

A Snapshot of Evangelical Mission Agencies in the UK 2019

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Introduction

There are over one hundred organisations in the UK which can be described as Evangelical Mission Agencies. Together, these agencies were in receipt of over £400M in 2017, indicating a significant level of support for their activities among the British Christian public. This document, based on publicly available information, provides an overview of these agencies and makes some tentative projections regarding their future.

A Brief History

The current situation for mission agencies in the UK is, to some extent, determined by the historical factors which have shaped the movement. In order to provide a context for this study, it is necessary to give a brief historical overview.

The rise of evangelical mission agencies is often dated to the 1792 publication of William Carey's "Enquiry", where he wrote:

"Suppose a company of serious Christians, ministers and private persons, were to form themselves into a society, and make a number of rules respecting the regulation of the plan, and the persons who are to be employed as missionaries, the means of defraying the expense, etc., etc. This society must consist of persons whose hearts are in the work, men of serious religion and possessing a spirit of perseverance; there must be a determination not to admit any person who is not of this description, or to retain him longer than he answers to it." (Carey, 1792, 82-83)

This proposal led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, with Carey himself setting sail as one of the society's first missionaries. Carey proposal of a home-based logistics and governing structure which supported the overseas work was inspired by the trading companies of his day and has proved extremely durable. Today, most mission agencies are charities, governed by a board of trustees in the UK and managed by a UK based leadership and administration.

The American missiologist suggests that there are three key eras in the development of the modern mission movement. (Winter, 1992)

The first era was typified by Carey's Baptist Mission Society and consisted of mission to the coastal areas which had been reached by the first European colonial efforts.

The second era occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century and involved the foundation of agencies who specifically sought to reach out beyond the coastal fringes into the inland areas. Organisations such as The China Inland Mission (1865) (now OMF International), the Africa Inland

Mission (1895) and the Sudan Inland Mission (1889) (now Serving in Mission) arose during this period.

Winter's third era, in the early twentieth century, involved mission to hidden or unreached people and saw the creation of agencies such as the Unevangelised Fields Mission (1942) and Wycliffe Bible Translators (1942).

Another historical development which is significant to the contemporary mission movement is the rise of what are termed Faith Missions (Fiedler, 1994). The earliest mission agencies were tied to specific denominations or groups of churches and tended only to send ordained men as missionaries. The China Inland Mission (CIM), founded by James Hudson-Taylor, was the first of a new form of mission agency. The CIM was non-denominational and prepared to send men and women as missionaries regardless of their ordained status. Crucially, the CIM did not pay salaries or stipends, but the missionaries were to look to God (through their friends and churches at home) to supply such income as they needed. Faith missions were a remarkably flexible and successful form of organisation and they paved the way for the development of many more agencies in a relatively short time.

Identifying Mission Agencies

Up to this point, the term evangelical mission agency has not actually been defined. It is impossible to describe these organisations in terms of their relationships to churches and denominations as there is no clear pattern. Likewise, they are involved in a wide range of activities (evangelism, church planting, Bible translation, medical work, education, relief of poverty...) which defies simple classification and while many of these agencies do send missionaries around the world, others do not. In the absence of a definition based on structure or activities, the simplest approach is to define mission agencies¹ as those who self-describe as such through their membership of Global Connections, a British network of churches and agencies, colleges and support structures². The Global Connections list of mission agencies was refined somewhat for this study by eliminating those organisations without a direct link to overseas work. This produced a sample of 144 agencies as of November 2018. The agencies are listed in appendix one.³

Examples of Mission Agencies

In order to gain an insight into the breadth of the mission movement, it is instructive to briefly examine examples of different agencies.

¹ For more information on the complexity of defining mission agencies see the discussion in (Arthur, 2017).

² <http://www.globalconnections.org.uk/>

³ By its nature, this study only looks at mission agencies that existed at the time of the sample. It is possible that there are significant agencies which have come into being in the past and which have closed for one reason or another, but these are not taken into account. Agencies such as Latin Link, which emerged from the merger of two older agencies are regarded as dating from the formation of the original organisations, not the later merger. There are organisations which could be described as mission agencies which are excluded from this study by virtue of the fact that they have chosen not to be affiliated to Global Connections.

The Smallest: Cambodian Communities out of Crisis

The smallest agency in the sample, in terms of financial turnover, is Cambodian Communities out of Crisis⁴ (CCC), which reported an income of £9,559.00 in 2017. CCC was founded in 1994 by the Rev. Ross Rennie, who visited Cambodia after sensing God calling him to serve the Cambodian people. The organisation does not send expat missionaries to Cambodia and only employs one person, the Cambodian director. Equally, they do not run their own projects in Cambodia; they channel funds from donors outside of the country to trusted partners who carry out their own projects.

Currently, the CCC website lists three areas that they focus on:

Children of Cambodia is a project which sponsors 15 children from deprived backgrounds to go to school and to receive a midday meal.

Education, CCC sponsors students at higher education institutions to study both vocational and degree level courses. In recent years, they have also started to sponsor younger children through their schooling.

Timothy College and Business Institute is a joint project with churches in Cambodia. The aim is to establish a tertiary level training college which will prepare Cambodian Christians for professional life in the country. The institute will have a Christian foundation and ethos, but it will not be a theology faculty. CCC recognise that the majority of the finance for the institute will need to come from outside of the country and they are actively raising funds for the enterprise.

CCC clearly focuses on one country. The strap line “From killing fields to living fields” makes a clear allusion to the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge during their domination of the country and the agency website frequently refers back to the problems caused during this period of Cambodian history. This geographical focus is matched by a clear way of working; funding projects through partners, rather than building up their own infrastructure in the country. This gives the agency a very distinct niche.

The Largest: Tearfund

By way of contrast, Tearfund⁵ reported an income of £72,768,000.00 in 2017, the largest of any agency in the sample and over 7,000 times that reported by CCC. Tearfund were founded in 1968 as the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund Committee. Initially they funded projects run by partners overseas, however since 1972, they have had their own staff — expatriate and local — in the areas where they work.

Over the years, Tearfund have been involved in a number of high-profile activities which have helped to raise their profile and develop their support base. The singer Cliff Richard was closely involved with the agency during the 1970s and 80s, serving as president and vice-president and shooting a number of films illustrating their work around the world. Tearfund played an important and influential role in the development of the fair-trade movement in the UK. In 1974, Tearcraft was founded as a subsidiary of the organisation selling fairly traded goods. The founder of Tearcraft went

4. <http://cambcomm.org.uk/ccc/>

5. <https://www.tearfund.org>

on to found Traidcraft and to help establish the Fairtrade Foundation, the industry body which has helped to bring an awareness of fair-trade issues to the British public. Tearcraft was wound up in 1999 as more fairly traded goods were available elsewhere. Tearfund is a member of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) alongside other charities such as Oxfam and Christian Aid.

Today, Tearfund describes itself as “a Christian charity called to follow Jesus wherever the need is greatest around the world”. Their website lists four particular domains in which their work has had an impact.

Responding to disasters. Working alongside other charities in the DEC, Tearfund has helped 13 million people by responding to earthquakes, storms and other natural disasters.

Developing communities. Their work in basic education and community development has reached over 32 million people.

