians and as the kingdom of God, are shared by Upper Room residents.

In the next chapter, I will widen the setting further, to the world outside of Upper Room, local churches, and the Church. I will discuss the primarily rhetorical and theoretical outreach by the Upper Room residents, and the wider Steiger communities, towards non-Christian members of what they call the 'Global Youth Culture'. I will also make further connections between the Emerging Church and Upper Room and the wider Steiger communities, through showing contemporary global evangelical trends of an emphasis on the evangelical value of 'relevance', and outreach that is relational, and also looking at the actual outcome of weak evangelism for these communities.

Chapter 5:
Outreach to non-Christians in the Global Youth Culture

This final substantive chapter investigates how Upper Room community house residents, and the Steiger Tauranga City Team, 'reach out' to non-Christians of the 'Global Youth Culture' (GYC) beyond the confines of the community house. I have chosen to use the term outreach to describe how the residents connect with, and attempt to spread the Christian message to, these non-Christians, rather than using 'evangelism', or 'activism' and 'conversionism' (Bebbington 1989) with these terms being outdated and having negative connotations. I begin by discussing Steiger's and Upper Room's main thoughts on non-Christian members of the GYC. The main trends and patterns of contemporary global evangelicalism that I will look at in this chapter, that are exemplified in the rhetoric regarding the outreach of Upper Room residents and the Steiger Tauranga City Team members, are the evangelical value of 'relevance', and emphasis placed on outreach that is relational. I noticed weaknesses in the practice of this outreach. With contemporary evangelicals characteristically showing weaknesses in the area of evangelism, I have chosen to refer to this trend as 'weak evangelism'. These trends, patterns, and characteristics are also exemplified by the Emerging Church movement.

Non-Christians in the Global Youth Culture

To understand how Steiger and Upper Room exemplify the outreach common to evangelicalism generally, one first needs to understand who their main target is and how they construct this group. Previously, in Chapter 2, I discussed how Steiger sees the GYC more generally. Here, I will specifically discuss Steiger's thoughts on non-Christian members of this group. Steiger sees these non-Christians as possessing a very similar worldview and values, and as being very cynical, particularly towards Christianity (Ezra). Participants in my study described these non-Christians as being 'lonely', 'individualistic', 'of the world', and 'lost', due to being influenced by consumer culture and social media.

Steiger International conflates the worldview of secular humanism and the influence of consumer culture, believing that people define themselves by the things they consume. Ezra said that "in the Western culture, it's just hollow … consume as much as you can, wear

all that stuff or whatever, and you'll be happy". Upper Room residents noted that consumerism is "a work from the evil guy [the enemy, Satan]" (Philip), that "we're very much socialised into *I need the next big thing* … and it kind of hijacks human nature" (Micah), and that consumerism:

> … drives countries to waste … drives greed, and it drives despair because it's empty and there's nothing good that comes out of it … society's trying to destroy itself … it's engineering people to waste, and to worship companies … surely that's a cry for help right there (Reuben).

In positing itself as the morally authentic alternative to the corrupt consumeristic lifestyle, Steiger exemplifies a key dimension of the Emerging Church movement, which "is compelled by a quest for authenticity which entails a critique of consumerism and a focus on changing the world" (Bielo 2011 in Reed 2014, 68). As a secular humanist, I disagree with Steiger's conflation of secular humanism and consumerism, as does Cooke (2007, 26) who highlights that "We must object every time secularism is used as a synonym for consumerism, as frequently happens". My objection, as a secular humanist, is based around the idea that there are more aspects of life that I place emphasis on than simply consumer culture. With consumerism being viewed in a negative light, if secularism is conflated with this, this consequently places secularism in a negative light also. Steiger argues that to be non-Christian is to be a voracious capitalist consumer, when this is simply not the case.

Steiger International also highlights the influence of social media on members of the GYC, arguing that despite feeling connected, they ironically also feel lonelier. It believes that members of the GYC don't know how to socially belong or relate to each other, or be part of a community (Steiger International 2019). Ezra and Phoebe claimed that social media has led to young adults losing the art of communication, and removes the important physical presence that people have with others. The relationships that Global Youth do have are said to be "casual" or "contractual" (Gibbs and Bolger 2005), or "very, very superficial" (Ezra). Kimball (2003, 81) puts forward that "Because emerging generations live in this confusing and often disappointing world, we need a much more relational approach to ministry and evangelism". By viewing social media as causing people to become lonelier, Steiger rationalises and justifies its relational evangelical efforts (a trend of contemporary global evangelicalism which I will be discussing shortly). While I was studying Upper Room, the residents watched a docudrama on Netflix titled *The Social Dilemma*, which investigated the manipulative nature of social media that can erode the social fabric of how society works, and social media's links with mental health issues including suicide, depression, anxiety, and self-harm. This docudrama was talked about for days afterwards, and resulted in the residents changing their social media habits. Janzen (2013, 56) notes that questioning

technology's effect on communities is "a startling countercultural idea for some intentional Christian communities". Through my positionality as a young adult that has grown up in the 'technological age', but not so much the 'social media age', I am able to observe the effects of social media on relationships and communication from a more objective standpoint. While I do believe that social media affects these, I do not believe that social media is harmful to the GYC only. Additionally, although social media may remove the physical presence that people have with others, I argue that it has not led to young adults losing the art of communication, but rather has given them other avenues to communicate. For those struggling with social anxiety, sometimes it is easier to communicate with people online, as opposed to in-person. As such, with contemporary evangelicals placing emphasis on relational outreach, they may actually be causing more distress and discomfort for some young adults.

Terms such as 'self-centred' and 'individualistic' were used by various participants to describe the non-Christian, or secular, world and worldview, with Western culture specifically moving away from, and dissuading, familial and community-focused mindsets and towards a more autonomous and individualistic worldview, where tasks come before relationships and people (Micah). The idea that today's society is individualistic is shared by Gardiner et al. (1997), Johnston (2001), and Gibbs and Bolger (2005). One Upper Room resident stated that "The period that we're at right now in the Western society is the most saturated in self that it's ever been" (Reuben). The view of the GYC as individualistic may also explain why the outreach of residents follows a specifically relational evangelistic style.

The idea that the GYC is made up of people who are 'of the world' rather than 'in the world' can be used to show a division between non-Christians and Christians. While non-Christian members of the GYC are cohesive and similar, Christians are perceived to be in the world to reach out to these people, but not to become the same as them (Ada). Another Upper Room resident said that "when we think secular, we think … people of the world, rather than of Christ … to be of the world means that you're living for the world, rather than living for a creator" (Shiloh). More broadly, Steiger International believes that "Jesus' teaching on salt and light gives us the perfect balance to be in the world yet not of it" (Greenwood 2019, 92). This quote shows Steiger's emphasis on the evangelical value of 'relevance', an aspect of contemporary global evangelicalism which I will be discussing shortly. Robbins (2006) and Bielo (2013) are also aware of this division of Christians, particular those of the evangelical variety, from 'the world'. Robbins (2006, 214, 215) says that "Evangelical Christians of various stripes … tend to emphasize the break with the social

world", and that "there are difficulties in knowing where to draw the line between the meaningful and Christian and the meaningless and worldly", while Bielo (2013) notes that "a very familiar evangelical dilemma … [is] how to be in the world, but not of it". Further, Jamieson (2002, 23-24) posits that "From their evangelical heritage, EPC [Evangelical Pentecostal Charismatic] churches have a strong focus on evangelism, seeing people come out of the 'world' and into the 'church'".

