Durham University

New Churches in the North East

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The front cover pictures come from the following new churches in the North East: Life Church, Newton Aycliffe; St Francis Church, Ingleby Barwick; City of God Christian Centre, Newcastle and King's Church, Durham – used with permission.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

New Churches in the North East is a research project conducted in 2014-15 by the Centre for Church Growth Research, based at Cranmer Hall, part of St Johns College, Durham University. The project was funded by the Leech Fellowship Committee. The seven main findings are as follows:

(1) 125 new churches have been founded in the North East of England between 1980 and 2015 – based on a strict definition of what counts as a 'new church'.[1]

(2) The usual Sunday attendance of these churches is around 12 000 people of all ages.

(3) Of the 12 000 people who usually attend Sunday worship at new churches in the North East, around 2500 are under the age of 16.

(4) The new churches baptised in the region of 1000 people (children and adults) in the past twelve months.

(5) Of the 125 new churches, 47 congregations are ones where the *majority* are drawn from black and minority ethnic communities. A further 37 new churches have a *significant*[2] *minority* of members from black and minority ethnic communities.

(6) The largest concentrations of new churches are found in Newcastle, Teesside and Durham City. But new churches have arisen across the North East.

(7) 18 of the 125 new churches were founded by the main historic denominations. The majority came from smaller denominations, denominations which have arisen in the UK since 1980 or are independent churches.

[1] For a list of the new churches, see Appendix One of this report on pages 88-91. For a definition of what counts as 'a new church', see p. 13.
[2] 'Significant' is defined as meaning that 20%+ of congregations under 100 people are from black and minority ethnic communities , or 20 individuals (or more) in congregations of over 100 people.

Acknowledgements

The Leech Fellowship Committee made a generous grant to this project and offered a stimulating sounding board as the research developed. We are deeply grateful to them for their help. Laurence Keith was researcher for the first six months of the project and did crucial work. Rob Suekarran and Aidan Goodhew gave invaluable help as temporary researchers. Professor Gary Craig, Dr Peter Brierley and the Rt Revd Paul Butler spoke at the conference when the interim findings were shared and provided crucial insights. Professor Craig and Dr Brierley very generously shared data which, in particular, informed sections two and three of this report. Chris Morgan, Ant Cooper and Jonny Dade gave insightful seminars on their new research at the same conference and Ant Cooper provided invaluable help in organising the conference. Ali Bradshaw, Sue Hobson, Val Strickland and Jess Khan have assisted the project in a wide range of ways. Susan Sadler, Chris Morgan, Bright Onuka and Clay Rountree assisted with the cover. The departments of Theology and Religion and the School of Social Sciences hosted research seminars at which the ideas of this report were tested. Thank you to you all.

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Section One

New Churches in the North East: Academic Debates and Methodological Issues

Introduction

The New Churches in the North East project has the following overall goal: *a survey of New Churches in the North East of England, with Particular Reference to Black and Minority Ethnic Churches.* The project found that 125 new Christian congregations have been founded in the North East since 1980, whose all-age usual Sunday attendance is c. 12 000 and which baptised around 1000 people in the past twelve months. These new churches are highly diverse – ethnically, socially, geographically and theologically. The North East churches have seen significant decline in recent decades, but they have seen significant growth too.

Such data rightly raises many questions. Most importantly, how were such numbers obtained and how trustworthy are they? This question is faced partly in section one under methodology (pp. 12-19) and partly in section three. Then there is the question of the role of black and minority ethnic communities. This is discussed in section four. There are many questions about new churches with regard to geography, chronology, class, gender and generation. Section five constitutes the beginning of an answer to these questions. How much do the new churches connect with the wider community or are they just 'holy huddles'? Section six discusses the extent of new church involvement in the wider community. What are the denominational and theological patterns within new churches? This is explored in section seven. But it is crucial to frame all these questions within academic debates about faith in contemporary Britain and an understanding of wider

economic, social and cultural change in the North East. Sections one and two are the precursor to all that follows by exploring the academic and wider contexts respectively. The final section, section eight, concludes the report by discussing the overall significance of the findings in three areas: (a) debates about secularisation; (b) the nature of the wider social context and (c) the nature of the church in the North East.

This first section has two parts: first, it explores academic debates about secularization which act as the backdrop to the survey; second, it looks at the methodology of the research – what it can, and cannot, say.

The report should be read with a caveat. This is a project looking at *new* congregations. There are many vigorous long-standing congregations across the North East which could not be described as 'new churches'. A significant number are growing and/or engaged in a wide range of forms of outreach. Beyond this, there are a significant number of new Islamic, Jewish, Hindu and Sikh communities forming across the North East. Existing Christian congregations and non-Christian communities within the North East richly deserve study, not least as a comparison with the churches discussed in this report, but it was not possible to study all that deserves to be studied.

Academic Questions

Academic discussion of Christianity in modern Britain operates, mostly, from the assumption that Britain is secularizing. Discussion of new churches, mostly, happens within this wider paradigm. Secularization means a number of different things. Dobbelaere's influential typology sees it as having three dimensions: the shrinking and closure of congregations, how the beliefs of individuals change (as measured, say, by opinion polls) and how faith becomes less influential within the structures of society (eg education, the media, government).[3] This study focuses on secularization in terms of the first dimension, congregational decline. But it is alert to how this is the not the only form of secularization and recognizes that these three dimensions may not move in the same direction.

There is a broad scholarly consensus about congregational decline in Britain; most scholars believe congregations are in long term decline that is set to continue. Some major scholars, such as Steve Bruce and Callum Brown, see Britain as experiencing dramatic congregational decline. The majority of leading scholars – such as Linda Woodhead, Paul Heelas, Hugh McLeod, Robin Gill and David Voas – are less emphatic, yet view the recent history and likely future of British churches in terms of substantial congregational decline. In saying this scholars, mostly, see 'church' in Britain as primarily the historic churches (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, URC, Baptist, Presbyterian). New forms of church, whether inside or outside the historic denominations, are consistently viewed as being of little significance.[4] A small number of scholars describe evidence of growth alongside

[3] K. Dobbelaere, *Secularization: an Analysis at Three Levels*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 2002).
[4] C. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001); S. Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); R. Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* (Ashgate, 2003); P. Heelas and L. Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); D. Voas and A. Crockett, 'Religion in Britain: Neither Believing nor Belonging', *Sociology*, 39, 1, 2005; H. McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, (Oxford: OUP 2007).

decline and make space for the non-historic churches, but this is rare.[5] The leading sociologist of religion, Professor Steve Bruce of Aberdeen University comments:

> What matters for the secularization paradigm is the 'net' numbers. If fifty people leave the Church of England and only ten people join the Blobbo Christian Fellowship, the second does not offset the first.[6]

Bruce is more blunt than many scholars, but says explicitly what most leading scholars are saying implicitly, that new forms of church are of little significance amidst long-term decline. This scholarly picture is echoed across most of the media and many churches.[7]

Scholarly literature sees the North East as experiencing the same trend that it depicts for Britain as a whole. Case studies of Durham Methodism and rural Northumberland point to the North East as secularizing as much or more than elsewhere.[8] Studies of church life across the North in recent decades mostly echo this viewpoint, seeing congregational life as steadily declining.[9] The work of George Lings and Matthew Guest are exceptions to this trend – but explore neither the North East, nor the non-historic churches.[10]

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[5] M. Guest, E. Olson and J. Wolffe, 'Christianity: Loss of Monopoly', in L. Woodhead and R. Catto (eds.), *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) and G. Davie, *Religion in Britain: a Persistent Paradox*, (Wiley Blackwell: Oxford 2015), pp. 135-54.

[6] S. Bruce, 'Secularization and Church Growth in the United Kingdom', *Journal of Religion in Europe*, vol. 6 (2013), p. 279.

[7] A recent example in the media is an article entitled '2067: the End of British Christianity', in *The Spectator*, 13 June 2015. This is echoed, more gently, by the example of the most widely read history of modern Britain, in which Christianity is notable by its absence: A. Marr *A History of Modern Britain*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2007). For a discussion of 'decline theology' as manifest in church circles, see: D. Goodhew, 'Towards a Theology of Church Growth: an Introduction' in D. Goodhew (ed.), *Towards a Theology of Church Growth*, (Farnham: Ashgate 2015), pp. 27-35.

[8] S. Bruce, 'Methodism and Mining in County Durham, 1881-1991', *Northern History*, vol. 48, no. 2 (2011); Gill, *Empty Church*, pp. 26-37;

[9] E. Whickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City*, (London: Lutterworth, 1957); P. Forster, (ed.), *Contemporary Mainstream Religion: Studies from Humberside and Lincolnshire*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995); S. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920*, (Cambridge: CUP 2003); Heelas and Woodhead, *Spiritual Revolution*.

[10] Guest, Matthew, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture: a Congregational Study in Innovation*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007); *An Analysis of Fresh Expressions and Church Plants begun in the Period 1992-2012,* (Sheffield: Church Army 2013).

However, recent research paints a different picture, particularly with regard to London.[11] A series of surveys of churches in London shows that the number of churches in the capital has grown by around 40% since 1979. Sunday attendance at London's churches bottomed out in the early 1990s and has been growing rapidly in the last decade – rising by 16% between 2005 and 2012.

Number of churches in Greater London

1979	3350
1989	3559
1998	3862
2005	4087
2012	4791[12]

This picture is echoed by detailed studies such as a recent study of new black majority churches in the London borough of Southwark, which found at least 240 new black majority churches in a single borough.[13] There is more limited evidence of the expansion of the number of churches and of church going outside of the capital. However, there is little work as yet on the North of England.[14]

[11] D. Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain*, (Farnham: Ashgate 2012); P.Brierley, *Capital Growth: what the London Church Census Reveals,* (Tonbridge: ADBC 2013).
[12] Brierley, *Capital Growth*, p.23
[13] A. Rogers, *Being Built Together*, (University of Roehampton, 2013); see also chapters by R. Burgess, A. Harris and H. Osgood in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain.*
[14] For the picture outside London see chapters by Marsh, Lings, Goodhew, Chambers, Roxburgh and Mitchell in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain*. However, this volume concentrates on London and the south of England and has only one chapter on the north of England and nothing on the North East.

It could be argued that London is odd, 'a different planet' to the North East, being far more ethnically diverse, richer economically and having a fast growing population. Consequently, comparing London and the North East is a key aspect of this project, to test how different these regions are in terms of church growth/decline. But further research questions could be asked. There is a growing awareness that minority ethnic communities have been acting as a key seedbed for new churches elsewhere in Britain. Is that happening, at all, in the North East? A related question is the widely-held, though sometimes questioned, assumption that the big cities are more secular than rural areas or suburbia. This study explores the extent to which the cities of the North East are predominantly secular cities.[15]

In the second half of the twentieth century, there was marked congregational decline in the North East. Peter Brierley's data suggests that in 1989 there were 1496 churches in the North East, but in 2010, only 1348 – a decline of 10%.[16] Brierley provides estimates of the numbers of churchgoers across counties, as follows:

	1989	1998	2005	2012[17]
County Durham	56 700	43 000	38 800	33 100
Northumberland	24 900	23 700	20 500	17 200
Tyne and Wear	81 900	73 700	62 400	53 600

[15] Bruce, *God is Dead*, pp. 35-6 and Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, pp. 8-9, 18-30, 145-9 show how the city need not be the incubator of secularity. But the overall trajectory of their work assumes that the 21st century British city has become exceedingly secular.
[16] P. Brierley, (ed.), *UK Church Statistics, 2: 2010-20,* (Tonbridge: ADBC Publishers, 2014), table 13.1.4
[17] Brierley, *UK Church Statistics 2*, table 14.16-25. Figures for 2012 are an estimate.

These figures have some value, but need to be treated with care. In an age when many regular members attend on days other than Sundays or are unable to attend every week the question of what constitutes 'a churchgoer' becomes harder to ascertain. A large number of the new churches uncovered during this project are not included within Brierley's figures. These figures are a reflection, primarily, of the historic denominations, with limited coverage of what was happening elsewhere.[18] These are figures for counties. Looking at smaller geographical units, it is possible that churches may be declining in one part of the North East, but not in another. Part of the value of this study is that it offers a detailed examination of patterns of decline/growth on the ground.

Nonetheless, the patterns in the above figures are, mostly, backed up by trends within individual major denominations. The reported Catholic population within the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle in 1998 was 239 155. By 2005 it was 216 694 and by 2012 it was 182 000. It should be noted that the Catholic diocese of Middlesbrough showed a different trend, growing slightly from 86 622 in 1998 to 92 000 in 2012, although it is not clear why this is so.[19] The Anglican church uses a range of measures, each of which has its merits and de-merits. One long-standing measure is usual Sunday attendance. For the diocese of Durham, this was 17 400 in 2001 and 12 900 in 2012. The usual Sunday attendance for the diocese of Newcastle was 12 100 in 2001 and 10 000 in 2012.[20]

These figures suggest that congregational life in the North East, particularly in the historic churches, experienced significant decline in recent decades. This decline forms the backdrop for this project. But it is legitimate to ask whether such secularization is the only, or the dominant, aspect of congregational life in the North East since 1980.

[18] Personal communication with Dr Peter Brierley, 4 December 2014.
[19] Brierley, *UK Church Statistics 2*, table 4.4
[20] P. Brierley, (ed.), *Religious Trends 7*, (Swindon: Christian Research 2008), 8.3; *UK Church Statistics 2*, table 2.6

Methodology

This study explores a challenging subject. A number of methodological questions need to be discussed so that the findings can be best understood.

Definitions

The research was conducted in the twelve months from July 2014. It involved a survey of all new Christian congregations founded in the North East since 1980.

The 'North East' is defined according to the government's definition of the regions of England, comprising the area occupied by Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and the Tees Valley.

The year 1980 was used as the starting point for the project for the following reasons:

- It allows the survey to look across a substantial period of time, in which both the North East and Britain are seen by scholars as secularising, thereby offering a consistent backdrop to any discussion of new churches.
- The period allows comparison with other studies of new church activity which have used 1980 as their starting point.
- Pragmatically, the resources available to the project did not allow for study of a longer time-span. It would have been very helpful to have extended the study back to 1960, the point when many studies see secularization as taking a marked step forward, or even to 1945. This said, limited comments will be made with regard to the pre-1980 years.

Defining what constitutes 'a new church' is both crucial and complex. There is the danger of being too lax, lest a loose grouping be badged as 'new' and the danger of being too strict, lest innovative congregations (which, for example, do not meet at 'normal' times, or in ecclesial buildings or which use innovative forms of worship) get passed over. The project used the following seven-point definition. A 'new church' was defined by seven qualities:

(1) It is Trinitarian

(2) It was founded during or after 1980

(3) It is a new entity, not a rebranding of an existing congregation.

(4) It meets for worship once a week or more (not necessarily on Sundays)

(5) It has a name and a clear identity

(6) The majority of members see it as their major expression of church

(7) It has ten or more people on average at its worship, per week

This definition was produced after consultation with a range of senior academics. It should be noted that most criticized it for being too strict. On a theological level, it is clearly too strict. There are many valid and worthy churches which have fewer than ten members and/or do not meet every week. The Church of England and Methodist Church has tended to speak in recent years of new churches as 'fresh expressions of church'. The main definition of 'fresh expressions' is, overall, less stringent than the definition of a 'new church' used in this report – accepting as 'fresh expressions' entities that have fewer than ten members or which meet monthly or every other week. Not all entities which are called 'fresh expressions' will therefore count as 'new churches' for the purposes of this report.[21] Some advocates of 'fresh expressions' and of churches which have congregations of fewer than ten people and/or meet less than once a week could critique the definition of a 'new church'

[21] The most widely used definition of a 'fresh expression' is a ten-point definition developed by George Lings and his team in Sheffield. See: *An Analysis of Fresh Expressions of Church and Church Plants begun in the period, 1992-2012,* (Sheffield: Church Army 2013), p.10.

used in this report as unduly strict. However, a key aspect of this definition is that it is *intentionally harsh* and therefore, when it errs, it errs by undercounting, not overcounting.

To illustrate the way in which the definition works, the following are examples of Churches which were *not* included:

- (a) The Ark, Crawcrook: this is a Methodist chapel on Tyneside which offers activities for young children and their carers. It is flourishing, widely valued and holds worship mainly at the times of major Christian festivals. Because worship does not happen weekly, it does not fit criterion 4.[22]
- (b) Hope Church, Hartlepool: this is a church which it meets monthly in Hartlepool and the rest of the time joins Jubilee Church, Stockton-on-Tees, so does not fit criteria 4 and 6.[23]

There is a danger that some churches which appear to be 'new' are in fact existing initiatives which have changed their name or in some other way been 'rebranded'. The project found a number of examples of what could be considered ecclesial 'rebranding', but filtered them out in the following ways. Churches which engaged in limited change, (such as a change of name, worship style and/or leadership) were not counted as 'new'. However, in cases where an older church effectively died out and a new church was started in its place, such a church was counted as a new church for the purposes of this project. For example, note the difference between Trinity Church, Sunderland, which is included and an older church ('church X'), which isn't. 'Church X' is an older Pentecostal church in County Durham founded in the first decades of the twentieth century which changed its name ten years ago. There were other changes, but these were not fundamental and its membership continued largely as before. Trinity Church in Sunderland

[22] See: https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/arkcrawcrook) – accessed 8 July 2015.
[23] See: http://www.hopechurchhartlepool.org.uk/wp/ – accessed 17 July 2015.

meets in a building formerly occupied by Sunderland Free Church. Sunderland Free Church had dwindled to single figures and was then the recipient of a 'planting team' from outside, including a new minister, new name, a new style of worship and new ethos. Its membership has subsequently grown and is now largely different from that of the old Sunderland Free Church. Trinity Church, Sunderland has been included in this survey, 'church X' has not.

A related, more theological question is 'what is a church?' The sevenfold 'grid' by which new churches are identified contains only one theological metric – a 'new church' is counted as such if it is Trinitarian. It could be argued that this excludes bodies such as the Church of the Latter Day Saints and Spiritualist churches. However, this metric matches how churches are identified by the leading ecumenical body, Churches Together in England.[24] The presence or absence of any theological aspect in defining a church raises theological issues and it was felt that chiming with current ecumenical thinking represents the best course of action.

'New churches' are defined primarily as congregations. It could be argued that this is an overly narrow definition – ignoring those who may connect with faith sporadically or who may not, for various reasons, wish or be able to join in congregational worship. It also ignores wider cultural and implicit manifestations of 'church'. The project recognizes that people connect with faith in a wide variety of ways. However, the centrality of communal worship and fellowship is a feature of most Christian traditions and is routinely used as a metric of Christian religiosity. This report is not arguing that congregational activity is *the* chief metric of 'being church', but it assumes that congregational activity is *a* key metric of 'being church'.

[24] http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234695/Home/About/Basis_of_CTE/Basis_of_CTE.aspx - accessed 30 June 2015.

