

Out with the Old, in with the New?

An Introduction to the Phenomenon of New Churches in Glasgow, Scotland

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ABSTRACT

THE PROSPECTS OF THE church in Britain have been defined by an enduring narrative of regression for many decades, but something new is happening. The presence and influence of old and established institutions are waning, but many new groups are emerging to keep the heritage of the church alive. This quantitative and qualitative study presents the new changes which have occurred in the Christian landscape of the city of Glasgow in Scotland in recent years, which are often hidden from other forms of research such as national church surveys. It reports the formation of 110 new churches in Glasgow between 2000–2016, and the key characteristics and impact of these groups on Christianity in the city. The

presence and effect of new churches in Glasgow indicate seismic changes and presents new challenges in the spiritual landscape of this post-Christian city, not least around the homogeneity of the majority of them.

INTRODUCTION

The outlook of the church in Britain has been defined by an enduring narrative of decline for over fifty decades (Brown, 2001; Bruce, 2002), but something new is happening. The landscape of Christianity in post-Christendom British society is undergoing a transformation. The presence and influence of old and established Christian institutions are undoubtedly waning, but many new and innovative groups are emerging to keep the heritage of the church alive. Against the receding tide of faith and practice, new patterns of growth and revitalization are beginning to emerge. Using empirical research methods, this article investigates the phenomenon of new churches in the city of Glasgow in Scotland, to add to the growing body of knowledge on this emerging trend in contemporary British Christianity.

In the first part of this paper, I will establish the background and rationale for implementing this kind of study in the chosen context. This will be followed by a detailed explanation of the chosen methodology and how data was collected and used in this study. This then lays the foundation for understanding the reporting and analysis of key findings which follow, and the conclusions drawn from them.

Background

A renewed theological and academic interest in church growth in contemporary Britain is generating some unanticipated results. They reveal upsurges in both the variety and size of congregations in many parts of the country (Gwanmesia, 2009; Goodhew, 2012; Brierley, 2014; Rogers, 2013). This development has been largely

attributed to the formation of various new churches and Christian groups, although some historic institutions, such as the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, have also shown significant gains in attendance and membership in recent times, particularly those located in major cities (Goodhew 2012; Brierley 2014; Goodhew and Cooper 2018).

New churches simply refer to recently founded congregations. The specific criteria for definition as a new church in this article will be discussed in detail later on, but generally, new churches can represent new Christian denominations, individual groups, new “plants” by existing denominations, re-foundations of declining or previously closed churches and various innovative groups widely known as “fresh expressions” and “emerging” churches (Cray, 2009; Moynagh, 2012). Novel sociocultural occurrences, experiences and changes in the social order in recent years, have led to the creation of many such congregations across Britain. These new groups usually attract a highly diverse demographic of followers and may have little or no connections with existing or historic church institutions.

The majority of studies that exist so far on the phenomenon of new churches in Britain have been focused on and conducted in the context of the southern half of the country, particularly in England (Goodhew, 2012; Osgood, 2012; Walker, 2014; Goodhew and Symmons 2015; Paas, 2016). There is currently very limited research on the question of the presence and scope of the phenomenon in other areas of the United Kingdom, especially in Scotland. Current and localised research is vital to any attempts to perceive and map the true nature of growth or decline in congregational life. Accordingly, this paper investigates the presence and nature of new churches in Scotland by studying recent changes in the City of Glasgow in the years 2000 to 2016.

Why Scotland?

No study of this nature has yet been conducted anywhere in Scotland. The Scottish region has consistently reported some of

the lowest statistics in Christian belief and church attendance in the United Kingdom in the past and in recent times (Brierley, 2017). Various polls and surveys conducted over the years have all pointed to the fact that Scotland's "historical reputation as a particularly religious nation" is rapidly fading (Field, 2001). Findings from the most recent national census in 2011 reinforced this recurrent theme. For the first time since census figures begun, the proportion of people describing themselves as having 'no religion' in Scotland (37 percent of the population), overtook the Kirk (as the established Church, the Church of Scotland is known) as the most popular national "religious" stance. In this census, just 32 percent of Scots identified with the historic Church of Scotland (Scotland's Census 2011). A comparison with the preceding 2001 census indicated a loss of nearly half a million Church of Scotland (CofS) adherents, and experts predict this downward trend is set to continue (Brierley, 2011).

Undeniable, wide-scale regression over many years, therefore, sets the scene for Christianity in Scotland, but it is important to question whether such decline remains the dominant issue of interest in congregational life in modern-day Scotland. This article sets out to capture a purposefully concise and substantially current glimpse of the present situation in Scotland to contribute to the ongoing discourse about the status and future direction of Christianity in Britain as a whole.

