The "Powerful" Hillsong Brand

Tom Wagner

On June 26, 2012, Robin Hicks posted an article on the Australian media and marketing website Mumbrella that claimed Hillsong was "Australia's most powerful brand" (Hicks 2012). In it, Hicks analyzed keys to Hillsong's success, including, "the music brand Hillsong United," "customer acquisition," "messaging and language," "the service (brand experience)," and "brand story." In her conclusion, Hick's pointed towards the power of religious branding using the language of consumerism and the market:

> And let's be clear. The Hillsongers I have met, or who know through other people, are not brainwashed members of some cult. They are normal, intelligent people who have *bought into a way of living. A brand.* The difference between the Hillsong brand and others is that it is not just part of their life, like a Qantas flight or a Tim Tam. *It is their life.* (Hicks 2012, my emphasis)

Brands are powerful cultural artefacts. But what does a marketing term imbued with religious significance say about religious practice and experience in neoliberal political economy? Claiming that the Hillsong, or

T. Wagner (✉)
London, UK

any brand, is anyone's *life* probably is an overstatement. However, if we approach Hillsong's brand from the view of media ecology—that is, if we understand the brand not only as a collection of media[1] but also a medium through which faith is practiced and embodied—then we might posit it (and by extension, market ideology) as an important, if not central, part of how they experience themselves and the world as Christians.

In this chapter, I approach Hillsong's brand from the perspectives of media ecology and critical marketing.[2] In the first part of the chapter, I review the popular and academic literature on religious branding. Both perspectives offer insights into the relationship between religious brands and consumer culture. However, most contributions stop short of developing a theory of religious branding in relation to political economy. I begin to do this in the second part of the chapter by exploring Hillsong's brand through the lens of media ecology, which is the study of how dominant forms of media *in and as* environments affect the ways in which people relate to the world. Starting from the assumption that branding[3] is one dominant mode of cultural communication in the environments in which Hillsong operates, I suggest that Hillsong's brand is more than just a series of clever marketing techniques; it is a collection of media through which meaning is communicated and a medium through which meaning is experienced. Hillsong's brand is an environment with both symbolic and sensorial properties. In the third part of this chapter, I discuss the implications of a symbolic/sensorial brand environment. From a critical marketing viewpoint, participants in branded environments make and experience meaning while simultaneously (re)producing the brand and its ideology (e.g., Carah 2010)—an ideology that is dialectically attuned to the market context in which it is embedded. If the "medium" of the brand is also—at least in part—the "message," then we can begin to understand how religious experience and political economy feed into and reinforce each other. I therefore conclude by drawing on anthropologist Birgit Meyer's notion of "sensational forms" to suggest that experiential religious brands such as Hillsong can be particularly powerful because the experience of the brand and the experience of God are so closely associated that they become co-productive, self-reinforcing and, ultimately, inseparable from its political economic context.

When reading this chapter, it will be useful to remember two things. First, like all brands, Hillsong's brand is co-constituted; it is the product of constant negotiation between many different stakeholders. It reflects, and reproduces, power relations (as several chapters in this volume have

discussed); however, it is neither organized completely from the "top-down" nor built entirely from the "bottom up." Second, for those who attend Hillsong, worship is a *lifestyle*. Hillsong's members work to "hear God in everything," and the brand is something they use to facilitate this experience. This is to say that the brand-building work that Hillsong's members and other stakeholders do through their everyday engagement with the church and its brand is a valuable (and valued) part of their Christian life journeys.

Branding in the (Neoliberal) Religious Marketplace

Religious branding is one of the latest forms of communication and experience in an ever-evolving "religious market." As R. Laurence Moore observes, religion has always incorporated commerce. From the markets that flourished in cathedral towns to the sale of indulgences, Christianity has always engaged with, and often relied upon, worldly economic activities to further its goals (Moore 1994, 7). Indeed, one of the central paradoxes of Protestantism is that, although it seeks to transcend worldliness, it cannot do so except through the cultural codes and artefacts of the world (Kahn-Harris and Moberg 2012). Yet the epistemologies of the "market" have varied dramatically throughout human history (Arendt 1958; Cf. Leshem 2016). In pre-Socratic times, *oikonomia* (economy) was thought of as a good for all, subordinated to and in support of politics and ethics (Baloglou 2012). In contrast, under contemporary neoliberal political economy, the ideology of the market does not only dominate politics and ethics, but subsumes it, colonizing it in ways that render all actors, to some extent, "neoliberal subjects" (Foucault 2008, see also Harrison this volume).[4] Under these conditions, religious branding is something much more powerful than simply a way to "sell" religion; it is a medium through which spiritual efficacy and neoliberal ideology meet at sites where the self is constructed, communicated, and experienced.

