

Congregations in an Urban Ecology

A Study of 14 Churches in Melbourne's Central Business District

By
Vibeke Sundsbø



Masters Thesis
Department of Classics, Russian, and the History of Religions (IKRR)
Faculty of Arts
University of Bergen
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
1. <u>Introduction</u>	4
1.1 Urban studies and congregational studies	5
1.2 Theme and problem outline	10
1.3 Methodology and material	13
1.4 Outline of thesis	19
2. <u>The historical, urban, and religious context of the churches</u>	20
2.1 Melbourne's establishment	20
2.2 Immigration	21
2.3 The development of Melbourne	22
2.4 Christianity in Australia	26
2.5 Melbourne's religious map and history	29
2.6 The churches in my sample	30
3. <u>Composition and structure</u>	43
3.1 Age	43
3.2 Ethnicity	45
3.3 SES	50
3.4 Location of congregants	54
3.5 Attendance and stability	58
3.6 Leadership structure and staff	66
3.7 Perception of space and the meaning of church buildings	69
4. <u>Church activities and outreach</u>	73
4.1 Worship services	73
4.2 Congregational groups	78
4.3 Outreach	84
4.4 Availability and approachability	92
4.5 Renting out property	96
4.6 Ecumenical efforts	100
5. <u>Comparative and theoretical perspectives</u>	104
5.1 Three main responses to a changing urban ecology	104
5.2 Comparative perspectives	110
5.3 Religious economies and the CBD churches	119
5.4 Prospect for a future study	124
Appendix 1: CBD Map	125
Appendix 2: Background information	126
Appendix 3: Composition and structure of the churches	127
Appendix 4: Church activities and outreach	128
Appendix 5: Church contact information	129
Appendix 6: Abbreviations	130
List of references	131

1. Introduction

In this introductory chapter I will firstly give an outline of the theoretical framework and relevant literature. Subsequently, the questions that will be addressed in this thesis will be outlined, and research methodology discussed. Finally, an outline of the thesis in its entirety will be provided.

The theme for this thesis is the various ways the churches¹ in the Central Business District (CBD) of Melbourne, Australia, have adapted and changed as a result of urban transformation processes.

The thesis is situated within religious studies, urban studies, and congregational studies, joining three academic fields which have rarely crossed paths until now. Literature and research on urban studies in relation to religion has been scarce. The same can be said for the discipline of religious studies and its focus on the urban processes, and the need for a cross fertilisation of these fields of inquiry has become evident. The lack of literature, as well as the fact that this topic has not been explored more extensively earlier, makes this study relevant and important for these academic fields.

Unlike other studies which have focussed on congregational studies and the urban environment combined; this study is conducted in Australia, not in the US, thus making it unique. Australia is a country that in my opinion is overlooked in terms of religious studies not related to its indigenous populations. However, although this would give me an excellent starting point for a comparative study, examining the differences between the America and Australia, this is not my main objective. I will focus on Australia and Melbourne, while I draw on American theorists who have studied the US, as these are mainly the ones available. However, I will not compare and contrast until the concluding chapter.

¹ Throughout this thesis I will make full use of the terms *church* and *congregation*. It can therefore be helpful to spell out my understanding of these terms, and the way they will be used throughout the thesis. *Church* refers to the physical building, the religious organisation, both on a micro level (the individual *church*) and on a macro level (world-wide denominations), as well as the group of people who are members. *Congregation*, on the other hand, refers to the group of people who regularly attend the same church, or the same worship service, these people are in some cases included in the decision making process at the church (see 3.6 Leadership structure and staff). Both *church* and *congregation* can therefore mean both the body of people gathering, and the organisation. These terms can thus to some extent be used interchangeably. However, there are still different meanings depending on the context. For instance, *congregation* can both be used to describe the entire number of people attending the church during one week, and it can be the ones that attend the different services. This leads me to suggest that when I am talking about the organisation, such as decisions made by the staff, etc., I will use the term *church*. Concerning instances where the people attending are involved, I will use the term *congregation*. In other instances the term *church* and *congregation* will to some extent be used interchangeably.

Stepping into this academic no man's (sic) land, I hope to be able to make an impact on the joining of these areas of study. My purpose has been to develop further theory within a discipline which has experienced increased interest recently, but is still lacking in studies.

1.1 Urban Studies and Congregational Studies

I will here give a presentation of the two areas of study in order to place the thesis within a theoretical framework. I will first give an outline of urban studies and its context in relation to this thesis, before I sketch out the area of congregational studies. These are both areas of study without a specific methodology, and in most cases are interdisciplinary. The areas have not been widely explored in combination; however, there are a number of researchers who are working in these areas. These have produced texts and studies to gain inspiration from, and compare to. I will first give an outline of the fields respectively, before I move on to presenting a number of studies where they have been combined.

There has been an increased interest in religious studies (religionsvitenskap) in relation to spatiality (for instance Knott, 2005), and religious rituals and space (e.g. Smith, 1987). However, there has not been much focus on religion in relation to urbanity. The most common connection made here is between modernisation and urbanisation. This is also emphasised by Kisala in the survey article 'Urbanization and Religion' (2004) where he attempts to describe urbanisation's impact on religious institutions. However, his focus is on the relationship between the demise of traditional Christianity and urbanisation, as well as the growth of new religious movements. He gives the impression that mainline and traditional congregations are in decline, but in my opinion this is an old-fashioned view of the effects of urbanisation. He, as many other scholars², has seen secularisation as an inevitable effect of urbanisation, as portrayed in the classical study *The Secular City* by Harvey Cox (1968) where he makes the claim that the emergence of cities will lead to the demise of traditional religion.³ I hope, however, that this thesis will take part in dismissing this belief.

1.1.a Urban studies

Urban studies are part of an area within the social sciences (and beyond) covering topics such as geography, ecology, architecture, health, etc (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005). Strangely,

² Further reading on secularisation: Bainbridge and Stark, [1987] 1996; Berger, 1967; Finke and Stark, 1988; Finke and Stark, 2005; Furseth and Repstad, 2003; Swatos and Olson, 2000; Wilson 1966.

³ I will not outline the extensive secularisation debate in this short introductory chapter, but have included this section in order to clarify that the combination of religion and urban studies' main concern has been on the relationship between secularisation and urbanisation.

religion is one of the topics urban theorists have devoted little attention to. The discipline is rooted in the early 20th century *Chicago School* at the University of Chicago where a number of sociologists (R. Park and E. Burgess, among others) started studying the city. They called their approach Human Ecology⁴ (Ibid).

Probably one of the most famous works emerging from this discipline is Louis Wirth's 'Urbanism as a Way of Life' (1938), which formulates a definition of the city still popular today: 'For sociological purposes the city may be defined as a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals.' (Wirth, 1938, p. 8) According to him, the city consists of three key variables: size, density, and heterogeneity. The larger impact any one of these variables has, the more urban the city. This essay and his theories in general, were groundbreaking, but have met a great deal of criticism in recent times.⁵ In my understanding, Wirth's definition can successfully be applied to Melbourne. Melbourne is the 2nd largest city in Australia and becoming more and more densely populated as suburbs close to the inner city are growing in population and housing. Melbourne is also very heterogeneous in terms of demographics of population, attracting people from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and America (and First Nation Peoples). I elaborate on the urban issues directly related to the topic of my thesis in the following chapter.

The lack of relevant literature combining urban studies and religious studies was one of my main inspirations for this thesis. Introductory textbooks on urban studies rarely mention, let alone feature a chapter on, the urban environment's impact on religion. The book *Key Concepts in Urban Studies* (Budd and Gottdiener, 2005), for instance, which covers a wide range of issues related to urban studies, does not include a single section on religion. The same can be found in introductory books on sociology of religion, as well, the topic of urbanisation is overlooked. There are few, if any, references to urbanisation and urbanity (except for when mentioned in the same breath as modernisation and secularisation).

So how can urban studies and religion be connected? In the few urban sociology textbooks where these topics are discussed in relation to one another (Scherer, 1982; Gold, 2002), the issues discussed are the connection between urbanisation and secularisation, and

⁴ Ecology originally pertained to scientists' research on how animals and plants adapt and change in accordance with their natural space. In the same manner urban scientists wanted to discover how humans adjust to their environment, in particular relating to urban community. 'More specifically, the study of territorially based spatial systems created by human endeavour, of which the urban community is the prime example, has come to be known as *urban ecology*.' (Gold, 2002, p. 15)

⁵ Other important theorists on urban studies are Mike Davis, Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, Saskia Sassen, and Edward Soja. Concerning urban planning history, influences from the work of Fredrick L. Olmstead and Ebenezer Howard can still be found in cities today. All of these, and many more, are featured in the compilation *The City Reader* (LeGates and Stout, 2003).

religious organisations as religious economies⁶. Studies and publications have mainly been directed towards ethnic religious groups existing in the city, ‘religio-ethnic subcommunities’ (Kim, Lazerwitz, and Rabinowitz, 1992) and the urban poor in relation to race. ‘Churches were a haven for people of one nationality in an ethnically differentiated society, providing places where religious beliefs and cultural traditions could be easily shared.’ (Gold, 2002, p. 223) This becomes evident in Orsi (1999) and Livezey (2000-c). These anthologies include essays on ethnicity and race in an urban ecology. Ammerman points out in the introduction of *Congregation and Community* (2001, p. 4) that earlier studies on the topic of congregations have nearly entirely focussed on race and ethnicity.

A type of literature combining urban studies and Christianity is urban ministry books. These are resources for urban Christian missions and have a theological approach to urban theory. Examples of these are *Urban Christianity and Global Order: Theological Resources for an Urban Future* (Davey, 2001) and *Envisioning the New City: A Reader on Urban Ministry* (Meyers, 1992). I have not made use of these volumes, although they are plentiful. The main reason for this is that these books’ main focus is to be handbooks for ministers, explaining how they can enact an urban ministry in light of the challenges in the city. These books mainly focus on the negative aspects of an urban environment, such as poverty, substance abuse, violence, prostitution, and how churches can deal with these challenges.

1.1.b Congregational studies

Congregational studies are an interdisciplinary field of research focussing on sociology of religion and religious studies, but also incorporating theology, psychology and history (Livezey, 2000-b, p. 17). Studies of congregations differ greatly in methods, and the entire social sciences toolbox of methods have been utilised, depending on the size and objective of the study. The aim of this field is to gain a better understanding of congregations, how they operate, and what influences them. This is a topic which has been interesting for both people who are members of congregations, as well as scholars. There are two main types of congregational studies.

Handbooks give outlines of how to design a study to uncover the processes and patterns of a specific faith community. Important resources are books such as *Handbook for Congregational Studies* (Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 1986), followed by *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Ammerman, et al, 1998). These guides to congregational

⁶ Further reading on the subjects of secularisation and religious economies (in relation to urbanisation): Finke and Stark, 1988; 2000; 2005.

studies give a detailed outline of important issues and method in relation to conducting a study of a religious organisation. A member, the clergy, or someone hired to do so, can perform a study as outlined in the handbook. The topics here include the identity of the congregation, focussing on denomination, history, rituals and demographics, as well as the context of the church, such as the surrounding ecology and social interaction with this environment. The next step deals with processes, both within the group, and in the community at large (suburb, city, country, or even worldwide). The aim of these books is to present a comprehensive model of studying a congregation from the congregation's point of view, with the premise that this will be done in a different way than a sociologist, or even a theologian would. This process has become especially popular for uncovering problems and functional changes (Ammerman et al, 1998; Carroll et al, 1986; Hartford Seminary: Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2006).

The second approach, which is the one utilised in this thesis, are studies conducted by an outsider. These are studies on the life and activities of one or more congregations. 'The field has (...) been shaped by studies of the ecologies of congregations-in-community and of congregational adaptation to neighbourhood changes (...)' (Livezey, 2000-b, p. 17) This study can be done on one congregation, a small area or city, within a denomination, or even nation-wide. There is not one specific theoretical framework to be applied here, nor is there one specific method. Depending on the size of the study, and the nature of the data being gathered, the majority of methods from the social sciences can be employed, from extensive case studies, to nation wide surveys.

In the late 1990s, sociologist Mark Chaves conducted a groundbreaking nation-wide study of American congregations, the National Congregations Survey (NCS). Employing a wide-ranging method, the nation-wide survey, he attempted to chart the activities and structures of American churches, such as social services, arts and culture, politics and worship.⁷ This resulted in the book *Congregations in America* (2004), covering a wide array of topics on American congregations.⁸

A large-scale nation-wide survey can provide interesting statistical information, but just as important are in-depth case studies. In *Congregation and Community* (Ammerman,

⁷ This study was one of my main influences when designing my interview guide and Dr. Chaves was generous enough to provide me with a copy of his questionnaire upon my request.

⁸ This study, as the majority of my sources, is American. I have, however, also been able to draw on the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) conducted in Australia every five years. The most recent study comprised 7000 churches and 435 000 attendees (NCLS, n.d.). I have, however, not placed much emphasis on the NCLS as publications relevant to my study was scarce. In addition, the NCLS compiles profiles on each church that participates in the study, but these are only available to the church in question.

2001) the author and her colleagues look at twenty congregations within nine communities across America, and investigate how these congregations respond to gays and lesbian communities, new immigrant groups, economic distress, and the impact of recent suburbanisation (Ibid, p 7-29). She draws on the experiences and material of her colleagues, presenting a range of case studies.

1.1.c Various studies

In order to give an outline of the field of study combining religious studies and urban studies, will briefly introduce two anthologies which deal with urbanity and religion: *Gods of the City* (Orsi, 1999) and *Public Religion and Urban Transformation: Faith in the City* (Livezey, 2000-c). The essays featured in these books focus on religious individuals and their behaviour, as well as religious organisations in an urban ecology. I will also introduce a study by Form and Dubrow which has been instrumental in developing the topic of my study.

Gods of the City contains an assortment of essays exploring the relationship between people, faith, and institutions within a framework of urban ecology. How have these developed in relation to the spatial and social features of the cities across the US? These essays all include an aspect of ethnicity, for instance, how new US immigrants adapt religious practices to the urban ecology, or how people in diaspora apply their sacred landscapes onto the cityscape.

The second anthology, *Public Religion and Urban Transformation*, has a similar theme, but focuses on one city, namely Chicago⁹. This includes a number of essays relating to religion and place. Also here a number of the articles relate to ethnicity. This is not surprising, since urban areas have had a larger heterogeneity than rural areas. ‘American cities have always been characterized by a wide range of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity as waves and waves of immigrants have poured into them in search of new opportunities.’ (Gold, 2002, p. 279) The reason for different ethnic groups being popular research objects in this field of study is hardly ever made explicit, but I suspect *visibility* to be part of the reason. They often live in segregated areas, or are visible in that they have other languages, skin colours, or belong to a different type of religious institution. Few of the essays in these anthologies centre on mainline Protestant congregations and their adaptations to the urban (unless they have either made attempts to attract a new ethnicity, or have been invaded by an ethnic group.)

⁹ This study, *Religion in Urban America*, was performed over a period of three years between 1992 and 1995. Each contributor to the book has conducted the research on which his or her essay is based (Livezey, 2000, p. ix).

A paper, which was an important inspiration when designing my study, was ‘Downtown Metropolitan Churches: Ecological Situation and Response’ by Form and Dubrow (2005), which focuses on a number of downtown congregations and how they respond to changes in their ecology. Both sociological and ecological theoretical frameworks are applied to explain these changes as interaction between the urban ecology and the religious district.

All the aforementioned studies and literature is produced and published in the US. The US and Australia carry similar traits concerning religion, history, and system of government. However, does this mean that I can freely apply findings from American studies onto Australian churches and congregations? To what degree can I compare my findings on Australian churches and ecology, to those of the US, both in relation to theoretical frameworks and empirical data? One of my concluding points will be to compare these to my findings.

1.2 Theme and problem outline

This thesis is a contribution to the fields of urban and congregational studies combined. When I started planning this study, I became aware of changes happening in the Central Business District of Melbourne.¹⁰ The CBD is the core of Melbourne in terms of transportation, finance, business, and retail. It is also a hub of entertainment and culture, with features such as theatres, cinemas, museums, pubs, and ecclesiastical organisations. This area, undoubtedly the urban heart of Melbourne, encompasses a number of well-established congregations, many of which can be traced back to the earliest settlement. These are, without a doubt, churches that have been able to adapt to the developments in their urban ecology, otherwise they would not exist today. My primary interest then became how these churches respond to changes in their environment. This is an area which has had nearly no residents during the last 100 years, yet these churches have survived. During the last years, however, the Central Business District has experienced an increase in residents, and I wished to examine how the churches in the Central Business District (CBD) have responded to changes in the urban ecology, whether or not they have adapted to them, and if so, in which ways.

¹⁰ A further description of the CBD and its development will be provided in 2.3 *The development of Melbourne*.

1.2.a Urban transformation – what and why?

Urban transformation processes are patterns of transformation occurring in urban environments, such as *white flight*¹¹, *urban sprawl*, or *gentrification*¹² (Livezey, 2000-b). These are processes that take place in cities, and they can be owed to a wide range of factors. *Gentrification*, for instance, which is widespread in Melbourne today, has been brought on by local, as well as global causes. This type of urban re-development has been brought on by people's wish to live close to the city centre, along with the availability of affordable real estate in declining inner city areas (Gold, 2002; Gottdiener and Budd, 2005). In Melbourne, gentrification has been brought on by the global process of moving industry to overseas, freeing up areas previously occupied by factories and wharfs. People are less willing to endure long commutes, and are more eager to live close to the city centre, even if this results in a higher cost of living (Armstrong and Johnston, 2006). In Melbourne, this has resulted in the declining inner suburbs being redeveloped into residences for more affluent citizens. This results in the inner city churches having a new population to draw congregants from. These people might have different expectations and demands for their church, which again might instigate change within these communities of faith, should the churches wish to attract them.

Churches and congregations exist within, and in relation, to an environment, in this case the CBD. This environment is the local neighbourhood with the aforementioned facilities such as pubs and museums. It also includes the people who spend time in the area, the city populations¹³: workers, residents, shoppers, disadvantaged, visitors, and religious commuters. The *urban ecology* is the social context of these churches, their setting, so to speak. 'Included in the context are people – their culture and characteristics, institutions and social groups, and the various social, political, and economic forces operative in the setting.' (Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 1986, p. 12) All churches have a social context; in the case of these churches it is an *urban ecology*, influenced by urban processes. Ecology can also be more wide scoped and reach across national borders and continents, such as worldwide denominations (Eiesland and Warner, 1998; Eiesland, 2000). This study, however, will focus on the *local ecology*.

¹¹ The term *white flight* has been used to describe the process where increased racial diversity within a neighbourhood has led to the white people who originally lived there *fleeing* to outer suburbs, they are willing to spend more money to live in racially homogeneous communities. (Livezey, 2000-a, p. 136). W

¹² The processes *urban sprawl* and *gentrification* are further explained in the following chapter.

¹³ The term *city populations* is derived from a paper by Form and Dubrow (2005) where they discuss the responses downtown churches have made to *downtown* populations. They list these populations as employees, shoppers, residents, and transients. A further discussion of this paper, as well as a comparison to my study, can be found in 5.2 *Comparative perspectives*. I did, however, find it necessary to add some additional groups of people who spend time in the CBD, such as the *disadvantaged* (please refer to 3.3 *SES* for explanation and use of this term), *visitors* (mainly tourists), as well as *religious commuters* (people who commute to the CBD from the suburbs to attend church activities).

When changes take place at one level in society, for instance concerning the demographics of the CBD, this can influence other levels, such as organisations (Eiesland and Warner, 1998). Churches interact with their neighbourhoods and social settings. In the case of Melbourne, many changes within these religious organisations can be attributed to changes in residential patterns. The churches have to adapt to the urban ecology in order to stay viable and are therefore implementing changes, such as a more diverse activity schedule, or changes concerning their worship services.

There were discrepancies between my initial assumptions, and what was actually happening. Before leaving for Melbourne I was under the impression that people had been living close to the city centre until recently, and that the challenges the churches were facing were that people now were moving further away. However, this turned out to be opposite. In Australia, particularly in Melbourne, the suburban sprawl started almost immediately after the first settlement. This meant that the oldest churches have been struggling with people living far away for nearly their entire existence. The main new development was gentrification, which is bringing people back into the city centre, presenting the churches with new challenges. How can they make their congregations attractive to city dwellers, and how can they reach them? If the churches have implemented changes in their structure and activities, what changes are these? Are they, for instance, attempting to attract one specific group of people? The CBD and the surrounding area have had an increase in population during the last years.¹⁴ Has this led to the churches experiencing an increased community responsibility, and are there differences from one denomination to the next? All of these are questions that I will examine in the analysis chapters.

Changes in Melbournians' residential patterns are one of the most significant urban transformations influencing these churches. Earlier, the churches mainly found their membership mass in the outer suburbs, whereas they now are directing their attention towards their immediate neighbourhood. However, it is important to point out that even though more people are moving to the inner city, the number of people moving to the city pale in comparison to the number of people moving to, and living in, the outer suburbs. I will go further into detail concerning this process in the following chapter.

Through this thesis, I will demonstrate how the CBD churches respond to the changes in the urban ecology, through changes and adaptations, if at all. I will also compare and contrast the churches within the same social context and ecology. My hypothesis is that these

¹⁴ The CBD alone have had an increase from 7700 residents in 2001, to 11 598 in 2006 (City of Melbourne, 2006).

congregations will intentionally adapt to its urban ecology's transformations in order to stay viable, whereas the ones not adapting will not thrive.

1.3 Methodology and material

1.3.a The sample

Before leaving for Australia, I researched directories and maps from the CBD, acquiring knowledge on a number of churches located in the CBD of Melbourne. I decided that these would comprise my sample. Melbourne has a clearly defined CBD grid, and initially I wanted to focus on the churches within this area. However, when I arrived I realised that some of these were not churches, but rather prayer groups, or mission to seafarers. In addition, one of the churches placed on the map did not exist. This made the number of churches within the grid which fit my criteria (nine churches in all) lower than I had originally assumed.

I wished only to include well-established churches that had been located in this area over an extended period of time. I therefore widened my focus area to include churches immediately surrounding the CBD (See Appendix 1: CBD map). The additional churches I included were all members of the ecumenical organisation Melbourne City Churches in Action (MCCIA). Being members of this organisation they would also identify themselves as *city churches*. I decided to make membership in this organisation the criteria for being included in the sample. In the end my sample comprised 14 churches (A detailed list of the churches can be found in Appendix 2-5).¹⁵

1.3.b The research process

I travelled to Melbourne in February 2006, and returned in June the same year. When I first arrived in Melbourne I made initial contact with the nine churches within the CBD grid during the first three weeks. I personally visited the church offices and handed out a letter with information about the project and my contact details. When there was no office to be found I made contact via e-mail or phone. After a while, I decided that I needed a wider sample and therefore made contact with the additional seven churches from the MCCIA. I managed to conduct interviews with 14 of the churches before leaving Melbourne. There were two churches where I had appointments, but my informants did not keep them. I was therefore

¹⁵ This means that when I address these 14 churches as *CBD churches* throughout the thesis, some of them are in fact not located within the CBD grid. However, they identify themselves as *CBD churches* through membership in the MCCIA, and through their close proximity to the CBD.

unable to gather enough relevant information to be able to include them in my thesis.¹⁶ In addition I had visited all of the church buildings, in many instances with a church representative. I also collected a variety of brochures, pamphlets and newsletters and made photocopies of books and articles about the congregations, and Melbourne's history. My research also included observation; among other things I participated in the *Way of the Cross* procession on Good Friday. It was unfortunately not possible for me to conduct extensive observation at each church as I was also taking classes at the university during my stay.

My data collection was done through one-hour interviews with one representative from each church. Paraphrasing Eiesland and Warner (1998, p. 43): the real experts on a congregation are long-time members and the clergy; they have first-hand knowledge on the context, recent developments and the congregants. Other studies, similar in both topic and size, had likewise applied this method of data collection¹⁷.

My interview material, 14 interviews in total, range in length from 27 to 109 minutes, 45 minutes being the average. They were conducted either in the church or an adjacent church building, such as an office or meeting room and were taped with a digital voice recorder.

The interviews were conducted with an open-ended interview guide where nine different topics¹⁸ were covered. As the questions were open-ended, this provided me with, in most cases, lengthy information on each topic.

With the exception of one, all my respondents were male. Ten were ministers¹⁹, the rest of them were elders or volunteers. I assume they were between 40 and 75 years old. Language did not appear to be a problem, although there were instances where I used terms and expressions the respondent understood in a different way than my intended meaning, but these misunderstandings were cleared up and led to improved and more extensive material. These instances will be discussed in the text.

¹⁶ These were St Patrick's Cathedral and the Salvation Army.

¹⁷ For instance Form and Dubrow (2005).

¹⁸ The topics covered were basic information about the church (history, denominational affiliation, leadership structure, as well as the demographics of the congregants, etc.), staff/volunteers, opening hours, worship, location of congregants, congregational groups, non-congregational groups, outreach/charity, and recruitment. I have chosen not to include my interview guide in this thesis as there exist no single set of questions which were used in all of the interviews.

¹⁹ The use of the title *minister* in this thesis is intended to cover the wide array of names and terms used as title for the clergy. Minister refers to a professional who is employed at the church. Alternative titles include reverend, pastor, vicar, canon, father, dean and precentor (Soanes, 2002).

1.3.c Data collection and challenges

There are both pros and cons concerning this type of data collection. As I wanted all my interviews to contain the same information within each category, I took great care in ensuring that all the questions were answered before finishing each interview. However, where new and important information surfaced, I found it necessary to enquire about this as well in the following interviews, even though I was not able to go back to previous respondents in order to fill the gaps. One example of this was the degree to which churches allowed people who were not members to get married, or baptise their children in the church. This was a topic that surfaced in my third interview, which I found important enough to include in the remaining ones. This can be seen as both a pro and a con of my method. On one side, the gathered data will not be the same for each respondent. However, at the same time was able to widen my scope during the research process, leading to more extensive material. There were few new categories that emerged during interviews, but rather new aspects of previously covered topics. The interviews were at times far between and there were few opportunities to interview someone a second time due to the respondents' busy schedules.

Another challenge with this type of interview situation is that the interviewer can influence the responses of the interviewee (Grønmo, 2004). I take this to be a given. The researcher does not only compose the questions, but also the order in which they are asked. She also influences the way the question is asked, such as syntax, and tone of voice. This is a risk when conducting this type of interviews. However, this is not a one-way process and it is also possible that the behaviour and answers of the respondents influences the interviewer. The majority of the questions I asked were mainly based on facts and fairly recent events. There were few instances where I asked for personal opinions. Due to the nature of my questions I will make the claim that I have not been able to influence the answers from my respondents to such an extent that it can be perceived as problematic in relation to the research ethics. However, I can perceive it to be a problem if my enquiries obstructed the opportunity of the respondents to express themselves on issues on the *fringe* of my questions. In order to prevent this I made sure to ask whether or not they had anything to add at the end of each interview.

Whether or not my respondents told me the truth when answering my questions is another issue that needs to be addressed. My respondents' role were to represent the church, and it is therefore possible that they have, consciously or unconsciously, made attempts to portray the church in a particular way. Although the credibility of my respondents can be questioned, I have chosen not to place much emphasis on this, as my respondents were either

employed at the church, or recommended to me by someone who was. I have to trust that these persons will represent the church in a truthful manner.

1.3.d My research process and reflexivity

This last paragraph was not intended to clear myself of any responsibility. On the contrary, I will portray a reflexive attitude towards my position as a researcher in the text. My main emphasis will be on the interview material, but there are also other types of material. I lived in Melbourne for five months while I was conducting the research. During this period I also attended Monash University²⁰ and lived in a *share house* in the eastern suburbs with three other students. Experiences such as taking the train, attending Melbourne Comedy Festival, reading the paper, or travelling to Sydney over the weekend were instrumental in shaping my understanding of Australian society. The interviews and gathered material alone does not complete the picture of Melbourne/the CBD as presented in this thesis. I will therefore make full use of these experiences and myself in the text. As I am the one interpreting the data, I also need to be visible in the text.

1.3.e Analysis

After collecting all the material I started to transcribe the interviews and analyse the data. Before I could start my analysis I had to settle on a methodological approach. I chose a mode of analysis influenced by Grounded Theory (GT) when scrutinizing and categorising the transcripts (Strauss, 1987).

GT is a method for building theories grounded in empirical material. I have based my analysis on the later tradition of Strauss as set forth by the book *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientist* (1987). GT focuses on writing memos all through the research process. These memos help develop understanding grounded in the material; this again results in more memos. 'Strauss re-recommends writing memos during the whole research process, which will contribute to the process of building a theory.' (Flick, 2006, p. 287) I started writing memos while I was analysing the transcribed interviews. When I felt confident in my understanding of these, I started an analysis based mainly on coding the information into categories and sub-categories into spreadsheets. Through the examination of this data the similarities, differences, and general tendencies of change became apparent. These will be discussed in the two analysis chapters (chapter three and four).

²⁰ While at Monash I took courses in Australian politics, Australian Aborigines and identity, and a unit on Australia in general.

1.3.f Use of respondents' terms and expressions

In modern day religious studies researchers are expected to be aware of the problems in connection to the understanding and use of terms. When conducting research and writing a text (in my case) based on other people's answers and statements it is important to be aware of how one interprets and uses their expressions. Words can be multi-layered and have several meanings. Most likely, my understanding of a common word, such as *environment*, might not coincide with my respondent's.

As I analysed the interview data I made extensive use of coding to construct categories and subcategories. In the coding process, important terms are collected and given meaning in relation to categories that I constructed. One of my challenges here was the difference between *sociologically constructed codes* and *in-vivo codes*, a distinction based on Strauss (1987). In-vivo codes are 'taken from or derived directly from the language of the substantive field: essentially the terms used by the actors in that field themselves.' (Strauss, 1987, p. 33) An example of this is when my respondents have used their own terms and I have incorporated them into the codes and categories. They have not necessarily employed technical terms, but rather introduced common words or phrases, which in many cases happen to be used in the sociology of religion²¹. One example here is the issue of socio-economic status discussed in chapter three (see 3.2).

The sociological constructed codes are formulated by the researcher and constructed around her understanding of the in-vivo codes. They are 'based on a combination of the researcher's scholarly knowledge and knowledge on the substantive field under study.' (Strauss, 1987, p. 34) In other words, I have constructed these categories based on the data I have collected as well as on my knowledge concerning urban studies, history of religion, Melbourne and Australia. This process leads to sociological codes. For instance, in the interviews I asked a question where one term was used, whereas the majority of my respondents used another term when answering it. I decided to use their in-vivo term throughout the discussion, but provide my own understanding of it. In this case I used their in-vivo term as a sociological term in my own understanding.

