Being Built Together

A Story of New Black Majority Churches in the London Borough of Southwark

Final Report | June 2013

University of Roehampton London

Southwark for Jesus

Churches Together South London

Acknowledgements

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> “The report shows what a wide variety and huge number of churches are **being** built in the London Borough of Southwark – the verb is in the present tense; the reality is of the present moment, actual and constantly developing.”

Foreword

It is difficult to imagine a better title for this significant and timely report than the three words Being Built Together. Taken from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians – ‘you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit’, they speak of a challenge which is current, which is concrete, and which is shared.

The report shows what a wide variety and huge number of churches are **being** built in the London Borough of Southwark – the verb is in the present tense; the reality is of the present moment, actual and constantly developing. The multi-Christianity of Southwark is one of its most remarkable features, and that Christian diversity is ever-changing. The quantitative data presented in this report captures something of a snapshot of that situation, and its narrative gives historical depth to that; but we can be confident that even by the time it is published the situation will have changed in many ways. So I believe it is important that we receive ‘Being Built Together’ not only as a piece of academic research professionally and rigorously delivered – though it is that – but also as an invitation to be involved together in a vibrant aspect of the borough’s life.

The word **built** is a reminder that it is from the very concrete issues of the availability and provision of buildings for prayer, worship and community service that this project took its genesis. Finding adequate places for people to express their faith, be that Christian or of any other kind, can be challenging in the modern city; but it is also a sign of the wider and deeper challenge of finding the right places in civic life for Christians and people of other faiths to be able to contribute positively, constructively and imaginatively to a borough and a city which is intensely religious, markedly secular and extraordinarily diverse. My hope is that this report will be able to provide a good starting point for that debate.

Finally, the authors are right to emphasise that it is **together** that we are being built up. St Paul’s reference is of course to the shared activity of the small Christian community at Ephesus to whom he is writing, but we may surely see in this a pointer to a wider sense of ownership of this challenge. There are issues highlighted in this report for individual ‘new Black Majority Churches’; for the networks which draw together pastors and congregations in the Pentecostal, evangelical and independent sectors of Christianity; for the historic churches in the borough, who are themselves going through ethnic and cultural diversification; for different faith groups; for the civic authorities of the London Borough of Southwark and other levels of planning; and for individuals and communities in neighbourhoods around the borough. And there is a still wider resonance – while Southwark may well be pre-eminent in the vitality and variety of its new independent church life, other parts of London and of the United Kingdom are experiencing something of the same. They too can expect to learn much of value from this thorough, stimulating and ground-breaking report, which I commend very warmly.

The Right Reverend Dr Michael Ipgrave
Bishop of Woolwich

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Glossary

AAP	Area action plans that focus on planning and development in particular areas of the borough.
APC	Apostolic Pastoral Congress
BBT	Being Built Together, name of this research project (see Resources)
BMC	Black majority church, a church in which over 50% of its members are black.
Building the Archive	Project run by Southwark Council to enable archiving of African and Caribbean communities in Southwark, including churches (see Resources).
CAG report	Research commissioned by the GLA into the needs of faith communities across London, particularly focussing on places of worship. Conducted by a consortium led by CAG consultants.
Charismatic	Similar emphasis on the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts to Pentecostals, but emerged out of the later renewal movement of the 1950s onwards in the UK. Spread within the historic denominations as well as leading to the development of *new* churches.
CTE	Churches Together in England
CTiSS	Churches Together in south Southwark
CTSL	Churches Together in South London, strategic partner of BBT (see Resources)
Demographics	In BBT, statistical data relating to nBMCs in particular, and Southwark, London and the UK by way of context.
EA	Evangelical Alliance (see Resources)
Ecclesiology	The study of the church, or as is more often the case here, the priorities and emphases of particular churches
Ecumenical	In BBT it is understood broadly as making connections to promote mission, unity and compassion in Christ's name.
Ethnicity	Categories are taken from the 2011 census which classifies people according to their perceived ethnic group and cultural background.
Evangelical(ism)	Cross-denominational Christian movement originating in the 18th century, which has historically had an emphasis on the cross, conversion, activism and the Bible.
Gazetting	The (uncommon) process of a church being added to those covered by the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969. It is so called due to a notice being placed in the London Gazette.
GLA	Greater London Authority
Guide for Faith Premises	Developed by Southwark Council to aid faith groups in the planning process (see Resources).
Having Faith in Southwark	A series of meetings held by Southwark Council around the issue of faith premises
Historic churches	All churches that are not nBMCs / new churches / independent. An approximate equivalent for 'mainstream'.
IMCGB	International Ministerial Council of Great Britain
Independent churches	Churches that are independent of any denominational authority, but distinct from 'new' charismatic churches. Sometimes used more broadly of all churches that are not 'historic'.
London Plan	A GLA statement of its planning policy for London, with which all London boroughs must comply.
Multi-ethnic church	A church comprised of multiple ethnic groups.
nBMC	New black majority church, a term generated for this project, indicating a BMC that has been founded since the 1950s
New church	'New' British churches emerging out of the charismatic renewal movement from the 1950s onwards.
NCLF	National Church Leaders' Forum – A Black Christian Voice (see Resources)
NPPF	National planning policy framework which sets broad planning policy for all regional and borough planning policies
One People Commission	A body of the Evangelical Alliance made up of key national church leaders, committed to celebrating ethnicity, while promoting unity within the UK evangelical Church (see Resources).
Pentecostal	Those Christians who look to the experience of the Holy Spirit by Jesus' disciples at Pentecost which is seen as duplicated in the experience of many believers during the 20th century onwards, particularly associated with events at Azusa Street from 1906 in Los Angeles.
SfJ	Southwark for Jesus, a parachurch organisation in Southwark welcoming all churches for prayer, unity and action. A strategic partner of BBT (see Resources)
Sharing Church Buildings Act	Legislation that permits different Churches (that are listed) to share their buildings.
SKIN	Samen Kerk in Nederland or Churches Together in Netherlands. An association of Christian migrant churches and faith communities in the Netherlands.
SMFF	Southwark Multi Faith Forum
Southwark Core Strategy	A planning document that sets out how Southwark will change up to 2026.
Southwark Council report	Internal report by Southwark Council based on investigations by two planning officers into nBMCs in the borough, especially unauthorised ones on industrial estates.
Southwark Plan	A Southwark Council statement of its planning policy for the Borough, which operates alongside the Southwark Core Strategy.
TAPAC	Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Association of Churches
Transform Southwark	A forum run by SfJ for church and community leaders, councillors and police officers. It has now run for many years to network, update and pray for our borough (see Resources).

> *Being Built Together* seeks to understand something of the excitement and growing pains of this 'moment', through paying particular attention to the experiences of new black majority churches in a London borough.

1. Being Built Together

The *Being Built Together* project takes its name from the same phrase used in the book of Ephesians in the New Testament of the Bible. Addressing the relationship between Christians from Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds, the apostle Paul portrays the whole Christian community as 'being built together' to become 'a holy temple in the Lord'.[1] The mission historian, Andrew Walls, has named this coming together of two differing first century cultures as an 'Ephesian moment'. In the twenty-first century, we would agree with Walls that 'in our own day, the Ephesian moment has come again' (Walls, 2002). Now we see a kaleidoscope of cultures from all over the world being built together in the church in our global city. *The Message* translation of Ephesians is highly suggestive for the multi-ethnic London church context, and has become something of a core text for the project:

> This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.[2]

Being Built Together seeks to understand something of the excitement and growing pains of this 'moment', through paying particular attention to the experiences of new black majority churches in a London borough. As will be seen, the metaphor of building embedded in the project title is also highly significant for such churches, and so for this research as well.

1.1 *Being Built Together* in Context

The formal aim of *Being Built Together* (BBT) has been 'to generate an account of new black majority congregations in the London Borough of Southwark, with regard to demographics and ecclesiology'. In other words, to count how many new black majority churches there are in Southwark (as well as some other pertinent statistics), alongside finding out about how new black majority congregations do church. This aim has been broken down into 13 objectives listed in Appendix A. New black majority church (nBMC) in this report refers to congregations established since the 1950s in which a majority of congregants are black.[3] This definition therefore excludes black majority congregations in the wider church from BBT. The cut-off date and issues surrounding this terminology are discussed further in §4 and §5 respectively. Churches commonly referred to as 'mainstream' are termed 'historic' in this report.[4]

The genesis of the project lies in the rapid growth of nBMCs over the past few decades, especially in London. Church leaders, community and local authority organisations have noted this growth, and have requested research to aid greater understanding of nBMCs. Existing research on nBMCs is limited, for example, there is little reliable data on the number and sizes of nBMCs in London. A particular catalyst for BBT was the pressing issue of finding suitable premises for nBMCs and the attendant problems surrounding change of use planning permission. This has been a particular problem in the London Borough of Southwark (see §9), hence a public meeting entitled 'Having Faith in Southwark' was called in November 2009 (Richardson, 2009; Town Talk, 2009). Arising from this meeting was the view that more evidence was needed regarding the growth, needs and contributions of nBMCs. Given the

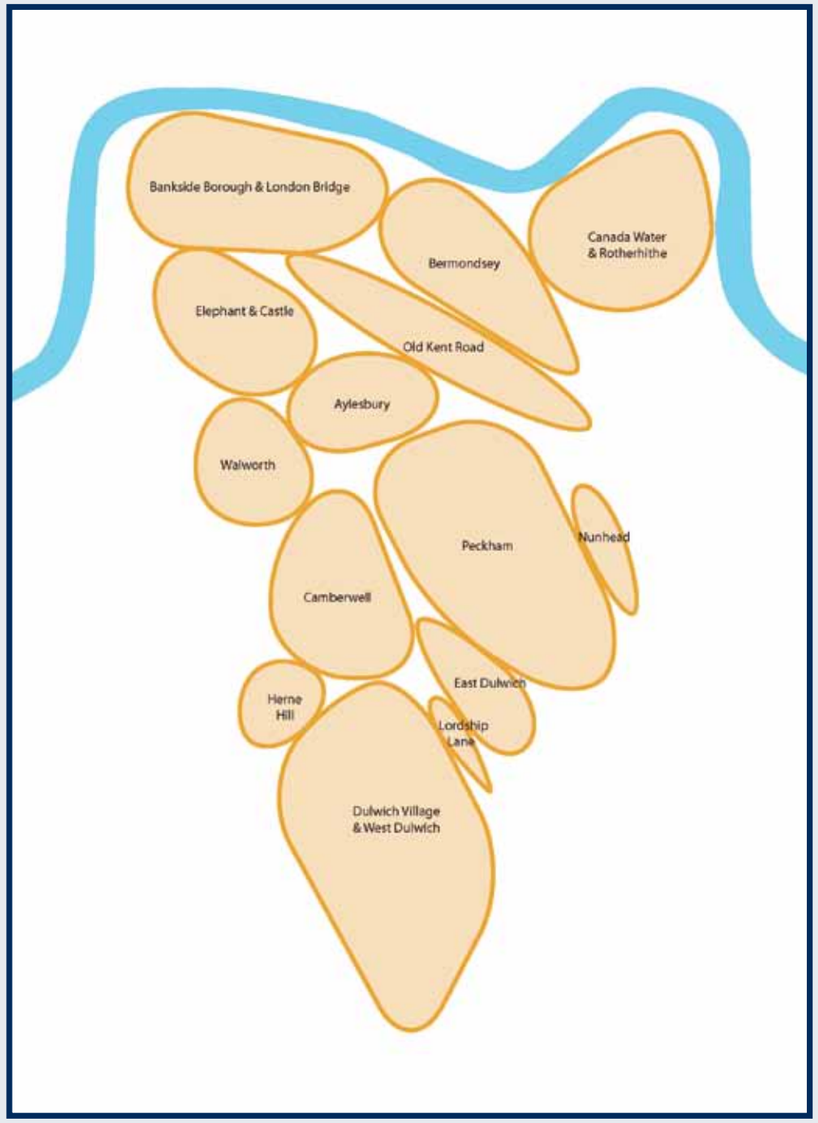

Figure 1 – Our places in Southwark
From the *Southwark Core Strategy* by permission (2011: 36)

various calls for research, BBT was commissioned by its strategic partners, *Southwark for Jesus* and *Churches Together in South London*, to address this desire for more information. Southwark was chosen as the focus, given the keenness of the premises issue, and some existing evidence pointing to particularly high concentrations of nBMCs in the borough.

There are a rapidly growing number of commentators and scholars publishing accounts of nBMC growth and ecclesiology in the UK.[5] Fewer are addressing issues relating to premises, planning, and nBMC demographics.[6] Regarding UK BMC demographics, the best overall statistics available are from Peter Brierley (2011). Regarding premises and planning, there are **two** pieces of prior research closely related to BBT. The **first** was an internal piece of research by two planning officers at Southwark Council, who assessed 104 places of worship within the Borough during 2005 and 2006. The resulting internal report demonstrated a nuanced understanding of nBMC ecclesiology in relation to premises, and was made available to BBT (Sangweme, 2006). It will be referred to here as the 'Southwark Council report'.[7] The **second** piece of prior research is the report *Responding to the needs of faith communities: places of worship*, commissioned by the Greater London Authority in 2007 and published the following year (CAG Consultants *et al.*, 2008). This reported research from across all London boroughs and faith groups[8] in relation to places of worship and the planning system and will be referred to here as the 'CAG report'. We will draw on both these prior pieces of research where appropriate (especially in §9), on the basis that there is not much point in reinventing the wheel.

A consultation panel with representatives from a range of BBT partners met on 15th May 2013 to consider the draft report and offer critical feedback for its completion. The findings of BBT were presented to an invited group of nBMC pastors and other project partners on Thursday 20th June 2013 at Southwark Cathedral.

> “The catalyst for the research was the rapid growth of nBMCs in Southwark over recent decades and the consequent shortage of suitable places of worship. The project title is taken from the New Testament of the Bible where the whole church is described as ‘being built together’ by God.”

2. Executive Summary

Being Built Together is a two year research project which has generated an account of new black majority churches (nBMCs) in the London Borough of Southwark. Six related topics were the focus of the research, highlighted in bold below. The catalyst for the research was the rapid growth of nBMCs in Southwark over recent decades and the consequent shortage of suitable places of worship. The project title is taken from the New Testament of the Bible where the whole church is described as ‘being built together’ by God.

Being Built Together is a partnership between the University of Roehampton, Southwark for Jesus, and Churches Together in South London. In addition, we have six other funding partners. The research team itself comprises eight members, led by Dr Andrew Rogers at the University of Roehampton. Located within Practical Theology, the project utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods, including database generation, participant observation in churches, informed observer / pastor interviews, and limited use of a questionnaire. 252 nBMCs were listed on the project database; 36 nBMCs welcomed us for a combination of visits, interviews and questionnaires; 28 informed observers assisted us with their knowledge of the Southwark situation. The report is a mix of statistical analysis and informed observer / pastor testimony.

Regarding **demographics**, Southwark is the African capital of the UK. We estimate there are 240+ operational nBMCs in the borough, and nearly half of these are in one postcode. 240+ nBMCs is more than double the total number of historic / new / independent churches in the borough. We suspect (but cannot yet confirm) that this represents the greatest concentration of African Christianity in the world outside of Africa. We estimate that well over 20,000 congregants attend nBMCs in the borough across a whole Sunday. Their premises are concentrated in four main geographical areas in a north central belt of the borough. nBMCs comprise a variable mix of local, borough, London and home counties congregants.

Ecclesiology as used in this report refers to the particular priorities of a church. BBT notes the distinctive histories and traditions of nBMCs and the need to recognise their diversity. nBMCs were able to tell something of their stories to BBT, but it is important that other opportunities are afforded as well. ‘Pentecostal’ was by far the most common designation in our participant sample. Commonalities between such diverse nBMCs may be aided by a ‘pentecostalising’ process that erodes distinctions between them, given their very close proximity and transfer growth. The international mentality of nBMCs was evident in interviews and in their church names. The mutually high expectations between pastor and congregation were noted, as well as socio-economic factors, both of which affect nBMC leaders’ availability for ecumenical / community projects. A competitive business model of church was accepted as having some truth for a proportion of nBMCs in the borough. The lack of appropriate and accessible theological education was noted as a key issue for pastors.

Based on our analysis of **ethnicity and culture**, nBMCs in Southwark are mostly African majority with a large proportion of congregants being of West African origin. Whether African or Caribbean majority, a good number of nBMCs include multiple ethnic groups in their congregations, varying proportions of local people, but very few whites. Being black majority does not necessarily entail being mono-cultural. For nBMCs sharing similar cultures, however, they provide a ‘home from home’, a safe place for those finding their way in a new country, with attendant benefits for such communities, local authorities and London. Whether ‘reverse

mission' is occurring in Southwark was uncertain, but questions were raised about cultural barriers and the willingness of 'the average white person' to have a black pastor. Multi-ethnic congregations were seen as an ideal by some, with multi-ethnic leadership understood as a key requirement.

Community Engagement notes that 'community' is used of both the associational church community as well as the local community. For planning, the local authority defaults to the local geographical community. We conclude that nBMCs are a gift to London. They serve dispersed communities across London that few other agencies can reach. They provide a 'safe haven' for migrant communities, meeting their spiritual needs alongside assisting with issues such as family, health, law and order. Consequently, nBMCs are a spiritual, social and economic asset to the city and its boroughs. We do raise questions, however, about the inward looking nature of some nBMCs, also noting the significance of permanent premises for engaging with local communities. Consequently, planning permission for a congregation in appropriate premises may be viewed as investing in London communities. Therefore, we argue that planning and faith group policy should be considered on a regional as well as borough basis. It is also important that nBMCs do not allow themselves to be defined by the premises issue with the Council, but rather by the genuine contribution that many make to the borough and city.

Ecumenical Matters is taken in the broad sense of making connections in order to promote mission, unity and compassion in Christ's name. Of the 252 nBMCs listed in our database, less than 20% were affiliated to the local umbrella organisation, *Southwark for Jesus*. The only national body with significant membership was the Evangelical Alliance, but again with less than 20% affiliation. The emphasis on relational forms of engagement is critical for nBMCs and thus for the wider church in Southwark, although the need to avoid paternalistic modes of partnership by the wider church was raised. The need for accountability and avoiding replication in ministry and mission were also highlighted by participants as an issue for nBMCs to face. The role of the local umbrella body was seen as key in offering a safe ecumenical space for pastors, although strategies for increasing participation are still needed. Local prayer networks for church leaders were understood to be valuable for, amongst other things, building relationships between different churches and communities. The ins and outs of 'sharing' church buildings were examined, with the language of 'host' and 'guest' preferred, along with questions for the wider church about recognising this need in the body. An example of good practice at Elephant and Castle is seen in **Case Study 2**, where one URC congregation shares it premises with eight other congregations.

Premises and Planning is the longest section in the report and builds on all the previous topics, recognising that they shape and are shaped by each other. It is divided into four main sections considering the inter-relation of four parties regarding premises and planning, namely the Council, nBMCs, the wider church and Southwark neighbourhoods. Southwark was identified in a 2008 report as having the 'most significant breach of planning control involving change of use' and on a 'larger scale than in any other London borough'. That is, nBMCs were renting or even buying premises, often industrial, that did not come into the D1 use class for places of worship. Consequently, their use was unauthorised. The number of outstanding cases of unauthorised use by nBMCs has since decreased from 88 cases in August 2011 to 41 cases in May 2013, BBT has learnt. For the period 2000-2011, there were 149 planning applications from places of worship in Southwark, of which 90 (60%) were from nBMCs. Historic churches made up 27% of the applications, and other faiths 7%. For nBMCs, planning permission was granted to 24% of applications over this twelve year period, with 47% refused, 18% withdrawn and 10% invalid. This granted figure is low and a cause for concern.

We argue that planning is an ethical and interpretative enquiry, and, by drawing on other cases in the UK, note that policy is interpreted variably according to time and context in relation to faith groups. Planning is more than square metres, parking spaces, decibels and postcode surveys. We therefore conclude that recourse to 'chapter and verse' of policy is not persuasive when it fails to take into account shifts in local circumstances such as changing ethnic and religious demographics.

Regarding use class orders, we question the suitability of the D1 class for emerging models of church that break down the separation between sacred and secular usage. We find the paucity of reference to faith groups in planning policy inadequate, given the demand for places of worship in London and especially Southwark. The most explicit, the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Equality and Diversity, produced by the Greater London Authority, is poorly constructed. There needs to be a regional strategy for faith groups and planning. We find the 'equality and diversity' language insufficient for capturing the particular contributions and needs of faith groups, as it can easily be reductionist, portraying faith groups as victims in need of protection, rather than as active agents in society. It also structures faith group relations with local authorities in competitive terms as another minority group demanding recognition and rights.

We recognise the relatively innovative approach of the Council in addressing the issue of planning for faith groups, the majority of whom are nBMCs. The *Guide for Faith Premises* and series of *Having Faith in Southwark* meetings have been a positive move. The four hotspots for nBMCs in the borough are a concern for all four parties, since the usual objections are intensified with regard to noise, traffic / parking, waste disposal and amenity. We welcome continuing initiatives from the Council planning department such as D1 hubs for multiple congregations, not unlike the innovative example seen in **Case Study 1** in Amsterdam.

The relationship between nBMCs and their neighbours is not always a good one. We have heard evidence of neighbours not behaving well towards nBMCs. There does appear to be an attempt by neighbours to distance the congregations, as 'not from here' and not 'our community', largely without evidence. The notion of 'our community' is also problematic. On the other hand, there is disturbing testimony from neighbour responses to nBMC planning applications. Even allowing for exaggeration, ideological objections and a few 'campaigns', the number and similarity of objections from neighbours across the Borough persuades BBT that low level anti-social behaviour by nBMCs is occurring and it is not just a few isolated instances. Some pastor testimony pointed to the need for sharing of practical strategies and experience amongst nBMCs to aid 'living in peace' with neighbours.

The **conclusions** in §10 are structured around three biblical themes that emerged out of the research project. The first is 'being built together' from Ephesians 2; the second is the great commandments to love God and neighbour from the Gospels; the third from Jeremiah 29 to pray for the peace of the city. It is hoped these themes will also be valuable for further reflection on the issues raised by BBT.

There are 16 **recommendations** in §11 listed in a numbered and accessible format. They draw on the statistics, testimony, analysis and evaluation presented in the whole report, although this executive summary will provide initial insight into their rationale.

> “Southwark is historically significant for BMCs in that the first BMC in the UK is said to have been founded within the boundaries of Southwark as far back as 1906.”

3. Methodology Matters

Practical Theology is the discipline in which BBT has been located, which means that the project has been able to draw on resources from both theology and the social sciences. A methodology appropriate for the aims and objectives of BBT was devised. Practical Theology's classic research cycle of description / analysis / reflection / action suited a project of this nature well. Given the well-known relational emphasis of African and Caribbean majority churches, sufficient time was allowed for establishing contact with churches and their pastors. Thus the project was set up to run for two years from June 2011 until June 2013.[9] The relational element was also significant in recognising that quantitative approaches (e.g. questionnaires) would be insufficient, at least initially. Leading with a qualitative approach (i.e. church visits and pastor interviews) made sense, as it would enable BBT to listen to the voices of nBMCs and (to some extent) understand them from the inside. Such an approach is sometimes called ethnographic (e.g. Ward, 2012).[10] Quantitative approaches were also valuable in generating a database of Southwark nBMCs, which collated a number of statistics gained from church visits, interviews, and online resources.[11]

As highlighted in §1.1, Southwark borough was chosen as our case study for a number of reasons. Firstly, issues surrounding premises for faith groups (especially nBMCs) had come to a head in the Borough. Secondly, and related to this, the CAG report identified the unauthorised use of industrial buildings for places of worship as the 'most significant breach of planning control involving change of use in Southwark'. Furthermore, this was occurring on a 'larger scale than in any other London Borough' (CAG Consultants *et al.*, 2008: 28; Sangweme, 2006: §1.2). Thirdly, Southwark is historically significant for BMCs in that the first BMC in the UK is said to have been founded within the boundaries of Southwark as far back as 1906 (Adedibu, 2012: 26f; Olofinjana, 2012).

BBT has been a team project comprising eight researchers,[12] three strategic partners, six additional funding partners and a reference panel. The multi-ethnic team ranges from those who are black church insiders to those who are outsiders with significant African / Caribbean church connections and experience.[13] In our view, this combination of insider and outsider perspectives is a strength of BBT. Cutting our research coat according to our budgetary cloth,[14] we chose to make one visit to as many Southwark nBMCs as possible, as well as carrying out interviews with their pastors. In the language of the participating churches, it was an opportunity to testify about their experiences as Christian communities in Southwark. The principal investigator (PI) also sought testimony from 'informed observers' through interviews and conversations by telephone or email. Local community testimony was largely available through neighbourhood consultation documents within Southwark's online planning portal (Southwark Council, 2010). A database of Southwark nBMCs was generated from a variety of sources listed in **Table 1**.

An ethics policy scrutinised by the University was put in place, ensuring that churches gave their informed consent when participating in the project (see Appendix B). Contact with churches took place in a variety of ways, but the standard approach was to email BBT details to the church, then follow up with one (or more) phone calls. We attended public worship services as participant observers, making notes on the proceedings and recording services with permission (see protocol in Appendix C). Interviews were semi-structured, which means guide questions were used with suggested follow up questions (see Appendix D), but there was the freedom to explore interesting issues raised.[16] Towards the end of the project we

DATA SOURCES FOR SOUTHWARK nBMCs
Southwark for Jesus database
Southwark Faith Groups database (Council)
Directory of Black Majority Churches
Black UK online
Evangelical Alliance
nBMC denominational websites
Find a Church
Planning documents available online[15]
Google and Google maps
Visual identification (i.e. walking around the borough)

Table 1 – List of Data Sources for Southwark nBMCs

stripped down the interview questions to generate a simple one page questionnaire for use in phone interviews or for pastors to complete via email or post (see Appendix E). Thematic analysis of the qualitative accounts was carried out using ATLAS.ti software,[17] and the quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

BBT sample numbers are given in **Table 2**.The key sample is the 36 participant nBMCs on whom the report draws most heavily (Sample 5), along with the informed observers (Sample 6). To a lesser extent, we also draw on the larger sample of all nBMCs identified in Southwark (Sample 1). The sampling strategy was initially to contact churches with whom we had stronger links, especially through *Southwark for Jesus*, but as the project progressed we intentionally included a range of churches of different nBMC types, denominations, locations, sizes and premises. This range is detailed in Appendix F. As will be seen in §4, we estimate that Sample 5 represents between 10-15% of the total number of nBMCs in the Borough. Relative to other qualitatively led studies of churches in the UK, Sample 5 is large. Furthermore, we consider Sample 5 to provide a 'telling' set of congregational circumstances (Mitchell, 1984: 238-241), enabling rich insights into the key issues of nBMC demographics, ecclesiology, ethnicity, community engagement, ecumenical matters, and premises / planning.

We have written this report with accessibility in mind for four key parties in Southwark, namely nBMCs, the wider church, neighbourhoods, and local authorities. Our ethical research procedure meant that all BBT participants were guaranteed anonymity, so we refer to churches and their pastors by pseudonyms (see Appendix F).[18] The report addresses the original 13 objectives for BBT as set out in Appendix A. The targets set in the interim report have all been met, except the number of pastor interviews was slightly under.[19] The main sections of the report take the format of reporting and analysing pertinent statistics and interview extracts, followed by an evaluative conclusion. The final conclusion picks up on overarching themes in the report and then leads into recommendations. Such an approach is consistent with a Practical Theology research cycle. A number of sections include a summary table of qualitative responses from pastors, to enable the reader to quickly take in the nuances of pastor responses. In most sections there are some extended quotations from pastor interviews. Although these are selected and lightly edited for the sake of brevity and readability, the intention is that the voices of the pastors and informed observers may be heard. The subtitle of the report should be borne in mind – this is 'a' story of new black majority

"We have written this report with accessibility in mind for four key parties in Southwark, namely nBMCs, the wider church, neighbourhoods, and local authorities. Our ethical research procedure meant that all BBT participants were guaranteed anonymity, so we refer to churches and their pastors by pseudonyms."

churches in Southwark between 2011 and 2013. It is an interpretation of the testimonies and statistics encountered – a coherent interpretation in our view – but it is does not claim to be an exhaustive account of nBMC demographics, ecclesiology, ethnicity and culture, community engagement, ecumenical matters and premises and planning. Rather it is 'a' story generated by asking a focussed set of questions to Christian pastors and data sources. We hope that this particular story might prompt further reflection and research.

SAMPLE TYPE	NUMBER	NOTES
1. nBMCs in Southwark	252	Identified from all sources in Table 1. Needs adjusting for uncertainties as to whether nBMC or operational.
2. Number of nBMCs contacted	186	Contact details for some churches not available or incorrect. Contact means a phone call and/or an email with BBT details.
3. BBT participant churches	38	Comprising churches visited, pastors interviewed or 'questionnaired'. Includes both historic and new BMCs.
4. BBT historic BMC participants	2	Included for the purposes of comparison
5. BBT new BMC participants	36 comprising… 29 visits 25 interviews 6 questionnaires	24 churches had a visit and interview; 5 churches had a visit only; 1 church had an interview only; 6 questionnaire only.
6. Informed observers	28	See Table 3 below for sample details. Comprised open-ended interviews, conversations, phone calls and email exchanges.

Table 2 – Sample Numbers for BBT

RANGE OF INFORMED OBSERVERS	NUMBER
National BMC leaders	3
Historic BMC leaders in Southwark	3
Historic and new church leaders inside Southwark	4
Planning consultants, planning academics and planners	9
Representatives of BBT partners	3
Politicians	1
Archivists	2
Southwark community representatives	1
Online church database representatives	1
BMC researchers	1

Table 3 – Range of Informed Observers

3.1 What BBT is not

It seems worth clarifying what BBT is not. We visited nBMCs and interviewed pastors by mutual agreement and were guests in their congregations. Notes, recordings and pictures were all taken with permission, and anonymity guaranteed. The importance of long-term relationship building between our partners has shaped the methodology of BBT, and indeed, is embedded in our project title. Therefore, it seemed inappropriate to engage in more intrusive investigations that checked on church policies, noise, transport / parking, floor space and congregational postcode surveys.[20] Where this information was readily available we made note of it (mostly in planning documents online), but as has been seen, our objectives include the planning and premises issue within the broader context of nBMC demographics and ecclesiology within Southwark and beyond. The Council provided us with a detailed seven page questionnaire in February 2012 entitled 'Southwark Council New Places of Worship Needs Survey' (Southwark Survey) which may or may not have been circulated to Southwark faith groups in the past.[21] Such a questionnaire was judged more appropriate coming from those with a legal enforcement role and not an independent research team such as BBT. However, approximately a third of the questions in the Southwark Survey were directly or indirectly addressed by BBT through visits and interviews. We asked pastors about their experiences of finding suitable premises, as well as examining all planning documents related to the nBMC participants. Given the broader context in which premises are placed in BBT, we expect a substantial proportion of BBT results will be pertinent for informing planning policy discussion.

Some other parties suggested we looked into matters of church malpractice such as sham marriages and healing ministry abuses. Such matters have received some attention in the media, particularly in London.[22] As we will point out later on, such topics receive undue attention from certain quarters of society, including the wider church. Faithful Christian communities are too easily steroetyped in this way. On the other hand, it is likely that such malpractice does occur in some nBMCs (but is not confined to them). However, given our aims, objectives and methodology outlined above, investigating such matters does not lie within our remit.

"The importance of long-term relationship building between our partners has shaped the methodology of BBT."

> “Christianity in contemporary Britain is experiencing both death and resurrection. Churches are growing *and* declining, opening *and* closing… it all depends where you look.”

4. Demographics

Half the aim of BBT was to find out about the demographics of nBMCs. Here we will briefly examine the national and regional context of church growth, before turning to the specifics of nBMC demographics in Southwark.[23] We are fortunate to have access to the 2011 census statistics for this final BBT report.

4.1 National and Regional Church Demographics

David Goodhew has recently argued that Christianity in contemporary Britain is experiencing both death and resurrection.[24] Churches are growing *and* declining, opening *and* closing. Britain is simultaneously becoming ‘more secular and more religious… it all depends where you look’. Growth is strongest in ‘black, asian and minority ethnic Christianity and new churches’ and also in London (2012: 253-54). A double whammy then for BBT. According to Joe Aldred’s much quoted estimate, ‘there may be as many as 500,000 committed black Christians in the UK’ (2007).

