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Hayama Missionary Seminar

*Heisei: A New Era or more
of the same?*

Missiological Issues in the '90s

Editors:

Robert Lee

Barry L. Ross

31st Hayama Annual Report

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Introduction

A new Era or more of the Same?

The year 1990 ushers in not only a new decade but also the final decade before the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the third millennium A.D. Even before the first of the year, mission journals, conferences and seminars anticipated this calendrical change with special issues, articles, and meetings. Although some scholars have questioned the historical significance of marking change in terms of the even units of ten, a hundred or a thousand years, others have pointed out the meaningfulness of speaking about the decades of the '60s and the '70s and of the centuries, such as the 16th and the 19th. Also, as the first millennium was coming to an end, historians noted the rapid rise of apocalyptic speculation regard-ing the imminent return of Christ. As we enter the last decade of the second millennium, we again hear increasingly similar speculations in Christian circles, in a new "new religion," the Mahikari, described in Richard Young's paper in this *Hayama Report*, and in the inauguration of the A.D. 2000 evangelism movement.

The year 1990 also nearly coincides with the beginning of a new imperial era in Japanese history. At the 1989 Hayama Seminar, entitled "Showa, X-Day and Beyond," "X-Day" arrived on the morning of the last day of the seminar; and the "Beyond" became the first day of the new Japanese era of *Heisei*. Already at that seminar some questioned the historical significance of the impending era name change. Arguments were presented regarding the "eternal" character of the imperial symbol, "the Emperor system," and its related "unchanging" social structure. The 1990 Hayama Seminar continued by asking, "Does *Heisei* represent a new era, or is it more of the same?" It set the discussion into several progressively wider perspectives - the Japanese evangelical church, the Japanese reli-gious world, and the international religious world

- to examine the missiological issues of the last decade of the second millennium.

As expected, the broad scope of the seminar theme evoked diverse papers. From the narrow focus of the church in Japan, Joshua Tsutada - with fourteen years of missionary experience in India, now the president of a theological college dedicated to pastoral and missionary training, and the current chairman of Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA), the Asian branch of World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) - in his paper immediately erased the question mark in the seminar theme, transforming it to *Heisei* a new era. . .! He presented the emergence of the triumphant (evangelical) church in Japan, a church chosen and poised to fulfill its missionary role in Asia and the world, concluding with, "Great days are ahead of us."

From the broadest or international perspective, Johannes Aagaard - professor of missiology and ecumenics at the University of Aarhus in Denmark and founder of the Dialog Center International (DCI), also headquartered in Aarhus - in his paper, likewise took an affirmative stance on the seminar theme by announcing the "New Age," represented by an international mass youth movement on a pilgrimage in Asian countries. Aagaard presented a militant critique of the religion of the New Age and introduced a new missionary community, the DCI, who, too, are embarked on an international pilgrimage to encounter in dialogue the pilgrims of the New Age religions.

Caught between a triumphant theology and a militant missiology, Richard Young, a JNAC missionary, professor of religion and specialist in Indian religion and the new "new religions" of Japan - presented a "descriptive" paper on the neo-new Japanese religion, Mahikari, a paper which at the same time questioned the con-ventional understanding of the modern era - and in that sense did preserve the question mark on the seminar theme: A new era. . .?

Just as the discernment of the historical age varied sharply, the three papers also evaluated the contemporary religious scene differently. Tsutada, using language from the Old Testament regarding

the rise and fall of nations, saw in an analogous way the rise of the East and the fall of the West in the shift of the center of divine activity, the *missio dei*. Aagaard, in sharp disagreement, saw what Tsutada called the "de-westernization" of the local churches as an "incredible immobilization of the world-wide mission of the church." Young described the efficacy of the new "new religions," not only in Japan but also internationally, to raise doubts of the validity of western scientific modernity and the universality of Christianity.

On the major missiological issues of the '90s, the assessment of the three papers took strikingly different directions. Tsutada saw the new era in terms of a "crisis," which in Japanese means both danger and opportunity. For Tsutada, God has led the Japanese church to the threshold of a great opportunity (and danger) to exercise leader-ship in the expansion of the Kingdom of God, in particular in Asia. Aagaard saw the urgent need for a new missiology - an "INTER-missiology" - to complete the missionary task that was evaded by the past generation. To that end he launched the DCI, for "doing missio-logy is as important. . .as doing theology." Young saw that the contradictory issues raised by his study of the efficacy of "spirits" and "magic" in our modern scientific age required a fundamental re-evaluation of our understanding of religion, which has been distorted by a western Christian bias.

Such diverse approaches to the seminar theme, with such different subject matter, would appear difficult to unify or even to relate. To try to unify or to generalize from these papers might falsify the current reality since these papers need to be accepted as indicative of the contemporary status of missiological thinking and practice. However, in the several panel discussions involving the guest speakers, who talked among themselves and then with the seminar participants, the dynamic interaction and occasional confrontation clearly demonstrated the relevancy of these papers. The discussions generated more animation and heat than has been seen at recent Hayama Seminars. New (and memorable) vocabulary was created for "hot" ("blood-filled") and "cool" ("bloodless liberals") to depict

different theological perspectives. But the heat generated proved that con-ventional wisdom was being challenged and new ideas were being appropriated.

This year's *Hayama Report* also features the fine Bible studies on the book of Proverbs by Paul Overland, who contributed much to the worship portion of the seminar. In addition, the 1990 *Hayama Report* remembers the passing of Gordon Chapman, one of the founders, and of Ferd Ediger, a faithful contributor, as well as the regular participants who are now retiring or leaving Japan.

April 10, 1991

"Editors"

***Heisei*: A New Era in the Japanese Church?**

**by Joshua
Tadashi
Tsutada¹**

***Heisei* in the Historical Perspective**

To understand the significance of the present *Heisei* era, we must view it from the perspective of Japanese church history. For purposes of this paper we may divide this history into two major

¹President, Immanuel Bible Training College. Pastor, Immanuel College Church, Yokohama, and ordained in the Immanuel General Mission of Japan. He is presently the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Evangelical Association of Asia. Dr. Tsutada's experience outside of Japan is extensive. He was a missionary to India for 17 years. His academic training includes graduate degrees from Union Biblical Seminary, India, and the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

periods. The first is from the time of the introduction of Christianity into Japan to just before World War II. The second is from the end of the war until the present. We will name these periods "before 1945" and "after 1945."

Before 1945: Three occasions when Japan was challenged by Christianity.

Tomonobu Yanagida² maintains that Japan has had in the past three points of confrontation from outside, which in turn became challenges for her to reject or accept Christianity into her heart.

In 1543 the first challenge came to Japan through three Portuguese who landed with guns in the southernmost island of Tanegashima. Six years later, in 1549, Francisco de Xavier, a Jesuit of the Roman Catholic Church, came to Kagoshima to begin the first missionary activity there.

The Japanese response to this first challenge, coming thirty-eight years after the challenge was first given, was a total ban against Christian missionaries, issued in 1587 by Hideyoshi Toyotomi.

During the years 1853-54, American Fleet Commander, Matthew Calbraith Perry brought his fleet to Uraga Port. Japan's political response, after a period of over 200 years of seclusion (1641-1854), was to open herself to the outside world.

Though he used force, Commander Perry intended to bring the Kingdom of God into Japan, which he believed was necessary for the good of the nation. Japan's spiritual response to this challenge was the proclamation of the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890. In essence, this was a rejection of Christianity and an imposition of Shintoistic ideology coupled with the moral teachings of Confucianism.