The categories have all been developed from my interview material. One problem is that as I am the one who decided what issues should be covered and developed the questions

²¹ An example that can be used here is the use of the terms *sect* and *cult*. When used in common language these terms often have negative connotations. When used as sociological analytical terms they are used to describe a type of religious body with certain characteristics. The sociological use does not carry any negative connotations (Furseth and Repstad, 2003, p. 163).

for the interview guide; I am the one who brought many of the terms into the material. While analysing I attempted to disregard the categories in my interview guide and aimed at developing new ones. Not surprisingly they were not very different from the original ones, but some differences occurred. For instance, in the interviews I asked whether or not there were any non-congregational groups using their facilities. However, during the analysis I realised that whether or not they rented out space at all had become the focus, not the groups. This category, and its focus, was therefore changed from non-congregational groups to *renting out space*.

The underlying problem here is that even though I use the respondents' own words and expressions, I use them as analytical terms as part of my analysis. In most cases I attempt to give a definition or explanation of terms, as I understand them. This is a challenge encountered through all types of ethnographic fieldwork and research. This is also one of the reasons as to why I write in English, all my material, as well as related literature, is in English.

1.3.g Anonymity

The book *A Particular Place* (2000) by Nancy Eiesland is based on a study of churches in an US exurb²². Eiesland points out in the introduction that she has not attempted to conceal the names of the churches included because it makes little sense as she names the town. My intention has been the same, in naming the city and the area of my study, there has been little or no point in making up new names for the churches. I have, however, attempted to hide the identity of my respondents, trying not to reveal their position or title. I had only one female respondent and have therefore referred to my respondents as either *he* (as this does not reveal their identities when there is only one female), or simply as *my respondent*, in order to hide the sex.

These churches are located in a relatively small ecology with few religious organisations. In some cases, however, the churches are so small, or have such tight knit congregations, that there is a possibility of recognition of the respondent. As I, in my opinion, have not enquired on any sensitive²³ issues, and my respondents were representing the church,

²² Exurb is a term first coined by A. C. Spector in 1957 and refers to an exclusive residential area, the people who live in these exurbs commute to work in the inner city, usually via highways. These are people who have been decentralised from the city (Eiesland, 2000, p. 215).

²³ According to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) a person's religious adherence is perceived to be sensitive information, along with the collection of data such as names. As I asked my respondents for their names, as well as (indirectly) religious adherence, I had to report my project to NSD. Due to a misunderstanding between my supervisor and me, this was not done until after my return, fall 2006.

this should not be problematic. In instances where other churches or people have been mentioned in the interviews, this has been left out. There were also occurrences where I have been told that something has been mentioned *off the record*. This information has not been included in the text.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

In the following chapter I will describe the background of Melbourne and Australia, concerning history, religious movements, and urban developments. In addition, information on each of the churches in the sample will be provided.

The two subsequent chapters will provide the analysis of the interview data, as well as other material collected. Chapter 3 will discuss two main topics, *composition* and *structure* of the churches. These topics are to a large degree interrelated. *Composition* covers the demographics of the congregants, as well as the size, and the location of the people in the congregations. *Structure* focuses on the leadership structure and staff, as well as the importance of the church building. The *composition* discussion makes an attempt to chart the congregants, whereas the analysis of the *structure* deals with the church organisation, and the relationship with the church structure, aiming to provide insight into the decision making process.

Chapter 4 is also, in the same manner as chapter 3, divided into two main parts: *church activities* and *outreach*. One does not exclude the other. I discuss the *activities the churches* offer to their congregants; these are worship services and congregational groups, as well as their *outreach* towards the city, and ecumenical efforts. The analysis of *outreach* will concentrate on the different types of outreach the organisations engage in, as well as the renting out of property.

In the concluding chapter I will outline a classification of the churches based on their responses to the urban ecology, as well as compare my findings with the results of other, similar studies, before I discuss whether or not it is possible to apply and compare American studies to Australian society. In the end I will look at changes and adaptations in relation to religious market theory. This comparison of my findings to both empirical material, and a theoretical framework, will serve as a summary of my analysis.

2. The historical, religious, and urban context of the churches

In this chapter I aim to provide insight into the historical and religious context in which my research has been conducted. The chapter is divided into three main parts. The first one will provide a brief account of the historical and urban development of Melbourne and Australia (section 2.1 through to, and including, section 2.3). The second part will give an outline of the development of the religion composition of Australia today, as well as a description of the religious landscape of the CBD (section 2.4 and 2.5). The third part will give short history and description of the churches in my sample (section 2.6).

The continent of Australia was first settled by the indigenous population, the Aborigines, about 60 000 years ago. It was initially utilised by the English colonisers as a penal colony from 1789, and was later on developed into several colonies. In 1901 the colonies federated into the Commonwealth of Australia with six states and one territory. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) with the capital, Canberra, was formed in 1931. Queen Elisabeth, who is also the regent of the United Kingdom, is the official head of state (Mackie, 2004).

2.1 Melbourne's establishment

Settlers from Tasmania led by John Batman, established the settlement of Port Phillip Bay in 1835, the future city of Melbourne. The settlement was officially established when the governor of New South Wales (NSW) formed a township named Melbourne after the British Prime Minister. Governor Bourke asked the chief surveyor in Sydney, Robert Hoddle, to mark out the township, and the first allotments of land were made available for sale on the 1st of June 1837. Hoddle also laid out the street grid which is still an important feature of central Melbourne today (City of Melbourne: Records and Archives, 1997).

The first official settlement was under the administration of the NSW government. However, in the early 1840s, the number of inhabitants had reached well over 15 000 and there was a call for a more autonomous Melbourne. In 1842, the town of Melbourne was incorporated as a part of the colony of Victoria. Only five years later, the town became a city, when the Church of England wanted to make Melbourne the seat of a bishop. In order for this to happen, Melbourne had to have status as a city, and this was made possible by patent letters from Queen Victoria. The first Church of England bishop came to Melbourne in 1848, and

was installed in St James Cathedral. However, this was not the first evidence of organised religion in the city of Melbourne. The first worship service held in the settlement took place as early as in 1836, at the present site of St Pauls Cathedral. By the time the Church of England's bishop was enthroned, all the mainstream Christian denominations of the time were represented in central Melbourne (City of Melbourne: Records and Archives, 1997).

2.2 Immigration

The colonies on the Australian continent were dominated by Anglo-Celtic immigration until after WW2. From the 1850s and onward people arrived from all over the world in search of the gold that had been found in the state of Victoria. During the gold rushes in the 1850s, the population of Victoria increased to 140 000 and included a wide array of nationalities (City of Melbourne: Records and Archives, 1997). The majority of the new immigrants were of European descent, but there was also a number of people from the US and China (Mackie, 2004, p. 149). There was also sufficient immigration to form several non-Anglo congregations in the city of Melbourne. Few of these are still active today.

Australia was in the beginning of the European settlement a penal colony, but in addition to the prisoners there were also 'free settlers'. The Europeans who settled were concerned about the immigration of indentured workers from Asia and the South Pacific. They feared these workers would accept lower wages and worse working conditions than white Australians. In 1901, the year of the federation of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Immigration Restriction Act was signed and put into effect. It severely limited immigration. For instance, it prohibited the employment of Pacific Islanders, and restricted the immigration of people who were sick, had 'doubtful character' or were likely to be a burden upon the public, or any welfare organisation (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2006).

This act led to limiting the immigration of people who were not of British or Irish descent. In times of high demand for labour, people from Northern Europe, especially Germans and Scandinavians who showed willingness of adapting to the English-Australian society were accepted. This early type of immigration restrictions was closely connected to assimilating people into the Australian society where necessities were to speak English, be fair-skinned, and be affiliated with some sort of Christian denomination. (Mackie, 2004, p. 151) People of Jewish descent were accepted, but encouraged to downplay their religious

affiliation by hiding visible religious traits. This act, along with several other policies, has later on been called ‘White Australia Policy’ (Ibid).

World War 2 (WW2) was the turning point for the Australian immigration policy. As the UK no longer encouraged their citizens to emigrate, there were too few British immigrants, and non-British immigrants were welcomed because of the need for labour (Mackie, 2004, p. 154). The Australian government introduced a ‘populate or perish’ policy. After WW2 the immigration of Southern and Eastern Europeans became more accepted, both people who had been displaced by the war, and people seeking employment. (Ibid)

In 1958, the revised Migration Act abolished many of the restrictions on Australian immigration. Educated and skilled people from Asia were now accepted. This latter part of the immigration process, which is still ongoing, has been instrumental in shaping Melbourne into the multicultural city we see today. Melbourne is, for instance, the city with the third largest Greek-speaking population in the world (City of Melbourne, n.d.-a).

2.3 The development of Melbourne

2.3.a The Hoddle Grid

Although the colonisers did not initially plan the settlement of Melbourne, it still ended up being one of the most meticulously planned cities of its time. In 1837 surveyor Hoddle laid out a grid of roads and laneways, later known as the Hoddle Grid (City of Melbourne: Records and archives, 1997). Today the grid comprises the Central Business District, an area for business, entertainment and retail. The lines in the grid travel one mile north and two miles east, and have a system of narrow and wide lanes and streets (Appendix 1: CBD map).

2.3.b Urban sprawl²⁴

Melbourne has kept expanding since it was founded. The *City of Melbourne*²⁵ is technically the CBD and the nine inner suburbs immediately surrounding it. The suburbs further out belong to other municipal councils such as the City of Stonnington or the City of Monash (City of Melbourne, n.d.-b). These all have separate mayors and administrations, but are part of Metropolitan Melbourne.

²⁴ ‘Sprawl is usually defined as the ‘haphazard growth’ of relative low density over an extended region, with residential units dominated by single family homes.’ (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005, p.145)

²⁵ It is important to note that the *City of Melbourne* is the municipality of Melbourne comprising the inner suburbs, as opposed to *Metropolitan Melbourne* (or just *Melbourne*), which comprises all the inner and outer suburbs. In the same manner, when I write the inner city, this has to be understood as the CBD, Southbank, and Docklands.

The early settlers and urban planners of Australia saw many advantages to the planning of suburbs as an alternative to the 'clumping of terraces and alleys' (Davison, 1999, p. 26) found in highly urbanised European cities. It was considered unhealthy to live in apartment buildings or even close to the city centre with its factories and wharfs, the suburbs were seen as a much healthier alternative to the slums. 'While the slum was dense, dirty, unnatural and disease-ridden, the suburb was open, clean, natural, orderly and healthy.' (Ibid) Living in a detached house on a quarter acre block became the Australian dream. This has resulted in an urban sprawl recognisable in most major Australian cities (Ibid).

Unlike in many of the cities in the UK and the United States, where living in a suburb was a sign of high socio-economic status (SES), the new cities of Australia were more loosely connected to the certain social classes. Spatial segregation was unavoidable, but at the same time the credo of this type of spatial planning was that all Australians should be able to live in their own house, on their own block of land. Large shares of urban dwellers could afford to live like this; however, this did not prevent the development of social differences between the suburbs. The suburban allotments were the same size, but the size of the houses and the number of people living in them could be vastly different (Davison, 1999).

In Melbourne this has resulted in the suburbs sprawling out in all directions, however some are more affluent than others. Generally, the wealthier suburbs are found in the south and southeast. The less affluent suburbs have high numbers of recent immigrants, especially from non-English speaking countries. These have traditionally been located in the north and west of Melbourne (D. Collis, pers. com., 10.05.2006).

Rather than focussing on a great socio-economic division in Melbourne, there is a more obvious spatial division between ethnic communities. This has also led to a spatial division of religion. Early Anglo-Saxon immigrants dominated the first suburbs in the inner- and south-eastern suburbs (Davison, 1999). As immigration became more multicultural in the post-war era there has been a growth of some suburbs being inhabited by certain ethnic groups, such as the Vietnamese in Springvale, or the Greeks in Oakleigh. Also in the inner city of Melbourne there are areas with visible ethnic profiles, such as Chinatown in the CBD, or the Italian area of Carlton (City of Melbourne n.d.-b).

2.3.c Low-density to high-density suburbs

Today Melbourne has been transformed from a post-war low-density city to a city of high-density suburbs. Due to the continued and uncontrolled urban sprawl of suburbs, Melbourne has now developed into a metropolis covering a large area. This constant sprawl further and

further away from the centre of Melbourne has led to a rise on the price of land in the suburbs closer to the CBD (Armstrong and Johnston, 2006).

As the majority of the detached houses on suburban lots have a backyard, this has led to dual occupancy²⁶ (Birrell et al. 2005, p.1-5). Lots that previously contained a house and a large garden now encloses two houses, or even a low-rise apartment building in the backyard. The houses are becoming bigger, but they are on smaller block of land than the original suburban allotment (Davison, 1999).

2.3.d Gentrification²⁷

Much like other large cities in the western world, the process of gentrification is taking place in Melbourne. In the last three decades there has been a government initiative for the change of Melburnians' residential patterns. A combination of the realisation that urban sprawl cannot continue unrestrained, and the increasing areas of vacant industrial land in the inner city, has led to an increased focus on the possibility of inner city living. This has led to developments such as the Docklands and Southbank residential areas, which are located in walking distance to the CBD. Designed to make life in urban high-rise buildings desirable even for families, these projects have drawn new types of people to settle down in the inner city (Chandler, 2006). This type of urban re-development has been a worldwide process leading to increased numbers of professionals working and living in the inner city, rather than commuting (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005, p. 33).

This process has mainly taken place in the CBD and inner suburbs of Melbourne. In the inner city there has been an urban renewal of early-industrialised areas, such as wharfs, whereas in the inner suburbs the renewal has been focused on old factories and run down housing. People who used to live there can no longer afford this and have been displaced. This has also happened in the CBD, where people living in cheap hotels and boarding houses were forced to move as these buildings were converted into luxury apartments. These people, most of them dependent on welfare services, were forced to move out to the suburbs, where the services they needed were not as readily available as in the inner city. So albeit gentrification has had the desired effect in revitalising run down areas, it has also displaced the people who lived there (M. Curnow, pers. com, 21.06.2006).

²⁶ 'Dual occupancy' refers to the process where the government has allowed for several houses to be built on a lot that previously has only contained one dwelling, this process is also know as 'infill'. It is estimated that this process accounts for 35 % of the new dwellings built in Melbourne today (Birrell et al, 2005, 01-5).

²⁷ 'Gentrification (...) involves the inflow of capital investment into the real estate of an already existing place in the metropolitan region whose values are depressed.' (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005, p. 32) These areas are usually developed into high end apartments as a part of urban renewal.

This re-development has led to an increase in the number of people who live in the inner suburbs and inner city, but what are their demographics? An article in *The Age* (Armstrong and Johnston, 2006) claims that people now have a greater desire to live in the inner suburban areas even after they become parents; they do not wish to trade away their urban lifestyle for a suburban one. They are choosing to stay in the inner south-eastern or northern suburbs, instead of returning to where they grew up. They are not willing to endure long commutes, and the lack of community facilities, as their parents had to (Ibid).

These are, however, not the kind of people who are mainly re-populating the inner city and the CBD, but rather the inner suburbs. Developments such as the Docklands and Southbank mainly include two groups. The first group comprises the single, young professionals from their early 20s to their mid 30s who work in the city. The second are the so-called 'empty nesters', people whose children have moved out, and who have traded their suburban home for the convenience of inner city living (Chandler, 2006).

There are, however, not only Australians who are settling in the City of Melbourne. According to the 2001 census, 38%²⁸ of the residents in the City of Melbourne are born overseas. 86% of the people who have settled here since 1996 have been international students, mainly from South-east Asia. Tertiary students, both international and domestic, make up a total of 23% of the population in the City of Melbourne, and although the majority of these live in the older inner suburbs, students can also be found in the CBD and Southbank. The majority of these students attend one of the several tertiary institutions located in the inner suburbs, such as RMIT or the University of Melbourne. A growth in residents and dwellings is expected for the whole municipality, and is expected to be highest in the CBD, Docklands, and Southbank (Melbourne City Suburbs Economic and Demographic Profile, 2005).

2.3.e Melbourne 2030

Metropolitan Melbourne has a population of 3.6 million people, and is reportedly increasing by nearly 1000 residents every week (Colebatch, 2007). In order to contain the urban sprawl the government has formulated a plan called *Melbourne 2030*. The main initiative is to create so-called 'activity centres'. These will mainly be high-rise buildings in suburban areas with shopping malls, schools, and other facilities close by, and will be built on sites that have formerly been avoided because of zoning laws. This plan is designed to accommodate another

²⁸ The City of Melbourne had in 2006 an estimated population of 67 000 people (Casey, 2006).

one million people in Melbourne by the year 2030 (Birrell et al. 2005, p. 1). However, where these centres specifically are to be placed has not been designated in the plan. Critics fear that the placements of these are entirely at the hand of private real estate developers, who will ruin the characteristics of the neighbourhood where they are to be built (Coslovich, 2006).

2.4 Christianity in Australia

The colonising forces of the Australian continent brought with them European Christian traditions. The first settlers were, as I have described above, English-speaking people from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as well as some Germans and a small number of people belonging to other nationalities. As a result, many of the churches in the inner city of Melbourne are connected historically and ethnically with early immigrant groups. This type of colonisation and immigration led to Christianity being the dominant religious expression in Australian cities. (Mackie, 2004)

The right to practice any religion, and the separation between church and state are listed in the Australian Constitution (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2002). However, according to Hughes (2003), Australia could be better described as non-sectarian rather than secular in the years between the federation (1901) and WW2. In the early years of the settlement, the Church of England attempted to make itself the state church of the new colony of NSW, but as new groups of people from other denominations²⁹ settled down, it became more difficult to establish a state religion. By 1833 the governing body of NSW decided to give equal funding to Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church. By the time of the federation it was commonly understood that no organised group was to be given official status as the state religion (Mackie, 2004, p. 94).

The values and traditions of Christianity had a strong influence on Australian society, and this impact did not lessen until the post-war era when a new wave of immigrants was coming in. Most of these were also Christian, but brought a new tradition of Christianity into Australian society, such as the Greek Orthodox (Bouma, 1992).

²⁹ When using the term *denomination* I will utilise the American understanding meaning of organised religious communities (trossamfunn), such as the Roman Catholic Church, or the Presbyterian Church. (Furseth and Repstad, 2003, p 165).

2.4.a Division between Catholicism and Anglicanism

The Christian unity that represented, to some degree, a common belief system for the nation was also the root of a great divide. At the time of the federation, over half of the population was either Anglican or Catholic. Whereas the Anglicans were mainly descendents of the English, the Catholics of Australia were of mainly Irish descent. This led to tension between these groups.

One of the main points of conflict was the issue of conscription at the time of WW1. At the time Australia was a self-governing dominion, but both the government's wish to help a fellow nation of the Empire, and the fact that Australia's foreign policy was controlled by Britain, led 420 000 men to enlist to serve in the Australian Imperial Force (Ibid; Mackie, 2004, p. 119f). However, the people of Irish descent were not as ready to fight and die for Britain as the English. Their views were promoted by the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Mannix, a man who saw no problems with advocating political stands on behalf of the Catholic Church (Ibid). The tension between these two groups was acted out in the political realm. The Australian Labor Party (ALP) was connected to the working class Catholics and the Liberal Party to the Anglicans and Protestants. The close relationship between the ALP and the Irish Catholics ended after a party-split in the 1950s.

2.4.b Other Christian denominations and influences

In addition to the Anglicans and Catholics, there were early on also other groups represented in the Australian religious landscape. Churches that could be found in large numbers early on were Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregationalist. A non-English speaking group widely represented were the German Lutherans. Many of these various denominations held on to their ethnicity when establishing new congregations, such as the Scottish Presbyterian, and the Welsh Methodist, in addition to the aforementioned German Lutherans.

There were also other small religious groups, such as the Seventh Day Adventists, the Brethren, and the Churches of Christ, all of which were represented in Melbourne. However, none of these were large enough to threaten the position of the Anglican and Catholic churches, which early on were well established throughout the colonies (Hughes, 2003). According to Hughes 'They brought minor variations in the dominant values (...)' (Hughes 2003, p. 133)

Due to the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 there were, until WW2, few non-Christian religious groups represented in Australia. As mentioned above, the assimilation policy called for people of other faiths to blend in as well as possible in Australian society.

This resulted in the minor Jewish population having to hide their religious affiliation. Not until the post-war immigration did Australia start to see a rapid increase in different religious groupings, although most of these belonged to Christian traditions as well. Catholicism was one of the denominations that increased (Bouma, 1992). Bouma ascribes this to the immigration of people from Italy, Holland, and Spain, but also to the high birth rate among Catholics. The increasing numbers of Catholics can also be attributed to the extended development of parochial and regional Catholic schools that continued to socialise and educate children into the beliefs and values of the Catholic Church (Mackie 2004, p. 82).

These factors led to an increase in the number of people identifying with Catholicism, and by 1986 it had become the single largest religious group in Australia (Bouma, 1992). This was not only because there were fewer people emigrating from the UK in the years after the war, but also because fewer people identified with Anglicanism. In the years between 1947 and 1986, less people identified with the traditional Anglo Celtic churches. In 1977, due to a drop in membership, the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists, decided to join forces by forming the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA), becoming the country's third largest denomination (Black, 1991).

2.4.c Religious beliefs in Australia today

The Roman Catholic Church is presently the largest religious group, followed by the Anglican. 48% of the people combined in Australia identify with these two denominations, but while the Catholic Church is increasing, the Anglican Church is decreasing (ABS, 2002). The third largest group on the ABS census are the people who claim to have no religious belief. The question of 'no religion' was first introduced on the census in 1971 and by 2001 the people that chose to tick this box on the census added up to 16%, a rise of 10% in 30 years (Hughes, 2003).

This does not necessarily mean that people now are less religious than they were thirty years ago. According to sociologist and Anglican minister Gary Bouma: '(...) some of the 'decline' in religious identification in Australian society may be due to an increase in honesty rather than an increase in secularism.' (Bouma, 1992) Due to this development it has been seen as certain that no one religion will be dominant in Australian society (ABS, 2002), both due to the increased population of non-Christian religious groups, as well as the decrease in number of people who identify with any religious group.

2.5 Melbourne's religious map and history

2.5.a Churches in central Melbourne

During the formation of Melbourne there were many small churches established within the Hoddle Grid. During the sale and distributing of land in the central areas of early Melbourne, property allotments were made available for churches on request. Many of these churches are still on these sites today, although most of them in different shapes and sizes than the original structures. Some of the churches that received these allotments later decided to sell the property for large sums of money and move elsewhere (Hubbard, 1977).

Melbourne experienced the same pattern of religious growth as the other Australian colonies. There was early religious activity among the settlers, and the Church of England was instrumental in making Melbourne into a city, rather than just a town. The pattern of immigration has been made visible in the churches that remain in the CBD. Today there are nine churches within the CBD grid and a handful more in its immediate surroundings. The churches I have included in my study are all good examples of the immigration pattern described above. There are four Anglican churches, two Catholic, two Methodist, two Lutheran churches, one Baptist, one Church of Christ, one Presbyterian, and one Congregationalist. Three of these declare their ethnic heritage in their name, Scots Church, the Welsh Church, and German Lutheran Trinity Church. In addition to the traditional congregations, there are also two 'missions to seafarers' still operating in the CBD, signifying that Melbourne was once a great port.

Timothy Hubbard (1977) has completed an index of the churches of Melbourne City. He makes some observations on the development and numbers of churches in the City of Melbourne, and, although this index is quite old, it still has some interesting points to offer. He points out that in the City of Melbourne the most numerous churches were Methodist and Presbyterian, mainly due to many splits and amalgamations. Unlike the Anglican and Catholic, these churches were unstable and built makeshift houses of worship. He also notes that the most stable were the Catholic churches and the Church of England/Anglican churches (Ibid).

When Hubbard compiled this index in 1977, he also found that the fastest growing church was the Orthodox, and that these have been major re-users of buildings. After WW2 it was only the new denominations that built new churches in the municipality of Melbourne, but none of these were built in the CBD (Ibid).

2.5.b Non-Christian groups

There are also other religious groups represented in the area in which I conducted my study. Examples of these are the Buddhist Centre on the corner of Bourke and Queen Streets, the City Mosque only one block from St James Old Cathedral, as well as a synagogue on Swanston St (albeit in a suite in an office building, but nevertheless present in the CBD). These do not have the long traditions as the churches; most of them are fairly recent additions.

2.6 The churches in my sample

In this section of the chapter I will give background information on each of the 14 churches featured in the study. Several belong to the same denomination; in these instances I will only give information on the denomination for the first church listed. I will cover the development of the church, such as when the congregation was founded and when the church building was built, as well as the worship services the respective churches offer today. The churches have been listed in the order in which the interviews were conducted. The reason for this is that there is no particular chronological order of their formation. Neither have I found it to be helpful to list them alphabetically as half of the churches have names that start with St (Saint). As there, in my opinion, is no need for a particular order in this description, I will follow the order of the interviews. This coincides with the letter each interview has been given in relation to references to the transcripts. A list of which church has been assigned which letter, as well as basic information on each church, has been provided in Appendix 2: *Background information*.³⁰

2.6.a Scots' Church

Presbyterianism is a Christian denomination that was formed during the Reformation (Bowker, 2005, p. 456). Each congregation within the Presbyterian Church of Australia is autonomous, but is also looked after by the General Assembly, which is found in each state

³⁰ It is important to note that all of the sources I have used when researching the different churches, with the exception of Bowker (2005) and Bouma (2002), have been written and published either by the churches, or on their initiative. This includes books, brochures, newsletters or articles from their websites. Some of the information gathered from these sources might not be historically accurate, or might not be verifiable, but nevertheless they are part of the church's official history. An example of this is that several of the churches see them themselves as 'the oldest church in Melbourne'.

(Presbyterian Church of Victoria, 2006). In the 2001 ABS census, 3.4% of Australians identified³¹ themselves as Presbyterians (Bouma, 2002).

The Presbyterian Church was the first church in Melbourne to conduct regular services by an ordained minister. The first Presbyterian worship services in Melbourne were held on the banks of the river Yarra in 1836 (Scots' Church, 2006). While the Presbyterians, led by Rev. James Forbes, were waiting for a grant of land, a makeshift wooden chapel was built on the west end of Collins Street. The congregation in 1838 were granted a two-acre allotment of land on the corner of Collins and Russel Streets, and in 1841, the first church was built, and a manse was also put up. By 1869 this church was too small, and a new church building had to be erected. This was opened in December 1874, and is the church which is onsite today (Ibid).

When the church was granted its two-acre allotment the elders were not pleased with the location they were given. At the time the property was too far from the city centre (Scots' Church n.d.). Today, however, this site is regarded as a prime location in the CBD.

Today the church is a part of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. However, when it was first established in Melbourne, it was done so with the support of the Church of Scotland. As indicated in the name it still has a strong sense of heritage and tradition.³² Today it offers three services each week, two on Sundays and one at lunch hour on Wednesday. The church is also made available to an Indonesian congregation for a service on Sundays. (A: 196)³³

2.6.b St Paul's Cathedral

St Paul's belong to the Anglican church of Australia. Today the Anglican Communion is made up of 37 different churches worldwide (the Church of England being the *mother church*). It is estimated that they have about 70 million members (Bowker, 2005, p. 40). The Anglican Church in Australia was called the Church of England until 1981 (Frame, n.d.). In the 2001 census, 20.7% of the population identified themselves as Anglicans, making it the second largest denomination in Australia.

St Paul's Cathedral is built on the site of the first public worship service in Melbourne, which were held on the banks of the Yarra in 1836. Until St Paul's was built, St James' Old Cathedral had served as the Anglican Cathedral, but the archdiocese decided it needed a

³¹ The number of Australians, who *identify* themselves with a certain denomination, does not necessarily indicate whether or not these people participate in religious activity, or if they adhere to the denominations core beliefs. Identification can also be seen as an indication of the person's ethnic heritage, or culture (Bouma, 1992).

³² A discussion on the importance of the ethnic heritage of Scots' Church, as well as the Welsh Church, and GLTC can be found in 3.2a *Ethnic churches*.

³³ When citing from, or making references to the transcribed interviews I will use this system of referencing. The letter indicates which interview, and thus which church it is regarding. A list of the churches can be found in the appendix. The number indicates line in the transcribed material.

cathedral that was built for the purpose of being the principal church of the diocese (St Paul's Cathedral, n.d.-a).

As the majority of the early settlers belonged to the Church of England, they were given a prime location in the city for their cathedral. The site was directly opposite Flinders Street Station, and this was the second church built on this site. At the time, this was the centre for all transportation in Melbourne, as well as next to the bridge across the Yarra River, connecting South Melbourne with the CBD. This site was so sought after that business entrepreneurs offered substantial amounts of money for the location, even after the foundation had been laid (Ibid).

The Cathedral today offers in excess of 20 services each week and a range of special events and concerts. It is also a popular location for weddings (St Paul's Cathedral n.d.-b). During my data collection the Cathedral was undergoing extensive restorations.

2.6.c St Michael's Uniting Church

St Michael's Uniting Church was originally part of the Congregational Union of Australia and joined the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) when it was formed in 1977 (St Michael's Uniting Church, n.d.). The Congregational Churches emphasise the autonomy of each local church and congregation (Bowker, 2005, p. 135). The UCA include Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, and 6.7% of the population identified themselves as belonging to the Uniting Church in 2001 (Bouma, 2002).

The church today known as St Michael's Uniting Church was originally called Collins Street Independent Church, and was built in 1839 as '(...) the first permanent building constructed expressly as a church in the Port Phillip Settlement.' (St Michael's Uniting Church, n.d.) This first church remained on site until 1866 when it was demolished to make way for a new, more grandiose structure that was completed in 1867.

At the time of my research the church was undergoing extensive restoration, both externally and internally. The church has not remained the same ever since 1867. A brochure found in the church states that 'the congregation (...) have not hesitated to add to it in ways that reflect the beliefs of the dynamic community that worship here.' (Ibid) One of these changes is the Mingary, a *quiet place* that was opened in 1999. It is described as 'a peaceful inner-city sanctuary that welcomes all who enter.' (Ibid) It is open to people of all religions and cultures. Its entrance is separate from the church's, and is not signified by a cross or any other Christian symbol. Upon entering one finds a room decorated with rocks, water, light and where there is a place to sit down and reflect or pray. In conjunction with the Mingary space

there is also the Mingary Counselling Service, which offers low cost counselling for a variety of clients and issues (St Michael's Centre, n.d.). Today the church holds one worship service each Sunday (St Michael's Uniting Church, n.d.).

2.6.d Melbourne Welsh Church

The members of the Welsh Church are Calvinistic Methodists who follow the teachings of Griffith Jones, Howel Harris, and Daniel Rowland (Bowker, 2005, p. 112). The Melbourne Welsh Church is part of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, and has a minister who has emigrated from Wales to serve as their priest.

The first service in Welsh in Melbourne was conducted in 1852 and was performed by a Baptist minister at the Collins Street Baptist Church. The people in the Welsh congregation belonged to a range of denominations such as Baptist, Wesleyan Methodist, Independents, and Calvinistic Methodist. However, because the majority of the group belonged to the latter denomination, it was decided that this would also be the name of the congregation. In 1854 they accepted an allotment of land, and in February 1857 their first church was opened on Latrobe Street (Melbourne Welsh Church, 2003).