There is a burgeoning literature on the extent to which "the market" is implicated in the ways we communicate, conceptualize, and experience ourselves. There are two particularly salient ways to approach the synergies between religions and brands. The first is the "popular marketing" perspective, which posits that successful companies and successful religions share many of the same attributes, such as that both are composed of participants who share an intense corporate culture and set of

values. For example, in *Primal Branding: Create Zealots for Your Brand, Your Company, And Your Future* (2006), Patrick Hanlon posits a seven-piece "primal code" of corporate communication that is shared by successful companies and religious organizations. Similarly, Jesper Kunde's *Corporate Religion: Building a Strong Company Through Personality and Corporate Soul* (2002) uses case studies of brands like Virgin and Harley-Davidson to find the "right formula" to create a "brand religion." This discourse underpins the marketing blogs that breathlessly present Hillsong's marketing strategy as the gold standard (In her Mumbrella article, Hicks advises: "Marketers. Watch and learn."). The strength of popular marketing accounts is that they highlight the power—or at least the imagined power—that brands hold in contemporary consumer culture by drawing parallels between religious conviction and brand loyalty. However, in doing so they underestimate and undervalue the seriousness of religious convictions. For those who are committed, the choice between Coke and Pepsi has little bearing on the fate of the eternal soul.

A second way to approach religious branding is from sociological perspectives.[5] In the academic arena, sociologically oriented approaches tend to focus on the ways that religious organizations appeal to consumers in a "religious marketplace." A few of the many works in this arena include R. Laurence Moore's *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (1994), Wade Roof Clarke's *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (1999), and Finke and Stark's *The Churching of America 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (2005). It is telling that each of these tomes focuses on religion as practiced in America, although the "religious marketplace" is now used to analyze religiosity around the world from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (e.g., Adogame 2000; Selka 2010; Dolan 2013). The "religious marketplace" approach focuses on how well religious organizations address the "needs" (spiritual and otherwise) of worshipers, but few works explicitly engage religious branding as a method of doing so. Those that do so include Mara Einstein's *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age (*2008*)*, Gauthier and Martikainen's *Religion in Consumer Society: Brands, Consumers and Markets* (2013), and Usunier and Stolz's *Religions as Brands: New Perspectives on the Marketization of Religion and Spirituality* (2014). Outside of my own work (Wagner 2014a, b, c, d) and that with Tanya Riches (Riches and Wagner 2012) few academic articles on Hillsong explore the sociological significance of relationship

between marketing and religious experience in depth. One that begins to do so is E.H. McIntyre's "Brand of Choice: Why Hillsong Music is Winning Sales and Souls" (2007). In it, the author notes that Hillsong's success:

> … illustrates that religion can be viable, successful and even subversive when armed with tactics borrowed from the dominant secular competition of consumerism, materialism and individualism, which is manifest in the principles of public relations, marketing and business. (McIntyre 2007, 178)

In contrast to popular marketing perspectives, sociological approaches to religious branding assume the seriousness of faith, and delve into the market mechanisms that religious individuals and organizations leverage to inculcate and deepen faith. However, while acknowledging the importance of the role of consumer culture in the religious experience, they do not consider how neoliberal political economy (i.e. "the market" as an ideology) is implicated in the epistemology and phenomenology of religious brands.[6]

In this respect, Marion Maddox's article "'In the Goofy Parking Lot': Growth Churches as a Novel Religious Form for Late Capitalism" (2012) comes the closest. For Maddox, growth churches such as Hillsong utilize the logic and ethos of consumer capitalism, and in doing so, they reproduce it:

> Seized by the vision of growth, [megachurches such as Hillsong] share the entrepreneurial spirit, the hierarchical corporate structures and the marketing techniques of entertainment, conversion and branding. Growth churches are the purest demonstration that, as Walter Benjamin and others have argued, capitalism has become the unassailable global religion. In growth church campuses, no less than in advertising offices, consumerism re-enchants the world according to its own lights. (Maddox 2012, 155)

Maddox is correct to note that churches such as Hillsong do, at least to some extent, reproduce consumer capitalism and neoliberal subjects. However, her top-down institutional perspective ignores the bottom-up actions of individual participants and therefore misses a key part of how market ideology is reproduced and normalized. For this we need to turn to media ecology and critical marketing, which the remainder of

this chapter explores. In doing so, I will integrate ideas from my previous work (Wagner 2014a, b, c, d and 2015).

A MEDIA ECOLOGICAL VIEW OF HILLSONG'S BRAND

Media ecology is the study of how dominant forms of media in an environment affect the ways people relate to the world. It is therefore a useful way to approach the dually media(ted) nature of Hillsong's brand because it takes a holistic view of the relationship among marketing, media, and experience.[7] Media ecology views *media as environments* but also *environments as media* (Lum 2006, 31). It furthermore considers such environments to be concomitantly symbolic and sensorial.

Viewed as a symbolic environment, every medium (and brand) is "systemically constituted by a unique set of codes and syntax" (Lum 2006, 29). For example, the use of English as a communication medium requires an understanding of (and facility with) its vocabulary (that is, its symbols and their assigned meanings) as well as its grammar (that is, its syntax and rules that govern the construction of meaning) (Lum 2006, 29). Similarly, the way Hillsong's brand is "understood" requires familiarity with the cultural codes that give it meaning in a given context. For example, the various components of Hillsong's worship service include recognizable language (Ingold 2014), technology (Klaver 2015), people (Evans, this volume), music (Riches 2010; Riches and Wagner 2012), and even the venue itself (Goh 2008). Each component "speaks" to worshipers, yet what is "heard" is complicated for at least two reasons. First, communication is culturally coded and intertextual (Kahn-Harris and Moberg 2012); second, no medium is value-neutral. This can be seen in, for example, in the ways different churches use, or choose not to use, Hillsong's music to worship according to (or in spite of) their theological outlooks.[8] Similarly, technologies are never value-neutral, so religious actors will (or will not) use them to achieve ends that are compatible with their idiosyncratic worldviews (Campbell 2010). Thus, Hillsong's "brand" of worship, which operationalizes the cultural codes, communicative techniques, and technologies of commercial and popular culture, is hotly contested according to different sets of values, ethics, and theologies.

Media acts on—and to some extent shapes—our sensorial apparatuses. Thus, viewing media (and brands) as sensorial environments has physiological-perceptual implications (Lum 2006, 28–29). We experience

ourselves relative to the constant flow of information from our external world and our internal states. According to McLuhan (2001), every medium engages the user's senses differently, and thus embodies a unique set of sensory characteristics. For example, reading primarily engages the visual senses, while listening to the radio primarily engages auditory capabilities. McLuhan's student, Walter Ong (2012), suggested that a society's dominant communication medium determines which of its people's senses are most acute, and that this has far-reaching cultural implications because it influences the way people comprehend the world around them. Thus, media as sensorial environments influence the ways in which we experience the world and ourselves. This has profound implications for the experience of Hillsong's brand, which is an affective, associational gestalt not only comprised of different media but *media in and of itself*. One can see that this branded symbolic/sensorial environment might be a powerful context for the affect-encouraging, embodied charismatic practices embedded in the pentecostal tradition from which Hillsong draws.