The word 'lost' is used in Christian literature, as well as by Steiger and Upper Room residents, to describe people who are "without Jesus" (Harney 2009) or "who don't know God" (Ada). The use of 'lost' relates to a story in the Bible about the lost sheep in Luke 15:4, where Jesus goes out to look for the one lost sheep or, in other words, the one sinner who needs to repent or "the one who had wandered off" (Jamieson 2002), and leaves the 99 sheep who are righteous and do not need to repent. Janzen (2013) states that the 'lost' is who Jesus' ministry was especially directed to. Steiger claims that members of the GYC are 'lost' due to being lied to by the secular worldview, which is not delivering on its promises. This connects to a statement by evangelical writer, Miller (1994, 78) that "… never, perhaps, was any generation as 'lost' as this one".

However, more positively, Steiger also sees the GYC as being 'influencers'. In recognising the influence that the GYC could have on the world, Pastor Vernall, of BBC, noted that the Pierces (founders of Steiger International) realised that "if they could intercept this Global Youth Culture with the message of the Gospel, then the world could change" (video no longer available on BBC's website). This perspective is linked to viewing the GYC as potentially 'open' and responsive to the Gospel (Muller 1993; Withers and Grant 1993; Morrison 1997; Lee 2004). Muller (1993, 210) attributes this to this age group "Wrestling with meaning and life issues, growing to maturity, high mobility, gregarious friendships, searching for a partner, determining a place in society, considering the purpose and future of the world …". Muller (1993) and Cray (2002) believe that when evangelistic efforts are made towards this age group, it stands to produce effective outcomes. David Pierce also described the GYC as 'open' to Jesus (in another video on BBC's website which has since been removed); I see this as a deliberate strategy by Steiger that goes along with the GYC being lost.

Upper Room residents' thoughts on secularism

So how do Upper Room residents view these 'lost' non-Christians, influenced by the predominant worldview of secular humanism? What are their perceptions of the term

secularism? I will look at these questions first, before examining how Upper Room residents and Steiger Tauranga City Team members say they try to reach them, investigating the evangelical value of 'relevance', and their emphasis on 'relational outreach'; and also look at the practical outcome for most evangelical Christians of what I call 'weak evangelism'.

Geering (2007, 4) states that secularism refers to "the separation of church and state" and to "the declining participation of people in organised religion"; however, popular speech puts secularism in opposition to religion (i.e. anti-religion). Geering also describes secular as referring to "this-world" rather than the other eternal world (Geering 2010; see also Stuart 1982; Harris 1994).

Many Upper Room residents conflated secularism with agnosticism or atheism (Shiloh, Ada, Aaron, and Jethro). I received a mixture of negative, positive and more neutral statements on secularism. Some residents believe secularism advocates the idea that humans came from nothing (Aaron), that it doesn't make sense and that evolution is a theory (Ada), and that secularism is single-minded. Others see secularism as describing society as a whole (Jemima and Micah), and see themselves as distanced from the use of that word (Philip). The former group noted the presumed hopelessness and absence of purpose that secular people may face due to their lack of faith, while the latter group believe that there needs to be more opening of boundaries between secularism and Christianity (Jemima), and that the division, separation, and dichotomy are false and unnecessary (Philip and Micah).

The idea of secularism for the Upper Room residents as a whole is significant in that those who are more open-minded on what it means to be secular are more likely to be able to be relevant to secular people, while those who are more closed-minded are more likely to find difficulty in connecting with them. In my ethnographic research, I found that I was able to connect more with those residents who were open-minded about secularism, as I felt that I was accepted by them. This means that by evangelicals being more accepting and open to those that they wish to evangelise, they are able to be more 'relevant' and 'relational', and therefore may not run into the issue of having 'weak evangelism'.

'Relevance'

Contemporary evangelicals share a belief that successful evangelisation depends upon the gospel being made relevant within any given social and cultural context. Kaldor et al. (1994, 142) note that "… those who take the message of the Gospel to modern society must do so using means which are, in and of themselves, relevant to outsiders". McGrath (1994, 116) states that evangelicalism has shown an "ability to embed itself in a wide variety of cultural

contexts … [due to taking] the trouble to link the gospel with the experiential worlds of those to whom it has proclaimed that gospel". I will now consider relevance in several contexts, beginning with relevance for the Emerging Church movement.

The Emerging Church movement is stated as "trying to read our changing times and make the necessary adjustments so as to be able to communicate the gospel to what is, in substantial measure, a new culture" (Carson 2005, 48). Bader-Saye (2004, 25) maintains that "An Emergent definition of relevance" may include "being ready to give an account for the hope that we have and being in places where someone might actually ask", "translating the culture's language back to the church", and "making theological sense of the depth that people discover in the oddest places of ordinary living and then using that experience to draw them to the source of that depth". Ward (2013a, 176), in giving scriptural basis to the evangelical value of relevance, highlights that the Emerging Church movement:

> … is to be commended for its recognition that in our multicultural world there is no one expression of the gospel that will incarnate it for "all," even within one community in New Zealand. They draw correctly on the missional principle which Paul spells out in 1 Corinthians 9, of becoming "all things to all peoples so that I might by all possible means save some".

The Biblical scripture that Steiger links to their value of Relevance is the same scripture (1 Corinthians 9).

The notion of 'relevance' is highly important for the missionising enterprise of Steiger International. It aims to communicate 'the real Jesus' to non-Christians in the GYC, through showing them what it means to be Christian in areas considered as "lost sheep places" such as bars, clubs, and pubs. Tomlinson (1995, 123) states how these places can be considered as "situations of temptation" where Christians' heads can be filled with 'worldly' thoughts and passions. Steiger Tauranga representatives and Upper Room residents understand that Christians can't expect to reach people in church, because that's not a place "that's attractive to most people in our generation" (Phoebe). White (1983, 96-97) also notes that "Humanism and secularism have so engulfed the younger generation that the 'bring them to the church' concept no longer has any possibility of working".

Additionally, Steiger's emphasis upon contextual relevance has a focus on creativity, which it feels is especially pertinent to young adults. Bader-Saye (2006, 20) states that "it may be that one of our most profound forms of re-elevation will be to find the ways in which cultural productions (films, music, novels) open up to the beauty of God". Steiger International believes that one of the most effective ways to communicate to secular people is through music and art, with creativity being valued, open to interpretation, and allowing

for discussions to be had, and the opportunity to reflect culture as well as lead it. One Upper Room resident said that Steiger's creativity helps convey the ideas of the Bible in a way that is eye-catching and interests people (Ada). Additionally, David Hodgkinson of TSCF noted that creative evangelism "works well with students and young, global youth and even millennials … art and experience is really a key thing for getting people thinking". In Christian literature, Johnston (2001, 75) puts forward that "Creative delivery enables the listeners to discover the truth for themselves as opposed to having ideas dropped in their lap", while Davidson and Lineham (1982, 311) note that "The Challenge is to bring the kingdom of Jesus Christ to young people by capturing their imagination in a creative way".