Together with 15 other Welsh churches, a leading body, *Gymfana*, was formed; this is the legal title of The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connexion in Victoria (Ibid). The 15 other churches were all located in the goldfields; the only one of these still existing today is situated in Ballarat, a city well known for its connection to the gold rush.

By 1868, the first church was found to be too small and was demolished for a new one, which was opened in 1871. In 1882 the Church recognised a need among the first generation of Welsh Australians and started to provide a monthly service in English. Today it is the only church in the Pacific basin that still holds regular services in Welsh; these take place on second and fourth Sunday of each month. In 1893, it was decided to build a hall to make room for more social occasions and groups such as Sunday school. It is still in use today and the Welsh Cambrian Society, which was formed in the hall in 1872, still meets there (Ibid).

Today the church has two services each Sunday. The Church is still part of the *Gymfana* with its sister church in Ballarat. Publications (such as a newsletter) are made both in English and in Welsh. Some other traditions have also been kept; such as the Welsh hymn singing festival, *Cymanfaoedd Canu* (Melbourne Welsh Church, 2006).

2.6.e Collins Street Baptist Church

The Baptist churches have a membership of over 40 million all over the world, but the majority of Baptists today are found in the US (Bowker, 2005, p. 75). Baptist congregations in Australia are represented in the Baptist Union of Australia, bringing together the State Unions. This is an advisory body, and the different state groups and congregations are autonomous under the Union (Manley, 2006). 1.7% of the Australian population identified themselves as Baptists in the 2001 census (Bouma, 2002).

Collins Street Baptist church (CSBC) was started in a tent close to where the present church is located. The congregation was given an allotment on Collins Street, and built a chapel there in 1845. By 1857, the church was in need of more seating and restoration, and architect Joseph Reed was commissioned to renovate it. He decided to demolish the old structure, and erect a new one in a theatre style (Himbury, 1993, p. 9). This is the present building.

A considerable amount of work has been performed on the church during the last 30 years, some of it financed by selling a property on Little Collins Street in 1983 (Himbury, 1993, p. 53). The welfare organisation Urban Seed, which is located in facilities owned by the church, works in partnership with the church as a part of its mission work.

The church offers three worship services weekly, two on Sunday and one on Thursday afternoon. A dinner is also provided after the Sunday afternoon service and is attended by a mixture of congregants and homeless people (Curtis, 2006).

2.6.f St Augustine's

The Roman Catholic Church's liturgy, doctrines, and structure are based on the pre-Reformation church, and Vatican Councils. It is headed by the Pope, and is the largest Christian community in the world³⁴ (Bowker, 2005, p. 490f). In Australia it is the largest denomination with 26.7% of the population identifying themselves as Catholics in 2001 (Bouma, 2002).

Before the gold rush in 1851, there had been only one Catholic church in Melbourne, St Francis' (see below). After news of the gold in Victoria reached the rest of the world, the city exploded with people wanting to try their luck, and the port of Melbourne became a bustling place with people from all nations. In 1851, the Catholic Church was allotted an

³⁴ There are several churches and congregations worldwide that denote themselves as Catholic, but are not connected to the Roman Catholic Church. When I use the term Catholic throughout this paper I mean Roman Catholic.

additional grant of land near the port to build a new. The church on the west end of Bourke Street was finished in 1853; it accommodated school on weekdays and mass on Sundays. By 1869, this timber structure was found inadequate and fundraising for a new church began. The new church was opened in October 1870 (Buckland, 2004).

In the years after WW2 the church became a place for non-English speaking Catholics to gather. From 1950 until 2001 several Eastern European groups used the church for masses and meetings, these included Polish, Ukrainian, Hungarian, and Latvian people. Some of these groups gathered there only until their own place of worship became available, whereas the Latvians stayed until their priest retired in 2001 (Ibid). These congregations often went on to build churches in a suburb with a high concentration of people of their own nationality (Ibid).

In 1968, a parish priest was appointed, and the church was given parish boundaries. Nevertheless, in 1996 the newly appointed Father Portelli was not appointed parish priest, but administrator. The same happened to the present Father when he came to St Augustine's in 1997. The reason for this was that there were hardly any parishioners within the boundaries. However, as the Victorian government's plans for the development of the Docklands became known, the Archdiocese declared the church a parish once again, and the Father was given the title of Parish Priest (Ibid).

Today, the church is part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement. It offers nine services weekly, including a Wednesday healing mass, and a Saturday student mass (Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 2007). The church has also developed an extensive cell ministry.³⁵

2.6.g Wesley Uniting Church

John Wesley was the founder of Methodism (1703-1791) and his followers are called Wesleyans, or Methodists. There have been a number of divisions within Methodism all over the world (Bowker, 2005, p. 375). In Australia the Methodist churches are part of the UCA.

The first Wesleyan Methodist church in Melbourne was built on the corner of Flinders Lane and Swanston Street in 1839. Only one year, later a new, larger church was built on a government granted allotment on the corner of Collins and Queens Streets. The land the church was built on became valuable and the congregation decided to sell it and build a new on Lonsdale Street. This new church was opened in 1858, and is the same church that is onsite

³⁵ The cell ministries of St Augustine's and SSCoC will be outlined in section 4.2.b *Cell groups*.

today. The church's new neighbourhood was perceived as the slum of Melbourne, with its many opium dens and gambling houses, prostitutes and criminals (Ziegler, 1989).

In the early 1890s, the people living in the area surrounding the church were in dire need of help, but the congregation had problems providing for them as they lacked both assistance and funds. In 1893, the Methodist Conference decided to form a Central Mission at Wesley Church (Ibid). The Wesley Central Mission was separated from the congregation in 2001 to suit the further needs of the Mission, which had become very professional in its ventures³⁶ (Wesley Mission, n.d.).

In 1977, as a Methodist church, Wesley Church joined the UCA. Today the church building gathers not only the traditional congregation, but also a large Cantonese Uniting Church congregation weekly. It offers two services weekly, Sunday morning and evening.

2.6.h St Peter's Eastern Hill

St Peter's Eastern Hill (Eastern Hill) is the Anglican parish church to the Eastern half of the CBD. The foundation stone of the earliest part of the structure was laid in 1846 and the church was finished in 1848 (Holden, 1996).

The area of East Melbourne and Eastern Hill where St Peter's is situated was in the first years of the settlement an area for the middle to upper class. Due to the economic development relating to the gold rush, the population of Melbourne increased, and the inner-city density became higher. The area surrounding the church had developed into an area of contrasts. Some of the richest people in Melbourne were the church's neighbours, at the same time as nearby areas had become high-density and poverty stricken (Ibid).

In the early 20th century, the church started to move towards Anglo-Catholicism as a part of the worldwide movement. This was very much debated both in the Melbourne press, as well as among clergy and parishioners, especially the fact that confession was brought back into the Anglican Church (Ibid).

Today the church has held on to its Anglo-Catholic tradition dating 100 years back. It celebrates 15 masses weekly and is one of the best-attended parishes in the archdiocese of Melbourne (H: 88).

³⁶ Congregations' relation to detached welfare agencies is an issue that will be discussed in under the heading of 4.3.d *Detached agencies*.

2.6.i German Lutheran Trinity Church

Lutheranism is a denomination formed after the teachings of Martin Luther. Its formation is traced to Germany and can now be found all over the world. It is estimated a worldwide following of about 75 million people (Bowker, 2005, p. 344), and that about 250 000 (1.7% of the population) of these are to be found in Australia and New Zealand (Bouma, 2002; Lutheran Church of Australia, 2004).

The first German Lutherans arrived in Melbourne in the late 1840s, and prayer meetings were conducted in the Independent Chapel on Collins Street (now St Michael's Uniting). In 1853, a German Lutheran congregation was officially founded, and the group obtained a grant of land from the government. On the 11th of June 1854, the Trinity Lutheran Church was consecrated in East Melbourne. The original church was replaced by the present one in 1874 (German Lutheran Trinity Church East Melbourne, n.d.).

The church describes itself as the *mother church* of Lutheranism in Victoria (Ibid), and it is true that it was the origin for the other Lutheran church included in this study, St Johns Southgate. However, whereas St Johns developed into being part of the Australian Lutheran Church (as explained below), the German Lutheran Trinity Church (GLTC) remained connected to its German roots. Not only did it continue to hold services in German, but it also became a meeting place for German people.

Australia has experienced several waves of German immigration; the most notable ones was the first wave during the gold rush, and the second one occurring after WW2. There have been a number of Germans immigrating to Australia ever since, either on long-term or short-term basis in connection with work (Ibid).

Today the church has one service every Sunday. One out of the four services held monthly is in English. They have a sister congregation that was founded in the suburb of Springvale in 1960 to meet the needs of a large number of immigrants settling down in that area to work for German businesses (St Johns Lutheran Parish Springvale Inc., 2001). In 1970, the aged care facility, Martin Luther Homes in the eastern suburb of Boronia, was established. This facility is also part of the responsibilities of the GLTC pastor, and a service is conducted in the chapel there every two weeks (German Lutheran Trinity Church East Melbourne, n.d.).

2.6.j Swanston Street Church of Christ³⁷

The origins of the Churches of Christ in Australia can be traced back to the British Churches of Christ and the American Disciples of Christ that developed in the USA in the 1820s. Each Australian congregation is autonomous, but take part in the Regional or National Conference (Ma, 2005, p. 11). In the 2001 census 0.3% of the population identified themselves as adhering to the Churches of Christ.

Swanston Street Church of Christ (SSCoC) has its origin in the Prahran Church of Christ, which was formed in 1853. A group of people broke away from this congregation and started to meet in the building next to their present location on Swanston Street. This has thus been seen as the beginning of the Swanston Street congregation, and the foundation of the SSSCoC. Next door to this building, there was a chapel owned by a breakaway group from Scots' Church called Free Presbyterian Church. In 1881, this Presbyterian congregation decided to rejoin Scots' Church, and the SSSCoC was able to rent the available chapel, until they raised the funds to buy it two years later (Swanston Street Church of Christ, 2005).

The church building has been altered several times in order to make it more flexible. While constructing a hall under the chapel, the congregation realised that the basement in the building next door would be a good location for extending their overflowing facilities. In addition, this was also the site on which the original Swanston Street congregation had gathered. The congregation made a bid on this building when it was being auctioned off, but lost. The new owners refurbished this newly sold building for college accommodation, and due to a problem with the planning permit; SSSCoC was able to negotiate a takeover of the basement in 1997. This was rebuilt and constructed in the design of an auditorium seating 750 people (Ma, 2005, p. 104f).

SSCoC offers three worship services every Sunday in this auditorium, each with a distinct profile. The church has also developed an extensive cell ministry, as well as a successful ministry towards international students.

2.6.k Holy Trinity

In 1857, Trinity Schoolhouse was built on the corner of the Victoria Parade and Hoddle Street in East Melbourne, and this served as a location for church services from its opening until 1864. In the original plans of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, there was not supposed to

³⁷ I recently became aware of the fact that SSSCoC had changed its name to *Cross Culture Church of Christ* at some point during the first quarter of 2007. I have not been able to reach a representative at the church for a comment on why this has happened. This future change was not mentioned during my interview.

be a parish church in East Melbourne on the site where Holy Trinity lies today. At the time, there were some uncertainties surrounding the future location of the Anglican cathedral. One of the sites proposed was in East Melbourne, next to the Fitzroy Gardens; this property therefore bore the name Cathedral Reserve for a long time (Holy Trinity Church, East Melbourne, 1964).

After some time a building was erected on the Cathedral Reserve to serve as a church until the cathedral was built, after which it would be used for other purposes. The building was also supposed to replace the schoolroom as a house of worship. It was opened on the 20th of November 1864 and named Holy Trinity. In 1888, a parish hall was added. Some time later it was decided that the Cathedral would not be built on this property after all (Ibid).

In 1903 the church became debt free and was subsequently consecrated. In 1905 the original church on the George Street side of Cathedral Reserve burnt down, and a new church was erected on the corner of Clarendon St and Hotham St facing the Fitzroy Gardens (Ibid). This is the church onsite today. It provides two services on Sundays and one on Wednesdays, as well as offering a range of congregational groups and a spiritual training program.

2.6.1 St Johns Southgate

The church today called St Johns Southgate, previously St Johns Church, was a breakaway congregation from German Lutheran Trinity Church in East Melbourne. This group wanted to distance itself from the German Lutheran community, and rather develop a relationship with the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). This congregation joined an already established Lutheran parish in a city just south of Melbourne, and for more than fifty years they met in halls and meeting rooms all over Melbourne. In 1927, the congregation decided to build a church just south of the Melbourne CBD, central to Flinders Street Station and public transportation. The area in which they built the church, now called the Southbank Complex, was an area with factories and warehouses, and by the end of the 1960s, the government had proposed plans to redevelop the area. About 20 years later the plans for the Southgate development were ready, and it became clear that the congregation would have to move in order for this development to be completed. (L: 15-28) The congregation made a deal with the developers; the developers would provide them with alternative nearby accommodation during the construction period and include a new St Johns Church in the Complex.

The old church was demolished in 1989, and made way for the new building that was opened in March 1992. It now forms a part of the Arts and Leisure precinct in Melbourne

together with Melbourne Concert Hall, Victorian Centre for the Arts, and many more (St Johns Southgate Church, n.d.).

Today the church offers three services each Sunday, each with its own focus and distinct congregation. One is traditional, one informal and one is directed towards youths and students. The church also offers function rooms for rent, both for businesses and cultural activities such as music or theatre. One of the most well known functions that the church provides in conjunction with the Sunday morning service is the Bach Cantatas. These concerts are integrated in the service and draw a very wide audience; it features visiting musicians as well as the Victorian College of the Arts (St Johns Southgate, 2006).

2.6.m St Francis' Church

The first Catholic priest to settle down in Melbourne was Father Geoghegan, who arrived in February of 1839. The Catholic Church obtained a government grant of land on the corner of Lonsdale and Elizabeth Streets, and a temporary chapel was built. The first mass in this chapel was said on the 28th of July the same year. Two years later the foundation stone was laid and the erection of the new church began. From construction start until finish, masses were celebrated in parts of the church, as they were finished. It was completed in 1845, and subsequently a hall and a school building were erected. In 1847, Melbourne became a diocese, and was made a cathedral upon the arrival of Archbishop Goold, awaiting the consecration of St Patrick's Cathedral in 1897. In 1929, the Blessed Sacrament Congregation was installed at St Francis' (St Francis' Church, n.d.-a).

St Francis' Church is today the oldest church being used for its original purpose in Victoria. A team of priests from the Blessed Sacrament Congregation serves here and lives on site. The church is today a mass centre that offers in excess of 40 services each week and attracts a mix of city workers, students, and residents. In 1993, the pastoral centre was opened, offering facilities for various community groups (St Francis' Church, n.d.-b).

2.6.n St James' Old Cathedral

St James' Old Cathedral (Old Cathedral) was the first Anglican church in Victoria. The first building on the original site was opened on the 11th of February 1837 and served as a house of worship for both Anglicans and Presbyterians; until the Presbyterians were told they were no longer welcome (Lewis, 1982).

Whereas other denominations usually were awarded two-acre allotments, St James' was allotted five acres. This gives a good impression of the position of the Church of England

in the early settlement. This allotment was on the corner of William Street and Little Collins Street. The small wooden church on this site was soon found to be too small and subscription for a new structure was launched already in 1838. The new church was opened for services in 1842 (Ibid).

Rev Charles Perry arrived in Melbourne in 1848, and was installed as Melbourne's first bishop. St James' became the cathedral,³⁸ pending the building of a church for that purpose. At this time there were still very few ordained clergymen in Melbourne, and the newly instated bishop was surprised and dismayed to find that Rev. Thomson (the only other Anglican priest), Rev. Forbes of the Presbyterian Church, and the city's only Catholic priest, Father Geoghegan were keeping social company (Ibid).

When St Paul's Cathedral was opened in 1891, all cathedral activities were moved there. St James' went back to being a parish church, only to find that it was no longer needed. In the close to 50 years that it had been situated on the corner of Williams St and Little Collins St, the surroundings had changed and were now dominated by commercial businesses. The majority of the congregation had moved to St Paul's, and the buildings were in need of expensive maintenance (Ibid).

In 1913, it was decided that the church would be moved 'stone by numbered stone' to a site in West Melbourne. In 1919 St James' became part of a city mission in partnership with St Johns, a church with even fewer parishioners than St James'. St John's was demolished soon after, and its geographical parish was merged with St James'.

This city mission is now separate from the church and the congregation and has been joined with Anglicare³⁹, a nation-wide welfare agency for the whole Anglican Church (Ibid). The parish boundary now covers the western half of the CBD and reaches as far west as the Docklands (N: 185-189). The church today offers one Sunday service and one Wednesday lunchtime service.

2.6.o Summing up the information on the churches

When compiling and reading short paragraphs on each church, some similarities become clear. The majority of the churches have had their formative phase at the same time, and have developed not only alongside each other, but also together. The Welsh church was dependent on CSBC in the formation of their congregation; St Johns might never have existed if it hadn't been for GLTC.

³⁸ Within the Church of England the seat of the bishop is called the cathedral (Bowker, 2005).

³⁹ Anglicare is one of the detached welfare agencies that will be discussed further in 4.3.d *Detached agencies*.

There are also clear similarities in the development of the churches. Many started out as small congregations, meeting in other churches, tents or halls, before they managed to obtain a grant of land and build a church. In most cases they have had to build new churches not long afterwards, because they have become too small, or have needed restoration. This has happened with nearly all of the churches within the CBD grid, and for most of the ones directly outside as well, like St Johns, which was built in the 1920s. It is clear then, that these churches from different denominations and with different people in the congregation have stories very similar to each other nonetheless.

3. Composition and structure of the churches

This chapter will give an outline of the findings concerning the demographic *composition*, and organisational *structure* of the 14 churches. The areas covered are the demographics of the people in the congregations, where they live, how large the congregations are, the staff and leadership structure, and what importance the church building has to them. These topics will be analysed with respect to changes having occurred in the churches during recent years, and how these relate to the urban ecology.

The issues discussed in this chapter will need a further explanation, before I present the findings from the analysis. As the title suggests, this chapter consists of two parts: composition and structure. These relate to one another throughout the analysis and are therefore featured in the same chapter. By the term *composition* I mean features that cover the demographics of the congregants (age, ethnicity and SES)⁴⁰, where they live, and the size of the congregations (section 3.1, through to, and including 3.5). This part makes an attempt to chart the congregants. The *structure* part discusses the churches' organisations, how they are run, what type of leadership and staff there is, as well as what importance the church building holds to them (section 3.6 and 3.7). The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basic understanding of the congregations and the churches, before I discuss their activities in the next chapter.

When describing the analysed data topic-by-topic, I will focus on changes and adaptations that have occurred. The main objective here is to discover whether or not changes, or lack thereof, have been instigated as a result of the church's urban ecology and urban transformation processes. What does this say about the church and the ecology? What processes of urban transformation have brought about these changes, if any? In the instances where there are no changes, are there any other signs of the churches responding to the development in the urban ecology, or the demands of the city populations?

3.1 Age

When I asked questions about the age composition within the churches, I was given many different replies, and interestingly, most of the responses did not include a concrete age group,

⁴⁰ I have chosen not to let gender be a part of my research. Mainly because it has not been a subject in any of the other research projects I have used as inspiration, nor have my respondents mentioned it as an interesting topic. I have reason to believe that the sex/gender compositions within the congregations are fairly even. Some of the congregations have gender specific congregational groups, however these are fairly few.

but rather a 'life stage'. The most common answers were *Students/youths*, *Young professionals*, *Families*, *Empty nesters/middle aged*, and *Elderly/pensioners*.

My respondents were asked the question: 'What type of age composition is there within the congregation?' This led to a disparity in the replies that I received, as the interview guide did not give any alternatives. However, based on the answers I was given, I was still able to compose five categories for age groups that the congregants were part of.

The first category has been entitled *Students*. This comprises people between the age of 18 and 25 who are attending tertiary education. Young Australians usually start their tertiary education within two years after finishing high school and attend between three and five years.⁴¹ This category also includes international students.

The next category comprises the people that are in-between; they are the *Young professionals/adults <40 years of age*. This category mainly covers people between 18 and 40 years of age (usually just labelled the *young professionals* by my respondents). They have finished their education and are working, but have not had children yet. They can be single, have a partner, be married or divorced.

The third category is *Families*. I have interpreted this to be couples or single people with dependent children, where the children still attend church with their parents, and/or still live at home. There is no age bracket here, although it could probably be set as wide as 18 to 50 for parents, should it be necessary to create one.

The fourth category has been given different names by my respondents. I have chosen to call them *Middle aged*, but they can also be called the *empty nesters* indicating that their children have moved away from home. These are in the age bracket from the age of 40 and until they reach retirement. This category includes single, married, divorced, and widowed people.

The fifth and last category is the *Elderly/pensioners*. These are people from 60 years of age and up to the age where they stop attending church, or pass away (it can be as low as 55 due to the possibility for people to access their superannuation at this age) (Australian Government - The Treasury, n.d.).

⁴¹ My experience was that people attend university in Australia at the same age as in Norway and this would place the majority of them in the age bracket of 18 to 25. Schooling is compulsory between the age of six and 15, but the majority of students complete high school and continue on to an institution of higher education. For further reading on this subject I recommend '4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, 2000' ('Participation in Education: Beyond compulsory schooling') published by the ABS (2000).

3.1.a Dispersion of congregants among the churches

There are people from nearly all of the categories attending every one of the churches.⁴² However, there are some exceptions and these are the ones I will focus on. All the churches have elderly/pensioners attending, but compared to the overall size of the congregation the percentages differ. The majority have attending congregations where there are representatives from at least four out of the five life stages. The two churches that do not are Wesley Uniting and SSCoC. The former have an ageing and declining congregation and have problems attracting new members from any age group. The latter is a church with a predominant Asian student congregation.

The majority of the churches had more than one worship service during the course of the week. I was told by many of my respondents that they had different congregations for each of the services, and the people in these various service-congregations were also in different age groups. This was in part promoted by the church, as some of the services were primarily aimed at families or younger people, whereas others were liturgically traditional and attracted more elderly people. This means that the overall age of the attendees were evenly distributed across the scale, but that they gather in different services and have little contact with each other. Was this done in order to attract certain groups of people because the church was not able to meet the needs of every congregant with one type of service? The answer to this will be different from one church to the next. Some churches have had the same service schedule for decades, whereas others have made changes during the last years (See 4.1 *Worship services*).

To sum up *Age*, the attendees in these congregations are fairly evenly distributed. However, many of my respondents reported a gradual change in the age composition, and that the average age had been lowered during the last years. Several expressed that they previously had ageing congregations, but that these people are no longer attending church, and that this has made it necessary for them to make a new effort to recruit new people (See 4.3.e *Recruitment*).

3.2 Ethnicity

During the analysis of the material on ethnicity, I focussed on three issues. These were: *Ethnic churches*, *Predominant ethnicity*, and *International students*. Ethnicity is an area within sociology (and most other disciplines where it is an issue) that is widely contested. What does

⁴² The general tendencies at each church concerning *Age* can be found in Appendix 3.

ethnicity entail? What levels in society and identity can it be applied to? I have chosen to highlight three very different areas and hope, to some extent, to be able to draw some conclusions based on these.

In the case of the *ethnic churches* in the CBD, their ethnicity is connected to nationality. Australia is a country made up of immigrants, and most Australians will give an account of their heritage as either very diverse, or bound to one specific ethnicity. This is one understanding of ethnicity: national heritage or nationality. The second topic concerns the *predominant ethnicities* within the congregations. This topic is much wider and relates to visible ethnicity (appearance), language and heritage. Here I use my respondents' in-vivo terms, as I found it difficult to translate these into analytical terms without changing what these terms mean. The last topic is whether or not they have *international students* in the congregation; the reason for wanting to examine this is the connection between international students and multiculturalism. With this section I do not aim to exhaust the topic of ethnicity within these churches. That would be an impossible task. However, I will rather direct attention towards some topics that have stood out during the analysis.

3.2.a *Ethnic churches*

The *ethnic churches* cover the cases where a church is connected to a certain ethnic group, country, or district. Three of the churches in my study are related to specific non-Australian ethnicities: Scots' Church, Melbourne Welsh Church, and GLTC. There are clear differences between these churches as to how important ancestry is to their contemporary identity.

Scots' Church appears to have the least connection to their heritage. The senior minister is *imported* from Scotland, and the church's interior shows clear signs of being Scottish, but the congregation does not seem to place much emphasis on this. According to my respondent, there are still people in the congregation who are clearly Scottish, and people who claim to hail from Scotland. The church is working towards, and experiencing an increased multiculturalism within the congregation.

The circumstances are different for the second ethnic church, Melbourne Welsh Church. They claim that the majority of their present congregation have Welsh ancestry, and that they are a meeting point for 'all things Welsh' in Melbourne. They hold regular services in Welsh, and this can be the reason as to why they still attract an ethnic crowd.

The last one, GLTC, comprises a nearly 100% German congregation. This includes Germans who have recently come to Australia, as well as people who have spent nearly their entire life there. Many of the latter group speak German and hold on to their heritage, and

three of the four monthly services are in German. GLTC is also a meeting point for German people in the same manner as the Welsh Church is; however, as immigration from Germany is still ongoing there are several other German institutions in Melbourne. This is in contrast to the Welsh Church, which seems to be one of the few places left for Welsh people in Melbourne to gather. Even though both of these churches consider themselves meeting points, there are differences.

Another feature separating these three churches is language. Scots' does not offer any services in Scottish; this is probably one of the reasons as to why they have become the most integrated of these three. They have not had the same language barrier to deal with as the other two. The Welsh church holds two services in Welsh monthly, whereas GLTC only has one monthly service in English. The fact that Scots' have services in English makes it easier for them to attract non-Scottish people, than it is for GLTC with their German services. On the other hand, by offering German services it is easier for GLTC to maintain their ethnic profile and identity, both within the congregation and towards.

Another way of displaying ethnic heritage at these churches are religious festivals. At Scot's my respondent reported, that every year in July they have a Scottish worship service which is celebrated by Scots all around the world, but strangely not in Scotland at all. There are '[u]sually a couple of 100 extra people wearing kilts and playing bagpipes, all that kind of stuff at that service.' (A: 93) This can be seen as an attempt to preserve their ethnicity and provide an identity to the people that wish to attend a Scottish church. In the same manner, the Welsh Church has held on to their hymn singing festivals, and GLTC still has a traditional German Christmas celebration.

An additional difference concerning these ethnic churches is that they recruit new people to the congregation in diverse ways. Whereas Scots' evidently have been recruiting non-Scottish people for a long time, the Welsh Church is in decline and appears not to be successful in recruiting more Welsh people. In the German church, on the other hand, they are still welcoming new Germans into the congregation, although maybe on a shorter term basis than the first and second wave immigrants, as many of the new arrivals are on short-term employment contracts.

Both GLTC and the Welsh Church have only one minister who ministers to all of Melbourne, not just the CBD. Scots' on the other hand, have a pastoral team of four. Scots' also has a larger congregation and plan to reach out towards the CBD and the surrounding areas. In addition, they have a more central location than the other two. Scots' is also the only

one that claims to have some sort of ethnic and cultural diversity beyond the traditional congregation.

It seems to be the tendency that Scots' church is reaching out to the wider community, not really placing much emphasis on ethnicity. The Welsh Church still has a very strong Welsh profile, and has been reaching out to the community, but has not been as successful as Scots'. Due to the Welsh Church's location on the fringe of the CBD, they have attracted some students who live in the area. The GLTC reaches out to all things German and tries to get people interested in their culture and language. They are trying to connect with their neighbourhood in some ways, but at the same time they also seem unwilling to adapt to Australian society. Had they, for instance, offered lunch hour services in English, they would probably attract people from the nearby office buildings and shops. GLTC is the church with the strongest ethnic identity out of these three, both based on the ethnic composition of the congregation, as well as their use of the German language.

3.2.b Predominant ethnicity

This section relates to the predominant ethnicity within the congregation.⁴³ Most of the congregations are dominated by what my respondents have chosen to call *White Australians*, people whom visually and vocally appear to be of English descent. It has a meaning that I observed to be commonly understood by Australians, and is a term that appeared to be unproblematic to my respondents. I have chosen to continue this use, although the term is not perceived to be politically correct. The other types of predominant ethnicity, according to my respondents, are *White*, *Asian*, and *Mixed*. I have chosen to also continue the use of these in-vivo terms when describing the ethnic composition of the churches.

Nine out of the 14 churches were deemed mainly White Australian, one Asian (SSCoC), one merely white (GLTC), and the remaining three were mixed. However, this does not mean that there are no people of other ethnicities worshiping in these congregations. There are a number of different nationalities and ethnicities that regularly take part in their worship services.

It seems that most of the churches have a majority of White Australian congregants. The only churches that claim to have mixed congregations are St Paul's and the two Catholics. It is understandable that these are more mixed, since most of the Catholics who have immigrated to Australia since WW2 have been of some other nationality than British or

⁴³ The general tendencies at each church concerning *Predominant ethnicity* can be found in Appendix 3.

Irish. The other churches are predominantly White Australian, except for SSCoC which caters to a mainly Asian congregation. In most instances, the ethnic diversity is limited to a family or small group.

It is, however, strange that these churches are not more ethnically diverse as 38% of the people who live in the inner city suburbs are born overseas (see 2.3.e *Gentrification*). The reason for this is most likely that in Melbourne, as well as in many other major urban cities, ethnic groups prefer to gather in their own congregations instead of joining an already established one. 'Religiously similar ethnic groups can provide primary relationships in a complex impersonal world, meeting human needs for fellowship and coming together with others who share a similar view on significant issues.' (Gold, 2002, p. 223) I can especially see this as prevalent when there are language barriers. Some churches make their facilities available for non-Australian Christian groups, but except for these cases, SSCoC is the only one with a congregation that is visibly not White-Australian.

An important question here is whether or not multiculturalism is the direction the congregation and the ministers wish to encourage. Several of my respondents told me that this is something they have been working towards, whereas some claimed that they do not have sufficient resources. Others claimed that they tried, but have not had any response. Some of the churches have a big enough challenge getting people into the church at all. I am not saying that it is more difficult to attract other ethnicities, but it does seem like immigrant groups either wishes to gather by themselves, rather than to join an established congregation. This observation is based on the number of, for instance Cantonese or Indonesian congregations, which gather in the church buildings or halls of the CBD churches. Especially joining small inner city congregations might be seen as less attractive for recent immigrants, especially from non-English speaking countries. This can be both because it is more difficult to develop a large network within a small group, but also because the activities and services offered lack diversity. This is an issue also described by Eiesland (2000) on the topic of attracting young people to an established congregation. In her account of the difficulties the United Methodist Church's traditional congregation had, as far as attracting newcomers, she reports that issues keeping newcomers from joining were a lack of, for instance, age-graded programs for children, and the dependency on the congregants to perform tasks (Ibid, p. 116).

