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**Original citation:**

Village, Andrew and Francis, Leslie J.. (2012) Have Anglo-Catholics lost their vision for mission agencies? an empirical enquiry among newly ordained clergy in Britain. *Journal of Anglican Studies*, Vol.10 (No.1). pp. 52-67.

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**Publisher's statement:**

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*Journal of Anglican Studies*, Vol.10 (No.1). pp. 52-67.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S174035531100009X>

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**Have Anglo-catholics lost their vision for mission agencies? An empirical enquiry among newly ordained clergy in Britain.**

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**Have Anglo-catholics lost their vision for mission agencies? An empirical enquiry among newly ordained clergy in Britain.**

**ABSTRACT**

Attitude toward Christian mission agencies was investigated in a sample of 827 Anglican clergy ordained in the UK from 2002 to 2006. The Scale of Attitude Toward Mission Agencies (SATMA) consisted of six items related to the work that agencies do, and whether clergy wished to engage with this work. It had a high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .80). After controlling for theological liberalism or conservatism, attitudes were most positive among evangelicals and least positive among Anglo-catholics. Both liberal and conservative Anglo-catholic clergy showed less positive attitudes toward mission agencies than did other clergy.

**KEYWORDS**

Anglican, Anglo-catholic, SATMA scale, attitudes, clergy, evangelical, mission, mission agencies

## 1. *Introduction*

The overseas mission of the Church of England dates back to the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, coinciding with the early expansion of British trade and colonial interests.<sup>3</sup> In 1701, Thomas Bray, an Anglican clergyman, founded the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts (SPG), with the aim of working among overseas British settlers and to evangelize non-Christians.<sup>4</sup> From the start, this organisation was rooted in the High Church tradition associated with Richard Hooker and the Caroline Divines,<sup>5</sup> and saw its missionary role as intimately connected with work of the Anglican Church. O'Connor noted the early decision of the SPG not to send out Bibles unless they were accompanied by the Book of Common Prayer, and how this close association with the Established Church led to the assumption that 'where British sovereignty prevailed, SPG had a responsibility'.<sup>6</sup>

More mission societies arose during the eighteenth century, including the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), formed in 1792, and the Church Missionary Society (CMS), formed in 1799. The CMS, forged out of the evangelical revival, is among the most important in Anglican circles<sup>7</sup> and, while by no means politically radical, was from its beginning less enthusiastic about stressing its ties with the institutional Anglican Church.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> J. Cox, *The British missionary enterprise since 1700* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008); K. Ward, *A history of global Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Ward, *A history of global Anglicanism*, pp. 33.

<sup>5</sup> D. O'Connor (ed.), *Three centuries of mission: the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1701-2000* (London: Continuum, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> O'Connor, *Three centuries of mission*, pp. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ward, *A history of global Anglicanism*, pp. 35; K. Ward and B. Stanley, *The Church Mission Society and world Christianity, 1799-1999* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Ward, *A history of global Anglicanism*, pp. 34-35.

Although CMS supported the Establishment of the Anglican Church, this was mainly as a safeguard against episcopal abuse or, in later years, the rise of high-church practices. The early years of the CMS and the SPG thus spawned two somewhat different approaches to mission, one based on autonomous missionaries answerable to the CMS, and one based on close ties between the SPG and Anglican Church authorities.

The changes in the Church of England during the nineteenth century associated with the rise of the Oxford Movement<sup>9</sup> and the Evangelical Movement<sup>10</sup> led to growing tensions between the two societies,<sup>11</sup> with the CMS tending to be championed by evangelicals and the SPG by Anglo-catholics.<sup>12</sup> The Oxford Movement also spawned a number of other missionary societies with a distinctly high-church flavour, such as the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) founded in 1857 following appeals by David Livingstone, the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, the Cambridge Mission to Delhi and the Melanesian Mission.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> K. Hylson-Smith, *High churchmanship in the Church of England from the sixteenth century to the late twentieth century* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993); P.B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in context: Anglican high churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> G.R. Balleine, *A history of the Evangelical party in the Church of England* (London: Church Bookroom Press, 1908.); K. Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> O'Connor, *Three centuries of mission*, pp. 62.