Peter Brierley’s existing research coheres with this picture of growth and decline (2006; 2011). According to Brierley, for the period 1998-2005 in England, non-white church attendance increased by 19% and white church attendance decreased by 19%.[25] 44% of all inner London churchgoers were black and Greater London had the highest percentage (29%) of black churchgoers compared to any English county (2006: 91, 99-100).[26] If one considers theological tradition, then Brierley calculated 34% growth in Pentecostal churches for 1998-2005 in England (2006: 33, 46) and 27% growth for 2005-2010 across the UK (2011: 2-7). A sense of proportion is needed, however, when assessing this combination of non-white Pentecostal church growth. Brierley notes that the two largest denominations by membership, Roman Catholic and Anglican, together accounted for 55% of total English church membership, compared to 11% from all Pentecostals (2011: 4). More pointedly, Joe Aldred cautions against ‘the Black Church Movement… glorying in growth among 2% of the British population’ (foreword in Adedibu, 2012: xi). This broader national picture, caveats and all, provides a useful context for understanding the rapid growth of nBMCs in recent decades, especially for our Southwark story.

4.2. London and Southwark Demographics

Southwark’s population grew from 256,700 in 2001 to 288,300 in the 2011 census – an increase of 12.3% (compared to 7.1% across England and Wales). Southwark has the ninth highest population density in England and Wales, at 9988 residents per square kilometre. Notably, the eight local authorities with a higher population density are all inner London authorities (Southwark Council, 2013b). Southwark is a diverse borough in socio-economic terms, with a ‘clear north south divide… with most deprivation falling within a north central belt’. The geographical correspondence with the highest concentrations of nBMCs (so §4.4 below) should be noted. Southwark is currently ranked as the 41st most deprived borough out of 326 local authorities in England, but there are a few areas within the 10% most deprived in England (Southwark Council, 2005-2013).[27]

Ethnicity is potentially significant for understanding nBMCs in Southwark. In both the 2001 and 2011 censuses, Southwark had the highest percentage and number of African residents for all London Boroughs (see **Figure 2**, **Table 4** and **Table 5**). Southwark also has the highest

percentage and number of African residents of any local authority in Britain (Office for National Statistics, 2013f; Southwark Council, 2011: §2.4). It is truly England's African capital.[28] 16.40% of Southwark residents identified as African in 2011, and 16.07% in 2001 (Office for National Statistics, 2004b; 2013b). Around three fifths of the African population of the Borough were born in Africa in 2001 (Southwark Analytical Hub, 2006a), and this proportion was approximately the same in 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 2013e).[29] African residents are predominantly from Nigeria and other parts of West Africa (Southwark Council, 2011: §2.4). Nigeria is one of the top ten non-UK countries of birth for usual residents in England and Wales in the 2011 census. 58.2% of usual residents born in Nigeria arrived between 2001-2011, 20.2% between 1991-2000, 13.1% between 1981-1990 and 8.5% before 1981 (Office for National Statistics, 2013d).

As can be seen in **Table 5**, the proportion of Black Caribbean residents in Southwark is somewhat different, decreasing from 8.0% in 2001 to 6.2% in 2011 (Southwark Analytical Hub, 2006c).[30] Almost three fifths of Black Caribbeans were born in England in 2001 (Southwark Analytical Hub, 2006c) and complete figures have not yet been released for 2011.[31] The differing percentages between the birth country for African and Caribbean populations highlight the distinct immigration patterns between the two ethnicities, which is significant for church demographics as well.

Religious affiliation in Southwark is less directly significant for understanding nBMC demographics, but is nevertheless still suggestive. 52.5% of residents identified as Christian in 2011. This was the largest religious group and above the London average of 48.4%, but below the national average of 59.4% (so **Table 6**). The 26.7% identifying as 'No religion' is above both the London and England percentage. Southwark is 17th amongst the 33 London

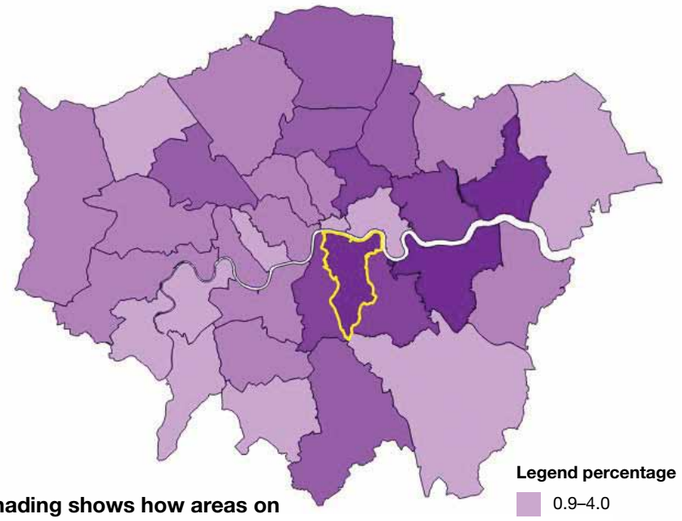

Figure 2 – London Boroughs by Ethnicity: % African – 2011 Census (KS201EW)
(Office for National Statistics, 2013b)

QS211EW	LOCAL AUTHORITY NAME	POPULATION	AFRICAN (COUNT)	AFRICAN (%)
1	Southwark	288283	47413	16.4%
2	Barking and Dagenham	185911	28685	15.4%
3	Greenwich	254557	35164	13.8%
4	Newham	307984	37811	12.3%
5	Lambeth	303086	35187	11.6%
6	Lewisham	275885	32025	11.6%
7	Hackney	246270	27976	11.4%
8	Haringey	254926	23037	9.0%
9	Enfield	312466	28222	9.0%
10	Croydon	363378	28981	8.0%

Table 4 – Top ten %s of African residents in London Boroughs: 2011 Census
(Office for National Statistics, 2013g)

ETHNIC GROUP (KS201EW), MARCH 2011	SOUTHWARK %	LONDON %	ENGLAND %
White; English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	39.7	44.9	79.8
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; African	16.4	7	1.8
White; Other White	12.3	12.6	4.6
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Caribbean	6.2	4.2	1.1
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Other Black	4.2	2.1	0.5
Asian/Asian British; Chinese	2.8	1.5	0.7
Asian/Asian British; Other Asian	2.7	4.9	1.5
Other Ethnic Group; Any Other Ethnic Group	2.4	2.1	0.6
White; Irish	2.2	2.2	1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black Caribbean	2	1.5	0.8
Asian/Asian British; Indian	2	6.6	2.6
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Other Mixed	1.9	1.5	0.5
Asian/Asian British; Bangladeshi	1.4	2.7	0.8
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black African	1.3	0.8	0.3
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Asian	1	1.2	0.6
Other Ethnic Group; Arab	0.8	1.3	0.4
Asian/Asian British; Pakistani	0.6	2.7	2.1
White; Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1	0.1	0.1
All Usual Residents (Count)	288,283	8,173,941	53,012,456

Table 5 – Ethnic Groups in Southwark – 2011 Census
(Office for National Statistics, 2013b)

RELIGION 2011 (KS209EW)	SOUTHWARK %	LONDON %	ENGLAND %
Christian	52.5	48.4	59.4
No Religion	26.7	20.7	24.7
Muslim	8.5	12.4	5
Religion Not Stated	8.5	8.5	7.2
Buddhist	1.3	1	0.5
Hindu	1.3	5	1.5
Other Religion	0.5	0.6	0.4
Jewish	0.3	1.8	0.5
Sikh	0.2	1.5	0.8
All Usual Residents	288283	8173941	53012456

Table 6 – Religious Identification in Southwark 2011
(Office for National Statistics, 2013c)

RELIGION 2001 (KS07)	SOUTHWARK %	LONDON %	ENGLAND %
Christian	61.58	58.23	71.74
No religion	18.51	15.76	14.59
Religion not stated	9.89	8.66	7.69
Muslim	6.85	8.46	3.1
Hindu	1.09	4.07	1.11
Buddhist	1.07	0.76	0.28
Jewish	0.41	2.09	0.52
Other religions	0.36	0.51	0.29
Sikh	0.24	1.45	0.67
All Usual residents	244866	7172091	49138831

Table 7 – Religious Identification in Southwark 2001
(Office for National Statistics, 2004a)

Boroughs for Christian identification in percentage terms.[32] Christian affiliation was highest amongst African residents at 73%, closely followed by White travellers, Irish and Caribbean residents at 71%, all of these strikingly higher than the Borough figure or the White residents figure of 49% (excluding the Irish) (Office for National Statistics, 2013f).[33] Notably, there has been a marked decline in the proportion of residents identifying as Christian from 62% in 2001 and a marked increase in those identifying as of 'No Religion' (so **Table 7**). The decline of Christian self-identification is set within a national story of declining identification with Christianity, albeit a story with many sub-plots and layers,[34] of which Southwark is a particularly interesting example.

4.3 Specific nBMC Demographics in Southwark

Part of the reason for this project was the recognition that data for nBMCs was incomplete, especially in the transient and rapidly changing London situation. A key aspect of *Being Built Together* was to improve the accuracy of demographic data for nBMCs in Southwark.[35] In addition to the other motivations already given for doing this, such data would be a useful baseline for identifying future growth trends.

Using the sources listed in **Table 1**, we trawled the existing data on Southwark nBMCs, checking their validity (e.g. operational status, new or black majority) through internet checks and visual identification. As explained in **Table 2**, we identified 252 nBMCs in the Borough (named *Sample 1* in §3). Due to the difficulty of establishing the operational status for all these nBMCs, we have reduced the total estimated number to 240. This is probably a conservative number, as some nBMCs have no internet presence and no markers on their premises such as a church sign or banner. Consequently they are very hard to find, apart from walking the streets of Southwark on a Sunday morning (which team members did on numerous occasions).[36] We would not be surprised if there were closer to 300 nBMCs in the Borough.[37]

Trend data is more difficult to derive. Existing nBMC data sources given in **Table 2** were somewhat incomplete, although for those intending to be comprehensive, searching the streets is not always a viable option. The Southwark for Jesus database had 42 nBMCs and the Southwark Faith Groups database 53 nBMCs.[38] The *Black UK Church Directory,* with a new edition in 2011, listed a maximum of 68 BMCs for Southwark (McGreal, 2011).[39] A more promising baseline might be found in the English Church Census 2005 (see Appendix G), which records 83 Pentecostal churches in the Borough, with only Newham, Lambeth and Brent having more.[40] This is more than any other denomination,[41] although, as we will see in §5, 'Pentecostal' is a super-denominational category.[42] David Voas' analyses of the English Church Census calculated that 44% of estimated church attendance in Southwark is at Pentecostal churches (2007).[43] In addition, the Southwark Council report from 2006 (which utilised street level identification of nBMCs) analysed the investigation of 104 apparently operational nBMCs from a planning enforcement perspective (Sangweme, 2006). Putting together these various demographic statistics, our 2013 figure of 240+ nBMCs leads us to have a strong degree of confidence in identifying ongoing growth of nBMCs in the Borough. However, it is difficult to determine precisely the characteristics of that growth over time with the limited empirical baselines we have.

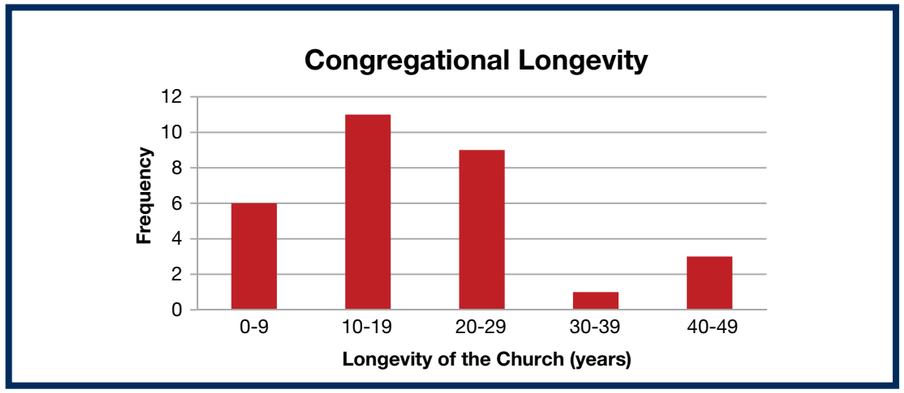

Figure 3 – Distribution of nBMC longevity

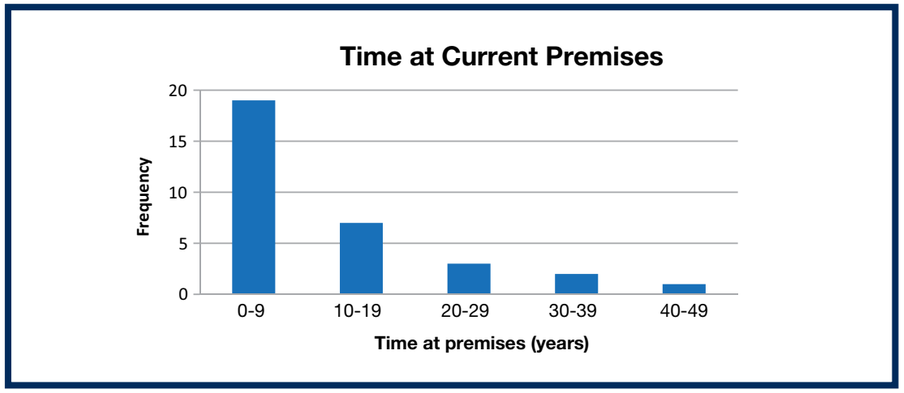

Figure 4 – Distribution of nBMC time at current premises

Scholars who study British BMC history divide up the last half century or so into a number of stages.[44] All agree that the 'black church movement' gained real momentum from around 1950 onwards, with the onset of mass migration from the Caribbean to the UK and then in later decades from West Africa (e.g. Adedibu, 2012: 50f). Details of these phases are explored further in §5.1. The observant will note that our definition of 'new' has changed since the interim report and from the start of the project. This is because the 'new' in nBMC was designed to capture the growth phenomena of BMCs. As the project has progressed, we have realised that the 1950s onwards is the most meaningful cut-off point from the historical perspective.[45] Furthermore, the issue of premises, which is pressing in Southwark, is largely a problem for new BMCs outside of the historic denominations.

In our small sample of participant nBMCs (full details in Appendix F), the median longevity of the congregations was 18 years (N=30).[46] The median time they had been in their current premises was 6 years (N=32). The distributions are shown in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**. For a smaller number of churches we could ascertain how many premises they had occupied in their congregational lifetime. Of 24 nBMCs, 10 had occupied 4 or more premises, with two churches having been in six different premises each. Another way of looking at this is to say that across the total lifetime of the 24 churches, they had occupied 72 premises between them.

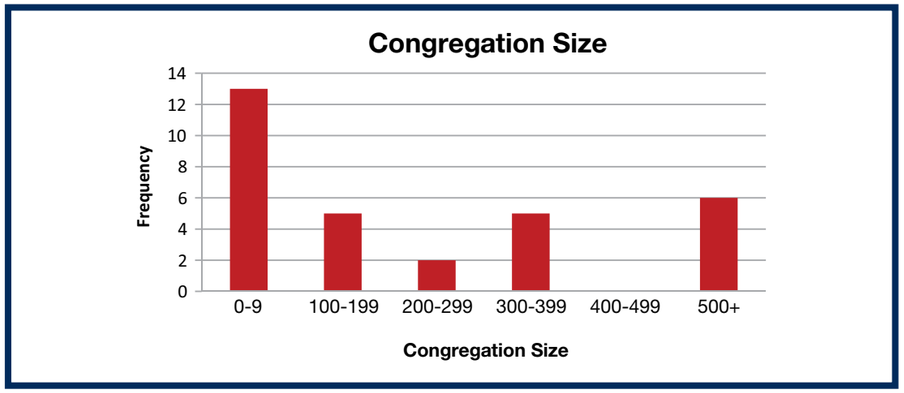

Figure 5 – Distribution of nBMC congregation sizes

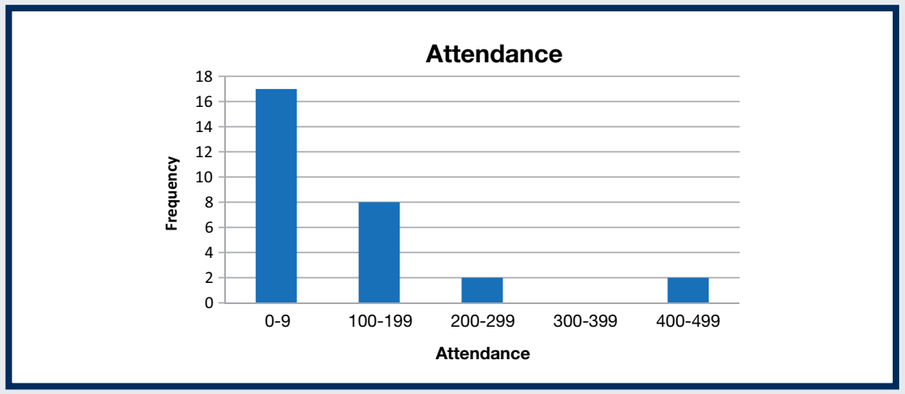

Figure 6 – Distribution of nBMC attendance

nBMC attendance was gained through a BBT team member counting all worshippers at a service. nBMC size was usually gained through asking the pastor in interview. The distinction is particularly important for churches running multiple services on a Sunday, sometimes due to insufficient space for the whole congregation to meet together. The median attendance was 84 (N=29) and the median size was 100 (N=31), which is higher than anecdotal evidence would suggest. Moreover, this is despite having used the median instead of the mean to avoid the skewing effect of the few very large congregations. Notably Brierley calculates that the average UK church in 2010 had 108 members (2011: 5). Our small sample size means we cannot place too much weight on these particular results, although we have visited across the spectrum of nBMCs (see **Figure 5** and **Figure 6**). In spite of this, our median figures are likely to be a maximum, since smaller churches in industrial units are harder to contact, and they are less likely to engage with a research project if there are concerns about legality of premises use. There was an interesting association between the size of a congregation and whether they owned or rented their premises. For congregations above the median size, 12 out of 15 owned their premises, whereas for those below median size, it was only 4 out of 15 (N=31) (see Appendix F).[47]

Taking these figures into account, it is possible for us to estimate the number of nBMC congregants in Southwark. Since many of the medium to large nBMCs run multiple services, the attendance figure gives us a number for nBMC congregants in Southwark at any one time on a Sunday. Therefore the total attendance at-any-one-time-on-a-Sunday for Southwark nBMCs is estimated at 20,100 (nearest 100). Congregation size tells us more about the total number of people going to nBMCs in Southwark across a whole Sunday, and this is estimated at 24,000 (nearest 100).[48] [49] The English Church Census 2005 estimated a Pentecostal attendance in Southwark of 11,500 (including historic Pentecostal denominations) and the draft Southwark Council report in 2006 estimated 'as many as 15,000 people per Sunday'. Given our data, these estimates need revising upwards to over 20,000.

4.4 Congregational Concentrations

As has been said, the concentration of nBMCs in the Borough is not spread evenly, but is highly concentrated in certain areas, as the Southwark Council report also found (Sangweme, 2006). For example, the number of nBMCs on the Old Kent Road has become something of a shop window for their growth, proclaiming the globalisation of Christianity in our city. Frequent visits to the Old Kent Road enabled us to identify upwards of 25 nBMCs on a road 1.5 miles long.[50] Based on the postcodes of all 252 nBMCs in Sample 1,[51] we identified four main areas of concentration - all in the north of the Borough - around the key road triangle of the Old Kent Road / New Kent Road (hypotenuse), A215 (Walworth Road / Camberwell Road), and the A202 (Queen's Road / Peckham Road). As **Figure 7** shows, the greatest nBMC concentration is in the east end of the Old Kent Road, especially in the industrial estate off the Ilderton Road, slightly to the north of the Old Kent Road. Secondly there is a concentration around Peckham Rye station and the Copeland Road area, particularly the Copeland Industrial Park (see **Figure 9**). Thirdly, there is a concentration around Camberwell Green, although more diffused, and fourthly, a concentration around the Elephant and Castle, which is also more diffused.[52] **Table 8** shows the distribution of nBMCs across the Borough by postcode, and it is notable that SE15 accounts for roughly half the nBMCs in the Borough (see also **Figure 8**).[53]

SWK POSTCODES *"outward" code*	CHURCHES *count*	CHURCHES *%*	TOTAL POSTCODES IN SWK[54] *count*
SE15	118	47%	1212
SE1	43	17%	2128
SE5	37	15%	811
SE16	20	8%	1032
SE17	14	6%	660
SE22	13	5%	586
SE21	4	2%	199
SE24	2	1%	79
SE19	1	0%	56
SE4	0	0%	4
SE8	0	0%	19
SE11	0	0%	97
SE14	0	0%	7
SE23	0	0%	29
SE26	0	0%	17
Totals	252		6936

Table 8 – Distribution of nBMCs by postcode according to the BBT database

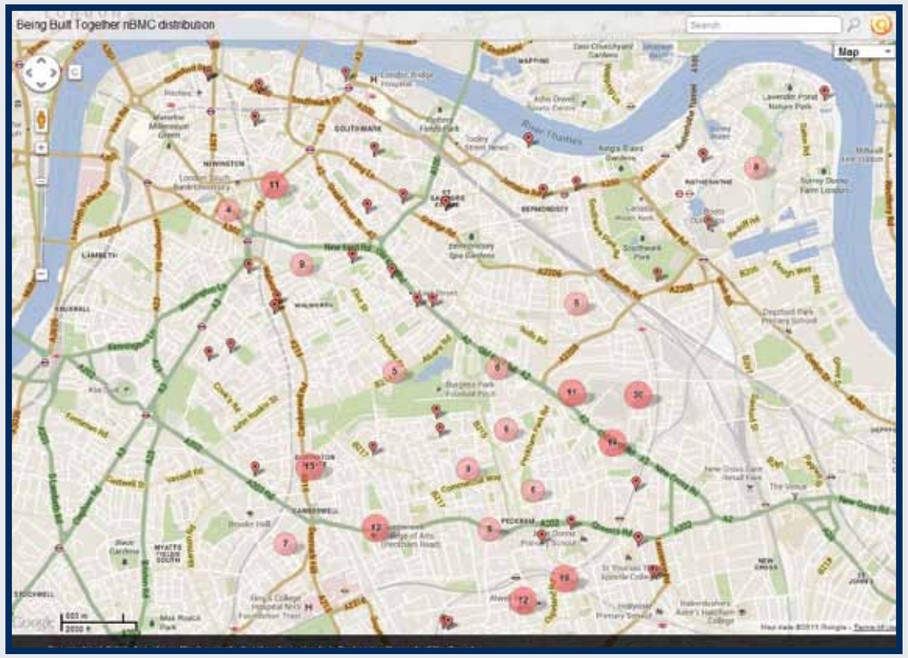

Figure 7 – Key Concentrations of nBMCs in Southwark

(Mapping by BatchGeo (2013). Map ©2013 Google)

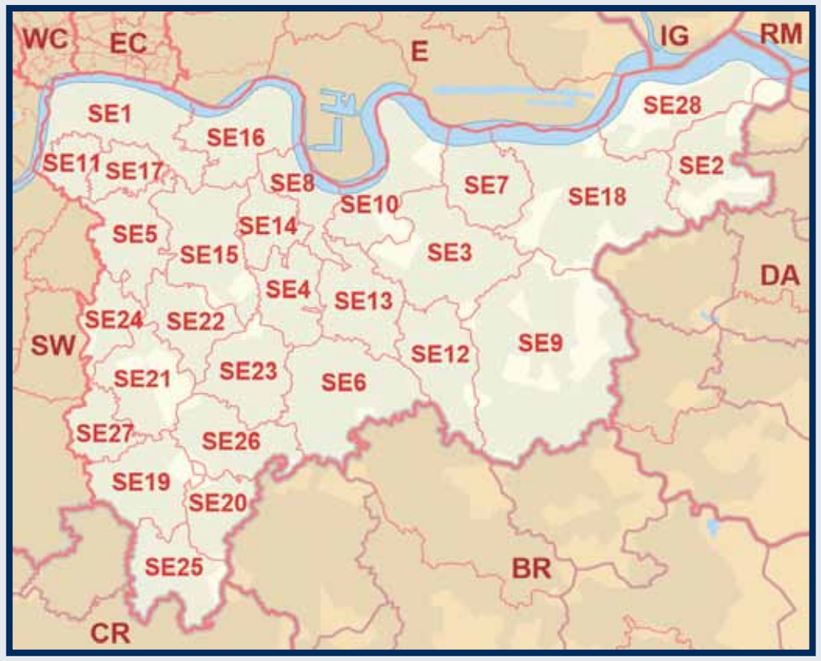

Figure 8 – Postcode map

Figure 9 – Concentration of nBMCs at Copeland Industrial Park in SE15 (Sept 2012)

4.5 Congregational Geography

To address objective 5, we asked pastors about their congregational geography, that is, where their congregants came from in London. Their responses are summarised in **Table 9**, and are as close to verbatim as possible for a summary. As headlined in §3.1, we opted not to attempt postcode surveys of congregations ourselves, as this was thought too intrusive, as well as unlikely to succeed. Some churches, such as C15, had postcode surveys of how their congregation travelled to the church in a 'Parking Study' which was part of their planning application. C31 generated maps indicating the catchment area of their congregants in a 'Transport Statement', also as part of their planning application. Some neighbourhood responses used such figures to question the locality of nBMCs (see §9.5).

Analysing the 31 available responses in **Table 9** does not allow us to encapsulate congregational geography descriptions in precise statistics, but it still provides a descriptive picture of where congregants are coming from. Inspection of the table suggests that churches who say they are drawing largely from immediate neighbourhoods are few; perhaps just C13, C20, C22, and C29 fit this category. Bear in mind that our sample is likely to have a slight bias to more established nBMCs, who have had time to make connections with their locality. Many of the churches identify a mix of local congregants (often meaning a number of Southwark neighbourhoods), sometimes estimated at around 50%, alongside congregants from south east London, from across London, and even from outside London. Seven congregations characterise themselves as drawing from across London (C2, C9, C17, C18, C28, C34, C36) and seven congregations refer to drawing congregants from outside London (C2, C6, C8, C11, C16, C28, C34). Six pastors in the table live a significant distance from the church. Notably, Pastor Kwabena identified one of his greatest challenges as getting everyone together on time given the size of London, since congregants are travelling from far away.

These responses provide a picture of Southwark nBMC congregational geography that is not easily susceptible of simple categorisation. nBMCs are a mix of local, borough, London and home counties congregants. 'Local' is used of Southwark, rather than of a neighbourhood. As we will see when looking at ecclesiology (§5), nBMCs tend not to operate according to a 'parish' model of church (like Anglicans and Roman Catholics), even when they use the term, but rather a 'gathered' model (cf. Churches Together in England, 2001). Many historic churches also operate according to a gathered model of church (e.g. Baptists), although not normally to the degree exhibited by nBMCs in Southwark. Pastor Matthew from C16 spoke to this point:

> …so our own church is ... the people from the community who live here, but I would say it's 50/50, a good number come from very far, which I would relate that to people go to a particular local church after they are saved, when they know that they feel connected to what's in that place and the leadership of that place. It's a connection, so because I tell people you don't just go to church because of convenience, you go to the place where you know God has led you to go and be established there, not for convenience. You don't go to work because it's convenient place, because if everyone wants to go to work because it was convenient place then everybody should just stay in the locality, if there's a MacDonalds next to you or whatever, just walk there, don't bother travelling 20 kilometres away. So go to where you know you feel led of the Lord, and you feel connected. God told, it was that prophet Elijah, in the time of the famine go to the brook called Cherith, there I have commanded the river to sustain you, go to Zarapheth, I have commanded the widow of Zarapheth to sustain you, there could have been other widows not far from him, but he has to go where he's told to go.

The calling to a particular church described here is therefore not to a locality, but to a particular church.

This ecclesiology therefore has an impact on how nBMCs choose their location. Although not an original BBT objective, we were interested to know why nBMCs came to Southwark in such numbers. Pastor Luke at C13 made one of the key factors clear:

> **BBT:** And was there anything about the Southwark borough or the area that attracted you or was it just what was available at the time?
>
> **Luke:** What was available.
>
> **BBT:** Yeah, so it wasn't that you particularly wanted to be in Southwark or Peckham, right.
>
> **Luke:** No, it was what was available.

nBMCs come to Southwark because that is where available and affordable premises are located (relative to other parts of Greater London).[55] Other likely factors are the religious marketplace cluster effect, the largest population of Africans in the UK, and possibly the Borough's centrality. Some have argued that this clustering may be short-lived, as once a church has been established for some time, there is a tendency to move out of the inner city into the suburbs. BBT recognises there is some evidence to support such a view, but considers the case quite provisional for nBMCs on current evidence (e.g. Duffuor, 2012; Eade, 2012).

ID	"WHERE DO YOUR PEOPLE COME FROM IN LONDON? LOCAL, S. LONDON, FURTHER AFIELD?"
1	not available
2	London wide: 90% from across London; a lot of people from Lewisham, some from Chingford, Hackney, Aylesbury (in the past), but members encouraged to go to the branch nearest to them
3	Most of them are local, within Peckham, Dulwich, Brixton, Kennington, within the South East [of London] mostly (congregants have recently started going to more local branches)
4	Most of our members live in Southwark; have planted churches so members can have churches close to them (except for ministers - want them to stay)
5	not available
6	50%+ Southwark, pastor lives in New Addington; others in Erith, Basildon, Romford, north London
7	50-60% in Southwark; others from Watford, Croydon, Harold Wood, Romford, Abbey Wood, Thamesmead
8	Not just an inner London church, we cover a lot of areas, even outside London (e.g. Milton Keynes, Gatwick, Orpington); but 25% walk to church (transport plan)
9	They come from all over London, although this parish is supposed to cover Southwark, Lewisham, Greenwich and Kent; pastor is from New Cross
10	not available
11	Originally local, but after property boom people moved outside London, so some in Basildon, pastor in Norwood, some in Thamesmead, Crystal Palace, a radius mostly of five or six miles, but people are c oming back in again now
12	Majority from Southwark, but a lot coming from south east London, such as Lewisham and Greenwich
13	Majority local
14	100% south east London
15	Peckham, Old Kent Road, Camberwell, New Cross (confirmed by transport postcode survey)
16	People come from far away (Redhill, Milton Keynes, Essex, Kent) - pastor lives in Kent - but it's about 50/50 re local and further afield; 78% of the congregation travel to the site by car (planning officer's report); 81% drive or share cars (according to Travel plan)
17	<dispersed> Peckham, Wembley, Surbiton
18	People come from all over London but beginning to be more local given the cost of commuting; Minibus arrangements haven't worked out due to cost
19	Some live locally (Dulwich, Peckham, Brixton); pastor travels 1 hour; one from Wembley, a few from Croydon
20	Majority from Peckham and Bermondsey; some Abbey Wood some Thamesmead
21	More than 50% travel in; used to be more local
22	70% local, all of us from SE London
23	not available
24	50% Southwark, 40% rest of south London, 10% greater London
25	South east and West London
26	not available
27	52% travelled by car in church survey. 16% walk, 35% in consultant survey (CS). CS survey also indicates 22% lived over 5 miles away, 59% live within 2 miles.
28	They come from everywhere; furthest attendee comes from Basildon, others from Feltham and Kingston; pastor from East London
29	80% from local 'constituency'; majority walk to church
30	All within London, a lot of them are close, some from Croydon, Lewisham, Mitcham, Romford
31	From 'Transport Statement': 'members travel from a wide distance over London with some members travelling as far afield as Edmonton in the north, Mitcham in the south, Hanwell in the west, and Brentwood in the east. However the majority of members are approximately within 5kms of the church'
32	50% from Southwark, 40% from South East London, 10% further afield (e.g. Wembley, Dagenham)
33	All over
34	Congregation travels, some areas near Luton, East, North and West London, Wembley; very few who are living within this area really
35	Local 50%; greater London 50%
36	They come from all over (e.g. Hayes, Bromley, Croydon, Brixton, Catford, a few from Peckham, pastor from Tulse Hill)

Table 9 – Congregational Geography of participant nBMCs from pastor interviews

> “Waking up is not just a message for local authorities, however, but for the wider church. Again, awareness of the presence of nBMCs and their part within the body of Christ is growing in the wider church, but there is some way to go in ‘being built together’.”