Why Glasgow?

The city of Glasgow has certain features which make it particularly suitable for the present investigation. These are its Christian heritage, its commercial capabilities, and its cosmopolitan nature. Glasgow is a city located in the central belt of Scotland along the River Clyde in the country's West Central Lowlands. Its Christian heritage is believed to have started in the sixth century, when the conurbation was founded by the Christian missionary, Saint Mungo (Hale, 1989). In the following years, the town blossomed as a

religious centre and later grew to become one of the key economic centres of the United Kingdom.

Currently, it is Scotland's biggest city and the fourth largest in the United Kingdom by population (Population UK Statistics 2018). It is also the most ethnically diverse and remains the principal commercial and industrial hub of Scotland, enclosing major trade and transport routes. These are all qualities which Goodhew and Symmons (2015) found to be key to the location of new churches in Britain.

Glasgow has one further advantage for the purposes of the present study - the city was crucial to studying the impact of urbanisation on the Scottish religious system in the past (Brown, 1981). As Callum Brown described in his study on the effects of urbanisation on religious development in Scotland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,

In few other countries did any one city affect so greatly the outlook and distribution of the resources of "national" churches. In the Scottish churches as in other spheres of civil life, Glasgow became synonymous with industrialisation and urbanisation. Ecclesiastical responses to the development of Scottish urban society were increasingly drawn from Glasgow's experience as the industrial revolution proceeded. In the city of Glasgow, therefore, the progress of religious development and secularisation can be illuminated not only by local reactions but also by the national responses to the growth of a city that acutely affected the social and economic life of the country. (1981: 7).

Glasgow continues to have economic, demographic and other influences over the rest of Scotland in the twenty-first century. Since developments in the city defined the religious landscape of the whole country in the pre-Christendom and Christendom eras, studies of current events in its spiritual sphere, especially in the post-Christendom age, can similarly have key implications for the church in wider Scottish society.

Why 2000–2016?

Key texts which discuss the subject of new churches in Britain usually cover its chronology in the UK from the 1980s (Goodhew, 2012). This enquiry, however, strictly focuses on and evaluates the twenty-first-century trends in the development of new churches by studying churches founded in or after the year 2000 and up till 2016. This serves to present a very fresh and current glimpse of the phenomenon in this unresearched region.

Much more importantly, the chosen timeframe, 2000 to 2016, covers periods of key statistical significance and points of reference for the study. These are the two most recent national population censuses in Scotland in 2001 and 2011, and also, the most recent national church surveys held in the area in 2002 and 2016. Referrals to these crucial data pools will appear in ensuing discussions for comparative and analytical purposes.

This time frame is also long enough for any recent changes in the Christian landscape to be noticeable and compact enough to be practicably manageable by a solo researcher working within a limited timeframe. Consequently, the study is limited in scope and scale. Nonetheless, it contributes to the data and dialogue about contemporary ecclesiological trends in post-Christendom societies.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The overarching aim of this research is to study the phenomenon of new churches in the city of Glasgow in the years 2000–2016. Specifically, it seeks to investigate the scale of occurrence and the characteristics of new churches which have appeared in the area during the period under review. Because it is a novel and developing phenomenon, existing research about new churches are usually exploratory and descriptive in nature, seeking to unearth information about their operations, nature, and ethos, and subsequently to postulate about the significance of these findings (Goodhew 2012; Goodhew and Symmons 2015). This study aims to apply a variety

of procedures including the exploration of original views and experiences in its evaluation of new churches; thus a quantitative and qualitative research design was adopted.

In his study of new churches in Seattle, James (2018) employed a similar approach to “counting” the number of churches which had been founded in the city between 2001–2014 and going further to study in-depth their characteristics using qualitative methods.

Data Collection

Locating new churches

A significant aspect of this research, and one of my key research enquiries, involved locating and counting the number of new churches established in Glasgow in the years 2000–2016. This exercise relied significantly on exploring several public data sources such as websites and social media pages. Using the search terms “church Glasgow” and “new church Glasgow” interchangeably on web and social media sites, I generated a list of potential new churches for further investigation. I then extensively researched and studied their Facebook pages and other online accounts, such as websites and blogs, for clues on when they were established, their meeting times and venues, the contact details of their leaders and even pictures and videos of their meetings where available. The church websites usually also provided extensive histories of the churches, their activities and their core theological beliefs among others. Using this information, I started to build a database of the churches which would meet the criteria of the study.