Envisioning churches. Wherever possible, Tearfund seeks to work through local churches and in doing so they have touched 154,000 local congregations, inspiring them to be voices for change in their communities.

Policies Changed. Tearfund are involved in advocacy work with local and national governments. Through this work they have been able to significantly influence or change a number of official policies around the world.

Currently, Tearfund are working with churches and other local partners in over 50 different countries in most parts of the globe.

The Oldest: OMF

While OMF⁶ are not actually the oldest agency in this sample (that honour belongs to BMS World Mission, formally the Baptist Missionary Society), they are the first of the “Faith Missions” and as such are representative of a particular type of mission agency.

OMF were founded in 1865 by James Hudson Taylor as the China Inland Mission. They were one of the wave of agencies founded in order to reach beyond the coastal continental fringes where most evangelical mission had been concentrated. Initially, OMF’s work was focussed on China, but following the expulsion of missionaries from that country in 1951, they expanded their work to cover the whole of South East Asia. As a result of this shift, they adopted the name, the Overseas Missionary Fellowship of the China Inland Mission, which was eventually contracted to OMF.

Although OMF was founded in the UK, there are now offices in a number of countries, with the various national expressions of the organisation being coordinated by OMF International which is based in Singapore. OMF missionaries are an international group, with people from traditional sending countries such as the UK and the USA working alongside colleagues from Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand. From its inception, OMF has placed a stress on evangelism and church planting, though this has always been accompanied by social action such as

6. <https://omf.org/uk/>

medical and educational work. Today, the breadth of their work is expressed on the website in these terms:

“We serve the church and seek to bring the gospel to all the peoples of East Asia. Our work is as diverse as the places and people we work in and amongst. From church planting to missional business, student work to medical practice, we aim to present the gospel, in a culturally relevant way, through word and deed.”

This approach is summed up in the strap line “Heart for Asia. Hope for billions”.

The Newest: Amor Europe

Amor Europe⁷ is the newest agency in the sample, having joined Global Connections in 2018. However, the British based agency is actually the European arm of an organisation founded in the United States in 1980.

Amor is primarily involved in building houses for poor communities in Mexico, though they have some work in South Africa, too. They identify six positive outcomes from their work; keeping families together, avoiding human trafficking, promoting health, combating poverty, promoting dignity and strengthening communities. Amor raises funds and recruits volunteers to go on short-term trips in order to provide the finance and the manpower needed for their housebuilding work which is carried out in conjunction with churches in Mexico and South Africa.

Their work is very focussed on a narrow domain in a small range of countries. At the time of writing (December 2018), Amor does not seem to have made a great impact in the UK and there is currently no UK or Europe specific pages on their website.

This brief introduction to four mission agencies gives a sense of the diversity of size and breadth of activities shown by different mission agencies. It also gives an insight into the ways in which mission agencies can develop organisationally. CCC is a small British charity, which remains based in the UK. Similarly, Tearfund, which is much larger continues to have a UK base, although it has spawned a number of Tearfund affiliate organisations in other countries. OMF, on the other hand has developed into an international family of organisations based in Singapore, although the UK based charity continues to function. Amor Europe demonstrates a different organisational trajectory in that it is a US based organisation which has established a British affiliate.

Each of these structures are demonstrated by other agencies in the sample.

7. <https://www.amor.org>

An Overview of Agencies Today

Sources of Data and Methodology

The overview of the mission agency sector was developed using publicly available information from the agencies own websites and the official reports submitted to the UK Charity Commission by the agencies, supplemented by information on the Global Connections website.

Two types of information were collected. The financial income for the agencies for the years 2015 to 2017 were obtained from the Charity Commission. Not all of the agencies had submitted reports for each of the years in question, and where necessary, adjustments were made in the analysis to account for this.

The second type of information comprises binary, yes/no statements about various aspects of the agencies' convictions and activities. This information was gathered by reading the agency websites and reports in detail and coding them for each of the issues under examination. Care was taken to ensure that the coding was consistent across all of the agencies, but as with any interpretive activity of this sort, there is the potential for error. For this reason, the codes should be taken as indicating trends across the sector as a whole, rather than as statements about the individual agencies. The criteria for the various codes are explained in the relevant sections below.

Point Observations

The Broad Picture⁸

The following chart which graphs the date at which each agency was founded against the log of its 2017 income, with agencies who are involved in evangelism shown in red and others in blue, gives an overview of the whole mission agency sector.

⁸ I am grateful to Dr. John Praeter, formally of Keele University, for the insights in this section.

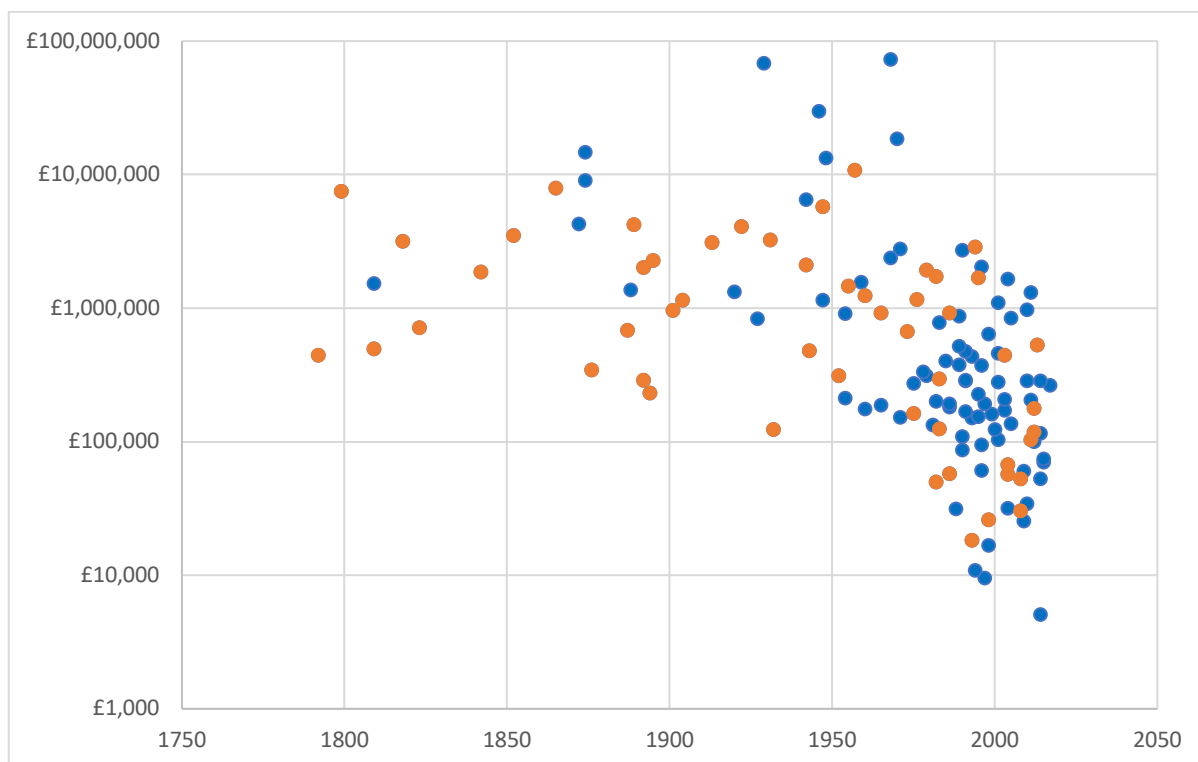


Figure 1: Agency foundation, income and evangelism

Although there are a number of outliers there appears to be a distinct change-point around 1970. Before this date, a relatively small number of agencies came into being and of these, a clear majority were involved in evangelism in one way or another. Post 1970, there is a profusion of smaller agencies most of whom are not involved in evangelistic work. This chart illustrates the way in which mission agencies and the work they do has evolved over time.

