

**What God Makes Free is Free Indeed:
Nondenominational Church Identity
and its Networks of Support**

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Introduction

It is commonly assumed by sociologists of religion that the numbers of nondenominational congregations in the United States are swelling at a rapid rate. Unfortunately, very little research can be called upon to substantiate this assumption. Not only are these independent congregations difficult to find and/or entice into cooperating with scientific research projects, but to this point few scholars have been interested in this segment of our nation's religious community. Recent national survey data collected at Hartford Institute for Religion Research shows the number of nondenominational churches to be roughly thirteen percent of the total population of congregations.¹ Mark Chaves' study of national religious communities found an even larger percentage of congregations (19%) which he identified as independent/ nondenominational. In addition, if current research which examines the factors contributing to congregational identity in traditional denominations is correct (where 75% of denominational church members do not think of themselves in terms of a denominational identity, combined with their congregations' often partial appropriation of denominational resources and labels), the nondenominational reality is closer to and more descriptive of the way many denominational congregations are currently functioning.² Therefore, for these and other reasons, this phenomenon deserves to be examined more closely.

This paper is a first attempt to explore the components of a nondenominational church identity and the organizational structures which support that identity. This analysis draws on key informant interview and questionnaire data of 73 independent churches from the larger [Organizing Religious Work](#) (ORW) project funded by the Lilly Endowment as well as, indirectly, on the author's research of independent megachurches (Thumma, 1996 and Thumma, [web article](#)). These independent churches were part of a group of 549 randomly selected congregations in seven sites (five urban areas - Albuquerque, Chicago, Hartford, Nashville and Seattle - and two rural area - clusters of counties in Alabama and Missouri which when combined roughly parallel the demographic and religious distribution of the U.S. as a whole).

It is impossible to say whether, or in what ways, this sample of independent congregations represents all the nondenominational churches in the nation. These data, however, do provide a first glimpse into this reality.

Defining Nondenominational Churches

The necessary first, and rather difficult, step is to determine what a "nondenominational church" is. Much confusion surrounds this label because it often is defined by **what it is not**. Sociologists of religion know very little of substance about this phenomenon - both because these congregations have not been systematically researched and because the reality isn't easily quantified. Our general scales, survey instruments and even theoretical categories are biased toward a particular kind of denominational model (Ammerman, 1999a).

A good example of the difficulty with this category can be seen in Meredith McGuire's textbook of the sociology of religion discipline. She summarizes this entire phenomenon in two sentences, stating that such congregations are

"organized by a dynamic preacher and not constrained by a central denominational organization or belief system...(are) usually recognizably Protestant...(and) idiosyncratic, (and are)...not fully 'official religion.'" Thus, she states, "researchers cannot make any general assumptions of what affiliation in such a church means; each congregation is independent of external control...[the most they can assume is that] the respondent has a Protestant affiliation and that it is not to any identifiable denomination" (1997:100).

The approach used to identify nondenominational churches for this paper was to allow the congregations to self-define their denominational affiliation or lack thereof. The majority of churches discussed in this paper claimed not to belong to any denomination. This identification is significant for the culture of the congregation as well as its identity to the larger society, as will be seen below.

Following this self-identification as nondenominational, considerable effort was made by the field researchers to probe for any ties to quasi-denominational entities. We found many congregations who used a generic label for their churches (like Valley Christian Church, Community Church of God, or Faith Fellowship) and whose pastors stated they were nondenominational; however, after more intensive questioning, it was determined they did have ties either to an official religious organization such as the Independent Churches of Christ or to one of the newer Networks or Associations of independent churches.

Once a congregation's key informant verified an affiliation with a larger umbrella organization, this group was investigated to ascertain its structural characteristics. Each of these networks were scored on whether they had professional full-time staff, a pension board, supported their own publishing entity, had an official membership list and carried an identity as a discernable religious group.³

From these five measures a degree of bureaucratization scale (1-5) was constructed with a continuum from no larger organizational structure (no score) to a minimal network structure (score of 1 or 2) to a partial agency structure (score of 3) to a full agency structure (score of 4 or 5). Nearly all of the congregations in this analysis were either truly independent or claimed to be nondenominational but were also associated with Networks having two or less of these institutional characteristics.

A few explicitly nondenominational congregations in this analysis had ties to more complex organizational entities (the Association of Vineyard Churches, Association of Calvary Chapels, Cherubim & Seraphim, and Pillar & Ground of Truth) but were included in this paper because of their congregational identity and a loose system of accountability were included in the nondenominational category.

