CHRISTIANITY AND PLANNING: PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

By Clara Greed

Emerita Professor of Inclusive Urban Planning
Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments

Occasional Paper 1 2016
The Faculty of Environment and Technology, University of the West of England, Bristol, is a large multi-disciplinary Faculty, in which teaching and research on the Built Environment, including urban planning, are strong components. This occasional paper is produced under the auspices of the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments (SPE) with the support of its Director Professor Katie Williams.

Occasional Paper 1 2016 is available as a pdf online at Clara Greed’s staff profile at http://people.uwe.ac.uk/Pages/person.aspx?accountname=campus%5Cc-greed

Upon request, it is available as a printed report, contact clara.greed@uwe.ac.uk or claragreed@aol.com

Published by:
University of the West of England
Coldharbour Lane, Frenchay
Bristol, BS16 1QY

ISBN 9 781860 435270

Cover Photo: St George’s Roman Catholic Cathedral, Westminster Bridge Road, Southwark, London. Traditional church denominations and their buildings are so familiar that we take them for granted without comment. But this church is actually only about ten minutes away from the Old Kent Road where many less traditional pentecostal churches have been established (see Photo 2) to serve the local community, often housed in what were retail and industrial building units.
Christianity and Planning: Pentecostal Churches

Occasional Paper 1 - March 2016 Faculty of Environment and Technology

By Clara Greed
Emerita Professor of Inclusive Urban Planning
Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments
Faculty of Environment and Technology
University of the West of England Bristol
# CHAPTER CONTENTS

1. **Pentecostals and Planning**  
   1.1 The Context  
   1.2 Contents  
   1.3 Methodology  

2. **Background and Conceptual Context**  
   2.1 Historical Legacy  
   2.2 Pentecostal Church growth  
   2.3 The Traditional Church situation  
   2.4 Conceptualisation of the changing situation  

3. **The Planning System and Religion**  
   3.1 Levels and Scope  
   3.2 International level  
   3.3 UK Central Government Level  
   3.4 Planning at Local Government Level  
   3.5 Equality Legislation  

4. **Planning Cases and Appeals Related to Religion**  
   4.1 Explanation of Categories  
   4.2 Economic Issues  
   4.3 Cultural and Religious Capital  
   4.4 Social and Community Uses  
   4.5 Environmental and Traffic Issues  

5. **Conclusion**
Additional Material

Figure 1: Summary of The RTPI Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit 42
Figure 2: Proposed Religion And Planning Toolkit 43
Example: Comparison of Religion and Retail Development 44
Bibliography 46
Useful Research Groups and People 53
Research Sites on Church Statistics 54
Research Sites on Planning Appeals 54

Photographs

Cover photo: St George’s Roman Catholic Cathedral, London
1. Bus Battles: Religion in public space 3
2. Mount Zion Church 5
3. Italian Church Square 7
4. Azusa Street, Los Angeles 9
5. Yatton War Memorial 14
6. Moscow’s Commercialisation 16
7. Conversion of a Redundant Church to Housing Apartments 25
8. ‘Now open all day Sundays’ 30
9. Winter Fest or Christmas? 32
10. Jesus is Lord café, Bridgwater, Somerset 38
End Picture: Temporary Church in St Albans

All photographs taken by the author except for End Picture of Temporary Church in St Albans, which was photographed by John Griggs.
CHAPTER 1: PENTECOSTALS AND PLANNING

1.1 The Context

There is a growing assumption in policy-making circles that UK society is no longer predominantly Christian in belief or culture. Instead it is argued there should be a greater emphasis on diversity (respecting those of ‘all faiths or none’), and less manifestation of religion in the public realm (in schools, government and urban areas), as expressed in the 2015 government report, *Living with Difference* (Butler-Sloss, 2015). There has been much criticism of this report from all branches of Christianity, and from other religions, that the report is at least 25 years out of date in its assumptions (CH, 2015). This is because many consider we are seeing a resurgence of religion in the public realm and thus within urban space, both in terms of the prominence of Islam (Amin, 2006), and also a growth in Christian faith groups, and a greater interest in non-creed-specific spirituality, in a newly emerging post-secular era (Beaumont and Baker (eds) 2011).

These religious changes have resulted in local planning authorities experiencing increasing pressure to deal with applications for faith-related development, particularly for new church buildings, and especially in the form of Black Pentecostal mega-churches. Whilst some of this growth may be accounted for by immigration, as will be explained, there has been marked growth of more traditional congregations too. But there appears to be little sympathy or understanding on the part of the town planners to accommodate church needs. At best planners will deal with religion-related applications under the category of diversity, equality or culture. At worst local authorities will be hostile to applications from what they may see as fundamentalist and likely anti-gay religious organizations. ‘Religion’ is not a neutral subject as it increasingly associated, in the media, with problems of immigration, threats to the British way of life and terrorism (Gale and Naylor, 2002; Nazir-Ali, 2006). But, as will be explained, faith groups may also be viewed in a much more positive light, in offering not only religion, but also all sorts of social and welfare programmes to the community, for the homeless, poor, and unemployed, and undertaking a vast array of childcare, catering, housing and caring roles. In these times of government cut-backs they are increasingly meeting social needs as the Welfare State contracts.

There is already a wide range of academic literature on ‘religion and cities’ (Atherton et al, 2011; Beaumont and Baker (eds), 2011), and as evidenced in the range of studies included in the bibliography), and on the problems Christian faith groups (FAPN, 2015) and those of other major religions, including Islam, having in dealing with the planning system (Gale, 2008; Amin, 2008). But this paper is specifically intended to provide a more detailed study of the relationship between town planners and Pentecostal churches, illustrated by a range of empirical examples.

This report is illustrated by a range of examples, mainly from the United Kingdom (UK) with particular reference to Pentecostal mega-churches in London. This is because Pentecostalism is one of the fastest-growing branches of Christianity, putting the greatest pressure on the planning permission for religious buildings. There have been many
unsuccessful attempts by black Pentecostal congregations to obtain planning permission for both new church development, and for the alteration, and change of use, of existing buildings which have increasingly challenged the development management powers of the planners.

Religion and the activities of faith groups have not been given much attention by planners and therefore do not figure as key considerations in the planning process (Greed, 2015). Religion has been seen as an ‘aspatial’ that is social issue (Foley, 1964) rather than a spatial physical land-use consideration: as a private matter with no implications for the public realm. But, as will be explained, the activities of faith groups have significant implications in terms of urban development, not only at the local building level, but also across a whole range of wider strategic planning policy areas including transport, sustainability and the economy. Yet few local planning authorities have any policies on ‘religion’, and thus, by default, planners are often confronted with unpredicted repercussions, which can undermine the chances of achieving their goals on sustainability, transport policy, urban regeneration and economic development. For example, blocked from being able to utilise empty redundant church buildings vacated by declining white churches, lively black churches are likely to apply for permission to use industrial units and empty employment premises on the edge of town, thus challenging local development plan assumptions about economic development and appropriate locational requirements.

The fundamental problem is that ‘religion’ is not recognized as valid land-use and development categories under planning law, and there is no requirement to include religious considerations in any policy document or plan, as ‘religion’ is seen as *ultra vires* (outside the scope of planning, because it is not seen as a land-use matter) (Greed with Johnson, 2014, page 310). In order to understand why this is so it is important to investigate the sub-cultural values of the planning profession, that is how planners, as to how they see the world, and what they consider as being ‘relevant’ or not. Planners tend to put greater emphasis upon the importance of economic factors in regenerating urban areas, albeit tempered by a generalised belief in the value of community and the importance urban culture. Similar problems have been observed in relation to other ‘social’ matters, and a range of equality and diversity issues, including ethnicity, disability and gender. Therefore, this research draws upon methodology, and is informed by theories and approaches used when researching ‘women and planning’, another topic which has often been marginalised by the planning system (Greed, 1994; Reeves, 2005; Greed, 2005).

Whilst the paper is mainly about Pentecostals and Planning, it also relates to several other areas of my research, for example inevitably equality and gender issues come into the equation, as does my ongoing concern with ‘planning for everyday life’, and all the local buildings and facilities that ordinary people need to live their lives, such as public toilets, which like churches, seem to be ‘under the radar’ of the planners (Greed, 2003). The visibility of religion in the public realms is manifest not only in church buildings (whose exteriors are often unremarkable and may give no clue as to what goes on inside), but also is impact of religion on the townscape, and its inevitable impact upon those travelling through an area, in terms of religious advertisements (Photo 1), church notice boards and temporary banners (cover photo), evangelistic posters, and the very presence of throngs of worshippers spilling out onto the streets. Thus this paper relates to both geographical and
theological literature on the sacred, religious space and cities (Hopkins et al, (eds) 2012; Sheldrake, 2014) and for that matter to journeys and the study of ‘mobilities’ (be it a bus journey to church or a pilgrimage) (Maddrell et al, (eds) (2015))

Photo 1 Bus Battles: Religion in public space.

There has been an ongoing ‘battle on the buses’ in London, started by Richard Dawkins, the well-known evolutionist and broadcaster, when he endorsed bus adverts stating ‘there’s probably no god, so stop worrying and enjoy life’. This assertion was countered by Christian organisations taking out adverts on buses stating ‘There definitely is a God’. Since transport is such a major component of urban planning, and ‘mobilities’ now figures strongly in urban policy considerations, it is clear that ‘religion in public space’ debate does not only relate to planning permission for religious buildings but also to transport systems too.

1.2 Contents

In summary the first half of the paper explains the context, relevant theories, and overall setting of the problem, whilst the second half looks at the issues (illustrated by examples) being faced by planners in dealing with the demands of increased church growth, and the difficulties encountered by faith groups in dealing with the planning system. Following a short section on methodology (1.3), Chapter 2, overviews the historical religious context of urban form, subsequent secularisation and now the emergence of a post-secular society (Beaumont and Baker, (eds) 2011). This has given rise to the demand for more religious buildings as generated by the growth of a diverse range of faith groups in UK society (Greed, 2011). Key theories which help explain the planners’ antipathy to faith groups will be presented, with reference to past societal trends towards secularisation and de-Christianisation, and current movements towards de-secularisation and the rise of religion.
As stated, this paper mainly concentrates on Christianity in the UK, with particular reference to the large Pentecostal churches that developed in recent years. Therefore in Section 2.2, the beliefs and nature of Pentecostal churches is outlined, as well as the wider context of immigration to the UK, global economic trends, and the importance of religion in the developing world. However, many of the problems in getting planning permission are also experienced by traditional white denominations too. Reference is also made to the wider situation in relation to other major religions, particularly in respect of Moslem communities; indeed all religious groups tend to have very similar problems with the planners, and relatively speaking, require similar solutions.

In the course of this account, the sources given in the bibliography comprise an indicative literature review, identifying some of the key sources from this growing and extensive field of scholarship, concentrating on those texts related to urban planning. After the references a short list of significant leaders, organisations and networks that are concerned with ‘religion and planning’ and ‘faith and place’ are given as useful sources of further information. As to terminology it is inadequate simply to speak of ‘churches’ (which suggests a congregation limited to a building and a Christian one at that) so the term ‘faith groups’ is normally used as it covers different religions and also implies a more active involvement in society.

Having given the historical and conceptual background in chapter 2, chapter 3 looks at the spatial, land-use and wider geographical context of religion, which is discussed with reference to the different levels of planning. At the global UN level, sustainability has become a key policy driver, indeed a veritable religion in itself, and this has been transmitted into EU policy and directives. As will be explained (3.3) at the UK central government level, religion and faith issues are seldom mentioned within national guidance, and there seems to be a high level of discretion as to whether individual local authorities give attention to such matters. The problems with planning law will also be discussed (3.4), in relation to the UCO (Use Classes Order), the ultra vires problem, Supplementary Planning Guidance issues in development plans, and whether religion counts as a material consideration. Other legal requirements impinging on planning, such as the relevance of equality and diversity law to religious issues are considered (3.5). The ecclesiastical exemptions from some aspects of planning law, peculiar to historic denominations, especially the Anglican Church, are also briefly discussed.

