

Fans and Christianity

Religious groups tend to possess many rituals and practices that are also seen in fan clubs and fandoms. Fans are the people who take an interest and incorporate their love for it into cultural activities, making the person, activity, or item a hobby. Fans celebrate their love for movies, teams, celebrities, bands, etc. Fandoms and fan clubs are ways in which fans can engage with one another. They meet frequently to share their passion with like-minded people, spending time together idolizing the specific person or item of interest. Certain aspects of fan clubs share many similarities to Christian religious life, as they both emphasize a community structure, creed concerning a level of devotion, belief, or trust, and a code of conduct or behavior.

Creed is generally considered to be a confession of faith. This is shown in religious life through verbal praise of God in confessions, church recitings, songs, and prayer. Creed is also demonstrated through written testimonies of faith. Fans demonstrate creed in a multitude of similar ways. Fan productivity is discussed on page 8 of “Fans and Fan Behaviors” by Janet Staiger, stating that fans demonstrate their devotion through “not only fiction writing and art but also “filking” (creating songs), videos and music videos (re-editing video material), and role-playing. Songs are sung solely and in groups at conventions, and people also produce music” (Staiger). Actively expressing admiration for a said being or thing is very important and common for both cultures.

Code, in general, refers to adhering to specific rules or actions that are in line with creed. Fan behavior follows a specific code, similar to Christians' code centered around loving God and loving people. On page 3 of “Fans and Fan Behaviors,” it is mentioned that “fans are much more purposeful in their consumption. They are attentive to the forthcoming arrival of a favored text or performer. They will be the first to buy tickets and will plan to videotape. If the text is a serial

program, they will view ‘faithfully’” (Staiger). The active participation and outward effort demonstrated by fan clubs parallel the Christian code as Christians demonstrate it through mission trips, volunteer work, church meetings, frequent prayer, and the spread of faith.

Additionally, many people in both circles collect tangible objects that reflect what they value and hold dear. The habit of collecting souvenirs, a prevalent tendency of fans, can be seen in religious life. Followers of Christianity may wear a cross around their neck, hang pictures of Jesus in their living room, or possess their own personal copies of the Bible. Staiger mentions that fans gather “collector's items” of gadgets related to the universe, posters of celebrities or characters, and unique copies of readings to materialize their passion. The exchange, sharing, and comparison of these items can contribute to the community aspect of both fan clubs and religious groups. Maintaining a community structure is essential for fandoms and the Christian faith. These groups' community-based structure feeds the faith, keeping participants engaged and active. Highly organized campaigning can be seen in the communities of religious life and fan culture through the creed and code elements previously elaborated on.

Overall, the Christian religion and general fan behavior have many similarities. Although they stand for different things and demonstrate code and creed in different ways, the broad rituals and traditions are relatively alike. Furthermore, fan attraction and idealization can mimic the praise and worship of God that is seen through Christianity. Lastly, the strong community centralization of the two groups is kindred.

Work Cited

Staiger, Janet. *Media Reception Studies*, New York University Press, 2005. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/yale-ebooks/detail.action?docID=866213>.