

The Fellowship of St. Thomas

NEWSLETTER

Centenary Celebrations

2010

Edinburgh

HAVE WE
PROGRESSED?

1910

August 2010

Let us pray.

A prayer for accountability quoted by Rev. Dr. Enos Das Pradhan of CNI.

O God, who didst make us for thy service, help us to train ourselves to be good servants by ready obedience, punctual fulfilment of duty, and strict honour in our dealings with one another; so that whenever the time shall come, thou shalt deem us worthy to do the work to which thou hast called us.

Amen.

Prayers from Nivedan in The North India Church Review. July 2010

Lord, we come before you as we are. We ask you to take away from us all that makes us less than human. Strengthen us with the power of your Spirit that our attitude and outlook may develop, and our “way of looking” may become more like yours. Help us to remain positive – encouraging and appreciating one another, looking upon people in the same way that you do.

Amen.

Lord, I pray for all who suffer from hatred and prejudice, from abuse and ill-treatment, and for all who are victims of what others do. I pray, too, for the people of violence, that they may change their ways and learn to respect others. I pray for myself, that when I face what is negative or evil I may have the courage and generosity to break the cycle of violence, hatred, fear or distrust, and make my own choices and take responsibility for the direction in which I want my life to go. I pray that I may always do to others as I would wish them to do to me. **Amen.**

Lord, our God, open us up to your Spirit living within us, that we may live fully each day of our lives. Touch us, that we may become more aware of all that is around us, growing in a sense of wonder and awe, and in appreciation for all that we see and hear and touch and taste and smell. May we live in such a way that we never take anything for granted, but always be appreciative and express our thanks to those who are part of our lives. **Amen.**

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President's Letter.

Livingston
July 2010

Dear Friends

Anniversaries come and go: we celebrated Bishop Newbigin's centenary at the end of last year and a lot of the first half of this has been looking ahead to Edinburgh 2010, the remembrance of the great missionary conference of 1910 when so much changed for ever in the world of inter-church and international Christian relationships. I've been asked in my letter this issue to give you my thoughts on my own very limited experience of the event and to include some of the reactions I've gleaned from others.

There was such a sense of anticipation. Would the world church, a century on, take up the challenge and look critically and seriously at mission and ministry in the present climate and mix of cultures and faiths? Those of us on the margins, looking in from outside were eager to see what would happen and what would come out of the whole thing.

Attendance at the discussions was limited to delegates but the Sunday was to be given over to interaction with the wider community. This proved to be a somewhat mixed happening. A strike of BA crews meant that some folk had to leave early so local churches who were geared to receive delegates found no one turning up at service time. This was a great pity as it meant an opportunity to share in the events was lost.

In 1910 the watchword had been the shift to becoming friends, spoken with such passion by VS Azariah from South India. It was that sentence quoted again by his successor Rt. Rev. B. S. Devamani, the present CSI Bishop in Dornakal which spoke to me and to many others who attended the closing ceremony of the whole conference. It is still what is needed and listening, learning and sharing alongside getting to know one another are what matters. That was the main message that came to those of us on the outside watching and waiting.

The service itself was a powerful expression of different cultures which lasted for three hours. For many of us it was reminiscent of the celebrations we have attended in the subcontinent, a feast of colour and music and praise of God. An African choir opened the worship, the Archbishop of York gave a message reflecting the need to work together, and there were moving contributions from descendants of the delegates to the 1910 meeting.

Many of us were looking forward to the reactions and comments of the present day delegates as well. This was to feature towards the end of the service. Time was running short and, sadly, it was decided that their contribution be cut out and a printed document of the resolutions was read. Whilst this was interesting we all had a copy of it. Most people I have spoken to felt this was an opportunity lost.

Like many such events, it was the encounters before and after the service that meant so much: a hug from an unknown delegate from US, overwhelmed by the welcome and the encounter, a quick chat with a former colleague not seen for years, time to spend with old friends involved in the planning... these made the experience a living one.

