

Institution: The University of Edinburgh
Unit of Assessment: 33 Theology and Religious Studies
Title of case study: Edinburgh World Missionary Conference 1910 Centennial Study Groups and Conference
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>From 2002 the Centre for the Study of World Christianity (CSWC), formerly Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (CSCNWW), at the University of Edinburgh established an action research process which culminated in the establishment of nine international study groups from 2008-10 leading to the international conference 'Edinburgh 2010', a major ecumenical conference with delegates from 115 Christian denominations. This conference, livestreamed around the world, marked the centennial of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference 1910 (EWMC 1910). Drawing on its research on EWMC 1910, CSWC established an international process of knowledge co-creation involving and benefitting churches, church leaders, clergy, laity, ecumenical and mission organisations, as well as scholars of Christian mission and Christian history. The project has led to increased understandings of Christianity as a religion of the global South as well as North, and a reinvigoration of global ecumenical partnership in mission reflecting this understanding, as evidenced in form of impacts on theological education at the global level.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research of Walls (Professor and Director of CSCNWW, 1986-1996), Kerr (Professor Director of CSCNWW 1996-2005), Ross (Hon Fellow 1999-present) and Stanley (Professor and Director of CSCNWW/CSWC 2009-present) showed that EWMC 1910 represented a milestone in the quest for Christian unity that led to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. It also revealed that the conference outlined the emergent shape of Christianity as a world religion. Andrew Walls identified EWMC 1910 as 'the point at which Christians first began to glimpse something of what a world church would be like' in his monograph <i>The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History</i> (3.1).</p> <p>In 2002 David Kerr, (Director of CSCNWW from 1996 to 2005), established an action research process to prepare for the centennial conference of EWMC 1910. This process drew church leaders and scholars into eight themed conferences held in the School of Divinity, 2003-7, designed to mirror the original eight commissions set up to prepare for EWMC 1910. These conferences in turn led to the establishment of nine international study groups in 2008. The conferences and study groups constituted an action research process of global knowledge co-creation. This action research both shaped the agenda, plenaries and workshops of Edinburgh 2010 and disseminated the extensive research of members of the UoA on EWMC 1910. Kerr, with Kenneth Ross (Fellow of CSCNWW/CSWC from 1999 – present), brought together and published the results of the study group process in a collection entitled: <i>Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now</i> (3.2).</p> <p>Ross was also co-editor with Todd Johnson of the related <i>Atlas of Global Christianity</i> (3.3), published by Edinburgh University Press in 2010. This work by Ross and Johnson represents a major research advance in the data mapping of Christianity as a religion which, as a partial consequence of the global coordination of Christian mission at EWMC 1910, had in the course of the subsequent century acquired more adherents in the global South than in its original centres of strength in Europe and the Middle East.</p> <p>Brian Stanley (Director of CSCNWW - renamed CSWC – 2009 – present) authored the monograph <i>The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910</i> (3.4). Stanley's research provides an evidentiary basis for the argument advanced by his predecessors (Walls, Kerr, Ross) that the reputation of the 1910 conference as the starting point of the ecumenical movement, whilst not without substance, had eclipsed the implications of the conference for understanding world Christianity. Previous writing had portrayed the conference as an event</p>

wholly dominated by Northern Christians, but Stanley modified this picture by devoting an important chapter to the presence, contributions and provocative impact of Asian Christian leaders (3.4, pp. 91-131). This research became the standard point of reference in the study group action research process, and for preparations and shaping of knowledge dissemination at Edinburgh 2010.

Daryl Balia (CSWC 2005–10), with K. Kim, *Edinburgh 2010: Vol. II: Witnessing to Christ Today* (3.5) documented the study group process, impacts and outcomes in a volume that includes narrative history and research on the process, documenting reports from the study groups and drawing together research findings in conceptual research papers.

3. References to the research

Research Outputs

3.1 Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 2002): **available on request from HEI.**

3.2 David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009): **available on request from HEI.**

3.3 Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds.), *The Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010). First publication to show through statistics and mapping the extent of the geographical re-orientation of Christianity to new centres of concentration in the south and east. It has become an indispensable source of reference, and formed the statistical basis of the report by the influential American think-tank, Pew Research Forum, *Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population* (2011): **available on request from HEI.**

3.4 Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009) (**REF 2**) [see review comments at <http://tinyurl.com/oboupzw>]

3.5 Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010: Vol. II: Witnessing to Christ Today* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010) and at

<http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/Resources/Witnessing%20to%20Christ%20Today.pdf> (made available to all 300 delegates of 'Edinburgh 2010').

[The previous weblink is to original webpage but should this be unavailable a pdf of the page can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/oboupzw>]

4. Details of the impact

Impact was achieved through two inter-related programmes: the international study process, and the Edinburgh 2010 conference at which delegates received the reports of the study groups and were drawn into a related plenary process of knowledge co-creation. The range of participants was unprecedented: 'No one enterprise can capture in full the diversity of Christianity today but the breadth and inclusivity of the Edinburgh 2010 project mark it out as a very special – and almost certainly unparalleled – event in Christian history.' Balia and Kim (5.1).