Another snapshot of British agencies is provided by noting the distance between each pair of agencies with regard to the information which was gathered. This is taken to be the number of attributes for which the respective data records differ⁹. An analysis of the distances between the agencies show that they group into three broad categories; agencies with an income of less than £0.25M, agencies with an income of £0.25M-£1M and agencies with an income of over £1M. While there are some exceptions to this pattern, there is a clear trend that agencies with a similar income share broadly similar activities and places of action.

Finance

There are approximately two million evangelical Christians in the UK (Ashworth 2007, 36) There are no readily available estimates of how much money evangelicals give to church causes, though in a 2010 survey at least 47% claimed that they regularly gave money to support mission work (Evangelical Alliance 2010, 35). For the financial year 2016-2017, the last year that records were available for the majority of the agencies, the total income of the 144 organisations, as reported to the Charity Commission was £425,000,000.

⁹ The Hamming Distance (<https://www.tutorialspoint.com/what-is-hamming-distance>)

Unsurprisingly, the larger agencies tend to be involved in a wider range of activities and work in a greater number of countries or regions than the smaller agencies who tend to concentrate on doing one thing with a restricted geographical spread.

The way in which the giving to agencies is distributed between organisations pursuing different types of work is examined in the following section.

Proclamation and Social Action

The following table shows the various ways in which the agencies are involved in proclaiming the Christian message. In this study the following definitions are adopted:

- **Proclamation** refers to any verbal (spoken, written, or multi-media) presentation of the message whether it is directed towards non-Christians or believers.
- **Evangelism** involves intentional, verbal sharing of the message with those who are not Christians, with the aim of introducing them to Jesus.
- **Working with Unreached People Groups (UPGs)** refers to evangelistic efforts focussed on socio-ethnic groups who are regarded as not having been reached by the Gospel¹⁰.

It should be noted that according to this classification, work with UPGs is a subset of evangelism, which is, in turn, a subset of proclamation.

In each of these cases, the focus is on the verbal transmission of the message. Many organisations are involved in various forms of social action with the intention of showing the love of Jesus through their actions. However, unless there is some overt, verbal communication of the message these sorts of approach are not classified as evangelism in this study.

Agency Activity	Number of agencies	Percentage of total	Income 2017	Percentage of total agency income
Proclamation	87	60%	£246,000,000	58%
Evangelism	56	39%	£152,000,000	36%
UPGs	20	14%	£29,000,000	7%

Table 1: Distribution of Agency Income by Activity

Over half of the agencies are involved in some form of proclamation. However, only 39% of them are involved in evangelistic work and 14% are overtly involved in taking the Gospel to people who have

¹⁰ The Joshua Project defines Unreached People Groups as having “less than or equal to 2% Evangelical Christian and less than or equal to 5% Professing Christians”. (<https://joshuaproject.net/help/definitions#unreached>)

had no opportunity to receive it up till this point. Significantly, the percentage of funds being directed into proclamation and evangelistic work is lower than the percentage of agencies working in this area. This indicates that those agencies which are involved in proclamation work, particularly those who reach out to UPGs have a proportionately lower average income compared to others. It is also important to highlight that most of the agencies which are involved in evangelism or outreach to UPGs are also involved in various forms of social action and work with local churches. This means that it would be inaccurate to say that 7% of the money given to mission agencies goes towards outreach to UPG. The true figure will actually be lower than this.

Sending Missionaries

Initially, mission(ary) societies existed in order to facilitate sending missionaries from the UK to other parts of the world. Today, this picture is more diverse, there are agencies who send long-term missionaries, others send short-term missionaries, others either support the work of missionaries sent by other agencies, while others focus on supporting churches and Christian communities around the world without actually sending missionaries.

That being said, defining what is meant by these terms is not always straight forward. There is no clear definition of what constitutes a missionary as opposed to any other role or position occupied by people within mission agencies. Likewise, there is no obvious distinction between long and short-term missionary service, with some agencies considering anything longer than three months long-term service, while others reserve that term for those who serve for several years. The specific definitions used in this study are:

- An agency was considered to send long-term missionaries if they maintain a significant staff in their place of service and if they were actively recruiting more people, especially for non-specific roles. This definition excludes organisations which only maintain a small number of regional representatives, or which only recruit to fill specific positions. In general, those who send missionaries will seek to attract people who sense a call to mission work, even if they do not have a specific role in mind for them.
- An agency was considered to send short-term missionaries if they regularly sent teams or individuals to the field for periods of less than two years.

For agencies which did not send missionaries, the following definitions were adopted.

- An agency was considered to be involved in missionary support if they do not send missionaries themselves, but they seek to provide pastoral, or other support for missionaries from other agencies.
- An agency was considered to be involved in church or community support if they did not send missionaries, but they seek to support Christians around the world through training, advocacy, economic support etc.

To some extent, these definitions are arbitrary, however in the absence of any generally agreed term, it was necessary to settle on some criteria which could be applied consistently throughout the study. It is also acknowledged that agencies which send missionaries are involved in missionary support and church support, but the primary way in which they interact with the world is through their missionaries.

The following table considers the proportion of agencies sending short and long-term missionaries.

	Total	Percentage
Sends both short and long-term missionaries	31	22%
Sends only long-term missionaries	8	6%
Sends only short-term missionaries	10	7%
Total number of agencies sending missionaries	49	34%
Agencies not sending missionaries	95	66%

Table 2: Agencies and Missionary Sending

Of the sample of 144 agencies, only 49 (34%) actually send missionaries, with the remaining two thirds without any missionaries *per se*. The majority of the agencies that recruit and send missionaries engage with both short- and long-term mission, with only a minority of agencies opting for one in preference to the other. There is no significant difference in the number of agencies sending only short or long-term missionaries.

It is important to remember that these data refer to numbers of agencies sending missionaries and not to the numbers of individuals being sent. It would be inaccurate to extrapolate the proportion of short or long-term missionaries sent from the UK from these figures. The information here does not take into account the different size of the organisations, nor does it reflect the large number of, especially short-term, missionaries who are sent out by church fellowships without reference to an agency.

The following table shows the combined totals for short and long-term missionaries as well as the primary focus of the majority of agencies which do not send missionaries.

		Total	Percentage
Agencies sending missionaries	Sends long-term missionaries	39	27%
	Sends short-term missionaries	41	28%
Agencies not sending missionaries	Supports the work of missionaries	10	6.9%
	Supports local churches and Christians on the field	83	57.6

Table 3: Missionary and Church Support

There are a relatively small number of agencies which exist in order to support the mission movement in general. However, a clear majority of agencies exist primarily to support churches and Christians around the world without the intermediary of serving missionaries.