A further distinction is made within this report, between 'historic' churches and other churches. 'Historic' churches are those which have a long-standing history within Britain, pre-dating the 20th century. The main 'historic' churches are: the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic church, the URC, the Presbyterians, the Salvation Army and the Baptist churches. A significant minority of 'new churches' come from such denominations. However, by definition, historic churches tend to be formed mainly of congregations which have been in place for a significant period of time and are therefore not 'new'.

Defining what is and is not 'a new church' has been the most debated methodological issue in this project. The seven-fold definition offers, we believe, a consistent and fair metric. Not all will interpret the data as we have done. In a handful of marginal cases, some will argue for the inclusion of bodies which have been excluded, or the exclusion of bodies that have been included. However, the great bulk of the data is, we believe, solid. Any research of this nature cannot offer absolute precision but, since the definition used is a strict one, the figure of 125 new churches in the North East is a conservative estimate.

Sources of Data

Data was sought from a wide range of sources which were checked against each other and against the views of an advisory board drawn from a wide range of academic and church leaders.[25] Initial findings were discussed at a day conference at St Johns College, Durham in April 2015 attended by fifty academic and non-academic delegates. Many other individuals have assisted the project. Alongside a wide range of documentary and web-based data sources has been trawled. From such activity a 'long-list' of potential new churches was

[25] For a list of advisory board members, see appendix 3.

created and then whittled down. The 'long-list' churches were all contacted by phone and email and surveyed via a questionnaire conducted with over 60 churches across the last ten months, of which 53 were confirmed as meeting the definition of 'new churches' outlined above. Compared with similar projects, this is a high response-rate.[26] The churches which responded are representative in terms of the centres of population of the region, in terms of size of congregation, ethnicity and in terms of the theologies of the new churches in the North East as a whole.[27] The results from phone surveys were then cross-checked with the advisory board and with other data and all suspect data was excluded.

From all this, lists one and two, printed in this report as appendices one and two, have been compiled. List One consists of those churches regarded as new churches in the North East. List Two consists of churches which form a 'penumbra', congregations which *may* be 'new churches', but where the evidence is inconclusive. Only data from List One is used in this research. List Two is included because it indicates other potential new churches that may exist.

[26] The response rate for the 2005 English Church Census varied from 67% to 7% between denominations, but, for a number of major denominations it was lower than that for this survey. See: P. Brierley, *Pulling out of the Nosedive: a Contemporary Picture of Churchgoing. What the 2005 English Church Census Reveals,* (London: Christian research 2006), p.16. Rogers, *Being Built Together*, discusses 240 new black majority churches found in Southwark, but held in depth interviews with 36.

[27] The 53 new churches which completed phone interviews were located as follows: Northumberland and North Tyneside (5); Newcastle (13); Gateshead and South Tyneside (5); Durham City (7); Sunderland (6); Teesside (9); the rest of County Durham (8). This is, broadly, representative of the 'List One' churches overall. Of these same churches, their size, in terms of all-age usual Sunday attendance, was as follows: 0 to 50 (22); 50 to 99 (16); 100 to 200 (7); 200+ (8). Those new churches interviewed are broadly representative of the total 'List One' churches in terms of size. There is no disproportionate influence from the larger churches, who might have been expected to be more likely to respond to interview requests, given their greater administrative resources. Indeed, a number of what are believed to be larger churches proved difficult to contact and, in one case, the church was not willing to participate in the project. In 15 of the 53 churches interviewed, the majority of their all age uSa came from the BME communities. This is lower than the proportion of majority BME churches in the whole of the 'List One' churches (the report estimates that 37% of the new churches, 47 of the 125 in 'List One', are majority BME). But the gap is not large and, since a number of majority BME churches are very new and/or do not use English as their primary medium, it is not surprising that they proved harder to contact. Of the 53 new churches which completed phone interviews a minority are from historic churches (7), one is Orthodox and one can be classified as liberal. The rest fall under the 'evangelical-charismatic' label (although that label contains much diversity). These proportions chime with the overall range of theologies within the new churches – see: pp. 69-77.

It is helpful to compare this project with wider attempts to gather data on congregations. There is no independent statistical body gathering such data, no 'OfRel' inspectorate who provide data on Britain's congregational life. The main datasets used are those produced by the indefatigable Dr Peter Brierley. These rely on self-reporting by church leaders and denominations.[28] It may be argued that self-reported data is liable to 'inflation' as participants may see themselves as bigger than they actually are. This is a danger which the research project has sought to counter. However, detailed studies in London suggest that there are considerably more churches on the ground than the Brierley data suggests. So, if there is a bias in existing data, it is in failing to record all the congregations that do exist rather than any inflation of their number.[29] Major denominations, such as the Church of England, depend on individual congregations and clergy reporting data to construct national figures. The data so produced contains considerable weaknesses, but is recognised as having some value.[30] If Church of England data can be used, it would seem inequitable to discount data from less historic churches. The New Churches in the North East Project excluded data that was felt to be suspect, notably by using a range of data-sources and its advisory board as a check on data quality. Whilst recognising that no dataset will be pristine, we believe that the data for this project is as good as – or better - than the existing data, including that of the historic denominations.

[28] Brierley, *Capital Growth*; Brierley, *UK Church Statistics 2*. Leading scholars such as Steve Bruce, Callum Brown and Grace Davie makes extensive use of the Brierley data.
[29] The number of churches found in Brierley's large-scale London Church Census, reported in *Capital Growth*, was markedly smaller than that of the more detailed study of a single London borough. See: Rogers: *Being Built Together*. The same appears to be true of data collected for the borough of Newham by Dr. Colin Marchant, see: http://www.urbantheology.org/journals/journal-1-4/faith-flows-in-newham - consulted 29 July 2015.
[30] An example of problematic data quality is a recent official report by the Church of England which included a survey of 51 "greater churches". It found that the data of two-thirds of such churches was so poor as to be unusable. See: J. Holmes and B. Kautzer, *Cathedrals and Greater Churches* (Cranmer Hall: Durham 2014), pp. 65-7 – also available online via: http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/findings. Analysis of wider problems within Church of England data can be found in section one of the report, Amalgamations and Team Ministries, Strand 3c of the Church of England's Church Growth Research Programme, available at: http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/progress_findings_reports - accessed 17 July 2015.

During this study, a wide range of other questions have been raised:

- To what extent are new churches the beneficiaries of 'transfer growth', where members of one church decide to move to another congregation? In other words, to what extent are they less actual growth than a shuffling of an existing Christian 'pack'?
- To what extent are new churches the product of migration patterns, meaning that they are not touching the more settled population ?
- To what extent are new churches 'holy huddles' which have little involvement in broader 'kingdom' issues of how they serve the wider communities which surround them?
- To what extent are new churches mainly 'middle class', being found more in a university town such as Durham City and less common amongst the more working class population of the North East as a whole?

These are important questions and will be discussed in sections 3 to 6 of the report.

Conclusions:

The data from the New Churches in the North East Project has implications regarding three major areas of debate: (1) secularization, (2) the wider social context of the North East and (3) the nature of the church in the North East. The conclusions of the report are unpacked in detail in the final section, but are briefly stated here.

Secularization: new churches in the North East show that, whilst there is considerable secularization of the North East since 1980, there has also been considerable church growth in the North East since 1980.

The Wider Social Context: the new churches are one of the most racially diverse elements of contemporary North East society. That is a fact of considerable significance for wider society, for local government and other agencies.

The North East Church: Churches outside the historic denominations form a large and rapidly growing segment of the North East church.

These conclusions will be unpacked fully in the final section of the report.

Section Two

The Changing Contemporary Contexts of the North East

Understanding the wider context of the North East region is essential to understanding the new churches starting up in the North East. But 'the North East' is a complex reality. The North East is widely associated with images of heavy industry, working class culture and economic decline. In 2014, an article the *Guardian* compared Middlesbrough to the dysfunctional American city of Detroit, whose plunging population is causing whole neighbourhoods to become uninhabited. The comment thread in the online edition showed that this downbeat depiction of Middlesbrough was vigorously countered by readers sceptical of London-based journalists.[31] This section explores how the North East's demography, economics and wider culture are shifting and how they sometimes vary from established portraits of the North East.

Demography

Demography is, to a degree, religious destiny. This sub-section explores rises and falls in the North East's population in recent years, its growing ethnic diversification and how these shifts are happening in a highly uneven manner in different parts of the North East.[32]
The overall population of the North East is stable, at around 2.5 million. However this stability masks marked variations. Some sectors of the population and some towns are growing and others are shrinking. Some ethnic groups are growing fast, others shrinking.

[31] http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/may/10/north-east-avoid-becoming-britains-detroit – 10 May 2015
[32] Data for the following paragraphs was provided by Professor Gary Craig, Durham University.

In 1960 the population of the North East was, in census terminology, almost entirely 'white British', but has grown significantly more diverse in recent years. The number of those classified as 'black or minority ethnic' (BME)[33], has markedly grown, as follows

1951 1,500 (estimate)

1961 7,000

1981 45,000

1991 60,000

2001 94,000

2011 160,000

The trends of a rising BME population has continued since 2011, meaning that in 2015 the number of people who are BME is significantly higher than the above figure for 2011, although precise estimates are not available.[34] Within these figures, those who can be categorised as BME are highly diverse and becoming more so. All minority ethnic groups have grown, but the largest rise has been amongst Africans, followed by Indians, Chinese, 'mixed' and 'other white'.

These shifts interact asymmetrically with that sector of the population classified as 'white British'. Overall, the white British sector is in significant decline. Between 2000 and the release of this report, the white British sector of the North East declined by the equivalent of the town the size of Hartlepool.[35] In Middlesbrough, it declined from 130 000 to 124 000 between 2001 and 2009. Yet, since the BME population of Middlesbrough was rising

[33] For the purposes of this report, 'BME' includes those categorised as 'other white' (ie white, but not 'white British').

[34] http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-uk--england-and-wales--scotland-and-northern-ireland/mid-2014/mid-year-population-estimates-for-the-uk-2014.html - accessed 30 June 2015.

[35] Figures from Prof Gary Craig show that the white British population of the North East dropped by 57 000 between 2001 and 2009. This is an ongoing trend and equates to over 90 000 between 2000 and 2015. The Population of Hartlepool is 92 000 - http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/info/200088/statistics_and_census_information/970/hartlepool_statistics/1 accessed 24 July 2015.

quickly in these years, the town's overall population stayed static at 141 000. In Sunderland a similar process is happening. The city's white British population dropped by 14 000 from 276 000 to 262 000 between 2001 and 2009, but the city's population only dropped slightly during these years, the balance being made up by the growth of the BME population. Elsewhere, the white British sector of the North East's population is declining, but declining more slowly. In Newcastle it dropped from 241 000 to 238 000 between 2001 and 2009. However, the overall population of Newcastle rose at the fastest rate of any area in the North East in these years, from 266 000 to 284 000. The preceding data illustrates ethnic diversification, but it also illustrates the variation between different towns – with Newcastle's overall population growing rapidly in recent years whilst Sunderland's has shrunk slightly and Middlesbrough's remained static.

This combines with the growing BME population to accentuate change, but the impact varies markedly between areas. Newcastle and Middlesbrough have grown much more diverse in recent years. Rural areas and East County Durham are less diverse. The 2011 census showed that the BME population comprised 17.4% of Newcastle and 13.5% of Middlesbrough. By contrast, the BME population of Northumberland and of Redcar and Cleveland is 2.5% and 2.1% respectively. But there are further micro-patterns within areas. Durham City is markedly more diverse than neighbouring areas.[36]

Newcastle and, to a lesser extent Middlesbrough are the most diverse parts of the North East, with other areas markedly less diverse. But a further, crucial, variable is age. The population aged 50 or over is far more homogeneous than the population aged under 25. This is most clearly seen in Newcastle, where under 10% of over-65s are BME, but almost

[36] http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=6279563&c=DH1+3RJ&d=140&e=61&g=6484116&i=1001x1003x1032x1004&m=0&r=0&s=1435677225008&enc=1&dsFamilyId=2575 – accessed 30 June 2015.

25% of those aged under 18 are BME – but the same pattern is found elsewhere.[37] The data for Newcastle is based on the 2011 census figures. Since then ethnic diversification has continued and by 2015, the percentage of under-25s of Newcastle who are BME will have risen. This is particularly significant for congregational life. The future population of the North East will be much more diverse than the current population. Furthermore, a wide range of data shows that over 80% of people acquire their religious affiliation before the age of 25. [38] What is happening, faith-wise, amongst the markedly more diverse youngsters of Newcastle is likely to stay with them throughout their lives and could indicate future significant shifts in religious patterns within the city.

A further aspect to demography is the faith of those migrating to the North East. There is a common misapprehension that ethnic diversification means a reduction in the number of those who ascribe to the Christian faith. This is not the case. Data from the 2001 and 2011 shows the reverse; a white British population in the North East where a shrinking number regard themselves as Christian. Conversely, the number of Asian Christians in the North East rose from 4000 in 2001 to 32 000 by 2011. The number of black Christians in the North East rose from 25 000 to 64 000 between 2001 and 2011. Christians who are 'other White' rose from 81 000 to 137 000. Such people tend to concentrate in major urban areas but the change is of such a magnitude as to affect the whole of the region. The figures from

[37] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/DC2101EW/view/1946157065?rows=c_age&cols=c_ethpuk11 – accessed 19 June 2015. This data source can be used to show the intersection of age and ethnicity across the North East.

[38] Scott M. Myers, 'An Interactive Model of Religiosity Inheritance: The Importance of Family Context', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 5 (Oct., 1996), pp. 858-866; Jonathan Kelley and Nan Dirk De Graaf, 'National Context, Parental Socialization, and Religious Belief: Results from 15 Nations, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (Aug., 1997), pp. 639-659; D. Voas and A. Crockett, 'Religion in Britain: Neither Believing nor Belonging', *Sociology*, 39, 1, 2005, p. 19; M. Hout, 'Demographic Methods for the Sociology of Religion', in M. Dillon (ed), *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion* (CUP 2003), p.79; C. Smith, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (OUP 2005).

this source are measures of affiliation only – and many of those affiliated to a faith are not members of congregations.[39]

Economics

The North East is known as a region built upon heavy industries that dramatically declined in the late 20th century. As in the *Guardian* article cited previously, it is sometimes seen as a by-word for economic decline and unemployment. However, the economic life of the region is not always as it is depicted.

Unemployment in the North East has for many years been historically higher than the national average. In recent years, it peaked at nearly 11.6% in 2011. But it has fallen by over one third since that time and now stands around 7.7%. This remains higher than many parts of the UK, but lower than many parts of the EU.[40] Many in the North East have low-paid jobs, but the cost of living in the North East is also lower than in many parts of the UK, partly due to markedly lower housing costs. There is much low pay, but for those on a median income, the North East region has the second highest real wages in the country.[41] The North East contains significant poverty, but the bulk of the workforce is classified as being in average income bands and the region contains significant wealth.[42]

[39] Church of England Council for Christian Unity, Changes in the Ethnic Diversity of the Christian Population of England between 2001 and 2011, North East Region, (London: Church House 2014).
[40] http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-labour/regional-labour-market-statistics/november-2011/stb-regional-labour-market-november-2011.html and http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-labour/regional-labour-market-statistics/april-2015/stb-regional-labour-market-april-2015.html - accessed 30 June 2015.
[41] Data from North East Local Enterprise Partnership: http://nelep.co.uk/ - accessed 19 June 2015.
[42] For evidence of economic dynamism, see: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/regional-trends/region-and-country-profiles/economy--june-2013/economy---north-east--june-2013.html : http://nelep.co.uk/; http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2379743.stm - accessed 24 July 2015. Thus the North East includes a town, Alnwick, regularly cited in surveys as 'the best place to live in Britain': http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2379743.stm - accessed 24 July 2015.

Employment patterns shifted dramatically across the twentieth century. In the 1920s 45% of Tyneside workers were employed in manufacturing and mining. By the 1980s 22% were employed in those sectors. In 1950 the Durham coalfield alone had 120 pits. By the early 1990s all had closed. The decline of heavy industry continued after the 1980s but has stabilised in recent years. The advent of factories run by companies such as Nissan, Hitachi and Reece show heavy industry is an ongoing presence in the North East, although it now employs a fraction of those it once employed.

But other sections have grown. By 1971 210 000 jobs on Tyneside were in the service sector and by the late 1980s 8000 people worked at a single government site – Longbenton. In the 1950 the North East had one university with a few thousand students. The contemporary North East has five universities, with over 100 000 students, employing tens of thousands directly and many more indirectly. In the contemporary North East heavy industry has become a much smaller employer (although it remains significant), but the public sector and the knowledge economy of the North East has expanded hugely and are now key parts of the region's economy.[43]

The North East economy is not as healthy as many parts of the UK, notably with regard to unemployment and low pay. But it is a mistake to see the region mainly in those terms. Alongside significant hardship, the large majority of the workforce are in work, there is significant prosperity and the economy is now markedly more diverse than it was for most of the twentieth century.

[43] For the data in these two paragraphs and an overview of the North East economy in recent decades, see: N. McCord and R. Thompson, *The Northern Counties from AD 1000*, (London: Longman 1998), pp. 394-404; R. Lomas, *An Encyclopaedia of the North East of England*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), pp. 481-5; data from North East Local Enterprise Partnership: http://nelep.co.uk/ - accessed 19 June 2015; http://www.cmhrc.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/durhamcf.htm - accessed 30 June 2015.

Culture:

Likewise, the North East's culture has diversified. The traditional North Eastern culture centred upon icons such as the Durham Miners' Gala and football. These remain key features, but other elements are becoming significant. The rise of mass tourism, the arts economy (embodied in the Baltic and Sage developments in Newcastle) and the shifts consequent on ethnic diversity (such as Newcastle's Chinatown) indicate a more heterogeneous North Eastern culture, which has more in common with other parts of the UK.

In the mid-1960s, Bobby and Jackie Charlton embodied the North East. Their roots lay in the Northumberland mining community of Ashington and their fame rested in the region's most popular pastime, football. A different set of brothers grew up in the North in recent years and have played for Newcastle United and other northern clubs. Their names are Shola, Sammie and Tomi Ameobi. Of Nigerian extraction, one moved to the North East as a young boy, but the others were born in Newcastle. Their father is pastor of the Apostolic Church in Newcastle. The Ameobi brothers - as footballers brought up in the North East, yet from a very different background to the Charltons - offer a vivid illustration of change and continuity within the region.

Historically, the religious culture of the North East has been highly varied. It contained ingredients of deep piety through figures such as Cuthbert, Hilda and Aidan in the seventh century – a spiritual current which continues to be of significance. Yet Bede also described the significant hostility to their faith that such figures faced. Since the industrial revolution, the North East experienced religious innovation through early Methodism, the rise of working class Roman Catholicism and the advent of Pentecostalism which, in Britain, began

in Sunderland.[44] Whilst there is considerable evidence of the decline of Methodism in recent decades, it would be a valuable project to ask whether something of the DNA of the once vibrant North East Methodism is feeding into contemporary new churches, perhaps partly via the tributaries of North Eastern Pentecostalism.