<sup>12</sup> Ward, *A history of global Anglicanism*, pp. 38.

<sup>13</sup> L.F. Henderson, *The Cambridge Mission to Delhi: A brief history*. (London: The Offices of the Mission, 1931); Hilliard, D., *God's gentlemen: A history of the Melanesian Mission, 1849-1942* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978); G. Longridge, *A history of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta* (London: John Murray, 1900); Ward, *A history of global Anglicanism*; J. Willis, 'The nature of a mission community (The Universities' Mission to Central Africa in Bonde', *Past & Present* 140 (1993) pp. 127-54; G. H. Wilson, *The history of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa*. (London: UMCA, 1936).

The sheer number of Anglican mission societies (over 80 by the 1960s, according to O'Connor<sup>14</sup>) is testimony to the strong emphasis on overseas mission that arose out of the nineteenth century and which continued well into the twentieth century. That many of these mission societies were aligned with either the evangelical or Anglo-catholic wings of the Anglican Church also shows that both traditions have a long history of engagement with mission through the work of mission agencies. Although the CMS may have played a major role in Anglican mission, it is by no means only evangelical Anglicans who been engaged in overseas mission. The legacy of many of the high-church mission societies remains today in the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG), which formed in 1965 as an amalgamation of the SPG and UMCA, and which other societies have since joined.<sup>15</sup>

During their history, Anglican mission agencies have had to adapt their rationale and purpose according to prevailing views of mission and prevailing financial contingencies.<sup>16</sup> During the latter part of the twentieth century in particular, there were a number of related religious and cultural changes that influenced the way that mission agencies around the world understood their purpose and ways of operating.<sup>17</sup> These changes have also

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<sup>14</sup> O'Connor, *Three centuries of mission*, pp.159.

<sup>15</sup> O'Connor, *Three centuries of mission*, pp. 159-162

<sup>16</sup> E. Johnson, and J. Clark (eds.), *Anglicans in mission: A transforming journey* (London: SPCK, 2000); O'Connor, *Three centuries of mission*, pp. 124-214; Ward and Stanley, *The Church Mission Society and world Christianity, 1799-1999*; T.W. Ward, 'Repositioning mission agencies for the twenty-first century', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23 (1999), pp.146-150, 152-153.

<sup>17</sup> D.J. Bosch, *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992); V.J. Donovan, *Christianity rediscovered: An epistle from the Masai* (Norwich: SCM-Canterbury Press Limited, 2001); D. Door, *Mission in today's world* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis

impacted on Anglicanism and on Anglican mission agencies.<sup>18</sup> The causes and consequences of such changes are complex, and are still being worked out among those involved with mission agencies, but a few key factors can be identified within the British context.

First, there is the changing religious climate in Britain, with a decline in mainline churches, and a move away from organized religion.<sup>19</sup> Many Christian denominations find it difficult to maintain congregations in Britain, and published figures suggest continuing declines in membership, congregations and clergy in Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches in the United Kingdom since 2000.<sup>20</sup> Under these circumstances, the appetite for supporting mission agencies working overseas might be reduced by the need to apply scarce resources closer to home.

Second, there is the growth in multiculturalism and religious pluralism in Britain, which raises awareness among the indigenous population about other faiths, and which makes the notion of an Established Christian Church increasingly difficult to justify.<sup>21</sup> In a society where other

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Books, 2000); Ward, 'Repositioning mission agencies'; T. Yates, *Christian mission in the twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> Johnson and Clark, *Anglicans in mission*.

<sup>19</sup> S. Bruce, *God is dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002); P. Heelas, and L. Woodhead, *Spiritual revolution: Why religion is giving way to spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> P. Brierley (ed.), *Religious trends 7* (Swindon: Christian Research, 2008), Section 8.

