

1983

Hayama Missionary Seminary

ALL THINGS
TO ALL MEN

Interaction of Biblical Faith
And the Surrounding Cultures

Major Papers

Presented at the
T W E N T Y - F O U R T H H A Y A M A M E N ' S
M I S S I O N A R Y S E M I N A R

“ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN”

Interaction of Biblical Faith

And the Surrounding Cultures" Amagi Sanso

January 5-7, 1983

Compiling Editor, Carl C. Beck TokyoG Japan, 1983

OCR & Word 2000 Format: Lonnie J. Dufty, 1993, 2008
PDF Version 1.2, November 2008

Those who desire to reprint material from this book should
obtain permission from the individual authors concerned
and give credit to the Hayama Seminar.

Notice Regarding PDF Release of Hayama Archives

Accurate reproduction of the original books is an ongoing process. Errors can be reported to the Hayama Archivist, Lonnie J. Dufty. Before doing so, please check for an updated version at the site you downloaded from or www.jema.org (Japan Evangelical Missionary Association). For the foreseeable future, contact information is available in the JEMA directory. Should the above information be obsolete, request for updated information should be available via www.jema.org .

In making a report, include the following information:

Year of book.

PDF Date and file version (generally located on title page)

Page number(s)

Example: Hayama Missionary Seminar Report 1988, PDF Version 1.1, November 2008

REGISTRANTS

Anderson, Robert K.	Maukonen, Bret
Anderson, Stig	Maurer, Ronald
Ayer, Harold	McElligott, Patrick
Beck, Carl	McIntyre, Denis
Bender, Ken	Metcalf, Steve
Benedict, Paul	Milhous, Kenneth
Bergh, Oliver	Moore, David
Burke, Bill	Mouat, Barry
Cain, Benson	Nakano, Takumi
Christianson, Warren	Nelson, Richard
Clift, Peter	Norden, Russell
Cole, Frank	Offner, Clark
Conrad, Stanley	Olson, George
Cunningham, Robert	Pickering, Frank L.
Dale, Kenneth	Potter, Barry
Davis, Francis	Price, Calvin
DeRolf, Chuck	Ray, Charles
Deyhle, Dan	Ray, Marlin
Edwards, Kemp	Schmidt, A. E. (Tony)
Eikamp, Arthur	Seat, Leroy
Elder, William	Shaida, Peter
Emanuel, Wayne	Shelton, Arthur
Engebretsen, Martin	Shenk, Charles
Eyler, Marvin	Sims, Harold
Fenwick, Brett	Sims, Jonathan
Fryman, Howard	Sorely, Robert
Gooden, Joe	Sprunger, Fritz
Graybill, John	Stoller, Ronald
Halstrom, Dale	Stott, Melvin
Herd, Peter	Stroud, Joe
Hilt, Kenneth	Thelle, Notto
Hinchman, William	Thiessen, Bernard
Joseph, Kenny	Totman, Roger
Kabira, Kiyoshi	Trevor, A. Hugh
Kinley, Philip	Van Wyk, Gordon
Kraus, Norman	Verme, Robert
Krause, Joe	Warriner, Austin
Kropp, Richard	Yoder, Marvin
Laman, Gordon	Young, John
Lengefeld, Bill	Youngquist, Harris
Liechty, Carl	Zook, Marlin
Long, Robert	

REGISTRANTS	iii
PROFILES OF THE SPEAKERS	iv
FOREWORD	
A CELESTIAL ORCHESTRATION An Opening Sermon by Oliver Bergh	1
THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND THE SURROUNDING CULTURES: CONFLICT AND ACCOMODATION A Biblical Study by John M. L. Young	3
JEWISH, GREEK, AND ROMAN INFLUENCES ON THE EARLY CHURCH A Historical Study by Carl Beck	10
THE FOREIGNNESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN A Sociological Study by Notto Thelle	22
USING JAPANESE LITERATURE IN PREACHING A Practical Study by Patrick McElligott	29
EXPERIMENTS IN CONTEXTUALIZATION IN JAPAN A Testimonial by Clark Offner	8 4
A Second Testimonial by William Elder	
A Third Testimonial by Frederic Sprunger	44
ADVENTURING IN ACCULTURATION: BRAINSTORMING SESSION A Summary of Group Discussions by Austin Warriner	47
WHY DON'T MORE JAPANESE BECOME CHRISTIANS? – Reflections on an NHK Poll by Kiyoshi Kabira	51
MOUNT FUJI EVANGELIZATION - A Closing Sermon by John Graybill	58

PROFILES OF THE SPEAKERS

Oliver Bergh: 33 years in Japan. American Lutheran Church. Church planting, mainly in the Shizuoka area.

John M. L. Young 20 years in Japan. Presbyterian Church in America. Former President, Japan Christian Theological Seminary, Tokyo. Church planting. Book soon to be published, By Foot to China.

Carl Beck: 33 years in Japan. Mennonite Church. Church planting in Osaka, Hokkaido, Tokyo. Asia Peace Ministry. Retired and now "helper" in Kanto churches.

Joe Gooden: 33 years in Japan. Baptist Church. Conference Ministry: World Vision, KeswickG Deeper Life, Pastoral Training, especially for young pastors.'

Philip Kinley: 27 years in Japan. Church of God. Church planting and education ministry. Principal, Tamagawa Sei Gakuin (Girls' Jr. Sr. High School).

Notto Thelle: 13 years in Japan: Norwegian Lutheran Church. Church planting in Shizuoka, Otani Univ., Kyoto, N.C.C. Center for the Study of Japanese Religions.

Patrick McElligott: 16 years in Japan. Worldwide Evangelistic Crusade field director in Japan. Literature ministry. Church planting in Shiga Prefecture.

Clark Offner: 31 years in Japan. Christian Catholic Church. Church planting in TichiJapanese religions research.

William Elder, 35 years in Japan. United Methodist Church. Chinzei Gakuin, Kyushu. Pastor;'_ Okinawa, Tottori, Chiba. Personnel Sec'y, JNAC Tokyo. Osaka Jogakuin.

Frederic Sprun~er: 18 years in Japan. Mennonite Church. Houseparent, Miyazaki. Church planting Miyazaki, Fukuoka. Author of TEE in Japan.

Kivoshi Kabira: Second generation Christian, born in Taiwan, returned to Okinawa. Shibuya Baptist Church. 15 years broadcasting work in Okinawa. NHK since 1972G comptroller in International Cooperative Division.

John Graybill: 25 years in Japan. Brethren in Christ. Church planting, Yamaguchi, Tokyo. Pioneer evangelism, Nagoya.

FOREWORD

Has the Christian church been too anti-culture in Japan? Has she estranged herself from the average person? Are there any ways in which she can accommodate herself more to national customs without compromising her Gospel? These are questions which this year's seminar grappled with.

In a way, this year's study was a continuation, though a broadening, of last year's theme. The emphasis was different, however. This year's emphasis was on how the Gospel might make use of and breathe into Japanese cultural patterns, so that a Japanese person can feel at home in the Gospel, and in the church in his native land.

The word "foreign" cropped up repeatedly in both presentation and discussion. That this should be true after nearly five centuries since the Gospel's first entry, and over a century since its reentry, into Japan raises serious questions. Is the Gospel itself "foreign" or has it come to Japan too encapsulated in "foreign clothes," or have the Japanese a more than usual sense of "the foreign?"

Whichever it is, if the Gospel is ever to thrive in the body of Japan, it must somehow overcome the "foreign implant" conception triggering "defense mechanisms" which reject this implant. This is obvious. How to neutralize these rejection mechanisms is less obvious and is what these papers wrestle with.

Though no major breakthroughs were achieved, we hope these papers will commend themselves to the readers; that participant and reader alike will have caught certain glimpses and insights making each person's work more fruitful and less the object of rejection mechanisms in this land to which we have been called.

Carl C. Beck
Compiling Editor
Member of Continuation Committee

A CELESTIAL ORCHESTRATION

An Opening Sermon by Oliver Bergh

Psalm 118:14 "The Lord is my strength and my songs He has become my salvation."

From the time the invitation came to lead this opening hour of worship I have felt that it should be a tune-up session. A tune-up time is not a part of the regular performance. When an orchestra is tuning up we do not expect the richest notes or perfect harmony. But if we do not have a tune-up something may be off-key or someone may not be able to respond to what the conductor wants. No one is here for solos. We are here for a joint performance and that will be the most satisfying to all of us if we can hear some of the notes that this Conference has struck, the notes which we expect that it will continue to strike, and which we want to hear.

We want to tune in to the joint endeavor which this Conference is. The Committee has worked hard and the Secretary has corresponded much to pick the men who can give us the best on the theme, "All things to all men." Men have again worked much to prepare the best for us. In the language of King James, they have sent out their decrees "that all the world should be taxed in order to share a rich revenue with us. They have condensed into an hour work that may have taken weeks. Some may be sharing wisdom which is the fruit of their careers. But if we are listeners this year we are not necessarily serving less. If we are good listeners we can reward these men with joy. If we are creative listeners we may be able to use some points better than they themselves have been able to use them. And if it is God's Spirit which is touching a truth it can become a built-in melody. They can even be wings to carry us through our tasks with joy. In the fellowship of God's people light can shine forth which seems to elude us in the study. Last month I finally saw that certainly one secret of Mary's Magnificent is that she was in the presence of Elizabeth. The Church's outstanding hymn of praise was born as a response to Elizabeth's welcoming affirmation. More of us would sound like Mary if we recognized the character of Elizabeth in our congregations: We need to tune in to the art of giving and receiving. It is in the fellowship of giving and receiving that there is equality. Only God knows when it is the speaker or the hearer who is serving best. If we can tune into this song none of us need be disappointed with these days. All of us can go home with the song which the Lord is.

We will be tuning in to the opportunity for discussions. We owe all men our respect and to those who have worked to serve us we also owe gratitude. But this Conference does not require agreement. The reader of every paper will recognize that someone in this group may have keener insights or more personal experience than he has been able to command. Many tune in well in the discussion sessions. I do not now recall the exact content of a paper which Don Hoke presented twenty years ago. But I will never forget that Raymond Hammer chided him for being a rationalist. There was enough humor in that so it did not hurt. There was enough seriousness for it to be significant. Sometimes the fruit of discussions are privately dropped in little pieces afterwards. Once, after a discussion session in which I had held forth on my favorite subject of the importance of the doctrine of Creation for evangelism in Japan, a man came over to tell me that early in his career he had invited Kagawa to preach for evangelistic meetings and that Kagawa had only lectured on Creation with a little bit at the end about faith in Christ. This brother said that he would never do it again, but he had written to Kagawa to say that he did not consider that appropriate for evangelistic meetings. Kagawa's retort had been, "You do not understand the Japanese people." Let's tune in to the opportunity to give and receive things like that: After one session Percy Luke whispered to me, "A young man should never speak on suffering.

We should tune in to the personal ministries which the fellowship of the saints offers. This year we do not see Gordon Johnson in our midst. The Lord will have to do something very rich to compensate me for that. I did not often see him except at this Conference but I always had the feeling that I was just the person that he had come to meet, and he was ready to give himself totally to learning how I was getting along. The Lord has called him home and will find other ways to love us. Or better yet, will teach us to love as he loved. The first year that I attended this Conference I found a man who was delighted to listen to my burdens. I do not recall that he has ever presented a paper, but he has served me

me well and undoubtedly he has served many others well too. Those who are eloquent of speech may become famous. But we really need those who use their ears, as God intended them to be used, to listen to the burdens of the brethren.

We are also here to tune into our prayer opportunities. Last year in one of the prayer groups Joe Gooden urged us to "turn the Word into prayer." During the past year I have recalled that as often as any other prayer counsel. It gives us inexhaustible resources for prayer renewal. Every text of Scripture becomes a gateway to God. A few months ago I discovered something in Luther which missionary parents should find easy to tune in to. In a letter written to a distraught woman whose husband had been kidnapped and whose whereabouts they did not know, he said, "We have been visiting him by going to our Lord Christ." Certainly we all have an adequate Christology to do the same. I have a little more difficulty following Luther's Christology when he wrote to a sick friend, "I hear that Christ is ill in you." But if we can follow him there and believe that, if Christ be indeed our Lord, we have a more powerful motivation for intercession than even the deepest sufferings of those who are the closest to us. We should have no difficulty tuning in to such prayers as one passed on to me by Wm. Vaswig, "Fill us with the power of your love and with the glory of your humility." Or we can tune in on one I recall from J. M. T. Winther, "We have never been so close to Thy throne that we cannot come closer." ,

Christ is our song, the melody we are to sing, and some of God's people have been gifted with a closer to perfect pitch than many of us have. The witness and wisdom of the entire Christian Church is available to us if we will only search it out. So the book table should not be neglected. One of the better preachers in my own Church told me that he reads some of George MacDonald almost daily-to put him in tune. There is much in George MacDonald that it is good to be in tune with. His son tells that if someone said that something was too good to be true, MacDonald's retort was that it was too good to not be true. In his *Behind The North Wind* he argues with this sophisticated logic. And we will surely be in better harmony with God's choir if we have digested his "The path to the next duty is the only straight one." Little wonder that C. S. Lewis found George MacDonald, of all writers, the one closest to the Spirit of Christ.

Recently I have found P. T. Forsyth one that I want to tune in to. When he is arguing for a missionary evangel with solid footings in the Cross he says, "If they do not hear the music that we hear, the dance we lead them must seem absurd." And I want to tune in to his perspective on missions when he says, "The missionary history of the Church is Christ's slow entrance on the right which he set up once for all in his cross." And he seems to have the entire choir, in mind when he says, "Nothing will set missions right which does not set much more right besides." Can't we all improve our music with these notes? If we are not harmonizing with these truths may we not be off key?

And while I was reveling in my discovery of George MacDonald, Forsyth came along and said, "Give George MacDonald a well-earned rest and take up your Pascal." There are ever deeper notes to tune in to, and some of them come from Pascal. One who has done considerable work at tuning in to Pascal is Malcolm Muggeridge. Some good fruit of that was born when at the Lausanne Congress he quoted Pascal to that large and hopefully influential assembly. His quotation was, "It is vain, O men, that you seek within yourselves the cure of your miseries. Your principal maladies are pride, which cuts you off from God, and sensuality which binds you to the earth. Either you imagine that you are gods yourself, or if you grasp the vanity of such a pretension, you are cast into another abyss and suppose yourselves to be like the beasts of the field and seek your good in carnality." If we can tune in to that we can better sing the songs about forgiveness. That will help us in our battles with pride and despair.

We are here to confess with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my song." We are looking to each other these days for help to sing that song just a little bit better. These words have been an attempt to prepare us for what these days can be for us.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND THE SURROUNDING CULTURES: CONFLICT AND ACCOMMODATION

A Biblical Study by John M. L. Young

INTRODUCTION, The Basis

I have been assigned the subject of The People of God and the Surrounding Cultures Conflict and Accommodation. Since it is impossible for anyone to write from a base that does not contain assumed presuppositions, it is reasonable to ask from what premise do I undertake this task, which has already been approached from such various perspectives as those of anthropology, liberation, dogmatics and Biblical theology? The premise with which I start favors that of a Biblical theology which attests that the Christian faith was supernaturally revealed in the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; and that this Word of God reveals to us the flow of redemptive history, from the creation of man to the first century's establishment of the new covenant church, as God unfolds His will for His people in various covenant arrangements in successive eras.

Biblical inspiration, as I was taught in the classroom years ago by Dr. A. A. MacRae, was a special work of the Holy Spirit whereby He moved upon the writers of the Old and New Testaments so that their words should convey the thought God wished conveyed, should bear the proper relation to the words of the other writers and should be kept free from errors of fact, doctrine and judgment. The Bible's authority transcends our understanding of it, since it is the word of God and is so attested by Christ Himself.

THE PROBLEM

As Christians have sought to communicate their gospel in a surrounding non-Christian culture, problems have arisen. One problem has been how to so set forth the gospel so that it is truly proclaimed without compromise, and understood with sufficient comprehension to provide adequate knowledge for saving faith. Paul wrote the Romans that "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17) But the question is, what do they hear from our presentation as we seek to communicate a message from heaven, set in a context of 2000 years ago, coming ourselves from a background of modern Western civilization, and coming to a people of a foreign culture and ideology?

As germane as the above problem is, however, I understand from the word "conflict" in my assigned subject that another question is more to the fore there, and in the short space before us will address our attention more to it. How do the people of God, the church of God, relate to the problem of accommodation to, or conflict with, the surrounding non-Christian culture? How do they distinguish lawful accommodation from unlawful? Do they consciously wrestle with God's Word for light on how to establish a church that is both at home in its own cultural way of life and comprised of obedient people who, both as church and as individuals, live with integrity before the face of Scripture and their surrounding culture, a faithfully indigenous church?

DEFINITIONS: INDIGENIETY, CONTEXTUALIZATION, CULTURE

Protestant missions of a century ago found the term "indigenous" a very meaningful one to express the kind of church they wished to establish in foreign cultures. To them, however, it referred basically to a self-supporting, selfgoverning and self-propagating church. In the past ten years it has increasingly been recognized that the "indigenous church" so formed often lacked identity with its own cultural context in such matters as the form of government and the form of worship, as well as personal lifestyle, concern for the needy, and for the contemporary social struggle. In a word, it failed to live up to its responsibility of being the church in the world.

In place of the need for indigeniety the need for contextualization began to be discussed. One writer in speaking of this term wrote, "Contextualization involves adapting the message to the particular concerns and understandings of a culture." (Hesselgrave, *On Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, p. 181) Another has written that the gospel is contextualized when it is "presented in forms which are characteristic of the culture to which the gospel is taken." (B. J. Nicholls in *Contextualizations A Theology of Gospel and Culture*, p. 74) Harvey Conn has stated that "covenant contextualization cannot take place without ...a back and forth movement between God's word and God's world, a conversation between text

and interpreter and context, where the interpreter functions not as a spectator on the balcony but as actor on the hermeneutical stage" (H. Conn, "Theological Reflections on Contextualizing Christianity," p. 8). In this description the central role of the interpreter who explains the text to the context of the surrounding culture is clearly recognized.

To J. H. Bavinek, "culture is religion made visible," while T. S. Eliot shortens the definition to "lived religion." The Willowbank Report presents culture as the integrated system of beliefs, values, customs and institutions which express these and which binds a society to ether and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity (p. 7). In speaking of religion they are not necessarily speaking of deity, but are definitely referring to those basic beliefs, values and practices to which one is committed and which guide and influence one's thoughts, words and deeds though often unconsciously. Religion may be defined as the beliefs and practices which bind one to one's most basic principles of interpretation. The new mind brings a new appraisal of the old culture and religious views, and the problem of conflict or accommodation begins. Scripture speaks of the necessity of being "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2), of "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5), the goal being to "serve God with a whole heart and a willing mind" (I Chron. 28:9).

INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLE, COVENANT PERSPECTIVE

As Scripture confronts the new man with its covenantal perspective, the ramifications of the radical nature of its demands for total obedience to God's Word in His world are begun to be perceived. The word "covenant" comes from the old French word *covenir* (to come together) from the Latin *convenire* (convened to arrange an agreement), but the Biblical O. T. word *berith* means to bind together while the N. T. word *diatheke* emphasizes an agreed arrangement. A Biblical divine covenant was thus an arrangement instituted by God whereby He proclaimed His will to His people and bound (obligated) them to Himself with promise. In ancient Semitic times the pattern form for a covenant was widely known.

God's first proclamation to man in the Scriptures (Gen. 1 & 2) comes as a covenant ("Like Adam they have broken the covenant," Hos. 6:7) in its pattern and gives us His unchanging first mission to men. 1) God, the sovereign Creator of man in His own image, is the speaker (1:26); the preamble. 2) Having placed man on earth, He must tell man what his mission to the world is as He ordains them for their task (1:27-28a); the historical prologue. 3) The covenanted stipulations of God's will for man are: a) man is to be fruitful, producing servants for God (1:28, 2:5b). (The word translated "cultivate" is the usual word "to serve.") b) Man is to "subdue the earth" for God as a steward of His world (2:15) and Word (2:15-16), bringing out their potential for God (1:26, 28). c) Man is God's vicegerent to rule all of nature for God, including himself and all of his responsibilities (1:26, 28-30). 4) The Tree-of-the-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil was the witness to the reality of the ever-present Word of God (2:17) while 5), the Tree of Life was God's provision for reminding them that He was the way to life without death, and the way of life (2:9, 3:22). 6) The proclaimed blessing and cursing keynoted the ultimate in importance, obedience to God's will for life and death for disobedience (2:17).

The covenant's most characteristic expression in Scripture is God's proclamation, "I will be your God and you shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12; note also Gen. 17:1, Ex. 19:5,6 and Jer. 7:23). In the unfolding of the covenants down through redemptive history, man was to find saving grace and the way of life, and in covenant obedience he found his true good and the glory of God. Nothing contrary to God's covenanted will can be approved so that will must be daily sought in the Book of the Covenant. After man's fall into sin, the new dimension of saving grace was added to the covenant, that the covenant breaker could be restored to fulfilling the mandate to cultural and spiritual service in the world (Gen- 3:9-19). Now under the missionary mandate of the New Covenant (Matt. 28:18-20) restored covenant breakers are the witnesses to the reality of the covenanted Word of God (Acts 1:8). They are to be in the world, as lights (Phil. 2:15), but not of the world (I John 2:16).

O. T. ACCOMMODATION EFFORTS

The people of God are a covenanted people, covenanted to glorify Him with obedient service and have nothing to do with idolatrous substitutes. When in the O.T. they ignored this and tried to accommodate their ways to those of the surrounding

culture, disaster fell on them from God. When at Sinai a sinful people told Aaron that their invisible God needed to be replaced by one that they could see going before them, he made them a golden calf, a fall-back to the Egyptian culture they had left. In Egypt a calf was sometimes used as the seat of a deity, and some have suggested that Aaron meant them to consider that the calf was the throne of the invisible Yaweh. If so, his accommodation failed, for the people were delighted to worship the calf. Whatever he intended, what he did destroyed the uniqueness of the Creator God and brought His anger on them.

On Mr. Carmel it was the boastful bluff of Baal's prophets that Elijah called, after the three years of famine due to the terrible apostasy at Samaria, and he was very careful to differentiate his worship from theirs. Not only did he refuse to use their altar for his sacrifice, but as a symbol of his foal to rebuild, he rebuilt an old altar of Yaweh's, there to receive the pending demonstration of Yaweh's mighty reality. When, as in Ahab's day, government officials require as an act of loyalty that which is an act of pagan religious practice, the officials trying to make it more palatable for believers by declaring it to be an act of patriotic loyalty only, a very difficult situation arises. This became a very real problem in Japan early in the history of Protestant Christianity here.

ACCOMMODATION EFFORTS IN JAPAN

In 1890 the Government, in order to unite the people around the Emperor, and to hold them to the traditional manner of thought at the time Christianity was making its greatest impact, introduced into the schools the Imperial Rescript and portrait. On certain special occasions when a school assembly was held, the Rescript was read as a message from the God-Emperor, and the students were ordered to bow in worship before his unveiled portrait. These ceremonies at first caused a great stir in Christian circles with real opposition being offered, but the Government was adamant. To make it easier for Christians, the religious bureau released a statement that these ceremonies were not religious but only patriotic. That they were of a polytheistic nature, and therefore religious in the Christian meaning of the word, several considerations show. The Rescript statement opened with a reference to the "Ancestors," but the Chinese ideographs used referred to the human ancestors of the emperors. Further, it spoke of "the Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth," and the "way here set forth is ...infallible in all ages and true in all places." To a Christian these can be nothing but the religious concepts of a primitive polytheism. A Government news release could not change their religious nature. But still further, was it not unlawful compromise for a Christian to bow in worship before the portrait of the Emperor, even though the student might have no worshipful feeling in his heart?

BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF BOWING

The answer lies in the second commandment where it is declared, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any ...likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." The Hebrew word translated here as "bow down" in the English, and as *ogamu* (worship) in the Japanese, is *shachah*. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, in a learned article on the word "worship," makes it clear that the root idea of *shachah* is that of bodily prostration with a view to showing reverence. When it is performed to living men in their presence, where no idea of deity is associated, the scriptures uniformly recognize the act of prostration, or bowing, as a legitimate salutation. As an act of worship to the living God, who is Spirit, or as only an act of respect in the presence of a living man, who is spirit and body created in the image of God, *shachah* (to worship or bow down before) is correct behavior.

What the Scriptures uniformly condemn, and the second commandment specifically condemns, is the act of bowing, whether merely as an outward act or as one including the inner, emotional, worshipful feeling, towards anything other than living persona, specifically anything made in the "likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath." According to the Scriptural presentation of the matter, the act of bowing when performed otherwise than as a act of salutation to a living person, is a worshipful act, whether performed from an inner, emotional religious feeling, or simply performed as an outward act without such feeling.

The three young Hebrew heroes of the third chapter of Daniel obviously so understood it, for if the only shachah (bow down or worship) forbidden by the second commandment was one associated with an inner religious feeling, then they could have bowed down in good conscience knowing that there was no such feeling in their hearts. They well knew, however, that it was the act of bowing itself which was forbidden and that to do so would be to "worship the image." Thus apart from the fact that the school bow to the portrait was made to the picture of one who was declared to be a god, and that the bow required was for the students' "profoundest obeisance," of which there could be none deeper in act or inner meaning-apart from these obvious considerations, should not the fact that the bow was to the material reproduction-of a man have been reason enough for Christians to classify it in the category of forbidden acts of an idolatrous nature? That they did not do so established the practice of compromise with the national polytheism for three generations of Christians to come. This early failure to discern between that which could be rendered "to Caesar" and that which was God's alone resulted in the planting of a seed which within a half century was to bring forth a harvest of destruction in the moral fiber of the Church. The unlawful accommodation involved in Christians participating in the Rescript ceremonies was a sinful compromise which had a profound effect on the whole future of Christianity in Japan, conditioning it to a tolerant attitude toward participation in polytheistic practices to this very day.

