



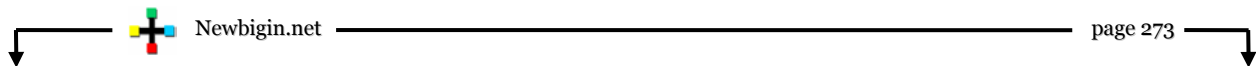
From The Editor

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J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

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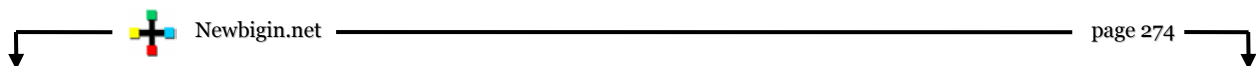
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When the proposal to put the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches together was being hotly debated, no point glowed hotter than the question, 'Can the Orthodox churches really be part of a missionary council'? There were those on both sides who said no. On the one hand, there were Orthodox voices which insisted that there could be no approval of the missions of divided churches. 'The Orthodox Church cannot help but painfully nod to the truth that "every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation..." It believes, therefore, that oneness in the Church is an absolute prerequisite for the proper discharge of the mission of the Church.'¹ On the other hand, there have not lacked Protestant voices to insist that the missionary movement would only be weakened by allowing itself to be tied to bodies which not only showed no zeal for missionary work, but actually tried to hinder it.

Plainly these were not the only possible views. As far back as the first decade of this century, the preparative commission of the Edinburgh Conference on Co-operation and Unity corresponded with the great

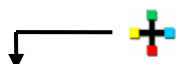
¹ Metropolitan James of Melita in *Basileia* (ed. Hermelink, Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag, 1959), p. 78.



Orthodox missionary Archbishop Nicolai of Japan, although at that time it was not possible to go beyond expressions of brotherly feeling. The ecumenical vision of John R. Mott included the Orthodox churches in its range from a very early date. The student conference that he organized at Constantinople in 1911 was the point at which many of the future leaders of Orthodoxy began their fruitful participation in the ecumenical movement, and there was never any concealing of the missionary character of that movement. And now, by God's grace, in the integrated World Council of Churches, Orthodox churches play their part in the discussion of missionary issues and the planning of missionary strategy. But it is important that this be regarded not merely as the end of a misunderstanding, but as the beginning of a fruitful interpenetration in which there will be

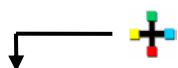
much to be received and given on both sides. Protestant readers of this Review will recognize in reading the articles which follow how much they have to receive from Orthodox thought about the missionary nature of the Church. And Orthodox Christians who are engaged in seeking to recover and restore to their people the original and authentically Orthodox missionary vision of earlier centuries freely acknowledge their debt to the western missionary thinkers who share with them in the ecumenical movement.

Obviously, it is absurd to suggest that Orthodoxy is inherently non-missionary. In refutation of such a charge, one could quote not only the vast missionary labours of the early centuries, culminating in the evangelization of Russia, but also the work of Russian missions right up to the revolution of 1917. Obviously also, the western critic of the Orthodox record in this matter must take account of the fact that most of the Orthodox churches have lived the greater part of their history under the total dominance of theocratic Islamic states, the grand exception being the Russian Church which, since 1917, has been learning – on behalf of us all – how to live under a totalitarian Marxist regime. One must compare like with like and ask, for example, how the Evangelical and Orthodox communities which now live side by side in the Near East compare with one another in effective witness to Islam. And while we are trying to put the historical record straight, it behoves western readers, both Catholic and Protestant, to remember what bitter memories the eastern churches have of western aggression. The word ‘crusade’ is a favourite among evangelicals: for Orthodox it evokes the memory of some of the most shameful episodes in all Christian history.



Protestant missions have placed in the forefront of their thinking the intention that as the fruit of their work there should be in every nation strong, self-governing national churches. To this end they have laid great stress upon the early translation of the Bible into the language of the people and the development of a native ministry. But in this respect they have been less single-minded and less successful than Orthodox missions. One of the most striking facts in the history of the expansion of Christianity is the way in which the missionaries of the eastern churches laboured to translate the Scriptures and so, in a real sense, to create new literary languages out of the speech of Syrians, Armenians, Copts, Georgians and Goths and the many Slavonic languages, including Russian. There was no attempt, as in the West, to impose a single language upon all the peoples as the one vehicle of Christian thought and devotion. The unwritten languages of pagan tribes were made the instruments by which God’s revelation was communicated to new peoples. And, as has been well said, ‘Such a translation brings about both the rebirth and the baptism of a language. The translator of the Bible is confronted with the creative task of expressing, with the often inadequate means of a hitherto non-literary vernacular, the immense body of spiritual and earthly, natural and social, sacred and profane, ideas that are contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments. To perform such a translation means, in fact, to conquer for the first time the intellectual and natural universe for the language in question, and therefore for the people who speak that language.’¹ Reflecting this experience, Orthodox worship has made much of the gift of tongues at Pentecost by which the confusion of human tongues is converted into a harmony in confessing the saving truth of Christ.

