

UK to global mission: what really is going on?  
Part 2: Messages from and to mission  
organisations

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## Research Questions

- 1. What do Global Connection partners (churches, mission agencies, colleges) see as the key trends that are impacting on global mission in the UK?**
- 2. What do these organisations feel that they need to do to respond effectively to these trends?**
3. In this context, do they see a role for Global Connections in helping them address these exciting and emerging challenges?



# Who was interviewed?

35 interviews seeing 37 people

The breakdown of interviews is as follows:

- 11 Church/denomination
- 7 large agencies
- 7 medium-sized agencies
- 2 small agencies
- 3 primarily UK agency
- 2 service services
- 3 Colleges

- What do Global Connection partners see as the key trends that are impacting on global mission in the UK?

- Issues for Mission Agencies

# There is a complex mix social, religious and organisational change is affecting world mission

## 1. Global change with massive cultural and demographic shifts

- Worldwide spread of **modernity, urbanisation** and **secularisation**
- Resurgence of **Islam**
- Growth of **Christianity** in Global South
- Growth of **post-colonial narrative** about identity
- Development of the **network** world of communications, with new means of relating beyond the local

## 4. Changing model of mission (see next slide)

## 2. Changing European context

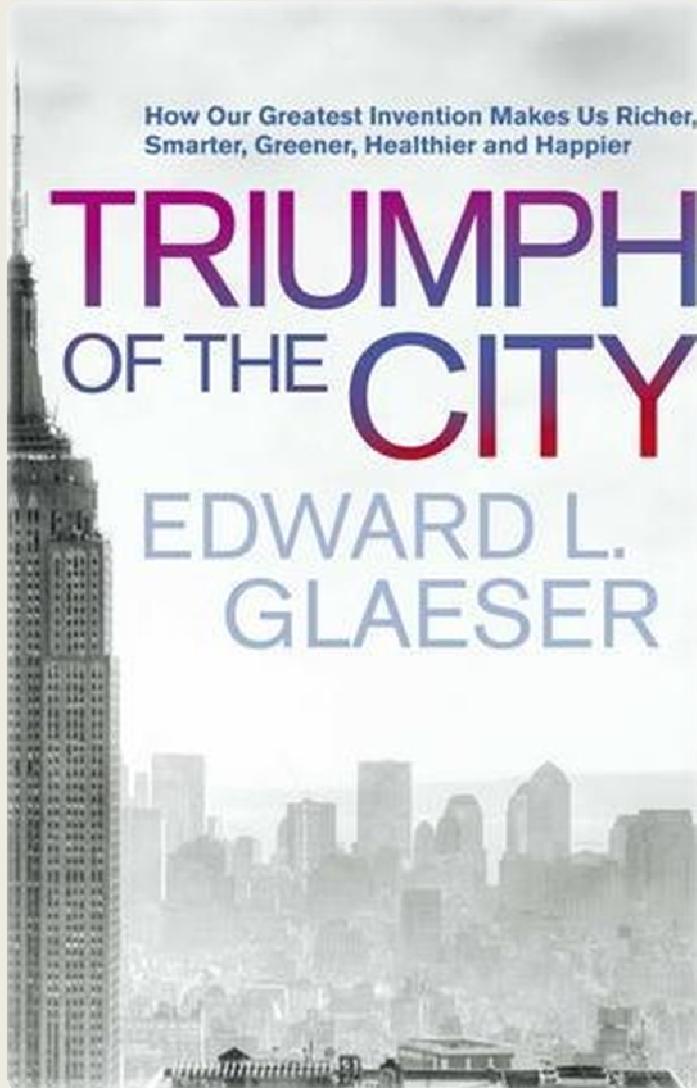
- Cultural trend to **postmodernism**
- Collapse of **communism** in Eastern Europe and expansion of EU
- Decline of **institutional Christianity** and rise of **informal spirituality**
- Recognition that **Jesus** of Western theology is a foreign culture to some
- Growth in **immigration**
- Awakening of Christian consciousness of need for **evangelisation of Europe** and **rediscovery of the Church**

## 3. Developing context for 21<sup>st</sup> century mission

- **Business as mission**
- Emergence of **inter-faith dialogue**
- Going beyond territorial understandings of Christianity
- A **new hope for mission** based on biblical eschatology
- **Fresh and alternative expressions** of Church
- Rediscovering Jesus's mission of the Kingdom of God
- Massive increase in **short-term mission**
- Emergence of **ecological mission**

Source: Tim Dakin (2008) CMS and New Mission, Anvil, vol 25, no 3, pp195-208

# Do we understand the city?



Secular thinkers have developed a holistic understanding of the city.