One of the most important secondary resources I consulted to locate new churches was the database of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). According to the Charities and Trustee Investments (Scotland) Act 2005, all charitable organisations in Scotland, including churches, are legally required to register their presence with the establishment. Applying the search terms “church,” and “church Glasgow” on the OSCR database,

several results were generated. I then paid attention to groups registered from the year 2000 onwards, and to their postcodes to ensure that they fell within the ambits of my geographical study area. This database also sometimes provided contact details, website addresses and a description of the key activities of the registered churches. This process was highly productive and contributed the largest number of entries (about 50 percent) onto my working list of new churches.

Beside these methods, I also conducted on-the-ground field investigations by visiting various ethnic and international shops and reviewing the flyers, posters and various other advertising materials being distributed or displayed on their notice boards. I discovered that many new churches, especially the ethnic minority ones, used this means to solicit new members or invite people to special church events. This method also helped to detect and confirm the presence of many new churches in Glasgow.

Empirical research was also implemented extensively in this enquiry for the purposes of discovering, studying and verifying information about the demography, activities, experiences, and practices which define new churches. A questionnaire survey was the principal empirical tool implemented in this study. Its main aim was to obtain comprehensive and characteristic information about the new churches discovered in Glasgow. The survey was divided into four parts and sought data about the churches and their leadership, the demography and size of their congregations, their meeting and attendance statistics and their theological and missional practices. A thirty-item, online survey instrument was developed and distributed to an overall population of 110 churches and obtained a response rate of 54.5 percent (sixty responses out of 110). The questionnaire also had a completion rate of 91 percent.

Additionally, for the qualitative element of the research, I conducted in-depth interviews with nine new church leaders and practiced participant observation in the worship meetings of another nine churches over several weeks. These additional methods served as supplementary resources. For instance, the interview questions were developed after a careful consideration of all the

information gathered from the survey and participant observation exercises. The interviews were then implemented to fill in any gaps in knowledge and for clarifications, whilst also obtaining additional perspectives on any essential issues.

The participant observation studies were used to verify some of the findings of the survey, particularly those pertaining to statistical and demographic information about the congregations; this helped to check the problem of self-inflated data, which can sometimes be encountered in self-reported church questionnaires (Goodhew and Symmons, 2015).

Furthermore, I paid random visits to more than half of the new churches discovered, including some of those which did not participate in the survey. These visits also enabled me to verify the authenticity of more survey data, as well as obtain new information about the non-surveyed groups through general observation and informal conversations.

It is important to highlight that, although writing in 2021, the data presented in this study was collected and analysed between 2016–2018 as part of a PhD study, and must therefore be considered with this caveat in mind¹

Defining new churches

To qualify as a new church for the purposes of this study, the Christian group in question must:

1. Have been founded or created during or after the year 2000 and up to and including 2016, in the Glasgow City Council area
2. Be Trinitarian
3. Meet regularly for worship, at least, once a week (not necessarily on a Sunday)

1. Akomiah-Conteh., S., (2018): *The Changing Landscape of the Church in Scotland: New Churches in Glasgow 2000–2016* is the PhD thesis which presents a full and more extensive review of new churches in Glasgow. It can be retrieved from the thesis archives of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

4. Have five or more people in attendance at meetings
5. Observe the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion
6. Have a clear, new identity (not a rebranding of a formerly existing church)
7. Self-identify as a church and be the main expression of church for the majority of its members (for instance not a cell group of another main church).

This seven-point criterion was adapted from the measures implemented by Goodhew and Symmons (2015) in their focused study of new churches in the North East of England, however, they considered new churches founded from 1980 onwards. The ‘definition’ of a new church for the purposes of this research was intentionally strict to ensure that the total number of churches identified as such were in no danger of being an overcount. This, however, means that several innovative activities, churches and Christian groups in Glasgow which did not fully meet the set criteria were excluded in this study. Had the criterion been more relaxed, the scale of new church foundation in Glasgow between 2000 and 2016 may have been larger than reported in this study.

For instance, new churches established in Glasgow before the year 2000 were not included in this thesis. However, it can be cautiously estimated that at least fifty new churches may have been founded in Glasgow between 1980 and 1999. The characteristics of these churches would, however, have been different from the churches established from the year 2000 onwards, particularly with regards to their ethnic diversity. These “pre-2000” church plants would have been significantly White Scottish or White British in membership. I know from the current data that at least 99 percent of the ethnic minority church denominations captured in this study did not have any presence in Glasgow pre-2000.

