

The Founding of the Taiwan Mission Quarterly

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by Thelma Lang Barnard

TMQ began with one man—Phil Schwab (the former director of TEAM's ministry in Taiwan). Phil has been described as an ideas man. However, he not only had an idea, but he did something about it. Having run across the JEMA magazine, put out by missionaries in Japan, Phil thought it would be a good idea for missionaries in Taiwan to have a similar magazine. He thought a professional journal written by missionaries serving in Taiwan for missionaries serving in Taiwan would encourage them in their missionary service.

Phil got the various mission leaders together and sold them on the idea.
The Need for Finance

"You can't publish a magazine without cash," says a member of the original editorial committee. Where was the money to come from to kick-start the venture? When those who were interested in getting the magazine going got together, they estimated that it would take NT\$180,000 to start TMQ up. At that point in time the Taiwan Missionary Fellowship provided NT\$120,000 in seed money. It was thought that initial subscriptions would bring in another NT\$20,000. A further NT\$60,000 was contributed as a grant by several of the mission bodies. That start-up money was set up as a revolving fund. In later years TMF has provided additional financial grants to TMQ when operating funds have been low.

Subscription Rates

At the beginning of TMQ the subscription rates were NT\$400 for a two-year subscription on island and US\$20 for overseas subscriptions. The rates remained the same until in 1996 they were raised to NT\$250 per year for on island subscriptions. The subscription period normally ran from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the following year. People who subscribed after July 1 were given any back issues they had missed so that their subscription would run out on June 30. (TMQ is returning to that good practice beginning with this issue. Ed.)

In 1997 the subscription rates were raised to NT\$300 for local readers and US\$24 for those living overseas. Those rates have remained the same up to the present.

The Early Magazine

The first magazine produced was not called Taiwan Mission Quarterly (TMQ) but Taiwan Mission (TM). The magazine remained Taiwan Mission until the winter edition of 1997, when it became the Taiwan Mission Quarterly. The name was changed because some people feared that TM sounded like a journal about meditation!

An original editor notes with interest that the format of the journal, which was established in 1991, has not changed much over the years. The multi-mission editorial committee in the beginning consisted of Dave Dolan (Covenant Missionary Society), Chuck Johnston (Formosa Christian Mission), Sheldon Sawatzky (Mennonite General Conference), Rahn Strickler (OC Ministries), an OMF International representative, Scott Grandi (CBInternational), Faye Pearson (Southern Baptist) and Wayne Schock (OMS). In preparing an issue the committee would choose a topic, circulate it among the missionaries in Taiwan, and solicit articles from the missionaries. Recently the net spread out to receive articles has been broadened to include our Chinese brothers and sisters in Taiwan. The editorial committee, which was originally an all male preserve, has broadened to include its fair share of ladies.

The topic chosen for the first magazine was "The Year 2000 Gospel Movement." This Chinese alliance has continued to exert significant influence in Taiwan's church over the last decade. In addition to articles about the focus topic, from the beginning the magazine also contained regular features such as "Window on the Church," "Women in Ministry," "Book Reviews," and "Language Learning Corner." Although other regular features were added throughout the years, those original features have by and large continued to be included in the journal. In the winter issue of 1993 the regular feature "Computers in Ministry" was first introduced. That article was "Taiwan Missionary BBS" by David M. Hupp. I remember hearing people talk about that article, but I never did find out what it was all about!

Editors

The OMF representative was the chief editor for the first two years. The editorial committee then rotated the editorial

responsibilities among its members from issue to issue. With Volume 4, Number 1 (July, 1994) Nan Sugg of the Southern Baptist Mission became chief editor. "It became more professional looking, and with her artistic talent, more sketches and photographs were introduced, compared with the dry writing only," says one man. In 1999 Joel Nordtvedt of the Lutheran Brethren Mission took over the editorship for about a year. Thelma Barnard, an independent missionary, now serves as chief editor, a post which she took on in 2000.

The Magazine Changes With Time

The first journal began with fifty-one pages. By the time the Volume 6, Number 1 issue was produced, it had grown to seventy-two pages, which was thick enough to give the journal a spine.

The first issue of the journal was printed with one color plus black and white. With Volume 3 the magazine cover moved to a two color production. Now there are no restrictions to the number of colors which TMQ uses—except the colors in the current issue have been restricted to give a sepia effect!

What About the Future of TMQ?

"We need input from missionaries who are thinking missiologically," says an early editor. Today TMQ has a small but dedicated staff. Although TMQ has this basic editorial team in place, the editors are often stretched to the limits. For all of the editors putting TMQ together is a job over and above other ministry responsibilities they have in

Taiwan. TMQ could use more new ideas, more creativity, more technical expertise, more writers—just about more of everything. Those on the editorial committee welcome the contributions of the Taiwan missionary community. Only then can TMQ continue to provide the information and stimulation that 21st century missionaries in Taiwan need.

We acknowledge that much of the historical information in this article was supplied by the OMF representative.

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