At the same time, industrialization contained within it a strongly secularizing dynamic. In 1925 Durham Miners famously attempted to throw the dean of Durham cathedral into the river Wear. Partly, this reflected the atmosphere of a coal strike combined with anger over the dean's antipathy to organized labour. But it was also symbolic of the distance between much of the North East and Christian faith.[45]

Conclusions

Beamish Museum provides a colourful portrait of the North East around the turn of the 19th century; a world centred around coal, railways and white working class culture. It is common for the contemporary North East to be described in similar terms or defined in the negative as a place which has yet to recover from the decline of heavy industry. However, an accurate contextualisation of the North East should beware a 'Beamishified' image. The area has markedly changed in the last quarter century. It has become more diverse demographically – especially in key urban centres such as Newcastle and Middlesbrough. Its economy has diversified and, whilst significant poverty remains, the bulk of the region does not suffer in this way. Culturally, the area has likewise diversified. Only with these shifts in mind can the changes in North Eastern churchgoing be understood.

[44] R. Moore, *Pitmen, Preachers and Politics*, (Cambridge: CUP 1974); J.A. Burnett and D.M. Macraild, 'The Irish and Scots on Tyneside', in R. Colls, (ed.), *Northumbria: History and Identity, 547-2000*, (Chichester: Phillimore and Co., 2007); G. Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy: Pentecostal Anglican Pioneer*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster 2007).
[45] J. Field, *Durham Cathedral: Light of the North*, (London: Third Millennium 2006), p.155.

Section 3

New Churches in the North East: the Numbers

The discussion in sections one and two of academic debates, methodology and the wider context of the North East are essential preamble. But they are a preamble. This section outlines the core findings; the number of new churches founded in the North East since 1980, their attendance and a further key metric of their vitality – the number of people being baptised in such congregations. It also explores the sizes of the various congregations.

The Number of New Churches in the North East

'List One', printed as appendix one, is a list of those churches which fit the seven-fold definition of a 'new church' within the North East, founded since 1980. There are 125 congregations on that list, based on the seven-point definition of what counts as a 'new church' discussed in section one of this report. As noted in section one, the definition can be critiqued as overly strict, making the figure of 125 churches a cautious estimate.

'List Two', printed as appendix two, consists of a further 33 churches which partially fit the seven-fold definition of a 'new. The 'list two' churches are *not* included in the results below, but it is likely that, with further investigation, some from list two would be added to list one, further increasing the figures. The consistent experience of this research project was that the longer researchers looked for new churches, the more they found. Were this project to have taken a longer time and/or been backed by larger resources, the number of new churches found would almost certainly be larger.

In terms of wider comparison, the 125 new churches started in the North East compare to the c. 200 churches of the Anglican diocese of Newcastle. The combined number of URC and the Baptist churches in the North East is, approximately, 118 churches.[46]

The project shows that significant numbers of churches have opened in the North East since 1980, but it important to note that significant numbers of churches have *closed* in the North East since 1980. Using the best data available, it appears that there were about 148 fewer churches in the North East in 2010 than there were in 1989. These figures are difficult to compare directly with those for this project. But the 125 new churches on 'List One' that have opened in the North East significantly offset churches that have closed in the years since 1980. It appears that since 1980 more churches in the North East have closed than have opened – but the gap, the 'net' figure, is not large. Moreover, those closing were small and shrinking, whereas a significant number of those opening have grown to a substantial size, so comparing openings and closures of churches is not comparing like with like.[47]

A key aspect of these findings is that the bulk of the new churches are not factored into current academic and non-academic discussions of church growth and decline. The main data on the number of congregations in Britain and their growth/decline is provided by Peter Brierley. This data does not include the bulk of the new churches in the North East.[48] A study of new black majority churches in the London borough of Southwark showed,

[46] Baptist churches linked to the Northern Baptist Association, number c. 46 churches in the North East. URC churches in the North East number c. 72. – data based on: http://www.thenba.org.uk/ and http://urc-northernsynod.org/ - accessed 20 August 2015.
[47] Data on church closures from: Brierley *UK Church Statistics 2* table 13.1.4. The bulk of the new churches are not counted in the Brierley figures: personal communication from P. Brierley, 9 December 2014.
[48] Personal communication from P. Brierley, 9 December 2014. It should be noted that the Brierley data is based on the English Church Census, conducted in 2005. Many new churches were founded shortly before or after 2005 and could not have been picked up by this survey.

likewise, that many, probably the majority, were not included in the Brierley figures.[49] It must be stressed that the Brierley data is national, is remarkable for the detail it provides and cannot be expected to cover the many churches springing up with may be recent in formation and/or hard to track down.

In addition, most academic studies of contemporary British Christianity focus on historic denominations and existing congregations. Such studies pass over non-historic churches (and the bulk of new churches, as will be shown, are from the non-historic churches) and show little interest in new churches started by historic denominations.[50] As a result, current academic studies are passing over a large and rapidly growing part of British Christianity. This is not to say that the congregational decline they depict is not happening, but it does mean that the picture they present is far from complete. That this is the case even in the North East where ethnic diversification and population growth are slower than the bulk of Britain strongly suggests that academic discussions of congregational life have seriously underestimated the number of congregations that currently exist and the aggregate number of churchgoers. This does not mean, necessarily, that the dominant academic narrative of secularization is wrong, but it does show that the picture is far more varied than is currently assumed.

The Size of the New Churches: All-age Usual Sunday Attendance

All-age Usual Sunday Attendance (uSa) is a standard measure used to measure congregation size. It is a measure of the number of people – children and adults – who

[49] A. Rogers, 'Walking Down the Old Kent Road: New Black Majority Churches in the Borough of Southwark', paper given at Colloquium, 'Church Growth and Decline in a Global City, London 1980 to the Present', Institute of Historical Research, 2 May 2014.
[50] Bruce, *God is Dead*; Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*; Heelas and Woodhead, *Spiritual Revolution*; Gill, *Myth of the Empty Church.*

usually are present in a congregation on an average Sunday.[51] The uSa data for this report is based on estimates by leaders of 53 individual congregations who completed detailed interviews. These 53 congregations were representative of the 125 new churches in terms of locality, denomination, ethnicity and size of congregation[52] and can therefore be used to calculate the uSa of the 125 churches.

By this measure, the usual Sunday attendance of the 125 churches in 'List One' is estimated as 12 000. This is a substantial figure, but it should be noted that considerable efforts have been taken to guard against overcounting:

- (1) where a church gave an approximate figure (eg '30 to 40') the lower figure was always used
- (2) where a church has two services on a Sunday, 20% was subtracted from the second service's attendance figure to allow for those who may be going twice[53]
- (3) figures were checked against other data sources and all questionable data was discounted
- (4) the actual figure for all-age uSa for new churches came to 12 288, but this was rounded down to 12 000.
- (5) as previously stated, the number of new churches in the North East is likely to be greater than 125.

Consequently, the figure of 12 000 is a conservative estimate

[51] All age usual Sunday attendance is widely used – see, for example: P. Brierley, *Pulling Out of the Nosedive*, pp. xxi, 27 – who notes that it has a bias to undercount. All age usual Sunday attendance is not without its problems as a measure – especially the fact it does not measure weekday worship. This said, it has considerable virtues – and other measures have weaknesses too – for a wider discussion, see: Amalgamations and Team Ministries, Strand 3c of the Church of England's Church Growth Research Programme, available at: http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/progress_findings_reports - accessed 17 July 2015.

[52] See note 27 on page 17 for details of how the 53 interviewed churches compare to the new churches overall.

[53] The figure of 20% is necessarily an estimate. It should be noted that the majority of new churches only had one act of Sunday worship.

Using attendance as a measure could be seen as a form of undercounting. Congregations could be seen as communities whose size is defined by those who consider themselves members of that community. By this definition, congregations are more than attendance at weekly worship. If membership is used as a metric of congregations it would have to take account of the fact that many active church members are not in church every week or gather to worship on days other than Sunday. If membership were the metric for measuring new churches in the North East, the number of people who see themselves as 'members' of these congregations would, almost certainly, be significantly higher than the figure for uSa.

By comparison, the Anglican diocese of Worcester has a uSa of 9800 in 2012, that of Hereford 8300, that of Birmingham 13 700. In other words, the collective uSa of new churches in the North East is equivalent to one of the smaller Church of England dioceses.

Interviewees were asked to estimate the number of children and young people under the age of 16 who attended on a usual Sunday. Of the 12 000 people who attend new churches in the North East on an average Sunday, around 2500 are children and young people under 16 years old. This suggests that the new churches have a diverse age-spread, an issue further discussed in section five.

One question raised during the project is the durability of new churches – are they like rockets, that rise swiftly, but decline just as fast? This can happen. And it is not helped by the propensity of a handful of churches to change name frequently. One respondent commented to a researcher that members of the church formerly known as 'S.C.C.' (which stood for 'Sunderland Christian Centre') used to joke that the initials stood for 'Something's Certain to Change'.

However, studies of new congregations in York and London indicate that only a small minority of such new churches (up to 10%) close in the years after they open. This 10% are liable to change location, name and/or go in and out of existence suddenly. But the majority of new churches in York and London have considerable resilience.[54] Study of new churches in the North East found six new churches which started and subsequently folded, but this was a small number compared to the wider phenomenon. It is highly likely that there are other new churches which have started and then folded, but which the research team have not been able to identify, especially where closure happened some years ago.[55] Those which closed came from a range of localities and a range of denominations. But the evidence is insufficient to support solid arguments as to why some closed and others did not – although this would represent a fruitful line of further study.[56] A further complication in assessing the number of new churches which subsequently closed is that some churches change their name. Thus, it would be a mistake to assume, if a new church cannot be located, that it has ceased to exist. It may be in existence, but using a different name.[57] The survey of new churches in the North East chimes with studies of York and London, suggesting that most new churches have significant durability.

[54] Goodhew, 'From the Sideline to the Mainline', *Church Growth in Britain,* p. 191; Brierley, *Capital Growth*, p. 134.
[55] Appendix Two includes a number of 'penumbra' churches. In a minority of these churches there is no recent data, which may indicate that they have closed, or that they continue to operate but the researchers failed to locate them.
[56] Data on new churches which started and then closed is difficult to verify. The following churches opened since 1980 and then closed: Justice Church, Durham; Mind the Gap, Gateshead; His Chosen Victorious Army, Wheatley Hill; a French-speaking congregation based at St Silas, Byker; Ss. Barney and Jude, Jesmond.
[57] An example is County Church, Bedlington, which started in 2004 but has recently changed its name to Hope Church. See: http://hopechurchbedlington.co.uk/about/county-church-northumberland/ - accessed 29 July 2015.

The Size of the New Churches: Baptisms

One way of measuring the vigour of the new churches is by the number of people they are baptising. Whilst baptism can be significant for a variety of reasons and can be as much a cultural as a religious rite, it is a rough indicator of the vitality of a congregation. New churches were asked how many people they had baptised in the year prior to being interviewed. Since those interviewed represent 43% of the total number of congregations and since those interviewed are representative of the new churches as a whole[58], the number of people being baptised by new churches in the past 12 months can be reliably estimated from this data.

The 125 new churches in the North East baptised around 1000 people in the 12 months prior to July 2015. Of these, around 110 were infants. The rest were 'believer's baptisms' where the person was either an adult or a child old enough to answer for themselves. These baptisms came from just over half the new churches. Others spoke of how they had baptism services planned and/or had baptised more people in previous year. A small number of new churches appear highly baptismal in practice – baptising 20 or more people per year. Conversely, a large minority appear to be baptising infrequently.

By comparison, the Anglican diocese of Newcastle in 2010 baptised 2180 children aged 0 to 12 (it also did 30 thanksgivings) and 130 people aged 13 or over. The Anglican diocese of Durham in 2010 baptised 5070 children aged 0 to 12 (it also did 180 thanksgivings) and 310 people aged 13 or over. In other words, the new congregations are baptising far fewer infants than the established church, but markedly more people aged 13 and over. In 2010

[58] See footnote 27, p. 17 for details of the representativeness of churches surveyed.

Newcastle and Durham dioceses together baptised 440 people over the age of 12, under half the number that the new churches baptised in a twelve month period.[59]

New churches show significant vitality in terms of the metric of baptism of those who are not infants. Such baptismal activity has a bearing on whether the new churches were largely the product of 'transfer growth' – the shuffling of a pack of already Christian people, moving between different churches. There is some circulation between churches. It is also possible that some of those being baptised may have been baptised as infants – although there is no data to confirm this. But, if the bulk of new church members were simply transferring from other ecclesial bodies, it would appear questionable as to whether they would generate such a large number of baptisms. The large number of baptisms suggests that something more than 'transfer growth' is going on.

More generally, the concept of 'transfer growth' should be used with great caution. It is highly problematic to define or measure.[60] New churches are arising in a range of areas where the existing churches were already quite weak, such as Newton Aycliffe, where few churchgoers existed to 'transfer'. In areas such as inner city Newcastle they are of a different demographic to many in existing congregations and do not appear to be transferring from them. Conversely, new churches are, mostly, not arising in smaller towns and rural areas where church closures predominate. 'Transfer growth' does exist, but there is little evidence to suggest that it is the main driver in the advent of new churches and much more research would be needed to sustain this view.

[59] The Archbishops' Council, Research and Statistics, Central Secretariat, *Church Statistics, 2010/11*, (London 2012), p.19

[60] 'Transfer growth' encourages an image of a person moving from church 'a' to church 'b'. But does such an image fit a scenario when a person moves between one area of the country and another, or does so only after an interval in which they cease attending at all? Are migrant-based congregations 'transfer growth' ? If this is the case, much of the Muslim community of Britain could be depicted as 'transfer growth'.

The Sizes of New Churches

The average uSa of the 125 new churches in the North East is 98 adults and children. Of these, over 60% can be described as small to medium-sized, with 20 to 100 all-age uSa. A minority, around 15%, have between 10 and 20 all-age uSa. Approximately 15 new churches are larger churches with 200+ all age uSa. These larger churches form a significant minority of new church attendance and have a strategic significance. But it should be stressed that the majority of new church uSa comes from congregations which are not 'larger churches'.

Conclusion

This data begs many further questions - about ethnicity, geographical spread, chronology, class, generation and denomination/theology. These will be discussed in the next sections. However, the core findings deserve careful pondering. Since 1980, 125 new congregations have been formed in the North East, The all-age usual Sunday attendance at these churches is around 12 000 people. These congregations baptised, between them, around 1000 people in the 12 months prior to the survey. The new churches in the North East constitute, collectively, a significant and vigorous phenomenon. It should be stressed that that the methodology used involves a strict definition of what counts as 'a new church' and attendance has been calculated in a conservative manner. Absolute precision is not possible in this field, but if the above numbers are wrong, they err by being too low rather than by being too high.

Section 4

New Churches and Ethnicity

One of the key purposes of this project has been to find out the impact of the growing black and minority ethnic (BME) communities within the North East upon New Churches in the region. Research carried out in London, for example the *Being Built Together* report focussing on new Black Majority Churches in Southwark, have shown the extraordinary rise in such churches over the past 60 years.[61] Along with the continued growth of other minority ethnic Christian groups across the country, this report seeks to discover whether similar research in a dramatically different ethnic environment from London would draw any comparable or contrasting conclusions. As noted in earlier chapters, the perception that the North East is an exclusively White British region is outdated. Neither English Christianity nor the North East are solely white – this project intends to aid in the general understanding of and response to this shift.

Definitions, Categorisations, and Initial Findings

Categorising any part of society using ethnicity is a sensitive matter. This chapter uses categories utilised by government in such publications as the 2011 national census. It also uses the widely used abbreviation BME (black and minority ethnic), to refer to all those who would not be categorised as 'white British' – i.e. 'BME' includes those who, in census terms, are designated 'White Other', such as those coming from Eastern Europe, for example. It then applies these to new churches in the North East as falling into three categories:

[61] Rogers, *Being Built Together*.

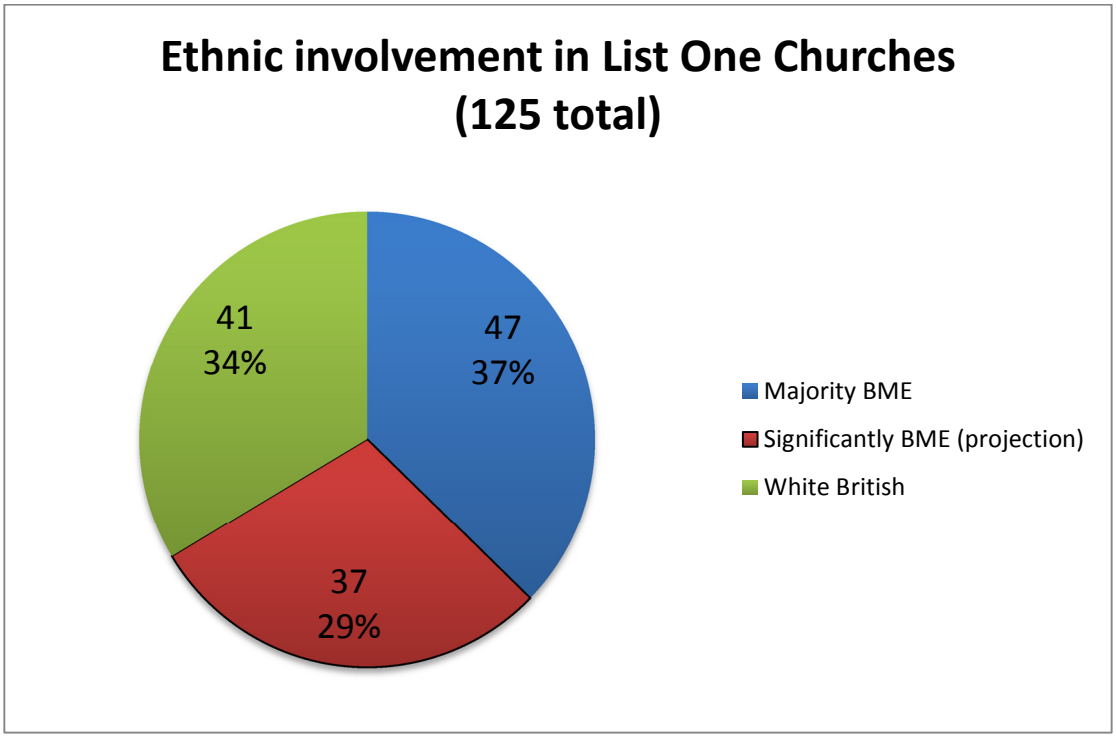
- *Largely BME*: new churches where the majority of the congregation are from BME communities
- *Significantly BME*: new churches where a significant minority of the congregation are from BME communities ('a significant minority' is defined as churches where either 20% of their congregation are non-White British (if their usual Sunday attendance (uSa) is fewer than 100 people), or which have more than 20 non-White British adults (in congregations with a uSa of more than 100)
- *White British*: new churches where most of the congregation are white British in ethnicity

In categorizing the BME churches encountered in the research, the project primarily used the congregation data collected from the phone questionnaires, and where this data was unavailable, wider data sources. This means that for some churches, although they have not been interviewed, it is still possible to attain some data (for example date of formation and postcode). For this reason some of the figures within this section will stem from different sized data pools from other sections. However, where possible this chapter will focus on those BME churches for which provided data via phone surveys, which comprise 31 churches out of the 53 churches which provided interview data. These 31 were divided into 2 broad categories using the attendance and ethnicity data provided by the church leaders. There were 15 'Largely BME' churches, comprising churches with a congregation of over 50% non-White British members, and 16 'significantly BME' churches. The vast majority of the 'Largely BME' congregations consisted primarily of a single ethnic group, however many of the 'Significantly BME' churches had a diverse global spread within their congregations, and this shall be covered in more depth later in the chapter. The interview data is representative in terms of geography, socio-economic backgrounds and

denominations.[62] Certain presumptions have been made at points regarding church ethnicity, but where uncertainties were present, it was presumed that the church had few BME members. As a result it is possible (indeed probable) that the estimates are an underestimate, although this has been allowed for by using projections based upon the existing data, indicating the probable scope of the BME presence within New Churches in the North East.