But, apart from **Timothy Keller**, it is difficult to find a Christian perspective (particularly UK) that really understands and interprets the city and its implications for mission and models for mission

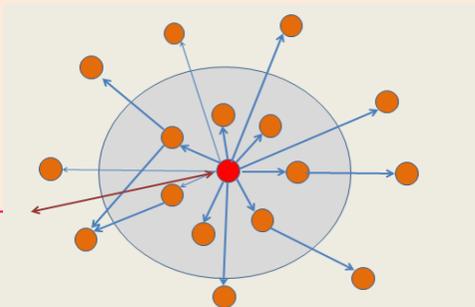
“As Edward Glaeser proves in this myth-shattering book, cities are actually the healthiest, greenest, and richest (in cultural and economic terms) places to live.” **Book promotion 2011**

“Like every golden age of which we know (renaissance, reformation?) it was an urban age” **Peter Hall, Cities in Civilization, 1998**

# Rural to City Model: different context

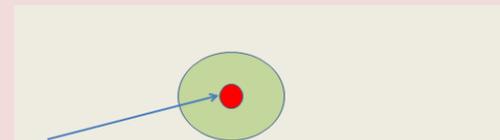
## City

- City
- Apostolic and network
- Teams and clusters
- Public and civic realm
- Strategic focus
- Capacity building, facilitating and training
- Collaborative
- Building communities



## Rural

- Village
- Partnership or 'from here to there'
- Mini-teams and individuals
- Private realm
- Project focus
- Delivery
- Isolated
- Supporting community