PAGAN HOME ALTARS

Another place involving unlawful accommodation concerns Christian use of Shinto kamidana (godshelves) and Buddhist butsudan (Buddhist idol altars) in the home. One or other of these objects, and in many cases both, are present in the great majority of Japanese homes for the worship of the ancestors' spirits. The Buddhist altar contains an ihai, or ancestral tablet, in which the names of the ancestors are written. To worship these things would obviously be idolatry, but the argument has been made that they can lawfully be accommodated to Christian use. For instance, one Kyodan (United Church of Christ in Japan) pastor made this recommendation in 1951: "Then what shall this writer recommend? The real sense of the butsudan comes from the fact that there is an image or picture enshrined in it. Thus, if we take these away we cannot call it a butsudan. Therefore we have only to return these to the original temple with some offering money. Next we must consider the ihai. The Buddhist names of the deceased written on the front side must be removed and the ihai turned around so that we can see the other side on which are written the dates of the dead. If we go further and remodel the inside of the butsudan by setting up a cross and a Bible there we can have a fine Christian holy place. Thus the spirit of Christianity can be breathed into Japanese Buddhists who have made Buddha images but neglected to put a real spirit in them."

What is the objective here? To achieve a sort of syncretism between pagan and Christian symbols, to make the difference between the two seem less apparent? Such a motive is an unworthy one and the method unjustifiable. Hope for unbelievers lies in their recognition of the uniqueness of Christianity, and a complete break with those objects which were the very symbols of their substitution of the worship of the spirits of deceased creaturely men for the living Creator. The idea that the presence of a Christian symbol like a cross in a pagan box can sanctify it is reminiscent of the Israelitish superstition that they could make God serve their purposes by taking out the Ark onto the battlefield. The call in II Corinthians 6 is for complete separation from such things. Paul's warning in I Corinthians 10:22 needs to be heeded, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?"

THE O-BON FESTIVAL

A somewhat similar recommendation to the above pastor's came also from a missionary in Japan concerning another matter, the O-bon Festival. (This is a Buddhist festival held each summer in which the spirits of the dead are welcomed back to their homes for a few days.) Christians-in Japan are under great pressure to participate in this pagan religious observance to show their filial piety. Thus the missionary recommended that the - Obon Festival be declared a Christian "All Saints Day" so that Christians too could observe the day. He wrote: "The process of adjusting Christian religious practices to Japanese culture is already taking place Because of the desire to pay respects to the dead, it would

be an easy matter for the Christian Church to develop an O-bon Festival (of the dead) observance. Many Christians have to return to their native place at this time, help clean up the cemetery and participate in a Buddhist service or they will not be considered filial by their relatives Japanese people will adjust their Christian worship and practices to their old faiths." Such an adjustment between polytheistic faith and Christian faith is syncretism. How will the heathen learn the distinctive nature of the Christian faith as the one, true, revealed religion of the living God, who alone is worthy of worship and who forbids all efforts to communicate with the souls of deceased men, whose destinies He holds in the palm of His hand, if such schemes are worked out to lessen the antithesis between Christianity and polytheism? The commands of God in the Scriptures forbidding any attempt to contact the spirits of the dead for any purpose are very explicit where those who "resort to idols and ghosts of the dead and to mediums and spiritists" are referred to (Lev. 19,31; Deut. 18:10-12; Isa. 19s3).

SUGGESTION FOR CONTEXTUALIZATION IN JAPAN

A form of contextualization that has appeal to me represents working from the hearer's acknowledged interest and ignorance as did Paul (Acts 17:23). It can be used in Japan by considering, for instance, Japanese Buddhism from the point of view of early Christian influence on its first centuries here. In 804, Kobo Daishi went to Hsian, China, and lived near the Christian (Nestorian) Church where its pastor was translating a manuscript with a famous Indian Buddhist priest in that city. When Kobo returned to Japan in 806, he brought new doctrines back with him. His new Shingon (True Word) sect taught of a soul that could be saved by faith, of a paradise, and conducted masses for the dead, all more similar to Christian concepts than to original Buddhism (Reischauer, *East Asia*, pp. 345. 370-372)• Is it not appropriate to ask Buddhists why these changes were made? Kobo must have found something in China's capital that he felt the older Buddhism lacked, something more satisfying and meaningful. Then one can introduce the early missionary story of China and the gospel as the source of the unadulterated message of salvation by faith.

"NANIKA" AS INTERESTED IGNORANCE

We are told that 82% of the Japanese do not accept religions for their content, indeed "do not believe in any religion," but that "there are many who have a deep religious sentiment (shukvoshin) (Basabe, *Religious Attitudes of Japanese Men*, pp. 117, 113). The first covenant was introduced by the statement that God made man in His own image. Indelibly stamped in men is the "seed of religion, the sense of deity," so that as they look out on the nature the Japanese love so well their God consciousness whispers, "Something (nanika) is there." As Basabe says, the older, thinking man will attempt to cross barrier of a total relativity to reach the nanika, but he knows that it is not possible for it is inexpressible. Religious doctrines, to him, are not immutable truth and all religions are man made (pp. 116, 117). Yet that very reaching out, that "deep religious sentiment," in spite of the despair, is evidence that the Japanese man cannot escape the God in whose image he has been made; and that nature itself is God's general revelation of Himself and will always bear witness that He is there (Ps. 19s1-4; Rom. 1s18-25). It is this God consciousness in man which is our point of contact with him and the ground of our expectation that our message is being heard-at least on the intellectual level, for only the Holy Spirit can open the heart to hear it internally.

Christians have a two-layer concept of reality, the eternal and the temporal; the Creator and the created. The Japanese mind, however, is monistic, rejecting all that is not temporal, tending to reject the subject-object relation. Truth can be falsehood and sin virtue, while it makes little difference whether one is a religious believer or an unbeliever as both must accept that all things are relative (p. 113). This is a world and life view with tragic implications and a built-in despair. There is no soil more foreign to the Christian message than one rejecting all eternal reality and holding to an earthly monism. The more we go to such a system for parallels the more we are likely to confirm monism.

PAUL ON ACCOMMODATION

When Gentiles began to be converted to Christ, problems arose which led to the Jerusalem conference. The conclusions were sent out to the churches, but a few years later the matter of meats offered to idols was brought up again by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. The problem here is what to do with things already used in idolatrous worship and which are still the symbols of idolatrous worship to some. The position Paul takes here is not that of allowing for the ignorance of the Jerusalem Council but of upholding it because of the almost sure possibility of putting a stumbling block in someone's path if it is ignored. He even warns against eating in a restaurant on the temple grounds, where everything is dedicated to the service of the idols, lest the example lead someone to ruin.

But in I Corinthians 10, Paul seems to carry the argument against accommodating oneself to eating things sacrificed to idols beyond that of the possible ill effects it may have on others, to an apparent condemnation based on the nature of the thing, and the ill effect it may have on the participator himself. In verse 14 he warns, "Flee from idolatry." Then he cites two illustrations as background for the conclusion he is to draw. In verses 16 and 17, he notes that the Christian communion service is a fellowshiping with Christ. Next, in verse 18, he says that the Jews, eating the temple sacrifices, understand that they are partaking of all that is symbolized by the altar; to them it meant a communion with God. Now is it different with the heathen? Not-that there is any reality to the idol, he repeats, but that behind the idol there are demons and it is to these the Gentiles are really sacrificing; their offerings are a symbol of their communion. The Christian cannot fellowship with demons, nor can he participate at a table where demon offerings are being made (19-21). The one who thinks he is strong enough to do this without harm is thinking that he is stronger than God, because God has forbidden it (22). Then, in verses 23, 27-28, we read, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedients all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, 'This is offered in sacrifice unto idols,' eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sakes for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The conclusion seems to be that if anything has a very loose or distant connection with an idolatrous symbol this is not of vital concern, unless another points out the connection as something to be avoided (28). Then one must be ready to abstain to avoid hurting the other's conscience.

As the century drew to a close, we see that this matter of eating or refraining from food sacrificed to idols was a key test of loyalty to Christ. John mentions it in connection with the sins of two of the seven churches in Revelation, condemning the church of Thyatira for listening to one who led them "to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev. 2:20).

Even in the passage where Paul warns against any conduct which might compromise one's own or another's testimony however, he does go on to indicate that he himself practiced a measure of identification. In I Corinthians 9:20-22 we read, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law as without law (although not lawless toward God but committed to Christ's law) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

A GUIDELINE

From the above consideration of the proscription of participating in heathen religious worship, or in things where the pagan religious symbolism or practice is still closely associated, and the example of Paul identifying himself with the life of the people where he could profitably do so for the Gospel's sake, I think we can derive a helpful guideline to assist us in distinguishing between lawful identification and unlawful accommodation. Briefly stated it would be this: In religious practices-separations in daily life-identification. By this is meant, that whenever there is a direct or close and wellknown association with pagan religious practice in their cultural life, then the Christian must be separate from it. On the other hand, where it is a matter of a Christian identifying himself with the life of the non-Christians, where such close religious associations do not exist, in order to win them to the Gospel, such identification is lawful and exemplary.

The objection may be raised that in the last analysis all the heathen do is related to their religion] that heathen religion is a total world and life view as is Christianity. Although this is true, yet there are very different degrees of that relation. Not all that they do is directly related to their religious practices. Many of their cultural practices, having to do with etiquette, dress, diet, house construction, may have long since lost the significance of religious practice, or are in a gray area, whereas certain cultural phenomena still prominently maintain it. It is where that obvious religious practice aspect exists that the Christian is warned to be uncompromising. If an effort is being made to carry over into Christianity something from pagan symbolism to make the break between the two seem less sharp, to maintain some seeming connection, to make Christianity more palatable to the non-Christian by lessening its uniqueness, then a form of syncretism is being advocated and unlawful accommodation is in view.

CONCLUSION

There is great need today for the covenant interpretation of Scripture, the covenantal perspective of identifying the God of Scripture as the Lord of His people, and His people as obedient servants gratefully serving Him with the world of nature, the world of human cultural effort, and the world of His revealed Word for, as Gen. 2:5 states, God made Adam for "there was no man to serve Him with the earth." With the motive of love we must aim at bringing out the blessing in all three worlds. It requires full alertness of heart and mind to be faithful interpreters taking the Biblical text into the surrounding context, understanding yet firm in the gray areas where light meets darkness, graciously accommodating in the light ones and uncompromising in the dark ones. Yet, with the help and grace of God, for this goal we must strive.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amerding, Carl E., Evangelicals and Liberation. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1977. Note Chapter 5, "Contextualizations Where do we begin?" H. Conn.)
- Basabe, Fernando M., Religious Attitudes of Japanese Men. Tokyos Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1968.
- Bavinek, J. H., An Introduction to the Science of Missions. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1990. Note chapters 6-10.)
- Conn, Harvey M., "Theological Reflections on Contextualizing Christianity: How Far Do We Go?" Unpublished Paper, 1977.
- Hesselgrave, David L., Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1977 . (Note Parts II and III. Ito Sei, "Modes of Thought in Contemporary Japan." Japan Quarterly, Oct.-Nov., 1965
- Nicholls, Bruce J., Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture. Downers Groves InterVarsity Press, 1979.
- Reischauer, Fairbank, Craig, East Asia, Tradition and Transformation. Bostons Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973.
- Teshima Ikuro, The Ancient Jewish Diaspora in Japan. Tokyo Bible Seminary, 1973.
- World Evangelism Lausanne Committee, The Willowbank Report - Gospel and Culture. Wheaton: Lausanne Committee, 1978

JEWISH, GREEK, AND ROMAN INFLUENCES ON THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

A Historical Study by Carl Beck

INTRODUCTION

By way of apology by daring to stand before you to touch on a field in which I make no claim whatsoever to competency, I will only say that I tried to refuse it, and even thought at one point that someone else was taking the paper. However, it fell back into my lap. The necessary studies have fallen out to my gain, but I still fear that it will have fallen out to your great loss that a specialist who has absorbed and digested this material over a twenty-to-thirty year period is not making this study for you. Apologies aside, I accept the subject as given by the committee. I would, however, like to define the term "Early Christian Church." Broadly speaking, I will define it as from Pentecost to Constantine but will concentrate on the 50 to 150 A. D. period which Johannes Weis uses as the basis for his volume entitled Earliest Christianity. I choose this period also as it corresponds roughly with the length of time since the re-routings of the Gospel seedling in this country in the 1870's and 1880's. I presume this paper is meant as a background for later discussions on this period of Japanese history.

Pentecost to Constantine was a period of great missionary activity, wide spreading severe persecution and rapid growth in the early church, as Cornelius Dyck rightly reminds us. By mid-second century the "Epistle to Diognetus" could taunt the persecutors that theirs was a losing battle as follows: "Do you not see that the more they are punished, the more do others increase? These things do not seem to come from a human power; they are a mighty act of God," By the end of that same second century, Tertullian could exult, "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled everything you have: cities, tenements, 1 forts (prisons), towns, exchanges, yes, and camps, tribes, palace, senate, forum."

In a period characterized by this kind of persecution and expansion, what were the influences shaping this infant church? Were there any influences? Edwin Hatch, in his *The Influences of Greek Ideas on Christianity*, suggests that to answer this question we need only to compare the Sermon on the Mount of the beginning of our period with the Nicene Creed at its end.² One belongs to the world of Syrian peasants, the other to a world of Greek philosophers. The Sermon on the Mount assumes beliefs; the Nicene Creed formulates beliefs. Theological conceptions which underlie the Sermon on the Mount belong to the ethical; those of the Nicene Creed to the speculative. Metaphysics are absent in the Sermon on the Mount; in the Nicene Creed they are controlling. The Nicene Creed says not a word about ethics, and the metaphysical terms of the Creed would have been quite unintelligible to the first disciples. What brought about this change?

In almost poetic balance, Phillip Schaff sees a dual background for this development. "Heathenism (and by this he means the Graeco-Roman world) is the starry night full of darkness and fear, but of mysterious presage also, and of anxious waiting for the light of day; Judaism, the dawn, full of fresh hope and promise of the rising sun; both lose themselves in the sunlight of Christianity."³

Rudolph Bultman, in his *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, spells out the richness of this dual influence a bit further.

"The cradle of primitive Christianity as a historical phenomenon was furnished by late Judaism, which in turn was a development from Hebrew religion as evidenced in the Old Testament Yet despite the predominance of the Old Testament and Jewish heritage, primitive Christianity remained a complex phenomenon. At a very early stage... it came into contact with Hellenistic paganism, a contact which was to exercise a profound influence.... This paganism was itself equally complex. Not only did it preserve the heritage of the Greek culture, it was also enlivened and enriched by the influx of religions from the Near East. It will be the purpose of this paper, then, to ferret out these influences and to see how Christianity coped, or failed to cope, with them.

One thing more must be said somewhere in this paper and I say it here lest it get lost in conflicting opinions that will fill the following sections. The great and overwhelming ingredient in the growth and development of the early church was a

person, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is his definitive interpretation of all that went before, his definition and manifestation of Divine Love, his matchless life, his redemptive death, his empowering resurrection, and his bestowal of the guiding Holy Spirit-these are the stuff from which the early church was made. This was in the early church, and must be in the church at all times and in all places, the supreme ingredient in development of life and doctrine whenever she meets, judges, purifies, and absorbs new culture.

BORROWINGS FROM JUDAISM

That Christianity was born in the bosom of Judaism, and that Jesus consciously and deliberately built on the foundations of the "Law and the Prophets," is so self-evident that for economy of space we need not belabor that point here. Let us pause to observe only a few generalities, and then a few specifics. A. C. McGiffert certainly overstates the case when he says,

"It was not in any sense a new religion which they (disciples) were proclaiming any more than it was a new religion that Jesus taught. Like him they were devout and loyal Jews." Their belief in Jesus involved no change in the religion of their fathers. Their God was the God of Israel, their law was the Jewish Law, and their Bible was the Jewish Bible. It was God, the God of their fathers, who raised Jesus from the dead and had given him the place of honor at the right hand of the most High. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah who would come again on the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead Up to this point I believe that we would generally accept the tenor of his argument that the ties between Judaism and the early church were strong. We would, how ever, strongly disagree with his assessment, "but they certainly did not identify him with God, and there is no reason to suppose that they regarded him as a divine being, or that they thought of him as anything more than God's servant and anointed one."⁶

We cannot agree that this acceptance of Jesus as Lord was a later Pauline-Hellenistic development. The only record we have indicates that as early as Caesarea Philippi an incipient faith was forming, and that with the full impact of the resurrection, and certainly after the fact of Pentecost, Jesus Christ was "my Lord and my God," a concept which would easily develop out of their Jewish understanding of God, given what they had seen and heard.

S. Angus, in his *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, notes that Romanes also exaggerates when he says, "If it had not been for the Jews, the human race would not have had any religion worth our serious attention," Matthew Arnold is perhaps on safer ground when he says, "As long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense for righteousness, most glowing and strongest, and in hearing and reading the words Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find a glow and a force they could find nowhere else. This was the Judaism which influenced the early church and the part they took over lock, stock, barrel and future sales.

M. S. Enslin asks us to note that "The Judaism that gave birth to a Jesus and a Paul was not that of the Old Testament Prophets."⁸ It was rather the Tannaite form which developed in Post-exilic Palestine and was spread throughout the Graeco-Roman world via the diaspora. In his Introduction, Edwin Hatch describes this Tannaite Judaism, a description we need not impose on this paper as long as we remember a bit later in our specifics, that all these influences were filtered through the Tannaite understanding of Gad, Satan, Hell, light, darkness, angelic beings and demonic influences, and of how a People of God conducts itself in diaspora.⁹

Now for a few specifics:

1. Knowledge of Jahweh. Neither Jesus nor the early church had any difficulty with the God of the Old Testament or of the Synagogue. They had a problem with the turbans, veils, and robes tied around him. But the Jahweh of an Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Amos was no stranger to them. He was the Creator God of Genesis, the Deliverer of Exodus whom Millard Lind rightly sees as a Warrior God, who hoped by his o deliverances to free his people from the burden of sword, spear, and chariot, 10 a reference picked up by Jesus in John 18, carried to its logical interpretation in Matt. 5, 2 and reflected in Rom. 12, "Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord." 13

In his classic, Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace, Roland Bainton has traced how this was understood and

cherished by the whole church until well into the Constantinian Era, and safeguarded by a minority right on through to our generation.

Bultman outlines the development of their understanding of this God in Israel's history from a tribal God to the jealous God of Isaiah 44:16. This God is the caring God of Psalmist and Prophet, and of Jesus and the early church. Not a sparrow falls without His knowledge; even the transitory flowers of the field and we ourselves experience His care, so that all things, even suffering, persecution and death, work out for good to those who love God and thus have eyes to see. This God is knowable. Both Tannaite Judaism and early church reject the Greek idea that man can know God only by tremendous efforts of reason, and can even deduce proofs of His existence, because the Old Testament never reflects in this way. God both speaks and acts. But word and act become understandable only as Israel reflects, and reflecting hears the interpretive voice.

It is this creative, caring, acting, speaking, interpreting, reigning God whom the early church receives with deepening and enriching through Christ and the Apostles. In terms of their God, the church owed nothing to Hellenism.

2. Worship and Liturgy. Enslin's observation on the worship of the synagogues throughout Palestine and the larger empire sound like much of what has been the heart of the corporate worship of the church for much of its history. There was a seven-day cycle. There was singing of psalms and hymns. Public prayers were offered. The law and the prophets were opened and read. There was a sermon based on, or embarking from, the daily reading and possibly, as today, there was sometimes more "embarking from" than "basing on." There was no fixed minister; able members, interspersed with "visiting brethren," took turns in giving the sermon—a freedom such as we see in the very early church. Hatch underscores the observation that the synagogue liturgy had a decisive influence upon the Bible-centered worship of the early church. Ideas enshrined in the Passover observance influenced the celebration of the Christ-instituted Lord's Supper. Baptism was a continuance of the immersion of proselytes. The vocabulary of the very earliest Christian theologizing was borrowed from the Greek-speaking Judaism of the disciples and their Septuagint. This was long before the church began to be influenced by Stoicism or Platonism via Philo during the second century.

3. Organization. Commenting on the organization of the early church in his *Earliest Christianity*, Johannes Weiss says:

Speaking generally one cannot exaggerate the looseness and freedom of organization in the earliest period. Direct inspiration and the factor of individual personality furnished all that was required; as yet there were no officers. It was not long, however, before the church, following the example of the Jewish synagogue organization, chose 'elders' to be its leaders and representatives in dealing with community matters. We have no definite information about the origins of the office; all at once it appears as a *fait accompli* (Acts 11:30; 15:6; 21:18).¹⁹

The earlier quoted Schaff remarks on this freedom of worship inherited from the synagogue by the early church. "Preaching and teaching," he says, "were not confined to a particular class, but every convert could proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers, and every Christian who had the gift could pray and teach and exhort in the congregation." O The early church knew no spiritual aristocracy or nobility. All believers were saints. There was no special priesthood. All were priests, all were kings. The entire body of believers were called clergy, *kleiroi*, a peculiar people, the heritage of God. All this was inherited from the Christian message and the freedom of synagogue worship. Hatch reminds us that what incipient organization we do see developing also takes its model from the synagogue. The early Christian "Presbyter" was the Jewish elder in a new role. The "Bishop" was the Tannaite "ruler" or "president of the congregation." The Tannaite "helper" or "attendant" became in the church a "deacon."²¹ All of these terms must be seen in the free and easy nonhierarchical organization of the Tannaite communities both in Palestine and the diaspora.

4. Theology and Eschatology. We have already noted that the earliest theologizing was in terms of Tannaite Judaism's vocabulary and categories. As a special form of theology, eschatology was extremely important in the life of the early church. 22 Not only the writings of Daniel but a whole exilic and post-exilic eschatological literature, influenced by Asiatic concepts, was inherited by Tannaite Judaism: and its categories, understandings, and vocabulary were passed on to the fledgling church, and provided comfort and hope when persecution rendered human and temporal hope irrelevant.
5. Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We have already noted Hatch's observation that baptism and the Lord's Supper as practiced by the early church had their roots in Tannaite Passover and proselyte observances. In his *History of Primitive Christianity*, Hans Conzelman narrows baptism down to "the Christians appropriated the rite of baptism from John the Baptist," 23 who epitomized all that was best in Tannaite Judaism. He observes further that originally it signified purification and only later in Hellenistic Christianity is it connected with the bestowal of the Spirit. Conzelman also sees a connection between the Lord's Supper and the ordinary Jewish meal in which the head of the family opens the meal by saying a 'prayer and breaking and dividing a loaf of bread. 24 Given the essentially familial sense among the believers in the early house churches, this would inform their understanding of the family of Christ fed at His table.
6. Scripture. Louis Duschene is telling us the obvious when in his *Early History of the Christian Church* he says, "Thus the Jewish tradition, the Old Testament was adopted in its entirety by Christianity.. All those books are divine - the things they tell us are the teaching of God Himself." This principle, often proclaimed in the church, is the basis for their understanding of an inspired Holy Scripture, as practiced by the first Christians as it had been practiced by the Jews before them. He sees tradition, history, and Scripture as a main part of the inheritance bequeathed by Judaism to the early church. 26
7. Life. Duschene further observes that the life of the early Christian was very like that of his contemporary pious Jew. Less legalistic, of course, but the same high moral standards were the ideal. Religious life was very like that of the synagogue. The faithful met to pray and to read the Scriptures in which the great examples of righteous men of old were especially studied. 27
8. Persian Ideas in Judaism. I am indebted to Anathon Aall in his *Hellenistic Elements in Christianity* for the reminder that many Persian ideas had become a part of Jesus - Jewish world. Jesus accepted angels and demons, Satan, a kingdom of darkness as well as a Kingdom of Heaven, all ideas which came to him from Persia via the Tannaite Judaism in which he was nurtured. 28
9. A Pacific Bent. We have already referred to the studies of Lind and Bainton and need not repeat here. Israel's first great contact with Yahweh in Egypt and at the sea of Reeds, a contact which was to be determinative for all the rest of its history, taught that only Yahweh was to be a warrior and king among them, a fact boldly and joyously celebrated in what may be their oldest piece of recorded literature, *The Song of the Sea.*" 29 They after forgot this to their hurt, in spite of repeated prophetic reminders. Jesus stands in line with the Prophets and, as Prince of Peace, picks up the idea and carries it a step farther into the area of peacemakers. As noted before, the church has never quite given up this portion of her inheritance, and I think it quite significant that within this month and within these halls our sister organization has this as their theme of concern. This is, of course, only a fraction of the elements one might have lifted out of the early church's borrowings from Tannaite Judaism. So close are the ties that our term "Judeo-Christian" is quite appropriate. Jesus consciously builds on the law and the prophets. Following Philo, many of the early church fathers and apologists interpreted the less suited portions of the Old Testament allegorically, to make them say what they don't say, in their zeal to mine all that was to be mined out of their Judaistic heritage.

BORROWINGS FROM THE ROMAN WORLD

We can make this section brief. Rome did not produce great or original ideas. The few great thinkers among them, like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, were more Greek than Roman in their orientation. Romans were men of action, of the battlefield and the law courts rather than of the study and the class room.

