

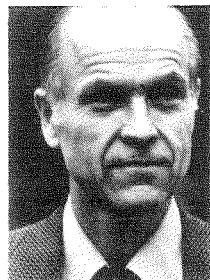
Something new and exciting is in the air. There has been nothing like it since the triumphalism of the 1920's collapsed under the twin blows of the Depression and the Second World War. Certainly the angry, reactionary pessimism of the 60's would not have predicted it. What is it? It is a new awareness 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.¹ 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.

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.

NEW FRONTIERS: EDINBURGH '80 TO WHEATON '83



Ralph Winter is founder and Director of the United States Center for World Mission, where 65 Frontier Mission agencies interface on completing the job of world evangelization.

The Immediate Background of Edinburgh 1980

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 descriptions make 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 professor 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 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 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."²

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.

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

1910/1980— Differences in Background



would be teaching any course at Yale University 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*, 1979, 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, and 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 evangelism in some sense or other by the year 2,000.

—One major church tradition, the Southern Baptist convention, had announced the year 2,000 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 CCCOWE 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 of 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 movements 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.

No one present in the bustle and excitement of the meeting in 1980 had much time to reflect on compari-

1910/1980—
Differences in the
Meetings
Themselves

sons 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 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 re-focusing 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 back then was 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 Interdenominational 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 By-passed Peoples Era of Tounsend 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 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
<hr/>	
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 massive Cantonese macrosphere, for example. The "people group" interpretation of Biblical "nations" highlights the fact that such broad socio-cultural categories are composed of perhaps dozens or hundreds of still smaller *unimax* peoples which we must take seriously if we are determined to seek groups within which there is highly efficient internal communication. Does God intend to do His mission work via trace lan-

guages 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 2,000," 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 missions 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 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 preceeding 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 the 1980 Edinburgh 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 larger phenomenon. What would Edinburgh 1910 have 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 preceeding 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 and the World Council of Churches 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?³

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.

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 intend 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 give rise to its divergent reputations.⁴ Speaking of the 1910 conference he, says:

Many viewed it as in the succession of London, 1888 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 the home constituencies, and [they] became large popular assemblies . . . Gustav Warneck, in his paper from London, 1888, proposed a body similar to what the International Missionary Council (IMC) became . . . [those conferences] created expectation 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 1900, "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. (Parenthesis added.)

The distinction 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 the next world-level conference, Jerusalem, 1923, was *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 Luasanne 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 effec-

tively 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 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 supported it 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, 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 reliably, durably, or authoritatively "the church" than the committed 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 an A + B Paradigm. It might become, in a way, Edinburgh 1980's 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 In-

dia 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 evangelical entity can be involved, whether a denomination, a donor, a local congregation or even an 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 move 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 Nicholis 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 W.E.F. 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 1980, 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 Nicholis, Executive Secretary of the W.E.F. 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 stressed at Edinburgh '80, and it is not surprising that three key responsibilities in the

task force developing the second consultation are carried by veterans of the 1980 meeting. Thus, it is unquestionable that 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 then a need soon for another pure B conference like Edinburgh 1910 and 1980? Certainly there do need to be more regional Paradigm B conferences. In the USA, EFMA and IFMA meet annually as crucially important pure B conferences. It was truly edifying for the leaders of missions 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 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. 338-353, and "1980 and that Certain Elite," *Missiology, and International Review*, Vol 4, April 1976.

4. William Richey Hogg, "Edinburgh 1910—Perspective 1980," *Occasional Bulletin of Mission Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October, 1980, pp. 146-153.