Press releases have spoken of the way ahead: 2110 perhaps being a multi-faith adventure... Others with more involvement will share some of the resolutions and how they are to be implemented in Scotland as well as other parts of the world. We need to thank God that it happened, to hope for some real and positive follow up and to be ourselves ready and available to spread the message of mission for a modern world.

I close with the reaction of a friend who obtained a ticket for the service at the last moment. Her grandfather, a Church of Scotland minister, had met delegates in 1910. Here she was, a century later, at part of the follow up. It showed continuity but it was also an expression of newness and new ways. Whatever the hiccoughs, this was an achievement: to bring together people from different traditions, different cultures and different ways of being church and to express that together we are God's people, ready to share God's good news in the places he has put us.

I hope you all have a good summer. Sadly I won't be with you at our celebration day in September. I have been called away on other church business. My thoughts will be with you and I look forward to meeting some of you off and on through the year. Next year in Dunblane, though...

All good wishes

Eileen

Eileen Thompson

President.

Edinburgh 1910.

What is so special about Edinburgh 1910 that we are commemorating it 100 years later? Did it really make a change to our lives? Why is it called a “conference that changed the world”? It was a meeting that by today’s standards for world missionary conferences would be called very unrepresentative. Barely 20% of the delegates were women and most of the males were well past middle age and white and western. Yet those 1,200 people made a lasting difference to the world of missions in the eight days while they met. Only 20 came from countries outside Europe and North America. However about 7,000 Christians were in Edinburgh for 8 days attending the meetings. It was probably the most influential Missionary Conference ever held, although by no means was it the largest. The seeds sown at the conference developed into ecumenical thinking and a realisation that the Asian churches could provide from their own people the leaders they required.

They set their goal high - “the evangelisation of the world in this generation” - but that was not the slogan that remained in the memories of those present and has remained as the gem from the conference to be remembered. This came from the lips of a young Anglican priest from India – V.S.Azariah – who complained “European missionaries are very good at making heroic sacrifices but not so good at making genuine friendships with Indian Christians”. This rightly caused unease in the minds of many of the missionaries who heard it. Their Indian colleagues sought not just a partnership in work and endeavour but one based on mutual recognition and appreciation. They sought autonomous churches in India, but wanted co-operation between the denominational divisions imported from Europe, so that they were better able to react to the indigenous faiths of India. They were also anxious to study the relationship of the Christian faith to the other religions, and the relationship between the work of the missions to one another and to the Colonial governments.

However the theme that was picked up from the over 300 consecutive addresses given to the delegates was that denominational differences were irrelevant and more than that, were a hindrance to mission. The Continuation Committee formed at the meeting eventually became 10 years later the International Missionary Council which in turn became The World Council of Churches only in 1948. Thus Edinburgh 1910 was the spark that lit the ecumenical fire in men’s and women’s hearts.

Leslie Robinson

**Words of greeting to the Edinburgh 2010 Conference
by the Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World
Council of Churches.**



Today in the World Council of Churches we give thanks to God for how this hundredth anniversary of the contemporary ecumenical movement brings us back to where we came from and sends us out to here we need to be. Whether you come from churches and mission movements linked to the WCC or not, together we can give thanks to the Holy Spirit for assembling such a wide spectrum of disciples of Jesus Christ in today's world.

Christ has called us to witness, to share the gifts of God with one another, to share the burdens of our failures and our shortcomings in being one and witnessing together, to learn and to take new steps forward together.

Christ has called us to be good neighbours to all human beings, wherever we are whatever faith they might have – or not have, to be sensitive and respectful to all who are created in the image of God.

Christ has called us to be peacemakers, to share in the burden of suffering in this world and to fight against violence and injustice.

One hundred years after the Edinburgh conference in 1910 we are challenged to launch together a new beginning for common mission in the 21st century. We need to discern together what the call to carry the cross of Christ means for us today, as we witness together and find different ways to make it visible that we are called to be one.