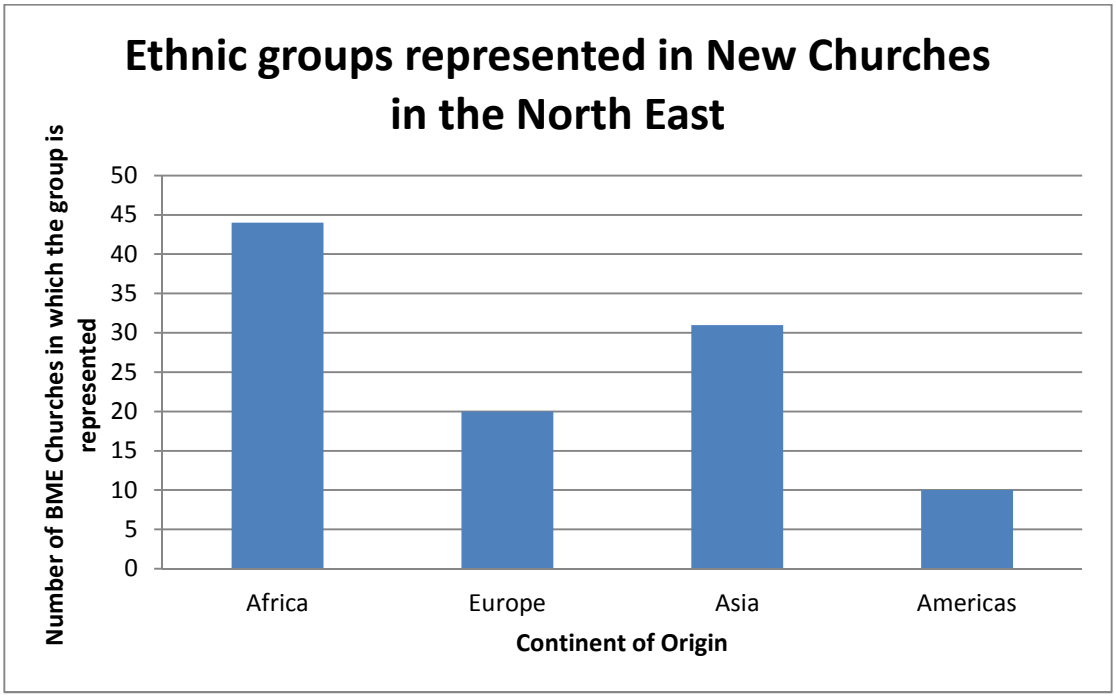
There are definitely at least 63 of the 125 new churches in List One that have largely or significantly BME congregations. This in itself remarkable – in a region with a non-White British population of only 7-8%, half of new churches have a significant BME presence within their congregations. If we add in the projected 21 further churches that we believe may have a significant BME presence,[63] this brings us to 84 out of 125 churches – or two thirds – which are largely BME or have significant BME presence within their congregation.

[62] See note 28, p.17 for further details on this point.
[63] In order to estimate this projection, we worked out the percentage of churches within our completed data pool with a 'significant' BME congregation (16 out of 55, or 29%), and then scaled this up for the 125 List One churches – giving a figure of 37 churches, 29% of the whole. This is a projection, but, since the interview data is representative of the whole data-set, it is reasonable estimate.



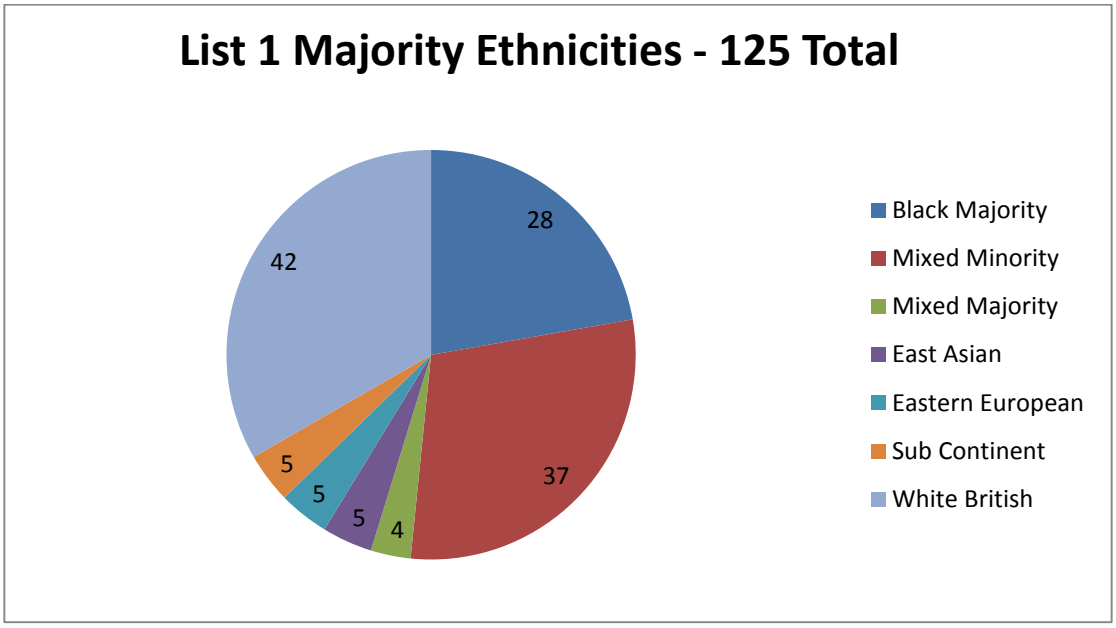
Breaking down the findings

Within the 31 completed relevant responses gathered, 47 different non-British nationalities were mentioned, varying from German and Canadian through to Iranian, Eritrean, and Sri Lankan. There are strong reasons to think there are a great deal more than this being represented too – this is a particular area in which the on the spot memory requirements of our survey means that Church leaders can be forgiven for not pinpointing every member of their congregation on a map! A number of responses were generalised (for example, 'West African', 'Eastern European', etc.), again suggesting that the list of nations represented is far from complete. However it does indicate that the range of ethnicities and nationalities represented within New Churches in the North East is extensive, and the growth is not solely due to one ethnic group. Although the largest single representative continent is Africa, nations from across Asia, Europe, and the Americas are all healthily represented, indicating that the growth in new BME churches across the North East has a strongly global element to it.



Within the 'largely' BME churches where the majority of the congregation are BME, 28 are Black Majority Churches, as well as 5 with primarily Eastern European congregations, 5 with primarily East Asian congregations, and 5 congregations from the South Asia.[64] We can also add 4 churches which can be described as 'Mixed Majority' BME, which are still over 50% non-White British , but do not have a single dominant ethnic group,. This results in 47 churches which are largely BME. On top of this we can add a further 37 churches who have significantly BME congregations – or 'Mixed Minority' churches - as mentioned above.

[64] It was straightforward in the case of particular churches to estimate the nationality of participants. Members of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, for example, are predominantly African. See: Burgess, 'Redeemed Christian Church of God', in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain*. The same is true of a wide range of other denominations.



In following up this research over the coming years, it may be interesting to see how this graph shifts. Will the increase lie primarily in the 'Mixed' churches, with an increasing number of churches becoming increasingly multi-ethnic, or will single-ethnicity majority churches become more common, particularly amongst Asian and Eastern European churches?

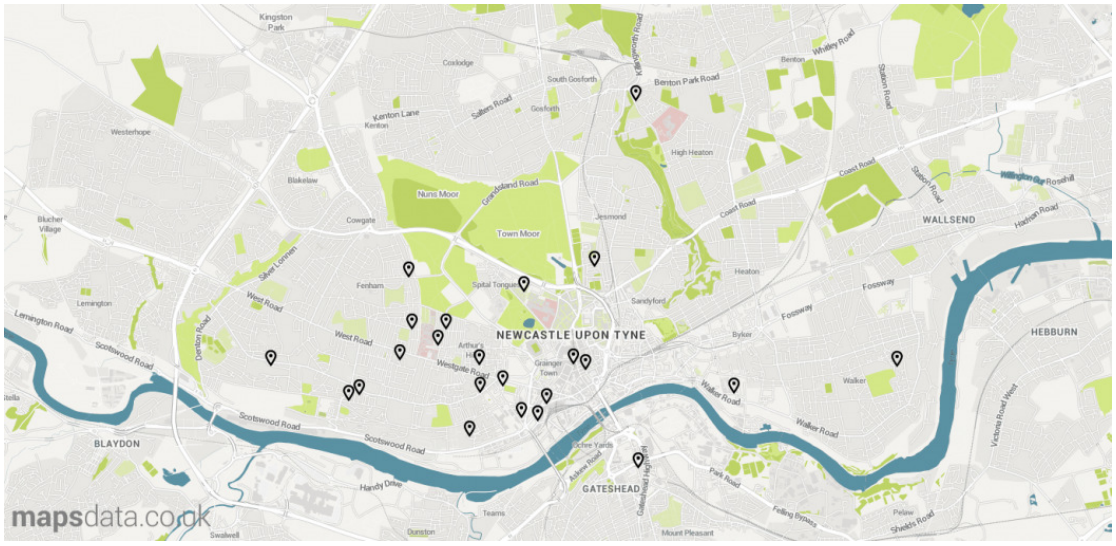
One of the particularly interesting elements within this area is churches wherein the majority of the congregation is White British but there is still a significant BME presence within the congregation – what are termed 'Mixed Minority' in the above chart. Within a number of these churches there is a wide spread of ethnicities represented, often with services provided specifically for these communities. One church reports having 'Iranians, Eritreans, West Africans, Nigerians, Angolans, Kurds and Afghans' within their congregation, and as a result provided specific support for these groups. For example, the main meetings are live translated into Farsi, and there are also separate meetings for Farsi speakers at other times and Tigrinyan speakers (for Iranian and Eritrean congregation members respectively). They also work closely with refugee and asylum seeker charities to provide support for affected members. Another majority White British church in the region has members from Pakistan,

India, China and Sri Lanka, and runs international events, such as meals and film nights, intended to bridge divides between the diverse communities represented within the congregations. These churches, outside of the traditionally diverse urban centres, show how even the predominantly White British New Churches in the North East are beginning to engage with BME communities in new and potentially fruitful ways. These examples of engagement with BME communities and building relationships between these communities and White British communities may have insights which could inform the practice of other churches and wider society.

Geography of BME Churches

This map shows the spread of locations of BME churches throughout the North East. As would be expected, these are primarily located in the larger urban areas – the highest number in Newcastle, followed by Sunderland, Durham, Middlesbrough and Darlington. However, as can be seen, there are a number scattered across the less urban areas. This map, and those to follow, indicates a number of key findings. Firstly, the growth of BME

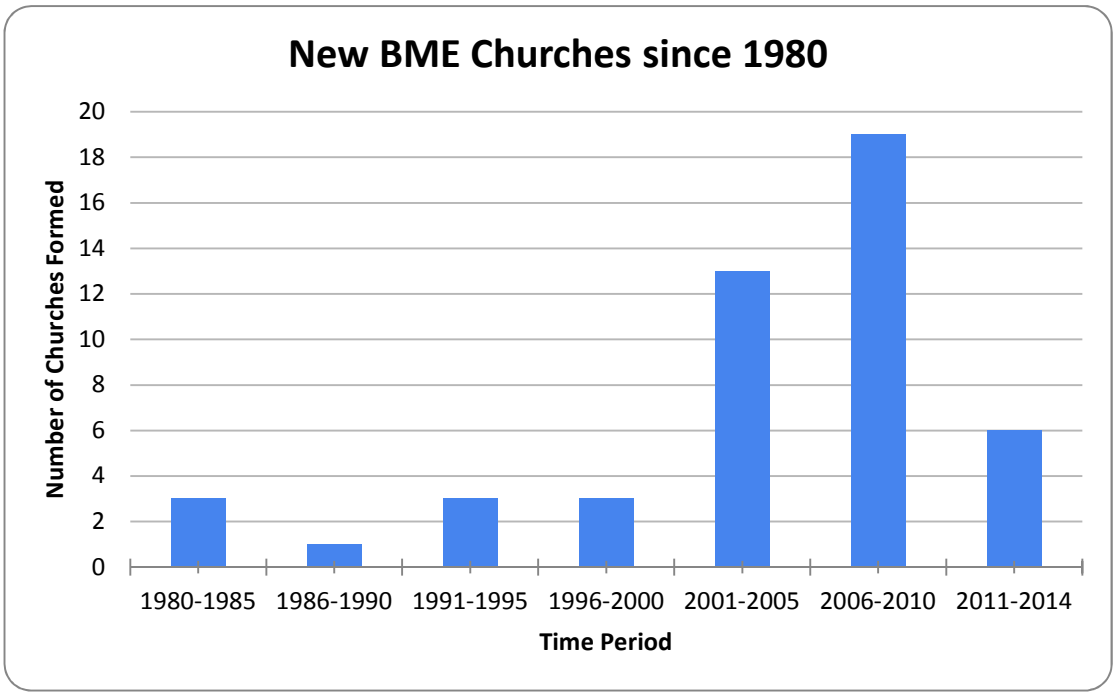
communities in urban areas is impacting significantly upon the formation, and presumably the growth of, new churches in these areas. By far the largest BME communities are located within Newcastle, which is diversifying more broadly than elsewhere and this is being reflected within the church community. The sheer number of new BME churches relative to new White British churches shows that the BME community is having a disproportionately large impact upon church growth in the region – particularly in urban areas. Alongside this there may be surprise amongst some that the growth is not limited exclusively to the larger urban areas. Across the region in smaller urban areas – such as Durham, Darlington, and Newton Aycliffe - BME churches are also emerging, serving as a warning against complacency amongst church groups assuming that BME churchgoing is 'just' confined to major urban hubs. It is also dangerous to assume that all attendees of central urban churches live in the immediate vicinity. It may be that many congregation members travel to attend some churches and are more dispersed that the location of BME churches suggests - suggesting that the divide between the centres of BME churchgoing and the rest of the region is less strong than it may appear.



This map of Newcastle and Gateshead shows the location of the BME churches in the area. . Most strikingly, this map shows that the river serves as a clear point of division. North of

the river in Newcastle, BME churches are more prevalent than in any other area of the North East, with a large number of BME churches located within close proximity to central Newcastle. This is clearly a thriving area for BME churches of all cultural backgrounds, as well as a number of (often large) churches with 'significant' BME congregations. To the south of the river in Gateshead, however, we see that this trend is almost entirely reversed. There is only one church with a largely BME congregation (a small black majority church with a usual Sunday attendance of under 35), compared to 22 to the North of the river. The stark contrast has socio-historical roots, but the extent of the distinctions between such close geographical neighbours is nevertheless fascinating. A major question going forward is whether the trend of intense growth in Newcastle will be a chronological or geographical anomaly in the North East, or whether it is rather ahead of a trend that will in time be reflected across other areas of the region – even its next-door neighbour, Gateshead.