Our study encountered over a dozen new nondenominational "networks" out of the hundreds of similar national groups in operation. A few such networks included the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies, Morning Star Ministries, Potters House Fellowship, Victory Outreach Network and Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship.⁴

This paper then focuses on these various Protestant congregations that explicitly identify themselves as "nondenominational" (or one of the other similar titles such as, independent, inter-denominational, and most recently post-denominational) even if they had ties to a larger network of churches with some organizational complexity. Using this pool of 73 nondenominational churches, this paper first describes the characteristics of this group. It then explores the variations and subgroups within the nondenominational category. Finally, the paper briefly addresses the cluster of parachurch organizations which assist in strengthening the nondenominational identity of these congregations.

The Characteristics of Nondenominational Congregations

Our research shows that the average nondenominational congregation appeared similar in several ways to other theologically conservative, denominationally aligned churches, in the sample. Independents parallel this group of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in terms of education levels and income of the members.

The nondenominational churches, however, are distinctively different in that they have considerably younger memberships, are located in more urban areas, and have far more racially mixed congregations than these other conservative churches. In addition, the independent churches had been established more recently and therefore have far less members born into the congregation or religious tradition than do the conservative denominational ones. The median worship attendance of the independent congregations is 110 persons which, according to this author's experience and compared to Chaves' national figures, indicates that this sample contains an over-representation of larger churches [See Table 1].

As stated above, among churches that claim to be nondenominational there are significant variations in their willingness to affiliate with any larger organized body. The seventy-three churches were placed into one of three subgroups based on the character of their affiliational ties. The nondenominational congregations were grouped into categories of those who had ties to a named Network or Association, those who affirmed a general denominational tradition (such as Baptist, Pentecostal or Methodist) but were not officially associated with an actual organization, and those who were not affiliated with any over-arching body - the truly independent. Table 2 shows the comparisons of these three distinct groups around several variables.

The Meaning Attached to a Nondenominational Identity

It could be argued that the nondenominational identity is sectarian and functions only at the individual congregational level. The nondenominational label does offer the local congregation a salient sectarian identity; however, given the recent rise of the national networks of nondenominational churches as well as parachurch support and resource organizations, this identity has also become a viable extra-congregational cultural reality. This cultural identity, although functional in the local congregational context, exists independent of any particular local church expression of it.

At the congregational level, the claim of a church's identity as nondenominational is an assertion about both spiritual independence and institutional freedom. This spiritual authority assertion is a powerful statement that independent congregations are explicitly not under, or beholden to, any human authority (read "denomination"). Rather, only God, the Bible, and God's spokesperson in the form of the pastor, are seen as spiritual authorities in and for the congregation. As the pastor of a small Black independent Spiritualist church suggested,

"Most of the people that are in certain denominations...they are really not serving God. They're serving the denomination. I'm seeking the truth and I am serving God, not a denomination or tradition."

This spiritual independence allows for the development of strong entrepreneurial, charismatic leaders. The implications of this for the congregation, as evidenced by the survey data, are decreased emphases by the leadership on providing a forum for discussion or encouraging internal democratic processes in the congregation when compared to other theologically conservative churches. This independence in spiritual leadership also allows for minimal internal checks and balances on the power structures and creates the potential for various abuses of authority.

This sense of spiritual independence, however, can also create an atmosphere of theological innovation. One fundamentalist megachurch pastor commented on this, saying, "We don't have to do what any denomination or group says. So that gives us lots of freedom to do things according to what we read in the Bible..." The female pastor of a small Holiness ministry enthusiastically agreed, "Nondenominational is all right! You just believe everything that the Word of God says! If God's word says it, we believe it! We put it to work." Historically, considerable religious change took place most often when a prophet rose up and stepped outside the boundaries of organized theological constraints. Much of the religious fervor and theological innovation in the past few decades (exemplified in such diverse phenomena as the Charismatic movement, fundamentalism, the Civil Rights movement, the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition, the prosperity gospel, cell churches, the house church movement, and the recent revivalist "river movement") happened as congregations embraced spiritually vital impulses which did not originate within denominations or arise out of their theological programs.