Steiger Tauranga has held creative evangelistic events including pop-up events like *Kill the Bunny*, yearly art and photography exhibitions such as *Diaries of Despair: True Tales of Turnaround,* and *#nofilter*, and monthly Open Mic Nights at the first community house. *Kill the Bunny* revolved around the idea that the bunny had stolen Easter and they wanted to bring it back to centrally acknowledging the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. At this pop-up event a man dressed in a bunny suit was 'nailed' to the Cross and then got off and started preaching the Gospel. *Diaries of Despair* and *#nofilter* featured stories on issues such as suicide, depression, self-harm, drug abuse and addiction, but also provided stories that showed how these people found hope and a way through in coming to know Jesus. The Open Mic Nights came about as Steiger Tauranga was influenced by the success of Steiger International's NLM (the theatrical music group introduced in Chapter 2), and wanted to connect with people in a similar way, but on a smaller scale.

The view of relevance, of going to "lost sheep places", can also be seen through where ColourCollide (https://colourcollide.com/), a pop/rock/funk band formed by two residents of Upper Room in 2017 as a music ministry venture independent from Steiger, choose to hold their gigs, with a number being held at local pubs and bars. The music written and performed by ColourCollide aims to connect to the "lost sheep" by being present in these "lost sheep places" where the people are presumed to be 'hurting', and by connecting with people on relevant issues such as suicide, depression, and abuse. One member of ColourCollide and resident of Upper Room said that they "kinda like the atmosphere a little bit more [in bars] because people are real. Where people in church … for so long have put this façade on themselves". Tomlinson (1995, 125) notes that for post-evangelicals "feeling at home in this world is not all bad, and indeed they will freely confess that they often find non-Christian friendships more satisfying than friendships with fellow-Christians". The other resident of Upper Room in ColourCollide said that performing "out of the church

environment … I think that's so needed, because … I feel like we have to go where people are hurting, then I should go as far away as possible". Overall, most participants in my study put forward that bars, pubs, and clubs are where young adults are hanging out, and that that is where you have to go if you want to connect with them. Being a young adult myself, I understand the connection that has been made, both between substance use and young adults, as well as the geographic space of pubs, clubs and bars and young adults, but also disagree with the stereotyping of where this age group hangs out, and the assumption that they are all 'hurting'. In reality, non-Christian young adults hang out where Christian young adults hang out too: at the malls, at friends' houses, and at cafés. The stereotyping of non-Christian young adults hanging out at pubs, clubs, and bars, is further evidence of the ideological manoeuvring of Steiger, and Upper Room residents.

ColourCollide's music has two parts: upbeat music played on instruments including the ukulele, electric keyboard, drums, and bass guitar; and deeper lyrics that touch on emotionally sensitive issues. They are idealistically aiming to offer a bridge through what they consider to be the universal language of music, in raising these issues, while also offering hope through sharing 'the Good News'. ColourCollide's lyrics touch on issues in "restless soul[s] wandering inside of heavy thoughts" and "mental trap[s]" (the lyrics of Again I Fly Away), suicide in "pain around his neck" (Battlefield), loss in "life should be different, this is not what I signed up for" (Falling), and "bathing in my own weakness" (Polaroid). However, the lyrics also subtly suggest the power of converting to Christianity in "I place my head into your hands, you give me hope" (Again I Fly Away), "we are all cracked let's allow light to fill us up connecting us" (Cracked Faces), "know you're carried when you fall" (My Friend), "Your breath is giving me a choice, I'm finally standing" and "I'm so close to freedom, I am awaiting you" (Polaroid), "keep your hands open" (Stand Still), "we are all inspired of the success of someone else's tools" (The Magic Thing), and in "so hungry and unfulfilled, it starts and ends with love" (Whispers in the Wind).

Various sources note how music is a powerful and influential communicator of the Gospel (Brown 2011; Onyinah 2014). Music has "the capacity to take the body 'beyond' itself in ways that transcend written communication and cognitive processes, and to shape behaviour, form personal identity, and consolidate group fidelity" (Shilling 2005 as cited in Althouse and Wilkinson 2015, 33), and to facilitate "'mutual tuning-in,' a form of social interaction that is nonconceptual and precognitive" (Althouse and Wilkinson 2015, 34). A participant in my study said that "music is definitely your biggest weapon, the thing that's most easily manipulated to what you want" (Keziah). ColourCollide members living in

Upper Room said that it "makes it really easy for me to then talk to people" and that it "is a great connection tool … its own language, and culture, in itself".

The genre of music that ColourCollide writes and performs, pop/rock/funk, and the instruments that they play, are very common in Christian worship and praise music across the world these days (as discussed in the previous chapter). The meaning of worship is found in the musical style, the lyrics, and the production of the performance (Klaver 2015), three aspects that I see ColourCollide as fulfilling through their songs addressing relevant issues for young adults, and performances being held in "lost sheep places" where young adults are situated.

Upper Room residents aim to be relevant through the presence of 'connect groups', small social groups created by the residents to connect people through their shared interests, which are to be primarily held outside of the community house. These groups, which draw on various interests of the residents, were in the process of being set up while I conducted my fieldwork. These were the *emotionally healthy spirituality* outreach, the *Jam Session Group*, the *Walking Group*, the *Women's Discussion Group,* and the *volleyball* outreach. In the previous chapter, connect groups were noted as being an example of small groups, which Walton (2011, 102) suggests are perceived as "a tool of evangelism". One resident said that the plan for the Walking Group was to "walk with people, to literally walk with them but also to metaphorically walk with them … getting to know people … spending time with them, doing life together" (Ada). During the course of my research this outreach was not held, and neither was the emotionally healthy spirituality outreach, to my knowledge. I heard at a flat meeting that the Jam Session Group was held, but I only found out after the fact. I attended the Women's Discussion Group outreach once, due to it not happening again. The subject of discussion at this group was *13 Reasons Why: Breaking down the portrayal of suicide*. I also attended the volleyball outreach on various occasions. This information is significant as it shows the trend of contemporary global evangelicalism of small groups, in yet another context. It also highlights the outward-looking efforts of Upper Room, and leads into the later discussion of the reality of weak evangelism for evangelicals (which follows my section on relational outreach below).

'Relational outreach'

Coleman and Hackett (2015, 21) state that "evangelicals are taught to become involved in the spiritual and emotional lives of others and to allow such involvement by others … [there is an] emphasis on … 'immersive sociality'". In a similar way, various sources highlight

the focus on, and effectiveness of, the building of relationships, in postmodernity and in youth ministry, with youths being seen as 'individualistic', 'lonely' and 'disconnected' as shown in my earlier section on the GYC (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007; Withers as cited in Brown 2008; Onyinah 2014; Gibbs and Bolger 2005; Hunt 2008; Rooms 2018; Gardiner et al. 1997; Cray 2002). Merrilyn Withers (as cited in Brown 2008, 260) says that "Relationships are the key to effective evangelism and discipling of this generation", while Onyinah (2014, 128) states that "Whereas modernity emphasized the message of evangelism, postmodernity emphasizes the incarnational message as expressed in a relationship". This literature highlights that for contemporary evangelicals, functioning in the period of postmodernity, relationships are key to evangelising and conversion of the young, on top of being of significance in the 'discipling' of this generation (as discussed in Chapter 3), and also that the term 'evangelism' is becoming obsolete.