Chronology of BME Church Growth in the North East



This graph shows the number of BME churches formed since 1980 across 5 year periods. It shows the sharp rise in these churches since the turn of the millennium. It should be

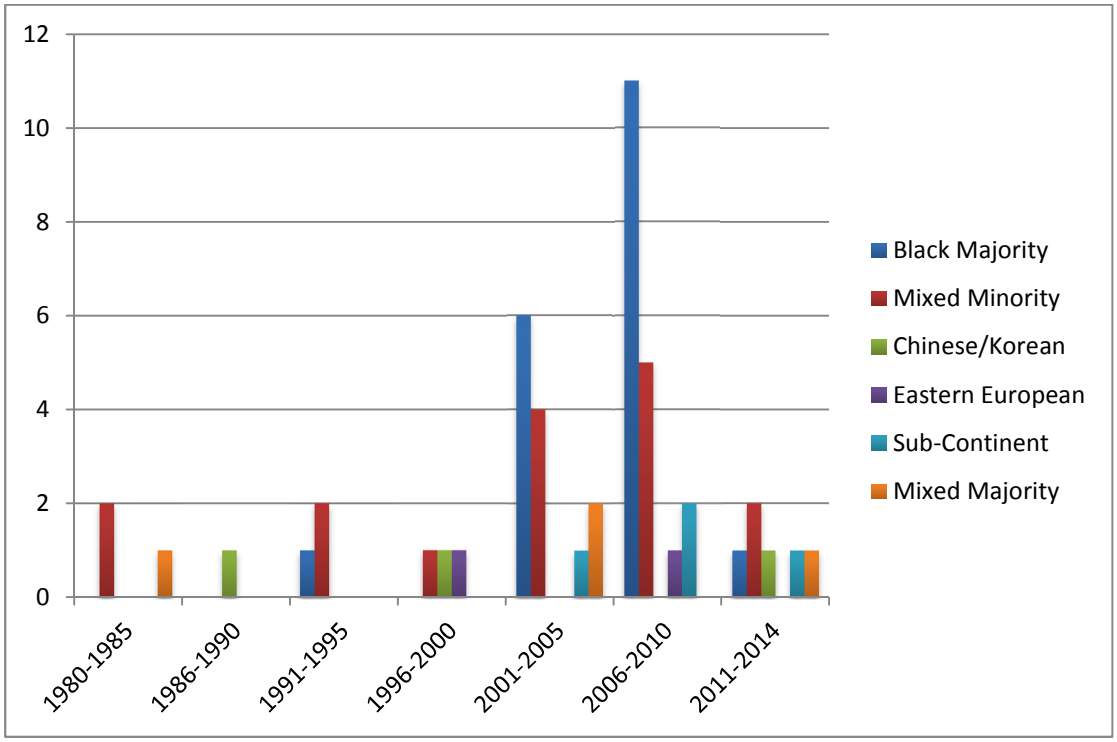
noted that some new churches have started since 1980 and then folded. These are not included in this data since their number and nature is difficult to ascertain with certainty. Their inclusion in the chart would make the 'spike' of foundations in recent years less steep. But the current state of the evidence of new church closures suggests that the picture given by the above graph would hold good.[65] Indeed, in 2005 and 2006 as many BME churches formed as in the 1980s and 1990s put together. This tracks onto immigration statistics for the region, which suggest that in the period between 2001 and 2009 the growth of the non-White British population was substantial – for example, the Black African population growing by 330%. [66]

The apparent dip since 2011 could be explained in a number of ways. This could be due to BME churches reaching their saturation points for their communities, with the remarkable growth in the 2000's providing churches as new communities were formed. Now that these communities are more settled, any growth in the communities may be more likely to lead to individual growth in church congregation size rather than exceptional numbers of new churches. Therefore the dip in new churches could be the beginning of a 'levelling off' period, wherein while new BME churches are formed, the rate will be smaller and steadier than at the beginning of the millennium. It is also possible that this is simply a small drop before another rise, potentially even coming in the second half of this decade, and over the next decades this five year period is the exception rather than the norm. Finally, it could be that BME involvement in new churches is higher than has been stated in this section for a number of reasons. Firstly, newly established churches are more likely to be smaller than older churches, and so less likely to fulfil the project's criteria for what makes a new church 'new' (requiring over ten regular attendees), and also less likely to appear in our research. While as complete a list as possible has been produced, there is no doubt that churches

[65] Regarding data on new church closures, see: pp. 30-1.
[66] Data supplied by Prof. Gary Craig.

have been missed – and smaller ones are more likely to 'slip through the net' than their larger equivalents. More generally, newer churches are less likely to appear in our research than older ones, which may explain an absence here. Finally, there is always the strong possibility that further churches have started since the research project began – and even between writing and publication – meaning that the five years prior to the production of this report was therefore always likely to be underrepresented in date based data. The data pool used in this graph represents the churches for which reliable formation data was found. The date of foundation cannot be precisely verified for all new churches meaning that there is always the potential that one five-year period is disproportionately over or under represented relative to others.

Chronology of New Churches by Ethnicity

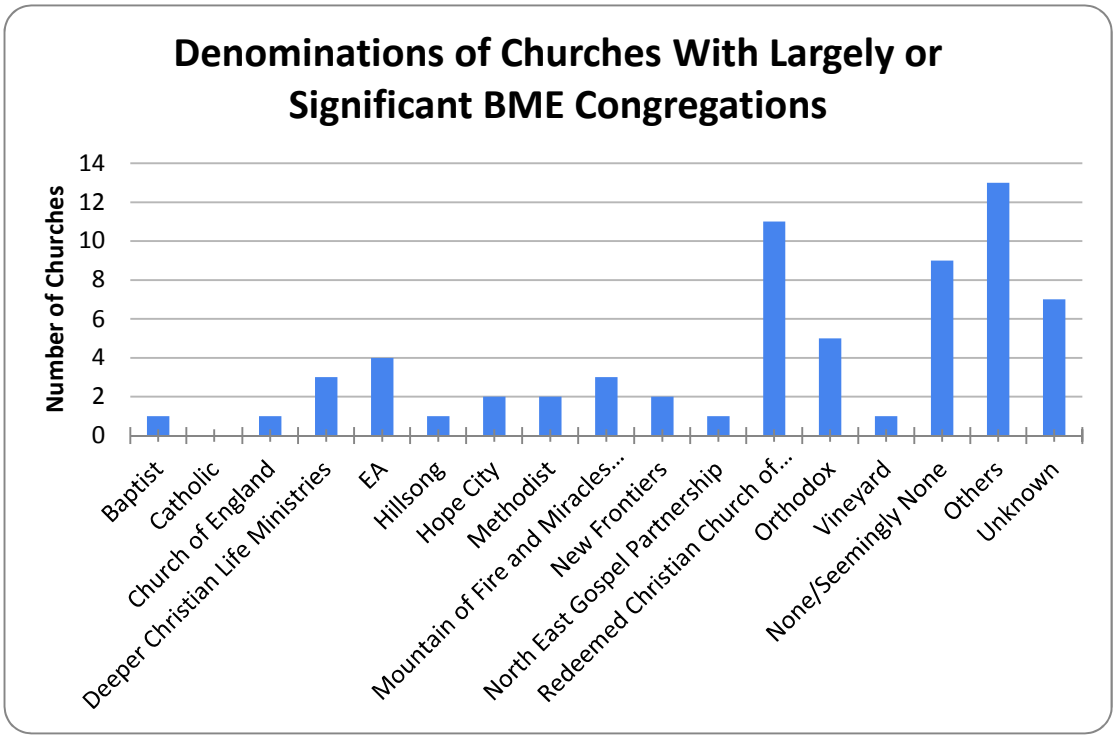


While the growth in 'mixed' churches was also significant during the period, the significant BME church growth in the period between 2000 and 2010 can largely, but not exclusively, be explained by the substantial expansion in the Black population, as all but one Black Majority Church in the region for which there is a date of foundation was formed after 2003.

Of the 28 BME churches formed since 2000, 16 have been Black Majority Churches. One would be tempted to assume, therefore, that were this rate of migration to continue, the growth of new churches would similarly continue. However, it may not be as simple as a map of immigration trajectory on to church growth. Osgood points to the strong focus within many Black Majority Churches placed upon church planting and evangelism, as well as growing political significance and development of relations with more traditionally White churches as potential reasons for continuing growth. Burgess points to the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) 's social and religious support networks aimed at aiding pastoral care of members and particularly their integration into society as well as encouraging social mobility and providing social capital. He also points to their ability to attract and retain young people as a key element of their potential future growth. These elements would require further and deeper study of the growth and persistence of new BME churches.[67]

[67] Osgood, 'Black Churches' and Burgess, 'Redeemed Christian Church of God' in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain.*

Denominational attachment of new BME Churches in the North East



With regards to the denominational attachments of BME churches, there are significant elements to note. Firstly, there is a significant lack of representation from the traditional denominations. Other than two Chinese Methodist congregations, one Baptist congregation and a single Anglican church, none of the traditional denominations is represented[68] – even amongst the 'mixed churches', many of which do stem from primarily White denominations. By far the largest single denomination is the Redeemed Christian Church of God, who are a growing force in the nation as a whole, growing from 161 parishes in Britain with a total membership of 45,000 in 2004 to over 440 in 2010 and 85,000 members.[69] The rise of Orthodox congregations within the North East is also interesting – though it should be noted that this graph has combined Greek, Russian, and Malankara Orthodox congregations.

[68] For the purposes of this paragraph, the Orthodox, though ancient in foundation are counted as 'new' since the congregations cited only arose since 1980.
[69] Burgess, 'Redeemed Christian Church of God', in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain,* p. 129-30.

However the majority of BME churches are either not attached to any denomination or are the only representative of (usually quite small) denominations within the region – indicating that new BME churches in the North East are being established mostly by new, and often small, denominations, or individuals or groups with no set denominational links.

In one sense this is not surprising – as a whole there is limited representation from the historic denominations within this research. Thus, with only nine Church of England churches amongst the 125 new churches, it is not surprising that there is little representation within the BME data. It is also likely that those members of the BME community who are drawn to the traditional denominations are attending one of the numerous pre-existing churches within the region. However, even in the existing congregations of historic denominations, there are few churches which have a significant (as defined by this report) number of BME members. Of the hundreds of existing Anglican churches in the North East, we estimate that eight parish churches have a significant proportion of BME congregants; ten, if the two Anglican cathedrals within the region are included – out of around 550 Anglican churches in the North East.[70] One example is Stockton Parish Church, whose congregation has become highly multicultural in the last decade and includes a significant number of Iranian worshippers. It mirrors developments in a number of new churches, but is exceptional in terms of both the Anglican church and the historic churches as a whole.[71] Recent national data from the Anglican church suggests

[70] The research team estimate that five Anglican churches in the diocese of Newcastle had a 'significant' minority of BME members (where 'significant' means 20% of attendees for churches with a uSa of under 100 or 20+ people for churches with a congregation of more than 100); St Silas, Byker, St Matthew's, Elswick, St Michael's, Byker, St Luke's Elswick and Jesmond Parish Church. Two Anglican churches in Durham Diocese had a 'significant' minority of BME members; Stockton Parish Church and St Nicholas Church, Durham. At least one Anglican church in Middlesbrough (Holy Trinity, North Ormesby) has a 'significant' minority of BME members, but no detailed survey of Anglican churches was performed south of the Tees. In addition, the cathedrals of Durham and Newcastle could qualify, although they represent, as cathedrals, highly distinctive entities with more fluid than normal congregations. This data was compiled following conversations with senior staff and parish clergy of Durham, Newcastle and York dioceses in June - August 2015, but the above judgements are the responsibility of the authors alone.

[71] See: http://stocktonparishchurch.org.uk/sunday-services/ - accessed 10 August 2015.

that the above picture is true more widely.[72] Roman Catholic churches in the North East are more diverse because of the nature of Roman Catholicism – but the tendency for BME Christians to worship in the new churches of the North East, and their relative absence from historic congregations, is striking.

The BME data within this report merits extensive further analysis and research. However, the basic findings – two thirds of new churches reporting majority or significant BME presence within their congregation – are sufficient to raise questions amongst both secular and Christian authorities. From a Christian perspective, the question for many Church leaders (particularly from the traditional denominations) is whether they are engaging enough with BME communities, or relying upon old assumptions that the North East is essentially mono-racial. For secular authorities, the disproportionately high representation of certain BME communities within this research suggests that church life is still of deep importance to many non White-British communities, in spite of the assumed decline within society as a whole.

[72] See findings from the report 'Everybody Counts': https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2261061/everyonecounts_keyfindings.pdf - accessed 13 August 2015.

Excursus: New Churches in the North East where the Majority of Members are from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

Bishop Auckland	Oaks Church of Righteousness
Darlington	Living Word Parish, Darlington
Darlington	Saint Cedd's Eastern Orthodox Chapel
Durham	Chinese Methodist Church
Durham	Durham Korean Church
Durham	Good Word Ministries
Durham	Living Grace Church
Durham	Sanctuary of Power RCCG
Durham	St Cuthbert & St Bede Orthodox Church, Durham
Gateshead	Living Assembly, Gateshead
Middlesbrough	All Nations Church
Middlesbrough	Deeper Christian Life Ministries Middlesbrough
Middlesbrough	Malayalam Christian (Pentecostal) Church (UK)
Middlesbrough	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, Middlesbrough
Middlesbrough	New Life Church, Middlesbrough
Middlesbrough	Living Water Church Middlesbrough
Middlesbrough	Praise Christian Centre International
Newcastle	Chinese Methodist Church, Newcastle
Newcastle	City of God Christian Centre, Newcastle
Newcastle	Coptic Cathedral Church of St George and St Athanasius, Newcastle
Newcastle	Deeper Life Bible Church, Newcastle
Newcastle	Glory chapel, Newcastle
Newcastle	Holy Ghost Zone, Newcastle
Newcastle	Life transformation Church Newcastle
Newcastle	Living Bread, Newcastle
Newcastle	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, Newcastle
Newcastle	Newcastle Chinese Christian Church
Newcastle	Potter's House Christian Fellowship
Newcastle	Solution Assembly
Newcastle	The Kings Castle, Newcastle
Newcastle	The Romanian Orthodox Church
Newcastle	The Romany Pentecostal Church
Newcastle	The Spring of Life Christian Centre Newcastle
Newcastle	Winners' Chapel International, Newcastle
Newcastle	Newcastle Dream Church (Korean)
South Shields	The Kings Castle South Shields
South Shields	Living Faith
Stockton-on-Tees	Our Saviours Parish
Sunderland	Chapel of Light International
Sunderland	City of God Christian Centre, Sunderland

Sunderland	Deeper Christian Life Ministries Sunderland
Sunderland	Hope City Church Sunderland
Sunderland	Living Praise
Sunderland	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries
Sunderland	St Thomas (South Indian Orthodox)
Sunderland	Sunderland Filipino Christian Church
Sunderland	The Kings Castle, Sunderland
Whitley Bay	The Filipino International Church

Section 5

Geography, Chronology, Class, Gender and Generation

This section explores five key questions raised by the growth of new congregations in the North East. First, geography: what are the geographical patterns of new church growth? Second, chronology: is there an even rate of foundation, or have new church start-ups clustered at particular points in the last 35 years? Third, class: what can be said about how new churches intersect with class identities? Fourth, gender: how does this impact on new church life? Fifth, generation: what generational patterns can be observed within new churches?

Geography and new Churches

Section four shows how new churches rooted in minority ethnic communities have tended to cluster in particular parts of the North East: Newcastle, Durham City, Sunderland and Teesside. This is true of new churches more widely.

The biggest centre for new churches is inner city Newcastle. Thirty five (over one quarter) of the 125 new churches founded in the North East since 1980 are located in city of Newcastle, most within three miles of Newcastle Central Station. There is particular concentration of new churches in the centre of Newcastle and in the mile west of the city centre. Durham City has 16 new churches. Sunderland, Teesside and Gateshead have ten or more new churches. The location of new churches in the North East fits the analysis

which speaks of churches arising most often on 'trade routes' of the A1, the East Coast mainline and Teesside.[73]

A significant number of new churches are found beyond the 'trade routes', but to a lesser degree. There are markedly fewer new churches in the rural parts of the North East and along the coast of County Durham and Northumberland. There are far more new churches in Newcastle (35) than in Sunderland (15) and Gateshead (11) combined. There are more new churches in Durham City (16) than in Sunderland, although Sunderland is far larger by population.

An additional development linked to location is the development of churches which have been set up in premises on industrial or shopping estates. Examples include Emmanuel Church, Durham and Amazing Grace, Stockton. These churches are primarily accessed by car. They seek to serve a specific area, but one which is markedly larger than many historic church congregations. The location of such churches is likely to affect their membership. What this means is a matter which merits further research.

Beyond the major 'trade routes', new churches are rare in the rural North East, but not entirely absent. They are found in the market towns – such as Hexham (3), Morpeth (1), Barnard Castle (1) and Wooler (1). A number are found in the smaller urban settlements north of Newcastle such as Cramlington, Killingworth and Blyth. Amongst the smaller urban settlements of County Durham the incidence of new churches is patchy. There is a significant cluster of four new churches in Newton Aycliffe. By contrast, neighbouring Darlington, despite a much larger population, has only five, Hartlepool has two and the Consett/Shotley Bridge area has none. More detailed study would be needed to ascertain

[73] For a discussion of 'trade routes', see: Goodhew, 'Church Growth in Britain', *Church Growth in Britain*, pp. 8-9, 224-6, 255.

why the distribution of new churches has this uneven quality. It seems that, alongside major trade routes such as the East Coast mainline and the A1, there are secondary trade routes – such as the A69 and Newcastle-Carlisle branch railway line which passes near Hexham. To a degree, new churches are clustering on such secondary trade routes too.

New churches in the North East are, thus, a predominantly urban phenomenon. More than this, they cluster in the central and inner wards of the main urban areas. There are micro-patterns within the urban centres. New churches in Newcastle are found more in the western inner wards than the eastern inner wards. Sunderland's new churches are mostly south of the river Wear, even though a large segment of Sunderland is north of the Wear. Most noticeably, the outer suburbs of Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, Durham City and Teesside have, overall, seen little new church activity - less than market towns such as Hexham and Barnard Castle. Understanding the precise causes of these patterns is worthy of investigation. But the patterns themselves chime with arguments of historian David Bebbington on the social and spatial trends in the spread of religious ideas and practices. Bebbington argues that churches experience patterns of cultural diffusion whereby movements circulate in the same ways as the movement of people.[74]

[74] D. Bebbington, 'Evangelicalism and Cultural Diffusion', in M. Smith (ed.), *British Evangelical Identities Past and Present*, volume one, (Bletchley: Paternoster 2008).

Chronology:

Section four outlines the chronological pattern of churches rooted in minority ethnic communities, indicating that new churches markedly proliferated from around 2000 onwards. This pattern holds true for new churches as a whole. The pace of foundation rose slightly in the 1990s, compared to the 1980s. It then markedly increased from the turn of the century. As previously noted, some new churches have started since 1980 and then folded. These are not included in this data since their number and nature is difficult to ascertain with certainty. Their inclusion in the table below would make the 'spike' of foundations in recent years less steep, but the number of new church closures does not appear to be large, so would not markedly affect the table below.[75]

Number of New Churches started:

1980s	15
1990s	19
2000s	40
2010 to 2015	25[76]

The rate of foundation has increased further since 2010, with the caveat that the data for the most recent period is so recent that such new churches have an inherent provisionality. The research team came across eleven new churches founded between 2013 and 2015[77] and plans to found a further three congregations in the North East in the latter half of

[75] For data on new church closures, see: p. 34.
[76] The precise date of foundation was ascertainable for the majority, but not for all, new churches – thus not all the 125 new churches are included in this table.
[77] Churches founded between 2013 and 2015: Southwick Community Church, Destiny Church (Durham), Hexham Prebyterian Church, New Life Church (Middlesbrough), Filipino International Church (Whitley Bay), The Point (Hexham), Chinese Methodist Church (Durham), Tyneside Central Church (Newcastle), Church in the Park (Newcastle), Hope City Church (Sunderland) and Trinity Church, Sunderland.

2015.[78] The increase in the rate of foundation since 2000 is, to a significant degree, fuelled by migration patterns. But the rate of increase, especially in the last five years, is due to other factors too. Those founded between 2013 and 2015 were predominantly not based within particular minority ethnic communities. The chronology of new churches founded by historic denominations is discussed in more detail in section seven. But it should be noted that the majority of new churches in the North East started by historic churches were started in the 1980s and 1990s. Whilst the number of new church 'start-ups' is growing, the number started by historic denominations has slowed in the last 15 years.

Class Basis of New Churches

Class is a slippery concept for discussion. Definitions of class categories vary, as do academic and popular usage of class vocabulary. But some simple findings can be extrapolated from the results.