The claim of structural independence from a denominational entity also provides a significant amount of organizational and cultural freedom. The pastor of an independent Pentecostal church put it this way,

"Without the denominational structure there comes a wonderful ministry, missionary emphasis, a strong binding together...To be a denomination is like losing the distinction of fellowship. This church is a very independent church. It's a very unique church.... By way of conviction, it feels

intrusive to be part of a denomination and there are some elements of being a denomination that causes (churches) to lose their distinctiveness."

This intentional disconnection from identifiable denominational labels, as well as the cultural presuppositions and historical religious patterning associated with these labels, means that each congregation's identity is essentially "unmade" or at least "unknown" from its sign out front. Potential members must enter in order to evaluate a congregation's merits, rather than relying on its denominational affiliation. This freedom from traditional denominational expectations and cultural models allows for considerable experimentation in every way from combining multiple ethnic and racial groups in one congregation and merging diverse worship and music forms, to holding together memberships of mixed age, income, educational and occupational clusters. As the pastor of an Anglo-Hispanic independent Pentecostal congregation remarked, "We have a real freedom in our church. We believe people can come in no matter who they are. We don't have a judgmental attitude. We just try to reach out." The pastor of a black Baptist church echoed a similar sentiment, "[We've gotten] out of this denominational strain that has kept us separated. We're Christians. Once we break that mold honey, this whole world is going to have a revival like you've never seen before. We're going to have a day of Pentecost — if we can ever get those titles off of our churches."

Evidence of the freedom to "make oneself anew" can be found in that 53 percent of nondenominational churches in our survey had memberships with some level of racial diversity. An even more astonishing fact was that 24 percent of these churches had truly multiracial congregations, ones in which no racial group had a predominance. In the larger ORW dataset, only the Catholic congregations had a larger percentage of multiracial churches, with the mainline and conservative denominations having barely a handful of truly integrated churches. The lack of an historic "color line" culture, often attached to a denominational label, allows for significant racial blending to take place in these independent churches. Stated inversely, if a congregation wanted to embrace a multiracial mission and have this racial openness communicated to outsiders, it could most easily accomplish this by jettisoning its denominational label. The nondenominational identity resides outside ethnic and racial color lines. One black Baptist pastor stated this clearly,

"I think [the denomination] is a man-made association designed to make us feel important... Why can't we just walk under one banner- the Christian banner? Why should it be divided by color? What color is right, can anyone tell? We've kept our churches behind with all these different things. I think they're designed to make people feel comfortable and to hold on to whatever power they have."

A second venue of the congregation where this creative freedom is evident is in the worship forms of these churches. The absence of a prescribed liturgical tradition provides the opportunity for worship innovation. New worship styles can be created which merge traditional and contemporary, ritualized and spontaneous, expressivist and staid worship into a unique mix, one which resonates with a diverse grouping of people. Worship formats can be tailored to the congregation or to a mission orientation without fear of treading on sacred and sacrosanct denominational liturgical traditions. Being nondenominational allows for both a spiritual and theological freedom of innovation.

A Stronger Identity

This dual assertion within a nondenominational stance influences the creation of congregation's identity in ways that contribute to the strength of the organization. First, the strong anti-denominational commitment, "We're not who they are," reinforces the group's sense of itself as apart from others. This anti-institutional, radically-independent stance requires members to give up old affiliations with denominations if they want to embrace the nondenominational label. Even if the church is a part of a Network, it is as a nondenominational entity. These small-scale, face to face, loose associations of like-minded ministries are shaped within a radical congregational polity. The congregation is first and foremost independent. Its ties to the network are characterized by a weak relational accountability between clergy, marginally supported by non-binding commitments, minimal resource exchanges and few requirements for membership. This network relationship will be discussed further below.

This "freedom from" a denominational grounding for an identity requires that the church must create its own congregationally based identity - "We are who we say we are." The intentional shaping of strong local church identity enhances commitment.

According to our data, this strong nondenominational identity can be formed around several different aspect of the congregation, aspects which as times overlap and merge together.

In nearly 40% of the 60 churches for which we have complete data, a distinctive worship/ritual style was mentioned as significant to that congregation's identity. These distinctive worship formats ranged from Pentecostal expressivism, to a laid back, jeans wearing, chorus singing Vineyard style, to a more contemporary Black gospel format. Eight three percent of these churches were founded since 1975. In addition, these congregations with distinctive worship styles were less likely to mention a distinctive history, or to have members who were born into the congregation.