Where Agencies Work

Some of the agencies have a world-wide focus, while others are limited to one or more countries or regions. The following table outlines the overall geographic distribution, Agencies which claim to work in three or more of the regions mentioned were taken to have a worldwide ministry. East Africa was distinguished from the rest of Africa because of the historic cultural, economic and religious links between the UK and this part of the world.

	Total	Percentage	Percentage of those with a regional focus
Worldwide	69	46%	
East Africa	17	12%	22%
Rest of Africa	8	6%	10%
Asia	25	17%	33%
Europe	13	9	17%
Islamic World	16	11%	21%
Latin America	3	2%	4%
UK	7	5%	9%

Table 4: Where Agencies Work

Just under half of the agencies claim to work in three or more regions. Among the agencies which have a regional focus, there are a significant number who work in Asia, East Africa and the Islamic World. Proportionately fewer agencies concentrate their work in the rest of Africa or in Latin America. A small number of agencies who work in other regions of the world, also have work focused on the UK.

Trends Over Time

Changes in the profile of the British mission movement can be illustrated by looking at agency activities in the light of the date when they were founded. This was achieved by grouping agencies together according to the decade they were formed post 1950, and by fifty-year groups before this. The totals for the various issues were established for each group of agencies. It is important to note that this analysis does not indicate what agencies were doing at any particular point in history, but shows what agencies founded at different points are doing *today*.

The Number of Agencies

The growth in the number of agencies over time is tracked in the following table.

A Snapshot of British mission agencies 2019

	Total Number of Agencies founded per time period (decade)
Pre 1850	7 (1)
1850-1899	15 (3)
1900-1949	16 (3.2)
1950-1959	6
1960-1969	7
1970-1979	10
1980-1989	18
1990-1999	27
2000-2009	18
Post 2010	20

Table 5: Date of Agency Foundation

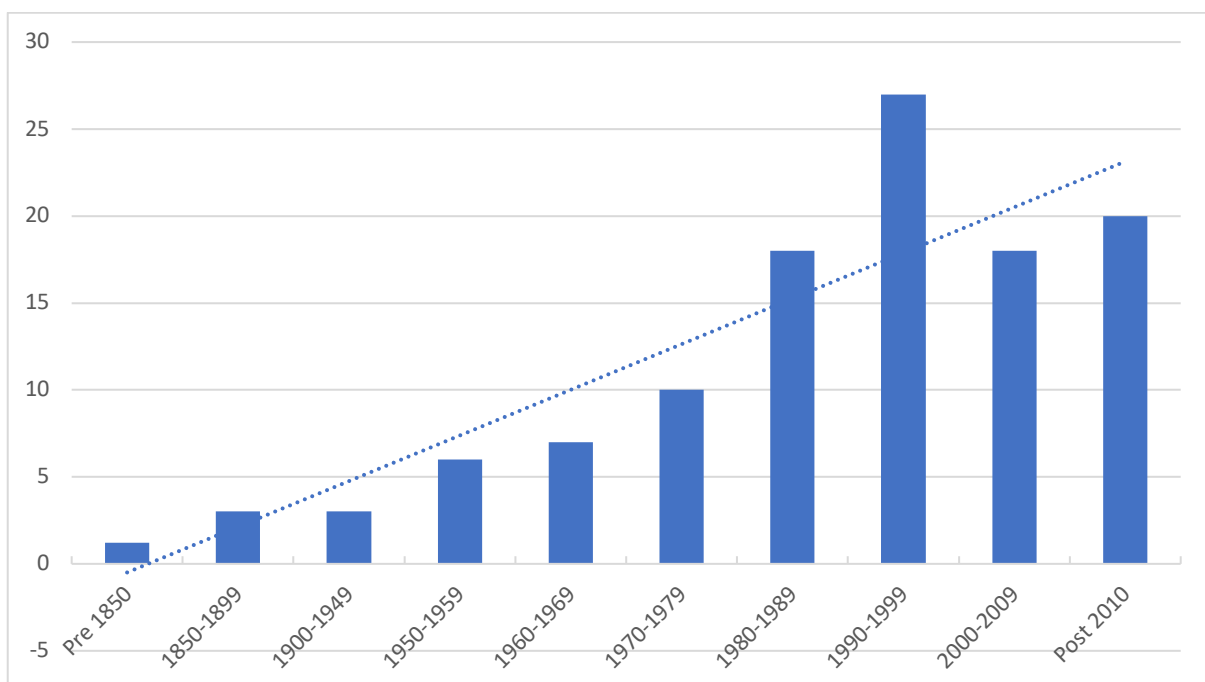


Figure 2: The Number of Agencies Founded per Decade

This chart demonstrates that the number of mission agencies is continuing to increase. Not only that, but the rate at which new agencies are being founded is increasing over time, as illustrated by the slope on the trend line. In the 1950s there were 6 agencies founded, but each of the last four decades has seen at least three times that number, with a peak of 27 agencies coming into being in the 1990s. This increase in the number of agencies needs to be considered in the light of the widely

reported decrease in church attendance in the UK. It would seem inevitable that stresses will be caused by a growing number of organisations seeking to raise support and interest from the same shrinking constituency.

The apparent decline in the number of agencies being founded since the 1990s may be a real decline, or it may reflect the fact that it takes time before agencies decide to join Global Connections; there is not enough data available to determine whether either of these hypotheses are true.

Proclamation and Social Action

The development of agencies' approach to proclamation of the Christian message is demonstrated in the following chart.

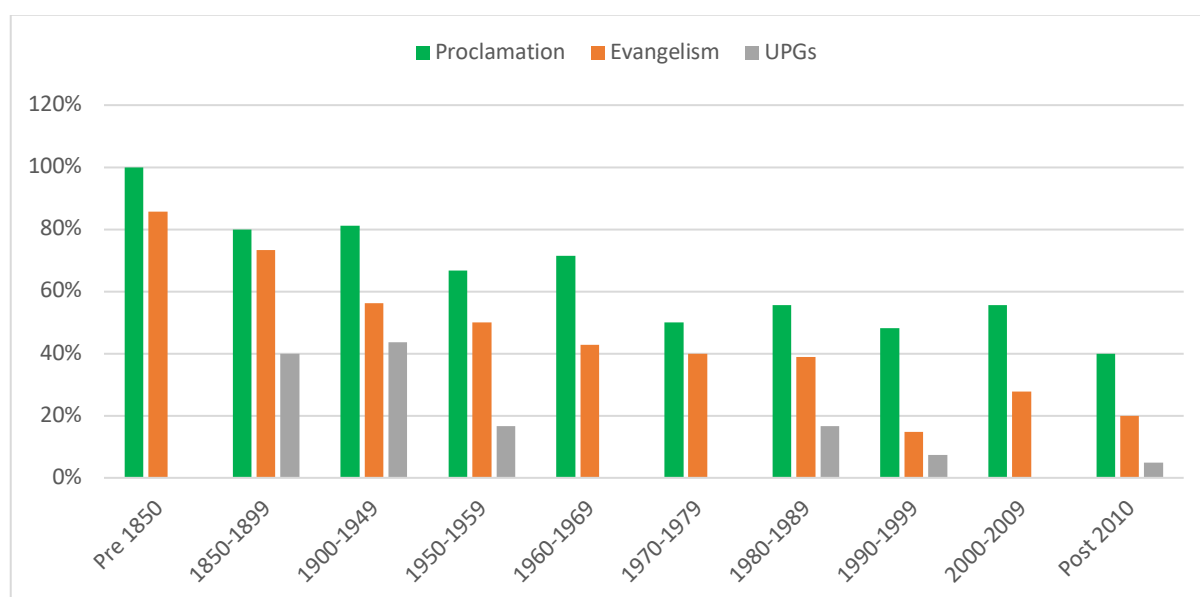


Figure 3: The Number of Agencies Involved in Proclamation

Over time, the number of agencies involved in various forms of proclamation has declined from 100% pre-1850 to 40% post 2010. Equally, there has been a decrease in agencies involved in evangelistic work and in particular outreach to unreached people groups over the same time. Significantly, the decline in the number of agencies involved in evangelism has declined faster than the number involved in a wider proclamation ministry. Of the agencies founded pre-1850, 86% of those involved in proclamation were also involved in evangelism. This proportion falls to 50% post-2010. This indicates that the newer agencies are focussing much of their effort on supporting existing Christian communities and are less likely to be involved in reaching out to those who do not know Christ.

