

Mission in the Twenty-first Century

KIRSTEEN KIM¹

Like its predecessor one hundred years before, Edinburgh 2010 was a landmark event – but for a different reason. Edinburgh 2010 brought together an unprecedentedly wide coalition of different Christian churches, through umbrella bodies, in its celebration of world Christianity and study of what it means to ‘witness to Christ today’. The General Council of Edinburgh 2010 included official representatives of all the main strands of Christianity worldwide: Protestant, Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal (and other independent groups such as African Independent Churches). This show of confessional unity in mission was cemented by the willingness of the final plenary that there should be a Common Call to mission articulated on behalf of the delegates in the Closing Celebration on 6 June 2010.

In this concluding chapter, I would like to examine the understanding of mission that informed the Edinburgh 2010 project, highlight some ways in which the study process and conference pushed mission thinking further, and conclude by identifying priorities for the future.

Two paradigms of mission

One of the ‘transversal’ topics of Edinburgh 2010 was ‘Bible and mission’. As a transversal topic it was not a primary topic of investigation but a thread to be woven through the fabric of the

Edinburgh deliberations. When Christians gather from so many different churches, the Bible assumes even greater importance because it is the only source for theological reflection which all Christians share whatever their denomination or region. So the authority for what was asserted in the study processes was not often the tradition of the church but the biblical text. In addition to this, certain academic theologians and missionaries who transcend ecclesial boundaries were also used to justify different points of view.

Edinburgh 2010 took a biblical theme. 'Witnessing to Christ today' comes most directly from the writings of Luke, especially Acts 1:8: 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth'. The nature of that witness is demonstrated in Luke's account of the lives of the apostles and the early church in the chapters that follow in the book of Acts, and also retrospectively in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the gospel of Luke. Acts 1:8 encapsulates two insights about the nature of mission that shaped the planning and execution of Edinburgh 2010 and are reflected in its Common Call: that mission is God's initiative and that Christian faith is for the whole world. In the twentieth century these insights have been expressed in a more particular way through two paradigms of mission thinking known respectively as *missio Dei* and world Christianity.

Missio Dei

In the post-war and post-colonial period the global circumstances in which mission takes place were significantly altered, especially for Christians in Europe. By the 1960s the imperial world which had formed the context of Edinburgh 1910 was gone, the United States was the new global power and lots of newly independent nations were making their voices heard. As a result there was a great deal of reflection among mission agencies and churches about how to be faithful to the Great Commission in this new world order, especially in the newly constituted World Council of Churches, as Dr Dana Robert showed in her keynote address at the 2010 conference. This rethinking in the ecumenical movement led to a new paradigm

of mission which has become known by the shorthand *missio Dei*, God's mission. Not only did it become the paradigm of the mainly Protestant and Orthodox churches in the WCC but by the 1970s Catholics and Evangelicals had also come to use and own this broad approach. David Bosch's 1991 book *Transforming Mission* remains the best explication of the shift to the *missio Dei* paradigm.²

Missio Dei as a paradigm is multi-faceted and its dimensions are shown in a number of important practical consequences which are reflected in the way Edinburgh 2010 was organised. First, *missio Dei* puts mission at the very heart of the Trinity. It is a way of expressing the dependence of all human action on God's initiative so that human mission is merely a participation in God the Father's prior sending (mission) of the Son and the Spirit (John 3:16; 14:26). So mission is not only a practical task but also a theological matter. In 1910 the questions raised about mission were about its methods, efficiency and effectiveness. In order to get the different mission agencies to participate, such theological questions had been ruled out. But the Edinburgh 2010 study process and conference explicitly explored the meaning of mission in order to recognise the mistakes of the past and discern what it means to 'witness to Christ today'.

Second, because mission God's, it is at the centre of what it means to be a Christian and to be church. Instead of being a task added to the other activities of the church, and carried out by specialist missionaries and organisations, mission now appears as integral to church life and a natural part of participating in Christ. This puts the emphasis on the witness of the local church – each member in each place, rather than on sending missionaries, as the primary means of spreading the good news. Thus one consequence of the paradigm shift was that, whereas 1910 which was organised by missionary societies, the stakeholders of Edinburgh 2010 were mostly church bodies which define themselves as missionary.

