

Ralph Winter Articles about Major Missionary Conferences and Councils

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We want to focus today on the famous meeting at Edinburgh in 1910, the resulting International Missionary Council, and World Council of Churches. In addition we'll look at the more recent Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization and some other structures that have developed that have to do with the international scene.

I wish the book called *Ecumenical Foundations*, by William Ritchey Hogg, were more readily available, but it is out of print. It gives a very interesting survey of what the author calls "movements of unity" on the mission field in the nineteenth century.

One thing that you should take note of is that there are four different streams of coagulation—that's my word, not his—whereby different groups and strands of Christianity began to come together on the field or have their impact on the field, in, say, India.

One stream was a series of field conferences convened by missionaries. A second was conferences held in the home lands. A third was fellowships of mission executives in the home lands (such as the IFMA and EFMA today). Finally, there was the student movement, the SVM and eventually the World's Student Christian Federation. I would add that before even the first of the four mentioned by Hogg, there were field fellowships of missionaries, without which the more formal "field consultations" would never have taken place.

The Origin of Unity: The Mission Field

How many of you have been to an inter-mission fellowship on your field, where all the various missionaries of the different missions get together? How many of you don't even know what I am talking about? On most mission fields, so-called, there is a variety of mission agencies. In Guatemala, there were 40 different mission agencies when I was there; by now it's probably 80, as I have not been there for some 12 years. I was the editor of the inter-mission newsletter at one point. I got to be editor by the simple fact that I suggested that there be such a newsletter.

That's the way it works. The missionaries from the various agencies would get together once a year for a time of fellowship. And usually some American pastor would come down and treat the missionaries like his pastoral charge for a few days of retreat and spiritual renewal. That type of inter-mission fellowship brings together people of different kinds. If I had not been in that kind of fellowship, I don't think I would have gotten to know the California Friends, the Central American Mission, the Nazarenes, or the Southern Baptists as well as I did. If I had stayed in California, it certainly would never have happened.

The point is that in the nineteenth century, due to Americans from the same city, say Cincinnati, going to India, they felt closer in India. I lived in a part of Guatemala where there were practically no Americans at all. Now and then when I would be in a nearby city, and if I would see an American tourist walking down the street with a wife and a couple of little kids, I would have to just bite my tongue to resist the temptation to

stop and talk with them in English! It would have been so nice! But I had to mind my own business and walk on past, for why, in the middle of a city, would you stop somebody else and start talking to them? I was a person who was starved for any kind of contact with my own people.

Note that it really isn't any great spiritual achievement or virtue that people from these different backgrounds of Christian tradition got together once they got to the field; at least that is not the only explanation. You cannot easily say that because the missionaries were holier than anybody else therefore they were able to see their unity in Christ more clearly. That might be part of it. But, basically, missionaries were stunned by the utter contrast between their Christianity, whatever type it was, over against, say, the Hindu reality.

So all of a sudden Mennonites and Presbyterians felt very close together, because in fact, comparatively, they were. That kind of unity was almost inevitable, no great credit to the missionaries.

It is a fact, however amazing, that movements for unity in Western Christendom are preeminently, in terms of originating energy and momentum, the result of mission field events. Missions got acquainted, and then their field churches were brought together in councils of churches, which tended to weld Lutherans and Baptists and Methodists on the field far sooner than it ever would have happened in the United States.

That is what the first hundred or so pages in the book by Hogg are about. Ritchey Hogg, by the way, was a student, a protege, of Latourette. I met Latourette and talked with him on several occasions, at length, before he died, but I was never a student of his. Hogg was actually a doctoral student under him. His book is a history of the International Missionary Council (IMC).

Edinburgh, 1910

In 1910 a very significant meeting took place in Edinburgh, Scotland. It was called, simply, a *World Missionary Conference*. There had been a meeting in 1900, called the Ecumenical Missionary Conference. It is rather amazing that they used the word *ecumenical* in the year 1900. That was in the United States at a very large meeting, a huge meeting, of church people mainly, a mission mobilization conference, not a strategy consultation; and the assumption was that every ten years there should be a meeting like that.

By 1910, John R. Mott, most easily characterized as being the leader of the Student Volunteer Movement, was about 44 years old. The SVM got started in 1886, when he was maybe 20. After 24 faithful and energetic years of labor, he and his friends now had an immense, international influence through the World Student Christian Movement and the Student Volunteer Movement. He was the one, for example (recalling a meeting he attended in Madras—a strategy meeting of mission leaders), who decided almost singlehandedly that the 1910 meeting in Edinburgh would not be a meeting of *church* leaders, as in 1900, but rather a meeting of *mission* leaders, focusing on field strategy rather than home mobilization.

This sets the Edinburgh 1910 meeting off from all previous meetings or subsequent meetings. Never before in history, and never after 1910, has there ever been a world-level conference to which people were invited specifically because they were mission agency leaders! Never before had anything like that been convened, nor since.*

It was an absolutely unique meeting in the sense that it drew together, not church leaders, but *mission leaders*.

At the conclusion of the 1910 meeting, a continuation committee was formed. The continuation committee had its work blasted to smithereens by the First World War. So it was not until 1921, at Lake Mohonk, New York, that the IMC (International Missionary Council) was formed. The IMC, not the World Council of Churches, was the immediate subsequent result of the Edinburgh 1910 meeting of missionary executives.

The International Missionary Council thus drew together all the various associations of mission agencies. In North America, for example, beginning back in 1892, there was the Foreign Mission Conference of North America (FMCNA). That was a conference of mission executives in the United States. There was a similar conference in Norway, a similar conference in England. In England they always have more modest titles for things, being an understating sort of nation. So they called this a British Foreign Missions Secretaries' Bag Lunch, or something like that.

Mission executives got together in the various countries of the world. Note, there was a sending portion of the globe and a receiving portion. This is not a proper distinction today, but it was a practical distinction then. So in the sending part of the world, you had the FMCNA, the Norwegian Missionary Council (which still exists full blast), the British Foreign Secretaries whatever, and so forth. And each of these sending associations were members of the International Missionary Council.

Then on the receiving end, what do you think they had? This is interesting—a very subtle event took place. Immediately after the 1910 conference, in various countries of the world you had a new phenomenon. The different agencies working in a country like India had been getting together for an annual inter-mission fellowship of some sort. Now they officially formed the National Christian Council of India. That Council and others like it in other mission fields also became members of the IMC, which then was composed of both sending councils in the home countries and field (receiving) councils of missionaries in the mission lands. These two kinds of councils would eventually be its undoing.

Thus the International Missionary Council was exclusively mission-agency oriented at its inception, and specifically “council” related. But from the word go a subtle transformation took place. The immediate goal of missions is to plant the church. So, the mentality of the missionaries (when a little later on you not only had mission agencies in the field, but also had resulting national churches to which these missions were tied) was the thought, “What will we do with the emerging national church leaders? Shall we incorporate them into the National Christian Council?” Of course, the answer was “Yes! Certainly. This was the purpose of our being in India, to produce national churches.”

Soon, then, you had two different kinds of leaders coming together in the field councils: you had expatriate missionaries, who represented spheres of financial power and intellectual power and schools and hospitals, running their own little colonial empire

*This statement was made in a classroom of missionaries in 1979. At the end of that class a missionary (Leiton Chinn) agreed to serve as the secretary of the founding committee of a meeting in 1980 which was in fact similar to 1910.

in India. They met together, but they eagerly—it wasn't reluctantly, it was very eagerly—said, “The national church leaders should come to our meeting!” And the 22 National Christian Councils all over the mission lands (one of Mott's great achievements) more and more were formed with the idea that the existing and future churches would be represented, not just expatriate missionaries.

So now you had what I call in my writings an “oicumenical” gathering. The phrase has never stuck, but at least what it means for me is a meeting where you have both church leaders and mission leaders. That is not ecumenical. Ecumenical today means church leaders only, and there is no word for mission leaders only. If you want to dream up a word, I'll be glad to try to make it popular. The tragedy is we don't even have labels for these crucial realities.

We're talking now about 1850–1950. Pretty soon, in the mission lands, the churches became very important and the mission agencies not so important. There may be a few mission agencies, late arrivals on the field, that didn't produce much of a church. And you had a few churches on the field that had no related mission agencies. But gradually, as the National Christian Council (NCC) of India consisted more and more of church leaders, there came a day in 1945 when somebody said, “Why do we have any missionaries in this meeting at all? Who are the missionaries? What are they doing here? It's the *church* in India that counts!” It's an interesting thing that no one noticed that two mission agencies already existed which were Indian mission agencies, agencies born in India of Indian national initiative. They were both founded by Bishop Azariah of the Anglican Church. One was the National Missionary Society, sort of a home mission society in South India, founded in 1905. But that wasn't good enough. Then about 1907 there was the National Indian Missionary Society. The point is that these two agencies were nationwide and interdenominational. These two non-Western mission organizations existed, but nobody took them seriously.

I want to go back to something I said earlier: *The greatest strategic hiatus in modern mission strategy has been the near total absence of anybody saying we have to start mission societies run by nationals.*

We've started churches run by nationals, but no one (or practically nobody) has thought of starting cross-cultural missions. But Bishop Azariah did! Actually, it was Sherwood Eddy, a Student Volunteer man in the YMCA movement, who encouraged him to do it, so it wasn't purely a national idea.

Thus, around 1945, some leaders suggested a change. These were missionaries speaking, not national leaders necessarily. It isn't as if the national leaders said, “Let's get rid of these missionaries.” The missionaries were the idealists, the armchair strategists who said, “We shouldn't be the ones to be here, you know; we're going to be retiring. Push the national leaders forward.” And so here they were saying, “Let's change the constitution of the NCC of India.”

Incidentally, what I am telling you is simultaneously happening in many other mission lands, in the National Christian Council of Kenya, and the National Christian Council of South Africa, or whatever—it's all happening simultaneously. The national churches are growing up. Their very presence and existence is just lionized. It is the precious fruit of missionary work!

And so in 1945 they said that the mission organizations and their people aren't even going to be members of these national councils. The National Christian Council of

India should now be called the National Council of Churches of India. So you have the NCC becoming the NCC; that is, the National Christian Council becoming the National Council of Churches. They didn't always change the name. In India, in fact, you still have the National Christian Council; but it has a different function. But in Melanesia they changed it to the National Council of Churches of Melanesia. And in most other places they did actually change the name from NCC to NCC, so to speak.

Who cares about names? We're interested in structures and forms and functions, and what is really happening. The fact is that over a period of time in the receiving areas of the world, you went from a mission situation to a situation where you had just churches. You ended up with a bunch of National Councils of Churches in the receiving countries, even though in the sending countries you still had a bunch of missionary-sending councils. The Norwegian Missionary Council: there it sits, abandoned, lonely in the West, an anachronism to the rising and transcendent reality of the worldwide church!

Great missionary and church statesmen orbited the earth, talking about the New Era of the National Church. Archbishop Temple was widely quoted as saying: "The younger churches are the great new fact of our time." Oh, what a thrilling and a fabulous development it is! The Church has come of age!

In every nation of the world the Church is there; and the mission agencies can just take a back seat or wither away, which they themselves wish to do in most cases anyway. The only ones we hear about now are the ones that hung on for dear life and made a great big stink. Henry Venn's famous goal statement in the nineteenth century was "the euthanasia of the mission (structure)."

Most mission agencies naturally wanted the national churches to be prominent. However, this produced what was a fundamental structural anachronism in the International Missionary Council. You had at one end of the scale a whole bunch of National Councils of Churches (NCCs). These people, incidentally—I guess I don't have to tell you—are not the kind of people who, when they gather together, are going to pull out their Bibles and read the Great Commission in their devotional period. Not on your life! Back in the earlier IMC, when they pulled out their Bibles they refreshed their minds on the Great Commission. In the new NCCs, when they pulled out their Bibles they read about social justice and all other kinds of problems that are the normal and natural and inevitable and perfectly reasonable concerns of national churches.

I don't want to excuse liberalism or excuse theological decay or erosion or anything like that. But in addition to all that you know about creeping liberalism, there is here a structural transition, which is not a theological change but a sociological change. This *structural transition* should not be blamed as characterizing creeping liberalism. Just because the National Christian Council of India no longer talks about missions does not in itself prove that they lost their marbles or lost their faith or lost their Bibles or lost anything else. They just simply lost their missionaries, that is, that is not their primary function.

In the mission lands, then, they lost the mission agency element. They ruled themselves out in the finest hour of their idealism. Here's the fly in the ointment, and this is why I always use India as the example of this transition: they even ruled out, structurally, two indigenous mission societies that were perfectly legitimate and totally national! In other words, they made a *structural* shift, not merely a national shift.

So when I ask, “What was the structural shift in India that was not merely a nationalization shift?” you should be able to answer the question. For this is the crux of the whole thing: They threw out the mission agencies, including those two poor little national mission agencies. *They shifted from mission agencies to churches*, not merely from foreigners to Indians.

Church theology is different from mission theology. If you don’t believe it, walk from the School of World Mission to the School of Theology in Fuller Seminary. The School of Theology is dominated by the concerns of the church. By saying that, you know by now, I have a very slight prejudice, but no ill-will. I believe that means nurture: nurture theology, pastoral care, E0 and E-1 evangelism at best.

Mission theology is something else. I am told it doesn’t exist: missiology isn’t an academic field, they told me. And I had to take the initiative, along with Gerald Anderson, to start the American Society of Missiology, because Dave Hubbard, President of Fuller, said, “You can’t offer a Ph.D. degree in Missiology; there isn’t even such a field! There is no scholarly society, no scholarly journal in missiology.” So we started a scholarly society and we started a scholarly journal. Now, finally, seven years later, you can get a Ph.D. in Missiology here at Fuller, but it is sort of a compromise, with masses of monocultural theology and actually less true missiology than the Doctor of Missiology degree!

The fact is that there was a structural shift, from focus on missions to focus on the needs of the churches, which meant a whole new agenda. Don’t get uptight about this. It’s inevitable, it’s reasonable, it’s normal. What do you talk about, after all, in the family circle? You talk about the family bank account and whether or not you should buy brown rice. But when you go to the office, you talk about things of the office. The office where you go to work is a task-structure. The home is a caretaker structure. The churches, whatever else they are, have to be caretaker structures. And when church leaders get together, they talk about caretaker problems.

Where is the link between mission theology and church theology? The Fuller Theological Seminary Statement of Faith was being revised a few years ago. They asked the School of World Mission to make some remarks about it, so for the second time I looked at it closely, the first time being when I became a professor. I realized the first time I looked at it that the whole statement of faith structurally was built, like any other Protestant statement of faith, to explain how it is that we’re Christians and nobody else is. The element of the Great Commission, of redemption, comes in as a secondary concern. So when we said that we didn’t have any problems with the Statement of Faith, except for its fundamental structure, there was a tense little back-and-forth discussion for a time! It’s basically a church creed. What about the Apostles Creed? Does it say anything about taking the gospel to the ends of the earth? No. It’s a *church* creed.

Now, when the church leaders became ascendant in the overseas field councils, an adjustment became necessary in the IMC itself. The IMC now faced a dilemma. The transition for the IMC took place between the meeting in Jerusalem in 1928 and that in Ghana in 1958. Already at the Jerusalem meeting you could see the predominance of church leaders crowding into the meetings. No longer, as in 1910, did they just invite mission leaders, and nobody else.

It’s a curious thing: Bishop Azariah, who had helped to found the two mission societies of India in 1905 and 1907, was actually at the 1910 meeting at Edinburgh. He

was not there *as a mission leader*. He was there because the CMS (the Church Missionary Society of the Anglican Church) said, “Hey, Azi, why don’t you come along with us to this conference in Edinburgh?” The expatriate missionaries in India saw him as an outstanding church leader, and the mission was proud of the church. So they said “Bishop, you come with us!” So he was there at Edinburgh 1910. But the Western missionaries ignored—I’m sure unintentionally—the enormous significance of his founding of a national mission society in India, run by Indians. And though Azariah was the founder and was involved in both of those two mission societies, it apparently did not occur to them to invite either of those societies to send anyone to the 1910 IMC meeting. As a matter of fact, it did not occur to Latourette himself, writing all this up in his *History of Christianity*, mentioning Azariah several times, to mention that he was a mission leader, not just a church leader!

That hiatus, however, is not a defect in the *structure* of 1910, it is a defect in the *implementation* of 1910. When we have our meeting in 1980, we will follow the same structure exactly, and we will try this time to implement it properly. We will invite no one but we will welcome any *mission society*, from any place in the world.

Thus, the IMC met in Jerusalem and then in Madras, and then they finally went to Ghana to have a meeting in 1958 to consider the developing anomaly. At the Ghana meeting they said, “What are we going to do? We now have mainly representatives of national churches coming to our meetings.” I happen to have a copy of the verbatim transcript of everything that was said at Ghana. The next meeting was in New Delhi, then in 1963 in Mexico (by this time the IMC had merged into the World Council of Churches), then came Bangkok, and then Melbourne in 1980.

So, the IMC was eliminated, or, that is, it was incorporated into the World Council of Churches. It became an associated council of councils. It also became a WCC “Commission on World Mission and Evangelism,” and under the latter name it still met, bravely, in Bangkok, and it tried to pretend that it was still interested in missions. Yet what they really did at that meeting was to try to say that missions is all over, it is a thing of the past! It is no longer legitimate to send missionaries from anywhere to anywhere! (I edited a little book about the details, *The Evangelical Response to Bangkok*).

But all this is what you can call *church* theology. Churches are now everywhere, so what’s the use of missionaries? Let’s not be so uppity about sending our people to tell somebody else what to do. “Mission in Six Continents” is the new phrase.

What a terrible heresy! “Mission in Six Continents.” Notice that word *in*. In other words, it takes place within each nation; it does not take place *between* nations. Well, yes, they have talked of “from” six continents “to” six continents, but what they are referring to are church-to-church workers, not mission outreach to unreached peoples.

The WCC (World Council of Churches), in preparation for its Melbourne meeting, devoted a whole issue of the *International Review of Mission* to an analysis of the IMC’s 1910 meeting, 1928 meeting, and 1936 meeting, and all the meetings down to Bangkok, and then looking forward to Melbourne. I was asked—I don’t know how this happened!—to write the article on the decisive Ghana meeting for that issue of *IRM*. Well, I was flabbergasted and pleased! I said, “Wow, what a privilege!” This was *the* crucial meeting in the whole history of the International Missionary Council! I wrote back and asked, “May I write not only about Ghana, but also about the structural changes

that flowed up to it, and so forth?” The editor said, “Sure, that’s OK!” So I wrote an article analyzing this whole trend.

In that article, I said that what we need is not only Mission *in* Six Continents, but missions *from* and *to* six continents, if necessary. That was what had been dropped out of the picture.

To sum up, I’ve been unfolding to you a “plot” that was not the design of any human being, but which was a very understandable transition, which, nevertheless, wrecked a Council founded to focus on missions. It changed because its pillars now were set upon a different kind of entity. When all these *church leaders* from around the world came to the meeting at Ghana, the Western delegates (in the minority)—those from the Norwegian Missionary Council, the German Missionary Council, etc.—said, “We can’t vote against all these nice national leaders, all these church leaders!”

It was obvious that it was too late at Ghana to do anything else. They said, “We don’t have any reason for existence, because the World Council of Churches is a council of churches, and now we also have become a council of church councils! So what is the use for us to continue to exist?” And so they invented a new category of the WCC called the Associate Councils of the World Council of Churches, to handle things like *councils of churches*.

Up until this time the WCC reached around the whole world to churches (and denominations) by themselves, not councils of churches. Individual churches are direct members of the World Council. Once the IMC was merged with the WCC, the latter gained a new department that takes the National Councils of Churches into membership. So now the IMC’s Council of Councils is a department of the World Council of Churches, and for many people that effectively takes the place of the whole missions sphere of reality. For many people the churches are the reality, and so it’s been a shift that has gone full circle. The structure of missions itself has thus been eliminated.

At this point in history, then, the gatherings of the new WCC entity only invite mission structures which are connected to member churches. This means that quite a few very significant non-church-related structures simply do not fit into the normal pattern of participants in the formal meetings of the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism—for example, a “World Mission” organization like Wycliffe Bible Translators, or even an “Evangelism” organization like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. This is in decided contrast to the earlier tradition of the IMC and the Edinburgh 1910 tradition. To understand the significance of this remember that, in 1925, 75 percent of American missionaries were sent out by churches related to the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, but that today it is less than 5 percent.

The Edinburgh Legacy, 1910 and 1980 (WCF Module 3, Lesson 69 Overview).

Introduction

This lesson will not be the last time we pick up this subject. In fact, we would like to run all the way from 1910 to 1980, which is beyond the bounds of Module 3, just so you can get a perspective on the issue. Naturally, in Module 4 we will be taking it up again to make sure that we get the other end of it, because the end is not yet. Actually this issue did not get resolved even in 1980.

There is probably no other more argued, discussed, and more interpreted event in modern mission history than Edinburgh 1910. Not only that, but the interpretations go in different directions. Arthur Johnson, who has been teaching in Europe for a number of years, wrote a whole book on what happened between 1910 and 1974. I am not sure for which conference the book came out, but he tried to put the Billy Graham-sponsored Lausanne conferences into perspective, looking back and contrasting them with the 1910 conference. So he has done more research on this than anyone else.

I remember when he and I sat down for breakfast in Deerfield, Illinois. He finally agreed that what was wrong with this tradition was not really wrong with the meeting in 1910, though it went wrong after the meeting. Now, this is a fairly significant point. Was the meeting itself so wrong that it catapulted things in the wrong direction, or was the meeting right and things went wrong later? I leave you with that kind of interesting question.

Latourette gives a number of different traits of this particular meeting. I have chosen two which I feel are not only unique to this meeting, but never occurred again on a world level until 1980. That was at another meeting in Edinburgh that was specifically designed to be a follow-up meeting. There are, as I say, other traits, but these two are very important.

One was that this was a meeting to which *individuals* were not invited, nor were classes of people invited. Mission agencies were advised that they could send delegates; so it was a meeting of delegates. This is not the first time such a meeting had happened, but it was the first time on a world level that that kind of meeting occurred, a relatively small, studious conference, compared to some of the other earlier so-called ecumenical meetings to which thousands of people gathered. For example, at the meeting in 1900, called the New York Ecumenical Mission Conference, the president of the United States showed up, giving the opening speech. This group of people on this occasion in 1910 deliberately decided to lay aside the word "ecumenical" for several reasons.

Another feature of this meeting was that it was very definitely a frontier meeting, emphasizing not missions in general, but frontiers specifically. They did not use the word "frontiers." They talked about geography, as in those days people were wont to do. They talked about the unoccupied fields, the unoccupied portions of the world, but they very specifically meant: where you do not have any form of Christianity that would give people any sort of access to the gospel. That meant they eliminated Europe and Latin America! Right there hangs the crux of the issue: Were they being soft on Catholics? Were they saying that Catholics were going to get to heaven? Or were they merely saying

that Roman Catholics in Europe and Latin America had access to Christian truth, and the kind of mission work necessary was different from pioneer mission work?

Consider the people in Latin America in particular, who were fighting for their lives against a very hostile Roman Catholic tradition. Thousands of people lost their lives in that conflict, especially in countries like Colombia! It could easily be imagined that they thought: Good heavens, if this isn't a mission field, then what is? And it was not so much a question of whether it was a mission field, whether or not you could be called a missionary if you were going to Latin America. It was a question of whether this was a frontier or pioneer mission field, an unoccupied field.

From my point of view, because I worked in Latin America, too—I was not working with the Spanish population who had had the Bible for a thousand years; I was working with the American Indian population—it seems to me in all fairness to people framing the Edinburgh conference, they could have at least recognized the 20 or more million people in Latin America for whom there was no access to the Bible. But they just wiped out Latin America. So they did make mistakes, but their mistakes were not so much in their principles as in their implementation.