Parallel to the decline in agencies involved in proclamation is a rise in the number participating in various forms of social action.

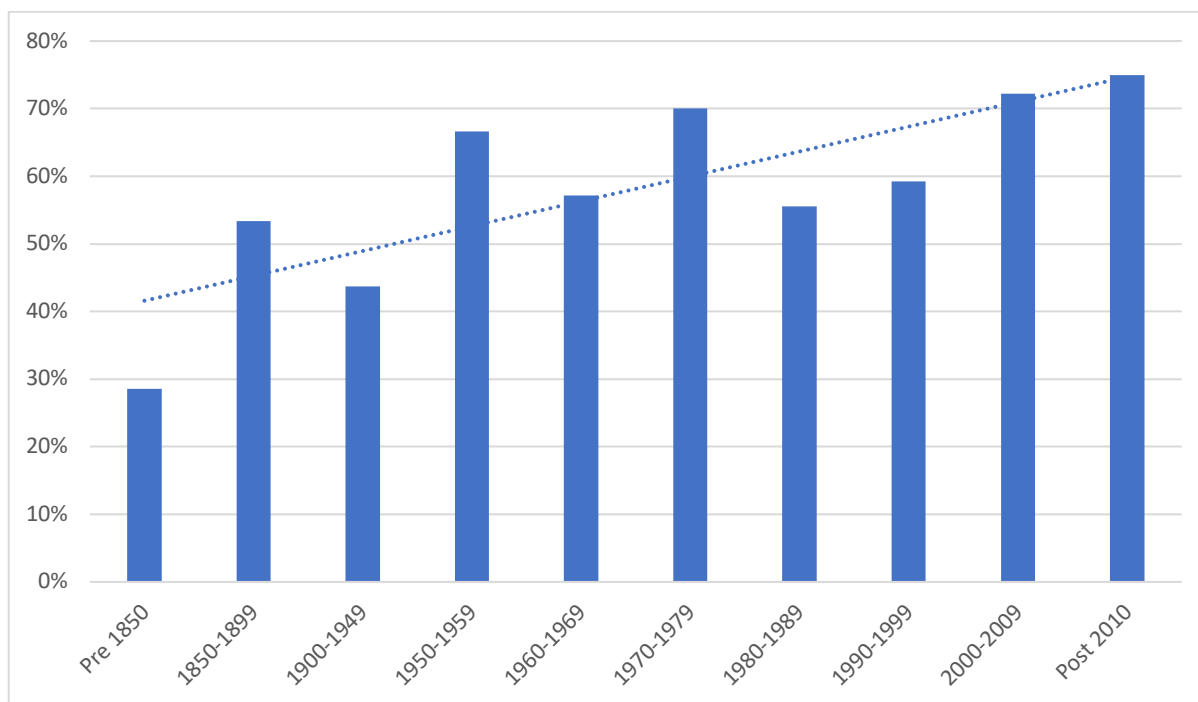


Figure 4: Agency Involvement in Social Action

There are few obvious trends with regard to specific forms of social action over time. For example, the proportion of agencies involved in education, medical work or the relief of poverty fluctuates over the different time periods, but without any particular direction of travel. The only observable tendency is that agencies founded around the middle of the twentieth century are more likely to be involved in a wide range of social activities than those founded at an earlier or later date.

Agencies and Missionaries

Looking at patterns of missionary sending over the years, it appears that it is predominantly the older mission agencies which send missionaries. Of the 39 agencies which send long-term missionaries, 22 were founded before 1950, while 21 of the 41 agencies sending short-term missionaries date from the same time. The implication is that although there are an increasing number of agencies being created today, they are less likely to be involved in actually sending missionaries overseas. This is illustrated by considering the percentage of the agencies founded in each time period which actually send missionaries.

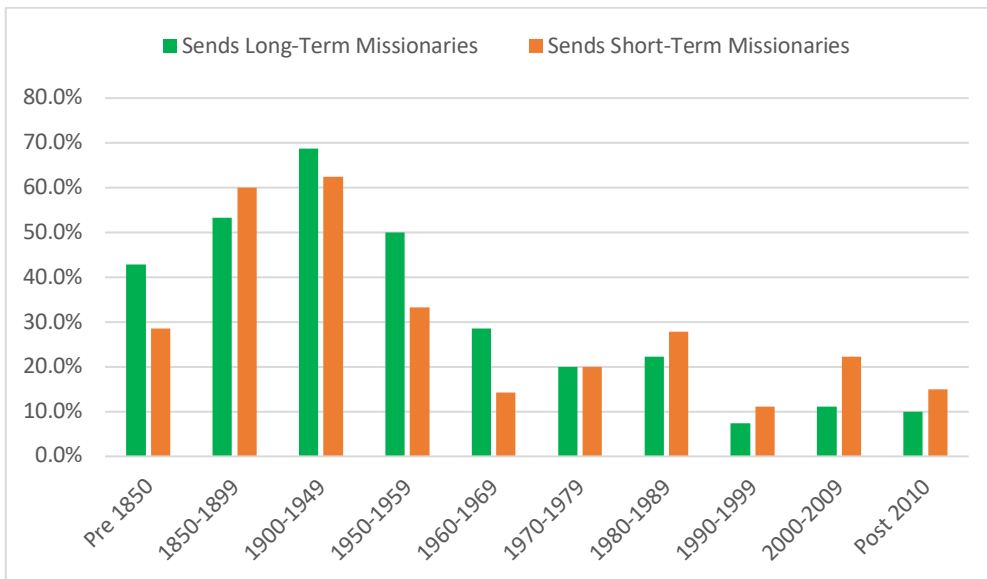


Figure 5: Agencies Sending Missionaries

Over 50% of the agencies founded between 1850 and 1950 send either short or long-term missionaries (and in many cases, both). By comparison, for agencies founded since 1990, only around 10% send long-term missionaries and between 10-20% send short-term ones. It is interesting to note that although there has been a well-documented growth in short-term mission over the last few decades, the majority of agencies which send short-termers were founded before 1950.

The following chart considers the agencies which don't send missionaries. It shows the percentage of agencies which support missionaries sent by other agencies and those that interact directly with churches and communities on the field.