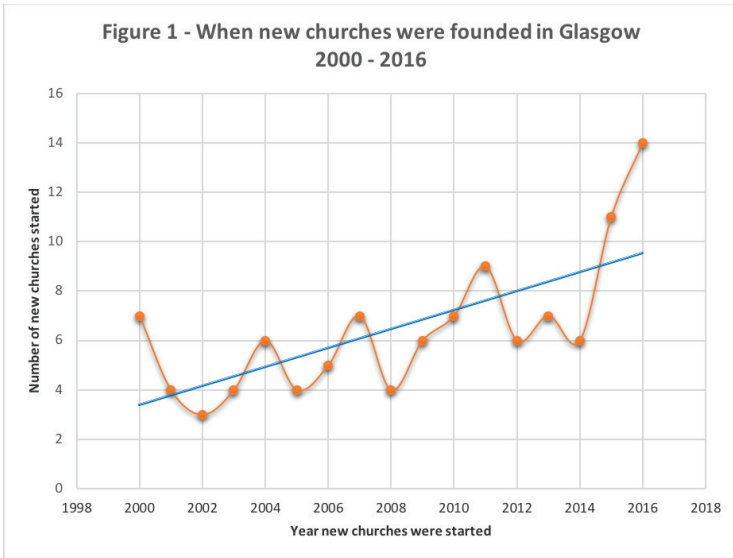
Several Fresh Expressions of church such as “messy church” and “community cafes,” among others, which engage primarily with the unchurched in different communities, were also excluded. A fresh expression is defined as “a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are

not yet members of any church,” (Goodhew, Roberts and Volland, 2012: 75). Much ambiguity and scepticism surround the definition of what it means to be a “church” for many Fresh Expressions (Church Army 2019: 15), and Paas (2016) admits that some Fresh Expressions cannot even be considered as church plants. This is because they normally begin as neutral groups with the potential to develop into mature expressions of church over time. Some, however, do not grow to the stage of becoming a church at all in their lifetime. As a result, the majority of these groups also do not practice traditional church rituals such as the administration of the sacraments of communion and baptism as part of their normal practice. These are some of the qualities which disqualified many Fresh Expression groups in Glasgow from inclusion in my study. Nonetheless, more than 250 Church of Scotland congregations across Scotland are reported to run Messy Church groups (Church Army Report 2019). Consequently, the inclusion of some of these innovative missional groups and activities in this research would have resulted in a much more significant quantity of new church activity in Glasgow.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Accordingly, this study discovered that a total of 110 new churches were founded in Glasgow between 2000 and 2016. This suggests an average church planting rate of seven new groups per annum.

Figure 1: *When were the new churches founded?*



Collectively, the new groups are nearly as many as all Church of Scotland congregations currently operating in the same area (there are currently 127 churches in the Church of Scotland's Presbytery of Glasgow). If they were a single denomination, the new churches in Glasgow would also largely outnumber the number of Roman Catholic (65), Episcopal (14), Methodist (9), United Free Church (10) and Salvation Army (9) congregations in the city.

The 2016 Scottish church census reported that there were 361 Christian congregations in Glasgow in total (Brierley 2018, section 12.15). My research, however, discovered that new churches were sometimes largely missed and undercounted in large scale, mainstream statistics.

The 2016 Scottish church census was hailed to be a comprehensive survey of “all denominations and every local church in Scotland” (according to the census information leaflet). Its organisers contacted over 3000 local congregations across Scotland with self-completion, postal questionnaires and achieved a response rate of 40 percent (Brierley, 2017: 11). Eight weeks after the Scottish national church census, I also implemented my

questionnaire survey of the new churches in Glasgow. This was purposely planned to prevent any confusion or clash of the two surveys, although mine was on a much smaller scale. I also wanted to test the level of participation of new churches in national activities. Therefore, my survey asked the question, “*Did your church take part in the recent Scottish church survey held on the 8th of May 2016? If No, why could you not participate?*”

Approximately 90 percent of my respondents in Glasgow did not participate in the 2016 Scottish national church census. The most popular reason given for their non-participation was “*not being contacted by the organisers and therefore not being aware of the activity.*” Only six out of sixty churches noted that they had received information about the census. Of these, however, two forgot to respond and four participated fully. Therefore, Brierley’s report of 361 congregations in Glasgow in the 2016 national church census is an undercount and may not include many new churches, especially those discovered in my study. This once again underscores the importance of small-scale localised research in congregational studies. Broad sweeping surveys and overviews of church growth and decline may be important for painting the picture of general developments, but they do not always tell the whole story.

With regards to congregational numbers, data obtained from my questionnaire survey revealed that approximately 5,178 people attended the sixty churches which participated in the survey. This indicates an average new church congregation size of 86, comprising of men, women and children (the survey asked the question, “*What is the current, total number of your congregation including men, women and children?*”).