So right here is one of the crux issues. Many people looking back said, “Those people assume that Catholics are going to get to heaven. Therefore they didn't want to be bothered with Latin America.” I'm not sure it was that simple. However, this is the part in which Arthur Johnson and I came to agreement that morning at the breakfast table.

But there is another issue that is even more important than who it was that framed the conference and what their sensitivities were regarding Roman Catholics, or Anglicans, for that matter. Many Protestants would have wiped out both Anglicans and Catholics as non-Christians, and work among either of those groups would be pioneer mission from their point of view. In any event, there was another issue that was not at all plain at the time, but became clear as the years wore on. Our purpose in taking this up, both now and later on, has more to do with this issue than with any other. It has to do with what kind of people gathered. As I said earlier, this was a *delegated conference*, and the only organizations that were asked to send representatives were *mission agencies*, not churches.

You will find in Paul Pierson's reading a slightly different perspective on that point, but that is for you to look at. The composition of the meeting had more to do with the nature and the value of the meeting than anything else. You could have had a meeting back in 1910 packed with liberals who did not believe the Bible. By inviting missionaries, you did not have that problem.

But later on, the tradition that was established by the Continuation Committee, as has been pointed out, became one of the most significant events in modern mission history. As things unfolded, the framers of subsequent conferences said, “We're trying to pull church people into the mission picture, so why don't we invite a few church people so they can come and enjoy our meeting? We can sort of evangelize them on the subject of missions.”

In Jerusalem in 1928, they got together and, sure enough, they invited quite a few church people—and the agenda shifted from the kinds of things that missionaries normally talk about. Missionaries do not normally talk about such things as whether they believe the Bible. They would not be there if they did not believe the Bible! This is true for the overwhelming majority of all missionaries, especially if you go outside of Europe

to the non-Western part of the world. The issue is not whether the church people have a right to have some interest, or need to have some interest in missions. The question is, “What do you talk about if your conferences have a lot of distinguished church leaders?”

The whole issue will shift over, for example, as in Jerusalem in 1928, to the uniqueness of the Christian faith. Most missionaries did not have that problem, but the church people back home had that problem. You could stir up all kinds of interest. A lot of people back home were not sure that we should even be sending missionaries. So when they go to a conference, they want to talk about the uniqueness of Christ, which is a worthy subject, but it is not what bothers missionaries. It is not what prevents the evangelization of the rest of the world.

So Jerusalem moved: it moved in subject, it moved in the nature of the meetings; and meetings from that point on continued to move. Even more subtly, the International Missionary Council, which was the direct result of the 1910 meeting, made up of missionaries and missionary representatives exclusively, also began to incorporate church leaders. How did this happen?

This is something for you to look at. It was a completely unintentional development. It happened not in, let’s say, the Norwegian Missionary Council arena, or in America, in the Foreign Mission Conference of North America. It happened actually more and more on the field itself, when missionaries themselves were involved. What did they do wrong? This is something to take a good look at, because it is a major issue. It eventually destroyed the unique significance of the International Missionary Council and meant that its merger with the World Council of Churches finally in 1961 was a relatively unimportant event; it was a foregone conclusion. There was nothing else to do; it was too late. What is it that happened? That is something for you to think about as you do the readings. You will find that this is a very subtle and significant subject.

Review

As I said earlier, I think that this subject is going to stay with us. This is not the last time we are going to touch on this, but it is probably our major focus of this lesson.

1. What was the focus of Edinburgh 1910 that caused so much consternation among missionaries in Latin America? And how is that an issue today?

I did not say anything at all in my introductory period about this, and none of your readings refer to what you have already been studying, namely the structure of the so-called three eras in this particular epoch.

As you may recall, we have the five 400-year epochs of missionary expansion. Within the fifth, beginning in 1800, you have the First Era of Protestant missions with William Carey leading the way, going to the coastlands of the world. The Second Era was led by Hudson Taylor, the so-called “faith mission tradition,” which went to the inland territories, going inland from the coastlands, and in that sense emphasizing frontiers. Then you have the Third Era, which is still ahead of us.

In 1910, the framers of this meeting had been extensively influenced by what we refer to as the Second Era. Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission in 1865. He did not really get very far in the first twenty years. It was not altogether certain that he would succeed, in fact, until Moody indirectly gave him a massive assist, by going to England and stirring up Cambridge. The seven Cambridge cricketers went to China under the CIM, and, all of a sudden, the CIM became a very popular, outstanding

mission, going from maybe 100 workers to 1,000 workers within a ten-year period between 1890 and 1900.

That fervor of going to the frontiers was part of the milieu within which the Student Volunteer Mission Movement began, and through them the World Christian Student Movement, with all these different students all over the world. So that when those young men grew up, they were given responsibility for running a meeting like in 1910. See, 1910 was 24 years after the 1886 birth of the Student Volunteer Movement, and the key person in 1886 was the key person in 1910, John Mott. So students, grown up, were now learning things, and they carried with them this concern for what they termed the *unoccupied territories*. I mentioned earlier that this focus was very disturbing to people whose mission work was not considered unoccupied territory. The “non-Christian world” was another phrase they used; this is simply to identify.

That issue is alive today. At this very moment there is a raging discussion in the AD 2000 sphere between what they call Christianized peoples and non-Christianized peoples. In this particular instance, harking back to 1910, I happen to be the one in this discussion who is saying that the Christo-pagan peoples of Latin America should not be considered Christian; they should be on the Unreached Peoples list! Others say, “No, no, no! If someone calls them Christian, then you can’t touch them; they are not truly unreached peoples.” I am taking an opposite point of view.

In any case, the issue of what is a true frontier is still with us. It does not mean that there is no other legitimate mission work. In fact, we believe that mobilization is even more crucial than front-line work. So, obviously, missionaries where they are more important, at least potentially, than missionaries who go to the frontiers, because the missionaries where they are hold the key to unlocking the resources of the existing mission field churches in joining that global mission operation. So for me it is a non-issue, but for many people it is still an issue.

2. What are the two unique features of the 1910 meeting which did not characterize any other global meeting until 1980? And why did the planners deliberately avoid the term, “ecumenical”?

One of the two unique features was this emphasis upon the unoccupied fields, and we have adequately discussed that. The other feature was the delegates coming from mission agencies—not churches. We have already discussed, in the introductory period, why it was that many people thought that we needed to invite church people. I have many times been to Billy Graham’s world and regional-level conferences. I have always noticed that there were a lot of church people there, and often people who did not really believe in evangelism.

In fact, one of the many global-level meetings, the Manila meeting in 1989, invited every single bishop of the Church of South India. A missionary from India came to my office at that time; he looked at the list of people being invited from India. He said, “Dr. Winter, they are inviting all the wrong people.” I said, “Wait a minute; they aren’t inviting the wrong people.” He said, “No, they’re the very people who don’t believe in evangelism!” I said, “You don’t understand. They are trying to mobilize bishops who don’t believe in evangelism. That’s why they are inviting them to a global-level congress on evangelism.”

That was not the purpose of 1910. That was not the purpose of the World Consultation on Frontier Missions in 1980 at Edinburgh, which consciously upheld these

two key characteristics: delegates from mission agencies—not a lot of church leaders—and an emphasis on the frontiers. There was no meeting between 1910 and 1980, and there has been no meeting since 1980, which carries those two same characteristics.

3. What trend in almost all of the so-called mission lands eventually and inevitably thwarted the purposes and character of the International Missionary Council?

This is not well known. It is almost a deception, really, in a way, an un-intended deception. The NCC of India changed its name but not the letters. The acronym, NCC, in 22 countries referred to National Christian Council, which embodied missionaries coming from the outside to their country, working together strategically to finish the work in that country.

Gradually those NCCs switched over and invited in more and more church people because that was the product of their labor, the apple of their eye—until finally they were renamed the National Councils of Churches, a radically different kind of structure.

In India they changed the function but not the name. In India today you still have the National Christian Council, which has no missionaries at all in it. They decided in 1947 not to allow mission agencies from abroad to send representatives to the NCC anymore. No vote; nothing. The church was the purpose of missions, and it should stand as the goal. Everything should give way to the church.

What they did was blot out missions—not only missions to India, but missions from India. Fortunately, since 1947 the missionary vision which is in the Bible percolated through to that national church. Now today you have about 70 different mission agencies that are gathered together in the IMA, the India Mission Association. There are a lot of agencies that are not members. They won't even allow members to join if more than 50 percent of their support comes from outside the country. These are truly India-based, India-born and run mission agencies. They have over 10,000 missionaries under these 70 agencies! That association has taken the place, in part, of the National Christian Council as it had existed many years before.

The National Christian Council, meanwhile, is now part of the World Council of Churches under a new arrangement called the Associated Councils of Churches of the WCC, which is the new name for part of the IMC once it joined the World Council. This is a little bit sticky and tricky, but the International Missionary Council, which was really originally formed of missionary councils in the Western sending nations, plus the field bodies representing those missions, became a man with one foot in mission-sending councils and one foot in field councils that became the Councils of Churches.

Those Councils of Churches were far more numerous than the sending councils of mission agencies, and eventually out-voted the mission sending councils. They said, "Look, why don't we just join the World Council of Churches and give up this business about missions being the main thing?" That is exactly what happened in 1958 at Ghana. When they made that decision it was a foregone conclusion, although some very stout people, like a German missiologist and Max Warren of the Church Missionary Society, had serious objections to that move. But in 1961 at New Delhi the two structures merged, and two new things appeared under the rubric of the World Council of Churches.

First of all, the IMC had become a council of church councils, and the World Council of Churches merely had church members, not councils. Now the World Council had an associated body called the Association of the Councils of Churches connected

with it. It also created a Division of World Mission and Evangelism, which every so often would set up a commission that would have a meeting.

This was the missionary part. Many strategists, World Council of Churches types of people, people like John Mackay at Princeton, whom Paul Pierson refers to, devoutly felt this was going to bring missions into the heart of the World Council of Churches. It was just the other way around. It brought the World Council of Churches and their agenda into the heart of the mission movement. Many mission-sending councils, even in the Western world, felt they were out of place, and they were virtually disbanded. They wanted to change their spots. They said, "All we are in the world today is a bunch of churches. Missions is missions from churches to churches." *Missions in Six Continents* meant, in effect, that each continent would help other continents in their church work, but they would mind their own work, and essentially missions absolutely disappeared. They got together in Bangkok. They tried to claim that this was still a missionary-minded organization, but it simply wasn't. They were talking about the agenda of the churches. So this is what happened in Question #3.

4. What are some of the alternatives to what happened to the IMC? Why is it that the current form of that tradition is structurally limited?

Let us take the last part first. Very simply, you could not possibly invite the Wycliffe Bible Translators, or the Greater Europe Mission, or the Sudan Interior Mission, now SIM, International. You could not invite bodies like that to the meeting of the transmuted IMC, because now that it was connected with the World Council, they would not invite any boards of missions to their meetings unless they were connected with members of the Council. This immediately throws completely out of whack all interdenominational missions, and in America today the interdenominational missions are a major feature. Some of the largest and strongest agencies central to the task of missions are interdenominational and are thus structurally excluded, if not theologically excluded, by the World Council of Churches.

What would be the alternative to the IMC, or to what it became? It is not difficult to imagine that the mission agencies of the world would get together on a global level. They did in 1980, but in 1980 the Continuation Committee fizzled for several reasons, which we will talk about in Module 4. But, there is no world level association of missions. The closest thing to it is the Third World Association of Missions, which is on a global level, but it only takes into account the Third World.

There is the IFMA in North America that is regional; there is the EFMA in the United States alone; there is the AEM in Germany, the Missionary Alliance in England; but there is no global level association. The closest thing to it would either be the Third World Mission Association, or the World Evangelical Fellowship's Mission Commission. But the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship is not like the Mission Commission of the National Association of Evangelicals in this country. In this country, the National Association of Evangelicals would be comparable to the World Evangelical Fellowship. The NAE has an affiliated body called the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies. It is run by the mission agencies. The mission agencies are members. They compose the Board of Directors. They decide who is to be admitted and who isn't to be admitted.

The World Evangelical Fellowship has no associated body of mission agencies. They have a commission that they appoint, and that commission then appoints people

here and there to come and have meetings. But the history of the missions commission is very poor, in that in the early years most of the people they appointed were church leaders, not mission leaders.

The fact is that on the world level there is no alternative to what the IMC used to be. There needs to be, there readily could be, but there is none. And unless the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship or the Third World Mission Association redefines itself, we will have no alternative.

We could go on and talk about alternatives on the national level. Those seem to be growing very naturally. You have in Nigeria NEMA, the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association. You have what I mentioned, the biggest of them all, although fairly recent by comparison, the Indian Mission Association, with 70 mission agencies, with 10,050 or maybe by now 11,000 missionaries. So you have something that is replacing the original National Christian Council in terms of sending people out, or people coming in.

Most mission fields have a fellowship of missionaries from abroad. So essentially you need three structures in every country. You need a structure that would take into account the churches that are there. That is the most obvious. You need a structure for missionaries coming in. That is the missionary fellowship, which in most countries continues. Then you also need an association of agencies sending missionaries out, whether those agencies are denominational agencies or not.

In any case, the Edinburgh legacy is something that cannot be overlooked. The issues it dealt with are still with us, and the behind-the-scenes activities and developments are extremely significant to this day.

**The Ebbing of the Tide
(multiple conferences)
Mission Frontiers (July 1979)**

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-ebbing-of-the-tide>

For 50 years mission work has consisted more and more of taking care of earlier converts, and the care and the feeding of new churches emerging from earlier beachheads. That was O.K. until it began to be clear in the early 70's that 5 out of 6 non-Christians lived still beyond those specific social groupings within which the gospel had been planted. E.g., India consists of 3,000 sub-nations, only 21 of which were effectively reached. But already major forces were in motion to reduce mission work, often with the excuse that nothing more was needed. A new theology of the "national church," valuable and right, allowed some people to justify the decline, say, of Presbyterian missionaries from 2000 to 400. At this moment, denominations within the National Council of Churches account for less than 8% of the U.S. mission force. And yet it is also true that 90% of all American missionaries are absorbed by the needs of overseas churches. There are not enough missionaries attempting to penetrate the last frontiers represented by 16,750 remaining human societies within which there is no church. That kind of mission work is in drastic decline proportionately. But there are a number of evidences that the tide is now turning.

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

In this thimble-full of space! cannot give details about the "distant past" - the 1966 Berlin Congress on Evangelism, the series of regional Evangelism Congresses, the 1972 proposal for another 1910-type mission representative conference in 1980, the 1974 Lausanne Congress, the 1976 IFMA-EFMA Executives Retreat, where I was asked to give the opening address (stressing a new thrust to pioneer missions), etc. But more recently:

Last November the young African leader, Osei-Mensah, Executive Secretary of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization, in a bold proposal asked for every 1000 Evangelicals to set apart one couple to go to the unreached peoples of the Hidden category. Recapitulating in the May '79 bulletin of the LCWE, he speaks specifically of the 16,750 Hidden Peoples and asks that the new people chosen go "as pioneer missionaries to (these) subgroups." In the same issue David Howard reports that the January meeting of the program committee of the 1980 LCWE Consultation in Thailand proposed that the Consultation "focus upon 'Hidden' Unreached People ... those who live in areas where there is no established local church in their cultural setting."

Also in January the TEAM Horizon magazine devoted two pages to an analysis of TEAM's excellent record of penetration of new (Hidden People) fields in the last 25 years, and reprinted the key diagram from the U.S. Center's poster, "Penetrating the Last Frontiers." By February we had word of at least five mission agencies which had set up new departments or appointed special people for attention to new field development.

In February, ten major mission agencies agreed to sponsor jointly the Center's mission study "semester out" which gives college credit for courses on worldwide Christian

perspective. (See our page in CT, April 20.) These agencies get 5000 requests per month from college students asking guidance.

In February one result of a major consultation last fall on Muslim evangelism, the Samuel Zwemer Institute, moved onto our campus and is already literally taking off in a cloud of excitement regarding the thousands of hidden peoples in their focus.

In April, in Seoul, Korea I asked 300 Korean pastors at the "First Worldwide Korean Missions Conference," representing all the major groups in Korea, if Koreans would commit themselves to reaching 1,000 of the 16,750 remaining Hidden Peoples. Every arm was enthusiastically raised!

In May the IFMA-EFMA China Consultation, meeting at the U.S. Center displayed amazing new concern regarding the new opportunities in China, long considered a hopelessly, inaccessible bloc of people.

July 19-22, 1979. While the Association of Church Missions Committees (ACMC), a new, powerful force for missions, gave 1/3 of their conference last fall to the Hidden Peoples, this year! have been invited to give the opening address. They know my emphasis. The meeting is at Gordon College near Boston.

August 15-23, Athens: The First Athens Congress on World Missions has asked the U.S. Center to design their entire program content. Our stress, as already mentioned, is specifically on the Pauline concern for the frontiers. (Write for details. Your pastor can go free if five of his people go.) We hope this will be a significant event in the turning of the tide to the frontiers.

Sept. 24-27, the Annual Executive Retreat of the Evangelical Foreign Mission Association has taken as its general theme "the Unreached Peoples," and knowing full well my special focus on the Hidden Peoples, they have asked me to give the keynote speech. It was only three years ago that I spoke to the same group, and the U.S. Center then was only a dream.

Dec. 27-31, the Urbana Convention. While I cannot claim that this convention is focused exclusively on the frontiers, nevertheless my 1976 IFMA-EFMA address is printed in the advance study booklet, and the December issue of Moody Monthly is to carry an article I will contribute on the challenge of the unfinished task.

The Precarious Milestones to 1980

(April 1980)

Frontiers in Mission, 81-84.

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035c3cc46c79701edfd23b/1594055796725/Frontiers_in_Mission%2B4th%2Bed%2Bcopy.pdf

The year 1980, gateway to the year 2000, is a year of many important meetings. One of the least well known is the World Consultation on Frontier Missions (WCFM—October 27– November 1, Edinburgh, Scotland), a meeting representing exclusively mission agency structures.

It is mildly amazing that so many people should be surprised by the present mounting flurry of preparation for this meeting that was suggested in 1972, seconded in 1973, and formally defined and proposed in 1974. It is the nature of this surprise that will focus this brief preview of a meeting that almost wasn't.

A Southern Baptist missionary, Luther Copeland (temporarily detained in the United States as a missions professor), as the outgoing President of the (U.S.) Association of Professors of Mission (APM) in June of 1972 made the original proposal as a part of his presidential address. This was out of the blue. But winds were stirring.

R. Pierce Beaver, surely one of the world's greatest historical missiologists, provided the organizing wisdom for a Consultation on Frontier Peoples in December of the same year. This could have underscored the value and feasibility of the Copeland proposal, pulling together as it did representatives of ninety United States missions of all stripes, and creating a solid book, *The Gospel and Frontier Peoples*. But it may have influenced the writer of this review more than anyone else.

In June of 1973, at the following meeting of the APM, the writer made a small presentation in effect “seconding” the Copeland proposal. There was still little noticeable response.

In June 1974, however, when the Association of Professors of Mission met at Wheaton, virtually everyone present participated in the Copeland-led discussion, which developed a statement of Call for the meeting:

It is suggested that a World Missionary Conference be convened in 1980 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world missions. The conference should be constituted by persons committed to cross-cultural missions, broadly representative of the missionary agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis.

A few days later at the International Congress on World Evangelization meeting at Lausanne, a group of about forty gathered in a side meeting to discuss the now public Call.

It is interesting that not only did Copeland make the original suggestion but he was the one presiding when the 1974 Call was formulated. Whatever he had thought the conference would finally be when he first suggested the idea would therefore seem to be superseded by the consensus of the 1974 group that formulated and, along with Copeland, signed the Call. Yet it is still a matter of historical record that Copeland himself, writing in the *International Review of Mission* in late 1973 had commented further on his 1972 proposal. In this article he interpreted the writer's “seconding” of his proposal in the summer of that same year as assuming that the 1980 meeting would be “composed of representatives

of para-ecclesial missionary agencies,” while by contrast he felt that “some combination of ecclesial, para-ecclesial, and conciliar structures may be necessary to achieve adequate inclusiveness.”

This slight divergence may be partly in terminology. In the writer’s thinking, and in the 1974 Call, the phrase “representatives of mission agencies of the various Christian traditions” includes nondenominational as well as denominational mission structures. His concern for both is probably contained in his words cited above, and is preserved in the 1974 Call. What the Call omits, however, is Copeland’s written 1973 questioning suggestion that for the 1980 meeting, unlike Edinburgh 1910, it “may be necessary” to include “churches as such. . . .”

Copeland’s 1973 article does not center on his concern for a 1980 meeting so much as on the evaluation of “an ecumenical network of national and regional centers of mission held together by a loosely structural international coordinating agency.” By contrast, he noted, “a World Mission and Evangelism is inevitably limited by virtue of the fact that vast reaches of the missionary enterprise in terms of agencies and churches are not affiliated with CWME.” The various centers he suggests would, one hopes, be able to transcend the present situation in which “traditional (mission) structures ...seem ill equipped either to penetrate the world beyond the Church or to develop mature Christian selfhood in the young churches.” While Copeland’s 1973 article ends with the hope that the WCC-CWME would take the initiative in calling the 1980 conference, it is clear that the 1974 Call does not envision that kind of initiative but retains the 1910 reliance on the initiative of the mission agencies themselves. Nevertheless, there is still much valuable food for thought and clear analysis of ultimate need in Copeland’s article. In any case, the 1974 Call became the basis of further thinking and planning.

In late 1975 a detailed summary of events going back to 1910, and an analysis of the 1974 Call, was the work of this writer, appearing in the April 1976 issue of *Missiology, an International Review*. The gist of this article is that the Call deliberately chooses the same name as the 1910 conference, and defines the same all important uniqueness of its constituency: mission agency representatives, whether denominational or interdenominational. This expository article further observes that the framers of the 1910 conference were very determined to focus on frontiers, as was indicated by their dogged but exceedingly unpopular adherence to a scheme that automatically excluded from participation those agencies that labored only in Christianized territories.

In the fall of 1976 the writer (on an unrelated trip to Korea) was invited to the Hong Kong meeting of the Executive of the Asia Mission Association, at which time those six key leaders present from all over Asia favorably discussed the 1974 Call and added some wisdom of their own, which became part of later plans, as we shall see below.

In 1977 both the World Council’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) decided to launch world level conferences in 1980. It was pointed out by the latter that the 1974 Call (employing the original name used in 1910 World Missionary Conference) could too easily become confused with the LCWE meeting unless it was changed. This was a helpful impetus, because the passage of time since 1910 had so extensively modified the meaning of the words “mission” and “missionary” that the use of the same title would no doubt have failed to carry forward the sharpened focus of the earlier conference. Thus “World Consultation on Frontier Missions” was finally adopted. But I am getting ahead of myself.

In 1978 the backing for the conference was still informal. The original date for the LCWE conference had been January 1980. When this was shifted to the latter half of June,

the August date long discussed for what we now call Edinburgh 1980 was virtually forced to move later in the year in order to be able to take full advantage of the study documents prepared for the LCWE meeting, now planned for Pattaya, Thailand.

Suddenly, with the full momentum of the Lausanne Congress tradition behind the Pattaya meeting, and a fulltime coordinator, David Howard, appointed, it became necessary on occasion to defend the very existence of the Edinburgh 1980 meeting. This has not been difficult. Edinburgh '80 (E80) and Pattaya '80 (P80) have different sponsorship, goals, and constituencies.