A third aspect of the *missio Dei* paradigm is that mission takes place everywhere. World War Two led to the breakdown of the old division between the Christian world (Christendom) and the 'non-Christian world' on which Edinburgh 1910 was

predicated. In 1910 the focus was on the outgoing work of missions from Christendom, a message and way of life flowing from the West to the rest. Mission was an activity of enthusiasts in foreign countries which the churches needed to be persuaded to support. But Edinburgh 2010 primarily celebrated the worldwide presence and local witness of Christian churches themselves. At Edinburgh 2010 Christians from Europe, especially, who made up the largest group among the delegates, were acutely aware that their nations were also 'mission fields' in need of the renewing power of the gospel. In 2010 mission was understood as taking place in every continent primarily through the life of local churches.

Fourth, if mission is God's mission, then mission is one. *Missio Dei* stresses unity in mission not only for pragmatic reasons but as an integral part of witness to God. In the last one hundred years the ecumenical movement has reflected a great deal on the meaning and form that unity should take. No firm agreement has been reached but reflection on God as Trinity suggests that unity is not monolithic but differentiated and affirms that unity is bound up with the sending of the church into the world.⁴ Edinburgh 2010 represented a recognition by all the churches that mission and unity are inseparable. Mission is centripetal as well as centrifugal: it is as much about calling the church and the world into one as it is about going out into the world.

Finally, the *missio Dei* paradigm affirms that God's concern is with the whole world and all life. Therefore mission is holistic and transformative of every area of human experience. In the middle years of the twentieth century the ecumenical and evangelical missionary movements were torn apart by the question of which took priority in mission: evangelism or social action. At Edinburgh 2010 both were able to agree on integral mission encompassing both. Furthermore, if the whole world is God's concern, then mission reaches out to the whole creation. The 'transversals' of Edinburgh 2010 included 'ecological perspectives' because, although the human response to God's call to mission was an essential part of the theology of Edinburgh 2010, which issued in its Common Call to mission, human well-being and salvation is also inextricably linked to the liberation of the earth (Rom 8: 19-23).

World Christianity

The Edinburgh 2010 project also worked broadly within a second paradigm known as the 'world Christianity' paradigm, which has been developed especially by Andrew Walls and Lamin Sanneh,⁵ and illustrated in the *Atlas of Global Christianity* edited by Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross for the centenary.⁶ Although it has theological implications, the paradigm is based on the sociological observation that since 1910, when seventy percent of Christians lived in Europe, the centre of gravity of Christianity has been shifting southwards so that now getting on for seventy percent of the world's Christians are found outside the West. If present trends continue, within a decade or so the continent with the most Christians will no longer be Europe but Latin America or Africa. According to Walls, this 'serial expansion' is characteristic in the history of Christianity.⁷

Although the estimated proportion of the world's population which is Christian has stayed the same since 1910 – approximately one third – the paradigm portrays Christianity as more truly a world religion in the sense that it is at home in all parts of the world as 'the ultimate local religion'.⁸ This ability of Christianity to root itself amongst the different peoples of the world is explained by Walls and Sanneh using the analogy of translation, although others have preferred the terms inculturation or contextualisation as giving more emphasis to local initiative rather than missionary activity.⁹ Edinburgh 2010 was intended to celebrate world Christianity both as the realisation of the vision of 1910 and the result of the faithful witness of believers in Africa and Asia especially.

Reference to the shift in the centre of gravity of world Christianity from the North to the South combines the world Christianity paradigm with the division of the world into 'global North' and 'global South'. This is primarily an economic distinction but it also corresponds roughly to the line between the old colonising and colonised worlds, so that the advent of world Christianity can also be a way of talking about how there is now partnership between Western churches and former mission churches. Or it may be combined with post-colonial perception that the 'the empire strikes back' and mission goes into

reverse, as the tables appear to be turned and those who were last are now first. In view of the North-South shift, a great deal of discussion in the 2010 General Council was given to whether it was appropriate to centre the commemoration in Edinburgh, or if it would not be more fitting to hold an event or events in the global South to signify this new reality. As a compromise, although the conference was held in Edinburgh, it was planned that it should include at least sixty percent of participants from 'the South' and the study process was polycentric; events were sponsored in other regions of the world, and the project website mapped as far as possible the many different activities worldwide.