Emerging Church evangelicals critique conservative Christian evangelistic practices, such as street preaching and conversion speeches, as they lack meaningful, lasting personal commitments (Bielo 2009, 2011). Gibbs and Bolger (2005, 153) add that emerging churches "have a strong desire to distance themselves from the prevailing models of evangelism, which they regard as intrusive and manipulative". Carson (2005, 58), commenting on McLaren's *More Ready than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix* (2002), says that:

> Gone is evangelism as sales pitch, as conquest, as warfare, as ultimatum, as threat, as proof, as argument, as entertainment, as show, as monologue, as something you do. Evangelism is disciple making and is bound up with conversation, friendship, influence, invitation, companionship, challenge, opportunity, dance, something you get to do.

Many Upper Room residents are against the confrontational or activism type of evangelism, especially towards young adults, with residents noting that they despise the efforts of these 'Bible bashers' that pressure (Aaron), and that pushing of faith turns people away from it (Shiloh, Aaron, and Reuben). One resident stated that loving one another and 'doing life' with people is much more valuable than this type of evangelism (Reuben). Similarly, various sources highlighted that demonstrations of love to people are the "greatest tool for touching the world (Jacobsen and Jacobsen 2003, 31), and "the primary form of outreach" (Janzen 2013, 183). In terms of one of Bebbington's (1989) key tenets of evangelicalism, namely activism, this suggests that a new perspective is required. Some residents stated that confrontational evangelism is hard for even them to deal with as Christians (Jemima and Keziah). Keziah noted that street evangelism is confrontational, that "it's not … very healthy, or very loving", and that "a Christian coming to a Christian doing that would be

scary enough … let alone some random who's not Christian". In contrast to the quotes from literature above, I observed in my research that it is not so much that the old style of evangelism is gone, but that it is being framed in a new way, with 'relational outreach' being built on essentially the same principle as street preaching and conversion speeches of taking the message to the people, and with ColourCollide illustrating evangelism as entertainment and as show.

Within Upper Room, the residents' primarily rhetorical outreach has a focus on relationships. By 'primarily rhetorical outreach' I mean that the residents have mainly talked about, but not acted on, their plans for reaching out. The residents' outreach is closely related to active kindness, which evangelicals see as "demonstrating God's love by offering to do humble acts of service, in Christ's name, with no strings attached" (Sjogren, Ping, and Pollock 2003, 91). Smith (2002) states that "Christian youths are more concerned with living and acting out the teachings of Jesus … than confronting people and enforcing their beliefs on others". The Emerging Church's evangelistic style is also typified as "serving" and "preaching" in the actions of the community (Kimball 2003; Taylor 2005), and showing faith "as much by our actions as by our words" (Lawless 2009, 313). There are aspects of the friendship evangelism model present in Upper Room's outreach, due to "sustained attempt[s] to build meaningful relationships with the 'lost'" (Bielo 2009 as cited in Lie 2018, 44). Additionally, the model of relational evangelism is of relevance due to "desire[s] to recapture small-scaled one-on-one and relational activism that is less acculturated, dogmatically driven and therefore more organic in nature" than the global evangelisation enacted by huge multinational mission organisations (Black 2015, 146).

I have formulated the term 'relational outreach' to describe the evangelism discussed by Upper Room residents, rather than referring to it as 'relational evangelism' or 'friendship evangelism', as many residents prefer using the term outreach to describe their efforts to reach out to others, as opposed to the term evangelism. This may be because some approaches of evangelism seem contrived, manipulative, heavy-handed, inauthentic, or coercive (Harney 2009).

Rather than seeing themselves as activists for their faith, Upper Room residents see their outreach as focused on "doing life with people" and bringing people in, helping them, and showing God's love through their actions. This links to Carson's (2005, 102) comment that "some Christians refuse to engage in any overt evangelism, except the demonstration of a Christian life, in the hope that others will simply ask them what makes them tick", and to above descriptors of evangelism today as being bound up with 'conversation', 'friendship',

'invitation', 'companionship', and 'something you get to do'. Through hanging out with the Upper Room residents, I discovered that "doing life" often involved simply 'chilling out' and having fun, with board games and video games, movies, and going on walks. "Hanging out with someone" was said to be a form of outreach (Ada and Keziah), and "really the only way that you can outreach … [as it's] more personal" (Keziah). At various times during the course of my research I was offered help, both in words and in actions. I believe that through these actions the Upper Room residents were attempting to convert me. However, I was not tempted to be converted as I am content, and grounded in being a secular humanist. In saying that, I do believe that this could be an effective mode of evangelism with the 'right' person, who is looking for additional meaning in life.

With regards to bringing people in, Upper Room always keeps one room empty in the house for guests to stay in, and is open to having people come for dinner. Residents talked about how there's "a big aspect of welcoming people from outside the house … creating a space where people feel comfortable to come and to be themselves, and to feel connected" (Micah). I did indeed feel a sense of belonging at Upper Room, which became particularly evident when I was staying in Tauranga one weekend while house-sitting for my parents, and needed company. The community house immediately came to mind, so I went around and was made to feel at home.

'Weak evangelism'

"Many of the seers and reporters of the community transformation movement have been very prophetic, but not apostolic. They have done an incredible job in revealing and reporting community transformation, creating vision, excitement and forward movement, but have not addressed the how-to-do-it issues in a real and tangible way."
(Delph 2005, 3)

Despite these outreach styles of being 'relevant' and 'relational' seeming to carry active approaches, I discovered in my research that they were primarily rhetorical and theoretical, and were weakly implemented. While reaching out suggests an active, dynamic, and thoroughly interactive approach, this was rarely realised in practice. Through research of relevant literature, and my own ethnographic research, I have observed that although Steiger members and Upper Room residents possess the ideology and rhetoric of having many ideas and the motivation to evangelise, they are experiencing difficulties in finding relevant methods and reaching the intended audience. In other words, they exhibit what I call 'weak evangelism'. Both Keeley's (1985, 188-189) statement that since the 1970s evangelistic activities "largely renew the faithful and challenge nominal Christians to a greater commitment, rather than solve the problem of reaching outsiders", and Delph's (2005)

comment above, show the issues that Christians more generally are having in reaching outsiders, or non-Christians. Additionally, Tomlinson (1995, 136) notes that for evangelicals, the failure to "engage positively with the surrounding culture" is where they have fallen down. For emerging churches specifically, Hammett (2009, 235, 258) notes that "one of the common criticisms of emerging churches has been a weakness in the area of evangelism" with the "majority of emerging churches … not translat[ing] their missional orientation into evangelistic fruitfulness". McKnight (2007) says that the Emerging Church "… evangelize and theologize like the Reformed – meaning they rarely evangelize, yet theologize all the time" (as cited in Wollschleger 2012, 70).