Location is a blunt but meaningful factor regarding class. Whether a new congregation is located in (a) the more affluent market town of Morpeth, (b) the university town of Durham City, (c) inner city Benwell in Newcastle or (d) the less affluent small town of Bishop Auckland in County Durham says something about its class location. The geographical spread of new churches suggests that they are markedly more urban than rural. Within cities, they cluster in the inner cities markedly more than the suburbs. Thus, in Newcastle the inner city areas of Benwell, Elswick, Heaton and Fenham are far more likely to have new congregations than outer suburbs such as Gosforth or Ponteland. Significant numbers of

[78] There are plans to start new congregations in late 2015 in Benwell, Gosforth and Hartlepool. See: http://stjosephsbenwell.org.uk/ (accessed 1 July 2015); http://www.christchurchnewcastle.net/resources/the-blog/post/christ-church-gosforth-weekend-away (accessed 12 August 2015); http://www.gracechurchhartlepool.co.uk/values-1/ (accessed 12 August 2015).

new churches have arisen in Sunderland, Stockton and Middlesbrough – towns which are amongst the least affluent areas of Britain.

Beyond the main urban centres new churches have a presence in some commuter-belt towns such as Hexham and Morpeth. But they are also found in less affluent small towns such as Blyth, Cramlington, Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe. However, there are significant urban areas – such as Hartlepool, Consett-Shotley Bridge and parts of Gateshead – where new churches are little found.

Ethnicity has correlations with class identities, albeit complex correlations. The very wide range of ethnic groups present in new churches[79] indicates that they are connecting with a wide social mix and certainly reaching well beyond that which could be termed 'middle class'.

New churches illustrate the limitations of much class terminology. The North East region has been seen historically and in the present as emblematic of working class identity. But defining what is 'working class' in the contemporary North East is increasingly complex. The inhabitants of ethnically highly diverse inner city Newcastle, close to significant cultural, educational and economic centres of activity can be seen as 'working class' and the new churches have a significant presence in such communities. But the term 'working class' is also used of inhabitants of towns along the Durham coastline such as Peterlee, Hartlepool and Easington where the population is overwhelmingly white, often poorly educated and where the local economy has yet to recover fully from the loss of heavy industry - and the new churches are far less prominent in such locations. However, it is also important to note that new churches are largely absent from villages and the outer suburbs of the North East -

[79] See: pp. 41-2.

where many of the more affluent residents live. New churches interact with class identity in complex ways which cannot be defined precisely without further work.

Gender

The researcher was phoning a new black majority church in the North East. It was a woman's voice who answered. 'Can I speak to the pastor please?', the researcher asked. 'That's me', came the reply. The researcher asked if he could ask some questions for a research project. 'Sure', she said, 'only I have just come in off nights, so I can only give you ten minutes. I need to get a shower and go to bed.'

The researcher completed the survey, hurriedly. But he came off the phone with a host of questions: about how someone could work night shifts *and* lead a church, about the experience of leading a largely black congregation in a largely white part of Britain and about how gender intersected with new church leadership. The role of gender in new churches is beyond the remit of this project but some things can be said.

First, the bulk of new churches appear to be led by men – but this is not always the case. As in British Christianity more widely, new churches appear to have a large female membership and many may be predominantly female.[80] But attitudes to gender roles vary. Some new churches are highly conservative and see church leadership as a male preserve.[81] Some are strongly egalitarian.[82] A minority of new churches are led by women.[83]

[80] C. Morgan, 'A study into the male- female ratio of student worshippers at King's Church Durham', MA dissertation, Durham University, 2015.
[81] For example, Christchurch, Durham.
[82] For example, Northern Lights, Newcastle.
[83] For example, Life Church, Newton Aycliffe.

Some stand in between these positions, willing to accept women in leadership but having a leadership team which is predominantly male.[84]

Second, as a plethora of studies show, whatever the formal power dynamics, power is held in a multitude of informal ways which mean that the nature and role of gender is not always what it seems. One common form of leadership amongst new churches is leadership held by one or more married couples.[85] In these cases, the man tends to be the titular head, but the practical expression of power relations may be different to its public expression.

All this is happening with a North East region where, during the dominance of heavy industry, gender roles were often tightly defined. It would be a valuable area of research to compare gender roles in new churches within the context of changing gender roles within wider North Eastern society.

Generation

Section 3 showed that new churches have significant connectivity with those under the age of 40. Further research is needed to give detail on this question. But an example is the way that new churches are attracting a large number of churchgoing students in the North East. A significant number of new churches are close to the five universities of the North East. Many new churches emphasise working with the student community. Interview data shows that students formed a significant percentage of new church congregations. Roman Catholic students have a particular experience of churchgoing, education and socialisation which is distinct from most other Christian students. The project's findings indicate that the

[84] For example, Kings Church, Durham.
[85] For example: Hope Church, Bedlington; Bethshan, Durham.

majority of non-catholic churchgoing students in Durham are attending new churches.[86] This may well be the case in Newcastle, Sunderland and Teesside as well.[87] Since patterns within student Christianity have a profound impact on wider Christianity this is a key development for the North East and beyond.

Conclusion

This section is, by its nature, an initial exploration of complex matters which require much greater research to provide detailed conclusions. However, some conclusions can be drawn.

New churches cluster along 'trade routes'. There are primary 'trade routes' such as the A1, Eastcoast mainline and A66 and secondary trade routes such as the A19, A69 and the Newcastle-Carlisle railway line. New churches are especially to be found in inner city Newcastle and Durham City. Sunderland, Teesside and Gateshead also contain substantial numbers of new churches. In addition, a significant number lie outside these areas. They are little found in rural areas and along the coastline of County Durham. New churches in the North East are predominantly an urban phenomenon and are mainly found in the centre and inner wards of urban areas. They are little found in the outer suburbs.

In class terms, as in ethnic terms, they are diverse. They are common amongst ethnically mixed working class communities. They are less visible in the rural North East, the outer

[86] New churches in Durham with a significant number of students include: Kings Church, Christchurch, Emmanuel Church and Bethshan Church – but other Durham new churches have student members, to a smaller degree.
[87]Thus, Christian societies amongst North East students give prominence to new churches in their advice to students on possible churches. See: http://www.northumbriacu.com/churches/#christchurchnewcastle; http://www.newcastle-cu.com/whats-on/church-search/; http://diccu.co.uk/churches/ – accessed 10 April 2015.

suburbs and amongst some traditional white working class communities. It would be incorrect to label them as ‘middle class’.

In terms of chronology, the rate of foundation of new churches has been rising since the 1980s and strongly since around 2000. It shows no signs of slowing and some signs of speeding up. Partly this links into migration patterns, but other dynamics are at work.

In terms of gender, much more work would be needed to give concrete conclusions. But the evidence suggests that, whilst new churches are mostly male-led, some new churches are led by women and gender impacts on leadership in a wide variety of ways.

In terms of generation, new churches have a significant ministry amongst children, young people and young adults. They have a particular presence amongst churchgoing students in the North East. New churches in recent decades may well have become the primary churches where non-Catholic students attend church in the North East.

Section 6

New church engagement with the Wider Community

It has been asserted to researchers that many new churches are predominantly inward focussed 'holy huddles', with little interest in or engagement with the community outside the church gates. Extensive research would be needed to test this assertion, but data was gathered on the extent to which new churches in the North East are engaging with their local communities and what forms this engagement may take. Churches were asked the open question 'How do you connect with or serve the local community?' and encouraged to interpret and respond to this how they saw fit. Every single church surveyed about the topic said they involved themselves in some sense with the wider community. This section offers some initial analysis of the nature of that engagement.

What counts as 'engagement' with the community is a matter for debate. It might be seen solely as support for charitable activities such as food banks or work with the homeless. However, this excludes more informal and small-scale activities. Using criteria drawn from a report by the Church of England's Church Urban Fund on social action[88] as a basic framework, the various responses were broken down into a number of broad categories. The nature of the responses means that this is far from an exact science, and it cannot be assumed that every church's list is exhaustive – particularly among the bigger churches. Equally, church leaders may have exaggerated their involvement for whatever reasons. However there are a number of interesting findings that emerge. The vast majority of churches interviewed (40 out of 53) were involved in multiple forms of community engagement, with many (at least 10, depending on interpretation of the responses) involved

[88] *Growing Church Through Social Action: A National Survey of Church-Based Action to Tackle Poverty*, Benita Hewitt, Church Urban Fund, 2012.

in five (or more) different areas of community engagement. With many of these areas it is difficult to know to what extent these projects are engaging with individuals outside of the existing church congregations, or primarily working with those already 'within the fold' – thus barely overcoming the 'holy huddle' critique.

A large element of this involvement comes in directly assisting members of the community perceived to be in need for a variety of reasons. For example, 13 from 53 churches provide or are involved with Food Banks, 8 are involved with care for the elderly, and 8 engage in specific work with asylum seekers, immigrants, and other international citizens. As mentioned in section 4, this last element can involve anything from Bollywood nights to providing legal help for those with immigration difficulties. Work with adults with special needs and mental health difficulties, clothes banks, job clubs and employment assistance, and relationship counselling, amongst many other things were also mentioned. Beyond Food Banks, food generally plays a large role in many community initiatives undertaken by new churches. 17 churches are involved in cafes, lunches, dinners, or individual events focussed around food. Often this is aimed towards the community generally, but a number of churches run events specifically for the homeless, for example soup runs and cafés. Unsurprisingly, many churches also report connections with charities and international links.

Another well-represented element of community engagement is church involvement in youth and children's work. This is a particular element wherein determining between external community involvement and congregational involvement may be difficult to discern, as the form and intended audience of these groups can differ significantly. However, the fact that the church leaders placed this within the 'community engagement' section rather than within the question concerning discipleship would suggest that these is seen by them

as a community project. Of the churches interviewed, 11 run parent and toddler groups, while 8 run groups for children and young people, 5 are involved in schools work, and 4 run other events specifically for children and young people. It is likely that a number of these churches run multiple groups for different ages, particularly in the larger churches, and so the impact may be larger than these initial numbers appear.

A further aspect of new church engagement of the community is where a new church has sought deliberately focus on a section of the community with particular needs. Examples of this are the 'Connect' congregations run through the charity Junction 42 which seek to work with those released from prison and the 'Oasis' congregation in the Anglican parish of Blaydon and Swalwell, which has a particular ministry to those on the margins.[89]

One area with slight question marks around it would be the role of evangelism and explicitly faith based initiatives within community engagement. A number of churches mentioned their public evangelism, guest services, or introduction to Christianity courses as part of their community engagement and service. This may strike some as hardly equivalent with operating a Food Bank, but it is interesting nevertheless that a number of churches perceive this as an important element of their community engagement. These are clearly events focussed towards those outside of the current congregation and in this sense are community engagement attempts. They also may well coincide with elements from other sections within this chapter – for example having a meal before a guest service. One may also ask why for a community engagement attempt to be 'legitimate' it must be serving entirely secular needs. Many churches would argue that their primary role in society is to serve the communities *spiritual* needs, alongside physical and emotional needs, and so evangelism and other similar events are a central part of their community engagement.

[89] See: http://www.stlukesnewcastle.co.uk/about-st-lukes/junction-42/ and http://www.blaydonandswalwell.webeden.co.uk/oasis/4531227948 - accessed 15 September 2015.

Finally, it must be noted that two churches did not specify any collective community engagement activities in which they participated but emphasised the fact that they encourage their congregation members to engage in community enrichment through their relationships, jobs, and voluntary service. This secondary involvement may indicate a lack of engagement with the community, and certainly on the surface would seem this way. However, were the churches to have the eagerness for preaching this message that they claim, and the congregation members were to be enthusiastic followers of this teaching, the indirect impact of the church upon the community could be considerable.

Section 7

Denominational and Theological Patterns within New Churches

Just as discussion of matters such as class identity is complex with regard to new churches, so is discussion of denominational and theological patterns. Terminology is often imprecise and/or used by different people to mean different things. As is the case with much of this project, more work is needed to give detailed conclusions regarding denomination and theology, but some broad comments can be made.

Denominational Basis of New Churches

Historic denominations are present across the North East. In many cases, this presence is active and innovative. Such innovative work, however worthwhile, will often not qualify as a 'new church' under the definition used in this report. However, eighteen of the 125 new churches come from the main historic denominations active in the UK; nine are Church of England, six Baptist, two Methodist and one Roman Catholic.

The Baptist denomination is proportionately small in the North East, both in comparison to other denominations and in comparison to the density of Baptist churches in some other parts of England. In proportion to its size in the North East, it has been the most active of the historic denominations in starting new congregations – a finding which chimes with wider evidence of recent Baptist history in Britain.[90] The Church of England has, in terms of numbers, been the most active of the historic denominations in starting new churches in the North East since 1980. However, it already had a very large number of existing

[90] I. Randall, 'Baptist Growth in England', in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain,* pp. 59-77.

churches in the area, so new churches are a much smaller proportion of its total number of churches than for the Baptist denomination. Such Church of England churches as have been started in the North East since 1980 started mainly in the 1980s and 1990s. Three of the nine have started since the turn of the century.[91]

One significant aspect of Anglican and Methodist life in the past decade has been the advent of what are called 'fresh expressions' of church. These are forms of church which utilise non-traditional liturgies, patterns of ministry and venues for worship. They have become widespread in parts of England and have spread into some other parts of the western world.[92] This paragraph relies on data from the organisation Fresh Expressions, whose primary supporters are the Church of England and the Methodist Church, and from work by a team from the Church Army led by George Lings.[93] The regional spread of fresh expressions varies. Fewer are found in the North East than many parts of England. Some overlap with the definition of new church used in this report and are included in this research.[94] The precise definition of what constitutes a fresh expression of church varies. Some fresh expressions, whilst highly laudable in themselves, do not fit the definition of church used in this report, since they meet less than once a week.[95] Of the small number of fresh expressions in the North East, some (such as St Luke's, Elswick, Newcastle) are

[91] The new Anglican churches in the North East, as defined using the criteria used in this project are: Burbank Community Church (Hartlepool); St Francis, Ingleby Barwick; St Elizabeth's, Newton Aycliffe; St Andrew's Church, Cramlington; St Peter's Church, Cramlington; St Wilfred's, Doxford; St Luke's, Newcastle, Oasis Church, Blaydon; The Ark in the Park, Newcastle. Three were started after 2000, the rest came into being in the 1980s or 1990s.

[92] For an account of the development of fresh expressions, see: G. Lings, 'A History of Fresh Expressions and Church Planting in the Church of England', in Goodhew, (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain*; Report of an Anglican-Methodist Working Party, *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church*, (London,: Church House Publishing, 2012). Other denominations have utilised the concept of 'fresh expressions', but Anglicans and Methodists have embraced it most vigourously.

[93] https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/ - accessed 8 July 2015. *An Analysis of Fresh Expressions of Church and Church Plants begun in the period, 1992-2012,* (Sheffield: Church Army 2013).

[94] For example: Connect (Durham); Life Church (Newton Aycliffe).

[95] For example: St Paul's Community Project, Willington Quay (see: http://www.stpaulscentre.btik.com/Church) and The Ark at Crawcrook (see: https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/arkcrawcrook) – accessed 8 July 2015.

active, but a number have closed in recent years.[96] This report has shown the large number of new forms of church appearing in the North East since 1980. However, whilst fresh expressions of church have proliferated in some parts of England, they are, as yet, a small part of new church life in the North East.

Amongst the new churches *not* started by historic denominations, there are a wide range of other denominations which are opening churches: notably (a) denominations rooted in specific minority ethnic communities and (b) denominations which have arisen in the west in the last 50 years. Denominations rooted in minority ethnic communities include those based in West Africa – such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Deeper Life Christian Ministry (also known as Deeper Life Bible Church) and Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries. Denominations which have arisen in the west since the 1960s and which have more recently begun to spread to the North East include the Vineyard churches, New Frontiers churches and Destiny Church, based in Glasgow. A further significant number appear to be independent of any wider denomination, although many such churches do connect with looser networks such as the Evangelical Alliance.

Orthodox Churches are a distinctive presence in British Christianity. The list of new churches includes five Orthodox congregations. Orthodox churches are keen not to see themselves as 'new', but they are classed as 'new' for the purposes of this study since prior to the 1960s the Orthodox had minimal presence in the region. Five of the new churches are Orthodox. But if the definition is broadened to include churches founded in the 1960s and 1970s and churches which meet less than once a week, the Orthodox church founded

[96] The following are fresh expressions of church which opened and then closed: Mind the Gap (Gateshead); Ss Barney and Judes (Newcastle); the Ruth Project (Stanley) – for information on these projects, see: https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories - accessed 8 July 2015.

eight congregations in the North East since 1960.[97] Since Orthodox identity, often linked to ethnic identity, has deep connotations regardless of regularity of worship, this indicates a significant Orthodox Christian community arising in the region. This said, some Orthodox congregations – notably that in Durham – draw people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including a significant proportion who could be termed 'white British'. Whilst the bulk of new churches in the North East could be classified as 'evangelical-charismatic', the rise of Orthodox congregations is a sign that other denominations within Christianity, very different to the 'evangelical-charismatic', are also able to found significant numbers of new congregations in the region.

Theological Tradition of New Churches

Classifying the theology of the 125 churches is delicate and difficult. Those rooted in historic denominations are rooted, to a degree, within the theology of their respective denomination. Whilst the bulk of new churches could be labelled 'evangelical-charismatic', as has been noted, a significant minority are Orthodox. Northern Lights in Newcastle, comes from the Metropolitan Community Church. It is the one new church which identifies with the liberal wing of contemporary Christianity.

Using the 'Bebbington quadrilateral'[98], which has been widely used as a definition of evangelicalism, the majority of new churches would fit the theological label 'evangelical' or 'evangelical-charismatic'. The new churches are similar in that they draw, mostly, from what

[97] Five Orthodox congregations were founded since 1980: parishes in Durham, Newcastle (Coptic), Newcastle (Romanian), Darlington, and Sunderland (South Indian). In addition, a Greek Orthodox congregation was founded in Newcastle in the 1960s and two congregations meet less than once a week: the Russian Orthodox congregation in Newcastle and the Orthodox congregation in Middlesbrough.
[98] D. Bebbington defined evangelicalism as Biblicist, activist, conversionist and crucicentric in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (Unwin-Hyman: London 1989), pp. 1-19.

would be seen as 'orthodox' Christianity – stressing the Bible and historic creeds and doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation.