The third challenge came to Japan immediately after the Second World War, **in 1945**, with General Douglas MacArthur, who led the nation into a new era of democracy. At the same time, Christians and churches from all around the world extended their hands to help the churches in Japan. Help in the form of goods and

²Tomonobu Yanagida, *Nihon Kirisutokyo Shi (History of Christianity in Japan)*.

personnel poured in from everywhere. For example, in October, 1945, only two months after the end of the war, the Bible Society of the United States of America sent in 2.5 million copies of the Bible. Four delegates came from the Protestant churches in America, promising total cooperation for the restoration of the church in Japan.

In that period just after the war, the foundation for the expansion of Christianity in Japan was laid in three forms. The first was the Kyodan and the denominations that came out of the Kyodan. The second was the denominations and churches newly formed by the Japanese themselves. The third was those churches and denominations newly established by the missionaries who came after the war.

Yanagida says that the response to this post-war challenge is yet to be seen. He may be right. The people of Japan have been outwardly liberated from all the old chains which appeared before the war in various forms, such as Emperor worship, the militant Shinto regime and all the other evils which came thereof.

This meant, however, that they were given freedom to make a choice. And this choice still remains ours today. We have, as I see it, three possible choices. One is to turn back to the old way of Shintoism, with the whole nation again becoming the people of the Emperor-god. The second is to choose the so-called new way of atheistic, agnostic and humanistic materialism. The third is to choose the way of the Gospel, the way of Jesus Christ. Now, forty-five years after the War, we are in a new era called *Heisei*, and the choice has not yet been made. However, it has to be made soon. Today we need to look at this new era, *Heisei*, from this perspective.

After 1945: Three steps in the growth of Evangelical Christianity in Japan.

Since the end of World War II up until the present, the Christian church in Japan has trod a long period of forty-five years. This period is, in a special way, important for understanding the

coming years of the *Heisei* era. We can analyze this period in the following three ways.

Rev. Akira Izuta, Board Chairman of the Japan Evangelical Association, divides this period into five categories. The first, 1945 to 1954, the Period of Restoration; the second, 1955 to 1964, the Period of Development; the third, 1965 to 1974, the Period of Confusion; the fourth, 1975 to 1984, the Period of Growth; the fifth, 1985 to the present, the Period of Maturity.³

Mr. Motoyoshi Tako, senior editor of *Kurisuchan Shimibun* (*Christian Newspaper*), because of his own conversion at the time of the 1967 Tokyo Billy Graham Crusade, begins his analysis of the postwar period from 1967. He gives four divisions.

1967-1974. This period begins with the first (1967) Tokyo Billy Graham Crusade, an event which in many ways was a turning point for Christianity and the churches in Japan. The period that followed was a time when the churches were awakened to the need for interdenominational cooperation for evangelization. Many evangelistic movements were born, putting forth considerable effort to mobilize the Christians of Japan. I mention here two examples: One was the Federation of Christian Laymen; a second was *Senkyo No Tsudoi*, united missionary campaigns in various parts of Japan by Rev. Akira Hatori and his colleagues. This latter was new in the history of the Church in Japan, for until then local churches and denominations had been functioning independently.

1974-1980. This period begins with the first Japan Congress on Evangelism. A new realization that the evangelization of Japan ought to be done in a church-centered way was recognized. The importance of the local churches was emphasized. Congresses on evangelism were held in different areas of Japan. Some of the movements, such as Evangelism in Depth and other crusades, became smaller in size so that they could be rooted more deeply into the churches.

³Akira Izuta, *Nihon no Fukuinha (The Evangelicals of Japan)*, Tokyo: Japan Evangelical Association, 1989.

1980-1986. This period begins with the second (1980) Japan Billy Graham Crusade. This crusade took place not only in Tokyo but in other major cities of Japan, including Okinawa, Fukuoka and Nagoya. This method of holding crusades in several cities in a way expressed the characteristics of this period, which again stressed the importance of the local areas and the churches therein. In this period, furthermore, in many areas, city-wide and province-wide cooperative Christmas meetings were held. Although the ideology of such cooperation was well accepted, there was weakness in actual implementation. However, this period ended with the reconstruction of the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA) in June, 1986. This reconstruction served as a point of consolidation in the church-centered approach for advancing Christianity in Japan.

1986-to the present. With the reformed JEA new days opened in Japan. Being consolidated within as the church of Jesus Christ in Japan, the church started looking outward and casting her eyes to the world. The churches now have realized the significance of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and the role that the Japanese church should take. In other words, the Japanese church has realized that she is indeed a member of the church around the world, an integral part of the global church. With the setting up of five commissions in JEA, such as the Commission of International Relationships, the Commission of World Relief, JEA has started extending its arms of fellowship and cooperation towards the churches worldwide. The Commission of International Relationships has extended its arms to be identified with and to work hand-in-hand with the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA) and the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), though on a small scale now but to the maximum possible in the future. The commission of world relief has begun functioning according to its stated purpose, cooperating with such groups as World Vision, Food for the Hungry International, and World Relief International.

My own analysis of the post-war period to the present sees three stages of growth of Christianity in Japan.

1945-1967. In this period there were two clear polarizations of churches and Christianity in Japan. The first, a major effect of the Second World War, was a distinct polarization of liberals and evangelicals. The war polarized the church in Japan in a way similar to what the emperor worship of the Roman Empire did to the early church in the period of persecution. With the coming into Japan of many liberally oriented missionaries immediately after the War, the church of the liberal trend grew strong. During this period liberal Christianity was the leading figure of the church in Japan, while evangelicals remained in the background. Liberalism, with its presentation of humanistic, materialistic and cultural content, was well accepted by the people of Japan, who were disillusioned with the old systems and teachings. Especially with respect to the belief that the Emperor was their god, they had lost the core of their trust which they held during the war.

A weakness of the evangelicals was that they stayed away from anything that appeared humanistic, materialistic or cultural, and, instead, kept to evangelizing "the souls." This may have been because of overreaction to the approach of liberalism. Because evangelicals presented the Gospel in simple, straightforward preaching, the souls they won became firm and sure in their faith. Yet, as for effect on society and the nation in general, the evangelicals did not appear effective.

This situation continued up to 1967 when the evangelicals, for the first time in the post-war period, united to conduct the Tokyo Billy Graham Crusade. The crusade executive director⁴ made it very clear when he accepted this position of responsibility that no one from the liberal churches should be appointed to responsible positions on the crusade committee. This became a challenge to both evangelicals and liberals. The result was great in every way, visible and invisible. The greatest auditorium in Tokyo, the Budokan, was full every night for nine days. The Korakuen Baseball Stadium, the place of the final meeting, overflowed with

⁴The Executive Director was Dr. David T. Tsutada, father of the author of this paper, founder of Immanuel General Mission, Japan (ed.).

people. The huge financial need was not only met, but there was enough balance to give a contribution to the Billy Graham Crusade organization. The conversion rate was reported to be the highest among the worldwide crusades up to that time.

This event gave evangelical churches, even in the most remote localities, a renewed sense of confidence in their faith. Some of the smaller churches, hidden from view in the side streets, started putting up large signboards with brush written advertisements of their Sunday morning services at the foremost places on the main streets.

With this event, the evangelical pastors and church leaders became conscious of a new sense of unity and oneness in Christ among the evangelical churches. Timidity, hesitation, reservation and a passive attitude which had existed before vanished away. This even brought to a full stop the long period when the liberals took the lead in Japan.

