



THE MESSAGE BOARD
A Newsletter from
A. Roy Medley, General Secretary



Personal Reflections

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Edinburgh 2010

Part 1

For the next several days, I will be leading the Baptist World Alliance delegation at **Edinburgh 2010**, a global conference on the life of the church and mission. This event marks the 100th anniversary of the pivotal World Mission Conference of 1910 held in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The 1910 conference called together the mission societies of the Protestant churches under the banner of "world evangelization in our lifetime." This gathering, with its emphasis upon the necessity for unity in mission for the purpose of world evangelization, is also considered the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement.

In this 100th Anniversary, we will be able to celebrate that a significant part of the purpose of the 1910 gathering has been achieved, as there is hardly a culture or geographical part of the world where the gospel has not been introduced and churches formed. The Bible has been and continues to be translated into not only major language groups, but also into the dialects of many people groups.

We will also celebrate the continued movement of the Spirit in the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer, "that they might all be one." The formal ecumenical instruments for cooperation and unity represented by the WCC and the Lausanne Movement, among others, have been instruments God has used to bridge the sectarian gulf between believers. And newer instruments such as the Global Christian Forum initiated by the WCC are bridging the gap between conciliar Christianity expressed through the WCC, historic evangelicalism expressed through Lausanne, the Pentecostal/Holiness traditions and the Roman Catholic Church. For this, we give thanks.

As we gathered, we recognized that the world context for the spread of the gospel has changed dramatically in the past century. The church's center in terms of members, energy and vitality has shifted from Europe and North America to the Southern hemisphere. Mission is no longer uni-valent, moving solely from a Western Center to the world. Now, Western cultures where the church has languished since World War II are receiving missionaries both formally sent from the church in other parts of the world and informally received through the immigration of Christians from former "missionary lands."

In recognition of the truly global nature of the church and mission, **Edinburgh 2010** will welcome not only the historic Protestant churches assembled in 1910, but also Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal/Holiness participants. And the participants will be from around the globe, male and female. The BWA delegation that I am leading is but one example of this new reality in that it consists of Marvia Lawes from Latin America, Noah Moses Israel of Africa, and Malkhaz Songulashvili of Europe.

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You can participate in the nine conference study themes by going online to www.edinburgh2010.org. There you will find contributions submitted by Christians from around the world representing many traditions as well as the reports of the core study groups. Look for the study process section on the website. In addition, the reports of the study groups have been published by Regnum Books as Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today.

The nine themes are: Foundations for Mission, Mission and Unity, Mission Spirituality, Forms of Engagement, Mission and Power, Christian Communities, Mission among other Faiths, Theological Education, and Mission and Postmodernities.

We ask your prayers upon this gathering that it, as much as the original conference, might serve as an instrument used of God for the spread of the gospel, the strengthening of the church and the deepening of our identity with Jesus, crucified and risen, in ministry to the world.



American Baptists Serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ

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