**Greetings from Rev. Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director of
the World Evangelical Alliance.**



He said he hoped that the Edinburgh 2010 conference will help participants to achieve a “renewed commitment to bear witness to Christ with the love of the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit in every corner of the globe”.

He said that although it would not be realistic to expect historical differences to be solved in a few days, he hoped “that during the conference participants will be able to listen to one another with love and respect, build bridges rather than create chasms, pray together, learn together, establish new friendships.

The wide spectrum of churches, denominations and mission traditions united around the project makes it one of the most representative of the diversity of world Christianity today. This spectrum includes Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Independent traditions.

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Centenary Service Address..

The preacher was the Archbishop of York, Bishop Sentamu, who challenged us with the question “Where is the church going?” Some say “Nowhere!” Whenever the church contemplates its position it looks backwards. The Holy Spirit is the director of our lives. The belief that “It all depends on me” is wrong. The Holy Spirit acts through men and women and Christ is the Message.

Next to worship is witness. These are the most vital callings of the Christian church. Too often we are fruitless – rearranging the furniture while the church is being destroyed by fire. We spend time on worthless arguments like the Orthodox Church whose main topic in 1917 was the colour of their vestments.

We must take the inquirer to Jesus and leave him there. Some of us are then too nose-y, wondering what he is doing. Frederich Nietzsche said “Disciples must look more saved if I am to believe in salvation. I would become a Christian if I could see one.” Jesus is on trial when the world looks at us. Christians are too much like a merry-go-round, moving but always in the same place. Expect the impossible. In humility say, “Lord you know.” Our hyperactivity gets in God’s way. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is an experience of Grace. Forgiveness is the greatest gift God gives to the place of renewal and life in the Holy Spirit.

The river of Life has its source in the presence of God at the altar and the Cross, the place of sacrifice. The River flows deep through the desert bringing life. What is on its banks? There are the fishermen and also the trees bearing fruit for all seasons.

Christ calls us to come and serve with Him, and to go out, bearing His reproach. Many Christians make a big splash but they are only standing in the shallows, not launching out into the deep. Evangelism puts love where there is none. Speak for freedom against injustice. (e.g. asylum seekers and the needy) A true prophet does not condemn failures. How can the Church be revitalised? Through the inpouring of the Holy Spirit, through a loving and united fellowship and through united prayer.

If you want to build a ship it is not enough to gather the craftsmen and give them tools and materials. It is much, much better to inspire a group of individuals with the greatness of the wide boundless oceans. So also for inspiring men and women for the wide ocean of the Kingdom.

EDINBURGH 2010

Christian songs and hymns from around the globe mingled with the native skirl of bagpipes at welcoming ceremonies for Edinburgh 2010, a five-day conference marking the 100th anniversary of the World Missionary Conference of 1910. By the start of the conference, 297 registered delegates from 60 nations were joined by more than 100 additional visitors and staff on the Pollock Halls campus of Edinburgh University.

Pope Benedict XVI had sent a formal greeting to delegates, visitors and staff attending the Edinburgh 2010 anniversary and on Saturday 5 June 2010, the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Roman Catholic Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, three leaders of prominent traditions of Christianity reflected on the hundred years since June 1910 in Edinburgh and the half-century since the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. Bishop Brian Farrell of what is now the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), Rev. Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) spoke on the topic “Christian unity today”.

In his opening words of greeting Dr Tveit said: “Today in the World Council of Churches we give thanks to God for how this hundredth anniversary of the contemporary ecumenical movement brings us back to where we came from and sends us out to where we need to be...Christ has called us to witness, to share the gifts of God with one another and with the world, in love and compassion for all human beings and for the whole of creation...Among the visits I have received I have very much appreciated those of the two leaders of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Committee. It has been moving and inspiring for me to realise how deeply we share a holistic understanding of mission.”