1968-1986. This period begins with the first formation of the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA) in 1968 and closes with its reconstruction and reformation in 1986. The basic reason for the reformation and reconstruction of JEA could be stated as follows:

It was a great event when the first JEA was formed with three charter members: Japan Evangelical Fellowship (JEF), Japan Protestant Conference (JPC), and Japan Evangelical Missionary Association (JEMA). Because membership in JEA was then only through one of these three organizations, for eighteen years there was dissatisfaction that not all the evangelical churches were represented in/by JEA. Therefore many churches not related to any of the three charter members could not become members of JEA. To rectify this imbalance of representation, the reconstruction of JEA took place in 1986. By completely canceling the three-charter-member-system, a new system of membership was established. Now, full membership is given to a denominational unit or a unit consisting of a group of independent churches. Para-church organizations join as associate members.

This reconstructed JEA now represents most of the evangelical churches in Japan. It provides a foundation for mutual fellowship, cooperation and work in Christ Jesus - a real spiritual unity in

diversity. This JEA, by God's grace, has become an example to the churches of other nations not only in Asia, but throughout the world.

1986-present. The first year of *Heisei* is the first year of the new JEA age. Therefore, we can get a good picture of the consolidation of the evangelical churches, and at the same time see clearly the direction that JEA is taking in the future.

Our perspective of the history of the church in Japan has helped our understanding of the location of the *Heisei* era in the work and life of the church in Japan today. The importance and significance of this *Heisei* era in relation to the Church will be further explored in the following sections of this paper.

***Heisei* in the Global Perspective:**

Is "History" "His Story?"

There is a well-known play on words, saying that "History is His story." In other words, history is the story of God's actions on earth. But is this so? I believe so. From the biblical view throughout both the Old and New Testaments, and throughout the history of the Christian church, we see this truth not as a play on words, but as reality. Nations rise and fall. A people arrives on the scene today with power but disappears from the scene tomorrow. History moves on. But above all earthly authorities and powers, we know there is the Authority on the throne high above, as Isaiah saw (Isa. 6:1ff).

What is God doing all through history? If what the Christians are told from the Bible and what they know by faith is true, that the ultimate purpose of God in human history is the Gospel and its penetration to the uttermost parts of the world is true, then we may see God as a Great Capitalist God who looks around the different parts of the world at each stage of history and grants wealth, power and other blessings to the people who do his work of mission. I do not want to appear dogmatic on this because God does, indeed,

have many different ways of carrying out his task throughout history.

But was it not the time when Great Britain was truly great in the world that they were the ones carrying out the missionary task of God, perhaps starting at the time of William Carey who opened up the way for the work of the modern missionary? Was it not also the time when they started withdrawing missionaries and mission work that the power of Great Britain started diminishing?

After World War II, did not the United States of America, almost as a whole nation, become a body of missionary works? And did not America indeed become in the eyes of the world a great, first class nation? God was blessing the United States of America, because the American people were carrying out his task.

Presently, I see this materially and culturally blessed Japan with the same eyes. Has not God been preparing this nation to be strong economically in order that the church can carry out God's task of expanding his kingdom and building up the churches of Jesus Christ around the world?

Today the church in Japan is standing at the point of crisis. The Japanese character for crisis consists of two words: danger and opportunity. Japan, and in fact also the church in Japan, must make a choice. If we should fail in making the right choice, with all our wealth and power Japan will become another Sodom and Gomorrah. We then will stand before the Judge and receive judgment for negligence of the privilege and responsibility vested in us by God.

Heisei and the Awakening of the Third World

The *Heisei* era should be looked at in the context of the current movement of the church around the world. There is the undeniable reality of the awakening of the third-world churches. This matter has been talked about for a long time, particularly in the West among the Church Growth people. But now, with the quiet moving of the Holy Spirit around the world, the church in the third world has been awakened. But the question ought to be asked, in what way and to what has the church been awakened? When a small

child is awakened from his sleep, it could be just because his surroundings were noisy. The child has been awakened but he does not know why he has come out of his sleep. He looks around but does not know what to do.

At the early stage of this so-called awakening in the '60s and '70s, it seemed to me that there was much shouting that the churches in the mission fields ought to be self-supporting, self-governing, self-expanding, and that they should contextualize themselves. The poor children around the world woke up all right, but for a while they did not know what it meant to be self-supporting, how to be contextualized, or to be engaged in business and so on. However, almost in parallel to the secular, political and social awakening of the third-world nations, churches in those same nations began to realize what it means to be responsible.

The Spirit of God has worked through different means among the churches so that they may have a real awakening within. He has led them to read the Bible for themselves, to study the biblical truth in it, and to choose for themselves to follow the way of Jesus Christ. This inner awakening has been gradually appearing in many different forms. We shall deal with some of these points later, but one point is to be raised here.

This point is the need to de-westernize the culture of the church. The national churches in different nations have realized that they themselves are branches of the Body of Jesus Christ. They have come to realize that they should and can be a branch connected directly to the Stem, and thereby can draw light and power straight from their own Lord without a mediator other than Jesus, their Lord. Just as a father is necessary for the birth and growth of a child, when the child is grown, the father needs to let the child leave his parents. The need is not only on the child's part to leave the father, but is also the responsibility of the father to leave his child.

The question that remains is: What distinguishes the Gospel in its non-western culture from the culture of western Christendom? There is no time to expound this point here, except to mention that during the latter part of the Showa era, the churches in Japan have

been struggling with this issue, an issue vitally involved in the matter of growth. It seems that the church in Japan, by God's grace, should set an exemplary example on this point for the churches of other nations.

The Japanese Church in the *Heisei* Era: Her New Realization in the Global Context

Just in the past two or three years the church in Japan has opened her eyes to the new reality of her own position in the context of the church around the world. The point of view of the church has been completely reversed. In the past, the understanding of the Church was as if, "In the beginning was my church." Then, around "my church" there are towns and cities which need our outreach. Then again there are wider areas of evangelism and mission, that is, the whole nation. And finally the field of God is to the uttermost parts of the world.

Basically, this idea must have come from Acts 1:8. But the church did not realize that what Jesus was talking about was an order of missionary expansion and not about the structure and mutual relationships of the body of Jesus Christ. The reformation of JEA in 1986 and its inward and outward growth has contributed to the Japanese churches' new realization that "in the beginning was the church around the world." Through contact and relationship with the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia and the World Evangelical Fellowship, together with other movements such as Lausanne, they have come to know afresh that first there is the holy catholic church as the body of Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the church, which is around the world. Then a part of the body is the Asian church, and in that part is the Japanese church. The Japanese church is made up of parts which are the denominations, and finally in the denomination exists "my local church."

This understanding, which the Japanese church has seen in the New Testament, such as in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, now has become reality in the mind of the church in Japan. Now, how to take this into the heart and how to apply this truth to the whole of the church in Japan, internally and externally,

is the challenge that is confronting the church. The entire perspective of each local church should be changed completely, and at the same time, the whole view of the missionary work of the Japanese churches ought to be reviewed. We are at the point where we should return directly to the Word of God, carefully and intently listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in terms of our future direction. If this is done properly, there will be a great outbreak of the power of the Gospel in and through the church in Japan. We are in an exciting age in this era of *Heisei*.

***Heisei* in the Ecclesiological Perspective**

Since the reconstruction and reformation of JEA there has been rapid change in the ecclesiological perspective of the church in Japan. This is seen in three ways.