1. Military Conquest. Christianity is indebted to Rome in a myriad of other ways. It was Rome's conquering of the Greek city states and the whole Hellenistic empire that spread the Koine-Greek language from East to West, and from South to North, a language which became a ready and indispensable tool to carry the Gospel from Ethiopia-Egypt and Indo-Persia to Spain, Gaul, and London in Britannia. One can almost say it was the Koine-Greek language which set the borders of the Christian church for the first 1850 years of its existence.
2. Transportation. It was the finest network of roads the world has ever seen, or would see again until modern times, which provided a Paul of Tarsus and thousands of later Pauls with a means of transporting the Gospel-laden Greek language from place to place,
3. Police system. It was one of the finest police systems of all times which garrisoned and protected these roads, striking terror to the very heart of a system of highway banditry which both preceded and followed the Roman Empire.
4. Diverse Religious Culture. There was a mood of universalism within the Roman spire. Eastern, Greek, Roman, Barbarian, and mystery gods were meeting and showing up each other's deficiencies. Many minds were searching with Socrates and Plato for the one, true universal God. In his *The Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*, Gerhard Ullhorn observes that the Roman world was open as no other world had ever been to a new religious impulse. 30 One can hardly say that a great waiting vacuum did not influence the flow and shape of that terrific upsurge of power emanating from an open tomb, shaping this young church into a missionary church, and so making it that 20 centuries later an Emil Brunner could observe, "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning."
5. Persecution. In their persecutions the Romans influenced the church for bad, of course, but also for the good. 31 The persecutions under Nero, and later under Domitian and others, provided a constant purification for, gave exposure to, and shaped the theology of this young church.
6. Christmas. Rome gave us Christmas. In his delightful little book entitled simply *The Early Church*, Oscar Cullman devotes a whole chapter to Christmas. He reminds us that the church of the first three centuries knew no December 25, Christmas. They accepted the fact that we are quite ignorant of the date of Jesus' birth. Not only did they not know the date, they felt no need to single out one date to celebrate what every day of the year should be. Furthermore, they were far more interested in celebrating the death, and certainly the resurrection, than an incarnation of what they understood to have always existed. Even the remembrance of special persons among themselves was done on their death date rather than their birth date. As late as the beginning of the third century, Origen objected to the celebration of any birthday as being a pagan custom, noting that in the Bible only the godless Pharaoh and Herod celebrated their birthdays. 32 Toward the end of our period January 6 did begin to be accepted as a special Advent day in some parts of the church, especially in the East. It remained, however, for the Emperor Constantine, at the very end of our period, to incorporate the celebration of Christ's birth into the great Roman High Day of the Festival of the Sun. So we have December 25 as the Festival of the Son; in English needing to change only a "u" to an "o."
7. Hierarchy. Rome gave the church her hierarchy. Though this was a post-Constantinian development, the efficiency and attraction of Roman police and military organization was early self evident, from the unquestioning obedience of the foot soldier to the haughty command, the power and the glory of the general up to the Caesar who, if not God, was certainly His vicar.

Though Rome gave nothing of ideas to the church, she was perhaps God's instrument par excellence in shaping the "fullness of time" of which Paul takes note. 33 Melito of Sardis, one of the earliest apologists, thinks it significant that the birth of Jesus and the birth of the empire occurred at the same time. It was in the first emperor's reign that Jesus was born in one of his provincial towns. 34 Gibbons, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, sees the time of this Augustus Caesar as unqualifiedly "the happiest and most prosperous period in the history of the human race." 35

In many practical ways then, in language, in transport, in security, in persecution, in her supreme religious festival, this "happiest" of all times did influence and shape the direction and form of the early church.

BORROWINGS FROM HELLENISM

Shelly no doubt exaggerates when he says, "We are all Greeks; our laws, our religion, our art, all have their roots in Greece," as also does Francis Thompson when he says, "Paganism is lovely because it is dead."³⁶ On safer ground is Butler when he says, "Greece is the mother-country of the mind."³⁷

I would like to open this section by noting with Schaff that Hellenism had already influenced the Jews of the diaspora and also, indirectly; the early church by "softening" Jewish "fanatic bigotry." Proselytes also had their influence; complete proselytes, or "proselytes of righteousness," were often more bigoted and fanatical than native Jews, but "proselytes of the Gate," or partial proselytes, were open in their thinking and not only influenced the diaspora, but were most open to the Gospel, cf., the Capernaum Centurion, Cornelius, Lydia, Timothy, and thousands of others. The Hellenistic form of Christianity was the natural bridge to the Gentiles.³⁸

Also by way of introduction, it should be said that Jesus was very little influenced by the larger Hellenistic world which surrounded his beloved Galilee. Even Jerusalem had set itself against the defiling paganism, so that Anathon Aall can unequivocally say, "There is no sign in the authentic records which we possess that Jesus absorbed anything from Hellenism. The ideals of Plato were certainly as alien to him as the astronomical ideals of Copernicus were to Martin Luther."³⁹ Later he reinforces this declaration with, "If therefore one identifies Christianity with the teaching of its founder, if by Christianity one means the religion of Jesus himself, then one is on safe ground. The whole thing is of oriental origin, Palestinian piety. With Hellenism it had nothing to do."⁴⁰ Yet when Angus looks at the church a century later he can just as unequivocally call Christianity "the most syncretistic of religions."⁴¹ Surely he was exaggerating, but it is the task of this section to discover the extent to which this may be true.

1. Paul and Hellenism. Saul of Tarsus was born and raised in one of the great Hellenistic centers of the eastern part of the empire. Tarsus was a university town. It was a strong university, so strong that in the entire empire Tarsus was the only town actually ruled by its university. One of its teachers, Athenadores, an older contemporary of Paul, was famous as the tutor of Augustus Caesar and of Seneca, the similarity of whose ideas with those of Paul are often remarked on. Three characteristics of the university were, a) An emphasis on the idea of an Imperial world religion b) The emphasis laid on freedom; c) Religiously oriented toward the worship of Hercules, a death and resurrection mystery religion .⁴² While it is certainly true that a Jewish boy would not live exactly at the vortex of the intellectual life of a large city, it is also true that a Hellenistic Jew was not averse to absorbing knowledge where it could be found, and that a lad of Paul's inquisitive bent could not help but absorb something of the intellectual climate where he grew up. And certainly the older Philo's openness to non-Jewish ideas in Alexandria, another center of both Hellenism and the Diaspora, would not discourage Saul of Tarsus from doing just that. The least we can say is that the brain of this lad in Tarsus must have picked up some intellectual tools and baggage that remained in Saul the Pharisee and in Paul the Christian, missionary, and pioneer theologian. One or two hints to substantiate this conjecture area

a) Paul never considered himself ill-prepared to enter into discussion with thinkers trained in Greek Philosophy, ⁴³ rather he seemed to seek them out; b) The Athenian poets he quotes in Athens were hardly learned in the school of Gamaliel; c) Even as Paul the missionary, he exhibits a strong curiosity in the idols, temples, religions, and ideas of the cities he visited. We also observe that Paul's statement, "There is no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free, man or woman,"⁴⁴ could have come straight from a Stoic's notebook. ⁴⁵ We do know that Paul discarded certain elements of Palestinian Christianity such as circumcision, the ceremonial law, and temple worship. Aall sums it all up by saying, "Two things that opened the way for a marriage of Palestinian Christianity and Hellenistic ideas were a great personality and a spiritual phenomenon of the age in question." The personality he refers to is, of course, St. Paul, and the phenomenon, metaphysical mystics. Perhaps

the man in question, summed it up even better when he wrote to one of these Greek churches, which he calls a colony of those whose citizenship is in Heaven, an island in a Hellenistic sea:

Whatsoever things are true,
 Whatsoever things are just,
 Whatsoever things are lovely,
 Whatsoever things are of good reports;
 If there be any virtue, If there be any praise,
 Think on these things, 47 and
 approve the things that are excellent. 48

2. The Greek Philosophers. Even though there is no room in this paper to treat the Greek philosophies as the paper really requires, perhaps we must take just a quick look for a bit of concrete background. We can eliminate the Epicureans at once as their whole system was rejected out of hand by the early church. Aristotle can be eliminated for the same reason. There is no evidence of Aristotelian influence in the pre-Constantine era. His ideas flowered in the Christianity of the Middle Ages. Socrates, Plato, the Stoics, and the Neo-Platonists must be looked at briefly. Here I am indebted to J. L. Neve's *A History of Christian Thought*.

- a) Socrates connected absolute knowing with absolute good. Virtues are teachable. God is the author of virtue in man. The human soul is the part of man attuned to God and, freed from the physical body, is immortal. Justin Martyr speaks of Socrates as having been practically a Christian (Apol. I,6). The strong moralist tendency among the church fathers may have been influenced by Socrates. The identification of knowledge and goodness certainly influenced both Clement of Alexandria and the Gnostics. All the Greek fathers tended to emphasize the importance of knowledge as the essential of Christianity.
- b) Plato taught that there is a dual world, the world of ideas and the world of phenomena. The latter is fundamentally non-existent, only a shadow of the real world of ideas. God is good, hence the source of all good, beauty, and excellence. He cannot cause evil. He is Creator, Father, and Artificer. These ideas found favor with the church fathers. Plato further taught that the human soul is pre-existent. In the world of ideas it sinned and, in punishment, was united with a human body. Always the soul yearns for the world of ideas with a great homesickness. Only by fleeing the world, the soul becomes like God in so far as possible. Here is the seed of that asceticism which put down its shoots in the latter part of our period. Plato, with Socrates, believed in the immortality of the soul. He approvingly quotes Socrates as saying on his death bed, "I am confident in the belief that there is such a thing as living again, and that the souls of the dead are in existence, and that the good souls have a better portion than the evil ...you may bury me if you can catch me." Understandably the church fathers, given the resurrection of Jesus, found this more palatable than the ideas on death found in the Psalms and the Wisdom literature. He also taught that each soul must redeem itself in this life. Those who fail to do so will be punished for a definite period. Here are the makings of both a doctrine of purgatory and the "Restoration of All Things" of Origen. Some souls are irredeemable and will be "hurled into Tartarus...and they never come out."
- c) Stoicism, founded by Zeno of Citium in the third century B.C., was the noblest exponent of ancient pagan ethics. It was represented by such men as Brutus, Cato, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. Stoicism was naturally pantheistic. The world is God's body. God is the absolute mechanical necessity, the destiny or fate which determines everything. The summum bonum of Stoicism was virtue; its maxim, "Practice virtue for virtue's sake." Understandably their writings would be attractive and may well have influenced the moralistic note in the writings of the fathers even while they eschewed its Pantheism.
- d) The neo-Platonic idea of God as a simple, perfect, absolute, transcendent being was more attractive to the fathers, of course, than the Pantheism of the Stoics. Their ideas of the soul, of creation as a mere overflow from God and of its eventual reabsorption into God, influenced the heretical excrescences of Christianity more than the main stream. The unknowableness, spirituality, and timelessness of God are reflected in Dionysius the Areopagite as well as Augustine of a later period.
- e) Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, was a bridge for both these philosophies and elements of the mysteries, which we shall deal with later, into the stream of Judaistic thinking, especially in the diaspora and thence into the early

church.⁵⁰ His writings were highly esteemed and his allegorical method of interpreting the Old Testament much imitated by Justin Martyr and other early fathers, ⁵¹ and even a bit by St. Paul. His reflections on the Logos of Plato and the Stoics may well have suggested this figure to John.⁵² The Gnostics drew heavily from him.

3. The Mystery Religions or Guilds. Here we come to an area so vast and complex and controversial, with such an immense literature to digest, that I tremble to even wet my feet in it. Let's permit Angus to introduce us to our search: These mystery fraternities were scattered all over the Graeco-Roman world and with the Synagogue furnished a model to the Christian house churches, but as the converts after the first generation came overwhelmingly from the pagan guilds rather than from the Synagogue, it was only natural that they should transfer the guild system into their new faith and adapt the guilds to Christian practices. ⁵³ Ulhorn reminds us that these mysteries had a strong oriental impetus—one could almost call them oriental religions in Greek clothes. ⁵⁴ Wendland, in "Hellenische-Roman Kultur," makes this provocative statements "All the religions advancing from the orient rendered pioneer service to Christianity;" ⁵⁵ and Inge, in *Outspoken Essays*, certainly overstates the case when he says, "It was, as a mystery religion that Europe accepted Christianity."⁵⁶ Let us then take a look at some of the elements in this diverse sea called mystery religions.

- a) They were secretive. The inner knowledge and mysteries were open only to the initiated. When the Christians were accused of doing strange things with blood and cadavers, the accused must have been looking through the lenses of the mysteries.
- b) There were solemn initiations, rites with magical powers. These were often fear provoking, horrible experiences. Only after overcoming these obstacles could the initiated be trusted with the secrets. Christian baptism early inherited some of this awe and magic.
- c) Instant Salvation. When the initiate was married to his dying and resurrected deity, he was granted immediate and unqualified salvation. ⁵⁷ Did this help Paul and the fathers find suitable expressions for the believer's relationship with Christ (en Kristo), and the church's relationship to the groom and our experience in baptism as a figurative dying and rising to a newness of life with Christ?
- d) Punishment and Hell. The Old Testament knew about holocausts and punishments, but in this life. Oriental religions, and especially in the clothes of the mysteries, had a more sophisticated view of punishment in the next life. The hells and pure physical tortures of the Orphics and Pythagoreans, among others, put to shame the torments described by the early Apologists, ⁵⁸ or even a later Dante or Milton.
- e) Ecstatic Experiences. The emotional exaltation, gloasalia, healings, etc., brought about as a result of tense expectancy, prudent sacerdotal suggestion, the contagion of other worshippers, fasting and ascetic strivings, and physical stimuli was highly prized in the mysteries. Some of the excesses Paul treated very gently at Corinth may have had their suggestions in pre-Christian backgrounds and experiences of these people. Did the church feel required to emphasize "signs and wonders, and powers," and the "gifts of the spirit" in such a religious milieu?⁵⁹
- f) Initiation Rites for Children. Children also were initiated into the mysteries nit ceremonies, though different, no less elaborate or colorful than an adult initiation. ⁶⁰ Did this have anything to do with the gradual shift from the rather anesthetic immersion of adult confessing believers of the first centuries to a sprinkling of children by elaborately robed clergy in the late pre-Constantine and Constantinian period?
- g) The Common Meal. The form of the Christian love feast, or Agape, was patterned more after the guild common meals than after any other form of social religion .⁶¹
- h) Asceticism. We observed that the ascetic notes introduced into the life of the early church may have had one foot in Socratic and Stoic philosophies, but perhaps another foot stood in the murky waters of the mysteries. Angus thinks so: "One chief source of that distorting asceticism, which from the first generation seduced Christianity away from the health and sanity of Jesus' religion, was to be found in the cults which accepted the dualism of flesh and spirit, soul and matter, and required the moat rigorous abstinences and self-torture."⁶² The devotee of Isis, who on bleeding knees

would wend her way through the Campus Martius to take her ritualistic bath in the waters of the frozen Tiber, was the forerunner of many a Christian penitent.

- i) Sacerdotalism and Sacramentalism. "The mysteries were bearers of Sacramentalism to Christianity and the western world."⁶³ The robes of the mystery-priest and the privilege of the mystery-hierophant were appropriated by the Christian priest. The pontiffs of the mysteries anticipated the Christian hierarchy in seeking political power and using it for other than religious purposes. "The God of the Mysteries," says Angus, "like the Deity of much of Christendom today, was approached properly and most securely through sacral acts of immense but mysterious intrinsic value, enhanced by the official character of the ministrants." It must be observed that much of this took place at the end and most fully after the period we are dealing with.
- j) The Great Mother was known in most of these mysteries and reigned as early as the fifth century B.C. When she finally passed with the collapse of ancient civilization she bequeathed both titles and honors to the Christian Virgin Mary. This too was only in incipient form in the period of our concern.
- k) And finally, Two Speculative Examples. In an article in the Journal of Biblical Literature, September 1980, entitled "An Alternative Source of Paul's Body Theology?"⁶⁴ Andrew E. Hill remarks on interesting recent archeological findings in the temple of Asclepius in the heart of old Corinth. The temple was dedicated to a son of Apollo and the Greek god of healing. It was the center of a mystery religion which flourished throughout the Mediterranean world of the fifth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. Patients who came and were healed left votive offerings in the form of clay replicas of the part healed as testimonials for all comers to see. In the ruins of these temple coffers these clay replicas still lay, piled up as they would have been in the first century, replicas of noses, ears, arms, heads, breasts, genitals, and feet. Judging from Acts 17, Paul made it a habit to acquaint himself with the temples and deities of places he visited even briefly. According to Acts 18:1, Paul worked in Corinth for eighteen months. That he should have missed visiting Corinth's pride near the heart of the city, or that he should have failed to reflect on what he saw in these coffers, is unthinkable. Is it only accidental that in his first known letter back to that church Paul first uses the illustration of the church as the body of Christ, and for the only time in any of his extant writings does he mention the body parts, both the honorable and the less honorable? Other images in I Corinthians, which probably come right out of contemporary Corinth, are the references to the builder in Chapter 3, prostitution and slavery in Chapter 6, food from the Agora in Chapter 8, and the boxer and the winner's wreath from the Corinthian Isthmian Games in Chapter 9. Paul's eager mind mined his Hellenistic world carefully for telling illustrations that hearers and readers could identify with. In the December 1979 issue of the Journal of Biblical Literature in an article entitled "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice,"⁶⁵ James Thompson notes that both Quaran and Greek speculative thinking had repudiated both sacrifice and temple as means of approaching deity. In Hebrews 9, the author insists on combining a criticism of sacrifice and sanctuary, something the Old Testament does not do. In verses 1-10, the emphasis on sarkis as unable to cleanse, that material can cleanse only material and not heart, is a concept thoroughly Greek in its understanding, not Hebrew. Further, the earthly tent and the heavenly tabernacle of chapters 8 and 9 are far more suggestive of Plato's two worlds than of Old Testament modes of thought. In moving from the heavenly real world to the earthly shadow world, Christ was able to do what the blood of bulls and goats, all a part of Plato's unreal world, could never hope to accomplish. Christ's sacrifice is not so much a shedding of blood as a giving of self in self-sacrifice, again a concept more Greek than Levitical. Objection to handmade sanctuaries and bloody sacrifice is a frequent theme in Greek literature from antiquity to the Christian Era. You don't find it in Hebrew literature. In the Hermetica, a Platonic writing, even incense, the most refined form of material sacrifice, is called "an abomination to God who is above all matter." Philo, again bridging the gap between 'Greek and Jewish thought, expresses his own love for the temple, but notes that its real value is to point to a better sanctuary and a better sacrifice. Is the writer of the Hebrews writing from the vantage point of Philo's bridge?

What shall we say then? One thing we can say is that the mysteries lacked, among other things, the thrilling redemptive power of the person of Jesus Christ, and, tongue in cheek add with Angus, "and the organizing genius of the Bishops of Rome. 66

Into a world of seething hopes, indescribable yearning, and religious ferment, into a mystery-laden atmosphere made ready in the fullness of time by its own groupings and "seeking after truth," Christianity entered as a new religion: not new in point of time only, but in character and power and with a startling claim to possess truth, not through an idea or theory of knowledge, but in a person who, in the words of Clement of Rome, "bestowed on us light, who addressed us as a father his sons, and saved us when perishing (II Clement Ad. Cor. I)." 67 To a world seeking divine help, it at once proved itself the very "power of God" to countless souls, both Jewish and Greek. It wrought such a transformation of character that it attracted attention as the only way of lifting man out of himself, so that an Origen can sing, "He opened the gates of light to them who had been the sons of darkness and of light (Celsus II, 67)." 68 In the midst of its contemporary seething religious milieu it became an aggressive missionary impulse, spreading a network of vigorous propagandist brotherhoods over the Mediterranean world, and again, in the words of Origen, "succeeding to a higher place than the religion from which it sprang, and within three centuries driving all others off the field," 69 superceding in influence the mightiest empire of antiquity.

REJECTIONS

Though this is not a part of the present assignment, to be fair to later discussions, we must also be aware of what the early church did not and could not borrow. Since it is meant only as a reminder, perhaps a partial list will suffice

1. It rejected out of hand and completely both the Pantheism of the Stoics and the Polytheism of Pantheon and Olympus.
2. The early church shunned the pomp and ritualism of Rome. It was not until Constantinian times that she succumbed.
3. They had little to do with Stoic fatalism. The Apologists rejected it outright.⁷⁰
4. Roman sensuality as described by both Gibbons and Ulhorn⁷¹ was abhorrent to the early church. Paul, James, Peter, John, and the Apologists fight it tooth and nail.
5. They dropped circumcision early= the ceremonial law, the Mosaic law as an instrument of salvation, temple worship and, sacrifice also.
6. They eschewed the hypocrisy and exclusiveness of Pharisaism, the cynicism of the Sadducees, and the asceticism of Qumram.
7. They could not accept the idea that manual labor was inferior. Both Paul and the Fathers exhort toward honest labor as a most noble occupation, a notion not popular in Greece and Asia Minor, or Rome, for that matter.
8. The philosophy of the Epicureans found no place in the teachings of the early church.
9. Aristotelian philosophy is not even mentioned until well into the Constantinian era.
10. Already in Paul, and much more in the Fathers, the emotional excesses of the mysteries are downplayed, and the immorality they condoned and even combined with ritual are energetically fought against.
11. We don't know what happened to the Centurians and soldiers mentioned in the New Testament, but in a very few years the implications of Jesus' (and Paul's) teachings on love were understood to the extent that there were no Christian soldiers, with very few exceptions, until Constantinian times, as Roland Bainton has carefully documented.⁷³
12. Astrology, divining, and soothsaying, rampant in both Greek and Roman worlds, found no place in the life of the Christian community.
13. Drunkenness, promiscuous sex, concubinage and divorce were common outside the church, shunned inside.
14. Greed, fame, love of feasts, and festivals, so much a part of Roman life, were not acceptable in the church.
- 15 Political intrigue, so much in evidence in this era, was not even thought of as a way of saving martyrs' lives.
16. Absentee landownership and excessive consumption, conspicuous on the Roman scene, were taught against.
17. "Bread and games" of Rome were substituted with "prayer and work."

18. The idea that religion and state belonged together, central to every Oriental religion from antiquity, and climaxing in Rome's emperor worship, had no place among people that knew of only one Lord of lords, and King of kings.

The list has no end, but perhaps we have made the point that the church has not been keen enough in "approving" only that which is excellent" and rejecting what needed rejecting is to be seen in the great heretical controversies that swept the church from the second century onward. The Ebionites were unable to cut the umbilical cord which tied them to the parent religion, and had to be sloughed off. The Gnostics drank too deeply at the heady font of the mysteries and fermented Socratic concepts, and eventually ran themselves into the ground. The Docetic branch made much of a misinterpretation of a Platonic dichotomy of matter and spirit, hence could not conceive of a God-man, and eliminated themselves. Marcion, an ardent reformer against Gnosticism, got lost in the Platonic good God whom he could not reconcile with the just God of the Old Testament, and ended up with two Gods, a concept which proved unviable. M. S. Costelloe notes that "Arius used Greek rationalism to explain away the real mystery of the Trinity, an observation that had to be combatted by Athanasius." 74 Montanus, imbibing deeply of Stoic ethics and Pharasaic concepts, forgot the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and headed down a stern, self-righteous moralism which could not live in the healthier climate of grace and forgiveness. This has ever been the history of the church imbibing too liberally of sources not approved as "excellent" followed by long periods of sloughing off what was incompatible with the Gospel. Even in our day the church still has great need of good kidneys. Poisonous trace elements have a way of hanging on for a long time.

CONCLUSION

By way of summary I would leave us with Neve's warning that the Greek and the Roman minds have each made a contribution to our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus, but they have also effected modifications and eliminations which impoverished Christianity. Out of this study I would like to ask a few questions relating the results of this study to the theme of this seminars

1. Can a Japanese Christian in 1983 completely divest himself of the influences of 2000 years on the church anymore than his Western counterpart?
2. Have we consciously choked off the channels of assimilation by, and absorption into the existing elements of Japanese religious feeling (not thinking)?
3. Is the church in the West still under the necessity and in the process of sloughing off millenniums of cultural accretions and influences?
4. Should, or must, the Japanese church go through the same process of absorption, assimilation, and sloughing off?
5. In the long view, is it better to Christianize Japan or Japanize Christianity?

NOTES

1. Quoted in Cornelius J. Dyck, An Introduction to Mennonite History. Scotdales Herald Press, 1967, p. 10.
2. Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity. New York Harpers, 1957. p. 2.
3. Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church. Grand Rapids Erdmans, 1910, 58
4. Rudolph Bultman, Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting. London: Thames & Hudsons, 1950. p. 11.
5. A. C. McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought. New Yorks Scribners, 1953. p. 14.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Both Arnold and Romanes are quoted in S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World. London. Murray, 1929, P. 3
8. M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings. New York Harpers, 1938, p. vii.
9. Hatch, op, cit, pp. ix-x
10. Millard Lind, Yahweh is a Warrior. Scotdalet Herald Press. 1980, pp. w7-54•
11. John 18:11.

12. Matt. 5:38-48.
13. Rom. 12:20.
14. Roland Bainton, Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace. New York: Abingdon, 1960.
15. Bultman, o cit., pp. 15-16.
16. Ibid., p. 22f.
17. Enslin, off. cit., p. 92.
18. Hatch, a,cue., p. x.
19. Yohannes Weiss, Earliest Christianity. New York: Harpers, 1937, P• 48.
20. Schaff, off., cit., . 124.
21. Hatch, op. cit., p. ix.
22. Ibid., p. xi.
23. Hans Conzelman. History of Primitive Christianity. New Yorks Abingdon, 1973. p. 49.
24. Ibid., p. 52•
25. Louis Duschene, Early History of the Christian Church, Londone Murray, 1905. P. 29.
26. Ibid., p. 30.
27. Ibid., .. p. 35•
28. Anathon Aall, The Hellenistic Elements in Christianity. London: University Press, 1930, p.29.
19. Lind, op. cit., p. 47.
30. Gerhard Ulhorn, The Conflicts of Christianity with Heathenism. New York: Scribners, 1879, p. 21
31. Conzelman, op. Lit., p. 115.
32. Oscar Cullman, The Early Church. London: SCM, 1956. p• 23f•
33. Gal. 4:4.
34. Ulhorn, off. cit-, p. 13.
35. Gibbons, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Chicagos University Press, 57. 1952, Vol. I, p. 58.
36. Quoted in Angus, acit., p. 2.
37. Butler, History of Ancient Philosophy. Vol. I, p. 268.
38. Schaff, op. cit., p. 87.
39. Aall, op. cit., p. 28.
40. Ibid., p. 30.
41. Angus, off. cit., p. 80.
42. Aall, op. cit., p. 54.
43. Ibid., p. 55
44. Gal. 3:28.
45. Aall, 22. cit-, P- 56.
46. Ibid ., p.
47. Phil. 4s8.
48. Phil. 1:10.
49. J. L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946, pp. 21-25.
50. Enslin, off. cit., p. 88.
51. Aall, off. cit., p. 47.
52. Gibbons, op. cit., p. 308.
53. Angus, op. cit., p. 82.
54. Ulhorn, op. cit., p. 20.
55. Quoted in Angus, op. cit., p. 84.
56. Inge, Outspoken Essays, p. 227.
57. Angus, op. cit. , p. 81.
58. Ibid., p. 83e
59. op. loc.
60. Ibid., p. 85.
61. Ibid.: p. 80.
62. Ibid. p. 86.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
64. Andrew Hill, "The Temple of Asclepius," The Journal of Biblical Literature. Sept. 1980, No. 99, pp. 437-439•
65. James Thompson, "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice," The Journal of Biblical Literature, Dec. 1979, No. 98, pp. 567-578.
66. Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 57e
67. Quoted *Ibid.* p. 93.
68. Quoted *op. op. loc.*
69. Quoted *off. loc.*
70. Neve, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
71. Gibbons, *op. cit.*, p. 60; Ulhorn, *off. Sit.*, p. 92f.
72. Cullman, *op. cit.*, p. 103,
73. Bainton, *op. cit.*, p. 66f.
74. M. J. Costelloe, "Hellenism," Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion, Ed. Meagher, O'Brian, and Aherne, The Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia. Washington, D.C.: Corpus, 1979, P. 1635.
75. Neve, *off. cit.*, p. 17.