<sup>21</sup> C.O. Buchanan, *Cut the connection: Disestablishment and the Church of England* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1994); K. Leech (ed.), *Setting the Church of England free: The case for disestablishment* (Croydon: Jubilee Group, 2001); G. Smith, L.J. Francis, and M. Robbins, 'Establishment or Disestablishment?: A survey among Church of England clergy', *Implicit Religion* 5 (2002), pp. 105-20; G. Smith, L.J. Francis, and M. Robbins, 'Who wants establishment? A comparison of clerical and lay opinion in the Church of England', *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 24 (2003), pp.

religious faiths are increasingly visible, and their right to exist without discrimination is supported by legislation, the very notion of proselytising becomes more problematic.

Third, there is globalisation, fuelled by advances in communication technology, which not only creates economic disparity and social injustice, but also makes them more visible and transparent. Religious or spiritual needs are less apparent than the immediate needs of food, clothing and shelter. Organisations whose initial aims were to tend to the religious needs of expatriates or to bring the Gospel message to those outside the Christian faith have had to rethink their vision and purpose.

Fourth, there are the changes in global politics and religion that result in changing levels of education, prosperity and religious affiliation in regions traditionally served by mission agencies. Countries that were once the target of missionary endeavour from Britain are now sending missionaries to Britain, much to the surprise of some commentators.<sup>22</sup> Political changes have opened up some countries that were previously hostile to mission agencies,<sup>23</sup> while in others it has become increasingly difficult for mission agencies to operate. Even if there ever was an age of unchanging certainties, it has given way to a time in which the web of relationships between countries, cultures and religions is complex and in constant flux.

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349-65; P. Weller, *Time for a change: Reconfiguring religion, state, and society* (London: T & T Clark International, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> V. Combe, 'Missionaries flock to Britain to revive passion for Church', *The Daily Telegraph* (2001), 18 January; R. Gledhill, 'Send for missionaries to halt church decline, bishops told'. *The Times* (2007), 6 February.

<sup>23</sup> M. Elliott, and S. Corrado, 'The protestant missionary presence in the former Soviet Union', *Religion, State and Society*, 25 (1997), pp. 333-51; Gledhill, 'Send for missionaries to halt church decline'; P. Parushev, 'Witness, worship and presence: On the integrity of mission in contemporary Europe', *Mission Studies* 24 (2007), pp. 305-32.



These major cultural shifts have had profound consequences for mission agencies that were conceived in a very different world. The idea of mission partnership began to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s<sup>24</sup> as the role of missionaries changed to working with local autonomous churches to promote their aims and objectives. Alongside this have been changes in how the task of mission is conceived, with traditional notions of evangelism and care being joined by notions such as inter-faith dialogue, inculturation, social justice, repentance and reconciliation.<sup>25</sup> The change in the scope of activity of mission agencies can be judged by figures for the USPG, which after the Second World War had some 700 missionaries, mostly permanent staff serving overseas. By the end of the century this had shrunk to less than 100 people on mainly short-term contracts.<sup>26</sup>

All these changes are likely to have influenced attitudes that Anglicans in Britain have towards mission agencies. Some may see mission agencies as the dying vestiges of colonialism, anachronistic at a time when the balance of Christianity has moved from North to South. Others might see them as important vehicles by which the Church expresses its concern about poverty and injustice on a global scale. Yet others may see them as continuing vehicles of evangelism in a world that needs the Gospel message of salvation as much today as it did in centuries past. The views that individuals take may be shaped by many things, but one is likely to their basic *theological orientation*, often expressed in terms liberalism or conservatism. These terms do not necessarily refer to well-defined parties, and this is especially true of the Anglican Church in Britain. Conservatism has mostly been expressed as a rather general adherence to traditional

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<sup>24</sup> O'Connor, *Three centuries of mission*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>25</sup> Bosch, *Transforming mission*; Johnson and Clark, *Anglicans in mission*; R.J. Schreiter, (ed.), *Mission in the Third Millennium* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> O'Connor, *Three centuries of mission*, pp. 122.