More successfully than any other missions, Orthodox missions seem to have grasped the fact that mission is not the same as church extension, that it involves the birth of a new church – the church of a nation baptized (with its language and its culture and all its common life) into Christ. The churches which are the fruit of Orthodox missions are, to a degree without parallel among the fruits of western missions, national churches. Indeed, the tensions within Orthodoxy to-day arise in large part from the difficulty of disentangling the over-all witness of Orthodoxy from the separate allegiances of autocephalous national churches. And – to a Protestant observer at least – it would seem that there has been something of a failure of missionary nerve in Orthodoxy’s meeting



with the secularized world culture of our day. Would not the Orthodox churches of North America, for example, be playing a much bigger part in the evangelization of that continent if they had not clung so long to their several native languages? It has not been characteristic of Orthodox missions in their greatest days to use the old shell for self-protection against the new culture.

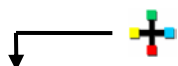
This same experience of the problems which face a plurality of autocephalous national Orthodox churches in a single cosmopolitan culture must surely prompt also a reconsideration of some of the much-used arguments about the relation of mission and unity. In the paper already quoted, Metropolitan James (now Archbishop Jakovos) wrote:

The Orthodox Church . . . believes that only a unified Church and ‘sanctified through the truth’ can effectively proclaim Christ and bring the nations to Him.... The Orthodox Church will therefore continue to believe that unity belongs to the mission, but it will also continue to question the opinion of some that missions can eventually lead to unity. Missions can probably lead to mergers or limited schemes of unity, but it would be more than audacious to think that they can lead to unity.¹

For this reason, the same writer maintains that ‘the Orthodox Church was always governed by the principle not to preach the Gospel where Christ was already named, lest it should build upon another’s foundations’.

There would seem to be need, now that the act of integration has brought Orthodox and western missionary thinking into the same discussion, to look again both historically and theologically at the reciprocal relation between mission and unity. It does not seem to be the case that disunity has at all times been regarded by the Orthodox as an absolute bar to missionary activity. One may quote two instances, one ancient and one modern. The apostolic work of Constantine and Methodius in Moravia in the ninth century was carried out in an area over which the Archbishop of Salzburg had jurisdiction and, despite the support of Pope Hadrian II, led to conflict with the western bishops. And the Russian mission to Japan in the nineteenth century worked in a country where other missions were at work with which unity was not possible. Moreover, it is a fact of history that what we now call the ecumenical movement had its main roots in the missionary experience of the western churches. It was this experience which moved these churches to a new and ardent longing for unity, a unity which should

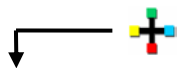
¹ *op. cit.*, p. 79.



embrace all who bore the name of Christ. The records of the Edinburgh Conference show that, even at that early date, staunchly evangelical missionary leaders were moved to express their longing for a unity which should embrace Roman Catholics and Orthodox. It would be difficult to deny pride of place to the missionary impulse among the spiritual forces which have drawn Orthodox into partnership with other Christians in the ecumenical movement of our time. The relation between unity and mission is not a unilateral one. On the one hand, the offer of reconciliation to God through the Gospel will only be credible if it has behind it a community which is manifestly living the reconciled life. Without this, it can degenerate into mere proselytism. With it, the Church may exercise a reconciling ministry, drawing men by the power of a holy love, even when the means of explicit propaganda are totally denied. This happens in Russia to-day. A truly reconciled community, living the life of thankful adoration and offering up

its daily service in the world as its participation in the one eternal sacrifice of Christ, centred and made explicit in the eucharistic offering, can be the means by which the Holy Spirit draws men to Christ and leads them into the reconciled life, even when all the external conditions are against it. But, on the other hand, disunited churches can discover again the secret of unity when they are willing to turn outwards to the world and live in that field of magnetic force where Christ's holy love meets an unholy and unloving world. It has many times proved true that it is in recovering their missionary relation to the world that Christians have been led back to the secret of unity.