I observed this weak evangelism with Steiger individuals having issues with being missional and reaching secular youths, with the ideas and motivation to be relevant existing, but there being difficulty in finding actual relevant methods and reaching the intended audience. One Upper Room resident said "Are they just attracting more Steiger people every time?" (Keziah). Steiger Tauranga is experiencing difficulties with its creative evangelism. Various Upper Room residents talked of Steiger Tauranga, and Steiger New Zealand more widely, needing to be 'rebooted', as they were subject to too much influence from the Steiger Europe city teams. One Upper Room resident said that "Steiger is about doing radical and outrageous stuff which works really well in America or Western Europe … [but] New Zealand is conservative" so this isn't normalised and it doesn't fit the context. One previous resident added that Steiger's evangelisation of America and Europe has a "real shock value". They also noted that Steiger New Zealand "always talk about relevance, and then I kinda can't take them seriously because it's not relevant a lot of the time", due to influence from other International ministries and city teams. An event held by Steiger Tauranga that showed the irrelevance and out-of-context nature of radical and outrageous evangelistic events in New Zealand was the pop-up event *Kill the Bunny.* Philip noted that "everyone was just kinda avoiding [the bunny carrying the cross] … they walk[ed] on the other side of the street [with facial expressions] 'what the hell? … what the hell!'". On Steiger events, such as the community dinners and the open mic nights, a previous resident said that "I think they were not working … because it wasn't drawing the public in, it was mostly Steiger people". On Steiger Tauranga's dual focus on the community houses and outreach, one resident said "They should either have made their focus we're *just building the community* <u>or</u> *more fully committed to reaching out to young people* … I feel like they've kinda stayed in this middle ground, where nothing really worked" (Micah).

Upper Room is experiencing similar difficulties in conducting 'connect groups' and 'relational outreach' to reach non-Christians, with myself as a non-Christian never having had the opportunity to attend the 'emotionally healthy spirituality outreach', 'the Jam Session Group', or 'the Walking Group', and with my only experience of 'the Women's Discussion Group' leaving me feeling outnumbered and like an outsider due to being the only non-Christian there, and the topic being *13 Reasons Why: Breaking down the portrayal of suicide*. My few experiences of the volleyball outreach were stained by over-competitive and rude comments from some of the Christian attendees. One Upper Room resident stated:

> I feel like these [Upper Room] outreach groups for the most part [are] … good for Christians, or people with some degree of knowledge of Jesus … [they] wouldn't necessarily be good for people who don't know Jesus at all, or had very little connection … or experience with Him (Shiloh).

Regarding the relational outreach of Upper Room, I noticed that this endeavour was more rhetorical and theoretical, being something that was spoken about, rather than carried through. At one point in my research when I helped the residents move around some furniture in their upstairs lounge, I found a poster on their outreach ideas underneath one of the couches, seemingly hidden and forgotten, a clear symbol of their weak evangelism.

I believe that the COVID-19 global pandemic, which resulted in a nationwide lockdown in New Zealand, also put a 'spanner in the works' of outreach by residents properly getting underway. Outreach efforts may have been hindered by social distancing, but the lockdown may have also acted, as one resident put it, as "just another reason not to practise some kind of outreach". Residents informed me that the lockdown was when discussions on possible outreaches were had, but that following this they "never really came into fruition", with a resident saying that "starting that [outreach] is kind of hard … it takes time and commitment, [which] not everyone has … especially due to COVID" (Aaron). Upper Room's lack of emphasis on outreach due to the impacts of COVID-19 links to a comment made by Sjogren, Ping, and Pollock (2003, 102) that "When it comes to evangelism, Christians often focus too much on preparation … use it as a crutch or an excuse for inactivity". I believe that the Upper Room residents' lack of emphasis on implementation of outreach methods is why they are failing at encouraging young non-Christian New Zealanders to convert.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has widened the setting, and expanded on evangelical Christian elements, in looking at the evangelism by Upper Room community house and Steiger Tauranga of non-

Christian members of the Global Youth Culture outside the sphere of their community house and the churches to which they belong. I have explored how these non-Christians are viewed by Steiger, and how important trends and patterns in contemporary global evangelicalism today are exemplified in the outreach of Upper Room residents and members of the Steiger Tauranga City Team. These trends are the evangelical value of relevance, emphasis placed on relational outreach, and the weaknesses of evangelicals in their evangelistic efforts. Through looking at these trends and patterns I have shown their relevance to the Emerging Church movement as well.

In the concluding chapter that follows, I summarise the main arguments of my thesis, position the importance of my research within the anthropology of Christianity and research on Christianity in New Zealand, and conclude with some personal reflections.

Chapter 6:
Conclusion

Main Arguments

In my research I have drawn on the Emerging Church movement as an analytical framework to show how the Upper Room community house, and the wider Steiger communities of Steiger Tauranga, Steiger New Zealand, and Steiger International, embody crucial aspects of contemporary global evangelical Christianity. These established and emergent aspects, which importantly mark out a new style of evangelical Christianity that differs markedly from what is typically thought to make up the evangelical style of Christianity, include the identification of and focus upon a particular group of people to be evangelised (namely the Global Youth Culture (GYC)), parachurch organisations, inter-denominationalism, non-denominationalism and a prioritisation of the 'Kingdom of God' perspective, 'Capital C Church' and the community of Christians, small groups and the small group movement, 'relational discipling', megachurches and contemporary worship, 'relational outreach', the value of 'relevance' and an emphasis on creativity, and 'weak evangelism'. All of these factors taken together mark out a new, emergent style of evangelicalism that departs significantly from traditional understandings of the like offered by Bebbington (1989).

In Chapter 2, I explored the evangelical, non-denominational, and inter-denominational nature of Steiger as a parachurch, and touched on Steiger's existence as an emerging church due to this, and through the emphases placed on creative evangelism and community. In Chapter 3, I explored how Upper Room residents exemplified non-denominationalism and 'relational discipling', and how the house could be considered as a small group. In Chapter 4, I explored how the residents see the Church as a community of Christians and as the kingdom of God, and also how they portray the disagreement with the size of megachurches and contemporary worship, and shy away from attending the small groups their churches offer, which were influenced by the small group movement. In Chapter 5, I explored the rhetorical 'relevant', and 'relational' outreach, as well as the practical 'weak evangelism' portrayed by the Upper Room residents and wider Steiger communities.

The most important established aspects of this new style of evangelicalism which the Emerging Church portrays are non-denominationalism and small groups, both considered in detail within Chapters 3 and 4. While the former is important to the Upper Room residents'

identities, and is intrinsic to evangelical Christianity through the idea of the 'Church Capital C' and the presence of parachurches, the latter can be used to label Upper Room and set it apart from the church-based small groups set up in evangelical churches influenced by the small group movement.

The emergent aspects of relational discipling, relational outreach, and weak evangelism are also significant in that they are all relevant to contemporary evangelicals, but are also all aspects that I formulated terms for as there were no accurate terms in the literature. In Upper Room, I saw the residents carry out relational discipling, but mainly theologise about relational outreach rather than practise it, leaving them with weak evangelism.

