

Ralph Winter

EDITOR'S PERSONAL PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD
OF *MISSIOLOGY*

Held at Wheaton, Illinois, June 7, 1974

[At the request of members of the Board after I had made this presentation, I agreed to have it typed out and circulated. It is reported here exactly as given, and was followed by a discussion on the matters mentioned. Alan R. Tippett]

I wrote a personal report to you all in March, before the meeting at Milligan College. A copy of that report was sent by post to all Board members not at Milligan. What I have to say now, presupposes that you have all read this and I do not have to cover that ground again. It all still applies.

Those of us who bring out the journal still have not solved all our problems of personal responsibilities and relationships, but I suppose we have to work these out for ourselves, and we all ask your patience with us. Our long delays in the publication process have frustrated us as much as they must have disappointed you. But the causes did not all lie with our inexperience and overloaded programs - the most serious delays were due to mechanical and economic factors.

I do not mean to imply that I have not made mistakes, and sometimes I have delayed too long in making decisions. In this I crave your forbearance, on the score that I am feeling my way and

have no models to guide me. And, maybe, some of my hesitations have been due to the fact that I am not an American and have often a culture clash with my associates. When you choose my successor next time, there are good reasons why he should be an American.

This morning, I would like to add a few points to the contents of my March report, to which a couple of Board members replied in a most helpful manner. This is the first time I have met you face to face, and I have not had the opportunity of saying what I am trying to do with the contents of *Missiology*. I want you to know me as an editorial assembly man. I want you to know what I am looking for from our contributors, and why sometimes the editor takes so long to make a decision about whether he can, or should, use an article.

First, and foremost, a number of *Missiology* is a total thing. No article stands by itself. The whole is not the sum of its parts. They are parts in relationship in equilibrium - maybe in mutuality, maybe in creative tension. But I want them to reflect the dynamics of the new era of post-colonial mission. Somewhere I have to see the wholeness, the entity which is a new number, before I can really decide which articles will be bound together.

In that process of interweaving, there are so many things which have to be taken into consideration and set over against each other. Furthermore, it is always conditioned by what articles I have in hand, or what I can persuade contributors to write at a moment's notice (the most difficult task of all - firstly, because it is hard to get, and secondly, because when you do get it, it is usually undocumented and provocative opinion). A provocative subject is always better when written over a period of time, such as is required by proper documentation, otherwise it becomes polemic and biased. This I cannot use unless I have something equally vigorous to set over against it. It is amazing how so many people, supposedly at the top, never produce a scholarly article, but write classical orations in style and imagery. The pity is that some of them have things of considerable importance to say, and if they wrote with more reason and courtesy they would win a better hearing. So I have decided not to be a "respector of persons" and have asked several such to work over their material again.

I have tried to bring things together in an appropriate combination. I do not say I have succeeded, but this has been my driving criterion. This not only refers to subject matter, but also to kinds of writing. Now, with this in mind, let me scan the first volume. At first, my notions were conditioned by two sets of circumstances. (1) I had taken over the material of *Practical Anthropology* - so many folders of papers, the contents of which I did not know, and (2) no one had as yet submitted anything for the first number and I had to solicit material.

I used four of the *P.A.* articles in the first number of *Missiology* and three more in #2. Material was being contributed by

this time. In #3, seven of the eleven articles were from the *P.A.* stock, as I felt I owed something to these contributors, and I also wanted to maintain something of the *P.A.* character for the readers we took over with the incorporation of that journal in *Missiology*.

[Let me comment on a problem here. I still have about 20 *P.A.* articles unpublished. It has taken all this time to get them read. They all have something to say, but their literary form is far from satisfactory. I don't know when these will all have been absorbed.]

In the first and second numbers of *Missiology* I wanted to demonstrate something of the wide scope of missiology as a research field - we touched missionary relevance, missionary ethics, ethnology, revolution, the missionary as an agent of secularization and ethnolinguistics in #1. In #2, we touched Black America, Latin America, American Indians, a survey of Third World Missions and a deviant movement.