Hillsong's ecosystem of branded communication platforms affords participants different, mutually informing ways of knowing (Wagner 2014a). As with the worship service discussed above, components of this ecosystem include not only old and new media technologies, but also commodities, people, places (both physical and virtual), and institutions that will be engaged with by different people, in different contexts, for different reasons. For example, Hillsong communicates to those who attend its services through print media such as the seat drops in services, and to the larger Christian community through books by its founders Brian and Bobbie Houston and articles in its lifestyle magazine *Relevant*. Demographically targeted CDs and DVDs circulate both sonic and visual tropes that are repeated, recombined, and elaborated as elements of worship services and conferences. Hillsong's pastors and worship leaders are also important parts of its message: they function as both local ministers and mediated celebrities whose images and personalities are co-branded Hillsong (Riches and Wagner 2012; Wagner 2014a, 79). Additionally, Hillsong maintains a network of institutions including name-brand churches in major cities around the world, its "family" of affiliated churches, and Hillsong College. Finally, an important part of Hillsong's brand ecosystem is its online infrastructure of both official and unofficial websites and social media. These platforms are connected by mutually reinforcing sonic, textual, or visual references.

An example of this is the "Scarlett Thread" theme of Hillsong's 2011 liturgical calendar.[9] Hillsong's communication proceeds largely in yearly cycles that begin with "Vision Sunday." On Vision Sunday, every Hillsong congregation views a video introducing a central theme to be explored during the year, with reinforcing visual imagery.[10] The 2011 video was entitled "The Scarlet Thread."[11] The central image of the video was a red thread that symbolized, among other things, Jesus Christ as the cord that holds together the tapestry of humanity—the red colour symbolizing His blood. Interspersed throughout three short "chapters" were scenes of a tapestry being hand-woven on a loom along with the testimonies of three congregation members (two Australians and one Londoner who had moved to the New York church).

The Scarlet Thread motif appeared throughout 2011, in, for example, print adverts, in-service videos, pastoral messages, and at Hillsong's conferences.[12] It was also the central trope on the cover of the 2011 Hillsong LIVE release, *God Is Able*. The Scarlet Thread provided a way of "knowing" that was distributed across a fragmented media landscape; it wove together Hillsong's communication threads to create a branded tapestry.

A View from Critical Marketing

When viewing The Scarlet Thread through the lens of media ecology, the question arises, "Who is doing the weaving?" Certainly, Hillsong provided the discursive thread and the contextual loom, but it was individual worshipers who, through participation, constructed and experienced the final product. This is where we may return to Maddox's assertion, discussed above, that Hillsong reproduces neoliberalism. In one sense, she is correct—growth churches like Hillsong do reproduce, to some extent, neoliberal ideologies. However, in her account, the church shapes its constituents, but not the other way around.[13] This leaves out a crucial ingredient of neoliberalism's hegemonic recipe: individual agency (or at least the appearance of it[14]). In the final section of this chapter, then, I will explore how Hillsong's media environment—its brand—provides both the material for and the context within which spiritual experience is produced.

The media(ted) nature of brands and branding offers advantages in communicating to (post)modern subjects in that, as a collection of disassembled signs, the "reassembling" process through which meaning

emerges is always fluid, multiple, and co-produced. One feature of these co-productive processes that is particularly important for religious brands is what I have elsewhere called "the prosumption of values" (Wagner 2014b). This is a process in which actors simultaneously produce and consume content imbued not only with their values and ideologies but also those of their media environments. This becomes clearer when the practical marketing and critical marketing perspectives of branding are compared.

Both practical marketers and critical marketers recognize that branding is an activity that relies upon and (co)produces different kinds of value. Actors derive intrinsic value from the social aspects of participating in activities such as crowd-sourced advertising campaigns and open-source software development, and they also reap tangible rewards such as, for example, bespoke products. Simultaneously, companies derive economic value from the participation of "the crowd" in the form of new (and often better) products and the development of an enthusiastic brand community. In prosumption activities, then, various kinds of economic and non-economic value are conflated.[15]

Because participants derive value from prosumption activities, practical marketers claim that is this kind of branding activity is a "win" for everyone involved. Critical marketers object to this assertion, however. A critical marketing perspective questions the power structures and inequities that perpetuate neoliberal capitalism, and therefore views branded environments as re-inscribing the ideology of "the market" ever more deeply into our cultural fabric and consciousness (Carah 2010). Drawing on observations similar to those of media ecology outlined above, critical marketing points out that the self-referential nature of branded environments delimits the symbolic/sensorial ways in which branded material can be used and understood (Arvidsson 2005; Carah 2010; Lury 2004). Because brands are embedded in neoliberal capitalist environments, then, the co-production of brands cannot help but be a hegemonic process through which neoliberal political economy is perpetuated.

