



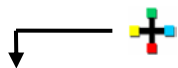
An Echo from Finland

1994

J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

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Like other readers of this newsletter, I continue to meet evidences of the stimulation which the Swanwick consultation has given to Christian thinking in many parts of the world. In mid-February I was invited to lead a two-day conference in Helsinki on the issues raised at Swanwick. The event was held in the magnificent Great Hall of Helsinki University and about two hundred people took part, including leading people from the academic world, the business world and the theatre. There was also a good attendance of students.

Finland is a much less secularized society than most of western Europe and the Lutheran Church claims the allegiance of 95% of the population. By speaking of 'the Gospel as public truth,' I ran head on into the strong Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms and my hosts warned me in advance that for Finnish Christians faith is an intensely private matter. This ensured very lively discussion in the various groups which dealt with different aspects of public life. I found the whole event immensely stimulating and delightful and I think we may look forward to further developments in that part of Europe.

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