In a statement published at the conference, the 21 Pentecostal delegates acknowledged the historical significance of Edinburgh 1910, and rejoiced over the participation of Pentecostals in the

centenary celebrations. "We appreciate that Pentecostals are recognised in a positive way. At the same time we leave with the challenge to find fuller expressions of global Pentecostalism in an ecumenical context. We also noticed a disparity of the language used and concerns expressed between the Global North and Global South. We must be careful that the academic voices of the North do not wash away the narrative claims of the South. As Pentecostals we are acquainted with both linguistic traditions, we realise that we can play an important role as bridge builders." In contrast to 1910, Pentecostals were represented on all levels of the governance of Edinburgh 2010 and participated in the study process leading up to the centenary celebrations.

In a keynote address Dana L. Robert encouraged delegates to Edinburgh 2010 in their commitment to unity of purpose in Christian mission, evangelism and dialogue.

"We must not allow difficult theological, socio-cultural and political issues, or disagreements over theologies of religion, to discourage us from sharing God's love and salvation through Jesus Christ with all the world. As we celebrate the centennial of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, 1910, we seek to deepen and strengthen its prophetic vision of worldwide, multi-cultural Christian unity--a unity marked by shared passion to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. The memory of Edinburgh 1910 reminds us that we are ambassadors of hope, confident in the power of God's love despite our limitations in a world of pain and injustice." --- Dana L. Robert¹

The youth delegation's verdict on Edinburgh 2010 was: "We would like to give 'a thumbs up' to Edinburgh 2010 for recognizing us as part of the Conference. Youth tends to be marginal in most proceedings and that makes their voice be silent. It is high time we move forward as the world and identify youth as the mission practitioners of today. This is the historic moment for young people who came to represent their churches and countries in witnessing to Christ today and to discuss about mission in the 21st century." Fofo Lerefolo said: "It's been 100

¹ <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/>

years since delegates met in Edinburgh to discuss the state of world missions, and many momentous, world-changing decisions were made. I sit now, a young South African, in 2010, part of the centenary celebrations. My presence here shows just how much the times have changed. In 1910, a mostly male, all-Western, all-adult delegation met. I represent the opposite of all that – young, female and African.”

Perhaps more significantly for those of us in The Fellowship of St Thomas was an iconic moment at the closing service of worship in the historic Assembly Hall was provided when Bishop Bachu Devamani, Bishop of Dornakal, 7th in succession to the famous Bishop V.S.Azariah, read part of Azariah’s speech from 1910. “Through all the ages to come the Indian church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us FRIENDS.”² Friends were there in abundance from the global south as well as the north and fittingly the sermon was preached by the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, who emphasised the crucial importance of our Christian witness.

The Conference issued a COMMON CALL which ended with these words: “Remembering Jesus’ way of witness and service, we believe we are called by God to follow this way joyfully, inspired, anointed, sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and nurtured by Christian disciplines in community. As we look to Christ’s coming in glory and judgment, we experience his presence with us in the Holy Spirit, and we invite all to join with us as we participate in God’s transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.”³

by Murdoch MacKenzie

² *World Missionary Conference 1910: The History and Records of the Conference*, Edinburgh and London:

Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revel. P.315.

³ [http: www.edinburgh2010.org/](http://www.edinburgh2010.org/)

EDINBURGH 2010 FELLOWSHIP OF ST THOMAS MEETING 5TH JUNE 2010

Address by Dr Marina Ngursangzeli Behera

Thank you firstly for having invited me here this evening. It is indeed a privilege to be a part of this gathering and to share with you some of the things that I have been pondering ever since I received the invitation to be a part of the Edinburgh 2010 celebrations.

As I stand before you this evening I am reminded of Bishop V.S. Azariah's plea a hundred years ago asking for friends. Indeed I believe that his request has been answered to a certain extent as I believe that this evening I stand before friends. This, I believe, is in no small measure because of the many world events that have happened in the last century that have not only changed the world politically but have also brought Christians across the globe closer with a better understanding of the mission in which we are partners.

When I was asked to share some of my thoughts and reflections on Edinburgh 2010, it got me thinking and I realized that I really needed to ask myself some questions and critically reflect and understand what these celebrations mean to me. There are several questions running through my mind and I would like to share some of these with you.

