

## Edinburgh 2020, Center for Missiological Research, Fuller Theological Seminary, May 13, 2020

### Introduction – Kirsteen Kim

The centenary of the famous World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910 – a decade ago – was the occasion for nearly a 100 conferences and study projects in all continents.

2020 represents a great opportunity to ask what we have learnt from the reflections in 2010, and since 1910, which can inform mission today. For reasons which I am about to explain, today's event selects three of the 2010 conferences – Tokyo, Cape Town, and Edinburgh.

In 1978, Ralph Winter, formerly professor here at Fuller Seminary and by then heading up the US Center for World Missions nearby, looked back on what he called a “marriage” twenty years before.<sup>1</sup> He was referring to the decision made in Accra, Ghana, by the International Missionary Council, the continuation of Edinburgh 1910, to merge into the World Council of Churches, which also originated in the World Missionary Conference.

It was intended that the integration of the IMC and the WCC would bring about structural unity in mission between the agencies of the West and the churches of the formerly colonized countries, or the Third World. But Winter argued that in fact this “marriage” had brought forth three different missionary “children.”

The first child was the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) within the World Council of Churches, which stood for the mission activities of the churches. These included agencies operating under church mission boards and also churches oriented toward mission, mostly in their own particular contexts – what today might be called “missional churches.”

The second child was what is now the Lausanne Movement which by then had held a series of congresses catalysed by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. These included the historic gathering in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. Winter described Lausanne as representing the vision for “world evangelization” of leaders of evangelical churches and related mission organizations.

The third “child of Ghana” was envisioned in the “call” which Winter and other US-American missiologists had drafted for a conference of *missionaries* committed to what

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph D. Winter, “Ghana: Preparation for Marriage,” *International Review of Mission* 67/267 (1978), 338-353.

he called “cross-cultural missions.” He emphasized that these would increasingly be from “non-Western mission societies,” and he hoped that these missionaries from other continents would meet with Western missionaries as equals.

Winter did not see this diversity of global mission networks as a problem but as an expression of a fruitful marriage. As I look back on the year 2010, it strikes me that Winter’s prediction was largely fulfilled. Among the many conferences to mark the centenary of 2010, three were outstanding because they were called by global networks. These were: Edinburgh 2010, which was sponsored by the World Council of Churches; Cape Town 2010, organized by the Lausanne Movement; and Tokyo2010, which was conceived by Dr. Winter.

These three events correspond to Winter’s “three children of Ghana” and Edinburgh, Cape Town and Tokyo form the basis for the structure of today’s meeting.

I have personal interest in these three conferences because, while working as the research coordinator for the Edinburgh 2010 project, I was also a member of the Lausanne Theology Working Group preparing for Cape Town 2010. Furthermore, I attended Tokyo2010, as a representative of Edinburgh. The Tokyo conference took place in May, and I shared from the platform there about the plans for Edinburgh. I organized the study activities for the Edinburgh event, which took place in June. And in October, I travelled to Cape Town, South Africa, for the Lausanne congress.

So I coincided with my co-presenter today, Dr. Allen Yeh at all three events, and I crossed paths at Tokyo with Mr. Dave Datema.

It is my view that all three events were faithful to the memory of Edinburgh 1910 but each in a different way. I hope this afternoon will demonstrate this and also suggest some ways forward toward further collaboration in mission.