3.2.c International students

The majority of the ethnicities mentioned by my respondents are South East Asian; this is due to an increasing number of Asians immigrating, both to study and work.⁴⁴ This leads me to the third topic concerning ethnicity: whether or not the church has a large international student congregation. Some of the churches have worship services at international students, whereas others attempt to draw them to ordinary services. As many of the international students live in, or close to the city, and are staying in Australia without their family, they are easily attracted to these church communities. The Catholic churches have had the most success attracting students, alongside the SSCoC. This is a result of their student ministry groups and tertiary student chaplainries. Most of the other Protestant churches have small pockets of students, but the focus here is more directed toward the Australian students.

3.3 SES

I have defined *Socio-economic status* as the interaction between social and economic factors relating to an individual, which can provide knowledge of this person's *class*, or position in Australian society. These factors are a combination between education, income, and occupation.⁴⁵ It was difficult to take a stand on what the different classes should be called and whether it should be called classes at all. The term 'class' might seem passé in an academic text, but is still very much in use in common language. Hence, when I asked my respondents what sort of SES composition there was within the congregation, nearly all of them replied in terms of class. Some replied based on the people's education or occupation, but the majority referred to a class. I decided to employ the in-vivo terms of my respondents used when describing when they ascribed their congregants a *class* and ended up with the following

⁴⁴ It is not a matter of fact that Asian immigrants join Christian churches, as Christianity is not a traditional religion in Asia. However, my respondent at SSCoC enlightened me with the fact that many of the immigrants that come to Australia to study or work have a Christian background. The reason for this is that they come from wealthy families and have thus had the opportunity to attend private schools in their home country; these are in many cases Christian: '(...), so they'd go to Catholic schools, they'd go to Anglican schools because of the quality of the education. Since probably the mid to late '90s, churches in Asia are very strong and there's a lot of, I'd say with the charismatic movement, there's been a lot of strong churches in Asia, and so we're getting increasingly students that are already Christian coming (...)'. (J: 215)

⁴⁵ In Schifloe's *Mennesker og samfunn*, SES is explained as: 'Vi bruker begrepet sosioøkonomisk status som en samlebetegnelse som sammenfatter en persons plassering i det samfunnsmessige ulikhetshierarkiet.' (2003, p. 230)

categories: *Disadvantaged*, *Lower middle class*, *Middle class*, *Upper middle class*, and *Upper class*.⁴⁶

Since there are no fixed definitions of these classes (or levels of SES) I have composed descriptions suiting my impression of urban Australian society.⁴⁷ *Disadvantaged* is a collective term where I have included people with one or more of the following issues: Living in public housing, receiving income support, having no permanent residence, unemployment, drug and/or alcohol dependency problems. I have defined *Lower middle class* as people who work in the service industry, or clerical occupations where little or no skills are required, and who have a low income. The next step on the ladder is *Middle class*, which in my understanding covers people who are working in white-collar clerical positions, usually managerial, with a demand for tertiary education and/or other skills, with medium income. The third level of middle class is *Upper middle class*, which I have defined as people working as higher professionals or higher managerial, with high levels of tertiary education and above average income.⁴⁸ The *Upper class* is the last level on this ladder and not well represented among my churches; I have defined it as the social group with the highest status as a result of a combination of high income, wealth and powerful positions in society. Based on the information I have been given by my respondents, and my knowledge of Melbourne, these definitions are serviceable for this thesis.⁴⁹

3.3.a *Disadvantaged*

There are six churches that claim to have disadvantaged people in their congregation. All these churches, except for CSBC, are either Anglican or Catholic and my respondents claimed they have people from *all walks of life* attending. However, are CSBC and Eastern Hill in their right when claiming to have disadvantaged people in their congregation when they

⁴⁶ This being said, I have defined the different classes in the text and given them meaning that might not have been the intention of my respondents when they used the term. It is necessary to point out here that even though I give the impression that I employ the term class in the same manner as my respondents, I in fact do it in a much more technical sense, as I have composed sub-categories with clear definitions.

⁴⁷ If the definitions were used to describe the entire Australian society it would be necessary to focus on several other spectres of society such as 'working class', or people with an agricultural background as well. As the churches in my study are located in an urban ecology, there are few people working in for instance, factories or mines. The 'working class' can be found in exurbs or fringe cities, as well as in the 'outback'. None of my respondents used the terms working class or manual labourers at any time, and the only churches I find it reasonable that they are part of the congregations, are the ones that have reported that their congregations include people from 'all walks of life'.

⁴⁸ The upper middle class has also been defined as: 'In contrast with the position of routine white-collar workers, the upper sections of the middle class, especially higher professionals and higher managers, have high levels of pay with well-defined career expectations, shorter hours of work, and better pension and sick pay arrangements. (...) (Abercrombie et al, 2000, p. 224)

⁴⁹ The general tendencies at each church concerning whether the congregants have high or low SES, can be found in Appendix 3.

provide free meals in conjunction with a service? This is problematic as the people have an added incentive to attend. Does this mean that the recipients actually want to attend a worship service, or are they attending primarily to receive the free meal? It does not seem to make any difference for the churches; the important thing for them is that they are able to provide these services to people who need them. On the other hand, it would be wrong to say that the only people who really belong to the congregation are the people that come to the services without any material incentive to do so. However, I would rather claim that the disadvantaged are a part of the outreach services that these churches provide, rather than the regular congregation.

The churches that claim to have disadvantaged people in their congregation are all, as mentioned above, Anglican or Catholic (except for CSBC, which has already been covered). I get the impression that the reason these have been able to attract the disadvantaged to their congregation, is because they are more approachable. They are open all day. This is different from most of the Protestant churches, which have fewer services, and shorter opening hours. In these churches, there are volunteers who staff the church; these volunteers most likely would not let a *street person* in.⁵⁰ The Anglican and Catholic churches are also the dominant Australian denominations. The most convincing explanation might just be that the majority of disadvantaged people belong to either Anglicanism or Catholicism, and therefore attend these churches.

The disadvantaged category does not only comprise people who are addicted to drugs and/or live on the streets, although this is the manner in which most of my respondents described them. At Holy Trinity the disadvantaged are pensioners and elderly people who live in the neighbourhood and need help from the church at times. This is especially the case for Holy Trinity, because they are located at some distance from the CBD and deal mainly with people who live within their parish boundaries. There are probably also other churches which have this sort of disadvantaged people in their congregation as well, but because of the major disparity between them, and the *street people*, I can imagine that they have opted for including them in the *lower middle class* instead.

3.3.b Middle class

I will now move on to the middle class, and middle categories. It is not possible to know exactly what my informants mean when they use the term *middle class*, or even *upper* or *lower middle class*. However, I can imagine that the middle class in Australia is fairly similar

⁵⁰ How open and available the churches are to the different city populations will be discussed further, see 4.4 *Availability and approachability*.

to the middle class in the UK as the UK and Australia have similar heritage, government and standard of living. The term *working class* can also be used in Australia, but to a lesser degree with regard to the people who live in the highly urbanised areas. However, there exists a lower middle class that have about the same pay and benefits as the working class, but their work is still white collar (for example store clerks).

With respect to the middle class, the information gathered matched my expectations. Based on the information on where the congregants live, and the distance many of them travel every week to attend services, I assumed that the majority were at least middle class, as it takes both time and resources to travel from the outer suburbs to the city. It does not only take a sense of commitment and belonging to make this trip weekly, they also have to have free time and means of transportation. Concerning the congregants belonging to the upper middle class, all but one of the churches reported to have people from this class in their congregation. The middle class, both upper and lower, were the most prevalent among these congregants. There does not appear to be any recent changes in relation to the number of people in the congregations who are members of the middle classes.

3.3.c Upper class

Four churches identify people from the upper class in their congregation. The first one is the Anglican Cathedral, St Paul's. This is not unexpected given that this is the seat of the Anglican Church in Melbourne, and they attract a variety of visitors, both from the upper and lower class, including members of the royal family. Another church that reports to have upper class members is Wesley Uniting. During the interview, my respondent spoke extensively about the historical connection this church has both the working class and the upper class, but when asked about the SES of the people in the congregation the reply was that: 'The only people here are middle to upper professionals, they are the top judges of Australia, medical people (...).' (G: 764) This indicated that there had been a change in the demographics of this church during the last decades, as this church used to attract a much larger and more diverse congregation. I am not sure whether this shift happened because the people from the lower classes left the church, or because they have moved upwards in terms of SES. This is a possible development, but I have not received any information from my respondent to support this speculation.

The third church with members from the upper class is St Francis'; this is not a parish church, but a mass centre. When asked about what type of SES the people in the congregation

have, my respondent told me that they range from ‘parliamentarians to street people.’ (M: 111) This answer indicates that this is not a particularly posh church, but rather diverse.

The fourth and last church which identifies their members as upper class is St Johns Southgate. The difference between this church and the other ones with upper class members is that my respondent claimed they are ‘upper class in terms of income’ (L: 218). I interpret this to mean that they are in highly paid positions, but that they are not necessarily ‘powerful’ positions in society. They have a high income, but they have not yet achieved the status of the upper class. One of the reasons that St Johns cater to this type of upper class people might be because the expensive high-rise apartments surrounding the church are often owned by wealthy people, such as business people who wish to have an urban lifestyle.

3.4 Location of congregants

A central topic to investigate with respect to urban ecology is the location of the congregants; i.e. where the congregants live. The questions initially used in my interviews were inspired by the NCS questionnaire, and focus on how many of the congregants live within what distance from the church, ten-minute walk, ten minute drive, or more than fifteen minutes drive. The answers I received were more based on *where* people live, not necessarily how far away from the church it is. I was usually told that a certain number of people lived in the inner suburbs, and so on. The answers I was given to the initial questions forced me to modify the questioning into: ‘Where do the congregants live?’ This was followed up by other questions to specify when necessary. In this category, as well as with most of the others, it was difficult to put the answers into very specific groupings. For instance, I had not taken into account that there was a difference between the *inner* and *outer* suburbs, or that people actually could come from all over the state. In the end of this section, I will also discuss the connection between location and diminishing attendance.

I have been able to construct four categories based on my respondents’ replies that cover all of the options. The first category is *Walking distance/inner city* which covers the inner city areas of the CBD, Southbank, and Docklands (although Docklands is not within walking distance of, for instance, Holy Trinity). The next category is called *Ten-minute drive/inner suburbs* and covers the remaining inner suburbs which formally constitute the City of Melbourne. The third category is *15-minutes + drive/(outer) suburbs*. This covers the rest of the suburbs surrounding Melbourne. The fourth and last category is *State-wide* and includes the people who travel from all of Victoria to attend services.

The majority of the respondents were able to provide me with specific figures when replying in regards to the first two categories, either the specific number of people, or a percentage. The third category was usually considered to include ‘the rest’, or ‘the majority’ of the congregation.⁵¹

3.4.a Walking distance/inner city

The numbers I was given in the first category, *Walking distance/inner city*, were in some cases very specific and in other cases very vague. In many of the instances where they had precise numbers for this category, they listed them as ‘no more than 10’ or ‘less than 15’. In some of the cases they gave specific numbers, whereas others gave percentages of the overall congregation. These ranged from four people to about 25 % (of a congregation of about 120 people).

This category is small, but evidently growing. However, as mentioned above, I was not initially clear on the difference between the inner city and the inner suburbs. This might have led to these numbers not being completely correct and the inner city numbers being inflated at the expense of the inner suburbs. These methodological problems aside, it is clear that the figures within this category have been subject to change during the last years. Many of my respondents said that they would not have had anybody in this category between five and ten years ago, but that that had changed now because of the new residential areas in the city. St Paul’s reported that: ‘(...) the proportion of the congregation we have who live in the city have grown from practically nothing to (...) ten percent in the last twenty years.’ (B: 359) However, the growth of inner city residents does not correspond with the growth of inner city residents attending these churches. Although several thousand people have moved to the recently developed areas surrounding the CBD, only a small percentage have found their way to the inner city churches.⁵²

3.4.b Ten minute drive/inner suburbs

The next category is *Ten-minute drive/inner suburbs*. My respondents placed few people in this category. There might be people who were included in the former category who live in the inner suburbs rather than the inner city, but given that there were some problems establishing exactly how far away *walking distance* was, I cannot be certain. The only church that stood out in this category was Scots’ where my respondent reported that most of the

⁵¹ The general tendencies for each church concerning where the congregants live can be found in Appendix 3.

⁵² The challenges of recruiting CBD residents will also be discussed in part 4.3.e *Recruitment*.

people who lived within a ten-minute drive belonged to a certain service-congregation. 'You'd probably cover quite a lot of our evening congregation, which is a younger group of folk, some students that live in student accommodation in North Melbourne for example, they are about ten minutes away by car.' (A: 247) The other churches had little or no data on who lived in the inner suburbs compared to the outer.

3.4.c 15-minutes + drive/(outer) suburbs

The information from the third category, *15-minutes + drive/(outer) suburbs*, was, again, very unspecific. Largely it covered the majority of the congregation or 'the rest' of them. Evidently it is not easy to keep track of where everybody lives, and it does seem like some of the congregations are very scattered across Metropolitan Melbourne. The majority of the churches do not have membership lists detailing the location of every member, resulting in follow-up questions about where in the suburbs not yielding much by way of clarification.

For some of the Protestant churches, the majority lived in the south eastern suburbs, whereas the people from the Anglican and the Catholic churches to a larger degree lived 'all over'. The results led to the conclusion that a clear majority of the congregants in all the churches live in the suburbs, more than a 15-minute drive from the CBD. One of my respondents said that this probably held true for the last hundred years, as people had been moving further and further out. He claimed that 20 years ago there would not be any congregants living further from the CBD than 8 miles out (which was where this respondent lived), whereas now he was probably the one in the traditional congregation who lived closest to the church. The rest lived as far out as 25 miles (which is a 40 minute train ride one way). This church had also experienced that when people moved further out, they did not attend as regularly.

3.4.d State-wide

The fourth category is 'State-wide' and was one I had not initially foreseen. There were two churches that drew congregants from all over the state, St Michael's and the Welsh Church. The former claimed to have people coming in from all over Victoria. St Michael's offer only one weekly service and this might make it easier to understand why people come from all over Victoria. The congregants will not miss out on any of the congregational activities as everything happens on Sundays when they are there. They also offer some activities during the week, but the majority are on Sundays. The other church that claims to have people

coming in from all over the state is the Welsh Church. However, these people are rather a semi-regular service-congregation who only partakes in the services in Welsh.

3.4.e Location and diminishing attendance

An aspect that was emphasised by my respondents with regards to location is the elderly people who are not able to get to church by themselves anymore (especially with Melbourne's dependency on cars). Some churches have coped with this problem by providing a chaplain for the elderly⁵³, who visits when necessary, but this is a question of resources, staff, and money. Some of the churches appear to have come to terms with this development. Although they are sad to lose these members, they are happy to see new ones come in. As my respondent at CSBC said when I asked whether or not the number of attendees were declining or increasing:

I suppose the declining of the congregation is the elderly people who come in from a distance, [the ones who have] very, very faithfully held things together and now can't come in on a regular basis. And one of our pastors in particular, his role is to care for them because we see it as a responsibility for people that have been part of our church to care for them as long as they still want to be in our care. So we greatly value those people. But that group of people, that would be the group that is dropping off. (E: 196)

Some churches also reported that a number of congregants switched to suburban churches when starting families, both because of the long distance and because they wanted to form ties with their neighbourhood community. People often move when they settle down to start a family and that can be another reason why they switch churches. Geographical mobility affects the type of religious institutions people join. 'Group pressure will be eased by mobility that breaks old ties and introduces movers to new options and excludes previous options, and this could result in religious switching.' (Sherkat and Wilson, 1995, p. 1000) It is more difficult to form these ties when they attend a church in the city, as they might not have the necessary contact with other parents. Important here are Sunday schools or other congregational groups. They want to be part of this type of community and this is difficult to achieve a city church.

⁵³ The German Lutheran community has established a retirement home, the Martin Luther Homes in Boronia, where the minister at GLTC offers regular services (2.6.i *German Lutheran Trinity Church*).

At St Johns, on the other hand, they reported having regained members, or have new people join the congregation when their children had left home.

Yeah, in fact we have a high percentage of members who are people who have come to us from other congregations, and when we talk to them about their membership here, their response is ‘we just want to come somewhere and sit’ because they’ve been at their local churches and the Sunday school and the music groups and the other communities and now they come here and say [exhales deeply]. (L: 148)

He continues by explaining that these people had been involved in a suburban church for so long that they were now looking for a place where they could come and just worship without having to partake in different groups.⁵⁴ They wanted to attend a church where they only had to be present on Sundays and would not run into the other congregants at the supermarket. The reason they came to St Johns was that this church gathered people from all over Melbourne. This subsequently diminishes the chance of having to *share* the church with anybody they know. I will discuss attendance and stability of the congregations more in-depth in the following section.

3.5 Attendance and stability

In this section, *attendance and stability* will be discussed. My focus will be the changes that have occurred during the last years, as well as over a longer period of time. By registering the number of people attending, I hope to be able to comment on some of the tendencies among these churches; especially concerning which ones are growing and which are diminishing. Are there any changes at all, and what can these be attributed to? For instance, can they be ascribed to residential changes or to internal congregation politics/policies? I will also attempt to compare them to the findings of the NCLS. Are they representative for Australian churches overall, or are there discrepancies? These are questions that will be addressed throughout this chapter. I will first give an account of the churches’ *Attendance*, before I move on to *Stability* where I have recorded my findings concerning the steadiness of the attendance, and what type of changes that have occurred.

⁵⁴ The different types of groups congregants can partake in are outlined in 4.2 *Congregational groups*.

While doing the interviews, I asked questions about the number of people in the congregation, and whether or not there had been any changes during the last years. It was not until I started analysing the data I realised the numbers I had received from my respondents related to three different issues, and that the category *Attendance* would be problematic if I took the figures into account without categorising them. Some of my respondents told me the overall number of people in the congregation, whereas others told me the number of people who are formally members⁵⁵. Some of the respondents listed the number of people attending each service without giving an overall number. This made it difficult to know how many people who attend regularly, and how many are occasional visitors. I was given few specific figures on the people attending services on a regular basis. My findings and problems here coincide with the challenges Chaves describes in *Congregations in America* (2004). He notes that it is difficult to know how many people are members of the congregation because the churches define the number of members differently. I have decided to use the same definition as he does when addressing the size of the congregations: ‘the number of individuals regularly participating in a congregation’s religious life.’ (Chaves 2004, p. 17) Here, I understand *religious life* primarily as regular worship services.

The recording of attendees is one issue I perceive as relating to the urban ecology of these churches. It might not be seen as possible, or even necessary, to record the exact numbers of attendees because there are so many people coming by whom they may never see again. In smaller, more close-knit, suburban congregations they will instantly become aware of new people attending. The city churches might not, although this depends entirely on the church and its size.

Attendance was thus divided into four subcategories: *Attendance weekly*, *Attendance by service*, *Affiliated congregants*, and *Registry*. *Attendance weekly* is the only category where I have been given numbers from all of the churches. *Attendance by service* was divided into each service the church offered. This resulted in seven new subcategories where I recorded the number of people attending the different ones. (I have, however, decided not to give this subcategory much attention, as the figures provided here are mainly the same as in *Attendance*

⁵⁵ The term ‘members’ in this connection has two different meanings, both formal members in a registry and persons that belongs to the congregation more informally. When using the term in *this section* it signifies formal members when it is mentioned in conjunction with the member registries, however, in general throughout the thesis, I will use members to describe people who attend worship services regularly.

weekly.) *Affiliated congregants* cover the number of people seen as attending regularly, and *Registry* includes the number of people in the member registry (where applicable).⁵⁶

3.5.a Attending weekly

The first, and most complete, subcategory is *Attendance weekly*.⁵⁷ The numbers gathered here will be compared to the numbers from the NCLS⁵⁸. The number of people attending weekly differs from church to church. In one case it is as low as 20 people, at the other end of the scale the number is as high as 14 000. This indicates large divergences between the churches and their capacity. The church with the lowest number of people, Old Cathedral, has only two services a week, whereas the one with the highest, St Francis', offers in excess of 40 services weekly. But then there is St Michael's, which only offers one service a week and has the third largest congregation based on attendance. I will have a closer look at worship services in the next chapter⁵⁹, but see it as necessary to point out the number of services can be relevant to the number of people attending throughout the week.

All the churches keep records of the people that attend, but the assiduousness of this recording differs from church to church. My respondent at Scots' told me that one of the older members meticulously counts the number of people attending each service; if he cannot attend he gets somebody else to do it for him. However, this is a rarity and most of the figures I have received are approximates. For instance, St Michael's told me that they have a congregation of *between* 600 to 800 people, meaning that one Sunday there can be 600 attendees, whereas the next there are 800.

As the number of people attending is accounted for weekly, one person can be counted more than once. One person can, at least in theory, visit a church with a daily service five times during one week and be counted as five different people. Therefore the number of people attending weekly does not give a reliable picture of the size of the congregation. Hence

⁵⁶ As mentioned above, specifying the number of people that belong to a congregation became a more problematic issue than I thought, mainly because it is difficult to establish a correct figure of weekly attendance. Should it be the number of people that attend weekly, the ones that attend regularly, or the people that overall feel they have a connection to the church and see it as *their* church (although they only attend ceremonies and religious holidays)? Because of the difficulties ascertaining this I decided to use the figures my respondents had given me in connection to the different services when these are mentioned. In the instances where they have given me the total number of people I have listed them as the full size of the congregation. In the cases where there is a member registry, I have received the number of people listed in this as well.

⁵⁷ The number of people attending each church weekly can be found in Appendix 3.

⁵⁸ The NCLS has performed several surveys. I will mainly focus on data from the National Church Life Survey 2001, where 17 congregations and 435 000 church attendees answered the survey. These included Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant churches (NCLS n.d.).

⁵⁹ See 4.1 *Worship services*.

it is much easier to make estimates on what the number of people belonging to the congregation is when there are few services.

3.5.b Affiliated congregants

The next subcategory is *Affiliated congregants* and covers the number of the people in the congregation who are seen as a regular part of the church life, the people who attend regularly and partake in other congregational activities as well. Some of the churches have congregations that are smaller than this, whereas some of the others are much larger, two hundred or even more. The odd ones out are St Francis' and SSCoC. St Francis' has some 12 - 14 000 attendees weekly because they are a *mass centre* rather than a parish church. My respondent here told me that about 50-55% of the people attend regularly. However, I assume that the actual number of people is lower than 50% of the weekly attendance, as I was told that many of these people attend more than one service during the week. According to the NCLS the average number of people in an Australian congregation is between 60 and 70 people⁶⁰. This will make the majority of the CBD congregations larger than the average, although there are a couple that are smaller.

3.5.c Registry

Registry is the third subcategory. Three churches reported to have member registries: SSCoC, and the Lutheran churches GLTC and St Johns Southgate. None of the Anglican or Catholic churches have one, either because they have parish boundaries or are a cathedral or mass centre.⁶¹ The Lutheran churches both have in common that they have more people in the registry than are attending regularly services, whereas at SSCoC it is opposite. SSCoC have between 1000 and 1200 people attending weekly, but even though they encourage their congregants to join the church formally, their member registry only number about 400. My respondent explains the disparity in these figures like this:

(...) whilst we have 1200 attending, we only have about 400 members as such, and the majority of those would be married couples. There's a core group that have (...) been students here many years ago, and have now become residents out in the suburbs and

⁶⁰ When counting this the NCLS: 'Congregational leaders were asked to estimate how many different people, both adults and children, attend worship services at their congregation in a typical week.' (NCLS, 1999, p. 1)

⁶¹ The Cathedral and the mass centre do not cater to any geographical group; they are open to anybody and attract people from everywhere due to their location and availability in the city centre.

are still coming to support the core values of the church because they are interested (...). (J: 156)

SSCoC have a large congregation of international students, which in many cases are transient. When they finish their education the majority of them will go back to their home country, or find a job in another city. The people who are willing to make a formal commitment to the church are the ones who are settled and have a family. I received little information about what it entails to be a formal member. As I understood from SSSCoC it does include more of a financial commitment to become a formal member, this might be an explanation as to why they have few students in the registries.

In the two Lutheran churches there are more people in the registry than there are attending services regularly⁶². These are people that perceive GLTC to be their home church and I got the impression that many of them feel like they still belong and attend on special occasions. At GLTC my respondent told me that they have 6-700 people attending the two Christmas Eve services (a much higher number than the registry which numbers about 350 people). Neither of my respondents gave any particular reasons as to why there are so large discrepancies between the formal members and regular attendees.

3.5.d Stability

I will now move on to the issue of *Stability*. At the start of this project I expected the majority of the churches in the CBD to be in decline because of urban factors, such as people living further and further from the CBD. I have therefore investigated if regular attendance is steady, or have there been changes concerning attendance? After analysing the material, I divided it into four topics. These were whether or not the congregations were increasing or decreasing, if there were any changes over time, and what changes there were, if any, during the course of the calendar year.

3.5.e Increasing or decreasing

The first topic was fairly simple to plot. Most of my respondents were aware of whether the numbers were going up or down; the problem here was rather whether or not my respondents were reliable concerning this issue. I am not claiming that they lied to me, but I can imagine it to be difficult to admit if your church is in decline. The majority of the churches reported to

⁶² By 'regularly' here I mean at least monthly.

be stable and growing, which I interpreted to mean that the numbers in general have been stable, but that when changes have occurred, the numbers have had a tendency to move up rather than down.⁶³ There was only one church that reported being merely stable, St Paul's Cathedral.

There were two churches that had decreasing numbers, but both of these were also entering a phase of transition the following year. These were St James Old Cathedral and Wesley Uniting. St James Old Cathedral had been experiencing a stable decline. However, a new priest had recently been assigned to develop a ministry directed towards a new target group. My respondent told me that the number of people in the congregation had increased recently, because a group of people had followed this new minister from St Jude's Church in Carlton, and that the numbers were expected to rise.

The second church, which had been declining, was Wesley Uniting. They had about 100 elderly parishioners and difficulties bringing new people into the congregation. However, they had plans to merge with a Cantonese congregation that had worshipped in the church for decades. I was told that there was some scepticism from the traditional congregation since the Cantonese congregation was twice their size, and their fear was that: '(...) we don't want to be a little Anglo-Saxon group attached to a large Chinese church.' (G: 584) These changes were still in the planning stages and had not yet been put through. However, this demonstrates that the churches that were experiencing decline were attempting to turn things around. During my data collection, I found no traces of recent churches that had vanished. The churches rather seemed to be restructuring in order to persevere.

3.5.f Stability over time

I will now have a closer look at stability over time. *Over time* is a very vague term, but in this case it is necessary because the category does not cover a fixed period. When I asked questions on whether or not there had been any changes concerning the size of the congregation during the last years, some of my respondents reported a drop in attendance, followed by a rise due to new leadership. I will address this issue, before I have a look at changes that have occurred within the other churches.

Five of the churches reported to have had an increase in attendance due to new leadership.⁶⁴ At two of the churches the number of members had increased as the result of a new minister with a new ministry. In the three other churches, people left the congregation

⁶³ Whether or not attendance was increasing or decreasing at each church can be found in Appendix 3.

⁶⁴ See Appendix 3 for the churches that have experienced changes as result of leadership change.

because of internal difficulties. Their numbers have been increasing during the last years. In these cases the rise in attendance is easily identified as a result of new leadership.

There had been no conflict at St Augustine's and Holy Trinity, but rather a need for a minister with a new vision. At Holy Trinity the diocese were about to close down the parish when the present vicar asked if he could try out a new type of ministry; spiritual training. This congregation has now grown from about a dozen people to 80 in only a few years. This is the same process that has now been started at St James Old Cathedral. Here, as well as at St Augustine's and Holy Trinity, the former minister retired, and there was no conflict involved, although the traditional congregation have had problems accepting the changes. The changes in leadership have led to other changes, such as new ministries, and a rise in attendance.

The remaining churches reported that their numbers had either stable-and-increasing attendance, or decreasing. What does this say about these churches? I got the impression that the impacts of the urban transformation have not been as great as I originally imagined. Does that mean that they are failing in bringing in new people, or do they not have any interest in it? Most of my respondents expressed a wish to increase the size of the congregation. Another point that was made by some of my respondents was that even though attendance was stable, this did not necessarily mean that new people were not coming into the congregation. Some churches experienced that when people were dropping off, new people joined. At CSBC my respondent mentioned that even though the older congregants were leaving the congregation, new members were replacing them. My respondent explained this shift like this:

I see that as a really natural thing. The group that is coming is the younger group who is more active and actually living in the city. So that's where the change is. I'm greatly encouraged by that. (E: 206)

St Johns Southgate had a similar experience:

We find that we have a turnover membership here of probably close to 40% every couple of years, because a lot of our membership doesn't live in the area, so they come in from outside. If they're older, once their health starts going, they can't drive anymore, so they can't get to church. (L: 124)

Had the church been in their neighbourhood they would be able to get there easily, but as they live far away, they are dropping off. The new, supposedly younger crowd coming in seem to

be living closer by.⁶⁵ These churches have experienced some change in the demographics and location of their congregants, but it has not affected the number of people attending.

3.5.g Stability during the calendar year

The next category covers any changes through the course of the calendar year. Whereas most of the churches that had particular experiences on this topic reported that there were more people attending during religious holidays, some of them also experienced having less people then. This was mainly because these coincide with the holidays and semester breaks. Some of the churches have a large student congregation and there are less people present during school holidays. This is especially prevalent at SSCoC; most of their congregation often go back to their home country during long semester breaks.

Only one church reported having more people in during the summer, St Paul's Cathedral. The most reasonable explanation for this is that these visitors are tourists as the CBD attracts a large number of tourists yearly. The CBD is the centre of attention for many tourists, not only because it is the centre of Victorian public transportation and the site of many hotels, but also because it is scattered with tourist attractions such as St Paul's Cathedral.

3.5.h Comparing the attendance numbers to the NCLS

This section has been concerned with mapping the different ways of looking at the size of the congregations, as well as the different issues concerning stability in attendance. I will sum up this section by having a quick look at some of the findings from the NCLS on congregational size and vitality. The NCLS found that some aspects of the vitality of a congregation were related to size, but that these are mainly found in the extremes. This means that the numerically large congregations were more likely to be growing, and the small ones more likely to be diminishing.

However, growth does not necessarily seem to be a goal in itself for many of these churches and these findings correlates with those of the NCLS. The NCLS found that small churches seemed to fear growth induced by the need to survive, as this might influence the family feel and closeness of the congregation. The larger ones, on the other hand, welcomed growth because it was expected to strengthen the congregation; they did not fear that their community would become weaker (NCLS, 1999). This means that the vitality of these

⁶⁵ See 4.3.e *Recruitment* for the ways these churches attempt to recruit the new inner city residents.

churches does not entirely depend on urban factors such as residential patterns, or the diminishing focus on organised religion, but also on the eagerness of the minister and social strength of the congregation. My data corresponds with these findings. The large churches were more focussed on growth, whereas the smaller ones realised that it was necessary, but were having problems dealing with any changes this might include. I believe that these are challenges that most small churches will face, and that this is not in relation to the urban ecology.