By drawing on the Emerging Church movement as an analytical framework, I have shown how this group of evangelical Christians portrays a contemporary, postmodern, relational style of evangelicalism, and positioned Upper Room, and the wider Steiger communities, at the cutting edge of a new style of evangelical Christianity now taking hold across the world. Steiger does not use the term 'evangelical' to describe itself, which may be an attempt by the organisation to avoid judgment, with the term 'evangelical' carrying negative connotations in New Zealand and globally. It was vital to study Upper Room and Steiger as evangelical in practice and belief, however, with Roxborogh (2000, 318-319) noting that "something can be learnt from … those who are wanting to distance themselves from [using the term evangelical]". With regards to my discovering the concept of the Emerging Church movement only through the analysis of relevant literature, I believe that Steiger may not identify as an emerging church due to the difficulty in defining this movement.

The Anthropology of Christianity

In looking at previous anthropological studies of evangelical Christianity, I found that many scholars refer to David Bebbington's tenets of evangelicalism as a starting point for analysing this phenomenon. Although I highlighted in Chapter 2 how these tenets align with Steiger's values, I did not assess the evangelicalism of Steiger and Upper Room through this framework, as I saw the Emerging Church movement as a more relevant analytical framework for articulating contemporary trends and patterns of global evangelicalism that go beyond Bebbington's formulation. Bebbington's tenets of activism and conversionism were of most significance, due to their alignment with Steiger's value of Relevance, and the outreach of the Upper Room residents and wider Steiger communities. Previous

anthropological studies into Christianity would find these tenets to be of significance with their research looking into evangelism as an external process (i.e. evangelisation of non-Christians). However, my research additionally looks at evangelism as an internal process through the prominence put on the discipling of Christians. With research in the anthropology of Christianity lacking studies of evangelism as an internal process, I decided to formulate my own term, 'relational discipling', to investigate this. I also formulated the term 'relational outreach' to show the style of evangelism that Upper Room residents are wishing to portray. The essential commonality between these two prominent concepts is relationships. Steiger Tauranga's focus on relationships can be seen through the establishment of the community houses using community to disciple existing Christians, and to possibly evangelise non-Christians with the houses being a space they can come to, to feel a sense of belonging. In looking at community, I am also adding to anthropological research on this important theme in Christianity that has been somewhat neglected. I see the community and relational aspects of the Upper Room residents' Christian character as reaching more towards their own 'tribe', with the 'discipling' of Christians taking precedence over the 'evangelising' of non-Christians. I see this practice in two contrasting ways. On the one hand, I see that there is discrepancy in what Steiger and Upper Room are theologising, and what they are practically carrying out (what I refer to in Chapter 5 as 'weak evangelism'). On the other hand, I see that there is respect for non-Christians by Upper Room residents not forcing their faith on others, but rather focusing on helping each other grow in faith.

Other aspects of contemporary global evangelical Christianity that have been discussed within the anthropology of Christianity, and that I also discussed, are megachurches and non-denominationalism. Within existing research, it is recognised that megachurches are a key aspect of contemporary global evangelicalism, but I have shown that contemporary Christians are actually moving away from them in some ways. Non-denominationalism, too, is an aspect of contemporary global evangelicalism which is crucial within the anthropology of Christianity, and the importance of this aspect is backed up by my research.

When searching for anthropological work on the Emerging Church movement, I noticed a dearth of studies. One anthropologist who has undertaken research on the Emerging Church movement is James Bielo. Both the work of Bielo and my own research show that within the Emerging Church movement there is a focus on relationships. However, while Bielo looks at patterns in the Emerging Church movement on a broad scale,

my study covers specific, localised aspects of the movement. Bielo's research has also been carried out specifically in the United States, while mine has been set in New Zealand. With various sources viewing the Emerging Church movement as prominent in New Zealand, research on a New Zealand group, which I consider to be an emerging church, is significant. Due to the lack of anthropological studies on the Emerging Church, I was forced to draw regularly upon Christian literature on this movement. I discovered a focus on using postmodern terms such as outreach and Church, as opposed to modern terms such as evangelism and church, due to the negative connotations of the modern terms' connections with an outdated, older form of evangelical Christianity. Through drawing on the Emerging Church movement, I have highlighted an important component of studies into evangelical Christianity, and have shown how the Upper Room residents and the situation I have looked at highlights a new style of evangelical Christianity that is only dimly starting to be registered by anthropologists.

Another area of interest within the anthropology of Christianity is that of new styles of evangelism differing from the old mission approach. Bielo (2012, 264) says that emerging evangelicals are "frequent experimenters with ritual and institutional structures", and Elisha (2013, 314) posits that there is a "diffuse and contingent nature of pastoral authority in evangelicalism's post-denominational age". Additionally, Hewitt (2014, 213) states that "This generation of young people wants creative space built through trust and accountability to be and to do ministry without being micromanaged by leaders". In my research, I found differences between Upper Room and its parent organisation of Steiger in the realm of outreach. These differences and the disconnect between Steiger and Upper Room may have resulted from this community house being the only one which had no Steiger missionaries living in it, and led to Upper Room residents distinguishing themselves from Steiger. The outreach efforts of Upper Room, although bearing some connections to the evangelistic efforts of Steiger Tauranga, reveal differences as well. Both focus on community in outreach, but carry this out in different ways (Lee 2004; Greenwood 2019). While Steiger Tauranga holds evangelistic events (in the traditional manner of missionising), I found that Upper Room is more focused on 'relational outreach', even if only rhetorically. Within the *Community House Agreement* (Appendix 3), Upper Room's allegiance to the wider organisation and to carrying out outreach is understood. However, there are still desires among the residents for the house to be autonomous in some of its outreach activities. An Upper Room resident said that "Steiger wanted us to do outreaches … I don't want to do a Steiger-styled outreach because these aren't Steiger people, these are just regular Tauranga people" (Philip). I observed the tension between Steiger and Upper Room residents when

carrying out my fieldwork, with Upper Room being characterised as "the rebellious younger sibling trying to be different from its family" (Micah). Although the differences in outreach may annoy Steiger, I believe that it is important for Upper Room residents to assert their autonomy and follow their own styles and methods of outreach (Bielo 2012; Elisha 2013; Hewitt 2014; Webber 2002).

Christianity in New Zealand

There is a scarcity of research into evangelical Christianity in contemporary New Zealand. With New Zealand and Tauranga becoming increasingly secular, it was interesting to see how an international global mission organisation was aiming to have an impact on the previously titled 'God's Own Country', and 'New Zealand's Bible-Belt'. I see Steiger New Zealand, and specifically Steiger Tauranga, as attempting to reignite evangelical Christianity in this country. When reviewing literature on Christianity in New Zealand, I noticed that the majority is rather general, and focuses mainly on the twentieth century. This literature is also written predominantly by Christians including Allan Davidson, Peter Lineham, Stuart Lange, and Kevin Ward. Key points that these authors have made about Christianity in New Zealand include: 1) the decline in young adherents (Lineham 2011) and more widely New Zealanders (Ward 2013b, 2016; Lineham 2017) to this faith; 2) that evangelicalism in New Zealand has not been studied widely (Lange 2013); 3) the effects of the charismatic movement on Christian churches (Lineham 1982, 2017; Ward 2013a, 2013b; Davidson 1997; Davidson and Lineham 1987); and 4) the weak and irrelevant evangelism of Christians (Davidson and Lineham 1982). My research confirms, and builds on, these points: 1) there being a focus by Steiger on reaching the GYC, 2) by mainly referring to evangelical literature from outside New Zealand, 3) by investigating small groups, megachurches, and contemporary worship (all influenced by the charismatic movement), and 4) by confirming the weak evangelism of New Zealand Christians. With New Zealand being an increasingly secular country, I see that this is the reason why precedence is placed on the 'discipling' of Christians by Steiger Tauranga, rather than on the 'evangelising' of non-Christians. Steiger Tauranga may believe that as non-Christian New Zealanders are not likely to convert to the Christian faith, they will have more luck carrying out evangelism with existing Christians (what I refer to as 'discipling').

