

## CHAPTER 13

# SINCE EDINBURGH

The whole purpose of Edinburgh '80 was to stimulate action by others toward reaching Hidden Peoples. The following examples are encouraging signs that the "Seeds of Promise" are beginning to sprout. (ED)

### **Advance in Europe**

During the conference, the combined Europe Study Groups felt the need for specific attention to the Hidden People concept in Europe. Here is their report:

It was felt that adequate information should be made available at Mission '83 (Sponsored by the European Missionary Association).

There was also a strong consensus that we should plan in such a way that others not present could take a full share of the responsibility, if they were prepared to do so.

The following tentative plans have been made:

- to gather information about European Hidden Peoples for use in Mission '83;
- to organize a study-conference to prepare found information for use in Spring, 1982;
- to organize a general European meeting on Hidden Peoples in the period of October 15—November 15, 1981.

In order to achieve this, an initiating committee has been chosen to act as steering committee for these activities. Its task will be:

- to initiate contact with missions and churches in order to encourage and coordinate research and ministry directed to Hidden People in Europe and USSR;
- to maintain contact with other similar approaches and the Centers for World Mission.

## Report by Rev. Teo J. Van der Weele

Over the last years the concern for “Hidden Peoples” has grown considerably. The Lausanne Committee on World Evangelism (LCWE) in Pattaya dealt primarily with the task of reaching the approximately 16,750 people groups, which have little, if any, witness for Christ within their culture. There are 2.4 billion of these “Hidden Peoples.”

Delegates attending the World Consultation on Frontier Missions in Edinburgh, came away with the commitment to establish “A church for every people by the year 2,000.” As Europeans, we are beginning to recognize that there are still many “Hidden Peoples” within our own borders, not only in the eastern part and beyond. Our heritage in missions has been rich and we praise God for what has been, and is being done by European missions and churches, but there is still much more to be done!

At Pattaya and Edinburgh and through interaction with the various European Evangelical Alliances, many of us feel that it is now time for European Evangelicals to make a fresh study of the situations in Europe. As the ad hoc European Hidden Peoples Study Group Steering Committee we met in the Netherlands (7–8 January) to discuss the issues involved and found we were confronted by questions such as:

- What is our theology of mission and missions?
- How does this theology lead us regarding the “Hidden Peoples?”
- Where are the “Hidden Peoples” within Europe?
- What needs to be done to reach them?
- How do we prepare for and channel the rapidly growing numbers of committed Mission-minded young people?

We have found that others are wrestling with these questions as well. We don't feel that a new organization is needed, but we do need to come together as a consultation study group or whatever, to do research, interaction and coordination. The present alliances and committees provide sufficient structure and organization to give the needed leadership to carry out the necessary tasks. However, we must come together, as leaders and concerned believers, to understand the present situation, discuss the possibilities and needs and establish some responsibilities and priorities.

Our Steering Committee in consultation with various leaders of the European Alliances, LCWE and the World Evangelical Fellowship has arranged for a one-and-a-half day consultation on 6–7 May 1981 in West Germany.

This consultation will seek to establish a direction and plan for the vital work that needs to be done over the next years. This meeting will be very important to each one of us. We are inviting only those people who understand and can represent the situation in their own countries.

## Students On The Move

Ward Shope, General Secretary of the Theological Students for Frontier Missions, writes that his organization traces its origin back to Edinburgh '80. Well, they don't have far to look back, but they have much to look forward to! They can justly associate with the title of this book *Seeds Of Promise*. Following are excerpts from a statement signed by concerned seminary students (ED):

### A Call To Seminary Students Concerning Frontier Missions

We, the seminary students assembled at the World Consultation on Frontier Missions in Edinburgh, do affirm that our Lord God created the world and all its peoples. We believe that He loves all nations... In order to communicate this love throughout the generations, Christ has called His people as ambassadors and witnesses of this Good News to all unbelieving peoples (John 17, Acts 1:8).