The two paradigms of *missio Dei* and world Christianity complement each other in one important respect. *Missio Dei* was the result of theological considerations which brought together churches of different confessions. The world Christianity paradigm draws attention to the geographical spread of mission. In the twentieth century, the term 'ecumenical' has generally been applied to the former approach – the unity of churches. But its original meaning as it applied to the councils of the early church was more geographical: it brought together all the churches of the world.¹⁰ These two dimensions of what it means to be 'ecumenical' – confessional and geographical – were in tension in celebrations of the Edinburgh 1910 centenary. In the end Edinburgh 2010 achieved a very high degree of confessional unity but was not as representative geographically as it might have been.

Beyond the paradigms

The study process and conference discussions both affirmed the two paradigms of *missio Dei* and world Christianity and also pushed beyond them. Several issues emerged which challenged the received wisdom and suggested further developments in mission theology and practice. Here will consider three: power, plurality and migration.

Mission and power

In retrospect the captivity of Edinburgh 1910 to colonial modes of operation is obvious and so participants at Edinburgh 2010

were especially mindful that mission has often been distorted and corrupted by its links with worldly power. The topic of 'mission and power', which was tackled Study Group 4, is the first new development to note. The group focused the discussion on a case study of the Canadian schools system that was so unjust to the Indigenous people. It was clear in the study that there are many parallel examples from around the world. Several of the 'transversal' topics also dealt with justice issues, aiming to redress past wrongs by including women, youth, and the marginalised or 'subaltern voices'. Theme 7 on 'Christian communities in contemporary contexts' dealt especially with the inequalities of poverty, gender and migration. Ecological perspectives also reminded the conference of the danger that mission is exploitative rather than empowering. As a response to such injustices, the conference called for repentance and wherever possible healing and reconciliation. Indeed in recent years healing and reconciliation has become an important new way of characterising mission.¹¹

The study of 'mission and power' drew attention to the abuse of power in mission but if mission is done by local churches then it is not always done from a position of power. Not all Christians are in a position of power over others. Nevertheless the question of power underlay many aspects of the conference deliberations since mission takes place among the powers and principalities, prophetically speaking truth to power and bringing liberation to the oppressed. A Pentecostal delegate pointed out that there was a need to talk more explicitly the biblical vocabulary of spiritual power(s) and power encounters – language which is readily understood in many parts of the global South especially. Edinburgh 2010 also discussed the right use of power and the power of the Holy Spirit in mission. The prevalent discourse of Edinburgh 1910 about 'advancing the kingdom of Christ' no longer seemed appropriate in a post-imperial and post-Christendom age. Instead mission as 'joining in with the Spirit' would be a better way to describe the approach of Edinburgh 2010. This phrase, which was picked up in the report of the Listening Group, both captures the Trinitarian understanding of mission from the *missio Dei* paradigm and also expresses the flexible and contextu-

al nature of contemporary mission activity. Furthermore, mission as 'joining in with the Spirit' implies that mission is first and foremost a movement from below rather than an imposition from above.

'Joining in with the Spirit' as a definition of mission also suggests that mission is a spiritual endeavour. The question of 'mission and power' was also covered but under the heading of 'mission spirituality' (Theme 9). Here the focus of attention was the motivating and sustaining power of the Spirit of Christ in mission, which leads to transformation and revitalisation. Mission spirituality is grounded in the love of God and the way of Jesus Christ. It involves authentic discipleship 'daily, local and lived' on the basis of the Scriptures, prayer, confession and the Sacraments in community. A recurrent theme across the project was the need for vulnerability in mission and the risks of suffering and persecution associated with 'deep' discipleship. Theme 6 reminded the conference that discipleship is supported by a holistic approach to theological education, which forms every Christian at the highest possible level in biblical, ecumenical and global ways.

Mission and plurality

The second issue to note was the question of mission in a plural world. The proportion of the world's population estimated to be Christians has not changed since 1910 but still stands at about one third. At Edinburgh 1910 this figure was regarded as too low because Christianity was regarded as 'the world's religion' and it was considered a realistic possibility that it could become universalised by 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation'.¹² Yet at Edinburgh 2010, it seemed accepted that Christianity is just one of the world's religions, and is likely to remain so, even while Christians continue to share the good news and invite a response. What was celebrated therefore was not the growth of Christianity at the expense of other forms of belief but the growth of Christianity in parts of the world where Christ was not known before and the worldwide spread of Christian witness. Despite this, it was pointed out that the majority of adherents to other religions do not know a Christian and that religious freedom is lacking in many parts of the

world – the situation of Christians in Islamic states being a special concern.

