

Lessons from 2010: Tokyo, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and Boston's Successes and Failures as Prelude to CLADE V

Allen Yeh

From 1910 to 2012

The years 1910–1912 were significant because of several events which would leave lasting marks on the history of the world. 1910 saw the convening of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland (the “birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement”¹), as well as the Mexican Revolution which began at the year’s end. In 1911, Machu Picchu, South America’s greatest archaeological site, would be rediscovered by Yale professor Hiram Bingham (and would eventually be voted as one of the “New Seven Wonders of the

¹ Dubbed thus by Kenneth Scott Latourette, “Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Missionary Council,” chapter 8 in Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill, eds., *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517–1948*, 4th ed., vol. 1 (Geneva: WCC, 1993 [1954]), 362.



Dr. Allen Yeh is a professor of missiology at Biola University. He has degrees from Yale (B.A.), Gordon-Conwell (M.Div.), Edinburgh (M.Th.), and Oxford (D.Phil.). He attended all four conferences in 2010 celebrating the centenary of Edinburgh 1910: Tokyo, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and Boston.

Lessons from 2010: Tokyo, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and Boston's Successes and Failures as Prelude to CLADE V

World”²). In the same year, several thousand years of imperial rule in China would come to an end with the fall of the last dynasty (the Qing), leaving a void which would be filled by the establishment of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen as the first President of the Republic of China. At the end of that year, Roald Amundsen of Norway became the first man to reach the South Pole. 1912 was similarly eventful: Arizona was admitted as the last of the forty-eight continental states of the United States of America, the Titanic sank on her maiden voyage, and Japan's Meiji era ended (signaling the transition from imperial rule to a parliamentary democracy). These upheavals were only precursors to the real shock: two years later, in 1914, World War I began.

The years 2010–2012 are an interesting comparison, given our propensity to celebrate centenaries. In 2010, four conferences (in Tokyo, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and Boston) each purported to be *the* successor to the Edinburgh 1910 missionary conference, the Burj Khalifa (the tallest man made structure ever at 2717 feet, almost doubling the height of the previous record-holder, the Taipei 101 skyscraper in Taiwan) was completed in Dubai, the World Cup was hosted in Africa for the first time ever, four of the biggest earthquakes in history hit the Pacific Rim (Haiti, Chile, China, Indonesia), the BP oil spill became a disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, a volcanic eruption in Iceland disrupted air travel all across Europe, Greece suffered a financial meltdown which triggered a crisis for the Euro currency, WikiLeaks caused security panics in the United States, and South Korea held the G-20 summit (becoming the first non-G8 nation to host the summit). In 2011, already we have seen revolution in Egypt, overthrowing the thirty-year reign of Hosni Mubarak. Parallel in timeframe to the Mubarak presidency was the United States' Space Shuttle fleet, which likewise began operations in 1981 and will be permanently retired in a few months. At this juncture, it becomes a bit of an unprofitable exercise to predict the future, but at least in 2012 we should see Queen Elizabeth II celebrating her Diamond

² See www.new7wonders.com.