

## IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE ROCK, AND THE ROCK WAS IN THE CAVERNA DE ADULÃO, AND THE ROCK WAS THE CAVERNA DE ADULÃO<sup>1</sup>

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DOSSIER RELIGIONS: THEIR IMAGES,  
PERFORMANCES AND RITUALS

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### ABSTRACT

In this article<sup>2</sup>, we will present how heavy rock in a general way with heavy metal and its subgenres, was able to foster a form of belonging and sociability in the beginning of the Cave of Adulão Community in Belo Horizonte. What we noticed with the research is that at first rock became the main founding element in the socialization of young people to communicate the Gospel in the very language and culture of the urban headbanger tribe, and later, other elements came in its

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and spirituality.

1. We made an analogy of a biblical passage to signal the socialization in the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão in Belo Horizonte with heavy rock. Through artistic manifestation with rock music, with the verb as the sung word, the youth were able to give meanings or re-significations to their cultural and religious practices. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1.1,14).

2. This article is linked to the master’s research in Religion Sciences with the title: The religious phenomenon among young people in urban tribes: an analysis of the relationship between culture and religion in the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão - Belo Horizonte/ MG, oriented by Professor Dr. Flávio Senra and presented at the PPGCR of PUC Minas in 2018. This research was conducted with support from the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brazil (CAPES) - Funding Code 001.

place. The methodology consisted of a literature review, having as main theorist the sociologist Michel Maffesoli in dialogue with other authors. In the field research we used the socio-anthropological-ethnographic method that happened with participant observation and the focus group technique.

## INTRODUCTION

With the intense urbanization process that has occurred in Brazil in the last decades, there has been a great impact on the lives of citizens in many cities in Brazil and around the world. Belo Horizonte also experiences this demographic explosion, which has fostered socialization in urban tribes with youth culture<sup>3</sup>. Reflecting these changes that touch post-modernity<sup>4</sup> and affect the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious areas, we use the thought of the French sociologist Michel Maffesoli<sup>5</sup> with the tribalization or neotribalizations. For Maffesoli, these transformations have enabled closer relationships with tribalism in the sharing of the same feelings, emotions, and affections, and are a response to social institutions, breaking the rigidity of social relationships and individualism.

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3. For the concept of culture, we use Maffesoli (2010). He points to two cultures within the same culture. On one side he showed the owners of society and are the ones who have the power to say what to do, being the instituted power, in the various forms: cultural, religious, social, and economic. This instituted power makes the decisions far away from life and thus from the reality of the majority of the population. On the other hand, it shows wild, anomic, and disorderly life as an instituting power. Also, according to Maffesoli (2010), wild thought is admitted by the experience gained from contact with primitive societies. Here, anthropology turns its gaze to the everyday life of contemporary societies, to what it called company cultures or other phenomena that seemed too close to be analyzed. This division of two cultures, for Maffesoli, is beginning to be accepted by the erudite culture. "This is also true for the erudite culture, which begins to admit the existence of another culture: that of common feelings. We can agree with this emergence. Numerous researches demonstrate it, the fact is that there exists between these two cultures a distance that sometimes does not fail to become an unbridgeable gap." (Maffesoli 2010, 240). The concept of culture that I work with here is closer to the instituting power, the feeling of being together, the sharing, the sociability, and the sense of belonging. This culture is built by the young people themselves who are in the headbanger urban tribes with rock, heavy metal, and its subgenres with cultural elements that are not accepted by the instituted powers as cultural standard, which often makes them underground and marginal in society.

4. For Maffesoli, postmodernity is characterized by tribalism. This phenomenon has been studied by him as a factor of sociability for more than three decades. For him, what counts in the present time is daily life and its rituals, the collective emotions, and passions, symbolized by the pleasure of being together. He also highlights as two essential axes, the simultaneously archaic and juvenile aspects of tribalism, and also its communitarian dimension and the saturation of the concept of the individual. In his view, these are the two roots of postmodern tribalism. (Maffesoli 2010). We will use the term postmodernity instead of contemporaneity.

5. We used the book Maffesoli (2010) as the main work in our master's research, anchored by other works by the author.

We researched the youth of the urban tribes headbangers<sup>6</sup> who like heavy rock<sup>7</sup>, who have experienced these social transformations, among them, the contemporary religious phenomenon. We tried to understand how this cultural and religious construction occurred among the headbangers of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão<sup>8</sup>, where rock music, at first, was used as an instrument in juvenile socialization. In the field research<sup>9</sup>, we observed that the adaptation of some evangelical churches to the needs of the youth and their cultural practices was what attracted them to the community, and then other socializing elements took the place of rock.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF YOUTH TO THE COMUNIDADE CAVERNA DE ADULÃO**

To talk about this adherence of young people to the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão we need to understand, that rock and religion<sup>10</sup> are culturally

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6. The term headbanger is used by fans of heavy metal culture, as well as its later variations and musical subgenres. It originated around 1970 in England and immigrated to the United States. The English band Black Sabbath was the forerunner of the heavy metal style and the incorporation of the aggressive headbanger aesthetic in concerts. The expression urban headbanger tribe is given to young people who interact in small groups or tribes in urban centers. For this tribe, socialization revolves around the sound of heavy rock and the production and consumption of this music among young people. They also consume a variety of clothes, shoes, and accessories, which are often defined by the members of the tribe itself. During the concerts, these young people dance in a circle with the mosh, which is reminiscent of the Indian tribes in their dancing. In the mosh, the young people make the circle dance and punch and tiptoe through the air. They also bang their heads, which is the literal meaning for headbanger, with the up and down movement, throwing their hair in the air, as the violent movement of the head in rhythm with the music.

7. In the research, we approached heavy rock with heavy metal and its sub-genres such as thrash metal, death metal, black metal, among others, from the sociological perspective and the power that this musical style has in bringing young people together. We describe rock as a founding element in the community and the paths it has established among the members of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão. This way, we will not work in the research with the rock bands that existed at the beginning of the community and the ones that exist today. We will also not do a biblical-theological analysis of the lyrics of the songs of these bands or their performances during concerts and evangelistic events. This could be the fruit of future research since the community, in the beginning, had more than 20 bands in the varied styles of grindcore, metalcore, punk, heavy metal, thrash metal, death metal, power metal, among other styles and today has only 2 heavy rock bands, the bands Trombada and Pesadelo.

8. The beginning of the community took place in 1992 when some young people and the pastors Fabio de Carvalho and Eduardo Lucas started evangelistic work among young people who belonged to the urban tribes headbangers in Belo Horizonte. The community went through several places in the center-south region of the capital city of Minas Gerais, and in 2004 it was established at 482 Aimorés Street, in the Funcionários neighborhood, where it is now.

9. In the field research, we used the anthropological-ethnographic method that took place with participant observation and with the focus group technique. In the participant observation, 4 visits were made to the Sunday services, at 6 pm. This field research took place in the months of July, October, and November 2016. The focus groups were conducted with 3 mixed groups and 2 meetings for each of them in the months of August and September 2017. At this stage, primary data, originally obtained through focus group discussions in the community, was observed and collected. These focus group discussions offered insights into the religious and cultural phenomenon in the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão in an interactive way, through the insider's view of the group.

10. In the master's degree in Religious Sciences, we researched the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, with a strict relationship between religion and culture, with heavy rock as a youth socializing element there. But, in the city of Belo Horizonte, there were many conflicts at that time regarding the use of rock music allied to religious practices, coming from some more radical members of the secular underground scene, who were in the

constructed elements. This construction reveals a complex and varied pattern of behavior with beliefs, artistic and intellectual manifestations, arts, laws, customs, and habits that are acquired by human beings in society. These collective transmissions signal human beings as transformers of culture, in which young people are also builders of their realities and cosmovisions, with the use of rock music in their religious practices<sup>11</sup> in urban tribes.