patterns of beliefs or practices that may go back centuries, whereas liberalism has connections with particular movements arising from the growth of Enlightenment rationalism. Anglican conservatives and liberals tend to hold markedly different views about faith, the bible and morality.<sup>27</sup> A typical conservative view of salvation is that it is the graceful gift of God, predicated on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and appropriated through individual repentance and belief. A typical liberal view of salvation is that it is coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, indicated by the breaking down of poverty, social injustice and oppression. Although these views are not mutually exclusive, they do betoken broadly different expressions of faith that might shape understandings of mission. Conservatives might stress the need to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ, whatever their social, religious or financial status. Liberals might stress the need to demonstrate the love of God by liberating people from social, religious or financial oppression.

Differences in *theological orientation* are partly, but not wholly, linked to differences in Anglican *church traditions*. The two main groups defining church traditions in the Anglican Church in Britain are the Anglo-catholic wing and the evangelical wing, both of which have their roots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>28</sup> Anglo-catholicism began with the Tractarian Movement in Oxford, and supporters sought to move the Anglican Church nearer to its Roman Catholic roots. The emphasis has been on church

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<sup>27</sup> L. J. Francis, M. Robbins, and J. Astley, *Fragmented faith? Exposing the fault-lines in the Church of England* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005); A. Village, *The bible and lay people: An empirical approach to ordinary hermeneutics* (Aldershot & Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2007); A. Village, and L. J. Francis, 'An anatomy of change: Profiling cohort-difference in beliefs and attitudes among Anglicans in England', *Journal of Anglican Studies*, 8.1 (2010), pp. 59-81.

<sup>28</sup> Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984*; Hylson-Smith, *High churchmanship in the Church of England from the sixteenth century to the late twentieth century*; Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in context*; N. Scotland, *Evangelical Anglicans in a revolutionary age, 1789-1901* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004).

worship with a keen interest in liturgy, sacraments and especially the Eucharist. The evangelical wing of the Church of England arose out of the general eighteenth- and nineteenth-century resurgence in evangelicalism, but is also associated with key figures such as Charles Simeon, from Cambridge, and those of the Clapham Sect.<sup>29</sup> Supporters sought to move the Church of England nearer to its Reformed roots. The emphasis has been on the preaching of scripture that leads to personal conversion and holy living. Between these two wings lies what is termed variously as ‘middle of the road’, ‘traditional’ or ‘broad church’ Anglicanism.<sup>30</sup> Broad church Anglicans, almost by definition, are likely to encompass a range of conservative to liberal views that may vary from issue to issue.

In general, the two basic theological orientations (conservatism and liberalism), have emerged within British Anglicanism alongside the two basic church traditions (evangelicalism and Anglo-catholicism). Although liberalism has tended to be associated with Anglo-catholics and conservatism with evangelicals, theological orientation and church tradition are not fully entwined: there are conservative catholics and liberal evangelicals within the Anglican Church.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, both theological orientation and church tradition may independently influence the way that British Anglicans perceive the work of mission agencies.

A key point of contact between the Anglican Church and mission agencies is provided by parish clergy, who are often relied upon to encourage interest in overseas mission among their congregations. This study investigates attitudes towards mission agencies among Anglican clergy in

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<sup>29</sup> Balleine, *A history of the Evangelical party in the Church of England*.

<sup>30</sup> P. K. Walker, *Rediscovering the Middle Way* (London: Mowbray, 1988).

<sup>31</sup> Francis, Robbins, and Astley, *Fragmented faith?*; Randall, *Evangelicals etcetera*; Village, *The bible and lay people*; A. Village, and L.J. Francis, *The mind of the Anglican clergy: Assessing attitudes and beliefs in the Church of England* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).