Both the practical and critical perspectives of marketing are helpful when looking at the co-productive processes of religious branding, an example of which is Hillsong's annual † = ♥ campaign.[16] † = ♥ is a three week endeavour, largely conducted though the social media, that promotes Hillsong's Easter message. Originally conceived in 2008 by Hillsong Art Director Jay Argaet and Worship Pastor Joel Houston as "a simple way to explain the Gospel" (Email to author, April 30, 2014),

the † = ♥ concept has since evolved from a largely local campaign to a global Christian "meme," as it has been adapted to the practices and logics of its media ecology. Every year since 2012, when the campaign went global, participants have been encouraged to share images of the † = ♥ symbol on social media, hashtagging the posts #crossequalslove. Participants are encouraged to create their own versions of the † = ♥ symbol in novel ways and in novel places (e.g., † = ♥ drawn on toast or homemade jewellery). However, since most social media users only share ready-made content, Hillsong has created a bank of Instagram-friendly images. As I discovered during my fieldwork at Hillsong London, the message and imagery of † = ♥ is reinforced by topical preaching, reading, and discussion at local "connect groups," and through the release of an Easter single by Hillsong Worship.[17] It is also embedded in the overarching yearly tropes. For example, early renditions of † = ♥ were made from the Scarlet Thread discussed above.

With the † = ♥ campaign, Hillsong leverages the culture and logic of its media ecosystem to build and operationalize its brand. As Jay Argaet noted in an email to me:

> I guess what is the point of difference for this campaign [from previous years] is we utilized marketing in a way that really worked. We understood that there is [a] *two-way* approach in marketing Easter—Internally to equip the church to be bringers and interact with the campaign and externally to inspire people who are yet to experience Jesus to find about Him. (Email interview with author, April 30, 2014; Emphasis added.)

Two important ideas are expressed in this email. First, Argaet acknowledges that the "two-way" nature of Hillsong's branding is important for communicating *with* (instead of *to*) stakeholders internal and external to an organization; in other words, its ecosystem is dialogic with its political economic context. Second is that the act of engaging with (and in doing so building) Hillsong's brand is a gateway to the experience of Jesus. As noted above, the productive agency of branded communities provides personal "value" to stakeholders. All of the participants I interviewed during the 2013 campaign at Hillsong London described their involvement as personally valuable. For example, Jalen,[18] an 18-year-old woman from Surrey, told me that:

It [participating in the † = ♥ campaign] was really good! It helped me understand how deep Jesus' love for me is. … One of my friends at uni really liked the pictures and she's going to come [to church] next Sunday! (Interview with the author; April 1, 2013)

This young woman described the value derived from her participation in terms of both "inward" and "outward" facing evangelism. In line with the evangelical emphasis on a personal journey, she emphasized the "educational" aspects of the campaign. The ultimate benefit came not so much from sharing the † = ♥, but from operationalizing the associated discourse that circulated in Hillsong's media ecosystem in the form of, for example, preaching topics, discussions, and song lyrics. She also emphasized that the campaign helped her spread the Gospel by giving her a way to engage a friend. I have suggested elsewhere that by positioning its music as an evangelical resource, Hillsong imbues it and, by extension those who use it, with the evangelical power of the Spirit (Wagner 2014b). Similarly, I suggest that the "two-way" nature of the † = ♥ campaign, as part of Hillsong's brand, afforded a real, immediate experience of God by virtue of its participants' agency.

Conclusion

Hillsong's brand is comprised of media, and is simultaneously a medium. Participants engage with a Hillsong brand that is intertextual, sensorial, and symbolic, and furthermore is dialogically made meaningful within its political economic context. The brand is therefore inescapably a product of neoliberal political economy; it is hegemonic because it anticipates certain kinds of meanings, and predetermines certain kinds of actions and attachments through a kind of framing (Arvidsson 2005: 74; Lury 2004). For the members of Hillsong church, the brand is imbued with particular power because it is implicated in the creation, maintenance, and experience of the (Christian) self.