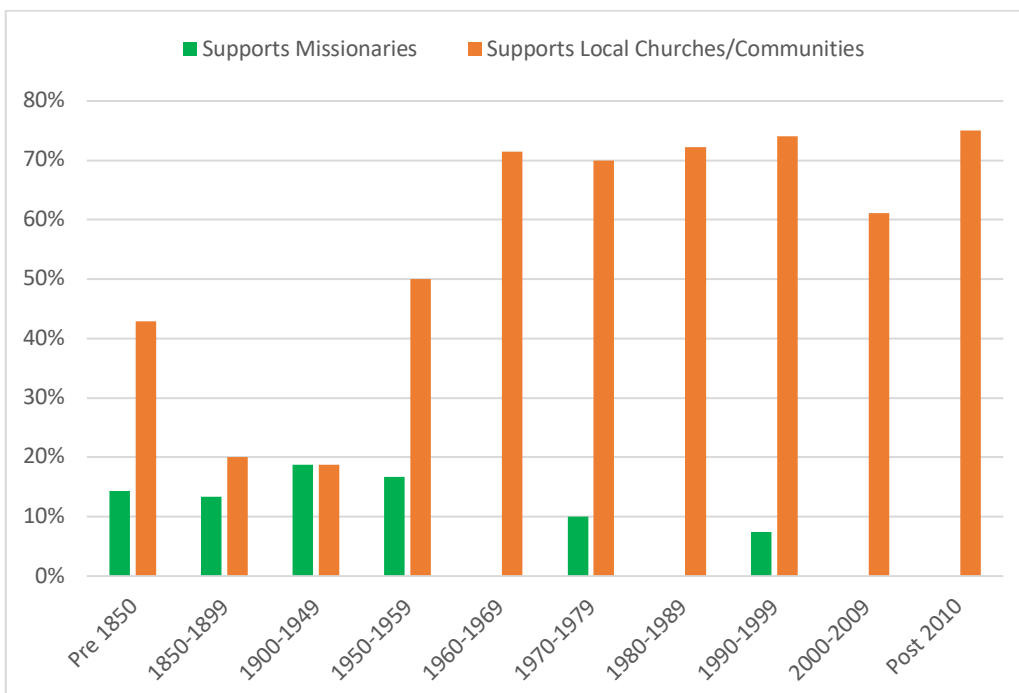


Figure 6: Agency Support for Missionaries and Local Communities

Parallel to the decrease in the percentage of agencies sending missionaries is an increase in the proportion which interact directly, in one way or another, with the communities they serve. This increase also coincides with the foundation of a number of Christian aid and development agencies since the 1960s.

Where Agencies Work

In general, older agencies are more likely to have a worldwide ministry than younger ones. As the following chart shows, this is not a smooth trend.

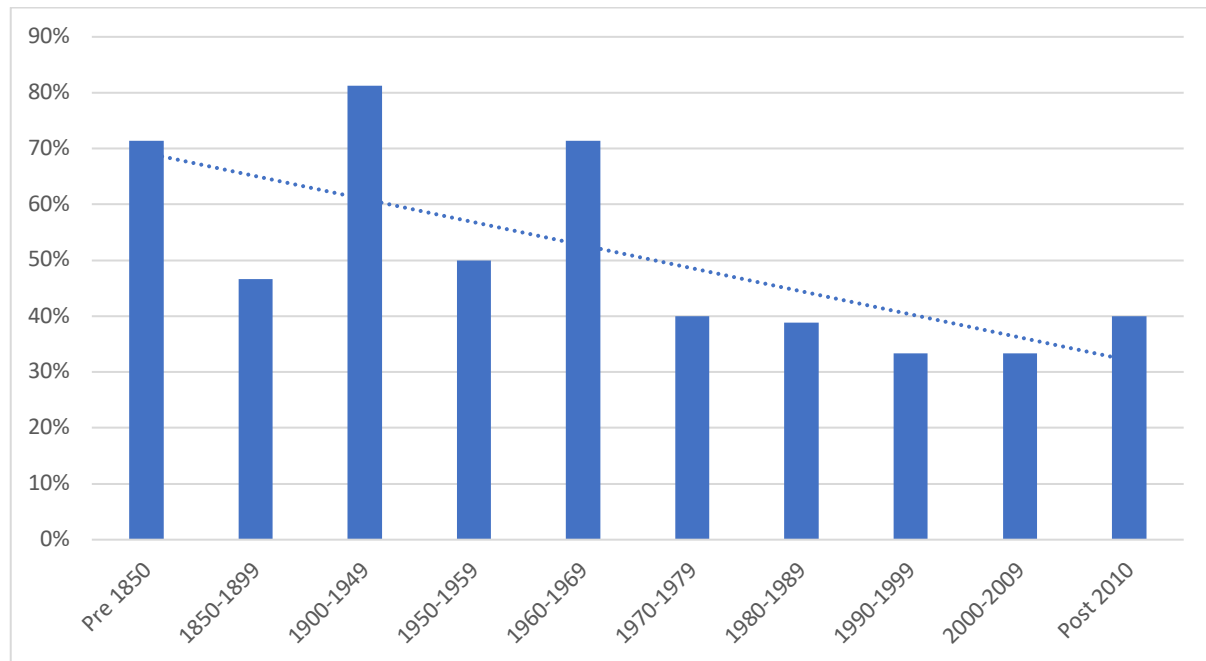


Figure 7: Agencies with a Worldwide Ministry

The drop in the proportion of agencies with a worldwide ministry founded in the late 1800s corresponds to Winter's second age of mission. At this time, agencies such as OMF with a focus on Asia and Arab World Ministries with a focus on the Islamic world came into being. Likewise, the increase in agencies with a worldwide ministry in the early 1900s corresponds broadly to Winter's third age, when agencies such as UFM, New Tribes Mission and Wycliffe Bible Translators who focussed on reaching people with no access to the gospel, wherever they were in the world. The 1960s marked the point at which a number of Christian aid and development agencies with worldwide reach came into being.

Looking at the particular countries or regions where agencies work gives a complicated and confusing picture over time, though some general trends can be observed.

- Agencies founded in the last thirty years are more likely than their predecessors to work in one specific country, rather than being regionally or globally based.
- From 1970 onwards there has been a distinct increase in the number of agencies focussing their work on Asia. It is unclear why this is so.

- There was a distinct spike in the number of agencies working in East Africa in the 1990s. For the most part, these are small agencies working in one country. One explanation of this phenomenon is that visitors, facilitated by increasingly easy travel, to this part of the world formed small charities to meet specific needs that they encountered during their visits.
- Following on from the fall of communism, there was an increase in agencies working in Europe post 1990.
- There has been an increase in agencies working in the Islamic world over the past decades.

Where the Money Goes

Looking at the total income for agencies founded in each of the time periods gives a somewhat confusing picture, with agencies founded 1850-1950 and in the 1960s receiving significantly more money than agencies founded in other time periods.