I would like to begin with the phrases or words which have marked several of the presentations and have been repeatedly used by many of the speakers that we have been listening to in the last few days – mainly:

(1) What is different or what are the differences between Edinburgh 1910 and Edinburgh 2010?

There are, undoubtedly differences between the 1910 and the 2010 conferences and these have been pointed out several times. These differences began with something that is very visible – the difference in the faces that you see at the gathering in terms of firstly, colour,

secondly, gender and of course thirdly the countries or areas that are represented today from the global south that were not present in 1910.

As one of those who is a part of this difference in terms of face, gender, colour and representation I asked myself these questions:

Has my presence really made a difference in this gathering in 2010?

Am I here through my own efforts and on my own terms or is my presence here fulfilling certain criteria needed to make this gathering look politically correct in terms of portraying a “different” face from 1910?

Is my voice being heard and considered seriously? Or am I just being granted a role or face in terms of context and perspectives because I may have something to share with the world? If this is so, then does what I have to say or am saying being accepted? Equally importantly, is such an attitude acceptable both from my side and on the part of those who have included me in these celebrations?

(2) The second word that set me thinking is the term “Shift” used in relation to, or to describe the “difference” or “what is different”.

There has been a lot of talk about the shift of the centre of the Christian movement from the global north to the south. The question is what does this shift really mean for us Indians and by extension for Asian Christians?

- Is it enough for all of us that we are recognized and accepted as being present here today?
- Is the Indian/Asian Church really understood, in other words has it managed to come across or communicate itself as a Church with its own rights – having journeyed through 1910 to 2010, witnessing through and amidst its many challenges, problems, weaknesses?

(3) The third term or word that I would like to reflect on is “Presence”, specifically, our presence or the presence of Christians from India and Asia. And by extension what does our presence in 2010 really mean? What does being here mean for us Asian and Indian Christians? What

does our presence mean for those who have invited us to be a part of Edinburgh 2010?

I suppose our being here could mean different things and would have different meanings for those who have seen our presence here as it would be for those of us from Asia who are present here as those faces who have made a difference-and I have to wonder, of what significance in the mission of our Lord is our presence here?

(4) The fourth term that I would like to reflect on is the term ‘Partner’ Or “Partnership”. We could even rephrase this as “Working in Partnership”.

So we have made a difference, we are present and have brought about a shift – not just by our presence here at the gathering of 2010, but because of the very presence of a live and vibrant church in the countries or the contexts we are from.

There is no denying and there certainly has been a shift in different spheres and aspects and here I would like to mention the shift in language and perspectives.

The earlier language or phrases and attitudes such as, “We are called”, “Our mission is to take the Gospel to those who have not heard it, and convert them to Christianity” have undergone a change and are today replaced with the term and attitude of “partnership”.

Missionaries from the global north who had worked with the goal of making Christians and, using phrases such as “to lead the heathen to Christianity”, were perceived and understood as the senders, the doers, the givers and the ones who were to lead – as those leading the others to the “right” and “true way”.

The people in the global south were considered as the receivers, the ones who were in need of what the North had to offer, the ones who did not have the capability or ability of deciding what was good for them and what they needed. They were perceived as those that needed to be led.

But now all of us are speaking a new language. We are now talking about partnership and of working together as partners. We have even

gone beyond partnership and are now talking about working in partnership with people belonging to other faiths and those with no faith for the good of all creation.

The question that I would like to reflect on and to try to honestly answer is – why are we talking about partnership?

- (a) Are we really convinced of the equality and rights of all people?
- (b) Are we all convinced and do we really believe honestly that all people have something to share with the others?
- (c) Are we forced to talk about being partners because we are faced with situations we cannot avoid or control?
- (d) Is it because we Christians in the global south are no longer passive receivers or listeners, and are no longer willing to be led?
- (e) Can it be because we in and from the global south are beginning to raise our voices, not willing to be silenced, and the only way to lower our voices and control the noise and calm us is by talking about partnership and offering us partnership?