In the third number, I raised the technological aspects of the missionary task. Focus here was on the problem of the expatriate. I utilized a large amount of *P.A.* material in this number, although this involved us in an inordinately large amount of editorial research, which should really have been done by the writers themselves.

Number 4 got me into personal research burdens I had not anticipated. Three articles on China came in within a week or so. Other circumstances and missionary news of China Study seemed to call for focus on China. I decided to push through the items I had. When they were already being typeset, and I considered the wholeness of my China entity, what seemed to be a large chasm loomed up before me. I had no anthropology and the symposium would not hold together without it. Where to find a Christian anthropologist with a China base? And to do so at a moment's notice. I would have gone back and put together something entirely different, but I had committed myself. (I learned the folly of saying 'Yes' under pressure, that month.) The material was already typeset and my dead-lines were upon me. In fear and trembling I wrote the anthropological article myself. There were so many things that had to be said to round off the entity of the symposium, and so badly was a heavily documented article needed, that it got longer and longer. I broke all my own rules for the sake of the totality of the China focus. It was a conflict of regular pattern and ideal, and, as I chose the latter, I had trouble with the former. Maybe I made an editorial blunder - I guess the feed back will tell.

I might say that the first number of Vol.II has a focus on Papua New Guinea. Five of the articles concern that part of the world. One is an historical survey. The others touch on missionary problems of stress, pastoral problems due to such things as world view and polygyny, and a theological item from an islander. Papua New Guinea

stands between home rule (last Dec.) and full independence (next Dec.), and the focus is appropriate. This went off for advertisements and to the printer a short time ago.

So much for my attempts to pull material together and give it cohesion. I have a feeling that something is being born. The contours of a new era of mission are beginning to take shape. Theology and anthropology are coming together, and the meeting throws light on history and speaks to the future. I heard an interview on the TWA closed circuit with a fellow-Australian, the singer, Helen Reddy. She has had a classical training, but spoke of the changes in the musical world of the last 5 years - a despecialization, an interweaving of musical types, a creative interaction. I think I see this happening in missiology.

One of the most encouraging things (though it means more and more editorial work) is the build-up of material I have for future numbers of the journal. However unpleasant the task of rejecting material, I have at present on my desk about 80 manuscripts (20 of them P.A.), and 10 or 12 being set up by the typesetter for #2.

As I glance over this material I perceive the ingredients of symposia or focal points - one on Africa, one on theological training, one on language translation and literature, another on research method, and so on. [I have enough on South America, but it has no wholeness. It is dogmatic, belligerent and biased, and will have to wait for some counter-current material to bring creative tension before we focus on it at depth.] I have not worked on this - but I see the clusters forming of their own accord.

I think, that now we have a stock of "standby" material, our subject matter problems are in terms, not of scarcity, but of abundance of material. The rate of submission of articles increases. During 1973, I received articles at the rate of just over one per week for the whole year. This year, I have averaged a new article every four days. This increase now puts the pressure on me to firm up my rejection policy. In the next three months I shall reread the 80 articles I have, and this will require a lot of letter writing. Before I do this, I want one direction from you as an Editorial Board, for I am now getting twice as many articles as I can use, regardless of the build-up.

In my March letter, I pointed out that we have material for a *Missiological Memoir* #1. This, I would recommend. At Milligan, the President held me off until we get on a firmer financial base. If that is so, then I shall have to start sending out more rejection slips for good material. Later on, when we discuss finances, I would like a definite word on this.

I thank you for listening patiently to these comments. I hope they help you to feel something of the editorial atmosphere within which

I am working. Please look at the things for which I am striving, and be patient with me as my associates and I try to iron out our mechanical problems. I hope to have things working smoothly and to be on schedule before the year is finished.

Stop Press.

All the editorial copy for Vol.II, #2 has now gone to the typesetter, and I hope that before I leave for Lausanne this will be in the printer's hands.

Material for Vol.II #3 is now being typed in final form for typesetting, so I expect to have caught up with the schedule by Fall.

Alan R. Tippett