Then, in chapter 4 a series of examples are given as to why religion-related planning applications are refused, and generally fail at appeal stage too. The main reasons for refusal are categorised into economic, social, cultural and environmental reasons. Each of these factors will form sub-sections in their own right, which will draw on relevant examples of planning decisions. It will be found that that transport policy, employment, architectural design and surprising equality diversity requirements, are typically used as reasons for refusal. Religion and churches seem to be taken for granted as something that relates to the distant past, perhaps to do with urban conservation and historical preservation, rather than dynamic modern policy making (Photo 2). Little emphasis is put upon the positive contribution of faith groups to the economy and society.
In the concluding chapter (5), recommendations will be made on how to change the situation. It is argued that the secular profession of planning is out of touch with the spiritual needs of ordinary people, but since the planners are meant to take their needs into account, regardless of what they themselves believe, then changes are required in planning policy, attitudes and law. Positive measures to improve the situation are presented, including the presentation of a Toolkit for mainstreaming religious issues into the planning process, adapted from my previous work on mainstreaming gender into planning (RTPI, 2003; Reeves, 2012). This new Toolkit will enable planners to flag up the religious implications of their decisions at each stage of the planning process. A comparison example is also given of how planners treat ‘religion’ as against ‘retail’ development, to highlight the need for a more strategic, high-level spatial approach to planning for religious issues. The report concludes with the list of references, followed by some useful lists of relevant organisations.

Photo 2 Mount Zion Church

Whilst people are used to traditional churches which are part of our visual heritage (see cover photo), this church at 275 Old Kent Road in Southwark, inner London is typical of the plethora of black Pentecostal churches that have grown up along this road. Mount Zion is part of the Redeemed Christian Church of God denomination (RCCG), but one can also find larger churches along this road such as the New Covenant church, the Everlasting Arms Ministry and Christ Faith Tabernacle along with many small churches occupying erstwhile shop units and small industrial buildings all along this road and the surrounding area. All of this ‘change of use’ has presented a challenge to the planners.
1.3: Methodology

My main focus of investigation has been to look at black-majority Pentecostal churches, because these are experiencing the highest rate of growth and have experienced many failed planning applications and appeals. For example, I have followed the planning saga of the London-based Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) and it search for a site to settle. I have also observed that the New Testament Church of God (NTCG), which has over 130 congregations nationwide, and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) which was originally founded in Argentina and has spread into Europe. The Redemption Christian Church of God (RCCG) is also of interest, a nation-wide federation of churches, each with their own choice of name, originally founded in Nigeria in 1952 and now spread worldwide. (The Sanctuary Parish Church illustrated on the cover is a member of the RCCG).

All these churches are looking for large available buildings (including unused cinemas, industrial units, retail buildings, and redundant churches) to provide worship space for their ever growing congregations. I have been tracking the situation since around 2009, to the present with more intensive research taking place during 2012-13, and I have been monitoring subsequent developments. For this research I needed to look at both the sources and effects of the conceptual basis of planning, as outlined in the next section, and to do empirical work on the end result in terms of monitoring relevant planning applications and the reasons for refusal (as discussed in the second part of the paper). A web search was undertaken of all planning applications, appeals and case law that related to ‘places of worship’ including using key words such as church, gospel, mosque, faith, and the names of the various denominations. I used www.compasssearch.co.uk which, in association with the Royal Town Planning Institute, provides frequently updated reports on current cases and appeals. I also searched using DCS (Development Control Services Limited) which is a password-only professional planning law site. I looked for relevant articles in the planning press, such as in ‘Planning’ which can be accessed at www.planningresource.co.uk (by searching for the date of publication and the key name of the person or place given in the text). Since many of the key cases are related to London, I also consulted the GLA (Greater London Authority) and Planning Aid for London (recently renamed Planning Aid England) (a voluntary planning advocacy group). There is a plethora of appeal cases, some of which are very similar to others in terms of reasons for refusal. So I have only drawn out a small selection of examples which illustrate the main issues. I combined, and triangulated this approach, with a more informal and anecdotal approach of simply talking to people from a range of churches and other faith groups on their experiences and views on the situation. Overall I found few good examples of a positive attitude being taken by the planners towards religion. However, there were also some local planning authorities, particularly in areas which had experienced high levels of immigration from Africa, the Indian-subcontinent and the Middle East, in the Midlands and within London, who have developed exemplary policies and good communication with faith groups, resulting in more positive outcomes.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

2.1 Historical Legacy

For many centuries European towns and cities were designed with reference to the importance of Christianity in public life, with the church often being at the centre of the town and the tallest building. For example, the design and layout of the medieval city was strongly influenced by the rituals, beliefs and calendar of the church, with town squares and cathedral precincts being built to accommodate not only markets but also religious processions and festivals. One can still find the imprint of this period in the street names, such as Pater Noster Square and Ave Maria Street in many European capitals, whilst ‘Church Street’ was the most common street name in British cities. Although such cities were designed on religious principles they were not necessarily functional or socially equitable. The early roots of town planning are to be found in the development of utopianism and social reform. In the nineteenth century, the demand for change became much greater as a result of industrialisation, urbanisation and public health concern, calling forth housing reform movements which comprised the antecedents to modern town planning, but were also, significantly often religiously motivated as church campaigners rallied for social reform. Town planning ideas and schemes were tried out by philanthropic factory owners from Non-Conformist Christian denominations, in the building of model towns for their workers, such as Bourneville built by the Quakers (Greed with Johnson, 2014: chapter 5).

Photo 3  Model of Typical Italian Church Square.

For centuries in European cities, the main church or cathedral, was the tallest building in the area, and at the centre of the neighbourhood alongside the market place and public buildings, and often the focus of the main road system.
Modern town planning subsequently developed as a secular profession in the early twentieth century, incorporating the values of science and rationalism. Many early planners came from surveying and engineering backgrounds who were concerned with creating functional, well-organised town plans, to house the workers and to promote industry (Greed, 1994). As planning became a governmental, bureaucratic function it lost many of its earlier religious and spiritual ideals. In particular, women were excluded from the new profession and a result many of the reformist, social, and utopian ideas promoted by early feminism were also excluded, and planning became much more concerned with meeting the requirements of men and work in the public realm than with the needs of women in the so-called private realm of home and family life (Hayden, 1976). Indeed the emphasis in land-use zoning upon the separation of employment from residential areas, although done ostensibly for functional and public health reasons, actually harked back to ancient principles of the separation of male and female, and thus the public and private realms of the city (Greed, 1994a: 70-81). The word zoning, and zone as I have explained in earlier work, etymologically derives from the word for ‘woman’ (Boulding, 1992:227). Marilyn French (1992: 76). Zona/zana is not only the root of zoning but also of sanitation, that is separating clean from dirty, public health, and social hygiene, being major obsessions of nineteenth century planners. (Greed, 1994:90).

Planning of all sorts became the Zeitgeist (Spirit of the Age) in the Post World War reconstruction period, and town planning was central in fulfilling the government’s slogan of ‘Build a Better Britain' (Greed with Johnson, 2014: pp 104-8). Whilst many of the principles of planning remained secular, scientific (and mainly gender-blind), paradoxically, there was still a tacit acceptance of the importance of religion in public life, perhaps because the role of the church had been acknowledged as important to public morale during the war, Archbishop William Temple being consulted by William Beveridge the economist, who was the main author of the Welfare State (Atherton et al, 2011, page 79). So nobody questioned the need to include a category for religious buildings in land-use in the Use Classes Order (UCO) within national planning law under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act (Mulkeen, 2014). It was considered entirely natural that each post-war New Town should be provided with space allocated for church building in every neighbourhood, along with other community facilities. Clearly the mid-twentieth century was a period of ‘living in the overlap’ when religion and secularity co-existed, without aggression or criticism. Relatively speaking most of the population was still fairly religious (or at least appeared to be so); it was the intellectual and political elites that were embracing secularity. But, by the 1960s church attendance was falling and pundits declared that society was entering a secular, post-Christian phase (Cox, 1965) resulting in a secular society.

2.2 Pentecostal Church Growth

Just when everyone was saying Christianity was no longer relevant, and even God was dead (Robinson, 1963) new players come onto the field, with the growth of a new fundamentalism, a stronger Evangelical movement (along with evangelism) Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement. Whilst many traditional, white churches have experienced decline, one of the fastest growing sectors of the UK is that of Black Pentecostal congregations (Burgess and Van Der Maas, 2003). As to definitions,
Pentecostal churches are marked by a belief in the ‘second blessing’ that is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues, which follows on from initial salvation. The present movement dates back to the 1906 outpouring of the Holy Spirit on a small black congregation in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, from which it spread remarkably rapidly (Gee, 1967: 119-127; Burgess and Van Der Maas, 2003 pp 344-350). I visited the site of the original Azusa Street church in 2013 expecting to find at least a cross or monument (Photo 4). All I found, with difficulty, was one small municipal plaque on a nearby wall. The site has been totally redeveloped as part of the Japanese quarter of the city. There are no sacred ‘places of pilgrimage’ in Pentecostalism, churches are more concerned with moving on to new, larger premises rather than with setting up shrines to the past. But, every believer’s body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians, 6, v. 19). Anyone, male and female, black and white, can become a prophet, priest, leader, healer and preacher, and so black women are more prominent in church ministry than in traditional denominations (Beckford, 2000: 49). Some planners, with childhood memories of cold, boring, empty, Anglican churches, have difficulty dealing with this unfamiliar new form of ‘church’. Colleagues at Planning Aid in London suggested that some ethnic-minority faith group appellants felt they were not taken seriously by the planners, who were more used to dealing with white vicars. Chizoma Onuoha my PhD student found that black women ministers experienced a particular lack of respect from male planners, and were not taken seriously (Onuoha and Greed, 2003, pp. 86-90).

Photo 4  Azusa Street, Los Angeles.

This is the location of the historic ‘ground zero’ of the Pentecostal movement, which subsequently spread world-wide. But there is no shrine or memorial here. Pentecostals like their religious buildings to be functional and able to accommodate large numbers of people: not to be shrines or places of pilgrimage. Therefore they are willing to look at any sort of building that might provide them with a place to worship, including converted industrial units and temporary shop-front premises.
The new wave of Black Pentecostal Christians has mainly come from previous overseas territories within the British Commonwealth, firstly from the Caribbean and nowadays from Africa (Muir, 2004). Many African countries were the subject of intensive missionary activity over the last two centuries and the Gospel took hold, so nowadays large sections of their population comprise fervent Christian believers. But on arriving in England many immigrants found that the historic denominations that used to send the missionaries are now in decline themselves, and their churches have been found to be unfriendly to immigrants so they are attracted to the newer black churches. Pentecostal churches are characterised by large gatherings and ecstatic and emotional spiritual worship. Arguably this is quite different from traditional western white churches and has more in common with some Eastern religions. But, it should be pointed out that there are also a considerable number of white Pentecostal churches in Britain, dating back from before the Second World War. They mainly comprise two denominations, namely the Elim church and the Assemblies of God (AOG) and both still have many branches across the country. Relatively speaking established Elim congregations have more in common with traditional white non-conformist congregations. Some AOG churches, especially in poorer, multi-ethnic inner city areas, have a similar spirituality and dynamism to the black churches, especially where there is an emphasis upon outreach and evangelism, but are generally smaller. Paradoxically the AOG is a major white middle-class denomination in the USA, with many highly educated and politically active members so one should always be wary about assuming a particular denomination is predominantly working class in character, or that denominations are the same in every country, in terms of class, ethnicity and education (Burgess and Van Der Maas, 2003).

Black Pentecostal churches, as well as worship, also provide social, educational and welfare services for their mainly immigrant congregations, all of which requires large premises (Kay, 2001). They are also the fastest growing Christian denomination in the West, and are a force to be reckoned with in many UK cities, especially in immigrant areas. Many immigrants (both Christian and Moslem) come from home countries that have never been through a secular phase, and that do not separate the public realm from private life, or personal belief from political activity. Therefore they are likely to be seen as out of step with the UK’s predominantly secular culture and society, and are likely to be viewed with suspicion. Many Black Pentecostals in the UK are immigrants from countries where there is no welfare state safety net, or right to free health care, and may find they have limited rights in their new country too. So they are more likely to develop a culture of self-reliance, dependence on the extended family, and belief in the power of prayer to intervene into their disadvantaged lives. Many also believe in a full Four Square Gospel, which encompasses mind, body, soul and spirit. There is a belief not only in spiritual salvation and baptism in the Holy Spirit, but also bodily healing, mental well-being, and deliverance from poverty, and even personal prosperity (Burgess and Van Der Maas, 2003). Taking literally the sentence in the Lord’s Prayer, ‘Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven’ they believe that their material conditions will change as an outworking of spiritual blessing, and that the achievement prosperity, well-being, even wealth, are all part of the Gospel. So their ‘bank’ and ‘capital’ is likely to be their spiritual resources. The means of the production of such capital is believed to be achieved through the mechanisms of prayer, faith, tithing, self-employment, networking, and education.
2.3 The Traditional Church Situation

The majority of the UK population still define themselves as Christian but less than 5% attend church services. But the majority of the population still say they believe in God and are Christians according to the Census. (A vast array of statistics on church attendance, numbers of churches, percentages in each denomination and religion may be found at http://www.pewresearch.org and www.brierleyconsultancy.com.) The paradox of ‘believing but not belonging’ has been discussed by the theologian Grace Davie (2015).