Urban tribes - and, in this more specific case, rockers - have a whole peculiar cultural characteristic way: the long hair, the tattoos, the piercings, the black clothes, and rock band shirts, as well as the different way of speaking, using slang and jargon that only those who are incarnated in the tribe can understand. They need to hear the Gospel in a contextualized way. The message must be transmitted in a way that they, in their way of living, thinking, and feeling, can understand. (Rodrigues, 2006, 65).

We noticed that in religious practices, openings and appropriations of cultural elements have also occurred, which, until a few decades ago, were not accepted. In this aspect, Christie showed how rock and heavy metal, besides not being accepted, still suffered attacks and discrimination in the United States.

While Slayer evoked the profane in their underworld, headbangers appeared in public everywhere, wandering around galleries with long, unkempt (or often even well-groomed) hair and T-shirts that often bore the terrible names and images of bands like Ratt, Def Leppard, Iron Maiden, and Venom. The authorities in the United States were beginning to feel strongly threatened, as there was still a large group for whom Def Leppard sounded like a bestial atrocity. To the eyes of the older generation, the clearly visible and seem-

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urban headbanger tribes and did not accept this relationship between rock music and religion. What we observed is that the Christian underground scene suffered prejudice and discrimination both in religion by other churches and communities that did not understand this appropriation of culture with rock music, and from society in general. Adding to this, there was also a non-acceptance of this Christian underground scene by some followers who had a more radical posture in the secular underground scene. This shows that the prejudice and discrimination suffered by Christian rock bands as well as churches and communities like Caverna de Adulão were much greater. This discrimination becomes even more evident with the attacks against Christian heavy rock bands, which are pejoratively called white metal, as a clear form of prejudice and delegitimization of the use of rock and religion, which in this case is in opposition to the black metal style. We realized that the secular underground scene with the urban headbanger tribes is a very broad group, with various aesthetic, political, musical, philosophical, religious, and why not to say theological views, with people who call themselves religious and also non-religious. Therefore, we have extended our research on religion and culture, also with rock music. In this case, we are currently researching the people without religion, represented by the rockers without religion in the doctorate in Religion Sciences with the title: Rock as a non-religious spirituality. A study on rituals, sociabilities, and cosmovision of rockers without religion in Belo Horizonte, under the supervision of Professor Dr. Flávio Senra, in the PPGCR of PUC Minas. This research is carried out with the support of the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brazil (CAPES).

11. For more information on churches and Christian communities, which use heavy rock, heavy metal, and their subgenres in religious practices, see: Rodrigues (2005), Rodrigues (2006), Rodrigues (2007), Rodrigues (2017), Rodrigues (2018a), Rodrigues (2018b), Rodrigues (2018c), Rodrigues (2018d), Rodrigues (2019a), Rodrigues (2019b), Rodrigues (2020a), Rodrigues (2020b) and Rodrigues (2021).

ingly universal appeal of heavy metal was the invasion of something terrible and wrong. (Christe, 2010, 153-154).

We can see in this situation that the rock bands, heavy metal, and its subgenres, as well as the young adepts of the headbanger urban tribes, were not well seen by the American authorities and especially by the older people who saw these bands and tribes as a desecration of the social and religious values of that nation in the 80s. Still according to Christe, at that time a real cultural war against heavy metal music broke out.

A culture war was brewing, and heavy metal became the punching bag. Even when not explicitly inciting a revolt in the streets, heavy metal acts represented a real threat to public order. Even though metal was not the only type of music to bother the morality warriors, because of its obvious sarcasm, the movement served as the perfect scapegoat. For the same reasons that Iron Maiden's *Number of the Beast* piqued the interest of teenagers, the album terrified adults. Soon, a veritable array of reactionary forces launched an unexpected and successful attack on the foundations of heavy metal. (Christe, 2010, 154-155).

This prejudice and discrimination against heavy metal were not limited to the United States but also happened in various parts of the Western world. This was also shown by Lopes, who researched heavy metal in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the world. In his vision, there is a rupture, with the appropriation and use of sacred and religious symbols. We could say in this case that the sacred symbols have enabled an artistic signification or re-signification by the heavy metal members.

The present research aims, then, not only to provide ethnographic descriptions, history, quantify, enumerate, map, and dissect to exhaustion the artistic world of heavy metal in the city of Rio de Janeiro (which requires a similar task about heavy metal in the world and Brazil, It is an artistic world that operates in extensive national, international and, above all, virtual networks), but also demonstrate that this artistic world, through its aesthetic conventions, transforms the perception of sacred symbols by its members, from the realm of religion to the realm of art, from the given to the constructed. (Lopes 2006, 23).

For Lopes, his research goes beyond a simple ethnographic description of the socialization generated around heavy metal to embody it in its national, international dimension and the last decades in the virtual space. He delves into the historical moment of the emergence of this musical style with young people without hope and future perspective, coming from the working class and living the crises that society was going through at that time, who were discriminated against for addressing religious issues of evil through the bias of Christian tradition.

The historical moment of emergence, the working-class origins of the first musicians and fans of the genre, the greater presence of middle-class participants today, the ongoing intense generic subdivision, the history of the main con-


ventions of the genre and its creators - conventions related to the disadvantaged social strata and the historical period of crisis of the beginning of heavy metal, which are essential to understand the discrimination against the genre because they address religious issues from the ontological domain of evil from the Christian tradition, and thus convert sacred symbols into artistic conversions - will be discussed here. (Lopes 2006, 71).

This discrimination or rejection of heavy metal in society occurs for two reasons, for Lopes. First, it occurs because of the values, ideas, and beliefs that are created by this marginalized group, which finds in the apocalypse and in the chaos proposed by heavy metal songs a direct attack to change social institutions. The second occurs with the appropriation of sacred symbols and also of the signs presented in the biblical book of Revelation, resigned in profane art.

There are then two major factors in the social rejection of the genre: the ethos of dangerous and subordinate layers (which recurrently appeal to an apocalypse, or twilight of the gods - Ragnarok which appears in heavy metal lyrics, in the case of heavy metal via art - in which hierarchical social structures will be altered), and the religious set of sacred symbols of evil (common also in the Bible's book of Revelation) transmuted into profane art. (Lopes 2006, 71).

This rejection to rock, heavy metal, and its subgenres shown by Lopes occurred worldwide. What was not different in the Brazilian context with the prejudice and discrimination that this musical style suffered. However, the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão in Belo Horizonte, managed to give a new meaning or resignification to rock, heavy metal and its subgenres in their religious practices.

Rock music is one of the examples of this signification and openness, where new forms of language, expression, icons, signs, and other objects are used in religious manifestation. Language is the first cultural asset of a people and from it, that meaning is constructed and understood by the group. For Maffesoli, language can connect individuals to the most varied social networks. "Without pronouncing on the content of this tendency, we can consider that communication, at the same time verbal and non-verbal, constitutes a vast network that connects individuals." (Maffesoli 2010, 139). Language or even communication in its most varied forms expresses the internal experience of the group, reinforces its boundaries and helps in its ethical construction. The ethos, in the context of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, is constituted at first with the young people who do not fit into the models of traditional churches and take refuge there to express their religious practice in their language and culture. These cultural and religious constructions are vital, for "there is no way to ignore culture, all the more so because it is not static, for it is always in the process of transformation." (Rodrigues, 2006, 70).



This is evident when a young rocker, involved in the urban tribe, has the freedom to express his spirituality with the practices of his tribe or group. Thus, rock music, like other musical styles, the clothes, the long hair, with extravagant or colorful cuts, tattoos, piercings, enlargements, and other elements that used to be the marks to point out what is not the stereotype of a member of a traditional evangelical church, can be incorporated into religious practices.

There is a great effort on the part of theologians, religious leaders, and the faithful to use elements that are culturally constructed. Faced with the openness and appropriation of cultural elements, churches and Christian communities are challenged to welcome and provide these young people with religious practices that make sense and are connected to all areas of their lives. The possibility of these practices, connected to the daily life of youth was captured by the pastors of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão. We verified the impact of cultural elements such as rock music on the religious practices of the community. Thus, it is not the youth who change their cultural patterns, but the religious institution is the one who changes and molds itself to their needs.