4.6 Demographics Conclusions

240+ nBMCs in one London Borough is a large number. Half of those being in SE15 is even more striking. We might speculate that this represents the greatest concentration of African Christianity in the world, outside of Africa.[56] Pastor Justyn in SE15 hoped Southwark Council would take note of these numbers, since:

> …a lot of the time I’ve been to meetings and they’ve said, you know, they don’t know when this happened that all of a sudden all these churches are here. And I’m thinking, I went to one meeting and I had to actually say hey, we’ve been here a long, long time, Southwark was sleeping, they didn’t realise, you know.

This may have been true in the past, but the current evidence is that the Council has indeed woken up to the presence of nBMCs in the Borough. Whether they have woken up to the scale of their presence, activity and contribution is another matter. Such numbers have significant implications for the Council, not least in terms of premises and planning policy. The evidence in this report points to a dramatic reconfiguring of the religious landscape in Southwark over the past 60 years. Total historic / new / independent congregations in Southwark, according to the English Church Census in 2005, are 116 (see Appendix G).[57] Consequently there are more than twice as many nBMCs as other churches. The Redeemed Christian Church of God may have as many as 21 congregations in the Borough, second only in number to the Anglican church.[58] This changing religious landscape is not restricted to Southwark either, but other London boroughs have also experienced growth amongst nBMCs. Consequently, the Greater London Authority needs to wake up to nBMCs, since, as we argue later on, planning needs to be on a regional as well as a borough level.

Waking up is not just a message for local authorities, however, but for the wider church. Again, awareness of the presence of nBMCs and their part within the body of Christ is growing in the wider church, but there is some way to go in ‘being built together’. Walter Hollenweger once wrote, ‘Christians in Britain prayed for many years for revival, and when it came they did not recognize it because it was black’ (Foreword in Gerloff, 1992: ix). One would hope that the invisibility of the black church movement is less true now for the wider church. For Southwark, at least, churches and local authorities funding BBT is a sign of change, especially bearing in mind the work of our partner organisations who are seeking to do more than wake people up, but foster genuine mutual engagement.

> “…the people depend on you so much. In a sense that they will call you, they want you 24 hours a day, you are their counsellor, you are their lawyer, you are their doctor, you are their papa, you are their mother, you are everything to them…”

5. Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is formally the study of the church, but the term is also often used to refer to the particular priorities of a given church. Finding out about nBMC ecclesiology is the second half of BBT's formal aim and is captured in many of the BBT objectives, especially objective 11 (see Appendix A). We asked pastors 'What sort of church are you? What are your priorities?' Their responses were revealing for understanding nBMC ecclesiology and inform what follows below (see **Table 20** in Appendix F). nBMC ecclesiology is a huge field of study for commentators and scholars, hence we will take a narrow focus on this topic. We recognise that a large part of what is covered in this report is ecclesiology, but this section concentrates on three key areas of nBMC identity arising from the fieldwork.

5.1 nBMC recent history

As highlighted in §4.3, British nBMC history is divided up into a number of stages by scholars. To understand nBMCs in Southwark, understanding something of their history is vital. Israel Olofinjana, a member of the BBT reference panel, has written and spoken at length about this history, and we draw on his work here to generate a brief historical overview (2010: 35f). Olofinjana identifies the early immigration of Caribbeans to Britain in the 1940s and 1950s, and their motivations for church planting, including, but not limited to, racial exclusion (so Aldred, 2005). This led to the planting of churches such as the Church of God of Prophecy (1953) and the New Testament Church of God (1953).

Then there was the first broad phase of African churches being established in England during the 1960s and 1970s, connected to the independence of African nations, mostly African Instituted Churches (AICs),[59] such as Church of the Lord (Aladura) (1964), Cherubim and Seraphim (1965) and Celestial Church of Christ (1967). Sometimes called 'Aladura' churches,[60] they are recognisable by their white flowing robes.[61]

The second broad phase of African churches relates to the period from the 1980s onwards, which started from humble beginnings, in houses, schools, office spaces, shops, growing to take over bingo halls, cinemas, old council properties, and warehouses, to name a few. These have been called Neo-Pentecostal Churches (NPC), due to their origination during the Charismatic revival in West Africa during the 1960s and 1970s (see also Adedibu, 2012: 68f). Nigeria and Ghana have played a leading role in the establishment of these churches, and such NPC churches predominate in the Southwark Christian landscape. Examples are Deeper Life Christian Ministry, New Covenant Church, and the Redeemed Christian Church of God, all of which started in the UK in the mid to late 80s.[62]

The NPC phase of growth appears to have continued into the 21st century across London and especially in Southwark, alongside other expressions of world Christianity. Such historical patterns also have a resonance with the immigration patterns referenced earlier in §4.2. nBMC participants in BBT were from all three of these broad stages of UK nBMC history, but mostly from the neo-pentecostal stage. Pastor Benjamin told a typical congregational story where they began as a meeting in the home with family and a few friends. Sometime later they moved into rented premises, which eventually became an aspiration to own their church premises. Such a vision had become reality for nearly half our sample.

The reasons for black Christian immigration to England are various and well-rehearsed. Pastor Joshua, a black church leader from outside Southwark, expressed it as follows:

> I think maybe these guys come over here or if they were born here they develop a business sense largely born out of the fact that many of them are professional people who are running churches, you know. So I think there is a difference there, whereas the Caribbean people came here to do menial jobs, most of the Africans who stayed came to study. Or come here having already studied and are professionals, so you have a qualitatively different mind-sets in terms of how you can apply yourself to doing church

The pastors in our BBT sample suggest that migration motivations may have become more diverse since the early days of African Pentecostal expansion. A few had been professionals in West Africa, some came as missionaries, few if any came to study, and there were other reasons as well.[63]

BBT is 'a' story of nBMCs in Southwark. We have tried to tell this story with its premises driven plot by listening carefully to nBMCs and other interested parties.[64] Apart from fieldwork, more established nBMCs may publish their story, but for the rest, it is either a few paragraphs on their website or nothing. We also note that some churches are currently invisible in that there is nothing to indicate their presence on the exterior of the building in which they meet. After a presentation for a BBT partner project, *Building on History* (The Open University, 2012a), an adviser at the National Archives emailed BBT with the following concern:

> …change of use [planning permission] records might very well form the only archival record of many of these congregations… The records your team have been creating are, I am sure, going to be the primary and perhaps only record for many of the nBMCs in Southwark. It would be wonderful if the churches were inspired to create and preserve records of their own existence but it seems likely that what will survive of their own creation in the longer term will be fragmentary and random. It is a powerful argument that the *Building on History* project has made that if religious groups or communities don't create their own records, they may well either pass from history or others will create records for them, not necessarily telling their story (20/11/12 & 22/11/12).

In addition to the historical arguments, ecclesiologically speaking, it is also important for a church to tell its own story (e.g. Gornik, 2011: 276). BBT is pleased to note that one means of doing this is through a Council funded archiving project in Southwark called 'Building the Archive' (see Resources). This aims to take 'a snap shot of black African and Caribbean communities… as they are now' so as to 'recognise and celebrate the contributions and achievements these communities have made' (see Southwark Council, 2013a).

5.2 Commonality and Diversity

In visiting services and interviewing pastors, the BBT team have been struck by the distinctives *and* diversity of Southwark nBMCs. Diversity is evident in the range of doctrines, practices, ethnicities, and sub-cultures observed in the churches. This is not to underplay the striking commonalities between many churches, which include: a strong ethnic identity with frequent reference to Africa and 'home'; nearly all the churches being 95%+ black; common prayers (e.g. the 'Pentecostal grace'); prayer nights; high levels of commitment in time and money especially the importance of tithing; belief in healing; a holistic emphasis on success and prosperity;[65] long services; loud worship; gathered nature of the congregations; international mentality; highly honoured position of the pastor,[66] and aspirational outlook.[67] On the other hand, some believed in tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit and others did not, some were conservative in dress and others were more relaxed,[68] some sang African and English choruses and others sang English hymns, some were majority Nigerian and others Ghanaian and others Sierra Leonean, some were very youth and gang orientated and others had mixed age and socio-economic demographics, some were small congregations (under 50) and others large (over 500), some gathered their congregations from a wider geographical area but others had a more local constituency (so §4.5). Despite this diversity, nBMCs may appear the same to outsiders. Skin colour is probably one reason for this perception. The premises issue is another, in that nBMCs are perceived to exhibit a similar set of 'problems' such as noise, traffic, parking and amenity. Assuming too much commonality for nBMCs is problematic for all parties addressed in this report.

The international mentality of the congregations was a common feature of their ecclesiology. Analysis of the 252 nBMC names in our BBT database *(Sample 1)* indicates that 47 churches use 'international' and 5 use 'world' in their titles. That is, approximately one fifth of the large sample explicitly indicates an international perspective. No wonder that Gerrie ter Haar uses the term 'African International Church' (1998: 24).[69] This also helps us to understand further the gathered and international ecclesiology of nBMCs that do not necessarily have a calling to a particular locality (as was discussed in §4.5). Indeed, various typologies have been proposed that note this international dimension of nBMCs. Afe Adogame identifies the most popular type as those nBMCs that 'exist as branches or parishes of mother churches with headquarters in Africa' – a type that certainly predominates in Southwark (2000).[70] Given the humble circumstances of many nBMCs in Southwark, this international vision is one indicator of their aspirational nature.

Another common feature of nBMCs was the significant role of the pastor. Pastors have considerable autonomy at the local level, even for those in nBMC 'denominations', which often function rather more loosely than historic denominations. Pastor Solomon spoke of 'the adventure' that African pastors are on, in that 'we go for it'. He explained:

> ...for me this is it, I pour myself into this, I put my life on the line, put my mortgage on the line, put everything on the line, there's a very crazy approach I think by African pastors, which I don't know that it always replicates across cultures... You'll find pastors selling their houses to buy buildings.

Congregational expectations of an nBMC pastor are very high, as Pastor Eaaron explained:

> …the people depend on you so much. In a sense that they will call you, they want you 24 hours a day, you are their counsellor, you are their lawyer, you are their doctor, you are their papa, you are their mother, you are everything to them because they say that whatever they need when they come by prayer they'll receive and that doesn't allow us very much time to do all the things…[71]

Some pastors spoke of the financial constraints their churches were under, with jobs losses amongst congregants, and the cost of premises sometimes triggering a 'survival mode' (so Pastor Solomon). This may well be connected to a number of pastors having other jobs to make ends meet, often known as 'tent-making',[72] with some even working full-time in other jobs. As discussed in §4.5, a number lived some distance from the church. Consequently, a current feature of nBMC ecclesiology for socio-economic and traditional reasons is that nBMC pastors are often time-poor, particularly in earlier phases of their congregational life (cf. Ashdown, nd). This has implications for issues such as community and ecumenical projects, as we will see, as well as access to theological education.

One aspect of nBMC diversity was the ecclesiological critique we heard from black church leaders from inside and outside Southwark. Pastor Dennis expressed reservations about the financial and business motivations of some nBMC leaders. Rev William, a black church leader from outside Southwark, argued that many new BMCs had:

> …a very different kind of mentality about church, it's more like a business for many of them and you know, the competitive spirit that they bring to church. Means that they will not only start a church on your doorstep they'll start a church on their own doorstep and so on, and so there is this accent on proliferation.

Pastor Joshua, a black church leader also from outside the Borough, thought that the 'proliferation' in places like Southwark was:

> …an extension of what happens in Africa. In Africa and in… Nigeria for example, there is a proliferation of churches just like this, in Lagos, in all the cities, in the cities in Nigeria where the, the desire for devotion and expression of faith is so strong it is almost like it's also localised within families… And I believe that is part of what is happening here even though it is not coordinated at all. There's a lot of internal tensions, there is a lot of competition, there is unnecessary repetition of purpose or objectives… And the reality is, that that is what those communities do, it's not something that can be solved or resolved overnight… I think the… resolution to this is numerous. You cannot, and will not resolve this by saying to them, you know walk together, amalgamate your churches.

The theological education of nBMC pastors was critiqued by Pastor Eaaron as follows:

> You know once you give somebody a chance to lead for some time ... he feels he can do it ... and because we depend more on gifts than education… we are telling people to get educated. At the moment we are working with [a University] They're trying to help us and we are trying to convince people that yes the gift is there, but you need education you know, the gift is for you to use to analyse, to express the power and the presence of God, but then you need the word of God to explain even what you are doing and you don't need words that come from your own head but you need words that have been tested.

Another black church leader from out of the Borough, Joel, also commented on theological education and BMCs:

> We now have a situation where the church's leadership … tend not to be people who are coming from a theological background… And they've got to learn the theology as they go along.…
>
> …unless and until we actually privilege… theological education… our churches will have a very, very wide… theological understanding. Often … often… they get that stuff from America … TV Evangelists and everything else. So the first thing is that we've got to try and encourage a new generation of black British kids… to go into a higher education institution, not … not always the Evangelical ones… where they learn theology.

In our nBMC sample, a number of pastors had attended denominational training colleges, and a few were undertaking postgraduate study of theology by distance learning. Many had no formal qualifications in theology, a finding that is noted by others of nBMCs more broadly.[73] Resources from African and Black Theology were notably absent.

5.3 What's in a name?

Given the diversity described in §5 so far, it is clear that 'nBMC' is a term that needs to be used very carefully. People like to be called by their given names, and that applies to churches as well. It was rare for churches in our sample to use this terminology of themselves, as Pastor John expressed it:

> …a lot of people see a black church and I've never seen myself as a black Christian, I've always seen myself as a Christian, first and foremost…

Ideally, then, we should refer to all the churches in our samples by their given names. In a report of this nature, however, this would be difficult due to our anonymity guarantee. Furthermore, we needed a term that would capture the growth phenomena of a distinct group of churches over the last half century. nBMC is therefore a missiological and sociological shorthand to be used in publications of this nature if necessary. The rationale for adopting the prefix 'new' should now be apparent from the historical overview given in §5.1. The terminology of BMC has been adopted due to a near consensus of usage by commentators in the field,[74] although we think it is a 'least worst' umbrella category.

We contrast nBMCs with other churches and denominations at various points in the report. By 'historic' churches we mean denominations such as those listed in Appendix G (e.g. Anglican, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Baptists, Methodists, United Reformed Church). There are many vibrant historic BMCs in Southwark, although figures about their numbers have been very difficult to obtain from denominational offices, even when statistics are known to be available. At the beginning of the project, BBT chose (with difficulty) not to include historic BMCs within its remit or sample for two main reasons. Firstly, most historic BMCs are shaped by the tradition of their denomination, which is largely distinct from the broadly Pentecostal tradition of nBMCs. Secondly, historic BMCs do not face the premises and planning issues to anything like the degree that nBMCs do.[75] Having said this, we did visit two historic BMCs in addition to our nBMC sample (see **Table 2**) to check on our project boundaries amongst other things.[76]

'New' churches are another broad category of church that lie outside the historic denominations (Kay, 2007: 19-20; Kay and Dyer, 2004: 304, 312f). They are charismatic by tradition, emerging

out of the renewal movement of the 1950s onwards in the UK (e.g. New Frontiers, Salt and Light, Ichthus, Pioneer). They tend to be white majority and are also likely to face some of the premises issues raised by nBMCs. Independent churches, often evangelical, are also outside the 'historic' category and like new churches, tend to be white majority and need to find their own premises. Sometimes, 'independent churches' is used more broadly to mean all churches apart from the historic denominations.

Appendix F shows how the pastors in our sample characterised the Christian tradition of their church. Of the 34 available responses:

- 18 straightforwardly identified as Pentecostals;
- 8 as a mix of pentecostal with one or two of charismatic / evangelical / community;
- 4 as in the Holiness tradition;[77]
- 1 as charismatic / evangelical;
- 1 as Christian;
- 1 as evangelical;
- 1 as Aladura.

It is fair to say that there was some fluidity in some pastors' use of these terms. 'Pentecostal', however, was recognised by 29 of the 34 responses as one acceptable designation; evangelical by 7 of the 34; and charismatic by 5 of the 34. We can conclude, on the basis of this sample at least, that if a Christian tradition designation is to be used in Southwark, 'pentecostal' is likely to be the preferred term. Defining the traditions 'Pentecostal' and 'Charismatic' is notoriously difficult, especially their difference, but a historical approach will suffice here. Pentecostals look to the experience of the Holy Spirit by Jesus' disciples at Pentecost 'which is seen as duplicated in the experience of many believers during the 20th century [onwards], particularly triggered by events at Azusa Street [from 1906 in Los Angeles]' (Kay and Dyer, 2004: 303). The Charismatic renewal movement has a similar emphasis on the experience of the Spirit, but started later ('the second wave'), as noted above, and spread within the historic denominations as well as generating 'new' churches distinct from Pentecostal churches. Evangelicalism is somewhat easier to distinguish as it is known for a different set of emphases stretching back to the evangelical revival of the 18th century (Bebbington, 1989: 3-4). There are obvious overlaps between evangelicalism and Pentecostalism, especially in relation to the Bible, but they should not be understood as synonyms.[78] What is interesting about the responses is the willingness of even a minority of pastors to partially self-designate as 'evangelical' – a point that can be explored no further here, however.

5.4 Ecclesiology Conclusions

This ecclesiology section has drawn attention to the distinctive nature of nBMC ecclesiology as BBT has observed it in Southwark. nBMCs have been able to tell something of their stories to BBT, although it is important that other opportunities are afforded as well. We have stressed the need to recognise the diversity of nBMCs historical origins and traditions, and not to be led into overestimating commonalities by either appearance or terminology or premises issues.

Other churches may find there is much to learn from the global vision of nBMCs, underlining the 'from everywhere to everywhere' of mission in the 21st century. The other side of this is that interested parties need to be aware of nBMCs differing mindset regarding the place of the local in their life and mission.

We have heard of the sacrifice and commitment given *and* expected of nBMC pastors. Consequently pastors may have little time for additional activities. As BBT has found, the mode and manner of communication is critical. Parties wishing to communicate with local churches should note the relative autonomy of nBMC 'branches' on their denominational 'tree'. Despite the appearance of wealth in a few churches, many nBMCs we contacted were facing difficult economic circumstances. The critique of nBMCs being overly concerned with a competitive business model of church is accepted as having some truth by BBT, but we see 'resolutions' as long term and coming primarily from within nBMCs themselves. Other parties may secondarily contribute through attending to nBMC ecclesiology, which will inform partnering in ecumenical and community focussed projects with nBMCs. Access to theological education that fits nBMC pastor circumstances and addresses their questions has also been identified as a key issue.[79]

> “nBMCs in Southwark are mostly African majority with a large proportion of congregants being of West African origin… a good number of nBMCs include multiple ethnic groups in their congregations, varying proportions of local people, but very few whites.”

6. Ethnicity and Culture

Ethnicity has already been addressed from a statistical perspective in §4.2,[80] where we noted that Southwark is Britain’s African capital. Here we consider the responses to the interview question we asked of pastors ‘What different nationalities and cultures are represented in your church?’ (summarised in **Table 10**, and addressing objective 6). This also led into discussions regarding nBMCs and mission which we will also explore in this section.

In our sample of 36 nBMCs, 28 were identified as African majority, 3 as Caribbean majority, 4 did not have this detail, and 1 did not provide ethnicity information. Of the African majority churches, 17 were identified as Nigerian majority, and another 6 had a majority of their congregants from a particular African country. One pastor at C24 preferred not to give specific ethnic breakdowns. We do not claim that this sample is exactly representative of Southwark nBMCs, indeed, no one knows the precise ethnic spread of Southwark nBMCs anyway. But we are confident that the sample reflects the predominance of African and West African majority churches in the Borough, while also including a diversity of other nBMCs as well.[81] What is also apparent from **Table 10** is that the term ‘African majority’ can hide the multi-ethnic nature of many churches in the sample. Although it was not possible to get details from every church on this point, it was clear to BBT that our participant nBMCs welcomed congregants from many ethnic groups. For example, using slightly different terminology, C9 spoke of more than 10 nationalities and C24 more than 40.

Pastor Solomon linked ethnicity with the nomadic nature of nBMCs in London as follows:

> …before that we were moving everywhere and that goes back to the situation of churches in London. We started at [a venue]. And straight away because we are ethnic driven, people do not live locally. They are coming in from north, south, east and west, they drive in, they park, they come into the service. So straight away you’re not local and then there are all the changes, because we were there for two years, we moved to [another place] for another 6 or so years. Then we moved to [yet another place] for about 5 years, and then we moved to [somewhere else] for 2 years and then from there we came here. So you feel like you can’t even be local [laughs]
>
> And then you’re trapped in a dangerous dynamic because the more you move the more ethnic you remain. When you finally settle down you can consider trying to be more relevant to the local population but because you’ve been, consolidating your ethnicity, you find that by the time you’ve settled down you really need some kind of genetic mutation to happen. [laughs]

For Solomon and C18, then, the transient nature of premises was connected to the congregation’s struggle to broaden its ethnic profile. The leadership at C7 associated their church with a particular nation, as they explained:

> …the church originates from Nigeria so we have [them] all over West Africa... so basically wherever there’s a Nigerian community more or less there’s a congregation.[82]

Many of the nBMC pastors in our sample spoke of their desire to reach out to all ethnicities and cultures in their neighbourhoods.[83] So Pastor Wale declared ‘we don’t want only 2 nationalities in the church, we want as many nationalities as possible’ although he added this was also their ‘greatest challenge’. Numerous other pastors acknowledged this challenge,

often citing cultural reasons as an issue. Some benefits of tending towards one ethnicity and shared culture were noted, as Pastor Eaaron expressed it:

> People understand themselves, so somebody from Ghana sees the church as, oh, this is from my home. So she or he feels comfortable.
>
> And also language plays a role. After the service is over you can get somebody to talk to, somebody to relate to, especially those who are not elite or who have not been to school, you know, they have trouble and they can speak to [someone], and that is one of the facts.

Pastor Matthew also highlighted the language issue as follows:

> …what happens is when conversations can progress, when you can understand each other, and what I realise is that when it comes to the accent, you're speaking to someone and you've got to go I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, and then next time you wouldn't want to go to that person even to start a conversation because of the same difficulties, but with time we're able to you know catch one's accent and once you get over that you'll find that going, especially with the Caribbean too, their accent and the African accent and then the English and the Scottish…

What culturally similar congregations can provide is a 'safe haven' for first generation communities in particular, or as Adogame expresses it 'places to feel at home' and a 'home away from home' (2000: 407). Our informed observer, Pastor Joshua, thought this a natural tendency:

> When a community is still settling, trying to find its feet, which the African church has been doing for the last decade and a half, there is a tendency to look for the familiar to settle down with those they know.

6.1 Reverse Mission ?

There is much talk of 'reverse mission' currently. Indeed, a number of Southwark nBMCs have pastors and leaders who have come as missionaries to 'the dark continent of Europe' (so the title of Olofinjana's book), thus 'reversing' the historical direction of mission.[84] In speaking to BBT, Pastor Matthew told us to 'look at what your forefathers brought' of the Gospel which 'we embrace'. Pastors and informed observers had a spectrum of views on whether reverse mission was happening or not. Some spoke of why they were not reaching a wider range of ethnicities and cultures in their congregations, particularly bearing in mind the congregational longevity given in §4.3. The combination of ethnicity, culture and church tradition was thought to be a barrier by Pastor Noble:

> The way we relate, the way we communicate are different, so in order for us to be able to accommodate more white people in the congregation we need to do a lot of mental reorientation, which is ongoing, we are not there. So style of worship and all of that, all of those are contributory factors, so our target is not primarily Africans because we do evangelise all the time, we do outreaches every month, which is not targeted towards Africans, it's targeted towards our immediate community, which is largely white. But even when people get saved in such circumstances through our outreaches and all of that it is not easy for them to worship here as to worship in another white congregation, so those are the logistics, those are what we've found.

Pastor Joshua took a pessimistic view of first generation nBMCs ability to engage in mission:

> …I think immigration and sociological, and social economic factors are the stronger determining factors to survival of these communities and so they, rather than engage in terms of mission are trying to survive basically, are trying to find themselves within a culture. I think it's going to [be] a second or third generation that is going to be able to engage because that generation would have gone to the schools, been educated here, and would have been able to imbibe the nature or the culture of Britain better than their fathers or their elders are able to.

Joshua critiqued some nBMCs for 'defaulting to culture, as opposed to defaulting to mission'. He argued that individuals and congregations need to undergo an 'intentional loss of culture' in order to 'engage the culture of the people you are trying to reach'. BBT witnessed at least one example of this 'intentional loss of culture', however, when one of the sample churches put on a Christmas carol concert in traditional English style, in order to attract local people.

Pastor Luke thought reverse mission *was* occurring and 'having a very big impact', but:

> …we're not seeing the results in the black majority churches. So for instance I'll go out and win a soul who is a quiet person, the person will not feel comfortable coming to my church... but will end up going to Anglican church or some other church. So really it's worked except that they're not coming to the black majority churches…

Of this trend, Luke said 'I don't want to call it racism' then added:

> **Luke**: There is this thing that maybe people will disagree with me, but it feels almost like the average white person wouldn't like to sit under a black pastor, but we have a few whites in our church, we have about thirty nationalities. In this place we have black majority, we have Irish, English we've got all those there.
>
> **BBT**: Now you said 'I don't want to call it racism'...
>
> **Luke**: Yes.
>
> **BBT**: Now you know I'm going to ask you about that [laughs]... why don't you want to call it racism ?
>
> **Luke**: Well the only reason I don't call it racism is because sometimes people are not comfortable with your culture and they don't see what you do in the church as an instruction from the Bible, they see it as your culture, so all the clapping and dances and stuff like that, they might take it as African culture, whereas when you go to the English church or to the High Church, you're sitting in the pew and singing song, that is what I'm used to, that is what I can identify it with ...
>
> **BBT**: Yes.
>
> **Luke**: So it might not necessarily be racism.
>
> **BBT**: Yeah.
>
> **Luke**: That's what I'm saying but sometimes it is, but then they give a very good reason.

This was the only occasion during the BBT fieldwork when a pastor initiated use of the term 'racism'.

6.2 Multi-Ethnic Congregations

A number of pastors talked about the challenges of developing a multi-ethnic church.[85] Rev Fred, a historic nBMC leader, spoke of his 'passion' which was:

> …to have a multi-coloured church, I won't say culture because you have multicultural everybody from Africa because they are French and Portuguese and so on. So I would love to have, if you want to use Jesse Jackson's term, a rainbow kind of church because I feel very passionate about this... If people from all races can be seen exiting a church, people are going to say "What is going on there?", because that is normal thing in the world, we have our own clubs and colours and classes.
>
> …and we try to stay within that, but I believe the church of Jesus Christ must have everything you know, whites, blacks, Chinese, pinks, browns, whatever colour.
>
> …and that in itself would be a strong witness for the gospel.

Rev Fred identified some of the issues with multi-ethnic / multi-coloured congregations, such as the issue of 'who wants to dominate'. Pastor Eaaron, in a multi-ethnic African majority church identified his greatest challenge as a 'culture problem' within the congregation, as follows:

> This is Caribbean and he wish the church is done this way. This is African and they want the church done this way, and this is somebody not English, but ... not English by colour, but English because he was born and raised here, he doesn't know anywhere else and would want to see it done this way.

Both Rev Fred and Pastor Luke identified the critical issue of leadership in multi-ethnic congregations. So Rev Fred explained:

> The next challenge is, how is leadership perceived? I personally believe that the leadership in the church should be representative of the congregation. OK? So one of the things we have start to do, not token, is to ensure that in our leadership we have someone from Africa, someone from Jamaica, someone who is English, okay white, that's become a bit harder now. So everyone is there because it's sad to say that you believe in the priesthood of believers but you only have a certain kind of people leading the church. I don't think that is biblical, I think it must be represented but then you have to be careful that you don't practice that to the exclusion of the leading of the Spirit.

Pastor Luke was more pointed in his comments about leadership, as he told BBT:

> **Luke**: Yeah my missions' director is white and my head of hospitality is also white.
>
> **BBT**: Oh interesting. Oh okay, and how did you come to decide, was that a deliberate policy or was it just that they were the right people for the job or...?
>
> **Luke**: I think both... they were right for the job and they... because if I'm living in a predominantly white country… My ministers are white, I have two missions' directors, one white and one black, it makes sense, because you've got to reach out to the white community, you've got to have that kind of face as well.
>
> **BBT**: Yeah.
>
> **Luke**: And also I did affirmative action or whatever, because with all due respect if you go to a lot of white majority churches they don't even see a one black person in leadership.
>
> **BBT**: Mhm, you're quite right.
>
> **Luke**: You have a lot of black people in there and I think it is very, very, terrible, and I criticise that all the time...

6.3 Ethnicity and Culture Conclusions

nBMCs in Southwark are mostly African majority with a large proportion of congregants being of West African origin. Whether African or Caribbean majority, a good number of nBMCs include multiple ethnic groups in their congregations, varying proportions of local people (see §4.5), but very few whites. Being black majority, or white majority for that matter, does not necessarily entail being mono-cultural. For nBMCs sharing similar cultures, however, they provide a 'home from home', a safe place for those finding their way in a new country, with attendant benefits for such communities, local authorities and London (see §7).

There was a widespread desire on the part of nBMC pastors to be more multi-ethnic, to welcome those from dissimilar cultures into their churches. There was recognition by pastors, however, of the cultural issues that needed to be faced, of the 'mental reorientation' required. Such challenges are by no means the sole preserve of nBMCs.

Questions about reverse mission are ongoing and cannot be fully addressed here, but the Southwark evidence would suggest to BBT that such question marks are deserved. BBT recognises the call for an 'intentional loss of culture' as a missional necessity in Boroughs such as Southwark. Multi-ethnic congregations invite such a loss from their congregants, but the 'loss' is not without gains.[86] Indeed, this loss is according to the pattern of incarnational ministry.

ID	"WHAT DIFFERENT CULTURES AND NATIONALITIES ARE REPRESENTED IN YOUR CHURCH?"
1	not available
2	Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Carribbeans
3	Ghana / Nigeria majority
4	Mostly Nigerian; also Malawian, Ghanaian, Jamaicans, Kenya, Sierra Leonian
5	Nigerian majority
6	50% Nigerian; 20% Ghanaian; 15% Zimbabwean; 15% Sierra Leonian
7	Nigerian majority
8	Nigerian & Sierra Leone majority; other Africans and Carribbeans
9	More than 10 nationalities; majority Nigerian; British, French, West Indies, Ghana
10	Nigerian majority
11	Ghanaian 25%; Nigerians 25%, Sierra Leonians about 20%, Caribbeans about 5%, 30+ nationalities (pastors all Ghanaian)
12	Sierra Leonian majority
13	Ghanaian majority; Nigerians, other African nations
14	70% black and 30% white
15	Ghanaian majority; few Caribbean heritage and one caucasian
16	African majority; a few Caribbeans
17	Majority Caribbean, plus Ghana, White Eng.
18	African majority but not West African[1]
19	Black African Carribbean community (Ghanaians, Nigerians, Caribbeans, Ivorians)
20	Nigerian majority; Jamaican minority
21	80%+ Nigerian; Ghanaians; Sierra Leone; Caribbean; 3 'whites'
22	Nigerian 55%; 15% Jamaican; 14% Cameroonian; 16% Sierra Leonian
23	Nigerian
24	60% not born in UK (resisted other analyses); 40 nationalities, 8-10 languages spoken in church
25	Carribbean 98% Africans and others 2%
26	Nigerian majority
27	four white congregants on visit; black majority (Nigerian)
28	Largest percentage are Nigerian; some Jamaicans
29	Nigerian 70%
30	Ghanaian majority, use local languages
31	Nigerian majority
32	Sierra Leone 90%
33	Ghanaian & Nigerian
34	Caribbean
35	90% Nigerian
36	Mainly black people, mostly Nigerians, some Ghanaians, Kenyans, Angolans, Barbadians

Table 10 – Ethnic composition of participant nBMCs largely from pastor interviews

1 This has been generalised to preserve anonymity.

> “...churches are not here just to make noise,
> we are here to transform, like I say,
> we are agents of transformation,
> we want to transform this borough.”