THE FOREIGNNESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

A Sociological Study by Notto R. Thelle

Because my work in Japan has brought me into contact and dialogue with Buddhists and members of other religions, I have tended to search for similarities and points of contact rather than emphasizing the foreignness of Christianity. It seemed more challenging to try to build bridges than to observe the existing barriers. That would also be in tune with the general theme of this conference, "All Things to All Men." On the other hand, we know that the Japanese-and this may be particularly true of Japanese religionists-put so much emphasis on keeping harmonious relations that dialogue easily deteriorates to mere politeness and superficial chatting. A Catholic friend once made the following comment about the interfaith dialogue in Japan: "Harmony is maintained by blurring the point of controversy and keeping up appearances." So I guess it is important from time to time to sort out what in Christianity is foreign to Japan, and examine it critically; we need to discern whether it is based upon the genuine foreignness of Christianity that is rooted in the Gospel; whether it is based upon Japanese misunderstandings of Christianity; or whether the feeling of foreignness is caused by our one-sidedly Western patterns of thought. We have to be aware that we, with our tendency to regard Christianity as a part of an entire Western civilization, often present our provincial forms of Christianity as the only true gospel. Instead of sowing the seed of the Gospel and letting it grow in the Japanese soil, we bring along a whole tree, already cut and pruned according to our traditions, and try to plant it in Japan.

I. Before going into specific issues, I would like to make a few preliminary remarks of more general character.

First, Christianity is not the only foreign religion or ideology in Japan; most of them are imported. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoistic traditions came from the Asian continent. Marxism, capitalism, materialism, and innumerable other -isms and all their gods came from the West. Now, Buddhism and Confucianism have been here for more than a thousand years, and few Japanese ever regard Oshakasama as an Indian prince and ascetic, or remember that Jizou Kannon, Taishukuten, Benten, and Bonten are Indian deities and Bodhisattvas, colored by Chinese traditions and imported into Japan. They have all become indigenized and have obtained Japanese citizenship. In periods of strong nationalistic sentiment, however, there are always people who remember that Buddhism is a foreign element, conflicting with pure Japanese sentiments. From a puristic Shinto point of view, Buddhism is an intrusive religion which corrupted the pure Japanese unsophisticated feeling of life, with its doctrines of passion, sin, and karma, reincarnation, death, and afterlife.

Second, we should keep in mind the question how far a religion can lose its foreignness without losing its spirit. If we examine Japanese Buddhism, it is easy to see that enculturation and assimilation often have gone so far that Buddhism is in danger of losing its identity. Buddhism has been swallowed up by Japan to such a great extent that Buddhists from Southeast Asia often ask themselves: Is Japanese Buddhism really Buddhism?

Third, Christianity has been a foreign element in every land, and when it is not felt to be foreign any more, it may be a sign that it has lost its vigor. Jesus himself ended up as a stranger in the Jewish community, and was crucified outside the camp." From one point of view, his teachings were substantially what they (the Jews) might have heard from any sensitively pious Sages in the synagogue or academy," 1 as a Jewish historian says but he upset the entire religious establishment with his radical proclamation of God's love for outsiders, and by his own claim to bring about the Kingdom of God. It is symbolic that the main part of Jesus' ministry took place in the provinces, far away from religious and political leaders, and that he was crucified in the religious headquarters of Jerusalem. Jesus was a disturbing element, threatening to the pious and to the theologians, and subversive to the authorities.

Since then, the proclamation of the Gospel has always taken place in the tension between repulsion and attraction. Paul knew that the Gospel was a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles (I Cor. 1:23); but at the same time he became as a Jew to the Jews, and as one outside the Law to those outside the law (I Cor. 9:20-23). The Gospel was radically new and strange, but also corresponded to a deep need. We have already had opportunity to examine the process of conflict and compromise with different cultures, and shall not repeat that here. But I think most of us agree that Christianity, for good and bad, became so identified with Western civilization that it often lost its critical distance to the society it was a part of. It is a painful paradox that almost the entire missionary movement since the great discoveries took place under the protection of one of the most oppressive systems in world history, colonialism. There was certainly both cooperation and conflict between Christian missions and the colonial powers, but the superiority of Western civilization and Western power was usually seen as signs of the superiority of Christianity. Christianity was "sold" as the spiritual backbone of the West. An American missionary in Japan wrote proudly, "The history of the United States down to the time of the Revolutionary War, is but the history of Christian sects' -of the progress of Christianity.. It is vain for them (the Japanese) to strive to enter the light of modern civilization and reject the light of Christianity." 2 So acceptance of Christianity was acceptance of the West. And we know that in Japan times of reaction against westernization were times of stagnation for Christian work. The identification between Christianity and Western traditions meant that something essential in Christianity was lost, as Uchimura Kanzou commented after his visit to the United States:

With what shamefacedness did they (the missionaries) declare unto us that the religion which made Europe and America must surely be the religion from on high? If it was Christianity that made the so-called Christendom of today, let Heaven's eternal curse rest upon it: Peace is the last thing we can find in Christendom. Turmoils, complexities, insane asylums, penitentiaries, poor houses! ...One thing I shall never do in the future: I shall never defend Christianity upon its being the religion of Europe and America. 3

The discovery of the false identification between Western civilization and Christianity led to a frantic search for a genuinely Japanese Christianity. The following appeal by Yokoi Tokio is representative of the theological climate in the 1890s:

We should believe in Christianity as Japanese, study theology as Japanese, propagate Christianity as Japanese We should hold up Christianity with the right hand and stretch down the left hand to grasp the forty million (Japanese) brethren."

The search for a Japanese Christianity that began in the 1890s was in many ways a failure, not because it was a wrong cause, but because the Japanese Christians failed to see the true foreignness of Christianity they generally propagated a Japanese version of liberal theology; they compromised and ended up with a nationalistic theology that served the aims of the government in its nationalistic and colonial expansion. The church lost its critical power and its ability to struggle, and gradually compromised with the Japanese society. 5 The legitimate reaction against a one-sided Western Christianity went to the other extreme and became a Japanized Christianity that was swallowed up by nationalistic concerns. In short, both in Japan and in our own countries the identification between Christianity and the local culture may be a sign of compromise and lacking vigor. We have to find the narrow way between the extremes of cultural estrangement and total assimilation.

I shall in the following pages introduce some specific areas in which Christianity is felt as a foreign element, a few rough

lines in a very complicated picture. I want to emphasize that the term "foreign" does not necessarily imply a value judgement. Depending on the circumstances, the foreignness of Christianity may be positive or negative; it may attract and challenge, or may be felt repulsive. In many cases it becomes a question of communication, and the ultimate issue is, of course, What is the true character of Christianity?

THE CLAIM OF TOTAL COMMITMENT

With the Japanese history of cultural and religious coexistence through the centuries, it is inevitable that it was felt disturbing and shocking when there suddenly appeared a religion which claimed to be the only true way, rejecting others as superstitious and evil. From the point of view of most Japanese, Christianity ignored the established pattern of peaceful coexistence of religions, and broke the rules of decent social etiquette. To use a metaphor, Japanese religions have been like a tree, Shinto being the roots, Confucianism the stem and branches (the social structure), and Buddhism the leaves, flower and fruit. The tree was all the time deeply rooted in the well-tilled soil of folk religion, and folk religious ideas were streaming up through the stem and branches out to the smallest flowers and leaves. All these elements were not felt like a syncretistic mixture, but constituted an organic whole. It would be easy to graft branches onto the tree, even Christian branches, insofar as they did not destroy the other parts of the tree. But generally the claims of Christianity were felt so foreign and provocative that its acceptance would lead to the destruction of the Japanese tree, which then would be replaced by a new Christian one.

While Japanese wisdom tends to say "both-and," Western traditions tend to emphasize the choice of "either-or." In Buddhist traditions there are two ways of relating to other faiths. One is shakubuku, which means to "conquer evil aggressively," a provocative way of propagation that combines preaching with refutation of other doctrines. The other is shouju, which means to "receive or embrace warmly," a method according to which one tries to convince others by accepting them, and then transforming them in a process of integration. The latter is most characteristic of Eastern ways, emphasizing harmony, integration, and transformation. The former has, after World War II, become the special feature of Soka Gakkai propaganda, and is usually regarded with extreme suspicion by most Japanese, just as they resent aggressive evangelism and door-to-door campaigns. Even though Christian propagation avoids violence and intimidation, as has been the case with Soka Gakkai, I think we have to admit that Christian propagation is often felt to be closer to shakubuku than to shouju.

There must be a way between relativism on the one hand and blind belief in the exclusive truth of Christian faith on the other. If we are unable to relate to Japanese religions and traditions in a meaningful way, Christianity will always remain a foreigner, in the bad sense of the word. Jesus certainly said that those who were not with him were against him; but he also said that those who were not against him were with him.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT AND SOCIAL CONCERN

In our efforts to understand Japanese religiosity all of us have stumbled over the communal character of Japanese religious life. Buddhism in Japan is not primarily a search for personal enlightenment, but a household cult centering around ancestor worship and observed through a representative of the family. Shinto functions as a communal faith, centered around the household, the company, the village, or-at least during the war - the state. The Christian emphasis on personal faith and individual commitment is often felt to be foreign to Japanese ways. The community is more important than the individual, and the very idea that religious convictions have priority over family solidarity and communal harmony is felt to be destructive and disruptive. In the history of the Japanese churches there are numerous examples of situations when Christians were systematically stigmatized as traitors and potential rebels. The most characteristic expression of this tension is seen in the conflict between faith in the supremacy of God and that of the emperor. The Christian ideas of monotheism and universal love seemed to undermine patriotism and the traditional loyalty to the emperor. Moreover, the priority of individual commitment to Christ rather than obedience to family and traditional rituals were blatant expressions of intolerable lack of filial piety. 6

Such criticism has weakened considerably - the Japanese tend to be extremely tolerant in matters of faith - but whenever faith has social implications, we see that it is often difficult to withstand the pressure from the family. A Christian girl

who refuses to have a Shinto wedding ceremony may have great problems; and a Christian son who is supposed to take care of the family altar will often face a tremendous pressure. And I am also convinced that in a time of heightened nationalistic sentiments the above mentioned conflicts between faith in God and loyalty to the emperor and to the nation again will create problems for Christians; Christianity may again be denounced as a foreign faith, incompatible with Japanese ways.

Another difference from traditional communal values is the social concern of Christians, which again breaks the limited rules of social harmony. For the Christian does not accept the narrow limits of kinship and traditional social units. Christian care is based in the love of God in Christ, expressed in the Biblical concern for the weak: the strangers, the poor, and the widows, and in Jesus' ministry with the sick, the sinners, and the strangers. I think there is a basis for a similar universal solidarity in Buddhism; and the Christian ideals appeal to a deeply rooted universal human sentiment that can be observed also in Japan; but it has certainly been weak here. So the Christian ideas have been felt strange and sometimes subversive. In the main, however, this is a foreignness which has challenged and fascinated and stimulated rather than being felt as something distasteful. This can be observed, for instance, in Buddhist efforts to cope with Christian social work. The Buddhist reform movement was to a great extent inspired by Protestant Christianity. The Christian charitable work was so challenging that the Buddhists felt that they had to respond as an act of self defense. The foreignness of Christianity in terms of social concern is certainly an asset rather than a liability.

GOD IS FOREIGN, BUT NOT HIS GRACE

I will add a few comments about some Christian teachings, hoping that what I say can contribute to some further thinking and discussion. The statement that "God is foreign, but not his grace" has to be modified in many ways, but I will use it just as a point of departure. Ever since I was a little boy I have heard missionaries and mission people repeat the following sort of consensus of missionary wisdom: "All peoples have some knowledge of God. The uniqueness of Christianity is that, while all religions teach that we have to exert ourselves to the utmost in order to reach God through offerings, prayers, sacrifices, ethical behavior and good deeds, Christianity alone teaches that God comes to man, offering salvation as a free gift of grace."

I am not sure this applies so easily to Japan. First, the very concept of God is actually often felt to be very strange. God came to Japan with a Portuguese name. There seemed to be no place for Deus in the Land of the Gods. "Why-do the adherents of Deus press their tedious claims with the pretense that they alone know the lord who opened up heaven and earth? Idle verbosity without substance, and most annoying" wrote the apostate Fabian in the early seventeenth century. The entire Biblical story was strange: creation, the fall, the story of Noah, the chosen people, God's guidance of Israel in war and nation building, the story of Jesus; through the centuries the Bible itself has been the main arsenal of material for anti-Christian propaganda. God seemed like an emotional and arbitrary tyrant who loved and hated, killed and protected according to unforeseeable and unpredictable moods. The very idea that God chose a people somewhere in the Middle East and, moreover, one specific person as the only means of salvation, was utterly strange. So God has been a stranger in the Land of the Gods. In Buddhist philosophy there is, of course, no room for God in the Christian sense of the word. It is impossible to conceive of any power that is outside the chain of causation, who is cause but not caused, who is creator but independent of his creation.

How can God be accepted in the land of the innumerable gods without being felt as a destructive intruder? The Japanese gods have their specific, limited functions, the god of the field, the god of the fireplace, the god of the well; every village, every district has its divine protectors. The gods are bound to their areas and make no claims outside that area. This is probably why I was asked once at a New Year party in Shizuoka, "Now, tell me, who is Yoroppa no kami? Who is the god of Europe?" It is acceptable that Europe has its god, that there is a Christian god, that Christ has his god, but to think in terms of a universal God with a universal claim is very strange.

Another element which sounds foreign is the Christian emphasis on God's transcendence. There is in Japanese traditions

little understanding of the radical difference between God and man, Creator and creations it is difficult to grasp God's holiness, His laws and commandments, His fierceness and His tender love. We believe that God is transcendent and that the world is full of His glory. The Japanese gods are not transcendent in the same way. The divine is somewhat beyond, but at the same time rather an extension of this world. There are the gods of the mythological age, heroes, ancestors, warriors. There are natural phenomena that are divine, rocks, mountains, waterfalls, whatever is awe-inspiring and extra-ordinary. And men can become gods. We all have a potential kami-nature. The divine is somewhat beyond, but men and gods are of the same kin.

This is expressed in a characteristic way in Isaiah Ben Dasan's *The Japanese and the Jews*, where he describes the difference in the understanding of relationship between God and man in the Bible and in *Nihonkyo*, the basic Japanese religious sentiment. According to the Biblical understanding, Israel is chosen to be God's son; the father-child relationship is based upon an adoption and a covenant. God has chosen the people as His adopted son, who is under His protection and guidance. But if the covenant is broken, God can abandon His own people. This is inconceivable from the point of view of *Nihonkyo*, says Ben Dasan; the relationship is based on blood ties. God and men are of the same kin, as parents and children. The children may forget their parents, ignore them, or be mean to them, but the relationship cannot be broken. At the same time the relationship to the gods is seldom intimate. In Christianity God is beyond, but the world is full of His glory; there is a radical difference between God and man, but at the same time the relationship is warm, responsible, close, and affectionate. That is difficult to grasp.

So God is in many ways a stranger. What about His grace, then? Usually we think about the grace of God as the radical new thing. Actually I am not sure that the idea of grace is so unfamiliar and new as we often tend to think. The most radical expression of grace is, of course, found in Pure Land Buddhism, particularly in Jodo Shinshu, Shinran's radical gospel of salvation by the Other Power (tariki) Amida Buddha's grace. Here belief in the Other Power implies a consistent rejection of all religious self-power as means of salvation. The believer is aware of his total lack of ability to break out of sin and passion, and relies one-sidedly on the Other Power. Pure Land Buddhism is expressed in terms so close to Pauline Christianity that many have characterized it as the "Protestant Buddhism of Japan." It is a religion of faith alone and grace alone, and rejects all human efforts to reach salvation. Even faith does not arise as a result of our own initiative. That would mean a vain reliance upon man's selfpower. Faith comes into being the moment when the calling from Amida Buddha's saving vow comes to man from outside. Pure Land Buddhism is so one-sided in its stress on the Other Power that it is sometimes said to be too special to be representative of Japanese attitudes. And, further, it seems to have deviated so far from Buddha's original teaching that its Buddhist's authenticity is sometimes questioned. The symbols and expressions are certainly peculiar for the Buddhist tradition, but it has influenced Japanese sentiments very profoundly. And, moreover, the basic awareness of grace and Other Power is not limited to this part of Buddhism alone.

I will, therefore, mention another Buddhist tradition in Japan which, according to the popular understanding, rejects all other-power and only stresses the way of self-powers Zen Buddhism. Admittedly, as a meditative tradition Zen is a religion for the few, for the elite, for those who have the will and capacity to go through years of meditation and severe training. You may meditate for one year, five years, or even a whole lifetime, and still only a few break through to the great liberation. So Zen is permeated with the spirit of self-power. Or is it really? Those who penetrate to the deepest levels of meditation seem to discover that Zen is based on much more than self-power. In a sketchbook humorously portraying the life of Zen novices there is a moving picture of a monk who has finally reached the stage of enlightenment, "the wonderful moment of satori." He may have been striving for years, a painful way of toil and hardship, -and self-power. But when he breaks through to the great illumination, he discovers that he is sitting on the great hanof the Buddha. And, in fact, he had been there all the time. He was carried.-LO Even Zen, the religion of self-power, has in its basic insight a deep awareness of grace and Other Power.

I could add slot of material from popular Japanese traditions in order to support the idea that there is in Japan a strong sense of grace or divine mercy. The concept of God sounds strange, but the message of grace is not felt to be so radically

new-it rather strikes a chord which resounds deeply in the Japanese soul.

It would, however, be too simple to stop here. For there is, on the other hand, something in the Christian message of grace which is also quite unfamiliar and disturbing, and which is related to the very understanding of God and man mentioned above. To simplify, the Japanese understanding of grace often lacks the tragic background of sin. We certainly find that deep sense of lostness and sin in Pure Land Buddhism, and especially in Shiran's gospel; but often divine mercy is preached without the background of sin and broken relations. According to Japanese sentiments, harmony and acceptance are possible without conflict with sin, evil, and death. Man's weakness is accepted, and life is not made complicated with feelings of sin and guilt. This is most characteristically described in many of the writings of Ehdo Shusaku who, in *Kiiroi hito* (Yellow People), says that the Japanese have eyes in which there is a lack of reaction and sensitivity, eyes that cannot discover God or sin, eyes which are insensitive towards the thought of death. The contrast between Western Christianity and Japanese sentiments is here dramatically portrayed through two of the main figures, a foreign Catholic priest and a young Japanese Catholic. The priest had to abandon his priesthood because of a relationship with a woman. He had betrayed the church, felt rejected by the church, and hated the church; but he still lived in fear and trembling because of his corrupt life. The young Catholic, on the other hand, had a relationship with the fiancée of his friend without being tormented by guilt and shame. His only reaction was a sort of tiredness and boredom.

Sin and guilt somehow do not fit into the Japanese attitudes. In the Shinto tradition it is basically pollution which can be purified through rituals. Sin is like dust that attaches to man from outside, expressed in beautiful simplicity in Tenrikyo rituals, where the dust of sin is swept away in graceful hand movements. Sin is not a basic evil, coming from inside, but a foreign element which can be swept away without corrupting the essential purity of the human soul. Even though there is in Japan a deep awareness of divine grace, it often lacks the dark dimension of sin and broken relations. It seems difficult to grasp the depth and dimension of the Christian concept of God's grace.

JESUS IS A FRIEND, BUT THE TEACHING ABOUT CHRIST SOUNDS ABSURD

Let me finally add a few comments about Jesus Christ in Japan. Jesus is a bewildering element in people's relationship to Christianity. Christianity is foreign; the church is a stranger in the land; God is difficult to understand; but Jesus is somehow a friend. Even a dear friend. You can encounter him among young people who love to sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." I once saw an artist sing the same hymn in a musical show, with tears flowing down his cheeks, obviously moving the audience deeply. Jesus is enshrined as one of the great spirits in many new religious movements. You can hear about him from devout Buddhists, who often admire his great example of sacrificial love. He attracts people far beyond the narrow borders of the church. Because there is a deep sense of self-abandoning love, and even sacrificial love in Japan, Jesus' life and death can sometimes be grasped intuitively and directly as the deepest realization of divine love. A few days ago I had a very meaningful conversation with an old Buddhist scholar who told me about his relationship to Jesus. "When I was young," he said, "I loved to read the Bible, especially the four Gospels. Reading about the words and acts of Jesus, I told myself, 'If this is Christianity, then I am a Christian!' But then I went to Europe, and it was very difficult to see what Christianity was all about."

The Gospel story and the life of Jesus can be grasped directly. Whenever the meaning of Jesus' death is explained in traditional theological terms, however, there seem to be insurmountable difficulties. The Christian ideas seem not only strange, but ridiculous and absurd. Let me be a little more exact, for this is a vital point. Most preaching of Jesus' suffering and death as a sacrifice of expiation is not only difficult to comprehend - the idea of bloody sacrifices is unfamiliar and even abhorrent to the Japanese - it also tends to force upon the Japanese the image of a cruel and capricious God who requires blood and pain to appease His wrath. There is a consistent trend of Japanese parodies of Christian doctrines about Jesus' suffering and death, from the sixteenth century to the present, expressing how difficult it is to convey the true meaning of the cross.

How can we better communicate the love of God in Christ without reducing it to parodies? First, I think we have to

recognize that God's love is a mystery which can only be confessed and preached meaningfully in stammering words and symbols; it can never be fully grasped by theological systems or theories which purport to be final and absolute. And we should also be aware of the fact that the sacrifice of expiation in the New Testament is only one of the central symbols used to express the meaning of Jesus' work. If this is used as the only key to interpret God's love in Christ, as it sometimes happens in both Protestant and Catholic traditions, it tends to isolate the suffering and death of Jesus as the only important facts in his life, creating the un-Biblical idea that his suffering and death changed God's mind and converted His wrath into love. Jesus' life and death did not change God's sentiment towards His creation, but was the ultimate realization of His love "which was in the beginning." Traditional preaching of the cross and the so-called objective theory of atonement are only stammering words and symbols pointing to the mystery of God's love. Let me add here that the Western Christian tendency to explain the mystery in detailed systems of theology-sometimes extremely rationalistic) doctrinal systems-is felt utterly foreign. Our theology is talkative. The mystery disappears in our many words. The more we explain, the less people understand. And they are left with parodies. The true word is a "finger pointing to the moon." The important thing is the moon, not the finger; but we often become more interested in the finger itself. I think we have to regain our faith in the power of the Biblical symbols, believe in the unsaid reality behind and beyond the words, and avoid explaining away the mystery.

In the Japanese context it is, of course, necessary to clarify the Biblical background of sacrifice, expiation, atonement, etc., and at least help toward a proper understanding of the Biblical symbolism. But we have to stress that this set of symbols cannot stand alone. We have to see the life of Jesus as a whole and not isolate his suffering and death. And we have to use the whole richness of Biblical symbolism interpreting his work: Jesus brings about the Kingdom of God; he is the revealer of the invisible God (John 1:18); his life is a sign of God's giving Himself (John 3,16); he is the shepherd who protects his flock and lays down his life for them (John 10:11-16; he lays down his life for his friends (John 15:13); he is giving his life as a ransom (Matt. 20:28); he is continuing and restoring God's creation (John 5:17, Matt. 11,2-6; Luke 4:18-21); he is conquering the evil powers (Mark 1:23-27; 3:27; Luke 10:17-18; John 12:31; Col. 2:15), etc. The effort to express the mystery of Jesus' expiatory suffering and death has to be continued, but I think it is important to devote more time and effort to develop and deepen the understanding of other Biblical interpretations as well. If we really make use of the dynamic potential of the abundant material of the Bible, it may be easier to convey the meaning of Christ in its manifold richness. And, for God's sake, let us not kill the mystery of God's love with our talkative explanations.

III

I have touched a few aspects of the foreignness of Christianity in Japan, somewhat at random. The foreignness sometimes becomes a barrier which effectively prevents the communication of the Gospel, but not necessarily so. The foreignness may also appeal and attract as something radically new. I will not provide you with any final conclusion, only repeat some of the questions I raised in the beginning and have not really answered. They are questions we have to ask ourselves daily in our ministry: When Christianity is felt to be so foreign in Japan, to what extent is that based upon the genuine foreignness of our faith, the skandalon represented by Jesus himself, his claim to come from God and to bring the Kingdom of God's love and lordship His challenge to radical discipleship, obedience, abandoning of one's life, etc.? To what extent is it based on Japanese misunderstandings of Christianity? To what extent is it based on our syncretistic Western Christianity, as we have mixed the Gospel with Western tradition of thought and lifestyle, our Western ambition and competition, and with our dependence on capital, military power, and innumerable false gods? The answers to these questions may help us in our ministry in Japan.