I suggest Hillsong's experiential religious brand is what anthropologist Birgit Meyer calls a "sensational form." Based on her observations of media use in pentecostal worship in Ghana, Meyer posits a "paradox of immediacy": as an immediate spiritual experience is realized repeatedly through a medium, the medium begins to transcend its materiality,

and becomes "invisible" through social processes. Furthermore, as the medium is repeatedly used as a vehicle of transcendence, it becomes "authorized," that is, imbued with spiritual efficacy:

> It is via particular modes of address, established modes of communication, and authorized religious ideas and practices that believers are called to get in touch with the divine, and each other. Sensational forms do not only convey particular ways of "making sense" but concomitantly tune the senses and induce specific sensations, thereby rendering the divine senseable, and triggering particular religious experiences. (Meyer 2008, 129)

The paradox is that the more the medium becomes "invisible" (i.e. spiritually efficacious), the more "realizing" the experience depends on its being visible. Following Meyer, I suggest that Hillsong's brand functions in this way. Hillsong's brand is a media environment that leverages the familiar communicative practices and logics of consumer culture to afford participants ways to actively engage in the immediate experience of God. In doing so, the brand becomes a necessary precondition for that experience. "Form" and "content" do not exist in opposition; rather, "form is necessary for content to be conveyed" (Meyer 2011, 30).

When I began my study of Hillsong in 2011, I was curious about how its brand "added value" to the worship experience. Did worshipers, I wondered, "find God" more easily or have a more intense worship experience, when engaging with Hillsong's brand? For some, religious brands such as Hillsong's may render powerful experiences. However, media ecology and critical marketing raise an important question: What is the "value of values" in relation to religious experience in neoliberal political economic contexts? On the one hand, participants derive value from their participation within the brand. On the other hand, participation (re)inscribes the values and ideologies of not only the brand, but also the neoliberal political-economic environment in which the brand is dialogically rendered meaningful. In this context, we must ask: What is the true "power" of (and behind) religious branding?

Notes

1. By this, I am invoking the McLuhan-esque notion that the marketing messages that comprise the brand are bound up with the media (magazines, websites, videos, etc.) through which they are communicated.

2. As with most academic fields, Critical Marketing is ill-defined, contested, and contextual (Saren et al. 2007). For the purposes of this chapter, I adopt Janice Denegri-Knott's observation that "critical marketing … adopts a multidisciplinary character in order to appropriate and adapt conceptual tools best suited to understand marketing as a social reality. So-called 'post modern'/critical theorists are summoned here to help ground conceptual and empirical explorations." (Quoted in Schroeder 2007, 25)

3. The terms "marketing," "branding," and "brand," are often conflated. For the purpose of this chapter, the brand is the "object," so to speak (Lury 2004). Branding is the process through which the brand is experienced, of which marketing is an important communicative aspect.

4. Thank you to Katerina Paramana for alerting me to this.

5. Marketing, of course, draws on a variety of sociological and anthropological methods and theories. Here I am mainly focusing on perspectives from the sociology of religion.

6. While there is not much work that explores the relationship between religion and neoliberal political economy from a branding perspective, much has been written about the religion and neoliberalism in general (see Martikainen and Gauthier 2013 for an excellent introduction), as well as on neoliberalism and pentecostalism specifically (e.g., Wightman 2008; Barker 2007; Newell 2007).

7. For a discussion of how this works through congregational music, see Wagner (2015).

8. See, for example, Herwig (2015).

9. Elsewhere, I have discussed how the form and content of Hillsong's communications—its liturgy—is dictated not only by traditional Christian events such as Easter and Christmas, but also by events such as its album recordings and releases. See Wagner (2014a), 56–61.

10. See Wagner (2014a), 53–58.

11. Video available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnG1si3xLto; accessed January 5, 2012.

12. It both figuratively and literally took center stage at Hillsong's European conference, where a giant loom was erected.

13. A similar tendency to ignore the individual and the internal diversity within Hillsong is found in Maddox (2012).

14. See Arnould (2007) who notes there are several problems with the concept of "agency," not the least of which is that, as an idea rooted in Western theology and the attendant emergence of a market-driven economy, agency is inseparable from institutional and cultural constructions of authority (142–144).

15. For an excellent account of the fraught nature of value(s) under neoliberalism, see Graeber (2001).
16. For an article length treatment of this, see Wagner (2015).
17. See Wagner (2015).
18. I have changed this name for anonymity.

