

## Retail Analogies; The Church in the Street

*So you enter a high-street shop. You can't see what is being sold from the outside but you know the shop is been there for a very long time. However not many people seem to shop there anymore. In fact you are lucky to catch them open, they are nearly always closed. If you're fortunate somebody hands you a book or a piece of cardboard and this apparently tells you what to do in the shop. Do you have time to read all instructions before you venture on in?*

*The interior design must have been fashionable a very long time ago and it looks a bit dusty around the edges. You can't see any sign of the product that is being offered in the shop but there are a number of symbols around the place. Perhaps they are selling benches. There are lots of those and most of them are empty. They don't appear to have done much with the lighting but it's a neat idea to have coloured pictures on the windows.*

*No sooner do you take a seat than the other people all stand up and everyone but you seems to know what to do next. You start to look through the instruction book you've been given and eventually find something you recognise whilst the other people are saying something out loud altogether. Just as you thought you'd found the place in the book and caught up you see other people turning over several pages and then the music starts. There seems to be an expectation that you join in using your best falsetto voice. Partway through the song you realise that it's the other book that they are all using and you feel that the other shoppers are all looking at you.*

We now live in a Western world where very many people are completely unfamiliar with church; its buildings, its purpose, its rituals, its people and its gospel message. These people see the church through their other experiences in life like shopping.

The Church's buildings contribute to this experience. There are a number of areas in which the church's buildings can attract or repel. The retail world has long known this and has been creating buildings to attract people inside, welcoming them and making them feel at ease.

Over the next few weeks we will look at:

- High street locations that we have inherited
- Managing the threshold
- The largest retail chain with the gospel as our product



*"Final reductions".  
A high street heritage church building becomes attractive in the shopping street, but too late.*

Next time: High Street Locations