Britain. In particular we ask if attitude is shaped solely by theological orientation (conservative and liberal), or if the different church traditions (evangelical and Anglo-catholic) also have a part to play, even after allowing for theological orientation. Given the history of the Anglican mission societies, and especially the USPG, it might be assumed that support for mission agencies would be widespread across all church traditions in the Church of England today. We test this by creating a scale measuring attitude toward mission agencies and correlating it against a recognized measure of Anglican church tradition, after controlling for theological orientation.

The way in which constructs like *theological orientation* and *church tradition* are understood is related to the particular discourses in which they might be discussed. Church historians, systematic theologians, social scientists, and empirical theologians each bring both the strengths and the constraints of their distinctive approaches to the examination of such constructs. The present study has been established within the framework of empirical theology, which tends to see such constructs as linked to individual religious identities. Within this methodological approach, extensive research and evidence-gathering has indicated the ways in which Anglicans in particular identify with different terms related to theological orientation or church tradition. In empirical research, individual participants are asked to self-define their position using terms that have been shown to be generally meaningful within particular religious traditions. The significance of such self-definitions is then explored empirically through ways in which they relate to other areas of belief, practice or attitude in general, as discussed and displayed by Randall and by Village and Francis,<sup>32</sup> or (as far as the present study is concerned) to attitude toward mission agencies in particular.

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<sup>32</sup> Randall, *Evangelicals etcetera.*; Village and Francis, 'An anatomy of change'.

## 2. *Method*

### 2.1 *Sample*

Questionnaires were posted to all 1656 Anglican clergy ordained between 2004 and 2006 in the United Kingdom, and 843 (51%) were returned. Of these, 827 gave answers to all the variables used in this study, 93% of which were clergy from England. Comparison of the sex ratio and age distribution of Church of England clergy in the sample with national figures published by the Church suggested the study sample was reasonably representative of all newly ordained clergy over this period.

### 2.2 *Dependent variable*

*Attitude toward mission agencies* was assessed by six Likert-type items,<sup>33</sup> related to views on mission agencies and willingness to engage with them personally or at a congregational level. Each item had a five-point response scale and was scored such that a high score indicated a positive attitude or willingness to engage with mission agencies. These items were used to construct the Scale of Attitude Toward Mission Agencies (SATMA). The scale included two statements of general attitude, ‘mission agencies do a good job in today’s world’ and ‘mission agencies are out of date in today’s world’, the second of which was reverse coded. The remaining items referred to different sorts of engagement with mission agencies: ‘I use resources provided by mission agencies’, ‘I donate money to mission agencies’, ‘I want to be personally linked with mission agencies’ and ‘I want my church to be linked with mission agencies’. The assumption was that clergy who viewed mission agencies as doing a good job and being relevant in today’s world were likely to use agency resources, donate to mission work and want themselves and their churches to be linked with such agencies. If this was so,

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<sup>33</sup> R. Likert, ‘A technique for the measurement of attitudes’, *Archives of Psychology* 140 (1932) pp.1-55.

then these items may indicate an underlying general attitude toward mission agencies.

### 2.3 Independent variable

*Church tradition* was assessed by inviting respondents to self-identify their personal position using a bipolar scale employed in a number of other studies of Anglicans.<sup>34</sup> This seven-point scale is anchored at one end as ‘catholic’ and at the other as ‘evangelical’ and seems to be the most efficient way of assessing tradition among Anglicans. The scale was used to categorize respondents as Anglo-catholic or evangelical, using the two outer responses at either end of the scale (1-2 = Anglo-catholic, 6-7 = evangelical). Those responding to the middle three categories were classed as ‘broad church’, and represent individuals who are sometimes referred to as ‘middle of the road’ Anglicans.<sup>35</sup> Some of these may have veered towards more Anglo-catholic or evangelical practices or beliefs, but most probably embraced features of both traditions. The categorisation was used to create two dummy variables for analysis: Anglo-catholic (= 1, other traditions = 0) and evangelical (= 1, other traditions = 0).