In 1992, the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão began, when some young people and the pastors Fábio de Carvalho and Eduardo Lucas, awakened to the need to take the Gospel message to the rockers of the headbanger tribe in Belo Horizonte. The work began in the streets, squares, and the city was considered the Brazilian capital of heavy rock. “This concern is easy to notice, for being Belo Horizonte, at that time, considered a true granary of bands of radical styles, such as Progressive Rock, Popular Rock, Heavy Metal, Grind Core, Hard Core, Crossover, Punk Rock, Gothic and Grunge, among others.” (Rodrigues, 2006, 130). The look of these pastors, reveals a sensitivity for the revolts, uncertainties, contestations, way of thinking and restlessness of this age group, and also their indifference to established social institutions, including the Church. “It is from everyday life that the reflection of the context of young people and adolescents present in urban tribes and the alternative<sup>12</sup> and underground<sup>13</sup> scene occurs.” (Rodrigues, 2007, 155). Thus, these pastors understood that the traditional churches could not communicate with the urban headbanger tribes.

How they understood socialization in the juvenile practice and how the public spaces of the city worked, for these rockers who were in these tribes.

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12. As a sociological term, the alternative is established as the succession of two reciprocally exclusive things, an option between two ways of relating within a social group or society. The alternative scene with the young rockers begins in 1990, this youth movement opens the possibility between one or another alternative in the fusions of rock music with other musical styles, which before was not accepted within the youth movements due to the radicalism of its members.

13. Culture that is not disseminated by the mass media, underground, clandestine, or hidden before a social group or an entire society.



The appropriation of squares, parks, and other public places was done not only for the lack of money for leisure, but mainly for the pleasure of being together and doing the same practices as the tribe. The community gave a new meaning to the religious practices, by welcoming the rockers that were in these tribes. “Many are the young people reached through the Word sung in rock music, and this occurs with bands, churches, and communities that develop events, both in temples and in streets, squares, villages, and clusters, to evangelize young people and adolescents, use such contemporary style as an attraction.” (Rodrigues, 2007, 155).

These churches and communities, when developing such events in the most varied public spaces, signalize a religious opening to the elements of culture. Young people who did not have any religious practice started to live and experience Christianity together. Over the years, this work has reached other urban tribes, which have been attracted to the community. In 1995, after working with other churches and Christians, the group received help and the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão was born. Currently, the community has twelve Ministries<sup>14</sup> that function as both an internal arm, serving its members, and an external arm, serving society. We highlight the Pastoral Ministry with five pastors and one female pastor, and the Ministry of Pastors in Training with two pastors. Other Ministries are also highlighted, such as: Deaconry, Children, Worship, Tithes and Offerings, Reconstruir Project, Evangelism on Guaicurus Street and Prayer Vigil, Prayer Meeting, Couples Meeting, Communication, Press Office, Archive and Memorial.

Because sociality occurs more specifically with urban headbanger tribes and the underground scene, at the beginning of the community there was a distrust of other evangelical churches, for not accepting these young heavy rock fans in their temples. Although the religious practices are very similar to other churches and traditional evangelical communities, there was in the Cave the socialization and acceptance of groups that would often be marginalized in the religious context and society. There these young people connected to the urban headbanger tribe, could express their spirituality in their language and worldview.

Social ties go beyond instituted forms and are created and recreated in encounters. For Maffesoli, the elaborations of the divine are social. They are potentiated and dynamized in the sharing, in the most ordinary life situations, that is, they occur in the encounter with the other: “However, it is good to remember that the divine comes from daily realities, that

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14. The Ministries are areas of action of the pastoral service of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, which develop work in the community, with other churches, in the streets and squares, and also in the villages and settlements. These Ministries rely on the service of community members to act, both in the community and in society in general. This survey occurred between 2016-2018 and may have changed.




it elaborates itself, little by little, in the sharing of simple and routine gestures. It is in this sense that *habitus* or custom serves to concretize, to actualize the ethical dimension of the whole society.” (Maffesoli 2010, 61). Not only does *habitus* foster the ethical dimension of society, but also mutual aid, which is based on proximity, on contact, on the simple moment of being together, on sharing the same ideas and attitudes. “We can say, then, that ethics is, in a sense, the cement that will make various elements of a given set form a whole.” (Maffesoli 2010, 53).

The socialization in the headbanger tribes is structured with the rock that is produced and consumed in the sociality of the group. Young people, who are often on the margins of their rights in society, use this style of music, not only as entertainment but also as an instrument of denunciation and claim for their basic rights. These young people are attracted to the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão precisely because of the proximity and acceptance of cultural expressions in their language in religious practices. As well as by the new way of choice, which makes it possible in an elective way, to which tribe or religious circle to belong in post-modernity. The social dimension and the possibility of interpersonal relationships are what give meaning to life in the community. “More than the purity of doctrine, it is living and surviving together that preoccupies grassroots communities.” (Maffesoli 2010, 109).

In this openness to new possibilities and different ways of religious manifestation, the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão appropriates and adapts itself to the culture in order to communicate the Gospel to the most varied urban tribes. As described by Maffesoli: “Indeed, what tends to predominate in founding moments is the pluralism of possibilities, the effervescence of situations, the multiplicity of experiences and values, all that characterizes the youth of men and societies.” (Maffesoli 2010, 117-118). We realize that the most varied human experiences contribute to the construction of social bonds. For Maffesoli, religion is also an important factor in the construction of social bonds, because it brings people together around the same thought and feeling. Still according to the sociologist, religion is fundamental for sociability, because “religion, here, is what connects. And it connects because there is shoulder to shoulder, because there is physical proximity.” (Maffesoli 2010, 74).

Social and religious groupings as in the case of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão go beyond the boundaries of traditions and social institutions to delve into the communal dimension of connecting or reconnecting people. “The communitarian ethos designated by the first set of expressions refers to a common subjectivity, a shared passion, while everything concerning society is essentially rational.” (Maffesoli 2010, 110).



Rock music and religion adapt to the most diverse cultures in which they are inserted, which can give young people the possibility of using them in their cultural constructions. As we have seen, for Durkheim, religion has the power to unite all the members of the group in collectivity. “The individuals who compose it feel connected by the mere fact of having a common faith. A society whose members are united by the fact of conceiving, in the same way, the sacred world and its relations with the profane world, and of translating this common conception into identical practices is what is called a church.” (Durkheim 1989, 75-76).

Therefore, the adherence of young people to the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão can be tied to commonalities and identical practices of young people. In this community, religion and rock music enabled the socialization with the cult in a contextualized and free way to its participants. What could be a religious manifestation in the traditional molds of evangelical and protestant churches, here occurs with rock music and the most varied urban tribes that get together to express their spirituality in an alternative way. This opens up possibilities for new religious practices and cults in our days, which manifest themselves in different ways by appropriating cultural elements that were not used before.

### **APPROPRIATION OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS FOR A CONTEXTUALIZED RELIGIOUS PRACTICE**

We see that there is no way to develop a religious practice without observing and appropriating the elements of culture and human daily life. This practice can only be fertile when it is not divorced and alienated from the diverse areas of life. Its fullness occurs when religious practices and cultural constructions are in constant dialogue. This dialogue with segments of society signals a religion that is contextualized, open, alive, and dynamic. Culture is in constant transformation, human life only makes sense when we manage to build and transform culture, with the most diverse forms and meanings.

In Tylor’s view, “Culture or Civilization, taken in its broadest ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (Tylor, 2005, 69). Everything that human beings construct or cultivate in culture is eventually established later by social living and practice. Among the various areas that Tylor points out, beliefs and art stand out here. Both refer to the cultural construction with rock as a religious manifestation and an element of an alternative spiritual practice in the urban headbanger tribe among the youth of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão.