7. Community Engagement

To address objectives 7, 8 and 10,[87] we asked pastors to ‘Tell [us] about any projects or ministries you have within the congregation and/or local community’. The responses are summarised in **Table 12**. During the course of BBT it became clear that the definition of ‘community’ is critical for understanding this aspect of nBMCs. Firstly, although the singular usage is conventional, talk of ‘the community’ can mask diversity as will be seen in §9. Secondly, which community are we talking about? In relation to planning, local authorities default to local geographical communities, whereas nBMCs tend to include their geographically diverse congregation under community engagement as well. Therefore associational and local communities are both in view. Furthermore, there are many nBMCs concentrated on industrial estates, and these do not have immediate local communities in the traditional sense (so §4.4).

Community engagement has particular leverage for new churches and nBMCs, as all organisations with charitable status (and so tax exempt) must demonstrate public benefit (Charity Commission, 2012). Furthermore, proposed or demonstrated community engagement is advantageous for planning applications (so §9.2), not least because neighbour responses are sought as part of the process (see §9.5).[88] It is curious how secular regulations encourage a world-facing or ‘missional’ attitude for churches in search of premises.[89]

7.1 Engagement in Context

The contribution of churches and faith groups to local communities and wider society has attracted significant research interest in recent years. Back in 2002, the report *Regenerating London: Faith communities and social action* identified 120,000 beneficiaries of activities by faith groups. Such groups in London employed 3000 people assisted by 13,500 volunteers running 2000 projects (London Churches Group for Social Action and Greater London Enterprise, 2002: 5-6).[90]

The aforementioned CAG report in 2008 noted ‘how critical the connections between faith, planning and regeneration have become’ and then continued:

> ...currently in London, however, many faith communities are constrained by inadequate facilities from providing the level and range of social services and activities they have the capacity to offer. In other words, faith groups bring an offer; they don’t just place a demand on the planning system but this may not be as widely recognised as it ought to be (2008: §2.1.2, §2.3.3).

Blessings under Pressure: The Work of Migrant Churches in the City of Rotterdam (BUP) is a report with some striking similarities to BBT (SKIN Rotterdam, 2009). It considers the situation of migrant churches in Rotterdam in the Netherlands, which are said to be 140 in number, with the fastest growing being Pentecostal. BUP draws on financial research which concludes that migrant churches in Rotterdam each year ‘save the Rotterdam government… between €55 million and €66 million’.[91] The author argues that migrant churches contribute greatly to the economic and social life of Rotterdam, despite enormous pressures, and concludes that ‘migrant churches are a gift to the societies in which they operate’. Despite different contexts, the parallel situations suggest that all parties should recognise the ‘gift’ that nBMCs are to Southwark and beyond.

Most recently, the report *Church and Community Involvement: National Church Social Action Survey Results* concluded the following, based on a comparison between results in 2010 and 2012 across the UK:

- Hours spent by volunteers in UK churches on local social action initiatives have increased by 36% in two years to 98M hours.
- In spite of current economic problems, funds given by UK Church members that were spent on social action initiatives have increased by 19% in two years to £342M.
- There has been a rapid diversification of social actions by churches – the average number of social action initiatives undertaken by a Church has risen from 5.7 to 8.2.
- The larger the church, the more the hours spent on social initiatives. However, this goes up markedly for large churches of over 500 adults (Knott, 2012).

The report helpfully identified the 'Top 10 Social Action initiatives of Churches' and these are reproduced in **Table 11**.

TOP 10 SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVES OF UK CHURCHES
Mothers and Toddlers
School assemblies / RE work
Festivals / Fun days
Food distribution
Children's club – up to age 11 (apart from church children's ministry)
Caring for Elderly (apart from church members)
Youthwork – 12-18 (apart from church youth ministry)
Café open to the public
Primary School Clubs / Summer clubs
Arts – drama, media, music, etc. (apart from church members)

Table 11 – Top 10 Social Action initiatives of UK Churches
(Knott, 2012)

Finally, the recent *Faith in the Community: Strengthening the Ties between Faith Groups and Local Authorities* report analysed responses from 155 local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland regarding their engagement with faith groups (Evangelical Alliance, 2013). This includes a picture of community engagement by faith groups through local authority eyes. Narrating the nuance of different local authority perceptions, the report identifies three activities that were consistently cited, namely Street Pastors, Foodbanks and Christians Against Poverty (CAP). Notably, this does not replicate directly the rankings in **Table 11**, which is probably due to the formal status of projects recognised by local authorities.[93] One concern, according to the report, is that some local authorities have little knowledge of faith group activities within their local area.

These five reports address the contribution of churches and faith groups in London, Rotterdam, and the UK. Such evidence of community engagement provides a context for understanding the impact of nBMCs within Southwark and across London.

7.2 Talking about Communities

When asked about their greatest challenges (so **Table 22** in Appendix H), 8 out of 27 responses made reference to community engagement in both the associational and local sense. Regarding more specific local engagement as a challenge, there were possibly 2 responses out of 27 (C9, C12). Reviewing **Table 12**, we can see that a number of churches speak of operating strong and/or extensive community programmes (e.g. C4, C8, C15, C21, C29), to the extent of attracting high profile interest from outside. Many nBMCs in the sample were operating a smaller number of programmes and the aspiration to be more engaged was a common theme. However, pastors also raised staffing, time and costs as an issue. A sizeable minority of our sample (6 out of 32 responses) said they had little engagement with the local community, seen in comments such as 'the area is too difficult to reach out to' (C12); 'not much to write home about' (C16); 'just started… focussing in house' (C22); and 'old building not suitable' (C34). From the qualitative summary here it would seem that only a small proportion of nBMCs were reaching the reported national average of 8.2 social action initiatives per congregation.[94] There is some evidence from a small survey undertaken in Balham and Tooting in 2003 that nBMCs have a greater internal focus until they purchase their own premises, then 'the church turns its focus outwards to the geographically local community'.[95] It is clear that 'community' refers to congregation *and* locality with varying degrees of emphasis, but we should also note that nBMC international projects are included in a few pastor responses (e.g. C32, C36), thus further reinforcing the international outlook identified in §5.2. The table also highlights the tension between conceptions of community engagement as conceived by secular bodies and the church, especially nBMCs. So many responses include Christian activities and a number mention evangelism / outreach as part of their community engagement.

The benefits of nBMCs to their own communities were addressed by pastors. Reinforcing the 'safe haven' theme introduced in §6,[96] Pastor Kwabena described how his congregation fulfilled this role:

> …when the people come in, it is like, if I know there's a vacancy and see a job normally people find it difficult getting job and so you make an announcement. If there's job available in a place, let us know, and then also you tell the people and they go in, especially, when they don't work that's when you get much more problem to solve so, we have, we can do that.
>
> …when somebody loses the parents or something like that, when you are here [i.e. in England], it is very difficult, so what we do then, when that happens, the church tries in a way to help the person, raise some money to help the person to send back home to the families.
>
> …when they are facing what to eat, how to take care of their children, the church also normally do donation to those people, [those] who… go into hospital, you try to raise something to help them. We're hearing their problems, we're praying with them, showing love, to let them know that we do care for the family so if anything happens to them they are not alone, but we are all as a family in Christ, through anything and that is our anthem…

A number of nBMCs, especially the more established, addressed basic health needs for their congregations, as Pastor Luke explained:

> …people come to church with their pressures, I don't know, their pressure is high, but you have to have some facilities that they can quickly check it, and there's a blood

> pressure man over there and so... check it and say "Hey it's high, go and see your GP". Yeah, or your blood sugar is high go and see your GP.
>
> So basically it's things like that. Somebody called the Pastor "Will you come and pray for me?", "What's happened?", "I'm in diabetic coma", and then it's "I never knew you had diabetes", now these are things that you can prevent, and stop it, and also these immigration issues also come in because some who have migrated here, they don't have papers and stuff like that so they don't have GPs...[97]

At C29 there was a particular fellowship for all congregants who were health professionals. Pastor Taiwo described how it functioned:

> …for instance when we finish the service, they do their setup… at the end of the service they have their stand and you know there are many clinics in… the other building. They don't give out drugs or anything but it's like a medical counselling unit where you have doctors and confidentially members are free to go to them and we've discovered that when we, we started that ministry three years ago and it has become very effective because it provides a framework of some reassurance to people. You know you find someone is experiencing some symptoms and they are afraid to even go to see the GP.
>
> "So should I go and see the GP, what do I do?" And also there is… that… fellowship, that relationship, the fact that you are talking to a brother in Christ, a sister in Christ who is in the profession, you know they can offer you advice. Apart from that it also helps our younger ones who want to go into those careers, those professions.
>
> So they also have opportunities to go to them, okay I am in the medical school or I'm in the nursing school, what do I need to do next? Er or I'm about to start applying for jobs, what do I need to do? Or I just relocated from abroad, I was a practicing doctor abroad, now I've just come to join my family or I've just relocated and I'm about to start, what do I need to do?

nBMCs fostering law and order was raised by a number of pastors, so Pastor Matthew observed:

> The council just have to be honest with the fact that the black community, their passion for the things of God, it is increasing and it is also a blessing to them, at least they are able to create a sense of order, a sense of law abiding, more law abiding citizens so to say, compared with the younger ones, the crime rates at least will be reduced, and people are well taught in an environment where core God values have been implanted into the hand of the young ones, not gun crimes and knife stabbing on the streets there because, and I know that is the devil's work, and these young ones are growing faster…
>
> [points to picture] …look at those children, this was a couple of years ago, some of them are from this community. Now we have a good number of them now who have grown up in the university, which to me that's why I'm not too bothered about whether it's white or black, it is whoever wants, it's open to all…

As we have seen, our informed observer, Pastor Joshua, was sceptical about the ability of first generation nBMCs to engage in reverse mission (so §6.1). In agreement with Pastor Matthew, however, he stated:

> …what they are doing is minimising the detrimental effect of family breakdown and the situation of crime within this community. And because of the challenge of provision of services… or of amenities for the young people, church becomes a way of life, and church is on a sociological, religious level, engaging many of these children and young people.

Pastor Daniel at C15 worked largely with young adults and BBT met some of them. He commented on how the church can help with the needs of second generation migrants:

> …the youth of this country wants fathers. It's not that they don't have fathers, they have fathers, you see, the African, Caribbeans, our problem is that the cultures that we have, we want to put it in the children, whether good or bad culture. I mean, our cultures are very rich, but whether good or bad, in every culture there is bad and there is good, but it seems like that when you come to another society, their cultures are different so two cultures emerge together. So, instead of that transition, we kind of not understand ourselves, so they don't understand this, mummy doesn't understand son or daughter and father does not understand son or daughter. So, in that gap there is a vacuum, the son is looking for a father that will understand…[98]

Pastor Justyn took a broader view of the contribution that churches were making to the borough, including their relationship with the council:

> I hope that when this [*Being Built Together* research] is in the public domain it will harmonise the relationship between church and Southwark council so that Southwark council appreciate that churches are adding value. The churches are actually a force to be reckoned with in the community, that most of these kids that are out on the streets are being taken care of by the pastors and churches without the churches blowing their trumpet to say this is what we are doing. And if the council can work symbiotically with the church so that we exchange and work with one another, where we need help, they can help, where they need help there are a lot of things that the church can offer that the council cannot offer, you know in terms of mediation, in terms of dealing with teenage pregnancies and crisis in homes, you know those things that social services cannot handle, the churches are well equipped to handle those things. So I'm hoping that somehow [this research] will also get out there for people to know that churches are not here just to make noise, we are here to transform, like I say we are agents of you know transformation, we want to transform this borough.

Reasons for being disengaged from local communities were offered by pastors. So the pastor living at some distance from the church is a problem for some, a point raised in other sections as well (e.g. §8). Pastor Luke argued of safe haven nBMCs that the goal of 'comfort and togetherness' were not especially compatible with the goal of 'doing something for that particular society'. Pastor Justyn, again, raised the socio-economic limitations constraining C8:

> …if the people in the church are not financially empowered then we cannot execute most of the projects that we have in mind because church is by free donation and if people here are not working and have no finance then it means that it puts a brake on the things that we want to do to the community. You know, for heaven's sake, you have to start from inside before you go outside, you cannot be saying to people in here "Let's go and do this mega work outside and feed the people out there" when they themselves are hungry. So for us, in the last few years, it's the fact that a lot of people have lost their job in our church.

Pastor Yomi identified premises and their limitations as restricting engagement at C5:

> Where we are, there's no parking, no, if we are preaching over some hours the council is always on our neck, and limitations and everything, so when we are occupied by problems then there is little room for you to start looking out to how you can help the community, raise our projects in the community.

Such a 'survival mode' perspective resonates with that expressed in §5.2. Premises were also linked to community engagement by Pastor Yaya who told BBT:

> The issue is we still need a place as you can see today, most of the time we assemble, then we dismantle, it takes time... Because we… just don't want to be gathering on Sundays alone… Yes, yes, not necessarily every day of the week because I work. I've got to do my professional job… but I miss having a stable place where we can easily interact with the community. If we've got a place, let's say in Southwark here we can easily have impact on the community, on the youth. Most especially bringing them to Christ.

Our informed observer, Joel, argued that churches need to be 'quite shrewd' in their dealings with the Council:

> …a church's interaction with local authorities cannot be predominantly around planning issues. That's the first thing... I think if you come to the attention of a council for only issues which you want… mainly how to extend your premises, it says something about what you're doing locally, if anything, at all. So I think first and foremost churches have got to be places where… local people can blow all the trumpet for them, right?
>
> And that means in many instances [churches have] got to think about faith literacy for local authorities. I mean, because the big issue is that sometimes local authorities are a bit sceptical, suspicious, even afraid that faith groups are only there for one thing and one thing only, maximise their attendance, get more people in. And of course no council would want to be seen to be financing, supporting proselytization. You can only get round that, not by preaching, you get round that by exhibiting to local authorities what you're actually doing, in other words show them your good works. You've got evidence to actually back that up. That's the currency that matters.

On the theme of good works, Pastor Taiwo gave one of the more sustained rationales in interview when asked about the priorities of C29. The tension highlighted by Joel above is clear in this excerpt.

> ...Jesus Christ said to us, we are the light of the world and you cannot light a candle and put it under the bed, so if you are the light of the world the world must see you shine and he told us how that shining takes place. He said let them see your good works so that they can glorify your father, so we also emphasise good work, good works to our community, good works to the people that we hope that God will save and get into his kingdom. Because when they see the good works of course we believe that they will glorify the Father... So priority is to get souls saved, I want to make heaven and get as many people as possible to make heaven. And priority is to do all that we can do to get the message of that salvation to the people and that includes good works in terms of serving the community, in terms of making facilities and the things that God has put in place here, accessible and available to the people that we want to see saved. And of course that's our immediate community to start with, we believe that we want to be a church for the community, a church where the community will be able to see good works coming out and they will want to give glory to our Father.

Joel expressed concern as to whether the situation in places like Southwark was conducive to communities seeing 'good works', given the 'proliferation' of nBMCs, as follows:

> If these small churches are in local areas… what it is that ecclesiologically, politically or culturally stops them from joining each other and doing something effective? …I'm saying that the atomisation and the proliferation of these small churches becomes something which I don't think is going to be… terribly helpful to the Kingdom of God… we know that even if someone's saying that they're doing a few things relevant… we know that that relevance can be exponentially replicated if they join and work with other churches.

'Exponential replication' appears to resonate with the findings of the *Church and Community Involvement Survey* described above in relation to large churches.

7.3 Community Engagement Conclusions

New black majority churches are a gift to London. To echo the words of the Rotterdam report, nBMCs bring blessings to the city, but blessings under pressure. Many Southwark nBMCs serve dispersed communities across London that few other agencies can reach. As we have seen, they provide a safe haven for migrant communities, meeting their spiritual needs alongside assisting with issues such as family, health, law and order. nBMCs are a spiritual, social and economic asset to the city and its boroughs. A number of nBMCs also serve their local communities with a range of programmes, although it is likely that this is more commonly by established congregations with a permanent home. The local authority should therefore bear in mind the significance of a congregation having a home for its engagement with the community. Planning permission for a congregation in appropriate premises may be viewed as investing in London communities, both local and associational. As we have argued in §9, this requires planning and faith group policy to be considered on a regional as well as a borough basis.

We have heard how Southwark nBMCs are constrained in their local community engagement, by distance, socio-economic factors, premises and 'proliferation'.[99] BBT recognises that these are genuine issues, but raises a question for some regarding how inward looking a church can be and remain a church? Following on from this, the implicit understanding of mission appears to equate mission with evangelism, and social action as an extra (although there were exceptions). Not all churches agree on this point, but it would be useful for churches to reflect on how they see local community engagement relating to their mission as a church. Regarding 'proliferation' or the concentration of nBMCs in parts of Southwark (so §4.4), we agree that this is not ideal for effective witness in the kingdom of God, in that greater missional co-operation is needed between churches (so §8).

BBT agrees that nBMCs need to be strategic in their relations with the Council (as some are already doing), by not allowing themselves to be defined by premises and planning issues, but rather by the genuine contribution they make to the borough and city. There is much sense in allowing a church's 'good works' to speak for themselves, although neighbours are not always impartial judges of a church's impact, as we will see in §9.5. BBT recommends that other means of 'blowing the nBMC trumpet' are investigated so that the Council (and neighbourhoods) are fully aware of their contribution to the life of the Borough.

ID	"TELL ME ABOUT ANY PROJECTS OR MINISTRIES YOU HAVE WITHIN THE CONGREGATION AND/OR LOCAL COMMUNITY"[1]
1	*not available*
2	Southwark for Jesus involvement; Southwark Multi-Faith forum; Music school, youth programme / club
3	Nursery open to the community (planning permission docs); outreach activities such as street evangelism
4	Football league; recreation day with other churches (Tooting Bec park); street party in Jubilee; building used by local authority; Saturday school shared with other churches and open to the community; visit from [very high profile figure] to see their community work
5	*not available*
6	<informal projects and aspirational with funding a major issue, case by case dealing with people's needs> women ministry, youth ministry, vision or projects of helping the orphans, give financial assistance to the elders who are vulnerable, youth projects to bring them together
7	PECAN; Street Pastors; small outreach projects – picnic, coffee morning
8	Work with three old people's homes (e.g. arts and crafts, Christmas parties); PECAN food bank; [University] students used the space for exhibition as well as encouraging young artists in the community; help young people with UCAS forms and university choices; events helping people with job applications (staffing is a problem though); aspire to run a computer suite, summer schools, revision classes
9	Music school for the youths (BBT talked with the teacher / saw performance); youth club and summer club; youth camp (free for friends of church youth); links with cadets; linked with More than Gold; provide free refreshments for the public; overall staffing is a problem
10	Literacy summer school programme
11	Have run a summer school for many years (but it got too big for the premises); youth group that invites other youth in; Council (not Southwark) have opted out of many community services, so we are planning when we move to work with over 60s, computer lessons for youth
12	No evidence of programmes locally; pastor said they had not been able to do anything as 'the area was too difficult to reach out to'; in the greater Southwark area, the pastor is involved with PECAN; support homeless people in the winter; want to do something to help older people but organisation went bust
13	Used to have music after-school club in Peckham, but director had some issues; some have suggested a disconnect between vision and implementation based on analysis of church
14	Youth mentoring scheme, family lifestyle, missionary training and counselling (similar on website)
15	Website offers free community services such as counselling, visitation / assistance for elderly people, house cleaning for disabled people; provision of ICT training and media/technology skills (also in interview); launched a debut album for one youth; work with young people in trouble; BBT heard testimony evidence from young people to reinforce claims

Table 12 – Community Engagement according to nBMC pastor responses

1 Some entries have been disguised to preserve anonymity.

16	Social action doesn't necessarily advance the Gospel; provide tea break for those in the immediate area; not much to write home about
17	Drop-in Centre (weekly), Senior citizens, nurses physio, P.E., talks, hot meals, games, mid week service, youth nurture groups
18	Cleaned streets / windows in [nearby road]; Christmas presents in the community; Youth work called [name] (video recording projects, audio recording, dance, fashion); process of establishing a nursery with subsidised places; south London apprenticeship scheme; week to week activities not yet cracked due to costs and time; [youth work] evidence on web
19	Healing (emotional / physical) and deliverance ministry open to anyone
20	<Aspirational> we have a plan to set up a sort of charity shop… we want to set up a sort of breakfast for the homeless…
21	Healing room, prayer & counselling, referrals; bookshop; soup kitchen on Weds; clothes bank; co-operate with PECAN; ministry to elderly - Easter / Christmas parties / films / BBQs; structured for IT training; structured for language classes (esp. Spanish); public library; plans for after school club / nursery; community family day once a year; serving the community - free car washes / drinks / hampers; also lists foreign projects as community related
22	We just started, [so] we are focussing in house to build up the people - plans in place for blessing two families at Christmas through Citizen's Advice Bureau; Carol concert open air last year
23	Aspires to offer counselling and youth mentoring, free training or opportunity to learn a life skills e.g. musical instrument (taken from Charity Commission website)
24	Football team playing with the community; Friday youth project, Saturday school, skills school, foodbank, commuity choir, after schools clubs, mentoring. Plan to use the basement for projects partnering local community groups
25	Music school, Drama group, Community concert
26	*not available*
27	Many projects proposed in planning documents, otherwise not available
28	Largely for the church community; offers free refreshments on Weds to the wider community
29	Nursery; after school club; preschool; holiday clubs; children's centre one of our greatest impacts in the community (premises key to this) – 70% not church members (subsidised)
30	Informal help to people, most work has been internal to the church (e.g. possible a soup kitchen equivalent)
31	Counselling, training, evangelistic
32	Religious – church planting and evangelism; humanitarian – amputees in [African country], pastor come to UK to train as football coach so as to train those in [African country], send food stuff to [African country]; here in the UK humanitarian not yet started, aspire to work with young people and aged but looking into the community to see what we can do
33	Evangelism, I.T. programme, youth national prayer
34	Programs for youth, open air programmes, conferences; old building not suitable for other sorts of projects; sometimes help with down and outs but not in the building
35	Music school
36	Poverty alleviation in [African country]; include sixth formers from local school on [African country] trip; works with youth charity XLP; informal help for the homeless; parenting course planned for the congregation

Table 12 – Community Engagement according to nBMC pastor responses *cont.*

> “At the end of the day, I think we’ll come equally and it’s not about power or it’s not ego, but we come in because we can help do things correctly together, rather than we’re just grateful that you kind of picked us type thing.”

8. Ecumenical matters

‘Ecumenical’ in this report is understood in a broad sense, taking a cue from our strategic partner *Churches Together in South London*, whose motto is ‘making connections for Christ’. Our title for the project, *Being Built Together*, underlines the project’s focus on how churches are making (and might make) connections in order ‘to promote mission, unity and compassion in Christ’s name’ (Churches Together in South London, nd). In addressing objective 9, we asked pastors ‘Do you belong to any church networks / denominations? Has it been possible to make links with other local churches?’[100] In addition we checked all the nBMCs we identified against our data sources (see **Table 1**) for links to directories and some associations.

Of the 252 nBMCs identified by BBT in the final database, 48 were listed in the Council’s *Southwark Faith Groups* database and 43 were listed as members of *Southwark for Jesus*.[101] 40 were identified as members of the Evangelical Alliance, a national parachurch association and umbrella body (2006-2012). Clearly there is plenty of scope for enhancing database records as well as membership and participation in parachurch bodies. Within our participant sample of 36 nBMCs, 20 were members of Southwark for Jesus, 15 on the Southwark Faith Groups database, 13 were members of the Evangelical alliance, and 12 were listed in the online *Directory of Black Majority Churches* (Churches Together in England (MECA), 2013).[102] Comparing the proportions in the two samples,[103] it seems likely that our participant sample was more associational and ecumenical on average than the larger sample. This is not surprising, given that they decided to participate in *Being Built Together*, which is partnered by two ecumenical organisations.

Characterising the nature and degree of nBMC ecumenical association in our sample has not been straightforward, as pastor responses varied significantly exhibiting no strong patterns. There was an overriding haziness from most pastors regarding the detail of the matter; however, certain emphases were recurring. One particular emphasis was on the building of *relationships* with other pastors and ministers. Some of these spoke of prayer breakfasts / networks positively. Only a minority of churches gave details of substantial links with other churches, and a few acknowledged their engagement was limited, so Pastor Moses stated ‘we are non-alliance... we’re not multi-faith’ and Pastor Wale said ‘we deal mainly with everything from here’. Links with other churches tended to be through denominational or parachurch networks, rather than with congregations in their immediate locality (so §5). It is likely that few nBMCs were encountering churches from significantly different Christian traditions. For Pastor Solomon, premises were a factor in ecumenical matters:

> ...I haven’t been able to do that and part of it is... when you’re at war, sometimes you just, when we got here, we landed into the fight, the fight of refurbishment, the fight of planning. You just become introverted, completely survival mode, and so I literally didn’t connect and when I’m connecting with pastors we are in the meeting and we are talking... My other connections are [denominationally] linked... And that’s not local and so I have pastors that I’ve worked with for 20 years, we meet every two months, we just talk and pray and share. But they are not local... I am yet to really connect one on one with any local church, in an ongoing kind of way... And then because of my own international work in [Africa], I go to [Africa] a bit, I go to [another continent], so you find that you’re spread all over the place, and the local area, I’ve not really had a breakthrough connection here.

A number of pastors spoke directly about the need for churches to work together. So Pastor Yomi declared of the 'black majority churches':

> ...they should sink all their differences and let us come together, and when they hear the call, they should answer.

With echoes of Ephesians 2, Pastor Yaya spoke of C6 as a 'church without walls, breaking down all barriers'. Pastor Ezekiel testified to the importance of building relationships with other churches as follows:

> ...in the ministry I don't think it is very healthy to stand alone... it is not very healthy for the congregation and also for me, as a… minister... So the relationship aspect is very important, and also it's an accountability... Most of these people that I'm talking about, I'm accountable to them, and I've told my members that if they see anything that's questionable, these people are around me, that they can speak to them.

It is interesting to note that Pastor Ezekiel and C19 found their premises by networking with other churches leaders through Southwark for Jesus. Resonating with the discussion in §7, ecumenical community projects were a priority for Pastor Luke because:

> ...the church must be very relevant to the community... if there are other churches in the community then you have a common purpose. If you have a common purpose then people will seek advice and people will connect one with another and then see what are the challenges in the community and how best you can be able to help...
>
> To do that, I think that you don't know it all because by the end of the day if we call ourselves the body of Christ then it means that we're all providing, the hand is providing something, the leg is providing something, the head is providing something and you've got to be able to have some sort of cohesion to bring everything together so we are not, I don't want to be duplicating what somebody else is doing.

Avoiding duplication was a point picked up by Rev Fred as follows:

> But over the years I have always argued strongly for partnership because reinventing the wheel is a waste of time... So I think if people know that we are in there to support, to help, to pray, to do what I think it would lend itself more to doing things together but I think this nature of sometimes ministerial life I wonder if we're more into competition that complementing and that is my fear.

Fred expanded on the dynamics of ecumenical engagement:

> **Fred**: I think a lot of these things I would say are relationships... you get to know people and you talk to them and you encourage them. And then they come together because you see, you know this is our problem, we always think we are into comparison and threat, and... so to meet could be a dangerous thing, that's my feeling.
>
> **BBT**: How big's your congregation? 200? Oh mine's bigger...
>
> **Fred:** Well that's the first question they ask as well so I don't ask that question any more, I don't ask any ministers, because that is not the big thing with the Lord and I say sometimes the ministers meeting reminds me of cocktail parties you line up with the people who you know can help you and the rest you just, across the hall you say 'Hi, nice to see you'. So, but what I think is, if we build relationships with people we get to know them, we could invite them and then they will easily come because they know that when they come it's not an examination time. It's really a time of fellowship sharing and supporting and we try to do that...

Pastor John, who was clearly fond of a cup of tea, also commented on how relationships between church leaders might be built:

> **John**: I think if there were more opportunities where we could sit down, have a cup of tea, and talk to each other without having, even having a main speaker or some praying just have a cup of tea, sit down at the table, "What's your name, what's my name? What do you do? Oh?" It would be much better, rather than sitting down in rows in a theatre, as it were, and having this speaker at the front just speaking to you.
>
> You don't establish relationships like that, you establish relationships by sitting down and having a cup of tea over a period of time, and that's how you establish the trust. I think there's still a huge divide between black churches and white churches and I think a lot of white churches still view churches with predominantly black members with suspicion, even though we're all meant to be Christians, that's our perspective. Because members have said to me "Look people may not want to come because it's a black church" but there's no such thing as a black church, it's just Christ's church.
>
> **BBT**: That's true.
>
> **John**: There's no Greek, there's no Gentile, all one in Christ.
>
> **BBT**: Yeah, that's right, that's true. Okay, so relationship building, cup of tea, etc., rather than a big meeting.
>
> **John**: And I think I've probably got a different perspective, because I was born here, grew up here...

John expanded on the nature of relationships and partnerships between churches:

> I'm using the term black church very loosely, sometimes I think other churches think they can partner black churches and black churches are still the minority partner and that's, I won't entertain that level of thinking. At the end of the day, I think we'll come equally and it's not about power or it's not ego, but we come in because we can help do things correctly together rather than we're just grateful that you kind of picked us type thing. I want to break out of that kind of mentality and kind of just get rid of this parental wing thing that a lot of churches want to put over us and get rid of that.

A number of pastors addressed particular barriers to ecumenical engagement, so Pastor Yomi had this following sombre exchange with BBT:

> **BBT**: Okay, I noticed that on Sunday when I left [your church] and I walked down Peckham there are lots and lots of black majority churches... is there anything you or maybe [your denomination] has done to come together with these churches?
>
> **Yomi**: I hate to say this that there are some of them, I'm not saying it's every one of them, but there are some of them who has their personal... there are so many quarters that also the young churches in London are so much, there are some of them that are about up to 10, or 15 [members]... and they just want to be on their own, they say they are called by God, we have no right

> to question their calling, but I believe some of them they are on their own personal mission, so there is nothing we do to draw them, they will not come.

Our informed observer, Rev William, observed that 'for many Pentecostal churches, ecumenical bodies are liberal spaces'. Pastor Moses expressed concerns of this nature in relation to ecumenical engagement:

> We believe strongly that, we don't want to compromise our standing, we don't want our members to be confused about, you know, what is it that leads an individual to heaven.

Pastor Eaaron spoke of the 'vast differences' between some nBMCs which means 'they can't work together'. Another side of this point was made by the leadership at C7 (an Aladura church), who felt that other nBMCs misunderstood them, as follows:

> ...and our mode of worship is a bit different from their own because when you look at our tenets… we are different, but because people just generalise us, and from the Pentecostal church they just sort of think everybody in white is no go area for them. They have the same attitude, they have the same mode of worship or beliefs or things like that, because we have different beliefs, like you will have seen that in a [another Aladura denomination] church you might see something different, but with our church most of our worship is more like the Anglican, you can see.

Interviewees identified social / economic / cultural barriers as well. So Rev Fred reflected on the timing of their ecumenical prayer group:

> We've just been in contact with some other person who wants to join, but the problem with some of these black majority churches is that a lot of the men work...
>
> So all the prayer meeting and the sharing is 8 o'clock on Tuesdays in the morning and people heading into work and so it's people like me who are fully supported by the church that don't have another job to keep bread at the table, we attend and all the men attend, and the thought is should we change the time okay, to maybe an evening... well nobody has voted yet to do that, but that's the problem...

Other practical issues related to the pastor living some distance from the church, possibly in a different part of London or even further afield. This makes attending additional meetings in the locality of the premises very time-consuming. Rev William also identified these practical points and assessed what motivated nBMC leaders to participate in ecumenical engagement:

> ...the concerns of a black pastor in a black church, are different, very often you know the pastor is working in a full time job... if you can't see explicitly what is the purpose of going along to an ecumenical meeting where people just seem to talk, talk and talk, they hardly pray, or read the Bible, you know it's a talking shop. For many pastors it doesn't come high on their agenda... so they need a reason... for why...

Rev William identified the need for a 'strong incentive' to encourage participation where 'issues that they are facing on a day to day basis' may be addressed. One might say that all church leaders need strong incentives for additional meetings, but it prompts reflection on whether the concerns of nBMC leaders are well enough known by ecumenical bodies.

