



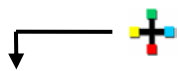
A Review of "Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism," edited by Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1981.

1982

J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

*The International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6, 1 (January): 32.

All material is reprinted with permission from the Newbigin family, the Newbigin Estate and the publisher. All material contained on the Newbigin.Net website, or on the accompanying CD, remains the property of the original author and/or publisher. All rights to this material are reserved. Materials are not to be distributed to other web locations for retrieval, published in other media, or mirrored at other sites without express written permission from the appropriate parties. The material can be used for private research purposes only.



This is a lively discussion among Christians of different traditions about the way to understand other religions and relate to their adherents. It seems to be easier to promote dialogue between (at least some) Christians and people of other faiths than it is to get different kinds of Christians to discuss the subject with each other. That is why Wilfred Cantwell Smith can claim that this volume "marks something of a milestone."

It embodies papers given to a conference in 1979 by theologians from Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Conservative Evangelical, and Ecumenical Protestant traditions. There are five main sections, each consisting of a presentation from one of these traditions, responses from two others, and a reply by the original essayist. There are admirable Bible studies by Krister Stendahl, four contributions to a panel discussion, and "an attempt at summation" by Professor W. Cantwell Smith.

One cannot comment in a short review on twenty-two separate papers. The value of the book lies in the interaction. I found myself asking: "Who is really listening to the others?" To my surprise I found most of the high marks for this going to the conservative evangelicals. This is worth pondering. Some of the contributors seem to confuse religious pluralism with cultural pluralism and to identify Christianity with one culture. Some are so overwhelmed by their (vicarious) repentance for the sins of nineteenth-century missionaries that all other issues are crowded out. And none seems to have been forced to think about Barth's famous word: "Religion is unbelief." At the end I found myself asking: "Is the root of our trouble that we see ourselves in the judge's seat rather than on the witness stand?"

But this is an important discussion that will start many fruitful lines of thought in the mind of a concerned reader. I warmly commend it.

All material is reprinted with permission from the Newbigin family, the Newbigin Estate and the publisher. All material contained on the Newbigin.Net website, or on the accompanying CD, remains the property of the original author and/or publisher. All rights to this material are reserved. Materials are not to be distributed to other web locations for retrieval, published in other media, or mirrored at other sites without express written permission from the appropriate parties. The material can be used for private research purposes only.