



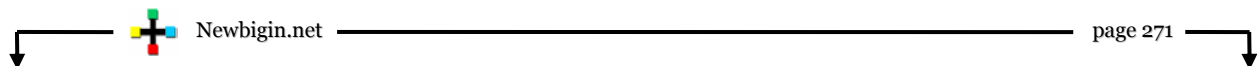
Rejoinder to “Mission and Unity in the Missionary Ecclesiology of Max A C Warren”, by Ossi Haaramäki

1983

J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

*International Review of Mission* 72, 286 (April): 271-72.

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.

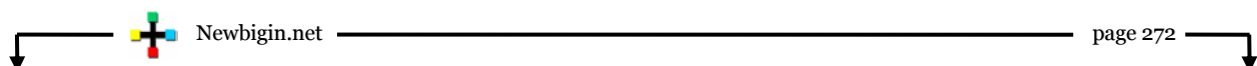


Dear Editor,

Readers of the *IRM* will be grateful to Dr Haaramaki for the insights he has given into the thinking of Max Warren about the IMC/WCC integration. I do not think that there is much difference between his interpretation of Max Warren's thinking and mine. He had become convinced that the IMC was no longer able to perform its former role. I accept Dr Haaramaki's affirmation that this arose from his opinion of the views of the IMC staff at that time and not from the considerations I suggested. But the IMC staff was – I think – correctly interpreting the opinion of the majority of the member councils outside of Europe.

Insofar as Dr Haaramaki's article opens up again the whole argument about integration, I would only make the following points:

1. There are no grounds for stating that "the starting point of ecumenical theology" is the affirmation "only in unity is the mission of the church possible". In the first place there is no such thing as an official "ecumenical theology". In the second place, the most authoritative ecumenical statement on the subject at the time of the debate was the statement of the Central Committee of 1952 on the Calling of the Church to Mission and Unity. This statement opened with a very strong protest against any conception of unity which was not at the same time missionary, and ends with a call to fresh missionary mobility.



2. It confuses the issue to use such pejorative terms as "bureaucratic super organization" to describe the WCC, while missionary societies are described as "creative minorities". Missionary societies are also large and powerful organizations, and the CMS in the time of Max Warren was among the most powerful. And no large organization is free from the dangers of bureaucracy.

3. I think Max Warren was right in sensing a failure of nerve among the constituency of the IMC and in deploring this. But this was something that affected the whole missionary movement,

and was part of the trauma of the whole period of decolonization. It was simply a fact that had to be taken into account.

4. I also think that Warren was right in saying that the theological basis for the integration proposals was inadequate. Much was done to rectify this, but missiology is an ongoing business, and always needs fresh work. This glimpse into the mind of one of the great missionary statesmen of our time helps us as we continue in the task. For this I am grateful to Dr Haaramaki.

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.