Brierley’s 2016 census did not collate church membership numbers for the different council areas. However, it measured Sunday church attendance by denomination and council area. According to its findings, 60,890 people overall attended church in Glasgow on any usual Sunday in 2016. This data suggests that at least 10 percent of the city’s inhabitants go to church on Sundays. It must be borne in mind, however, that contemporary trends in churchgoing indicate that many new Christian groups also hold

various weekday meetings and for some their main weekly meeting may not take place on Sundays. The popularity of online church activity exacerbated by the extremities of the current COVID-19 pandemic may also have an impact on the systems of measurement and collation of church attendance statistics in the future. Nonetheless, of the 60,890 people attending church in Glasgow weekly (on Sundays) in 2016, 38,570 went to Roman Catholic churches, 12,870 went to the Church of Scotland and 2,310 were Baptists. The remainder were from a mixture of other smaller denominations and churches.

We now know that the current statistics do not include many new churches in Glasgow. Therefore, the inclusion of an additional 5000 new church members will definitely add a substantial boost to church attendance in Glasgow. If we were to stretch this further by estimating the total potential membership of all the 110 new churches discovered in Glasgow using the survey sample as representative, we will end up with a potential sum of 9,178 more church attendants. This was calculated by rounding down the average congregation size of the surveyed churches, which is 86.3, to 80 (rounding down instead of up guards against overestimation, and in this case it is better to underestimate than to overestimate). The membership size of the fifty non-participating new congregations is therefore projected as 4000. All of this illustrates that church attendance figures in Glasgow may be higher than has been officially reported, and that new churches may be contributing to Christianity in many other ways that are not recognised.

Types of New Churches in Glasgow

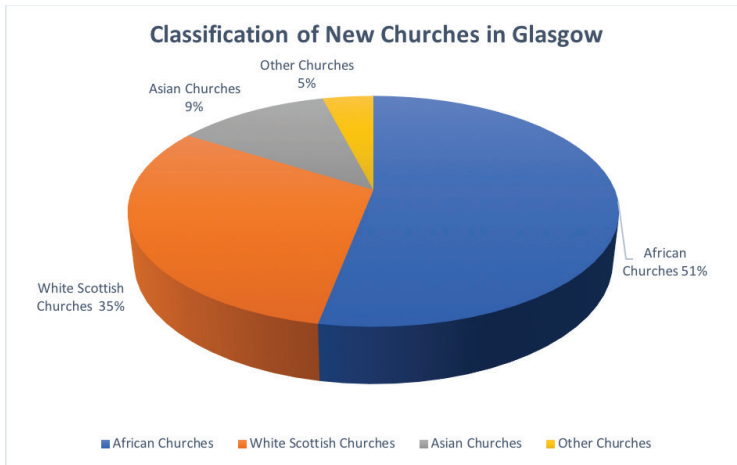
Upon studying all the demographic data gathered about new churches in Glasgow, a clear pattern began to emerge. The new churches in Glasgow all seemed to fall distinctively into three main ethnic groups. These were African, White Scottish and Asian. A fourth small category which I named “Other” contained a mixture of specific national churches.

In a bid to discover how ethnically diverse new churches were, the survey asked respondents: “*Approximately how many of your congregation fall into the following ethnic groups?*” The categories presented to them were White Scottish/English/Welsh/Irish, Other White, Mixed, Black African, Black Caribbean/Black Other, Chinese/Japanese/Korean, Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Other Asian, Other Non-White. These same categories were used in the 2016 Scottish church census.

Using data obtained from the surveys, participant observation, church visits, and reviews of information available on church websites and social media pages including pictures and videos, I was able to locate each of the 110 churches discovered into one of these categories. I defined African churches as those groups in which 80 percent or more of the congregation were African, White Scottish churches as those congregations where 80 percent or more of the membership were White Scottish or White-British, for example, English, Welsh or Irish, and Asian churches as churches with 80 percent or more of the congregation coming from Asian backgrounds. “Asian background” in this instance means, largely related to or coming from the Asian continent. This includes people from Pakistan, India, China, Korea, Japan, Iran, Syria and the Philippines.

Going by this definition, 51 percent of all the new churches discovered in Glasgow (56 out of 110) were African churches, 35 percent or 39 churches could be described as White Scottish, and 9 percent or 10 churches could be described as Asian churches. The final “Other” category was primarily made up of five churches which were exclusively Romanian (3) and Russian (2). They accounted for 5 percent of new churches in Glasgow.