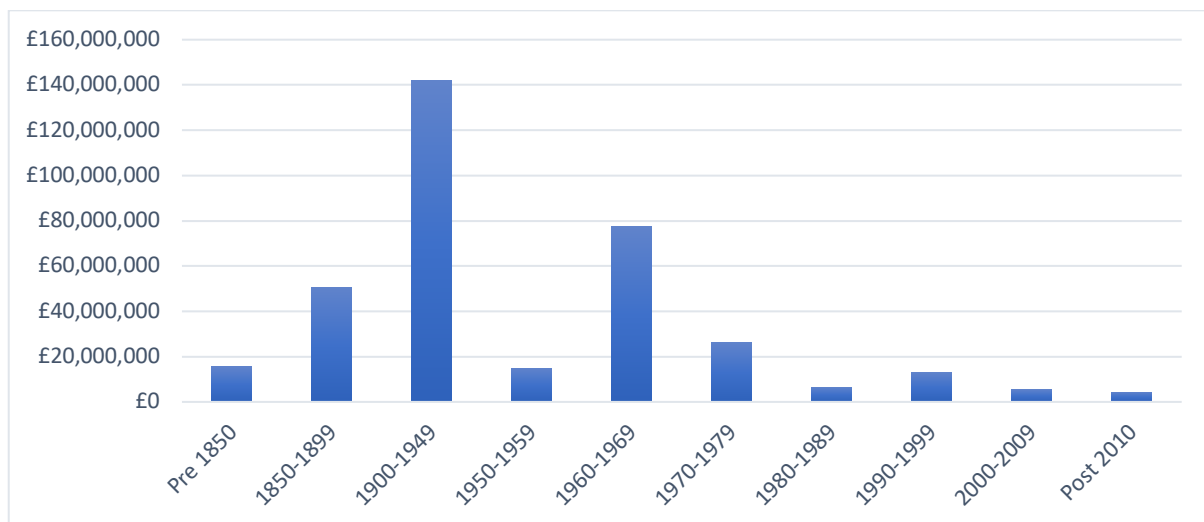


Figure 8: Total Agency Income

This picture is complicated by the number of different agencies founded in each time period, this can be clarified by considering the median¹¹ income for the agencies over each time period.

¹¹ The median value, the midpoint in the data, is used rather than the more usual mean value as it is less affected by a small number of unusual values.

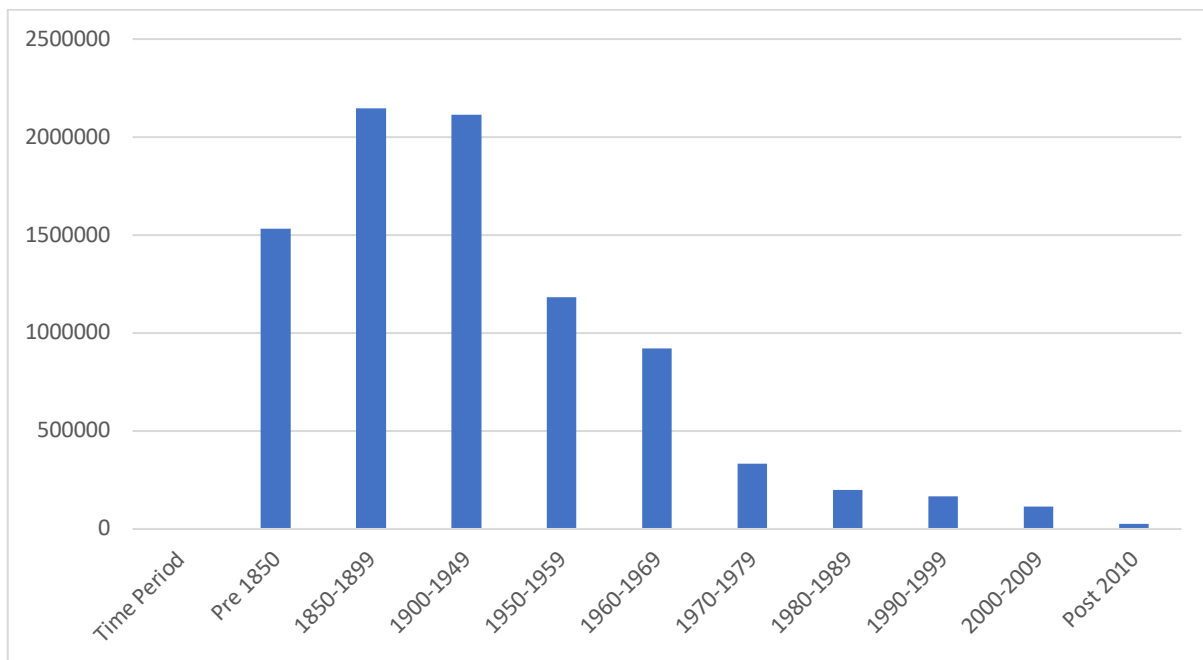


Figure 9: Median Agency Income

There is a clear discontinuity here, with those groups of agencies founded after 1970 having a much lower median income than their predecessors. Overall, there is a pattern of declining median income over time.

Conclusions

This overview of data from 144 mission agencies demonstrates that, despite the reported stagnation of the evangelical church in the UK, the number of mission agencies is continuing to grow. In addition, it appears that newer agencies are likely to be very different to their forebears from the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Five Eras of Mission Agencies

In 1992, Ralph Winter suggested that there were three eras of mission, typified by three types of mission agencies. Today, it is possible to expand that analysis to suggest that there are five types of mission agencies, which broadly align with different eras in modern history. There are exceptions to this description, but it holds for the majority of agencies.

Era One Pre 1859

This overlaps with Winter's first era and consists of a group of 8 agencies who:

- Are more involved in proclamation and evangelism than agencies from any other era
- Are less likely to be involved with unreached people groups than agencies from the following two eras.
- Are less likely to be involved in social action than other agencies.
- Almost two-thirds of these agencies work worldwide.

Era Two: 1860-1899

This overlaps with Winter's second era and consists of a group of 14 agencies who:

- Together with those from Era 3 are the most likely to work with unreached people groups.
- Are the least likely, apart from era 5, to be involved worldwide – this ties in with Winter's suggestion that these agencies focussed on specific inland regions.
- Have the highest median income (£2,007,791) for any of the eras.

Era Three: 1900-1959

This overlaps with Winter's third era, missions to unreached people and consists of a group of 22 agencies who:

- Despite the correlation with mission to unreached people, this group are more likely than those from previous eras to be involved in social action.
- Are the most likely to send missionaries, in particular short-termers.
- Along with those from Era 4, are the most likely to have a worldwide ministry.

Era Four: 1960-1970

This overlaps with the rise of Christian aid and development agencies¹² and comprises of a group of 8 agencies who:

- Do not focus on unreached people groups.
- Are much less likely to send missionaries than agencies from previous eras.
- Are more likely to focus on supporting local communities than agencies from any other era.
- Are very likely to have a worldwide ministry.

Era Five: 1971-Present

This group of 92 agencies:

- Are the least likely to be involved in proclamation or evangelism.
- Are the least likely to send missionaries
- Are the least likely to have a worldwide ministry.
- Have the lowest median income of any of the groups (£186,896), being less than 20% of the value of the next smallest.

¹² A number of evangelical Aid and Development agencies came into being in the late 1950s and 1960s following the end of the "great reversal" a movement which saw evangelical Christians retreat from involvement in social action.