# Global mission in the UK: what has changed?

## Mission Agency

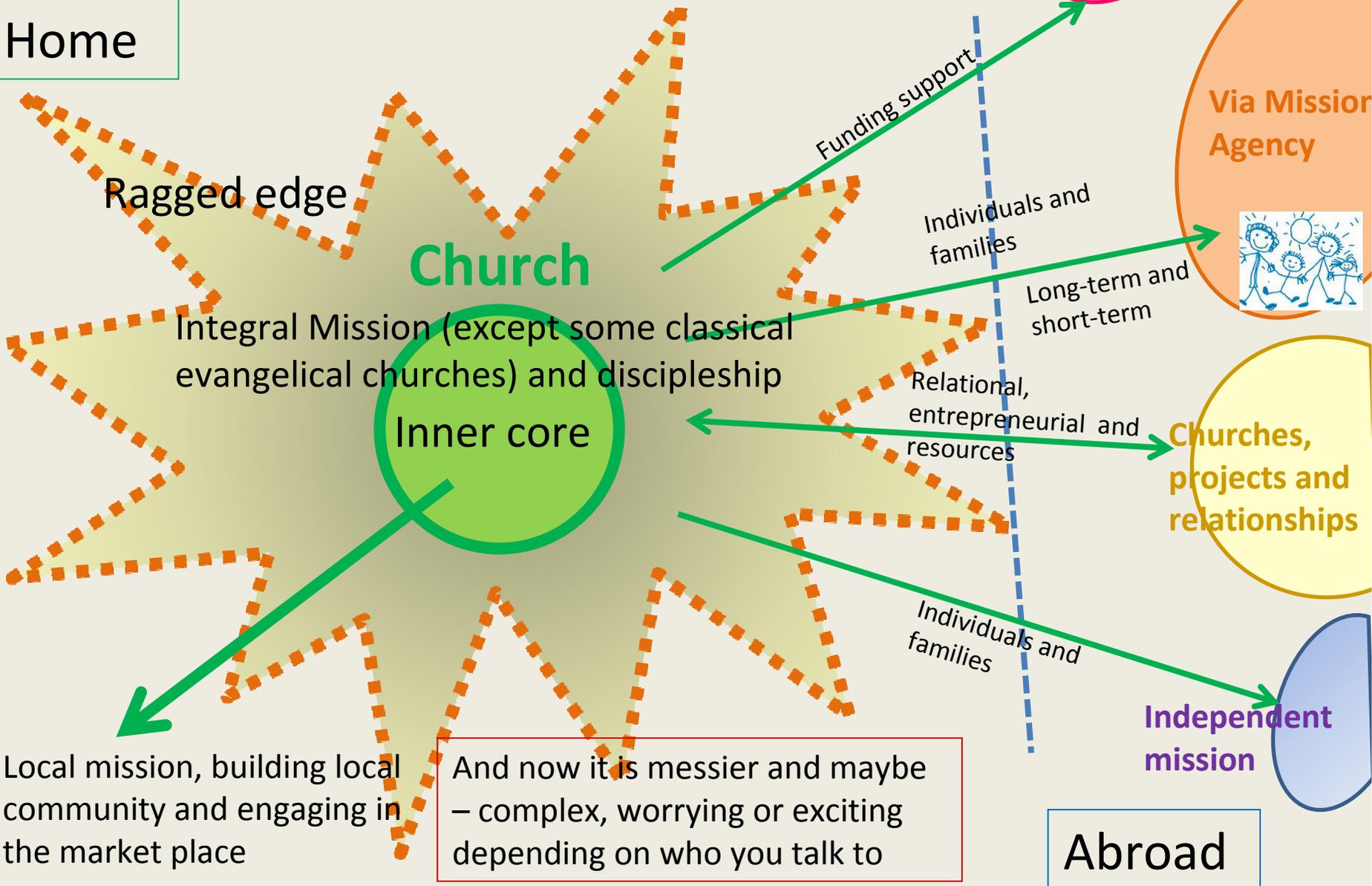
### At home in UK

- Relative decline in UK church
- Growing churches (charismatic, youth focus and Black) may want to do own thing
- Evangelical churches best source of mission partners
- What model of mission: proclamation or integral?
- Competition from poverty reduction agencies for resources
- Competition from entrepreneurial mission for people and resources
- Long-term redefined
- Growth in short-term programmes
- Direct funding for agencies reduced
- Pooled to individual support for Mission Partners
- Independence or merger

Source: Inspired by Richard Littledale and other church leaders

# UK Church today

Home



Local mission, building local community and engaging in the market place

And now it is messier and maybe - complex, worrying or exciting depending on who you talk to

Abroad

# Global mission in the UK: what has changed?

## **Mission Agency**

### **In the field**

- Massive growth of church and mission from global south
- 'Partnership' post-colonial model inappropriate
- Different understandings of 'unreached'
- Trend towards national leadership
- Growth of indigenous mission
- Rural still dominant paradigm
- Choice of independence or collaboration

# CMS – Changes in UK to global mission



## 1800-1850 – ‘Fly-casting’

An experimental period of learning to do evangelism and church planting context

## 1850-1900 – ‘Scaffolding’

A phase of establishing local church presence, of church growth and leadership in other cultural settings

## 1900-1950 ‘Institutionalised Christianity’

A building up of Christian civic and cultural institutions as well as political institutions and broader cultural engagement

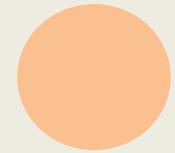
## 1950-2000 ‘Partnership’

There was a new emphasis on co-operative relationships with maturing churches of the South. However, the direction of mission was still North South. As a result it remained largely a ‘sending and receiving’ rather than ‘sending and pooling’ model with the priorities of the West continuing to dominate

## 2000 onwards – ‘Inter-change?’

Where there is genuine engagement with one another at a deeper level, where we see ourselves as in the ‘Body of Christ’ together – a kind of ‘Ephesian’ movement (from Jew to Gentile interaction to multiple cultures coming together). It will only work through practical engagement with each other in different centres. The priority is still on the ‘contextual’ and the ‘local’ and with inter-change being about enriching each others mission

Global South



Christianity in Global South massively expands



Source: Tim Dakin

## The drivers of change

*“I can only be optimistic about the future of mission agencies in general if they have got on top of the really big issues. They can reorganise their offices all they want, but the drivers (shaping mission) are going to be the big social movements that are taking place in economy, society and communications. If you are not connecting with these, you will not get on top with what is really happening in the world today.”*