NOTES

1. Louis Finkelstein, The Jews: Their History, 4th Ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1970, p. 141.
2. O. H. Gulick in the Missionary Herald, July 1871, p. 207,
3. The Complete Works of Kanzou Uchimura, 7 vols. Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 1971-1973, Vol. I, pp. 118-119.
4. Yokoi Tokio in Rikugou Zasshi (The Cosmos), No. 144, June 1890, p. 5.

5. See, e.g., Sumiya Mikio, Kindai Nihon no keisei to kiriktokyo (Christianity and the Formation of the New Japan). Tokyo: Shinkyou Shupansha, 1974, p. 131.
6. For a more thorough examination of such conflicts, see Notto R. Thelle, "Foe and Friends The Changing Image of Christ in Japanese Buddhism," in Japanese Religions, Vol. 12, No. 2, July 1982.
7. George Elison, Deus Destroyed, The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 262.
8. Such reactions are probably similar to our astonishment when Tenrikyo people declare that Tenri City is the unique center of the world, the place of creation, revelation, and fulfillment.
9. Isaiah Ben-Dasan, The Japanese and the Jews, tr. Richard L. Gage. New York: Weatherhill, 1972, Chapter 9.
10. Unsui: A Diary of Zen Monastic Life, Giei Sato and Eshin Nishimura. Honolulu The University Press of Hawaii, 1973, fig. 92.

USING JAPANESE LITERATURE IN PREACHING

A Practical Study by Patrick McElligott

The idea for this paper arose from the discussion times at last year's Hayama Seminar when we were talking about cultural substitutes. It was at that time that I expressed the opinion that Japanese literature contains a wealth of material, and models of communication, which give us some basic common ground when compared with Scripture. This common ground between Scripture and Japanese literature, if used wisely, can make our presentation of scriptural truth more relevant to the Japanese and, consequently, easier for them to identify with and respond to. It is a known fact that the Japanese in general are a "feeling" people rather than a logical people when it comes to making acts of the will that result in a change in lifestyle and values. The Japanese are moved by what they feel rather than by what they think. Consequently, any approach to the Japanese that has as its objective a basic change in lifestyle and attitudes should contain within it a strong appeal to the emotions prior to any appeal to the intellect. "We Japanese are an emotional people and are moved more by our emotions than by our intellect When we discuss things, my Japanese friends and me, we do not think logic and persuasion as important as personal feelings I sometimes have a hard time understanding my foreign friends because they put so much emphasis on logic which I think is cold and impersonal We Japanese are affected much more by the intangible and nebulous mood that drifts across our society than we are by straight facts and clear issues To know what our mood is you have to immerse yourself in it and try to sense it with your emotions rather than your mind." (Quoted from Richard Halloran, *Japan, Images and Realities*, Tuttle, 1970.) It behooves us therefore, to consider what appeals to the heart of the Japanese because it is here that the pathway to the will begins in this land.

There are many factors of culture which could be prime movers in causing a person to accept a change in lifestyle, values, or ways of thought. For a German, the prime factor could be philosophy. For a man from the Middle East, it is most likely to be religion. But what of the Japanese? Last year at Hayama, Rev. Koji Arai said this, "Among Japanese, it is said that philosophy has never become a leading opinion of the public, but literature has." (Hayama, 1981, p. 117.) In fact, Japan has not produced a philosophy of any great influence, and has never in its history been deeply moved by either philosophy or logic.

In general, religion in Japan is not a matter of belief but of practice. It is very much the outward form, the action, which is important, not the "inward" faith. This is why the word "believe" (shiniiru) is used far less than the word "perform" (mamoru) when speaking of religion.

History, in its non-literary form, has never held the appeal that it has in its literary form. It is popular only in as much as it is dramatized. From early times history in Japan was written in the cold factual Chinese chronicle style and in pure Chinese script. It became popular only as it was produced in literary form. The modern Japanese knows most of the history of his country through its literature. What moves the Japanese emotionally more than any other cultural factor is their literature. The great Shinto nationalist of the preMeiji period, Motori Norinaga (130-1801), spent a great deal of his life on studies of the Kojiki, Tale of Genji and the Mu. His selection of these works as the virtual scriptures of National Learning" (kokugaku) Constituted a rejection of Confucian rationalism and ethics in favor of emotional expression. The beginnings of the nationalistic movements prior to the Second World War are traced by many to the work of this man, and others like him in this movement, which revered the emperor and appealed to the emotions, those peculiarly Japanese emotions which are stirred through the literature of Japan more than anything else. To this day the number of Japanese familiar with the content and meaning of Buddhist scriptures remains very small indeed. The "scripture" of "Nihonism" remains the great works of Japanese literature. Those previously mentioned, plus the poetry collections Lohin-211u, Shinkokinshu, The Hojoki, The Heike Monogatari, Tsurezure,usa, and a number of minor works. To this list should also be added the haiku of Basho and Issa, and works like Chushinaura. An understanding of, or at least an acquaintance with, Japanese literature will open up to the missionary a means of identifying with the Japanese in that cultural area which, more than any other, will help to move them onto that pathway towards an act of the will, to either accept or reject the scriptural message. Consequently, I would like to encourage the younger missionaries among us to consider this field when going on to advanced language study.

The following comparisons between Japanese literature and Scripture are divided into three parts: A) Some major areas of common ground found in both Scripture and Japanese literature with brief mention of the conclusion that Scripture invariably comes to; B) The use of haiku in preaching= and C) Japanese literature and sermon structure.

A. AREAS OF COMMON GROUND

As the extracts in Appendix A will show, the common ground in both the Bible and Japanese literature includes the following: 1) The transience of impermanence of life; 2)Emphasis on the inevitable fact of death; 3) The consequential emptiness, fruitlessness and weariness of life; and 4) The use of nature to illustrate these truths. It is the above aspects of Japanese literature more than anything else that moves the Japanese emotionally, both as a people and as individuals. Even in busy, modern Japan the Japanese are deeply and poetically aware of these aspects of life, and are delightfully surprised to discover that the Word of God is in agreement with their basic feelings about these things, i.e., about life and its impermanence and meaninglessness. It is my conviction that we need to pay more attention to these facts in our preaching and dig into the treasure trove of Japanese literature, and present within our sermons the truths found there which are in agreement with Scripture. There are common roots which are basic to man's existence and it is in these areas of agreement that we should begin our appeals to people's hearts, and then move on to the positive and glorious conclusions that the Bible reveals to us

Many of the passages I have quoted are obvious as to their application. In some respects the similarities are remarkable. I would like to take just a few minutes to expand upon a few a) The book of Ecclesiastes seems to be, of all the books of the Bible, the one most likely to be understood by a Japanese reading Scripture for the first time. It has so much in common with Japanese literature in general, and touches those common chords of emotional sentiment which are both part of Scripture and one of the major themes of Japanese literature. When introducing an inquirer to Scripture it is probably good policy to start him or her on whatever you feel is best, plus Ecclesiastes. In this way you will be sure that he will understand something:

Our final emphasis should always be on the conclusions that Scripture comes to about our condition. It is not, however, altogether necessary to compare those conclusions with the lack of conclusions in Japanese literature. Simply to emphasize and explain the certainty of eternal life, the meaning and fruitfulness of a life lived in the love of God, the

historicity and therefore reality of the cross and the resurrections the glorious truth that the Eternal Father has and does work in the history of mankind in general, and in the experience of each individual in particular, will be enough. The best illustration of this that I know of in a shortened form is the verse from Psalm 121: "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills; from whence cometh my help?" Here is a sentiment which every Japanese will immediately feel empathy with. The Japanese are very fond of mountains and in their literature they often "look to the mountains." Looking at the mountains invariably leave them with questions, as the poems quoted will show. But they are unanswered questions and result in feelings of loneliness and emptiness. (One should remember that this is often not the problem to the Japanese that it is to us. The Japanese can enjoy and savor such moments, and the enjoyment of the emotions of loneliness and emptiness become, on the purely sentimental level, "salvation.")

The Scriptures go on however: "My help cometh from the Lord, Which made heaven and earth." Here is the affirmation of faith in the living God which is always missing in Japanese literature. God is there, He does help, 'Le has come'. From this affirmation we could move on to New Testament passages like Heb. 2:14-18 "Since the children are partakers of flesh and blood (i.e., impermanent, heading for death from the moment of birth, and within the transience of that existence, subject to the emptiness of life because originally made in the image of God and for eternity), He also in like manner partook of the same that through death He might bring to nought him that hath the power of death even the devil. And might deliver them who all their lives were subject to bondage Wherefore it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest For in that He hath suffered being tempted He is able to succor them that are tempted." Such passages are more meaningful to the Japanese if the common ground is explored first, and the attention gained through the emotions, before scriptural conclusions are applied.

b) I have included the miracle story from the Tales of the Heike (Appendix B) as an illustration of the fact that the Japanese are not unfamiliar with miracle stories. It goes without saying that very few Japanese would actually believe that this actually took place or, that if did, it was a mere coincidence. The Heike Monogatari was composed partly to be sung to the accompaniment of the biwa by travelling Buddhist priests. The miracle story is a religious and literary embellishment. The Christian missionary preaching from Mark 4:35-41 might do well to compare these two stories, and emphasize the difference between the two. The major difference, in my opinion, is that the priest Mongaku appeals to the elements through intermediaries, namely the spirits of the winds and the waves, the god of the sea, etc. Christ, however, in all simplicity addresses the elements directly. He speaks with the authority of the Creator of the elements. The fact remains that the average Japanese with any knowledge of his own literature would have read miracle stories similar to those in the Scripture. He will not, therefore, readily believe the scriptural accounts unless the differences are pointed out to him.

B. THE USE OF HAIKU IN PREACHING (APPENDIX C)

The use of Haiku in preaching can be very effective in illustrating Scripture, often in a humorous way. The haiku used need to be by a well known poet as this will immediately arouse interest on behalf of the listener. The haiku need to be reasonably well understood before they are used. Often the background to a haiku verse gives useful information on how it can be used. As an example, take the verse:

Hasu no hana shirami o suteru bakari.

The lotus flower blooms, Yet here am I Picking my lice And flicking them away:

At first glance one may wonder what on earth this verse may have in common with Scripture: It presents us with an illustration of Romans 7:19, "I don't do the good I want to; instead I do the evil that I do not want to do." When Issa wrote this verse he was sitting on the porch of a rich friend's house. Issa was on a journey and being a poor man, he often slept in the open or in the very cheapest lodgings. He invariably picked up plenty of body lice. Having arrived at his friend's house, he sits on the veranda and looks out at the beautiful garden with its ornamental pond and the lovely lotus flowers in full bloom. As a poet, the response this should provoke from him is a verse in praise of the beauty before him but instead, all he can think about is the lice. This can be used as an illustration of the fact that instinctively we all know that we are

made for something more, something higher than what we are purer, more thoughtful, loving, kind and truthful. Yet so much time is taken up with the nitty-gritty of daily life and we soon fret and fuss, lose our tempers, and compromise the voice of God within us. Instead of living with a song of praise unto God who made us and loves us, we see and feel the beauty and the potential yet we live on such a low plane ourselves: "The lotus flower blooms, Yet here am I picking my lice."

Mary of these haiku verses can be used without any explanation at all. When preaching on preparedness for deaths

Ohiru hana ya sude ni onore mo kudari saka.
The blossoms fall and scatter I too Am already in decline.

Shinijitaku itase itase to sakura kana.
Get ready: Get ready to die Say The cherry blossoms.

Yo no naka wa jigoku no ue no hanami kana.
This world of ours'
'Tis like viewing the cherry blossoms Over hell.

Issa composed this verse while viewing cherry blossoms overlooking the great city of Edo. It is the city he is referring to as "hell." Being from the countryside, he was discriminated against and had a hard time in the city.

One needs to be sure of the meaning of the poem before using it. Take for example the following verses

Kuyo kuyo to sawagu na asa wa asa no tsuyu.

Don't distress yourself With fret and worry, Tomorrow will bring Tomorrow's dew.

This verse, so reminiscent of the words of Jesus, "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself," is not a declaration of faith but mere just simple optimism in the vein of "Cheer up, things will turn out for the better." However, the verse can be used to show that the words of Jesus are based on the previous verses, "Your heavenly Father knoweth

C. JAPANESE LITERATURE AND SERMON STRUCTURE

A quote from Japanese Theatre, p. 151: "Disregard for the plot and complete submission to the arbitrariness of the set situation do not disturb a Japanese audience. The spectator is more interested in seeing an already familiar and prescribed situation and what the actor does under the circumstances than in following the unfolding of a plot. Out of the variety of situations with which playwrights and actors dealt with appeared a list of basic scenes which became the kernel of the plays and the chief centre of interest. These basic scenes which commanded the importance that in other theaters is taken by the plot, are called 'scenes of emphasis' and vaguely correspond to the western idea of climaxes."

The context of much of the traditional theater of Japan comes from the world of Japanese literature. The great works of Japanese literature, with the exception of the Tale of Genji, are at first a disappointment to the Western reader. The diaries describe a variety of completely unrelated incidents with no apparent unifying factor. The Tales of the Heike is episodic rather than epic, and books like The Pillowbook of Sei Shanagon, Tsure, tsure Gusa, and The Tales of Ise contain no logical structure but seem to be strings of little incidents or comments upon trivial things. The appeal of these works is not to the intellect but to the emotions. Consequently, it is the emotional impact of the set verbal scenes rather than the intricacies of plot or story that are important. Logical sequence in the Western sense is not the object of the presentation. On the contrary, for the sake of dramatic and emotional impact, the sacrifice of a consistent plot is seen as justifiable to the Japanese.

It is my conviction that this mode of communication should at least be considered in the structure of our preaching. Most of us have sat for years under consistent expository preaching, and were taught hermeneutics and apologetics at Bible school or seminary along principles based on Western ways of thought which have, as their basic principles, logic,

consistency, and the building up of a case that leads to a clear conclusion. The appeal to the emotions is seen as legitimate, for most of us, in a secondary sense. Most Japanese pastors are taught similar principles in Bible colleges and seminaries here in Japan. Little or no reference is made to the modes and methods of communication to an audience which we find in literature and the other arts in Japan.

Not for one moment am I suggesting that we go for an all out non-logical appeal to the emotions in our preaching, But I do feel that in our sermon preparation we should pay more attention to "scenes of emphasis" which primarily appeal to the emotions, and describe these scenes in ways that build up to a climax with which the listener can identify emotionally and from that point apply scriptural truth related to the passage to a heart that is already moved. The Scriptures, particularly the historical passages of the O.T. and the Gospels in the N.T., are full of such scenes: "The Prodigal Son," the "Widow of Nain," the woman taken in adultery, the blind men sitting by the wayside. In fact, all the Gospel stories where people meet Jesus contain scenes which can be presented so as to arouse the emotions in a legitimate way. Even when preaching from the Epistles such Gospel scenes should be utilized to illustrate truth. I often feel that much of my preaching falls short because it so easily becomes an explanation of truth rather than a demonstration of truth.

In conclusion, let me add a word of caution. No amount of knowledge of Japanese literature will compensate for prayer, Bible study and the empowering of the Holy Spirit when it comes to preaching. But all other things being equal, the use of Japanese literature in our preaching in both content and structure will enhance our presentation of the truth.

The crunch question is this, "Is it worth all the time and effort?" In answer to this all I can say is that to answer "no" too readily to this question would be to deny the seriousness of the whole subject under review. There is a price to be paid for identification and contextualization; a price, which in Japan, is not the physical inconvenience of jungles and persecution, but the price of mental and intellectual effort. Lest we get discouraged let me quote in closing another verse from Issa:

Sujidango chinpuncan mo nodaka kana.
The wayside preaching Though I can't make head nor tail of it Is somehow peaceful.

We are not the only ones who have our problems!

<p>Scripture: Eccles. 1:2-11</p> <p>The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity." What advantage does man have in all his work Which he does under the sun? A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever. Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; And hastening to its place it rises there again. Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns. All the rivers flow into the sea, Yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, There they flow again. All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell <i>it</i>. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing. That which has been is that which will be, And that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new"? Already it has existed for ages Which were before us. There is no remembrance of earlier things; And also of the later things which will occur, There will be for them no remembrance Among those who will come later still.</p>	<p>Hojoki</p> <p>Ceaselessly as the river flows and yet the water is never the same, while in the pools the shifting foam gathers and is gone, never staying for a moment Even so is man and his habitation. In the stately ways of our shining capital the houses of the high and low raise their roofs in rivalry as in the beginning, but few there be that have stood for many generations. This year falling into decay and the next build up a gain. How often does the mansion of one turn into the cottage of the next! And so too are they who live in them. The streets of the city are thronged as of old, but of the many people we meet how very few are those what we knew in our youth. Dead in the morning and born at night, so man goes</p>
---	---

That which hath been is that which shall be and that which hath been done is that which shall be done and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there a thing whereof men may say, "See this is new?" It hath been already in the ages which were before us. There is no remembrance of the former generations, neither shall there be any remembrance of the latter generations that are to come among those that come after.... I made me great works; I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards... and behold all was vanity and a striving after the wind and there was no profit under the sun.

Eccles. 4:1-6.

Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun; behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter.... Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living, which are alive. Yea better than them both did I esteem him which hath not been, who hath not seen the evil works which are done under the sun.... Better is a handful with quietness than two handfulls with labor and striving after the wind.

Eccles. 12:13-14. (Concl.)

This is the end of the matter, all hath been heard; fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Ps. 78,39.

For He remembereth that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away and cometh again.

James 4:14.

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is a vapor that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away.

on forever unending as the foam upon the water. And this man who is born and dies who knows whence he came and whither he goes? And who knows why with so much labor he builds his house or how such things can give him pleasure? Like the dew in the morning are the man and his house, who knows which will survive the other? The dew may fall and the flower remain, but only to wither in the morning sun, or the dew may stay on the withered flower, but it will not see another evening.

Ho joki

Men of influence are usually greedy of place and power while those of none are apt to be despised. If you have property you have many cares while if you are poor there is always plenty to worry you. If you follow the fashions around you, you will have little comfort and if you do not you will be called crazy. Wherever you go and whatever you do it is hard to find rest for mind and body.... Food and clothes are just the same.... If your food is scanty it will have the better relish ... my only luxury is a sound sleep.

Hojoki(Concl.)

In the still hours of the dawn I think of these things and put to myself these questions, "Thus to forsake the world and dwell in the woods has it been to discipline my mind and practice the law of Buddha or not? Have I put on the form of the recluse while yet my heart has remained impure? etc., etc." And in my heart there is no answer. The most that I can do is to murmur two or three times a perchance unavailing invocation to Buddha.

Sad am I at heart

When the moon's bright silver orb
Sinks behind the hill,
But how blest 'twill be to see
Amida's perpetual light.

Shinkokinshu

In this mortal world
Whether we linger on or pass away
ahead Our brief span is like
The greater fall of dew drops from
the leaves
Or the shorter drop of moisture
from the stalk.

James 1:9-11.

But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate and the rich in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth and the fashion of it perisheth. So also shall the rich man fade away in his doings.

I Peter 1:12-25

For all flesh is grass and all the glory thereof as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower falleth. But the word of the Lord abideth forever.

Ps. 121:1-2.

I will lift up my eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help?
My help cometh from the Lord Which made
heaven and earth.

Eccles. 3:22-23

For what has a man of all his labor and of the striving of his heart, wherein he laboreth under the sun? For all his days are but sorrows, and his travail is grief; yea even in the night his heart taketh no rest. This also is vanity.

Job 7:6.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are
spent without hope. * *

I Chron. 29:15.

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.

Heike Monogatari (Intro.)

The sound of the bell of Jetavan echoes the impermanence of all things. The hue of the flowers of the teak tree declares that they who flourish must be brought low. Yea the proud ones are but for a moment, like an evening dream in springtime. The mighty are destroyed at the last, they are but as dust before the wind.

Fujiwara Shunzei

Oh this world of ours
There is no way out! With my heart in
torment
I sought the mountain depths But even there
the stag cries.

Saigyō

Trailiftg in the wind
The smoke from Mt. Fuji Melts into
the sky So too my thoughts
Unknown their resting place.

Issa

Nishiyama ya onore ga noru wa dono
kasumi.
The mountains in the west, Which of the
mists
Will be the one I ride upon?

Manyōshū

Life is such in this world
That our struggles are all in vain. Years rise on
months And time flows ever onwards Flooding
us away.
A hundred trivial concerns Oppress us in
succession
And stifle us under their weight.

Manyōshū

How I long to be
Unalterably what once I was Immovable as a
rock.

Jer. 10:23.

O Lord I know that the way of man
is not in himself; it is not in
man that walketh to direct his paths.

John 14:5-6.

Thomas saith unto him, "Lord we know not whither thou
goest, how can we know the way?" Jesus saith unto him, "I
am the way and the truth and the life; no one cometh unto
the Father but by me.

Ps. 55:4-6.

My heart is sore pained within me; And the terrors of death
are
fallen upon me.

Fearfulness and trembling are
come upon me

And horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, "Oh, that I
had wings like a dove!

Then I would fly away and be at rest."

Mark 4:35-41.

And the same day when evening was come, he saith unto
them, "Let us go over unto the other side." And when they
had sent away the multitude they took him even as he was
into the ship. And there arose a great storm of wind and the
waves beat into the ship so that it was now full. And he was
in the hinder part of the ship asleep; and they awake him
and say unto him, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"
And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea,
"Peace be still," and the wind ceased and there was a great
calm. And he said unto them, "Why are ye so fearful? How
is it that ye have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly
and said to one another, "What manner of man is this, that
even the winds and the sea obey him?"

And they arrived on the other side of the sea into the
country of the Gadarenes.

Chiru hana ya sude ni
onore mo kudari saka.

Shinijitaku, itase
itase to sakura kana.

Tsuyu no yo no naka nite
kenka kana.

Kokinshu

How sad this road

Covered with the obscuring snow Where not a person passes
Where not a trail remains
to mark the course
Of travel through a world
of fading hopes.

Manyoshu

One of us may feel

That life holds only pain, And another that our lot
is shameful.

Yet since we are not birds but men We cannot escape in flight!

Heike Monogatari, Mongaku Nagaruru

After this he went down from Anonotsu in the Ise province unto
Tenryunada in Totomi province. Suddenly a great wind arose and the
waves beat against the boat as if to overturn it. The boatmen tried
their utmost to save the situation but all seemed to be of no avail.
Some called upon the name of Kannon, Goddess of Mercy, while
others sent up their last invocations to the Buddha. However, the
priest Mongaku, undisturbed by it all, was fast asleep, snoring
loudly, in the bottom of the boat. When he saw what was happening
he quickly rose to his feet and stood on the prow of the boat facing
the shore. He lifted up his voice and shouted, "Dragon King, Dragon
King of the sea! Why do you hinder this boat in which a holy man of
prayer doth ride, you are making a great mistake indeed. Would you
fight against heaven itself, O Dragon gods?" At this immediately the
wind ceased and the waves became calm. All became quiet and they
reached the province of Izu in safety.

The blossoms fall and scatter

I too am

Already in decline.

Get ready, get ready to die

Says

The cherry blossom

This world of dew

Among its dewdrops,

People quarreling.

<p>Tsuki hana ya shiju kyunen no muda aruki.</p> <p>Warera gi wa tada yakamashii hototogisu.</p> <p>Ware ni nite chiribeta naru ya kado no hana.</p> <p>Nani mo nai ga kokoro yasusa yo suzushisa yo.</p> <p>Tsuyu chiru ya ore mo onore mo ano tori.</p> <p>Shinigami ni yorinokozarete aki no kure.</p> <p>Nagaki yo ya kokoro no oni ga mi o semeru.</p> <p>Yukisaki mo tada akikaze zo kojunrei.</p> <p>Anata makase anata makase zo toshi wa inu mo toru.</p> <p>Asagao mo zeni dake hiraku ukiyo kana.</p> <p>Kuyo kuyo to sawagu na asa wa asa no tsuyu.</p> <p>Waga ue ni yagate sakuran koke no hana.</p> <p>Oi no mi wa hi no nagai nimo namida kana.</p> <p>Hasu no hana shirami o suteru bakari nari.</p> <p>Toshi toru mo wakare wakare ya shiranu tabi.</p> <p>Yukimizu no ato e modoranu kyuami to wa shiritsutsu namida nagaretsuru kana.</p> <p>(on the death of one of his children) Matatsushi no nari sokonOte hana no haru.</p> <p>Yo no naka wa jigoku no us no hanami kana.</p>	<p>The moon, the blossoms, Forty-nine years Of useless walking around.</p> <p>Our righteousness, 'Tis nothing but A noisy mountain cuckoo'</p> <p>Just like me Hanging on the branch too long Blossoms at the gate.</p> <p>Not a thing have I But a heart at ease And the coolness.</p> <p>The dewdrops fall, And thus it will be With both you and me.</p> <p>Still here, Not taken by the Reaper. Autumn draws in.</p> <p>The long night. Within my heart, The stings of conscience.</p> <p>Up ahead there's just the autumn wind That's all, Little pilgrims.</p> <p>I'll leave it to fate, Just leave it to fate For even the dogs grow older.</p> <p>The morning glory too Opens only for money In this world of ours.</p> <p>Don't distress yourself With fret and worry Tomorrow will bring tomorrow's dew.</p> <p>Over me too One day it will bloom The flowering moss.</p> <p>For the aged The long days too Bring tears.</p> <p>The lotus flower blooms Yet here am I picking my lice And flicking them away.</p> <p>Growing old Is just one farewell after another On a journey to not knowing where.</p> <p>Flowing water having once flowed by Never will return. Yes, this I know And yet tears flow, remorse.</p> <p>Not yet Returned to dust I see again The Spring and its blossoms.</p> <p>This world of ours, 'Tis like viewing cherry blossoms Over hell!</p>
--	---

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aston, A History of Japanese Literature, Tuttle.
 Basho, The Narrow Road to the North, Penguin.
 Blyth, H., Haiku, 7 -Vols., Hokuseido.
 Blyth, History of Haiku, 2 Vols., Hokuseido.
 Bowers, Japanese Theatre, Tuttle.
 Brower and Miner, Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time (13th century), Univ. of Tokyo Press.
 Brower and Miner, Japanese Court Poetry, Stanford Univ. Press.
 Halloran, Japan Images and Realities, Tuttle.
 Issa, The Year of My Life, University of California Press.
 Keene, Anthology of Japanese Literature, Tuttle.
 Keene, Japanese Literature, Grove Press.
 Keene, World Within Walls, Tuttle.
 Kirkwood, Renaissance in Japan, Tuttle.
 Porter, trans., The Miscellany of a Japanese Priest, Tuttle .
 Sadler, The Ten Foot Square Hut and Tales of the Heike, Tuttle.
Sources of Japanese Tradition, 2 Vols., Columbia Unive Press.
 Yasuda, Land of the Reed Plains, Ancient Lyrics from the Manyoshu, Tuttle.