Representing the concerns and vision of nBMC leaders brings us to the role of organisations that include an advocacy role for nBMCs in relation to other churches and local / regional / national government. As we have seen, representative nBMC organisations at the national level were not high profile for Southwark nBMCs. Pastor Joshua was pessimistic about the potential of a 'comprehensive umbrella' for the black Christian community, since 'our journeys are different and our issues our different' within the community. Furthermore, any such organisation was usually 'not effective' because of the 'gravitational pull' of the big nBMC denominations which are 'forces that are pulling in different directions'.[104]

At a regional level, *Churches Together in South London* (CTSL), one of BBT's strategic partners, was not known directly by our participant nBMCs. This may be due to the behind-the-scenes role of CTSL in making connections between churches, as well as its wider south London remit. Nevertheless, it has had indirect impact through enabling the relaunch of *Churches Together in South Southwark* (CTiSS) (formerly known as *Churches Together in Dulwich*), which is now more task and project orientated and has recently seen an increase in the number of nBMC members.[105] The CTSL ecumenical officer visits churches all over south London, including Southwark, to assist with a range of matters, including parachurch membership, schools, premises and 'trouble-shooting' or mediation. Praying with pastors on such visits is said to be key. CTSL meetings themselves have also seen an increase in nBMC membership and the chair is now a black woman Bishop. CTSL were also instrumental in getting BBT started, which it is hoped will also have a positive impact on 'being built together' in the Borough.

At the Southwark level, the representative faith group organisation for the Borough linked to the Council is the *Southwark Multi Faith Forum* (SMFF) (Southwark Council, 2013f; Southwark Multi-Faith Forum, nd). Very few nBMCs were linked to SMFF – we did not hear why from pastors directly, but we might speculate that it was for doctrinal reasons. The chair of SMFF, Eileen, spoke to BBT clarifying that the multi faith focus is on the civic matters that people of any faith have in common. Planning permission is one example amongst many others. She observed a 'relative lack of borough infrastructure in two important areas, i.e. black churches and mosques'. Eileen noted that historic denominations have structures for communicating with each other and local authorities, but 'black churches do not seem to be linked into that'.[106]

As seen above, *Southwark for Jesus* (SfJ) is the parachurch organisation with the largest number of nBMC members in the Borough, although the proportion is less than 20%. Pastor Michael, himself a member of *Southwark for Jesus*, said that SfJ works 'because of the networking of the leadership'. SfJ is one of BBT's strategic partners, uses the strapline 'Prayer, Unity, Action' and describes itself as:

> **...** a forum for Churches and Charities in Southwark. It is run by and for pastors, project leaders and church members from across the London Borough of Southwark who identify closely with one another in order to Transform Southwark through Unity in Prayer and Action (2013).

With historical roots in the evangelical tradition, and a strong emphasis on prayer that BBT has seen for itself,[107] SfJ is likely to be a relatively 'safe' ecumenical space for nBMC leaders and congregants. In addition, a significant number of nBMC leaders are on the steering group. Where the focus is on building relationships between churches, the SfJ label is used, but the regular meetings addressing wider community engagement are known as *Transform Southwark* (TS) (2013). Such meetings have addressed a range of issues facing Southwark communities, including premises for churches, alongside praying for community leaders, councillors and police officers. Praying for the 'peace of the city' and seeking a 'blessing on this borough and those in authority' are key theological motivations mentioned on the website.[108] SfJ aims to develop 'grassroots prayer' in the Borough, and the website currently identifies five such groups. This matches with one of the emphases from nBMC pastors identified at the beginning of this section. Two of our informed observers, historic church leaders in the borough, also spoke of the value of local prayer networks, whether organised informally or by TS (Rev Timothy and Rev Fred).

Ecumenical matters reach beyond Southwark and the UK. The body of Christ is worldwide, and it is important to note that nBMCs have been growing in cities across the world. Writing of the situation in the Netherlands in 2005, Alle Hoekema highlighted some 'practical' problems facing the African majority churches in terms of premises, language problems, visas for pastors and the 'increasing racism and xenophobia in Europe'. One inter-church network, 'Samen Kirk in Nederland' (SKIN) works with many 'migrant' churches (2008; World Council of Churches, 2013).[109] In an email to BBT, SKIN commented on the situation:

> In Amsterdam and other big cities in The Netherlands, international and migrant churches face similar difficulties [to London]. Finding a place to worship is one of the most urgent and actual problems our member churches have to deal with. Many migrant churches in The Netherlands meet in buildings that are not designed for that purpose, like industrial buildings, garage boxes, schools and office blocks. These locations are mostly temporarily available, which implies that the migrant faith communities have to 'move' often. Local (autochtone Dutch) churches rarely rent out their buildings. In general, they hardly know about the existence, contribution and challenges of Christian migrant communities in The Netherlands.[110]

Clearly the situation for nBMCs in London, while perhaps the most intense, is not unique in Europe. **Case Study 1** in §9 highlights one response to the premises issue in Amsterdam. In Germany, the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) asked Claudia Währisch-Oblau in 1998 to 'start a ministry with migrant Christians'.[111] She notes a 'surprisingly large' number of Pentecostal churches which are 'overwhelmingly African'. She speculates that:

> In major cities like Dusseldorf or Cologne, likely as many migrant Christians attend a "migrant church" on any given Sunday as Germans attend a German church.

For a long time, she argues, German churches 'did not realise what was happening'. Writing in 2008, Währisch-Oblau notes that the Federation of Free Pentecostal Churches in Germany had accepted 'more than 120 migrant congregations into its fold' over the previous decade.[112] Ecumenical projects between churches have included courses for leaders of 'migrant' churches in their role as 'reverse missionaries', theological dialogue on reverse mission and consultations on spiritual warfare (2008). Finally, in New York City, Mark Gornik has been working with African majority churches for many years, through research and also through 'seeking the peace of the city through theological education' (City Seminary of New York, nd; Gornik, 2009). He writes of the many gifts that nBMCs bring to the 'life of the churches of the West', describing eight such gifts and also three areas for further exploration (see Appendix I) (2011: 268f).[113] It seems to BBT that, despite different urban and national contexts, there is much to learn from the worldwide church regarding the issues addressed in this project.

8.1 'Sharing' Church Buildings

One of the most intimate ways in which nBMCs relate to other churches is through sharing buildings. 'Sharing' appears the most natural term to use, but it has a specific legal meaning as set out in the *Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969* (The National Archives, 2013). Many independent churches, including nBMCs, are not covered by this act, but it is *possible* to be added to the list of churches through a process known as 'gazetting' (Churches Together in England, 2009).[114] The full list of churches covered by the Act is available on the *Churches Together in England* website, along with other pertinent information on sharing church buildings (2013).

Churches Together in South London, a BBT strategic partner, drew up a framework for the Anglican Diocese of Southwark to provide guidance for churches that are looking to 'share' their premises (Diocese of Southwark, 2009).[115] This framework applies to churches covered under the 1969 Act, but *also* to churches that are not. In other words, the framework additionally allows for 'sharing' in the non-technical sense. In the framework the language of 'host' and 'guest' church is proposed, and we will adopt it in this report.[116] The framework identifies a range of relationships between the host and guest church, namely 'hiring only', 'some co-operation', 'partnership' and 'covenant'. We will examine the experiences of being hosts and guests, including the nature of the relationship, in §9 and **Case Study 2**. See the resources section at the back of the report for details on who to contact for advice and guidance on the process of becoming hosts and guests. The need for people who can act as 'mediators' between churches who are considering 'sharing', or are having problems with 'sharing', is highlighted in the Churches Together literature (2001). The same documents include a quote for all parties to reflect upon:

> This is not just a practical issue – about sharing the cost of church buildings. It is a justice issue – about how people of different races are treated in the body of Christ; and it is an ecumenical issue – about recognising each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

8.2 Ecumenical Conclusions

It is clear that in this 'Ephesian moment' (see §1), there are things to celebrate and things to address regarding ecumenical matters, nBMCs and the wider church in Southwark. The emphasis on relational forms of engagement is clearly significant for nBMCs and therefore also for the wider church 'being built together' in Southwark. The nature of those relationships or partnerships needs to be one of mutual respect (Aldred, 2005), and historic / new / independent churches particularly need to avoid sending mixed signals in this area. This does not mean, however, that the wider church and nBMCs have nothing to learn from each other.

The need for accountability and avoiding replication in ministry and mission were rightly highlighted by pastors. BBT considers the number of nBMCs that 'want to be on their own' an issue for churches in Southwark to address, although this is not a problem for nBMCs only. Doctrinal boundaries and perceptions of 'ecumenical' by nBMCs may indicate that it would be wiser to avoid the term (unlike this report). Those organising ecumenical events and projects should not ignore the socio-economic factors constraining many nBMC pastors at the current time. Furthermore, in order to be more inclusive, such organisers (if not from nBMCs themselves) should have better awareness of nBMC concerns and ecclesiology.

Membership of national parachurch associations was limited, with the Evangelical Alliance the most significant. It remains to be seen what representative role the relatively new *National Church Leaders' Forum* and the *One People Commission* can make (Evangelical Alliance, 2006-2013; NCLF, 2013). For Southwark nBMCs, organisations such as Southwark for Jesus / Transform Southwark are critical in bringing nBMCs together in a safe ecumenical space. Nevertheless, the number of nBMCs engaged is still small, and BBT recommends further development of strategies for linking with nBMCs in the Borough. Better records, as provided by BBT, should contribute to this endeavour, and the emphasis on establishing local prayer networks also appears very valuable. All parties may be able to learn from the situation of nBMCs in other parts of the world.

Regarding the more intimate relationship of sharing buildings, BBT affirms the notion that this is not merely a practical matter, but embedded with theological values. While acknowledging the nuances of individual cases, BBT agrees that this is an issue of justice, an issue of recognising need amongst other members of the body that all churches need to consider seriously.

> “Planning is, at its core, an ethical enquiry: into how to live with each other in the shared spaces of multicultural cities and regions and how to live sustainably on the earth.”

9. Premises and Planning

Issues surrounding premises and planning for nBMCs were the catalyst for commissioning BBT, as explained in §1.1. As we discovered, the previous five topics (demographics, ecclesiology, ethnicity & culture, community, ecumenical matters) were strongly connected into the issue of premises. Our BBT objectives therefore have all contributed towards a better understanding of the struggle nBMCs face in obtaining suitable premises for worship. BBT objectives 2 and 10 address premises and engagement with the local authority planning department, but we extended our remit in this area early in the project, due to the concerns expressed by nBMCs in interview and at public meetings. This section is divided into four main parts (plus scene setting and evaluative conclusion), considering the premises and planning situation from the perspective of the four interested parties detailed in §3. Key documents consulted are given in **Table 13**.

9.1 Setting the Scene

British planning laws, as Michael Nye notes, operate on the principle that ‘the ownership of land carries only the bare right to continue using it for its existing purposes’ (cited in Gale and Naylor, 2002: 389). Such a principle may well be different to policy and practice in the country of origin of first generation nBMC congregants and their pastors. Within England and Wales, land and buildings are put into particular ‘use’ classes, ranging from A to D, where each alphabetical category is broken down into further numerical categories (so A1, A2 etc.) (Planning Portal, nd; The National Archives, nd). As the Southwark *Guide for Faith Premises* states:

> The type of activities allowed in a building is grouped together in use classes. Premises in each use class group all tend to have similar effects on the surrounding areas, such as a steady flow of visitors, and they also have similar benefits for the people who use them (2013c: 6).

Faith premises belong to the D1 use class termed ‘non-residential institutions’, which also includes clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries, museums, libraries, halls, church halls and law courts (Southwark Council, 2013c: 6). If a church wishes to purchase or rent premises ‘for, or in connection with, public worship or religious instruction’ then they must find either an existing D1 premises or gain ‘change of use’ planning permission from the Council (Planning Portal, nd; The National Archives, nd). The problem for nBMCs is that there is a scarcity of suitable D1 premises in Southwark and in many parts of London. Available premises in different use classes, such as a residential area or ‘preferred industrial location’,[117] are often deemed unsuitable by the Council for a change of use.

KEY DOCUMENTS	AUTHORS	YEAR
Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969	Central Government	1969 with subsequent amendments
Planning for a Multi-Racial Britain[118]	Royal Town Planning Institute / Commission for Racial Equality	1983
Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987	Central Government	1987 with subsequent amendments
Religious Discrimination in England and Wales (Home Office Research Study 220)	Home Office	2001
Sharers, Guests or Tenants? The Sharing of Church Buildings in a Multi-Cultural City	Churches Together in England	2001
Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities	Local Government Association	2002
Faithful Cities: A Call for Celebration, Vision and Justice (especially Chapter 6)	Church of England / Methodist Church	2006
Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities (especially Chapter 3)	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister / Mercia Group	2006
Planning for Equality and Diversity in London (Supplementary Planning Guidance to the London Plan)	Greater London Authority	2007
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Department for Communities and Local Government	2007, updated 2012
The Southwark Plan	Southwark Council	2007
Face to Face and Side by Side: A framework for partnership in our multi-faith society	Department for Communities and Local Government	2008
Responding to the needs of faith communities: places of worship	CAG Consultants with Land Use Consultants and Diverse Ethics	2008
A framework for the use of parish buildings by independent churches	Diocese of Southwark	2009
The London Plan	Greater London Authority	2011
Southwark Core Strategy	Southwark Council	2011
Guide for Faith Premises in Southwark	Southwark Council	2009 first edition; 2013 (latest edition)
Faith in the Community: Strengthening the Ties between Faith Groups and Local Authorities	Evangelical Alliance	2013

Table 13 – Key documents consulted that inform planning and nBMCs in Southwark

9.2 The Council, Premises and Planning

Council policy on planning is set by a somewhat confusing array of frameworks, plans, strategies, action plans and guidance. The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) is the national statement on planning policy that shapes all regional and local policy. There is very little mention of faith groups, but under the heading of 'Promoting healthy communities', paragraph 70 requires that:

> …planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

London Boroughs have a two-tier planning hierarchy, in that the Greater London Authority now shapes planning policy at a regional level, and all Borough policies must conform with the *London Plan*. The *London Plan* itself does not make substantial reference to faith groups, which is puzzling when one considers the rapid growth of certain faith groups across London in recent decades. However, under an 'equality' heading, the Plan does encourage Boroughs in shaping their own plans to:

> …identify significant clusters of specific groups (such as those who experience particular disadvantage and social exclusion) and consider whether appropriate provision should be made to meet their particular needs such as cultural facilities, meeting places or places of worship (Greater London Authority, 2011: 76-77).

Furthermore, the Plan states in §3.5 that 'it is important that the needs of all in society, such as faith groups, are addressed' and notes that this may be through 'coordinated action with neighbouring boroughs' (2011: 77). Probably the strongest reference is found in §3.91 under 'Social Infrastructure', which states somewhat opaquely:

> Voluntary and community groups often find it difficult to find premises suitable for their needs; unused or underused facilities should be brought into use as much as possible to help address needs. The additional use or reuse of places of worship should be considered for the purpose of providing accomodation for use by other traditions or other faiths and/or wider community functions (2011: 105).

The most explicit policy engagement with faith groups and planning at any level comes from the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) *Planning for Equality and Diversity in London* produced in 2007 and not updated since. Constructed on a clear equality and diversity agenda, faith groups are addressed as one out of nine 'target equality groups', alongside others such as 'Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic People' (BAME) and 'Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers'. The SPG recognises the overlap between these two or even three target groups, and identifies a few issues for Boroughs to consider. So, in a rather controversial comment, it notes:

> The **definition** of 'places of worship' in the planning system is based on an old fashioned Church of England model of provision, and often does not adequately reflect the wider needs of faith groups and the very different patterns of worship that are beginning to crop up (Greater London Authority, 2007: 85).

Rather unfairly, we are not told exactly what is 'old-fashioned' about Anglican ecclesiology, although a 'gathered' versus parish model of church may be in mind, with its attendant implications for the definition of 'community' as discussed in §7. What is 'beginning to crop

up' are 'large congregations' which are 'developing for some faiths', which 'require large spaces to accommodate all worshippers in their services and in many cases experience difficulties in finding appropriate sites' (2007: 87). The SPG goes on to identify, somewhat equivocally, the importance of 'public transport accessibility' where possible. Notably, under the BAME target, there is no mention of the very high identification with Christianity amongst black Londoners (so §4.2) (2007: §4.7).

The composition of policy documents for Southwark is the most complex, and for those who would like to unravel this further, do visit their Planning Policy website (Southwark Council, 2013e). The *Core Strategy 2011* includes a 'sustainable community strategy' which 'sets out what people want Southwark to be like and what needs to be done to get there' (2011: §2.48, §2.49). This 'vision for the borough' is expanded in the Southwark Alliance document *Southwark 2016: Sustainable Community Strategy – Our shared vision for the future* (Southwark Alliance, nd). From a faith premises perspective, however, the latter largely reiterates other documents. The Core Strategy seeks to 'develop our network of community facilities to make sure everyone has access to the facilities they need' – a bold aim. The Core Strategy also encourages 'flexible community space' with 'better use of community facilities that are currently underused' (§5.44). The key policy point is in §5.45, where it is recognised that 'providing for London's diverse faith communities needs to be addressed regionally.' After all, faith groups and nBMC congregants in particular are not necessarily thinking about local authority boundaries when choosing which church to go to. In a rather thin response to the faith premises situation, §5.45 then emphasises the approach which encourages different faith groups to 'share facilities' to make 'the most effective use of opportunities' (2011: 75). The *Equalities Impact Assessment Appendix F* to the Strategy, however, does enlarge on this point through acknowledging the Council 'need to consider providing locations where places of worship can go'. It then comments 'this will have a positive impact on certain faith groups' while also having a 'negative impact on some other groups who may object to the noise of places of worship'. The Southwark Plan 2007 reiterates the 'equality' language of other documents in relation to places of worship. It includes 'places of worship' as one of a 'wide range of services' that are a 'basic requirement' for people living in a world city such as London, where one 'might reasonably expect almost boundless choice and the highest quality of service' (2007: §165, p34).[119]

There are a number of Area Action Plans (AAP) that focus on planning and development in particular areas of the Borough. There is not space to examine them all here, but since Peckham has the highest concentration of nBMCs, the *Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan* seems worthy of mention (2012). The AAP recognises that the area has a 'prominent and diverse faith community', where 'the role of these groups, their current and future needs are important issues for Peckham, Nunhead and more broadly for south east London' (§2.1.27). The accompanying *Equalities Analysis* document comments on the value of 'more flexible community space' which will 'benefit religious groups unable to afford separate facilities in the borough' (2013d: 17-18). Furthermore, it is stated that 'we recognise this is an important issue in Peckham' and notes that the Council has held workshops with faith groups (more on this below), explaining how the 'development management team continue to work with faith groups to find suitable premises in the borough' (2013d: 18).

We will comment in more evaluative fashion on this survey of planning policy in relation to nBMCs in §9.6 below, but first we want to explore further the situation on the ground. The unauthorised use of premises by faith groups, and nBMCs in particular, has been problematic for Southwark Council for some time now. The Head of Planning at the Council summarised the situation in July 2010 as follows:

> There have been many instances of religious groups occupying what are seen by the local planning authority as unsuitable premises such as in residential areas where the noise of their activities and large numbers of people arriving by car causes harm to residential amenity or in industrial areas where their occupation of factory and warehouse buildings often contravenes the council's policies to protect these areas for appropriate employment generating uses. A number of refusals of planning permission and enforcement actions against places of worship have resulted and the council sought a dialogue with religious groups to find ways to avoid this happening wherever possible (Bevan, 2010).

In 2006, the Southwark Council report identified:

> …the unauthorised use of industrial buildings by places of worship is by far the biggest breach of planning control involving change of use in Southwark, more than any other local authority in London.

The report further notes that:

> …the majority of the unauthorised places of worship in the Borough are Pentecostal/ evangelical churches led mostly by BME leaders and attended by a mostly BME congregation.

The report recognises that at the time demand for premises was outstripping supply, and that suitable D1 premises 'have been saturated'. In a strongly worded observation, the report argues:

> Current council policies do not provide appropriate and adequate guidance on suitable locations for new worship centres and indeed London Assembly and Government guidance on this matter is also lacking.

We will agree with aspects of this judgement in §9.6. The majority of the 104 churches they investigated in the report were unauthorized and mainly operating from industrial units. The report details the planning applications from places of worship for the period 1995–2006, although it is not clear if this is comprehensive (see **Table 14**).

PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE OF USE TO PLACES OF WORSHIP 1995–2006		
Granted	23	41%
Refused	33	59%
Total	56	100%

Table 14 – Planning applications from places of worship 1995-2006
(Sangweme, 2006)

The Council granted planning permission for 23 industrial buildings to change their use to a place of worship, mostly in SE15, which resonates well with BBT data. 9 of the refusals were taken to appeal and 3 were allowed by the Planning Inspectorate. Overall the report recommended that the Council:

> …speedily develop long-term solutions to this pressing matter as there is a potential of conflict between resident groups and the unauthorised churches because of the way the uses are perceived in causing disturbance and nuisance within local communities. There have been recorded incidents of violent clashes…

Specific proposals included giving the planning enforcement team 'clear mandate on the way forward' in dealing with unauthorised places of worship, and the Council should 'engage "new places of worship" into the planning process'. It also notes the importance of maintaining a database of faith groups in the Borough.

The CAG report drew on a survey of all 33 London Boroughs and received responses from 22 boroughs, meaning they were able to scrutinise 602 planning applications relating to places of worship from 2000 to presumably 2007.[120] The highest number of applications was in Lambeth (122) and then Southwark (87), with Wandsworth (48) and Brent (41) some way behind. The majority of applications were for change of use (217), followed by redevelopment (157) and new development (156). Of the 217 change of use applications, 160 were changes to a place of worship from another use (74%). Of this 160, 87 were granted (54%) 'which is well below the national average for all planning applications'. 46 were refused (29%) and 12 withdrawn (8%) (2008: §3). The CAG report notes in §3.5.3 that planning officers were 'unclear whom to consult' regarding 'consulting faith groups on plan preparation'.[121] Few Boroughs had established a faith forum, and 'databases of relevant contacts tend to become out of date very quickly'.[122] Another interesting point was the 'rate of turnover of planning officers' and faith community representatives both militated against preserving 'local know-how'. Southwark is held up as an example of taking a 'positive approach to faith consultation',[123] although the results of the questionnaire survey quoted are not known to BBT. Finally, in §3.5.6, the CAG report notes that 'the principal concerns' for applications are 'impacts of traffic, parking and noise', along with places of worship being 'perceived as a "bad neighbour"'. 12 out of 22 Boroughs indicated they 'use planning conditions to grant temporary planning permission', thus enabling them to 'assess the impact of use as a place of worship on the local community'. This broader view of premises, planning and faith groups across London sets Southwark borough in context, albeit we are now five years on. The BBT team were informed that Southwark planning officials attended a workshop with other London boroughs to discuss the findings at the time, but the judgement was that 'there has not been any discernible impact on policy'.[124]

Southwark still deserve credit for taking a 'positive' and proactive approach to consultation. They have held a number of public meetings for faith groups to address the issues raised by premises and planning, with a significant number of nBMC leaders attending the first few meetings (see **Table 15**).[125] A key early meeting, attended by 80 people, took place in November 2009 at South Bank University, addressing questions submitted in advance. This

MEETING	DATE	NOTES
Transform Southwark, Southwark Town Hall (as was)	29th June 2009	75 representatives of faith / community groups
Having Faith in Southwark I, London South Bank University	16th November 2009	80 attendees, early version of Guide for Faith Premises launched
Having Faith in Southwark II	15th July 2010	18 representatives of religious / community groups
Having Faith in Southwark III, Tooley Street (Council)	10th November 2011	Approx 60 attendees, BBT contribution
Having Faith in Southwark IV, Victory House (Redeemed Christian Church of God)	26th March 2012	Approx 30 attendees, BBT critical commentary on revised Guide for Faith Premises

Table 15 – Summary of Southwark Faith Group engagement meetings

meeting had been publicised with the claim that 'the council received 60 planning requests to open faith premises last year', with the follow up that '65% were turned down'. In addition, it was claimed that '80 unauthorised places of worship have been identified by the council's planning enforcement team mainly concentrated in SE15 and SE16' (Town Talk, 2009). The rejection figure was also repeated at the meeting (Richardson, 2009), although BBT has not been able to verify the source of these figures,[126] and the claimed 60 planning requests, presumably in 2008, is hard to square with planning data given to BBT (see below). Further meetings were held in this series, some at Southwark Council and others at nBMC premises. The *Guide for Faith Premises*, which details the various obligations of faith groups in running a place of worship, was initially launched in 2009 and through a prolonged period of revision was reissued in 2013 (Southwark Council, 2013c).[127] Southwark's investment in the faith premises and planning issue is also evident in being a partial funder of BBT. Based on emails and consultations with Southwark planning officers, the Council calculate that they have opened 150 files on potentially unauthorized places of worship from 2006 to 2012, largely nBMCs. In August 2011 there were 88 cases outstanding, although by June 2012 this had decreased to 54 ongoing cases.[128] The trajectory is said to be continuing downwards, due to some industrial estates being demolished; more planning permissions being allowed; some churches moving to other Boroughs; and recognition that new churches are moving into premises of which the Council is unaware. 41 enforcement cases were said to be outstanding in May 2013.[129] These figures are not necessarily within the public access planning system, since they are mainly unauthorized, and therefore many will not have made a planning application.

The Council also sent BBT data of all planning applications from 2000-2011 based on the search 'church' and 'place of worship'.[130] Analysis of this data has a margin of uncertainty and needs to be read carefully, as it is not always easy to identify churches and there are many categories of planning application and decision.[131] Nevertheless, the results provide some perspective on the situation (see **Table 16** & **Table 17** & **Table 18**). As can be seen in **Table 17**, the figures for 2007-2009 do not easily tally with the quoted figure from the *Having Faith in Southwark I* meeting mentioned above. For the twelve year period we see there were 149 applications from places of worship of which 90 were from nBMCs or 60%. There is a gradual increase in the number of applications from places of worship over the period, although this is less marked for nBMCs. However, recent figures for 2012 and 2013 would suggest that the nBMC application trajectory is continuing upwards.[132] This is a positive sign for the council in that it suggests unauthorised uses are being converted into planning applications, particularly given the declining trajectory of unauthorised use given above.

As seen in **Table 16**, nBMCs constitute the majority of planning applications from places of worship over the twelve year period, with historic churches accounting for less than half the nBMC number, and non-Christian faith groups generating very few applications. Planning decisions come under four main categories – granted, refused, withdrawn or invalid. The twelve year granted rate for all 149 applications from places of worship was 34%, with 40% refused, 15% withdrawn, and 9% invalid. For the 90 nBMCs over the same period, the granted rate was 24%, with 47% refused, 18% withdrawn, and 10% invalid. Bearing in mind the CAG report figures above, the proportion of applications granted is low and continues to be a cause for concern for all parties.

Table 18 provides an interesting comparison with **Table 8**, as it is possible to calculate the postcode frequency of nBMCs from the planning data, although it should be remembered that this is cumulative over twelve years, rather than the year taken to generate the BBT database. Notably the top five postcodes are in the same order, with the exception of SE1, which has dropped down two places when analysed by planning applications. Under this

SUMMARY OF PLANNING APPLICATION STATISTICS 2000-2011	COUNT	%
Planning applications from places of worship 2000-2011	149	
Planning applications from nBMCs	90	60%
Planning applications from Latin American churches	3	2%
Planning applications from historic churches	40	27%
Planning applications from non-Christian faith groups	11	7%
Other planning applications (special circs or uncertain)	5	3%

Table 16 – Southwark Planning Applications from Places of Worship 2000-2011 summary

analysis, SE15 continues with approximately the same proportion of Southwark nBMCs, but the other percentages begin to diverge and we cannot offer an explanation for this on the data we have.

YEAR	POW APPS BY DECISION DATE (COUNT)	nBMC (COUNT)	nBMC GRANTED	nBMC REFUSED	nBMC WITHDRAWN	nBMC INVALID	nBMC OTHER
2011	18	11	1	5	4	1	0
2010	22	12	3	4	2	3	0
2009	12	7	2	5	0	0	0
2008	10	9	2	5	2	0	0
2007	14	10	0	2	4	4	0
2006	15	8	1	5	1	1	0
2005	11	3	1	2	0	0	0
2004	17	8	2	5	0	0	1
2003	4	3	1	1	1	0	0
2002	7	5	3	2	0	0	0
2001	10	7	2	5	0	0	0
2000	9	7	4	1	2	0	0
Totals	149	90	22	42	16	9	1

Table 17 – Southwark planning applications from places of worship (PoW) by year

Of our participant nBMCs, 12 out of 36 had no record of having made planning applications.[134] Consequently, 24 out of 36 or two thirds had submitted planning applications of varying complexity. Some were on more minor matters, such as toilets and windows, some were fulfilling conditions from previous planning permission notices, others were for full change of use to a place of worship, and one was issued with an enforcement notice for unauthorised use. Some nBMCs applied just once, whereas others have made multiple applications over many years.

BBT looked at the planning documents for all 24 participant churches with applications on record. In line with evidence cited above there were a number of key issues that arose across this sample, namely **traffic & parking, noise, amenity & employment, reserved uses and waste disposal**. To some extent, these issues also reflect the concerns of nBMC neighbours discussed in §9.5 below. Planning officers when granting planning permission often attached conditions that must be met within a certain timeframe in relation to the issues above, but also so they could monitor the impact of the church on its neighbourhood.

POSTCODE	ALL PoWs (COUNT)	ALL PoWs (%)	nBMCs (COUNT)	nBMCs (%)
SE15	62	42%	45	50%
SE5	29	19%	16	18%
SE16	15	10%	13	14%
SE1	26	17%	12	13%
SE17	9	6%	3	3%
SE22	7	5%	1	1%
SE4	0	0%	0	0%
SE8	0	0%	0	0%
SE11	1	1%	0	0%
SE14	0	0%	0	0%
SE19	0	0%	0	0%
SE21	0	0%	0	0%
SE23	0	0%	0	0%
SE24	0	0%	0	0%
SE26	0	0%	0	0%
Total	149		90	

Table 18 – Distribution of PoWs / nBMCs by planning application postcode (nBMC order)

A few examples from Council planning documents related to our participant sample follow. For C8, the decision notice explained why planning permission had been given:

> Particular regard was had to the impact on neighbour amenity and transport impacts that would result from the proposed development but it was considered that this would be outweighed by appropriate conditions to safeguard amenity, particular in relation to noise and disturbance and by granting permission for a temporary period of 2 years.

In a later notice for C8 'the benefit of developing the Council's network of community facilities' through the church was also noted. Conditions, as in many other decision notices, were given relating to noise; hours of use; refuse storage arrangements; and the installation of 'cycle storage facilities'. A straightforward increase in amenity was noted by the planning officer's report on C9 who stated:

> The design and Conservation team welcome the re-use of this building, as the proposal would bring the building back into beneficial community use and remove it from the at risk register.

nBMCs were refused planning permission for most of the key reasons given above. Enforcement action was taken against C1 since:

> The Unauthorised Use of the Land as a place of worship has resulted in the loss of employment floor space within a designated Strategic Preferred Industrial Location…

Furthermore, specific mention was made of the 'excessive number of existing places of worship within the area' which meant that for C1 'it is likely that the Unauthorised Use has a negative cumulative impact on parking and traffic congestion with[in] the area'. Regarding noise, C14 received planning permission with the condition that premises may only be used

between 9am to 8pm and the building must be closed by 8.30pm, so as to 'safeguard the amenities of nearby residential occupiers'. It also adds:

> There shall be no use of percussion instruments or electronically amplified sound within the premises at any time other than for emergencies.

Quite what constitutes a worship emergency was not made clear. C5 was not permitted to use its premises until:

> …full particulars and details of a scheme to insulate the premises against the transmission of airbourne and impact sound has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority…

C21 had even tighter hours, with worship services restricted to 10am-12noon on Sunday, 7-9pm on Tuesdays and at no other times. Inevitably such conditions have an impact on nBMC identity given the nature of Pentecostal worship discussed in §5.

Retrospective planning use was given to a number of nBMCs in the sample. So C16 was granted permission in 2012 for a D1 class use in a preferred industrial location that they had been using since 2003. Their prior occupancy indeed seemed to work in their favour as it was clear that the official change of use would not be a problem for 'vehicular and pedestrian safety' as there had been 'no evidence of additional on-street parking pressure in the surrounding streets' in the preceding years of their usage. C16 also was permitted a mixed use of industrial (Use Class B1, B2, B8) alongside D1, but conditions were attached to keep these uses separate. On their second attempt, C18 also gained mixed use planning permission B1 (Business), D1 (non-residential institution – i.e. church), and D2 (assembly building). It was noted by the planning officer that this was a departure from the Southwark plan, and permission was granted as 'personal to the applicant'. The premises would 'revert to its former authorised… use' were C18 to vacate the premises. The key factor for C18 was their 'significant community benefit essential to meet diverse local needs in particular in relation to young people'. This community benefit theme has already been considered in §7, and is another planning factor shaping nBMC identity.