Two key impacts on church leaders, clergy, development and mission agencies, and theological educators can be identified as follows:

1. A commitment (embodied in the 'Common Call' issued by the conference) to work together in developing patterns of theological education that transcend traditional boundaries and incorporate the contributions of the rapidly proliferating Pentecostal and new Southern churches, many of which now have a substantial diasporic presence in the northern hemisphere. This commitment emerged from the study process. One WCC leader has commented: 'Edinburgh gave a particular attention to migration as mission returning to the originally "sending" churches. The multiplication of migrant or multi-cultural churches challenges not only European and other forms of racism, but also our ecclesiology, understanding of ministry and ministerial formation

and evangelism in postmodern conditions.’ J. Matthey (5.2)

2. A new understanding of EWMC 1910 as the point at which the dawning consciousness of Christianity as a *world* religion – with significant leadership, membership and new organisational forms in the global South – first became visible in Europe and North America. Heightened awareness of the Asian role at EWMC 1910 as revealed by Stanley’s monograph (3.4) informed the numerous and vocal contributions of non-Western Christian leaders to both the study process and the conference itself, and gave non-Western delegates to the 2010 conference a heightened sense that EWMC 1910 was part of their own Christian history, not merely that of the Western churches.

Study Process

This was initiated in 2008 bringing together, in an exercise of knowledge co-creation, academics and users of academic research. It included scholars of Christian history and mission, international church leaders and lay members, theological educators and representatives of ecumenical and mission agencies working together in nine international study groups (<http://edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes.html>). The groups, coordinated from Edinburgh, met in representative locations on all continents and studied the themes of 1. Foundations for mission; 2. Christian mission among other faiths; 3. Mission and postmodernities; 4. Mission and power; 5. Forms of missionary engagement; 6. Theological education and formation; 7. Christian communities in contemporary contexts; 8. Mission and unity – ecclesiology and mission; 9. Mission spirituality and authentic discipleship. The report of the nine study groups was published as Balia and Kim (5.1).

The most tangible impact discernible to date was achieved by the study group on Theme 6, ‘Theological Education and Formation’ which produced a report, *Theological Education in World Christianity* (November 2009), recommending that a global handbook on theological education be prepared. This led to the publication of *The Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*, edited by four members of the group, Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang and Joshva Raja in 2010. This *Handbook* is the first attempt to map and analyse developments in theological education on a global scale. The volume, with contributions from 98 leaders in theological education from around the world, provides a comprehensive introduction to the major themes and contexts in the international discourse on theological education (5.3). These publications were seminal in the development of the World Council of Churches’ Global Survey on Theological Education 2011-2013. This was the first survey of theological education ever conducted which covered all branches of Christianity – Catholic, Orthodox, mainline Protestant, and evangelical Protestant (including Pentecostals). The role of the Edinburgh 2010 Study Process and conference in this development is referenced in an ‘Ecumenical Covenant on Theological Education’ endorsed by the WCC Central Committee in August 2012 which makes explicit reference both to the 1910 conference and to the 2010 study process and conference. In this way, the study process brought together third sector leaders and practitioners with academic providers resulting in a commitment to reflect upon theological education and set it on a more inclusive and global trajectory that reflects the radically changing composition of global Christianity.

‘Edinburgh 2010’

The conference to celebrate the centennial of EWMC 1910 was the culmination of the knowledge co-creation process of the study groups. It also provided a forum of international delegates for the dissemination of knowledge and research on Christianity as a world religion generated in the CSCNWW/CSWC and in research outputs (3.1–3.5). The conference, hosted 2-6 June 2010 by the University of Edinburgh, was attended by 300 delegates from 200 churches and Christian organisations, who were members of 115 denominations, represented 77 nationalities, and 62 mother tongues.

The conference culminated in a public celebration in the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland (the venue of the 1910 conference) attended by delegates and an additional 800

members of the public, and web-streamed live (5.4). The address was given by the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu. Participants included descendants of the Asian delegates at EWMC 1910, whose contribution had been brought to public attention in Stanley's book. Their contributions attracted particular interest. One Hong Kong delegate observed: 'It was truly an exciting and meaningful experience to be present in the 2010 Edinburgh Conference, particularly sitting in the same Assembly Hall at the closing celebration where Rev. Cheng Jing-yi, the forefather of the Church of Christ in China sat in 1910. The 2010 Edinburgh Conference has aroused the urgency for developing a new way of thinking about missiology and ecumenism ... the leaders in 1910 braved the challenges and dared to find new ways. Encouraged by their ... example, we are also able to start another mile on this road.' E. S. Y. So (5.5) The project website, and live stream, had more than 344,000 hits, with 79,974 unique visitors.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[The following weblinks are to original webpages but should these be unavailable a pdf of the page can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/oboupzw>]

5.1 Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010: Vol. II: Witnessing to Christ Today* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 2.

5.2 Jacques Matthey, 'From 1910 to 2010: A Post Edinburgh 2010 Reflection' in *International Review of Mission* 99, 1 (April 2010), 258 – 275.

5.3 Source corroborating impact of study group process: Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang and Joshva Raja (eds.) *The Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), especially pp. xxv-xxviii.

5.4 YouTube video of Edinburgh 2010 conference:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W39IEYiRz20> (video of the final celebration at the conference)

5.5 Eric S. Y. So of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, 'The Centenary Celebration of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference: The Event and Reflections', at <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/news/2010-in-the-news.html>.

5.6 Ecumenical Covenant on Theological Education at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ete/ecumenical-covenant-on-theological-education/>

5.7 Corroborating Contacts

5.7a Professor at Leeds Trinity University, and co-ordinator of the Edinburgh 2010 study process. Able to corroborate statements regarding the value of the historical research conducted by Walls, Kerr, Ross and Stanley for the study process and its resulting publications designed for use by church and mission leaders

5.7b Chair, Edinburgh 2010 project. Able to corroborate statements about the geographical and denominational breadth of delegate representation at the Edinburgh 2010 conference, and its global reach and significance for the churches.

5.7c World Council of Churches staff missiologist. Able to corroborate statements about the strategic significance of the Edinburgh 2010 study process and conference for subsequent developments in international theological education, and in particular for the World Council of Churches' Global Theological Education Survey, 2011-13.