More people go to church than attend football matches, or are members of political parties. Contrary to media coverage, there has in fact been a tremendous growth in church-attendance and membership in many inner city areas. Therefore, there is considerable demand for church accommodation. Goodhew (2012) has found that that adult membership of the Anglican churches in the diocese of London has increased 70% between 1990-2010, and much of this growth is due to immigration. According to www.brierleyconsultancy.com, there are over 500,000 Christians in black majority churches, and 1 million other Christians in Britain from Black, Asian and other minority groups, who are to be found in majority churches. Whilst church closure is a problem among the traditional denominations, around 7,000 new churches have been started including black Pentecostal congregations. For statistics on how many churches there and which are closing down or starting up see http://www.eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/ as it is a complex and changing situation.

Traditional denominations have also benefitted from immigration. Roman Catholic churches have experienced unprecedented growth in recent years as a result of Polish people to the UK, who have also not been affected by secularisation but retain a strong traditional faith. There is also considerable growth among white Evangelical and Charismatic churches. Charismatics are similar to Pentecostals in terms of their belief in the Holy Spirit, but they are more likely to be white, middle class people originally from the historical denominations. There has also been an increase in church membership amongst indigenous young people in traditional denominations owing to outreach initiatives such as the Alpha course (Hunt, 2004). Overall it is not a static situation as some churches decline, others take their place. Any new church is likely to go through several stages, from perhaps being a small house church, to taking on a redundant small local chapel, and then eventually getting a larger church building. So there is a lot of ‘churn’ and turn around in church premises (just like there is with retail units, or leisure facilities).

In this report I am concentrating on Christianity but similar patterns of growth and change are found in relation to other religions in the UK too (Peach and Gale, 2003; Amin, 2006). It is estimated there are over three million Muslims, around one million Hindus, half a million Sikhs, and 150,000 Buddhists and 25,000 Jains, within the total UK population of 63 million people. The way in which society perceives each group varies according to how ‘different’ they seem. For example, there are also 290,000 Jews, many of whom are not new immigrants but have been part of British society for generations. As will be illustrated planning applications from the ultra-orthodox Jewish sects are most likely to be
questioned by the planners, whilst liberal assimilated congregations blend in un-noticed. Likewise, little attention has been given to the needs of Hindus in the UK arguably because of the smaller numbers involved, many of whom are in professional occupations, who present a peaceful, affluent, politically non-threatening image (Peach and Gale, 2003). However, what is seen as excessively ‘exotic’ architecture from any of the above religious groups can fall foul of planning policy regarding townscape and urban conservation (Gale, 2004).

Much of the literature about ‘religion’ and faith groups has focused upon Islam, presumably because it is new and different, and seen as a security threat with links with unrest overseas. But this suspicious mentality can engender negativity towards all religions, because of imagined extremism. Tolerance towards religious groups has not been a characteristic of diversity policy, in spite of the fact that religion is one of the valid ‘minority categories’ in UK equalities legislation, alongside race, disability, age, sexuality and gender. There are also competing priorities, as to which equalities issue takes precedence over another, religion often ends up at the bottom of the pile (Scott, 2013) only slightly above gender (Greed, 2011). In an ideal world there would not be competition between different minority group interests as individuals may belong to several such sectoral groups at once, and some issues such as gender and ethnicity may overarch all other categories (Reeves, 2005). But, as we shall see in Chapter 4, religion is often seen as a negative factor likely to be divisive, resulting in planning applications from faith groups to be treated with suspicion. The public expression of one’s beliefs, and free speech, is being increasingly curtailed. The 2015 Counter Terrorism and Security Act implies that if a person has strong religious or political beliefs this might indicate links with terrorism, and puts a duty on universities to spot likely students https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance

2.4 Conceptualisation of the Changing Situation

As a result of the growth of faith groups, religion, and a general interest in spirituality, many sociologists and theologians, now speak of the UK having entered a post-secular phase. However, there are equally signs of continuing de-Christianisation, and the secular agenda is also still strong, so the situation is mixed. The current post-secular phase is characterised by a re-emergence of faith in the public realm of civil society and the city, compared with twentieth century attitudes (Cox, 1995). A new relativism is also a feature of the post secularism, allowing for the co-existence of a range of truths, with no one truth predominating; this is at odds with both secular scientific positivism, and the absolutes of sacred dogma (Habermas and Ratzinger, 2007). Baines argues that, according to Habermas, post-secularism is marked by a contest between religious lobbyists (which have grown in strength with the resurgence of fundamentalist religions), and secular pressure groups who promote diversity and equality (Baines, 2009). Although pluralism is a key characteristic of post-secularism, nevertheless certain groups and issues become privileged above others (Du Toit, 1997: 5) with both religion and gender remaining low on the pecking order (Panelli, 1985).
The government’s attitude towards all this growth has been mixed. For example, the social work and caring for children, elderly, unemployed, inter alia, done by many churches, helps fill in the gaps in an ever-declining Welfare State is welcomed, as is the role of religion in strengthening communities. But on the other hand the actual beliefs of different faith groups are often seen as divisive, because of fears of fundamentalism, social unrest, homophobia and community conflict. As will be seen in the empirical part of this paper (Chapter 4), planning applications from faith groups, which would actually benefit the whole community, may be treated with suspicion and are more likely to be refused. These two aspects ‘works’ and ‘beliefs’ have been defined as the religious and spiritual capital respectively which the church gives to society (O’Sullivan, and Flanagan (eds) 2012). Baker takes this further and describes religious capital as the resources, beliefs, networks, sense of community, and values that enrich society, whereas spiritual capital is seen as the beliefs, motivation, faith, spirituality that energises such religious communities and (Baker, 2012). I will go further in this paper and argue that these two forms of religious capital contribute significantly supporting and maintaining society, but this is not generally recognised, or ‘planned upon’, by local planning authorities. Society is familiar with, and accustomed to (even inoculated against), the inherited religious capital of the past (especially if it is gothic, medieval and Anglican) that is embedded in the design and layout of our cities, in our laws and customs, and even in the English language itself. But the new unfamiliar forms of spirituality manifested in Islam and Pentecostalism are more likely to be seen as a challenge and questioned (Strange, 2014: 334).

Nevertheless economic, rather than social or religious, capital is still seen by the government as the most important factor. As will be illustrated in chapter 4, many planners also strongly believe that allocating land and buildings for employment and economic growth are fundamental to urban regeneration and should not be blocked by giving planning permission to other less worthy forms of development, such as religion. Likewise, feminist academics have long argued that it is women’s unpaid work in the home which produces the workforce, which enables the economy to function in the first place (McDowell, 1983). The value of the voluntary, charitable work undertaken by faith groups is not valued economically and is often taken for granted in the UK, according to research by the Cinnamon Network, faith groups provide £ 3 billion in support services, filling the gap left by government cutbacks (Cinnamon Network, 2015). In particular many faith groups provide childcare and after school clubs which enable parents to go to work, which is essential to the achievement of urban regeneration and government employment programmes (Brownill, 2000). Church halls and other religious buildings are vital components of the built environment used for a multiplicity of community uses, including childcare, day care for senior citizens, evening classes, social clubs and evening classes. But all these vital social facilities and activities, which are part of what McClymont (2015) calls ‘municipal spirituality’ are ‘under the planners’ radar’ because they are mainly used by women, those with children, the elderly, immigrants and the poor. Although those attending traditional church services on Sunday has declined, all sorts of people use church buildings in the week, and there is still a legacy of an abundance of church buildings, which comprise a significant but undervalued component of urban building stock. But the people who use them, as described above (women, the poor, the very young and the elderly) are all part of a world with which the average middle class, male planners has little contact, who are more likely to see sports and leisure facilities,
pubs and clubs as the most important spaces, all of which are predominantly male venues (Aitchinson, 2006). McClymont also argues that modern urban space leaves very little space for contemplation, reflection or prayer, especially for those who do not want to belong to a particular faith but still need space to themselves (Photo 5). In her research on cemeteries, and grave yards, she suggests such spaces may provide appropriate reflection space, and another important component in ‘municipal spirituality’ but also remarks that modern town planning provides very little recognition of the importance of death, and this is reflected in weak planning laws on this matter (McClymont, 2014).

**Photo 5  Yatton War Memorial near Bristol.**

*Society may be less outwardly religious, but people still need places of contemplation, prayer and reflection, but without feeling they have to subscribe to a particular faith. This memorial is unusual in that there is no cross.  

![Photo of the Yatton War Memorial near Bristol.](image)

Many sociologists and urban theorists are now beginning to see the value of social and religious capital but it has not yet filtered down to the planners. There has been a long, but often neglected tradition of valuing cultural and social factors, in addition to economic considerations, within sociology. For example, Weber and other less-deterministic sociologists, such as Tönnies, Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, all acknowledged the role of social capital, in the form of community identity, religious tradition, social class and status, and personal ‘habitas’ in shaping both society and economic development (Weber, 1964; Greed with Johnson, 2014: chapters 8 and 14; Greed, 2013). By the mid twentieth century, the importance of cultural capital was identified by Bourdieu, Lefebvre and Williams, as another key factor in shaping not only society but the nature of urban space itself (Bourdieu, 1986; Lefebvre, 1974). Religion, belief and spirituality were
identified in their work, and that of many more ethnographic theorists, as key ingredients in the creation of culture (Williams, 1981). In recent years a whole new set of cultural theories has developed which question the old deterministic, absolutist theories, from a post-modern, post-structuralist, post-positivist viewpoint. New materialist theory allows space to investigate the effects and impacts on society of qualitative factors such as religion, belief, gender, inequality, belief, violence, injustice, nature on society: that is all the things that the old theorists said could not be counted and had no economic or material impact (Coole and Frost, 2001, Braidotti, 2013). New materialist theory has been applied to the investigation of the very real material, spatial impact ‘belief’ has on urban form and development (Crockett and Robbins, 2012). In particular religion has now come back as a major issue to be re-evaluated, and there has been a considerable amount of publication on this topic, (as evidenced in the list of references) and sociologists and theologians are increasingly concerned with investigating the implications for the urban situation and thus town planning.

The modern founding fathers of sociology tended to discount religion as a primary force within society in its own right. Economists across the spectrum from Left to Right continue to see capital, labour, employment and business investment as key drivers of the economy. Economic capital has been seen as the predominant form of capital which shapes power within society, as recognised across the sociological spectrum. Marx saw economic supremacy, and thus capitalism and capitalists, as the main agents of power within society, and an evil power at that. Marx gave no place to religious and spiritual capital within either production or consumption, relegating it to the realms of the superstructure. Subsequently the modern founding fathers of sociology tended to discount religious capital as a primary force within society. For example, religion was generally only seen as a vehicle, as a temporary stage, in the rise of capitalism (Weber, 1965), not as a source of power or as a form of real capital in its own right. Tawney (1922) argued that the Protestant values which developed as a result of the Reformation led to the development of modern capitalist society. Wealth and business success were seen, especially under Calvinism, as a sign of God’s blessing on an individual as one of the ‘elect’.

Tawney (like Marx) imagined that religion would gradually wither away as society became more economically developed, although this has not proved the case in many countries such as the USA (Wallis, 2005). In developing countries such as India, industrialisation and urbanisation is actually leading to more religious devotion not less. It is often said by people from the Developing World (often also called the Majority world) that it is only people in the West, in developed countries, that no longer believe in God and religion, but everybody else in the world still does! (Narayanan, 2015, a). Indeed in many developing world countries, religion has provided the impetus for economic and social development, where western-led NGOs and relief programmes had previously failed (Freeman, 2012). Thus the whole conceptual situation is turned on its head, with spiritual, religious, social and cultural factors being seen as the main drivers and bases of society, with the economy becoming the superstructure on top! Meanwhile in the erstwhile Communist countries, previously inspired by Marxian ideologies, the kaleidoscope has been shaken again creating new configurations of belief and religion (Photo 6).
Since the fall of the Soviet Union and communism, consumerism fired by global capitalism has filled the vacuum. But, interestingly ‘religion’ in the form of the Russian Orthodox church has come back into power, creating new synergies and implications for the appearance of cities, with both huge advertising hoardings, and new orthodox church building ‘colonising’ the townscape, and creating new social realities.