E80 is not sponsored by any previously existing organization. It enjoys the favor of a number of existing agencies, associations, commissions, and so forth, but is sponsored precisely by an ad hoc group of mission agencies, as was the 1910 meeting, and as defined in the 1974 Call. P80 is the successor to the Berlin 1966, Lausanne 1974, and LCWE sponsored series of meetings. Furthermore, the mission agencies convening E80 have established a credentials committee, which may under certain circumstances (see below) turn down missions expressing an interest in participating. By contrast, no one applies to P80, and individuals, not organizations, are invited.

P80 will involve a spectrum of scholars and leaders from both church and mission (as equals) and will concentrate on the identification of Unreached Peoples and Hidden Peoples (see below) and the best strategies for reaching them. E80 will be a conference of representatives, sent as delegates strictly from mission agencies, and the implementation of what is studied and strategized at P80 will be in order. The mission agencies, after all, must take the implementing lead in the actual development of plans (as contrasted to strategies) and the commitment of funds and personnel. Of twenty-two missions in Norway at this writing, only two have had any of their people invited to P80. All twenty-two will be welcome at E80, and some of them can send more than one delegate, in proportion to their size.

Just as the LCWE regional committees themselves are primarily church, not mission, leaders, so the choice of P80 invitees is primarily in the hands of church, not mission, leaders. This does not mean that no mission leaders will be invited. Furthermore, not all can be invited. For example, invitees related to only 12 mission agencies of the 100 in the United Kingdom will be going to Pattaya. All could apply for attendance at E80.

But rather than considering all these matters a divergence, the writer would prefer to see them as a providential convergence. For P80 to stir up the church world about missionary frontiers is entirely complementary and foundational to the work of E80. In turn, E80 will allow the cross-cultural outreach structures to further plan and deploy forces to new Hidden People groups, but can gratefully build on the new mood of outreach among the churches created by P80. If also the WCC-CWME sponsored meeting in May 1980 at Melbourne (M80) functions in somewhat the same way as P80, then we can see a great deal of good deriving from Copeland's 1972 proposal, his 1973 article, the 1974 Call, and the three nonconflicting meetings resulting: E80, P80, M80.

At this writing (late 1979) so many details have been settled with regard to Edinburgh 1980 that space does not allow for all the particulars. Precise organizational and theological "participation criteria" have been laid down and specific goals and objectives have been developed. An elaborate set of committees has been defined, and different national and regional committees are forming and stepping forward to shoulder the various roles. As might have been expected, the first initiative outside the United States was British, but the largest and most auspicious committee outside the United States is, at this date, in Korea. These same committees' representatives compose an International Council of Reference,

which will function without actually meeting. A central office in Pasadena, California, established by the first regional committee to form, has a fulltime office manager, Leiton Chinn, who has performed efficiently and sensitively from the moment his mission offered his services.

E80 has chosen Edinburgh partially for historic reasons, but has turned away from any non-Western site primarily for reasons of economics. The overall cost of convening a world meeting, especially when there is still a slight majority of mission agency headquarters in the West, is smaller for a gathering somewhere near the Frankfurt-Geneva-London triangle, and in this meeting, as befits mission societies, expenses are definitely to be minimized. A travel pool will “level” all travel costs, so that those coming from a great distance will be aided by a sizable fund created by a substantial registration fee that will not only cover consultation expenses but provide financial assistance to those coming from a distance. Detailed calculations are as yet impossible, without knowing the precise geographical contours of attendance, but the travel pool plan in use by the American Society of Missiology has worked out very equitably and is being adopted for E80.

One of the early decisions of the first committee in Pasadena, made in consultation with the host leaders in Scotland, was to define the conference as Protestant Evangelical and, in addition, to adopt verbatim a statement drawn for the discussion of the Executive Meeting of the Asia Mission Association in Hong Kong, in a section called “Theological Criteria for Participation.” Added also was the phrase “agencies that are in agreement with the tenets of the Statements of Belief of the IFMA or the EFMA or the Lausanne Covenant.”

In regard to the matter of E80’s focus on frontiers, a most significant regional antecedent (beyond the already mentioned Chicago consultation in 1972) was the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association Executives Retreat, held in September 1979. The theme of the conference was “Unreached Peoples,” but the emphasis at this more recent meeting was even more specifically on that large subgroup of unreached peoples nowadays called by a technical phrase “the hidden peoples.” This happens to be the precise focus of E80. For example, the first of six objectives of E80 speaks of, and centers the conference upon, “the world’s ‘Hidden Peoples’: those cultural and linguistic subgroups, urban or rural, for whom there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people.”

Since this event is now rapidly drawing closer, readers are urged to write for the documents describing the latest developments. The World Consultation on Frontier Missions will have offices in many countries, but the central office can be reached by addressing Leiton Chinn, WCFM, 1605 E. Elizabeth Street, Pasadena, CA 91104, or by phone (213) 7942127.

In view of all this background, why are so many people surprised to see this conference finally come together?

For one thing, an ad hoc meeting is never a sure thing until it actually jells. No one organization can decide the issue, but one organization must take the initiative and gain the collaboration of others before things can begin to move. The one organization that made the most decisive move was International Students, Incorporated. Even so, their decision to contribute a fulltime office coordinator depended upon a great deal of personal initiative (and personal expense) on the part of Leiton Chinn. For one thing, no one could have predicted that he would step forward. If he hadn’t, I believe the moment of final opportunity for this meeting to have come together would have passed. He gave up personal educational goals to tackle a cause. Yet for him this has already been probably the most stimulating “education” he could possibly have gained.

But there are more profound reasons for surprise. For many people this kind of meeting is “out of due time.” It seems anachronistic precisely because of the extensive trend in the past thirty years to the belief that, now that there are churches overseas, the mission agency structure itself is no longer needed. To be sure, for a few rare people the situation is only a case where Western missions need to be sensitive to the rise of Third World missions, and for this rare group it is reassuring that E80 welcomes mission societies from all parts of the world. (Curiously, the 1910 meeting somehow failed to take seriously either the Indian Missionary Society of South India, or the National Missionary Society of India. Bishop Azariah, who could have been sent by either of these had they not been ignored, attended in 1910 only because the Church Missionary Society sent him as one of their delegates!)

But for a considerably larger group of people, and for a still different reason, it is also startling to see such a meeting promoted this late in history. The conscientious opinion of people in this group is that pioneer mission societies are no longer needed, and that church departments or councils that lend interchurch workers are all that are needed. Such observers have not yet recognized the fact that fully 80 percent of all nonChristians live in sub-societies in which there is not yet an indigenous church tradition to which workers can be sent, and that to reach into these 16,750 remaining pockets will require mission agencies from somewhere employing essentially pioneer missionary techniques, not normal, culturally near neighbor outreach evangelism.

Fortunately for the WCFM, enough agencies have in fact discovered the “new” world of Hidden Peoples, long invisible to those outsiders who tend not to take subtle cultural differences seriously. These alert agencies have taken the necessary initiatives. They sense that we are now in the Third Era. William Carey’s Era One took missionaries to the coasts of Africa and Asia. Hudson Taylor’s Era Two went into the “interior”—went “inland.” Our own Era Three does not confront geographical boundaries but does face 16,750 culturally definable frontiers. Pattaya 1980 will throw a great deal of light on the subject; perhaps Melbourne 1980 will as well. Edinburgh 1980 can be the ideal complement: to clarify the key administrative decisions that will move from facts, strategies, and dreams to plans, bold moves, and realities.

1980 and That Certain Elite

IJFM 20:2 (2003)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/20_2%20PDFs/08%20Winter_Elite.pdf

Written two years before the 1980 meeting, this article is of value because it tells us in blow-by-blow detail both why the 1910 meeting succeeded and why its offspring, the IMC, eventually failed. The IMC began with a slightly fuzzy mandate, in terms of sponsorship. It later slightly corrected that wording, and then, as this article shows, succumbed to an entirely unforeseen structural development (due in part to success) which dragged it down, fatally modifying it. This article is reprinted from Missiology, April 1976, Vol. IV, No. 2

For a certain elite group in the world today the phrase “Nineteen Eighty” has a crucial significance. Due to a strategic Call drafted in 1974, 1980 will probably be the year of the largest, most representative gathering of mission leaders in human history. The elite group to whom this phrase is significant consists of people for whom the fulfillment of the Great Commission is the primary commitment of their lives. Such people, very often career missionaries, have been meeting together “on the field” for well over a hundred years in “inter-mission meetings” of all sorts in virtually every country of the world. But once and only once in history, in 1910, was a conference held on the world level to which all Protestant mission societies sent representatives as the sole official participants. Hopefully the same kind of elite gathering can take place once more, now that the immense additional spectrum of the non-Western world has blossomed with its own hundreds of mission societies and thousands of missionaries.

In order briefly to evaluate this arresting possibility, we must 1) review the developments thus far, 2) exposit the central document of The Call, and 3) endeavor to envision the results.

Reviewing the Past

The concern of God for the recovery of all the world’s peoples is plainly stated at least as early as the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:3). It is restated at the decisive moment of the reconstruction of the nation of Israel in the Exodus (Exod. 19:5). It is reflected again and again in the Psalms. It is brilliantly restated at another critical juncture in Isaiah 49:6. It is definitely clarified and detailed once for all by His Son, Jesus Christ, in the Great Commission.

The Emergence of an Elite Structure

In 1976 we look back on the brief intervening period of only nineteen centuries during which a certain elite—those who have tried consciously to fulfill that commission— have gone to virtually all corners of the earth. They penetrated the Roman Empire and then exceeded its furthest reaches both in the East and in the West. Such agents were echoed back from Ireland to win Southwestern Europe. They moved north to Russia and eventually to fierce Scandinavia. They were forerunners in the development of navigation skills and reached literally the ends of the earth once the means were developed.

In every age it has been primarily *intentional* efforts and mainly *group* efforts that have been able to cross cultural boundaries in this world-wide task. Such organized groups have been teams of Irish *peregrini*, groups of Franciscan Friars, transplanted industrial communities of Moravians, and self-supporting bands gathered around men like William Carey. They have been highly organized societies like the family of mission agencies that sprang up in England, Norway and Germany from Hudson Taylor's influence. These various organized teams have been both closely and distantly related to the organizational structure of the various church traditions.

These groups are not to be confused with churchly entities, whether denominational, diocesan, district, parish or congregational structures. It is well known that where biologically perpetuating communities have become reconciled to God in Jesus Christ and the principal mechanism of perpetuation of the "faith" is through the process of socialization, a beneficial but eventually nominal Christianity results. The official churchly structures, representing as they do this mainly biological type of Christian structure, have in only rare and isolated instances initiated efforts effective in recovering distant peoples to a vital relationship to God.

On the other hand, the organized team structure proposed by William Carey in his crucial *Enquiry* (indeed the very meaning of the phrase in its long title, "The Obligation ... to Use *Means*") was precisely not a church entity but a "society" structure, a structure which is characteristically an elite vanguard, a nonbiologically perpetuating structure—the kind of thing anthropologists call a sodality.¹ It is this kind of elite "vanguard" to which Max Warren refers, reflecting back upon a lifetime of distinctive service on a world level:

A community becomes committed precisely in proportion as it has a spiritual vanguard that is committed. Indeed my own conviction is that to call an entire denomination a "missionary organization" actually obscures the real situation and prevents the average person ever making any progress at all towards becoming one of the vanguard. This is best achieved by voluntary organizations consisting of persons who have joined together on some agreed basis (Warren 1974, 158).

The Development of a Unique Prototype: the 1910 Conference

The person most widely known for proposing a conference of members of such mission sodalities is, again, William Carey. His plan, actually quite feasible even in 1810, was scoffed at by church leaders, was dismissed back home as merely a "pleasing dream" not because it was physically impractical but because the people back home couldn't believe missionaries of widely different traditions would want to meet together (Rouse 1949, 181). One hundred years later that dream was fulfilled, at Edinburgh, now built upon more than a half-century of periodic field gatherings of missionaries of many backgrounds in various non-Western countries (Hogg 1952,16-35).

But since the 1910 conference was a "first" in human history, it is not surprising that different people have seen it from different points of view. With the advent of the massive anticolonial revolt and the birth of the new nations in the non-Western world following World War II, some have looked back on the 1910 meeting and regretted the small percentage of non-Western delegates, as though societies that did not yet exist in the non-Western world could have been invited. Certainly no African or Asian mission society was intentionally excluded.

Others have felt the 1910 meeting was itself at fault—and perhaps it was in part—because it failed somehow to prevent subsequent history from expanding the invitation to church leaders as well as mission leaders in a series of subsequent meetings. Thus the “fault” of the 1910 meeting was partly its very success in attracting the interest of church leaders. It attracted attention to the world-wide family of those reconciled in Christ. It inspired world-level conferences involving both missionary and church leaders of this family.

In 1910 *only a few non-missionaries*— church leaders like Henry Sloan Coffin from the USA and Bishop Azariah from India—attended. At Bangkok in 1972-73 *only a few missionary leaders* attended. In 1910 church leaders came only as part of a delegation sent by a missionary society. At Bangkok virtually the only missionaries or mission executives there as voting members were part of delegations sent by councils of churches—just the reverse. In 1910 mission leaders outnumbered church leaders at least 10 to one. Bangkok reversed these quantities as well as the process of selection.

The Erosion of the Elite Pattern

Yet this profoundly significant change resulted from a gradual transition, fascinating and fatal. The 1910 meeting itself had been an abrupt and decisive transition in the opposite direction. Early thinking about the meeting had assumed that it would be another massive exposition of missionary interest like the 1900 Anglo-American conference had been, dominated as that conference was by supporters in the churches, and by church leaders and public citizens. In the new trend at the 1910 conference Mott’s influence was probably decisive (Hogg 1952, 105). In 1908 it was finally determined that the meeting would be based upon appointed delegates of missionary societies. “Leading missionaries” were sought, “and if practicable, one or two overseas church people]” (Hogg 1952, 109). But the basis was clearly the structure called the sodality.

The centrality of the active agency of mission continued in the early thinking leading to the founding of the International Missionary Council, which was the organizational direct outcome of the 1910 conference. As the Continuation Committee met near The Hague in 1913, the conclusion was drawn that

The only Bodies entitled to determine missionary policy are the Home Boards, the Missions and the Churches concerned (Hogg 1952, 161).

If the wording here is a bit fuzzy as it apparently mentions both missions and churches, the actual founding membership of the International Missionary Council, which consisted exclusively of mission societies, groups of mission societies, or councils of mission societies, clearly maintained a continuity with the nature of the 1910 meeting. Yet the preamble to the International Missionary Council’s constitution included the above quoted statement only slightly reworded:

The only bodies entitled to determine missionary policy are the missionary societies and boards, or the churches which they represent, and the churches in the mission field (Hogg 1952, 204).

Here the mission society structure at least comes first with the home churches as an alternate (the “or”). A new entity “the church on the field”— is now mentioned.

By the time of the Jerusalem conference in 1928 this new voice would be heard much more strongly, and its legitimacy was not questioned. But the trend from a

conference of mission strategists to a conference of church leaders was now very clear as the roots (the mission agencies) and the fruits of missionary work (the churches overseas) became confused. This was no plot against the missionary societies. They still had a major voice in the various Christian councils in the non-Western world and were themselves eager for the precious fruits of their work to become known in the West.

However, the trend from missions to churches in the structural backbone of the IMC became even more pronounced as its constituent members—the National Christian Councils—began to enroll churches alongside of missions as their members and thus gradually became councils of churches rather than continuing to be councils or associations of mission agencies. Again, it is not as though the new national churches sought to shoulder the mission agencies out of the way. In most cases the earnest desire of the missions themselves was that the churches should increase and the missions decrease. This was a glorious trend, in some respects. There came a day when the largest of all National Christian Councils—that of India—voted to exclude mission agencies from the Council, thus making it virtually impossible for a mission society—even a national mission society—to have any direct voice either in the Council in India, or in any higher-level world gathering (Fey 1970, 98).

By 1948 the Constitution of the International Missionary Council reflected the complete reversal. The phrase quoted above, which had put mission societies first now read:

The only bodies entitled to determine missionary policy are the churches and the missionary societies and boards representing the churches (Hogg 1952, 373).

The remaining anachronism was that the associations of mission societies in most Western “sending” countries (but no longer the USA) still represented the missions—the elite structure. This input was lamely continued when the International Missionary Council merged with the World Council of Churches, becoming its new Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 1961. Thus while the CWME theoretically continues the function and mandate of the 1910 meeting, for most of the world it has become structurally incapable of doing so.

The Recovery of the Elite Pattern and a New Call

In light of all this, the Chicago Consultation in December, 1972 was a very curious phenomenon. Indeed, a stunning recrudescence of the long-lost meeting of missionary leaders was formed when an ad hoc committee under R. Pierce Beaver brought together a wide range of mission structures. At this date in history only the very oldest men present could remember the days when the Foreign Missions Conference of North America effectively gathered mission leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds. In the intervening years the Foreign Missions Conference had suffered by attrition in becoming merged with the National Council of Churches in the USA as those mission agencies representing church people who did not believe in church councils were lost in the transition.

But at Chicago the unbelievable had happened again: the elite pattern reappeared. Since it was a conference not of churches but of mission leaders simply conferring with each other, there was no more need for a creedal statement than in 1910, and the reasonable avoidance of theological issues about which there was known conscientious disagreement was well understood just as it had been in 1910. Thus highly conservative

evangelical mission agencies along with mainline denominational mission board people as well as Roman Catholic missionary leaders were present, about one-third from each sphere, with a total of 97 different people registering. The sense of fellowship and great profit resulting from the theme of “The Gospel and Frontier Peoples” was impressive and unanimous. In the preliminary canvas of all American mission boards and societies (excepting those confined to work in Europe) there was a response of more than 90 percent, and only one board disclaimed any interest and concern.

But it was a minor tragedy of timing that the Chicago Consultation had not yet occurred when the idea of a full-blown successor to the 1910 conference was enunciated at the Association of Professors of Mission meeting in June of 1972, by Luther Copeland, the outgoing president. Even at the following meeting of the APM in 1973, when the writer seconded Copeland’s proposal, there was at least one vigorous objection based on the assumption that the 1910 meeting had been merely a clique of Europeans. The structural significance of the Chicago Consultation had not yet fully soaked in. But by the following year, the idea had gained ground within the Association of Professors of Mission and the 1974 APM meeting was suspended at one point so that a discussion of the wording of a formal resolution could be discussed on a completely ad hoc basis. Luther Copeland lead the discussion. Twenty-four professors—almost everyone present—signed the resulting Call, which will be discussed below. The meeting was held at Wheaton College, and perhaps the majority of those who signed could be called conservative evangelicals, but there were Catholic and main-line denominational mission scholars as well.

Everyone agreed to discuss the Call in whatever circles they might find themselves. Inevitably, the meeting coming up a few days later at Lausanne, Switzerland—the International Congress on World Evangelization— gave opportunity for a slightly larger gathering to consider the Call. Due to the very nature of the Lausanne conference, the majority of those who indicated their support of the idea at this second meeting were evangelicals. But since there were Roman Catholic observers at Lausanne, some of them were also present.

Interpreting the Call

The Call, as it was carefully formulated by those professors in 1974, consists of just two sentences:

It is suggested that a World Missionary Conference be convened in 1980 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world missions. The conference should be constituted by persons committed to cross-cultural missions, broadly representative of the missionary agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis.

The echo of this Call has been heard in various periodicals, in small gatherings and in many face to face conversations throughout the intervening 24 months. The idea has actually moved about more rapidly than the exact wording and implications of the Call, so that in some discussions not all the elements have been present.

The Essential Elements of the Call

The first sentence chooses quite intentionally the exact name of the 1910 conference. The second sentence describes the most important characteristics of the 1910 meeting:

1. that “representatives of missionary agencies” should constitute the conference.
2. that “missionary” in this context means “cross-cultural” outreach, not efforts for renewal within the church, nor local outreach in the same cultural sphere of existing churches.
3. that the meeting should involve simply a conferring as befits a conference, not a meeting which in any remote sense could or would bind any agency sending representatives.
4. that representatives of no cross-cultural Christian mission agency will be excluded due to its being related to one or another of the ‘various Christian traditions.’”
5. that, finally, the meeting will be a world level meeting.

Brief Elucidation of These Elements

The reasons for *Element 1* have been developed in the historical section of this article. Here it may be added that representation that will be fair to both large and small agencies will inevitably follow the 1910 lead in going according to the size of the society or the work of the society, especially encouraging representation from diverse field situations. Also to be noted is the fact that no structure other than mission societies can be directly involved.

Element 2 involves an urgent but highly technical (and “sticky”) point. Probably the greatest unhappiness at the 1910 conference resulted from the decision to limit participation to agencies sending missionaries “among non-Christian peoples.” Since 1910 enormously increased secularization has taken place in the so-called Christian lands. Nowadays church leaders in Latin America, Europe and even North America with its proudly high church attendance in many regions, are willing to admit the vast mission fields at their backdoors. Nevertheless, it is unquestionably best to focus in 1980, as in 1910, on those societies (“peoples”) which are distinctly non-Christian: for one thing, efforts for renewal and evangelism within the churches and within Christianized societies of the West (and the non-Western world too) are today more widely recognized and implemented than before. Furthermore, the cross-cultural task requires extensively different methodology. Finally, “non-Christian peoples” are still the biggest task with the smallest effort assigned to it.² The framers of the 1974 Call said *cross-cultural* missions. That is simply an up-to-date way of confirming the 1910 focus. When an agency has both mono-cultural and cross-cultural work, it will be the latter that will be represented at the conference.

Element 3 is obviously an essential ground rule. Southern Baptist Foreign Board leaders, for example, were perfectly willing to *confer* with other mission executives and actually helped to found the Foreign Missions Conference of North America in 1895, but when after a half-century that *conference* became replaced by a department of the National Council of Churches, they felt obliged to withdraw. The 1910 meeting would not have occurred if it had allowed the type of Christians who believe in organic union between congregations and denominations to exert unwelcome influence on the kind of Christians who equally sincerely do not believe in such relations between congregations.

Element 4 may be viewed in the light of the fact that the Chicago Consultation readily attracted responsible people from Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical traditions, and the fact that the Call was also drafted by a group representing these three spheres. William Carey and Henry Martyn and other early Evangelical missionaries had a remarkably open attitude toward the “various Christian traditions.” Carey made his proposal to include “all denominations of Christians from the four quarters of the world” (Hogg 1952, 17). Martyn conferred extensively with Catholic missionaries regarding the handling of caste and other problems unsolved to this day (Rouse 1949, 189). In 1910, once matters of “faith and order” were defined to be the province of churches not mission agencies, the problem was not whether to *allow* Anglican mission agencies to be involved but how to *persuade* them. Catholic agencies were regarded unpersuadable (Hogg 1952, 132). Furthermore, things are considerably different today. In the Association of Professors of Missions already mentioned and in the larger American Society of Missiology more than 500 Conservative Evangelical and main-line Protestant as well as Roman Catholic scholars and mission leaders are conferring with one another more or less constantly.

Element 5 is the only hope of dealing equally with all sectors of the world Christian family. Regional or national conferences will not put Asian mission leaders on the same basis as Western leaders, only a world level conference will. The rapid increase of mission-sending structures in Asia and Africa will automatically correct the imbalance sensed in 1910. Indeed, many a new non-Western church will be encouraged to make sure its own people are organized for outreach in such a way as to qualify for participation in a World Missionary Conference. This is happening already as the Asia Missions Association has come into being.

Further Attempts to Interpret the Call

It is likely that a good deal of additional discussion will be necessary in order for the elements of the Call to be further clarified. Hopefully it will come up again in the USA at the 1976 meetings of the Association of Professors of Mission, the American Society of Missiology, the Association of Evangelical Professors of Missions, the combined meeting of the executives of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association and the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, as well as comparable meetings in other countries. In 1976 the International Association for Mission Studies will be in Costa Rica. There too it may be discussed.