3.6 Leadership structure and staff

This section concerns the leadership structure and employed staff. The leadership structure within the different churches gives insight into how decisions are made and who holds the power, whereas the section concerning the staff describes the paid positions. I will discuss the unpaid/volunteers in the next chapter (See 4.2.d *Service groups*). Issues that will be explored here are whether or not they employ pastoral teams, and how many people work within the churches. Some attention will be given to whether or not they perform maintenance themselves.

Leadership structure was a complicated category to analyse because many of my respondents were not clear when explaining the type of leadership structure their church has. In many cases there were several levels of management, and the decision making process was complicated. Some churches were run with congregational involvement, either by representatives or by a church meeting: In some instances elected elders made up the entire church council, in other cases there were only a couple of representatives from the congregation and the rest of the council consisted of employees, such as the minister or the manager of finance. The people in the council were given different tasks and were usually elected for a certain period of time. The exception seemed to be the Anglican and Catholic churches which have more of a top-down organisational structure. This was also true for Wesley Uniting.

One of the most visible volunteer and leadership groups within the Protestant churches is the elders. Not only are they part of the leading body at the church, but they also seem to perform a lot of the tasks that need to be done. In addition they are part of the church council and in this way affect the daily running of the church, alongside the minister.

3.6.a Number of ministers

Half of the churches have a pastoral team (two or more ministers on staff), whereas the other half only has one minister.⁶⁶ It is difficult to identify any common factors that could explain why some churches have a team, while others do not. There are large differences between the numbers of people within each team; they range between two and 16. There are also differences as to where a large team is needed and where a small team is sufficient. An appropriate question might be whether they have a big organisation because they have such a large team, or if they have a large team because their tasks are so many. Places, such as St Francis' need a large group of ministers to be able to perform the excess of 40 masses they offer weekly. St Michael's on the other hand, which has a team of two, offer only one weekly service. These two ministers have divided the tasks between them; Dr. McNab holds the weekly service, whereas the assistant minister only performs weddings. It seems that the reasons why many of the churches do not have more extensive organisations, more groups etc, is because they lack the capacity, for instance because they have only one minister. In these churches there can be more pressure on the members to take on chores, such as chaplaincy for the elders. However, this will depend on the size of the congregation as well.

Out of the four Anglican churches, two of them have pastoral teams, and the other two do not. The differences between these are their daily functions. The two Anglican churches that only have one minister (vicar) are small parish churches. Both of these have been threatened by closing, and there has been very little activity there for a long time. The two other churches are Eastern Hill and St Paul's Cathedral. Both of these offer several services daily, and this would clearly be difficult without more than one minister to perform them. Eastern Hill is technically a parish church, but it has a different function than the two smaller ones, both because it is Anglo-Catholic and because of its location and history. St Paul's is a cathedral and traditionally the seat of the bishop. Both of these also have associate ministers who work part-time. The same overall observations can be made for the two Catholic churches; the parish church has only one minister, whereas the mass centre, St Francis', has a team.

There does not seem to be such a pattern concerning the Protestant churches. Half of the churches have teams, while the other half does not. The churches with teams have larger organisations and are more diverse, but there are about the same number of people attending. The only clear commonality between the Protestant churches that only have one minister is

⁶⁶ Which churches have single ministers and which churches have pastoral teams can be found in Appendix 3.

that they only have services on Sundays. The ones that have teams have services on weekdays as well (except St Michael's).

It does, however, appear as if the churches which have a pastoral team are more stable than the ones with only one minister. As discussed above there has been an increase in attendance in the churches where there has been a change of leadership. Four of the five churches discussed here had one single minister, which can lead to the conclusion that churches with a pastoral team are more stable and less at risk of a schism. However, at the churches where the minister had retired and a new one was instated new ministries were introduced, drawing a new congregation. This is also an important development and can mean that where a single minister is hired, the church can explore its undeveloped potential more freely than if it had a pastoral team which was set in its ways.

3.6.b Employees and their tasks

There are other people employed at the churches other than the ministers. The employees include clergy and administrative/maintenance positions, as well as music or the arts.⁶⁷ This does not reveal whether or not they are part-time or full-time positions. The lowest number of employees within one church is one (GLTC), and the highest number is 30 (St Francis'). These numbers include anything from the minister in charge to the cleaners and organists.

Depending on the size of the congregation and the church building there are also differences between the churches regarding whether they rely on volunteers to do maintenance work. In most cases, the churches outsource these tasks and employ either a general caretaker, or someone who performs specific tasks, such as gardening or cleaning. Two of the churches give the impression that they carry out the maintenance themselves, but the majority pay for it. Some have expressed that there is just so much maintenance to be performed on these old buildings that there is no way they would be able to do it themselves. In addition, many of these churches are heritage listed, and any work has to be done in a certain way according to official standards. While I was doing my research, two of the churches were undergoing major restorations, and it was clear that this had taken a massive

⁶⁷ Gender is also an interesting issue when looking at staff and leadership. The hiring of the clergy and the administrative staff at the churches, such as secretaries and elders, seem to follow traditional gender divisions. Some of the churches have male secretaries and some others have female elders, but they are a minority. As for clergy, there are two female ministers in this group of approximately 55. These work at St. Paul's Cathedral as the Precentor, and at CSBC as the Reverend. For obvious reasons the Catholic churches don't employ any female ministers (although Eastern Hill has a 'religious sister'). The same goes for the Presbyterian Church. Concerning gender and leadership these congregations are still very traditional.

fundraising effort.⁶⁸ This is work that could not have been undertaken by volunteers because of the sheer magnitude and the specific skills required. This topic will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

3.7 Perception of space and the meaning of church buildings

Perception of space is not an issue I asked specifically about, but rather a topic that materialised itself during the data analysis. In most cases, the respondent's view of the church buildings was mentioned when they talked about renting out their facilities. I encountered many different opinions as to the importance of the church building, and there were different perceptions as to how *sacred* the church space was perceived to be.

The majority of the churches own more property than the actual church building. In most of the interviews I asked questions about whether or not they make these areas available to non-congregational groups.⁶⁹ Their answers gave me insight into their relationship to the church building, and its spatiality concerning the sacred. Is it perceived as sacred, or is it just a building in which they gather? This section can give insight into to how large degree the churches use their church buildings to reach out to the city populations.

To begin with I can point out that with the exception of St Johns Southgate, all of the church buildings in this study are between 160 and 90 years old, the majority of them are protected by the Heritage Council of Victoria, which means they are recognised for their historical importance. Concerning this heritage listing, was this something they saw as an obstacle or an important part of their identity? I encountered different opinions on this issue.

3.7.a SSSCoC and St Johns – the odd ones out

There are two churches that stand out in relation to this topic. The first one is SSSCoC. This is the only church that expresses a total lack of perception of holiness concerning their church. This was not only expressed in the interview, but also in literature made available to me. However, they still had rules as to what types of groups were allowed to rent their facilities. I can start by describing the Church of Christ's perception of space as explained in Calvin Ma's *The Church in the heart of Melbourne*:

⁶⁸ Pamphlets appealing for donations to support the restoration effort were placed at the entrance of St Paul's Cathedral and St Michael's Uniting.

⁶⁹The topic whether or not the churches rent out property, and how this relates to their urban ecology, has been addressed in 4.5 *Renting out property*.

There are no sacred buildings reserved for worship alone. The services of a Church of Christ can be held anywhere. Churches of Christ have no altars or other items of sacred furniture. We place great emphasis upon the fact that God dwells not in temples made with hands, but in human hearts. (Ma, 1995, p. 12)

My respondent at SSCoC also expressed this view when I asked questions about the building. They no longer used the church for worship and they have built an auditorium that they utilised for services. The chapel was actually labelled 'useless' to them in the manner in which it stood. But, due to the historical significance they were required to have a hearing at the Historical Buildings Society in order to be able to just remove the pews, and they were allowed to do that if they kept them in storage for at least five years. This caused some frustration and my respondent asked the question: 'What's the use of having a gothic structure if we're not connecting with the people, if we are not fulfilling our purpose?' (J: 141) It becomes clear that they do not perceive the church structure as sacred, unlike most of the other churches in my sample. However, at the same time they are not willing to give it up or sell it because of its prime location.

The other church that stood out is St Johns Southgate, the only one with a new church structure. They base a lot of their income by renting out space for meetings and other functions; this venture also includes the nave of the church. They have no reluctance about making money on renting out, and my respondent reported that it is used by large corporations, but that they tell them: '(...) there is a cross there and it's not going to be covered. The altar remains there, we can push it back, but it's there. If you're not comfortable with that, don't come, but we're a church. We've never had anybody complain.' (L: 546) The congregation respect the building and have rules as to who can rent it. However, at the same time they do not have the same reservations as many of the other churches appear to have, mainly because the income is vital to the church and congregation's survival.

3.7.b 'Very holy place'

SSCoC and St Johns Southgate can be said to weigh down one side of the scale, whereas the other churches have a different point of view on their church building. One that stands out in clear opposition to SSCoC is St Augustine's where my respondent from the beginning of the interview talked about how holy the church room was. One of the first things he asked was whether or not I had been inside the church yet, and when I admitted that I had not, he insisted

that I: ‘Must go inside, very holy place. You might get a zap from God.’ (F: 26)⁷⁰ Throughout the interview he mentioned several times what a special church this was, and what sort of feeling people got when they entered it. When asked whether or not they allow people to rent it (as they do not have any other facilities to rent out) he told me that: ‘Sometimes people want to come and play their music, concerts, [but] we don’t want to encourage them because it’s a very holy, prayerful space (...).’ (F: 338) This indicates a strong sense of the inviolability of space.

The majority of my other respondents also expressed that their church is holy and has a special connection to God. However, the importance of their church building does not only concern its inviolability. It can also be perceived as a connection to their ancestors and the history of the congregation. Much of this has been immortalised by pictures, tablets, and memorial plaques in the church. Especially at Wesley Uniting a special effort has been made to remember important contributors throughout their history. All of the churches have decorated the narthex, nave, or even the apse with pictures of previous ministers, or gifts from benefactors such as paintings or tablets of remembrance. The church building is also a sign of the continuity of the congregation and great pride is taken in maintaining it.

3.7.c Historical significance vs. modern day use

Although the congregations take pride in their tradition, I still sensed frustration because of the restrictions imposed on them by the Heritage Council of Victoria. They all wish to maintain their church’s exterior and interior, but because of the strict rules they can hardly change a single thing without applications and permits. My respondent at CSBC expressed their experiences:

The building is (...) seen as the 6th most important building to be preserved in Victoria, so that’s fairly wonderful in one sense. [It] does create some difficulty in that everything you want to do, if you want to make a change, it has to go through not just the council regulations, but also the heritage regulations. So it does, even to what colour things are painted, and so on. (E: 20)

⁷⁰ I had previously, upon his request, revealed to him that I was not a member of any religious organisation.

The changes they want to implement might not be large and booming. In the case of CSBC they did, for instance, meet some difficulty when putting in ramping to make it wheel chair accessible.

In addition there are demands from the Heritage Council to maintain the church in a certain way, which is not only time consuming and intricate, but also expensive. As described in *The Location of Religion* (Knott, 2005) it has become the norm to protect these old, religious buildings, and we can here draw parallels between Britain and Australia:

In Britain, for example, the listing and grading of buildings of historical significance has continued to favour the survival of the public face of Christianity (thus shackling local church communities with expensive programs of conservation and sometimes curbing innovative spatial renewal). (Ibid, p. 47)

This excerpt describes fairly well the difficulties associated with being responsible for a historically significant building. The restraints of these old church buildings not only being very formal, but also little flexible, has led some congregations to use other facilities, especially for more modern worship services. St James Old Cathedral, for example, envisions that the new congregation will not be meeting in the old church building, but rather in some other type of function room. When asked about the future of the building my respondent answered that:

It makes a good museum, and it will be a good place for traditional services, and for, in effect, I think, older people who like traditional services. Most of the church groups that I'm aware of used big open spaces, halls or warehouses, and also spaces with a lot of facilities, electronic facilities as well as facilities with rooms for breaking into small groups, things like that. This [church building] doesn't provide that. (N: 291)

In other words, the church as it stands today is not functional for a new and contemporary congregation. I think this can be indicative of many of these churches in the future. Some churches are moving services into halls⁷¹ or more flexible facilities and letting the churches become exactly what they have been labelled as, 'historical buildings'. However, the sanctity of such a building can also be perceived as an asset when holding traditional services.

⁷¹ See 4.1.b *Service profiles*.

4. Church activities and outreach to the city

In this chapter I will discuss two topics. The first topic is the different activities presented to the congregants, such as worship services and different congregational groups they can partake in (section 4.1 and 4.2). The second topic is the different outreach efforts the congregations have, both welfare services, and otherwise (from section 4.3, to section 4.6). The main issues here are the availability of the churches, the community outreach endeavours, renting out property, and ecumenical work. As in chapter 3, the topics discussed in this chapter are to some degree interrelated. They are also interconnected with the issues discussed previously. When applicable, I will discuss changes and adaptations in relation to the urban ecology of the CBD and appropriate theories.

The aim of this chapter is to chart the activities and outreach of the churches. What efforts do they make to attract people? Do the churches respond differently to their surrounding community? To what degree do they make themselves available to the city populations?⁷² The term *outreach* was one of the terms that I had to modify during the research process. When I initially asked questions about the type of outreach efforts the churches provided, I had to specify that I was interested in welfare and charity work. Many of my respondents told me about different ventures they had towards the people who work in the CBD, or live in Southbank. This made me realise that my initial understanding of outreach was too narrow. I widened the term to mean nearly any way the churches *reach out* to their surrounding community. This is also the intended meaning throughout this chapter.

4.1 Worship services

In this section, I will look at the different worship services the churches offer. This topic has to some extent been discussed in the previous chapter, both in relation to different service-congregations, as well as in relation to the ethnic churches. Here, I will direct more focus towards changes and adaptations concerning the service schedules, and the service profiles. Important questions concerning this subject are how many services the churches offer, when are they scheduled, and what profiles do they have? Who are the churches attempting to reach with their programme? It is important to take any changes into account, as I have found that they have usually been the result of changes in the urban ecology.

⁷² The city populations consist of workers, residents, shoppers, disadvantaged, visitors, and religious commuters, as outlined in 1.2.a *Urban transformation – what and why*.

4.1.a An overview of the worship services

Chaves states that: ‘The regular worship services produced by congregations are tied to the calendar and therefore occur regularly and predictably (...).’ (Chaves, 2004, p. 127) Depending on denomination and the traditions of the particular church, there is an established liturgical calendar. He continues by explaining that the failure of this regular ritual to occur is a much more significant incidence than if, for instance, a prayer group fails. Regular worship services are the most significant activity and feature of a viable congregation. ‘Producing collective religious events frequently and at regular intervals is part of what we mean by congregational religion.’ (Chaves, 2004, p. 128) It can thus be seen as a shared quality for all of the churches in my study. They all offer them in one shape or form. Variations can be based on denominational differences; they can be due to different target groups, or something as simple as what day of the week they take place.

The number of services performed weekly within each of the churches differs from one (1) to an excess of 40.⁷³ Some provide only one weekly service, whereas others offer daily ones. Eight of the 14 churches have some type of programme for the people who spend time in the city on weekdays, mainly directed for the people who work or live in the inner city. These services therefore take place at times convenient for them, either in the morning, before people go to work, during lunchtime or in the evening immediately after people leave work.

The timing of these services is imperative, as they signify what group of people the churches are attempting to reach. Morning services all start before eight o’clock. The lunch hour services start between 12 noon and 1.15 pm (most churches state that these are short services, so that the people attending will have time for lunch as well). The late weekday services either start in the late afternoon, or early evening, so people can drop by on their way home. These are times that fit most city workers schedules.⁷⁴ However, there are services scheduled for non-working people as well, St Francis’ offers masses all throughout the day. Their late morning masses attract pensioners who come for mass, and then have tea in the pastoral centre afterwards.

Do the churches that provide weekday services have anything in common? All of the Anglican and Catholic churches offer weekday services, whereas the two Protestant ones that

⁷³ See Appendix 4 for the number of services each church offers, and when these are scheduled.

⁷⁴ I realise that my concept of a city worker might seem narrow. It does not, for instance, necessarily include tram drivers, or restaurant hostesses. I am not claiming that the inner city shuts down at 5.30, but rather that the people who work in offices, or retail, are the groups of city workers that the churches place most focus on. These were the city workers that my respondents emphasised as their target group.

do are Scots' and CSBC. Both Scots' and CSBC offer short contemplative services intended to attract city workers. In the case of CSBC, this is a relatively new endeavour designed to attract people from the city.

Our service on Thursday is a half hour contemplative service. Just the whole idea is (...) that after work people can come and have this time of refreshment, and centre in and with God. Time for them to pray for things that are on their mind (...) (E: 423)

My respondent further stated that there are people who only attend this particular service, but are seen as regular members of the congregation. Here again, we find signs of these service-congregations, people only attending the Thursday service, but doing so regularly, and thus becoming part of a narrower understanding of a congregation. There is a good chance that should the members of the Thursday congregation show up on a Sunday morning service, few from the traditional congregation would know that they actually attend CSBC regularly. It is likely that the Thursday attendees belong to a Sunday congregation closer to their home in the suburbs. On the other hand, it is also possible that this is the only religious service they attend. The profile of this service is, nonetheless, low-involvement. It demands very little from the congregation concerning participation in various activities, such as social groups that take place after the Sunday services.

Only three churches provide services on Saturdays. These are the same that provide the highest number of services overall, St Paul's Cathedral, Eastern Hill, and St Francis'.

All the churches offer at least one Sunday morning service. This was by many of my respondents deemed to be the *traditional* service, both because it had been part of the service schedule since the formation of the church, but also because of a more traditional liturgy. In some instances this was the only regular service. This was the case for St Michael's Uniting and GLTC. Churches that had several services on Sundays had different profiles for each, the exceptions here were Welsh Church and Wesley Uniting, which reported having two fairly similar services, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

There were only one or two occurrences where services were removed because of low attendance. There were, however, cases where they were considering it, especially the weekday lunch service. Eastern Hill explains changes concerning the lunch hour worship.

We see, one of the things that has really happened in recent times in the city, and I'm sure it's affected everybody, is the idea of a lunch hour has disappeared. People might

get half an hour for lunch, or maybe nothing. So people are in a very big rush, and it's almost impossible to expect people to do anything leisurely in the middle of the day anymore. So we find we'd like to get more people at 7.15 in the morning, than we are at the lunch time. We've been reviewing whether lunch time works at all. (H: 236)

They were not necessarily discontinuing these services because people were no longer willing to attend during their lunch hour, but rather because the lunch hour is no longer the institution it appeared to have once been. However, none of the Catholic churches reported having these problems concerning their lunchtime service, indicating that this might be a denominational difference.

Scots' reported a significant decrease in attendance at their Wednesday lunch service between now and 50 years ago. At that time, this service used to be a place for powerful businessmen to gather, whereas now there are only a small group of people. Attempts have been made to turn this around by offering lectures and seminars in order to attract more people. These are endeavours they hope will make the lunch hour service more attractive for the city populations, especially the city workers. They have also hired a minister who has the business community in the CBD as his target area.

4.1.b Service profiles

The next issue concerning worship services are service profiles⁷⁵. This is the area where the most significant changes have occurred and this can be related to the target groups of these services. There are profiles attached to the different churches and services, these describe the style of worship, some of them are merely *traditional*, whereas others types are called *contemporary* or *informal* and have traits such as contemporary music, discussion groups, lectures, and so on. These features are different from one church to the next, but it seems they mainly exist within the Protestant ones. Within the Anglican and Catholic churches the focus seems to be on the *Eucharist* and *healing masses*. Whether or not these have adopted any contemporary traits, I am not certain. The Protestant churches appear to have more freedom of liturgy. This would also depend on the church. Some of the afternoon/evening services offered (both during the week and the weekend) are contemplative or prayer services.

Two churches, Scots' and St Augustine's, reported to have changed the time slot of a service in order to attract a demographic they found to be lacking, namely families. In both

⁷⁵ The profile of a worship service depends on the style and liturgy; services are often advertised as being either informal or contemplative.

cases this was the Sunday evening service, and it was moved to earlier in the evening. My respondents at both of the churches hoped an earlier time slot would make it easier for families to attend. At Scots' they had not only moved the time of the service, but also changed the location:

Our evening service is the one that's changed most dramatically because (...) we changed that to a contemporary style, and just as of Sunday, we moved it to the hall rather than the church. And we've moved the time from 7 o'clock forward to 5.30 so that it suits families (...) and they're in the hall, which is much more relaxed and informal, and the service style is very contemporary. The music is very different. So we've made the most radical changes to that service, but we haven't closed down a service and opened a new one, just changed the one in existence. (A: 222)

The churches are reluctant to discontinue a service only because of low attendance. They will rather attempt to adjust and change it, as they have done here at Scots'. If there are few people attending the church is willing to move the service to a time slot that suits people better. If the overall attendance is low, they can make the necessary changes to attract new target groups. This can also be the answer as to why these churches have survived in this ecology for so long: they have been adapting and changing along with the city. Their willingness to do so has resulted in viable congregations. However, according to my findings there have been few *major* changes (such as discontinuing a service). Whether this is because the churches have adapted gradually as the city has changed, or because there have not been major changes in the city either, I am not certain. The key changes in the ecology have been coming about the last decades with urban re-development, but here it seems they are moving slowly enough for the churches to keep up. Therefore there have not been necessary with significant changes to the worship schedule. Small adaptations have sufficed, such as changing the time slot for a worship service.

What about the traditional Sunday morning services? Throughout my entire sample, the Sunday morning one is the one with the largest congregation. These appear to be so rooted in tradition that it is impossible to change, or remove them. Even though there are other services with growing attendance, the Sunday morning service is the main one. Not providing a Sunday morning service seems impossible, as they are such an established part of the service schedule.

4.1.c A voluntaristic approach to religion

Earlier I have directed attention towards the fact that people may attend different service-congregations within the same church. This depends on the *selection of services*; people can also attend services at different churches. Some will drop by a lunch hour service close to their office on a Wednesday, and attend a Sunday morning service at their suburban church. This can be described as a *voluntaristic approach to religion*, which describes religious individuals as a consumer of religious services in that they do not have to commit to one ‘total institution’ (Ammerman, 1997). Ammerman claims that a religious organisation, such as a church, does not have to offer all types of services to their members/attendees, and that ‘[i]t is perfectly possible to have a thriving low-commitment religious organization.’ (Ammerman 1997, p. 205) The reason for this is that people today, to a greater extent than before, have a variety of religious groups they participate in, especially in the urban environment. There is less total involvement, and an extended use of various religious agencies.

A religious individual can, for instance, attend an evening church service after work, then go to a local women’s Bible study the following day, before attending a traditional Sunday service in her suburban church. The fact that she might be perceived to lack commitment does not make her any less religious. Ammerman claims that we have to let go of understandings of ‘the church’ being a total institution covering all the person’s religious needs. Any involvement is part of religious commitment. ‘The complexity of our lives is such that we need to discard traditionalist notions of commitment, developing new models that begin with whatever bonds of practice and affiliation - however plural and temporary – actually exist.’ (Ibid) As mentioned above, there are people who attend a weekday service at CSBC regularly, and they are not seen as any less of a member than the people who attend the traditional Sunday services. It appears that several of the churches in the CBD have this approach to religious commitment - they see regular attendees as part of the congregation, although they do not participate in the full range of activities the church offers.

4.2 Congregational groups

This section will deal with the different groups that can be found within a congregation. A congregational group is a group of people who gather on a regular or ad hoc basis where the majority of the members belong to the same congregation or church. Upon completion of the data analysis, I was able to divide the congregational groups into four types based on their main type of activity. The first are the *Social/Fundraising* groups, the second are *Cell* groups,

the third type focuses on *Educational* work, and the fourth one in one way or another provides a *Service*. However, groups can easily fit more than one type at once. This section is directly related to the volunteers within the churches, this will be discussed further when I address the service groups. I have also gathered information on where the groups meet, to see if this can provide any additional information about the congregations.

What can the congregational groups tell us about the churches? First of all, they indicate fellowship within the congregation. The diminishing of these groups is a symptom of a congregation either in difficulty, or in some type of transition. Congregants are encouraged to become part of a group, as the fellowship developed in these groups strengthens the congregation. However, the minority of congregants in the CBD churches join a group. This can be because they do not feel that any of the existing groups appeal to them, or because they have no interest to attend any activities, except for the worship services. These might be people who feel they do not need the fellowship offered through these groups, or people who have a voluntaristic comprehension of membership. Simply participating in the worship services satisfies them. The only churches, which have been successful in including large parts of the congregation into congregational groups, are the ones that offer cell groups. These will be addressed below.⁷⁶

4.2.a Social and fundraising groups

I will begin with the social and fundraising groups. These have been put in the same category, as it is difficult to separate the mainly social ones from the fundraising ones since some of the groups both socialise and raise funds. An example is the *Presbyterian Women's Mission Union* at Scots'; they carry out both fundraising and social activities. They gather to be social, but at the same time, they use their meetings to plan fundraising efforts. These groups in their traditional form are in decline, whereas the chiefly social ones are on the rise. Increasingly, there are groups that gather mainly to socialise, for instance at St Johns: '[O]ne group called themselves Richmond dinners because they all lived in Richmond and they got together for dinner, that's it you know, there's no more formal structure than that, but they just wanted to get together...' (L: 445) They focus on people getting together and sharing a meal. However, this is not widespread, and I found no evidence of these in the Anglican and Catholic churches. These focus on connecting with their neighbourhood, as well developing fellowship within the congregation. The wholly social groups seem to be formed on initiatives from the

⁷⁶ See Appendix 4 for a list of the main focus of each church concerning congregational groups.

congregants, rather than the ministers, whereas the fundraising groups are based on tradition and influenced by the clergy.

4.2.b Cell groups

In the churches where young people dominate congregations groups with a more social focus have been established. Two churches (St Augustine's and SSCoC), which have charismatic and young congregations, have developed a cell ministry. This is a ministry where congregational groups meet in people's homes on a regular basis. The meeting consist of a meal and a discussion, a cell leader heads the group and facilitates the discussion (Potter, 2001). The groups are both social and educational. This is a way of getting people involved at the church the moment they start attending.⁷⁷ The main objective of these groups is to grow; when they have become big enough they have to multiply. As they grow, they develop more personalised fellowships within the congregation. As a brochure I collected from St Augustine's claimed: 'Remember: We don't have cells in our parish. OUR PARISH IS MADE UP OF CELLS.' (St Augustine's, n.d.)

According to Potter (2001), the home-groups (Bible study groups) have been renamed, and restored as cell groups. So what is the difference between cell groups, and other Bible study groups? First of all the cells are small, but their main objective is to grow. Potter compares the cell groups to a different type of cells: 'One of the unique features of white blood cells in the body is that they don't have a very long life in themselves, because they go on multiplying. Similarly, the cell group is uniquely different because its chief and ultimate goal is to grow and then multiply. It literally lives to divide and if it doesn't, it eventually degenerates and loses its life.' (Potter, 2001, p.18) At SSCoC, my respondent outlined the purpose and effect of their cell ministry:

We've got, I think it's 70 cell groups, which basically cater for one of our core functions. We try to have missions and pastoral care and evangelism and prayer filtering, not just on the top but also through each of the cells so that we are not just meeting for the warm and fuzzies, just sharing our interests. It's for study, it's for personal growth, discipleship, but it's also for outreach. So we have 70 of those particular group meetings. We try to encourage everyone to be involved in at least one cell (...) and our ministry's been more

⁷⁷ Scots' have or home Bible study groups, but these are not run by cell principles.

effective by the people being equipped, and we are being multiplied the ministry by that process. (J: 358)

In Melbourne the cells gather on the basis of location (both St Augustine's and SSCoC) as well as age (at SSCoC they also have youth- or student-cells). Churches with this ministry often encourage members of group to socialise between meetings as well. It is thought that development of a personal relationship between the members of a group encourages them to return to the church. This increased focus on developing personal relationships in the congregation appears to have been successful in an increasingly impersonal urban environment. The two churches that have implemented cell ministry are two of the best attended churches in the sample.

4.2.c Educational groups

The educational groups focus primarily on Bible study and widening people's horizon. These can be both small prayer groups, and more professional Bible study groups. St Paul's, for instance, offers a theological study group in cooperation with the theology department at the University of Melbourne. My respondent explained that the people in the group could, if they wanted to, hand in assignments and have them graded at the university. If they choose to follow this program, they will in the end have a degree in theology. However, few of the participants do this and the majority just turn up for the discussions.

Another type of educational group is the confirmation class provided by the Lutheran churches. These are primarily aimed at teenagers. St Paul's offers adult baptism and confirmation classes, which lead to an initiation service during Easter. Some churches also provide Alpha courses⁷⁸ that aim to teach non-Christians about Christianity and Jesus, a course that is also effective in bringing new people into the congregation.

The majority of these educational groups are in one way or another focussed on educating people about Christianity. However, there are also some groups that do not focus as much on religion, but rather self-development. St Michael's, for instance, offers a cultural learning group. Others offer book groups, etc. At the time when I was doing my research the book *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown was still a hot topic, and several seminars were offered on the relevance and legitimacy of its claims.

⁷⁸ A London minister, Charles Marnham, developed the Alpha course in the 1970s. The course is aimed at presenting basic principles from the Bible, such as 'Who is Jesus?' It became a great success through educating people on Christianity and came to be perceived worldwide as a new, fresh type of evangelism (Alpha Organisation Australia, 2005).

Sunday school has also been included in this category. The churches that have families with small children in their congregation, offer Sunday school or similar groups (such as crèche⁷⁹). These are programs that can be instrumental in attracting new families, as they signal to potential members that this church has other families in the congregation. In a handbill from St Michael's the following notice was found: '[O]ur *Kids Club* is open [during the service] on the 1st floor of the St Michael's Centre for stimulating and enjoyable activities. Our crèche is also open for younger children to enjoy.' (St Michael's Uniting Church, 2006) This announcement both promotes, and informs about the possibilities at St Michael's, thus making the church more appealing to families with small children. However, whether the church can offer this type of groups depends on amenities as well. They will have problems offering attractive age graded programs, if they do not have flexible facilities.

4.2.d Service groups

The fourth and final type is the group that provide some sort of service for the church, or the congregants. I have attempted to chart the degree of volunteer involvement within the churches to show what types of work they perform, as well as to what degree the churches depend on people from the congregations. My respondents appeared to be very aware of the fact that the churches can hardly be maintained without the members doing their bit. Volunteers in the different congregational groups play an important role in the daily running of the churches. The people who volunteer are usually organised in congregational groups that have meetings, and at times social gatherings also when they are not 'working'.