The decrease in unauthorised uses detailed previously is perhaps a positive sign. Initiatives by the planning department may further help to alleviate the pressure on D1 premises. Better information and access to community centres would be a useful move, since 'in most cases places of worship will be able to use these facilities'.[135] Another possibility is identifying suitable D1 'hubs' that might accommodate a number of (smaller) faith groups. BBT understands such an approach is being considered in Southwark. Such an approach has been carried out in Amsterdam where the south east of the city is known to have a high number of Ghanaian majority churches. De Kandelaar (The Candlestick) is a purpose built space designed to be used by various community groups, particularly nBMCs. The 'Candle Foundation', a consortium of five Ghanaian churches, is one of three partners that run De Kandelaar (see **Case Study 1**) (De Kandelaar, 2013). This is just one example where looking to the situation of nBMCs in Europe can be instructive for London, including matters relating to premises (e.g. Hoekema, 2008).[136]

This account of Council, Planning and nBMCs demonstrates that the planning department are required to balance a complex set of interests of all persons and communities within the Borough, set within national, regional, borough and local planning policy. We now turn to consider the perspective of nBMCs on this matter.

Case Study 1

Kandelaar (Candlestick) in Amsterdam south-east

Taken from the website http://www.dekandelaar.nu/ and translated from Dutch by Google

Multi-purpose rooms for Meetings and Celebration

The Candlestick (Bijlmerdreef 1239) is a multifunctional community centre in Amsterdam Southeast. The building is home to 15 churches in Amsterdam Southeast. There are five church halls, with capacity up to 900 believers. The Candlestick also gives space to a number of self-help organizations, a daycare and a catering facility. Moreover, in the Candlestick there is the opportunity to meet, hold parties and other meetings. You can reserve space by contacting Rev. Koney and / or the contact form.

Background

The need for church rooms in Amsterdam Southeast is large because of the radical overhaul of the Bijlmermeer neighbourhood, since more buildings and parking garages have been demolished, where church services were held. Especially smaller denominations came into trouble; of the 80 churches in Amsterdam Southeast, there were approximately 45 'homeless'. Most were forced to resort to empty buildings or community centres elsewhere in the city. Rochdale property therefore, in consultation with these churches, built the multipurpose church building The Candlestick.

Who are The Candlestick?

There are a number of foundations that are active in running The Candlestick building. The Candle Foundation, which manages the building on behalf of all participants is a partnership of five Ghanaian churches. Five church halls are for rent. Bijlmer Church Foundation is particularly responsible for fundraising serving the investment for the churches.

Renewal Amsterdam SouthEast

Rochdale property is the first in the Netherlands who have developed a new church assembly building. Rochdale attaches great importance to investing to enhance livability in the Bijlmermeer. The renewal of the area is the most radical overhaul operation in a postwar urban area in the Netherlands. With the commissioning of The Candlestick there is a new perspective for the sustainable development of religious activities and social activity, assembled into a functional and multi-coloured building.

BBT spoke with Rev Emmanuel Koney, the manager of Kandelaar, and also pastor of *Pentecost Revival Church International*, pictured above and below. Emmanuel explained that 15 years ago, five churches, including his own, got together to find a solution to the problem of migrant congregations having nowhere to meet. The authorities were building houses, but no 'social gathering space' for the migrant communities growing in south east Amsterdam. Many migrants wanted a church that felt like home with a Pentecostal style of worship. 'I don't want to fall asleep' was how Emmanuel put it. As in London, however, premises were scarce and expensive.

So five churches, including *Pentecost Revival*, got together and agreed to find land for a purpose built multi-congregation premises. Emmanuel drew up a business plan, and after 10 years of negotiations, which included drawing attention to the social benefit of migrant churches, the Kandelaar was finished. A government grant was part of the deal (through an intermediary), and apartments were included within the development.

The original five churches have use of one hall each on a long term rental basis from the owner, Rochdale property. Each church has the right to sublet, and a maximum of 15 churches may use the halls. Emmanuel observed that the sound-proofing on some of the apartments was not sufficient, so one of the halls has been taken out of use, due to issues with noise. As he says, 'we want to be good neighbours'.

When BBT asked Emmanuel if this was a project he might recommend to other cities, he responded enthusiastically, 'Yes, yes, yes'. He recommended that churches need to commit to being together. Visitors have come from Norway to consider a similar project for Oslo. The Kandelaar consortium are now thinking about similar projects for other cities in the Netherlands.

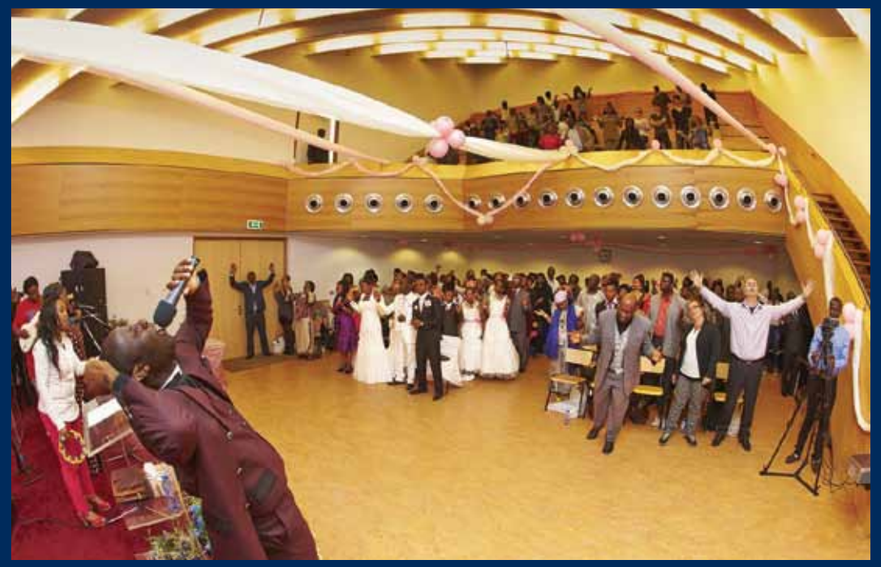

Image from Pentecost Revival Church International, Kandelaar, Amsterdam, Netherlands, with permission

9.3 nBMCs, Premises and Planning

We asked all our participant church leaders about their search for premises, and most had a tortuous story to tell about the securing of premises and planning permission. Pastors spoke of sharp practice by agents and landlords, queues of churches waiting for vacant premises to become available, the significant expenditure incurred in planning applications (especially the cost of the various consultants needed), and the loss of money when permission is withheld. Of such experiences, pastors used words such as 'fight', 'challenging', 'problem', 'difficult' and even 'nightmare'.

We also asked all pastors 'What are the greatest challenges facing your church?' which provoked a smaller scale response in relation to premises (see **Table 22** in Appendix H). Of the 27 responses we obtained, 9 included reference to premises or planning or the Council, and of those 9 there were 6 that focussed on premises and planning. In the strongest response, Pastor Yemi declared 'The greatest challenge is the Council – allowing us to do what is best for the community'. Similarly, Pastor Bernard stated that 'getting planning permission for premises is one of the main constraints' and Pastor Gideon identified 'the issue of planning permission' as a 'major problem confronting churches'.

We visited a wide range of locations including those on high streets, main roads, and industrial estates. We visited premises that had been shops, businesses, small colleges, industrial units, warehouses and historic church buildings. Some nBMCs were hosted by other churches, a few were hosts to nBMCs themselves. 19 out of 36 (53%) rented their premises and the remaining 47% owned their premises. We expect this ownership figure is rather higher in our participant sample than for all nBMCs in the Borough.[137]

A number of pastors referred to the problems of overcrowding in their churches, and this was confirmed by BBT's experience when visiting for Sunday worship. Multiple services on Sundays have been the consequence. The search for premises for medium to large congregations was said to be particularly difficult. Evidence of demand was heard from churches who were owner occupiers. Pastor Michael said he had received over 60 enquiries to buy the property in which they met when news of their possible move became public. Rev Fred from a historic BMC spoke of how he received enquiries to rent their building every month of the year.

A number of pastors spoke of their congregations in terms of being without a home. At the *Having Faith in Southwark I* meeting, one unknown nBMC leader described their experience as being 'displaced', 'roaming' and 'running about all over the place'. Lucy, who works alongside many nBMCs, was applauded at the meeting when she posed the following question:

> I know a lot of the churches we are working with are saying, okay, we want to comply with the planning but all we get told is we don't want you here, we don't want you here, we don't want you here, we don't want you here, and there's never really any information in a positive sense that we do want you here. So if you don't want churches to be taking over industrial properties and you don't want them in residential areas where would you suggest that they look… ?

Similarly, Pastor Yemi had struggled with the logistics of negotiating planning permission and observed in interview that what was *not* permitted was more forthcoming that what *was* permitted. In terms of what might be done, 'they put the burden back on you to go and put it in paper' and then:

> …by the time you come back, generally, the officer you spoke to will either say I don't remember the conversation, he will forget the conversation, or he's gone. So now you are meeting a new officer.

Regarding local authorities, Pastor Matthew thought that the growth of nBMCs in south east London had not been sufficiently anticipated by some boroughs, particularly given 'the influx of the immigrants from other nations'. Pastor Bernard felt those in authority needed to do more:

> …the responsibility for every government is to meet the needs of the people and one of the needs of community is people need a place of worship you know and I think the government should do more in terms of helping people, to find a place of worship or when they get it they should be more considerate in terms of planning permission issues, because they give permission to so many people to do other things and for communities like us, the black African, in our case, you know the communities like us, worship is part of us, and of course the evidence is out there, but the worship whether people believe it or not, but the worship that we do, you know helps people in their personal lives in a lot of way. You know it gives them a community that they belongs to…

Some nBMC pastors questioned the recourse to 'chapter and verse' of planning law, so Pastor Matthew commented:

> …[the Council] want to go by the book, so the planning law has been in place over the years has not been changed to reflect the current climate condition in the environment, so it is like a conflict, what is on the ground is not the same as what is in the book…

On this point, Pastor Daniel pleaded with council representatives at the *Having Faith in Southwark I* meeting to escalate matters to the GLA:

> We all believe that law is there for all of us. It's not there to kill us or to destroy us or to destroy the community so when we see that as we're growing and the law is not favouring us that much that is when we amend the law, so laws are there for amendment so we beg you, if it is possible that you review the law… we believe we are talking to the people who… become our voices, so please if it is possible… if it is very necessary that our words we're giving to you are important then we will plead with you that the Mayor of London will know that now we are increasing, we are growing…

Regarding some of the standard issues raised in planning applications, Pastor Yomi spoke of his congregation having to leave previous premises (a purpose built church) due to complaints about noise from neighbours and subsequent attention from the council. Yomi spoke of how the issue gained national media attention at the time, which also intruded into their Sunday worship, as Yomi explains:

> …we wanted to remain, there was nothing we could do… why we left was that they came to, they resorted to violence, they were boarding our doors, they set fire on our doors and… we park our cars on Sunday and we would go, by the time we finished the service we saw our windows shattered and they vandalised the cars… We called the police but the police said there's nothing they can do and so...

Pastor Matthew explained they had soundproofed their building as 'they didn't want to be a nuisance to the community'. Pastor Luke had the opinion that 'a lot of times churches haven't been very sensitive to the needs of the community'. For his church, they have a policy whereby:

> …after church everybody stays inside and do your talking. If you walk out you just [get] into car and drive away, no hooting in the car park, we have had a strict rules, and we abide by…

Similarly Pastor Michael considered it important for church leaders to be aware of the practical issues around noise, so when:

> …people come to church they're so excited especially in the summer and they're talking and they wouldn't even [be] conscious of what they're doing, so especially when we close, finishing in the evening we tell them "look even when you are closing your car doors can you do that in unison so that you don't bang, bang, bang and you know people knocking doors and when you start your engines, just keep the engine running slowly and glide out of wherever you are, rather than zoom…"

A number of pastors talked about 'living in peace'. Pastor Michael mused on the possibility of congregations sharing churches, but noted:

> …if you're in a residential area like this you need to be considerate to your neighbours. But if three or four churches are using this same place, I mean your neighbours can't have peace of mind. We'd love to have all night prayers but we can't do it… because it will be going beyond 11pm... we'll be disturbing our neighbours, and we need to live in, we shouldn't create war, we should live in peaceful atmosphere…

Pastor Taiwo spoke of the changing relationship between church and neighbours, in that 'our neighbours didn't see us as, you know, as life threatening as they initially did, we became friends'. Pastor Benjamin spoke of the C4's desire to 'be at peace with our neighbour' although he mentioned in the early days of soundproofing 'we have some neighbours that are not really happy'. In a striking reflection on the current nBMC scene and his own journey, Benjamin commented:

> …for other churches who have not got buildings and they want a place to worship it has been very difficult for them… I mean everybody needs Jesus… I know that not all the churches that are springing up have this same mind or whatever but at the same time… if the council can help, because there are some that have the right motive and they want to do something but they have become disabled because you know they have no place to do it, so people like that, I know the concern of the council because the meetings are out of control… you know everything has to be in order and you know I believe in, when I came to this country and I see all the orderliness, I said I love this and I want to live my life like this and that is the reason why everything I want to do, I will tell our people, the board of trustee, let's do thing legally because I mean it is for our own good… so… some people came to this country, they just want to do things the way they're doing it in their country and that is costing us a lot of problems.

Other pastors similarly commented on 'bad eggs' (Benjamin's phrase) which cause local authorities and others to 'lump everybody' together (Pastor Luke).

Renting premises is not always an ideal solution as a number of pastors pointed out. Pastor Noble remembered arriving over two hours prior to the service for cleaning the large auditorium they were using. Pastor Solomon recalled a school which was difficult because of 'access, caretakers, their heating was temperamental… we were freezing in that building several times'. Pastor Ezekiel tried to rent a community centre, but:

> …the difficulties was, especially we first, we started with the council, we were trying to find the council like… tenant hall, or things like that, and most places they were not giving them to churches because it's… one of the reasons was that… it's a community thing and they don't just want to give it a church, but… they want to give it people to use it for community basis … to rent it for parties and… other things.

A number of our participant nBMCs were renting the premises of other churches and a few were hosting other churches themselves (discussed in §8). The relationship between the host and guest churches was not always as oil running down Aaron's beard. Leaders at C7 used to hold their meeting almost immediately after their host church service ended. They sensed some bad feeling from the host church in that 'we became a threat to them by virtue of our large congregation'. Pastor Eaaron struggled with the host church where 'every day they change the law'. He continued:

> …every day as the church was getting established the man would come and [he] said "oh no this time you don't have to come to church in the afternoon, come in the night", and so we start at 7 and finish at 9 and people who go to work, and when that was almost settled, then they came and said "can you start early morning", and then "can you start in the afternoon", so it was challenging…

Fortunately, there are more positive experiences of being guests and of hosting, as **Case Study 2** illustrates, where eight congregations (mostly nBMCs) are hosted at Crossway United Reformed Church at Elephant and Castle. We will develop the potential of hosting arrangements in the conclusions and recommendations.

Case Study 2

Hosts and Guests: Crossway United Reformed Church at Elephant & Castle

Crossway United Reformed Church (URC) is located on the New Kent Road by the Heygate Estate near Elephant and Castle.[138] Rev Dr Peter Stevenson was appointed as a special category minister to lead the small white majority congregation largely from the Bermondsey area. He was tasked to build church, build congregation, and build community.

Peter sees 'building church' as about building worshipping communities within the building, drawing on a model of a Christian centre. Crossway is distinctive in that in addition to the URC congregation, eight other churches currently use the building, nearly all of whom are black majority. Planning permission is not an issue in a building that is already being used as a church. Peter used to be called 'landlord' by the guest churches, albeit not always seriously, since over time the relationship has changed. As Peter comments 'there's a real interchangeableness coming but it's not quite going both ways yet', but the 'landlord' label is fading and being replaced by 'sister church'. Joint services have become part of the life of Crossway. The hosting arrangements were initially based on 'word of mouth' and building relationships between the churches, but more recently letting agreements have been drawn up and constitutions exchanged 'just to formalise the business side of it'. This enables Peter to 'understand better what's happening within each congregation', but he stresses 'I start from the position of saying, of course, we'll work it out'. Peter also mentions the inevitable frictions that arise when multiple congregations share a building, largely relating to practical matters such as tidying up. Teaching on 'love thy neighbour' has been part of the response.

One of the guest church pastors, Kwabena, spoke of the struggle they had to find suitable premises, of sharp practice through last minute inflating of prices, of the difficulty of 'being over-stretched' and finding 'something that's affordable'. While not avoiding the ongoing limitations of renting, when they finally came to Crossway, Pastor Kwabena said 'it is like a sister church, we are brothers', and remembered that 'all the churches that worship here came together and had fellowship' at the joint service. Regarding engagement with the local community, 'most of the things we do share with Peter'.

An interesting development in the Crossway story is that the redevelopment of Elephant and Castle has led to an agreement with the Council to rebuild the church as the Crossway Christian Centre (Crossway Church, 2013), which will be 'a centre for welfare and wellbeing' (Elephant Amenity Network, 2011). All the current congregations are planning to remain at the church. Councillor Fiona Colley said of the Council's rebuilding commitment:

> I am delighted that rather than simply buying out the Church, we have instead taken the decision to relocate this important community facility to a new purpose built church at the heart of Elephant and Castle… Crossway not only provide space for their own congregation to worship, but seeks to maximise the use of their premises by other local community organisations, including eight other faith groups (Southwark Council, 2013g).

9.4 The Wider Church, Premises and Planning

As has been stressed before, §9.3 and §9.4 are not separate in the sense that the church is one. From the perspective of premises and planning, however, much of the wider church is not experiencing homelessness to the same degree as Southwark nBMCs. BBT spoke to numerous church leaders, both black and white, in Southwark, London and beyond who were not pastors of nBMCs in Southwark, but had a strong connection to the issues BBT was investigating. These informed (and often participant) observers were asked for their perspective on the premises and planning issue and what they thought were potential solutions. As this issue is intertwined with the topics from previous sections, many of their responses have already been included. In keeping with the theme of §9, here we focus on the experience of 'sharing' buildings.

Rev Diane, who has a good knowledge of hosting amongst historic congregations in Southwark, identified premises as the biggest issue for interaction between nBMCs and Anglicans. She described a reluctance to rent amongst some Anglican churches, with one of the reasons being due to concerns about guest churches taking away host congregants. Rev Babatunde, minister in a Southwark historic BMC, thought it was good to share a building with other churches, as his church had done so for the last 20 years, holding shared services at Christmas. He commented that some of his clergy colleagues 'hide under regulations' when it came to hosting. On the other hand, Rev Babatunde had recently increased the rates for guest churches, and so was 'not the most popular priest around'. In a more extreme example, Rev James characterised comments from his congregation regarding the guest church as follows:

> "You know the mess they've left, it's the bins they haven't emptied, it's the doors they haven't closed and locked, it's the windows that you know they've left open, it's the lights that haven't been switched off". It's the material things that, as soon as they see it, I know that they're going to come to me and say "Do you know what they've just done?", and it's this third party dehumanising going on, you know it's… often "have you seen what the blacks have done?".

It should be stressed that reports of such comments were rare. Rev Timothy from a historic church in Southwark was up for hosting a church. Enquiries had been made about being hosted at Timothy's church, but nBMCs leaders had not followed up or turned up for meetings. Rev Timothy expressed the need for help in making connections with a suitable guest nBMC congregation – a point also highlighted in §8.

The longest reflection on the practicalities of sharing premises came from Rev Fred who led a historic BMC in Southwark (see §9.3) with significant experience of hosting. His view was as follows:

> People would like to find out if you rent your hall, you rent this. We host… a congregation on Saturday nights. And we opted for Saturday because it keeps Sunday clear for us, we have tried to accommodate Sunday groups but… they don't stay within the time. We have the morning and evening services.
>
> And so we have made a decision that unless it's definite, some I suppose, and we are sure, we are not going to host anybody on Sundays. We don't mind a Saturday congregation which we have.
>
> But we would, now during the week too, when people enquire I find that some of them are not straight up with you, they tell you they just want something for a few minutes or a few hours and it's a small prayer meeting and then it, you know that as you talk with them that it snowballs into something we can't control.
>
> But yes there is a problem for congregations, a need for places and I think if people were more disciplined I think maybe we would be possibly willing to help more but it, it is a headache for those who are in charge of opening and closing and ensuring that people stay within their time.
>
> Yeah, because you see I don't have the issue, there is also the issue of rent, because most people they get burnt, rent is owed and as a brother you feel it's not good to take your fellow brother to court so you end up not getting the money and it has implications…

Fred then moved on to talk about constructive approaches to hosting in suggesting:

> …maybe get people to meet at a forum and talk, maybe a forum through Southwark for Jesus or Transform where we can sit down as ministers and say how we can help those other churches to understand the culture of, of renting and the culture of sharing.
>
> …because more what I think and maybe I should say more people would want to share if they can be guaranteed that people stay within the guidelines and the boundary set up and I think people are fearful and I believe what happens… and maybe I'm guilty of this, we just say no, just to save ourselves the headache and so we don't give ourselves a kind of open, well we don't give ourselves real room to help these people we just maybe batten down the hatches and say no, don't come.

These comments, along with others related to hosting in this report, will feed into our conclusions and recommendations.

9.5 Southwark neighbourhoods, Premises and Planning

The majority of our testimony here is taken from neighbourhood consultation responses to our participant nBMC planning applications. For our participant sample at least, the number of responses to planning applications was small (9 out of 36).[139] It should be remembered that neighbour responses are not always directed at specific churches,[140] but sometimes to clusters of churches that are geographically proximate. This testimony is supplemented by a number of community online discussion forums[141] and one extended conversation with a Southwark community activist.

Reading neighbourhood testimony regarding their experience and perception of nBMCs in Southwark is deeply disturbing. Such testimonies should be required reading for all church leaders in Southwark. Except for well-organised larger churches, who arrange for their members to send in letters of support to the Council, the majority of responses are objections to proposed nBMC planning applications.

We begin with some representative responses on the standard issues of noise, transport / parking, waste disposal, and employment space. One business owner on an industrial estate with many churches stated:

> …noise is an issue… levels from microphones and music is excessive… we have to start work early on Saturday and leave by midday as for us working in the day is not an option available.

A resident near a main road premises with many churches wrote with frustration:

> The impact of this noise is staggering. It is simply not possible to sleep when events are taking place overnight. In the evening, when the services and events are ongoing, it is futile trying to work or partake in any activities which require quiet and concentration. The incessant noise of the churches is so intrusive that, on many occasions, I have been reduced to tears – often compounded by a lack of sleep… Over the last seven months four neighbours have moved away as a result of the noise… The churches have consistently treated those authorities who have asked them to turn the noise down… with sheer contempt.

On both noise and parking, one resident living near a church responded 'This area is very busy all week, please give us time out'. There are a minority of responses that list their objections then strike a conciliatory tone, such as the resident who concluded his objections:

> …if, however, compromises could be made we could support such changes. For instance, if services ended earlier on weekdays and the music was limited to vocals only (no drum and bass). If after evening service they could show respect to the local residents by leaving quickly and quietly…. we would welcome this church and its members.

Parking and traffic is a particular sore spot for many neighbours. As one SE5 forum entry comments on their experience of the local nBMC:

> This Sunday one of my neighbours had a blazing row with one of the church-goers as she couldn't get her car down [the road] to her house. They did nothing… I have called [the church] a number of times to ask if they could be more considerate to residents in terms of parking and noise. Each time they have told me "try your luck with the police".

Back on the industrial estate, parking is an impediment to getting on with work. One business respondent commented on this and went on to address waste disposal:

> I am strongly against this change of use, as there is more than enough Worship in this area and they already cause us problems. They take up all the parking spaces… leave rubbish all over the streets… urinate & even human stools in front of our doors and hallway plus footpaths. We have had fighting…

Other businesses on this estate with a particularly high concentration of nBMCs concurred:

> …these places of worship are being used for social and community-based activities that involve bouncers, loud music and alcohol consumption. This results in anti-social behaviour including noise, urination, defecation and rubbish.

The reference to alcohol here is a little surprising as most Pentecostal churches consider it taboo – it is possible that sub-letting is also taking place. On the waste disposal issue, many residents complain about rubbish thrown into their gardens by churchgoers, although one respondent noted 'Those causing the nuisance openly acknowledge that they ignore the instructions given by their leaders'.

Larger concerns about employment and business opportunities were raised by many. This was most pithily expressed by a Café owner who said 'We want work not worship. We have church in this area'. A ward councillor expressed the concern that 'places of worship are… squeezing out employment uses' in preferred industrial locations. A business owner on the industrial estate claimed:

> As a direct result of commercial premises being converted into church premises the availability of premises to work from has become scarce and the result of this has pushed up the cost of commercial property in the area.

Another respondent spoke more dramatically of the 'monopolisation' of Pentecostal churches in the area, which he thought was:

> …having adverse effects on [this area's] economy and infrastructure, as the saturation of churches (as well as betting shops and pound shops) is leading to less and less chance of [our area] being rejuvenated… businesses will not want to invest in an area which seems to be wholly run by Pentecostal churches…

Interestingly, our community activist also spoke of multiple 'saturations', so nBMCs and butchers in Peckham, the point being that both saturations were unhealthy. One conciliatory response reflected on reserving industrial space:

> Perhaps today's world doesn't require light industry in the same way and in the same places as yesterday's world. Thus, the only true demand for such properties are congregations looking for affordable, large spaces. I'm not a religious person and personally find teachings of some of these congregations offensive. But given the choice of an empty building that attracts street drinkers and kids starting fires, I see the merits of a church that offers computer and drama classes on week nights / weekends.

There were plenty of responses on the planning process itself. One resident was frustrated at perceived retrospective planning permission, since:

> …this site has been used as a place of worship for many months now. To allow the change of use seems to make a mockery of the planning procedure by seeming to allow people to use buildings for any purpose without approval, safe in the knowledge that approval will be granted at a later date

Another resident questioned the motivations of the Council:

> I'm well aware that churches like this one are in need of large spaces and throughout the Borough, they are increasingly moving into industrial sites. The Council, as I understand it, is taking a light touch due to the potential public relations nightmare associated with appearing to [be] tough on a church.

Some of the strongest responses related to the notion of community. We have already considered aspects of community in §7 and noted how it is locked into issues around premises and planning for nBMCs. Responses demonstrated a strong degree of 'us' and 'them' in their comments, so a multiple-signed objection from an area with many nBMCs stated:

> We believe the areas is witnessing through the 'clustering' of places of worship the development of communities, although resident on the boundaries of [this area], that are primarily focussed on the needs and aspirations of their distinct and often small congregations. This appears to be reflected in the high volume of churches in the area whom, do not appear to be engaged with the wider local communities… we do not believe the current high concentration of places of worship is contributing to… developing strong cohesive and integrated communities

Numerous responses claim that the majority of nBMC congregants come from outside the area. How 'area' is defined is not made clear. One respondent did produce a postcode survey from planning documents to support his claim. However, there were almost no responses

recognising that Southwark has the highest number and proportion of Africans of any local authority in London and the UK (so §4.2 above). One of the less pleasant comments drew this comparison tightly, so:

> …[this particular] church does not come from [our] strong [ ] community, its parishioners would travel in from all over London, a wandering tribe looking for a home… the church community facilities DO NOT come out of our community but would be imposed on us

Finally, others emphasised what they saw as the 'inclusive' nature of community, with the damning conclusion from one response:

> …a building run for the community is inclusive, a church is not.

These comments raise questions about whose community is being spoken of here, as has been discussed in §7.[142] The most poignant comment from all the neighbour responses came from a younger respondent who wrote the following breathless email, encapsulating most of the previous points as follows:

> …im not saying that people should not be able to worship but this is crazy my mum is disabled and i can never find anywhere to park on church days as they take advantage that the permits are not in force on a weekend so what i am paying for i should park for free like them as they come out of hours. As for the <premises> its always used for a place of worship [they] put posters up advertising peopled come down each week to give a service i never see it used as a training or educational and when it let out for other peoples use it was for kick boxing which ended in 8 police vans being called as a massive fight broke out that it was in the road cars had to swerve out of the way i dont see why the council feels the need to have so many churches or is it all about money they say they want to make the area better and have started in elephant why don't we turn the <premises> in to a bowling ally or big center for the young people to go to like they have in other places in london i as a young person think its crazy i have to go westend or surrey quays for something to do and you wounder why young people get into trouble and start a life of crime its because everything is getting turned into a church all for what the money they make.

9.6 Premises and Planning Conclusions

Embedded within planning policy and practice are assumptions about what a city *should* look like. This is highlighted in Leonie Sandercock and Maged Senbel's definition:

> Planning is, at its core, an ethical enquiry: into how to live with each other in the shared spaces of multicultural cities and regions and how to live sustainably on the earth (2011: 87)

If this sounds somewhat removed from Southwark, the words of the Southwark core strategy quoted above are very much in this vein. It speaks of setting out 'a vision for the borough' regarding 'what people want Southwark to be like'. Similarly, the Southwark Alliance strategy speaks ambitiously of 'our shared vision for the future'. Planning is sometimes characterised as a rationalistic and objective endeavour, and there is a sense in which this is the case. Decisions are constrained and directed by policy, drawing on the available case data. But these decisions are still driven by a vision of what Southwark and London should be. We might say driven by what is desirable and fair for its residents and communities.[143] There is no way of avoiding these ethical terms. And such ethical judgements about the city are understood in different ways by its different communities.[144]

This leads BBT to the conclusion that planning is also an interpretative enquiry. We have seen in the testimony offered in this section that policy is interpreted variably according to time and context. There is space for discretion and room for manoeuvre. Studies on planning and religion in other parts of the UK have arrived at similar conclusions. So Richard Gale's study of Muslims in Birmingham concludes that:

> …whilst the legislative positioning of the planning system enables planning authorities to confer legitimacy upon one or another use of space, in practice their power to do so is far more relative than a more formal, idealized conception of law would have us believe…
>
> …planning policies are at least partially susceptible to the contingencies of circumstance and to forms of resistance (2008: 36).

To put it another way, planning is more than square metres, parking spaces, decibels and postcode surveys. Therefore BBT is not persuaded by recourse to 'chapter and verse' of policy that fail to take into account shifts in local circumstances such as changing ethnic and religious demographics.

Regarding use class orders, there are question marks arising from this and other research as to the suitability of the D1 use class for new places of worship such as nBMCs. It is based on a model of church that enshrines the separation of sacred and secular.[145] Thus the evidence of nBMCs that wish to operate with mixed uses and the complications this provokes. Clara Greed, Professor of Urban Planning at the University of the West of England, notes that:

> Black Pentecostal churches need large flexible premises to accommodate, not just religious services, but also the wide range of educational, welfare, catering, and childcare activities (2011: 111).

With a little hyperbole, she observes that such 'social' use does not fit easily into the use class orders, however, since the 'new churches are zone-zappers' that transcend the sacred / secular divide (see also Gale, 2008: 34). Such criticism is for the long-term, given the recent use class order consultation in 2012, but again underlines the importance of a contextual interpretation of policy by planning officers.

We find the paucity of reference to faith groups in planning policy inadequate, given the demand for places of worship in London and especially Southwark. In terms of degree, one struggles to find mention of faith groups in some key documents, and the most explicit (SPG 2007) is poorly constructed. The Southwark Council report of 2006 concurs with this general conclusion at the Borough, GLA and national level. The CAG report makes the same point at the London level (2008: 3). The Southwark Core Strategy is also right to stress the need for a regional approach.

In terms of categories, we also find the heading of 'equality and diversity' insufficient for capturing the particular contributions and needs of faith groups. The recent Evangelical Alliance report concurs with this point, arguing that such language can be reductionist (2013). Others have noted the danger of equality and diversity language portraying faith groups as victims in need of state protection, rather than as active agents in society (Gale, 2008). Bretherton also warns of the danger of being drawn into the 'politics of recognition', where the church becomes 'just another minority identity group demanding recognition for its way of life as equally valid in relation to all others' (2010b: 214).