Church-centered Orientation

The Japanese church has suffered for a long time with no defined understanding of the church as a whole in terms of its being and its doing. In other words, a proper understanding of the whole matter related to the life and work of the church was not understood in the proper order. The life and work of the churches in Japan have been like in the days of the Judges when "everyone did according to what was seen to be good in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6). Each church has not thought of its existence and activities in relation to other parts of the Body. Churches have not thought of their being and doing in terms of their proper roles in mutual relationship. This has been seen often in the areas of missions and evangelism.

This fragmentation of the body of Christ has been caused by the way Christianity came into Japan. Christianity came from the West from two different backgrounds, both of which seemed to have the identical point of weakness.

One background is that of Great Britain and the missionary-minded Christians there. We learn from the history of the church in Great Britain that missionary work started and developed separately from the life of the church proper. The work of mission was carried out by the mission societies that were external to the institutional

church. For example, William Carey, the forerunner of the modern missionary movement of Great Britain and Europe, was ignored by the church. Therefore, he formed a supporting body, a mission society outside the church. This became a pattern for other overseas missionary work.

The second background is that of the United States of America. With pioneering spirit, and an independent, individualistic way of thinking and carrying out matters, the Americans set up different missionary and evangelistic groups, sending missionaries all over the world, including to Japan. This work, in some cases, was supported not by the unit of local churches or denominations but rather by individual Christians.

Based upon a personal concern, interest and burden, the missionaries from these two different backgrounds displayed a strong vitality in their work on their respective fields. Having individualistic ideological backgrounds, however, these missionaries caused a lot of confusion or gave no coordinated thought to ways of doing mission work and evangelism in Japan. However, after the first Tokyo Billy Graham Crusade in 1967, there has been a gradual crystallization of the streams of church existence and activity into one stream. It has become clear that the whole of Christian activities and mission work ought to be related in such a way that the church is the center of the whole, and furthermore that increasingly the church as the Body of Jesus Christ ought to be under its Head, Jesus Himself.

There have been some factors which led to this realization. One was the presence of "para-church" organizations. They have been actively working out their own convictions literally "around or beside the churches," some of them not quite vitally related to the church. A second factor was certain international movements such as the Lausanne movement. While churches in Japan were not conscious of their own place of existence and relationship to such movements, they have been nevertheless pouring out their efforts and contributions in many ways. But it did not take them long for to begin questioning as to whom these movements were responsible, both in Japan and around the world, and what they were effectively

building up in the church. Having this as a background and in light of Scriptural teaching, the church in Japan now has come to the realization that the whole matter can be set right when everything is done having the church at the center.

Now, with this new realization of a church-centered orientation, there are several issues we need to clarify in the future. Some are as follows:

1. The nature of "para-church" organizations: their title, definition and place in relation to the church.
2. Christian movements which have no basis in nor relationship to the church, such as AD 2000 and the Lausanne movement: their significance and their relationship to the church.
3. The liberal churches: their place in relation to the church, if any.
4. The missionary organizations and their missionaries in Japan: their role in Japan and their relationship to the church in Japan.
5. Relief and development work of the church: the theology of giving should be thought through and established.
6. Theology: several vital points in theological issues should be reviewed in the context of the Oriental and Japanese mind and culture.
7. Theological education and ministerial training: the proper set up, curriculum and course should be reviewed.
8. In addition to many other issues such as the above, in the case of Japan, there is one particular point that should be clarified. This is the matter of war crimes. With Shintoism and Emperor worship, Japanese soldiers committed terrible crimes and evil acts throughout Asia. The resolution of this matter is not simple.

There are two dimensions that should be taken into consideration in this whole matter. It is not simply Japan versus other nations in the war, but it was the satanic world versus the Kingdom of God. How to make this clear in the task of reconciliation which relates these two dimensions properly is a

difficult question. Yet it must be resolved in order to bring about a basis for heart-to-heart unity in carrying out mutual endeavors for the Kingdom of God among the Asian nations.

A Church- and a Culture-conscious Approach to Evangelism and Missions.

Paul says in Romans 1:16, "[The Gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." The ultimate goal of the work of the Gospel is that the Gospel, the power of God, reach each soul so that the soul receives the salvation of God. In the two streams of the church, liberal and evangelical, different views and approaches have been taken respectively in expediting the work of the Gospel.

While this Gospel, the power of God, should reach each individual's soul, there is a bridge or a channel, which is called culture. Thus far, both the liberals and evangelicals have been doing their evangelistic works with certain shortcomings.

In carrying out the work of the Gospel, the liberals reached only to the cultural and humanistic levels. Thus they did not bring to each individual the power of God or the power of the Gospel to change the soul. The evangelicals, however, in neglecting culture, went straight to individual "souls" in order to save them. These two approaches are charted as follows:

The liberals:	Gospel + Culture
The evangelicals:	Gospel + Souls

But a new realization of the holistic approach is taking place among the churches in Japan, seen as follows:

Gospel + Culture + Souls

When we talk about culture, we can mean national, family or individual culture. In the cases of Jesus and Paul, they never neglected culture in reaching souls with the power of the Gospel. Jesus, for instance, pointed to the birds in the air or the lilies in the

field to teach the truth of the Kingdom to the common people of his day and place. Paul used illustrations of the armaments and athletic fields and even boxing and gymnasiums to convey the truth of the Gospel according to the culture of his day and place. He says, "To the Jews, I became like a Jew. . .to those under the law I became like one under the law. . .to those not having the law I became like one not having the law. . .to the weak I became weak. . .I have become all things to all men," but he says at each point, "in order to win souls" (1 Cor. 9:20-23, NIV).

With this new realization, if the Church in Japan proceeds on in its proper course, a great fruit-bearing work can be expected.

The Japanese Church in the Realization of her Responsibility in the Global Relationship

With this new realization that the church in Japan belongs to the church worldwide as a branch of the Body of Jesus Christ, the Japanese church began discovering the role that she should take to fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ in her relation to the churches in different parts of the world, particularly in Asia.

It used to be, that when we talked about major cities, to our minds would come cities such as Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kobe, Osaka, or to the north Sendai, Aomori and Sapporo. But nowadays, when we think of major cities in connection with our ministry, names such as Seoul, Taichung, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Manila, Singapore, Jakarta, New Delhi, Karachi, and more come to our minds. In fact, on the desk of the EFA chairman in Yokohama and on the desk of the JEA office in Tokyo, the Fax phones are receiving communications from these Asian cities almost every day, and the Fax messages are going out in reply to the same cities. This is a new day indeed.

From December 4-7, 1989, for the first time in the history of the church in Asia, there was a Kanji [Chinese characters] Area Church Leaders Conference held in Japan. Fifteen top leaders of the church in Korea, nine delegates from the Chinese churches throughout the world, and seventeen Japanese church leaders met together, first in

Tokyo, then in Hakone. This year, 1990, from August 27-31, in Seoul, Korea, there will be a great congress on missions in Asia, the **Asia Missions Congress '90**, sponsored by EFA. Two thousand delegates of the churches throughout Asia are expected, with five hundred observers from non-Asian countries around the world invited. Two hundred seventy-five from Japan are to participate. The purpose of the Congress is three-fold: 1) To review past missionary work up to the present, with a full analysis of all available data, 2) to grasp the total picture of the present status of mission work in Asia, and 3) to find out God's way for us to fulfill the task of missions in Asia from now on.

It is exciting to see that by the work of the Holy Spirit in the coming years of the *Heisei* era, the Asian churches, including the churches of Japan, are joining the great force of the work of the Gospel, work that has thus far been carried largely by the western churches throughout history.