The *missio Dei* paradigm can be used to secularise Christian mission for, if God's concern is with the whole world, it might be asked what is special about the church. Or, if God's Spirit is already at work in the whole creation why the need for evangelism and conversion to Christ? Since God created all peoples and cultures, are not their religions also valid paths to salvation? Some have suggested that 'dialogue' not 'mission' is the only acceptable approach in the context of different religious communities. In view of such questioning, the choice of 'Christian mission among other faiths' as the theme for the work Study Group 2 was controversial. As a result of the study process, the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call affirmed that dialogue, respect, friendship, reconciliation and hospitality are all integral to Christian witness in contexts of religious plurality as elsewhere, but confidence in the Christian gospel also demands testimony to the uniqueness of Christ and that the Christian invitation to salvation is for the whole world. Those Christians who have long lived in the context of other religions were able to share what it means to 'give an account of our hope' (1 Peter 3:15) in such circumstances.

The contemporary challenges to mission and evangelism were especially brought to the fore by theme 3. Although postmodernity is often thought of as a feature of the West, the study group recognised in its title 'mission and postmodernities' that there are many forms that it takes and that these are experienced in other continents as well. In some cases this is because of the rapid spread of ideas in a highly globalised world but this is not always the reason. Asian participants, for example, pointed out that common features of what the West describes as 'postmodernity' – such as pluralism – have been present in their contexts for centuries. The emphasis on 'mission in six continents' since the 1960s has tended to regionalise mission as done in contextual ways in different places but here there was a recognition of the need for a concerted effort across continents to address the dominant philosophies of our age. Although historically Westerners have not had any hesitation about evangelising other regions, sometimes the impressi-

on is given that only those who have 'come of age' through the processes of modernity can understand and contribute to mission in the West. The participation of people of all continents in discussion of this theme demonstrated that mission and evangelism in the West is not a fundamentally different matter from anywhere else and that Christians from other places and cultures share a responsibility for the evangelisation of Europe and North America and are shedding new light on it.

Mission and migration

The third issue which challenged the existing paradigms was the issue of migration and mission, which was raised especially by Themes 5 and 7. A world Christianity approach which divides the world into separate regions may play down the movements between them and the presence of migrant communities everywhere. And the *missio Dei* paradigm, which has emphasised mission as the role of each local church in its own region, has contributed to a view of churches as stationary, planted for ever in one place. The issue of migration has highlighted the interconnectedness and flows between different regions of the world and militates against the tendencies to regionalisation and compartmentalisation of the world into separate cultural blocks.¹³ Today we see churches on the move, especially from poorer countries to richer ones in the West and in the Gulf. Churches exist very often in diaspora and in communities which have only recently migrated from one region to another. Although some complained that diaspora communities remain hermetically sealed off from the wider community and do not share their faith, others see the potential of diaspora movements for witness to Christ in parts of the world where Christianity is weak.

The increasing plurality of Christian expression caused by migration, especially in the world's cities, poses new challenges to unity, as Study Group 8 working on 'mission and unity' recognised. This is especially the case when the new churches are independent of the traditional denominations, such as many of those from sub-Saharan Africa, China and some other parts of Asia. One problem is that from the perspective of existing churches with a longer Christian tradition, the validity of

such new expressions of Christianity is often questioned and so it is difficult to achieve the mutual respect that is essential for working together. Furthermore, when migrant communities are poor, they may be seen as targets of humanitarian aid rather than as partners in mission. Another problem is that newer churches may not respect the older ones, believing themselves to be the more vibrant and valid form of Christianity. In either case the unity of witness is impaired.