Almost all the churches have people come in to either sit at the welcome desk or to be a tour guide. Many are also involved in the hospitality, a field centred on making coffee after the Sunday morning service, or preparing meals. Some congregants volunteer their time to mind the gift shop/book room at one of the three churches that have these (St Paul's Cathedral, St Peter's Eastern Hill and St Francis').

Another field of volunteerism are the deacons and the church servers. This is a way for lay people in the congregation to contribute to the worship services. These are people who help out during the services with both practical and ceremonial tasks. I found it difficult to discover exactly what these people do within the different denominations, in some cases it seems they nearly perform the entire service, especially the contemporary ones, whereas in other churches they seem to be mainly passing out psalm books, or lighting candles.

⁷⁹ Nursery for babies and young children (Soanes, 2002).

Other tasks that are mainly performed by volunteers are within outreach services. The churches that offer meals or a gathering place normally have one paid social worker. In addition there are people from the congregation, or even non-members from the outside who do most of the practical work. These churches all report that they have volunteers who are not members, and who might not even be Christians. This is, as expected, not simply the case with these churches, but with all types of faith based welfare agencies. An article in *The Age's* Easter edition (entitled 'Faith') supports this observation and describing how congregations are losing members, whereas welfare agencies seem to be gaining volunteers. People who do not profess any denominational or congregational connections are still volunteering and supporting faith-based social services (Zwartz, 2006, p. 15-16).

These are the main service groups, making it clear that the churches depend on the congregants to perform a wide array of the tasks and services, especially the different types of outreach. It also seems that they are happy to do it. As Eiesland describes it in *A Particular Place*: 'The jobs of the church had to be done, and many old-timers saw serving without complaint as their Christian duty.' (Eiesland, 2000, p. 109) The people who are doing most of this type of work today are the pensioners who have free time on their hands. However, this can be a problem in the future. When the age compositions in the congregations now are changing, this can mean a loss of these resources. It will become necessary to change the tasks that have traditionally been performed by the elderly congregants. I am not claiming that younger people do not wish to help out, but that it can be more difficult for them to find the time, during the day when the churches are usually dependent on volunteers.

4.2.e Meeting places

I also asked questions on the meeting places of these groups. It seems the majority have meetings in different church facilities. The exceptions are the cells/home groups, which meet in people's home. Both because the churches encourage that the people should be able to meet congregants in their neighbourhood, but also because it gives a certain type of fellowship and community to meet in somebody's home. It does also make it easier for people to meet on weekdays, if the meeting is in their suburb. My respondent at SSCoC explained why they encourage groups to meet in people's homes, instead of at the church:

Well, mainly so that you have that connection in a home. On a whole, people relax more in a home. It's far more clinical in this environment [the church]. And it's good to meet people on their own turf, try and connect. And you do interact quite differently

in a home than you do in a (...) room like this because you don't get to know each other, you're here for a purpose, in a home you know it's part of the extension of yourself. (J: 431)

In the examples where the groups have their meetings at the church, the reason is usually convenience; it is easier to gather people from all over Melbourne in the CBD, rather than have people travel to someone's house in the suburbs. The majority of the groups that meet in people's homes are the cells, and other Bible study groups, as well as some primarily social groups where the congregants gather based on where they live. The service groups, with few exceptions, meet in church, as this is where they usually perform the service.

4.3 Outreach

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I realised throughout my data collection, that the *outreach* term was much wider than my initial understanding. The churches have a broad comprehension of the concept: any type of activity open to the CBD is an outreach effort. This includes worship services, ecumenical work, etc. I decided to focus on the activities they provide which are mainly directed towards people who are not part of the regular congregation (city workers, visitors, shoppers, and the disadvantaged). The efforts made here are not only designed to attract people to join the congregation, some of them focus on educating people on Christianity, whereas some are more secular efforts. At Scot's they emphasised that they were not primarily focussed on bringing people into their own church: 'Souls are one for the kingdom of God, not for Scots' Church.' (A: 385)

I decided to divide this category into two, outreach to the city and outreach to the disadvantaged. In addition, I found it useful to include the issue of recruitment into this section as well. I will start out by giving an account of the outreach the churches offer to the community⁸⁰ (the CBD), before I address welfare work. In the end I will focus on their recruitment efforts.

⁸⁰ On the whole by my respondents used the term 'community' was when talking about the inner city of Melbourne (mainly the CBD) and its populations. Being a vague term that can have many meanings, I choose to use this understanding of community in my text with the understanding of it is an emic term in this context.

4.3.a Community outreach efforts

Community outreach is another group of activities and services that these churches see as part of their outreach work. This type of work is aimed at directing and providing spiritual and intellectual assistance for people in the CBD. Whereas the welfare outreach covers basic needs such as food, clothing and medical help, the community outreach work is directed towards their neighbourhood and community, such as the business community, schools and hospitals. This outreach is intended for whoever is in the city and has many shapes and forms. They have in common that they focus on the spiritual and human relations.

These outreach efforts are multifunctional and can comprise of anything from student chaplainries to concerts. Something as basic as keeping the church open to visitors during the day can also be seen as outreach. Outreach can be defined as any attempt of interaction between the church and people in the city where the church's main objective is to reach out to the city populations, mainly the residents, city workers, and visitors. For instance, some of the churches want to offer prayer groups in office buildings because it is easier to reach people in their work place, than to make people come to them. Others have free concerts in conjunction with a regular service, which helps them attract people by offering a free, cultural experience. As already mentioned, these efforts and ventures do not necessarily focus on recruiting people to the congregation. At CSBC it was expressed that:

(...) when I first came here I remember saying it's really important that we welcome people that are moving into the city into our church. So I think we've made quite an effort to be the church who welcomes people who are now moving into the city to live, and I'd say that most of the newer people that come in do live in walking distance (...) I guess what I saw was (...) that we really need to build a church that had a local influence, and that would be able to do more things during the week. That people would actually be around during the week, so we're gradually moving towards that, all these things take time to make a powerful shift like that, but I think we are seeing that now. (E: 165)

CSBC has focussed on reaching out to the city and inviting people from the neighbourhood into their church, even if they only come to special events such as a concert. They are conscious of that they are to some extent responsible for the people in their immediate surroundings, becoming more of parish church (although they do not have any parish boundaries).

Another type of outreach to the community is musical and cultural events in the church. Especially the Lutheran churches provide these. St Johns and GLTC have Bach Cantatas⁸¹ that are either part of a regular service, or a separate concert in itself. St Johns has developed a tradition for Bach Cantata services and cooperates with the Victorian College of the Arts located in the Southgate district. They have worked the Cantatas into their syllabus. My respondent at St Johns told me that since the Cantatas are in conjunction with a regular service, they have to emphasise to the people attending that they are not supposed to leave when the music is finished, but stay on for the remainder of the service.

This section has been able to give insight into the contact these churches have with the people who live, work, and shop in the inner city of Melbourne. Many of the churches are becoming more parish oriented, whereas other churches focus nearly entirely on their congregation, and very little on their surrounding neighbourhood (I will discuss this further in *5.1 Three main responses to a changing urban ecology*).

4.3.b Chaplainries and services to local institutions

Another type of outreach my respondents emphasised was the different chaplainries they provided, such as to the universities and hospitals. Hospitals are mainly the responsibility of Eastern Hill, as they have a number of them within their parish boundaries. They also provide a university chaplain, as do Scots' and St Francis'. When I asked my respondent at Eastern Hill whether or not their chaplaincy work was part of a recruitment plan he answered: 'No, no, just service to the wider community and connection with it. If it was never another soul that came our way that wouldn't matter (...).' (H: 485) He was making it clear that the tertiary chaplaincy is a service to the university community.

Scots' has a minister in their pastoral team who is responsible for the outreach to the CBD. They assigned him to this task because they felt that the church has a duty to reach out to people who live in their geographical area, even though they do not have exact parish boundaries. The church realised that it had become disconnected from their own neighbourhood, in part because the majority of the people in the congregation lived in the suburbs. They were not reaching the business, residential and student community and their response to this was:

⁸¹ The Bach Cantatas consist of nearly 200 sacred cantatas written for specific functions within Lutheran liturgy. There is also a large volume of secular cantatas (e.g. with no liturgical connection) written by Bach (Crouch, 2000).

So we took a conscious decision to specifically enact outreach ministries to these communities in our geographical area, and went looking for an assistant minister who would have the necessary credentials to connect with some of that. And (...) we took on a full time minister who has experience in the business world, he's done 12 to 13 years working (...) in the city, actually Sydney rather than Melbourne, but he knew his way around the business community and the city community, and he's done a fabulous job. (A: 134)

Scots' is the only church that has done this. Although many of the churches have outreach efforts such as prayer groups or musical events, they all show signs of being suburban churches. This can be for a number of reasons. The Welsh Church reported having problems connecting with the city, both because their congregation live in the suburbs, but also because the church is located on the fringe of the CBD. I can imagine this to apply to some of the other churches as well. St James Old Cathedral, for instance, is located outside of the CBD and attracts mostly tourists (due to its historical significance it is listed in an array of tourist guidebooks). Holy Trinity is also located outside the CBD, but in proximity to a large sporting arena, hotels, parks, and hospitals. However, this area does not have the same flow of pedestrian traffic as the CBD, and they do not have any chaplainries as the hospitals are covered by Eastern Hill.

4.3.c Welfare services

Outreach in terms of welfare services is the second type I wish to address. Inner city churches have traditionally been connected to the provision of food, health services and other types of welfare assistance covering essential necessities (Scherer, 1982, p. 179). This can be traced back to the Social Gospel movement that sought to help poor and working class people who lacked basic needs. The main aim of these activities were based on an understanding of 'practical Christianity' and led to, for instance, settlement houses and soup kitchens (Swatos, n.d.).

Welfare endeavours at the CBD churches span from monetary aid to welfare agencies, to providing services face-to-face.⁸² Many of the churches have little or no contact with the disadvantaged people living in the city, either because they are not very receptive of them, or because they are located on the fringe and are not very available (See 4.4 *Availability and*

⁸² See Appendix 4 for a list of the main focus of each church concerning their welfare outreach.

approachability). Two low-effort types of outreach are monetary aid to other welfare organisations, and giving out referrals to local welfare agencies, both faith-based social services (FBSS) and secular (such as the Salvation Army). The monetary aid is usually funded through the congregants' donations, or small fundraising efforts (such as a sausage sizzle). The Welsh Church explained their welfare policy as:

No, what we're very conscious of [is] the fact that churches should participate in those activities, but all of us [congregants] are so scattered. So we've overcome that by donating regularly, on a monthly basis, to various other churches that have food, breakfast programs that need some help (...). There's a Lazarus' Centre down in St Pauls Cathedral, we donate money towards their cause. (D: 224)

This describes the policy of the churches that do not have an agency. They all seem to feel, as expressed in the quote, that they should help the needy, but that they feel more comfortable donating to professional agencies, such as the Salvation Army⁸³. These are FBSS that provide services more professionally than the churches are able to, and therefore it is seen as more expedient to give them money to do a job well and professionally, than for them to provide little or nothing. If somebody shows up at their door, they will be able to send them to this agency.

All the churches available to the public, offered referrals to people who came to them for help. None of them gave out money, but some provided food parcels or Metcards (train tickets). A group of church administrators have also made a booklet called *A Cup of Water*, which in detail list welfare organisations and other types of aid available in the city. This booklet is handed out to people who ask for assistance.

4.3.d Detached agencies

Some of the churches had a separate agency connected to their church building or congregation. These are detached agencies that at some point had been run by the congregation, but had been separated, because they became too large and too professional to be

⁸³ The Salvation Army was one of the churches/agencies that I was uncertain whether I was going to include in my sample. They are listed as a church in the Yellow Pages directory for 'worship centres'. However, after conducting an interview with a volunteer at their CBD centre, Urban Heart, I concluded that the Salvation Army's main objective is to provide welfare services. They do provide a weekly Sunday worship service, but they are still more of a welfare agency. They appeared to devote little of their time to building a congregation, compared to the time they devote to welfare services. The centre is open daily, but there is only one worship service there during the week. I therefore decided not to include them in my sample.

run by a congregation. CSBC has its own welfare agency connected to their congregation: Urban Seed, as does Wesley Uniting (Wesley Mission), and the Anglican churches (Anglicare). Urban Seed and Wesley Mission were more formally connected to the church earlier, but have been separated due to the development of both the agency and the congregation. They are so-called *spin off agencies* (Wedam, 2003). They function close to the churches, and still have important connections to them, but there are few people from the churches who work there. At Wesley they had realised that:

We [the congregation] are not up to the calibre required [to run the mission], and after a long period of time a bureaucratic decision was made to sever the mission work, that the church had commenced, from the administration of the church. (...) The decision was an appropriate bureaucratic management driven decision, but of course it had been bubbling along in a very unfortunate lively way for many, many years before the decision was made to put the mission under a separate administration. (G: 366)

This was clearly not an easy decision and according to my respondent it affected the congregation greatly:

Our people feel tremendously sad that the church and the mission aren't one, but there are reasons for it, and it's monetary and political and the leadership in this particular church that was leading the mission did not have the skills to do it. (G: 378)

Where such a split has occurred, there are still connections between the agencies and the congregations, but I came to understand that there have been changes. These agencies are dependent on a great deal of volunteer work, which can be difficult for the congregations to supply.

The Anglican Church has its own welfare agency called Anglicare (found nationwide) that provides a number of different services. In the CBD they work in partnership with St Paul's and Eastern Hill. They provide breakfast at Eastern Hill in the morning and keep the Lazarus Centre at St Paul's open in the afternoon. Therefore it is not correct to say that the congregations provide these services, but rather that the churches work in partnership with a larger organisation. They merely provide the facilities. People often find their way to churches to ask for help, and it therefore makes sense that these types of FBSS are to be found at church facilities.

4.3.e Recruitment

The last issue concerning outreach activities is *recruitment*, the churches' attempts to attract new people into the congregation. The word *recruitment* was one of the terms that I had to modify throughout my research process, as many of my respondents interpreted it in terms of hiring people.

Only one church used newspaper advertisements weekly, whereas other churches at times used them to advertise special events. Many mentioned websites as an important way of people getting to know about them (only one church did not have one). These websites contain information about the service schedule, the location of the church, as well as other information about the activities at the church. Some of these websites are updated regularly, whereas others show signs of neglect and provide little updated information.

Another type of recruitment effort was the traditional letterbox drop. This involved making pamphlets or newsletters that were delivered to every mailbox within a designated area. Many of the churches reported doing this previously, both within the city and outwards to the suburbs, but have had different success. At Wesley they reported that: '(...) we have letterbox dropped every single home within the entire congregation on a number of occasions and it has proved fruitful for us in terms of membership, but it is an older system to attract attention (...)' (G: 214) They had previously attracted a number of people through this venture, but it is not efficient as far as recruiting people who live in high-rise buildings because of security measures, and is perceived as an out-dated method. This is also a method that takes a lot of time and requires a lot of resources compared to many other strategies.

4.3.f Recruitment challenges

The reason for the difficulties reaching the new city residents is the high levels of security in the inner city apartment buildings. Recruitment has been highlighted as a challenge by several churches. How are we supposed to be able to attract these new residents to our services? There are thousands of new residents in the inner city, but it seems only a few hundred altogether have joined the churches. Whether the inner city residents are making conscious decisions not to attend church, or they have decided against all of their inner city options, I cannot be sure. There is also the option that they are still attending another church, or that they belong to a non-Christian group.

It is important to point out here is that there are visible, stereotypical urban factors that are affecting these churches' opportunities to connect with the new inner city residents.

Violence and crime is often connected to urban centres and cities, and this has led to high levels of security. Signs of security measures can be found nearly anywhere in the CBD, not only in high-end apartment buildings. Also at the churches security was tight, and there were only a small number of churches where it is possible to walk right in to the office. A doorbell (buzzer) or a receptionist was common.

Mike Davis argues that '(...) "security" has less to do with personal safety than with the degree of personal insulation, in residential, work, consumption and travel environments, from "unsavory" groups and individuals, even crowds in general.' (Davis, 1990, p. 203) Especially in the gentrified areas of Melbourne, in particular Southgate and Docklands, there are 'pseudo-public spaces' which are not open to the lower classes. At St Johns Southgate this became evident when I asked if people would come to the church asking for food, or money. The answer was *no*, because of the security guards in the Southgate Complex. If people looked like they did not belong there, either inside the complex, or outside on the promenade, security guards would ask them to leave. I can imagine that the sighting of a homeless person in Southgate sets off similar reaction as described by Davis concerning gentrified areas in Los Angeles: 'The occasional appearance of a destitute street nomad in Broadway Plaza or in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art sets off a quiet panic, video cameras turn on their mounts and security guards adjust their belts.' (Ibid, p. 206) This is what happens when public spaces become pseudo-public, and high-end private residences become near fortress-like. This is to a greater degree happening in the CBD following gentrification, making it difficult for the churches to have face-to-face contact with people they wish to invite to a service, or event.

This being said, recruitment of new members is not something the churches appear to be overly concerned with. The overall attitude seems to be that the people will come and that God will provide. Old Cathedral, on the other hand, has a new approach. They are hiring a church planter, and this person will be responsible for recruitment and planting of a new church based in Docklands, instead of the original church building. However, they are more or less starting from scratch. Here, the churches are attempting to reach people where they live. However, just as important is it that churches are available to the people who try to reach them. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

4.4 Availability and approachability

In order for people to come to the church, the churches have to be easily available. Whether or not the churches are mainly available to people seeking them out, or to people in general, can influence the type of activities the churches offer, and whom they reach out to. This availability can be connected to a range of different factors. Here I will focus on whether or not they are widely open to the public, and what role their location plays. Concerning their availability to the general public I wish to address the opening hours of the church, how visitors are met, and whether the doors are open when the church is not offering a worship service. I will also discuss if the location of the church also can affect the availability.

By *availability and approachability* I mean how accessible the churches are to the different populations in the city such as city workers, residents, visitors and the disadvantaged. Approachability also represents whether or not these churches appear to be welcoming and open, or unreceptive and closed to these groups of people.

4.4.a Opening hours

I will commence by commenting on opening hours. Some of the churches are open all day long, others only while they have a worship service, and some only for a couple of hours in the middle of the day.⁸⁴ The churches that keep their doors open during daylight hours are the Catholic churches along with three out of the four Anglican ones (Old Cathedral is the exception).⁸⁵ They all reported that it was important that the church was accessible all the time, and that this was more important for them than the fear of being robbed or vandalised. At Anglican Eastern Hill, which is situated on the outskirts of the CBD, I asked whether their location was the reason for why they kept the church open all day long. Did they feel safer because they were at a distance from the CBD? The response, however, was that:

[M]any churches particularly Protestant churches just keep themselves closed, except for service times. That's not something we do. We've lost a few things occasionally, but I think that's a risk that ones need to take. From our point of view it's extremely important that the church be open. (...) I think it [the church] even may be at less risk because it perfectly obvious that we're opening it up for everybody. I'd like to think

⁸⁴ See Appendix 4 concerning when each of the churches is open/available.

⁸⁵ St Johns has a small chapel separate from the church that is open during the day, and Wesley keeps the narthex open during office hours. The main church buildings were only open when somebody was present to supervise.

that there's some sort of respect for that openness, literally and metaphorically. I hope so. (H: 173)

This is a different response than I got from many of the Protestant churches; they did fear that people would not respect the church space. Because of the fear of making the church available to the wrong people, they chose to make it available to almost no people at all. Unlike the Catholics and Anglicans, they were hesitant to keep the church open unsupervised. The Catholic churches and St Paul's expressed that it was more important for them to that the church be available than to fear mistreatment of the building. GLTC made this quite clear: 'The church is not open [except when supervised], unlike the Catholics and the Anglicans across [the road], for security reasons because East Melbourne for the past years have been a popular spot for drug addicts so we have to be careful as all properties here.' (I: 191) However, when they express it as clearly as this, it does make it easier to understand their motive. They wish to keep the church safe and serviceable for the people who use it for what they perceive to be its actual purpose. This also makes denominational differences visible; there are three churches⁸⁶ located in close proximity to each other. If one of these sees drugs addicts as a problem in the area, why are the other churches still keeping open unsupervised? I will return to the topic of denominational differences below.

An interesting point to make in relation to this topic is the fact that my respondents claimed that their main challenge concerning recruiting the city residents was high security measures in the gentrified areas where they live. At the same time many of the CBD churches are closed during the day because of security concerns. Thus, the churches are making themselves unavailable, except for short opening hours in the middle of the day, when the majority of city residents are at work. The worship services end up being one of the few ways of getting in touch with the church staff.

4.4.b Denominational differences

The majority of the Protestant ones kept their church open at longer or shorter intervals during the week. A welcome desk or another type of greeter/supervisor meets the visitors. These opening hours range from one to five days a week, and last between three and five hours in the middle of the day. The precondition for these churches to be able to keep open is usually volunteers. Most of them prefer to have two, and as mentioned earlier, the people who have

⁸⁶ Unfortunately, one of the three churches mentioned here is St Patrick's Cathedral, the one church where I was not able to conduct an interview during my stay in Melbourne.

free time in the middle of the day are usually pensioners. At Welsh Church, GLTC and Wesley there is only one person who is responsible for this activity, whereas the other churches have a roster of people who volunteer regularly. They will sit behind a desk and welcome people who come in, offer them a brochure, and a tour if they wish. In the churches where there is only one person greeting people, he or she will usually just open the door and sit on a pew, at times taking care of small tasks while they *wait*. Only one church is not open to the public during the week, SSCoC.

When I asked what type of people who come by, the answers were fairly similar from one church to the next. They ranged from people just passing by and seeing that the church was open, to tourists who had looked it up in their Lonely Planet. Some passer-bys come in to have a quiet moment; whereas others just want to have a look at the church they pass each day, but have never been inside. Welsh Church, for instance, is open one day during the week:

[We're open] on Thursday morning, but strangely we get very few visitors. So we don't know whether to continue or not. (...). We opened every day of the week during the Commonwealth Games recently, and we got a few more in, but mostly visitors. Although one or two did come in that pass it regularly, but have never seen inside, they popped in, but they were people who work in the city. (D: 201)

Similar experiences were also reported at GLTC, when asked if visitors would come in:

Well, that's happening because since June last year we have the church open, like today, on a Friday between eleven and three. Many people are surprised, they express an interest to come in and make good contact, so that is part of our vision to become an inviting congregation, an inviting church, and to cast the net here very wide according to the stories from the Bible. So we are doing a lot at the moment to become more known. (...) our profile was a little bit low, so the impression was we were sort of a secret, but that is changing right now. (I: 180)

Clearly, this type of outreach does not necessarily need to be for tourists, it can also reach people who wish to discover something new in their own city. However, it does seem as if the people who come by are not focussed on a spiritual experience, but rather to have a look at an old church building.

The extent, to which the church is open, with or without staff, is vital for how available it is. Once again I will return to the topic of denominational differences. The Anglican and Catholic churches are the ones with the longest opening hours and are therefore more available to the public than the Protestant ones. The reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, the Anglican and Catholic churches have much larger congregations than the Protestant churches. They need to be open and be available to their congregants. Secondly, the Anglican and Catholic churches have a much stronger tradition for using the church as a place of prayer, reflection, and seeking counsel. Protestants have less tradition for this, and therefore it is not as necessary for them to be able to access the church at all times. The churches are kept open during the day, but not necessarily for people to pray, but rather for people to come and look at the building and listen to stories about it, and its congregation. The Anglicans and Catholics, on the other hand, stay open for people to use the church for spiritual purposes, but people are also welcome to come inside and have a look.

The only Anglican church not open during the day is Old Cathedral. The reason for this is that the church has not been very active for a long period of time and there has only been a small congregation worshipping there. The church has a secretary who can open it up for people when there is an interest, such as a school group or historical society. The remaining Anglicans are open during daylight hours.

Another reason as to why there have been little weekday activity and short opening hours at the Protestant churches may be because they have few members living in the city. The majority of their congregants are religious commuters, people who come to the city on Sundays to attend worship services. The Anglicans and Catholics, on the other hand, have a stronger tradition for attending church during the week, which has led to a stronger tradition for keeping the church open.

It does not appear as if there have been many changes concerning opening hours recently. Some of my respondents from Protestant churches explained that they wish to keep the church open more often, but that this has been difficult to carry out because they lack volunteers. The Welsh Church, on the other hand, contemplated to not keep the church open anymore as they had few visitors. These (possible) changes concerning opening hours can be seen as responses to the city populations' behaviour, making it clear that these churches are willing to change as a result of changes in the ecology make them more or less sought after.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ For further discussion on the extent to which these churches respond to their urban ecology, see 5.1 *Three main responses to a changing urban ecology*.

4.5 Renting out property⁸⁸

Many small churches struggle with financial difficulties. With this section of the analysis, I wish to observe the degree of which these churches rent out their available space in order to make money. As mentioned by Form/Dubrow (2005), a decrease in membership does not lead to a decrease in expenses. Churches are dependent on donations from individuals, mainly congregants. Australian religious institutions benefit from tax exemptions⁸⁹ (Zwartz, 2006). However, perhaps one of the most important sources of income (especially for the Protestant churches in this study) seems to be the renting out of property, a business that many churches in my sample partake in. One of the reasons for these financial difficulties is old buildings with historical significance.⁹⁰ Wesley Uniting, for instance, is a church where ‘[t]here is an enormous financial liability (...) due to the poor condition of the three key heritage buildings on the site.’ (Preston and Webster, 2005) These are challenges that nearly all the churches in the sample struggle with.

However, financial difficulties are not the only reason for renting out space. The demand for reasonably priced facilities and parking plays an important role. In this urban ecology, where commercial agents own most meeting facilities, the churches are able to make their space available with affordable prices.

My reason for including this topic was to discover to what degree the churches make their space available, both to make money, but also to help community groups⁹¹. They all have church buildings, but do they also own other facilities that appeal to outsiders? What rules do they have concerning who is allowed to rent?

The properties are divided into three different types: the church building, the remaining amenities (meeting rooms and halls), and the public parking facilities.⁹² In this classification I have chosen to highlight the difference between sacred and profane space,

⁸⁸ The title of this section can be perceived as misleading. Many of these churches are not renting out property at all, but rather lending it out; making it available to others. I will proceed using the term ‘rent out’ as the majority of this activity involves some sort of monetary exchange. I will make a point of it if this is not the case.

⁸⁹ Goods and Services Tax, land tax, payroll tax and income tax, in addition to a range of state and local taxes depending on the city/state they are located within. Donations from members, however, are not deductible (Zwartz, 14.04.2006).

⁹⁰ I have previously discussed the challenges many of these churches meet as a result of owning a protected building in 3.7 *Perception of church space and meaning of church buildings*.

⁹¹ I distinguish between commercial interests and community groups. Community groups meet for the sake of socialising, or to perform a service to the community, either to the city in general, or to a certain group of people within the city. This can be anything from a support group for rape victims, to people advocating a welfare reform. Common for these groups is that they have little or no commercial interests.

⁹² This division is based on observations made in the 14 churches concerning space, as well as data from the interviews.

making spatiality a key concept. ‘Spatiality is socially produced space in which social life is situated (...).’ (Wedam, 2003) I will go into detail concerning the renting out activities of the different facilities they have, before I continue by looking at whether or not there are specific rules. I will also look at their approach to ceremonies, mainly weddings, performed for outsiders.

4.5.a Church room

The rules concerning renting appear to be different concerning the church room in itself, and other properties. The thought of allowing commercial interests to use the narthex, nave, or chancel raised scepticism by and large among the majority of my respondents. Most of the churches expressed that they were very particular as to whom they would rent the church room out to. Some respondents also expressed an overall scepticism to let the church be used for anything other than worship. Many of the respondents were more comfortable with the thought of renting the church room out for a classical musical event, such as a string quartet or group, or a performance of the *Messiah*.⁹³ Particularly St Paul’s was used for this purpose.

Mostly [when] the people want to use the Cathedral for classical music, it’s music that’s got some church basis to it. Sometimes not, in that case it is just straight classical music. That’s all right, but we wouldn’t allow just a pop concert or anything like that. (...) most of the things that we allow the Cathedral to be used for have got some connection to the church. (B: 307)

This statement describes how the majority of the churches view non-liturgical use of the buildings. They allow classical concerts or Christian worship services held by other congregations. However, commercial activity, or anything including other religions is by and large not allowed in the church room.

4.5.b Function room facilities

The second type of space is function room facilities. There is only one church in my sample that does not rent out any meeting space, St Augustine’s. The reason for this is, according to my respondent, because there are no available facilities. I am also uncertain regarding Wesley Uniting, they have a wide range of property, but it is at large too run down to be rented out.

⁹³ The majority CBD churches are popular venues for classical musical events, both because of the solemn environment, and the good acoustic.

One building is made available to *The Big Issue*, a magazine sold by disadvantaged people (Preston and Webster, 2005).

Concerning the churches that do rent out function room facilities, these consist of meeting rooms, function facilities, and halls. Some of them also have office space that they lease out for an extended period of time, although the majority are appointments that take place weekly, or monthly. Many reported having an information folder with a list of prices and so on for groups that were interested in renting. This signals that this is a professional venture for these churches, and is not just done on an ad-hoc basis. As described at GLTC: 'We have manual of our policies, and for example the requirements in terms of insurance are there, and of course to keep respect for this building. It is all very clear in our little manual.' (I: 479) Especially the churches that have a church hall report a demand in meeting space of this size. Holy Trinity, for instance, let their hall be used by the community library while a new one was being built. 'When they had to demolish the old library and build a new one the question was: Are we going to have a temporary library somewhere? So we made our hall available to the wider community, as a gift really, so the library could go on.' (K: 262) This was done without any charge, as a service to the people in their parish.

4.5.c Parking facilities

Parking lots are the third and final type of space. Six of the churches have parking facilities, whereas the remaining not has available property (either this is because they have sold their excess land in the past, or because the church is so large that there is no room for one). Parking was perceived to be an important source of income, as expressed at GLTC: '[W]e rent out part of the parking in the courtyard, which is quite a significant source of income because parking is very hard to come by in the city of Melbourne.' (I: 479)

The parking lots are a direct response to a need in the urban ecology. There would be less parking needs, were it not for the fact that Melbournians have a high dependency on cars due to their suburban lifestyle. During the week commuters use the parking lots, whereas on Sundays they are utilised by people attending church. The congregants are able to park for free when attending the Sunday service. I also learnt that the members from St Michael's enjoy a discount at the Scots' Church parking lot on Sunday s, as they do not have their own.

4.5.d Profit of non-profit

There are differences between the facilities the churches rent out, and whether or not there is any profit involved. Initially I wanted to discover to what degree the churches rent out in

order to make money. I am not alleging that they are violating their principles in order to make a profit, but I wanted to find out to what degree they use their opportunities to make money from this sort of venture.