Era	Number of Agencies	Involved in Proclamation (%)	Evangelism (%)	UPGs (%)	Social Action (%)	Sends Long-Term Missionaries (%)	Sends Short-Term Missionaries (%)	Supports Missionaries (%)	Supports Local Churches/Communities (%)	Works Worldwide (%)	Total Income (£)	Median Income (£)
Era 1: Pre	8	100	88	13	25	50	38	13	38	63	19,180,726	1,698,633
Era 2:	14	79	71	36	50	50	57	14	21	29	47,444,182	2,007,791
Era 3: 1900-1959	22	77	55	36	73	64	91	18	27	73	157,158,813	1,456,055
Era 4: 1960-1970	8	63	38	0	63	25	13	0	75	75	96,272,516	1,082,494
Era 5: 1971-	92	50	26	7	65	13	18	3	71	21	38,467,566	186,896

Table 6: Summary of Agency Eras

The vast majority of mission agencies working today came into being post 1971. These agencies are smaller than their predecessors and more likely to be involved in one or two social-action projects in a single location. However, despite their proliferation, these agencies have a limited impact on the sector as a whole. It is the agencies from Era 3 who dominate financially, with 44% of the income given to mission going to these 22 organisations. In terms of sending missionaries, it is the agencies formed before 1959 who are the most prominent.

Older agencies are likely to be large (measured by current financial income), to have a focus on proclamation and evangelism, to send both short and long-term missionaries and to have a worldwide focus to their ministry. By comparison, the newer agencies are smaller, tend not to send missionaries, are more likely to concentrate on social action than proclamation and to focus their efforts on a specific country and region.

However, despite this proliferation of smaller, more focussed agencies, the vast majority of the money given to the mission sector goes to agencies founded pre 1970. This pattern is an indication as to which agencies the British Christian public are interested in supporting.

A Glimpse into the Future

Epoch defining moments such as the publication of Carey's enquiry or James Hudson-Taylor's foundation of the CIM are impossible to predict. In God's providence it is entirely possible that such an event will occur in the next ten years, shaking the mission sector completely. However, in the absence of an event of that magnitude, it is likely that mission agencies will continue to change by a slow process.

It is likely that many more small, entrepreneurial agencies focussing on one project in one location will come into being. However, these agencies will be supported by those who are close to them and will have a limited impact on the sector as a whole.

The movement away from evangelism and towards social-action will continue. Though a number of medium-large agencies will maintain an evangelistic focus; these are the agencies that are most likely to continue to send missionaries from the UK, while other agencies are unlikely to send missionaries.

Some issues not covered in this paper, but which will be relevant in the future:

- The continuing stagnation or recession of the evangelical church in the UK means that some agencies will face significant financial and recruitment problems.
- The growing church worldwide will have a growing desire to have an input into how foreigners do mission in their backyard.
- This study has not touched on the growing phenomenon of churches supporting overseas projects and sending missionaries without the intervention of a mission agency. This is a broad movement (if it can be described as such) covering Anglican diocese in the UK partnering with diocese across the world, small church-based projects and new denominations which have a significant international church planting focus. It is difficult to assess the extent and impact of this movement in the absence of any central source of data. There is a need to study this issue in more depth, but it would need institutional buy-in by

the organisations involved and is probably beyond the scope of an independent researcher¹³.

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¹³ Robertson's 2014 PhD thesis examines the missiology of three new church streams, New Frontiers International, Salt and Light and World Horizons. His study provides a valuable insight into the motivations and activities of these groups but does not provide statistical information which would allow their overall impact to be compared to traditional mission agencies. (Robertson 2014)

Appendix: The Agencies in the Sample

This list of the agencies is ordered by date.

BMS World Mission	1792	African Pastors Fellowship	1981
Church Mission Society	1799	Eurasia Education Foundation	1982
Church's Ministry Among Jewish People	1809	Frontiers	1982
Scottish Bible Society	1809	Missionary Ventures	1983
Sailors Society	1818	World Horizons	1983
Intercontinental Church Society	1823	Asia Link	1986
Christian Witness to Israel	1842	Focus Radio	1986
Interserve	1852	Serving Christ Internationally	1988
OMF International	1865	Japan Christian Link	1989
Arab World Ministries of Pioneers	1876	Compass Braille	1990
Messianic Testimony	1876	Damascus Trust	1990
Mission Africa	1887	Elam Ministries	1990
Irish Baptist Missions	1888	Avail Mission	1993
Lifewords	1888	Nations Trust	1993
Serving in Mission	1889	People International	1993
Latin Link	1892	AOG Mission	1994
Zambesi Mission	1892	Cuba Para Cristo	1995
Chosen People Ministries	1894	Sat-7	1995
AIM International	1895	DAI UK	1996
One Mission Society	1901	Carey Outreach Ministries	1997
Pioneers	1904	Friends of IEM	1998
WEC	1913	Preachers' Help	1998
European Christian Mission	1920	International Aid Trust	2001
Crosslinks	1922	International Teams	2001
Reach Beyond	1927	Pasion for Sport	2001
Elim Missions	1929	3P Ministries	2003
UFM	1931	Agape Live in India	2004
World Outreach International	1932	INet	2004
New Tribes Mission	1942	Bless Network	2004
Wycliffe Bible Translators	1942	Illyrian Gospel Trust	2008
World Share	1943	Salt Malawi	2008
IFES	1947	Acorn Camps	2009
Reach Across	1952	Arab World Media	2011
Chinese Church Overseas Christian Mission	1955	Hamsayer	2011
OM	1957	Al Massira Trust	2012
FEBA	1959	Good Books for Asia	2012
Gospel Printing Mission	1960	The Kerusso Trust	2012
YWAM	1960	CAM International	2013
Transform Europe	1965	4.2.20 Foundation	2017
France Mission Trust	1968	Platform 67	2017
Release International	1968	Echoes International	1872
Langham Partnership	1971	Leprosy Mission UK	1874
Jews for Jesus	1973	Leprosy Mission International	1874
Calvary Ministries International (CAPRO)	1975	MAF International	1946
Gospel Literature Outreach	1976	Dohnavor Fellowship	1947
GFA World	1979	MAF UK	1948
Servants UK	1980	INF	1954
		Teach Beyond	1954
		Christians in Action	1965
		Tear Fund	1968

Samaritan's Purse	1970
Mission India	1971
Middle East Media	1975
Emmanuel International	1978
Lightforce International	1979
Engineering Ministries International	1982
Global Care	1983
Christian Friends of Israel	1985
links international	1985
Cambodia Action	1986
Chinese Church Support Ministries	1986
Food For the Hungry	1989
Medair	1989
Middle East Concern	1991
Teso Trust	1991
World in Need	1991
World of Worth	1991
Heart of the Father	1994
Novi Most International	1995
Ambassadors Football	1996
Hands at Work Africa	1996
Heartlink	1996
Viva	1996
Breadline	1997
Cambodian Communities Out of Crisis	1997
Rope	1998
Bethany Children's Trust	1999
Kisumu Children's Trust	2000
Friends of Mandritsara	2001
Medic Assist International	2003
Starfish Malawi	2003
Mission Direct	2004
Prime International	2005
Vision for China	2005
Gorakhpur Nurseries	2009
A Rocha International	2010
Apprender	2010
Operation Orphan	2010
Hope for Kids International	2011
Evangelistic Medical Missions Abroad	2014
Fonic Trust	2014
Home Leone	2014
Make a Difference Worldwide	2014
Arukah Network	2015
Friends of Life	2015
Turkic Belt Ministries	2015
Amor Europe	2018