Some smaller-scale migration is the result of intentional missionary movements. The United States continues to send high numbers of missionaries overseas and so do some European countries but in recent years rising economic powers with large Christian populations – such as South Korea, Brazil and Nigeria – have also been sending missionaries around the world. Some come to the North, to Europe especially, regarding it as a mission field, a phenomenon known as ‘reverse mission’ (because it is in the opposite direction to the mission sending of Edinburgh 1910). To label all missionary movements from the global South and East as ‘reverse mission’ is misleading because most missionaries are sent to the South – many offering educational, medical and other skills – and the main motive for such movements is not to turn the tables on former colonial masters and exact revenge. Nevertheless, the rise of intentional missionary movements from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania is an example of the way in which mission ‘comes back’.

In earlier generations mission tended to be seen as a one-way sending from the Christian to the non-Christian world, from the West to the Rest (although the extent to which it fed back into the life of Western churches even then is underestimated). Even in the post-colonial period, this pattern has been perpetuated by the high level involvement of churches in development activities and the unequal economic relations which divided churches into North and South. However, in the highly globalised world in which we live there are flows in multiple directions, and actions in one part of the world rebound in another. At Edinburgh 2010, being a gathering of Christians from many different regions in mutual respect, it was clear that it is no longer possible to do mission without any comeback, or without considering our endeavours from the recipients’

point of view. This realisation impacts even on the foundations for mission, as Study Group 1 insisted when they included an experiential and empirical dimension to their work. The research projects on which the group drew both looked at grass-roots experience of mission in UK and Indian contexts. The way mission works out on the ground is the test of the theory. However finely articulated are the biblical grounds and mission theology, the real nature of the mission will be known by its fruits and the extent to which lives are transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ and communities experience justice and peace.

Witnessing to Christ today

Having seen some of the challenges to the paradigms of mission which we have from the second half of the twentieth century, there are some further insights from Edinburgh 2010 that we can draw for our mission practice in the twenty-first century. These concern the Spirit, the world and the changing landscape of global Christianity.

Witness by the Spirit

By thinking of mission as 'joining in with the Spirit' the Edinburgh 2010 discussions made explicit the pneumatological dimensions of *missio Dei* since the Spirit is the way God works in the world and the way we experience God. But if the mission thinking of Edinburgh 2010 is to have integrity then 'joining in with the Spirit' must be compatible with 'witnessing to Christ today'. This can only be the case if it is clarified that, because God is Trinity, 'the Spirit' shares a common source with the Son in God the Father. Being sent from the same Father, the Spirit and the Son work together in the economy of salvation. It is important to state this because it is what makes Christian mission distinctive. 'Spirit' is understood in many different ways and is not a specifically Christian term. Indeed it is the common awareness of the presence and activity of the Spirit that provides a point of contact with people of other religions, spiritualities, ideologies and philosophies— from Indigenous religions and Hinduism through Hegel and Marx to New Age and forms of postmodernism. But the criteria we use for defining

the Spirit differs according to the worldview. It is the Christian confession that the Spirit of God descends and remains on Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, the Word Incarnate, 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (John 1). Therefore Jesus Christ, as testified to in the Bible and Christian tradition, is the key to discerning the work of the Spirit and joining in.¹⁴

'Joining in with the Spirit' expresses a profound insight about the nature of mission was built into the structure of the Edinburgh 2010 conference: that mission is not merely a task but a spirituality – and not any spirituality but a way of life in the Spirit of Christ. Instead of worship sessions slotted in between the plenary and parallel sessions, attention was given instead to the whole 'spiritual life' of the conference, within which the meetings took place. This was a clear statement that the end does not justify the means in mission. Prayer and worship is not just a tool to motivate, inspire and make us more effective in a mission that is planned on other grounds. Rather, the spiritual life is the context which frames mission in every aspect. This non-instrumental understanding is also inherent in the word 'witness' in the conference theme. If mission is done in the Spirit then the process of mission is as important as its results. It cannot be done in ways that are unethical, unjust, underhand, aggressive, or otherwise incompatible with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Similarly, if mission is in the One Spirit, then it must be done in unity. In an era when the barriers to institutional unity between churches seem insuperable, nevertheless a spiritual unity such as that generated by Edinburgh 2010 is possible.