### 2.4 Control variables

*Theological orientation* was assessed accessed by inviting respondents to identify their personal position using a bipolar scale similar to that used to access church tradition.<sup>36</sup> This seven-point scale is anchored at one end as ‘liberal’ and at the other end as ‘conservative’. This ordinal variable was used

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<sup>34</sup> Francis, Robbins, and Astley, *Fragmented faith?*; Randall, *Evangelicals etcetera*; A. Village, and L.J. Francis, *The mind of the Anglican clergy: Assessing attitudes and beliefs in the Church of England* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009); Village and Francis, ‘An anatomy of change’.

<sup>35</sup> Village and Francis, ‘An anatomy of change’.

<sup>36</sup> Randall, *Evangelicals etcetera*; Village and Francis, *The mind of the Anglican clergy*; Village and Francis, ‘An anatomy of change’.

in the regression analysis. The variable was categorized for graphic representation, with scores of 1-2 being assigned to 'liberal', 3-5 to 'broad', and 6-7 to 'conservative'.

*Individual characteristics* which varied across the sample may also influence attitude toward, or engagement with, mission agencies. If attitudes have been changing in recent years, there may be generational differences, so age was included as a control variable because evangelical clergy were slightly younger, on average, than those from other traditions. Sex was also included because there was a higher proportion of male clergy among evangelicals than among the other traditions.

### 2.5 Analysis

The internal consistency reliability of the Scale of Attitude Toward Mission Agencies was first established by factor analysis,<sup>37</sup> using principal components extraction and varimax rotation,<sup>38</sup> and then by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.<sup>39</sup> These statistical techniques test the reliability of the scale in terms of its internal consistency. In other words, whether someone with a particular general attitude toward mission agencies (positive, neutral or negative) would answer all items in the scale in a consistent manner. The scores of individual items were summed to create the dependent variable, a measure of attitude toward mission agencies, which was then analysed using multiple regression. Multiple regression is a statistical technique that allows the effect of one variable (in this case church tradition) to be assessed

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<sup>37</sup> A. McKennell, 'Attitude measurement: Use of coefficient alpha with cluster or factor analysis', *Sociology* 4 (1970), pp. 227-45.

<sup>38</sup> J.-O. Kim and C. Mueller, *Factor analysis: Statistical methods and practical issues* (London: Sage, 1978).

<sup>39</sup> L.J. Cronbach, 'Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests' *Psychometrika* 16 (1951), pp. 297-334.

independently of other variables (in this case sex, age and theological orientation). Control variables were added in two groups: first sex and age, followed by theological orientation, before adding the two predictor dummy variables based on church tradition. At each stage the change in  $R^2$  was tested for significance, which indicated whether adding the new variables to the model had significantly improved its ability to predict attitude toward mission agencies.

### 3. *Results*

#### 3.1 *The Scale of Attitude Toward Mission Agencies (SATMA)*

The six items produced a uni-dimensioned scale on factor analysis, which explained 51% of the variance and which had a high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .80, Table 1). The two items relating to the work and relevance of agencies scored highest, and there was generally a strong tendency for positive affirmation of what mission agencies do. The items on engagement scored slightly lower, and some clergy who donated to mission agencies were more reluctant to be personally linked with them. Overall, inter-item correlations were reasonably high and the SATMA scores were approximately normally distributed around a mean of 22.6 (SD = 3.7, minimum = 6, maximum = 30, midpoint indicating overall neutral attitude = 18).

[Table 1 about here]

#### 3.2 *SATMA and church tradition*

Details of the independent variables used in the multiple regressions are shown in Table 2 and the results of the regressions in Table 3. Model 1 showed that there was no evidence of a relationship between attitude toward mission agencies and either sex or age in this sample. When theological orientation was added in model 2, there was a highly significant positive correlation, indicating that positive attitude toward mission agencies was



associated with conservative rather than liberal belief. The addition of the two church-tradition dummy variables in model 3 significantly improved the fit, with evangelicals showing a more positive attitude, and Anglo-Catholics a less positive attitude, when compared with the rest of the sample. This final model indicated that both theological orientation and church tradition exerted highly statistically significant independent effects on attitude toward mission agencies. The overall proportion of the variance in SATMA scores explained in the final regression was less than 20%, which is typical of this kind of survey, and which suggests that attitude toward mission agencies may have been partly explained by other factors not measured in this study.