Taylor's definition shows that culture is built with the knowledge that is socially acquired. Maffesoli signaled the two cultures within one culture. On one side he showed the "owners of society" as "instituted power", who have the power of decision and change. On the other hand, he showed the "instituting power," which sits on the sidelines of decision making and thus power. "In short, instituted power, in its various forms: cultural, religious, social, economic, versus instituting power" (Maffesoli 2010, 01). Maffesoli, exposes the tension within culture concerning cultural manifestations. What is not accepted by the instituted power, can be suffocated as it was with rock music and the headbanger urban tribes decades past. This can happen even within the religious context, as it happened with the Californian band Stryper, which even being Christian suffered countless prejudices in society and even from religious groups in their own country, the United States. This is due to the use of the album title: *To hell with the devil* and a pentagram on the cover of the same album in 1986.

Not even the Christian metal band Stryper has been spared the fervor of truth owners. The band voluntarily redid the artwork for their 1986 album, *To hell with to the devil*, because of controversy over the New Testament-inspired cover: "We got backlash from Christians who thought we put a pentagram on there just for the fun of putting a pentagram on there," says Stryper vocalist Michael Sweet. "One of the angels had torn a cord from Satan's neck and thrown it away, and that was the pentagram. People misinterpreted it, and so to avoid controversy and potential problems, we did an all-black cover with just the Stryper logo." (Christe, 2010, 159-161).

The amplitude in the forms of socialization with the plurality and diversity of life in the city context enables the opening and acceptance of cultural cosmovisions in post-modernity. Culture comprises all the possibilities of intellectual enrichment and learning that will be built throughout the individual's life. This individual in the cultural environment will have his gaps filled in the representations of various social roles. Religion, as a part of the great cultural mosaic, enables religious manifestations that absorb cultural elements with new senses and meanings. Around the cultural construction as a space of alterity, young people find the possibility of fusing rock with religion. Another aspect that facilitates the use of elements like rock in religious practice in the community is the openness to the diversity of cultures. However, fusion and openness may not occur when communities and churches close themselves in their theological and cultural reflections, not observing the richness and cultural diversity provided by the several cosmovisions nowadays. This richness of diversity for Maffesoli has fertile soil with postmodern tribalism. "The quotidian and its rituals, the collective emotions and passions, symbolized by the hedonism of Dionysus, the importance of the body in spectacle and contemplative enjoyment, the revival of contemporary nomadism, here is everything that accompanies postmodern tribalism." (Maffesoli 2010, 03).

Postmodern tribalism, with archaism<sup>15</sup>, returns to the source, to the bases and the primitive, at the same time it goes through the vitality of life. We can observe here a correlation of archaism with the name Caverna de Adulão, which gives origin to the community in Belo Horizonte. The mention of the Caverna de Adulão is found in the Old Testament<sup>16</sup>. This biblical text shows David's escape to the Caverna de Adulão fleeing from King Saul. Subsequently, about 400 men who were marginalized and oppressed joined David, who became their leader. In the biblical context and the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão today, we observe that both are places of refuge, refreshment, healing and acceptance of differences. Young people who do not fit into the patterns of traditional evangelical churches end up seeing in the Cave a place of encounter, of belonging to equals, and of affection. The counterculture<sup>17</sup> is established there with socialization that goes against the grain of many Christian churches and also of today's society.

In the same way that David shared the same emotions and feelings with those who went with him to Adullam's Cave, this also occurs today with the urban tribes spread throughout the cities, which are agglutinated in the sharing, shared feelings and belonging, in being together and in sociability. In this respect it is good to remember that Maffesoli uses the term tribe in a pioneering way. "At a time when this was not fashionable, I proposed the metaphor of the 'tribe' to observe the metamorphosis of the social bond." (Maffesoli 2010, 04). The changes in the postmodern social bond, according to Maffesoli, occur with two essential roots. "On the one hand, that which stresses the simultaneously 'archaic' and youthful aspects of tribalism. On the other, that stresses its communal dimension and the saturation of the concept of the Individual. Here, it seems to me, are the two roots of postmodern tribalism." (Maffesoli 2010, 05).

We can notice that the return of young people to the archaic, the search for a community dimension, and the saturation of the concept of the individual already signal disbelief and dissatisfaction of these young people with the institutions in force today. This makes it possible to read and reread previous phases of culture in search of stability or maturity in social organization in its most diverse areas.

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15. Maffesoli (2010, 07) has "shown that one could characterize postmodernity by the exacerbated return of archaism." Also according to Maffesoli, archaism causes certain discomfort to social observers, who seek a linear and secure progress, whereas archaism is a return that for him characterizes: The Time of the Tribes. This return is a spiraling return of archaic values coupled with technological development.

16. "David fled from the city of Gath and went to the caverna de Adulão. When his brothers and his father's family heard about it, they went there to find him. He was also joined by all those who were in trouble, the indebted and the discontented; and he became their leader. There were about four hundred men with him." (1Samuel 22. 1-2).


17. Counterculture starts from the principle of rejecting and questioning the values and practices of the dominant culture of which they are apart.

Also, according to Maffesoli, archaism points to the richness of the communal dimension, which occurs in the encounter with the other, with the different, and breaks the domain of the individual and the private. “This is the lesson of postmodern ‘archaism’: it becomes to represent, in all domains, the communal passion. We can defend ourselves against it, take offense at it, deny it, protect ourselves from it, it matters little; the tendency that pushes us toward the other, that urges us to imitate him, is present.” (Maffesoli 2010, 15). What Maffesoli called “archaic,” we can see among youth tribes today with the movements that are established as countercultural, with the alternative and underground scene. Both, too, signal the fertility of community life and the fall of individualism. “In this sense, before being political, economic, or social, tribalism is a cultural phenomenon.” (Maffesoli 2010, 06).

The Comunidade Caverna de Adulão translates both the archaic and youthful aspects of tribalism, and points to the communal dimension and the decline of individualism in its religious practices. The community manifests its religious practice openly and enables the use of rock music as a cultural element in the youthful language of the urban headbanger tribe. It also enables religious practices in postmodernity that go beyond traditional evangelical churches. With new forms or religious practices these young people signal an alternative spirituality with new clothes, readings, and languages that are accessible to manifest their religiosity in an open and contextualized way.

With ritual, its repetitions, and with worship, the youth express their religiosity and make the tribe’s internal bonds stronger. According to Durkheim: “rites are rules of behavior that prescribe how a man should behave with sacred things.” (Durkheim 1989, 72). This signals the ethical behavior of the group, in face of the sacred or religious practices. Also, according to Durkheim, a religion can diversify by using elements of the culture in which it is inserted. It presents itself as a whole, but is formed by different parts, with each individual, their experiences and subjectivities. “[...] a religion is not necessarily fixed on the same idea, it is not reduced to a single principle which, even if it diversifies according to the circumstances to which it applies, would, at the bottom, always be identical to itself: it is a whole formed of distinct and relatively individualized parts.” (Durkheim 1989, 72-73).

Christianity exemplifies a religion that conforms to the diverse circumstances and cultures through which it passes, in which the whole is made up of different parts. Where Christianity was introduced, it used the elements of culture, starting with language, to express itself and make itself intelligible to the faithful. The Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, in its religious practice, also presents itself as one of these parts and



differentiates itself by the use of elements of culture such as rock. Although it is a church like many others spread around the city of Belo Horizonte, it develops a religiosity that fits the language and the needs of these young people. The otherness and responsibility of the church members towards the youth and their sociability are what matters to the tribes that join the community.

The religious practices in the community have been established with the socialization of the young people from the urban tribes and also with people of various ages. This heterogeneous formation shows the diversity of religion as a big mosaic, where the parts, represented by each individual, compose this big mosaic and establish there the socialization among all the members of the community. For Durkheim, this diversity of related groups does not occur by spontaneous and pre-established agreement, but happens by the same force that drives individuals in the same direction. “If all hearts vibrate in unison, it is not because of a spontaneous and pre-established concordance; it is because the same force moves them in the same direction. Each is dragged along by the others.” (Durkheim, 2011, 37).