However, mission as a spirituality cannot mean it is otherworldly, remote or does not influence the world. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit made manifest in Christ cannot remain as an experience of international conferences. The spirituality of Edinburgh 2010 must be worked out in the material world governed by personalities, structures and institutions. Acts 1:8, from which the Edinburgh 2010 theme was drawn, makes it clear that witness to Christ is by power. But this was not a greater degree of power than others but a different kind of power, the power of the Holy Spirit. As recounted in Acts 2, the

coming of the Spirit at Pentecost empowered the disciples and liberated them for bold preaching, humble service, barrier-breaking fellowship and boundary-crossing mission. They were 'turning the world upside-down' (Acts 17:6) as they bore witness – sometimes to death – to their Lord and Saviour. The Spirit of God is known not primarily as the Great Spirit which defeats all other powers of this world but as the Holy Spirit who exercises a quality of power different from any worldly spirit. Witness that is truly by the power of the Holy Spirit will change the world.

Witness to the world

The Edinburgh 2010 had an added dimension not available a hundred years before: the online conference, which widened the participation and increased the modes of interaction with the project. In many respects the ideal of the Internet parallels the vision of Edinburgh: multi-cultural, poly-centric, multi-directional, interconnected. It expresses many of the hopes that Christian mission will foster exchange, understanding and mutual respect between peoples. However, the egalitarian, open access ideal of the Internet is far from the reality which is that many cannot participate at all, or if they do it is not on a level playing field. Similarly globalisation, which is often described as if it were a reciprocal interplay of forces, was condemned as inherently unjust by many from the global South who attended the conference. Confirmation of this was seen in the fact that several delegates from sub-Saharan Africa were denied visas to attend because of inequalities in a world in which those with the right passports are travelling further and more often than every before.

The close analogy between the ideals of the Internet and globalisation and the vision of Edinburgh 2010 suggests that the latter may in retrospect be as enmeshed in the prevailing norms of its world as was Edinburgh 1910. Certainly the project and event would not have been possible without electronic communications and air transport; nor could the conference have been so representative in the politically polarised situation that existed between nations for most of the twentieth century from the onset of war in 1914 to the fall of the Berlin

Wall in 1989. Even the prevailing pneumatological understanding of mission seems to have come to the fore because it lends itself to a world in which power is exercised by force-fields, trade flows and cultural influence.¹⁵ But although they are related – especially because Christian mission and movements for unity have been contributing to overcoming the barriers between nations, it would be unwise to link Christian mission too closely with globalisation. The driving spirit of each is different and so are their ends. There are many benefits of globalisation that Christian mission can affirm but it is also necessary to discern the darker forces at work.

A globalised world is one in which the world's communities are brought closer together, and this creates heightened possibilities both for conflict and for peace. Transversal 4, 'Contextualization, inculturation and dialogue of worldviews' was a reminder that as well as the rooting of the gospel in each culture, there is an increasing need to understand our differences through dialogue. Global communications make differences between Christians very obvious now and there is a particular need for understanding between churches of the global North and the South. Edinburgh 2010 and other truly global conferences can help to do this but 'knowing one another theologically' is something that needs to happen at the level of grassroots theological education. *The Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity* produced in collaboration with Edinburgh 2010 was an attempt to achieve this.¹⁶ Mission as mutual sending or exchange also becomes very important.

The same potential for conflict between communities applies to inter-religious differences. Christian-Muslim relations in particular have become a site of violence and clashes of worldview. In 2010 the memory of 9/11, the Gulf and Iraq Wars and Israeli-Palestinian conflict was very current and challenges to peaceful coexistence between Christian and Muslim communities were being felt in Europe, North America, Africa, West, South and South-East Asia, and many other parts of the world. Despite the celebration of world Christianity, the maps presented at Edinburgh showed a large patch in the middle with few or no Christian communities: much of the Muslim world. The proportion of Christians in the Middle East is lower now than

it was in 1910, and the contemporary emigration from that region only accelerates a process that has been going on for centuries.¹⁷ The pressure on these communities is not a problem that can be solved by courageous grassroots witness alone but which demands concerted efforts in interfaith dialogue and advocacy to change policies of both Western and Islamic governments.

