First Meeting Outside Europe

The International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS), proposed at a consultation in Oslo, Norway (1970) and formally established in Driebergen, Netherlands (1972), held its first meeting outside Europe in San José, Costa Rica, 24-31 July, 1976.

About one hundred scholars from 41 countries (28 of which situated in the Third World) took part in this congress around the theme: Tradition and Reconstruction in Mission - where are we in mission today? This theme was introduced by the Latin American missiologist Dr. Orlando Costas. Next came its focus on the main missionary issues and challenges of seven different socio-cultural areas, followed by topical discussions on mission(s) in relation to culture, spirituality, religious pluralism, politico-economic systems and Christian unity.

One of the more remarkable events of this San José meeting was a workshop of a fully ecumenical and diverse group of Europeans and North Americans. It may well be one of the first times that such a group sat together outside of their home areas to reflect upon the missionary task back within the North Atlantic world. Remarkable was also a gathering of a group of women who had attended the sessions, including three full members of IAMS. In their evaluation of the San José meeting they expressed the desire that there should be more visibility to issues related to Women and Mission of the Church, as well as a larger share of participation in such an event.

The full report of the San José IAMS-meeting will be published in the IAMS Newsletter no. 10.

The aims of IAMS are:
- To promote the scholarly study of theological, historical, social and practical questions relating to the missionary dimension of the Christian message.
To relate studies in mission to studies in theological and other fields by interdisciplinary research programmes and other appropriate means.

- To promote fellowship and co-operation among individuals and institutions engaged in mission studies.
- To facilitate mutual assistance and exchange of information between those engaged in such studies.
- To organize international conferences.
- To encourage the creation of centres of research.
- To stimulate publications in the area of the Association's interest, including an international journal and bibliography.

The objective of IAMS is not only to promote communication and exchange between those involved in mission studies but also to stimulate interest in those studies especially among scholars of the Third World.

The growing number of IAMS-members from Africa, Asia and Latin America will certainly contribute to liberate missiology from the North-Atlantic ghetto in which it found itself up till recent times.

Executive committee and secretariat

The IAMS actually has 385 individual and 54 corporate members (i.e. study centres etc.). The newly elected members of the executive committee are: Professor A. Camps (Netherlands, president), Professor J. Aagaard (Denmark, vice-president), Dr. F.J. Verstraelen (Netherlands, general secretary), Rev. P. Clifford (England, treasurer), and Rev. L. Egan M.M. (USA), Bishop M.O. Gaxiola (Mexico), Dr. G. Tasie (Nigeria), Dr. J. Chao (Hong Kong) as members.

The Secretariat of the IAMS has been transferred from Aberdeen, Scotland to Leiden, Netherlands. The Secretarial address is:

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