Durkheim shows a vibration of groups that move in the same direction and one infects the other within the larger group. Maffesoli observes that the feeling of belonging, affection and being together, to share the same emotions is the force that moves urban tribes in the same direction. This sharing of the same emotions, tastes, and affections generates a concordance, a driving force between individuals in their social practices and can be observed in the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, in the religious practices developed by the young people who socialize there. Also, according to Durkheim (1989, 73) religion is a “whole formed of distinct and relatively individualized parts.” In this aspect, in religion the different ones socialize by some common point, that is, something that can unite them as a “tribe” in the metaphor proposed by Maffesoli, which does not undo the individuality of each part makes up the whole.

Based on this principle, we consider that even if the religious practices of the community provoke some estrangement for traditional churches with their different way of communicating the Word of God to marginalized groups, among them, the young people who are in the urban headbanger tribes with rock music, these practices end up guaranteeing their place in contemporary society. For these young people what is important are personal and interpersonal relationships. By adapting the message to the needs of the young people, each member sees himself as a small part, with his small story that fits into and makes sense in a larger story. In this way, these young people, who otherwise would not be able to express their spirituality in their language, find the possibility to do so.

The community appropriates rock music as one of the cultural elements and the religious practice here is established as a part of a whole that also forms the other Protestant and Evangelical churches.


We realized that in religious manifestation, Protestant churches can be seen as the organizational center for being traditional or historical, but there is also the peripheral manifestation of Ministries, Churches and Communities that develop their religious practices in a freer and more spontaneous way today. This spontaneity points to religious manifestations that have the power and freedom to create, shape, and transform their religious practices with the adherence of elements proper to culture, such as rock music.

Thus, with today's great diversity, religious manifestation and practices spread and develop in situations and places that for many religious leaders and their respective institutions, would be unthought of, "[...] and there is no religion however unitary it may be that does not recognize plurality of sacred things." (Durkheim 1989, 73). In Durkheim's thought religion recognizes that the field of sacred things is very vast. We note that not only religion has this breadth within culture. Other cultural elements also have a very large production and consumption. Music is an example of this vastness of cultural production, which can vary between cities, states and countries. From the perspective of underground culture there is a large network of meanings for the young people who socialize in it, because they use cultural elements to give meaning to the group's practices.

By sharing what is produced by the urban tribe, with the same tastes, sensations, ideals, and gestures, young people are united by the fact of being together and by the feeling of belonging. Thus, the underground culture is sedimented in the ritual and repetition of youth production, which generates an identity and its sociability. The community exhausts all its forces in the creation and recreation of group boundaries, with the union of community ethics and solidarity. These end up developing the ritual, which by its repetition gives security to the community.

The community, in turn, exhausts its energy in its creation (or, eventually, recreation). This is what makes it possible to establish a link between community ethics and solidarity. One of the particularly striking aspects of this link is the development of ritual. As we know, this is not exactly teleological, that is, oriented toward an end; on the contrary, it is repetitive and, for this very reason, provides security. Its only function is to reaffirm the feeling that a given group has of itself. (Maffesoli 2010, 47).

As demonstrated by Maffesoli, the creation of a community is also established in recreation, that is, it is structured by the simple pleasure of doing




something together, which generates the amalgamated social coexistence of the group. We perceive in rock and in religion, clear aspects of the cultural constructions that men and women established in the world, and each specific life context. In the same way that there is sociability around rock music as a musical style among young people who are in urban tribes, there is also sociability in religion. As Durkheim reports: “Beliefs properly religious are always common to a certain collectivity which makes a profession of adhering to them and practicing the rites connected with them. They are not only admitted individually, by all the members of that collectivity; they are things of the group and constitute its unity.” (Durkheim 1989, 75).

Without socialization between people and groups there will be no habits, customs, and the establishment of culture. Religion, urban tribes, and any other form of sociality, occur through adherence and practice in unity. The use of cultural elements in the religious manifestation in the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão occurs through the acceptance of the manifestation of young people with rock and urban tribes. Post-modernity opens the possibility to accept the difference, as well as the use of various forms of languages, readings and re-readings, making possible the construction and appropriation of cultural elements that end up being slowly incorporated into religious practices.

We could synthesize the culture described by Tylor (2005) as a set of learning in the most varied human areas, in which the human being is in constant learning. Although Maffesoli (2010) has pointed to two cultures within culture, with the instituted power and the instituting power, the latter for him is the one that fosters socialization with the feeling of being together, belonging, sharing, emotions, tastes, and the same sensations. Culture could thus be established as all the production and accumulation of knowledge of a people, nation, ethnic group, or community.

Rock music and religion as culturally constructed elements can transform and mold themselves to the most diverse cultures and customs. Both are reborn, resurrected, resurrected every day with new forms, languages, and mixtures. In garages, small stores, sheds, stadiums, and for audiences of thousands of people. However, it is not the greatness that such manifestations can generate that draws our attention, but the construction of something that until then was unthought of, namely, rock and religion. Thus, we can see that post-modernity opens possibilities for a cultural and religious manifestation contextualized for those who receive them. Rock music, urban tribes, the alternative and underground scene resemble religion in many ways. All these manifestations are charged with passion, devotion, and have great apologetic character for their members. Besides being embodied in everyday life, they are also lived and passed





on from generation to generation in a cultic way. This happens because the individual does not live isolated and is also connected to a cultural network that is very broad. “That said, we rediscover that the individual cannot exist in isolation, but that he is connected, through culture, communication, leisure, and fashion, to a community.” (Maffesoli 2010, 140).

Observing the birth of rock music, we notice that there already was the source of sacred and profane music with the blues and gospel, in both cases this music represented a cry for freedom against all kinds of injustice and oppression. The protesting effects of rock music echoed in the subsequent decades, starting with the youth in 1950 with rock’n’roll and the post-World War II baby boom generation, which generated other evolutions within rock itself, with heavy metal and its sub-genres until today. Making rock heavier, faster, more aggressive and noisier, with heavy metal, thrash metal, death metal and black metal. Youth cultures became freer and young people became more autonomous in their cultural constructions in Western countries.

Previously, we reported that the term “tribe” was proposed by Maffesoli as a metaphor, and observed the transformations of the social bond. However, for Pais (2004, 10), the use of the term “tribe” can cause some kind of prejudice, by creating a “label” that becomes labels that are applied to young people. These young people may not identify with the label printed on them. They still run the risk of being confused with youth groups that conflict with the law, such as “gangs”. Thus, they may suffer some kind of prejudice by labels that are created for some tribes. “Young people are what they are, but they are also (without being) what is thought of them, the myths that are created about them. These myths do not reflect reality, although they help create it.” (Pais 2004, 11).

Magnani (2005, 175) notes the limitations of the term “tribes” because it is used in traditional studies of ethnology for deeper and longer-lasting ties, such as clans, tribes, segments, and local groups. However, for young people the term means just the opposite, that is, a fragmentation and a stance against mass culture.

According to Pais, the very term “tribe” already carries in itself the idea of friction, resistance and opposition. “In effect, tribe is an element of word composition that expresses the idea of friction (from the Greek *tribé*), that is, the resistance of opposing bodies when they confront each other. This dimension of group resistance, substantively linked to the idea of friction, is present in the phenomenon of urban tribes.” (Pais 2004, 12).

In this sense we realize that the young people in the headbanger urban tribes, even today, use rock music as a cultural element in their protests

against the established powers. Although he uses the metaphor of the “tribe” to designate the transformations of the present time, Maffesoli understands that this metaphor cannot express this concept with confidence.

There is, I recognize, a true paradox: to indicate a guaranteed direction with “words” having in no way the security of the concept. [...] Perhaps one has to know how to accept, and live, this paradox. [...] one must know how to be content with metaphors, analogies, images, all vaporous things, which would be the least worst possible means to say ‘what is’, what is in a nascent state. (Maffesoli 2010, 04-05).