But the label 'evangelical-charismatic' contains much diversity and the new churches of the North East which could be classified within this label have important differences with one another. Some draw strongly from the Pentecostal/charismatic movement – such as the Vineyard churches. Some churches draw strongly from the reformed tradition of theology – such new Presbyterian churches.[99] There are a variety of views on gender. Some new churches have women leaders[100]; some strongly promote mixed-gender leadership[101]; some see congregational leadership as restricted only to men[102]. There are a variety of approaches to mission. As shown in section six, the bulk of new congregations see mission as a mixture of evangelism and social action across the wider community. A small proportion see mission as primarily or only evangelism.[103]

Theological terminology is often used in imprecise ways and it can be freighted with pejorative meanings. It should be noted that, whilst the bulk of new churches come from what can be loosely called the 'evangelical-charismatic' wing of the English churches, this does not mean that new churches cannot come from other traditions. Alongside the already-noted presence of new Orthodox churches, it is striking that the two vigorous churches which have established themselves in the large new town of Ingelby Barwick are catholic in tradition.[104] The capacity for starting new catholic churches (whether anglo- or Roman) may be greater than has yet been realised. Conversely, whilst small sections of the North East's evangelicalism are highly hostile to the surrounding culture and highly

[99] New Presbyterian churches, which stand outside the historic Presbyterianism, have appeared in Gateshead, Hexham and Durham. In addition the Reformed Evangelical Church has arisen in Newcastle.
[100] For example: Life Church, Newton Aycliffe
[101] For example: Kings Church, Durham
[102] For example: Christchurch, Durham
[103] See: p. 66.
[104] One, St Francis, is Anglican. One, St Therese, is Roman Catholic.

sectarian, 'fundamentalism' is used so imprecisely and with such pejorative connotations that the term is problematic in academic analysis.[105] Section six has shown that the bulk of the North East's new churches combine their evangelicalism with a strong interest in connecting with the wider community.

Ecclesiology

The vast majority of new churches mostly meet on a Sunday and most contain the word 'church' in their title. Some writers have argued that 'emerging church' – defined as movements that often lack these characteristics - represent the future for western churches.[106] The evidence of new churches in the North East does not suggest that this is so.

The new churches in the North East are, however, highly flexible in other matters. There is great diversity in the buildings used by congregations. Some are borrowing a church building from another denomination; some have built their own structure, some are hiring a venue from a non-ecclesial provider. These include schools, community centres, the hall of a student union building and a wide range of other premises.

Similarly, just as new churches are utilising buildings that may or may not look like traditional churches, the liturgies used by new churches vary greatly. Some enact worship which draws consciously on ancient patterns – such as the new Orthodox congregations. The bulk of new churches utilise musical instrumentation, liturgy and forms of worship

[105] For a longer discussion of the problems with this term, see: D. Goodhew, 'Evangelical but not 'Fundamentalist': a Case Study of the New Churches in York, 1980-2011', in D. Bebbington and D. Ceri Jones, (eds.), *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom During the Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: OUP 2013).
[106] See, for example: P. Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*, (Baker: Grand Rapids 2008).

which have arisen during the last fifty years – more powerpoint than hymnbook, as it were. A theme worthy of further study is new church use of I.T.. Most new church congregations make heavy use of the internet and social media. The lists of new churches in appendices one and two provide web addresses where they exist. New churches appear significantly more keen to use such resources than historic churches. How this is informing their ecclesiologies is hard to say, but is a subject worthy of further study.

New churches use a strongly voluntarist ecclesiology. Much, sometimes all, depends on the initiative of the leader or leadership team. Most new churches did not seek permission to do what they are doing. Some seek to operate in connection with other churches in the area but many see themselves as free to operate as they think best – on the premise that there is much need for additional congregations in the contemporary UK.

There is a wide variety of sacramental theology underlying sacramental practice within new churches. Unsurprisingly, new churches from the Orthodox tradition stress the sacramental markedly more so than most other new churches. However the churches interviewed all practise communion in some form. For the majority it is conducted monthly, although a significant minority celebrate communion more frequently and a significant minority celebrate communion less than once a month. A small number of congregations spoke of conducting communion within small groups in members' homes. One congregation spoke of how it had conducted a communion service once in the past year, but how it had a weekly communal meal for the church community, which it regarded as 'closer to the early church'.[107] Almost all practise baptism, some baptising large numbers, but a significant minority have not baptised anyone in the year prior to when they were surveyed. Orthodox,

[107] Of the 53 churches interviewed, 30 stated that they conducted communion monthly, nine did so weekly (or more often), two did so bi-weekly and ten conducted communion less than once a month. In two cases communion was conducted in home groups and in two cases communion was conducted in the congregation and in home groups.

Catholic and some Anglican new churches are conducting numerous infant baptisms. Most other new churches practiced 'believer's baptism', in which candidates were either adults or young people old enough to answer for themselves.[108]

Conclusion

Some generalisations are possible about the theology and ecclesiology of new churches in the North East, but with the caveat that such generalisations should be treated with care. Although 18 of the 125 new churches in the North East come from the historic denominations, the large majority do not. It should be noted that the historic churches, by their nature, have long-standing congregations in most parts of the North East. They are understandably more focussed on sustaining/growing such congregations than starting new congregations. Nonetheless, the smallness of the number of new churches having their origin in the historic denominations is significant, given the large number of new congregations. Most new churches could be classified as 'evangelical-charismatic' – with two caveats. First, a significant strand is Orthodox; second, the label 'evangelical-charismatic' covers a diverse range of ecclesial bodies.

This is apparent when the theologies operative amongst the new churches are examined. Alongside a general attachment to 'orthodox' Christianity, (such as stressing the Bible and historic creeds and doctrines of the Trinity and incarnation), a wide range of theological emphases are in operation. This feeds into a strongly voluntarist ecclesiology which is high on entrepreneurial vigour and sometimes low on connectivity with other churches. The new churches are an implicit challenge to ecumenical bodies which have tended to be

[108] Twenty four of the 53 churches interviewed stated that they had not baptised anyone in the twelve months prior to the interview, although the bulk of such churches then spoke of earlier baptisms and/or plans for future baptisms. Conversely, nineteen of the 53 churches interviewed stated that they had baptised ten or more people in the past twelve months.

dominated by the historic denominations. Equally, given the vulnerabilities that can come with a voluntarist ecclesiology, new churches may be able to benefit from having a wider support network.

Section 8

Conclusion

The data from the New Churches in the North East Project has major implications regarding three major areas of debate: first, secularization; second, the wider social context of the North East; third, the nature of the church in the North East. Alongside considerable secularization of the North East since 1980, there has also been considerable church growth in the North East since 1980. In terms of the wider social context, the new churches are one of the most racially diverse elements of contemporary North East society. In terms of the nature of the church in the North East, new churches are mostly outside the historic denominations and form a substantial and rapidly growing segment of the North East church. In this section these three conclusions are unpacked in turn.

Secularization

Secularization is not a one-way street. There has been marked decline in North Eastern Christianity since 1980, primarily amongst the historic churches, but this is not all that is going on. The advent of 125 new congregations since 1980, with a combined all-age usual Sunday attendance of 12 000 (equivalent to one of the smaller dioceses of the Church of England), baptising around 1000 people in the past year is a seriously significant phenomenon. The rate of new church foundation has quickened markedly since 2000. It shows no sign of slowing down. In its congregational life, the North East has seen significant

church decline *and* significant church growth between 1980 and 2015. The hegemony of the secularization narrative is called into question by the facts on the ground.[109]

Existing scholarship on secularization focuses mainly on the historic denominations[110], which produced 18 of the 125 new churches. By focusing mainly on the historic churches scholars over-emphasise church decline and under-emphasise church growth. Since a large number of BME Christians in the North East are worshipping in the new churches, a further aspect of existing scholarship's stress on historic churches is that it undercounts BME churchgoing. When BME churchgoing is noted, depictions of BME churchgoing can be misleading. A recent *Times* article assumed BME churchgoing was mostly due to 'the black churches'.[111] This is not correct. Churchgoing by black people is *a* key part of BME churchgoing in the North East and nationally, but BME churchgoing is far too diverse to be encapsulated by the phrase 'the black churches'. The North East, although rapidly diversifying, remains one of the least diverse regions of England in terms of ethnicity. Given the vitality of BME churchgoing in the North East, this factor is much more significant when looking at England as a whole. In an academic study from 2012, it was argued that around 5000 new congregations had been started across the UK since 1980. Recent data from London, supplemented by the report on the North East, suggests strongly that considerably more than 5000 new churches have founded since 1980 in the UK.[112]

[109] A study of new churches in the North East thus chimes, to some degree, with the analysis of C. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2007).
[110] Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*; Bruce, *God is Dead*; Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited*; Heelas and Woodhead, *Spiritual Revolution*; Voas and Crockett, 'Religion in Britain'; McLeod, *Religious Crisis*.
[111] See, for example: *The Times*, 2 February 2015.
[112] The figure of 5000 new churches opening since 1980 was put forward in Goodhew, 'Introduction', in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain*, pp. 7-8. This figure was put forward before the appearance of further research by Brierley and Rogers which points to dramatic growth in the number of churches in London and significant growth in the number of churches more widely. See: Brierley, *UK Church Statistics 2*, table 1.1; Brierley, *Capital Growth*; Rogers, *Being Built Together*. Brierley, in *UK Church Statistics 2*, table 1.1.2, estimates that 3004 new churches opened in the years 2008 and 2013 across the UK.

New churches in the North East show that the developments seen in London are happening even in the region of England least like London, albeit at a slower rate. The new churches of the North East show that it is possible to start and grow churches in the late modern North East. A society can 'resacralise'[113] as well as secularise. Indeed, a society can 'resacralise' and secularise at one and the same time

The North East illustrates a phenomenon present more widely in Britain, how some congregations can thrive as society becomes more plural ideologically. This correlates with 'rational choice theory' – the thesis, better known in the US than in Europe, that when religious groups have to compete in an environment of many competing ideologies they may expand as each struggles to connect with the wider community. 'Rational Choice Theory' has its weaknesses as a theory, but deserves deeper consideration with regard to Britain than it has hitherto received.[114] The new churches of the North East also chime with Grace Davie's argument that religion in Britain is shifting from a religion of obligation to a religion of consumption, where people have to 'opt in' rather than needing to 'opt out'.[115]

It must be stressed that there is great religious variety within the North East. The various flaws in the statistics mean that acquiring a 'net' figure for the region – the balance of attendance once decline and growth are accounted for – is highly problematic. However some things can be said. The scale of overall congregational decline in the North East since 1980[116] means that it is likely that there has been 'net' decline of North East congregations overall since 1980 – but once the new churches are factored in, the size of the 'net' decline

[113] The term 'resacralization' lacks precise definition, but is used here in the sense used in G. Davie, "Resacralization", in B. Turner (ed.), *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
[114] For an evaluation of rational choice theory, see: G. Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, (London: Sage, 2007), pp. 67-88, 147 and Goodhew, 'The Death and Resurrection of Christianity in Contemporary Britain', in *Church Growth in Britain*, pp. 14-16, 255.
[115] Davie, *Religion in Britain*, pp. 8-7.
[116] As outlined on pp. 10-11.

is significantly smaller than has been hitherto assumed. Moreover, in significant parts of the North East the 'net' figure is steady or growing. The number of new churches arising, for example, in the City of Newcastle (35) is so great that it offsets, or more than offsets, congregational decline in the rest of Newcastle's congregations. Within certain areas of the North East - notably inner city Newcastle and Durham City - new churches have arisen to such a marked degree that the aggregate number of people in church on a Sunday in those areas has almost certainly grown since 1980. Conversely, in the most settled parts of the region, where there are few new churches, (such as the North East coastline, aside from Sunderland, and much of the countryside) the substantial decline in the number of people in church on a Sunday since 1980, far outweighs any new church activity.

Socially and religiously, inner city Newcastle, parts of Teesside and Durham City are exhibiting similar trends to many parts of London, parts of Birmingham and cities such as York.[117] In terms of ecclesial vitality, some parts of the North East are similar to London and some parts of the North East are very different to London. The broad-brush assumption that London is 'another planet' is incorrect. Rather, the religious ecology of the North East region is now strikingly varied. Thus, for example, Benwell in inner city Newcastle (with its burgeoning minority ethnic congregations), Hexham (a small market town with three new congregations) and Consett (a largely white, post-industrial town with no new churches) have had seriously different religious trajectories since 1980.

This raises the fascinating question of what would be found if a similar survey was done in the West Midlands, Manchester or the burgeoning towns around London. The new congregations of London and the North East are centred on major urban areas. The old assumption that the city is the incubator of all things secular, is no longer true – and,

[117] Brierley, *Capital Growth*; C. Marsh, 'The Diversification of English Christianity: the Example of Birmingham' and Goodhew, 'Sideline to Mainline', in Goodhew (ed.), *Church Growth in Britain*.

arguably, was never as true as has been sometimes assumed. The evidence suggests that in twenty-first century Britain the reverse is often true – with religiosity most vibrant in cities and often more fragile in remote rural communities. More generally, whilst some aspects of society are growing more secular, at street level congregations are proliferating in many places. It is now widely recognised that in 'net' terms, the church in London has been growing for several decades.[118] Assuming that, in 'net' terms, the church in the North East is shrinking, it could be argued that other parts of England stand between these two regions. Moreover, the mottled pattern of growth and decline exhibited across the North East is likely to be found in other regions.

The Wider Social Context

The North East is sometimes seen as ethnically largely 'white British'. The phrase 'multi-cultural' is sometimes used as synonymous with a portrait of non-Christian faith communities supplementing 'white British' communities. And the word 'Christian' is sometimes used as if it were synonymous with 'white' and 'British'. This survey of new churches in the North East shows all these assertions are increasingly untrue in this region. The new churches are socially significant for many reasons, but a key reason why they matter is their racial diversity. The new churches are one of the most racially diverse elements of contemporary North East society, which is itself rapidly diversifying. That is a fact of great significance for wider society, for local government and for other agencies.

Moreover, the ethnic diversification of the North East is strikingly 'diverse'. Whereas in earlier decades migrants to the UK came primarily from Commonwealth countries, the BME communities are truly global in their diversity and this in turn has an impact on church life.

[118] See, for example: Brierley, *Capital Growth*.

The ethnic diversification of the North East is happening alongside the decline of the 'white British' population which, in some areas, is declining rapidly. When age and ethnicity are considered, it is clear that the children and young people of the North East are markedly more diverse than other age-groups. The ethnic diversification most visible in central Newcastle, parts of Teesside and Durham City is likely to spread to many other parts of the North East in the coming years. Such changes are a key framing reality for churches and wider society.

More generally, there are observable patterns to the growth of new congregations. They concentrate on the 'trade routes' – centres of population growth, increasing diversity and economic dynamism. Within the North East, the major 'trade routes' are embodied by the East Coast mainline railway and the A1 and A19. Thus, new churches are most often found in inner city Newcastle, Teesside and Durham City – although they have arisen in many other places too, often on what might be termed the secondary trade routes. In terms of social class, new churches are highly diverse. It would be inaccurate to describe them as 'middle class'.

Generation is a significant aspect of new churches and may become more significant in the future. New churches have a substantial proportion of members under forty and the growing ethnic diversity of the North East is likely to swell the number of younger new church members. New churches also have particular strength amongst churchgoing students in the North East, a key constituency for future church life.

The North East Church

This study shows that the North East church has changed very significantly since 1980. It 1980 the North East church was composed almost entirely of churches from the historic denominations and of people whose ethnicity was 'white British'. By 2015 this had ceased to be the case. Churches outside the historic denominations, the majority with significant numbers from minority ethnic communities, now form a large and rapidly growing segment of the North East church. In certain areas - such as inner city Newcastle, Durham City and parts of Teesside – the new churches are as significant as the historic denominations.

Minority ethnic churchgoers have rapidly grown in number and they are found predominantly in the new churches. One of the most startling findings of the research was both the size of minority ethnic churchgoing and the tiny number of historic congregations with significant numbers of minority ethnic members in the North East – aside from Roman Catholicism. This was especially noticeable in areas such as Newcastle, Teesside and Durham City where there are large numbers of BME churchgoers. There remain areas of the North East (such as rural areas and the coastal areas, aside from Sunderland) where minority ethnic churchgoing is seldom seen and where the historic churches are the main expression of church – for now. However, given the rapid spread of new churches in the last decade it would be unwise to assume that that is a settled reality.

The shift in the nature of North East Christianity offers both opportunities and challenges for the Christian communities of the North East. The advent of the new churches is concrete evidence that secularization is not inevitable. Churches can be started and can grow, *even* in the 21st century, *even* in the North East. This may be a shock for some churches and church leaders. More than a few denominations, their leaders and congregations have

internalised the secularization thesis and formed a kind of 'theology of decline' in which it is assumed that churches in late modernity *must* decline, that hanging on in quiet desperation in the English way.[119] The new churches which have arisen in the North East since 1980 undermine such an assumption and offer models of how to start and grow new congregations.

On occasion, during the research process, it has been suggested to researchers that the significance of new churches is limited since they tend to last for a short period then fold, or because they are 'holy huddles' which do not connect beyond the church community or because they are 'transfer growth' – the shuffling around of a pre-existing group of believers. None of these asssertions has been found to be the case. Some new churches subsequently fold, but the number closing is small.[120] Section six shows that the bulk of new churches engage actively with the wider community. 'Transfer growth' is hard to define and to measure, but the scale of baptisms performed by new churches cautions against the assumption that they stem from the shuffling of a pre-existing group of believers.[121]

The bulk of the new churches can loosely be classified theologically as within the 'evangelical-charismatic' tradition – but such a comment requires health warnings. 'Evangelical-charismatic' encompasses a wide range of beliefs and practices. Moreover, the rise of a number of Orthodox congregations and some vigorous new churches of a catholic tradition shows the potential for new churches to arise in the North East from a wide range of Christian traditions.[122] Conversely, whilst forms of church which are called 'fresh expressions' and 'emerging churches' are more common elsewhere in England, they are

[119] For an initial exploration of 'decline theology', see Goodhew, 'Towards a Theology of Church Growth', in *Towards a Theology of Church Growth*, pp. 27-35.
[120] For more detail, see: pp. 34-5.
[121] For more detail, see: p. 36.
[122] For more detail, see: pp. 72-3.

little seen in the North East. Most new churches can reasonably be described as 'church plants'.

The number and size of new churches in the North East indicates considerable vigour. But any ecclesial triumphalism would be wholly inappropriate. Alongside the advent of the new churches, the North East has seen much congregational decline since 1980. Moreover, the new churches, whilst they have considerable strengths, also have their weaknesses. The new churches operate, frequently, in isolation or in small clusters. This limits the extent to which they can connect with the public life of the region. In addition, whilst such independency of spirit facilitates ecclesial entrepreneurialism, it can also mean a lack of accountability structures. Ecclesial structures can have a dampening impact on congregational life. But ecclesial structures do have value in dealing with the failings and frailties of individual congregations and individual leaders. A key challenge for new churches is how to retain their dynamism *and* evolve structures which facilitate their work for the long haul. A parallel challenge for the historic churches is how they can learn to start and grow new congregations. The new has much to teach the old, but could learn from the old, too.

On the cover of this report are pictures of baptisms performed at four new churches in the North East. The photos vividly express the vitality and diversity of these congregations. The examination of new churches in the North East since 1980 shows how dynamic the religious landscape has been in recent decades. From St. Aidan to early Methodism, from Tyneside's working class Catholicism to Pentecostal pioneer and Anglican priest, Alexander Boddy, the churches of the North East have a long tradition of innovation. The churches of the North East have seen substantial decline in recent decades. But that is not the whole

story. This survey of the new churches of the North East shows that the tradition of innovation is vigorously alive in the contemporary North East.