Being a secular humanist, my eyes are wide open to the diversity of religions present in New Zealand. From my perspective I see that many New Zealanders believe that it would be unwise to allow any religion an undue influence in society, as this could lead to extremist

or fundamentalist behaviour that could destroy our society. There is a possibility that, although Steiger sees itself as relevant, its views on issues are too conservative for many New Zealanders. I experienced this conservatism when conversations around contentious issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and cannabis use were had, and I was on the opposite side of the fence to several Upper Room residents. This may be because a "wide variety of inter-denominational or non-denominational movements" and "movements for young people" are found among conservative, evangelical Protestants (Brown 1996, 67).

The critical elements in my thesis, such as the sections on 'weak evangelism' and the Emerging Church's move away from megachurches and contemporary worship, are important for Christians in New Zealand to understand in order for them to be accountable and responsible, and so that they can fulfil their mission more effectively, as argued by Arnold (2006) in Chapter 1.

Concluding Reflections

I hope that my new insights regarding contemporary global evangelical Christianity focusing on youth, relationships, and community, allow anthropologists of Christianity an alternative framework with which to conduct research into this area of interest. More anthropological research is needed on the Emerging Church movement, and particular communities like Upper Room and Steiger that portray aspects of this movement, with the Emerging Church being a more relevant analytical framework than the outdated tenets of David Bebbington. I also hope that my critical comments about weak evangelism, inaccurate and negative portrayals of youth, and insular communities, initiate discussion of change within Christian communities. Although this research has been all-encompassing, and at times I have felt completely out of my depth with the entire new vocabulary and knowledge that I have obtained, I stand firm on other secular anthropologists conducting research into Christianity, as it not only allows Christians to teach them something about the world they live in, but also allows Christians to learn something that may encourage themselves to be more authentic, and create a more honest society for everyone.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO FACULTY OF ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Jesus in Secular New Zealand: 'Reaching and discipling the global youth culture' in a Christian community house

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to participate in this research project on community of youth and their relationships with the secular world, at a community house in Tauranga, New Zealand. I am inviting you either as a resident of the community house or as a representative of the Steiger organisation that oversees the house (a leader or house facilitator).

The purpose of this research is to gain insights into the type of community that has been established in the community house, as well as how the residents have a sense of community and belonging, relate to the secular world, and navigate through the youth and young adult life stages in their lives. As the researcher, I will be conducting semi-structured interviews with you over a period of 3 months, and will be observing and participating in the community's events and activities, to investigate the type of community the residents live in.

As a resident, you may be asked questions about your thoughts on global youth culture, your relationships with the secular world, individual autonomy in community settings, as well as initial decisions to join, reasons to continue involvement, how community is constructed and performed, experiences in decision-making, and goals and visions for the community's future. You will also have a chance to discuss other relevant information with regards to these questions. As a representative of Steiger New Zealand, you may be asked about the organisation and its community houses. Interviews will take around 45 minutes to 2 hours each time. If you agree, interviews will be audio recorded to capture the content and the form of the interviews.

Findings from this research will be made publicly available in the form of a Master of Social Sciences in Anthropology thesis, but will not be published.

I will protect your anonymity in my study by giving you a pseudonym. A confidentiality agreement can be signed if needed. Additionally, I will maintain your confidentiality by keeping data secure, and by not revealing personal details or identifying characteristics.

The collected information will be stored on my personal computer, within password protected Microsoft Office files, until the project is completed. Once the research has been completed my supervisor, Dr Fraser Macdonald, will store the data for 5 years.

If requested, I will provide you with a copy of the research findings.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are able to decline to participate in the research or related activities (or any portion or part of these). You are also able to decline answering a particular question, and can withdraw information given in interviews up until two weeks after I send you the transcript of each interview. Participant data cannot be withdrawn from the project after it has been submitted, due to the anonymity of the data. You are also able to ask any further questions about the research that occur to you during your participation, and can correct or withdraw any information, personal or otherwise, that you have given to me.

The principal investigator for this project is myself, Esther Liddle, Masters Anthropology student at the University of Waikato. The supervisor for this project is Dr Fraser Macdonald. I can be contacted at any time via my student email at the University of Waikato, eml16@students.waikato.ac.nz, or on my mobile phone number (027 8447021). Dr Fraser Macdonald can also be contacted at any time on his staff email, fraser.macdonald@waikato.ac.nz, or on his office phone number (07 8379315).

"This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email alpss-ethics@waikato.ac.nz, postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240."

Appendix 2: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Jesus in Secular New Zealand: 'Reaching and discipling the global youth culture' in a Christian community house

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Name of participant (community house resident or Steiger New Zealand representative):

_____

I have received a copy of the Participant Information Sheet describing the research project. Any questions that I have, relating to the research, have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions about the research at any time during my participation; can correct or withdraw any information that I have given up until analysis has commenced; can decline to participate in the research, related activities (including interviews), or any portion or part of these; and that I can withdraw information given in interviews up until two weeks after I am sent the transcript of each interview. If I wish to withdraw information I have provided this must be done by informing the principal investigator via the contact details provided on the Information Sheet.

During the research, I understand that I do not have to answer questions if I am not happy to talk about the topic. I can stop interviews at any time, and I can ask to have the recording device turned off at any time.

I understand that the findings from this research will be made publicly available in the form of a Master of Social Sciences in Anthropology thesis, but will not be published.

I also understand that the data is to be stored on the principal investigator's personal computer, within password protected Microsoft Office files, during the research project. On completion, the data will then be stored by the project's supervisor for five years.

When I sign this consent form, I will retain ownership of my involvement but I give consent for the principal investigator to use interviews, and any follow up fieldwork, for the purposes of the research outlined in the Information Sheet.

Please complete the following checklist. Tick [✓] the appropriate box for each point.	**YES**	**NO**
I understand that my identity will remain confidential in the presentation of the research findings.		
I consent to having interviews recorded.		
I wish to view transcripts of interviews.		
I wish to receive a copy of the findings.		

Participant :		Principal Investigator :	Esther Liddle
Signature :	_____	Signature :	_____
Date :	_____	Date :	_____
Contact Details :	_____		
	_____		

Steiger Community House Agreement

Tauranga, New Zealand

MISSION VALUES EXPECTATIONS & RENTAL AGREEMENT

Mission Statement

The Wharf Community Houses are Christian communities that grow closer to Jesus and reach (influence) young adults living in and visiting Tauranga with an invitation to know Jesus.