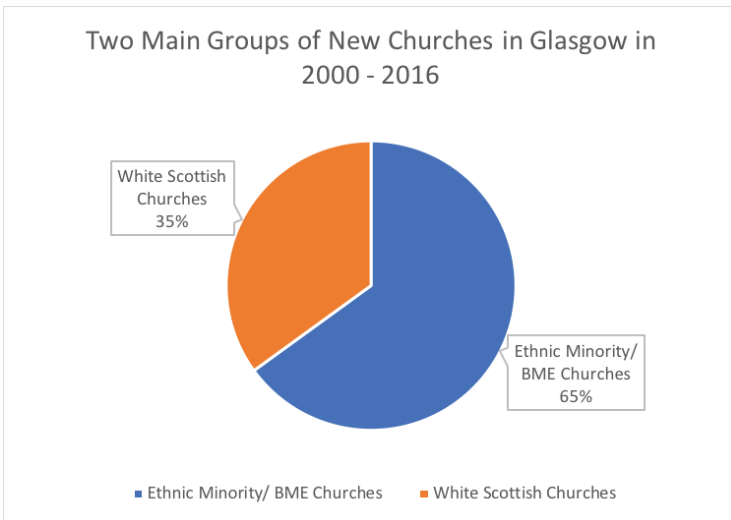
Figure 2: *Classification of New Churches in Glasgow*



Broadly speaking, a large proportion of the new churches founded in Glasgow between 2000–2016 were ethnic minority churches. The Oxford Dictionary defines ethnic minority as “a group within a community which has different national or cultural traditions from the main population.” This includes Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), and “Other White” communities. According to the UK Institute of Race Relations, BME is the terminology normally used in the UK to describe all people of non-white descent. The term “Other White,” on the other hand, is a classification of ethnicity in the United Kingdom, referring to persons who consider themselves “White” but are neither British nor Irish (Office of National Statistics Ethnicity Data, 2013: 9).

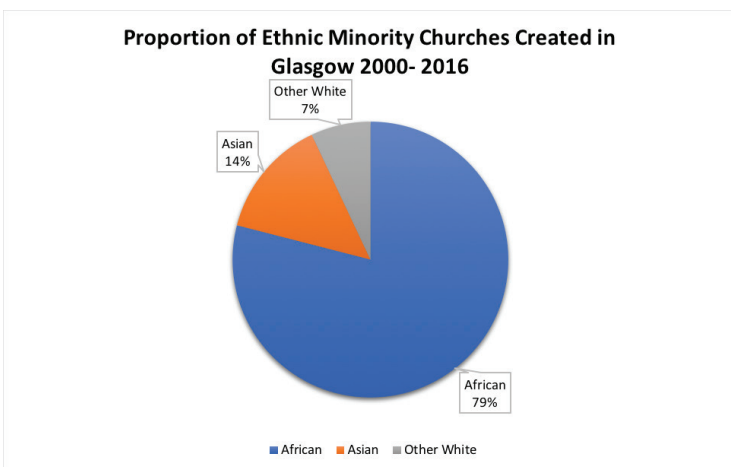
Statistics gathered in the current study show that 65 percent of the new churches discovered in Glasgow (a total of 71 churches) are ethnic minority churches. In these churches, at least 80 percent of the congregation were from BME backgrounds and the “Other White” category. The following pie chart illustrates the two broad types of new churches in Glasgow.

Figure 3: Broad Category of New Churches in Glasgow



Within the ethnic minority group of new churches in Glasgow, African churches make up 79 percent of the total, Asian churches make up 14 percent and Other White churches occupy 7 percent. African churches are therefore the fastest growing ethnic minority church in Glasgow.

Figure 4: Proportion of Ethnic Minority New Churches in Glasgow



Another interesting discovery about the ethnic minority churches in Glasgow is that they are all individually very homogenous. The various African churches in the city, for instance, are largely groups or denominations from specific African countries. It is therefore very easy to identify the Ghanaian churches, Nigerian churches, French-speaking Congolese churches, Zimbabwean churches, etc. On the other hand, the Asian churches are grouped along linguistic lines. Notably, whereas at least 95 percent of the African churches conduct their services in English, nearly all the Asian churches hold their meetings in a local language. For example, the three Asian churches I visited during my participant observation studies conducted their services in Tamil, Malayalam and Punjabi respectively. In two of these churches I was assigned a personal (English) interpreter during the church service.

As the data illustrates, the concept of new churches in Glasgow is a distinctively ethnic phenomenon, expressed in three main varieties in the city. New churches in Glasgow are either predominantly African, Asian or white Scottish. Truly multi-cultural churches are very rare in Glasgow and even among the groups which appear to be mixed, the proportion of people from different ethnicities is most likely to make up only about 10 to 15 percent of the entire group. Homogenous churches therefore appear to be flourishing in Glasgow. This manifestation has several implications for mission, ecumenical relations and social integration in Glasgow and Scotland as a whole.