Witness in a changing landscape

Just as the map of the world has changed many times over the last one hundred years, so the landscape in which mission takes place continues to change. The rise in economic power of China, India, Russia, Brazil, Nigeria and others is benefitting their citizens but poses new challenges of resources, sustainability and peace. The shape of world Christianity is also changing. In many parts of the world rapid growth of Christianity has taken place in movements that are independent of the traditional denominations which the WCC brings together and even outside the networks of the Evangelical movement. Some these wish to identify with the Christian tradition, although they may be critical of other churches. Those which do not will probably cease to be recognisably Christian. Many can be brought together under the label of Pentecostalism¹⁸ but not all are easily defined under that umbrella or resist such classification. Unity in mission is just as challenging now as it has ever been and new means need to be found to relate to these movements, especially as they constitute the fastest growing part of Christianity today. Too much attention to confessional unity may be to neglect the geographical dimension of large regions of Africa and Asia, and some parts of the USA, where the maps show that independent forms of Christianity predominate.

The new mission movements from South Korea, Brazil, Nigeria and other countries as another feature of the landscape suggest a renewed need to examine the role of mission agencies. In ecumenical but not evangelical circles, the settled model of *missio Dei* combined with that of world Christianity to suggest that, since mission was primarily the responsibility of each local church and the churches were widespread, the age of missions was over. Today we have a new wave of mission

agencies being founded, many of them looking back to the models of mission by which they themselves were evangelised more than a century ago. If these churches have found a need to re-invent this pattern of Christian witness, perhaps it has biblical, theological and practical justification after all? At the very least there is a need for mutual discussion about mission activities that reach beyond church localities to another region with a willingness to contemplate that this might be justified while also raising questions about how this relates to the missions of other churches existing in that region.

Conclusion

Mission in the twenty-first century is informed by the two twentieth-century paradigms of *missio Dei* and world Christianity. These are challenged by thinking which emerged at Edinburgh 2010 of mission as a power encounter, of mission taking place in plural societies, and of the links of mission with migration movements. The effect of these challenges is to emphasise that Christian witness is not fixed in a particular place but takes place on the move and in interaction with other movements in the world. Christian mission is a form of spirituality and deep discipleship which exercises the alternative form of power which Jesus Christ demonstrated. It is facilitated by but not captive to the forces of globalisation and it is responsive to a changing landscape, especially as new Christian movements emerge from different parts of the world. As the Common Call declares, witnessing to Christ today is 'sharing in God's mission of love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit'. Ultimately it is judged not by the sophistication of its theory but by its faithfulness to Christ and actual practice (Matt 25:31-46).

Noter

¹ Dr Kirsteen Kim is Director of Programmes in Theology and Religious Studies at Leeds Trinity University College and served as Research Coordinator of Edinburgh 2010 from January 2009 to March 2011. This article is the concluding chapter of the conference report, Kirsteen Kim & Andrew Anderson, eds., *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Now and Tomorrow*, Regnum Edinburgh 2010 Series, Vol. 3 (Oxford: Regnum Books International, forthcoming in 2011).

- ² David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).
- ³ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 38.
- ⁴ CWME, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (1982), in Jacques Matthey (ed.), *'You are the light of the world': Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 4-38, paras. 1-2.
- ⁵ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996); Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002); Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).
- ⁶ Todd M. Johnson & Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).
- ⁷ Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History*, pp. 27-48.
- ⁸ Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
- ⁹ Ultimately none of these is adequate. See John Parratt, *An Introduction to Third World Theologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7-9.
- ¹⁰ Cf. Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 18-19, 36-37.
- ¹¹ See Jacques Matthey (ed.), *Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile: Report of the World Council of Churches Conference on Mission and Evangelism*, Athens, May 2005 (Geneva: WCC, 2008); www.mission2005.org.
- ¹² See, for example, John R. Mott, *The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions* (Edinburgh: The Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, 1910).
- ¹³ See for example, Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008).
- ¹⁴ Kirsteen Kim, *The Holy Spirit in the World: A Global Conversation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).
- ¹⁵ Kirsteen Kim, 'Edinburgh 1910 to 2010: From Kingdom to Spirit', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 30/2 (2010), 3-20.
- ¹⁶ Quotation from John Mbiti, 'Theological impotence and the universality of the church', in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Mission Trends 3: Third World Theologies* (Eerdmans 1976), 6-18 (at p. 17). Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang & Joshva Raja, *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010).
- ¹⁷ See, for example, Anthony O'Mahony (ed.), *Christianity in the Middle East: Studies in Modern History, Theology and Politics* (Sawbridgeworth, Herts: Melisende, 2007).
- ¹⁸ See Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).