Mission Agency CEO

*“Mission societies are not the key spearhead of mission despite what they may think of themselves. It is actually big global emigrational movements. Even in the New Testament it was the big movements of Christians out of Jerusalem, not Paul and one or two people. It was all the Christians moving out of Jerusalem and Judea out into the wider world because of the persecution that made a big difference. The big Western movement of mission was not created by mission societies, but by Christians generally leaving the West and taking the Gospel with them.”*

Mission Agency CEO

2. What do these organisations feel that they need to do to respond effectively to these trends?

- Mission agencies

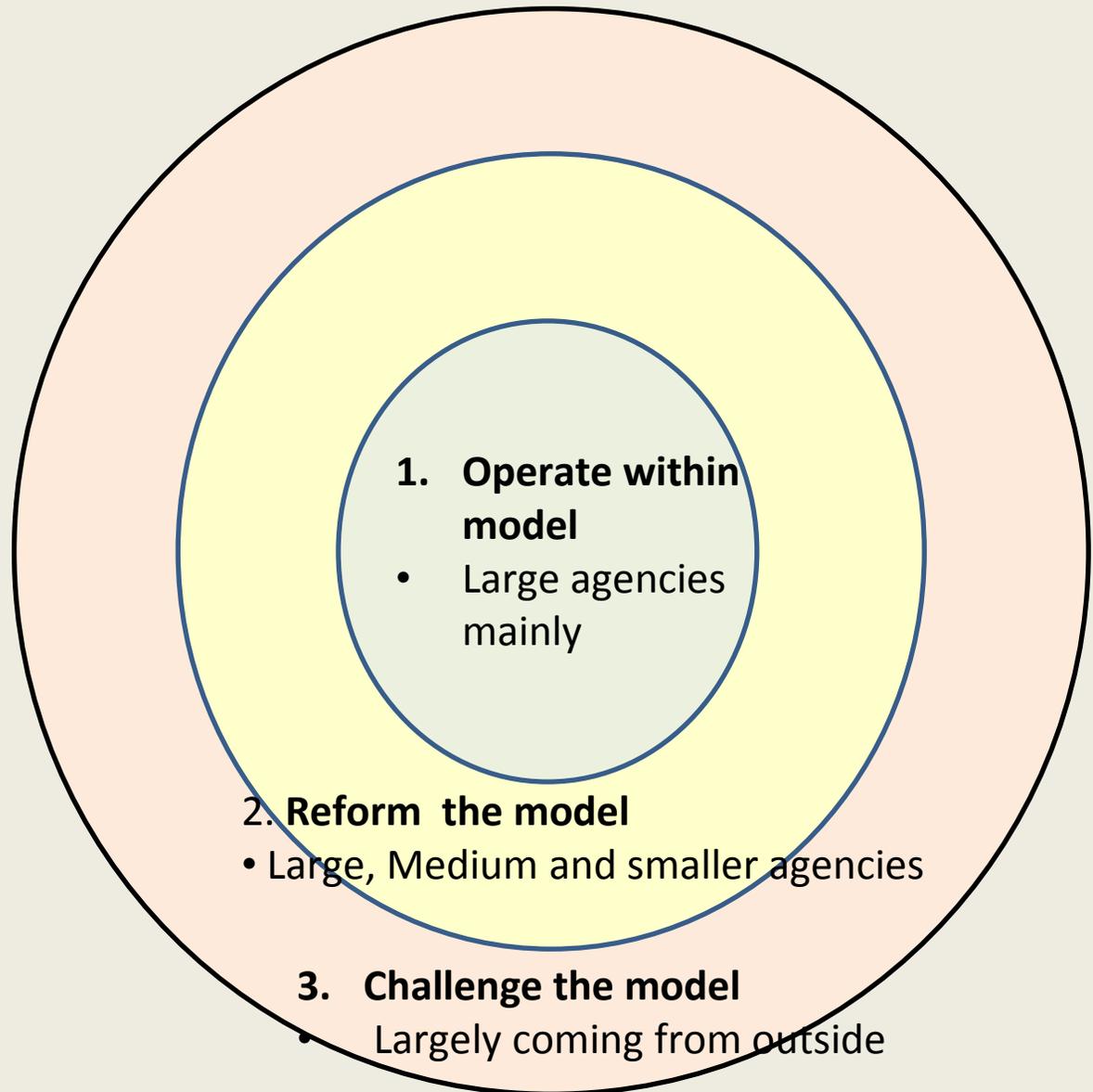
# Mission Agency model

The interviews illustrated three types of responses to the established mission agency model for facilitating the sending of mission partners overseas. These were:

**1. Operate within the model** – reforms to keep the existing model operating

**2. Reform the model** – make changes to the model to reflect changing local and global circumstances

**3. Challenge the model** – question the validity of the model in today's world



# Strategies for 1. Operate within model

## *National*

- Cut regional structures and centralise operations
- Cut head office headcount
- Build up and empower volunteer support base
- Introduce cost saving office systems
- Separate operational management from CEO role
- Develop new strategy and spend on marketing
- Reposition to reinforce core church and supporters base

## *Mission partners*

- Pooled to individual support
- Improved selection methods
- Stronger church relations
- Redefine long-term to rolling 2/3/5 year contracts
- Strengthen mission partner (pre-during-after) care
- Short-term taster programmes as a route into long-term
- Shift to shorter initial training and induction and life-long learning

## Will it work?

There is some evidence of it working for some agencies

- Financial Accounts for some agencies are OK
- Most agencies interviewed reported stable 'long-term' recruitment
- Mission partners appear to be receiving funding through churches and individuals

### **But -**

- Some agencies are facing significant financial challenges, particularly with revenue budgets
- Is there a tension between:
  - Agency survival and UK effectiveness in world mission?
  - Responding to core supporters view of mission and the needs of the world mission?
- Are all of the responses strategic?
- Why does a rural paradigm of mission so dominate in an urbanising world?
- Are churches more sceptical than mission agencies about financial model long-term?

## Different views

### **Yes**

*“Why are we succeeding? It is because we are responding to what the church wants in the UK. The church and individuals are looking for strategic ministries that are having an impact in Africa.”*

*“There are an increasing number of conservative evangelicals available for overseas mission because a number of churches with this background are increasingly engaged in church planting in the UK”*

### **Not quite so sure**

*“We have gone from a situation where we (UK) were a big player to becoming a smaller one. In this context is the mission community being strategic enough? Almost certainly not. But it goes beyond that. It has to do with undertaking the deeper missiological thinking that underlies strategy. It is to ask the question ‘what is the mission that the Church of Christ in Britain is called to?’”*

*“Is there mission agency over capacity? If you are talking about the old people sending paradigm then yes. It is a no brainer and is verging on the ridiculous. You can go to a Christian conference and there are literally queues of mission agencies trying to find one or two people who are interested in mission. The recruitment levels to the mission agencies are just minuscule. If they get one or two people a year they feel that they have succeeded.”*

# Long-term mission: 'opportunity costs?'

- **Costs** - £40-£50-£60-£70,000 a year for mission partner and family on long-term mission, depending on agency, location, role and location (individual £15-20,000)
- **Calling** – There will always be people recognising call to go
- **Effectiveness** - A common view is that it takes up to 10 years to become fully effective (learning language and absorbing culture) in the field
- **What is long-term?** - It is no longer for life, but can now mean 5-10 years or even shorter
- **Trends** - towards:
  - Professional (paid) employment on mission
  - Tent making alongside mission
  - Retired mission partners on pensions
  - Entrepreneurial mission
- **Personal support** – There is a marked trend towards mission partners raising their own financial needs (generally successfully still), with the agency's advice and guidance

## Mission partner budget

10-12.5% to mission agency

87.5-90% to mission partner  
Covers:

- Living allowance
- Travel costs
- Means of local transport
- Housing costs
- Training costs
- Security costs
- Health insurance
- Pension
- Children's education

*"It costs a lot to send someone abroad. We cannot afford to send people casually anymore. They have to be effective. They have to be called to their particular context and they have to have something special to offer. "*

Mission Agency CEO

## Strategies for 2. Reform the model

### ***International***

- Transfer international HQ overseas e.g. Singapore, Kuala Lumpur
- Regionalise operations in different parts of the world e.g. Asia and Africa
- Let go control to national leadership
- Support more national workers, particularly in church planting and evangelism
- Empower more national institutions
- Appoint representatives from global south to UK board membership
- Increasing collaboration between mission agencies in the field
- Develop network models of mission to move 'from-to' to 'inter-change'