Another significant ground of congregational identity, for over 40% of the nondenominational pastors interviewed, was a distinctive set of beliefs. These theological identities ranged from Fundamentalism to Prosperity doctrines, to charismatic emphasis on Spirit Baptism and the gifts of the Spirit. In congregations where a distinct theology was stressed, it was much less likely that members identified with a general religious tradition or mentioned a history of affiliation. Strong beliefs, however, were neither more or less likely to be related to distinctive worship practices.

A final area of significant identity formation was around the race or ethnicity of the congregation, and especially around a multiracial identity. For the Korean, Hispanic and some black Baptist congregations in our sample, it was their ethnicity which unified the membership. The mixed racial congregations also derived significant congregational identity from their multi-racial constituency. Several explicitly advertised themselves as such. In a highly segregated religious reality, the multiracial quality of many of these nondenominational congregations provided a powerful ground for identity construction.

Support Structures of a Nondenominational Identity

Given the absence of a strong bureaucratic national denominational organization within the independent church context it is crucial to examine how the nondenominational identity is supported. The plausibility structures which support this identity are evident both within the local

church, between congregations, and in the parachurch and special interest groups that provide resources for these churches.

Intra-congregational, a church's leadership must intentionally create ways to nurture and teach the group's identity to members. This is of central importance because these nondenominational churches are of recent origin, with very few cradle members, and are lacking in denominational traditions or labels upon which to draw. As seen above, distinctive worship and liturgical styles, as well as clearly defined beliefs, help to socialize and teach members in the distinctive culture and identity of the nondenominational congregation. By explicitly shunning denominational ties, the independent church must define and reinforce who it is from within its own congregational base, through its worship practices and ideology.

To say a nondenominational congregation is independent, however, is not to imply it lacks any affiliations with other churches. There is a strong commitment even among the most independent not to be a "Lone-ranger Christians." As one pastor of an independent church strongly asserted, "we are not alone, we certainly fellowship with other churches." Inter-congregationally, many of the nondenominational churches have ties to local clergy associations. These interactions with denominationally identified churches reinforce their own independent stance. In each region we also found a significant number of informal associations of nondenominational churches united for fellowship or specific mission purposes (roughly an average of two such connections per congregation). These groupings of like-minded churches with similar "visions for ministry" were potent reinforcers of identity apart from a denominational reality. In Hartford, for instance, the pastors of five churches (An independent Hispanic Pentecostal, a nondenominational charismatic, a UCC church with ties to the Schuller Network, a NBC/ABC/Schuller/Kingdom networked black Baptist church, and a Willowcreek/Saddleback affiliated Assembly of God congregation) meet each month to trade ministry ideas about how best to reach the unsaved in the Hartford area and their congregations gather together several times a year for fellowship and joint worship services.

In addition to these informal networks of support many nondenominational churches were found to have started "church plants" or themselves be "daughter churches" from another independent congregation. This "family network" shared the training of pastors, creation and sharing of resources, and reinforcement of the nondenominational identity. This model, found most prominently in the Calvary and Vineyard Networks, produces unique relational ties and accountability as if to a parent or older sibling. These familial ties, as well as the informal associations, are also significant and fertile grounds for the recruitment and training of new nondenominational clergy. Often, promising lay leaders are nurtured into official leadership positions, mentored by existing clergy and then are encouraged to "plant a daughter church" - occasionally with the financial support of the "sending" congregation.

The regional and national networks and associations of independent churches, such as those mentioned above, also support a distinct nondenominational identity. This identity is not exactly the same as complete congregational independence, but neither is it identical to being a part of a full agency bureaucratic denomination. Many networks provide the opportunity to "belong to something bigger" while offering fellowship events, resources and training as well as some minimal pastoral oversight and accountability. Nevertheless, these networks are loose affiliations of like-minded ministers who may or may not represent their congregations. There are few formal ties, with

minimal obligations to belong and even less sacrifices to disaffiliate. In addition, a pastor might be affiliated with several networks at the same time or move from one to another depending on the congregation's present needs. A minister's involvement with a network may never be known by a large majority of the congregation. Likewise, the influence of these networks may be felt in the general congregation either through a worship style or theological orientation. More often these connectional influences slip into the congregation unobtrusively through the music, teaching resources, and educational events offered by the network.

Given the considerable lack of research on these network relationships, an extended series of interview quotes is offered as evidence of the character of these associational ties.