BBT consider Southwark Council to be relatively innovative in their approach to faith groups, but they need to be given the number of nBMCs in the Borough. The *Guide for Faith Premises*

is useful for nBMCs starting out on the planning application process, especially in providing the name and telephone number of a designated planning officer to address 'unanswered questions or if you are unsure of anything' (2013c: 9). The *Having Faith in Southwark* meetings have also been a positive move, although these have been more about advice for conforming to existing policies, rather than genuine consultation about the premises situation itself. Indeed, one informed observer spoke in strong terms of an early meeting as 'pacification'.[146] However, BBT has noted a genuine attempt in the planning department to help churches with submitting planning applications for suitable premises. The concentration of nBMCs in the north of the Borough and particularly in the four hotspots identified in §4.4 are a cause for concern for all four interested parties. The question for the Council is whether such concentrations are desirable and fair for all concerned. The standard objections raised by planners and neighbourhoods tend to be at their most intense where there are high concentrations of churches. Continuing initiatives by planning to alleviate the pressure on premises for churches would be welcomed, such as better information about available D1 spaces (e.g. community centres), and the use of D1 hubs as seen in the innovative example of **Case Study 1**. Furthermore, BBT would like to underline the request from some pastors for continuity of case officers, as well as constructive advice regarding what is possible in addition to what is not.

The testimony of nBMC pastors makes it clear that premises are a major issue for many of them. It is also evident their neighbours do not always behave well towards them either. Taken with the testimony of their neighbours, it is clear that there is an issue for all parties to face. The disturbing testimony of nBMC neighbours has to be read critically, as for any other testimony in this research. There does appear to be an attempt by neighbours to distance the congregations, as 'not from here' and not 'our community', largely without evidence. The notion of 'our community' is also problematic. Ideological objections to conservative forms of Christianity would also not appear to be relevant to planning or even as to who meets in the locality.[147] Some exaggeration is probable in some responses. Nevertheless, the number and similarity of objections from nBMC neighbours across the Borough persuades BBT that low level anti-social behaviour is occurring, and not just in a few isolated instances. A significant number of nBMCs, although by no means all, are being bad neighbours; hence the perception of church by many local people in the Borough is that of a nuisance. This is to the shame of the church, which is supposed to be Good News and known by its love of neighbour.

Pastor testimony indicated the need for a sharing of practical strategies amongst nBMCs regarding 'living in peace' with their neighbours. A few of these strategies are also contained within the *Guide for Faith Premises*. Forums for such matters may well be appropriate, which may also apply to the issues surrounding 'sharing' church buildings and the need for mediators to make connections and assist churches in this process. Sharing good practice, such as seen in **Case Study 2**, may be useful for many churches in Southwark and beyond.

10. Conclusions

This story of new black majority churches in the London Borough of Southwark comes to an end here. Three biblical themes have permeated the story. The first, 'being built together', taken from Ephesians 2, was chosen for the project by the strategic partners and reference panel. The 'premises' metaphor has proved a most appropriate theme. The second theme, introduced in the interim report, were the great commandments given in the Gospels, to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself. The language of 'neighbour' is used by all parties referred to in the report and is embedded in the planning process. The third theme, picked up from participants and sources in a variety of ways, is that of 'praying for the peace of the city' taken from Jeremiah 29:7 as follows 'But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare' (NRSV). These three themes will structure our concluding reflections.[148]

The theme of 'being built together' has guided the whole project, but has particularly informed a number of sections. We began with the 'Ephesian moment' and have seen something of its excitement and growing pains. 'Being built together' underlines the Christian conviction that we need each other. We need 'each other's vision to correct, enlarge, and focus our own' (Walls, 2002). We have recognised that nBMCs are a gift to the church and the city in many ways. Similarly, the wider church has much to offer nBMCs, as we have seen. One example of this is learning from each other regarding a global and local vision for ministry and mission. The critical role of local networks and umbrella bodies has been addressed as a hard yet vital endeavour for being built together by the Spirit. Competition and replication has been noted as a feature that generates fractures in the 'premises'. Accessible and appropriate theological education, for leaders who have not had that opportunity, is stressed as key for building each other up. Through embracing difference within a congregation, we have heard how multi-ethnic churches are (becoming) a sign to the world of being built together. 'Sharing' buildings may be one of the most intimate (and literal) ways of being built together; hence it is more than a rental agreement.

The theme of 'love your neighbour' in particular was referenced by many pastors in the language of being a 'good neighbour'. The Council refers to 'neighbours' in the geographical sense during planning consultation processes. It is significant that Jesus says of the great commandments 'there is no other commandment greater than these' (Mark 12:31, NRSV). When asked in Luke's Gospel 'Who is my neighbour?' Jesus responds with the parable of the Good Samaritan. The first commandment to 'love God' drives the Christian motivation to meet together for worship. Worship is favoured in planning speak as the phrase for faith group premises, namely 'places of worship'. The second commandment to 'love your neighbour' is intensified through the dynamics of the Good Samaritan story. It is at least a challenge to show love in action, where such action may include encounters across cultural and religious barriers. As we have heard, neighbours loom large for nBMCs in Southwark, although not always for the right reasons. Examples of good practice from churches who have implemented strategies for reducing neighbourhood disturbance need to be shared more broadly. Alongside this point, nBMC leaders need to reflect carefully on the consequences for neighbours when considering premises in high concentration areas (as identified in §4.4). Love of neighbour also forms part of the church's understanding of mission. We acknowledged the important work of nBMCs amongst culturally similar communities and the engagement with

local neighbourhoods by some of the churches. We also posed a question about the need for a greater outward focus towards culturally dissimilar neighbours for whom the church and Pentecostalism is very foreign.

Being a 'good neighbour' overlapped with pastors wanting to 'live in peace', which leads into our final theme of 'praying for the peace of the city'. It is taken from a letter written by the prophet Jeremiah to a group of exiles in the city of Babylon. This passage has been interpreted over the centuries, especially by Augustine, as a key text for understanding Christian political engagement today.[149] The Apostle Paul's advice in Romans 13 regarding earthly authorities also has echoes of Jeremiah's letter. Bretherton comments of Jeremiah's time:

> In many ways that is the situation of Christians today: the church no longer has priority and Christians are not in control. The salience of Jeremiah 29 is its call to become part of the public life of the city…

He adds that 'faithful witness' for Christians entails 'active investment' in the city's wellbeing *combined* with obedience to God (2010a: 3-6). We have seen how *Transform Southwark* follows Jeremiah's advice quite straightforwardly, through praying together for civic leaders and the issues they are facing. Drawing churches into this form of political participation, including nBMCs, is a valuable initiative that reconfigures the dynamics of the church / local authority relationship. Such biblical guidance also reinforces the Christian's normal duty to conduct their affairs, in the words of pastors, 'legally' and 'in order'. This does not prevent dialogue, however, that seeks to review policy and practice that is not conducive to the welfare of the city. Consequently, this project has argued for more joined up thinking about faith premises in London, as well as guidance for boroughs that recognises the particularities of faith groups. Given the evidence regarding nBMC contributions to the city, reviewing current policy on faith premises is an investment in London's future welfare.

BBT has identified a number of simultaneous tensions for nBMCs in Southwark. They are complex and not susceptible to easy characterisation, thus the length of this report! By no means, however, does BBT claim to be exhaustive in its story. Consequently we recommend further research, investigations and collaborative projects to better inform Southwark churches in 'being built together'. The remaining BBT contribution in this report is through the sixteen recommendations that follow.

11. Recommendations

The recommendations below are addressed to all four parties in the BBT conversation and relate to the data and testimony considered throughout the report. A key point emerging is that *Being Built Together* is not solely a challenge for Southwark Council or the Greater London Authority to address. Indeed, although the Council have an important role to play regarding premises and planning, the overarching issues are to do with the church and its mission. Our recommendations are therefore as follows:

1. Based on the testimony of church leaders in and out of Southwark, we recommend that Southwark church leaders (from both nBMCs and the wider church) seek to further establish local and borough wide prayer networks. *Being Built Together* is ultimately a church issue, and therefore prayer should be the response. BBT participants have spoken of the value of prayer networks in building relationships between different churches and communities.

    1.1 Those organising such networks should take into account the time constraints often faced by nBMC pastors.

2. We recommend that historic / new / independent churches and nBMCs in the same locality consider opportunities to get to know each other, with shared community projects appearing to be an effective strategy.

    2.1 Funding for community projects is not easy to access according to pastors. Local networks and umbrella bodies may be able to share information and expertise regarding funding processes.

    2.2 The critical sign of the Ephesian moment in the early church was eating together. What are the signs for Southwark churches in the 21st century?

3. We note that multi-ethnic churches are a witness to the world and may alleviate the need for founding additional churches in Southwark. We recommend that in order to encourage more multi-ethnic churches in Southwark, leaders from nBMCs and the wider church need to be intentional about modelling multi-ethnic leadership.

4. We underline the valuable role played by the few umbrella bodies that are linked to nBMC leaders in Southwark. They have a crucial function in connecting and bringing nBMC leaders together. We recommend that all key umbrella bodies / directories at the local and national level (e.g. Transform Southwark, Evangelical Alliance, Directory of Black Majority Churches, Churches Together in England) actively seek to include a greater number of Southwark nBMCs. While recognising the historical difficulties of doing so, there is a desire at the local level for a clearer collective voice for nBMCs. This should be a point for further reflection by the relevant umbrella bodies.

5. The situation for nBMCs in London is not unique. Although the London context is probably the most intense, nBMCs in many other British, European and world cities face similar challenges. We therefore recommend not reinventing the wheel, but learning from the body of Christ around the UK, Europe and in other parts of the world. Examples in this report include…

    5.1 Multi-congregation purpose built centre for nBMCs in Amsterdam (**Case Study 1**)

    5.2 Situation of 'migrant' churches in Rotterdam and their contribution to the city

    5.3 Programmes running between the Protestant churches and 'migrant' churches in German cities, including courses on cross-cultural mission and theological dialogues.

    5.4 Role of theological education amongst African churches in New York City

6. The diversity of nBMCs should be recognised by all parties. With this in mind…

    6.1 We recommend that nBMCs are only called 'nBMCs' in reports of this nature if possible! Churches should be called by their given names by all parties, although if more general terms are needed, then 'pentecostal' is better than 'evangelical'.

7. Bearing in mind the near invisibility of many nBMCs in the Borough and the importance of telling our stories of faith we recommend nBMCs find ways of recording their histories. Two possibilities are known to BBT:

    7.1 Utilise the 'Building the Archive' project set up by the Council (Southwark Council, 2013a).

    7.2 Draw on the expertise disseminated in the *Building on History: Religion in London* project – 'Exploring and Preserving History for the Black Majority Church' (The Open University, 2012b).

8. We recommend that the Greater London Authority takes the advice of Southwark Council, the CAG report and BBT, with regard to premises and planning for faith groups. This advice is that the issue of faith group premises needs to be addressed on a regional, as well as a borough and local level. The existing supplementary policy guidance is not fit for purpose in its lack of detail and its restriction to 'equality and diversity'.

    BBT recommends that more specific and detailed policies on places of worship are needed in the London Plan, to address the changing religious demographics encountered across a number of London Boroughs. Accompanying up to date guidance, as recommended by the CAG report, is also needed.

9. We note that many first generation nBMCs provide a valuable 'safe haven' for congregants learning to navigate their way in a large, foreign city. A number of testimonies have pointed to such churches as having many positive social functions. Such churches in their initial phases are often dispersed across London, serving a community of culturally similar congregants. Consequently…

    9.1 BBT recommends that the concept of 'community' is re-examined in planning policy and conditions, since, under current conceptions, such churches are valuable for London, but not for boroughs.

    9.2. BBT recommends that, for some nBMCs, reflecting on the balance of their inward and outward focus would be valuable.

10. We recommend that Southwark Council also generates its own faith premises policy guidance.[150] The Council have invested a good deal of time and energy over the last few years in engaging with nBMC premises and planning issues in particular, as has been shown. Planning officers come and go, as has been noted, so it is important to preserve the 'know-how' for the future. This would not be a replication of the recommended additions to the London Plan, but more detailed guidance that deals with the contingencies of the Southwark context.

11. We recommend that Southwark Council planning officers continue to exercise appropriate discretion and innovation in relation to faith premises solutions.

    11.1 We applaud the rebuilding of Crossway church as a centre for multiple congregations and community provision, and hope that other examples might follow in the future. The principle that new developments need a proportionate amount of D1 space for worship is a sound one.

    11.2 Identifying premises with multiple D1 spaces suitable for nBMCs is also a positive development (not dissimilar to the Kandelaar example in **Case Study 1**).

    11.3 In the short to medium term, better information and access to suitable D1 spaces for churches would be valuable (e.g. community centres).

12. We recommend that a database of all Southwark faith groups needs to be kept up to date in order for policy and practice to succeed, with effective communication being a key factor. Our experience is that this is a time-consuming and exacting enterprise. To this end:

    12.1 Email is currently not an effective means of communication with nBMC leaders for various reasons. We encourage all those communicating with nBMCs to opt for a combination of phone, text and post.

    12.2 BBT plans to give its nBMC database to *Southwark for Jesus* who have indicated they are able to act as an ongoing communications mediator for nBMCs in Southwark. nBMC participants in BBT will be given the opportunity to opt out of the ongoing database if they so wish.

    12.3 BBT currently plans to maintain its BBT website beyond the life of the project to act as a portal for project issues.

13. We note the examples of churches sharing or having a host / guest relationship, reporting a mix of positive and negative experiences. We recommend that the wider church in the Borough is made aware of good practice by denominational and ecumenical bodies. We recommend that hosting frameworks and guidance are made more widely available by such bodies. We recommend that Southwark churches with experience of 'sharing' buildings identify additional 'mediators' to facilitate hosting arrangements.

14. We recommend that *Transform Southwark* facilitates setting up a series of church based workshops or similar following this report. The workshops should be for sharing wisdom and experience regarding matters such as navigating the planning system, premises and 'living in peace', setting up community projects, cross-cultural mission, and arranging a host / guest premises. The workshops should make plenty of space for mutual engagement – conversations rather than monologues.

15. We note that nBMC growth in the Borough is not an unqualified good for some parties. Consequently, we recommend the following:

    15.1 The planning department to avoid granting further planning permission to churches in areas where high concentrations of nBMCs next to businesses or residential premises are likely to intensify problems with traffic / parking, noise and waste disposal.

    15.2 nBMC leaders to take any anti-social behaviour by their congregants very seriously. Churches should be at peace with their neighbours. Such behaviour brings disgrace to the church. Consequently, matters of noise, parking, transport, and waste disposal need to be tackled head on. We have heard testimony from established nBMC leaders to this effect, and also how to put this into practice.

    15.3 Beyond these matters, nBMCs in Southwark have something of an image problem, whether they have been bad neighbours or not. Positive action or 'blowing the trumpet' is needed to show how nBMCs are good news for the community. Examples of such good news were given in §7. Planning applications should usually involve genuine consultation with local people, as well as taking advice from other churches, if necessary, on how to go about this.

    15.4 Local neighbourhoods are aware of many African majority churches being present, but some do not seem aware that Southwark has a large resident African population. Thus comments about 'not our community'. Nor are they aware of the many positive contributions some nBMCs are making to local communities. Residents also appear confused about what sort of church is present on their street, or if it even is a church. Better information needs to be made available to Southwark neighbourhoods.

16. Most of the pastors we interviewed had not undertaken formal theological studies, although a minority had undergraduate, masters and even doctoral degrees in theology. A few BBT participants spoke to us about the pressing need for theological education in nBMCs. We acknowledge that this is a vested interest point, since two members of the research team are theological educators in a University setting. We both teach on the same programme to students largely from nBMCs (although very few are from Southwark). While acknowledging our interest in the matter, we have seen the transformative nature of theological education and students can testify to this as well.

    Consequently, we recommend that our relevant partner organisations and umbrella bodies actively encourage nBMC pastors to undertake appropriate forms of theological education. London is not short of face to face programmes in theology, and there are a number of distance learning theology programmes available in the UK as well. Some nBMC denominational bodies have developed, or are developing, training pathways for their pastors, but there are still many gaps, as is evident in our Southwark sample. The edge to this recommendation is that nBMCs should invest in the theological education of their pastors, and this needs to include forms of financial assistance if it is to be taken seriously.

Resources

'Being Built Together' (BBT)

The research project that generated this report. The project formally finished in June 2013, but the team is happy to engage with enquiries regarding the project and report.

Email bbt@roehampton.ac.uk or visit www.roehampton.ac.uk/beingbuilttogether

Building on History: *Exploring and Preserving History for Black Majority Churches*

Resources from a large research project by the Open University. Mark Sturge and others address how to explore and preserve the history of BMCs.

See http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/boh/?p=88

Building the Archive

Building the archive is taking a snap shot of black African and Caribbean communities in Southwark, as they are now, to build the Local History Library and Archive's collections of photographs, film, and documents relating to the past, present, and future of the borough. Black African and Caribbean communities are part of the fabric that makes Southwark. We want to recognise and celebrate the contributions and achievements that these communities have made - and continue to make - by collecting and storing this information as a legacy for future generations. Are you part of a community or church group, own a business, or meet in a social group locally? If so, help us build the bigger picture of Southwark.

Visit http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200161/local_history_library/2815/building_the_archive/1 or email local.history.library@southwark.gov.uk with 'building the archive' in the subject line.

Churches Together in South London (CTSL)

Churches Together in South London is the umbrella ecumenical body that encourages and supports inter-church work, worship and witness in the London boroughs of Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth, Wandsworth, Croydon, Merton, Sutton, Kingston, and Richmond south of the River Thames. The motto is 'Making connections for Christ'.

CTSL is a strategic partner of BBT, and John Richardson is their ecumenical officer. For enquiries about affiliation to umbrella bodies, help with 'sharing' church buildings, or other ecumenical matters, please contact John on 01462 422502 or john@ctslondon.org.uk or visit http://www.ctslondon.org.uk

Evangelical Alliance (EA)

The Evangelical Alliance is the largest and oldest body representing the UK's two million evangelical Christians. For more than 165 years, we have been bringing Christians together and helping them listen to, and be heard by, the government, media and society. The EA also happened to be the national umbrella organisation with the most nBMC affiliations in Southwark.

For more information, visit: http://www.eauk.org

Guide for Faith Premises

This Guide has been developed by Southwark Council to assist faith groups in the planning process. It has been consulted upon, critiqued and revised, and the 2013 version is now available.

Visit http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200074/planning_and_building_control/3060/faith_premises_guide/1

National Church Leaders' Forum (NCLF)

The *National Church Leaders' Forum: A Black Christian Voice* represents the interests, concerns and aspirations of the African and Caribbean churches in the UK.

Visit http://nationalchurchleadersforum.wordpress.com/

One People Commission

"Celebrating diversity, promoting unity" The *One People Commission* is a body of the Evangelical Alliance made up of key national church leaders, committed to celebrating ethnicity, while promoting unity within the UK evangelical Church.

Visit http://www.eauk.org/church/one-people-commission/

Planning Advice for Churches

- Take a look at the *Guide for Faith Premises* above.
- Or contact the *Southwark Council planning department* (see below).
- Or London churches may contact *Planning Aid for London* (see below).
- Contact *Transform Southwark* for accessing local 'know how' on planning issues from those who've been there and done that (see below).

Planning Aid for London (PAL)

Faith groups in London can get independent and affordable advice from *Planning Aid for London* on 020 7401 8046 or email info@planningaidforlondon.org.uk or visit www.planningaidforlondon.org.uk

Planning policy and resources

For a list of key policies and documents, see **Table 13**.

'Sharing' Church buildings

Churches Together in England has the most comprehensive information on the different policies for different denominations sharing church buildings.

Visit http://cte.org.uk/Articles/61504/Churches_Together_in/Local_Ecumenism/Resources/Ecumenical_Notes/4_SHARING_CHURCH.aspx

For help with setting up a 'sharing' arrangement, see *Churches Together in South London* (above).

Southwark Council planning department

- For enquiries from Southwark churches, 'if you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of anything' please contact planning officer Neil Loubser at Southwark Council on **020 7525 5451**.
- For planning applications, call the duty planning officer on 020 7525 5438.

Southwark for Jesus (SfJ)

The umbrella body in Southwark that has the largest number of nBMC members. Chaired by Phil Stokes, pastor of *The Well*, the strapline is 'Prayer, Unity, Action'. It brings churches together for that very purpose.

- Visit http://www.southwarkforjesus.org.uk for information about SfJ.
- If you wish to join a local leaders prayer group, please email admin@sfj.org.uk or call 07970 875628

Southwark nBMC database

As a result of this project, *Southwark for Jesus* now has the most up to date database of nBMCs in Southwark. *Southwark for Jesus* may be able to aid various local bodies in communicating with well over 200 nBMCs.

Theological Education

There is a wide variety of face to face theology programmes in London at undergraduate and postgraduate level, both part time and full time, at universities and theological colleges (both independent and denominational). In addition, there are distance learning programmes in theology available at various institutions across the country. Many programmes are tailored towards the needs of pastors, with a strong emphasis on integrating theology and practice. We cannot list all the institutions offering theology programmes, so we have included two links covering Bible Colleges and Universities.

- *UK Bible Colleges*, see http://www.ukbiblecolleges.com/ (no directories of this sort are complete)
- *UCAS*, see www.ucas.com (main portal for all University courses in the UK – search for theology)

Transform Southwark (TS)

Transform Southwark, part of Southwark for Jesus, is a regular forum for church and community leaders, councillors and police officers. It has now run for many years to network, update and pray for our borough.

For involvement in community projects or planning issues raised by BBT, email transformsouthwarkdr@gmail.com

Appendix A – Being Built Together objectives

NB: These objectives are taken from the original BBT summary document finalised in Sept 2011.

1. Find out where nBMCs are located in the borough.
2. Describe the type of premises nBMCs are meeting in.
3. Find out how many nBMCs there are in the borough, and the size of the congregations.
4. Provide a selective history of a sample of congregations.
5. Find out where nBMCs draw their congregations from.
6. Describe the cultural make-up of a sample of congregations.
7. Find out how nBMCs address social issues both inside and outside the congregation.
8. Assess how nBMCs interact with their geographical community.
9. Find out how nBMCs engage with other churches in Southwark and beyond.
10. Look at how nBMCs relate to voluntary sector organisations and local authorities.
11. Find out what nBMCs think a church should be.
12. Reflect theologically upon the account generated.
13. Publish the findings of the project in a variety of formats, including academic journals.

BBT OBJECTIVE	PLACE IN FINAL REPORT / OTHER
1.	4. Demographics
2.	Partially in 9. Premises especially 9.3
3.	4. Demographics
4.	Partially in 5.1 nBMC recent history
5.	4.5 Congregational Geography
6.	6. Ethnicity and Culture
7.	7. Community Engagement
8.	7. Community Engagement & 4.5 Congregational Geography
9.	8. Ecumenical matters
10.	7. Community Engagement and 9. Premises and Planning
11.	5. Ecclesiology
12.	10. Conclusions
13.	See Rogers (2013).

Table 19 – BBT Objectives and the Final Report

Appendix B – Participant Consent form

University of Roehampton London

ETHICS COMMITTEE

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: BEING BUILT TOGETHER

Brief Description of Research Project:

The project is designed to help Southwark churches and local organisations understand more about Black Majority Churches and the communities they serve. Given the rapid growth of Black Majority Churches in recent years, the project aims to generate an account of new black majority churches in the Borough of Southwark, with a particular focus on demographics (the make up of the churches) and ecclesiology (how church is done). Further details are overleaf.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name	Dr Andrew Rogers
Department	Theology and Religious Studies, Department of Humanities
University address	Roehampton Lane, London
Postcode	SW15 5PU
Email	andrew.rogers@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone	020 8392 8167

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department.

Head of Department Contact Details:

Name:	Professor Trevor Dean
University Address	Department of Humanities, University of Roehampton
Email	t.dean@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone	020 8392 3242

Further details regarding the BEING BUILT TOGETHER project

This project addresses a need for fuller information about Black Majority churches in London, especially those founded in the last few decades. Black Majority churches have grown rapidly in this time period, and many local church leaders have been saying they want to understand more about Black Majority churches. Thus this project. To narrow it down a bit, *Being Built Together* focuses on the Borough of Southwark in South London.

Rapid growth has meant that some Black Majority congregations have found it difficult to find somewhere to meet. Nobody knows at the moment how many Black Majority churches there are in the Borough of Southwark. *Being Built Together* aims to count how many Black Majority churches there are in Southwark and roughly how many people attend them. This means that other local church leaders and local authorities will have better information for addressing the needs of Black Majority churches.

But *Being Built Together* is not just about counting churches. Local church leaders want to know more about how Black Majority churches *do church* – that is, what's important when it comes to running a church. In order for local churches to be united in their witness, they need to understand each other – understand both their differences and similarities. *Being Built Together* aims to contribute towards this.

We anticipate that over 100 churches will participate in this project in a variety of ways. There will be two public meetings during the project in order to report on the findings (an interim report meeting took place in June 2012). We will invite every participating church to send representatives to the final meeting in June 2013.

The project partners are *Churches Together in South London*, *Southwark for Jesus*, and the *University of Roehampton*. For regularly updated details of the project, see www.roehampton.ac.uk/beingbuilttogether

Details of Consent

By signing this consent form, you agree that a project team member may visit your church. The project team member will agree with you in advance whether they can take notes, or record the service, or take photographs. As with most research projects, all individuals and churches will be anonymous in any research reports or other publications (unless you give us permission to name your church).

If you are being interviewed, then you are agreeing to being recorded and for that recording to be transcribed. The interviewer will ask you about the history of the church, the priorities of the church, affiliations, make-up of the congregation, community projects, and challenges facing the church. The interview is likely to take about 45 minutes.

Churches will have the opportunity to provide feedback on how they have been represented in accounts generated by the project team.

Project Team

Dr Andrew Rogers is the Principal Investigator for the *Being Built Together* project. He is Senior Lecturer in Practical Theology at the University of Roehampton, and runs a Ministerial Theology degree programme for students largely from Black Majority churches in London.

Misha Burgess is a Research Assistant on the project, specialising in database administration. She is studying for a degree in Mathematics at Queen Mary's College, London.

Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed is a Research Assistant on the project. She has a background in law, and works on various projects related to cross-cultural understanding.

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Appendix C – Observation Protocol

The prompts listed here are designed to remind you of the minimum you need to observe during your visit. You may choose to write it up separately, and that is fine, as long as you cover the points listed here. Point 18 is the largest component of this record and will need to be separate.

1. Date and time of visit / phone call / email:
2. Project team member:
3. Name of the church (ensure you have any alternates):
4. Denomination or network or affiliations (if any):
5. Christian tradition, or subtradition:
6. Church contact person:
7. Church leader(s):
8. Project team member's arrival time / leaving time:
9. Address of church (including postcode):
10. Description of area and building:
    (eg1 school, another church, community centre, own building; eg2 are there other churches nearby?)
11. Official service start time:
12. Name of service (e.g. prayer meeting, celebration):
13. Description of the interior of the church:
    (photo or sketched diagram useful)
14. Number of people attending at the beginning and one hour into the service:
    (adults / children split useful, but need total also)
15. Male / female numbers at the service:
16. Ethnicity description:
    (including how it is represented in the visible leadership)
17. Official congregation size:
    (may be obtained at interview / by phone, but congregant perception is useful)
18. **Description of the components of the service observed** (in separate notebook):
    (please note the time at particularly interesting points of the service; include items such as (not exhaustive): who is at the front, when the pastor / leaders come in, any banners / texts / posters, worship start and finish, sermon start and finish, offering, arrangements for visitors)
19. Indicate whether the service was recorded (with permission):
20. Were photographs taken (if permission was given) and what of?
21. Was there any printed material for you to take? (with permission) If so, summarise it briefly:
22. What evidence of transport arrangements are there?
    (e.g. minibus route, parking)
23. Was there any visible evidence of community programmes?
    (e.g. nursery)

Appendix D – Semi-Structured Interview Questions

These questions are a guide for the project team member interviewing the church leader. The prompts do not dictate the exact form of words for the interviewer, and supplementary questions may be asked as issues are raised. The interviewer may find that the question order needs to be rearranged to fit the discussion more naturally. Comments in brackets are to guide the interviewer only, they are not direct questions. It is expected the interviews will last around 45 minutes. All interviews are recorded and transcribed, and interviewees are anonymous by default in any publication.

- **What sort of church are you? What are your priorities?**
  (please follow up with supplementary questions)
- **How long has the congregation been meeting in this place? / How long has the congregation been together? / How and when was the church founded? / Have you met in other locations previous to this one?**
  (make sure you get the time at this venue as well as the age of the church; if appropriate find out if the premises are owned or rented; also identify why the church is in Southwark)
- **What size congregation are you? Can you tell us how you have grown?**
  (how many meetings per week / month)
- **What different nationalities and cultures are represented in your church?**
  (try to get some rough proportions; if appropriate, explore why they are a particular ethnicity)
- **Where do your people come from in London? Local, South London, Greater London, further afield?**
- **Have you had any problems with finding somewhere to meet? If so, what sort of problems have arisen?**
  (if appropriate, explore what the pastor thinks is a solution to the premises issue)
- **Do you belong to any church networks / denominations? Has it been possible to make links with other local churches?**
  (try to explore how this has or hasn't happened, particularly with other local churches)
- **Tell me about any projects or ministries you have within the congregation and/or local community.**
  (check that the projects are currently operational; explore why the church engages in such projects; if appropriate ask if there are any pressing social needs within the church / in the local community; do they collaborate with any local authority / voluntary sector organisations?)
- **What are the greatest challenges facing your church?**
  (allow time for the pastor / leader to think about this)
- **Is there anything else you'd like to say, or ask of me?**

Appendix E – BBT Questionnaire

Many thanks for completing this brief questionnaire about your church. It will be invaluable for the *Being Built Together* project. All respondents are anonymous in any project publications. Please ensure you have completed the consent form which you should also have received.

1. What is the name of your church?
2. Does your church belong to a denomination or network of churches (if any)?
3. How would you describe your church? (e.g. Pentecostal, holiness, evangelical, etc.)
4. Name of senior pastor or minister:
5. Address of church (including postcode):
6. Do you rent or own the building in which you meet?
7. How long have you been meeting at your current premises?
8. How long has your particular congregation been in existence?
9. What time is your main church meeting?
10. What is the size of your congregation?
11. Please estimate the ethnic make up of your church.
    (e.g. 50% Nigerian, 20% Ghanaian, 30% other)
12. Please estimate where your congregation comes from in London.
    (e.g. 40% local, 40% south London, 20% greater London)
13. What programmes do you run for the local community?
    (e.g. nursery, music clubs, food bank)
14. What would you say is the greatest challenge facing your church?
15. Any other comments?