One is reminded of the research findings of the urban geographer Doreen Massey, as to how much power groups shape urban space ‘through the reproduction over space of social relations’ (Massey, 1984). The process of transmission is mediated, to a considerable degree, through the role of the planning profession, as informed by its subcultural values, in determining what should be built where. The beliefs of the main urban decision-makers, including the planners, property developers and politicians are themselves shaped by the dominant world views arising from the relative power of the different capitals. Sadly religious capital is short on political influence, although arguably it still has a major unrecognised role in holding up society. Meanwhile in the UK, economists across the spectrum from Left to Right continue to see capital, labour, employment and business investment as key drivers of the economy. Therefore, as will be illustrated, by planning appeal examples, urban planners strongly believe that planning allocating land and buildings for employment and economic growth are key to urban regeneration and should not be blocked by giving planning permission to other less worthy forms of development. In the following examples we will observe a battle between the forces of the different capitals, economic, cultural, social and religious to determine the land use and physical content of our towns and cities.
For the powerless, whose efforts and labour is generally ignored or under-valued, capital accumulation is not based on ‘works’ and self-determination (as in the wealthy Protestant’s ethic) but on belief in miracles and the direct intervention of God for the poor. To continue the industrialised capitalist analogy, the Holy Spirit is the Steam Engine powering the whole process. Goods produced and consumed include healing, well-being, wisdom, strength, salvation, protection, employment, social inclusion, church buildings, community facilities, housing, and also actual personal prosperity. Whilst many of the believers see themselves as ‘the sons and daughters of the living God’ in fact they are often powerless, in low status jobs, working as cleaners, or unemployed. But faith is the substance of things hoped for, so this is a mechanism whereby spiritual capital is operationalised and manifested. In spite of all this vast amount of pent-up Holy Spirit power, and the best of intentions, many dynamic, expanding Black Pentecostal Churches are finding that their attempts to establish themselves in the community by church building, or conversion of existing vacant premises, fall foul of the planners. A clash of cultures, if not of ‘capitals’ (economic and spiritual) is played out in numerous planning appeals. Investigating some of these incidences may help us to understand the planners’ surprisingly negative attitudes, when, in fact, such churches possess all the right characteristics to foster urban regeneration and renewal.
CHAPTER 3: THE PLANNING SYSTEM AND RELIGION

3.1 Levels and Scope

In this section, I want to identify the main attitudinal and policy barriers that have resulted in so many refusals. In summary, there is a lack of national policy guidance on the place of religious buildings and faith groups within strategic urban land-use planning, or on how local planning authorities should deal with applications related to places of worship. The situation is not consistent across the nation as a ‘postcode lottery’ (zip code lottery) is apparent with some local planning authorities taking a more positive view than others towards the ‘same’ sorts of applications. Planning applications from faith groups are not being given adequate value is because ‘religion’ does not fit in the planners’ terms of reference in land-use planning, as informed by the powers of economic, social and cultural capital. Therefore applications from faith groups for religious buildings are dealt with through the lens, and judged by the standards of existing categories, such industrial, commercial, residential and leisure uses.

I will look at the different levels of planning, international, EU, UK central government and local planning authority level for indications of ‘religion’ faith belief. At the local authority level, both development plans and development control (development management) will be discussed. Planning law presents many challenges. In addition, there are other areas of law, regulation and control which affect the chances of faith groups getting planning permission, including building control, health and safety regulations, highways policy and Equality laws.

3.2 International Level

The United Nations (UN) is one of the main drivers of policy at the global level. Two policy aspects are of interest, equality directives and sustainability protocols. The UN and many other global agencies have put a great deal of emphasis upon equality and diversity issues as manifest for example in the Millennium Development Goals and the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (see Greed with Johnson, 2014: chapter 10) which have put considerable emphasis upon diversity issues including gender and ethnicity, but scant reference to religion. Although there is an emphasis upon cultural and sociological factors which can hold back, or endorse, the development agenda, religion as such is not given much emphasis. Indeed it is NGOs, international churches, and charities that are more likely to be concerned with these matters (Freeman, 2012). However, secular ex-pat relief agencies and development organisations often fail to see the economic and social importance of religion in developing countries (Narayanan, 2015,a,b). UN and other international organisations are not ‘just’ concerned with the developing world but also impinge upon UK urban inner city areas, such as in the case of Oxfam, and therefore this has implications for planning (Greed, 2007).
Sustainability is a much more powerful concept than ‘religion’ and has now subsumed just about every aspect of planning globally but it is often interpreted to mean environmental sustainability alone. However, the concept of sustainability grew out of quite mystical origins. The early ecology movement was quite spiritual looking forward to ‘the Age of Aquarius’. The need to save the Planet, from the destruction of the ozone layer, overpopulation and famine, was enunciated in foundational books such as *Blue Print for Survival* (Goldsmith, 1972), and *Future Shock* (Toffler, 1970), had quite Biblical overtones in being concerned with the End of the World, Judgment and Salvation of those who repented of their ways. Environmentalism filled the vacuum left by the rejection of religion in western society, a higher moral ground, even a God, namely Gaia goddess of the Earth.

Through processes of subsidiarity, UN directive implementation, and the rolling out of the Agenda 21 programme, sustainability policy and regulations were transferred down to each nation state, in the UK’s case through the intermediary of the European Union (EU) and into the UK, where the concept of sustainability had to be fitted into existing planning structures and cultures. UK planners have tended to concentrate on the environmental component of sustainability as that fits well into the subcultural values and practices of the planning profession, linking to rural planning in particular. But the original definition produced by Gro Harlem Brundtland, the first female Prime Minister of Norway at the 1992 UN Rio Earth Summit was much broader, and included three components, economic well-being; social equality and environmental sustainability. This definition was arguably more people orientated, and therefore could, in theory at least, take into account people’s beliefs, religions and motivation for living (and working) in the first place. The people-less-ness of sustainability policy (Dempsey et al, 2011) continues to hobble sustainability policy, whilst the lack of space within its agenda to accommodate people’s existing belief systems works against its objectives.

### 3.3 UK Central Government Level

Religion, faith and belief do not figure strongly in any DCLG policy directive, except for an occasional brief mention in relation to ethnic minorities, indeed scanning the web for such references it would seem the government is more likely to discuss religion in relation to education, social policy and diversity, not spatial planning matters. Hidden away in the DCLG there is a Directorate concerned with ‘Faith and Integration’ although its remit seems more related to Home Office security concerns than spatial planning. However, there is no mention of religion in national planning guidance. Overall religion appears to be seen to be a purely personal matter with no physical land-use planning implications. A major report on the planning system’s approach to places of worship by CAG (a national planning consultancy) highlighted the fact that there is no national strategy or high-level governmental policy statement on this matter (CAG, 2008a and b). Most local planning authorities, at county, city and local district level, do not even have a specific policy statement in their development plan documentation on places of worship. Indeed as with gender issues, religion falls into the ‘strategic policy filter’ (Reeves, 2002) whereby because it is not mentioned at central government level, therefore local planning authorities see no reason to mention it at local level, and if someone asks about why there
is no policy in the local plan they will be told it is the responsibility of central government so everyone passes the buck.

As for national planning law, there is no special Use Class for religion within the UCO (Use Classes Order) (the nation-wide land-use Zoning Ordinance regulations), there is no special category for ‘worship buildings and uses’. Churches and other places of worship come under the designation (D1) ‘non-residential institutions’ which also includes exhibition halls, public libraries, universities, and health. Some ancillary religious buildings such as halls may be ruled to come under the designation D2 ‘assembly and leisure’ which includes bingo halls, dance halls, swimming baths and sports and leisure centres. However, as stated above, religion did once have its own Use Class at first under post-war reconstruction planning legislation but with increasingly secularisation this was changed. In 1985, the separate religious category, in the UCO, was abolished, in the name of streamlining and modernising planning law. Religious buildings were now lumped together with a range of other ‘places of assembly’ type uses including entertainment and leisure facilities, such as dance halls under the UCO categories under D1 and in some cases D2 (Mulkeen, 2014, page 23). Under the current Use Classes Order (UCO) shops come under Class A1, cafés A3, businesses B1, industry B2, dwelling houses C3, and significantly non-residential institutions are under D1, with places of assembly and leisure under D2 (Greed with Johnson, 2014: 49). Churches, mosques and other religious building come within D1 alongside community centres, museums, and exhibition halls, whereas some ancillary religious uses, such as church halls may come under D2 which includes public halls, cinemas, and sports facilities. So applications for religious buildings are likely to be judged by inappropriate Use Class criteria, and may be lumped in with commercial leisure developments (Wickham, 2014). I have listed those other uses above that are also of relevance to some church building applications, as for example some mega churches have applied for large multi-use church buildings which include shops, cafes, business offices, leisure facilities and residential provision within the building complex. In addition, building inspectors, fire officers, highways departments, and others with statutory control over different aspects of buildings experience difficulties dealing with complex multi-use buildings which are going to contain very large numbers of people and thus such buildings will be subject to increased levels of control and even refusal. All these issues are of major concern to faith groups, and in late 2015 the Faith and Place Network produced a Briefing Paper which, with the support of the RTPI, it submitted to Parliament (FAPN, 2015)

3.4 Planning at Local Government Level

Planners are meant to be advocates and enablers, to encourage community development and regeneration, especially within deprived areas. The Localism Act 2011 introduced by the Coalition government puts great emphasis upon localism, neighbourhood planning and community involvement in the revised planning system. The act, in theory at least, gives more power and voice to local communities in the production of Neighbourhood Plans. Indeed, ‘the church’ (presumably Anglican) is seen by progressive planning commentators as having a valuable role in establishing neighbourhood fora for public participation purposes (Planning, 20.01.2012, article Melissa Mean-Money, ‘Pioneering neighbourhood planning - a first-hand view’). But, only a few community representatives are permitted to
sit on the newly created neighbourhood forums, to represent on average several thousand people, so the chances of minority religious groups being represented is low. Indeed, planners seem rather unsure and edgy as how to deal with churches, especially non-traditional ones. Jon Rouse, the previous chief executive of the London Borough of Croydon and an influential voice in urban planning, expressed uncertainty as to how to deal with the recent effects of African immigration (sic) in terms of church provision, although this in a borough whose inner-city areas have had a high level of ethnic minority population since the 1970s! (*Planning*, 25.02.12). Paradoxically, in spite of this admission, Croydon, has had one of the better Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) more recently known as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), on Church growth amongst local planning authorities (Croydon, 2009). SPG documents are policy statements that don’t quite make it into the main body of the Development Plan, but need to be taken into account as additional ancillary guidance in determining a planning decision. There is always much legal wrangling as to what extent SPG policy ‘counts’ and one is likely to find various other ‘equality’ related topics, such as gender, disability, crime and design in this no-man’s land. Clearly such policy guidance would be much stronger if it were made a mandatory requirement of the main policy document.

As will be seen, planning applications for church development are generally dealt with on an individualised basis with little reference to the wider strategic, urban, regional and even national policy statements on the matter: because none exist. In contrast, applications for retail development are always perused in relation to higher-level policy considerations such as the extent of the catchment area, city-wide impact, and local employment and regeneration considerations; even when the churches in question are very large and significant pieces of development. (The comparison with retail development will be developed further in the final section.) Mulkeen notes that there are no planning requirements nowadays as to how much land should be allocated for religious building within residential districts, although some standards did exist in the 1950s on provision of churches in New Town neighbourhoods (Baker, 2012; Mulkeen, 2014).

I have looked at a range of development plans, local plans, and other forward planning documents looking for policies on religion, faith, church, belief and so forth. Doing a web search for these words brings up the obligatory equalities statement mantra at the start of every policy document, in which religion is one of the protected equalities categories. But hardly any local planning authorities integrate these matters in their policy statements, or have a separate chapter or section just on religious land-use matters (as is the case with gender, and other equalities issues too). There are few other studies of development plans in respect of religion. The planning consultancy CAG is the front runner, as it has undertaken four key studies on the attitudes and policies of planners towards the needs of faith groups (CAG, 2013) in conjunction with the GLA (Greater London Authority) one of the few authorities to include religion fully in its diversity agenda (GLA, 2007) along with several local authorities in the Midlands where there are high levels of Moslems.