There are more restrictions concerning making money from the church building, than from secular facilities (meeting rooms, hall, etc.). These facilities were portrayed as very popular, largely because of the lack of affordable meeting space in the city. However, the churches distinguish between commercial activity and community groups. Community groups normally do not have to pay the full fee, or they are merely expected to make a donation. At St Francis' they explained their procedures concerning renting out meeting rooms the Pastoral Centre:

Well, groups or individuals that make a request, we do a briefing from them on who they are, and what their purpose is. To my knowledge we haven't turned anyone down in the period of time that I've been here. (...) the [facilities] haven't been used for political rallies or anything like that. But it's part of a Pastoral Centre, and in the Pastoral Centre we try to provide access to space for groups who in some way or other are socially minded, and involved in aspects of the life in the community. (M: 203)

Clearly, many of the CBD churches experience some type of responsibility for the community groups, and therefore make their facilities available to them. These efforts are not something they profit on, rather a service to the community. On the other hand, when companies such as IBM or Ernst & Young wish to rent space at a church, they will be handled as professional clients. This is a widespread practice, and I can conclude this section by saying that the majority of the churches rent out either for profit or non-profit depending on who wants to rent it.

4.5.e Rules and guidelines

One of the things I enquired at every interview was whether or not they had rules as to who was allowed to rent space. The general conception was that they did not need strict rules concerning this issue, as it was largely common sense. Guidelines were sufficient and generally prohibit political organisations, alcohol consumption, and worship related to non-Christian groups. Christian community groups are encouraged to rent.

Concerning ceremonies, people who are not from the congregation are in most cases allowed to get married in the churches, as long as it is a Christian ceremony. In some churches

the couple can bring a minister of choice. Differences also exist as to the extent they market themselves as a *wedding church* or not. St James, however, claims that most of the people that get married there do so because they have a traditional connection to the church.

4.6 Ecumenical efforts

The reason for choosing these churches to be part of my sample was not only because of their location, but also because they are all members of the ecumenical organisation Melbourne City Churches in Action (MCCIA). The ecumenical work is an issue of interest because I wanted to see to what degree the churches worked with each other. How much contact do they have with one another?⁹⁴ And what common activities do they have?

The worldwide ecumenical movement consist of Christian organisations working together across denominational boundaries.⁹⁵ ‘One of the themes of this ecumenical movement has been to play down the differences among the several denominations of the Christian church.’ (Bouma, 1992, p. 103) In 1948, when the ecumenical movement had already been underway for some 40 years attempting to create unification of the whole Christian church, the World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed (World Council of Churches, 2006). The aim of the WCC is to work out a shared missionary strategy to help the churches collaborate (Brown, 1987).

This movement has spawned ecumenical organisations on different levels, worldwide as well as local, such as the MCCIA. The board of the MCCIA consists of ministers as well as lay people, from the different member churches. The leader of this board at the time of my data collection, Convenor father Collins, told me that there are very few records kept from the formation of it and until today. The reason for this is unclear. I had great difficulties finding information about its establishment, but have received information suggesting that it goes back between 25 and 30 years, making it a fairly recent addition to the religious landscape of the CBD.

⁹⁴ As explained in the introduction, I felt it was not sufficient to include only churches located within the CBD grid in my sample. Therefore, I decided to widen my area to the churches that were members of the MCCIA. My justification for including these non-CBD churches was that as members of the MCCIA, which is completely voluntary, they must identify themselves as *city churches*. In addition to the churches that are included in the thesis, other members in the MCCIA include St Patricks Cathedral and the Salvation Army. (See 1.3.a *The sample*). See Appendix 4 for the level of MCCIA involvement at each church.

⁹⁵ Ecumenism has also come to be known as cooperation between various religions, not just within Christianity.

Today, the organisation provides a connection between the churches and to the City Council. The main activity is the Good Friday march, the *Way of the Cross*⁹⁶, which gathers thousands of people. The MCCA is also responsible for the nativity scene in the CBD⁹⁷, as well as keeping regular ecumenical services. Bimonthly meetings are held. They state that: 'We work together to develop understanding and cooperation and to spread the message of Jesus Christ in our City.' (Waltrowicz, February 2006)

There were different degrees of involvement among the members of the MCCA. Some of the churches found the organisation to be very important, whereas others seemed to have no interaction with them at all, except for being formal members. All the churches located within the CBD grid are members, however, it is not a prerequisite to be located within the grid as nearly half of the member-churches are not. One member that stands out here is Holy Trinity. Their location is in the inner city suburb of East Melbourne, and it was therefore not expected for this church to join. However, Holy Trinity reported that:

We joined that group; we're not really in the inner city. We're just kind of on the edge, but we joined that when I came here at the beginning of 2001, because this parish wasn't linked ecumenically to another church council or something. So we applied for membership of the city churches group. (K: 27)

Holy Trinity clearly find support in being part of an ecumenical group, which provides the church and the congregation with a network of other churches to cooperate with.

4.6.a Way of the Cross

My focus will be on their main activity, the *Way of the Cross* arranged on Good Friday. The walk is marked by 14 sculptures depicting motives from the Passion, one sculpture placed at each of the churches included in the procession. As some of these churches are not located within the CBD, not all of the 16 churches were included. The ones left out were St James Old Cathedral, Holy Trinity, St Augustine's, and Welsh Church. Welsh Church and St Augustine's were provided with a sculpture for their minister to say a prayer at, at respectively St Francis' and St Patrick's.

⁹⁶ The *Way of the Cross*, or Stations of the Cross, is a commonly observed Christian ritual. It can take place at any time, but is most widespread during Lent, especially on Good Friday (Ashley, 1999).

⁹⁷ The MCCA has in cooperation with the Melbourne City Council been responsible for a nativity scene placed in the City Square from early December (Waltrowicz, October 2006).

I was able to attend the walk during my stay in Melbourne. The procession started at St Francis'. Practical information was given and booklets with the route and prayers were handed out. The MCCIA convenor informed the attendees that as this was an ecumenical walk they would not follow Catholic tradition for the procession. Prayers were said at each of the sculptures and people prayed, nearly chanted, as they were walking from one station to the next. The walk ended at St Paul's Cathedral, which is the 13th station. However, the next morning people gathered there and walked across the Yarra River down to St Johns Southgate, which is the 14th station, and the end of the walk. A dawn service followed.

It appeared as if people were joining all through the walk and I was later told that there were as many as 6000 people following. The most impressive part of the whole experience was the fact that everything in the city, such as traffic and public transportation, had to come to a standstill because of this crowd of praying people. The people participating reconnected to Jesus and his suffering through the urban landscape of the CBD. A former convenor of the MCCIA, Peter Gador White, expressed his thoughts on the meaning of this walk in an interview.

It's a project which is designed to bring the churches much more physically into the public realm. But all through the history of the church, the church has constantly affirmed that the Christian faith is a public faith, it's not a private affair, although there are personal aspects to our faith. But it's very important that we don't encourage the split between private and public, because our worship services in churches are public events, just as much as the things that we do outside those churches are public. (...)

I think the other side of that is that we have been very concerned to maintain good relationships with the other religious communities and therefore have placed these sculptures on church and private land rather than on public land because we want to be in good dialogue with other communities of faith. (Anonymous, 2001)

This statement describes both the function of this type of ecumenical procession, and the intention of the MCCIA organisation. By walking from one church to the next, saying prayers, this event makes worship a public, rather than private, action, attempting to connect with people the churches usually do not reach. By bringing a religious ceremony into the streets they are making it a low-threshold event. Anyone can join; there is no further commitment than to walk as far as you wish. At the same time people get a tour of the churches in the CBD. The second ambition of this procession is to bring the churches in the

inner city closer together. It lets people from different denominations and congregations gather in a festival they all celebrate and make people aware of the fact that the churches actually are cooperating and that they are all part of the same community, rather than in competition with each other.

A couple of my respondents highlighted that this type of activity, such as the Way of the Cross, or other general ecumenical tasks was something special for Melbourne. At Eastern Hill my respondent expressed his views concerning the Walk this way:

Yeah, [the walk is] quite remarkable isn't it? And going from a Roman Catholic church to Churches of Christ to Uniting church to this Anglican church to Roman Catholic to German Lutheran then down the road to Presbyterians and Baptists. It's a very interesting mix; I'm not sure anything quite like it happens anywhere else, except it would not happen in Sydney. So you're getting something very Melbourne here. (H: 53)

This quote does not only highlight the ecumenical intention of the Walk, but also some of the friendly rivalry between Melbourne and Sydney. (This was not the only mention, throughout my interviews, of this unofficial competition between these cities.)

4.6.b Summing up the ecumenical efforts in the CBD

The Way of the Cross is the largest activity of the MCCIA. However, they also have other ventures such as the aforementioned nativity scene, ecumenical Week of Reconciliation-services, and Lenten Bible Study. Through the bimonthly newsletter the churches can make announcements on other upcoming events.

The MCCIA can be seen as a relatively new venture in this urban ecology. Since most of these churches are over 100 years old, the formation of this ecumenical organisation (although 25 years old), is fairly new. Also the Way of the Cross is a new venture, being organised for the seventh time in 2007. This signals a heightened awareness of the community of churches in the city, and what effects common work can have.

Most interesting was it to see how these churches clearly had different attitudes towards the MCCIA. It seems as if the larger churches that appear to have weak denominational ties are not as devoted to the MCCIA (St Michael's and SS CoC). The medium size churches (such as CSBC and Eastern Hill) encourage more cooperation, perhaps because they are the ones that focus their ministry towards the city.

5. Comparative and theoretical perspectives

When doing such a large and extensive study for such a small thesis it is, at times, necessary to paint with a broad brush. My main goal in this chapter will be to highlight some of the adaptations and challenges of these churches in their urban ecology.

I have throughout the thesis drawn conclusions as to why different changes have, or have not been implemented, as well as how the churches have responded to their urban ecology. I will therefore not present a summary of the analysis, but rather discuss the churches' responses in light of similar empirical studies, and by the application of a theoretical perspective. I will begin this chapter by presenting a classification of the churches based on their responses to the urban ecology, before I compare my findings to two previously conducted American studies. These are studies which address many of the same topics as mine. Have the congregations, which have been examined in these similar studies, experienced the same processes as the churches in Melbourne CBD? Can my study be compared to these papers at all, considering that these are based on studies conducted in different countries? Comparing my findings to these studies may at the same time serve as a summary of my analysis. In the end, I will discuss the religious economies approach of Finke and Stark. Can this approach be successfully applied to the findings from my study, considering that this is a theoretical framework developed in the US for American religious organisations?

5.1 Three main responses to a changing urban ecology

It has not been my intention to arrive at any one answer in regard to the questions I posed in the beginning of this thesis.⁹⁸ The questions have rather been tools to explore my material to its full extent. As I have covered such a wide range of issues when discussing these churches and their urban ecology, I found it difficult to detect a single, encompassing pattern for all 14 churches. I will therefore present a possible approach to a classification.

As my main point of interest when analysing my material was to detect how the churches have changed and adapted as a result of changes in their urban ecology, this can provide a good starting point for a classification. I have presented several issues where the churches have implemented changes as a result of urban transformation processes. However,

⁹⁸ These questions have been previously outlined, see 1.3 *Theme and problem outline*.

some churches appear to be virtually unaffected by their surrounding environment. To what degree do these churches have an awareness of their location, and their possibilities to be a church for the city populations (workers, residents, shoppers, disadvantaged, visitors, and religious commuters)? The churches will here be considered in relation to their awareness of, and interaction with, the specific challenges imposed by their urban ecology.

The degree to which these churches actively interact with the urban ecology, depends on several issues. The demographics and location of their congregants, worship services, outreach, and their recruitment efforts, are all important elements when establishing an image of these churches' involvement in their surrounding environment. By considering several of these variables, the churches can be divided into three groups according to the congregations' involvement, both their activities over time, and responses to the urban transformation processes. This classification is based, not only on my gathered material, but also to some degree, on the enthusiasm of my respondents when discussing their congregations' outreach to the city.

5.1.a Major CBD orientation

The churches in the first group are explicitly oriented towards the city in their ventures. They have a high degree of contact with their neighbourhood, as well as definite plans for further interaction. There is no clear-cut pattern connecting these churches together within this group in terms of activities, but rather an understanding of their complete organisations as very open to the city populations. My respondents at these churches highly emphasised how important it is for the congregation to maintain contact with the people in the city. This group comprises Scots', CSBC, St Augustine's, and Eastern Hill.

Although Scots' and CSBC do not have parish boundaries, they are now evolving into focussing on an *imagined* parish. Scots' felt they had been disconnected from their neighbourhood, and have therefore identified three groups they wish to reach out to: the business community, the residents, and the students. To aid the congregation at Scots' to make contact with their neighbourhood, a part-time student minister was hired, as well as a Minister to the CBD. The Minister to the CBD's main task is to profile the church in the business community, in order to attract city workers to their weekday lunch service. This can be done through, for instance, establishing office prayer groups. The Minister to the CBD can be seen as a liaison between the congregation and the city workers.

Having found that it has also been disconnected from their *parish*, CSBC likewise made similar efforts to connect with the CBD. At CSBC, they have added a new weekday

afternoon service aimed at city workers, as well as started a social group where congregants who work in the city meet and have lunch once a month.⁹⁹ They have also chosen to direct their focus towards the disadvantaged people in the city by offering a worship service followed by a free meal. Both Scots' and CSBC expressed an explicit wish to reconnect with their geographical neighbourhood, to be a church for the city people.¹⁰⁰

St Augustine's and Eastern Hill are in a somewhat different position. These are in fact formal parish churches, although they have had few parishioners for some time. However, both of these churches make an effort to reconnect with their geographical neighbourhood. Both of these churches have weekday services that are mainly attended by city workers, as well as projects directed at helping the disadvantaged in the city. At St Augustine's there is a group of congregants who seek out homeless people in their area, whereas Eastern Hill hosts a breakfast in conjunction with their morning weekday service.

The main process that appears to have sparked these churches' interest in revitalising their connection to their neighbourhood has been gentrification, resulting in an increase of residents. Three of the four churches have made changes to their worship schedule in order to attract people from their target groups. Whereas CSBC added a new service, Scots' and St Augustines' changed time and location¹⁰¹ of Sunday evening services aiming to attract more families. Students are also a priority, and Scots', CSBC, and St Augustine's have introduced worship services with a more youthful profile than the Sunday morning service.¹⁰² The churches included in this group do also have high levels of involvement in the ecumenical efforts of the MCCA.

Although these churches have efforts to attract people who live and work in the city, the majority of the regular congregants live in the outer parishes.¹⁰³ Not all of their activities are aimed towards the inner city, but in addition to maintaining their traditional congregation, they also direct attention to their neighbourhood. In most cases, they are attempting to develop a joint community where both suburban and inner city residents will gather. The congregational groups are an example of this; there is no clear division between the groups for inner city people versus suburbanites - they are open for the whole congregation. The only feature that can make a division concerning the congregational groups, is the fact that some of

⁹⁹ The aims of this type of social group have been addressed in section 4.2.a *Social and fundraising groups*.

¹⁰⁰ This topic has been previously discussed, see 4.3.a *Community outreach*.

¹⁰¹ The reason for changing the location of a worship service has been discussed in 3.7.c *Historical significance vs. modern day use*.

¹⁰² The importance of worship services, and the service profiles has been extensively covered in 4.2 *Worship services*.

¹⁰³ An outline of the location of the churches' congregants has been provided in 3.4 *Location of congregants*.

them are based on where people live. This can, however, contribute to the congregations becoming more close-knit, as people will get to know their fellow congregants in their neighbourhood.

5.1.b Minor CBD orientation

The churches in the second group are also, to some degree, aware and active within the city, but do not place as much emphasis on it as the previous group. This is the largest group, and comprises St Paul's Cathedral, GLTC, SSSCoC, St Johns Southgate, St Francis', and Old Cathedral.

The churches in this group are not unwilling to reach out to the city populations; several respondents expressed a wish to do more in order to reach new residents. However, previous attempts have been hampered either by a lack of resources, or the fact that the ventures were not suitable for their particular congregation. St Johns did, for instance, start a weekday worship service to attract city workers, as part of a project by the MCCIA. But, although the Southgate complex next to St Johns is the workplace of hundreds of people, this service was not an immediate success among its target audience. The church decided to discontinue it after realising that the only people attending were older members who did so in order to support the church. St Johns have decided to rather focus on the Sunday worship schedule, and in addition keep their chapel open daily as a low-effort way of reaching out to the city populations.

St Paul's Cathedral has also removed a service from their schedule. They found that that they had too many services, and by removing the morning service the people who used to attend this would attend the lunch hour service instead. The two other Anglican churches in this group, on the other hand, were contemplating closing down their lunch hour services because of poor attendance. A commonality within this group and the worship schedules is that they are more likely to discontinue a service, than to change the style in order to attract new people. The churches in this group are not as likely to adapt their service schedules to the changes in the city's populations.

The church buildings, with the exception of SSSCoC, are to some extent available during the week. Few other ventures have been arranged to attract people who work or live in the city or to in other ways make contact with them. Welfare services are mainly provided through monetary aid, or detached agencies. Efforts to connect with the city populations are

made through student chaplainries; otherwise there is little focus on the city people, aside from the congregants.¹⁰⁴

A church being transformed to meet the needs of newfound city residents is Old Cathedral. Using the church building and its parish boundaries as a starting point, the minister is aiming to attract the Docklands residents.

Concerning involvement in the MCCA¹⁰⁵, the churches have very different degrees of involvement. Some of the churches saw the organisation as very important, whereas others seemed to be nearly unaware of its existence. The other churches report that they wish to be available to the people who seek them out, but have few activities that are directed at specifically attracting people from the city populations to the church. This too is an important low-effort way of connecting with the people in the city. Although they welcome more contact with the people in their geographical neighbourhood, they also wish to focus on their present congregation.

5.1.c Marginal CBD orientation

The churches that comprise the third group have very little connection to, and interaction with, the CBD. This can be both because the churches traditionally have been very little involved when the city has been experiencing urban transformation, and because their suburban congregations lack the dedication and incentives to become engaged in the church's neighbourhood. This group comprises St Michael's, the Welsh Church, Wesley Uniting, as well as Holy Trinity.

There is one church in this group which is very aware of its geographical neighbourhood, and that is Holy Trinity. But, this church, albeit a member of the MCCA, is the parish church to East Melbourne and focuses its attention towards this area¹⁰⁶ and its congregation. Few of the people from the major city populations are located here. This is an area that has not been part of the gentrification process, few people work here, and the number of disadvantaged people is low as well. The activities Holy Trinity offers are mainly directed towards congregants.

The extent to which these churches interact with the city populations is small. Some respondents claimed that they have challenges attracting people from the city populations, mainly the residents, to their church. Both Welsh Church, and Wesley Uniting reported

¹⁰⁴ Information on the availability of the churches has been addressed in the section 4.4 *Availability and approachability*.

¹⁰⁵ The activities of the MCCA has been extensively covered, see 4.6 *Ecumenical efforts*.

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix 1: *CBD map* for the location of Holy Trinity.

having problems attracting the new city residents, and that traditional recruitment measures had failed.¹⁰⁷

St Michael's is perhaps the church with the least interaction with the CBD and its people. Except for keeping the church and the Mingary¹⁰⁸ open to visitors, the congregation at St Michael's focuses little attention towards reaching out its immediate neighbourhood.

One of the reasons for this difficulty attracting new people can be the worship schedule offered at these churches. As mentioned above, one way to recruit new people to the churches is to offer more diverse and modern worship services. These churches (with the exception of Holy Trinity) only provide Sunday worship services, and have made few efforts to promote themselves towards the city workers and students as they have little to offer them in terms of congregational groups, or worship services. This poor range of activities makes it difficult for new groups of people to involve themselves in the congregations. The churches in this group show very low involvement in the MCCA, and only one of them (Wesley) is included in the Way of the Cross.

5.1.d Summing up

It seems that several of the CBD churches are in a stage of transition, be it in size, mission strategy, or demographic composition of the congregation. These processes of developing and changing the church can be ongoing, instigated by a leadership change, or still in the planning stages.

Issues, such as the importance of the church buildings, or whether or not the churches rent out property, have not been given much attention in this classification. I found that these issues are more dependent on the church buildings, and other facilities, than the congregation's wishes to reach out to the city populations. The fact that the majority of the CBD churches make their space available can be seen as a response to the urban ecology. There is a need for affordable meeting space in the city, at the same time, as the churches need to make money. The churches, which offer free, or discounted, facilities for community groups, are, in this manner, reaching out to the city. However, there is no correlation between the churches that do this, and how the churches have been classified in accordance to involvement with their geographical neighbourhood and city populations.

¹⁰⁷ The challenges faced by the churches in terms of recruiting people from the city populations was addressed in section 4.3.d. *Recruitment*

¹⁰⁸ A description of the Mingary is provided in the section on 2.7.b *St Michael's Uniting*.

This classification is an attempt to highlight the different churches' interaction with, and awareness of, their urban ecology. The overall tendency appears to be a heightened interest in their immediate geographical surroundings, whereas some of the churches appear to keep their focus directed inwards. This increased involvement is also an ongoing process, and as more people move to the city, more churches will realise the potential growth and development the city populations can bring to their congregation. The city workers are also an important resource, as some have become conscious of, and others have yet to discover. This classification is not an attempt to make one group appear to be better than the others, but rather to show the different levels of development as city churches.

5.2 Comparative perspectives

In this section, I will compare my findings to two different papers on studies similar to mine. The first paper is: 'Downtown Metropolitan Churches: Ecological Situation and Response' (2005) by William Form and Joshua Dubrow. This is the study on which I modelled my methodology, and to a large degree my interview guide. Form and Dubrow have, using urban ecology as a basis, examined downtown Columbus, Ohio, and its congregations concerning their response to the changing environment. The authors use the interaction of both sociological and ecological frameworks to explain the churches' responses to the urban environment (Form and Dubrow, 2005).

The second paper is 'The "Religious District" of Elite Congregations: Reproducing Spatial Concentration and Redefining Mission' (2003) by Elfriede Wedam. She applies urban ecology, new urban geography, and 'agency' theory to her material in order to examine the relationship between a religious district in Indianapolis, Indiana, and its social and geographical contexts. This study takes into account many of the same factors as mine.

5.2.a 'Downtown Metropolitan Churches: Ecological Situation and Response'

This paper was my chief inspiration in terms of theme outline and methodology. However, my thesis was never meant to be a replica of this because I had neither the time, nor the necessary experience to carry out such an extensive study. I did, however, utilise their methodological approach¹⁰⁹. I will address the topics of this paper in the same order as they are introduced in my thesis.

¹⁰⁹ Form and Dubrow conducted one-hour interviews with clergy, staff, and volunteers at the 18 churches in which they requested information on: 'a brief church history, the size, age, socio-economic, and racial

The main question posed in this paper is: ‘How do downtown metropolitan churches respond to their unique ecological niche?’ This *ecological niche* is the urban ecology of the Columbus congregations, which is instrumental in shaping and changing them.

Columbus’¹¹⁰ downtown area has experienced urban transformation processes, but in a different manner than the Melbourne CBD. Columbus seems to have experienced suburban relocation at a much later date than Melbourne. As residents moved, so did many congregations. In contrast to the situation in Columbus, the CBD in Melbourne has experienced a resurgence of people taking up residence in the inner city. Although these two areas did not experience the processes at the same time, they are still facing similar challenges. As there have been changes in both urban ecologies, the congregations have made different responses.

Composition of the congregations seems fairly similar for both religious ecologies. The congregations in both cities are diverse and include people from all age groups, several ethnicities, and with different SES. Not all congregations are diverse, but a diverse group of people are represented in these congregations. The fact that such a high number of churches can survive in such a small area indicates that they have different things to offer. Should all of the congregations attract the same demographics there would hardly be a need for, respectively, 14 and 18 churches in these areas. This is an important trait of this type of urban ecology; it attracts a wide range of people.

Location of congregants plays an important role also in Form and Durbow’s study. In both cities the churches have lost members as people have moved further out in the suburbs. As Melbourne experienced suburbanisation at such an early stage, the prevalence of inner city re-settlement has come about at an earlier stage than in Ohio. The Ohio churches have yet to face the task of attracting and serving new inner city residents, and the challenges this introduces in terms of recruitment. The Ohio churches, like the Melbourne churches, find the majority of their congregants from areas beyond downtown. In Ohio, none of the representatives from the churches reported having inner-city residents in the congregations, unlike in Melbourne where the numbers of these were increasing. As urban re-development

composition of the congregation, church activities during the week, the number of persons in each activity, clergy and staff contacts with other churches and religious groups, outreach activities, the number of people reached (workers, shoppers, homeless, others), and the number who entered the church for religious or other reasons.’ (Form and Durbow, 2005, p. 273) My interview guide was also influenced by the NCS questionnaire by Chaves.

¹¹⁰ Columbus is the state capital of Ohio; it has about 1,5 million inhabitants, compared to Melbourne’s 3,6 million.

seems to have had a greater impact in Melbourne than in Ohio, several of the CBD churches appear to have put more effort into attracting new inner city residents.

One of Form and Dubrow's main premises is that the congregations will respond differently to changes based on whom they are able to reach out to. 'Ecological theory predicts that, by virtue of location, the 18 downtown churches will vary in response to the four downtown populations (employees, shoppers, residents, and transients) in proportion to their exposure to them.'¹¹¹ (Form and Dubrow, 2005, p. 280) In Ohio, as in Melbourne, there are differences concerning where the churches are located and what clientele they cater to. As discussed in *Availability and approachability* (see 4.4) in the previous chapter, some churches respond differently to their surrounding environment than others, based on the people in the area. The Welsh Church of the CBD, for instance, keeps the church open one day a week, but has had very few visitors because they are located on the fringe of the CBD. Foot traffic density is low on the fringe, compared to that of CSBC, Scots', or St Paul's Cathedral. However, foot traffic is not the only factor affecting whom these churches are able to reach out to.

The *availability* of the churches is important in downtown Ohio as well. Form and Dubrow have divided availability into *Daytime Religious Contact* and *Openness to Daytime Populations*. Daytime religious contact concerns whether the churches have weekday worship services, which is also a topic in my analysis. The Catholic churches offer weekday services, so does one Episcopalian, and one Presbyterian. However, the remaining ones do not. Form and Dubrow's findings coincided with mine as the Catholics and Anglicans as well as some of the Protestant churches in the CBD have weekday services and keep their doors open. This indicates that denomination has some influence on this topic.¹¹²

Openness to Daytime Populations is also a topic in my analysis. In my analysis I have, however, addressed this topic both in the section on *Outreach* (see 4.3), and in the section on *Availability and approachability* (see 4.4) To what degree these churches are open to the daytime city populations depends on to what extent the churches are open, as well as whether or not they offer any welfare services. Whereas Form and Dubrow found that the clergy, staff and volunteers primarily had contact with *street people* to a larger degree than city workers and shoppers, I found that the churches that are open during the day mostly are sought out by tourists (and in fewer numbers also city workers). Only to a small extent do the disadvantaged

¹¹¹ In the CBD I have identified six different city populations: Workers, residents, shoppers, disadvantaged, visitors, and religious commuters. Please refer to section 4.3 *Outreach* for a further discussion on the ways in which the CBD churches attempt to reach out to these city populations.

¹¹² The connection between openness and denomination has been addressed in 4.4.b *Denominational differences*.

people seek them out, and when they do, they are usually referred to other agencies. The degrees to which the churches are able to offer any welfare services are based on finances and human resources. Only a few of the CBD churches offer welfare services, such as food parcels for people who come by. The same can be said for the Ohio churches. Here, as in Melbourne, the majority of the welfare outreach work is performed by separate organisations (where some have historical connections to the congregations). In Ohio, many of these are located outside of downtown, whereas in Melbourne the majority are situated in the CBD, or in the inner city suburbs. Congregants from churches in both cities do to some extent volunteer¹¹³ in these separate agencies, but they are more likely to volunteer at activities within the church. Services offered in both cities are free meals, soup vans, free clothes, as well as counselling by a social worker. If the church has a connection to such an agency, this is usually where they will refer people in need of help.

In their conclusion Form and Dubrow emphasise the importance of foot traffic: ‘the churches most exposed to the heaviest pedestrian traffic responded the most to them.’ (Form and Dubrow, 2005, p. 287) These Columbus churches aimed at creating second congregations which would include the people in the area who were more socially heterogeneous than the regular Sunday congregation. This has been done in the Melbourne churches as well, but I found little or no connection to foot traffic. However, denomination, as well as to some extent established missionary strategy, seemed to be significant factors.

Form and Dubrow conclude their paper by summing up that over the years, and due to urban development, the Ohio churches have developed into *niche churches*. These are churches with specialised tasks directed towards certain groups of people. Melbourne has not had the same development. Here, the churches have not only adapted in order to attract new groups, but they have rather made their organisation more diverse, making room for several different congregations within one organisation.

There are clear similarities between the findings of these two studies. However, by comparing these studies I found that even though two studies are performed on similar terms, both methodologically and thematically, it is difficult to compare them. The geographical areas, the historically determinants, and the urban developments are different, only making it possible to compare and contrast general tendencies. This should also be kept in mind when examining the following paper.

¹¹³ How and when the congregants volunteer in the churches has been addressed in 4.2.d *Service groups*.

5.2.b 'The 'Religious District' of Elite Congregations: Reproducing Spatial Centrality and Redefining Mission'

Wedam has examined a religious district of elite congregations in Indianapolis, Indiana, through historical research, surveys, and ethnographic fieldwork (Wedam, 2003, p. 48). The paper discusses several of the same issues as the present thesis. The two studies will be compared on the topics of *Demographics, Attendance, Location of congregants, Outreach, and Recruitment*.

The elite congregations in Indianapolis are situated on Meridian Street, defined as one religious district. The Melbourne congregations are not located on one specific street, but are, as the Indianapolis churches, located within a fixed area. This area (the CBD) can also be analysed as a religious district, giving room for comparison of these two studies. Whether the CBD churches can be deemed *elite congregations* depends on the definition. Wedam describes the Meridian Street congregations as prominent due to their high status location; they attract people with high SES, the elite people of the area. The CBD churches are to some extent elite congregations as well. They are situated in a prime central location in the oldest part of Melbourne, and they have extensive traditional ties with the area and the founding of the city. This legacy entails high status in society, and will thus be instrumental in making them *elite*. However, in terms of the SES of the congregants, few of the congregations can be considered high status.

In both of these religious, districts the church buildings can be said to play an important role in the cityscape. A description of two of the older Meridian Street churches paints a picture, which in my experience also holds true for the CBD churches: 'Both cathedrals are pressed by commercial buildings on all sides, but appear to stand defiantly against any suggestion they are out of place (...)' (Wedam, 2003, p. 50) Many of the CBD churches are in similar ways in stark contrast to the skyscrapers, and retail shops. They appear as historical artefacts which in some way or another try to be relevant city buildings through housing modern-day congregations. Also the interior of the CBD churches show signs of the congregation's historical ties, creating continuity from formation until present day through tablets and memorial plaques.¹¹⁴ These historical ties of these congregations, both in Melbourne and Indianapolis, take part in creating the understanding of elite congregations.