EXPERIMENTS IN THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL IN JAPAN

A Testimonial by Clark B. Offner

While serving as the pastor of a Japanese congregation, I have often been asked to perform traditional Japanese ceremonies with a Christian content and usually have willingly responded. These have included services at building sites before construction began, at cemeteries after new gravestones had been erected and when ashes were transferred to the new grave= and on memorial days when the deaths of departed loved ones were commemorated. In these cases I have tried to make use of Japanese tradition, insofar as it is not in conflict with the spirit and teaching of the Scripture as I understand it, and fill them with genuinely Christian content. There are other cases in which I have taken the initiative rather than merely responding to the requests of others, and it is from this group that I have chosen seven (in good Biblical fashion) to share with you for your stimulation and consideration, if not for your imitation.

1) New Year Cards. Seventeen years ago I gave up the American tradition of sending out Christmas cards and began following the older, Japanese custom of conveying New Year greetings by postcards. Each year I relate the symbolic animal for the coming year to a short New Year message or prayer (in both Japanese and English) and a Scripture passage or Christian thought. For example, my New Year card for this year referred to the one Biblical passage where mention is made of an inoshishi (boar), and expressed my prayer in an acrostic pattern, the first letters of which spelled i-no-shi-shi and b-o-a-r. I feel this is one way to make use of a traditional custom to communicate a Christian message and, possibly, motivate a few readers to open up rarely read Bibles.

2) New Year's Day Worship Service. At our New Year's Day Worship Service last week, which began at 8:00 A.M., the tempo of the first hymn (Alfred Tennyson's "Ring Out, Wild Bells") was changed midway through the hymn to illustrate the contrasting atmosphere invoked by temple bells and church bells. At the conclusion of our time of collective worship, worshippers were invited to rise, one by one, and to stand individually before the pulpit, upon which an open Bible was placed facing the worshippers. In front of the Bible was a box of Scripture verse cards. It was made clear that neither the Bible nor the cross behind the pulpit were objects of worship, but they were encouraged to individually worship or pray in the manner they felt meaningful for them, whether kneeling or standing with bowed heads and closed eyes, with lifted heads and opened eyes; whether with palms of hands pressed together, upstretched or at their sides, and wheter hands

clapped or silent. I believe that these Japanese Christians appreciated the opportunity of standing alone "before God," yet as a part of a "body," in a sacred place, to give thanks or to make a new commitment for the New Year. Besides their natural inclination to petition for personal good fortune in the coming year, they were encouraged to include the following three elements in their individual worships a) thanksgiving; b) intercession (on behalf of a particular person); c) petitioning for help in living a Christ-like life, and in effectively witnessing to at least one (named) person in this New Year. Then they took a verse from the box as God's word to them and, at the close of the service, read it publicly and commented upon it if they so desired. In this way they not only spoke to God, but, in effect, received a word from Him upon which to meditate during the New Year. In significant contrast to the hurried, jostling, stylized routine performed in a semi-serious mood at a shrine near my home that I had witnessed a few hours earlier, these Christians were encouraged to pour significant, Christian content into a traditional Japanese worship form, making it a meaningful worship experience for them. I was happy to see the unbaptized husband of a lady, baptized last year, accompany his wife to the front so that they prayed together rather than separately.

3) Communion Service. Although we generally follow a traditional Christian liturgical form -during our monthly communion service (at which time we use unleavened bread and fermented wine, the elements at hand at that last Passover [or pre-Passover] meal Jesus ate with his disciples), on occasion we have a more informal memorial at the beginning or close of an agape meal when we also use the common elements at hand- senbei and green tea, or rice and misoshiru (soup)-emphasizing that the significance of the Lord's Supper should not be limited to a formal, liturgical occasion when exotic elements are used, but should be a part of the daily life of the believer. Whenever we eat or drink, we should have a sense of the Lord's presence with us and remember his sacrifice for us.

4) Christian Wedding. At a wedding ceremony conducted this year, in which the couple had chosen each other rather than having been selected by a go-between, a nakoudo couple stood with the bride and groom to be the special witnesses to their mutual vows. However, as the father of the bride walked with her to the altar, the father of the groom stood with him at the side of the altar (instead of a so-called best man). Symbolically, the fathers, representing their respective homes, were giving up their children to their respective mates. At the close of the ceremony, of course, the bride and groom walked down the aisle together, followed by their parents. My exhortation during the ceremony indicated that, while the bride and groom continued to bear responsibility toward their parents, they have now left their fathers' homes and their primary human responsibility is centered in their new home.

5) Buddhist Funeral. The problem of a proper Christian posture at a Buddhist funeral is a difficult one. It is a matter for each one of us to faithfully, prayerfully, and sympathetically work out as we feel led in accordance both with the letter of the Word and the Spirit of the Lord. Needless to say, I do not urge others to violate their consciences but, as a result of the research I have made regarding what the Japanese, in general, consider the meaning of bowed head, palms pressed together and incense burned, I no longer feel hesitant to participate in this expression of respect toward the dead. However, for those few who may be interested in carefully observing my actions, and are in a position to do so, before placing the pinch of incense in the burner I make the sign of the cross with it. I feel that this is not offensive to the Buddhist observers and that, while indicating my sharing with others in expressing my respect, makes a distinction, if one is indeed required, indicating that for me this act is done with a Christian significance. Needless to say, I do not consider this an act of worship of the character which is due to God alone. I am confident that both God and perceptive observers also recognize the distinction. For the unperceptive, I feel it may be a more significant witness to the Gospel of Christ than a refusal to follow Japanese tradition at this crucial time.

6) Religion/culture Discussion Group. About 22 years ago I organized a monthly Religion/Culture Discussion Group (Shuukyoku Bunka o Kangaeru Kai) for people of different (or no) religious backgrounds. The clearly stated purpose of the group is not indoctrination nor conversion, but a deeper mutual understanding of the religious or cultural viewpoints of others. During my years of research into Japanese religions, during which I have come into contact with clergy and laymen of many different religions, I have been impressed with the misconceptions under which many of us are laboring

as a result of misunderstandings or willful blindness relating to the doctrines or the meanings of the traditional practices of other religions. Few Japanese engage in serious religious reflection or thoughtful consideration of the meaning of religious ritual. This includes not a few who by virtue of inheritance, are engaged in religious vocations themselves. Even though some religious discussion may be carried on by members of the same religious group (in churches, temples, doujou, etc.), there is very little continuing dialogue across religious boundaries—even among believers in different branches of the same religious stream. Our monthly meeting format consists of a lead-off talk by a member of the group, followed by questions and general discussion. Although I have given more talks than anyone else, participants and speakers in the group have included Shinto and Buddhist priests of various sects, local leaders of new religious groups, and others with no religious affiliation. The aim is to bring about a deeper mutual understanding among those of different religious perspectives, which should stimulate all participants to a better appreciation of their own heritage and a fuller apprehension of the Truth. Furthermore, it is my conviction that a faithful witness by attitude and act, as well as by word, to the Gospel in such an atmosphere—apart from any attempt at immediate conversion—will also bear fruit.

7) Taped Telephone Messages. Because there is no resident pastor of the church I serve outside of Nagoya, with the result that the church telephone was rarely used, four years ago the church purchased a rusaban denwa and I began preparing daily taped messages in Japanese called Kyou no Messeiji so that people who called the church at any time of day or night could listen to a short "sermonette." With this background experience, a little over two years ago I began a similar telephone service in English called Daily Word, from a Nagoya telephone number. This service has been reported on both in newspapers and on television, which resulted in spurts of over 200 calls per day (the record was 570 calls in one day), but the average number of daily calls over the past two years has been just under 100. (Sunday is always the low day, with Saturday next.) These messages, aimed at fairly fluent speakers of English) make reference to historical and current events, anniversary dates, meanings of words, cultural traditions, etc., but regularly include a Bible verse or some Christian thought. Weekly typewritten copies of the daily messages are mailed to those sending self-addressed, stamped envelopes plus a service fee for the benefit of those who tape the messages on their own cassettes and wish to read the manuscripts. On fifth Sunday afternoons of the month we have been holding Daily Word Listeners' Meetings at the YWCA where we meet and converse with listeners—most of whom are non-church-related. At the meeting this month, the third issue of a publication called Daily Word Echoes will be distributed, consisting of essays submitted by listeners to questions or subjects I have posed in the telephone messages, and which I have corrected before publication. I believe that the daily sowing of Christian truth, mixed together with other information of general interest, will also bring forth its fruit in its season, and there is indication that some such fruit is already being born.

Although I have no Japanese church ministry in Nagoya itself, last November I began a Bible Study in Japanese at the municipal Education Hall. Members of this class are basically listeners to the Daily Word messages, and are members of the Religion/Culture Discussion Group.

In conclusion, I would like to express a couple of observations relating nay "testimony" to the seminar theme as a whole. The incarnation, one of the basic Christian doctrines, affirms that the fullest revelation of the eternal God was accomplished when the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us. As a particular person in a specific time/space matrix with a peculiar cultural heritage, our Lord both affirmed and rejected certain elements of his tradition as they harmonized or conflicted with his spirit, which is the Spirit of Love and Truth. His followers, in their particular times and places, with their peculiar cultural traditions, must also distinguish between what is in keeping with, and what is contrary to, the Spirit of Christ which now indwells them. I do not understand the mission of Jesus to have been to provide us with a new, objective law to supercede the old law which proved ineffective to change lives. His aim was not indoctrination, but spiritual enlightenment which we may refer to in various ways: liberation, salvation, regeneration, etc. He both manifested and left us with his Spirit who is the effective life-changer. It is that Spirit that we should seek to infuse into all of life, beginning with our own culture. Only as we sympathetically understand the culture of another people can we perceive how the Spirit of God is at work in it, and how we may become co-workers with him. In the final analysis, it is the bona fide members of a particular cultural stream themselves who must distinguish what is in keeping with Christ's

spirit, what is in conflict with it, and how to bring good fruit to maturity through the interaction of the Biblical faith with that culture.

PASTORAL RESPONSES IN A JAPANESE CONTEXT

A Second Testimonial by William M. Elder

While serving as a pastor of Japanese churches I have had occasion to do some things that were the result of working in a Japanese context. I will describe two experiences in some detail and make some generalizations from them.

The first experience occurred while I was serving as pastor of a church in Okinawa. I did not seek out and plan the situation; rather it was thrust upon me and I responded to it. It had to do with reconstruction of a family tomb. The tomb is very important in the lives of people in Okinawa. They are large and are for the larger family (perhaps clan would be an appropriate word). The central family in the clan has responsibility for care of the tomb, and one of my church members had this responsibility. Their tomb was quite old so they decided to rebuild it. There are certain ceremonies connected with this occasion that are performed traditionally by a local priest. However, my church member decided that they should have Christian ceremonies. I was not keen enough to foresee what was in store when she came to me saying that they were going to rebuild the tomb and she wanted me to have a prayer service with her and a few immediate family members before the urns were removed for the construction. It sounded like a simple request and as her pastor I agreed. She and a couple of other family members came and we had a simple prayer service at the tomb.

Finally the new tomb was completed, and she talked with the clan members about the ceremony of celebration. This would be an important occasion when all the clan would gather. After the ceremony there would be a meal and festivities. She told them that she wanted me to do it, and there the conflict began. I learned about all of this after the fact, but apparently there were objections on various levels. In Okinawa the Okinawan gods should be called upon to bless the tomb, and their ancestors had always had the local priests perform such ceremonies and this should be continued. It just did not feel right to have a foreign Christian minister do such an important ceremony, and it was sure to be too "light." She was a strong-minded woman and able to hold her own in arguments so she insisted that I was going to do it, and finally the decision was made to ask me. Then she came and told me about the argument and decision, and asked about dates when I could do it. I saw that she had gone out on a limb and that it was important to her to have a Christian ceremony, so I promptly agreed. As I listened to her report of the objections that had been raised, I realized that I could do nothing about most of them. They related to customs, history, or subjective feelings that I could not change. However, I could understand their fear that it would be "too light" and decided to do something about that.

After agreeing I began looking for information or help on such a ceremony. Our Kyodan Book of Worship offered no help, and my fellow ministers had no suggestions to make either. I was on my own. Determined that it would at least be weighty, I put together a service using several Bible readings, hymns, a litany, prayers, and a short sermon. The service lasted about fifty minutes. I should explain here that the area in front of the tomb was concrete, and everyone was sitting in proper Japanese style. A few had one sheet of newspaper under them to protect their clothes; others did not even have that. After awhile some people were shifting their bodies to relieve their aching feet. Meanwhile, I, having been blessed with the ability to sit on my feet comfortably, was in front of them leading the service and doing just fine.

During the meal and festivities that followed there were several expressions of appreciation for the "wonderful ceremony." One man commented that the ancestors may have been a little surprised, but he was sure that they, too, were pleased. Needless to say, my church member was happy, and she told me later that it had been a good witness to the entire clan. No one thought it was too light. It showed that Christians take seriously their relationship with their ancestors.

At the time of this experience I did not act according to a conscious set of principles; I just did what felt right. However, as I look at it I can make some generalizations about how I have acted in this and similar situations.

First of all, as stated above, I did not seek the situation - it was thrust upon me in the context of a pastoral relationship. My concern has not been to invent Japanized Christian ceremonies for their own sake. Rather it has been to relate to people in their life situations. I have tried to relate as a pastor who is sensitive to the situations, feelings, and needs of my parishioners. It has the advantage of being existential and genuine. The disadvantage is that one does not have time to reflect on the theological implications, and to study and discuss them before acting. Usually some kind of response is demanded soon. I have often found myself "flying by the seat of my pants."

The second thing I see about my approach, and a direct consequence of what I have said in the above, is that I may make decisions and do things that are inconsistent with traditional Christian theology. I am influenced by the feelings and desires of the people I minister to, and their requests may arise out of feelings and customs rooted in Buddhist or Shinto traditions.

On the one hand I have not worried about this. That is, I have had no fear of offending God. I am sure that God can take care of herself (himself, itself, or whatever pronoun is appropriate). Whatever we are trying to point to by the word "God" is far greater than anything I can comprehend, and I am counting on its accepting and forgiving my mistakes that may be made in attempting to minister to the spiritual and psychological needs of people. On the other hand, I have tried, within what I consider reasonable limits, to interpret what we are doing in the light of Christian faith. This is not to protect God or Christian theology, but to help people understand what we are doing so as to enrich their lives and contribute to their growth in faith.

A third element I see in my response has been a feeling for the importance of the weight of liturgy. I am aware that the amount of blessings from God does not depend on heaping up words. In the example given above, I could have asked for God's blessings in one sentence. Or it might have been a short prayer that would have taken only two or three minutes. However, the spiritual needs of the people gathered there demanded something "weighty," That meant taking an amount of time appropriate to the seriousness of the occasion and having a liturgy that carried a certain aesthetic weight. I must admit that the idea of writing a litany for the occasion first came from the need to fill the time, but as I thought about it I liked the idea of involving the family in something more than singing hymns. As it turned out, the litany was the part of the service that received the most favorable comments. I would be hard-pressed to justify everything I did theologically, but from a pastoral concern it seems to have been the right thing to do.

On another occasion, when a parishioner asked me to have a prayer service blessing the land where she was going to build a new house and store, I felt an undertone of shamanism in the request. We talked about the meaning of such a service, and then I did it. I was not sure she understood completely what I was trying to say, but not doing it would have meant rejecting her and her need. I chose to accept her and respond to her need.

When speaking of Christian liturgy in a Japanese context, I must comment on the funeral service as held in most churches. My experience has been that funeral services are a powerful witness in Japanese society. This is due largely to the Christian attitude toward life and death. At the same time, whoever is responsible for initiating the practice of placing a flower before the picture of the deceased as a substitute for the Buddhist practice of offering incense had a sensitive understanding of the meaning of ritual and made a great contribution to the indigenization of Christianity. This ties into a

familiar custom and given weight to the service in a meaningful way.

Turning to a different area of pastoral activity, I would make a comment on holding Bible study, prayer meetings, or local evangelistic meetings. Almost all of my pastoral experience has been in rural situations, so the example will be limited to that setting. Perhaps it will provide hints for other situations. Adapting the time, place, and style of the meeting to the life of the people involved is an obvious principle, and the most extreme example in which I have done this was in meetings held in the small hamlet of So chi in the town of Chizu, Tottari prefecture.

So chi consisted of twenty-five houses tucked into a narrow valley in the Chugoku mountain range. Through the influence of a high school girl who wanted to attend a Bible reading group in town (there was no church in town at that time) and with the understanding of her mother who had attended church school as a child, contact was made with the hamlet, and eventually I was invited to go there each year during the winter when the snow was too deep for work, to hold an evangelistic meeting. The meeting was always held in the second floor meeting room of the small community building. A home would have been more comfortable, but I learned that everyone felt more at ease in this meeting room. It was neutral territory; interpersonal relationships were minimal there.

I first started going there with a Japanese pastor who shared my willingness to adjust to the life rhythm of the people, so we operated on their schedule. Meetings always started an hour or so after the announced time. Before that we chatted with the few people who came and went, ate oshiruko and other dishes brought over for us, and just waited. Occasionally we might sing a hymn, talk some more, and wait for the crowd to gather. When people finally came they sat in little groups around kotatsu to listen to the talks and participate in the discussion that followed. Discussion went on and on. I can remember often seeing people snooze during the discussion and then wake up to participate while others took their turn at napping. This went on till one or two in the morning. Even though we were ready to call a halt to it and go home, there was always someone who wanted to ask more questions or say more. The atmosphere was informal, to say the least. Seen in one light, one could be irritated at the seeming lack of seriousness. On the other hand, there was always a good crowd there and someone was always involved in discussion.

Once another pastor and I went and started the meeting at seven-thirty, just thirty minutes after the announced time. We finished our talks, had a brief discussion period, and took our leave about nine o'clock. A few days later I met a man from the hamlet who complained that he was just thinking about going over to the meeting hall when he heard us start the car and drive away. He wondered why we were in such a hurry. People have their life rhythm, and the more we can adjust to it the more easily they will identify with our message. During the time my pastor friend and I were going there, we baptized thirteen people from seven different families in this hamlet.

As stated in the opening, Japanese expression of the Gospel per se has not been a major concern for me. Rather my concern has been pastoral. I have tried to be with the people where they are and relate according to their needs. I do not know how many mistakes I have made or opportunities I have missed. My goal, however, has been to be sensitive, hang loose, and do what feels appropriate in each situation.

SIX THINGS I'VE LEARNED ABOUT CONTEXTUALIZATION

A Third Testimonial by Frederic Sprunger

There is some disadvantage to being the third speaker. About this point everyone feels the need for a seventh inning stretch. But there are also some advantages, one of them being you can have the last word. The problem is, I am not sure I have the last word on this subject. In fact I know I do not. Like the other speakers I suppose, one problem I have in dealing with the subject is that I have not consciously run a series of experiments which I can report on. But still, like them and like you I'm sure, I have had a number of experiences with trying various ways of presenting the Gospel to Japanese people. Some things tried have worked some haven't. But this is supposed to be a testimonial-type paper, and that is what I intend it to be. (lay definition of coritextualization, by the way, is "making the Good News meaningful in a given context." In this case, of course, it refers to Japan.)

When we first came, I tended to be rather critical of the way missionaries were working. It seemed to me the Gospel was not being contextualized well at all. From the order of the worship services to the translated hymns to the stark white church buildings with benches, it didn't seem very "Japanesey." Where were the oriental melodies, the native instruments? Where were traditional architecture, graceful gardens, and indigenous culture patterns to be found in the churches? The same questions still get asked at times, but not as often as they once did, or with the same intensity. Perhaps I've been here too long. Or, have come to realize that the way things are is often how the Japanese themselves seem to want it. (Cf. the work of Japanese artists, i.e., that of Christian artists Sadao Watanabe or Seiji Fujishiro. Notice how un-Japanese their paintings are, the faces etc. Why? It's beyond me. But if you ask them, I am sure there would be an explanation. And one certainly cannot say that such attempts are not a contribution to indigeneity, though they may not look very Japanese to us.) I also feel that our national brethren need to develop their own unique patterns, and one of the most helpful things we can do is encourage from behind the scenes. At any rate, while I am still apt to be critical at times, I do not throw as many stones as I used to. Part of the reason for that is no doubt my own feeble attempts at preaching the Gospel which have, more often than not, seemingly ended in failure or certainly not borne much fruit. So, through it all, what have I learned? Have there been any lessons? I would like to mention six.

First, the Gospel is best contextualized by doing things with people (the church people) and not for them. Language study for us actually came after our initial three-year terms dorm parents for missionary kids at a small school down in Miyazaki. After a year and a half at JMLI, and becoming more knowledgeable about Japan's culture, and hopefully a bit more contextualized ourselves, we set to work.

We were working with an established church, but trying to begin a new center. So, in many ways, we were free to experiment. We tried remedying some of the things which had bothered us the first time here. For worship we sat on chairs in a circle instead of benches; at times, on tatami around a low table. Japanese music (seika, sanbika) played in the background as people came. The worship order was varied. We tried to always have a lay person as chairman, or speak. An attempt was made to be more informal, only to discover that many people preferred more formality: (We also learned quickly that parroting back in the classroom is quite different from trying to talk over a cup of tea with a neighbor.) The usual round of English/Bible classes was held. There were showings of Moody Science films and those made in Japan. Notices for films, or tracts, were passed out. When church people were too busy to help, we did it ourselves (after all, we were paid for it weren't we-in their eyes at least). Our children were in Japanese school. My wife was deeply involved in PTA and local block" activities. Going around was a good "in" with the community.

Yet, we were foreigners. As time went on, and especially when it came time to leave, we felt we had tried to do too much by ourselves. It was probably easier that way. It often takes more work to get others to help out. But for the Gospel to be really contextualized in the eyes of those not yet Christian, the church needs to be involved. We learned the importance of doing things together. What we do is not so important. We need to work more at doing things with rather than for people. Doing it together can also be more fun.

Second, the Gospel gets contextualized when people can tell what God is doing for them now. In the case of the first church we worked with, a sharing time was incorporated into the Sunday worship. It was meant to allow people to testify as to what God was doing in their lives; to ask for prayer if there was a special need: to make the worship more corporate. But, though such a time was provided, for the first six months no one stood up to say anything. The next six months, there was an occasional testimony. The following year, a few more. Gradually it took hold until there were two or three each week. With the church we now serve there is also a time for sharing prayer concerns, but not a testimony time as such. Yet I believe this is important-to give people a chance to say what God is doing for them now. In this way the Gospel gets contextualized for them and their hearers, and can carry over to witnessing in daily life.

Third, it is essential for the Gospel to become contextualized in both word and deed. Practicing is as important as preaching the Good News. To say this possibly raises in some minds the old faith/works dichotomy; evangelism versus social action. And I don't want to get into that. We are saved by faith; no doubt about it. But, as Paul tells us in Ephesians in the same passage, we are saved for good works. No doubt about that either.

Two years ago our pastor proposed having a "church bazaar" for the benefit of the needy in Bangladesh. He had visited there and seen the needs himself. Some of the church folks were maybe not quite ready for it. But we went ahead anyway with used items, a food corner, game corner, vegetable corner, English books, and self-help items made in Bangladesh. Over 70,000 was raised for school kits for children there. Not a large amount, but for a small group of a dozen or so believers, a good beginning. One of the things that amazed us, however, was how enthusiastic even the non-Christians in our classes were about this - donating items, offering to help, thanking us for the opportunity to be part of such a worthwhile cause, and wondering when the next one would be. Our second "annual" bazaar was last October. I expect it will continue to be held. It puts a little flesh on our faith. It helps people see that Christians are concerned about the needs of this world, as well as the next. Contextualizing the Gospel in deed is as necessary as doing so in word. We ought to have a holistic approach.

Fourth, for the Gospel to be contextualized, it must eventually be communicated in their own medium. My work has mainly been in English, teaching English classes, Bible classes, at all levels. And English has its place. It is a good way to contact new people, to develop lasting friendships. There are those who enter the Faith through that door. But I also know something of how long it takes for this to happen. As a cooperating missionary in an assisting role with a local church, I am comfortable with what I'm doing. I feel called to be a teacher. (I also do occasional preaching/teaching in Japanese.) But, at the same time, while English classes may be a way of building bridges to the church, and certainly opens one way of presenting the Gospel in a natural study setting, I must admit that it seems to me that for the Good News to really be contextualized it goes best in their own medium--the "language of the heart." In noting this, I am not knocking English as a method of sharing Christ. What I am suggesting is that we must not put as much stock in it as we missionaries and the church sometimes tend to do, "If only we had a missionary to teach English, we could do some evangelism!" That sort of attitude is dangerous. English Bibles, bilingual New Testaments, and Bible lessons can be of great help. And whatever language is used, we must of course try to make the message plain. But in the end (as we might expect), the Holy Spirit appears to work fastest and best in and through their own medium, their own language.