The subject of the Homogeneous Unit Principle of church growth has triggered considerable debate among church practitioners and theologians about Christian missionary endeavours in contemporary society for decades. This classical notion promoted by Donald McGavran, the pioneer of Church Growth philosophy states that, “people like to be Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers” (McGavran, 1970: 198). Peter Wagner, one of his key supporters also believed that evangelistic efforts were more effective when new converts were assimilated into churches of their own culture rather than into neutral ones where there was no “cultural match” (Wagner, 1978). He argued that,

Culturally homogeneous congregations, when they are formed voluntarily and when they are open to all others who wish to become members, possess an intrinsic integrity as Christian community. Therefore, rather than being denounced, they should be celebrated. Rather than being perceived as the causes of racism and discrimination, they should be seen as one of the most viable institutions for healing such social ills. (Wagner, 1978: 12)

Even in a place as culturally diverse as the United States, a national congregation study revealed that about 90 percent of American congregations are made up of at least 90 percent of people of the same race (Emerson and Smith 2000). Although, recent commentators observe that the popularity of the Homogeneous Unit theory or “people group principle” is waning (Schnabel, 2008: 405–406), my study and others show that homogeneous groups such as Fresh Expressions and ethnic minority Christianity are currently thriving in Britain.

Kwiyani (2020) nevertheless maintains that multicultural churches are the future of worldwide Christianity, describing the increasing cultural diversity in contemporary British Christianity as “the great new fact of our era, and a new normal that is here to stay.” He urges church planters and practitioners to embrace and explore the concept of a multicultural kingdom of God.

Indeed, racial and social unity is a theological ideal that should be manifested in the Church depending on socio-cultural contexts. However, how to translate this model most effectively into the ordinary missionary and local church ministry practice of many contemporary churches remains elusive. Therefore, when faced with the reality of the global church, it can be tempting to accept homogeneous churches as an inescapable element of the evangelical landscape.

The Theological Background of New Churches in Glasgow

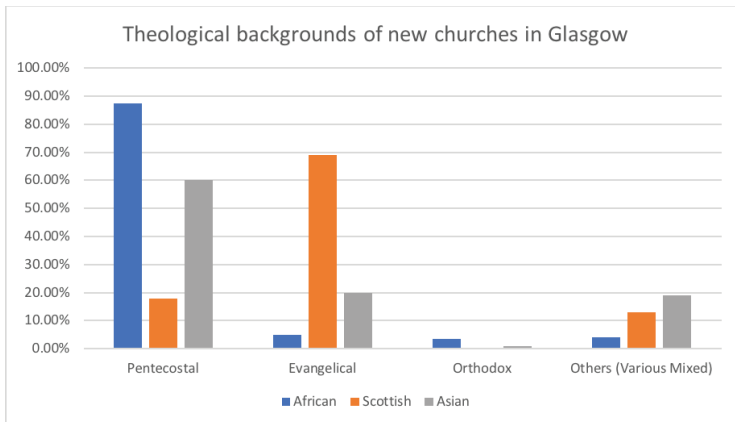
New churches in Glasgow predominantly describe themselves as Pentecostal. More than half of the new churches in Glasgow (56

percent) described themselves as Pentecostal when asked in the survey, “Which of the following terms best describes your congregation?” with the following choices given: Pentecostal, Evangelical, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland, Episcopal, Methodist, Orthodox and Other.

Those who describe themselves as Evangelical are the second largest group of new churches; 29 percent described themselves as such. Orthodox churches made up 5 percent of the new churches, while the Baptist Union accounted for 3 percent. The Free Church of Scotland Church had 2 percent of the total share of new churches, and both the Church of Scotland and the Reformed Presbyterians had 1 percent. None identified as Catholic, Episcopal or Methodist churches.

African churches were the most likely to describe themselves as Pentecostal. Almost 88 percent of the new African churches in Glasgow said they were Pentecostal and just 5 percent categorized themselves as Evangelical. In sharp contrast, white Scottish churches largely classified themselves as Evangelical (69 percent), and 18 percent as Pentecostal. On the hand, 60 percent of the Asian churches also described themselves as Pentecostal.

Figure 5: *Theological Background of New Churches in Glasgow*



These findings are consistent with results from similar studies in other parts of Britain where Pentecostal churches, particularly

African Pentecostals, are known to be spreading rapidly across the country (Goodhew and Symmons, 2015). Similarly, the 2016 Scottish church census related that the number of Pentecostals in Scotland has tripled since 1984, growing at a rate of 3.8 percent per annum. It also confirms that the most popular theological tradition for ethnic minority groups is the Pentecostal category. A total of 32 percent of them attended Pentecostal churches across Scotland (Brierley 2017). The following table shows how ethnic minority groups are distributed across some major denominations in Scotland.²

Table 1: Ethnic Minorities in Scottish Churches 2017

Ethnicity	Church of Scotland %	Episcopal Church %	Roman Catholic %	Pentecostal %	Baptist %
<i>White</i>	98.1	96.2	88.4	68.1	92.7
<i>Black</i>	0.6	1.8	2.8	20.9	3.3
<i>Mixed</i>	0.7	0.5	1.2	3.8	0.8
<i>I/P/B</i>	0.2	0.6	3.4	4.0	0.6
<i>C/K/J</i>	0.2	0.7	0.6	1.3	1.1
<i>Other Asian</i>	0.1	0.2	2.0	1.0	1.1
<i>Other Non-White</i>	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.4

Key: I/P/B (Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi); C/K/J (Chinese/Korean/Japanese).