When using the term urban tribes, we think about the metaphorical issue proposed by Maffesoli, who demonstrates the transformations in social bonds, with the feeling of belonging and being together, affection, passions, and community devotions among young people who join these tribes. Another factor for the use of this term is that the members of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão called themselves a rock tribe at the beginning of the community, and today they call themselves a more heterogeneous tribe, open to cultural diversity. We emphasize that not only the cultural manifestations in the community are developed in a counter-cultural way. The preaching, the liturgy, the evangelism<sup>18</sup>, the

18. We emphasize that evangelism at the beginning of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, is closely linked to the urban headbanger tribes and the newly formed secular underground scene. The city of Belo Horizonte in the mid-1980s was experiencing an explosion of the underground scene with the creation of many heavy metal bands and their subgenres. In this cultural ebullition of the capital of Minas Gerais concerning rock music in 1991, a group of young people meets to exchange information about foreign Christian rock bands and music. This group feels the need to evangelize their old friends from the alternative and underground scene and so they start praying to God for a pastor identified with the subculture of heavy rock. In 1992 this group exchanged some correspondence with Pastor Fábio de Carvalho, who lived in Londrina, in the state of Paraná. In July of the same year Pastor Fábio and his family move to Belo Horizonte. At this time the first bands of White Metal of Brazil appear, among them: Saved, Razão and The Joker. The group gets permission to perform with these bands in the hall of Comunidade Atos, located on Rua Levindo Lopes, on Savassi, on Saturdays. This event was named Refúgio do Rock (Rock Shelter). Due to the growth of the group and the demand created, Pastor Fábio begins to lead the Sanctuary Ministry, created to disciple the members of the newly established bands and also to evangelize the youth connected to the urban headbanger tribe. Later on, growth groups are created with weekly meetings at homes, with the purpose of communion among the youth and Bible study. In 1993, more bands appear, and the concert schedule grows. In April of the same year, a group of 12 youth from the Apostolic Church Renascer em Cristo, from São Paulo, visited Belo Horizonte to get to know the Shrine Ministry. From this visit and from the experiences they had, the band Antidemon was born. In September, Pastors Fábio and Geraldo travel to São Paulo, where they attend the presentation of the American band Bride, in the event SOS da Vida promoted by the Apostolic Church Renascer em Cristo. In 1994, the group strengthens relations with other Christian ministries, such as JOCUM (Youth With A Mission) and Hippies of Christ. The year of 1995 was crucial for what would happen with the Christian underground in Belo Horizonte. In January Pastor Fábio disconnects from Comunidade Atos and some time later Pastor Eduardo also disconnects. Pastor Fábio tries to take that flock to some church, but the few that approved of this type of work with young people still had difficulty understanding and living with the alternative and underground Christian culture. Here there is a perception of recognizing that group no longer as a ministry of a church, but as a church, so Pastor Fábio invites Pastor Eduardo to pastor them both and after a while he accepts the invitation. In June, in a garage of a house in the Cruzeiro neighborhood, the first service of the new church takes place, formed by two distinct groups. Pastor Fábio with his underground flock and Pastor Eduardo with his conventional flock. At that time there was a concern not to put a

participation of the members and the pastors in the community's life, shows a different format from the traditional evangelical and Protestant churches. In which young people and the whole community build their religious practices in a more organic, open, and contextualized way.

These young people create with rock their aesthetics, ideology, and posture towards the world, and they signal friction and opposition to mass culture. Starting with the fact that they use a different language in the group and the musical production with guttural vocals and a fast, aggressive, and very noisy sound. The extravagant clothing also demonstrates this friction and opposition to what is conventionally defined by mass culture. "The trust that is established between group members is expressed through rituals, through specific signs of recognition, which have no other purpose than to strengthen the small group against the large group." (Maffesoli 2010, 159).

Ritual occurs with repetition, and although tribes appear to be unstructured, contestatory, and subversive, "the reference to ritual underlines that the essential quality of group and mass resistance is that it is more cunning than offensive." (Maffesoli 2010, 159-160). In resisting the mass culture that is set as the standard to follow, urban tribes may suffer some depreciation and prejudice, with the label and stigma that are given to their members. "It is certainly no accident that many groups of young people take with them the appellation of the tribe. It is because their conduct is seen as misaligned, confrontational, exotic." (Pais 2004, 13).

But it is precisely the non-acceptance of the tribe by what is imposed as the cultural standard by the mass culture that we can see the feeling of belonging, the conviviality, and the feeling of being together. In this aspect, tribes unite young people who have the same sensations, emotions, interests, and ideals. "If the individuals who integrate some urban tribes distance themselves from certain social standards, it is not exactly to isolate themselves from everything around them, but to reunite with reference groups closer to their ideals." (Pais 2004, 17).

This sociability occurs in eye-to-eye like the horizontal relationships with the large streams of small tribes.

When we look closely, this indistinct shoulder to shoulder, which resembles animal pilgrimages, is in fact made up of a multitude of interacting small cells. It is also punctuated

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name on the new community, so as not to create a new denomination or movement. In terms of evangelism, because Pastor Fábio worked with the underground, he was more present with the juvenile public. This made possible his articulation with several urban tribes, and not only the headbangers, with rock and heavy metal, but also with other urban tribes that socialized around the theater, cinema, skateboarding, sports, tattoos, music in general, and other situations that generated belonging. Even if this was a simple way of stopping to spend time together, to watch a movie or go to the concerts of favorite bands of these young people and teenagers.

by a series of recognitions, of people and places, that make this broth of culture signs a well-ordered whole. (Maffesoli 2010, 168).

We can observe that the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão uses cultural elements like rock music in their religious practices. Even if such practices seem contrary to the vast majority of traditional evangelical churches, the practices of the urban headbanger tribe with rock and religion have the power to unite opposites. “The tribes and their struggles, the strong interdependence that constitutes these tribes, and at the same time the need for a God who unites the contraries, here is the epistemological-mythical framework in which the dialectic “of love and estrangement” that seems to be the basis of all social structuring is inserted.” (Maffesoli 2010, 185).

Therefore, what we noticed in the religious practices of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão and the alternative spirituality developed by the young people there, is that there is an opening for the appropriation of the cultural elements of the urban headbanger tribes. This points to a contextualized religious practice that respects and accepts the manifestation of these young people.

### **UNDERGROUND CHURCHES AND COMMUNITIES: NEW ECCLESIAL MODELS?**

To talk about underground churches and communities or new ecclesial forms today, we asked the following question. Underground Churches and Communities: New Ecclesial Models? With this questioning, we sought to understand how the construction of the relationship between religion and culture took place in a practical way with the experience of young people who liked rock music and were in the urban headbanger tribes, in the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão. Subsequently, we observed if there was the occurrence of a new church model there.

We realized that the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão in Belo Horizonte was consolidated as a Christian community that used elements of culture, including religion and rock, with the sociability of young people from urban tribes. We notice that this relationship between religion and rock was not always so harmonious, with conflicts that intensified even more against heavy metal bands and their subgenres. The documentary *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* (2005), presented by Canadian anthropologist Sam Dunn, who became a heavy metal fan when he was 12 years old, shows his journey around the world, capturing different opinions and perspectives about the musical genre known as heavy metal. He researched its origins, themes, aesthetics, visuals, stances and attitudes, as well as the controversies, and the reasons why it is so admired and loved by many young people, teenagers, and people of various ages around the world.

In this documentary Dunn, shows that in 1986 heavy metal became the most popular music worldwide with millions of fans and at the time of his journey in 2005, he tried to understand why heavy metal suffered so much prejudice and was discriminated against. As he relates, “This music has millions of passionate fans all over the world. Yet for 35 years it has been stereotyped, repulsed, and condemned. I know, because I’ve been defending it since I was 12 years old.” (Metal 2005).

The documentary shows how the hunt for rockers and heavy metal began in the United States in 1984, via the US Congress and the creation of the PMRC Parent’s Music Resource Center. The band Twisted Sister was the first to suffer this discrimination with heavy metal music. Dee Snider, lead singer of the band was the first to be summoned to Congress, as reported.


1984 was a pretty mindless year for Twisted Sister. We were hearing things about this Parenting and Music Resource Center and Tipper Gore, but not paying much attention, because we had protests from religious groups at every show. So, for us it was just another parent group that you know, put Twisted Sister on their hit list. (Metal 2005).