Conclusion

Tomonobu Yanagida (mentioned earlier) talks about our nation of Japan confronting the challenge of Christianity. Facing this challenge, our nation again is standing at another crisis. While we do have an optimistic view of the church in Japan in the *Heisei* era, there are points about which we need to be watchful and points of hopefulness.

Some points of watchfulness:

1. A possible rise of a new tide of Shintoism. We need to recognize that Japan is essentially a pagan nation.
2. Signs of a revival of the traditional Japanese social structure, regarded by some in the form of a mobile [hierarchy].

Some points of hopefulness:

1. A good foundation for the growth of the Church and the development of the task of missions has been prepared already.
2. There are many indications that spiritual revival is anticipated in the prayers of the saints and through the working of the Holy Spirit.

The Key Point

The work of the Gospel has been a personality movement all through history. Quite often the question is asked: Are foreign missionaries still needed in Japan? The answer is clear that if the minister, regardless of the nationality, is qualified as a spiritual leader who is able to bear the task of this personality movement, then he or she is needed. The matter concerns a minister's *being* before his *doing*. Those who are not qualified for spiritual leadership, therefore, are not needed because they do harm rather than good to the church in Japan. The ones whose hearts are cleansed and totally dedicated to the Lord, whose lives are characterized by the total giving out both to God and to the people, are the ones who are very much required in the field here. The matter, therefore, is focused upon the question whether we have such men and women of God in whom the holiness of God in heart and in life is seen. This not only applies to the foreign missionaries, but to the pastors, evangelists and all other Gospel workers in Japan. Isaiah says, "You who bear the vessels of the Lord purify yourselves" (52:11).

I conclude this paper with the prayer that we may find many men and women of God such as this, because only through them is God able to carry out what He desires to do in and through the churches in Japan in the coming years of this *Heisei* era.

Great days are ahead of us!

A Response to

"Heisei: A New Era in the Japanese Church"

Siegfried A. Buss⁵

I wish to commend the Hayama Committee for opening this 1990 seminar with a Japanese speaker. I am especially delighted that Dr. Joshua Tsutada was invited. He is an outstanding evangelical and represents the kind of leadership that will advance the cause of Christ in Japan in the '90s and beyond.

Since nearly half of Dr. Tsutada's presentation dealt with providing a proper historical setting for the *Heisei* Era, I will begin with a few personal observations dealing with Japan's past.

The Past

In his paper, Dr. Tsutada pointed out that Francisco de Xavier had a great impact on Japan when he landed in Kagoshima in 1549. I would further suggest that Xavier's influence is felt in Japan even to this day. During the immediate Post-War Period, the 400th Anniversary of his landing was celebrated in great splendor on a nationwide scale. The year 1949 could be described as a time of Xavier revival. Japanese by the thousands paid homage to relics of the saints which were paraded through the streets of Japan. The propaganda impact of this event gave the Roman Catholic Church in Japan a very strong postwar start, reminding the public of the

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long, historic heritage of the Catholic Church. I witnessed this "Xavier hysteria" as a high school student at St. Joseph, a Catholic school in Yokohama.

Dr. Tsutada touched on the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890. In my review of this period of Japanese history I was again reminded of its extreme complexity. During the late 1890s, a concerted effort was made to "unify ideology." We must keep in mind that this was at a time when nearly 200,000 shrines were completely under government control. Is it not ironic that just a year earlier, in 1889, religious freedom was guaranteed in Article 28, which stated:

Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.

The ambiguity of wording, a technique used widely in international diplomacy today, left the door open to harassment under any pretext.

I would like to suggest that Christianity's greatest opportunity came for Japan at the end of World War II. It is significant that General MacArthur sensed the urgency of the hour when he appealed for 10,000 missionaries. He, of course, was concerned that the post-war spiritual vacuum would be filled with communist ideology. This golden hour of opportunity slipped by without the church taking full advantage of it. In no sense, however, do I mean to minimize the valiant efforts of the first wave of post-war missionaries, nor the efforts of such organizations as the Pocket Testament League or World Vision. But there was too little, too late.

I must differ with our distinguished speaker and suggest that the Japanese people during this period *did make a choice*. They opted for pragmatic materialism while conveniently absorbing into their culture whatever the West had to offer. This is a direction that the post-war generation inherited, refined and "Japanized" to a point of perfection where Japan now has become "Number One." People

often ask why evangelizing Japan is so difficult. Isn't part of the answer to be found here?

I am always fascinated by the way the postwar era has been divided. Rev. Akira Izuta approaches the period from a Japan Evangelical Association perspective; Mr. Tako of the *Kurisuchan Shinbun* (*Christian Newspaper*) classifies history in strictly personal terms in which his encounter with Jesus Christ becomes the pivotal point in post-war history. As for Dr. Tsutada, 1967 is singled out as a year of great importance. I am not disputing the significance of the Billy Graham Tokyo Crusade, but at the same time I cannot help but point out that the Executive Director of the Crusade was none other than Dr. David Tsutada, our speaker's father.

A few years ago I attended an educators' congress. During the workshop hour we were handed a plain piece of paper and asked to draw a world map in just three minutes. As the leader came around checking our maps, he would comment, "I can tell that you are from Australia and that you come from Europe. . .and you must be from North America, and you from Japan." How could he tell? The answer is very simple. Most of us had placed our respective area in the center of our map. (Have you ever watched NHK TV at the end of the day?)

With this, let me look at the postwar era from a missionary perspective. Division by decades is, of course, arbitrary, but I regard the '50s as a decade of sowing. General Douglas MacArthur's call for 10,000 missionaries did not fall on deaf ears. Many who had fought the Japanese in battle returned as soldiers of the Cross. The Far Eastern Gospel Crusade is a classical example. It was a time when land acquisition, compared to today, was a minor problem, and many churches were established. It is especially significant that there was a great influx of evangelical missionaries. Setting aside minor differences, they were prepared to work together to reach Japan for Christ. Such organizations as JCEM and its successor EMAJ bear witness to the resolve of evangelicals. Rev. Reiji Oyama has calculated that at the end of the war the ratio of evangelicals to liberals was twenty-three to one.

(Today evangelicals account for almost 50%.) The majority of the evangelical leadership of today accepted Christ during the '50s, many in English Bible classes.

The '60s by contrast were a decade of growing pains. There was strong anti-American feeling fueled by the Vietnam War. Things improved dramatically in the '70s which I would describe as a decade of consolidation. A very healthy partnership evolved in which missionaries and pastors could work together harmoniously.

The Present

This brings us to the '80's, a decade of reaping. Much has happened in a very short time! Church historians will point to the reorganization of the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA) as the watershed of the post-war era. A welcome consequence was the establishing of long overdue ties with the church at large. This found tangible expression in JEA's joining of both the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA).

Japan's evangelicals also participated in significant conferences and consultations both in Japan and abroad. On the international scene, in the '80's there were Amsterdam I and II (Congress for Itinerant Evangelists), there was the Seoul Prayer Assembly, ALCOE II (Asian Leadership Consultation on Evangelism), the Young Leaders' Consultation, the AD 2000 and Beyond Conference, and Lausanne II in Manila. Dr. Tsutada correctly pointed out the dynamic role the leadership of JEA has come to play. It is quite exciting to note that the voice of Japan's evangelical church is being heard around the world and that the Japanese church is playing a role in shaping the direction of various international organizations, including the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia. There is cause for optimism. There are positive signs of growth. Today there are 6,629 Protestant churches in Japan. That is 800 more than in 1980. In 1950 the figure stood at 2,120. When we consider that the total in 1909 was only 600, we may be tempted to congratulate ourselves. But there is cause for sober reflection. The Japan Church Growth Institute has calculated that if the number of churches continue to

grow at the same rate as in the past five years, 1.68 percent per annum, there will be only 8,171 churches in the year 2000. If we take seriously the goal of reaching 10 million Japanese for Christ by the year 2000, 50,000 churches will be needed! Perhaps Okinawa, not Tokyo, will set the pace. Presently, four percent in Okinawa are Christian and the churches are enthusiastically working towards a target of ten percent.