Appendix 1: List One of New Churches in the North East

Churches in the North East		
City	**Name of Church**	**Website addresses**
Ashington	Ashington Family Church	http://www.lakeshoreuk.com/Events.html
Barnard Castle	Influence Church	http://www.influencechurch.co.uk/
Bedlington	Hope Church	http://hopechurchbedlington.co.uk/
Bishop Auckland	Oaks Church of Righteousness	http://www.oakschurch.co.uk/
Bishop Auckland	West Auckland Vineyard Church	http://www.westaucklandvineyard.net/
Blyth	Blyth Family Church	http://blythfamilychurch.co.uk/
Cramlington	St. Andrew's Church	http://www.cramlingtoncofe.org.uk/standrews.html
Cramlington	St. Peter's Church	http://www.cramlingtoncofe.org.uk/stpeters.html
Darlington	Darlington Christian Fellowship	http://www.darlingtonchristianfellowship.org/
Darlington	Kings Church	http://www.kingschurchdarlington.org/
Darlington	Living Word Parish	http://www.rccguk.church/places/darlington/living-word-parish-darlington/
Darlington	Mosaic Church, Darlington Vineyard	http://mosaic-church.co.uk/
Darlington	Saint Cedd's Eastern Orthodox Chapel	http://www.churchindarlington.org.uk/churches/o_st_cedds.htm
Durham	Apostolic Lighthouse Church	http://www.alcdurham.co.uk/
Durham	Bethshan Church	http://www.bethshanchurch.net/Group/Group.aspx?ID=68960
Durham	Chinese Methodist Church	http://www.durhamdeernessmethodist.org.uk/wordpress/?page_id=612
Durham	Christchurch	http://www.christchurchdurham.org/
Durham	Connect Durham	No website
Durham	Destiny Church	http://www.destinynortheast.com/#!durham/c112j
Durham	Durham Community Church	http://www.durhamcommunitychurch.org.uk/
Durham	Durham Korean Church	http://durhamchurch.org/
Durham	Durham Presbyterian Church	http://www.depc.org.uk/
Durham	Emmanuel Church	http://www.emmanuel.org.uk/
Durham	Good Word Ministries	http://goodwordchristiancenter.org.uk/Church/
Durham	Kings Church Durham	http://www.kcd.org.uk/
Durham	Living Grace Church RCCG	http://www.rccguk.church/places/durham/living-grace-durham/
Durham	Sanctuary of Power RCCG	http://www.rccguk.church/places/durham/sanctuary-of-power-durham/
Durham	St Cuthbert & St Bede Orthodox Church	https://durhamorthodox.wordpress.com/
Durham	Durham Vineyard	http://www.durhamvineyard.org.uk/
Gateshead	Dunston Family Church	http://www.dunstonfamilychurch.co.uk/

Gateshead	Family Church Gateshead	http://www.familychurchgateshead.org.uk/
Gateshead	Gateshead Presbyterian Church	http://www.gatesheadpres.org.uk/
Gateshead	Heworth Christian Fellowship	http://www.heworthchristianfellowship.org.uk/
Gateshead	Holy Trinity, Gateshead	http://holytrinitygateshead.org.uk/
Gateshead	Living Assembly, Gateshead	http://www.rccglivingassembly.org/
Gateshead	Mulberry House Community	http://www.mulberry-house.org.uk/
Gateshead	Oasis Church, parish of Blaydon and Swalwell	http://www.blaydonandswalwell.webeden.co.uk/oasis/4531227948
Gateshead	Vision Christian Fellowship Gateshead	http://www.visionchristianfellowship.org.uk/
Hartlepool	Burbank Community Church	http://www.stranton-church.org.uk/
Hexham	The Point	https://brandnewchurch.wordpress.com/about/
Hexham	Hexham Community Church	http://www.hexhamcc.com/
Hexham	Hexham Presbyterian Church	http://hexhampres.uk/
Killingworth	Community Church	http://www.communitychurchkillingworth.com/
Middlesbrough	All Nations Church (Marton)	http://www.anc-middlesbrough.co.uk/
Middlesbrough	Deeper Christian Life Ministries	No website
Middlesbrough	Jubilee Church Teesside	http://www.jubileechurchteesside.com/
Middlesbrough	Malayalam Christian (Pentecostal) Church (UK)	http://middlesbroughchurch.org/
Middlesbrough	Middlesbrough Community Church (formerly St Aidan's Community Church)	http://www.middlesbroughcommunitychurch.org/
Middlesbrough	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries	http://www.mountainoffire.org.uk/index.php/branches
Middlesbrough	New Life Church	http://www.newlifechurchmiddlesbrough.com/
Middlesbrough	Living Water Church (RCCG)	http://www.rccguk.church/church-finder/
Middlesbrough	Praise Christian Centre International	http://www.praisecci.org/index.html
Middlesbrough	Coulby Newham Baptist Church	http://www.cnbaptist.com/
Middlesbrough	St Thérèse of Lisieux,Ingleby Barwick	http://stthereseingleby.org.uk/welcome
Middlesbrough	St. Francis CofE, Ingleby Barwick	http://www.stfrancisib.org/Pages/default.aspx
Morpeth	Morpeth Baptist Church	http://www.morpethbaptist.org/
Newcastle	The Edge Christian Centre (Assemblies of God)	http://www.findachurch.co.uk/details/newcastle-upon-tyne/53611.htm
Newcastle	Chinese Methodist Church	http://www.newcastlechinesemethodist.org.uk
Newcastle	Christchurch Newcastle - Fenham	http://www.christchurchnewcastle.net/who-we-are/fenham/
Newcastle	Christchurch Newcastle - Heaton	http://www.christchurchnewcastle.net/who-we-are/heaton/
Newcastle	City Church, Newcastle	http://city-church.co.uk/
Newcastle	City of God Christian Centre, Newcastle	http://www.cityofgodchristiancentre.org/
Newcastle	Connect Newcastle	No website
Newcastle	Coptic Cathedral Church of St George and St Athanasius, Newcastle	http://staugustinecoptic.co.uk/church-directory/

Newcastle	Cornerstone Church	https://www.cornerstonechurchnewcastle.co.uk/
Newcastle	Deeper Life Bible Church	http://www.findachurch.co.uk/search/church_view.php?church_id=13487
Newcastle	Destiny Church	http://www.destinynortheast.com/
Newcastle	Gateway Church	http://www.gatewaynewcastle.org/gateway-church/sunday-service/?view=mobile
Newcastle	Glory Chapel	http://www.glorychapelrccg.org/index.html
Newcastle	Holy Ghost Zone	http://www.rccguk.church/places/newcastle/holy-ghost-zone-newcastle/
Newcastle	Hope City Church	http://www.hopecitychurch.tv/locations/newcastle/
Newcastle	Life transformation Church	http://www.ltmn.org.uk/
Newcastle	Living Bread	http://www.livingbreadnewcastle.org.uk/
Newcastle	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries	http://www.mountainoffirenewcastle.org.uk/
Newcastle	Newcastle Chinese Christian Church	No website
Newcastle	Newcastle Christian Life Centre	http://www.mynclc.co.uk/
Newcastle	Newcastle Reformed Evangelical Church	http://www.nrechurch.co.uk/
Newcastle	Northern Lights Metropolitan Community Church	http://www.northernlightsmcc.org.uk/
Newcastle	Potter's House Christian Fellowship	http://www.pottershouse.co.uk/uk-fellowship-churches/north-east
Newcastle	Preston Grange Community Church	http://www.preston-grangecc.org.uk/
Newcastle	Solution Assembly (RCCG)	http://www.rccgsolutionassembly.org/
Newcastle	St Luke's, Newcastle	http://www.stlukesnewcastle.co.uk/
Newcastle	The Church in the Park (run by The Ark In the Park)	http://www.thearkinthepark.org/thearkipark.org/ARK_HOME.html
Newcastle	The Kings Castle	http://staging.thekingscastlechurch.org.uk/
Newcastle	The Romanian Orthodox Church	No website
Newcastle	The Romany Pentecostal Church	No website
Newcastle	The Spring of Life Christian Centre	http://www.thespringoflifechristiancentre.org/
Newcastle	Tyneside Central Church	http://tynesidechurch.org/
Newcastle	Tyneside Vineyard	http://tynesidevineyard.org.uk/
Newcastle	Winners' Chapel International,	http://www.winnerschapelnewcastle.org.uk/
Newcastle	Newcastle Dream Church	http://www.newcastledreamchurch.org/
Newton Aycliffe	Aycliffe Evangelical Church	http://www.aycliffe.net/
Newton Aycliffe	Harvest Christian Centre	http://www.harvestchristiancentre.org.uk/welcome.htm
Newton Aycliffe	Life Church	http://lifelinecommunityaction.co.uk/life-church
Newton Aycliffe	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Woodham	http://www.achurchnearyou.com/woodham-st-elizabeth-of-hungary/
Sedgefield	New Generation Church	http://www.newgenerationchurch.org.uk/
Shilbottle	Gateway Church	http://gatewaychurchnorthumberland.co.uk/leaders/

South Shields	The Kings Castle	http://staging.thekingscastlechurch.org.uk/
South Shields	Living Faith (RCCG)	http://www.livingfaithrccg.org/
Stanley	Jezreel New Testament Church	http://www.jezreel.co.uk/welcome.htm
Stockton-on-Tees	Amazing Grace	http://www.amazinggrace.eu/
Stockton-on-Tees	Destiny Church, Tees Valley	http://www.thedestinychurch.co.uk/
Stockton-on-Tees	LifeChurch	http://lifelinecommunityaction.co.uk/life-church
Stockton-on-Tees	Our Saviours Parish Norton on Tees (RCCG)	http://www.rccguk.church/places/norton-on-tees/our-saviours-parish-norton-on-tees/
Stockton-on-Tees	Norton Baptist Church	http://www.nortonbaptistchurch.org.uk/welcome.htm
Stockton-on-Tees	Tees Valley Community Church	http://www.tvcchurch.org.uk/
Stockton-on-Tees	The Vine Church, Teesside	http://www.thevinechurchteesside.com/
Sunderland	City Life Church (Assemblies of God)	http://www.clcsunderland.org/
Sunderland	Bethany City Church	http://www.bethanycitychurch.org/
Sunderland	Chapel of Light International	http://www.scli.org.uk/
Sunderland	City of God Christian Centre	http://www.cityofgodchristiancentre.org/contact-us/locations
Sunderland	Deeper Christian Life Ministries	http://in-greatbritain.net/705840976161535/
Sunderland	Hope Church	https://sites.google.com/site/hopechurchdesign/contact
Sunderland	Hope City Church	http://www.hopecitychurch.tv/locations/sunderland/
Sunderland	Living Praise (RCCG)	http://rccglivingpraisesunderland.org.uk/
Sunderland	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries	http://www.ngex.com/bd/b/Mountain-of-Fire-and-Miracles-Ministries_221-Sunderland-Tyne-and-Wear-United-Kingdom/
Sunderland	St Thomas - South Indian Orthodox congregation	http://sunderlandorthodoxchurch.com/
Sunderland	Southwick Community Church	http://www.southwickchurch.org.uk/
Sunderland	St. Wilfrid's Church Doxford	http://in-scotland.net/714496888643536/
Sunderland	Sunderland Filipino Christian Church	No website
Sunderland	The Kings Castle	http://staging.thekingscastlechurch.org.uk/
Sunderland	Trinity Church	http://www.trinitychurchsunderland.org/
Whitley Bay	The Filipino International Church	http://www.thenba.org.uk/filipino-international-church
Whitley Bay	Whitley Lodge Baptist Church	http://www.whitleylodgebaptist.org.uk/Welcome.html
Wooler	Glendale Crossing Places	http://www.glendalecrossingplaces.org/

Appendix Two: List Two of Possible New Churches *not* Counted as 'New'

List Two consists of churches which are a 'penumbra' to 'List One'. They fit some or most of the seven-fold criteria for defining a new church given on page 13 of this report, but not all the criteria. Details of why they were excluded from 'List One' are given in brackets after the name of the church.

Location	Name of Church
Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle Christian Fellowship (began as a small group in a private home in the 1970s, starting Sunday worship in the early 1980s – possibly too old for this survey)
Darlington	Light and Life Mission (unclear when founded)
Darlington	Xcel Church Darlington (unclear when founded)
Dawdon, near Seaham	St Hild & St Helen Christian Fellowship (Pentecostal Church which changed name and in other ways as it took over a redundant Church of England church - but, arguably, insufficiently changed to be defined as a 'new church')
Gateshead	Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, Blaydon (does not worship every week)
Hartlepool	Hope Church (meets monthly)
Hartlepool	St Mark's Church and Community Centre (date of foundation uncertain)
Middlesbrough	One Life Church Eston (date of foundation uncertain)
Middlesbrough	The Greek Orthodox Community of The Annunciation at St Columba with St John (meets monthly)
Middlesbrough	RCCG Bible Christian Fellowship (unclear if it continues to exist)
Newcastle	True Jesus Church (founded before 1980)
Newcastle	Christ's Mission in the World (unclear if it continues to exist)
Newcastle	Congolese Church - Could be 'Adoration Pentecotique' (active in 2008, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	Congolese Church in Dilston Road Methodist Church (active in recent years, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	Cote D'Ivoire Congregation at St Thomas, Haymarket (active in 2008, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	Eritraean Church at St Andrew's RC Church, Worswick St (active in 2008, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	Golgotha Church/Golgotha Assembly (active in 2008, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	Guda Re Murare (Zimbabwean-based Church) (active in 2008, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	L'Ombre D'Eternel (active in 2008, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	Newcastle Chinese Christian Fellowship (founded before 1980)
Newcastle	Ocuvaleno Church, Byker (active in 2008, but unclear if it continues)
Newcastle	Our Lady of Czestochowa, Polish Catholic Church (founded before 1980)

Location	Name of Church
Newcastle	Russian Orthodox Parish of St George the Trophy-Bearer (does not worship every week)
Newcastle	St Anthony's Greek Orthodox Church, Newcastle (founded before 1980)
Newcastle	St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park (began as a small group in a private home in the 1970s, starting Sunday worship in the early 1980s – therefore possibly too old)
South Shields	New Hope Church (date of foundation uncertain)
South Shields	Living Waters Church (changed its name and changed markedly in other ways in 2000, but, arguably, insufficient to be defined as a 'new' church)
Spennymoor	Xcel Church Spennymoor (date of foundation uncertain)
Stockton	RCCG Living Proof Community Parish (unclear if it continues to exist)
Stockton	Stockton Parish Church (underwent marked change in tradition, leadership and membership in last decade, but retained some of earlier congregation – so, arguably, not 'new')
Sunderland	Bethshan Church Sunderland (has had different names, possibly to be considered as founded before 1980)
Sunderland	True Jesus Church, Sunderland (founded before 1980)
Teesside	Acts of Love International, Stockton (unclear if it continues to exist)

Appendix Three:

Advisory Board Members

Revd Prof David Wilkinson, Principal, St Johns College, Durham (chair)
Revd Dr David Goodhew, director of research project, Cranmer Hall (secretary)
Pastor Bright Onuka, City of God Christian Centre, Newcastle
Dr Mark Bonnington, Senior Pastor of Kings Church, Durham
Revd Dr Robert Ward, St Luke's Church, Newcastle
Revd Alan Farish, Vicar, Stockton Parish Church
Revd Dr Michael Volland, Director of Context-based Training, Ridley Hall, Cambridge
Revd Dr Calvin Samuel, Director, Wesley Study Centre, St Johns College, Durham
Fr Dominic Black, Vicar, Holy Trinity Church, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough
Fr Andrew Louth, priest of the Orthodox Parish of St Cuthbert and St Bede, Durham
Revd Joanne Thorns, Regional Officer, North East Churches Acting Together
Revd Steve Lindridge, Chair of the Newcastle Methodist District
Revd Canon John Sinclair, Newcastle Cathedral
Rev Hugo Charteris, Christchurch, Heaton, Newcastle
Rev Lis Mullen, URC, North East Region
Rev Dr John Claydon, Northern Baptist Association
Rev Chris Howson, Sunderland Minster
Rev Jenn Bradshaw, North Wearside Team, Sunderland

The Advisory Board has provided valuable insights during the research process, but the research team alone are responsibility for the findings and conclusions of the research.

Academic Advisors

Prof John Wolffe
Prof David Martin
Prof David Bebbington
Revd Canon Dr George Lings
Dr Andrew Rogers
Dr Peter Brierley

The above were consulted with regard to the definition of 'a new church' but the research team alone are responsibility for the definition used in this report.

Durham University

The New Churches in the North East project is a survey of new churches which have arisen since 1980 across the North East region of England. Using a strict definition of what counts as ‘a new church’, it has uncovered 125 new churches in the North East whose combined usual Sunday attendance is 12 000 people. In two thirds of these new churches a significant proportion of worshippers come from black or minority ethnic communities. Notwithstanding considerable church decline in the North East in recent decades, the new churches of the North East show that current thinking on secularisation needs to recognise that significant church growth is happening as well as church decline. In addition, the research gives insights into how wider society and the Christian church in the North East have changed markedly in the last 35 years.

> 'New churches' are an important element in the current debate about religion in Britain, a field in which the detail matters. New Churches in the North East is full of such detail, with respect to both the North East itself and to the very varied churches that have established themselves there in recent decades. I recommend it warmly to anyone with an interest in the religious life of the region and indeed the country as a whole.
>
> *Professor Grace Davie, Professor Emeritus, University of Exeter*
>
> At a time when most discussion about the Christian church suggests that it is in terminal decline, this detailed study of one region demonstrates that a process of growth is occurring somewhat 'under the radar'. What is particularly interesting is that, pace much contemporary debate about migrants, much of this growth is driven by ethnic minorities either creating new churches or contributing substantially to the growth of others. This is yet another positive contribution made by ethnic minorities in the region which has been overlooked in the often-hostile political and media commentary to date.
>
> *Professor Gary Craig, School of Applied Social Sciences, Durham University*
>
> All too often, studies of church growth or decline focus on the national picture while overlooking important regional variations. The New Churches in the North East report makes a valuable contribution to our understanding by taking one such region and charting the realities of church life using fresh evidence. It frames the emergence of a range of innovative churches: some thriving, many challenging common assumptions about Christianity in this part of the UK.
>
> *Dr Matthew Guest, Reader in the Sociology of Religion, Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University*
>
> This is a very useful study of the church life in one English Region, and could well serve as a model for like research in other Regions. It is especially good that it focuses on the growth of the non-white ethnic groupings in Britain (the BME dimension) as these are increasingly becoming an important part of the ecclesiastical landscape, and likely to become an even more major element in the future.
>
> *Dr Peter Brierley, Brierley Consultancy*