Values

The Steiger Community houses believe in the values of the greater Steiger community these are: **Seeking God, Relevance, Courage, The Cross, and Holiness.** http://steiger.org/about-us/values-and-statement-of-faith

Personal Growth

We are a community that commits to developing our personal relationships withChrist by spending time in prayer, bible study and community (including Church,Bible Studies, and Small groups). We value teachability, transparency, accountability and holiness.

Servanthood

We are a community that wants to have good habits of serving each other. We choose to have an attitude of servanthood. Considering it a joy to lift each other up, and serve each other.

Engaging Culture

We are a community that desires to not only focus on growing together as a faithcommunity but also, desires to invite young adults living in and visiting Tauranga to develop relationships with Jesus by engaging in conversations about the Christian faith. Because of this, we choose to commit to being an inclusive community - welcoming both Christians and Non-christians into our everyday lives.

Honouring One Another

We are a community that commits to praying for each other and believing the best of each other. We acknowledge that while living in community conflict can occur. We commit to honouring each other and giving second chances when aggravated or offended.

We understand in Community, that because of the nature of our outward focus it is important to have outward (inclusive) and inward (exclusive) focused disciplines. The following expectations are both inclusive (affecting guests) and exclusive (affecting only the team.)

EXPECTATIONS

Personal Growth

- Christian Community is a vital part of life at Community houses. We will have weekly meetings that will include, accountability, prayer and weekly updates.
    - During house meetings it is important to make sure that individual schedules are communicated. If unable to participate in any event or leaving on holiday it will be communicated to the rest of the team as soon as the teammate knows when they will be unable to participate. Clear communication is a must for healthy community and we make the commitment to honour each other by letting each other know what's going on.
- We expect community house team members to have a growing relationship with God which includes praying for one another and with one another.
- Team members are expected to attend and be committed to a local bible study, small group, or church.
- Community team members are encouraged to have a mentor/accountability person they meet with at least once a month.
- It is expected that all team members will clean their personal spaces (room) at least once a month.

Servanthood

- Cleaning Rosters
    - Please be cleaning as you see needs, not because you are asked, but because you love your community and respect your fellow flatmates! For cleaning bathrooms, vacuuming, and deep cleaning the kitchen – there is a roster for who cleans and when.
- Please clear all personal items from community spaces before going to bed each night
- Cooking rosters
    - Food allergies and preferences will be respected during pre-planned meals.
    - We will have breakfast and lunch food available and also pre-determined housemeals (aka a cooking roster.) All food not labeled with a name or day of the week is free for all!
    - Flatmates will let each other know if they won't be there for dinner, within a reasonable time.

    - There is a weekly roster for cooking and everyone pitches in cleaning up after meals.
- Grocery app and food shopping explanation.
    - There will be a weekly food shop. We will do our best to fulfil food requests however we are budgeting and need to keep that in mind when shopping - so all requests may not be met

Engaging Culture

- Team members are expected to be present at house events and to communicate with other flatmates if they are unable to attend.
- We want to cultivate an engaging atmosphere and friendly environment at each community house.
- When the community house hosts events or people, team members commit to being a positive influence on our guests. We choose to not allow casual complaining to affect community life.
    - If there is an issue the team members will discuss in house meetings/catch-ups, not with guests.
- It is encouraged while in the lounge/community spaces, to give up screen time and to spend time socialising and hanging out with each other. We often have our smart phones or other devices in our hands and minds, and we want relationships with each other to be the main priority.
- Team members are expected to be able to engage in conversations with guests about the big picture of life. These engaging conversations should bring people to discuss a personal relationship with Jesus.
- DVDs, movies, YouTube videos, etc watched in the community space will be chosen using discretion and take into account any visitors. Sexually explicit television shows and movies are not allowed in public spaces. (Generally R16 and above)
- Alcohol is prohibited at large public gatherings in community house spaces.
- Team members are expected to be kind and courteous to guests, both planned and unexpected.
- Internet Wi-Fi code will be regularly updated as needed.
- We do not want to create a stumbling block for any of our guests as per Romans 14:21 therefore no alcohol or remnants of alcohol (bottles etc) will be visible during community and public events. All events, community meals/potluck, etc will be alcohol free.
    - The use of illicit and illegal drugs are not permitted at any of the community houses. There is also, no smoking inside the house/flat.
    - Pornographic material will not be tolerated in any form.

Honour

- We value spending time together regularly and will have weekly catch-ups - to be determined by each house.
- House calendar - to schedule meals, guests and special events
    - All overnight guests (friends and family of flatmates) must be cleared (within reason) with other flatmates in the house.
- Steiger has purchased and been donated a lot of items for the Community House. These need to be respected as if they were your own. If something breaks, please let Sarah know as soon as possible and we will work together for a solution. If something is broken by you (or your guest's) sheer stupidity, you will be responsible to pay for its replacement or repair. We will maintain a list of what Steiger owns in the house (an Asset Register).
- We expect the truth (with grace) to be spoken and believe that honesty is a foundation for trust in the community. We commit to speaking the truth in love and with grace always. We respect each other's needs, privacy, and boundaries (which include the individual's private room and belongings).
- It is important to be open and honest with other flatmates to make sure that issues are being dealt with. It can be challenging to live in community and it is important to address offence and frustration at appropriate times. We commit to talking with each other in person and to follow the biblical model of conflict resolution outlined in Matthew - going straight to the appropriate person first, and if it cannot be worked out, meeting with the appropriate Steiger leader.
- Boy/girlfriends do not stay the night in the bedroom of their significant other.
- Should a significant romantic relationship begin to develop between flatmates, then one person would be expected to move out within a reasonable time frame.

I commit to:
Honouring others in the house by working through conflict and speaking well of others outside of community spaces.
Giving at least one month notice if I choose to move out.
Following a cooking and cleaning roster agreed upon by the Community house team I live with. Meeting together as an exclusive flat weekly to pray together and grow closer to God together. Paying rent weekly $190.
Paying a one time bond of $200 if one person, and $300 if a married couple.

If a team member breaks the agreement and is increasingly difficult to get along with the following actions will take place:

Cleaning Roster/Cooking roster issues
If after 3 consecutive weeks of not … there will be a fine of $25.
There will be a written warning, then there will be a fee/fine of $25 if there is continual laziness/lack of respect.
If there are more than 3 fines within 3 months it could be grounds for eviction. These things will be brought up at weekly team meetings.

Conflict resolution
If team members are continually in conflict and a compromise cannot be reached, the following actions will take place:
Formal conversation with Steiger leader to mediate.
Follow-up conversation with Steiger leader to see if changes have been implemented.
If unable to reach a middle ground, it may be cause for the team member to be asked to leave the community house. One month will be given to give the team member time to find new accommodation.

Immediate eviction:

- *Violent act/abuse*
- *Sexual misconduct/assault*
- *Drug use*
- *Excessive alcohol consumption (drunkeness)*

The Community House Agreement

I commit to the mission, purpose, values, expectations and policies of the Steiger Community House. I agree to abide by these, to actively participate in the community and to submit to the local leadership of Steiger.

Name:

Signed Date

Date Moving
into the House

Date Bond Paid