Fifth, it may be possible to contextualize the Gospel better by going at it from the opposite end. We all know how many things in Japan are seemingly done backward to the American way--reading a book from the "back," driving on the "wrong" side, pulling rather than pushing a saw and so on. It may be that we are the ones doing things "backwards." Be that as it may, may there not be something to learn here? If things are often this way, why not try presenting the Gospel backwards? Start with man instead of God; start with goodness instead of badness. To be more concrete, take the concept of sin. We often begin with the idea that man is a sinner. All men are sinful. Man is downright bad. And this is the concept many have of the Bible's teaching. Buddhism teaches man is good; Christianity, that man is bad. Period. If this is their preconception how about coming at it the other way around? Not that man is hopelessly bad, but that he is not as good as he ought to be. This of course raises the question of what standard we go by, "Loving God and others with all our heart,"

Jesus said. All our heart? Yes. That means 100. Know anyone like that? No, who does. We all know some misty fine people, including many non-Christians. Hut when sin is explained as falling short of what God expects; when it includes sine of omission as well as commission, people begin to say, "Well if that's what sin means, then who isn't a sinner? We must all be sinful because there is no one who is perfect." That°e right. Starting with man falling short of being wholly good, rather than being totally bad, can ring a bell.

In connection with this matter, I did run an experiment of sorts with an English class to illustrate sin. Two jars were filled, one with pure tap water, the other with the dirtiest water I could find in Hakata Hay. The jars were put on the table. One was supposedly 100 pure; the other, dirty. Then, one drop of Bay water was added to the pure water. The students were-asked, "How does it look now, dirty?" "No, it still looks pure, clean." "Would you drink it?" "No, never!" "Why not? It looks clean doesn't it?" "Yes ...but we know it's not perfectly clean. There is some dirty water in it even though you can't see it." Ah, there is the analogy! That is how it is with us, isn't it. To each other we may look pretty good. Hut God sees the heart. Even if our hearts are 99.9% pure, there is no one without some sin, known or unknown. There is no one who doesn't need forgiveness. There is no one who doesn't need a Savior. And praise be to God, there is a Savior in Jesus Christ. Going at things from the opposite end can, I believe, be a good way of working at contextualization.

Sixth, to enable the Gospel to become more contextualized, we need to consciously work at developing more Christian celebrations (other than Christmas). There are churches which have special New Year services, Seven-five-three Day blessings, Adult Day commemorations, death anniversaries and the like. These are good. ("Functional substitutes" is what we are talking about.) But could we not use a few other new, big, happy Christian festivals in which non-Christians can also participate? One example would be a "Creation Celebration." The church year generally begins around November with Advent services. It ends with Ascension and Pentecost. But from Pentecost to Advent, depending on your tradition,there is usually not much by way of celebration. With Japanese having such a close affinity with nature, why not have a "Creation Celebration" in early fall? People could bring favorite plants, or have the celebration outside and plant a bit more greenery in the church yard, or even hold it in the mountains. In any event, try to develop a Christian "Festival of Creation," focusing of course on the Creator of it all who is also our Savior. If a creation festival was held in the fall, maybe there could be something in spring, like a "Music Festival" including the Hallelujah Chorus.

Incorporating traditional dance and Japanese instruments in worship is another dream I have often had. When suggested to a pastor though, to act out a Christmas hymn in Japanese dance, a look of incredulity crossed his face. But why not try it? Why let the non-Christians have a monopoly on the riches of Japanese culture? Why not affirm rather than deny the best in the culture? Why not adapt it to express our message to the glory of God? I heard of one pastor who encouraged this-accepting rather than rejecting. He has written up a little service to go with the Christmas cake people all eats something very low key, but to give it new meaning, to tell the Christ story as people eat their cake. Why not? It's a grand idea! Where are the other pioneers who will lead us?

- bamboo crosses, manger sets, communion cups
- kimonoed dancers acting out biblical encounters
- recitation of Christian poems to Japanese melodies
- mountain backdrops to adorn institutional platforms
- colorful posters/banners to point to the Way, Truth, Life

In conclusion, it is easy to be critical. It is hard to be truly creative. But our job as missionaries is to try to be creative, each in his or her own way, and encourage others to do the same. In time it will pay off in greater contextualization of the Gospel. May we each determine to do all we can to become ever more effective creative contextualizers.

ADVENTURING IN ACCULTURATION: BRAINSTORMING SESSION

A Summary of Group Think-Tanks by Austin Warriner

In an article in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research, October 1981, Dean G. Linwood Barney of Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack details the challenge of Anthropology to current Missiology. Professor Barney observes that missionaries must deal with people within their socio-cultural contexts, realizing that "the Christian community in a specific culture should be encouraged to develop its own cultural forms for a meaningful expression of the supracultural (God's activity) Any society's self oriented culture will have to be modified and reoriented to reflect the supracultural with its divine source

The Christian faith has to be expressed in a specific context and utilize forms of that cultural context; however, the forms employed by Christians in one culture are not to be imposed on the new believers in a different culture (P. 174).

The purpose of the Brainstorming Session was to help us see some of the aspects of the Protestant Church in Japan that bear the marks of having been "imposed" on the Japanese church by missionaries from the West. Then, in our discussions, to try to discover specific areas where our cultural prejudices could be overcome in favor of a more suitable Japanese contextualization. To this end Hayama participants were divided into nine groups of approximately nine persons each, according to a specific interest topic, with a chairman appointed for each group, and a recorder selected from within the group to write out a report. As the overall leader, I have attempted to edit and condense these nine reports with the following results. While nothing extraordinary came out of these sessions, it is hoped that the reader will be challenged to do further creative thinking in the area of how the customs and concepts of a particular culture can be adapted and utilized in evangelism, Christian nurture and worship within that culture.

GROUP 1, NEW YEAR (OSHOGATSU) ACTIVITIES

Adapting one aspect of Year-end parties (Bonenkai), a Watchnight Service could be planned in churches that would give members an opportunity to reflect on the past year's church activities (possible constructive feed-back for the pastor), and project specific hopes for the new year. Since many people like to stay up until midnight, why not have something for them at the church? In some areas, especially where a view of the sun coming up over the water is available, a New Year's Sunrise Service might be entered into enthusiastically by the church and a segment of the community. During the regular New Year's Day Morning Service, worshippers could be encouraged to write specific prayer requests, or confessions of sin, on a piece of paper. Then, at a designated time, these are to be taken to the front of the sanctuary and burned in a receptacle placed next to a lighted candle. The rising smoke can symbolize the prayer going up to God, while the destruction of the paper can symbolize release from the power of sin. The Japanese O-shogatsu symbols that relate to purity could be explained with an appeal for Christians to seek the purity that is ours through the blood of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Other winter related activities suggested were ski lodge evangelism and community wide Christmas Carol singing in public places such as the cathedral-like concourse of the Hankyu Railway Umeda Station in Osaka.

GROUP 2, O-BON AND OTHER JAPANESE FESTIVALS

It was noted that converts to Christ keenly feel the need to sever all association with Japanese religious customs, including festivals. Therefore, it is important for churches to provide alternate activities during the summer period such as summer camps and conferences, showings of feature length Christian films at a community recreation area, outdoor worship services, etc.

Many other Japanese Christians do not think of the folk dancing of Bon Odori as religious, and feel free to participate. Perhaps the church could learn from Jewish customs derived from the Old Testament where dancing before the Lord was sometimes included in public worship. The O-bon celebration itself is not essentially Buddhist in origin. It was pointed

out that even Buddhist masses for the dead began in 766 A. D. in imitation of Nestorian Christian practices. Perhaps Easter morning would be a more appropriate time for Christian graveside memorial services, however.

GROUP 3, VARIOUS CEREMONIES AND SPECIAL DAYS

Probably it is not necessary for the church to compete with the civic sponsored "Coming of Age" ceremonies on January 15, as they are not specifically religious. But it is recommended that a time of special recognition and prayer be given for new adults in the worship service nearest to this date. The young people could be given opportunity to give testimonies of their faith and/or to express their thanks to their parents and other Christians who have helped them in the church. Some churches present the new adults with a Bible or some other Christian book. January 15 is also a good time to sponsor a youth music festival with many churches participating. Each presentation could be judged with the selection of the best in each category.

Respect for the Aged Day on September 15 could be an opportunity for the elderly to gather at church for a special program and meal. Another twist might be that instead of being entertained with a program, the oldsters be given the opportunity to serve the church by doing simple chores such as cleaning the slippers, et c. This makes them feel needed. Some churches make gifts for their elderly and take them to their homes on this day, expressing thanks to them for their past service and singing a hymn or two with them.

Many churches have special ceremonies for children, especially seven, five, and three-year-olds, on the Sunday nearest November 15. Applications can be sent out and gifts given to each child. Even non-Christian parents appreciate having special prayers of blessing given for their children, and it gives the children a chance to dress up in kimono. Labor Thanksgiving Day on November 23 might be a good time for a church to carry out a community service project such as cleaning up a public park or the local bus stop area.

Christmas is an especially good time for evangelism with special Christmas Eve services, often well attended by the community. (One church reported two services, both with more than 700 people.) Christmas concerts, if well advertised, also have been known to draw large crowds.

When Christians are having a new house built, it is good to plan a real feast for the builders on muneage day. Each man can be given a gift of nicely wrapped cookies, or a simple gift for his children. Also, whenever a new family moves into the church neighborhood, especially if it is a new house, a group of Christians from the church could visit and extend a tangible welcome, and offer to pray a prayer of blessing for the new family.

GROUP 4, EQUINOX, NATURE AND CAMPS

Since Japanese people are so fond of the gardens at Buddhist temples, fancy restaurants, and in their own homes, why shouldn't Christian churches also include in their facilities a garden that would capture the appreciation of those who attend church services? Also, a good flower arrangement near the pulpit can give evidence of the glory of God through the beauty of His creation. In an effort to express appreciation for natural beauty, the church could take the lead in attacking the problem of littering by enthusiastic participation in clean-up of public places such as in front of train stations, et c. When visiting famous historic places such as Ise, Christians should be encouraged to seek out the beauties of God's creation while avoiding even the appearance of worshipping at the shrine or temple. The giving of flowers, taken from their own gardens, to the residents of Old Folks Homes by Sunday School children (on the second Sunday in June) is keeping in tune with the Japanese appreciation of natural beauty.

Camping programs will be more effective if the variety attempted is increased. For instance, Wilderness Adventure Camps help to develop strong personal relationships because of the strenuous activity involved in setting up camp away from conveniences. English Conversation camps, Skiing camps, Family camps, Sunday School Children's camps, et c., each meet a special need. The International Camping Association held each year in Karuizawa is a good resource for ideas and methodology.

GROUP 5, WEDDINGS

The Christian concept of marriage is something that missionaries can bring to the Japanese culture. It is, of course, ideal for our Christian young people to marry Christians. Associations are helping pastors find Christian husbands and Christian wives for the young people. This ministry should be encouraged.

In recent years marry Japanese young people who are not Christians are turning to the churches asking for Christian weddings. This poses a problem for pastors and churches. Some pastors will not marry the couple unless at least one is a Christian, and some, not unless both are Christians. Often the Christian is lost to the church after marrying an unbeliever, but sometimes the unsaved partner is won to Christ through the influence of the Christian spouse. Even though there are unresolved theological considerations, it was the consensus of the group that the church should not turn away people from a Christian wedding simply because the couple does not have faith in Christ. It was agreed, however, that Christian weddings should be given only to those who are willing to receive counseling, before and after the ceremony, concerning the Christian concept of love, marriage and the family. Many have been led to attend church through this contact. In the ceremony, rehearsal, and on other occasions, Christian teaching can be given and love shown to the families and friends of the couple also.

The ceremony itself can be the regular ceremony common to churches of the West, but alterations can also be made to fit the situation here in Japan. For instance, one missionary has the go-between couple 'stand with the bride and groom in the ceremony. Another has the mother of the groom, as well as the mother of the bride, seated just before the ceremony begins. The wedding vows can be rephrased so that there are no theological wordings beyond the level of the couple's faith. But inasmuch as marriage itself is the Divine plan and is to be blessed by the true God and Creator whom we know in Christ, the pronouncement that the couple are now man and wife should be made in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Pastors, and especially missionaries, often have excellent opportunities to lead seminars on the subject of marriage and the family. Requests for this ministry come not only from churches, but also from kindergartens, P.T.A., civic groups, town halls, etc. Christian literature is now available for this purpose from most Christian publishers in Japan.

GROUP 6, FUNERALS AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP

In the case of non-Christian Japanese people, we missionaries should not be condemnatory when they are simply doing what they feel meets their needs. While most Japanese do not know analytically what they are doing when they bow in

veneration to their ancestors or to the picture of the deceased at the funeral, according to Clark Offner's survey, more than half said that they felt they were communicating with the dead, and that it did something for them. At the Buddhist funeral the deceased receives his posthumous Buddhist name (kaimyou), and this is displayed in the Buddhist family altar (bill The picture of the deceased symbolizes the person, and most Japanese feel it is quite natural for them to address the picture conversationally, just as though the spirit of the person were present and aware of what was being said. Ideally, Christians should not address the spirit of the deceased, but should pray to God the Father, giving thanks for this person's life. However, this ideal is often unattained. One Christian brought the picture of his deceased wife to the baptismal service of their son, thinking that she could thus witness the answer to her prayers and rejoice with him in this victory. Loving tender care is needed in any attempt to set such a matter straight.

It is a fact that the periodic Buddhist memorial services held at intervals of one week, one month, two months, a year, et c., do seem to meet a continuing emotional need of the bereaved. While there is no such schedule in the tradition of most Christian churches, the Anglican Church in Japan does follow this schedule. Also in Anglican churches, a prayer liturgy for the departed members of the congregation is read on All Saints' Day, November 1. In an Osaka Anglican church last year, two tables were set up with pictures of the deceased members and their families, and about 200 names were read. It was also reported that Korean churches in Japan hold annual memorial services thanking God for the lives of those who have died.

GROUP 7, DRAMA, MUSIC AND LITERATURE

Our concern is not only in seeing the Gospel permeate the arts in Japan, but in asking how the presentation of the Gospel itself can be enhanced artistically. If Japanese art sources are used in preaching, a more attractive and deeper presentation of the Gospel should be possible.

Shadow pictures (kage ningyo) can be used effectively to dramatize the Christmas and Easter messages. Large picture cards (kami shibai) are still much used in Bible story presentation in Sunday School and Bible clubs. A unique slide series could be made by having a youth group or Sunday School class enact Bible stories, with colored slides being taken of the various scenes and a narrative tape recording produced to accompany the set. Another idea suggested was to utilize the dramatic dialogue between two protagonists to convey a Biblical truth, Hanayagi Dance Troupe is experimenting with interpretive dancing as a means of expressing Christian religious feeling and thought.

Since music is a particularly effective bridge in evangelism, it is encouraging to see that Japanese folk song-type music is being written by Japanese and used in the churches. The old well loved hymns from Europe and America are not to be despised, however, since so much of the music of the West is loved and admired, and accepted into the Japanese heart and home. Shalom Corporation is the agent for many Japanese Christian singers and singing groups, affording much encouragement to performing artists.

Miura Ayako has written many popular novels in the sentimental vein with Christian content. These are very appealing to the Japanese and are effective as pre-evangelism. Endo Shusaku's books are widely read and can be utilized if due care is taken. Translations of C. S. Lewis' books are helpful to some seekers.

GROUP 8, THE COMPANY AS THE EXTENDED FAMILY: JAPAN INCORPORATED

In seeking to carry out its mission in Japan the church often comes into direct confrontation with the authority of the company. Men in their thirties and forties seem trapped in their company's programs. The church finds it hard to compete with the company for men's loyalty. Since the Meiji Era, the church has had the image of being very inflexible in what it expects of men who become Christians. Perhaps it is time for the church to change its Sunday program. Why not join the men in sports on Sunday morning and have church worship services later in the afternoon or in the early evening? This flexibility might reap a great harvest among the men. In any case, men need to find that they can acknowledge the authority of Christ as greater than that of "Japan Incorporated."

Becoming a Christian does involve breaking with some Japanese traditions and practices, and this may seem to interfere with the pursuit of a successful business career. For instance, excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages seems to be part of the pattern of advancement. But the Christian can be encouraged to stand against this custom and to trust the Lord to bring him advancement if that is His will. One of the members of the discussion group, a Japanese businessman, reported that he was actually advanced to a managerial position after becoming a Christian. The company president found that he could be trusted because he would not get drunk or otherwise shirk his duties. The Christian church should encourage Christian men to be loyal to Christ and to Christian principles. This is necessary for personal Christian growth and does not interfere with one's true responsibilities within the company.

GROUP 9, CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THEOLOGY IN JAPAN

What we want to discover is how the unchangeable nucleus of the Gospel content relates to the changing context of Japanese society. What are the specific bridges in Japan for an effective communication of theological concepts? When we let the Bible itself speak directly to the Japanese, uncluttered by our theological presuppositions, and we missionaries really listen to them, what can the Japanese tell us about their impressions of Scripture?

Observing the strong Japanese identification with nature, is it not possible that the best approach to theology is from the perspective of God as Creator? Whereas the thought of eternal life is not so meaningful nor attractive to Japanese people, the thought of abundant life from God our Creator is appealing. Matters relating to "birthright" and the full inheritance that we can have in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, are also word pictures that are not mysterious or offensive to the Japanese mind. The whole concept of a "covenant people," the family of God, fits the Japanese context with its

assumption that they are a unique people. The covenantal idea of our passing on to the next generation our Christian heritage is a concept that Christian missionaries can share with their Japanese colleagues in confidence that they will be able to grasp the meaning.

Since the Japanese mind does not easily think in terms of law, it is perhaps best if we do not give top priority to the forensic aspect of the Pauline approach. Japan is not strong on theological concepts in its traditional religions.

Perhaps those things perceived intuitively are more effective in communicating the Gospel. For example, more emphasis can be put on the spirit of Christ and his teachings. One participant even raised the question, "Perhaps a distinctive Japanese theology isn't needed. Actually do we think there is an 'American theology,' a 'Chinese theology,' a 'European theology?' Isn't there just one theology - a Biblical theology?"

WHY DON'T MORE JAPANESE BECOME CHRISTIAN

A Sociological Study by Chosei (Kiyoshi) Kabira

Last spring, when I was asked by Mr. John Graybill to talk on this subject, I may have made too quick a promise, but it is difficult to turn down a request from Mr. Graybill who has been a diligent missionary in Japan for many years, and who is a good friend of my Mennonite wife and myself. My promise was an honest one, for I had received a detailed report of a survey on "The Religious Consciousness of Japanese" conducted by the NHK Public Opinion Research Institute during late November, 1981, which covered urban and rural areas. I thought the Hayama Conference would be an ideal opportunity to share this report with many missionaries.

Now if I am to answer the question why more Japanese don't become Christian, I could begin by simply stating four words: intellectualism, urbanism, foreignness, and individualism. In the choice of the first three words I was greatly influenced by Professor Yasuo Furuya, of International Christian University, who lectured at Shibuya Baptist Church, June 25, 1978, on the subject "Church and Society in Japan." Also, in preparing for today, I received much help from reading several publications of past Hayama conferences and past issues of The Japan Christian Quarterly which showed that many good answers to our question today have been studied and clearly stated. I feel like a graduate student in front of a board of advisory professors. However, let me comment on some of these answers in my own way.

INTELLECTUALISM

Many writers suggested that intellectualism is a barrier to Japanese becoming Christian. As an example of this I recalled that when K.F.A. Gutzlaff translated the Gospel of John into Japanese, with the aid of Japanese fishermen from a wrecked ship, it was indeed in commoners' Japanese: ハジメニカシコイモノゴザル コノカシコイモノ ゴクラク

This was published in Singapore in 1837, but was never adopted officially by the churches upon the lifting of the ban against Christianity in that same year.

Christianity then attracted Japanese intellectuals as a source of Western learning in the mood of "civilization" and "enlightenment" and "leaving Asia and entering Europe," though these people were not necessarily interested in learning Christianity per se. Later, however, many of these people were caught by the esteemed personalities of their Christian teachers (missionaries) who witnessed to their belief in Jesus Christ in their daily conduct. The fact was that those students happened to be the sons of dissident samurai of the Tokugawa side against the new Meiji government. Some of them were such people as Masahisa Uemura (Hatano clan, an inner Tokugawa clan), Kanzo Uchimura (Takasaki clan), and Inazo Nitobe (Nanbu clan). (Kiuchi Saburo, Nihon Protestant-Shi, Kyodan Shuppan Kyoku, p. 168.)

Those Christians were later grouped as the Yokohama, Sapporo, and Kumamoto bands, and became instrumental in producing the first official Japanese Bible in 1875, which was the Gospel of Luke. The style of the entire New Testament of 1880 was unavoidably in intellectual literary form, now called bungo-tai. In comparison with the fishermen's style, the first verse of John reads with many kanji: 大初に言あり。言は神と友にあり言は神ありさ。

Since then Christianity in Japan has always been identified with the intellectual class. This is confirmed in the 1981 NHK survey as follows: "In the case of Christianity (2%) there are not many differences among believers according to their ages, but there are slightly more women than men. As far as academic levels are concerned, the proportion of college graduates is high among Christians. Buddhism, which occupies the highest ratio (27%), is found more among women, aged, urban and small town dwellers, and those with low education. Shinto (3%) believers are mostly among those who are independent business operators in small towns and cities (NHK 1981 Religious Survey, 1982,-p. 6.)

URBANISM

With regard to the second factor, that of urbanism, I can only agree with the view expressed by Kishida Kaoru, pastor of Zion Kamata Church, in his article, "Reading Secularists," in the summer issue of *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, 1982: Already by the first year of the Meiji Era (1868) Christianity was thought to have a great many believers from the intellectual class, but this seemed to occur because most churches were in cities and it was easy for students to convert. As a result, urban missions came to be representative. Location and historical background determined the advantages and disadvantages for evangelism. This meant that it was very disadvantageous to evangelize in inconvenient and culturally underdeveloped areas where population was being depleted of their working force, and where Shinto and Buddhism were strong. On the other hand, the large cities with their more convenient transportation were made open to new cultural influences. Thus urban missions were useful for the conditions of the intellectual class, but this became an obstacle for the infiltration of the Gospel into the general public (Kishida, pp. 153-154)."

FOREIGNNESS

My third answer to the question of why more Japanese don't become Christians is the factor of foreignness. This is apparently the most widely discussed characteristic of Christianity in Japan. It seems that Christianity hasn't yet become a national or indigenous religion in Japan even after 120 years of evangelism.

Dr. Kiyoko Cho Takeda, in her article "Christian Dialogue with Traditional Japanese Culture," clearly describes this historical background: "Because Christianity came to Japan from the West, Christians in Japan, particularly in the Meiji period (1868-1912), were often called *batakusai* (smelling of butter), an odor associated with Westerners. The way of gathering, the way of worship, the way of prayer, the way of Christian life, apologetics and theology-all were influenced by missionaries and by Western cultural and intellectual roots, and the result was an image of Westernization in Japanese Christianity that has been a sort of stumbling block (Takeda, *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, Winter 1978, p. 6)." This phenomenon was caused not only by the missionaries, but also by Japanese pastors and ministers who followed the teachings and training of Western theology and evangelical methods. An example of which many Japanese Christians complain is the tendency of many Japanese ministers to quote Western thinkers such as Barth, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer, and to ignore what Uemura or Uchimura or Nitobe preached in the past, or how our Japanese forefathers lived.

It is worthwhile to note the "big" question of Dickson Karuo Yagi at the 1982 Hayama Conference: "The big question, then, is not the foreignness of Western Christianity to the Japanese mentality, but 1) the legitimacy of theologizing in any human language (culture) at all, and 2) the legitimacy of the Western brand of the Christian faith. Since Jesus Christ is too big to be contained in the Jewish conception alone, he burst forth into Greek philosophical terminology-the basis for Western theological formulations This being the case, who is to complain if Christ should now burst the bonds of Western culture and take on Japanese dress?" Are your churches helping these bonds to be broken?

Could we Japanese Christians and church leaders seriously consider adopting some conventional forms of Japanese verbal presentations in such popular styles as *kodan*, *rokyoku*, and *rakugo*? Could the *sanbika* include the Japanese styles of *min yo*, *enka*, and even *kouta* to become familiar forms of spreading the Gospel in Japan. We have so far been too busy in following and adapting too many Western traditions. I believe there are many possibilities for more Japanese to become Christians in the future if Christian churches become more Japanese.

The NHK survey provides some valuable references for evangelistic strategies for churches in Japan. Please refer to APPENDIX A.

INDIVIDUALISM

In the beginning I placed the word individualism after intellectualism, urbanism, and foreignness as answers to the question why more Japanese are not becoming Christians. Perhaps it is the most important answer. Christianity appears to

be an extremely personal and individualistic religion in comparison with Shintoism and Buddhism, and maybe I should include Confucianism here also.

The Bible teaches, in Psalm 27:10 and Matthew 10:21, 35-36. that believers must be ready for separation from their father and mother to pursue faiths "My father and mother may abandon me, but the Lord will take care of me." "Men will hand over their own brothers to be put to death, and fathers will do the same to their children; children will turn against their parents and have them put to death." "I came to set sons against their fathers, daughters against their mothers, daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law; a man's worst enemies will be the members of his own family," That Christianity is an anti-family system, anti-ancestor worship, and anti-communal observance is a commonly heard criticism of Christianity in Japan. In the early evangelism in my home state of Okinawa, there was a minister who was reported to have said that the family ancestral tablets (ihai) should be burned without any consideration of leaving the family records. There may be many views among us here today concerning the Japanese butsudan and kamidana, but I raise this point to show that Christianity seemed in this case to be pitting the individual against his family. It may be the failure of many churches to deal positively with the matter of the butsudan or kamidana which makes it difficult to enter into the Christian faith. Why isn't there a Christian seidan in every Christian home in Japan? The church should indeed look for the personal salvation of individuals, but this does not mean that the church can not be involved in its members' family and social affairs. The definition of a healthy church may be a church where the members could freely bring their joys, sorrows, troubles, despairs, and every human incident for sharing and comfort, as in a family.