Envisioning the Results

Further discussion of the Call will be valuable, but discussion is not enough. What will be the result of this Call, and how will the essential preparations take place?

The Mechanism of Sponsorship

In all ad hoc developments what has actually happened is often more important than what might have happened. In the case of the 1910 conference the sponsorship could easily have developed a dozen different ways. Even the official account of the conference fails to unravel the precise details (Hogg 1952, 103). Where things begin is not as important as where they end. That an ad hoc group predominantly of American professors signed the Call (yet David Cho of the Korean Missions Association was there

and also signed) and considered themselves thereby “co-chairmen” ought not in any sense to suggest that Europeans or Asians are not welcomed to this task.

It is important to note that the APM suspended its session lest its own organizational being seem presumptuous in such an act. This would imply that these framers of the Call, these “co-chairmen,” do not believe it is appropriate for any existing organization to interpose itself to decide for the various mission agencies what they can only decide for themselves. The 1980 pattern is based squarely on whatever mission agencies are willing to participate, not on any intermediate or related structures. The next meeting of the 1980 co-chairmen will undoubtedly take place June 21st at the 1976 meeting of the APM (at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) which is the meeting that drew the majority of them together at the time of the Call. Others who wish to underwrite this Call are welcome. But that group will not have fulfilled the responsibility defined by the Call until every cross-cultural Christian Mission agency on the face of the earth has had a chance to participate in the planning and execution of the conference. Sponsorship is defined by the Call, not by the make-up of the people who drafted the Call.

Perhaps it is necessary to comment on the fact that in 1910 the Foreign Missions Conference of North America had a significant role, along with parallel groups in Scotland, England and Germany. In those days the FMCNA included the CIM, the SIM, the Foreign Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, all of which withdrew before the FMCNA was absorbed “in a burst of enthusiasm” (Smith, 1976) into the NCCCUSA. The IFMA had since 1917 existed alongside the FMCNA, but its very nature excludes denominationally related boards. The EFMA includes both denominational and inter-denominational boards, but specifically excludes non-evangelicals. There simply is no equivalent of the FMCNA in North America or in the USA today. This may explain Luther Copeland’s special interest as a Southern Baptist. In countries where such an association exists, an admirable sounding board is available. But no association of mission boards has either the desire or the power over its members so as to force a mission agency to allow or not to allow its representatives to attend a meeting where they will simply *confer* with other people. Thus it is reasonable to suppose that associations of mission agencies should not presume to speak for their members even in the framing of such a conference. It seems necessary for the final sponsorship to be an ad hoc group of representatives of whatever mission agencies are willing to lean their shoulders to the plow.

The Means of Moving Forward

In an age of unprecedented communication facilities, it seems likely that we can do in four years what the 1910 planners did in two. But it is urgent that all possible discussion of the *Call* and the “contemporary issues” mentioned in the *Call* take place wherever mission leaders meet between now and 1980. The Asia Missions Association is already discussing the idea of a major Asian meeting six months before the 1980 meeting. There are in fact four kinds of structures where mission leaders are regularly gathered, but which are not yet present in all countries.

1. The already mentioned association of mission agencies and/or associations of mission agencies—the AMA lists both individual agencies and associations of mission agencies as members. These entities link agencies according to their

sending base, e.g. The Norwegian Missionary Council (Norske Misjonsråd) or the Korean Missions Association.

2. The inter-mission meeting— where “arriving” missionaries gather. Every country of the world ought to have an annual meeting of missionaries who come to work cross-culturally from other countries or other parts of the same country. It is unfortunate that both the need and the existence of the many missionaries to the USA are hidden through the absence of any such annual gathering. But where such exists it can be a base for discussion of 1980.

3. Meetings of missiologists. The technical study of the phenomenon of the Christian mission is clearly a rising, growing enterprise. Witness the journal in which this article is printed. Again, every country needs such an association and these associations can help each other—how indebted we all are to the outstanding bibliographic task performed by the South African Society of Missiology. Where such gatherings take place, 1980 can be discussed.

4. Meetings of churches. Denominational, confessional and ecumenical gatherings of churches inevitably bring masses of people together annually, and while 1980 is not likely to be on the agenda, those mission leaders who happen to be together at such meetings surely can take advantage of that fact for the ends of 1980.

Beyond this, however, all those mission agencies which wish to participate directly in the planning and preparation for 1980 will have to meet specifically for this purpose, perhaps in suspended sessions of some of the meetings above, perhaps in regional meetings, and inevitably on the world level. The first thing the co-chairmen must next do is to solicit financial backing for the enterprise such that the Call and its meaning can be widely circulated and a working committee of mission representatives formed and funded. Specific studies must be made of just what mission societies or agencies are engaged in cross-cultural mission work among non-Christian peoples. The challenge of non-Christian peoples among whom no mission work has yet been undertaken must also be represented. Presumably when the final meeting takes place—the Liebenzell Mission of Germany has already offered its expansive facilities as a site—the mission agencies themselves can in most cases foot the travel bill for their representatives. Even then smaller, more distant societies will require some help. The facilities at Liebenzell, as befits a missionary enterprise, will be Spartan and economical by comparison with many world gatherings. We recall that William Temple was writing on the floor of a tent at Jerusalem. Even today’s missionaries are familiar with conditions church people in general might look at askance.

The overriding concern in the period of organization will be the orderly, disciplined, and faithful transition from a group of co-chairmen who have not and could not consider themselves representative—but who yet have the initiative in their hands—and the kind of working committee which will both be more representative and can prove to the confidence of everyone that the precise meaning of the Call will be fulfilled.

Preliminary thinking leads to the suggestion that the world’s mission agencies fall quite naturally into “spheres.” It is very likely at the final meeting those whose background is Reformed, Lutheran, Catholic, Wesleyan, Charismatic, “Conservative

Evangelical,” Southern Baptist, Churches of Christ, etc. may have a great deal to discuss among themselves. That being the case, it is no doubt wise for their preparations to be made in advance such that the meeting in one respect will consist of a number of autonomous spheres that are meeting in the same place at the same time. Morning and evening meetings can be inter-sphere; afternoon meetings can be intra-sphere. Each sphere may choose to handle its own travel plans and financial matters rather than to have a single office attempt to do this. One factor in this proposal is the desire to treat sympathetically those who cannot in good conscience attend meetings with other groups. Their attendance would be justified by—but by their own choice limited to—the sphere to which they belong. Such spheres in some cases might choose to have no official relationship as such with the committee sponsoring the general meetings and yet be delighted to be present so that many of their members as individuals might attend on their own choice.

The Task of the Final Meeting

The final meeting cannot be a massive show: the characteristic frugality of the mission agencies will prevent that. Its goals must be far less modest. The Christian Mission enterprise is the largest, sustained undertaking of mankind, and has had an impact on world history all out of proportion to its efforts. But today the very agency of mission itself is under attack as though it never had a right to exist. In many cases it has been converted into a mechanism of interchurch aid— since it draws its strength from home churches and has as its most prized product the new church among non-Christian peoples. In many cases it has overstayed its welcome and younger church leaders have in desperation, with mixed feelings of appreciation and self-determination, cried out for a moratorium on the sending of missionaries to them. The very word ‘missionary’ has seemed to imply Western paternalism.

The one most important task of 1980 may be to re-establish as highest priority the cross-cultural approach to non-Christian peoples in place of aid focused on younger churches that wish to stand on their own feet. Western mission societies must release themselves from overweening pride in the churches they have established and turn their eyes once again to the people to whom no witness is being made. Non-Western mission structures must rise up to join in the unfinished task. Can any one thing in 1980 be more important than for “that certain elite” to be rescued from misunderstanding and misuse; for the concept of the missionary, the apostolate, to be re-established once for all as an obligation of every believer everywhere, not just those who have lived in the West?

Four years remain, however, in which this suggestion and many others will surface to become the fruit of six continents of thinking and prayers that must constitute the only legitimate basis for the kind of conference that will carry forward the purpose and structure of Edinburgh 1910.

Endnotes

1. Latourette (1970: 18) also uses this term. It is earlier a Roman Catholic term used in a slightly more restricted sense (Winter 1974).
2. The writer has estimated that 87% of the non-Christian peoples of the world are beyond the normal, mono-cultural evangelistic outreach of any Christian congregation

anywhere. Thus 1980 will involve any agency focusing cross-culturally on 2.4 billion of the 2.7 billion non-Christians (Douglas 1975, 228).

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How Did the Edinburgh 1980 Conference Come into Being?

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/how-did-the-edinburgh-1980-conference-come-into-being>

Editor's Note

The reason for presenting a highly condensed statement from something written back in 1980 is to illuminate the steps now being taken to call a similar meeting for 2004.

The original article, entitled "Precarious Milestones to 1980," was first published in the Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol. 4, No. 2, April 1980. It has recently been republished in IJFM 20:2 (April-June 2003).

A Southern Baptist missionary, Luther Copeland, as the out-going President of the (U.S.) Association of Professors of Mission (APM) in June of 1972 made the original proposal as a part of his presidential address. This was out of the blue. But winds were stirring.

R. Pierce Beaver, surely one of the world's greatest historical missiologists, provided the organizing wisdom for a Consultation on Frontier Peoples in December of the same year. This could have underscored the value and feasibility of the Copeland proposal, pulling together as it did representatives of ninety United States missions of all stripes, and creating a solid book, *The Gospel and Frontier Peoples*. But it may have influenced the writer of this review more than anyone else.

In June of 1973, at the following meeting of the APM, the writer made a small presentation in effect "seconding" the Copeland proposal. There was still little noticeable response.

In June 1974, however, when the Association of Professors of Mission met at Wheaton, virtually everyone present participated in the Copeland led discussion, which developed a statement of a "Call" for the 1980 meeting. Here are the words:

It is suggested that a World Missionary Conference be convened in 1980 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world missions. The conference should be constituted by persons committed to cross-cultural missions, broadly representative of the missionary agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis.

A few days later at the International Congress on World Evangelization meeting at Lausanne, Switzerland, a group of about forty gathered in a side meeting to discuss the now public Call.

Copeland, in a 1973 article noted, "a programme of the [WCC] Commission on World Mission and Evangelism is inevitably limited by virtue of the fact that vast reaches of the missionary enterprise in terms of agencies and churches are not affiliated with CWME." The 1974 Call does not envision that kind of initiative but retains the 1910 reliance on the initiative of the mission agencies themselves.

In late 1975 a detailed summary of events going back to 1910, and an analysis of the 1974 Call, was the work of this writer, appearing in the April 1976 issue of *Missiology*, an *International Review*. The gist of this article is that the Call deliberately chooses the same name as the 1910 conference, and defines the same all-important

uniqueness of its constituency: mission agency representatives, whether denominational or inter-denominational.

In the fall of 1976 the writer (on an unrelated trip to Korea) was invited to the Hong Kong meeting of the Executive Committee of the Asia Mission Association, at which time those six key leaders present from all over Asia favorably discussed the 1974 Call and added some wisdom of their own, which became part of later plans, as we shall see below.

In 1977 both the World Council's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) decided to launch world level conferences in 1980. It was pointed out by the latter that the 1974 Call (employing the original name used in 1910 World Missionary Conference) could too easily become confused with the LCWE meeting unless it was changed. This was a helpful impetus, because the passage of time since 1910 had so extensively modified the meaning of the words "mission" and "missionary" that the use of the same title would no doubt have failed to carry forward the sharpened focus of the earlier conference. Thus "World Consultation on Frontier Missions" was finally adopted. But I am getting ahead of myself.

In 1978 the backing for the conference was still completely ad hoc. Suddenly, with the full momentum of the Lausanne Congress tradition behind the Pattaya meeting, and a full-time coordinator, David Howard, appointed, it became necessary on occasion to defend the very existence of the Edinburgh 1980 meeting. This has not been difficult. Edinburgh '80 (E80) and Pattaya '80 (P80) have different sponsorship, goals, and constituencies.

E80 is not sponsored by any previously existing organization. It enjoys the favor of a number of existing agencies, associations, commissions, and so forth, but is sponsored precisely by an ad hoc group of mission agencies, as was the 1910 meeting, and as defined in the 1974 Call. P80 is the successor to the Berlin 1966, Lausanne 1974, and LCWE sponsored series of meetings. Furthermore, the mission agencies convening E80 have established a credentials committee, which may under certain circumstances (see below) turn down missions expressing an interest in participating. By contrast, no one applies to P80, and individuals, not organizations, are invited.

P80 will involve a spectrum of scholars and leaders from both church and mission (as equals) and will concentrate on the identification of Unreached Peoples and Hidden Peoples (*see Editor's Note) and the best strategies for reaching them.

E80 will be a conference of representatives, sent as delegates strictly from mission agencies, and the implementation of what is studied and strategized at P80 will be in order. The mission agencies, after all, must take the implementing lead in the actual development of plans (as contrasted to strategies) and the commitment of funds and personnel. Of twenty-two missions in Norway at this writing, only two have had any of their people invited to P80. All twenty two will be welcome at E80, and some of them can send more than one delegate, in proportion to their size.

Just as the LCWE regional committees themselves are primarily church, not mission, leaders, so the choice of P80 invitees is primarily in the hands of church, not mission, leaders. This does not mean that P80 will not invite any mission leaders. Furthermore, not all can be invited. For example, invitees related to only 12 mission

agencies of the 100 in the United Kingdom will be going to Pattaya. All could apply for attendance at E80.

But rather than considering all these matters an unfortunate contrast, the writer would prefer to see them as a providential convergence. For P80 to stir up the church world about missionary frontiers is entirely complementary and foundational to the work of E80. In turn, E80 will allow the cross-cultural outreach structures to further plan and deploy forces to new Unreached People groups, and can gratefully build on the new mood of outreach among the churches created by P80. If also the WCC–CWM sponsored meeting in May 1980 at Melbourne (M80) functions in somewhat the same way as P80, then we can see a great deal of good deriving from Copeland’s 1972 proposal, his 1973 article, the 1974 Call, and the three nonconflicting meetings resulting: E80, P80, M80.

At this writing (late 1979) so many details have been settled with regard to Edinburgh 1980 that space does not allow for all the particulars. Precise organizational and theological “participation criteria” have been laid down and specific goals and objectives have been developed. An elaborate set of committees has been defined, and different national and regional committees are forming and stepping forward to shoulder the various roles.

As might have been expected, the first initiative outside the United States was British, but the largest and most auspicious committee outside the United States is, at this date, in Korea. These same committees’ representatives compose an International Council of Reference, which will function without actually meeting. A central office in Pasadena, California, established by the first regional committee to form, has a full-time office manager, Leiton Chinn, who has performed efficiently and sensitively from the moment his mission (ISI) offered his services.

E80 has chosen Edinburgh partially for historic reasons, but has turned away from any non-Western site primarily for reasons of economics. The overall cost of convening a world meeting, especially when there is still a slight majority of mission agency headquarters in the West, is smaller for a gathering somewhere near the Frankfurt-Geneva-London triangle, and in the case of this meeting, as befits mission societies, expenses are definitely to be minimized. A travel pool will “level” all travel costs, everyone ending up paying approximately the same amount. This way those coming from a great distance will be aided by a sizable fund created by a substantial registration fee that will not only cover consultation expenses but provide financial assistance to those coming from a distance. One of the early decisions of the first committee in Pasadena, made in consultation with the host leaders in Scotland, was to define the conference as Protestant Evangelical and, in addition, to adopt verbatim a statement drawn for the discussion of the Executive Meeting of the Asia Mission Association in Hong Kong, in a section called “Theological Criteria for Participation.” Added also was the phrase “agencies that are in agreement with the tenets of the Statements of Belief of the IFMA or the EFMA or the Lausanne Covenant.”

The first of six objectives of E80 speaks of, and centers the conference upon, “the world’s ‘Hidden Peoples’: those cultural and linguistic sub-groups, urban or rural, for whom there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people.”

For many people this kind of meeting is “out of due time.” It seems anachronistic precisely because of the extensive trend in the past thirty years to the belief that, now that there are churches overseas, the mission agency structure itself is no longer needed.

To be sure, for a few rare people the situation is rather different: it is a case where Western missions need to be sensitive to the rise of Third World missions, and for this rare group it is reassuring that E80 welcomes mission societies from all parts of the world.

But for a considerably larger group of people, and for a still different reason, it is also startling to see such a meeting promoted this late in history. The conscientious opinion of people in this large group is that pioneer mission societies are no longer needed, and that church departments or councils that lend interchurch workers are all that are needed.

Such observers have not yet recognized the fact that fully 80 percent of all non-Christians live in subsocieties in which there is not yet an indigenous church tradition to which workers can be sent, and that to reach into these 16,750 remaining pockets will require mission agencies from somewhere employing essentially pioneer missionary techniques, not normal, culturally near-neighbor outreach evangelism.

Fortunately for the 1980 WCFM, enough agencies have in fact discovered the “new” world of Hidden Peoples (*see Editor’s Note), long invisible to the average outsiders who tend not to take subtle cultural differences seriously. Pattaya 1980 will throw a great deal of light on the subject; perhaps Melbourne 1980 will as well. Edinburgh 1980 can be the ideal complement: to clarify the key administrative decisions that will move from facts, strategies, and dreams to plans, bold moves, and realities.

**in 1982 these terms were agreed on as synonymous*

World Consultation on Frontier Missions: 1980 Reports

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/world-consultation-on-frontier-missions>

Two hundred seventy delegates from mission agencies around the world gathered at Edinburgh, Scotland, October 27 November 1, in what was history's second world level conference to be composed of official delegates from mission boards, mission agencies, and mission societies.

Called the "World Consultation on Frontier Missions," this meeting of mission professionals followed beautifully on the heels of the Consultation on World Evangelism in Pattaya, Thailand last June. In Thailand, 800 evangelical leaders from all over the world gathered under the question "How Shall They Hear?"

Thailand brought together outstanding evangelical leadership, the opinion makers, including a wide spectrum of pastors, denominational officials, evangelists, and evangelism specialists, as well as a number of mission leaders. All of the non-Christians of the world, including nominal Christians, were the concern of the conference.

At Edinburgh, the focus was narrower: concentrating exclusively on frontier missions those populations where there is not yet any church at all. The meeting was composed of delegates sent by mission agencies.

The 270 people who participated represented at least 194 different mission structures from more than 35 countries. One hundred and two people present came from Third World countries, some of them being Western mission executives coming back from the field; but 88 of the delegates were Asian, African, and Latin American citizens representing 33 percent of the registrants at the consultation and representing 57 different Third World mission societies.

The largest delegation in proportion to the size of the country represented was the group of 40 from the United Kingdom, although Korea ran a close second. By contrast, the U.S.A. with a population four times as large, had only 84 participants. From Asia came 69, Europe outside of the U.K. 35, Africa 24, Latin America 9, and Canada 3.

The earlier meeting in 1910 was larger in the number of people present, but was nowhere nearly as representative since not a single non Western agency was represented (the only three known to exist at that time were left out by accident).

At Edinburgh 1980, three out of the four major plenary addresses in the morning sessions consisted of technical papers which were assigned to Third World mission leaders. The largest Third World agencies present having about 100 or more missionaries were the Evangelical Missionary Society of Nigeria, the Friends Missionary Prayer Band of India, the Indonesian Missionary Fellowship, and an Evangelical missionary group (A.M.E.N.) of Peru.

Ralph Winter challenges mission leaders with frontier vision. Evening meetings were open to the public, and the city's "Assembly Rooms" on George Street were usually filled to the last row of the balcony as the program of the conference dipped to a slightly more popular mood. Afternoon sessions consisted of a large number of task forces devoted to technical aspects of missionary outreach to the world's hidden peoples, defined as those people groups where as yet there is no indigenous evangelizing church—a category estimated to number 16,750. This focus gives meaning to the conference theme, "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000." Before leaving Edinburgh, the

Consultation voted into existence an “International Catalyst Committee” charged with exploring the time and place for another similar meeting, and acting as a clearing house for the developing plans of the world’s mission agencies to penetrate the last frontiers.

A highlight of the meeting was the unveiling, for the first time, of an index merging references to the unreached peoples from the files of World Vision’s MARC, Gospel Recording’s extensive files, and the Wyciffe’s *Ethnologue*. This index alone runs 2,700 pages, covering 168,000 items, mainly different languages and people names, many of them referring to the same populations. At the conference, delegates could walk away with 12 celluloid cards containing the entire index for just \$12.

The project was rushed to completion in time for the meeting by Allan Starling of Gospel Recordings, using the computer facilities of the U.S. Center for World Mission and World Vision, International. The “Peoplesfile” microfiche cards can be obtained from the U.S. Center for World Mission for \$12.

For the benefit of later, scholarly reflection, the entire proceedings were both audio taped and video taped.

A novel addition to the excitement of the conference was a sister consultation composed of 180 students from all over the world—the International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions—which overlapped the plenary sessions of the WCFM, but had a day and a half of additional sessions both before and after the main consultation as well as separate meetings every afternoon. The young people adopted the same consultation goal, “A Church for Every People by the Year 2000”; and demonstrated a zeal, a vision, and a competence which bodes well for world mission leadership and specifically for the goal defined for the year 2000.

Edinburgh weather was mild and dry, providing a beautiful backdrop to what was a highly inspirational, but also determinedly businesslike meeting of mission professionals, dedicated to cooperation with the larger sphere of Christian leaders which had gathered in the middle of the year in Thailand. Probable no year in this century, since 1910, has provided more hope and meaning to the world church for the cause of world evangelization.

Around the World in 80 Days: Meetings in 1980

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/around-the-world-in-80-days>

I don't want you to think I just travel around to different world level meetings. But 1980 is a special year, and I have been invited to 5 of 6 different very significant meetings. We want you, dear reader, to be able to share in this experience. So let me tell you briefly about a whirlwind tour this bulletin will take you on next month. We will fly at supersonic speeds to touch down at Melbourne, Australia; Pattaya,

Thailand; Seoul, Korea; Wheaton, Illinois; and two meetings at Edinburgh, Scotland. You will become a first-hand observer at each of these meetings—all world level (except Wheaton, which was North American). Why would we want the readers of *Mission Frontiers* to know about these meetings? First: to encourage you by the many references most of them made to the finishing of the task of world evangelization. Secondly: to warn us all about any ominous developments that seem to be threatening the completion of this task. Let me tell you in advance— the story will be both thrilling and saddening.

Melbourne

We will quote an eminent spokesman for the World Council sphere saying that the World Council Meeting at Melbourne paid little attention to unreached peoples, had 'little if any faith in the intrinsic power of the preached and taught Word,' and took notice of non-Christians primarily in regard to their social condition.

Pattaya

We will contrast the radically different concern of this major meeting of Evangelicals as it struggled to bring World Evangelism into the minds and hearts of church leaders.

Seoul

Hardly mentioned in the secular press, this meeting constituted the most significant verification of the impact of missions of any event so far in this century, and probably the largest meeting of human beings in history—2.7 million attending at one place at one time. “The Koreans are coming.” We need their faith and exuberance in the U.S.A. With their bulging muscular vitality, they are now talking about world evangelization!

Wheaton

Here the largest gathering yet of the American Society of Missiology evangelicals, Catholics and Conciliar church specialists in mission spent several days evaluating the Melbourne and Pattaya conferences. Friendly yet trenchant analyses.