[Tables 2 and 3 about here]

The partial independence of the effects of theological orientation and church tradition on SATMA scores is illustrated in Figure 1, which indicates that attitude toward mission agencies was more negative among broad and conservative Anglo-catholics than among broad and conservative clergy of other traditions. However, liberals from the broad-church and evangelical traditions had similar attitudes to those of Anglo-catholics. Less positive attitude toward mission agencies was thus associated with Anglo-catholics of all theological persuasions and with liberals of all church traditions.

[Figure 1 about here]

#### ***4. Discussion and Conclusions***

This study has shown that a relatively simple six-item scale can be used to assess attitude toward mission agencies among Anglican clergy. The statistical results indicate that it is reasonable to assume that the SATMA scale was a reliable measure of the general attitude that clergy had toward mission agencies. The Cronbach's alpha of the SATMA scale (.80) was well

within the range generally considered to indicate an internally reliable scale.<sup>40</sup> Positive attitudes towards the work that mission agencies do and their relevance today seem to be associated with a propensity for clergy to engage with agencies, to donate money to them and to use the resources that they provide. More work would be needed to test the validity of the scale, though high face validity is suggested by the fact that all the items related directly to mission agencies and the various ways in which clergy might engage with them. Although a more thorough study might explore different dimensions of attitudes in this area, it seems reasonable from the present evidence to suggest that clergy who are positive towards mission agencies see them as doing good, relevant work, are likely to respond positively to requests for donations, will use resources produced by agencies and will encourage links between their churches and mission agencies. They may, however, be less inclined to seek personal links, perhaps because of a fear of what this might entail in terms of time and energy.

Attitudes towards mission agencies in this sample of recently ordained clergy were generally positive, with the average SATMA score being around 23, compared with a mid-scale (neutral) score of 18. Mission agencies can take heart that what they do is seen in a positive light by most of this group of rather varied Anglican clergy. Despite the pressures and changes facing the endeavour of overseas mission, many clergy still value the role of mission agencies. Neither sex nor age seemed related to attitudes, suggesting that any changes in the age structure or sex ratio of Anglican clergy in Britain should not of itself change the way that mission agencies are perceived in the future.

Two main points emerged from the regression analyses. First, theological liberals have more negative attitudes than other clergy. This was

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<sup>40</sup> P. Kline, *The handbook of psychological testing* (London: Routledge, 2009).

true for all traditions, even among evangelicals. Liberalism is generally associated with a move away from traditional views based on the idea that mission means the expansion of the Christian faith, to belief that the relief of poverty and deprivation is a more urgent and fitting task for the Church. Many Christian mission agencies are, in fact, mainly engaged in development work with the poor and marginalized, but liberal clergy may view them as irrevocably linked to a proselytising stance, and would perhaps prefer to support non-religious aid agencies. Liberal evangelicals are relatively rare, and there were not enough in this sample to tell if they really shared views with liberals of other traditions, or whether this was a sample-size effect. It does appear that some evangelicals have a more liberal stance to mission agencies, and it would be interesting to investigate this group in more detail.

Second, Anglo-catholics of all theological persuasions had less positive attitudes toward mission agencies than those from broad churches or evangelicals. The difference should not be overstated, because very few clergy were hostile to agencies, and average SATMA scores for all groups were well into the positive end of the scale. Nonetheless, the lower scores of Anglo-catholics are striking and require some explanation. It does not appear to be simply a matter of more liberal theological belief, because this was controlled for in the analysis. It is evident from Figure 1 that the theological conservatism that is associated with more positive attitudes among evangelical and broad-church clergy has little or no association among Anglo-catholics. Theological conservatism among Anglo-catholics may be linked to different sets of issues than among evangelicals. Other studies of Anglicans in England have shown that evangelicals tend to be conservative about doctrinal or moral matters, whereas conservatism for Anglo-catholics is mainly related to matters related to ecclesiology.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Village and Francis, 'An anatomy of change'.