REFERENCES

Adogame, Afe. 2000. The Quest for Space in the Global Spiritual Marketplace. *International Review of Mission* 89 (354): 400–409.

Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Arnould, Eric J. 2007. Can Consumers Escape the Market? In *Critical Marketing: Defining the Field*, ed. Michael Saren, Pauline Maclaran, Christina Goulding, Richard Elliot, Avi Shankar, and Miriam Catterall, 139–155. London: Elsevier.

Arvidsson, Adam. 2005. Brands A Critical Perspective. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 5 (2): 235–258.

Baloglou, Christos. P. 2012. The Tradition of Economic Thought in the Mediterranean World from the Ancient Classical Times Through the Hellenistic Times until the Byzantine Times and Arab-Islamic World. In *Handbook of History of Economic Thought: Insights on the Founders of Modern Economics*, ed. Jürgen Georg Backhaus, 7–91. New York: Springer.

Barker, Isabelle V. 2007. Charismatic Economies: Pentecostalism, Economic Restructuring, and Social Reproduction. *New Political Science* 29 (4): 407–427.

Campbell, Heidi. 2010. *When Religion Meets New Media*. London: Routledge.

Carah, Nicholas. 2010. *Pop Brands: Branding, Popular Music, and Young People*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Connell, John. 2005. Hillsong: A Megachurch in the Sydney Suburbs. *Australian Geographer* 36 (3): 315–332.

Dolan, Catherine. 2013. Economies of Expectation: Men, Marriage and Miracles in Kenya's Religious Marketplace. In *Consumption and Spirituality*, ed. Diego Rinallo, Linda Scott, and Pauline Maclaran. London: Routledge.

Einstein, Mara. 2008. *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*. London: Routledge.

Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark. 2005. *The Churching of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. Revised. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978–1979*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gauthier, François, and Tuomas Martikainen (eds.). 2013. *Religion in Consumer Society: Brands, Consumers, and Markets.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Graeber, David. 2001. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Goh, R.B.H. 2008. Hillsong and 'Megachurch' Practice: Semiotics, Spatial Logic and the Embodiment of Contemporary Evangelical Protestantism. *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 4 (3): 284–304.

Hepp, Andreas, and Veronika Krönert. 2008. Media Cultures and Religious Change: 'Mediatization' as 'Branding Religion.' In *Referat Auf Der Konferenz: Religion, Media Process and the Transformation of the Public Sphere: A Day Symposium, I.* http://www.imki.unibremen.de/fileadmin/mediapool/medienkultur/IMKI/Paper-Religion-3.pdf.

Herwig, Bruce. 2015. Why I Stopped Singing Hillsong. *Color Me Redlands Blog.* June 14. https://bruceherwig.wordpress.com/2015/06/14/why-i-stopped-singing-hillsong/.

Hicks, Robin. 2012. Hillsong—Australia's Most Powerful Brand. *Mumbrella*, July 26. https://mumbrella.com.au/hillsong-australias-most-powerful-brand-104506.

Ingold, Richard. 2014. God, the Devil and You: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis of the Language of Hillsong. *Literature & Aesthetics* 24 (1): 85–116.

Kahn-Harris, Keith, and Marcus Moberg. 2012. Religious Popular Music: Between the Instrumental, Transcendent and Transgressive. *Temenos* 8 (1): 87–106.

Keller, Kevin Lane. 2003. Brand Synthesis: The Multidimensionality of Brand Knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research* 29 (4): 595–600.

Klaver, Miranda. 2015. Media Technology Creating 'Sermonic Events.' The Hillsong Megachurch Network. *CrossCurrents* 65 (4): 422–433.

Leshem, Dotan. 2016. *The Origins of Neoliberalism: Modeling the Economy from Jesus to Foucault.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Latour, Bruno. 2007. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lum, Casey Man Kong. 2006. Notes Toward an Intellectual History of Media Ecology. In *Perspectives on Culture, Technology and Communication: The Media Ecology Tradition*, ed. Casey Man Kong Lum. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. 1–60.

Lury, Celia. 2004. *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, 2004. New York: Routledge.