Edinburgh

Long in the making, announced before any of the others, this will end the year of conferences—Oct. 27 through Nov. 1st. It will be the first world level meeting in history consisting of delegates from mission agencies founded by African and Asian church leaders as well as Western missions. Ever since 1910 in Edinburgh which was the first World level meeting of mission agencies (but all from the Western world), the action agencies of world evangelization have never had a chance to gather by themselves on a world level. True, over 200 agencies annually send delegates to meetings of mission

executives of North American agencies, but there have never been any such gatherings on the world level. Ideally timed to follow the meetings we have mentioned above, which in a sense are preliminary, this second Edinburgh meeting may be able to establish concrete goals for the year 2000 that will be taken seriously for the next 20 years. The officials at these other meetings were able to discuss strategies, but were not in a position organizationally to shoulder concrete goals. Over 200 mission agencies, the majority from Africa and Asia, have already expressed an interest in coming. Unlike the other meetings, this one has no sponsoring, financial entity; yet already over 80 agencies have made final applications of which only 25 need some help with travel expenses.

Edinburgh happens to be geographically cheaper for a group to travel to than any African or Asian spot. All the more reason that those who live closer should help those who come from a distance, and this is intended. The tiny \$70, 000 budget sought from well-wishing believers and congregations is radically less than the million plus Thailand and Melbourne budgets. A number of African and Asian agencies simply cannot get there without some help. Checks can be sent to World Consultation on Frontier Missions, 1605 East Elizabeth St., Pasadena, CA 91104. Delegates to Edinburgh will mostly be staying in homes for the \$8.50 "Bed and Breakfast."

Edinburgh

A second, simultaneous "Frontiers" conference will be run by college and seminary students, hosted by the IVCF group at Univ. of Edinburgh, and even more frugally operated. Young people who attend will get in on all the major meetings of the executive conferences but will have a lot of their own programs. Within ten years these students will be offering strategic leadership to world missions. Now is when they need to discover that the job is not impossible and where they can fit in. These students, too, especially from Asia and Africa need help in getting there, and any gifts will be greatly appreciated. Use same address as above.

As you can see, it is the two final conferences that really zero in on the frontiers and the Pattaya conference is the best foundation for that. You'll see more of the details when you take the trip around the world with us in the next issue of *Mission Frontiers*.

Momentum Is Building in Global Missions

(From Lausanne '74 to Manilla '89)

IJFM 7:2 (April 1990)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/07_2_PDFs/7_2%20Winter.pdf

The complex details of the unfinished task have filled scores of pages in books and articles in the past two decades. Most of us desire someone to “sum it all up” so we can gain at least a basic understanding of frontier missions. In the next few pages find a cogent summation of God’s plan for all peoples.

Amazing developments took place during the 15-year period between the first International Conference on World Evangelism at Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974, and “Lausanne II” at Manilla in 1989. We have begun to see more clearly than ever, for example, that we cannot merely focus upon the winning of *individuals*, but must, along with that fundamental effort, unlock the cultural puzzle of the *group* to which an individual belongs, so that a church movement can be planted within reach that individual can grow and reach others in his group. And then it has been clarified that if groups must be taken into account we need to go on to ask what kinds and sizes of groups are to be dealt with, and can working with groups help us evaluate our progress in world evangelization? Then, finally, how can the global Christian movement go about dividing up that all-important task?

Thus, it seems that we can now describe efficiently 1) the significant background of our present thinking, 2) the very nature of missionary endeavor, 3) the key definitions of the kind of peoples which deserve highest priority, 4) the good and not-so-good methods for the measurement of progress toward our goals, and 5) a spectacular method for promoting the completion of the task. We can do this under the following points:

- 1) The Background of Current Thinking
- 2) The Method: Pioneer Church Planting
- 3) The Target: Unreached Peoples
- 4) Measurements of Progress
- 5) Promoting the Effort

1. The Background of Current Thinking

We’ll first glance at the distant background of our discussion, and then specifically at the results of a very special Lausanne-sponsored meeting in 1982.

A. An Overview

1. *The Old Testament.* An important aspect of the development of the Unreached Peoples concept is portrayed centrally in the period of the Old Testament. We now have a new understanding of what the Bible has been talking about all along. The whole Bible talks about the peoples of the earth. At the very beginning, just beyond Genesis 1–11 (which constitutes a general introduction to the whole Bible), right in Genesis 12 we are introduced to the plan of the ages—the commissioning of Abraham *through whom all the peoples of the earth will be blessed*. This throbbing theme then unifies the Bible into a

single book on planetary redemption, beginning in the promised land and moving out to the ends of the earth. We see this theme again and again throughout the Old Testament.

It is crucial to note that the key word, *blessing*, refers foundationally to *family membership*—an interdependent, *obedient relationship* with the living God, our heavenly *Father*, not a worldly basket of personal independence-creating blessings in the usual sense of the English word. It is a concept which not only links us with a Father in heaven, but also with our fathers and brothers and sisters and children on earth, or surrogates thereof. This is not just an individual salvation, which is sometimes the reduction of our wonderful Pietist heritage. It is also somehow the reclaiming of the peoples of the earth.

2. *The New Testament and Beyond*. In the New Testament and in the history of the expansion of the Church following the events of the Bible, we have gained a new appreciation of what earlier missionary efforts have encountered, and how missionaries have reacted to the actual mission field experience, *the peoples of the earth* to whom they are sent. The fascinating twists and turns of these experiences, especially within the last century, have been treated in some detail in my chapter in the book *Unreached Peoples*, edited by Harvie Conn (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1983).

3. *From Lausanne I to Edinburgh 1980*. The World Consultation on Frontier Missions in 1980 was strictly a meeting of mission agencies and their delegates. On the world level no meeting of this kind had been held since the previous meeting in Edinburgh in 1910. This meeting drew delegates from more agencies than were represented in 1910, and vastly more from the third world, namely 88 delegates from 57 such agencies. While some “Two Thirds World” agencies existed in 1910, their category was not clearly understood and their leaders (such as Bishop Azariah who founded two of them) came as the delegates of Western agencies! This meeting adopted as a “watchword” the slogan, “A Church for Every People by the Year 2000.” It also promoted the concept of “A Hidden People” in terms of the presence or absence of a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.

4. *From Edinburgh 1980 to Chicago 1982*. Events rapidly accelerated during the eight years between Lausanne '74 and a Lausanne-sponsored meeting in Chicago in March of 1982, the result of the initiative of Ed Dayton and the Lausanne Strategy Working Group. Many of these details are in the Conn chapters just mentioned. In particular, there was the desire to blend the terminology of *Unreached Peoples*, having less than 20% believers coming from the Strategy Working Group, and *Hidden Peoples*, having less than a viable church movement, coming from Edinburgh. This merger happened at the Chicago '82 meeting. Essentially the phrase from Lausanne, *Unreached Peoples*, was given the definition that had been attached to *Hidden Peoples*, at Edinburgh in 1980, and it was suggested that the latter phrase be dropped, its meaning continued under the other phrase. All this is described in detail in the Conn book mentioned above.

5. *From Chicago '82 to Lausanne II in 1989*. In the following seven years still further developments took place. *This paper will concentrate on those seven years*, which build on the solid foundation of that unique meeting of the minds at Chicago in 1982. Thus, it would seem logical to summarize briefly what was accomplished at that meeting before going to describe what followed.

B. The Unreached Peoples Meeting of March 1982

A fine example of the catalytic power of the Lausanne movement was the timeliness and widely representative nature of the meeting in 1982. At no time before or since has as large or representative group gathered for two days to focus specifically upon the necessary definitions for a strategy to reach the unreached peoples. (The full document presenting the results, prepared by Edward Dayton, is published in the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 2:1, January 1985.)

Two basic definitions came from this meeting:

1. **A People Group** is “*a significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc. or combinations of these.*” For evangelistic purposes it is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

(Note for later reference that the elements of “largest” or maximum sized and sufficiently unified to be without insuperable barriers, underlies the alternate name for this kind of group, namely, a *unimax* group. Note also that the first part of the definition is a basis of the phrase, *sociopeople*.)

2. **An Unreached People Group** is “*a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.*”

(Note for later reference: the word, church, does not appear here, giving rise to those who feel this must refer to church planting and those who feel it does not need to.)

The following additional terms were also agreed upon as a series of reasonable steps in the process of reaching a people group. I have added my own abbreviated descriptions.

1. **Reported**—a group is *reported* to exist.
2. **Verified**—a group is *verified* to exist.
3. **Evaluated**—that is, how large is the group, what previous evangelization, etc.
4. **Selected** (or “targeted”)—a group has been *selected* by a mission agency for later work.
5. **Supported** (or “adopted”)—the necessary resources of prayer, manpower, and money have been pledged.
6. **Engaged**—work has begun on site or in specific “non-residential” endeavor.
7. **Reached**—the group has been *reached* by the definition above.

Further on in this paper, I will refer to these terms in the process of dealing with the more pragmatic questions of the concept of “Closure,” which defines the completion of the task and the “Adopt-a-People” movement which seeks to bring implementation to the task.

Within a few weeks of the conclusion of the March, 1982 meeting, the Lausanne Strategy Working Group, in the attempt to make the *People Group* definition from March more useful, removed the phrase, “as a church planting movement.” Furthermore they chose not to accept the thought of most of those at the March meeting, that the other definition, for an *Unreached People Group*, spoke of planting a church. The value of this was to open up two significant levels of mission strategy, the **Preliminary Evangelism** of groups that are not really ideal candidates for church planting (involving whole families), call them **sociopeoples**, and the standard **Church Planting Evangelism** of the

generally larger groups where it is impellingly appropriate to plant congregational life, call these two groups **unimax** groups.

But before going on to deal with these two major strategies, and the two kinds of groups to which they relate, let us pause to take a look at a different approach which correlates, but does not correlate perfectly, to the concept of planting a church in every group appropriate to that endeavor.

C. Barrett's Index of Evangelization

In 1983 the massive *World Christian Encyclopedia* (David Barrett, Editor, Oxford University Press) appeared. It was too close in time to the Chicago '82 meeting for those results to be reported, but it did present a fascinating new concept which Barrett described, in part, as "an index for measuring the extent or level of evangelization" of a given country, city, or other grouping. Since 1983 this concept has been intensively used in his own "World Evangelization Data Base," which is often quoted.

Barrett's index, which ranges from 1 to 100, and is often used to reflect the level of evangelization in a given country, is built out of a consideration of 206 factors, such as the percentage of "practicing Christians of all denominations," 22 "Background characteristics favoring evangelization," such as the existence of Bible distribution, Christian radio, etc., 23 "Hindrances to evangelization," such as conditions of oppression of Christianity, poverty, inflation, etc., 114 kinds of "Direct contributions to evangelization," 38 "Indirect contributions, and 10 other factors, the final one being the possible presence of groups sealed off from the degree of evangelization of other communities in the same country. If such populations constitute 15% of the country, then the index cannot go higher than 85, etc.

This approach is an excellent of reducing to a single index a welter of factors which reflect evangelizing energies in a given locality. It allows all of the countries of the world to be ranked by a single index. It is a good way to answer the question, "how evangelized is such and such a country?" But it can be misunderstood. If a country has an index of 20, that does not necessarily mean that 20% of the people have been evangelized properly. It could mean that all of the people have been evangelized inadequately. Two countries which have the same index, say 40, may have been pegged with that index due to strikingly different events or conditions in those two countries.

It is clear that if a country has an index of 40, or whatever, this does not necessarily reveal anything specific for any one sub-population within that country, especially an unreached people (as defined in 1982) which is, by definition, lacking many crucial conditions within it.

Finally, it must be understood that, if by this index Japan has an index of 70, and if people draw the conclusion or employ the terminology that "Japan is now 70% evangelized," this would be an improper conclusion, especially if it were understood to mean that 70% of the Japanese citizens had had an adequate opportunity to say "yes" to Jesus Christ. The index means exactly what it is defined to mean, and that is all. It is, in David Barrett's words, a matter of "Comparative Demographic Evangelization." A country, first of all, is not a *people* of the type referred to by the March 1982 definition, and if it has a Barrett index of 31, it is not necessary *reached* by the March '82 definition. This will be discussed in further detail below.

2. The Method: Pioneer Church Planting

(Or, is winning individuals good enough?)

By the time of the huge meeting at Lausanne in 1974, a substantial consensus among mission scholars had been reached, mainly through the influence of the teaching of Donald A. McGavran—namely, that evangelizing individuals is not a good enough mission strategy.

Winning people to personal obedience and allegiance to Jesus Christ is a concept that is absolutely basic in the entire evangelical movement. It is the foundational and unshakeable platform on which all other endeavors must be built. But in the last few decades, the Navigators, for example have put great emphasis upon the need for “**follow up**.” More recently an echoing emphasis upon **discipleship** is seen in our churches, recognizing that the initial decision is merely the beginning of a process as important as the first step. Proliferating evangelistic models in the last two decades all seem to stress the importance of what happens **beyond** the winning of persons, namely, the accountability between individuals in disciplined Bible studies or “support groups.” Groups come into the picture.

With similar meaning, the overall goal for most mission agencies is nowadays most often stated as *the planting of the church*. McGavran’s thinking has emphasized the fact that we cannot say that we have genuinely given a person an opportunity to accept Christ if that person does not have the opportunity to be incorporated into a warm, loving accountable fellowship of his own people, a structure which McGavran would prefer to call a “church.”

This precise emphasis stood behind the wording of the definition of “reaching” a people that was hammered out by the Lausanne-sponsored meeting of 1982, already mentioned, namely, an *unreached people group* is “a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group,” substantially the wording emerging from the World Consultation on Frontier Missions in Edinburgh 1980.

If properly to give a person the opportunity to “say yes” to Jesus Christ requires the planting of an accountable church fellowship it is obvious that this requirement defines a fairly lofty goal for our *evangelizing method*. At the same time we must recognize that we can often approach this lofty goal most efficiently by going at it *indirectly* through an intermediate step we may call *preliminary evangelism*. This intermediate step will then introduce us to another kind of group—one that is not really a candidate for the planting of a church movement, but nevertheless, whose penetration by *preliminary evangelism* may actually be a strategic pathway to a larger kind of group which IS a candidate for a full-blown church movement and under our next major point, we’ll need to tussle with terminology to distinguish these two different kinds of groups.

A. Preliminary Evangelism—within Sociopeoples

The very best way to plant a church is often to begin a Bible study, a Navigator discipling relationship, or small prayer group within some relatively small group of people with natural affinity for each other—such as women washing at a stream, businessmen at lunch, college students living in dorms, new arrivals in a big city from a particular rural group, or military men separated from their families. Let’s take three examples.

Two of the most celebrated examples of church planting flowing from evangelistic work typifying this kind of *preliminary evangelism* would certainly be found

in the story of the amazing growth of Christianity in Korea. In Korea, *as a providential supplement to direct, intentional church planting*, there have been two powerful mechanisms exemplifying *preliminary evangelism*, each functioning, not directly but indirectly, in the planting of thousands of churches and the development of hundreds of thousands of wonderful Christians within those churches.

One example has been evangelism within the Korean military world, where virtually all of the male population growing up is required to spend a certain transitional period of time. For at least 40 years, such military experience has brought young men from all over Korea into an environment where close to 50% of the people, including virtually all of the military leaders, have been fervent Christians! This factor is often given credit in discussions of the phenomenon of church growth in Korea.

A second, slightly less well known but with equally gargantuan impact on the runaway story of Christianity in Korea, is the existence of the so-called Bible Club Movement. This movement brought together young people in small towns and village settings in what we would call grade-school and high-school classes, all conducted in a high quality Biblical and evangelistic environment. The movement (as with the early Sunday School movement in Britain) has been a type of Boy Scouts of America emphasizing fundamental education, not just Bible studies (despite the name Bible Club Movement). Somehow the people of Korea acquired major motivation in the area of schooling, and even non-Christian parents encouraged their young people to be involved in a school/club movement like this, whether or not a Christian testimony would result. The social momentum of this movement has created thousands of schools, many of which have become stable, formal, notable institutions—a fact which may not be as important as the spiritual impact on the young people involved. Nationwide festivals involving close to a quarter of a million young people have taken place in the history of this movement.

In American history we see a third and somewhat similar phenomenon, only occasionally discussed by church growth enthusiasts, namely, the relatively sudden emergence of church-based youth fellowships in American church life, taken for granted today, but at the time something novel when compared to the form of Christianity inherited from Europe. In 1881 the first youth fellowship known to have been organized formally within a local congregation was started by a woman interested in imbuing young people with a missionary vision, herself the product of an equally amazing movement generating thousands of “Women’s Missionary Societies” in local congregations.

The youth phenomenon itself is a fantastic story. Within months, many other local congregations adopted the same youth fellowship pattern, and in ten years an interdenominational rally associated with Christian Endeavor, as the movement was called, brought 30,000 together at Madison Square Garden in New York city. Four years later 56,000 registered

Edinburgh 1980 to Wheaton 1983 (*IJFM* 1:1, 1984)

by Ralph Winter

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Something new and exciting is in the air. There has been nothing like it since the triumphalism of the 1920s collapsed under the twin blows of the Depression and the Second World War. Certainly the angry, reactionary pessimism of the 60s would not have predicted it. What is it? It is a new awareness of final frontiers. A new chastened optimism is arising and is reflected by certain world-level conferences and a lot of eddy currents they are producing.

In one sense this narrative could be called “From Wheaton to Edinburgh to Wheaton.” Wheaton ’74 was the *call* for the 1980 meeting at Edinburgh. And Wheaton ’83 will in part be another world-level reverberation of the Wheaton ’74 call to frontiers. In our attempt to understand a whole series of events, we may base our reflections on a number of post-conference, regional follow-through meetings, and on the now-available detailed plans for the world-level Wheaton ’83 consultation on “The Nature and Mission of the Church in New Frontiers in Mission.” Sketches of the developments leading up to the Edinburgh World Consultation on Frontier Missions are available in earlier articles. Here we must only very briefly review their highlights before looking closely at the event itself and especially the new direction leading back to Wheaton in 1983.

The Immediate Background of Edinburgh 1980

Patterned after the former World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, the meeting in 1980, October 26–November 1, would seem apparently to be only the second world level meeting in this century to be exclusively planned and executed on the behalf of *mission structures* concerned about the breaking of new ground. It was also the largest world-level meeting of mission leaders in history, if measured by the number of agencies sending delegates.

By the middle of 1983 it is already possible to look back with great appreciation for both the meeting and for the many other factors in what appears to be a new trend in world awareness of new frontiers, a formidable trend within which the conference itself occurred. Indeed the writer believes that all three world-level meetings in 1980 occurred in that year due to a larger trend.

Let us glance at some highlights.

Already the IFMA had attempted to arrest the attention of the world for new beginnings in its 1960 Congress on World Missions. Already Carl Henry and Billy Graham had spearheaded a Congress on World Evangelism at Berlin in 1966. The 1960 IFMA meeting spurred the IFMA and the EFMA jointly to convene the Wheaton “Consultation on the Church’s Worldwide Mission” in 1966; already the IFMA and the EFMA had jointly convened the EFMA-IFMA Study Retreat at Green Lake in 1971; already a very similar meeting (e.g., mission leaders, frontiers, etc.) had been held on a North American level—the Chicago Consultation on Frontier Peoples in December of

1972; and finally the Lausanne “International Congress on World Evangelization,” which included a very fine emphasis on frontiers, was in the offing a few days hence, having held the attention of many leaders of many kinds during its months of preparation.

Moreover, during the lengthy period following the 1974 Call (a six-year lead before the projected meeting date in 1980, compared to only two years between announcement and meeting back in 1910), the influence of the Call itself energized certain efforts that otherwise might not have been. Undoubtedly, the LCWE meeting in June 1980—intended to be a response to the 1974 Call—was encouraged in its frontier emphasis by the Edinburgh purpose. Certainly the WCC-CWME World Mission Conference, both in name and in date (moved back from its originally scheduled 1981 date) was in fact a response to the 1974 Call, even though its conference description makes no reference to the Call but do give prominent references to the 1910 meeting.

Most important for our purposes here is the simple fact that the 1974 Call for the 1980 meeting was evidently a response to the 1910 World Missionary Conference itself.

Luther Copeland ignited a small flame in 1972. He was the outgoing president of the (American) Association of Professors of Mission, a Southern Baptist mission professors, and a missionary on furlough. The same group in 1974, this time meeting at Wheaton College, gave a ringing endorsement of what he proposed two years earlier. Copeland himself presided at an adjourned, ad hoc session:

It is suggested that a World Missionary Conference be convened in 1980 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world mission. The conference should be constituted by persons committed to cross-cultural missions, broadly representative of the missionary agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis. The following signed this “Call” ...

In the above wording, we see intentional solidarity with the classical traits of the meeting of identical name in Edinburgh in 1910. Both the 1910 and 1980 meetings at Edinburgh were (1) world level, (2) constituted by participants delegated by mission structures, and (3) focused on cross-cultural outreach “among non-Christian peoples.”

Once this Call went forth, the occurrence and contribution in successive years of the many other types of meetings, including the 1974 Lausanne meeting to be held a few days later, more nearly underscored rather than diminished the rationale for this particular kind of 1910-type meeting.

1910/1980 Differences in Background

The background of the 1980 conference varies from the background of the 1910 conference in at least one important way. In 1910, immense special studies called forth by the conference constituted one of its greatest pre-conference achievements. By comparison, the 1980 meeting did not itself elicit as ambitious a program. On the other hand, the 1980 meeting enjoyed the great advantage of a much longer period of prior announcement, and in part encouraged and reinforced the special studies leading up to the LCWE-1980 meeting. Furthermore, the 1980 meeting had the luxury of building upon more extensive studies than the 1910 meeting simply because the world of 1980 was conceptually larger and more pluralistic and by comparison fairly bristled with research initiatives. Let us pause to note the research “context” of the 1980 meeting.

For one thing, toward the end of the 20th century it is difficult to look back to 1910 and imagine how poverty-stricken secular research in the university world actually

was. For example, those leaders had to wait another quarter of a century before anyone besides Latourette would be teaching any course at Yale on the Far East. By 1980, seventy years later, it was difficult even to sketch the immense secular investment in Asian studies. It was a whole new world. In addition, there were a few of the specifically evangelical initiatives underlying and informing the research base at Edinburgh:

- MARC, a research division of World Vision, was originally founded with a burst of research into the shape and scope of world Christianity, country to country. By the 1974 LCWE conference, MARC had begun to expand decisively into the study of people groups where the church was absent—the Unreached Peoples highlighted at Lausanne—and by 1980 had begun to publish annual volumes (*Unreached Peoples* 1970, 1980, etc.) for the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization.

- By 1980 a number of seminaries—Columbia (South Carolina), Fuller, Trinity, Dallas, Asbury—had established a mission center and/or some sort of new mission emphasis in the school of mission.

- The International Association of Mission Studies, the South African Society of Missiology, and the American Society of Missiology had all come into being between 1966 and 1980.

- The IFMA, the EFMA, the Asia Missions Association, the World Evangelical Fellowship's Missions Commission, had all shown special interest in Unreached Peoples and in new beginnings beyond the final frontiers. The best example was the 1979 EFMA meeting totally given over to Unreached Peoples, where a tally of 5,908 to be contacted by 1990 resulted from something like a straw vote.

- Regional meetings in the Lausanne tradition, such as The Asian Leadership Consultation on World Evangelization in November of 1978, had reflected optimistic concern for completing world evangelization in some sense or other by the year 2000.

- One major church tradition, the Southern Baptist Convention, had announced the year 2000 as the target date for its own global evangelistic challenge program.

- A number of new study centers were born, rejuvenated, or expanded, and were hard at work prior to 1980. Examples would include the CCCWE in Hong Kong (significantly catalyzed by the LCWE tradition), the Evangelical China Office of the IFMA-EFMA, the Ventnor Overseas Ministries Study Center (with its *International Bulletin*), and the U. S. Center for World Mission where 250 people from over 60 mission agencies focus on the frontiers (including the Institute of Chinese Studies, the Institute of Tribal Studies, the Samuel Zwemer Institute, and the United Presbyterian Center for Mission Studies, to name a few).

