



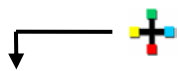
A Review of "Sharing a Vision," by George Carey (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1993).

1994

J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

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This is a collection of 38 addresses given by the Archbishop during the two years following his enthronement. Some are substantial lectures, others are short sermons. They are addressed to both secular and ecclesiastical audiences, and they cover a very wide range of issues. We hear the Archbishop addressing the nation as Primate and speaking as the spiritual focus of authority for the world-wide Anglican communion and as leader of the Church of England. Every piece contains substantial argument addressed to the issues with which the particular gathering is concerned. The CBI is reminded, in a powerful and much discussed address, that industry exists to serve people, and MPs are reminded that the ruler is required to be a servant. From his Evangelical background Dr Carey speaks movingly of the riches of the Catholic tradition, and also gently reminds a Roman Catholic audience that all the separated churches have something to learn. He speaks cogently of the need for moral and spiritual values in the life of the nation, but also (refreshingly) reminds his hearers that 'values' are floating in the void if they are not rooted in some belief about how things really are, about what is the case.

Much contemporary Christian talk is hostile to 'Establishment' in any form. This fashion of thought can conceal an unworthy evasion of responsibility for public life. These addresses show how the historic position of the Archbishop of Canterbury can provide an opportunity to address the gospel to the nation. Dr Carey combines great generosity of mind with a firm commitment to the truth of the gospel. He does not offer a kind of 'civil religion' which everyone could accept because it has no real content. He does not wish to draw lines which exclude others, but lifts up the person of Jesus Christ as the one who constitutes the Church by drawing all to himself.

This strong Christo-centric position enables him to deal both firmly and generously with doctrinal diversity within the Church of



England, especially in respect of its Catholic and Evangelical elements. One of the most interesting pieces in the book is in his discussion of the way in which Michael Ramsey dealt with the debate about *Honest to God*. His estimate of this book is (to the present reviewer) surprisingly mild, but perhaps this is because (unlike the more recent controversy surrounding the writings of John Hick and others) Robinson did not call into question the centrality of Christ.

The same anchorage serves him well in his very wise discussion of inter-faith relations. He has no difficulty in combining a whole-hearted appreciation of the faith and life of people of other religious traditions with a clear affirmation of the uniqueness of Christ and of the gospel.

In his Preface the Archbishop expresses the hope that his book will both encourage and nourish believers and also address the questions of those searching for faith. It will do both, and it should be widely read.

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