I believe that there is a need to really study and reflect and ask ourselves what this partnership really means- are we all, irrespective of whether we are from the global North and or South, in agreement as to what this partnership entails and how it should function and work ? Additionally I would like to ask:

- Are we all really considered to be equals and do we all really have equal say and role in this partnership?
- Do we really have an understanding of what each of us is expected to be, the role we are to play and especially about our share in this partnership?

(5) The fifth term or word that I would like to reflect on is “Context” – a very popular word and one that is used liberally whenever certain issues and challenges are discussed and deliberated.

We have been ‘generously’ granted our context, and so we can now speak from our perspectives shaped by our contexts. But then again, certain questions arise –

- (a) Are we really free to define our contexts and perspectives?
- (b) Are our contexts becoming the pretext of another form of the mission field because these are being used to define and stereotype us again?

In this regard we also need to, importantly consider: Who is defining the context? Who are the ones being defined as a result?

I would like to conclude by saying that we should not forget the good work and contributions made by our foremothers and forefathers and our friends and well-wishers and missionaries who have worked and toiled in India.

We have begun our journey together, trying to understand one another through failures and successes on both sides. It was a journey taken together before 1910, through 1910 to 2010 and will continue beyond.

But the journey is not yet over and new maps have to be drawn and new routes need to be charted. For those of us in India who continue, on one hand to reap the benefits of the work of the missionaries and on the other hand struggle to define our identity as Christians in a pluralistic India and in the global Church, there is the need to consider the following questions:

- (a) What has been our role as Indians in the journey so far?
- (b) What would be our role in the journey to be yet taken taken?
- (c) Will the Indian Church play a role and contribute in drawing and charting new routes and directions for world Christians and the Christian movement and mission at large?

Dr Marina Ngursangzeli Behera
Chairperson of the Dept of the History of Christianity
The United Theological College,
Bangalore, India.

EDINBURGH 2010

I am very happy to write these thoughts to be published in St. Thomas Fellowship Newsletter. In the historic connection with Bishop Azariah, the first Bishop of Dornakal, I was invited by friends in Edinburgh organized by Revd. Murdoch MacKenzie with the support of CWM and Iona family groups. Bishop Azariah came as a Lay Missionary to Dornakal in 1904, and was called to become the Missionary of Dornakal by Bishop Whitehead of Madras. He was the only Indian delegate in the 1910 Edinburgh International Missionary Conference. His famous speech given at the 1910 Edinburgh Conference became very significant in the history of the Indian Church and the Missionaries at large. He spoke to the assembly saying “not to treat (us) the Indian Leaders like children, but treat them as equals.” “Through all the ages to come, the Indian Church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for Love. Give us FRIENDS!”

It was my privilege to address the assembly on the last day, bringing greetings from Dornakal and our people remembering the evangelistic pioneer works of Bishop Azariah. It was a great sense of gratitude for me to express and to see the interest in the speech of Bishop Azariah. The context now is very much changed in the 2010 Edinburgh Conference that the passion for Evangelism, Ecumenism and mission activities around the world through Churches was reaffirming. I was asked by the Organizers of the Conference of 2010 Edinburgh to read for the assembly two selected portions of the famous address of Bishop Azariah. It was indeed gratifying to say that we all agree that Bishop Azariah’s words from 1910 still have a powerful message for us today.

I had the privilege of preaching at the Priest Field Church in Edinburgh in the morning Eucharist Service. I also had the

privilege of addressing the gathering of St. Thomas Fellowship where several of our former Missionaries, the friends of India and several delegates were present. In all these gatherings I shared about the life and ministry of Bishop Azariah who always said as his famous words “Every Christian a Witness, let us make known all our people the chief purpose for which the Church exists to be His witness, that is the sole object of our existence.”

Dornakal was a completely inconspicuous little village then in the northern South India with a small Railway Junction. He built a unique Cathedral in the Centre with its beauty and dignity expressing unique Christian, Hindu and Islamic Architecture with its sanctuary flowing with its beauty of the inner altar and marble flooring.