- By 1980, many individual mission structures, far larger and stronger than in 1910, had already begun the necessary studies by which to spread their wings in new frontier efforts. The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, for example, in 1979 voted to triple its mission force and establish 10 new fields allowing contact with hidden Peoples by 1990. Many agencies made similar plans due to the above-mentioned EFMA retreat of 1979. The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel accepted the goal of 100 Hidden People contacts by 1990 and by the 1980 meeting had already chosen 65 specifically.

- The much discussed Church Growth Movement, while not exclusively concentrating on frontier populations, nevertheless can be credited with eliciting more concrete, published studies in mission field situations than any other entity in the second

half of the century. This stream of research was the chief factor in the founding of the William Carey Library, which had over 150 published titles by 1980. Although the Church Growth Movement generated a number of tangential which often stressed merely the growth of existing churches, the characteristic passion and optimism of its founder was aimed ultimately at the growth of the church beyond existing frontiers and the multiplication of congregations among all peoples, including those which yet have none.

Without being alive in 1910, it is difficult to speak with utter confidence, yet by comparison it is safe to say that Edinburgh '80 had a very substantial research base.

1910/1980 Differences in the Meetings Themselves

No one present in the bustle and excitement of the meeting in 1980 had much time to reflect on comparisons between 1910 and 1980. But it must be done if we want to look clearly into the future. The 1980 Edinburgh II, however closely intended to be the successor to the 1910 Edinburgh I, was admittedly different.

Five Differences

1. The 1980 meeting was uniquely a dual-level conference: the plenary sessions were an amicable crossover of close to 500 people representing both the World Consultation on Frontier Missions and the autonomous sister conference, the International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions.

2. Unlike 1910, Edinburgh II was electrifyingly more successful in incorporating delegates from all “six continents.” Fully one third of both delegates and delegating mission structures were non-Western—precisely 88 people were sent by 57 “Third World” agencies. In 1910 the 17 non-Westerners who came, came as guests of Western societies. The handful of non-Western societies that had been founded by that date were not invited by name because as organizations they were either unnoticed or not taken seriously.

3. The 1910 meeting took place at the very crest of the wave of a new Protestant mission era. By then, mission structures new and old had already extensively retooled to go beyond the occupied *coastlands* of the William Carey Era, to focus on the *inland territories* of the Hudson Taylor Era. Edinburgh 1910 was a public confirmation of the direction 40 new “faith” mission agencies had taken following Hudson Taylor’s lead. By contrast, although the 1980 conference clearly reflected the refocusing of many agencies on new frontiers (this time the final frontiers of *the still by-passed peoples, the “Hidden Peoples”*), in 1980 a new and rapidly developing wave of awareness of such remaining frontiers was a wave nowhere near its crest. To this fact we will return.

4. The 1980 meeting had more *agencies* participating (175 to 1910’s 160), but 1910 had more *people* present. More importantly, the 1910 gathering constituted a much higher percentage of existing agencies, enjoying what was back then a far clearer consensus of concern for a new, final push into the “non-Christian portions” of the globe. Why? Partly because in 1910 the frontiers were still easily defined, being geographical. By contrast, in 1980 the remaining frontiers were subtle and ethnolinguistic rather than geographical. The 1980 Convening Committee (composed of representatives of sixteen different agencies) worked hard in advance to define frontier peoples as “*the world’s ‘Hidden Peoples’: those cultural and linguistic sub-groups, urban or rural, for whom there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their*

own people,” a definition which has now been accepted in substance for the phrase *Unreached Peoples* by both the Lausanne Committee and the International Foreign Mission Association’s new Frontier Peoples Committee.

5. It follows that the greatest difference between the two conferences was in the area of the larger context of the two meetings. In 1980, as we have seen, a far larger proportion of mission leaders was still preoccupied with continuing labors in partnership with indigenous churches working almost entirely within groups defined by previous frontiers. It is almost as though their concern was not “how to start from scratch” within a people group lacking a church as much as “how to avoid being scratched” in continued relation with developing church leadership in the longstanding overseas fields of endeavor! Indeed, the Inland Era of Hudson Taylor was so incredibly large and successful compared to the earlier *Coastlands Era of William Carey*, that the new *Bypassed Peoples Era of Townsend and McGavran* was only beginning to be noticed with many questions remaining.

On the other hand, Edinburgh 1980 and Pattaya 1980 both built on the people-group concept. Such groups are what the writer understands to be the addressable “nations” the Bible talks about and to which the Great Commission is specifically addressed. The Lausanne Strategy Working Group originally defined such entities as “a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who have a common affinity for one another.” However, from a missiological standpoint, the most significant trait of such groups might be the fact that the communication within these groups is highly efficient due to their internal homogeneity. The people may react like the effect of a pebble in a pond: reach one part and the ripples move readily to the rest of the group. Such a group could be called a “unimax” people—the largest still sufficiently unified. The concept can best be described missiologically as “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread by a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of acceptance or understanding.” The Lausanne group has added this aspect.

Using this concept of people groups and the Edinburgh definition of Hidden Peoples, there are roughly the following number of frontier or unreached peoples. Unlike the approach of 1910, these are not geographical or political categories. As a result, we discover that many of these Unreached Peoples are now (and were even in 1910) located within the geographical heartlands of the Western world, that is, portions of the globe (including Latin America) which 1910 ruled out as a mission field.

1,000 Buddhist peoples
 2,000 Chinese peoples
 3,000 Hindu peoples
 4,000 Muslim peoples
 5,000 Tribal peoples
1,750 other people groups
 16,750

At first glance many will not understand this kind of numerology, having understood the Muslim, Chinese, and Hindu worlds to be at least initially penetrated. The huge megaspheres have been indeed penetrated. In fact, the Gospel has penetrated even the still-great subdivisions of these megaspheres—call them the Sunni, Shiite, Cantonese, and Mandarin “macrospheres.” But note that communication is not highly efficient across

the still smaller *unimax* peoples which we must take seriously if we are determined to seek groups within which there is a highly efficient internal communication. Does God intend to do His mission work via trace languages alone? Does He not seek to use the language of the home and the heart, and to work within the cultural and linguistic confines of these smaller “nations”?

At any rate, the Edinburgh conference in 1980 focused upon frontiers made up of groups defined in this way. The meeting was not held for the purpose of educating the delegates, nor did it need to. They were certainly the alertest of the alert in missions in 1980. For the most part, then, both the *conference definition* of frontiers (of Hidden Peoples) and the *conference slogan*, “A Church for Every People by the year 2000,” were foci accepted warmly, even enthusiastically, and well understood by the vast majority of the delegates even before they arrived.

Despite these differences, the main characteristics of the two meetings were astonishingly similar.

Four Similarities

1. Two non-negotiables for both conferences were: delegates came from *mission agencies*, and the focus was on frontiers.

2. Student leaders were prominent in both. In 1910, former student movement leaders literally organized and ran the conference, and student leaders worked on the staff of the conference. In 1980 a youth element also considerably influenced the conference, this time primarily via the International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions, an autonomous parallel conference which provided an inspiring, existential factor that is yet to be fully appraised. One spin-off from this student conference is the TSFM—Theological Students for Frontier Missions—planned at the meeting itself and organized by the Edinburgh seminarians.

A second student spin-off is the National Student Missions Coalition (NSMC) organized in 1982. The key leaders had been to Edinburgh. The “Edinburgh Declaration” is the basis of the NSMC. This group is a coalition which includes the TSFM and a number of other student initiatives on several levels. It studiously avoids becoming bound up with any one denomination or student organization, but is working very happily with all of them. In its first five months it published its first book, a 606-page tome that works back to the Student Volunteer Movement and all the way up to the present. The NSMC is certainly an important development directly related back to the 1980 Edinburgh youth.

The ISCFM, renamed the International Student Leaders Coalition for Frontier Missions, is carried forward by two young couples chosen at the meeting in 1980, linking through information exchange the 171 students that attended as well as their growing number of associates. At first a newsletter, *Frontierline*, and later the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, reflect the continued energy of these younger leaders.

3. Concerning pre-conference studies, a great deal was managed in the few months preceding the 1910 conference. In 1980 the only thing comparable was a major research project managed by Allan Starling of Gospel Recordings and catalyzed specifically for the 1980 conference. The 2,700-page *Peoplesfile* (available on 12 microfiche) is a computerized index of 168,000 names of peoples, places, and languages, describing groups of humanity beyond the influence of the Gospel and

indexing the extensive, physically separate research files of Gospel Recordings, Wycliffe, and World Vision International's MARC.

4. Both the 1910 and 1980 conferences derive their meaning, existence, and eventual influence from the fact that they were at the same time the cause and the effect of a large phenomenon. What would Edinburgh 1910 had been if there had not also been the very large student's and women's missionary movements? Consider the impact of the amazing Laymen's Missionary Movement which quadrupled the giving to missions of participating churches in the USA in a seven-year period and held 75 banquets of more than 2,000 businessmen each during the twelve months preceding the 1910 meeting.

What significance would Edinburgh 1910 have today had not its existence been reflected, at least partially, in the shape of events that followed? Could the marriage of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) that took place at the final IMC meeting at Ghana been avoided had there been any subsequent meeting (prior to 1980) that retained the same basic traits of being focused on the frontiers and conducted by leaders of mission agencies?

What will, in fact, be the shape of events following the 1980 conference? Can our response make a difference? We must turn now to the major direction things are heading, especially the role and character of Wheaton '83.

Wheaton '83 and the Two Paradigms

New directions resulting from major events depend heavily on the perceived nature of those events. Events, like words, often mean what people think they mean, rather than what their authors intended them to mean. Thus, Edinburgh 1910 in some regards was and is ambiguous. There are two major ways people have looked back on the 1910 meeting, resulting in two points of view which still exist. Hogg has meticulously sketched the differing types of conferences standing behind Edinburgh 1910 which gave rise to its divergent reputations. Speaking of the 1910 conference he says,

Many viewed it as the succession of London 1988 and New York 1900. Yet in preparation, nature, and outcome, Edinburgh 1910 differed sharply from these.

Let us call the London and New York conferences Paradigm A. Significantly, Hogg points out that they were popular assemblies drawing in far more than mission professionals:

These "home-based conferences" ... sought to encourage, stimulate, and educate their home constituencies, and [they] became large popular assemblies. ... Gustav Warneck, in his paper from London 1988, proposed a body similar to what the International Missionary Council (IMC) became. ... [those conferences] created expectations for major decennial gatherings.

Paradigm A, then, is defined by gatherings characterized by, constituted by, and of most benefit to *church* rather than mission leadership. But the 1910 conference followed a different Paradigm B which when it first appeared in India in 1910, "marked a procedural and structural departure from all preceding field conferences." In Hogg's paragraph,

For Edinburgh 1910, three [conferences of mission leaders] held unique significance: the South India Missionary Conference at Madras in 1900, the All-

India Decennial Conference at Madras in 1902, and the Centenary Conference at Shanghai in 1907. Madras 1900 marked a procedural and structural departure from all preceding field conferences, and the two following built upon it. ... studied by those who planned Edinburgh 1910. These three meetings shaped that assembly.

The distinctions between these two patterns are extremely important, for although Paradigm A and Paradigm B are equally valuable, they are quite different in function, and neither function should become extinct.

However, the overriding fact in historic perspective is that the newer, rarer, and more professional Paradigm B ("the Edinburgh pattern") began to revert back to Paradigm A almost as soon as the meeting was over. This reversion was due in part to the existence of many people who had sought, expected, and then were unconsciously compelled to perceive the 1910 meeting to be like New York 1900. In any case, none of the 21 regional and national follow-through conferences in Asia (between November 1912 and April 1913) adhered strictly to Paradigm B. It is no wonder that that the next world-level conference, Jerusalem 1923, as *at best* an A+B paradigm.

Edinburgh 1980, in contrast, was intended to be explicitly Paradigm B. Now that it is behind us, are there already evidences of a similar reversion to Paradigm A? Many. In 1980, as in 1910, many onlookers and a few participants, were frustrated by the very narrow definition of Paradigm B. It would seem that church leaders can meet without mission leaders present, but that mission leaders, so some said, must never meet without church leaders present. Structurally speaking, Melbourne was straightforwardly a meeting designed and directed by church leaders, with a tiny minority of mission leaders present. Pattaya 1980, like Lausanne 1974, was a meeting designed by an ad hoc body including mainly church leaders, directed mainly by para-church leaders, and attended by invited church leaders with perhaps 20% mission leaders present. Remember, Edinburgh II was, as in 1910, composed 100% of mission agency delegates plus a few invited missiologists.

In other words, Melbourne was Paradigm A, Pattaya was A+B, and Edinburgh II, pure B. Certainly each conference served certain needs, and did so more effectively than if they had all been one big A+B meeting.

Since the 1974 Call was framed only a few days prior to the large meeting at Lausanne, it is fair to say that most of the 24 signers of the Call, mainly professors of missions (including one Asian and one South African), were well aware that this type of meeting was not the same type of meeting as the A+B 1974 Lausanne conference which (1) was not confined to mission agency leaders, (2) was an invitational meeting, rather than one thrown open to the delegates of any properly qualified mission agency, and (3) was not confined to frontiers as herein defined. It is fair to postulate that had the framers of this 1974 Call been able to see ahead eight years to the three contenders for 1910 succession in 1980 (Melbourne, Pattaya, and Edinburgh), they would have had no trouble agreeing that the Edinburgh meeting in 1980 reflected the pattern they had in mind.

However, more important than the intent of the 1974 Call is the reaction of larger circles to the reappearance at Edinburgh 1980 of Paradigm B. Unbelievable confusion resulted in many circles and numerous explanations were necessary. The 1910 meeting was often either forgotten or misconstrued. Even accusations of illegitimacy were voiced. But at least the mission executives that organized and got it supported understood the

pattern clearly. Lack of interest was probably to be expected in those circles in which the structural pattern of the mission society is itself suspect of being historically no longer appropriate for any situation. Only weeks before the meeting, contrary pressures reached a crescendo and severely reduced American participation. This was in a way fortunate because the American presence was still large enough in proportion to the whole to verge on inappropriateness (although for its size, the U.K. had the greatest representation).

What was the problem? In seeking the answer we may eliminate one possibility right away. The emphasis on new frontiers does not seem to be the problem. Such an emphasis was the theme of the U.K.'s 1981 Evangelical Missionary Alliance meeting; it surfaced prominently in the October 1981 issue of the *International Review of Mission*, in the words of the Melbourne conference secretary, Jacques Matthey. The E-80 phrase, "Hidden Peoples" was, in English, the theme of the February 1982 meeting of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelikaler Missionen (German Association of Evangelical Missions). The IFMA and EFMA Retreats in 1982 were both devoted entirely to the final frontiers. It is now the theme of one of three simultaneous consultations proposed by the World Evangelical Fellowship for 1983.

The problem is rather that *Protestantism is apparently still not at ease with its special organizations designed to cross frontiers*. Newbigin, in the October *IRM* issue just mentioned, insists (as he has many times before) that such entities should exist. "I have argued that we do need specialized groups of people whose specific calling is to make the name of Jesus known and honored where it is not known and honored" (p. 255). Why, then, is it so difficult for the nature and mission of such organizations to be known and honored? Cannot their people be allowed to associate together from time to time, both regionally and on a world level?

The continuing problem must be due to the continuing hesitance of Protestants to view such groups as legitimate, stable, and God-honoring as the general category (of a wild kaleidoscope) of so-called "church" organizations. Our very terminology is biased. We say missions are "para-church." Aren't congregations then "para-mission"? I hope not. How long will we persist in considering the Antioch congregations somehow more reliable, durably, or authoritatively "the church" than the combined missionary band like Paul's? Was that structure not headed up by Antioch's two leading pastors? Historically do congregational and denominational structures have a better track record of faithfulness than the Protestant religious "orders" whether those orders be missionary at a distance or evangelistic at home? Why is it then, so unreasonable for such "orders" to organize their own world-level meeting?

The Wheaton '83 meeting clearly represents and A+B Paradigm. It might become, in a way, Edinburgh '80s Jerusalem '28, where Edinburgh's 1910 pure B paradigm first became blurred into an A+B pattern. The World Evangelical Fellowship itself is now no longer merely an alliance of associations of churches but follows the pattern of the Evangelical Fellowship of India and the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand which is the longstanding pattern of the National Association of Evangelicals in the United States. That is, it is a Fellowship in which any entity can be involved, whether a denomination, a donor, a local congregation, or even a individual believer. Its Theological Commission has been a catalytic force of great activity and influence, holding important meetings and publishing *An Evangelical Review of Theology*. Waldron Scott, as Executive Director, saw it more forward tremendously. David Howard, its

present director, will ably carry it further. Its president, Theodore Williams of India, and the leadership of the Wheaton '83 Consultations—principally Bruce Nichols of New Zealand—all represent loyalty to both denominational and non-denominational action-structures (that is both paradigm A and paradigm B structures). Moreover, the Executive Committee and the various commissions also faithfully reflect both church and mission structures. Unlike the mood in Ecumenical circles, there does not seem to be in the world of WEF any strong conviction that the *mission of the church* is solely the task of the churches rather than something shared by the body of Christ which usually includes the mission structures. Nevertheless, due to the heavy participation of non-mission people in the Wheaton '83 consultations, it is probably not possible for these consultations to begin at the level of sophistication represented at Edinburgh '80 where virtually everyone present had considerable specific involvement in the mission world.

The Wheaton '83 event was originally proposed and is now coordinated by Bruce Nichols, secretary of the WEF Theological Commission and a BMMF missionary with many years of missionary experience in India. Wheaton '83 is really three consultations in one:

1. The Nature and Mission of the Church in the Local Setting
2. The Nature and Mission of the Church in New Frontiers for Missions
3. The Nature and Mission of the Church in Meeting Human Need

The second consultation clearly carries forward the kind of frontier concern at Edinburgh '80 and it is not surprising that three key responsibilities in the task force developing the second consultation are veterans of the 1980 meeting. Thus, it is unquestionable that the Wheaton '83 Two will be faithful to the definition hammered out for Edinburgh '80. There is a presence also of Pattaya '80 people who are highly committed to the same frontiers. It is quite likely that the vision will survive and possibly become more prominent than ever. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the first two consultations represent, respectively, paradigm A and paradigm B. They are, as meetings, both the A+B combination. In this sense, they will be more like Pattaya than Edinburgh 1910 or 1980.

Is there a need soon for another pure B conference like Edinburgh 1910 and 1980? Certainly there do need to be more regional Paradigm B conferences. It was truly edifying for the leaders of mission structures from all parts of the globe to meet as equals at Edinburgh in 1980. Such people are very likely now to stay in touch. Perhaps the New Frontiers (of remaining unpenetrated people groups) are now re-clarified for our generation. Perhaps now, for a while, we need again merely to welcome the paradigm A meetings of church people as much as possible, so long as the frontier vision does not thereby slip out of view.

At Wheaton '83 two of these consultations—One and Three—will overlap certain plenary sessions with part of Consultation Two (Frontiers). That is helpful since all three conferences need to be alert to the frontiers. Let us rejoice that the Second is exclusively a frontier conference. Perhaps at this stage we do not need to worry overmuch about the survival of the frontier vision beyond Wheaton '83. Yet, of course, mere survival of this vision is not good enough.

Notes

1. Ralph D. Winter, "The Precarious Milestones to Edinburgh 1980," *Occasional Bulletin of Mission Research*, Vol. 4, No. 2, April, 1980.
2. William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundation: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth Century Background* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1982), p. 120.
3. Ralph D. Winter, "Ghana—Preparation for Marriage," *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXVII, No. 267, July 1978, pp. 338-53, and "1980 and that Certain Elite," *Missiology, an International Review*, Vol. 4, April 1976.
4. William Richey Hogg, "Edinburgh 1910—Perspective 1980," *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1980, pp. 146-153.

Editorial Comment: GCOWE 1995

Mission Frontiers (July 1995)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment71>

It is not remotely possible to convey to our readers in a few pages just what happened in the most important global meeting in history—GCOWE '95, with 4,000 key leaders in Korea May 17-25.

Beyond the New Testament no face-to-face meeting in human history has been more significant.

- Yes, earlier meetings, like stepping stones, have enabled this meeting to do what it did.
- Yes, there have been many crucial, cliff-hanging events earlier in Christian history, etc.

HOWEVER: I would argue with anyone that nothing this significant has ever happened beyond the pages of the Bible. Why? Read on. We need not argue. We need to act!

This cluster of astounding events was on the front page of the National and International Religion Report June 12. That report quoted Dr. Robert Coleman of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: “This is the time for which we were born.” It quoted Director Luis Bush saying, “As he read the declaration, Coleman began to tremble with emotion, and the entire gathering ‘went wild’ in a spontaneous response.” It quotes a denominational leader saying that there was so much networking between leaders “it made the stock market look tame.” Before this event took place I said this would be the most important meeting in human history. The event itself, however, exceeded every hope and aspiration that I ever had for it.

Never in my lifetime have I had the privilege of commenting on as significant an event.

Actually, most of my lifelong interests were dealt with seriously. There is no meeting I would have been more eager to attend. Alas, certain promises kept me home. First, some of the highlights.

In a way, the most momentous event of the conference was not even planned: the pervasive, unexpected, profound mood of confession and repentance between different national groups, bridging centuries of isolation and hatred—Arab and Jewish, Turkish and Armenian, Japanese and Korean. Some of the physical accommodations were so distant that confession and repentance arose when it became clear how hard the Korean hosts had tried to make everything just right.

Speaking of Korean hosts, their energies were everywhere. What they gave in cash alone would have been equal to \$25 million for a country the size of the USA.

The final Korean youth meeting brought out 75,000 young people (in the rain) to a meeting that would have been the equivalent of 350,000 in the USA. And this was a student mission meeting! Has there ever been a more fervent, praying crowd of young people that large in any one place in human history?

This is the only large global Christian mission conference that has ever had more than half of its participants from the former mission fields of the world.

This was probably the most widely represented conference of its size ever held, Christian or non-Christian, with people from 186 countries.

When delegates left they were handed a professionally-edited video tape of the conference! (This was mainly the effort of our USCWM staff—23 of our people went to help, working behind the scenes.) To order this video for \$6.50 postage paid see page 47 for more details. But what now?

The real meaning of this conferences is what is going to happen next—differently! That meeting was merely the kickoff of a dazzling countdown that will fill the next five years.

If that tiny, overworked AD 2000 office in Colorado Springs had more than it could handle before the conference, think of what it must shoulder now that this whole global movement has exploded. But read on... Is this crazy stuff?

Is all this realistic? Do sober people talk like this?

One detractor of the frontier mission movement made the following statement—carelessly, no doubt (it was an unguarded comment in an Email exchange):

“It’s time for frontier missions to grow up about the year 2000. The year 2000 will be just another year. Come the bi-millennium, the world will probably still look like hell, showing every one of its long 2,000 years. Poverty, hatred, disease, and war will still be with us, and the Great Commission will still be unfulfilled.”

Wait just a minute!

1. First of all, this careless remark talks as if human misery and violence has been a burden in this world for only 2,000 long years. Far more than 2000 years ago, even the most ancient evidences of human remains reveal gruesome homicidal violence and hatred.

2. The AD2000 Movement has never talked in terms of “fulfilling the Great Commission” by the year 2000. Its goal is “A Church for Every People...”

3. The Bible never links the elimination of “poverty, hatred, disease, and war” with the Great Commission OR with the Return of Christ. Indeed, after the end of time God will “wipe away every tear” (Rev 21:4).

I personally think that one main reason Christ will return (Remember? “As in the days of Noah” when the majority are scoffing or looking the other way) is precisely because of human inability to erase poverty, hatred, disease, and war. More on this in the booklet mentioned in the center of this page.

