



A Letter To The Editor

1990

J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

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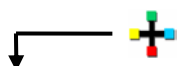


Dear Dr. Abraham

In the recent issue of the Forum there is an article on the Charismatic Movement which includes considerable material about my supposed involvement in this movement. As this material is largely fictitious and certainly inaccurate, I venture to make some corrections in the hope that you will kindly publish them.

Page 106. "Historically it was Newbigin (sic) who made the first attempt to assess the Pentecostal Movement and came out with an accommodating position". The reference is to my book 'The Household of God' written in 1952. At that time I had had no contact with the Pentecostal movement except a very casual meeting in Madurai. I knew almost nothing of it. There is no 'assessment' of the Pentecostal movement in the book. Nor is the book about the ecumenical movement. I was writing a doctrine of the Church. Writing immediately after the Amsterdam Conference which had highlighted the Catholic-Protestant divide, I began work on this two-fold scheme. Only as the result of further biblical study did I come to the conclusion that this two fold scheme was not adequate. The biblical evidence required a third facet. Only afterwards, searching for a name to characterise this third factor, did I decide to use the word Pentecostal – simply because the feast of Pentecost is associated with the coming of the Spirit.

Page 108. 'Newbigin blessed Pentecostalism by terming it 'Third stream'. I did not. I evaluated this third element in



the life of the Church along with those emphasised by Catholics and Protestants. .

Page 120. The writer attempts to show that I was Influenced towards Pentecostalism by a Quaker education, by contact with the SCM and John R. Mott, and by Moral Rearmament. If the writer had any knowledge of these movements he would know that they are as remote from Pentecostalism as it is possible to be. The quotation at the end of this paragraph is taken from another book, totally out of context and completely mis-understood.

Page 120. 'It was during Newbegin's bishopric that the charismatic movement entered India and the CSI'. It was also during this period that the USA invaded Vietnam but I was in no way responsible for either.

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