He had three great aims in his life and vision: First and foremost is the conversion of the people of India to Christ by sharing the Gospel of Church – the Evangelization of India.

Secondly Worship and the faith must be shared in indigenous ways, to the people of India, for which his great Cathedral is an outstanding example of adoption of Indian and Christian Worship.

Thirdly, he was a great protagonist in the cause of the re-union of Churches which he advocated as it is the Lord’s will “that they all may be one.” We are grateful to such a great servant of God, a missionary and first Indian Bishop of the Anglican Church, whose vision became a reality in the formation of the Church of South India on 27th September 1947.

I also had the privilege of sharing some of the issues related to Dalits and Dalit Christians. The efforts of Indian Christian leaders both Protestants and Catholics have joined in our initiatives, organized by the Dalit Commission of the National

Council of Churches in India, of which I am the Chairman and Organizer. One of the important issues at this time to which the struggle continues through the Churches is to address the fight for rights for Dalit and Dalit Christians before Parliament. This has been our great struggle for the last two years and finally in the coming months in August and October, 2010 all the leaders of the Christians in India are coming together to make a final effort before the Government. There is no peace and justice in the Indian Churches and the Community. There is no rest awhile until the justice is done to these our people who live in most pathetic lives.

Pilgrimage to IONA:

I had also an opportunity to go on a Pilgrimage to Iona, and spent a 2 day retreat on the Island of Iona . This was refreshing and revitalizing my own spiritual journey in this pilgrimage. It is a great joy to meet my good friends and professors Revd. Dr. Ian Clarke, Revd. Ms. MacGregor, Revd. Peter Millar, Revd. Murdoch MacKenzie and family and several others. Lastly it was a good visit to Oxford, meeting the General Secretary of CMS and other personnel in Oxford, through the kind invitation of Revd. Phil Simpson a long time friend from my working in Israel in the Diocese of Jerusalem as a CMS Partner.

Ever since I arrived back in India there has never a day ended without the sharing of these experiences to institutions, groups, congregations and Diocesan Committees including at the Synod Executive Committee gathering. I want to express my thanks to all the friends for giving me this unique opportunity and excellent hospitality.

With every good wish,

Rt. Revd. Dr. B. S. Devamani

Bishop in Dornakal

PLACE: DORNAKAL

07/07/2010

Edinburgh 2010 – Closing Celebration.

The Assembly Hall which housed the Edinburgh 1910 meeting was again filled for Edinburgh 2010 with an even more international congregation. In 1910 there were 20 from Asia. In 2010 there were Christians from every continent and many countries. The worship opened and closed with the praise of an African choir and later Indian Bharatanatyam dancers interpreted a passage of scripture in Indian dance symbolism.

The printed Order of Service carries this introduction:-

One hundred years ago in this city,
men and women who were engaged in mission
came together from every part of the globe.
As they told their stories and prayed for each other,
they were surprised by the Spirit with a moment of inspiration,
when they glimpsed a vision of a united church
speaking with one voice the name of Christ,
and saw within grasp a world won for the gospel.

Now in a different age,
where violence and injustice still prevail,
where Christian witness is still fragmented,
and where secular forces mass against the gospel,
we gather to pray for a new moment of vision,
for new energy, fresh inspiration, and new resources
for witnessing to Christ today.

Many of our British hymns speak of the ‘bread of life’ but 60% of the world lives on rice not bread. Thus we began with the hymn “The rice of life from heaven came” sourced from Malaysia and Taiwan. This was followed by a Nicaraguan song “Sent by the Lord”, a French song “I will praise you, Lord” then from New Zealand “Touch the earth lightly” and finally from S. Africa “We walk his way”.

Then **Rev. Dr. Ken Ross** asked **Prof. Brian Stanley** of the University of Edinburgh about the change from 1910 to 2010.