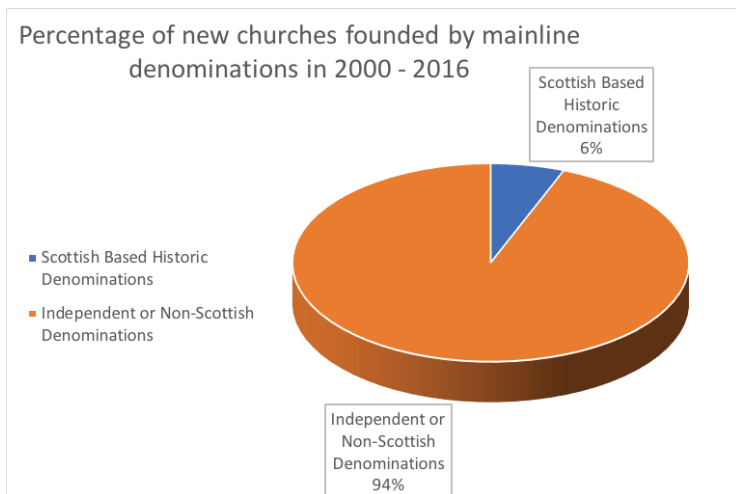
Church Planting Among Historic Denominations in Glasgow

Only seven or 6 percent of the 110 new churches founded in Glasgow in 2000–2016 were founded by four of the historic denominations in Scotland. These were the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church and

2. Adapted from Table 4.7. in Brierley (2017).

the Baptist Union of Scotland. The Church of Scotland established one new congregation in the Whiteinch area of Glasgow in 2000. This remained its sole new church plant in Glasgow in sixteen years.³ The Free Church of Scotland, on the other hand, launched one new church in Govan in 2013, and started a new Romanian congregation or “Roma Church” which is attached to its existing parish in Govanhill. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland also started one new congregation in the West End of Glasgow in 2011, and the Baptists planted three, one of which was the restart of a previously closed congregation in Dennistoun.

Figure 6: Church Planting in Historic Churches in Glasgow 2000 - 2016



Evidently, the mainline or established Scottish Christian denominations started very few new churches in the period under review. Consequently, 94 percent of the new churches presently in Glasgow have no association with the historic denominations. This finding further highlights emerging changes in the Christian religious landscape in Glasgow, Scotland and Britain as a whole.

3. The Church of Scotland has established several “Fresh Expressions” groups operating across Glasgow; however, none of them met the strict standard for inclusion in this study as a new church.

CONCLUSION

This inquiry set out to explore the phenomenon of new churches in Glasgow in the years 2000–2016, in a bid to contribute to the fast-developing discourse on this subject in Britain. By pioneering a study of new church trends in the context of Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland, it investigated the scale, characteristics and impact of new churches which have appeared in the area during the period. This research adds to the growing body of empirical evidence which indicates that, while many churches across the country become empty and close every year, numerous new congregations are also being founded and are flourishing across various regions of modern-day Britain. However, the incidence and contribution of these new groups are less documented or recognised in the national statistic because the old methods of enquiry alone are no longer sufficient to present a true and balanced picture of the current condition and rapidly transforming landscape of the church in Britain. Therefore, localised and grass root research such as this study conducted, is necessary to capture the true nature of growth and or decline in specific regions.

The outcomes of this investigation have implications in three main areas of debate: first, homogeneity and the future of Christian mission in Glasgow and Scotland as a whole, second, ecumenism and inclusive church partnerships, and thirdly, immigration and the wider social context. The proliferation and impact of new churches represent a seismic shift in the Christian landscape of the city of Glasgow and Scotland as a whole. Old forms of the church are giving way to new expressions, and a new diversity in the demography and theological character of the city. Ethnic minorities and immigrant communities make diverse economic, social and spiritual contributions to their host communities. Their agency and contribution to religious diversity, especially to British Christianity, should particularly be welcomed, acknowledged and celebrated. Notwithstanding, new churches have markedly altered the landscape of the church in Glasgow in the last sixteen years.

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