What is JEA's role? It could be described as being that of a catalyst. JEA also has become a voice for Japan's evangelicals. Already, 1,500 churches are part of JEA and the number is increasing. Dr. Tsutada pointed out that JEA has made clear its stand on various issues, such as the Yasukuni Shrine, the funeral of the late Emperor, and now the matter of the enthronement and deification (*daijosai*) of the new Emperor. JEA is also in a position to challenge tactics of various cults, especially the Unification Church. Korea's evangelicals have suggested that such issues as the "Moonies," which are of mutual concern, should be confronted jointly. Presently, for example, this group is seeking to establish its own university in Korea and JEA has been approached about communicating to the Korean authorities its concern and apprehension.

The December, 1989, Hakone Consultation, referred to as the Kanji Culture Consultation, was sponsored jointly by EFA and JEA and brought together leaders of Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong (Chinese speaking) and South Korea. The days together convinced those attending that dynamic cooperation lies ahead, including the eventual evangelization of China. The political map of Eastern Europe has been rewritten during a very brief period of just months. When will the Bamboo Curtain fall? No one has the answer, but the time for planning and preparation for such an eventuality is at hand. (By the way, I must mention that I received a most unusual Christmas Card this year. It was from my younger brother, Professor Reinhard Buss, Director of BIOLA Abroad, who was writing from Berlin and had attached a chip off the Berlin wall.)

Dr. Tsutada is too modest a person to highlight activities in which he plays a vital role. It was both a day of pride and rejoicing

when word was received that Dr. Tsutada had been elected chairman of the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA) during the 1989 General Assembly. He had previously served as vice-chairman of EFA and is a person eminently qualified. He has for many years served in India where he is highly respected. Dr. Tsutada is a world Christian and addresses problems as well as opportunities from a global perspective. It is no accident that his first great challenge will be the **Asian Missions Congress (AMC '90)**. Over 2,000 participants and observers will discuss mission strategy from August 27-31, 1990, at Seoul, Korea. Two hundred seventy-five are expected to attend from Japan. This congress will serve as another stepping stone towards closer cooperation between JEA and its Korean counterpart, KEF. The *Heisei* era is opening a new chapter between the Christians of Korea and Japan. For too long tragic events of the past have cast a dark shadow over the two countries. It is encouraging to see that both sides now are striving to bury the past and to move forward for Christ and his Kingdom. Many Koreans for some time have unitedly prayed for the salvation of ten million Japanese and the significant growth of the church in Okinawa can, in part, be attributed to its close ties with Christians in Korea.

The Future

Now, as we turn our attention to the future, we are once again reminded of today's topic: "*Heisei: A New Era for the Japanese Church?*"

Of special interest for us is, of course, the role missionaries will play in the *Heisei* era. I appreciated the frankness with which Dr. Tsutada approached this subject. I agree that a greater effort must be made on the part of the missionary to adapt to the realities of the '90s. All missionary activities should be directed towards supporting the existing church, which, of course, is under Japanese leadership. There is no room for independent "adventurism."

The missionary force in the '80s has been relatively constant and averaged around 2,600. The same can be said about JEMA with its forty-five member organizations and 1,500 members. What

has changed is an emphasis on short-termers who are to supplement career missionaries. Japan is a unique country where missionaries can play a vital role in church planting. In the future, more consultation may be necessary in church planting efforts in order to avoid duplication of effort. Church Information Service (CIS) is of great assistance in providing up-to-date information. Missionaries of today have the advantage of working in most cases with a church or pastor who is senior in age and experience. The young missionary just out of language school must accept this reality gracefully.

I predict that there will continue to be a need for specialists in the field of radio, TV, communication, publication, computer technology, languages and other academic subjects. A mastery of written and spoken Japanese in most cases will prove essential. Mission leaders will need to be increasingly sensitive to the wishes of Japanese pastors. This may effect the assigning or reassigning of missionaries. It would make sense to check with the local pastor about post-furlough assignments. Where missionaries are "endured" rather than warmly welcomed, ample opportunities for change exist. A solution for missionaries who do not "fit" may be early retirement or "home assignment."

Another concept that needs to be applied in the '90s is that money does not build churches. American financial aid is no longer appreciated. After all, Japan has become a financial giant. It has been pointed out that if the twenty-three districts of Tokyo were put on the market for sale, the proceeds would be more than sufficient to buy all of the U.S.A. There would be a balance of around thirty trillion yen left over - enough, perhaps, to purchase the moon? If it is not money that the Japanese church needs or wants, then, what is it? Missionaries, yes, missionaries with the virtues of integrity, kindness, commitment, dedication, and dependability, to mention a few. Is the price too high, the sacrifice too great?

If the church is to make progress in the *Heisei* era, something must also be done about how God's Word is proclaimed. At the earlier mentioned Hakone Consultation, Dr. Jong-jun Lee, Senior Pastor of the Choong Hyun Presbyterian Church in Seoul, spoke on

the "The Power of the Word of God in Pastoral Ministry."⁶ There is a dearth of expository preaching in Japan. This is a matter of urgency. AMC '90 will convene at Dr. Lee's church. May Japan's pastors be inspired and challenged to make the best use of the Sunday morning service. This in turn will contribute to church growth.

I am convinced that the *Heisei* era will also change the status and role of women in the church. JEA belatedly added the Women's Commission in response to inside and outside pressure. Even the Liberal Democratic Party, during recent elections, has discovered that half of the voters are women, and during the recent months of political crisis, women were included in the cabinet. My contact with Christians of South East Asia, Singapore and Indonesia, in particular, has convinced me that the dynamic church growth in those countries has a direct relationship to the role women play in the church. It is just a matter of time until we will see a greater appreciation of women in Japan's church.

The *Heisei* era has ushered in the five-day week for Japan's workers. Leisure and especially the enrichment of one's life are frequent topics in newspapers and magazine. Here, too, the church faces a challenge. Will it be in a position to provide "enrichment" in daily life that today's materialistically oriented society is unable to provide? The Soka Gakkai is striving hard to take advantage of this time of opportunity.

We rejoice in the more than 300 missionaries Japan has sent overseas. But this is just the beginning. Dramatic changes are taking place. The shift to third-world missions is astonishingly rapid. (Just consider the fact that at the First Missions Conference in Edinburgh, held in 1910, the Third World was represented by less than 2% of the 1,200 delegates.) Non-western missions will contribute towards more rapid and effective world evangelization at a much lower cost. There is the added benefit that non-western missions will contribute towards correcting the erroneous perception that Christianity is an import from the West.

⁶Reproduced in *Japan Harvest*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1989.

For Japan the implications are to integrate increasingly non-western missionaries into the missionary force. The Christians of Korea, for example, are prayerfully considering their role in evangelizing Japan.

Japan is rapidly becoming an aging society. While only 4.9 percent were aged 65 and over in 1950, the number rose to 10.8 percent in 1987, and will climb to 23.4 percent by the year 2025. Longevity in Japan can be a blessing in disguise. Will the church in the *Heisei* era consider the challenge of providing geriatric care in a Christian setting? This has proven to be a viable option to institutionalization in America. Ann Underland and her outreach through CARING International can provide, among others, assistance in setting up programs in Japan. God is giving us an extra thirty years to reach the aged of Japan for Christ. Life expectancy at birth in 1987 was 75.61 years for males and 81.39 years for females.