ID	PASTOR PSEUDONYM[1]	CHRISTIAN TRADITION[2]	ATTENDANCE	SIZE[3]	NO. OF PREMISES[4]	RENT OR OWN	TIME AT PREMISES	CONG. LONGEVITY
1.		Pentecostal	21			Rent		
2.	Pastor Moses	Pentecostal / holiness	115	250	3	Own	32	37
3.	Pastor Eaaron	Pentecostal (Charismatic or Pentecostal evangelical)	35	50	4	Own	14	25
4.	Pastor Benjamin	Pentecostal	84	500	2	Own	20	25
5.	Pastor Yomi	Pentecostal	137	300	2	Own	10	
6.	Pastor Yaya	Pentecostal but other things as well	26	55	1	Rent	4.5	4.75
7.	Group interview	Aladura / Anglican	73	135	5	Own	34	49
8.	Pastor Justyn	Community / Pentecostal	51	70	6	Rent	2	16
9.	Pastor Yemi	Full Gospel / Holiness (pentecostal / evangelical when it suits)	100	350		Own	17	
10.		Full Gospel / Holiness	100			Rent		
11.	Pastor Michael	Pentecostal	120	350	5	Own	23	28
12.	Pastor Bernard	Pentecostal	78	95	1	Rent	4.5	4.5
13.	Pastor Luke	Charismatic with pentecostal emphasis	83	500	2	Own	16	16
14.		Evangelical		40		Own	3	11
15.	Pastor Daniel	Pentecostal	250		2	Rent	5	
16.	Pastor Matthew	Pentecostal charismatic church	85	260	4	Own	10	18
17.		Pentecostal		75		Own	27	45
18.	Pastor Solomon	Pentecostal	280	500	5	Rent	6	22
19.	Pastor Ezekiel	Independent charismatic, evangelical	30	45	2	Rent	5	7
20.	Pastor Wale	Pentecostal gospel church mixed with evangelical	24	110	4	Rent	0.75	8
21.	Pastor Noble	Pentecostal / tending towards holiness	100	300	2	Own	6	27
22.		Evangelical leaning to Pentecostal	20	40	1	Rent	1.5	1.5
23.		Pentecostal	91			Rent		
24.	Pastor John	Christian	82	100	6	Own	10	20
25.	Pastor Dennis	Pentecostal / evangelical		100		Rent	7	27
26.		Pentecostal	178			Own		18
27.		Pentecostal	400	Over 500		Own	3	20
28.		Pentecostal	76	300	2	Rent	5	10
29.	Pastor Taiwo	Pentecostal	415	Over 500	4	Own	11	16
30.	Pastor Kwabena	Charismatic / pentecostal	40	65	2	Rent	2.5	10
31.		Pentecostal (adds belongs to “all churches”)		100		Rent	5	10
32.			21	20	1	Rent	3	7
33.		Pentecostal		25		Rent	7	10
34.		Pentecostal	142	Over 500	2	Own	44	45
35.	Pastor Gideon	Pentecostal		50		Rent	2	19
36.				30	4	Rent	0.5	25

CITED INFORMED OBSERVER PSEUDONYMS	DESCRIPTION
Rev Babatunde	Historic BMC leader inside Southwark
Rev Diane	Black church leader inside Southwark
Rev Fred	Historic BMC leader in Southwark
Rev James	Historic church leader inside Southwark
Joel	Black church leader outside of Southwark
Pastor Joshua	Black church leader outside of Southwark
Lucy	Works alongside many nBMCs
Rev Timothy	Historic church leader in Southwark
Rev William	Black church leader outside of Southwark

Table 20 – Anonymised nBMC participants in BBT & informed observers

1 The title ‘Pastor’ has been used for all ministers, so as to preserve anonymity.
2 Self-definition. An empty cell indicates data was not available, for example, it may not have been possible to arrange an interview.
3 The size of churches has been summarised for large congregations, so as to preserve anonymity.
4 i.e. how many premises has the congregation occupied since they began.

Appendix G – English Church Census 2005 by Denomination and Borough

	LOCAL AUTHORITY	POP'N (2001)	ANGLICAN	BAPTIST	ROMAN CATHOLIC	INDEP'T	METHODIST	NEW	ORTHODOX	PENT'L	URC	OTHERS	TOTAL CONGS
1	Newham	243,891	27	18	14	13	7	7	1	93	7	11	198
2	Lambeth	266,169	45	19	11	11	11	8	3	86	5	12	211
3	Brent	263,464	24	14	15	10	7	5	5	84	6	7	177
4	Southwark	244,866	40	16	15	10	6	12	3	83	6	8	199
5	Hackney	202,824	33	7	7	7	6	9	6	78	5	7	165
6	Haringey	216,507	24	17	8	9	8	20	7	71	5	12	181
7	Lewisham	248,922	36	14	9	16	6	21	1	56	6	13	178
8	Wandsworth	260,380	38	11	17	13	9	9	3	47	4	9	160
9	Croydon	330,587	43	21	17	17	10	13	3	44	5	9	182
10	Greenwich	214,403	32	8	19	8	10	19	3	35	6	6	146

Table 21 – Number of Pentecostal Congregations by London Borough (top 10 only)
(Christian Research, 2010; Voas, 2007)

Appendix H – Greatest Challenges facing the participant Churches

ID	"WHAT ARE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FACING YOUR CHURCH?"
1	not available
2	We wish that everyone would be saved; some might say finances but we depend solely on God
3	I have a culture problem - African, Caribbean, English want things done different ways
4	How to penetrate into people's lives, so they see that we are the people that carry the love of Christ
5	not available
6	not available
7	Correcting misperceptions of their ecclesial identity
8	People have a lot of needs they bring to church, how the church family can meet these; many have lost their jobs - how to meet their needs; funding for projects a major issue
9	The greatest challenge is the council - allowing us to do what is best for the community
10	not available
11	Space
12	Reaching out to the local community; getting planning permission for premises is one of the main constraints
13	Very optimistic person! Expansion of the ministry presents its challenges
14	We want the local authority to see us as a partner in progress
15	Not explicit, but funding from the Council to develop their work
16	Finding a place of worship
17	Nourishing folk in the word of God, social problems, folk looking for answers
18	Drop in church income due to job losses in the congregation
19	Evangelism is a bit difficult - not able to break through into the community. Want to see whole community of churches coming together in order to see revival.
20	Evangelism - want more than two nationalities
21	not available
22	None
23	not available
24	Local authority tend not to be that helpful (e.g. too many conditions on funding); funding and finding partners for projects, unsaved husbands
25	Financial
26	not available
27	not available
28	not available
29	Growth - spiritual and numerical, especially spiritual - need for mentoring; numerical - do we need a third service / another accommodation?
30	Getting everyone together on time given the size of London (people are travelling from far); raising money to pay for rent; schedule especially with people working on Sundays
31	Drug Addicts and those who don't want to know salvation
32	Congregants wanting to be served, not to serve; financial constraints
33	Soul winning
34	Transportation for the elderly to church, keeping in touch with older members at a distance from the church (facility not very suitable for the less mobile)
35	Lack of building (major problem confronting churches is the issue of planning permission)
36	Finding time in a small congregation of very active and busy professionals with full time jobs and families

Table 22 – Greatest Challenges facing Southwark nBMCs (pastor responses)

Appendix I – Gifts from nBMCs to the Wider Church / Areas for Further Exploration

This list is drawn from Rev Mark Gornik's lengthy study of African majority churches in New York City, published in *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City* (2011: 268f).

- A first gift of African churches is that they can help the churches of the West to see themselves within a larger story.
- A second gift of African churches is an invitation to name ourselves by Pentecost.
- A third gift of African Christianity is a sacramental imagination.
- A fourth gift of African churches is a holistic anthropology and approach to Christian practice.
- A fifth gift is an enlarged reading of Scripture.
- A sixth gift is resources for ecclesiology.
- A seventh gift is a model of mission.
- An eighth gift is a repositioning of the concept of citizenship and concern for immigrants.

- A first area for further exploration is the relationship between the resurrection and the cross, power and suffering.
- A second area for renewed thinking is the relationship between new African immigrants and African Americans.
- A third area for exploration involves the relationship to history.

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Endnotes

1. Ephesians 2:21-22, NIV.
2. Ephesians 2:19-22, The Message.
3. On the BMC definition, see Sturge (2005: 31).
4. 'Mainstream' begs many questions about the centre and periphery of the church in the UK, particularly in the Southwark context (so §4).
5. For example, Adedibu (2012), Burgess (2011; 2012), Osgood (2012), Sturge (2005).
6. Notable examples include my Roehampton colleague, Professor John Eade, who has written extensively on the situation of faith groups in London (e.g. Eade, 2011; 2012). The work of Chris Baker and Justin Beaumont on 'postsecular cities' helpfully engages with the changing religious dynamics of cities, and Richard Gale has looked at planning and faith groups in a number of cases outside of London (Gale, 2008; Gale and Naylor, 2002). BBT is also grateful to James Ashdown who directed us to earlier work in London around these issues by the Zebra project (nd).
7. See n20.
8. We will use the term 'faith group' in this report in preference to faith community. We recognise the objections raised by Luke Bretherton to 'faith community' due to its homogenising tendency (2010a: 38).
9. The principal investigator spent one day a week on the project, and the remaining members of the project team worked on an hourly basis as the fieldwork required, some paid, some volunteer.
10. Ethnographic approaches are increasingly used in an interdisciplinary manner by scholars from a range of academic disciplines, including practical theology. Indeed, ethnographic studies of Christian practice are becoming increasingly common. The Ecclesiology and Ethnography network (2013), following Jones and Watt (2010), characterise ethnography as a 'sensibility' with a number of shared core values: participation, immersion, reflection / reflexivity / representation, thick description, an active participative ethics, empowerment, and understanding (Ward, 2012: 6f).
11. The nBMC database is structured around a list of all Southwark postcodes provided by Southwark Council.
12. We started with three and added additional researchers along the way as the size of the task became apparent. See also n9.
13. With the exception of our administrator who was not involved in fieldwork.
14. The Churches Together in South London enabling group advised BBT on 13/9/2011 to 'be realistic about what it could achieve in two years'.
15. Online planning documents are not exhaustive, as older planning documents have not been placed online. One stop shops in the Borough theoretically allow the public to access a greater range of planning documents, but these are not suitable for research as user slots are limited to 15 minutes. BBT sent a researcher to the council offices to gain additional records, and this was partially successful, but not comprehensive. Consequently, the records we accessed are better than that available to the public, but an absence of records for BBT does not necessarily mean that an nBMC has had no planning history.
16. Informed observer interview / conversations were mostly open-ended and followed their area of interest in BBT.
17. Nearly 1200 files generated by BBT were loaded into ATLAS.ti. Observation reports, interview transcripts, notes, photos, articles, and planning documents were coded to aid thematic analysis, broadly following the procedure in Miles and Huberman (1994).
18. To preserve anonymity, some details of churches have been withheld or generalised. Informed observers have also been given pseudonyms, except when referring to organisations where the identity of key people is publicly available.
19. The interim report set a target of visiting at least 30 nBMCs and interviewing at least 30 nBMC pastors. We passed the first target, but missed the second with 25 pastor interviews. Our experience was that it takes a long time to make an interview appointment with some pastors, and there were clearly some pastors who would prefer not to be interviewed (Rogers, 2012: 15). The higher than expected number of informed observer interviews, especially with church leaders, ameliorates this shortfall to an extent.
20. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Southwark report research by planning officers was not well received by nBMCs.
21. It has not proved possible to gain clarification on its use and history.
22. E.g. BBC News London (Dangerfield, 2011; 2013); The Independent (Lakhani, 2011).
23. So addressing objectives 1 and 3 (Appendix A).

24. I am following Rogers (2013) here.
25. We recognise the limitations of measuring the vitality of the church through membership / attendance statistics alone. However, used with care, and placed alongside other measures, including the qualitative, they are a helpful part of a larger picture.
26. The West Midlands was second with 19%.
27. This is an improvement on previous figures, when Southwark ranked as 17th in 2004 and 26th in 2007. The most deprived areas, according to the indices of multiple deprivation, were East Walworth, South Bermondsey, Nunhead and north Livesey.
28. Particularly when one takes into account additional African congregants who travel from outside the Borough, as discussed in §4.5 (cf. Benedictus, 2005).
29. 59%.
30. This is a decrease in actual persons as well.
31. As a top ten non-UK country of birth for usual residents of England and Wales, Jamaica, as a key Caribbean example, has 59.8% of usual residents arriving before 1981, 5.1% between 1981-1990, 16.8% between 1991-2000, and 18.3% between 2001-2011.
32. Havering, Bexley and Bromley have the highest proportions, with Redbridge, Camden and Tower Hamlets having the lowest (Office for National Statistics, 2013h).
33. African Christian affiliation has declined slightly, as it was 76% in 2001, and Caribbean Christian affiliation much the same at 70% in 2001 (Southwark Analytical Hub, 2006a; Southwark Analytical Hub, 2006b). However, the decade interval shows an increasing gap between Christian affiliation in white and black populations in the Borough, as the broader national church growth statistics would suggest.
34. See the discussion by Clive Field on British Religion in Numbers (2012).
35. Existing sources include the Southwark for Jesus database, the Southwark Faith groups database and the Black UK Church Directory (McGreal, 2011).
36. Indeed, this is largely why our final estimated total is much higher than anticipated in the interim report.
37. James Ashdown, who worked on similar projects in the late 80s and early 90s, commented 'my general experience is that there are always more churches than you think' (Email, 14/9/11), see n6.
38. These counts did not vary especially throughout the project, so for Sample 1 churches at the end of the project *Southwark for Jesus* links were 43 and Southwark Faith Group links were 48. These sources form a limited baseline for the start of BBT in June 2011.
39. Our database suggests many of these print edition entries were out of date. This was acknowledged of the online version (Email from bmcdirectory, 31/10/2011).
40. There are inflation and deflation factors on the figure here. On the one hand, this figure will include historic Pentecostal congregations. On the other, given the premises situation in Southwark over the last ten years, nBMCs have more reasons than most other churches to be wary of questionnaires.
41. So Anglicans are said to have 40 churches, Baptists 16, and Roman Catholics 15.
42. BBT counted historic Pentecostal denominations in Southwark and identified 7 Elim congregations and 3 Assemblies of God. Although this may not be exhaustive, it gives a sense of the proportion of nBMCs in the total figure.
43. Only estimated Pentecostal attendance in Hackney (53%), Newham (50%), Brent (48%) and Lambeth (47%) were a higher proportion. Anglican proportions were only higher in the City of London (51%), and Roman Catholic proportions were the same in Westminster and higher in Hounslow (46%).
44. For an overview of four different schemas, see Sturge (2005: 85)
45. See a similar usage in Balia and Kim (2010: 188).
46. The measure 'longevity' can be confusing. It does not refer to the ages of the congregants, but rather how long the congregation has been in existence.
47. There is some indicative evidence to suggest that a sizeable proportion of nBMCs are renting premises, so Burgess (2012: 136).
48. Pulling against the likely maximal nature of these figures is the likely conservative estimate of total nBMCs.
49. To give a sense of proportion, 24000 congregants are 8.3% of Southwark's 2011 population. We recognise that a proportion of these congregants come from outside the Borough (so §4.5), but the proportion still represents the number of nBMC congregants moving around the borough on a Sunday.
50. This counts churches that are visible on or from the road. Some use 'Old Kent Road' as a region and thus arrive at much higher estimate.

51. It is not possible to map the estimated figure of 240, since this has been generated by applying an uncertainty factor. Consequently, we have to map all identified nBMCs.
52. These four areas show continuity yet also significant development with the areas identified by the Southwark Council report (Sangweme, 2006).
53. The vagaries of postcode analysis should be borne in mind however. Only two postcodes in Southwark are wholly within its boundaries (SE17 and SE22). Postcodes vary greatly in terms of how many codes are associated with the 'outward' part, so SE1 has over twice as many unique postcodes as SE16.
54. This number represents the total number of unique postcodes within Southwark for each 'outward' SE postcode.
55. Larger premises are especially difficult to come by, and so the same principle applies. C11 was moving to another borough as that is where premises were available.
56. Further research is needed to confirm this claim, but initial soundings with BMC scholars and commentators suggest this is on the right lines. London has the greatest concentration of nBMCs in the UK, and more than in the European cities such as Amsterdam and various German cities. Mark Gornik has identified 111 nBMCs across the whole of New York city (2011). The critical comparison remains with other London Boroughs as identified in Appendix G.
57. Our own assessment of historic church websites, and communication with local historic church leaders suggests some of these historic denominational figures are a little high. This may be offset by the Pentecostal category including some historic Pentecostal churches (see n43). See Table 1 in the interim report (Rogers, 2012).
58. We have it on good authority that there are 37 Anglican congregations in the Borough. *Cherubim and Seraphim*, if all streams taken together, may have as many as 11 congregations, and *Christ Apostolic Church* as many as 9.
59. AIC has become an ambiguous term. The 'I' can mean indigenous, initiated, or instituted, hence it is not surprising that other terms have emerged (Gornik, 2011: 28).
60. 'Aladura' is a Yoruba term from Nigeria meaning 'owners of prayer', 'prayer fellowship' or 'the praying people' (Adedibu, 2012: 64-65).
61. Sometimes referred to (perhaps pejoratively) as 'white garment' churches.
62. The predominant forms of Southwark nBMCs have led us to simplify this story.
63. See Clifford Hill's analysis in his *Annual Redeemed Christian Church of God Academic lecture* entitled 'The Third Generation Hypothesis' which looks at the differences between the first, second and third generations of African and Caribbean migrants (2009).
64. This section is a partial response to Objective 4 (see Appendix A). More detailed histories of congregations were not realistic in the space available.
65. Some project partners expressed an interest in knowing more about prosperity teaching in nBMCs. Although we saw evidence of such teaching in most churches that participated, its form varied widely. An analysis of prosperity teaching is beyond the scope of this report.
66. Often addressed as 'papa' or 'Daddy' in the African majority churches we visited, but also described more formally as 'the man of God' (cf. Kalu, 2005). Pastor Michael speculated that the use of 'Daddy' may be because many congregants have left their parents behind in Africa.
67. Some of these commonalities may be due to a 'pentecostalising' process that erodes distinctions between nBMCs (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2008: 193), especially when in such close proximity and with a good deal of transfer growth (Adedibu, 2012: 96f; Burgess, 2012: 136).
68. So ladies wore hats at some churches and there was a morning of teaching on 'how we dress' at another. For other churches with a more 'world-affirming' stance, dress was not an issue.
69. See also SKIN Rotterdam (2009: 17).
70. See also the typology reviewed by my colleague Richard Burgess (2013). An interesting minority of nBMCs in Southwark were plants or 'badged' by historic Pentecostal denominations.
71. See Gornik's job description for an African pastor (2011: 51).
72. After the apostle Paul in the New Testament who supported himself through making tents (Acts 18).
73. Adedibu argues that a lack of formal theological training is a 'reoccuring feature of Pentecostals globally'. He notes Robert Beckford's denunciation of this trend as a 'major flaw that has allowed the continued bewitchment of Blacks in their mission agenda through colonial influences' (2012: 73). Although dated, William Kay's survey is still indicative, where in 1999 he found that 36% of UK Pentecostal ministers had not received any formal theological training while only 10% had gained a degree in theology (2002: 1081). Wahrisch-Oblau says of the German situation that 'most missionary migrant church leaders have had little or no theological training and insist that a spiritual call and charismatic giftedness are all that is needed for their ministry' (2008).

74. See n3. The shortcomings are laid out by Arlington Trotman (1992).
75. The difficulty in making these exclusions lay in the recognition that there may not be watertight definitional boundaries between nBMCs and other churches.
76. Contributions in this report from historic BMC leaders come under our 'informed observer' heading.
77. 'Holiness' in this Pentecostal context draws on some early strands of evangelical teaching on sanctification that means a believer may live without intentionally committing sin (Warrington, 2008: 207). This is combined with the typical Pentecostal emphasis on experience of the Spirit, along with strict codes of behaviour relating to matters such as alcohol, entertainment and dress.
78. Of his extensive work with African majority churches in New York, Gornik states 'African churches are "evangelical" in the root meaning of the word, but they are not American or British evangelical Christianity'. He adds, 'assimilating [African Christianity] as part of the "evangelical" movement is misleading…' (2011: 23-24).
79. See the discussion in §8 regarding the work of UEM in Germany (Währisch-Oblau, 2008).
80. Defining ethnicity is notoriously difficult. To dodge the bullet, we have used the simple self-designation approach of the 2011 Census, to aid consistency with §4, and to keep this discussion brief! 'Ethnic group classifies people according to their own perceived ethnic group and cultural background' (Office for National Statistics, 2013a). Notably an identifiable group and culture are part of this definition. Our interviewees used a wide variety of terms to refer to this aspect of personal identity, including 'nationality', 'culture' and colour terms.
81. We were not able to include francophone nBMCs in our sample, which is to be regretted. This is a combination of many factors, including practical matters such as language.
82. They added that congregants from other West African nations and the Caribbean attended their churches.
83. Few pastors seemed comfortable with aspiring to the idea of relatively homogenous congregations in terms of ethnicity, even if this was the case in practice. The late missiologist Donald McGavran and the 'church growth movement' would argue for just such an aspiration based on the 'homogenous unit principle' (HUP) (e.g. MacGavran, 1970).
84. The term 'reverse mission' is not without its detractors. If it implies a replication of the historical missionary movement, but in a different direction, then it is indeed problematic. The concept has been noted in the media, especially through the BBC2 series 'Reverse Missionaries', first broadcast in 2012.
85. See also the Grove Booklet which draws on Southwark diocese as its case study (Sandiford, 2010).
86. Walls speaks of both a 'pilgrim' and 'indigenising' principle that are native to Christian faith. Reference to 'intentional loss of culture' is a strong expression of the pilgrim principle (cited in Bevans, 2011).
87. Regarding objective 10, BBT did anticipate engaging with voluntary sector organisations as part of the project, but for various reasons, including time available, this did not work out.
88. For churches offering new community facilities as part of their planning application, the Southwark Plan requires 'provision is made to enable the facility to be used by all members of the community' (Southwark Council, 2007: §2.2). In an appeal decision on C27, the inspector commented of this policy 'inevitably there are practical limitations on the extent to which any facility can be made available for use "by all members of the community". These include the demands of primary use for which the premises are intended, physical constraints and economic considerations.'
89. Consequently, such regulations shape nBMC ecclesial identity to a degree. This is also evident in the Green transport plan which shapes a church's environmental theology to a degree.
90. If this data is a predictor of overall faith-organised social action in London, then faith communities could be running more than 7000 projects, employing 10,000 staff, involving over 45,000 volunteers, serving some 390,000 people, with 2,200 buildings available for community use.
91. Migrant churches are divided into three groups in this report. There is not space to discuss the typology here, but the third group is of interest to BBT, since it 'consists of churches for and by new migrants and refugees', including the Coptic church and African / Asian / Latin American Pentecostal churches.
92. The survey had responses from 359 churches, which were from across the denominations.
93. The report identifies five levels of activity by faith groups as recognised by their local authorities.
94. BBT recognises this is a crude measure – not all initiatives are of the same size.
95. Email from Alan Sharp, BBT research team member (10/5/13). The survey was of 16 nBMCs (McLean, 2005). Although this broadly matches our findings, there are exceptions, and BBT does not have the right sort of evidence to establish this point independently.

96. The Blessings Under Pressure report identifies a similar situation in Rotterdam, so 'migrant churches represent for their members a place to meet kindred spirits' where the church acts as 'a gateway to society' and churches are often 'migrant's guiding post to educational and medical help' (2009: 9)
97. Comments of this nature relating to immigration were very rare in the fieldwork.
98. See n67.
99. A number of studies speak of the relative affluence of nBMC congregants (e.g. Hunt, 2002), but this was not straightforwardly the case for our Southwark nBMC sample.
100. Responses were not suitable for summarising in tabular form.
101. Very similar to the initial figures given in §4.3.
102. 11 had entries on the Black UK Online database, but this does not appear to be running currently. 8 identified as members of Churches Together in England, and very few were members of the Apostolic Pastoral Congress (2013), the Trans Atlantic and Pacific Association of Churches (TAPAC) (2012), Churches Together in South Southwark (CTiSS) (nd) and the Southwark Multi Faith Forum (SMFF) (nd).
103. Reliable figures were not available for all items in the large sample, hence they are not quoted.
104. Adedibu notes the plethora of BMC parachurch organizations in recent history, and provides a critical commentary on the demise of the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance (ACEA) in March 2009 (2012: 93f).
105. See n103.
106. Email on 1/4/13 and phone call on 6/3/13 with Eileen Conn.
107. At the project launch meeting on 25/10/11 and in presenting the interim report on 20/6/12, both at Transform Southwark meetings.
108. The language is taken from Jeremiah 29 in the Old Testament of the Bible (see Conclusions).
109. 'Migrant church' appears to be the term of choice in Europe, and although not favoured by BBT, we use it here for the sake of convenience (see discussion in SKIN Rotterdam, 2009: 17).
110. Email from Francisca Folkerstsma at SKIN on 11/4/13.
111. Known in English as 'the programme for cooperation between German and immigrant congregations' (Währisch-Oblau, 2000).
112. *Bund freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden,* BfP.
113. SKIN Rotterdam produced a report which addressed 'migrant churches' as a gift to the city as well as the church (2009).
114. BBT has been told that gazetting is not a common process, and can only be undertaken by churches who are members of *Churches Together in England*, or the *Evangelical Alliance,* or the FIEC (Churches Together in England, 2009).
115. Space permits examination of the framework from one denomination only. It should be stressed that other historic churches will have different arrangements for the process of becoming hosts and guests.
116. A short paper from Churches Together in England entitled Sharers, *Guests or Tenants? The Sharing of Church Buildings in the Multi-Cultural City* (see Table 13) argues that 'each Christian congregation should regard the other as the body of Christ'. It goes on to state 'the landlord-tenant relationship is not appropriate within the body of Christ. There should surely be a different spirit between the sharing of church premises between two Christian congregations and the letting of church premises to a badminton club or keep fit class' (2001).
117. i.e. areas designated primarily for industrial / business purposes and not for worship.
118. In an email from the RTPI they explained that 'the RTPI have not done any further work on faith and planning to date' (2/8/12), that is, for thirty years, to date.
119. This is an example of the state tending to define faith groups with the language of the market (Bretherton, 2010b: 214).
120. Due to their sources of data, there was a bias to premises over 1000 square metres (2008: 13).
121. Olatunji Adebayo, the founder of TA Property Consultants, has acted as agent for many Southwark nBMCs (as BBT has seen from the planning records). He broadly endorsed the findings of the CAG report, noting 'the "ad hoc" ways in which each borough handles Places of Worship applications' (Inspire Magazine, nd; cf. TA Property Consultants, 2008). BBT attempted to contact TA Property to act as an informed observer, but without success.
122. This is a popular recommendation it would seem, so the Mercia Group argued that planners should 'build up a database of contact organisations for consultation on planning policy issues' (2006: 52).

123. The CAG Case Study on Southwark appears to draw heavily on the internal Southwark Council report.
124. Email from the Southwark planning department (26/6/12). Although the report is still on the GLA website, its recommendations do not appear to have been taken up by the GLA either. Some informed observers argue that this is due to its unfortunate political timing – the Mayor of London changed in the same year it was published. There was also some media interest at the time (Akwagyiram, 2008; BBC News, 2008; Inspire Magazine, nd).
125. Although not quite directly comparable, a survey conducted on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 'it was found that only slightly more than 25 percent of all local planning authorities in England stated that they "always" consulted faith groups when preparing development plans or special planning guidance, whilst 26 percent said they 'never' did so (cited in Mercia Group, 2006: 56).
126. The figure of 80 unauthorised places of worship does fit with the other sources of evidence.
127. BBT offered critical feedback during the Guide's consultation process and also provided a critical commentary on the Guide at *Having Faith in Southwark IV*.
128. Phone conversation with the Special Projects Officer at Southwark Council on 14/6/12 and 7/5/13. Phone call with Chief Enforcement Officer on 19/1/12 and email on 14/6/12.
129. Figures supplied by Southwark planning officer on 15/5/13.
130. In response to an email request. Data received on 10/10/11 by email.
131. We have only included full planning applications.
132. Figures supplied by a Southwark planning officer on 15/5/13 gave 12 planning applications from places of worship in 2012 and 18 applications in 2013 so far. The majority of these were for nBMCs.
133. This one case is described as 'pending legal agreement'.
134. Although some had made applications before the cut off date for records being available online.
135. Email from Southwark planning department (14/12/12).
136. A representative of SKIN, an umbrella organisation for immigrant faith communities in the Netherlands, wrote to BBT the following: 'finding a place to worship is one of the most urgent and actual problems our member churches have to deal with' (Email from Francisca Folkertsma, 11/4/13), see also SKIN (World Council of Churches, 2013).
137. This is a partial response to objective 2, which set BBT the task of looking at the type of premises in which nBMCs met. For the reasons given in §3.1, we have not gone into greater detail on this objective.
138. The minister of Crossway has given BBT permission to withdraw anonymity for himself and the URC church. This does not apply to the nBMCs sharing the premises.
139. Although this is a minimum since records are not historically complete, see n15. A number of pastors spoke of planning problems for which there is now no public record.
140. Neighbour responses are to specific planning applications submitted by a particular church, but their comments often refer to churches in the immediate area as a group.
141. The SE5 forum and the People's Republic of Southwark have a number of threads relating to nBMCs and planning permission (2013; 2013).
142. See also n89.
143. The Faithful Cities report was driven by the question 'What makes a good city?' (2006: 54).
144. In stronger terms, Leonie Sandercock has produced a number of studies that show 'orthodox representations of the planning profession as a rational, 'utility maximising' product of the enlightenment have often masked the deep-grained imbalances of power on which it rests' (summarised in Gale, 2008: 21-22).
145. Confusingly, in the academic jargon, this would be termed 'modern', but in the sense of enshrining the values of modernity.
146. Telephone conversation on 3/8/12.
147. Are there objections to conservative tradition congregations meeting in neighbourhood historic / new / independent churches? If not, what does this suggest about the substance of the objection?
148. Theological treatments of migration are not plentiful, but the theme of 'welcoming the stranger' was prominent in Theological Reflections on Migration: A CCME Reader, albeit not particularly accessible (Churches' Commision for Migrants in Europe, 2008).
149. I am following Bretherton here (2010a).
150. As we discussed in §9.6, this is distinct from guidance for faith groups.

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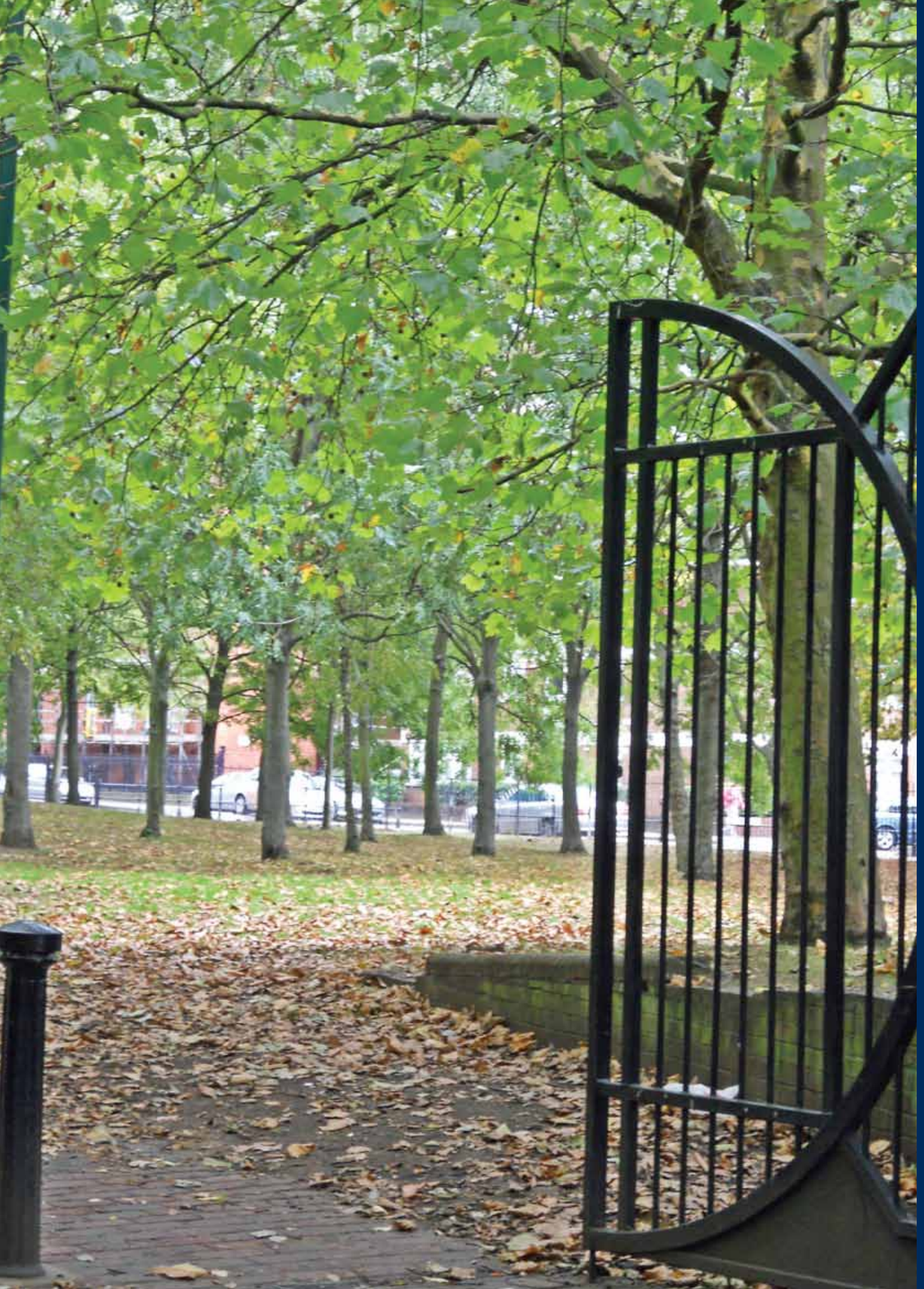

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