From then on, Dunn noted that discrimination and persecution against heavy metal bands intensified, as “the PMRC classified the songs according to violence, occultism, sex, drugs, and alcohol.” (Metal 2005). In this same direction, Christe shows that the PMRC tried to attribute to heavy metal many social problems and all kinds of juvenile delinquency at that time.

Responding to what some saw as a radical music crisis, the political activism group Parent’s Music Resource Center, or PMRC, formed in 1984 out of the disquiet of Susan Baker, Tipper Gore, and many other wives of well-known members of Congress. The group spread the theory that the growing statistics of suicide and rape among teenagers could be attributed to lewd rock lyrics. (Christe, 2010, 155).

Also, according to Christe, an expansion of this persecution and discrimination against heavy metal by the PMRC occurred during the administration of US President Ronald Reagan, which spread to other sectors of society with professionals from various fields of endeavor, including Protestant religious leaders.

Still, the fear campaign continued to expand during the Reagan administration, as PMRC hearings granted self-proclaimed occult connoisseurs professional status - bizarre modern-day witch hunters who lectured at PTA meetings, encouraged campaigns to write letters of protest, and infiltrated the news segments of television with alarming regularity. The joy train extended into a procession of resurrected comedians, retired police officers, and evangelical ministers, such as Bob Larson, author of a series of works attacking rock music. In his independent book, published in 1983, *Rock*, Larson feeds the terror of the ignorant with improbable warnings about Black Sabbath’s alleged use of astral projection and rituals with chicken blood. (Christe, 2010, 159).



Observing Christe's reports about the indiscriminate persecution that happened against heavy metal in the United States, by people from every society that supposedly could form an opinion, even with the sieve of religion, in this case the evangelical one. Today it is not difficult to understand the difficulty that this rhythm faced, as well as the barriers that would be faced by churches and Christian communities that dared to use it in their liturgy.

However, this is what happened with the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão in Belo Horizonte in the Brazilian context, less than a decade later. Besides using this rhythm inside the community in services and evangelistic events, pastors Fabio and Eduardo also encouraged the formation of rock bands, heavy metal and its subgenres. This showed a deep sensitivity and respect for the culture of these young people, who besides not being discriminated against there, could still worship God in their own worldview and language. They were also encouraged to leave the four walls of the church, to minister in the streets, squares, and unusual places in Belo Horizonte, in Brazil, and in other parts of the world.

For Maffesoli, religious practices can help in the expansion of sociability, because they establish closer ties between people and this helps to face the adversities of life. "That religion (re-ligare) is the expression of a plural sociality, [...], is by no means surprising. Indeed, it should be remembered that before becoming institutionalized, with known rigidity, religious meetings serve, first and foremost, to keep warm, to close ranks in the face of the harsh social or natural 'order of things.'" (Maffesoli 2010, 185).

This plural sociality that religion can provide with the feeling of belonging, and the warmth produced by shoulder to shoulder, can also be observed in the composition of the community. In the beginning, the work was focused on young people who were in marginalized and discriminated groups in society. Today, its members include men, women, children, and people of all ages. We also observe that it is not a new church or community, but religious practices that make use of varied cultural manifestations, with readings, re-readings, and new forms and meanings, which here use rock music as a youth cultural element. Before we go on, it is good to point out some differences between churches and communities. According to Brakemeier (2004, 49), "community is the local congregation, while church designates a set of communities." Also according to the author, church and community are neo-testamental synonyms.

According to the New Testament, however, church and community are synonymous. The difference is only in the etymological origin. Church comes from the Greek *ekklesia*, meaning assembly, while the community is a Latin term, designating a group united by something common. From this perspective, to live in a community is to live in the


church and vice versa. Christian community always has an ecclesial nature. (Brakemeier, 2004, 49-50).

Another prominent factor is that communities are more open to cultural elements than churches. Thus, they are more involved in what is produced by culture. The community also ends up being more receptive to culture because of its freedom regarding customs, dogmas, and ecclesial structures, which are less rigid and plastered than churches are when it comes to changes. Many evangelical communities that develop their work with young people use this nomenclature to distance themselves from the format of conventional churches and to be more open to all kinds of youth groups. These communities are often not connected to the large churches, whether historic or not, but they are faithful to the gospel and are wholly contained within the church of God.

This does not prevent local communities from presenting themselves in a variety of forms and cultural colorings. They have the right to be different. Already in early Christianity, Hebrew and Greek-speaking Christians lived together, thus coming from different environments. Traditions, customs, ethnicities differed. Plurality did not always fit into a single community organization. The church of Jesus Christ cannot claim uniformity. It needs to adapt to the context in which it lives, to articulate the gospel in its respective culture, to speak the language of the people. It is noteworthy that the Christian community is not tied to any specific culture (“cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19ff.”). It can wear the typical costumes of the respective locality and region. It is open to multiculturalism. It brings together concrete people from all nations (Matthew 18.18). (Brakemeier, 2004, 50).

Local communities establish themselves as fertile ground for the varieties of forms in different environments. This plurality can go beyond the community organization and thus signal that no community is locked into a specific culture. In this way, regionalism is respected, with the incorporation of elements that are specific to certain groups. This makes it possible to open up to multiculturalism without falling into the temptation of monopolizing or flattening manifestations that are outside the large urban centers. We have verified that these churches and underground communities that appropriate elements of culture, such as heavy rock concerts in their facilities, like the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, and other communities and churches that hold events with other musical styles like electronic music, which resemble raves and nightclubs. They develop this kind of work with young people and are not restricted to the big Brazilian metropolises, but have spread to several parts of Brazil, and have reached small and medium-sized cities.

According to Baggio (1997, 72), the Comunidade S-8 in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, was the pioneer in Brazil to develop its work geared toward young people, challenging cultural standards and supporting bands with their styles.




The community started its activities in 1971 with meetings for young people seeking guidance and treatment for drug use and abuse. Several social problems have led communities and churches to give answers to a world in constant transformation. Nowadays, a great increase in violence, drugs, and promiscuity is observed, as many cities around the world have experienced a demographic explosion, bringing with it serious problems typical of large metropolises.

We verified that as well as the Comunidade S-8, countless churches, communities, both small and large, develop specific works with young people who are in the most varied urban tribes spread throughout the cities of Brazil. Among them we highlight the Comunidade Metanoia in the city of Rio de Janeiro, founded at the end of the 1990s. Still in this decade, in 1998, Projeto 242 starts its activities in the city of São Paulo. Another community created in São Paulo was Comunidade Zadoque, which later had its name changed to Crash Church Underground Ministry and also opened a community in the city of Cuiabá in the state of Mato Grosso. In Paraná, Comunidade Gólgota and Comunidade Refúgio stand out, both of which started their activities in 2000. The north and northeast of Brazil deserve to be highlighted for the large number of communities that develop work with young people who are in urban tribes, among these, we highlight the Comunidade Zoe in the city of Palmas and the Comunidade Altar in Belém.

Minas Gerais boasts countless churches and communities working with young people who are part of urban tribes. In Uberlândia, we highlight the Comunidade Manifesto Missões Urbanas. In the Vale do Aço (Steel Valley) region, in the city of Ipatinga, we highlight the Comunidade Grito de Alerta. In the Rio Doce Valley, in Governador Valadares the highlight is the Comunidade Impacto Urbano. In Zona da Mata, in Juiz de Fora, we highlight the Caverna do Rock.

In the case of Belo Horizonte, besides highlighting the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão as the oldest active one and as a result of our research, we also highlight, among other churches and communities, the Comunidade Justiça e Retidão, which does this kind of work with young people who are in the urban headbanger tribes in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte. The effervescence in Belo Horizonte between the 80's and the 90's with the most varied heavy rock bands already pointed to the capital city of Minas Gerais as a source of rock bands, with their sub-genres. This preoccupation is easy to perceive, because Belo Horizonte was considered the barn of bands of styles such as: Progressive Rock, Popular Rock, Heavy Metal, Death Metal, Thrash Metal, New Metal, Doom Metal, Grind Core, Hard Core, Crossover, Punk Rock, Gothic and Grunge, among others.