Conclusion

How, in conclusion, does the future in Japan look for evangelicals? My personal assessment is that the future looks bright. Evangelicals are not biding time but moving forward. The local church today has a better understanding of its role in world evangelization. Para-ministries which have supported the outreach of the church in the past are now becoming more closely identified with the church, and increasingly para-ministries are becoming an arm of the church. Accountability is becoming more clearly defined. Internationally, the evangelical church will play a major role in the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia and will fully support the goals and objectives of the World Evangelical Fellowship. Current trends in the Lausanne Movement place in doubt Japan's active participation in that organization in the future.

I sense optimism, unity, cooperation and enthusiasm in evangelical circles in Japan today. A new wind is blowing. The banner of the Cross is lifted high as the church moves forward to win *Japan for Christ*.

John said to him, "Master, we saw a man driving out devils in your name, and as he was not one of us, we tried to stop him." Jesus said, "Do not stop him; no one who does a work of divine power in my name will be able the next moment to speak ill of me. For he who is not against us is on our side."
Mark 9:38-40 (NEB)

It appears that the fastest growing religious interest in Japan centers on the new religions, and they, in turn, all center on healing and deliverance. I think this indicates the great need of people for healing and that the basic pre-evangelism of Christianity is meant to be healing and deliverance. In default of our believing actively in a healing and deliverance emphasis, the field has been left open to anyone who offers to supply the basic need.
MacNutt 1981, pp. 142-143.

Magic and Morality in Modern Japanese Exorcistic Technologies: A Study of Mahikari

**by Richard
Fox
Young⁷**

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OBSERVERS of Japanese New Religions are much perplexed by the unanticipated resurgence, especially among the neo-new religions (*shinshinshukyo* 新新主教) such as Mahikari (真光) and Agonshu (阿含主) of belief in spirits, the decline of which had long been predicted as an unavoidable sacrifice to modernization. Contrary to some theorists, who maintain that rationality - the *sine qua non* of all processes by which societies transcend primitive or feudal institutions - is antithetical to spiritism, what we see in Japan today suggests the very opposite. Rather than an archaic cognitive anomaly, contemporary spirit-belief might better be understood as an expanded rationality with its own modality of logic. Spiritism is not only compatible with modernity but is also capable of enhancing the meaning of life in Japan's highly urbanized and industrialized society where often a sense of disconnectedness prevails that no dose of scientific reasoning appears able to cure.

Not only disinterested specialists but also those who actively preserve Japan's elite or established religions (*kisei shukyo* 既成主教) which, at least in principle have traditionally been antagonistic to spirit belief, are puzzled by its revival. Their consternation is articulated by Sasaki Shoten, a Jodo Shinshu theologian, who laments that

We, who had been looking down on the new religions as premodern, even primitive, and have made great efforts to show that our Buddhism can coexist with science, now are confronted with the idea that the true match for a scientific-technical world is spirit belief, the magical, pseudo-scientific, manipulative type of religion (Sasaki 1988, p. 32).

Elite religion, as Sasaki notes, has in the modern era aligned itself with elite culture by reasserting the intrinsic rationality of Buddhist theories of causality, without discarding the necessity of faith in the absolute efficacy of savior deities such as Amida whose compassion resolves the apparent contradictions of life. Nonetheless, traditional salvation religions, just as modern rationalism, appear to be ineffective in counteracting the trend in popular culture and religion toward belief in spirits, precisely because of their simplicity. Such spirits are increasingly regarded as a

neglected link in the chain of cause and effect, and to recognize their existence seems to interpret more satisfactorily the complex world of today that the creative forces originally released by rationalism generated but no longer fully explain.

What follows below is not concerned with establishing whether or not spirits exist as scientific fact, but rather to explore the logic of, and the meaning derived from, the beliefs of individuals who have joined New Religions that regard their reality as indisputable. First, I will briefly draw attention to what current research has to say in connection with the revitalization of spirit belief. To sort this complex data out, I will differentiate, as H. Byron Earhart has done in his most recent study of a Japanese New Religion (1989), between enabling and precipitating factors. However, as I am convinced that socio-historical forces alone cannot account for the reemergence of spirit belief, I will introduce the exorcistic ritual of Mahikari as an instance of innovation in Japanese spiritism that can, as such, be considered paradigmatic of a whole cluster of contemporary New Religions. Finally, in view of the fact that modern forms of spirit belief are an explicit challenge, not only to modernity itself and to traditional Japanese salvation religions but also to Christianity, I offer some reflections on how the spiritism exemplified by Mahikari has universalistic aspects embedded in its Japanese particularity that have elicited a vigorous, if not yet massive, response from abroad.

Mean Streets, Malevolent Spirits

What enables spirit belief to emerge in present-day Japan in the first place? For, as far as the wider society is concerned, spiritism is an offense against reason and a return to premodern thought.

The at-hand answer is that its antecedents are the worship of household divinities, the ancestors (*senzo* 先祖), and the pacification of wandering and angry spirits (*muenbotoke* 無縁仏, *onryo* 怨霊) that has characterized the totality of Japanese religion (with the possible exception of Christianity) in varying degrees at all levels of popular and elite religion from the earliest times until the beginning of modernization. Although transformed in a manner that

shall be noted later, current spirit-belief arises out of this vast reservoir. The situation today, though, is less like the run-off of ages past than the overflow from a dam that has been stopped up too long.

Although spiritism was a necessary precondition for the reappearance of similar beliefs in modern society, what precipitated their reawakening from a period of relative dormancy, considering the primacy of rationalism in Japan's furious pace of modern nation-building dating from the second half of the nineteenth century?

With the onset of modernization, the social cohesion of village communities broke down when the solidarity of individual households was weakened by the departure of second and third sons as emigres to cities where the infrastructure of the newly industrialized, market-based economy of Japan was being developed. In rebellion against the anonymity of urbanized life and to counteract the arbitrary groupings of unrelated peoples whose interaction was mainly governed by competitive commercial instincts, utilitarian and com-munitarian religious movements emerged that promised to restore the communal support and solidarity of the old rural social order, albeit in the changed context of the city.

Chronologically, however, the first New Religions arose in the first half of the nineteenth century, before modernization, in village environments where one would assume that spirit belief was most deeply rooted. In point of fact, rural-based movements such as Tenrikyo (天理教) and Konkokyo (金光教), which have never enjoyed substantial urban following, were centered on parent-deities (oyagami 親神), which, though they did not deny the existence of ancestral and other spirits, relegated them to a position of relative unimportance.

Beginning with the Meiji era, however, and with heightened intensity in the Taisho and early Showa eras, by which time the most dramatic aspects of demographic change in Japan were largely complete, such urban New Religions as Omotokyo (大本教), Seicho no Ie (成長の家), and Reiyukai (霊友会) had outpaced

older village-based rivals. Symptomatic of these newer urban movements was a renewed conviction that spirits exist, not merely benign ancestral spirits but also spirits so malevolent that even the benevolent parent-gods of rural Japan seemed weak in comparison.

Why, then, did this trend toward spiritism occur in tandem with the process of modernization? In his analysis of spirit belief in modern Japanese urban society, Shimazono Susumu (1987) has traced this phenomenon to a number of factors, among which only a few can be mentioned here.