What is planned now? Three major strategies are in motion right now:

1. Find out exactly what must be done. The goal is clear and measurable: “the establishment of a mission-oriented church planting movement within every people of the world...” (by the turn of the century).

Luis Bush is working toward a large workforce of younger people who will go out to the ends of the earth (easier to get to than ever in history) and “survey” the remaining task. Do we need 6,000 to do this? Well, 75,000 volunteered a year of service right there in that meeting—young people from only one country! How about one out of ten of them!

2. Line up the necessary energies. Leaders are now talking about a small meeting of mission organizations which actually have “troops” to put into the field—that is, tried and true mission structures. Mission executives are in a different capacity than pastors or church leaders. It is like contrasting army, navy, air force leaders with mayors and state

governors. The two have to work together, but don't confuse their capacities! Again, see the booklet mentioned in the center of this page. The work has to be parceled out: "Your organization will do this, ours will do that, etc." Interdev in Seattle and the two major coalitions working in the former USSR, the CoMission and the Alliance, have proven that dozens of totally independent agencies can effectively work together.

3. In line with all this, Patrick Johnstone has already proposed that there be specific conferences focused on the major "affinity blocs" of peoples within which almost the entire remaining task lies—see his point #1 on page 12. What Could Go Wrong?

One excited pastor flew his family to a Muslim country and paraded down the street (the whole family) in long robes, carrying a big cross. They risked an angry mob, finally got safely in jail, and were sent home. Didn't they know that the last Christians coming at them with a cross were Crusaders who murdered Muslims by the thousands all over the Middle East for over a hundred years?

While the simple faith to hurl yourself out into the unknown is essential, simplistic faith that does not do its homework is dangerous. Amateurish mission is dangerous, plunging heedless mission is dangerous. As usual, there are more wrong ways than right ways. Most people underestimate the complexity of missions. They think that a warm heart is all that is necessary. They want God to take care of them when they do thoughtless things.

I would say that most of the enormous new interest in missions in this country today is flowing into amateurish mission is either useless or counterproductive. We have short termers rushing over for fun, doing lots of things which are not very helpful. They learn. That's good. But they do not serve effectively in many cases. Some of them do not even meet a missionary family. Not very many ever go back—what they see and do is not all that effective or attractive. More than ever local churches are sending individual families to far off places to start churches like what they have in this country. Unless they find people who are Westernized already this rarely works out.

In a major step forward, Youth With A Mission, has established a new Frontier Mission division and they are now sending hundreds of people on a long term basis and are endeavoring to do some solid study of the task. This is something to which short terms can contribute little.

What we need is "sober exuberance." Four out of five who wish to be missionaries must resign themselves to be mission mobilizers. That is the pattern of history.

The Key Issue Is You: Thousands of Americans like you can and must simply uproot themselves from what they are doing and join in with the essential mission mobilization, planning, and field efforts. This cannot be done without "Prayer with Feet."

Look, are you following the O. J. Simpson trial more closely than you are the five-year countdown to the year 2000? If so, it's partly because your TV is handier than this little bulletin. Why not reconsider your occupation. Are you mainly just staying alive, supporting yourself? Or is what you are doing the most significant thing you can do for the Kingdom during the remainder of your life? This movement needs help! Write to me. Send me your phone number. This is urgent!

From Mission to Evangelism to Mission
 (Singapore 2002, Conference on Unreached Peoples)
Frontiers in Mission, 155-57
<https://wciujournal.wciu.edu/frontiers-in-mission-1>

The most likely interpretation of my topic as I have phrased it could readily be that of a sequence of stages in which mission work produces a national church which then engages in evangelism and finally begins to send *missionaries*. That is certainly one of the most common and healthy sequences of events in the world today.

However, I would like to pursue a radically different interpretation. I would like to speak of a sequence (not often recognized) in which *mission* work produces a national church that unfortunately is not much more than a projection of the Western style church in the missionary's homeland but tries to do *evangelism*, and then after a while the mission realizes it must go back in *mission* and start over with a more indigenizing kind of mission effort which can produce a much more indigenous church than the one—call it a “first try church”—which has inherited much of the missionary's own culture.

Note that this line of thinking suggests that a people group may not really be reached at all if merely a Western style church is planted within it. That means we will probably need some radical reevaluation of how many groups are reached.

In some ways this point of view almost seems to suggest that we need in many fields to start all over again. It implies that all we have done so far is parallel to the scattered synagogues of Jewish believers across the Roman empire in the time of Paul. That is, they had planted “churches” (synagogues) in a foreign land. But those churches required Greeks and Romans to become Jewish culturally if they wanted to go all the way. And, as Jesus pointed out, Jews were diligently traversing land and sea to make a single proselyte, only to achieve a cultural conversion, not necessarily a conversion of heart.

For example, is there yet a truly Japanese form of our faith? Many serious observers doubt it. This would mean there is still a need for cross-cultural mission in Japan, and that a truly missiological breakthrough is still in the future.

A further example might be the church in India. It consists largely of a Westernization of a population sector which has little to lose and much to gain by grasping for any kind of alternate cultural tradition. This perspective could imply that there is essentially little true mission work that has thus far been accomplished in India, and that the unreached populations there are far larger than we have commonly conceived them.

Before going further, however, I need to define some terms. I would like to suggest that there can be great value in making a distinction between a *mission* agency and an *evangelistic* agency. Obviously the phrases can be used interchangeably. But for the sake of discussion here I hope you will find it helpful to think of *evangelism* and *mission* as quite different, all mission work being evangelism but not all evangelism being mission, mission being a very special type of evangelism. This distinction is so important, in fact, that I am convinced we would not even need to speak of frontier missions if we observed it. In fact this whole conference might not have been so necessary if this kind of a distinction were well understood and taken seriously.

Many church people, for example, talk freely about evangelizing the world. So often does this happen somewhat carelessly that, years ago, I felt it necessary to develop the distinction between E-0, E-1, E-2, and E-3 evangelism.

E-0 stands for evangelism within the church movement itself.

E-1 stands for outreach to those within the same culture as the church.

E-2 stands for a quite different type of missionary cross-cultural evangelism within a people quite different from that of the evangelist, different yet still somewhat similar. Enough

different to need a separate congregation but still similar, like English culture and Spanish culture.

E-3 stands for even more strikingly missionary cross-culture evangelistic outreach to people in a totally different culture from that of those workers who are reaching out, like the difference between English culture and Japanese culture.

In the first two cases you can use existing congregations or simply multiply the same kind of congregations. This is ordinary *evangelism*. By contrast, the second two cases, E-2 and E-3 types of activity, merit the designation *mission* or *missionary evangelism* for the simple reason that E-2 and E-3 efforts reach into strange situations that are so different as to virtually require separate and different kinds of congregations.

Using these terms, all true *mission* differs from ordinary evangelism because it is an activity involving the special problems of cross-cultural communication and contextualization. That is why all *mission* involves evangelism but that there are types of *evangelism* that do not involve cross-cultural communication and therefore are not true mission.

However, mission is not merely a *communication* problem. It is a *creation* problem. What is needed must be created by the Spirit of God as a new church tradition, not just the extension of a Western denomination but perhaps a worshipping movement with a decidedly different church life.

Suppose a mission agency goes to Nigeria and establishes fifty indigenous churches among the Yoruba, and those churches then plant even more Yoruba churches. In that case, the efforts to achieve the initial “missiological breakthrough” would be called *mission* while the further church planting expansion, *whether by missionary or by the Yoruba churches* would be considered *evangelism*. But if now the Yoruba send missionaries to break through to a cultural group where there is not yet an indigenous church movement, then you can say that the Yoruba believers are not only involved in ordinary evangelism but also in cross-cultural work, in the *creation* of a new worshipping tradition of Jesus’ followers. Such efforts classify as a *mission* activities.

We can further say that if the initial mission agency is not involved in that further outreach but is content to continue to work with the Yoruba church, then it ceases to be a mission agency but becomes merely what could be called a “foreign evangelism” agency.

Now, since most agencies of mission eventually go through the transition of becoming merely evangelistically involved (and that is certainly one measure of success) it may appear that this kind of distinction devalues much of mission work. On the contrary, the mission that continues in evangelism and allows and encourages an overseas church movement to become missionary is doing a very strategic thing.

However, let me freely admit that I have no power to define words for other people. Most people will go on using *evangelism* and *mission* in whatever way they wish. I am not even terribly concerned to have it my way with these two often-used words. I would be willing to talk about, say, *Type A work* and *Type B work*. The main thing is to understand that reaching out in the same culture is relatively simple and is often automatic while breaking through to a new and different culture is both rare and complex.

I actually believe that the achievement of a true *missiological breakthrough* into a new culture is often grossly underestimated as to its complexity.

For one thing not many Christians realize how major a transition it was when our faith spread from its Jewish roots into the Greek and Roman world. The pagan holiday called the Saturnalia was converted into Christmas. So were a hundred other things adopted, such as the wearing of wedding rings and the throwing of rice at a wedding. In a further transition our faith spread into the Anglo-Saxon sphere, where early missionaries even made use of a pagan sunrise festival promoting a spring-goddess of fertility (called Eostre) as our present-day Easter sunrise service. These were mission attempts to indigenize the faith, representing complex cross-cultural evangelistic decisions that went far beyond ordinary evangelism.

Perhaps we don't often think of the complexities of the past and we may wish they did not extend into the present. But if we take a hard look at the current expansion of the faith around the world from the standpoint of our distinction between *evangelism* and *mission* I am afraid that we must recognize the need for a great deal more in-depth true mission than we have thus far accomplished.

For the most part the much heralded march of the Christian faith across the world has been successful mainly in subordinate cultures, where, say, the Koreans, oppressed for so long by the fellow Buddhist country of Japan would grasp a foreign faith almost automatically.

For example, as already mentioned, are churches in Japan today sufficiently indigenous to conclude that all that is left to be done is for these churches to multiply with their relatively Western form of the faith? Some keen observers, as I've said, suggest that there is not yet a truly Japanese church movement but only a relatively small Westernized following. Movements like *Soka Gakkai* are quite Japanese, although they embody some Christian elements, but by being rather more indigenous have grown astronomically, proving the existence of a spiritual hunger in Japan despite failing to provide even the minimal elements of Biblical faith.

We have often thought of Unreached Peoples as being small, but when you look more closely at the definitions it is clear that wherever an authentic "missiological breakthrough" has not yet occurred the size of the group does not matter.

From this point of view you can impellingly argue that the true missiological breakthroughs in Africa, India and China are to be seen surprisingly and precisely in movements that are "outside" of what we ordinarily identify as Christianity in those places. Such movements are not readily recognized as Christian despite their characteristically strong focus on the Bible. It is a little known fact that in three key places, Africa, India, and China, the truly devout believers in Christ within radically contextualized groups may actually outnumber the truly devout believers in Christ within the more identifiably "Christian" movements of missionary-implanted Western- oriented Christianity.

It has never been true that a people group has been considered reached just because essentially foreign churches were present within that group. The definition mentioned here distinctly requires an "indigenous" church movement.

Of course, there is room for discussion as to just what is truly indigenous or not. Indigenous churches tend to grow, sometimes very rapidly. They are often not initiated by foreign personnel but many times are actually heretical spin offs which highlight certain cultural features lacking in missionary-established churches. They are not always Biblically balanced, although they are often highly respectful of the Bible. Donald McGavran's perspective was that our relationship to such groups ought to be friendly and supportive if, in fact, they focus on the Bible seriously. That focus will straighten them out in the long run, he felt.

Thus, shocking though it may seem, the world may look substantially different from our usual take if viewed from the perspective of the essential importance of authentic indigeneity. Ordinary evangelism must thereby be seen as inadequate if it is going on in a situation still requiring true mission with true indigeneity as a goal. The ordinary evangelism of an essentially Western Christianity may in such cases be little more than the promotion of a complex cluster of foreign legalisms which people in characteristically minority and oppressed cultures learn to wear like outer clothing with the hope that they will be benefitted thereby.

Ironically, we have been talking for years about the necessity of mission agencies moving intentionally beyond care-taking existing mission field churches to reach out to still untouched, genuine Unreached Peoples. That is, we have been calling for mission elsewhere *in addition to* evangelism in established beachheads, when we might more accurately have been calling for a much more radical and penetrating *mission instead of* evangelistic outreach from a Western style church. We may have too easily accepted the birth of a new national church as truly indigenous when in fact it was still substantially foreign. And, instead of expecting the birth of a new substantially strange and unpredictable movement to appear which could then by itself grow

automatically by evangelism, the movements we have planted may themselves need to be subjected to an on-going attempt at true indigenization, which is the object of true mission.

Thus, my title, "From Mission to Evangelism to Mission," can be utilized to describe the ideal sequence of events in truly successful work. However, that sequence may not have truly happened beyond the spread of a church pattern which is still significantly Western. This is not bad. It is not illicit. It may be superficial, however, and it may be a cultural phenomenon in which people under oppression gladly accept anything with promise.

But at the same time the truly successful missiological breakthroughs, such as the Pauline breakthrough to the Greeks, and the Lutheran breakthrough to Germanic culture, have characteristically involved the actual creation of new movements *which the older source culture could not recognize as true to the faith*. It may well be that a true missiological breakthrough will always be a church movement which is somewhat alienated, and will believe for a good long time that the missionary's form of the faith is seriously flawed, and that vice versa, the missionary will characteristically reject the validity of the new form of the faith in the receptor culture.

The blunt meaning of this kind of thinking is fairly easy to illustrate from major movements and events that have already taken place in the mission lands. We hear reports that there are 52 million followers of Jesus Christ in Africa who do not belong to any standard Christian tradition. The same is true in India where smaller estimates (14 to 24 million) caste Hindus are reported to be devout followers of Jesus Christ even though they do not call themselves Christians. Finally, much of the most vibrant work in China is not to be found in the state recognized churches but in the millions of followers of Jesus Christ who are to be found in the so called "house churches."

Thinking along these lines involves receiving and digesting information which we do not expect and are not well prepared to believe. It is a new kind of frontier that must be recognized as soon as possible, and dealt with strategically in ways that are practical and possible, even if not conventional. Are we ready to do that?

Editorial: Singapore 2002 and Other Conferences

(IJFM 20:1, Jan.–March 2003).

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/20_1%20PDFs/03%2004_Editorial_20_1.pdf

This issue of IJFM falls in the middle of a significant series of events. Long before the Singapore '02 conference itself (October 28-31) key people all over the world were wrestling with the agreed-upon theme: *Advancing Strategies of Closure among All Unreached People Groups*.

Thus, our last issue, 19:4, anticipated the Singapore '02 conference by presenting some of that advanced “wrestling with the theme” in the form of most of the plenary papers to be given there. Issue 19:4 was, in fact, employed as a study document at the conference itself.

This issue, 20:1 offers a detailed running summary of the entire conference as well as presents several of the presentations at Singapore in workshops and even between sessions (by which I refer to my own unofficial presentation on the Rise and the Fall of the IMC).

I doubt if you will be captured by every single detail in Greg Parson's summary of the conference. You are permitted to find the sections that are of greatest interest to you!

The next few issues will bring to light some additional presentations made at Singapore not available as yet. That is why I say that this issue falls in the middle of a series of significant events.

But how significant? At this date we are in a much better position to evaluate the conference.

Of conferences there is seemingly no end. However, in some ways this particular meeting (and its accompanying series of events) was in the league with the germinal Edinburgh 1980 meeting, which, in turn, attempted to repeat the most famous mission conference of all time, the World Missionary Conference that met at Edinburgh in 1910.

The 1910 Edinburgh conference gathered world missionary leaders like no conference before it, and set in motion enormous energies and entities, many of which are still moving today. One of those entities, with great purpose, which unfortunately is no longer moving is highlighted in this issue of IJFM—the International Missionary Council (IMC). Its purposes urgently need to be replaced.

The 1980 Edinburgh conference actually attempted to promote a replacement for the IMC but did not quite succeed, possibly because the global interest in a new push for closure was not as alive then as now.

The 2002 Singapore conference, amazingly, reflected almost universal interest in an on-going unnamed entity, the results of the various study groups can be seen on page 12, and are commented on again on page 19.

The conference was a very gratifying mix of highly dedicated and intelligent people from the whole globe, about as representative as 212 people could be, all focusing on “Advancing Strategies of Closure,” wording which fairly describes the concerns of both 1910 and 1980.

Thus these three conferences are kindred in spirit and excitingly sequential. I could easily get carried away describing the “advancing” perspectives undergirding the progression of strategies reflected in each of these conferences.

Just a bare-bones comment:

Comparing who came: 1910 did not attract a single delegate from a third world mission agency. They probably did not even think that was possible, although it actually was, and Bishop Azariah attended not as an agency delegate but as a church delegate. 1980 attracted one third of those attending from the third world while 2002 attracted 39 percent of the total, a slight improvement.

Comparing strategy: 1910 conceived of closure in purely in terms of a head count of human beings yet to accept Christ. 1980 decisively shifted from people to be reached to peoples to be reached, a major and drastic semantic shift for the word “reached.”

Of less import is the fact that almost everyone spoke English in 2002, again, a major change from a century earlier.

The cliff-hanging question, in my opinion, is not about what happened at these conferences but what happens after them. For me the most important result of 1910 was the IMC, of 1980 was the failed attempt to establish a global entity linking mission agencies both North and South, and of 2002 is the hope of a global office of some sort which will interface specifically with mission agencies pressing forward into the frontiers. I have called such entities “frontier active” agencies, which most mission agencies are, in one way or another.

So don’t just read what happened. Read thinking and praying about what will happen in on-going contact that can be substantial.

The largest difference in the last 100 years is, in one sense, simply the fact that the very mobility of the ethnic realities with which we are concerned. Just imagine, 20 million diaspora Indians earn an equivalent Gross Domestic Product to the other 980 million back in India. If you are working with India’s peoples it is no longer just a national or regional but a global challenge.

This is true in hundreds of other cases. Actually, thousands of people groups are scattered across the entire globe.

For example, the annual gathering of agencies from fifteen countries concerned to reach the Fula peoples who are at least that scattered, must follow the Fula whether they end up in Paris, Amsterdam or London.

Every reason for believing in the value of associations of mission agencies on the national or regional level applies at least as cogently to an association of mission agencies on the global level.

In my mind this is the key “issue” of this 20:1 issue.

The Third Call

(Amsterdam 2005, calling for a Global Network of Mission Structures) and Overview of
Two Earlier Calls: Edinburgh 1910 and Edinburgh 1980
Frontiers in Mission, 123-30.

Dear fellow executives of frontier mission agencies,

We now finally have a date, costs, and a clear path to move forward: Amsterdam YWAM headquarters, April 18-21, 2005, all delegates, near or far, paying the same (covering travel and all conference costs), namely something under \$850 US.

Lest you waste time trying to dig up previous letters I will attach all four previous letters. But to save you time I will also give here an overview of events, quoting from some of the earlier letters.

Overview of the Three Calls

It is possible to see three world-level frontier mission events as parallel.

The First Call: In 1910, for the first time in history, mission leaders and missionaries were called together to consider how best to finish the global task of missions. The conference was called The World Missionary Conference. *That was the First Call.* No one was invited. The only people attending were *delegates* chosen by legitimate mission agencies. Great things came out of that conference. A Continuation Committee was formed. Then the *International Review of Missions* and the International Missionary Council (which served effectively for forty years) derived from that committee. This famous 1910 conference also, and unexpectedly, inspired dreams of both Christian unity and a number of other successive but unconnected conferences, some liberal, eventually resulting in the World Council of Churches. However, none of those later conferences had the distinctive composition of exclusively mission people as had the 1910 meeting.

The Second Call: In 1972 a Southern Baptist professor of mission proposed a repetition of the 1910 conference. In 1974, a group of missiologists under the banner of the newly formed American Society of Missiology, meeting at Wheaton College, hammered out the wording of a Call for a **second 1910 type conference** to meet on the world level in 1980. As reported in the July 31, 2003 letter (See attached), here is the exact wording of that Second Call.

It is suggested that a World Missionary Conference be convened in 1980 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world missions. The conference should be constituted by persons committed to cross-cultural missions, broadly representative of the missionary agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis.

When that 1980 meeting took place in Edinburgh in November of 1980, it was called The World Consultation on Frontier Missions. More agencies were represented than in 1910, and notably *one third of all agencies* were now from the Third World (none in 1910). The compendium of that conference is the book *Seeds of Promise*, Edited by Alan Starling (William Carey Library, 1981).

In 1980 the slogan adopted was “A Church for Every People By the Year 2000.” Thomas Wang was one of the plenary speakers, and he carried it into the AD2000 movement with a clarifying addition, “A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person by the Year 2000.” Problem: the 1980 “Continuation Committee” failed to function. No ongoing structure survived.

The Third Call: Clarifying and updating the wording of the Second Call, here is what was proposed in the July 31, 2003 letter for a “Third Call” meeting:

It is suggested that a global level conference be convened in 2004 or 2005 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world missions with the purpose of establishing an ongoing global network of mission agencies. The conference should be constituted by formal delegates of frontier active cross-cultural missions broadly representative of the mission agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis. The delegates need to be from appropriate agencies which have delegated them to speak for the agencies in regard to the plans for a global network of mission agencies.

The Sequence of Events Thus Far

At the Singapore '02 Conference the formal discussion highlighted the highest concern of the delegates as being the achievement of global level networking. That fact, it seemed to me, simply as one of the delegates, could readily be considered a “motion” for the establishment of such an entity. The question I then posed in a letter May 15, 2003 to those who attended the meeting (See first letter attached) asked if there existed a “second” to that motion. A flurry of positive responses resulted, effectively indicating that a “seconding” of the motion would be quite possible.

In the May 2003 letter I suggested a face-to-face meeting for the purpose of seconding the motion and sent out a call for a “second.” It soon appeared to be true that rather than to meet at a world level merely to “second” the motion, the second was something that could actually be done by email.

Thus, in July of 2003, a second letter went out, asking for a “second.” It included the following wording (on p. 2, paragraphs 2, 3, and 6):

Those *appropriate* agencies responding to the Third Call, which will agree to send delegates to the founding meeting should then 1) email in their formal, organizational decision to back the Third Call, 2) indicate their intention of sending a delegate to the founding meeting and 3) suggest dates when that would be preferable.

Note: an “appropriate” agency for this founding purpose ought to be, as before: An agency that has had at least five cross-cultural missionaries for at least three years, and is “frontier active,” that is either now involved with outreach to, or mobilization for, reaching unreached people groups, or has definite plans to do so.

Any agency in substantial agreement with this Call, and which clearly qualifies under the “appropriate” definition above, is thus hereby invited to affirm their qualifications and “second” this motion by email, and plan to attend the founding meeting at a date and place to be determined.

Once again, the replies to the July '03 letter, during August and September of 2003, were enthusiastic. Thus it seemed reasonable to consider the “motion” of Singapore '02 now to be seconded!

Meanwhile, however, one response came from the Great Commission Roundtable, a global-level entity representing the Lausanne Committee and the World Evangelical Fellowship (now Association). They asked that we sit down with their executive committee and discuss the Third Call proposal from their point of view. As a result of this very reasonable request, a third letter, October 3, 2003 (See attached) then was sent out putting things on hold until after the expected meeting with the GRC in January of 2004. This third letter asked for definitive formal, official organizational replies to the Call.

Okay, that January meeting took place. Following the meeting the GRC formally responded:

Dear Dr. Winter:

Blessings in the name of the Almighty! On behalf of Great Commission Roundtable, I want to express our deep gratitude for accepting our invitation to be part of the Roundtable in Sierra Madre last week, a valuable exchange of ideas and clarifying questions about “The Third Call for Global Networking”.