Whatever the particular causes of the less positive attitudes among Anglo-catholic clergy, the results do suggest that the enthusiasm for overseas mission once encapsulated in organisations such as the SPG and UMCA may have subsided. Reasons that might be worth investigating are (1) that Anglo-catholic clergy see other, more urgent, priorities for the Church than mission as currently conceived by mission agencies, (2) that Anglo-catholic clergy have lost confidence in mission agencies to carry out their traditional roles effectively, or (3) Anglo-catholic clergy believe that mission is something other than that promoted by the agencies. There is also evidence that Anglo-catholic clergy may have more positive attitudes towards agencies that share their own church tradition than towards mission agencies generally,<sup>42</sup> so perhaps some of the lack of enthusiasm was because the term ‘mission agencies’ was thought to refer to organisations promoting a more evangelical version of Christianity.

This study was a tentative investigation of attitudes that have rarely been tested empirically before now. The study sample was a relatively small sector of Anglican clergy, namely those ordained from 2002 to 2006. Future work could expand the SATMA to include a wider range of issues, such as attitudes toward the different ways in which the work of mission is conceived today. A more comprehensive scale would enable attitudes to be assessed among a wider range of clergy, among lay people, and among those from different parts of the globe. This study has suggested that those who run churches or mission agencies might benefit from further empirical investigation of attitudes toward mission among those whom they serve or among those on whose support they rely.

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<sup>42</sup> A. Village and L. J. Francis, 'The visibility of mission agencies in general and USPG in particular among recently ordained Anglican clergy: An empirical enquiry', *Transformation* 28.2 (2011), pp. 129-37.

**Table 1.** Items in the Scale of Attitude Toward Mission Agencies (SATMA)

	Mean	SD	FL	IRC
Mission agencies do a good job	4.00	0.68	.59	.44
Mission agencies are out of date in today's world*	4.04	0.78	.68	.52
I use resources provided by mission agencies	3.51	0.99	.61	.46
I donate money to mission agencies	3.88	0.92	.77	.63
I want to be personally linked with mission agencies	3.30	1.02	.79	.65
I want my church to be linked with mission agencies	3.92	0.82	.81	.67

Note. Sample size = 827. \* This item was reverse coded. FL = factor loadings for unrotated solution extracted using principal components analysis. IRC = corrected item rest-of-scale correlation coefficient.

**Table 2** Summary of independent variables

		N	%
Sex	Male	428	51.8
	Female	399	48.2
Age	25-29	38	4.6
	30-34	75	9.1
	35-39	79	9.6
	40-44	92	11.1
	45-49	115	13.9
	50-54	133	16.1
	55-59	142	17.2
	60 or over	153	18.5
Theological orientation	Liberal (1-2)	244	29.5
	Broad (3-5)	436	52.7
	Conservative (6-7)	147	17.8
Church tradition	Anglo-catholic (1-2)	218	26.4
	Broad church (3-5)	372	45.0
	Evangelical (6-7)	237	28.7

Note. Figures in parentheses show how scores on the seven-point scales for theological orientation and church tradition were categorized.

Table 3 Multiple regression of SATMA scores

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
Sex	-.07	.02	.01
Age	.00	.01	.02
Theological orientation		.33 ***	.22 ***
Anglo-catholic			-.21 ***
Evangelical			.10 **
$R^2$	.00	.10	.16
Change $R^2$	.00	.10	.06
$F$ for change $R^2$	1.76	90.78 ***	28.14 ***
$df$	2, 824	1, 823	2, 821

**Figure 1** Mean ( $\pm$  SE) Scale of Attitude Toward Mission Agencies (SATMA) scores by church tradition and theological orientation