Prof. Stanley started his remarks with comments on the differences between 1910 and 2010. If we went back to 1910 we would see the lack of any visual aids or audio equipment. There were 300 speeches without any loudspeaker equipment. There were plenty of words but no emails. Worship and prayer in the meetings would impress us. There was a much more limited range of churches. Today there are more from Africa along with Roman Catholic and Orthodox delegates. The Pentecostal church only appeared in 1910 for the first time. Although the range was less 1,200 delegates attended who did feel that the church in Asia should have a more Asian dress. Only 20 delegates came from Asian churches. There was only one Korean delegate at 1910 and his younger brother's granddaughter attended in 2010 and told how her ancestor was exiled to Shanghai and went later to USA for study. On his return to Korea he became a church and government official. The Korean church has seen tremendous growth in the last century.

Rev. Noel Israel, who is a Baptist from Natal in S. Africa, came with his wife who is the granddaughter of Rev. John Rangya, India's first missionary in 1903 the son of a Hindu priest. He founded 11 churches in S. Africa over 11 years.

Bishop Devamani spoke of his predecessor, Bishop V.S. Azariah, the first Indian Bishop in Dornakal. He based his work on ecumenism and evangelism. There are now 1.5 million Christians in Dornakal divided into 3 dioceses. Bishop Azariah believed that friendship is more than love of the benefactor and in his famous speech he finished with the call "to give us friends".

What should be the key emphasis for the future?

- 1) God is the Creator.
- 2) Christ's call at Nazareth for justice.
- 3) The equality of women.
- 4) The need for the touch of fellowship for the marginalised in our society,

The Christian Community.

The National Sample Report of 2004-05 has given some interesting data regarding the Christian Community and compared it with other communities. Some aspects are encouraging while others are a cause for concern. Christians have the highest literacy rate among all religious communities. For men, it is 80% in rural areas and 96% in urban areas. For women, it is 69% in rural areas and 89% in urban areas. This is way ahead of other communities, especially for women. Among Hindus and Muslims about 41% of the women are literate in rural areas. In urban areas, 73% of Hindu women and 60% of Muslim women are literate. Moreover, there are proportionately more graduates among Christians than in any other community.

However, education cannot by itself be the path for economic progress – this is also brought out by the National Sample Report. Compared to five years ago (1999-2000), the extent of Christians unemployed has increased from 4% to 4.4% in rural areas in 2004-05 and from 7% to 9% in urban areas. For other communities, it has remained broadly the same or it has slightly decreased. It might be that the figures for 2005-10 may be the same, if not higher. This is the cause for concern and must serve as a wake-up call for Christian leaders to take pro-active steps to halt the unemployment in our community.

by Rev. Dr. T.M. Joseph
Former Principal of Wilson College, Mumbai.
from The North India Church Review July 2010.

Treasurer of the Fellowship.

We have been admirably served as our Treasurer by Sardar Ghauri for several years. He is now retiring at the end of this year and we offer him our thanks for all his careful tending of the Fellowship finances. We wish him well in his retirement. His retirement means that we are now searching for someone to take over from him in 2011.

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Obituaries.

1. Mary H. (May) **Wilson** on 29.10.09 who was a nurse in Jalna.
2. Ruth Mary **Young** who served with the USPG in Delhi.
3. Helen **McMillan** in September 2009 who served in Pakistan.

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The Fellowship of St. Thomas

Annual Celebration

**on Saturday, 25th September 2010
at Dunblane Cathedral.**

10.00 am: Tea/Coffee in Cathedral Church Hall.

10.45 am: Communion Service in Church of Bangladesh Liturgy
Preacher - Very Rev. David Lunan
12 noon: Lunch in India Gate Restaurant

1.30 pm: Annual General Meeting – in Cathedral Church Hall

2.00 pm: Annual Celebration
Rev. Ken Ross on Edinburgh 2010

3.45 pm: Tea/Coffee in Cathedral Church Hall.
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The Friends of the Church in India

FCI Day

**Indian YMCA, Fitzroy Square, London
Saturday, 2nd October 2010 at 10.30 am**

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For information about the Fellowship of St. Thomas contact the
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