Andrea Mulkeen, as can be seen above in relation to her study of the position of religious buildings with the UCO, has undertaken considerable research on the relationship between planning and church development (Mulkeen, 2014). She is employed by the Church...
Commissioners (for the Anglicans, that is the Church of England) and therefore can keep an eye on the national situation. However, the Anglican Church is at an advantage compared with new church denominations in that along with other long-established traditional denominations they have certain automatic rights to develop under the Ecclesiastical Exemption rules (DCMS, 2010). There are five denominations in England that have special protection and exemptions from many of the rigours of planning law and building control, namely, the Church of England (Anglican), Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists and the United Reformed church (this union including the Congregational and other historic, smaller non-conformist churches), and also the Anglican churches in Wales and Scotland. Church buildings are listed under conservation policy to highlight their importance, and indeed churches and cathedrals comprise 45% of all listed buildings, but they are exempt from certain aspects of listed building and conservation area controls as such. However, they still consult closely with central and local government departments on heritage matters. Therefore ancient ecclesiastic law predates and takes precedence over modern planning law (this limitation to state control apparently going back to 503 AD). Ecclesiastic exemption entitles the churches included to various ‘permitted development’ rights for example in relation to the benefice of the parish to build a vicarage and to undertake other forms of church-related development within the curtilage of the church building. In comparison many newer and non-traditional churches, and faith groups, do appear to suffer considerable discrimination in relation to planning decisions and appeals. Robert Wickham a planning consultant, barrister and Free Church minister, specialising in faith group applications and appeals has produced statistics demonstrating this (Wickham, 2014). For more information on the work of the church commissioners in relation to church buildings and related planning issues see https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/our-buildings.aspx. Recent proposed changes to the planning system within the 2016 Housing and Planning Bill have failed to address any of these issues, as the main concern is with speeding up, simplifying and stream-lining the planning system. Indeed fears have been expressed that the UCO is going to be simplified even more which would reduce the chances of religious buildings gaining their own ‘use class’ or being strengthened and differentiated within the existing D1 class category.

3.5 Equality Legislation

The 2010 Equality Act lists seven protected categories that should be taken into account in all areas of policy making, including (in theory) urban planning. These are Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation, and Religion and Belief. Yet, social equality issues, including gender, have generally been given low priority compared with environmental considerations within the planning system (Greed, 2005; Reeves, 2005), and within the equality agenda, some social issues are more important than others. Sexuality is given primary attention as the factor defining a person’s identity, whereas religion has a low profile (Habermas and Ratzinger, 2007), it is dealt with under ethnicity or cultural diversity issues. There have been attempts to introduce social and equality impact assessments, to parallel Environmental Impact Assessment. The Equality and Human Rights Commission seeks to integrate equality assessment into all aspects of policy making for all government departments, including planning, and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) exists to ensure this happens (DCLG, 2011). As will be illustrated in Chapter 4, the PSED is now meant to
be taken as a material consideration in respect of specific equality categories, when
determining planning applications and dealing with appeals, but this has not been
widespread.

Implementation of equality issues has been very limited in planning departments. Many
planners imagine equality matters are nothing to do with them, owing to the technical and
environmental nature of their work (Greed, 2005; Greed, 2012). For example, there was
little concept that gender might have implications for apparently people-less, or male-
dominated policy areas such as sport, industry and transport planning: although all these
do really have major gender implications. Equality measures appeared more acceptable, in
what are seen as, more women-related departments such as social services, and personnel.
Likewise religion is not seen a mainstream planning policy matter, but rather a minor matter
related to local church building applications. Planners have difficulty dealing with aspatial
issues (Foley, 1964), (that is social, cultural, non-land-use matters) and find it hard to
integrate high-level conceptual issues, such as sustainability and gender equality in urban
policy-making (Dempsey et al, 2011; Buckingham, 2013).
CHAPTER 4: PLANNING CASES AND APPEALS RELATED TO RELIGION

4.1 Explanation of Categories

I have arranged the order in which I discuss the examples in relation to the different types of barriers the churches in question are experiencing: firstly economic capital (employment, new businesses, retaining land and buildings for future jobs); secondly social factors including the need to re-use religious buildings to meet the housing crisis (Photo 7); thirdly cultural and religious characteristics (favouring of established churches and any ecclesiastic building that is either old, of architectural importance or named after a Saint!); and fourthly wider environmental factors including transport impact. Along the way a range of technical issues will be highlighted which are often used to justify the refusal of planning permission, or the imposition of other statutory controls, including: noise, overcrowding, disturbance, social unrest, transport overloading, crime generation, and a whole range of specifics regarding the Building Regulations, Health and Safety, and site-specific planning policy details, such as signage and the ‘churchy’ appearance of the buildings in question.

Photo 7 Conversion of a Redundant Church to Housing Apartments

This was previously a redundant United Reformed Church in Portishead near Bristol, now divided up into apartments. Overall there is a pressure to convert redundant churches into housing accommodation, or other more profitable uses, as ‘religion’ in itself is not generally seen as making a contribution to the economy, and may be seen as blocking more beneficial use of buildings.
4.2 Economic Issues

One of the most frequent reasons for the refusal of planning permission for churches is because they are seen as taking up space that is allocated for employment and industry. Because of the lack of suitable available premises, such as redundant church buildings or empty public buildings, many new Black Pentecostal churches have resorted to applying to use empty industrial units, often on trading estates on the edge of town, where, to all accounts, there is little demand for occupation by businesses. A web search will soon reveal endless examples of refusals for such ‘change of use’. The argument always given by the planning authorities is that church development will take up valuable space allocated for employment, which itself is seen as vital to urban regeneration and the economy. In contrast, churches are generally viewed as an obstruction, as a negative factor that contributes nothing to the regeneration. Far from acknowledging the needs of such minority faith groups, and far from seeing them as prime movers, change makers and valuable allies in urban regeneration programmes (as discussed above), they and their church buildings were likely to be seen as obstacles to urban regeneration, plan-making and as a nuisance. But there are exceptions, for example, it was stated that ‘rather than seeing the church as an obstacle to regeneration’ the council has ... highly commended the work of the Churches Housing Group in Liverpool (‘Beacons of Excellence’ by Ben Cook, in *Planning* (30.11.12), although this comment was made in respect of a church housing scheme not the development of an actual church.). (Please note all *Planning* magazine references to be found at www.planningresource.co.uk).

To give just a few examples amongst scores, it was stated, in respect of one small-scale application for change of use, from industry to church use, in South London, that ‘permanent use of building as church was dismissed over employment fears’ (reported 29.06.2012, DCS 100-077-056). Another church failed to overturn an enforcement notice against its use of an industrial unit in South East London as a church, the planning inspector stating that the community benefit did not outweigh the conflict with employment policies (29.01.2010, DCS number 100-065-817). But results are not always negative, a minority of applications succeed, giving reason for hope, and also highlighting the inconsistency between different local planning authorities and also the confusion amongst planning inspectors. For example, temporary use of an empty industrial unit was granted to a church in Greater Manchester for two years (DCS 100-078-028, August 2012). Even if churches get planning permission they are not necessarily free of the economic clutches of the planners. For example, the Christ Apostolic Church, in the London Borough of Southwark won its appeal against being required to pay a new planning levy being imposed on the development, which would usually be raised on commercial property, which seemed totally disproportionate for a small and poor faith group (*Planning*, 30.11.12). No doubt the appeal was seen to be won through the power of prayer and intercession to God rather than through the planning system.

Overall, planners are very keen on seeing the economic factor as the key to growth rather than social or religious factors. It is highly significant that the main battle ground between church expansion and the statutory planning system, seems to be focused upon applications for the use of unoccupied industrial units to church premises as this shows it
is a battle between two views of how economic capital is created. The planners still seem to have an old-fashioned attitude to what constitutes the economy, and what might create growth and urban regeneration, in which ‘industry’ is still given a privileged position. They do not see churches as a source of employment, regeneration or indeed of creativity, although ‘creative industries’ and entrepreneurial activity may arise from within the church community (Stott, 2012). As explained in previous research (Greed, 2011), Black Pentecostal church often provide day care facilities (see Photo 2), education and careers guidance and undertake a host of charitable activities and positive interventions in the surrounding neighbourhood, all of which actually contribute to residents finding work and having the housing, education and childcare to participate in the workforce. But urban regeneration, is so obsessed with employment and investment issues, and increasingly with achieving environmental sustainability and ‘green’ credentials, that often it forgets all about the essential social support system needed to enable people, especially women, to get into the workforce (Greed, 2005, 2007).

So to conclude this sub-section, planners do not understand how religious activity interrelates to and supports other policy objectives such as employment, social welfare and housing. Likewise they do not see religion, as a strategic planning matter (like retail or residential development) at urban, regional or national level, in spite of it having very tangible physical built environment implications regarding of land use allocation, zoning and new development. A significant and powerful minority of the planning consultants and advocates who seek to help Black Pentecostal churches are themselves of Afro-Caribbean and African, especially Nigerian, origin (for example the Adebayos who run TA Planning Consultants). I am fascinated by the very much higher priority given to religion in Nigeria. For example, there is an entire new urban development called Jesus City planned on Christian town planning principles, developed in association with Nigerian property developers in London www.cftchurches.orgjesuscity/map.html. Back in England, regardless of the indifference of the planners, entire housing districts are being restructured around religion such as around Islam in Oldham in the North of England, and around Black churches in inner London, as immigrant faith groups make sure they live close to each other and within walking distance of the mosque or church. But ‘church’ is not seen as an engine of the economy (as Patrick Anderson a planner working at Planning Aid for London has discussed with me). Thus religious capital are not recognised as a change agent, or as a force as potentially powerful as economic capital, because it does not ‘fit’ into the planners’ view of how the world should be. Patrick explained to me that whilst globalisation of economies has actually undermined English industry, hence so many empty industrial units; it has also created increased immigration and thus the demand for places of worship, a role which the industrial units could readily fulfil. A virtuous circle! But still the planners live in a world in which they sincerely belief that one day ‘industry’ will re-emerge so they have to save the industrial units for that time.

There is another economic issue to take into account when discussing Pentecostal churches. One component of the Full Gospel is the belief in deliverance from poverty and unemployment. Unlike in many traditional white middle-class, denominations there is no merit given to being poor. However, as expressed by some American television evangelists, there is also a more exaggerated belief in the idea that if you give to God you will receive great prosperity in return. In fact, churches in the USA seem to be generally
much better off than their UK equivalents and generally run, like businesses. In comparison, there is a strongly entrepreneurial spirit in many Nigerian-originated churches in the UK. As Freeman (2012) has found, in developing countries, where western NGOs have failed, the emphasis upon developing small businesses amongst church members can actually help with the economic development of the country in question. However, even Anglicans are now becoming unashamedly entrepreneurial in outlook, as they realise church growth requires long-term maintenance and investment in their available building stock. This new approach was adopted by Bishop Nick Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury and former Vicar of St Martins in the Fields London. St Martins is a landmark building alongside Trafalgar Square which was under-utilised and poorly maintained. Under Holtham’s leadership St Martins was completely renovated, with the vast area of underground crypts being opened up to offer a range of amenities, including cafes, toilets, local meeting spaces, and facilities for the homeless. Apparently he experienced considerable opposition initially as some of his congregation saw the vast investment in building works as ‘worldly’ and ‘selfish’ but now it is realised that the changes have put St Martins ‘on the map’ culturally, socially and economically, and greatly increased its outreach in the area (Holtam, 2015). A more entrepreneurial spirit is increasingly seen as a valid component of church ministry. For example, the Church Times, 19.02.2016, page 35, in its jobs section, carries an advertisement from the Diocese of Durham, for a ‘Priest/Entrepreneur’ to join its ministry.

4.3 Cultural and Religious Capital

4.3.1 Cultural Familiarity

To be seen to be acceptable to the planners ideally one should belong to an established, historical, traditional, white type of church, which is already accepted as an essential and familiar part of our national culture. Whilst many newcomer, immigrant black churches are having great difficulty getting planning permission for new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings, established churches, especially white, middle-class ones generally fare much better and many have the benefit of the ecclesiastical exemption explained above. In addition there are many large predominantly white evangelical churches which are viewed as highly respectable, even establishment, some of which may even be charismatic in their form of worship and beliefs (the polite white middle class version of Pentecostalism) but are still treated reasonably favourably by the planners. Such churches may also run educational facilities, housing associations, charities, nurseries and almost always some form of coffee bar or drop in centre and an Alpha course (Hunt, 2004).

