

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MISSION STUDIES

Report of the Executive Committee, 1972-1974

In accordance with article six of the Constitution of the International Association for Mission Studies, as adopted by the General Meeting held at Driebergen, Netherlands, August 1972, the Executive Committee hereby submits a report of its activities during the period September, 1972 - July, 1974, and its proposals for advancing the objects of the Association.

Since the Driebergen Conference the Association's outreach has become steadily wider. There has been a considerable increase in the number of members, namely, from 244 members (205 individual, 39 corporate) in August, 1972, to 323 members (273 individual, 50 corporate) in July, 1974. The Association embraces people of all the six continents as well as of all the major confessions of the Church Universal. Not only that but the variety of theological and missiological thought represented is indeed remarkable. It is a matter for gratitude that it has been possible, through the IAMS, to lay the foundations for what we hope will develop into a creative fellowship for the scientific study of the Christian mission. (For full particulars concerning IAMS membership see the analysis, by the secretary in the IAMS News Letter, no.5, May, 1974.)

Copies of the IAMS brochure, specially prepared for the purpose of "propaganda" were sent to all members, individual and corporate, with the request that it be "distributed with a view to making our fellowship better known". To increase the proportion of members from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific, the brochure along with a circular letter, was sent to heads of theological institutions in those regions inviting their support in our efforts to make the Association truly global in scope. We realise, we said in the letter referred to, that because of travelling expenses it may be difficult for members from the "two-thirds world" to attend the biennial conferences, but this fact makes it the more urgent that they contribute to the Association's process of thinking concerning the several questions - theological, historical, social and practical - relating to the missionary dimension of the Christian message.

As an instrument of fellowship and information the IAMS News Letter, under the editorship of the secretary, was launched through this publication, despite its modest appearance, useful contacts between the members, (individual and corporate) have been established and news about missiological activities, projects, etc. communicated. So far five issues of the "Letter" have appeared.

The question, so eagerly debated at Driebergen in 1972, of publishing an academic journal of mission studies received much attention. The matter was fully discussed at the meeting of the Executive Committee in November, 1972, and again in 1973.

Two events which made it necessary to take a fresh look at the whole question of publishing a journal, was the founding in 1972, of Missiology (including the former Practical Anthropology), a publication of the American Society of Missiology and the decision of the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism to continue the publication of the International Review of Missions.

For financial and other reasons the Executive Committee was not able to proceed with the offers by Messrs. E.J. Brill and Marcham Manor Press respectively. The possibility of the Association publishing a journal in conjunction with the Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft was considered, but no satisfactory arrangement was reached.

The question has been raised whether instead of a straightforward journal, the News Letter might be substantially enlarged. What is needed, at least for the time being, it has been suggested, is an information service on the model of the African Religious Research, published by the African Studies Program of the University of California, Los Angeles.

On the activities of the working party on bibliography and documentation, see the report enclosed herewith.

The Egede Institute, Oslo, continued to provide free accommodation and free services for the Association. The Executive Committee wishes to record its sincere appreciation of the valuable help received, not only during the period of review, but for a number of years (1968-1974), from the secretary/treasurer of the Institute, Miss Marie Thauland.

Oslo, June 20, 1974/Frankfurt/M. July 29, 1974

The working party on bibliography and documentation will be putting forward some papers for discussion during the meeting. It continues to recommend that, until it becomes possible to institute a comprehensive mission studies bibliography, member institutes should seek to develop coverage of all relevant publications in their own geographical or language area. There has been much discussion of which items should be included, and this is an area in which further clarification is needed. Certainly the working party sees little usefulness in comprehending items on evangelism in western countries, nor indeed every item which could be represented as having relevance to Christianity in Africa and Asia (e.g. every article on the Theology of Paul written by, say, Indian theologians, or every commentary on, say, the Church and alcoholism by Afrikaner church leaders?) The working party does suggest that I.S.B.N. members should be included in bibliographies: it will be proposing an agreed set of standards soon. The working party has also been in contact with our colleagues in the C.E.R.D.I.C. project of the University of Strasbourg with a view to co-operation.

A.F.W.