However, we have become aware of two situations which trouble us deeply: First, in her witness to Christ, the Church has yet to penetrate some 16,750 cultural-linguistic people groups that include about 2.5 billion people.... They remain the greatest challenge to the Church and to those in our seminaries preparing for service. Yet, only about 9% of the world missionary force is actively carrying the Gospel to those people.

The second situation concerns our seminaries themselves. We do not believe that very many of our brothers and sisters are aware of or are considering the challenge... So little is said; so little is done; so much is needed.

In addition to urging students to sign the Edinburgh Pledge (see *Introduction*) they also provided a pledge for those not called to the foreign field (ED).

As a servant to a local church, whether in my country or abroad, I will seek to mobilize the congregation I serve to a deep compassion for the Hidden Peoples. I will encourage them to contribute to penetrating the Hidden Peoples with the Gospel through prayer, through finances, and through supplying Frontier missionary personnel. Furthermore, I will commit my life to be an example of what it means to be personally committed to Frontier Missions by praying, by giving my resources, and being informed.

In a meeting in Dallas, Texas on May 1981 the students put legs to their concerns. Ward Shope writes: "The purpose of the meeting was to give the movement which started in Edinburgh some basic foundational structures to ensure its progress. This was accomplished very successfully with the help of God. The meetings were long, and there were times of frustration and even hopelessness before we came to a resolution which seemed right to all." The new organizations stated purpose is "to mobilize graduate theological students to a lifetime commitment to the task of frontier missions for the glory of God." We are committed to the watchword, "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000."

## The Basis For The Future Samuel Wilson

On the final Saturday morning in Edinburgh, delegates to Edinburgh '80 voted to provide for the election of a permanent International Catalyst Committee through the ad hoc evaluating committee which had functioned during the consultation. The committee was to represent eight regions of the world, and was empowered to enlarge itself as it saw fit. Three pro tempore officers were elected until such time as the permanent committee could organize itself. Samuel Wilson was elected chairman, Leiton Chinn secretary, and Larry Allmon treasurer. Under their leadership, the following international committee has been elected: Africa south of the Sahara, Panya Baba; Middle East and North Africa, Kundan Massey; Europe, Patrick Johnstone; East Asia, David Cho; South Asia, Chris D. Thomas; Latin America, Waldemiro Tymchak; North America, Samuel Wilson; Oceania, Petrus Octavianus.

The future should be assessed against the background of the motivation produced by Edinburgh '80. Visibility brings challenge. The awareness which was heightened in the hearts of those who attended carried over into a charge to the Evaluating Committee members to nominate only those who would be willing to respond by becoming active for actually planting the Church through cross-cultural mission among Hidden Peoples. Each committee member has accepted responsibility for active promotion of efforts to reach those among whom no cluster of witnessing congregations now currently exists. The vision which brought Edinburgh into existence is bringing local and regional initiatives to fruition. Momentum is being built which will give substance to the dream of future consultations on a growing scale.

Until now, it has been possible only to estimate the number of Hidden People groups. These estimates must yield to factual identification and planned penetration. Realistic evangelism with a view to planting a church disciplined to the point of being able to carry on witness is the more meaningful and necessary goal.

Regional initiatives, like the ad hoc European Study Group, of which Teo Van der Weele is the leader, are providing the local stimulus to actual evangelism. Likewise, in the West Africa Hidden groups have been identified and first efforts at penetration are being made. Regional consultations are already in the planning stage in several areas, such as Murree '81 in Pakistan.

In the long range, three participants in the Edinburgh '80, Dr. Ralph Winter, the Rev. Teo Van der Weele and Dr. Samuel Wilson, are active in the planning process for a Consultation on the Nature and Mission of the Church in New Frontiers for Missions, to be sponsored by the World Evangelical Fellowship. This Consultation will take place in Wheaton, Illinois in the USA in June of 1983. It will undoubtedly serve as only the first step in a series of world events where information and experience can be shared, hopefully leading toward the serious pursuit of "a Church for Every People by the Year 2000."