Such white evangelical and Pentecostal churches are increasingly involved in social action, reform and local politics. Successful planning applications include a new central London office development for OASIS (a major evangelical organisation) as reported in the popular evangelical magazine Christianity. June 2008, page 9 (see www.christianitymagazine.co.uk). Birmingham City Council willingly granted permission for the conversion of a factory building in Frankfort Street, Newtown to a church with educational facilities run by New Creation Ministries which operates from St Cyprian’s Memorial Church (Planning. 05,11,2010) [for all Planning journal references see www.planningresource.co.uk]. Note this was a factory,
that is an industrial use, but in this case unlike in many Pentecostal church applications, nobody said that essential industrial economic premises had to be retained. In leafy Hampshire, church use restrictions were actually relaxed to enable a new church to provide youth group meetings and other associated activities on its premises, but this was a white church (01.07.2011, DCS number 100-072-266). In contrast, the change of use of a business premises in North London to a community resource centre, namely a church hall, was declared unacceptable as it was seen as undermining the council’s employment objectives, and thus employment policy blocked the church hall (16.10.2009, DCS 100-064-425). In previous research I found that there seemed to be less concern with parking controls on traditional suburban churches (Greed, 2012). However, as society and government attitudes become less traditionally Christian in belief and custom, white churches, even Anglicans, may also find themselves seen as outsiders, experiencing the same exclusion and ‘otherness’ experienced by black churches.

4.3.2 Architectural Merit

Whilst established church congregations are generally tolerated by the planners, what planners like even more is empty redundant churches which are to be commended for their age and quality of architecture. Empty church buildings are seen as a wonderful opportunity for re-use as community centres, housing, art galleries, and even bars and clubs, within the context of regenerating the inner city. Even the churches are complicit in this process, glad to off load their old expensive properties and heating costs. Some ‘trendy vicars’ even imagine that turning their church into a community centre, and thus removing any sign of ecclesiastical imagery may actually improve their chances of evangelism and bringing people in, but disqualifying the building of any chance of future use for weddings or other formal religious ceremonies. For example, closed-down 18th century church in the deprived area of Toxteth, Liverpool, namely St James in the City, was allocated in by the Diocese to be redeveloped as a visitor centre and garden, to be completed in 2015 (Planning 14.6.10), hardly an example of a worship use. But one should at least be grateful that the planners do value church buildings nowadays, even if for the wrong reasons, for as Anthony Fyson notes, in the 1970s in the days of Cost Benefit Analysis calculations, a medieval church, which was in the way of a new airport, was valued as only being worth 10,000 pounds (Planning, 17.06.2011). Nowadays the architectural and historical value of churches is valued much more highly but their religious, spiritual, social and community capital is not even counted. As highlighted earlier it is estimated that the good work done by churches and faith groups in society is worth at least 3 billion pounds a year (Cinnamon Network, 2015). For example the development agency responsible for regional development in the North West of England, calculated that faith groups contributed £95 million of voluntary work to the region each year (Atherton et al, 2011, page 39).

Indeed the emphasis on architectural purity can crush church growth. Some still-lively, expanding churches, located in historical buildings, have found attempts to expand and build on extensions to be thwarted by the planners. For example a three storey extension to a Victorian church in east London was deemed to destroy the symmetry of this listed Bath stone building, admittedly rather an ambitious design but clearly the need for an extension
was the sign of a healthy, growing church (DCs 100-074-444). The issue of extensions is a particular problem for erstwhile poorly-attended Roman Catholic churches which have experienced unprecedented growth in recent years as a result of Polish immigration to the UK, with the new congregants bringing with them much traditional catholic religious capital as well as strong spiritual capital.

**Photo 8 ‘Now open all day Sundays’**

This is a redundant church that is now used as a café and restaurant in Bedminster, Bristol. It is popular with the local, gentrified population that has replaced the previous working class community and is open 7 days a week.

Overall, in line with the widely-held false belief that the church is in decline, planners are happy to treat churches as museums, and to conserve them and very happy to see changes of use from churches to night-clubs, restaurants and private houses. A national-chain Italian restaurant, which has taken over a redundant church in Bedminster, Bristol (Photo 8) which has a banner across the front of the building saying ‘we are now open all Sunday’ (with no irony intended). A perusal of successful planning applications will show that are lots of conversions from churches to other uses, but not so many in the other direction in spite of a huge demand for this and many controversial cases. Branson argues in ‘Planning’ in an article on the drop in church attendance, that more redundant church building should be returned to community use (Branson, 2009) giving examples such as St Paul’s Church Bristol, built in 1790 and restored through the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was further adapted in 2005 to make space for a circus arts academy. Note this is a
majority ethnic minority area where just up the road one can find Black churches precariously holding on to tenancy of industrial units who would have jumped at the chance to be offered such redundant church buildings in the area. But maybe this building was seen as too posh to give to the local residents?

It is not just inner city churches that are being de-commissioned, such is the power of cultural capital over religious capital. An 18th Century, Benedictine Abbey in Fort Augustus, alongside Loch Ness was converted into ‘The Highland Club’, a housing and leisure complex, in 2012 and given an Award for Regenerating Rural Communities as reported in Planning, 20.11.2012. Likewise in view of the lack of affordable housing there is increasing pressure for the Church of England to release redundant churches for conversion to housing. But according to the authors of the CAG Report (2008a) on planning for place of worship, without a positive planned approach, there is likely to be a significant national under-provision of worship space. (Smith and Parham, 2010).

Not all religious architecture is considered culturally acceptable, even if it is well designed. A proposed mosque with a modest dome and minarets was deemed to be out of place in Lancashire, (DCS 100-080-331,) and there have been many incidences of such ‘foreign’ architecture being deemed unacceptable. On the other hand, modernistic architectural styles, that are generally unpopular with the residents, are favoured by some established churches desperately trying to appear 'modern and relevant', on the rare occasions when they build something new, but probably drive some people away. But some non-established church faith groups fare much better, in terms of architectural acceptability, as they fit in. Appearance is everything. For example, a large Jewish Community Centre, on the Finchley Road in North London, comprising 35,000 square feet on several floors is so well integrated into the built environment, using a contemporary ‘office block’ architectural style, blending in like a chameleon that one can hardly notice they are there. The building has even won construction awards as a ‘green building’ (as well as being a totally kosher building) and its large auditorium, entertainment facilities, day nursery and other community amenities are integrated into the body of the building (Crawford, 2012). In contrast, in April 2012, an Orthodox Jewish group in the same area was issued with an enforcement notice to close down a ‘home school’ based in residential premises on the grounds of various technical building infringements (DCS 100-076-537). Several more ‘religious looking’ Jewish buildings have often suffered from stone throwing and swastika daubing.

Likewise in the past, when Irish immigration was high, the Roman Catholics were careful to place their stain-glass windows high up on the building facade to avoid broken windows. The message seems to be if you are going to be religious make sure your buildings blend in, and limit your religious activities to your church, or synagogue as the state regards religion as a personal belief, to be confined to sacred spaces (Inge, 2003) not something that should leak into the surrounding residential area, and thus affect the wider built environment, by ‘looking different’. So it is better to blend in, or is it? Recently, a wealthy Moslem business man, the owner of a large expensive villa in Newport, South Wales, put up a sign on the front wall of the house in two foot Arabic lettering saying ‘There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his Prophet’ in green neon lighting tubing. The planners immediately issued an enforcement notice, but at appeal the
planning inspector argued that the sign was there to bless the house not to advertise a product, so the sign was actually allowed it in February 2013. This is very interesting as various signs on minority churches, conveying messages such as ‘Jesus Saves’ have been frowned upon by the planners over the years. In my locality I even remember a private householder being cautioned by the planners for displaying a life size Nativity scene in his front garden, and innumerable are the examples of over-zealous, secularist local authorities banning Christmas decorations or declaring that Christmas such now be called ‘Winter Festival’ ostensibly not to offend those of other faiths (see Photo 9). But when I talk to local Moslems no such offence is found as Issa (Jesus) is also one of their saints, so it is quite acceptable for them to send Christmas cards to their customers and friends!

Photo 9 Winter Fest or Christmas?

The area around the London Eye was made festive with lights and such posters in 2014. The Power of ‘naming’ of festivals and of visual images cannot be under-stated in terms of the removal of religion from the public realm.

In conclusion to this subsection, it must be said that the planners ‘don’t get it’ when it comes to seeing the importance of religion, and this has resulted in many negative and inconsistent decisions. However, there have been several significant decisions regarding Jewish religious buildings in particular that may have implications for all faith groups. For example, in 2013 an application in regarding Jewish school, the Etz Chaim School, was permitted, following a court judgment in the case Regina v. the London Borough of Barnett. It was decided by the court, that under the PSED (Public Sector Equality Duty) religion had to be taken into account as one of the protected equality categories under Section 149 of the 2010 Equality Act reported in The Encyclopaedia of Planning Law, March 2013 Monthly
Bulletin. Another similar case was in reported on 5.6.2015, in the, ‘Appeals Case Book’ section of Planning journal (online at www.planningresources.co.uk). It was decided that the demand for worship space, was a material consideration under the PSED. This was used to quash a previous notice requiring a building to continue to be used as a house not a synagogue extension (DCS 100-076-690) because of previous inspectors failure to take into account the requirements of the above section 149 of the Equality Act. Another negative decision regarding an Orthodox synagogue decision (DCS 100-076-690, June 2015) in North London, was struck down on appeal because the High Court failed to take into account Section 149 of the 2010 Equality Act (regarding religious equality). Therefore the new Inspector Diane Lewis (one of relatively few women planning inspectors), said that it should be allowed (DCS 200-003-592). Establishing religious factors as a material consideration is clearly the way ahead.

However, things do not always go this way, there is a high degree of discretion and inconsistency amongst planning inspectors in respect of planning appeals that involve religious equality issues. For example the same item in Planning, mentions other similar appeals which failed, or were allowed with excessive conditions. For example one inspector in determining an appeal regarding the expansion of a mosque said there must be a limit on the number of worshippers attending services (DCS 400-007-430). Since many churches and mosques judge the success of their outreach upon numbers attending, this is a very restrictive requirement, and in comparison, one cannot imagine a planning inspector telling a large department store that it must restrict its number of customers. Likewise proposals for a ‘mega mosque’ on former industrial land in East London was refused on the grounds that it would take up land designated in the London Borough of Newham’s strategic plan for housing development (DS 200-004-272, November 2015). There has been a long-running saga regarding this mosque which in size, and range of facilities is a Moslem equivalent of the KICC mega church, saga described in the next section.

4.4 Social and Community Issues

4.4.1 Cinema Sagas: Insiders and Outsiders

Planners seem to differ on who and what they see as part of the ‘community’ and whether they see faith groups as part thereof. Some government policy-makers, and urban planners, including those concerned with urban regeneration from a more progressive social perspective, welcome the contribution of dynamic new immigrant churches in improving education, reducing crime, and increasing a sense of community and responsibility in depressed inner city areas. Black Pentecostal Churches, and for that matter Moslem and other growing religious immigrant communities are seen as the ultimate manifestation of the equality and diversity agenda (provided they know their place of course). The vibrant spirit manifested by Black Pentecostal churches, typified by Full Gospel Choirs is also very attractive to the media and the music industry, whilst adding urban vitality and ‘colour’ to the inner city.
But as Zohar and Marshall (2004) comment policy makers are not so keen on the religious fundamentalist aspects of such congregations and want to take the secular benefits and ignore the religious aspects. They note that politicians, especially under New Labour (1997-2010) were very keen to court faith groups, including inner city ethnic-minority churches, in order to gain votes, and to use their networks and religious capital resources in urban regeneration programmes. As discussed above, the government welcome the social and religious capital (the good works) but not the spiritual capital (the nature of their beliefs) (Baker, 2012). Many planners and local councillors, with a secular background, seem to completely misunderstood the beliefs of faith groups (and appear religiously-illiterate) and treat them with suspicion as likely to be homophobic and out of step with the equalities agenda. This seemed unjust in that some congregations primarily consisted of heavily-disadvantaged black immigrant groups who were theoretically meant, themselves, to be the beneficiaries of diversity legislation and greater racial tolerance. But the importance of the spiritual dimension needs to be recognised and not suppressed, or separated from the material world, as it is part and parcel of the whole deal, for as Baroness Warsi (one of the few Moslem women members of the House of Lords) has said, ‘Those who do God, do Good’, (The Daily Telegraph, 15.2.2013).