Implanting and indigenization seem to have been two key words for study and discussion at this seminar. My naive question is, "How deeply have you looked into the soil of Japan in terms of the rhythm of life, the traditions and observances which may be useful and worthy of consideration for adopting into the church activities?" For example, I understand that the observance of Christmas came into being at the timing of the Roman feast of Natalis Solis Invicti (Peter Milward, The Japan Times, "Readers in Council," Dec. 26, 1982)= When you look deeply into Japanese life, you may see why Japanese do not easily become Christian. According to the NHK survey, 80 percent of the people agree that our livelihood in the past was materially poor but was affluent in the heart. This is reflected now in that Japanese today are once again revaluing customs and traditions peculiar to Japan, though there may be a little danger of becoming very nationalistic in the sense of "Japan as Number One." I can only conclude that for many Japanese to become Christian, it may be very necessary to work strongly on softening the factor of individualism in the church, and strengthening the family and community factors.

Now, before I give a few concluding thoughts, I want to refer to APPENDIX B. There, in connection with the point that in order to reach more Japanese for Christ, the churches must be less foreign, must work in rural areas also, must be less intellectual, and must be more family and community centered, I have translated some detailed information on the Japanese year. This year is the basis of our lifestyle and rhythm. Please read it at leisure at your home, and reflect on how the Christian churches could use this rhythm of life.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

So far I have presented some research material which may have been quite redundant for you. However, I hope the NHK survey will provide you with some hope; it is important to note that since 12% of the people expressed their intimacy or friendliness toward Christianity, there is still a great possibility of evangelism here. Furthermore, we have to reflect on the fact that the largest percent of those who are interested in Christianity is among the so-called irresponsible teenagers (girls-37%, boys-22%), followed by the carefree twenties (women-17%, men-10%). These numbers are higher than the numbers of those who expressed friendliness toward Shintoism. The figures are, however, reversed when the people reach the more responsible ages of those who must bear the family and social commitments and responsibilities. What does this fact mean in our church planting methods?

You must have been experiencing that fewer and fewer among those baptised young people stay on at church as they enter college, get employed, get married, and so forth. So the churches have to take measures to remain significant to those, not only in the teens and twenties, but for those of all ages and those near death also. It would be very interesting to compile figures as to how many have been baptised in all Japan since the end of World War II, and to compare that figure with the present total church membership, and with the potential of the percentage of the population who express friendliness toward Christianity. Now is the time when Japanese Christians should work together to become a real part of the society, with your continuing cooperation. The churches are still in the developing stage even while Japan as a nation seems to have fully developed, and nationalism is somewhat revived. Perhaps a more important question than mine today is the question of why don't Japanese Christians stay in the Christian faith and church life?

Now, finally, here are some thoughts for the churches to grow into congregations which are fully involved with the members' families and community activities and traditions:

- 1) The ministers and pastors should be aware of the activities, events, and special days designated in the calendar and, if appropriate, these could be taken into consideration in preaching, teaching, and counseling. For example, could all the churches be open on New Year's Eve for hatsumoude? My own church has not yet made this a tradition.
- 2) The churches should figure out some ways not to have their congregations directly involved in Buddhism or Shintoism, such as festivals, offerings, and carrying the o-mikoshi, at their local temples and shrines. Similar to the activities of conscientious objectors during the war, the church members could play a very active role in the community in security, medical emergency help, and activities for the aged and handicapped. The churches could be identified as first aid stations, disaster centers, and lost children care centers. In this sense, it is vital for the churches to be opened every day for some scheduled activities identified with the community, and for daily worship.
- 3) The churches could encourage their young people to develop associations with other young church members, crossing denominational lines, and the churches could be instrumental in matching young couples by exchanging information on this. Christian homes can be a basis for a growing church.
- 4) The churches could pay more attention to such personal and community events for its members such as shichi-go-san, seijinshiki, kanreki, etc. These events are, after all, considered to be important in Japanese life.
- 5) The churches could pay more attention to the dead and to the question of the ancestors of the church members by observing the memorial services according to Japanese traditions. The 7th, 49th, and 100th days as well as the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 13th, and 33rd years may have Buddhist origins, but they may be used for Christian meanings. Could young Christian couples keep their butsudans as the ancestral records until they reach the age when they are fully responsible for their ancestral affairs; then could they change to a Christian home altar where the family lineage records could be stored? Could the family tomb be kept at the temple until the church member is of the age to take full responsibility by moving the tomb out, or by paying only for the maintenance and not for any Buddhist ceremonies there? It is always very important for each church to have a graveyard. As for o-bon, could the churches observe All Souls' Memorial services with the meaning of respect and remembrance for their ancestors? The church members could be directed to compile and maintain accurate ancestral records. Actually, Buddhist o-bon observances today are often superficial formalities, and people don't have knowledge of the ancestors which they are supposed to be worshipping.
- 6) In Japan there are too many small churches which Indonesian minister Andar Ismail, in his article "The Church in Japan: Both Overestimated and Underestimated, Impressions by a Fellow Asian," labelled as "pocket-size" and "bonsai" churches (Ismail, *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, Summer 1982, p. 131). It may therefore be better to have more ecumenical and organized activities in the communities to appeal to the village or city people. Christmas and Easter could be most appropriate. A Christian talent bureau could be established and publicized among Christians in each community with careful coordination among pastors and laymen. Some may be good at marriage counseling, some at the problems of juveniles, some at educational affairs. There are some Christian professionals such as doctors, lawyers, public accountants, architects, etc., but who are not well known among Christians. It would be encouraging for

Christians to know their counterparts, and to know that there are more Christians than within their own small groups to whom they could look for help when needed. There may be a great advantage in having mass goudou reihai in each ward of Tokyo and areas of Kansai, or prefectural wide rallies where Christians can receive a sense of mass support and fellowship. Now may also be a time for us Christians to be more politically involved, as some seem to think Japan is headed for an era wherein the church should be careful to acquire the status of conscientious objector.

This concludes my thoughts on positive answers to the question of why more Japanese do not become Christian. I hope that you may be benefited in taking the time to review the appendices and find some answers in them also.

APPENDIX A

NHK 1981 SURVEY ON JAPANESE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

- 1) One third of the Japanese believe in some definite religion. Those who have a faith are mostly among older age groups (seventies: women-65%, men-57%; sixties: women-61%, men-58%), and more in towns and small cities than in big cities. The younger age group is mostly indifferent towards religion (teens: boys-79%, girls-78%; twenties: boys-85%, girls-79%).
- 2) The largest religious group is Buddhism (27%) the second largest is Shintoism (3%), and the third is Christianity (2%). The Buddhists are mostly found among the women, aged, those of low education, and those in villages (cho-son) and small cities. Shintoism is believed in mostly by those self-employed who are living in cho-son. As for Christians, we find there are slightly more women than men, not many age differences, and proportionately more college educated than in any of the other religions.
- 3) Seventy percent of the people affirmed that they should have a religion or that they had better have a religion, while only 1% stated that there should be no religion. The older people get the more they become affirmative about religion (teens: boys-57%, girls-62%; twenties: men-54%, women-61%; thirties: men-63%, women-69%; forties: men-72%, women-77%; fifties: men-86%, women-81%; sixties: men-90%, women-85%; over-seventies: men-84%, women-81%). The reasons given for the necessity of religion were mainly because, as 66% of the people said, "Religion provides spiritual support and comfort which are vital for human beings to live." This is followed by 45% who said that religion teaches morality which the society requires.
- 4) When people were asked about the necessity for faith, 50% replied that faith is necessary. Again there was a higher number among the aged (fifties-63%; sixties-75%; over-seventies-76%). One interesting outcome was that teenage girls showed more concern about faith (37%) than teenage boys (25%) and people in their twenties (women-33%, men-29%). This correlates with the interest shown toward Christianity by teenage girls (37%).
- 5) It is said that Japanese have an allergy toward religion and so the question was asked, "What sort of images do you have toward religion?" The results are as follows:

Younger	Older
Restriction	Free
Dark	Bright
Old-fashioned	A little old-fashioned
Have nothing to do with	Intimate one

The image of one-third of the people about religion was expressed in the word "serene."

- 6) More than sixty percent showed the most friendliness (familiarity or intimacy) toward Buddhism; more young people showed this attitude than those who claimed a faith in Buddhism (teens: boys-58%, girls-50%; twenties: men-53%, women-54%; thirties: men-53%, women-56%; forties: men-59%, women-65%; fifties: men-75%, women-77%; sixties: men-77%, women-80%; over-seventies: men-80%, women

Those who feel most friendly or familiar to Shintoism were about 20%, and this percent doesn't change much among age groups. As for Christianity, the number of people who expressed friendliness or familiarity was eight times as many as the number of self-claimed Christians. In the different age groups there was more friendliness shown toward

Christianity among the youth, and the interest factor dropped drastically in the older groups (teens: boys-22%, girls-37%; twenties: men-16%, women-17%; thirties: men-10%, women-16%; forties: men-8%, women-13%; fifties: men-6%, women-8%; sixties: men-6%, women-3%; overseventies: men-3%, women-8%).

More than twenty percent of the people have no feeling of friendliness or intimacy toward any religion; in this group there are more men than women, more educated, and more in urban areas than in the rural areas.

- 7) Concerning the basis of religious belief, the question was asked whether people believed in the existence of gods) or Buddha. To this question, more than twenty percent stated their firm belief in god or Buddha, and another 15% think gods) might exist. An interesting result is that here again there is a high percentage of firm believers among teenagers. Among those who confessed their religious faith, and at the same time affirmed the existence of God (gods), the Christians showed the highest percent (81%) followed by the Shintoists (71%) and the Buddhists (66%) and in this case, the existence of Buddha.
- 8) More than half the people are still very much concerned with o-higara (lucky days) and engi (omen) although many of them may be thought to be mere superstitions.
- 9) About sixty percent of the people are feeling deep spiritual ties with the ancestors. The percentage rises gradually according to the age group (teens: boys-22%, girls-30%; twenties: men-33%, women-34%; thirties: men-45%, women-55%; forties: men-61%, women-68%; fifties: men-76%, women-83%; sixties: men-84%, women-85%; over-seventies men-87%, women-86%)

As for Shinto home shrines (kamidana) and Buddhist altars (butsudan) where the ancestors' posthumous tablets are placed, 45% of the people have both at home; 15% have only shrines, and 16% have only altars.

- 10) More than half of the people make a New Year's visit (hatsumoude) to shrines and temples. There is not much difference concerning sex, age, academic level or locality in this. Therefore, hatsumoude may be labeled as a national observance which may have neither theological nor dogmatic significance.
- 11) Science is not almighty; 73% of the people replied that they are convinced of this. This reply was more conspicuous among those who are well educated, and who reside in big cities such as Tokyo or Osaka. Furthermore, more than one out of four thinks that religion has power which could surpass science; 27% of the people think religion has power to make things occur which science says is impossible.
- 12) Eighty percent of the people recognize that there are many people who are only concerned about themselves and who are indifferent about others. Likewise, the same number of people think that now is the time that monetary and material matters are valued more and spiritual wholesomeness is neglected, though 92% showed their content with being born in Japan.
- 13) Though they showed some critical view on the present social situation in Japan, nearly 60% of the people think that private life should not be sacrificed, even if this may contribute to the welfare and wellbeing of society and the nation. It should be mentioned that only men over sixty and women over seventy think social and national priorities should be considered over private interests.
- 14) Eighty percent of the people agreed that their livelihood in the past was materially poor, but their life was affluent in the heart. They think that Japanese traditions and customs should be revalued. This shows a definite turning point in the Japanese post-war history, as people seem to be getting out of the critical period in which everything that took place during the pre-war years was wrong. They are also getting over the inferiority complex once acquired by the defeat in the last war.

How can all these facts be used in the church building strategies?

APPENDIX H

THE E-TO ALMANAC: GUIDE TO JAPANESE LIFE

Japan officially adopted the Western (Gregorian) calendar to take effect from January 1, 1873 (Meiji 5) as part of its modernization policy--but also to avoid having to pay civil workers for thirteen months in 1873 (the old calendar would have required an extra month that year, a periodic measure to adjust to solar cycles). The old Japanese calendar, originally adopted from China (A. D. 861) was coordinated with both lunar and solar cycles and thus was technically a lunisolar

calendar, not a "lunar" calendar (as it is usually but mistakenly called).

The old calendar (kyuureki) was closely related to farming and was regularly used for daily life, for to the technical calendar were added many notations for predicting fortunes, good and bad, for days, years, seasons directions, and the like, to produce an almanac (guchuureki, "annotated calendar"). Most of these notations came from the realm of Chinese divination, though additions and alterations were made in Japan. These almanacs still sell by the millions each year in Japan and are used for making decisions-whether seriously or "just to be on the safe side." Brief explanations of some key features follow.

Three main elements: JIKKAN (1), ten celestial stems (originally ten-day units, three-in a month ; JUNISHI (2), twelve terrestrial branches (twelve months); IN-YO GOGYOU (3), Yin-Yang and Five Phases (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water).

The ten stems were each assigned one phase in both its Yang (e, "elder brother," ascending) and Yin (to, "younger brother," declining) aspects, giving the name "E-to almanac." The Wood-Yang stem, for instance, is kinoe; the Wood-Yin stem, kinoto.

The twelve branches were also correlated to phases (Earth to four branches; other phases, two branches each). Each branch had, as well, an assigned animal (rat, ox, tiger, etc.): as related to hours of the day, still evident in the terms gozen (4) ("before the ox," A.M.) and go go (5) ("after the ox," P.M.); source, too, of designations such as "Year of the Rat," etc. All this was organized into a sexagenary (60-unit) cycle by overlapping the ten stems six times with the twelve branches, allowing a fourfold determination (Yin/Yang plus Phase/Phase) for each year's (or day's) prospects. The stem/branch combination could be agreeable (e.g., Wood-Water, for Water "produces" Wood) or conflicting (e.g., Wood-Earth, for Wood "conquers" Earth) Particularly ominous are double-phase years of the same phase (e.g., Metal-Metal, for Metal "fills heaven and earth and makes everything cold, including human hearts"), though worse when the phase is in its Yin aspect (58th year), instead of its Yang aspect (57th).

The sexagenary cycle applies also to days of the year, so there are sen-nichi (6) (selected days) which have special Yin/Yang--stem/branch characteristics. Examples:

Ten'ichi tenjo (7) ("Lord of heaven ascends to highest heaven"); sixteen days from the 30th to the 45th day in the 60-day cycle; good fortune, no mishaps.

Hassen (8): twelve-day period (49th to 60th day) with eight days having double-phase combination, such as Water-Water (49th) and Wood-Wood (51st) of "over-leaning" condition; either fortune or misfortune tend to increase.

Jippougure (9): ten-day period (20th to 30th day) with eight days of conflicting double-phase condition, such as Wood-Metal (21st) and Fire-Water (24th); inappropriate for negotiations and transactions (exchange of gifts, marriage, moving, monetary exchange, etc.).

An overlapping scheme divided the year into twenty-four fortnightly periods, sekki (10), of fifteen days each; each season had six sekki roughly approximating sthanging meteorological conditions. Each sekki, in turn, had three kou (11) (five-day units), and the word for "climate," kikou (12), combines sekki and kou.

Some "miscellaneous periods" (zassetsu (13) mark key times among the sekki. Examples:

Setsubun (14) (Feb. 2: originally a day before each sekki begins, now indicates the beginning of spring, Risshun (15) (one of the fortnightly periods).

Hachi juuhachiya (16) (May 2 : 88th day after Risshun; appropriate for planting seeds i.e., end of frost season),

Nihyakutouka (17) (Sept. 1): 210th day after Risshun; danger of typhoons damaging flowering rice plants.

Others include Nyuubai (18) (June 11, advent of the rainy season); Hangeshou (19) (11th day after geshou, summer solstice; rainy season ends, rice sprouts appear; July 2).

	(4) 午前	(8) 八尊	(12) 元候	(16) 八十八夜
(1) 十干	(5) 千役	(9) 十方暮	(13) 雑節	(17) 二百十日
(2) 十支	(6) 逢日	(10) 節季	(14) 節分	(18) 入梅
(3) 陰陽五行	(7) 天-天上	(11) 候	(15) 立春	(19) 半夏生

MOUNT FUJI EVANGELIZATION

A Closing Sermon by John W. Graybill

It seems every year I have the same experiences that is, when I receive the Hayama information in November, the program always looks good, so I send in my registration fee. However, when January 2 or 3 comes around, it seems I get lazy and choose rather to stay at home. But, having paid my fee, I drag myself to this lovely place of Amagi Sansou and again this year, when it comes time to leave, I'm very grateful that I attended. This has been another wonderful conference, and I want to thank you also for attending.

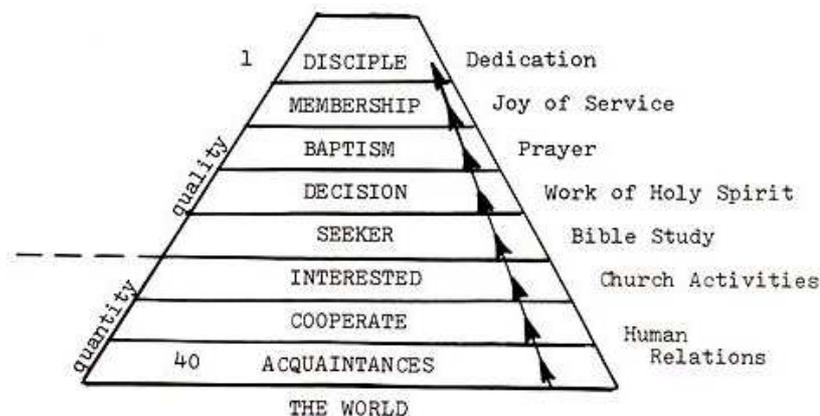
Whenever I attend conferences, seminars, and workshops, I always try to find one or several thoughts which I wish to keep in memory and use in my ministry from here on. This conference was no exception. From the very first opening message of Oliver Bergh, we were reminded that "we have never been so close to the Lord that we can't come closer." This statement from John Young's paper sticks with me, "The uniqueness of Christianity is a complete break with those objects which were the very symbols of the spirits of the dead."

Carl Beck's paper reminded us that " ..the church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning," and Notto Thelle skillfully challenged us to remember that when we speak, we must consider three areas of culture: 1) that of the listener, 2) of the speaker (missionary), and 3) the Bible. Our Japanese guest speaker did an excellent job of pinpointing four words to suggest why the Japanese people can't easily become Christians. Mr. Kiyoshi Kabira listed these as ...intellectualism, urbanism, foreignness, and individualism."

We all learned much from the three testimonies of contextualization. Clark Offner suggested seven ideas which he has tried successfully, while William Elder suggested that in his ministry he does not try to seek a situation but rather relate to it as it comes up. And from Kyushu, Frederic Sprunger shared six very helpful principles which he has tried to follow in his experimentation.

To add to all this wealth of information we have heard, Patrick McElligott opened his heart to us and stressed that through Japanese literature these people are moved emotionally more than by any other thing. And, as always, Joe Gooden came through with challenging evening devotions to "keep a burning heart" for the Lord, while Philip Kinley, in morning meditations, reminded us, "What we do for the Lord depends on what we are in the Lord."

Brethren, what more can I add in this closing message? Briefly, let me state that last summer, in the June Kyoto Conference on Evangelism, I was in a workshop with an Evangelical Free pastor and he testified to the fact that in his congregation baptism does not automatically give church membership; one must go through a process and, if qualified, is admitted to church membership in a separate welcoming service. Since that time I have given this thought much consideration, and I, too, have come up with an eight-step process which I am trying to use in our new evangelistic thrust in Nagoya.



Using the shape of Mt. Fuji, we begin at the base which represents the world and the masses of people without Jesus; from this group we get our acquaintances. These are the people whom we know by face, and perhaps by name, within our community; and from these many faces we are able to get some to cooperate with us in evangelism. That is, they will help us to find a suitable meeting place and permit us to put posters on their block walls. We can pitch a tent on their unused lots for tokuden or perhaps, till folks get saved, they may help in playing the piano, et c. for reihai. From this group we get our interested people who want to come to us for English classes, knitting, music, sports, cooking, Ikebana, and all kinds of interesting things on the hobby, or intellectual, level of fellowship. This is good but must not stop here. We must go on to the seeker bracket where they are interested enough in Christianity to buy their own Bibles, come to special evangelistic meetings, occasionally attend worship services, or attend a Bible class in Japanese. As time continues, these seekers will make a decision which would require a repenting of their sins, accepting Christ as Savior, attending worship regularly, and beginning preparation for water baptism. Baptism would follow which is their entrance into the spiritual body of Christ (I Cor. 12,13) and a life commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Probably several months later, membership into the local visible church body would take place in a separate ceremony, with vows to be faithful to the church rules and practices, thereby forming the core group of active witnesses. Through special training sessions and experience, discipleship would be achieved and spiritual-reproducing believers, who are taught, trained, and equipped as soul-winners, will result.

I am the first one to admit that we face a big problem in getting the people to move upward in our Fuji-san diagram but, if we do the following, I believe we can experience some measure of success. At least I'm in the process of trying it.

Acquaintances are gained through human relationships, by taking time to listen, to understand, to love, and to feel the pain of the other person. The Bible says that if we want friends, we must be friendly. How well I remember our first tent meeting 23 years ago in Nagato, Yamaguchi-ken, when Kogo Sensei from J.E.B. Seminary was our evangelist for fifteen nights. One night, while eating watermelon in our kitchen after the service, he said to me, "Graybill Sensei, remember this. Whenever you see a new face in your Sunday morning worship you can almost always assume that person has a problem and is seeking friendship, a listening ear, and not to hear you preach a sermon." This is how we gain friends who will cooperate with us.

We gain interested People through church activities. Usually, the more activities a church sponsors, the more interested people will become. Of course, not for salvation yet, but for cultural or intellectual reasons, or just as a hobby to pass the time as many Japanese wives who live in high-rise apartments have. Thus, if possible, the church should be used each day of the week for all kinds of activities to draw in the folk through interest groups.

But that is not enough and it may not stop there. We must lead these interested folk into some kind of systematic Bible study where they are introduced to Jesus. This is crucial. If this link is weak, the chain will break, and there will be no spiritual progress upward in our climb to the top.

How well I remember ten years or more ago, my dear friend from Kyushu, Peter Voran, on his way back to the States and stopping over in my Tokyo house, said to me, "John, as I look back at my missionary career some twenty years ago, I am completely amazed at how many people were saved those years. I could not speak good Japanese; I knew little about Japanese culture, thinking, customs of these wonderful people, but in my many limitations, I was forced to pray, 'Lord, I cannot do this work. You must do it by your Holy Spirit or else it will fail.' And to my surprise, many were converted, probably more than in recent years when I could relate in a better way." Brethren, this is the secret to our success or failure in church planting. Through prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit, decisions will be made from the group of seekers who come to us for diligent Bible study.

Then, as we Christian workers demonstrate the joy of service and personal dedication to the cause and work of Christ in this land, the Japanese Christians will follow our example. As Patrick stated so well just within the last hour, "Much of our preaching is explanation of the truth, but not demonstration of the truth." May God help us.

In conclusion, may I suggest that we need both quantity and quality in our church planting ministries. As a student at Fuller School of World Mission in church growth studies, I am not ashamed to admit that I'm concerned about numbers, about quantity in our church witness. If we have few acquaintances, we will have very, very few disciples coming out at the top of our diagram. On the contrary, following the Biblical principle of "sowing and reaping," if we have hundreds of acquaintances coming into our lives and church witness at the base, we will see more coming out at the top in discipleship. I have no proven theory, but from these twenty-five years of experience, I have come to the conclusion that for every forty friends the church or I have, only one will become-a reproducing disciple for the Lord. We need quantity and top-notch quality in our Japanese churches. '

With this introduction, we come to our text as found in John 12:32, being the words of Jesus, himself, as follows: "And if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto myself." This is the New Year's verse that the Lord has given to me for 1983, and you will notice it consists of two parts. First, it is our responsibility to exalt the Christ. May I suggest two ways in which this may be accomplished 1) By our theology and 2) by our lifestyle and daily testimony. Let's look briefly at each one of these.

Our concept of the Savior and our Christology is very important in leading people upward in our pictured diagram. I refer you to the book of Colossians, Chapter 2, verses 9 and 10, which read as follows: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given the fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority (NIV)." Brethren, we must preach that Christ is God! This is what we believe and teach. Many Japanese tell me that Christ Jesus probably is a god, one of the thousands, they say; but I cannot accept this and neither can you. Look quickly at Chapter I of Colossians and you will see that: a) Christ is the image of the invisible God, vs. 15. b) Christ is the Creator of the world, vs. 16-17. c) Christ is the Head of the Church, vs. 18. d) Christ is the Reconciler of all things, vs. 20. e) Christ is the Savior of the world, vs. 21-22. Gentlemen, this is the Christ we preach!

In the second place, by our lifestyle and daily testimony, we exalt the Christ. Look at Col. 1:27, "Christ in you." This is through which is usually more effective than our preaching and doctrine. It is more difficult, but the Bible teaches us that for Christ to truly be living in our hearts, at least three things are necessary: a) We need a new life from above, Col, 3:1-3. b) This is a walk of faith, Eph, 3:17. c) In accordance to our obedience, I John 3:24. As we develop in our Christian life, we will gradually be able to do what Col. 3:17 tells us to do: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Thus brethren, what should our attitude be? Look at verses 23 and 24 of this same chapter: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for your mission(men), since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ .you are serving."

And finally, it is Christ's responsibility to draw all men unto himself. Why do we so often see such little results in Japan? It seems we are seeking for methods, but God says I'm seeking for men who will exalt my Son, the Lord Jesus; and if this is done by us, he will draw men unto himself, our churches will grow, and this nation will be won for Christ.