From a pastor affiliated with the *International World Ministry Fellowship*:

"It's just a faith organization... [as a member] we have fellowship with them and we support missionaries through them, but we're not governed by them. And we're also, both he and I, are ministers with Independent Assemblies and with the Charismatic Bible Ministries with OUR out of Tulsa...you know usually a church needs to be accountable to God first, but they also need to be accountable to some other people that everything stays in line."

Two pastors with the *Fellowship of Christian Assemblies*:

"We belong to a loose group of (300) churches...very loosely structured. We don't have any overseer. We do share a common statement of faith. Although the individual practices within the churches might vary."

"Theologically [the FCA] are similar to the Assemblies of God but in practice they would not have the same kind of denominational structure." (What does the fellowship connection do for you?)

"Not a lot. It provides the true fellowship of churches is primarily what it is for. It's a national convention, a regional convention. Primarily it's for fellowship. Some cooperation for missions."

A pastor associated with the *Biblical Apostolic Organization*:

Pastor: I was with the Pentecostal Apostolic Faith Association originally...I am no longer with that organization though I'm still friendly with them. Now I'm with the BAO, and they made me a bishop in it and I serve as the financial secretary...

(Int: For other churches to be part of the association, is it a voluntary commitment?)

Pastor: Yes, voluntary.

(Int: Are there doctrinal points everyone has to agree on?)

Pastor: Yes, we investigate anyone who wants to join up with us to be sure they are what they say they are.

(Int: Does the BAO provide any resources to the pastors?)

Pastor: No, we don't get involved in that.

(Int: Is it pretty much just a fellowship?)

Pastor: Yes.

(Int: Do people in your church think of themselves as being part of that association or as a part of your church?)

Pastor: No, just part of the church - most of them don't know what BAO is all about.

Pastor in *New Day Pentecostal Church of the Apostolic Faith* and the *Apostolic World Christian Fellowship*:

"Being a part of the organization that I am, every church is independent. You're part of an organization but we're (the congregation is) independent. So, we're not being dictated to by the organization on what to do and how to do it and all. It just becomes a body where we are organized and have the strength, being strong for unity, for advice. We have counseling where we can advise, but we cannot make the churches do anything... The individual churches own their own property. They have their own constitution."

A *Calvary Chapel* pastor:

...Each church is autonomous, and each church is self-governing. It is, however, an association of churches....It is an association of like-minded fellowships that associate with each other because they have the same philosophy.

A *Potters House Network* pastor:

The Potter's House is more defined as a fellowship (1000 churches) - not the denominational or legal ties, but strong relational ties are what binds us, with a common vision or goal. And so, while we as pastors are in essence independent...yet we're not entirely independent - because of relationship. And so, we link together and we keep the contact through laboring together and through area-wide conferences. It's the relationship that brings, if you will, the pressure points of things - I don't mean manipulation.... But as a denomination you have the guidelines and rules that you function under. In the fellowship, it's the relationship - so there are standards, guidelines, principles, ethics.... There are some very distinct relational connections. Typically, it's kind of like a family."

These quotes, and countless others in our research, indicate that if the new networks and associations function as quasi-denominations at all, it is certainly with different characterizations of authority and agency than traditional denominations. 6 The dominant basis of authority functioning in these networks is relational - grounded in a unity of vision and purpose - rather than charismatic, bureaucratic or traditional. If a network member's direction of ministry changes, then, as a Vineyard Association judicatory pastor hypothetically counseled, "we are not walking together down the same path. I still love you as a brother in Christ, but perhaps you should think about finding a different group as your primary fellowship." Likewise, the agency structure of these networks appears to be relatively informal in organization, minimal in the scope of functions performed and, in the case of megachurch networks, highly centralized around a congregation or its leader's mission objectives. Finally, in nearly every case, the network does not function as the sole source of either religious authority or agency for the associated clergy member or the affiliated local church.