### **National**

- Increase collaboration between mission agencies in UK
- Encourage reverse mission, with people coming to the UK from global south or from 'any place' to 'any place'
- Develop a service based model
- Engaging more in the civic and corporate realm
- Reduce focus on doing and increase emphasis on facilitation
- More strategic placement of mission partners in a network context

## Strategies for 3. Challenge the model

### **Voices calling for reflection**

*“What they (mission agencies) need to do is to recognise that they had a role, but that it has changed. It is rather like the banks in the City of London. There was the British Empire and we did control the majority of the world economy. But it all collapsed. But out of it we still remained a major player in banking, insurance and commodity markets. What has happened with mission agencies has a parallel. We are no longer the major player in world mission. But what we have and others lack is expertise in designing structures and providing services that enable world mission to happen.”*

Source: Mike Wall, Principal, All Nations College

*“I would like to see the following. First, fewer mission agencies achieved through amalgamation and the sharing of resources, operations and activities. The focus should be on community and cooperation. Second, there ought to be wholehearted commitment to reverse and decentralised mission to facilitate the movement of everywhere to everywhere in multiple directions. Third, there should be greater integration of mission and church so that we are able to celebrate the demise of some mission societies because their denominational body to which they relate has found new ways to own mission. Fourth, there needs to be greater engagement between evangelicals and non-evangelical mission to learn the best from each other”*

## And more...

*“Globally we are now a marginally Christian country and the centre of Christian faith is in the global south. We need to rethink our whole approach. Out of Lausanne, countries are sending missionaries to other countries outside of Europe and the USA without even talking to us anymore. We went from being the primary hub of global mission to the point where we are now marginal. Maybe one of our roles is to export our wealth to those who are struggling to build the Kingdom without the resources to do it. The world no longer looks to us to write the theology text books, to design the mission programmes and to send the missionaries. In this context we need to figure out what is the best role we can play. However, it should not mean that the UK church should loose even more mission focus. A positive aspect is that churches have got better at linking with their local agenda.”*

*“It is a truism that world mission has changed in the last few decades. But it is a truth worth reiterating because the implications of the change are yet to have their full impact upon the perception and practice of the Christian faith in both the North and South” (Tim Dakin (2008) CMS and New Mission, vol 25, no 3, page 195)*

## So, what is going on?

- 1. The sample size is too small to come to firm conclusions**
- 2. There is no general crisis so far and so agencies are responding to funding and other challenges in their own way**
  - (e.g. re-positioning, fresh strategies, re-visioning, marketing, cost-cutting, changing funding arrangements for mission partners etc)
- 3. There were differences in perception between:**
  - ‘People sending’ and ‘service provider’ mission agencies
  - Large and medium-sized mission agencies
  - Whilst being supportive, churches were more likely to question whether the ‘personal support’ funding model is sustainable over the long-term
  - Particularly significant was whether you were speaking from a leadership role in a mission agency or were on the outside looking in
  - The Colleges, women and ethnic minority interviewees were much more likely to challenge the model

# Some tough questions for the mission community?

How far has the UK mission community collectively engaged changes that are going on in world mission and asked of itself some tough questions:

- What is the contribution we can most usefully offer from the UK?
- What are the skills, institutional strengths, resources and experience that we ought to be offering collectively to world wide mission?
- How good are we at collaborating both here in the UK and out in the field?
- Do we put the survival of individual agencies before the common good?
- Who are we really serving? Are we using our resources effectively?
- Are all the mission projects that raise funds in the UK really useful in the field?
- Have we really moved on from a post-colonial and 'partnership' mind set?
- Why does the UK mission community retain a 'rural' mind set in a rapidly urbanising world?

# Conclusions

- **Great privilege to undertake this research**
- **Is there a crisis?** No, not yet, but there are clearly significant underlying problems and issues to be resolved by the mission community
- **Individual versus collective response?**
  - Early stage symptoms of a ‘prisoners dilemma’ problem?
- **Challenge for Global Connections (and its members)**
  - To support from behind or get alongside?
  - To help lead from the front?
- **Finally**

*“The really exciting places where mission seems to be being blessed is where it is a bit uncomfortable for all the parties because they do not agree on every aspect, but they recognise that there is enough there that they can agree on”* Rob Hay, Principal, Redcliffe College