To illustrate the issues, I will give an update on the KICC church saga, which I have been following for several years, having previously covered this church’s troubles in other work (Greed, 2011). KICC (Kingsway International Christian Centre) is a huge church of over 12,000 members from 46 different nationalities, which have been seeking to build a mega church which would seat more people than any existing cathedral in Western Europe. The church had to move from its previous premises to make way for the London Olympics with the promise from the planners that any alternative site would be looked upon favourably. But this promise was not kept. Subsequently the church put in many applications on a range of sites and buildings within London. For example they bought a redundant cinema in Bromley, inner London, near to Crystal Palace, and started using it as a church, in the hope of receiving retrospective planning permission. They were subject to the threat of enforcement proceedings on a whole series of technicalities and experienced a number of negative appeal decisions (DCLG, 2009). As the local press attests, local residents expressed objections on a much wider range of criteria. In particular they expressed concern about ‘outsiders’ taking over the building, thus apparently depriving existing residents of its use. Fears were expressed by some local residents about noise, disturbance, increased crime and anti-social behaviour taking place, and overcrowding on the pavement outside (www.crystal-palace-mag.co.uk). In reality nobody has wanted the building for years, the locality has a substantial and long-established ethnic minority population and members of the KICC church are known for their holiness and good works, and are hardly part of the perceived criminal fringe. In the end the cinema building was turned into an arts complex, a use which arguably does not reflect the needs of the majority of the local population but that of the metropolitan elite. But culture, media and the arts are far more likely to be seen by the planners as drivers of urban regeneration and the local economy, than religion. Similar problems were experienced by the New Testament Church of God whose application, and subsequent appeals, to turn another local cinema, this time in Walthamstow in North London, into a church failed. In this case the ‘culture’ factor was
strong as apparently Alfred Hitchcock had frequented this cinema, although in recent years it had become very run down.

Not only does this example raise the question of ‘who’ comprises ‘community’, and what ‘local culture’ consists of, in the minds of the planners. It also raises issues as to what local planning authorities see as valid leisure, entertainment and cultural uses. Many local councils are keen to promote the ‘night-time economy’ and the 24 hour city. Such policies usually result in over-provision of licensed drinking premises, with attendant noise, public drunkenness and street urination. There is clearly a double standard as many churches are refused permission on the basis of noise and disturbance, although many congregations are likely to be tee total and careful not to disturb the peace. Because there is no survey of the actual need for church premises, planners base their decisions on the assumption that there is a drop in church attendance, and thus decline in the need for church premises, and so it is argued that more redundant church buildings should be returned to community use (Branson, 2009).

Some councils wistfully imagine that inner city cinemas will be popular again, although they cannot compete with the out-of-town multi-plexes in terms of facilities, film choice and car parking provision. But they seem to imagine old cinemas have to be preserved for some future time when people will flock back (the same attitude they have towards empty industrial units one day being filled with workers again!). Let us make a comparison with a similar age, Art Deco cinema in the affluent Whiteladies Road, Clifton in Bristol. Local conservationists have fought long and hard to retain the cinema but have not found a commercial backer to reopen it. The local planning authority has recently granted permission for the cinema to be converted and subdivided into restaurant, bar, and possible housing uses, arguably causing degrading the character and entity of the building, and only just preserving its Art Deco architecture. Some long-term, local residents have expressed concerns about noise, disturbance, and anti-social behaviour. But Whiteladies Road, Bristol, is already lined by many bars and late-night facilities, but presumably because the customers are mainly white, professional clientele with some more affluent students too, they are seen as attracting the ‘right type of people’. Like many city councils Bristol is very keen to promote the ‘night-time economy’ with delusions of creating Continental style street ambience, and the 24 hour city. In many areas such policies usually results in over provision of licensed drinking premises, with attendant noise, public drunkenness and street urination. As will be illustrated, many applications for church and mosque use in vacant inner city property, are refused on the basis of noise and disturbance, although the congregations are likely to be tee total.

4.4.2 Noise, Disturbance, Public Health Concerns

Many a church has been refused permission because of a range of technicalities in terms of noise generation, building design, parking and public health issues. Noise is clearly a subjective factor judged according to the culture, class and race of the noise makers. For example a mosque and community hall development failed because the Inspector argued it would draw people in from a wide area and undermine the predominantly quiet residential character of the area, although this application was for the use of an existing redundant
church building, in a vibrant, predominantly Muslim inner city area (24.09.10, DCS 100 068 876). Likewise permission was refused to convert a shop in North Yorkshire to a church for a congregation of 75 people. This was refused because of noise concerns but surely influenced by the fact that the shop was actually a unit in a restored old corn mill complex of architectural importance (Planning, 4.12.2009). It was not considered appropriate to mix modern ‘ethnic development’ with heritage ‘Industrial Revolution’ buildings, although both represent important aspects of the area’s history.

In just a few applications, the noise factor has not prevented development, but planning conditions have cost the churches dearly. For example, on appeal, a change of use of an office in Essex as a black Pentecostal church was allowed subject to extensive noise insulation (03.12.201, DCS 1000-069-677). There have been several cases where expensive sound insulation, double, if not treble glazing, and restrictions on times of meetings have been introduced. The whole planning process can be dragged out on technicalities, arguably to deter applicants persevering. There are many accounts of the length of time conversion of buildings takes to a religious takes, for example 6 years to change a fire station to a Buddhist temple in Newham, London, and 6 years to convert a warehouse to a place of worship, in spite of planning decisions normally being required to be made in 8 weeks (Greed, 2011, post sec). Again there is great inconsistency nationally, a postcode lottery, and another application in Essex (12.08.11, DCS 100-73-089) to use an isolated small industrial unit as a place of worship was ruled inappropriate due to the risk of disturbance to local residents, although not located directly within a residential area. Of course noise is relative, we are all used to the church bells ringing and people generally see it as part of our culture and background ambience. But the Iman making the call to prayer is less familiar and acceptable, not that anyone can hear much of anything nowadays above the roar of traffic in our cities.

Sometimes even quiet, elderly white middle class congregations get prosecuted for making a noise if they belong to what is seen (wrongly), in these politically correct times, as a rather questionable fundamentalist group. A tiny, elderly Plymouth Brethren congregation in a village in Dorset, who wanted to hold occasional meetings in a bungalow, in a low density residential area, were told that they were too noisy. This is astonishing seeing as the Brethren do not permit their women to speak and their repertoire of hymns is decidedly on the quiet and traditional side, and often unaccompanied by musical instruments. Subsequently the Brethren have been in the news nationally because of their belief in traditional marriage, and have been under investigation by the Charity Commissioners, in spite of their well established reputation as quiet, doers of good works and valuable contributors to the community in terms of religious capital. To be ‘born again’ is not a good career move either if one is a prominent politician or professional, and such a status has even been used to criticise a planning appellant in Dorset (Planning 09.08.11) over a small alleged planning infringement. In reality it is just as illegal to identify and criticise a planning applicant for being ‘born again’ as it is to state he/she is ‘gay’, or ‘black’, as personal characteristics, and moral issues, should not be material to the planning determination process. As yet there is no balance of rights between the different equality issues, and religion and belief tend to come low on the pecking order (Bagilhole, 2009: Scott, 2013)
Whilst some churches hide away in remote locations, try to be quiet, and do not draw attention to themselves, young churches concerned with outreach and moving away from traditional forms of church building often experience negativity from the planners. In these days of high levels of closure of traditional shops, it is significant that religious uses of existing shops such as for Christian cafes, walk in centres, community meeting places are often refused, especially if they front onto the main high street. For example a white Pentecostal church in a market town in Somerset opened a cafe on the main street, in an area where there are many pubs and clubs, and stayed open to minister to young people, night and day. They had the words ‘Jesus is Lord’ in red emblazoned above their store front windows, which the church argued was the registered name of their cafe for trading purposes (Photo 10). But they have had a great deal of trouble from the planners. Directly behind the cafe they used the rest of the building as a church, and the whole combination of mixing commercial and religious uses along with the Jesus Saves signage was just too much for the planners to get their heads around. Subsequently, by 2015, after many battles, the church vacated the premises and it was replaced by yet another night club, thus further reducing local shopping facilities during the daytime. In contrast, in many towns, there has been a proliferation of Pound Shops, pawn brokers, adult shops, and betting offices, which are often objected to by local residents but still get planning permission. For example, a planning inspector deemed that a loan shop would boost central retail footage in a Lincolnshire seaside resort, in spite of national planning guidance advising against loss of traditional retail uses (DCS 100-076-867 June 2012). In the case of lap dancing premises and other more dubious uses, moral considerations are not considered to be ‘material considerations’ in planning law (Greed with Johnson, 2013, chapter 3). Interestingly, Mary Portas, who undertook a review of high street retail development for the government, apparently investigated some North Somerset towns as examples, and the local Bridgewater College was encouraged to undertake a student project on the problems of declining retail provision in the town (Portas, 2015).
Photo 10 Jesus is Lord Café

_Bridgwater Somerset. Signage and religious advertisements are seen as a valid form of evangelism by many enthusiastic churches and mosques, but some members of the public object seeing such religious texts as being inappropriate in the public realm_.

4.5 Environmental and Traffic Issues

Environmental sustainability is a primary concern to modern planners, and this usually results in policies concerned with controlling car usage, improving public transport, and reducing the outward growth of cities to reduce long commuting journeys (Greed with Johnson, 2014). As discussed above, in respect of the KICC cinema saga, the planning inspector had raised questions about ‘who’ is entitled to use the pavement, and had expressed concerns about the church generating too much traffic and too many people. The Planning Inspector dealing with a previous failed KICC application for a church building in Rainham Essex, actually stated that the church would put too much demand on local bus services (isn’t that was buses are for?). This is extraordinary in that nowadays transportation planners are obsessed with getting people out of their cars and on to public transport for ‘green’ environmental sustainability reasons. In the cinema case too, the [new] planning inspector also raised concerns about too many pedestrians being generated, because many of the congregation would walk to church, as well making as a range of curious comments about the use of bicycles, local taxis and public transport all being too overwhelming for the area. Are the KICC Christians meant to fly to church on angels’ wings? If the building was reopened as an ordinary cinema presumably just as many people would be generated if it was successful? So clearly there are times when the priorities of the sustainability agenda are suspended because of a greater concern with
controlling religious development. Planners would not apply the same attitudes to office or retail development, where they are encouraging people to use public transport and leave their cars at home, by means of strict controls on parking and often the provision of improved public transport provision.

The KICC church has tried to get planning permission on several different buildings and new sites over the years, both inner city ones such as the cinema, and edge city sites on industrial estates, whilst its congregation remains fragmented and reduced to holding multiple services in a range of scattered venues. For example, back in 2009, KICC’s application for an 8,000 seater mega-church in Rainham, Essex (on the outskirts of London), on an industrial estate was refused. They partly chose this site because there were no near neighbours so they could not be accused of causing a disturbance and being too noisy. This application was refused on the grounds that the site was already allocated for industry, although most of the units remained empty. Eventually, as a result of all these problems the KICC saga has been solved to some extent by the church ‘leapfrogging the green belt’ and moving into more rural premises has now moved to Buckmore Park, Maidstone Road, Chatham, east of London, as well as still retaining churches in Walthamstowe and other satellite locations, see www.kicc.org.uk. People are ferried to and from the new Chatham site by minibus or commute by car, as public transport is not direct, and arguably this has had more impact on the environment than just letting them stay in London. Church leaders have commented that if the KICC church (which regularly attracts thousands) had been a major retail developer (such as Westgate), or a football team (such as Chelsea) which attracts thousands of supporters, the application would have been dealt with in a very different way with major changes to local transport policy to enable fans to reach the stadia each weekend.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As can be seen, religious needs are generally trumped by the forces of economic capital, whilst spiritual capital sits uneasily with both social and cultural capital priorities. Clearly there is a need for planning authorities to see faith groups as powerful factors in urban regeneration, which have a tangible and considerable financial value. Rather than seeing religion as a negative factor that detracts from economic development, it needs to be valued in its own right. There needs to be national policy guidance on how to deal with applications generated by church growth, along with strategic planning policy statements on the matter in every urban and local development plan, similar to the guidance given on retail development.

There needs to be a major overhaul of planning law in respect of the needs of faith groups. At present inconsistency rules, which does however, give some space and hope for the future as the few ‘good decisions’ set case law precedents for the future, but it is very much a lottery as to what a particular planning inspector thinks to be important. In particular, religious land-uses need to be recognised, as an important and distinct category of land-use and building occupation with the Use Classes Order (UCO). However, concerns have been expressed for example by Richard Blyth, policy officer at the RTPI, that separating out religious uses, from other D1 uses, might actually make them more vulnerable, given the government’s continuing emphasis upon simplifying the planning system in favour of private development.