One consequence of this minimalist structure is that the networked nondenominational church, as well as the independent congregation, must rely on a host of other organizations to sustain its ministry. There are a multitude of *extra-congregational* parachurch organizations and special purpose interest groups which supply this needed support for nondenominational, even networked, churches. Wuthnow (1988) called attention to the proliferation of these special interest groups which are themselves often nondenominational. These organizations strengthen the nondenominational identity much like an established denomination's resources, programs, publications and seminaries reinforce a denominational culture. These parachurch groups can be clustered into four broad categories:

- Those which support mission efforts locally like Habitat for Humanity and Campus Crusade for Christ or internationally with groups such as Youth with a Mission and hundreds of independent missionaries and mission programs.
- Those groups which provide ministries or programs that a church can adopt as their own or become a part of like Promisekeepers, Angel Tree, and AWANA.
- Those groups which provide resources and supplies with a nondenominational focus such as publishers, bookstores, music ministries, and the Internet.
- Those parachurch structures which offer ideological and educational information such as the Bible Study Fellowship, television ministries, conferences sponsored by megachurch pastors, the Internet, and the increasingly numerous independent Bible schools, and traveling workshops or "teaching ministries."

This plethora of agencies provides the "tools of the trade" to independent congregations without them having to subscribe to any particular denominational or even associational product or agenda. It is interesting that these groups are increasingly becoming viable resources for denominational congregations as well. This is certainly obvious for the most often discussed new network, the Willow Creek Association. The association membership included large numbers of congregations from mainline established denominations. In the ORW data, two dozen congregations listed being in the association or using its literature. Of these, only three were nondenominational churches, the rest were from established mainline and evangelical denominations.

Conclusions

The nondenominational identity is in many ways an elusive category, but it should be apparent that this identity more than just a congregational reality. The claim of the nondenominational label carries with it distinct cultural, spiritual and structural characteristics. This reality is supported by a host of auxiliary organizations from informal spiritual fellowship networks of churches to parachurch missions and agencies, to nondenominational resource entities offering every conceivable product. This paper offers a glimpse into the nondenominational congregational reality and posited several preliminary observations about the substance of this identity and how it functions both for the local church and collectively in associations. Although it was not the focus of this paper, the exploration of a nondenominational identity raises the consequences for denominationally affiliated churches which associate with these independent networks and use

these sources for various religious goods and programs. Likewise, with a large number of denominational congregations de-emphasizing their ties to their parent body and adopting a functional nondenominationalism, the distinction between "official" independent status and de facto nondenominationalism is increasingly blurred. What is clear is that this nondenominational congregational reality requires further research. In the near future I will have more to add to this picture of nondenominational congregations, until then think of this as a work in progress.

End Notes

1. This Lilly Endowment funded research project was undertaken by Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary. The co-directors of the project are Nancy Ammerman, Adair Lummis and David Roozen. As a post-doctoral fellow, I functioned as project manager since Fall 1997. Much of the analysis of this data relies on the work of Nancy Ammerman and the discussion the entire team has had at our weekly meetings.

2. See Nancy Ammerman's analysis of the ORW data in her 1999 ASR and RRA conference papers "Postmodern Trends in Religious Organizations" and "Challenges to Denominational Identity in Local Congregations" for details of these denominational identity characteristics.

3. The analysis of these structural characteristics as definitive of differing denominational forms is presently being developed by Nancy Ammerman and applied to all the religious groups in the survey not just the nondenominational networks. Her analysis of this data initially led her to group the independent congregations into the three categories of networked, nondenominational but with a general heritage such as Baptist or Methodist, and the independent. Addition analysis on these Networks needs to be done to determine whether these networks actually have formal and separate headquarters, the number of staff they employ, the extent to which they sponsor any mission or service agencies, offer annuity or clergy insurance plans, levy dues or fees, how formal their accountability structures are and how they go about ordaining and training clergy affiliates. In addition, although this paper hints of the very loose relational ties which hold a church and its pastor to the Network, considerable investigation into the depth and character of these affiliations remains to be done.

4. The most current and comprehensive discussion of these new networks can be found in C. Peter Wagner's recent books *Churchquake* (1999) and *The New Apostolic Churches* (1998). An extensive listing of networks in the U.S. is obtainable from the "Networking Directory" published by Strang Communications Company.

5. Donald Miller's *Reinventing American Protestantism* (1997) begins to explore the nature of the Calvary Chapel, Hope Chapel and Vineyard Associations. Peter Wagner's *Churchquake* (1999) likewise looks at many of the new networks but in a less systematic and analytical manner.

6. This insight that denominations have dual, parallel structures of authority and agency is Chaves (1993). Essentially, I think this argument is correct and it would be interesting to chart the agency structures of several networks as Chaves did traditional denominations. It might also be instructive to explore further the legitimacy and functionality of the structures in these seemingly relational networks with their polities of radical congregationalism.