Maddox, Marion. 2012. 'In the Goofy Parking Lot': Growth Churches as a Novel Religious Form for Late Capitalism. *Social Compass* 59 (2): 146–158.

McIntyre, E.H. 2007. Brand of Choice: Why Hillsong Music Is Winning Sales and Souls. *Australian Religion Studies Review* 20 (2): 175–194.

McLuhan, Marshall. 2001. *Understanding Media*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Meyer, Birgit. 2008. Media and the Senses in the Making of Religious Experience: An Introduction. *Material Religion* 4 (2): 124–134.

Meyer, Birgit. 2011. Mediation and Immediacy: Sensational Forms, Semiotic Ideologies and the Question of the Medium. *Social Anthropology* 19 (1): 23–39.

Moore, R. Laurence. 1994. *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Murphy, John. 1998. "What Is Branding?" In *Brands: The New Wealth Creators*, 1–11. New York: Palgrave.

Newell, Sasha. 2007. Pentecostal Witchcraft: Neoliberal Possession and Demonic Discourse in Ivoirian Pentecostal Churches. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37 (4): 461–490.

Ong, Walter J. 2012. *Orality and Literacy:* 30th anniversary Edition. London and New York: Routledge.

Riches, Tanya. 2010. The Evolving Theological Emphasis of Hillsong Worship (1996-2007). *Australasian Pentecostal Studies*.

Riches, Tanya, and Tom Wagner. 2012. The Evolution of Hillsong Music: From Australian Pentecostal Congregation into Global Brand. *The Australian Journal of Communication* 39 (1): 17–36.

Robbie B.H. Goh. 2015. Hillsong and Megachurch Practice: Semiotics, Spatial Logic and the Embodiment of Contemporary Evangelical Protestantism. *Material Religion* 4 (3): 284–304.

Saren, Michael, Pauline Maclaran, Christina Goulding, Richard Elliott, Avi Shankar, and Miriam Catterall (eds.). 2007. *Critical Marketing: Defining the Field*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Schroeder, Jonathan E. 2007. "Critical Marketing: Insights for Informed Research and Teaching." In *Critical Marketing, Defining the Field*, eds. by Michael Saren, Pauline Maclaran, Christina Goulding, Richard Elliott, Avi Shankar, and Miriam Catterall. Oxford: Elsevier.

Selka, Stephen. 2010. Morality in the Religious Marketplace: Evangelical Christianity, Candomblé, and the Struggle for Moral Distinction in Brazil. *American Ethnologist* 37 (2): 291–307.

Usunier, Jean-Claude, and Jörg Stolz (eds.). 2014. *Religion as Brands: New Perspectives on the Marketization of Religion and Spirituality*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing.

Wagner, Tom. 2014a. Hearing the 'Hillsong Sound': Music, Marketing, Meaning, and Branded Spiritual Experience at a Transnational Megachurch. Ph.D. Royal Holloway University of London.

Wagner, Tom. 2014b. Music, Branding and the Hegemonic Prosumption of Values of an Evangelical Growth Church. In *Religion in Times of Crisis*, ed. by

Gladys Ganiel, Heidemarie Winkel, and Christophe Monnot, *Religion and the Social Order* 24. Leiden, NL: Brill, 11–32.

Wagner, Tom. 2014c. Branding, Music, and Religion: Standardization and Adaptation in the Experience of the 'Hillsong Sound'. In *Religion as Brands: New Perspectives on the Marketization of Religion and Spirituality*, ed. Jean-Claude Usunier, and Jörg Stolz, 59–73. Farnham: Ashgate.

Wagner, Tom. 2014d. No Other Name?: Authenticity, Authority and Anointing in Christian Popular Music. *Journal of World Popular Music* 1 (2): 324–342.

Wagner, Tom. 2015. Music as a Mediated Object, Music as Media: Towards a Media Ecological View of Congregational Music. In *Singing a New Song: Congregational Music Making and Community in a Mediated Age*, ed. Anna Nekola, and Tom Wagner, 25–44. Farnham: Ashgate.

Wightman, Jill Marie. 2008. New Bolivians, New Bolivia: Pentecostal Conversion and Neoliberal Transformation in Contemporary Bolivia. Ph.D. diss, University of Illinois, Urbana.