The band Sepultura, from Belo Horizonte in the 90s was considered the biggest heavy rock band in the world. In the city there were also several successful bands among them: Overdose, Sex Trash, Sarcófago, Mutilator, The Mist, Eminence, Absolute Disgrace, Chakal and many others. The city, due to the great amount of bands, in 1994 receives the title of “Capital of Rock” in the secular alternative and underground scene. The capital of Minas Gerais entered definitely in the world rock scene with the “BHRIF” (Belo Horizonte International Rock Festival). National and international bands performed at Praça da Estação and at Serraria Souza Pinto. This festival was held by the Belo Horizonte City Hall, in partnership with the private initiative, open to the general public.

The alternative and underground Christian scene were not left behind either, with the pioneering of the first Christian rock underground bands and the emergence of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão in the early 1990s. “In Minas Gerais, according to Tibério, the first white metal bands emerged. The Minas Gerais Ministry of White Metal, as Tibério reported, was initially called ‘Sanctuary Church’ and, in 1994, was renamed ‘Caverna de Adulão’, the name it bears today.” (Costa, 2004, 54). Also, according to Costa, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, communities and churches began to change their field of action to reach the youth in the suburbs of the cities. “More or less from that moment on, religious communities and evangelical churches began to emerge, which started to change their way of acting and the methods of co-optation of this youth coming from the suburbs of the Brazilian cities.” (Costa, 2004, 48).

In this way, both communities and churches began to accept the cultural manifestation of young people within their religious practices, and the support given by religious leaders to these groups or tribes reflected in the attendance and permanence of these young people in their churches. “One of the attractions was that as long as they accepted ‘Jesus’ and started attending churches, they could continue to ‘be as before.’ Which meant being able to wear the traditional clothes, hair and props, listen to and participate in concerts and musical and cultural gatherings, in a peaceful way, among other possibilities.” (Costa, 2004, 49).

In summary, we realize that the adaptation of these churches and communities points to a new way of evangelizing and also a new way of being a member in these religious circles. It is worth emphasizing that this is not a new model of church or community. However, in these religious practices open to the appropriation of cultural elements, we can see that the religious institution is the one that changes and adapts itself to the needs of its members, and it is not the person who changes in the act of his/her conversion. The continuing “to be as before” described by Costa above, refers to the openness of religious institutions to the practices



performed by young people in urban tribes. “Thus, the traditional figure of the ‘believer’ wearing a black suit, holding a Bible and followed by his wife wearing a long dress and keeping her hair long, was replaced by the faithful wearing casual, colorful clothes and fashionable hair.” (Costa, 2004, 51).

This that at first seems to be a new church model that breaks the rigidity of institutional religion, as it seems, develops new religious practices, which use cultural elements as a form of religious expression that erupts within the culture itself. The services of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, even if they seem to have a different form from the traditional patterns of evangelical churches today, do not differ from the religious practices of these churches, although there is a more inclusive participation of its members and also a greater freedom for cultural manifestations in the community.

Similarly, to Costa, Maffesoli notes that these alternative spiritualities signal new religious practices in postmodernity, in which the faithful are the ones who make their choices with the religious goods that suit their needs. “This religiosity can go hand in hand with de-Christianization, or with some other form of de-institutionalization. And for this very reason, sociality designates, precisely, the saturation of the great systems and the other macro-structures.” (Maffesoli 2010, 135).

In this respect, religion and rock music can establish sociality among small groups or in urban tribes as an expression of this broader culture. This sociality breaks with the big systems and big structures by the distancing and relational coldness they cause. “The religion that defines itself from a space is an aggregating cement of an ordered whole, at once social and natural.” (Maffesoli 2010, 211).

Both religion and rock music use clothing and elements used by other social and youth groups from past decades to give a new meaning to religious practice. In these religious practices rock music could be what Maffesoli described above as “space” because through it many young people are drawn to communities and churches that work with urban tribes and express religiosity in alternative and underground culture.

In this way, rock music as a youth music style, can establish itself as a symbolic “space” that helps religion lay its foundations in sedimenting the bonds between young people. In parallel, Costa notes that music has the power to unite young people with the same ideals. “In the case of certain youth groups, music is experienced collectively as a source of meaning and identity.” (Costa, 2004, 58). In these bonds, in the feelings of belonging and being together, ideologies are rescued, postures and aesthetic elements

of some youth groups are re-released many times as something to be followed, that is, they become fashionable for the whole society. These reinterpretations open up possibilities for new religious expressions, as is the case of rock music, which until a few years ago would have been unthought of in the religious sphere.

Therefore, we observe that postmodernity enables human beings to have autonomy in their own choices with the plurality of thoughts and no longer fits an absolute and true thought. It has also fostered the use of totally new elements and perspectives not thought of before, with new religious and cultural practices. We realize that the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, like other churches and communities that develop this kind of work among urban tribes, do not signal a new form of church. However, they point to new religious practices today, when they use and respect the manifestations of the emerging generation and its elements that are culturally given.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Through our research, we realized that religion and rock music, like other human manifestations need socialization or repetition, to establish their transmission. We also observed that at the beginning of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, rock was the main socializing element at that time. Culture, then, stops being an obstacle in the religious practice and the adhesion of new members to the church, and becomes an ally thanks to the sensibility of its leaders. These enabled the use of cultural elements such as rock music allied with religion, which allowed these young people to develop their spirituality with their meanings and languages of their daily lives. As reported by Pinto:

Today, instead of salvation through the negation of rock, what has operated is salvation through rock. Instead of abandoning the torn jeans and the black t-shirt, we have the use of these bodily appendages for the construction of a sacred territory. Instead of an ethic dictated by the pastor, we see the breakdown of this figure as a manipulator and mediator of the sacred. Broken the mediations, the sacred, coupled with heavy metal, becomes a source of agentiality to these young believers. (Pinto, 2009, 12).

Although we can observe this use of rock as a founding cultural element of the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão, to reach a specific young audience that otherwise would not be in churches with a conventional format. After Pastor Fábio's death in 2007 on a missionary trip to Cuba, there was a transition from rock to a cultural diversity, because he was the one who did the evangelism work focused on religion and culture, with specific groups of theater, music, skateboarders, and more specifically with the headbangers urban tribes.

There was the exchange of rock for the internet as an instrument of evangelization and sociability in the community, which was no longer aimed only at reaching urban headbangers or other specific groups and tribes. Among the elements that replaced rock and took its place, we can highlight the social projects developed by the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão and its members, such as the Projeto Reconstruir, the Projeto Lamalma, and the Projeto Cupim Sagrado, among other forms of socialization of the members.

We also verified factors that differentiate the composition of the members in the community. The aging of the people who were in the beginning of the community has occurred, and there has also been a change in the profile of those people who were single, students, didn't work, lived in the outskirts, and thus depended on public transportation. Today these same members are married, many have children, are professionally and financially established, live closer to the central region of Belo Horizonte, and have cars. However, they are not as involved in the work of the community as they were in the beginning.

Therefore, what we see is that there was a diversity of tribes in the Comunidade Caverna de Adulão with varied social groups. If “in the beginning was the rock, and the rock was in Caverna de Adulão, and the rock was Caverna de Adulão”, now, what we verify is that the rock opened space for other forms of socialization in the community. This diversity and plurality of tribalization also occurs frequently in urban centers in our days and show these varied forms of socialization. “That which links religion and space, as a double founding polarity of a given whole, cannot be said any better. Physical proximity, everyday reality has as much importance as the dogma that religion admits to conveying.” (Maffesoli 2010, 212). In this way, society can only exist when its everyday personal and interpersonal relationships in the most diverse groups are varied from one another. The encounters, social ties, and individual experiences are consolidated with the feeling of belonging and being together in the construction of collectivity in society.

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