On the topic of *demographics* there were clear similarities between the two religious ecologies. Few changes had occurred, although more diversity within the congregations was

¹¹⁴ The importance of the church buildings in relation to creating continuity, and building an identity, is discussed in 3.7 *The perception of space and meaning of church buildings*.

welcomed in most cases. Demographics of the congregants were one of the issues where I found few changes in the CBD as well. However, change probably did take place, albeit gradually. 'The composition of the membership is likely also to have changed insofar as educational and occupational mobility has broadened participation in American institutions generally.' (Wedam, 2003, p. 54) This is also true for Australia since higher education has become widely attainable and the class differences have become smaller in urban areas. This will have an effect on the membership compositions. Being located in the city centre they are able to attract people from all over Melbourne, for the CBD is available to everyone. However, in order to be a regular member, the people have to have means of transport, free time, and a strong sense of commitment. People with fewer resources who live in the outer suburbs will more than likely have less opportunities and incentives to choose one of these congregations in the CBD. The SES of the members was stable, and concerning ethnicity there were few mixed congregations. In terms of age, the older people in the congregations were dropping off and younger ones joining.

The *size* of the congregations, and whether or not they are increasing, can be an important indicator of the church's viability. In the CBD churches the majority had stable numbers of people attending, and when there were changes, the numbers of attendees were increasing. The Meridian Street churches, on the other hand, have reportedly suffered losses in membership, but not to such an extent that they are in danger of having to close down. The most notable difference between the two religious ecologies is the number of people in the congregations. Whereas in Indianapolis the smallest congregation has a membership of 500, the smallest in Melbourne has about 20 members. The loss of congregants makes the churches less viable; however, a church that has 500 members and is decreasing, is more viable than one with only 20 attendees. Wedam does not provide explanations as to why membership is decreasing other than the vague description *changes in the ecology*. She does, however, claim that suburbanisation has been positive for membership in the furthest end of Meridian Street, as this section reaches into the suburbs. This claim cannot be made for Melbourne as suburbanisation keeps removing people further away from the CBD.

Another issue discussed in my analysis is the *location of the congregants*. The majority of people who attend worship services at the CBD churches are commuters. When they commute to the city on weekdays (usually the city workers), they will attend worship in the morning, during lunch, or in the evening. The other type of commuter is the people who belong to the Sunday congregations, people who drive or take the train for up to an hour to attend a service.

The Meridian Street congregations have people living in close vicinity, but also attract a few people from the outer suburbs. According to Wedam, these churches are constrained by the high-class status of the area. Whereas they are experiencing difficulties attracting people from the suburbs, the CBD churches have problems attracting people who live in the inner city, namely people with low SES.

Although some of the CBD churches in my study have formal parish boundaries, the general understanding was that these have been out-dated for some time, mainly because few people have actually been living in the area. However, there still is an understanding of the churches responsibility for the people in their area. The recent years' increase of people living in the CBD has aided in heightening this sense of responsibility. Wedam found that also the Indianapolis churches have become more parish-like as they are drawing more people from near-by areas.

Concerning the *outreach* they provide, I also see similarities between the two religious districts. However, due to a lack of human resources, as well as a need for a more professional approach, most CBD congregations either donate money, or encourage their congregants to volunteer at other agencies. As pointed out earlier, many of them cooperate with, or refer people to, welfare agencies, usually FBSS. On Meridian Street there are eight organisations which are so called spin-off agencies, whereas in the CBD there are three organisations that have 'been spun off'¹¹⁵ from established congregations. My overall impression of these churches and welfare services is that they all wished to contribute, but they were not able to. It is also the nature of welfare services today that the agencies have become more professional and offer a wide array of services. This makes it less necessary for the churches to provide, except for monetary contributions. The majority of the churches do not have the resources to run any welfare programmes.

The CBD churches, on the other hand, encounter the disadvantaged within their immediate surroundings. As the disadvantaged people gather in the city, in many instances they can be found on the churches' doorstep. The congregations feel a responsibility and see it as their duty to help them, even if the only thing they can do is donate money to external agencies. However, few attempts are made to include the poor in the congregations. The Meridian Street churches have made efforts such as mission activities focussed towards underprivileged neighbourhoods. These efforts have been successful in terms of helping people, but have been unsuccessful in recruiting new members, which appear to have been

¹¹⁵ A further explanation and discussion concerning 'spin off agencies' was covered in the section on welfare services in 4.3.d *Detached agencies*.

one of the goals of this outreach. According to Wedam, one of the reasons for this failure was the churches' elite status.

The last point of importance is *recruitment*, also a type of outreach. The difference between the CBD churches and the Meridian Street churches is that in Indianapolis the churches have had opportunity to recruit people from a larger area. Meridian Street stretches as a corridor from downtown into the suburbs. Although this study is similar to mine in that it covers a specific religious ecology, it examines a different geographical area, which again leads to different premises for recruitment. Many of the churches on Meridian Street have easier access to the nearby residents than the CBD churches, because the people who live in the area have been there for some time, and are more likely to know that the churches exist. They have less need to promote their church, whereas the CBD churches are more dependent on making newcomers aware of their existence.

It seems that many of Melbourne churches have depended on their location's visibility as a means of gaining members. My experience in Melbourne was that even though the churches were aware of the need to recruit members in order to stay viable, the majority of them had a *laissez-faire* attitude. They placed recruitment in the hands of God. The reason for this might be because, as a result of location and legacy, they have never had to focus on recruiting new people.

In Indianapolis, the churches' largest challenge appears to be to change people's opinion of them as *high-status congregations*. One specific recruitment challenge highlighted by Wedam is the problems attracting a racially diverse congregation because of this status. 'Subcultural processes of similarity in wealth, occupation, denominational history, and aesthetic and liturgical preferences and taste that include musical as well as the vernacular language are at work.' (Wedam, 2003, p. 57) These factors influence people to choose different congregations to worship in, both in Indianapolis and Melbourne. It seems that the churches in Melbourne, some of which have had success in attracting a multi-ethnic or multi-racial group, to a larger degree than in Indianapolis are attracting recent immigrants. This success is based on denomination, rather than explicit attempts to become multicultural. The Catholic and Anglican churches, being larger worldwide than the various Protestant denominations, attract a wider range of ethnicities.

Summing up, the most important similarity between Wedam's study and mine is the focus on a specific religious district, a religious ecology. We have both addressed a number of congregations and how they have adapted to their ecology, drawing many points of similarity concerning what factors affects them, and how. Through these studies it becomes evident that

churches located within the same district are affected by the same processes, and make similar choices since they are located in a shared ecology. I have also been able to observe similarities between Australia and the US, a point which I will discuss below.

5.2.c Can an Australian study be compared to American studies?

Can I compare American findings to the findings in my study of an Australian study? The studies and research I have used when writing this thesis have, with the exception of the National Church Life Survey, been performed by American scholars. I will therefore pose some questions concerning whether I am in my right to compare and contrast these two different ecologies.

Congregational studies are to a large degree an area of study that has been developed in the US. Contributions have also been made from the UK, for instance *Congregational Studies in the UK - Christianity in a Post-Christian Context* (Guest, Tusting, and Woodhead, 2004), but British congregational studies has to a large degree been marginalised (Ibid, p. xi). As the appropriate material for my study has mainly been American, I have focused on these contributions in this thesis.

There are clear historical and social similarities between Australia and the US. Both countries are former colonies, subject to several waves of migration, federations, and English speaking. Both countries have to a large degree experienced the same urban transformation processes, such as urban sprawl and gentrification. The effects of these urban processes have also had similar effect on religious organisations. In terms of immigration, the countries have had similar experiences leading to segregated religio-ethnic communities, the focus of many studies.

Both countries have never had a state-imposed church monopoly (Finke and Stark 2005; Mackie, 2004, p.94). One of the most important premises of scholars studying congregations in America is the pluralism brought on by being, according to Finke and Stark (1988; 2005), an unregulated market. The same has happened in Australia. Although the Anglican Church enjoyed a special position, it was never given status as state church.¹¹⁶ However, the development was not parallel insofar as the Anglican Church has played a more important part in Australian history than any single mainline denomination in the US.

In the end it seems that comparing and applying American studies to the empirical findings from an Australia urban ecology is fairly unproblematic. It provides the opportunity

¹¹⁶ See 2.4 *Christianity in Australia*.

of displaying unique Australian traits concerning urban ecology, such as the effects of early suburbanisation, while it also demonstrates how urban processes are happening simultaneously in our increasingly globalised world. However, is it also possible to successfully apply a theoretical framework developed for the US? This will be my next topic of discussion.

5.3 Religious economies and the CBD churches

The marketplace model (Rational Choice theory) is presently one of the more influential paradigms within religious studies.¹¹⁷ This tradition can be traced back to Adam Smith and his application of economic principles to religious organisations at group or social levels (Finke and Stark, 2000, p. 36) has now been further developed by, for instance Finke and Starke. I will focus on some of their key concepts, such as the market of a religious economy, its pluralism, competition, and the development of specialised churches. How do these relate to the CBD of Melbourne, and can this theoretical approach successfully be applied to the findings of my study? I will discuss selected topics of this perspective in relation to the CBD churches.

According to Finke and Stark (1988; 2000; 2005), religious organisations are part of a religious marketplace where churches (or other religious bodies) are in competition with each other. These marketplaces make up the religious economies. ‘Religious economies are like commercial economies in that they consist of a market made up of a set of current and potential customers and a set of firms seeking to serve that market.’ (Finke & Stark, 2005, p. 9) Religious affiliation is a matter of choice; religious organisations must compete for members in the same manner as commercial enterprises compete for clients. In the religious economy, the churches are like companies, or businesses, competing with each other for clients (believers). A deteriorating church can be compared to an ineffective business.

In Melbourne, the body of potential clients comprise the people who spend time in the city. The city populations, the market is made up of the religious institutions that exist there: the 14 churches in my study, the two remaining MCCA members, as well as other churches located in the inner suburbs. Also included are Christian prayer groups, newer churches that meet in office buildings, New Age groups, as well as non-Christian religious groups (as well

¹¹⁷ In addition to Finke and Starke, other scholars have also been instrumental in developing the present rational choice theoretical perspective. The rational choice approach has also received a great deal of criticism by, for instance Chaves, 1995; Demerath, 1995; Bruce, 1999.

as suburban churches). Clearly, this market is much more complex and competitive than what my earlier descriptions might have given the impression of. There are far more than 14 firms operating in the market of the CBD. I will, however, mainly focus on the churches in my sample when discussing this theoretical perspective.

The Australian market is an unregulated one, meaning that no one group has been given special benefits as a state religion (resulting in a monopoly). As described in chapter 2, Anglicanism was never given status as state religion¹¹⁸ (Mackie, 2004, p.94). Not having a religious monopoly has made Australia, according to Finke and Stark, a pluralistic unregulated religious market. Undoubtedly, the CBD is a pluralistic religious district where most major Christian denominations are represented, along with Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and new religious movements.

5.3.a Importance of denominational affiliation

One of the most significant claims concerning the marketplace approach is that these churches are competing in an open market, and that they are in competition with each other. There are also claims that denominational affiliation has lost influence (Finke and Stark, 2005), but I believe it to be otherwise. People do still, to some extent, have denominational affiliations. This can result in limiting their choices, especially when, or if the churches all have diverse products to offer. In my observation, there was little competition to spot between the 14 churches as portrayed in the interviews. One might argue that one of the main reasons for this was their adherence to denominations, as one of my respondents expressed when asked why the people who lived around the church did not attend their services:

(...) if they're Anglican they go to St Paul's Cathedral, if they're Catholic they go to St Augustine's, St Francis', St Pats', if they're Uniting Church they've got the Wesley Church, the Baptist go [to] Collins Street Baptist, Churches of Christ up Swanston Street. Then you've got South Melbourne too, which is really not that far away, you've got Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox... (L: 176)

In my opinion this shows that the competition is not as harsh as market theory advocates, and that people are attracted to *their* denomination. For people who have grown up with a strong

¹¹⁸ However, even though none of the churches in my sample are part of a monopoly, they were once given special benefits. Having received their property as an allotment from the government at the time, they have been able to maintain their central location in the city. This benefit was not enjoyed by newer groups that have to either buy expensive property, or rent.

connection to a particular denomination, this bond will persist. Sherkat and Wilson (1995) explain this as an attraction towards the religious and cultural goods one is accustomed to. Denominational adherence is established in a person by her parents, and this person is not likely to leave the denomination unless significant changes occur. However, both within one denomination, and within each church, different products are offered. In the CBD, for instance, the different Anglican churches offer varied products, giving people a choice between different programmes. People who adhere to this denomination will more than likely not shift their loyalty because there are some changes to the worship schedule, as doctrines and style of worship will stay the same.

People with a strong connection to a church, and strong loyalties to the traditional aspect might question their commitment if there are big changes. This happened at SSCoC when the missionary strategy was shifted towards international students:

There were some [members] that left back in the eighties due to the emphasis on the students. They couldn't accept that vision. They thought they were being forgotten and neglected, (...) the students were getting the attention, and they weren't, so they moved on. But [the] majority now will have accepted the vision of the church and see that as the core function of our particular church, yeah. (J: 239)

Here, part of the older and more traditional congregation felt pushed out for the benefit of a new demographic. SSCoC made the decision to commit to a student ministry, and this was difficult to reconcile with the traditional congregation. However, it seems that the potential group of clients available was larger than the number of older members. They saw the possibility for profit, and moved towards becoming a specialised church.

5.3.b Specialisation of churches

Finke and Stark presuppose that: 'Where many faiths function within a religious economy, a high degree of specialization as well as competition occurs.' (Finke and Stark, 2005, p. 11) Does this apply within the CBD as well? My findings from the religious ecology, or the religious economy, of the CBD do not support this assumption. As already stated, there was little competition to be found. If this competition exists, it is not outspoken and deliberate. The churches exist in relation to each other as they have done for years, not in opposition to each other. Different denominations support different doctrines and it seems this is what the congregants are drawn to. Joint ventures, such as the Way of the Cross, and other ecumenical

efforts¹¹⁹, suggest that these churches are actually joining forces in order to attract more members collectively, rather than competing individually.

One type of this specialisation is *niche*¹²⁰ church (Ammerman, 2001; Form and Dubrow, 2005). The general idea is that churches will change into organisations with special user groups as a result of changes within their religious ecology. In Melbourne, this has happened at one church, whereas the other churches in general have become more all round products. SSCoC has experienced this type of niche-adaptation, as they have directed their ministry towards the international students, at the expense of their traditional congregation. GLTC also has a niche congregation, but they have not developed into being a German church recently, but rather *stayed* German. However, this church is also working to attract a wider range of congregants.

Aside from SSCoC and GLTC, the remaining 12 have not become specialised. Through my study I have rather found that the changes these 12 churches have implemented over the last years have aimed at making the churches' body of congregants more heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, age, and SES. They are working towards covering many needs and attracting a diversified group of people, most probably due to their location in this particular religious ecology. 'Recognizing that there may be a wide range of wants or needs among a diverse body of potential "consumers" religious bodies often diversify their "product" to satisfy diversified needs or preferences.' (Gold, 2002, p. 218) Many of the CBD churches are dependent on offering a range of services as there are few people living in the city, and the remaining people comprising the city populations only spend time in the inner city at certain times, for instance on weekdays. By offering worship services and activities available and open for different groups they manage to attract a more diverse congregation. They are not dependent on specific constituencies as SSCoC and GLTC. In order for the church to be able to gratify their congregation, it must offer certain things. Some churches develop into an institution which offer one certain thing for one group of people, whereas others become more all round.

5.3.c A successful application of the religious economies approach?

The CBD and its religious organisations can be identified as a religious economy, or market place, as can most urban areas in the Western world which contain more than one religious

¹¹⁹ See 4.6 *Ecumenical efforts* for a further description of the Way of the Cross procession, and its objectives.

¹²⁰ 'Niches are market segments of potential adherents sharing particular religious preferences (needs, tastes, and expectations)' (Finke and Stark, 2000, p. 195).

institution. The CBD does offer a wide range of religious products, making it a pluralistic, and the clients in this market are free to choose any product they wish. However, successful application of this theoretical framework ends here.

The religious institutions featured in my thesis do not display the strong competition that Finke and Starke highlight as central in this type of religious economy. One of the reasons for this appears to be a stronger sense of commitment to denomination among the CBD congregants in particular, and Australians in general. People will often seek out churches belonging to their denomination. The CBD churches also have a joint venture, the MCCIA, which also diminishes the competition between the churches, as they work together to attract people to events such as the Way of the Cross. In theory, the churches might be competing for clients, but I have not found evidence of competition being outspoken and deliberate. There is little tension to detect in this religious economy.

Finke and Stark's assertion that churches in an urban religious economy will become specialised in order to attract certain target groups is not supported when examining the CBD churches. There is only one niche church; the remaining 13 have rather become more versatile, attempting to attract a wider range of people.

In the case of the CBD as a religious district in an urban ecology, the theory of religious economies does not yield relevant results and can therefore not be successfully applied. My evidence suggests that one of the reasons for this is the fact that this theoretical framework is developed for American religious institutions; the empirical evidence the theory is based on is also American¹²¹. This leads me to the conclusion that not all American studies can be applied to the Australian religious landscape. However, more important is it that the churches that make up this religious district seem to have evolved alongside each other for such a long time that they compliment one another. This religious district appears to offer the clients what they want, and therefore there is no need for harsh competition and a wide range of niche churches. The religious economies of Finke and Stark are driven forward and maintained by the competition between the different religious institutions, whereas in the CBD it seems the churches are to a larger extent developing the religious district together, not at the cost of each other.

¹²¹ The book *The Churching of America* (2005) is based on statistical data of the development of American churches and sects from 1776 to 2005.

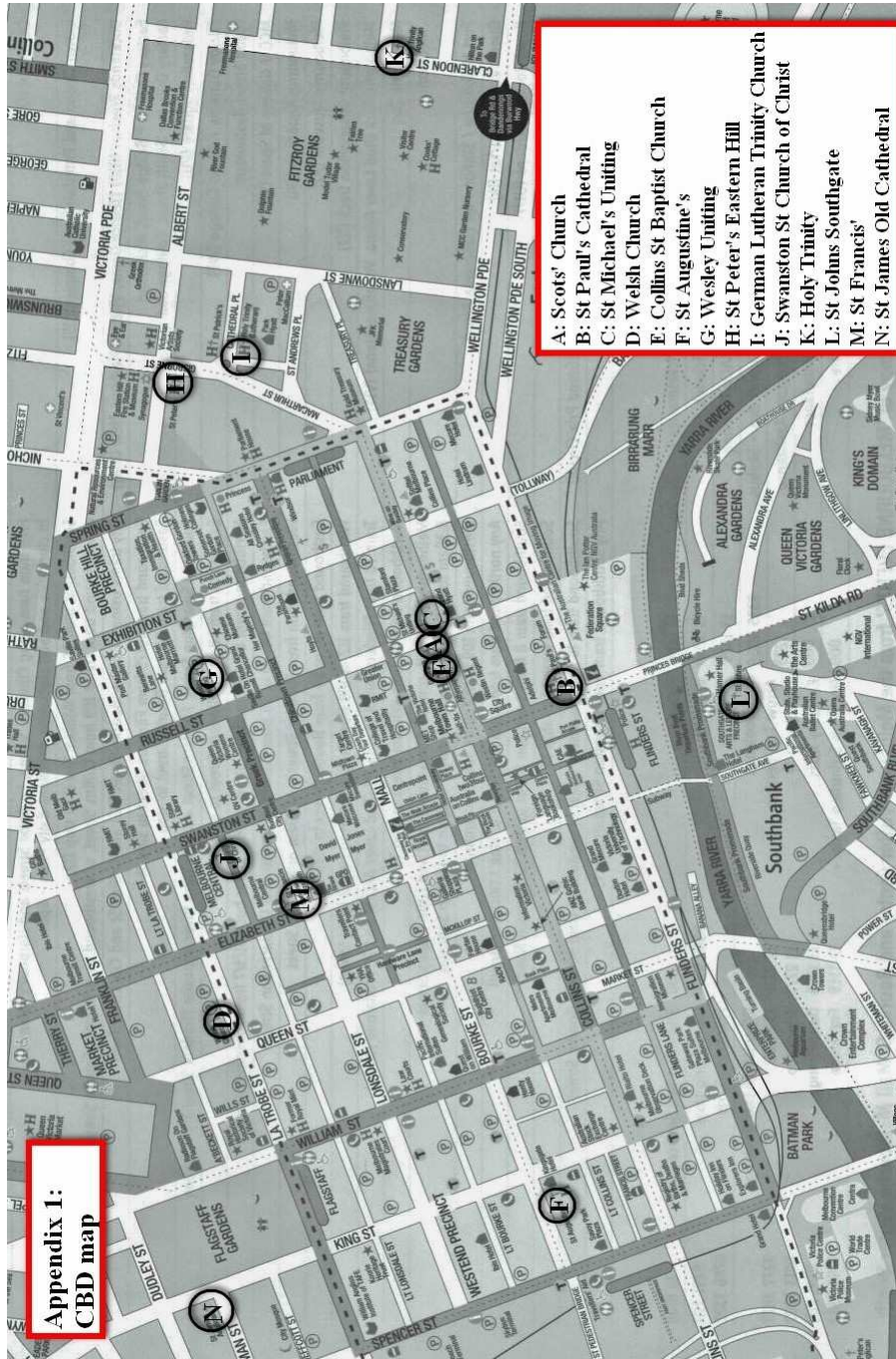
5.4 Prospect for a future study

There are several possible approaches towards performing a future study of the churches in the CBD of Melbourne. By interviewing church representatives, and drawing much of my information from written material, such as brochures, I have focussed my attention on the churches as organisations. My respondents have answered my questions according to how they see the congregation, and how they wish to represent their church. Although this study to some extent also has dealt with how congregants respond to their churches' activities and developments, I was not able to talk to the congregants while I was undertaking my data collection.¹²² An interesting future study would therefore be to interview the people who attend these churches, not only the ones who partake in the Sunday worship services, but everyone who make use of the churches' activities in one way or another. As this is a very high number of people, the design for such a study would have to be based on quantitative methods, selecting an appropriate sample of people from the thousands of congregants.

By conducting this type of study, I would be able to record the habits of the people who use the CBD churches, as well as being able to detect whether they make use of other religious institutions as well. Such a study would be instrumental in developing a wider understanding of the religious district of Melbourne CBD, and how it is affected by its urban ecology.

Another prospect of a future study could be to make contact with the residents in the newly developed residential areas of Melbourne, such as Southgate and Docklands, and interview them in relation to their religious behaviour. Why are so few residents attending the churches in the CBD? In my study, the churches expressed the challenge of recruiting the new residents to their congregations. Is the reason for this that the churches are unable to reach the residents, or are there other sources for this difficulty? This study would, in addition to give a picture of the use of religious institutions in Melbourne's inner city, provide a wider understanding of how the urban ecology influences people's religious choices.

¹²² An outline of the methodology is featured in 1.3 *Methodology and material*.



Appendix 2: Background information*

	Name	Abbreviation	Denomination	Founded	1st church	2nd church
A	Scots' Church	Scots'	Presbyterian	1838	1841	1874
B	St Paul's Cathedral	St Paul's	Anglican		1891	N/A
C	St Michael's Uniting Church	St Michael's	UCA		1839	1867
D	Melbourne Welsh Church	Welsh (Church)	Calvinistic Methodist	1853	1857	1871
E	Collins Street Baptist Church	CSBC	Baptist	1843	1845	1862
F	St Augustine's	St Augustine's	Catholic		1853	1870
G	Wesley Church Melbourne	Wesley	UCA		1839/1840	1858
H	St Peter's Eastern Hill	Eastern Hill	Anglican		1848	N/A
I	German Lutheran Trinity Church	GLTC	Lutheran	1853	1854	1874
J	Swanston Street Church of Christ	SSCoC	Church of Christ	1865	1883	1997
K	Holy Trinity Church East Melbourne	Holy Trinity	Anglican	1857	1864	1905
L	St Johns Southgate	St Johns	Lutheran		1927	1992
M	St Francis' Church	St Francis'	Catholic		1845	N/A
N	St James' Old Cathedral	Old Cathedral	Anglican		183?	1842

* Appendix 2 - 4 will include a sample of the information presented in chapter 2, 3, and 4.

Appendix 3: Composition and Structure of the Churches

Name	Abbr.	Age	Ethnicity	SES	Att'n'd weekly*	Increasing/decreasing**
A Scots' Church	Scots'	Mixed	White Australian	Medium	300 - 310	Stable - increasing
B St Paul's Cathedral	St Paul's	Mixed	Mixed	Medium	325 - 450	Stable
C St Michael's Uniting	St Michael's	Mixed	White Australian	Medium	600 - 800	Stable - increasing
D Melbourne Welsh Church	Welsh Church	Elderly	White Australian	Medium	70 - 75	Stable - increasing
E Collins Street Baptist Church	CSBC	Mixed	White Australian	Medium	115 - 117	Stable - increasing
F St Augustine's	St Augustine's	Young	Mixed	Medium	950	Stable - increasing
G Welsey Uniting Church	Wesley	Elderly	White Australian	High	100	Decreasing
H St Peter's Eastern Hill	Eastern Hill	Mixed	White Australian	Medium	400 - 500	Stable - increasing
I German Lutheran Trinity Church	GLTC	Mixed	White	High	40 - 50	Stable - increasing
J Swanston Street Church of Christ	SSCoC	Young	Asian	Medium	1000 - 1200	Stable - increasing
K Holy Trinity East Melbourne	Holy Trinity	Mixed	White Australian	Medium	20 - 80	Stable - increasing
L St Johns Southgate	St John's	Mixed	White Australian	Medium	135 - 160	Stable - increasing
M St Francis' Church	St Francis'	Mixed	Mixed	Medium	12,000 - 14,000	Stable - increasing
N St James' Old Cathedral	Old Cathedral	Elderly	White Australian	Medium	20 - 30	Decreasing***

Location congregants****	Staff	New leader*****
A REGIONAL/local	Team (4)	Yes
B REGIONAL/local	Team (7+)	
C REGIONAL/local	Team (2)	
D REGIONAL	Single	
E REGIONAL/local	Team (3)	
F Regional/local	Single	Yes
G REGIONAL	Single	
H REGIONAL/local	Team (10+)	
I REGIONAL	Single	
J Regional/local	Team (6)	
K Regional/local	Single	Yes
L REGIONAL/local	Single	Yes
M REGIONAL/local	Team (16+)	
N REGIONAL	Single	Yes

* Where one specific number was not provided, the figures from the different services were added up.

** As described in 3.5 Attendance and stability.

*** Increase expected due to new leadership

**** Capitalised/not capitalised indicates small or large degree of congregants who are regional/local. Local indicates CBD and inner suburbs, regional indicates outer suburbs and state-wide.

***** Where there has been a change in leadership during the last 5-10 years and this has had an effect on the number of people attending.

Appendix 4: Church Activities and Outreach

Name	Abbr.	Worship serv's*	Congr. groups**	Availability	Outreach: Welfare****	MCCIA involv.
A	Scots' Church	WD/WE (1/2)	Various	Mid-day	Monetary/food	Medium
B	St Paul's Cathedral	WD/WE (10/5)	Educational/service	All day	Lazarus Centre	Medium
C	St Michael's Uniting	WE (1)	Various	Mid-day	Monetary	Low
D	Melbourne Welsh Church	WE (2)	Various	Mid-day	Monetary	Medium
E	Collins Street Baptist Church	WD/WE (1/2)	Various	Mid-day	Urban Seed/Refugees	High
F	St Augustine's	WD/WE (6/2)	Cells/various	All day	Monetary/group	High
G	Wesley Uniting Church	WE (2)	Unknown	All day***	Wesley Mission	Low
H	St Peter's Eastern Hill	WD/WE (9/6)	Various	All day	Breakfast	High
I	German Lutheran Trinity Church	WE (1)	Various	Mid-day	Monetary	High
J	Swanston Street Church of Christ	WE (3)	Cells	NA	Monetary	Low
K	Holy Trinity East Melbourne	WD/WE (1/2)	Various	All day	Monetary	Medium
L	St Johns Southgate	WE (3)	Various	All day***	Monetary	Medium
M	St Francis' Church	WD/WE (30/14)	Various	All day	Monetary/ St Vinnies	High
N	St James' Old Cathedral	WD/WE (1/1)	Unknown	NA	Monetary	Low

* WD=Weekday/WE=Weekend services

** Main focus of congregational groups, if any

*** Small chapel, not the entire church.

**** Main focus of welfare outreach, if any

Appendix 5: Contact Information

Name	Address	Suburb/ Postcode	Phone number	Website
A Scots' Church	Cnr. Russel St & Collins St	Melbourne 3000	96 509 903	www.scotschurch.org.au
B St Paul's Cathedral	Cnr. Swanston St & Flinders St	Melbourne 3000	96 503 791	www.stpaulscathedral.org.au
C St Michael's Uniting Church	Cnr. Collins St and Russel St	Melbourne 3000	96 545 120	www.stmichaels.org.au
D Melbourne Welsh Church	320 La trobe St	Melbourne 3000	93 295 139	member.nelink.com.au/~mwchurch/
E Collins Street Baptist Church	174 Collins St	Melbourne 3000	96 501 180	www.csbc.org.au
F St Augustine's	631 Bourke St	Melbourne 3000	96 297 140	http://go.to/staugustines
G Wesley Church Melbourne	148 Lonsdale St	Melbourne 3000	96 622 355	www.wesley.org.au
H St Peter's Eastern Hill	Cnr. Gisborne & Albert St	East Melbourne 3002	96 622 391	www.stpeters.org.au
I German Lutheran Trinity Church	22 Parliament Place	East Melbourne 3002	94 597 272	www.kirche.org.au
J Swanston Street Church of Christ	333 Swanston Street	Melbourne 3000	96 239 188	www.ssccc.org.au/
K Holy Trinity Church East Melbourne	Cnr Clarendon St & King St	East Melbourne 3002	94 173 341	www.holytrinitymelbourne.org.au
L St Johns Southgate	20 City Road, Southbank	Southbank 3006	96 864 955	www.vicnet.net.au/~sjohns
M St Francis'	Cnr Lonsdale St & Elizabeth St	Melbourne 3000	96 632 495	www.stfrancismelbourne.org
N St James' Old Cathedral	Cnr. King St & Batman St	West Melbourne 3003	93 290 903	No website

Appendix 6: Abbreviations:

ACT – Australian Capital Territory
ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics
ALP – Australian Labor Party
CBD – Central Business District
CSBC – Collins Street Baptist Church
FBSS – Faith-based social services
GLTC – German Lutheran Trinity Church
GT – Grounded Theory
MCCIA – Melbourne City Churches in Action
NCLS – National Church Life Survey
NCS – National Congregational Study
NSW – New South Wales
RMIT – Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SES – Socio-economic status
SSCoC – Swanston Street Church of Christ
UCA – Uniting Church in Australia
UK – United Kingdom
WCC – World Council of Churches
WW1 – World War One
WW2 – World War Two

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