

FOREWORD

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At the annual meeting of the Advisory Medical Board of the Leonard Wood Memorial, March 21, 1964, a proposal was made that the Leonard Wood Memorial, in collaboration with the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, organize a special conference for the purpose of focusing on several unsolved problems in leprosy, particularly the cultivation problem. The Advisory Medical Board approved and Brig. Gen. J. M. Blumberg, Director of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, agreed enthusiastically to be host for the proposed meeting. The conference was scheduled for May 1965, just four years after the very successful Leonard Wood Memorial-Johns Hopkins University Symposium on Research in Leprosy held in Baltimore, Maryland, in May 1961.

With the letter sent to the scientists who were invited to participate in the Leonard Wood Memorial-Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Conference on Research Problems in Leprosy our Committee enclosed the original announcement of the Conference, in which it was stated:

"Subjects to be discussed will include (1) the unsolved problem of cultivation of the leprosy bacillus *in vitro* and (2) unsolved problems in animal transmission, immunology, epidemiology, and experimental therapy.

"At this Conference microbiologists, biochemists, and scientists from other disciplines not working directly on leprosy will be invited to meet with investigators now engaged in leprosy research. There will be an objective appraisal of present approaches, and, hopefully, new ways for attacking unsolved problems will be offered. The program of this Conference will therefore consist of:

1. Presentation of current approaches by scientists now doing research in leprosy.
2. Presentation of possible new approaches by scientists not working directly in leprosy.

"The greatest amount of time will be scheduled for the cultivation problem. It is incredible that with the advances in microbiology that have been achieved since Hansen, more than 90 years ago, observed

small rods in leprosy lesions, *Mycobacterium leprae* has not been successfully cultivated *in vitro*. This unsolved problem should be a challenge to microbiologists who are interested in the basic principles of microbial growth, even though they may not personally have worked on the cultivation of the leprosy bacillus.

"The other areas of leprosy research that will be discussed at the Conference all urgently need new approaches. Hopefully ideas developed from discussions at this Conference will result in renewed attacks on these problems."

The Committee, aware that many of the scientists invited to participate had had no experience with leprosy as a disease, decided to invite leprologists and other physicians long experienced in leprosy to present each day one or more clinical pictures of leprosy.

The portrayal of leprosy as a human disease, so ably done by the speakers, served to keep the invited investigators aware that the objective of the research sessions was to unlock doors to new approaches for conquering this disease. In addition, the interesting presentations of the clinical and pathologic changes in leprosy, interspersed among the intensive research sessions, provided a welcome change of pace.

Although the Committee could not offer support for travel, the Committee was greatly heartened by the enthusiastic response of the large percentage of the scientists invited. Of the 132 final participants, 32 were from outside the United States.

The preparation of the *Proceedings* for prompt publication was made possible by the arduous work of Dr. Esmond R. Long, Editor, and Miss delta derrom, Assistant Editor, INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY. Their work was facilitated by the excellent recording of the entire session by the staff of the Visual Aids Section of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and by the prompt transcribing of the recording by the members of our secretarial staff.

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MEDICAL DIRECTOR
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