This Review is dedicated to the proposition that the Gospel is to be proclaimed to all men, to the end that they may believe in Christ and be saved. A minority of men do so believe. Nothing less than all the strength of the Christian Church is needed to finish the unfinished task. A Christian world mission without the witness of the Orthodox churches is a maimed and lop-sided thing, deprived of some of the riches of the Gospel. Readers of this Review will rejoice at the evidence which the following pages give of the missionary concern in the Orthodox churches. This is not only a matter of words, but has begun to manifest itself in deeds. Let no one put limits to what these deeds may yet grow to. Orthodoxy will bring to the task of world mission in the twentieth century not only the treasures of a past missionary greatness, but also an unparalleled experience of what it means to live as Christians among Muslims and among Marxists. They may well be the teachers of the rest of Christendom in the school of Christian witness to these



two formidable contenders for the allegiance of twentieth-century man.

The present year is the centenary of the birth of John R. Mott, that extraordinary man who has left so many marks upon the Christianity of our time. I have already referred to the part he played in drawing Orthodox churchmen into the ecumenical movement. Other facets of his work are more often remembered. One way in which the centenary is being celebrated is by the publication of a popular booklet containing a biographical sketch by Dr Robert Mackie and a number of short 'snapshots' from men and women who knew Mott personally and who can make him live again for those who did not know him. The book is to be published as a paperback by the SCM Press, London.

A number of important changes take place in the staff of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism during the latter part of this year. Dr Carpenter, who joined the staff of the International Missionary Council in 1956 after a distinguished career of missionary service in the Congo, retires from service shortly after this issue of the Review appears. Dr Carpenter was the acting General Secretary of the IMC from 1958 to 1959, and has been at the head of the New York *office* until the present date. All who have had any touch with the work of the IMC and of the Division know that the part he has played in the work of ecumenical missionary co-operation has been outstanding. The creation and nurture of the All Africa Conference of Churches owes a vast amount to his vision and generosity of spirit. A fuller appreciation of the part which Dr Carpenter has played in the work of the Division will appear in the October issue of the Review.

It is a matter for great thankfulness that Dr T. E. Floyd Honey, of the United Church of Canada, has accepted the invitation of the World Council of Churches to join the staff of the New York office in Dr Carpenter's place. This appointment, however, coincides with important changes in the working of this office. Following the integration into one Division of Overseas Ministries of the former Church World Service and Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, it has been agreed that Dr Honey should serve the interests of both the DWME and the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the World Council of Churches. The two New York offices are now integrated into a single office under the direction of Dr Eugene L. Smith; and Dr



Honey will serve as a member of the team in this office, concerned primarily with the programmes and policies of the two WCC Divisions and the single NCC Division with which they are now related. It is a position of exceptional importance for the development of healthy relations between the mission and service activities of the churches, and we are thankful that Dr Honey has been willing to accept this new and difficult assignment.

A very important change is also to take place in the London office of the DWME. Mr Orchard, who has directed this office since 1955, has accepted appointment as General Secretary of the Conference of British Missionary Societies in Great Britain, in succession to Mr Short. He is expected to assume his new office in September, and the Divisional Committee has decided not to make any appointment in the London office for the present in his place. We are thankful that Mr Orchard will continue to be in a position of constant and close participation in the work of the Division and that his wise counsel and his acute powers of discernment and analysis will still be at the service of our common work.

In the Geneva office, the Reverend John Elliott, of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, has given eight months of most helpful service, with special responsibility for handling the development of relations between Inter-Church Aid and missions. His colleagues in the Division are extremely grateful to him, and to the Board of Missions, for all that he has contributed. His place is being taken by the Reverend Alexander John, of the Church of South India.

The consultation at Tubingen on 'The Healing Ministry in the Mission of the Church' has stimulated a remarkably wide and vigorous discussion among and between doctors and theologians. It has suggested promising lines for the rethinking of medical missionary policy. The consultation itself called for a big programme of survey and consultation and the appointment of full-time staff to direct the work. The Divisional Committee has not yet been able to meet this request, but we have been extremely fortunate to be able to make an arrangement with the Division of Overseas Ministries (NCCCUSA) by which the part-time services of Mr James McGilvray will be available to us in beginning the follow-up of Tubingen. Mr McGilvray, who participated in the Tubingen meeting, has wide experience of medical missionary matters, and is giving special attention to the development of regional surveys of medical missionary work. In all this new work, we are fortunate to have available the expert services of the WCC's Committee on



Specialized. Assistance to Social Projects (SASP). The Medical Panel of SASP is already providing much expert help in carrying out the proposals of the Tubingen meeting.

The Editor should also report that he has been called back to serve in the Church of South India as Bishop in Madras, in succession to the late David Chellappa. At the time of writing, it is not yet possible to say anything about the appointment of a successor, but the matter is receiving the urgent attention of the officers and Executive Committee of the Division.

Readers will have learned of the death in March of Miss M. M. Underhill, who was joint Editor of the Review with William Paton from 1928 until 1940. The Review owes a very great deal to the distinguished service which she gave, with so much quietness and modesty, during those years. We print a brief appreciation of her on a later page.

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