

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Katie Briton

Interviewee: Katie Briton

Interviewer: Anonymous

Date: April, 2020

Location (Interviewee): Unknown

Location (Interviewer): Unknown

Transcription Equipment: Otter.ai

Interview Equipment: Unknown

Abstract: Katie Briton talks about how COVID-19 has both negatively and positively impacted her religious beliefs. She also talks about how her religious community has been affected as a whole and what community service activities they have engaged in to help people. Additionally, she draws connections between her class book, Anthropology of Religion, and other class readings to her own religious experiences.

Interviewer 0:00

So the first question is, how has COVID-19 affected your faith or beliefs.

Katie Briton 0:05

So I've, I'm a Christian. And I feel like it's affected my beliefs in positive and negative ways. In the negative ways, our church isn't able to meet publicly. So and I really rely on a lot of people for emotional support. And it's kind of like a nice, like, at the end of the week, you get to go to church and see all these people, it's really refreshing. So that's been a little bit hard. However, because of the COVID-19, I have been reading my Bible more, and I've been more actively listening to Christian music, and I've just been praying more. So I feel like that has actually made my faith stronger. So I feel like just doing those things like I'm more actively doing religious things. So I feel like it has affected me positively.

Interviewer 0:57

Okay. Yeah, that makes sense. So you said you're not meeting? But like, is your religious community still gathering? In any other ways? Um, the there so much virtual stuff going on? So?

Katie Briton 1:14

Well, yes. So we actually, we're a very big church. So we do have live sessions, the worship team gets together and the pastor gets together. And during these live sessions, you can log in at three different times. And you can, there's music and there's church updates, and then there's the actual sermon. So you actually do get see that once a week, three different times. So there's that. Also, I have my small group. So we meet together on Google Hangouts. And we're able,

even though we're not being able to meet physically, it is nice to be able to meet together over the Google Hangouts, and although there are some technical difficulties, which are actually pretty funny, it's, um, it's really nice to get to be able to still study in the word through Google Hangouts.

Interviewer 2:15

Okay. Yeah. So you can actually still see each other. And he said that you, they still the sermons, and they have the live sessions. So did they get to at least meet the band? Or is it are they just joining a Google Chat, too?

Katie Briton 2:30

So it's actually it's like watching you know, how sometimes on different channels, they'll have like live services?

Interviewer 2:38

Yeah.

Katie Briton 2:38

For, so it's pretty much like that. So it's not like Skype, because we're such a large church. Not everybody could Skype or Google Chat, but we're still able and they have the worship team gets together, and then all the pastors actually get together, but our senior pastor preaches.

Interviewer 2:56

Okay, okay. Um, yeah, in our book, Anthropology of Religion, we read about authority and religion. And a quote from a chapter was authority must be actively made and remade in lived social contexts. So like, now with COVID-19 going on, there are some churches meeting on Skype, like you, you said, you guys are doing. And there are some who have actually fought mandates to stay home. So it seems the pandemic has revealed some who believe in the threat of COVID-19, or at least they believe in the authority of the government mandates to stop large group meeting. But it also shows those who do not think as a huge threat and, and who feel their religious freedom infringed upon. So that's cool that you guys get to at least meet on the Skype. And I don't know if you'd heard anything about those different reactions to COVID-19.

Katie Briton 3:55

Yeah, personally, I believe that you should listen to the government mandates and that I'm just following the scientific, but like, just following the scientific background of that is like, you know,

kind of like looking at the curb. I'm looking at statistics, it's good to just be it's better to be safe than sorry, in my opinion.

Interviewer 4:17

Okay. Yeah. Um, so the last question, is your religious community, supplying or engaged any kind of community service in an attempt to help alleviate issues caused by the kin pandemic? If so, what are those efforts? So, like, um, something else kind of relevant to this is like in an article that we were reading the case for religious studies, grew in states, individuals and communities are inspired by their religious identities to take action in the world. does this apply to your church and COVID-19?

Katie Briton 4:51

Yes, so actually, we have a food pantry that you can that a lot of people go to who have been unemployed because of the COVID-19 Or just need relief and no questions asked will give you food. So that's a really nice relief project that my church is doing.

Interviewer 5:08

Okay, awesome. Well thank you for answering the questions.

Katie Briton 5:11

You're welcome.