As you requested, please find the statement from the participants of this Roundtable as follows:

The dialogue between the GCR roundtable participants and Ralph Winter offered a valuable exchange of ideas as well as an opportunity to clarify issues through questions. In the spirit of this conversation, we request that the Third Call process and leadership be sensitive to existing grass-roots, national and regional mission structures. We also ask that the proposed Third Call meeting take place some time after the October 2004 Lausanne Forum.

On a personal level, we reaffirm our appreciation to Ralph, for his life and profound contribution to the global mission movement. His legacy will last a long time.”

May the Lord continue blessing your lives and ministry for the advance of Global Evangelization

[Signed] David D. Ruiz M., International Coordinator, Great Commission Roundtable

Following that very friendly meeting with the GCR, a fourth letter went out dated March 12 (but not mailed until about June—I was recovering from a severe illness). That Fourth letter is attached with its original date, March 12, 2004. It is the source of the quote from the GCR.

Moving Ahead

At this point we approached the YWAM base in Amsterdam as a possible place to meet. Note that the total cost of flying people in from all over the world is probably less to Amsterdam than to any other point. (We did not choose that location because it was in the West.) The YWAM consent and sample dates came through a few days ago, just as I was leaving for the Lausanne meeting in Thailand.

Nothing now stands between us and the founding meeting of a Global Network of Mission Structures. It is time to renew our perspective. The Lausanne Forum that is just past is a good place to start.

Renewing Our Perspective

The Lausanne Forum of 2004 (which occurred just a few days ago) was a major Lausanne meeting, thirty years after the first in 1974. Interestingly, I gave a plenary presentation in 1974, “The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism.” Now, thirty years later I believe I was the only plenary speaker from 1974 present at the Third Lausanne meeting.

All of the Lausanne meetings (including dozens of regional and national meetings) during these thirty years have had marvelous results. This time 1,700 people from 136 countries attended, speaking something like 50 languages. Lausanne meetings have consistently introduced the churches of West and Non-West to the multiple challenges of the Christian faith, and they have always invited a broader representation of Christian believers from around the world than are represented by the World Evangelical Association or any other existing global entity of which I know.

However, the focus of all of the Lausanne meetings has been primarily 1) the reaffirmation of our basic theology and 2) the reexamination of the multiple responsibilities and opportunities of *existing churches* world over. The latter, of course, logically includes cross-cultural mission to peoples within which there is as yet no witness (e.g. “Classical Mission,” that is, “Unreached Peoples” outreach). However, the unreached peoples dimension at Lausanne gatherings has always been a relatively small percentage of the various “tracks” or “issue groups,” since churches do indeed have a wide variety of obligations under God.

Thus, at Thailand there were 31 “Issue” groups, such as, #4 Holistic mission, #8 Transformation of Cities and Slums, #16 Religious and Non-Religious Spirituality, #18 Evangelization of Children, #20 Understanding Muslims, #23 Reaching the Youth Generation, #24 Empowering Women and Men, #26 Discipling Oral Learners. Only #6 specifically focused on the remaining outreach to unreached peoples.

Even then the task in #6 was divided as #6a and #6b. The latter covered the need for outreach to “disabled” peoples cross cultural or not. It was said that disabled people number 650 million and constitute the third largest “country” in the world, an “Unreached People.” These issue groups mentioned could have all included some reference to peoples without a viable church among them (not just to unreached individuals), but with the exception of #6a, most all groups focused on what existing churches within reached groups might do in their immediate locality. Even the one on Islam was substantially on the need for church people to understand Islam, not on doing pioneer mission work within the culture of Islam. In fact, in important matters, the church people in the Muslim Issue group could not agree with the handful of missiologists present.

But, all told, it was an inspirational conference, located in marvelous facilities with world-class, lavish food arrangements. It was in no significant way a meeting of mission leaders concerned to penetrate the last frontiers. But, it was not supposed to be. To point this out is not to be critical but to acknowledge its real function.

Furthermore, it was not the intent of the conference to establish any sort of an ongoing global structure to facilitate mission agencies networking in the area of frontier missions. That remains to be done. That will happen, Lord willing, April 18-21.

What Can We Envision in Amsterdam?

What is envisioned is not a conference costing millions of dollars of subsidy, as have the Lausanne conferences. The very opposite. We don't expect to rely on a single penny of subsidy. A global networking function is *the goal of the meeting*, not the discussion of mission strategies. Today, with email, a great deal can be done without any face-to-face global meetings. The purpose of our expected April '05 "founding meeting" in Amsterdam is simply to set up the essential ongoing structure of coordination and mutual edification between mission structures focused on the "classical mission" of going where Christ is not named.

As the result of this quite unique purpose, it is proposed that no money be spent on anything but room and board and travel, and that the latter be spread out so no agency sending a delegate will pay more than any other (See the hypothetical table at the end of this cover letter). If these economizing plans do not turn out ideally, later meetings can do things differently. But minimizing cost is a hallmark of the mission tradition. Since missions are an "out of sight, out of mind" operation, donations are always hard to secure, and agencies need to conserve every penny they get.

Practicalities

1. Due to the increased delays in getting visas these days of heightened security against terrorists, we need to move quickly to confirm who is coming. See page 8 and 9 where travel details are mentioned. Note the Nov 20th deadline below.

2. This founding meeting need not require delegates from more than 30 agencies, one delegate per approved agency. To be neutral we need to accept agencies in the order in which they apply and are approved. Those which respond last may not be able to be accepted. A number of agencies have already applied. If they are approved by the credentials committee (see next paragraph) they will be the first to be included. However, no one is going to pick and choose which agency sends a delegate. That will be determined by the order of application.

3. A credentials committee has been assembled, simply to review the basic facts about the agencies wanting to send a delegate. An appropriate agency, as mentioned earlier, *must have at least five cross-culturally-experienced members for a minimum of three years of operation, and the agency must be concerned seriously with unreached peoples*. Unless your agency is given the go-ahead signal by this credentials committee, you must not plan to send a delegate. Also, if your definitive reply comes later than November 20 it may be too late to be counted in.

4. In addition to agencies approved by the credentials committee, that same committee will accept applications from a maximum of a single official delegate from ten national (or regional) associations of missions, such as NEMA of Nigeria, the IFMA in the USA, and the IMA of India. These delegates will be considered **consultants**, non-voting, unless they also represent a specific approved sending structure.

5. What will be the actual cost for each and every delegate, one from each agency?

- a. Room and board (nine meals, three nights) 65 Euros(about \$81.25 US)
- b. Travel pool, about 614 Euros (\$767 US)
- c. Registration, \$0

Where did these figures come from? We do not expect there to be any expenses other than costs incurred by the delegates themselves, which means travel, food, space. We have been given a firm cost for room and board of sixty-five Euro dollars, which at the moment is US \$81.25 for the evening meal the 18th through lunch the 21st, including overnight the three nights 18-20. The travel pool is an estimate, hopefully high. Exact travel pool costs will be worked out by December 1st **if we have prompt replies for our credentials committee to consider.**

Once we know precisely from where delegates will be coming, an agency in the Netherlands will ascertain the lowest possible round trip air fare from all those places. If this should turn out anything like what I outlined hypothetically in my 2nd (July 31, '03) letter, each delegate (no matter whether they are near to Amsterdam or far) will pay \$767 US into the travel pool (See the last page). I don't think that amount will be higher and it may well be lower. On top of that, the amazingly economical board and room will be added.

What Will Be the Global Network of Mission Structures?

It seems very strange that while global level meetings of like-minded people are common, and church people often gather to discuss theology and/or many different kinds of ministries, it seems sometimes that people are less enthusiastic when *mission people* want to gather on the global level, even on the national level.

In the United States, the Foreign Mission Conference of North America did not start until 1891, which was 90 years after mission agencies (denominational or interdenominational) began to emerge. After a few years the FMCNA decided that only denominational agencies were legitimate, asking interdenominational agencies not to vote. This, in 1917, virtually forced into being the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association, when the CIM, SIM, AIM etc. were still fairly young. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was present at the 1910 meeting but there were in those days far fewer interdenominational agencies. In 1925, 75% of American missionaries were sent out by the mainline denominations. This dominance had dropped to 5% by 1980.

By the 1980 meeting in Edinburgh, no such distinctions were raised (denominational or interdenominational), and any entity functioning as a sending mission structure that had five cross-cultural missionaries for at least three years was welcome to send delegates. That 1980 meeting became a large gathering of 146 agencies or so, all paying their own travel. The proposed GNMS may in the future hold large meetings, too. But in an age of email, that need and frequency will be far less.

What will the GNMS do? It will do whatever the member agencies decide. The founding meeting will elect a board. That board, governed by the members, will do whatever the member agencies decide. Many of the things a global office will do will parallel and supplement what is being done on a national and regional level. We recall that the follow-through of the 1910 meeting created a periodical with a global perspective. The GNMS office can maintain close ties to the Lausanne Committee, the World Evangelical Association, and the Great Commission Roundtable, etc. One specific thing that needs to be done is to collect, on the world level a list of email and postal addresses for all the agencies in the world which are seriously involved in what can be called frontier missions. Thousands of agencies are doing good things all around the

world. But *the hardest and most complex task is frontier missions to unreached peoples*. The relatively fewer frontier mission agencies have every reason to be in touch with each other. Phill Butler has done a marvelous job of fostering collaboration in regional areas. This needs to be done on the world level. Note also that the very phenomenon of migration forces consideration of global level collaboration. It is a concern that can best be dealt with effectively on the world level. It is the growing phenomenon of more and more major people groups spreading all over the world by the millions. These are called national “diasporas” (the Greek word for *dispersion*). Note that national and regional groups by their very geographical confines are not well equipped to track intercontinental migrations.

A substantial book entitled, *Scattered*, was given out to all participants at the Lausanne meeting in Thailand earlier this month. This superb book may be the first serious study of the *diaspora* of a given nation from the standpoint of missions. Millions of Filipino workers are all over the world, just like the ancient diaspora of Jewish believers. Just as Paul sought to minister in and to Jewish synagogues around the Roman empire, hundreds of Filipino pastors are out across the world doing the same for Philippine believers in foreign countries. The millions of Filipinos out there are both a mission *field* and a remarkably strategic mission base. Indeed, the book has a whole chapter which agonizes over whether to call these pastors in foreign countries missionaries or not.

We are concerned for the Gospel to reach to all “Unreached Peoples,” that is, remaining ethnic groups within which there is not yet any culturally relevant church movement. The Filipino diaspora and other diasporas from other nations are very crucial. Whatever we call the pastors who are out there in foreign lands ministering to their own countrymen, whether they are called missionaries or not, the really challenging task is for them and their church members to learn enough of the language and culture of the host country to be able to penetrate the unreached groups in that country if there are any.

What is a Missionary as Distinct from an Evangelist?

Just for the record, and in light of our upcoming meeting in Amsterdam, it may be helpful to make a purely pragmatic distinction, namely, 1) an *evangelist* is someone who is reaching souls without having to puzzle through into a foreign language and culture. 2) the word *missionary* then, means those who work cross culturally within a people group where there is not yet a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement—that is, they work within a group in which no one has ever been able effectively to explain the Gospel in that situation.

The latter work is not more important, for the angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who comes to repentance. But the latter work is clearly more *urgent*, both because people in such groups have no access to the Gospel, and, furthermore, the task of reaching into such groups from the outside is incredibly more demanding, perplexing, and difficult to accomplish. In other words, a missionary is one who a) crosses into a different culture, and 2) needs to do so because in that other culture there is not yet a “viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.”

To be able to send a delegate to Amsterdam, an agency does not even have to be involved as yet in an unreached people. If the agency has five people who have had at

least three years of cross-cultural ministry, and, is intending to assist in reaching the unreached peoples, that is the minimal test for at least this first meeting.

We rejoice in the many agencies which are serving the various church constituencies around the world even though they may not be focused on unreached peoples. However, at this stage we are convinced some agencies must be focused seriously on outreach to the truly unreached peoples.

Your agency does not need to attend the founding meeting in April of 2005 to become a member of the resulting GNMS. However, if you wish to send a delegate to that meeting these are the essential elements:

1. Your agency must be one of the kind the credentials committee will approve, see page 2.
2. Your agency must be able to afford the necessary US \$850.
3. We cannot guarantee translation from English into other languages,
4. You must reply by Nov 20 so we can confirm your delegate by Dec 1st See travel details on next sheet.
5. You must be able to secure a visa in time.

If your agency can fulfill these conditions and does not apply too late for there still to be room, we will welcome your delegate to the founding meeting of the Global Network of Mission Structures!

Blessings on you as you consider this,

Ralph D. Winter, provisional convener

Note: While this document is here to provide a perspective on one type of frontier in mission, the reader may wonder what actually happened at the meeting in Amsterdam April 19-20, 2005. The meeting turned out beyond all expectations! A good deal of information is now on the website, www.gnms.net

Editorial Reflections: A New Strategy: Why Didn't We Think of It Before?

(Global Network of Mission Structures, with comparisons to the 1910 meeting).

IJFM 24:1 (Spring 2007).

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/24_1_PDFs/Editorial_Reflections.pdf

How do missionaries figure out what to do? In the history of missions there have been huge changes.

The famous World Missionary Conference of 1910 in Edinburgh, Scotland was not only built upon profound and serious pre-conference studies, it issued into extensive post-conference research as well. Nothing similar had ever been done before, or has happened since. One of its major contributions was its hefty 10 x 14 inch, approximately 200-page atlas of missionary work, *A Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions*. The proposed atlas for 2010 is currently titled *Atlas of Global Christianity*. This sequel is being produced for the 2010 Centennial meeting sponsored by the University of Edinburgh, but 1910's many other documents will possibly never again be matched.

In all of that flurry of serious study, however, the basic idea was to make (individual) disciples in all countries. It was not clear in 1910 that the Bible speaks mainly of peoples, not countries. Nor was it clear that the Great Commission does not speak of making disciples of *individuals*, but of whole peoples. I have not checked this, but I don't think they emphasized the fact that the Great Commission does not merely say "teaching ... all that I have taught you," but is, in a sense, a restatement of the "Thy will be done *on earth*" part of the Lord's Prayer: "teaching them *to obey* all that I have commanded you."

For our purposes here, however, it is enough to note that in 1910 they talked mostly about winning *individuals in countries*, rather than focusing on *peoples* where there had not yet been a missiological breakthrough. Thus, for example, all of Latin America was not considered a mission field because in each country there were already Catholics. Not even the 20 million indigenous peoples in Latin America surfaced in their country-by-country perspective.

Meanwhile, we have seen in the last 50 years an enormous shift of mission strategy from going beyond winning individuals to making sure those individuals are safely members of an accountable Christian fellowship. We talk more often of "church planting" than mere evangelism. In the past 25 years, we have seen a huge shift from countries to peoples, and specifically "unreached" peoples.

It is time to go further? *I would like to introduce a new term: Global Peoples*. This is not totally new, of course, but there has been a huge and totally unprecedented volcanic blast of global migration that has scattered the members of literally thousands of peoples all over the earth.

I contend that it is no longer entirely reasonable to think of the Samoans being in Samoa or the Swazis being in Swaziland, since in both cases there are more of them outside their homeland than there are left where they started. But even where the majority of the members of a people are still at home, a large proportion may have migrated elsewhere. Take the case of the Turkmen. While they are still mainly in Turkmenistan, it is nevertheless true that almost half of them are scattered in thirteen other countries.

This fairly obvious insight has more than one value. It may be easier to get to some places than the homeland of a people. Also, members of a people may be more easily reached where they are no longer settled and self-confident about their way of life. Of course, in many cases the migrated group, especially if cut off from its source for many years, will have little relation to its roots. Even so, the globalized members of a group may still have an inherent advantage in going back with the Gospel to the place where they originated.

How does this insight change things? It means that when a missionary, church or mission agency picks a people within which to work, it would be wise to take seriously that group's various locations and, if necessary, regard it as a "Global People."

This "Global People" perspective is also one of the things that underlies the rationale for the formation of the Global Network of Mission Structures, and now for the plans of the GNMS, the Third World Mission Association and the Asia Mission Association to jointly sponsor in 2010 another meeting structured like the 1910 meeting, namely one made up of delegates sent by mission agencies from all over the world. More on that meeting later. It is not the same as the small conference of scholars which will meet in Edinburgh, nor is it the Lausanne Committee meeting which will, as usual, focus on envisioning church leaders.

Edinburgh 1910 in the Year 2010

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/edinburgh-1910-in-the-year-2010>

The first question is inevitably, “What happened in 1910 at Edinburgh that was so great?”

Two periodicals give background about the unique nature of the 1910 meeting. They can be seen at www.Tokyo2010.org. While only one of the 2010 meetings is intentionally structured like the one in 1910, all four meetings commemorating E-1910 will have a good purpose and success.

Four 2010 meetings consider Edinburgh 1910

In June 1910, over 1,000 mission leaders met in Edinburgh, Scotland for a World Missionary Conference, representing 162 mission agencies. Four international conferences are being convened in 2010, each in its own way looking back to the Edinburgh 1910 meeting. Organizers of the four meetings met on Nov. 10, 2008 in Boston to compare notes and to pledge cooperation. Here’s a brief description of each meeting in 2010, in chronological order. (See picture on page 7.)

May 11-15, 2010 in Tokyo, Japan

The Global Mission Consultation & Celebration will feature evening sessions of local “celebrations” open to anyone from local churches in Japan. But during the day it will be a very serious “consultation” of mission executives and mission leaders—because, as in 1910, all participants will be delegates chosen and sent by mission agencies, no one will be invited as a person. Tokyo churches are hosting the meeting. This meeting is thus far officially sponsored by various regional and global associations of mission agencies: the Asia Missions Association (AMA), the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America (IFMA—Canada, USA, Mexico, and some Caribbean nations, now CrossGlobal Link), the Global Network of Mission Structures (GNMS, founded in 2005 at Amsterdam), and the Third World Mission Association (TWMA). The intention now is to gain the sponsorship of as many national level associations as possible who can, in a final stage, encourage their mission-agency members to send delegates. See www.Tokyo2010.org for more information.

June 2-6, 2010 in Edinburgh, Scotland

Edinburgh 2010 has come into being to seek new direction for mission in the twenty-first century by bringing together representatives of different strands of mission and church life for a very focused and highly organized process of study and reflection. It is expected to culminate in the centenary celebration of the 1910 World Missionary Conference which will take place in Edinburgh again from 2-6 June 2010 when 1,200 Christian leaders will gather. The study process revolves around nine specific themes and guidelines are to be developed to help mission leaders evaluate their models of mission within the broad theme of “Witnessing to Christ Today.” Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Independent Churches from around the world are currently involved in preparing for the centenary celebrations in partnership with New College at the University of Edinburgh. For more information visit the website www.edinburgh2010.org.

October 16-25, 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa

At the urging of Evangelical leaders worldwide, the Lausanne Movement, with the participation of the World Evangelical Alliance, will host the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa, 16-25 October 2010. Cape Town 2010 will provide a global forum—before, during and after the Congress—in which leaders from around the world will explore issues facing the Church and God’s world. Then together, leaders will prayerfully seek God’s guidance in responding so that God’s name may be honored and many more men, women and young people will be able to hear and respond to the message of Christ presented in a relevant and culturally appropriate manner. It is anticipated that over 4,000 leaders from 200 countries will attend Cape Town 2010. The Participant Selection Team, made up of leaders worldwide, has established specific criteria to ensure that the Congress will include men and women from a broad spectrum of nationalities, ethnicities, ages, occupations and denominational affiliations. More details are found at www.lausanne.org.

November 4-7, 2010 in Boston

Seminary students and faculty from all over the world, but particularly as based in the schools of theology, seminaries and university divinity schools of the Greater Boston (USA) area, will hold a conference sponsored by the Boston Theological Institute (BTI), the consortium of such schools. (A similar meeting was held in 1910 in Boston shortly after the one in Edinburgh in 1910.) The BTI envisions a conference that will come toward the end of 2010, offering a summation and analysis of the previous “Edinburgh Conferences.” The conference in Boston, with the theme “The Changing Contours of World Mission and Christianity,” will reflect the student and academic character of its setting. This conference will be an opportunity not only to interact with key mission leaders but will also include workshops welcoming student participation at a variety of points, particularly around the leading themes of the Edinburgh mission process. The goal of the conference is to discern a vision for what might constitute mission in the 21st century, a mission that stands in the trajectory of Christian witness from the earliest days of the Church and is inclusive of matters relating to human flourishing, reconciliation, faith in the future and conducive of religious liberty. See <http://www.2010boston.org> for more information.

All four meetings are part of a process of reflection and activism that will likely continue beyond 2010. Though constituencies and agendas of the four differ markedly, the organizers have expressed a commitment to work together and will send representatives to each other’s meetings.

Although I hope to be involved enthusiastically in at least the Edinburgh and Cape Town meetings, the reason I am most interested in the Tokyo meeting—and the reason we are highlighting it in this issue of *Mission Frontiers*, is due to its serious focus on the mission agency level of concerns and activity. The other meetings will probably stress more what church leaders can do. The only meeting that will be a repetition of the kind of meeting that took place in 1910 will be the one in Tokyo.

Tokyo 2010

What will Tokyo be like? No one will be invited! All participants will be selected and delegated by mission associations and mission agencies. This is what happened in

1910 and that would seem to be one reason why the 1910 meeting has had such an impact across the years—the huge New York meeting ten years earlier that attracted up to 200,000 has been almost forgotten. At the website already mentioned you can find the details about 1910. They can be consulted and downloaded.

Finally, why is a global level meeting of mission leaders important? Because like an avalanche, the peoples of the world are now more and more global in their location. That is the reason for the new Global Network of Mission Structures—to track peoples and offer to mission structures the data essential to an approach, people by people, that will take into account the location of the members of any given ethnic group in the entire globe. This kind of research cannot as easily be done by national or even regional associations of mission agencies. (See the interview on page 13.)

What was the Edinburgh 1910 meeting?

In 1886 D. L. Moody sponsored a meeting of college students. That meeting resulted in the formation of the famous Student Volunteer Movement. Those young students were 40 years old by 1910. They organized a global meeting of mission leaders who met in Edinburgh in 1910.

The meeting was not absolutely perfect.

For example, in order to please the Anglicans (who had outstanding mission work in Africa and India) they had to ignore the urgent need to evangelize the vast number of nominal Christians in Europe, America and Latin America. Missionaries to Europe and Latin America were outraged when they were not expected to participate! But the leaders of the meeting were earnestly trying to focus on only those fields where there were no Christians of any kind, or very few.

Also, to avoid the use of time at the conference arguing over denominational customs they excluded discussion of theological issues such as modes of baptism.

They had a “credentials committee” which studied and approved the theological statements of the agencies from which they expected delegates. Thus, they did not require each delegate to sign a doctrinal statement at the meeting. This is similar to other meetings of church or mission leaders where the participants come from organizations which already have published statements of faith.

The worst deficiency was the fact that no one present officially represented a non-Western mission agency. Even though Bishop Azariah had earlier started two mission agencies in India, he was in Edinburgh as a delegate of the Church Mission Society of England.

The meeting had, nevertheless, many good points.

- It sponsored extensive study and planning in advance.
- It was clearly focused on the unfinished missionary task.
- It set in motion one of the most valuable journals, the *International Review of Missions*.
 - It demonstrated the basic unity of the Protestant mission world.
 - It was able to give serious thought to and discussion of many mission field problems.
 - It was the first time in the history of the world that so many diverse groups of Christians met together on the world level.

A similar meeting in 1980, commemorating the 70th anniversary, drew delegates from 47 non-Western mission agencies—one third of the total. At Tokyo in 2010 we expect that two thirds of the agencies will be from the Global South.