For religion to be valued and taken seriously within the planning process, there needs to be a change in the world view of planners, in terms of the subcultural values of the profession which are mainly secular, and concerned chiefly with spatial and quantitative factors (Young and Stevenson, 2003 (eds); Greed, 2013; Fewings, 2010). Attitudes also need to change on the part of the planners when dealing with minority congregations. Church leaders and community representatives dealing with the planners often feel do not receive the respect they would expect, because they are often seen as ‘outsiders’ and ‘not part of the community’ even in ethnic majority areas. Women church leaders in particular experience a lack of recognition of their importance and a devaluation of their potential influence in urban regeneration programmes (Onuoha and Greed, 2003). But they believe the power of prayer will change these circumstances through divine intervention (CARE, 2009). But this needs to be accompanied by practical changes to the planning system.

Therefore some black Pentecostal churches are running courses on planning and urban politics (NCLF, 2015) and theologically there is a move towards stressing the importance of involvement in the public realm (Laurence (ed), 2104; Boot, 2014).

Ironically, the roots of modern town planning were rooted in the reforms and model town building of the nineteenth century, much of it, as stated in Chapter 2, being instigated by religious campaigners especially from Quaker and Non-Conformist churches. We need to return to the ‘civic gospel’ that inspired the work of city fathers such as George Dawson in Birmingham. He was a Baptist minister and urban reformer, whose Christian faith and leadership contributed to the building of libraries, housing, municipal parks and other
amenities for the city (Briggs, 1963). If we ignore our religious heritage, then the original purpose of our religious building will be forgotten. Then, as John Betjeman foretold in his poem, The Town Clerk’s Views, in 1948, ‘Every old cathedral that you enter by then will be an Area Culture Centre’ (this being highlighted in the Preface to Víctor Moore’s book on Planning Law (Betjeman, 2006, Moore, 2010). Faith and religion need to be taken seriously as major social, economic and spatial contributors to the city, and not as a subset of diversity, or culture.

But how can we generate a change in the planners’ attitude towards religion. Drawing on methodologies used in our work on ‘women and planning’ (another marginalised and under-valued topic) in the following section I have adapted the Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit we originally produced for the RTPI in 2003 (Figure 1), to create a new Toolkit (Figure 2) that might help planners mainstream religion and faith issues into their work. The Toolkit is basically a means of raising awareness and consciousness of these issues at each stage of the planning process. Then in the final section, to give a more detailed example, I draw on the methods, hierarchies and policies used in dealing with retail development to create a framework for dealing with religion in a meaningful spatial manner. This example also draws out the fact that religion is not just about little individual churches and chapels but should be seen as a high level spatial issue, particularly when we are now dealing with congregations running into thousands in many cities.

**Figure 1: SUMMARY OF THE RTPI GENDER MAINSTREAMING TOOLKIT**

In order to integrate women’s issues into planning one must ask the following questions at each stage of the planning process, and in respect of each aspect of policy making:

1. What organisational resources and experience is there on gender mainstreaming?
2. How is the policy team chosen and is it representative of men and women?
3. Who are perceived to be the planned?
4. How are statistics gathered, are they disaggregated by gender, and who do they include?
5. What are the key values, priorities and objectives of the plan?
6. Who is consulted and who is involved in participation?
7. How is it evaluated?
8. How is the policy implemented, managed, monitored and managed?

(See RTPI, 2003 and Reeves 2012 for further explanation of Gender mainstreaming methods)
In order to mainstream religion into planning one needs to ask the same sort of questions. I have expanded on each initial question to give you a range of indicative questions that might asked of the planners. This should not only raise awareness but also provide a path to recognising and planning for religious needs. I mainly refer to Christianity in this illustration, but this schema could be adapted for any main religion depending on the requirements of the locality in question.

Urban policy makers and planners should ask themselves these questions:

1. What resources and expertise are available in the planning department to carry out this process? How much knowledge and experience do planners have of religious issues? Are they scripturally illiterate? Is money available to send them on training courses? Are paid experts, ministers and consultants to be brought in?

2. Does the policy team include either planners, or community representatives who are knowledgeable about religious issues? Are there male and female? What ethnicity? Are there representatives from traditional and non-traditional churches? Are there representatives from the other main religions found in the area?

3. Who are perceived to be the planned? Which religious groups are included? Do you only speak to the Anglican bishop or to the chief Iman? What other religious groups and faith communities are included? Who is the plan for? Is it for the benefit of rich developers and bankers or poor local people or outsiders? Who is missing from the plan?

4. Are there up-to-date statistics on church affiliation, size and location of congregations? Are there records of levels of refusal for new religious buildings or change of use? What does this tell you about demand? Do you have records of the levels of occupation and demand for religious buildings?

5. What are the objectives of the plan? Is economic development the primary consideration? What about social infrastructure, childcare and community facilities? What role do you envisage the church playing in this provision? Are religious buildings and faith groups seen as obstacles to redevelopment or as generators of economic and cultural renewal in their own right? Do any of the other main policy topics, such as employment, transport, housing, have implications for religious development?

6. Who is consulted over the plans? Do you make an effort to explain the planning process to people, do you give pastors, imams and other faith group leaders some training on planning law, building control and how to read plans? Are women and men, rich and poor, and all ethnic groups involved?

7. How is the plan evaluated? What are your criteria of success? Is it based on economic, social, cultural or religious satisfaction and enrichment? Have you expelled and alienated the original residents by bringing in outside developers, clearing away so-called slums,
clutter, street markets and chaos, thus depriving people of their livelihoods? Does your transport policy improve pedestrian routes and public transport, or does it just knock new highways through existing settlements and restrict public transport access?

8. How is the policy implemented? Are the needs of existing businesses respected or are they replaced by national chain stores and factories? Are churches and other faith groups still involved in on-going monitoring or have they been dropped once development has taken place? Is there still room for everyone, including God?

**Example: Comparison of Religion and Retail Development**

In order to develop a methodology that might enable the integration of religious development into plan-making, lessons may be learned from how retail development is treated. Retail development (shopping) comes in all sorts of sizes and is found in many locations. Planners generally use survey techniques and mathematical models, such as retail gravity models, to estimate the likely attraction of a proposed retail development, such as an out of town shopping centre, or a local district centre, based on assessing the size and characteristics of its catchment area, the floor space size, the range of facilities and also transport availability in terms of both public transport and car parking.

Planners and developers identify hierarchies of shopping provision, ranging for the largest out of town centres, major city centre destinations, district centres, supermarkets, local shopping parades and at the smallest scale local corner shops. The catchment areas and levels of attractiveness of each of these may overlap, as people may choose to go to the main centres for major purchases, and to local corner shops for emergency food purchases.

In comparison huge churches such as KICC should be likened to major retail centres with regional and even national or international level pulling power, comparable to say Oxford Street and Bond Street in central London, or to the Blue Water out of town shopping centre outside London, or to the Westfield shopping malls at Shepherds Bush and Stratford (originally developed in conjunction with the Olympic Games site). In the case of such major centres high levels of car parking are usually provided, and strong linkages are made with public transport, even changing the rail network infrastructure to deliver shoppers to these centres. Nobody suggests that numbers of shoppers should be restricted because of the pressure on public transport (as in the case of mega-church developments) and no expense is spared in providing transport provision.

Likewise at the intermediate levels of district centres, provincial town centres, and local retail centres, nobody questions the right of shops to exist, and indeed the government is trying to regenerate High Streets as part of the commercial and social fabric of towns and cities. In contrast centrally located traditional churches serving the town as a whole often have considerable difficulty getting planning permission to expand or modernise. Clearly they are not seen as having a social function in serving the whole community, with drop in centres, and cafes, and perhaps pleasant sitting areas in the green spaces of historic church yards and church precincts.
At the local neighbourhood level it is accepted by most planners that local corner shops and convenience stores are a vital component of urban areas, and they are seen as contributing to the sense of community in serving the immediate area. Indeed they are welcomed as they reduce the need to travel by car in order to shop as people can walk to their nearby local shop or mini market. In parallel, small chapels and gospel halls often comprise a very convenient local form of church, particularly attractive to elderly residents, local families with children, and to those without cars.

In order to plan efficiently for religious groups and the needs of the faith groups that use them, there is a need to treat religious uses in a similar way as retail development, by undertaking comparable surveys of the amount of existing development, levels of demand, whether there is empty property or voids. Indeed there is no national survey of religious land and building. So it is hard to say if there is too much or too little provision and some planning consultants consider current demand is vastly under-estimated (TA Consultants, 2010). As with retail development there is a need to undertake the survey with reference to the different types of church and denominations (in the same way that retail is divided into different categories such as food, clothing, electrical goods, furniture and so forth). It is also important to relate demand to the different characteristics of local areas, in terms of demographics, social class and likely religious affiliation. But historical denominational divisions may not as important as in the past because of the general secularisation of society. However it is important to identify likely growth areas, with unmet demand, for example, for Pentecostal churches, or for mosques, with reference to immigration trends and the demographics of local areas.

As can be seen this is quite a complex process, in which the needs of each area need to be investigated. But then this is no different from what is done in respect of any other major land-use, such as industry, employment, leisure, education and so forth, where an initial survey and analysis is undertaken, following by ongoing monitoring and updating of the situation. There is a strong emphasis upon integrating transport policy with the nature of land-use and development, establishing functional links between residential areas and areas of employment, retail and leisure facilities. In the same way decisions about religious development need to be inter-related to overall transport and land-use policy and not dealt with in an ad hoc way in isolation from all other key land uses, activities and transport structures within the city.
Bibliography

This list includes both references used in this paper and some additional sources.


Branson, A. (2009) Religious conversion, in Planning, 02.11.2009 see www.planning/resources.co.uk


CAG (June 2013) Northampton Faith Communities Profile and Places of Worship Audit and Needs Assessment, London: CAG.


DCMS (2010) *The Operation Of The Ecclesiastical Exemption And Related Planning Matters For Places Of Worship In England*, London: Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)


Holtam, N. (2016) ‘Spiritual developments, enhancing our purpose as a house of prayer during large scale developments’, paper given at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, as part of the conference on ‘Architecture for the New Contemporary Church: Imagining the new within the context of the Old’, Bristol: St Mary Redcliffe, [www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk](http://www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk)


Mulkeen, A. (2014) *The Planning System and Places of Worship: The extent to which the planning system since the second world war has facilitated the needs of faith communities for places of worship*, MA in Urban and Regional Policy, University of Westminster and she works for the Church Commissioners.


RTPI (2003) Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit, London: Royal Town Planning Institute, authors D. Reeves, C. Greed and team. See www.rtpi.org.uk


**Useful Research Groups and People**

Faith and Place Network, [http://faithandplacenetwork.org/](http://faithandplacenetwork.org/) organised by Andrew Rogers (Roehampton University) and Richard Gale (Cardiff University) and David Muir (see below)

David Muir, Co-chair of National Church Leaders' Forum see [https://www.nclf.eu/](https://www.nclf.eu/) and Lecturer in Ministerial Theology, University of Roehampton

Faith and Flourishing Neighbourhoods, originated by Chris Baker, Chester University, who is Head of Research at William Temple Foundation. [http://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/neighbourhoods-network/](http://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/neighbourhoods-network/)

Richard Blyth RTPI, Chief Policy officer, [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

Andrea Mulkeen, Church Commissioners [https://www.churchofengland.org](https://www.churchofengland.org)


Mary Anderson, Partner, CAG Consultants, see [http://www.cagconsultants.co.uk/faith-in-planning/](http://www.cagconsultants.co.uk/faith-in-planning/)

Kingsway International Christian Centre [www.kicc.org.uk](http://www.kicc.org.uk). Address: KICC (Prayer City, Buckmore Park, Maidstone Road, Chatham, Kent, ME5 9Q9, 020 8525 0000.


Elim Pentecostal Church [http://www.elim.org.uk](http://www.elim.org.uk)

Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church [www.aog.org.uk](http://www.aog.org.uk)

Glopent: The European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism, based at SOAS, University of London see [www.glopent.net](http://www.glopent.net)
Research Sites on church statistics

http://www.pewresearch.org
http://www.brierleyconsultancy.com/

Evangelical Alliance www.ea.uk/church/research-and-statistics/english/church/census/cfm and for numbers of churches opening or closing down see:

http://www.eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/how-many-churches-have-opened-or-closed-in-recent-years.cfm

Cinnamon Network http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/

Research sites on planning appeals

www.compasssearch.co.uk

http://www.planningresource.co.uk/

The Planning Portal https://www.planningportal.co.uk/
Temporary Church in St Albans

A Temporary meeting place in St Albans Hertfordshire. A banner outside a local school advertising the black church meeting there, which subsequently moved on in its search for more permanent premises (courtesy of John Griggs, St Albans). This image embodies the transience and fragility of new churches trying to establish themselves in temporary accommodation.