According to Shimazono, if spirits are factored into the environment as but one among many causal elements that can be organized, dominated, and manipulated, they can then complement, without competing with, the technological-manipulative frame of mind that scientific reasoning and rationalistic education fosters. Belief in savior- or parent-deities, on the contrary, cannot key into this modern attitude, because of its tendency toward uncausality, or the conviction that the will of God determines all the seemingly contradictory phenomena of life. The implication here is that the individual ego is not negated in spiritism, as it tends to be in traditional salvation religions and village-based New Religions. On the contrary, the I-Thou relationship with God, although present in spirit-belief, is less restrictive. There the ego is free to give full play to its powers of experiential and inductive logic to construct meaning in apparently happenstance situations without the necessity of introducing a compassionate God as *deus ex machina* (Shimazono 1987, pp. 96-97).

Shimazono further argues that urban life, unlike rural life - at least as it used to be before modernization - is never static; it demands a constant input of new configurations of knowledge to keep abreast of change. But without the psychological backup of the traditional household religion, the pressure-cooker atmosphere of cities becomes nerve wracking. There has consequently been an increased vulnerability among relocated branch-families in urban settings to fear of disturbances caused by spirits. Such spirits are meaner and more malicious relative to the perceived threat in the surrounding environment.

But to live with a sense of resigned arbitrariness, that all is determined by chance or necessity (fate), is alien to the contemporary belief in spirits, just as it is to modern rationalism. Spiritism today functions in an urban environment more complex and uncertain than was envisioned by traditional salvation religions or premodern New Religions. It empowers individuals to live with more certitude, precisely because its expanded vision of rationality includes hidden factors of causality (spirits) and does not deny the basic validity of empirical chains of cause and effect.

The perceived inadequacy of rationalism is not that it fails to explain *how* events occur but rather that it abstains from saying *why*. medical science, for instance, teaches that germs or bacteria cause illness, but according to the etiology of illness as understood by spiritism, people become sick because they ingest illness-causing agents at the behest of spirits. Spirit belief thus draws a tighter net of causality around the experience of what the world-at-large calls misfortune or plain bad luck.

There can be no question, however, but that involvement with malevolent spirits, especially those that inhabit this world, is regard-ed by the public-at-large as deviant behavior, even by many who continue to believe in the presence of ancestors who are near at hand. This bias, too, derives from modernization; it is not just a feeling, as I have often heard Japanese put it, that talk of spirits is "creepy" (*kimochi ga warui*). As Shimazono notes,

When rationalism seeps down to the masses, it carries with it the ascetical ideal of hard work and frugality. In order to survive within the mercantile economy of capitalism, one needs to succumb to the ascetical ethos, systematizing the things of life and investing energy in highly efficient economic activities. The ascetical ethos . . . rejects the expenditure of energies on sentimental behavior and emotional satisfaction. Things like belief in spirits are dispensed with as literally worthless.

By the 1970s, however, the booming Japanese economy reached a critical transition point, marked by a decline in the "ascetical ethos", that is, a tendency toward less preoccupation with

production and more willingness to attribute value to introspective, emotional, or non-rational activities (Shimazono 1987, p. 98).

This survey of trends favoring the reemergence of spiritism in contemporary Japan would be incomplete without alluding to the rebellion against modern rationality itself that is symptomatic of a wider Japanese society than is circumscribed by the neo-new religions alone. Reaction against modernization and its costs, pollution and environmental abuse, is gaining momentum among those who wish for a return to more natural life-styles. A not insignificant aspect of this back-to-nature boom is increased interest in holistic healing methods, triggered by dissatisfaction with Western medical science, especially the over-prescribing of medicine and impersonal patient-care systems in urban hospitals.

The Divine Magician-Physician

The above observations have outlined how spirit-belief has not only been preserved in modern Japan but also transformed so that nowadays it dovetails neatly with the demands of urban life and even reinforces the values of industrial society. What has not yet been pinpointed precisely is the innovation in *tekhne*, skill, that sets as its objective the manipulation of means to control the hidden spirits believed to be external to the self, for only a development in this connection could continue to fuel the resurgence of spiritism. As an instance of a significantly new spiritual technology, the exorcistic ritual of Mahikari called *Mahikari no waza* (真光の業) the Mahikari technique), or, more simply, *okiyome* (お清め purification) will be discussed below.⁸

Mahikari's institutional history spans no more than three decades, but its prototype, "world-renewal" religion (世直し主教, *yonaoshi-shukyo*), appeared first in the late nineteenth century with the advent of Omoto (The Great Foundation). Originally, Omoto pivoted around a parent-like divinity, Ushitora no Konjin 長ノ金神. He was believed to have returned to this world after aeons of

⁸ For a detailed study of Mahikari ritualistic behavior in relation to secular technological processes, see Miyanaga 1985.

like (陰) attributes, sensual, apathetic, and lenient, whose essence is water 水. The priority of Su-god, as a deity of fire and light 光 (*hikari*) and preeminently of the sun 日 (*hi*), is to cleanse the world of the evil spirits that lesser deities could not constrain, and to purge the human body of defilement (濁毒 *daku-doku*, lit. "dirt and poison") especially the toxins and wastes produced by modernization (pollutants, medicines, and chemical leftovers of processed foods) that result in illness and unnatural death.

Having chosen Okada to be the savior (救い主), Su-god, the True God of Light (whence the organizational name, Mahikari [True Light], is derived), declared his intention of bathing the world in a Baptism of Fire (火の洗礼 *hi no senrei*), a healing light for the seed-people (種人 *tanebito*) who respond to it, but a burning and destructive light to those who hide themselves from it. If the imbalance between good and evil in the world cannot be corrected, Su-god will incinerate the world. The year 2000 A.D. is said to be the deadline, and, if not fulfilled, will provide scholars with interesting material for further study of what happens to sec-tarian societies when prophecy fails.

Out of this summary of Mahikari's mythological, messianic, and millenarian structure, the component to be isolated for more extensive analysis below is the diffusion of a curative divine-light, especially insofar as it has been ritualized into an exorcistic ceremony.

Aside from Su-god himself as the original source, True Light is emitted from his throne on earth, the shrine called Suza (王座),¹⁰ and from the scroll inscribed with the characters "True Light" that hangs over the altar in every Mahikari practice hall (道場 *dojo*), and from an amulet (お御玉 *omitama*) worn by members (the efficacy, or thickness of the rays of this light is in descending order of listing). The world is said to be constantly flooded in True Light, but the practice hall is where its power is primarily put into effect

¹⁰ There are two rival claimants, administered by the two Mahikari respectively: one in Takayama, Gifu Prefecture, the other in the Izu Peninsula, Shizuoka Prefecture.

as the purification ritual is enacted, during which an intricately standardized procedure is carried out. Members sign an attendance register on arrival at the practice hall, write a wish (generally accompanied by a donation), offer a prayer to Su-god, bow and clap in several sequences, greet other believers, pair off, intone another prayer, the Prayer of Heaven (天津祈言 *Amatsunorigoto*), in classical Japanese with Shintoesque diction. Only then do they commence to purify one another with True Light, one person at a time in alternating active-passive roles. Considered to be the focal point of True Light, the palm of the hand is directed at the partner's forehead, behind which the primary soul (主根 *shukkon*) is said to be located. Possessing spirits are thought to reside here, and the purification ritual invariably begins with a ten-minute exorcistic phase, followed by thirty minutes or more of irradiating the body at various vital points to heal a variety of ills, from stiff shoulders to malignant tumors.

Of principle interest here is the exorcistic phase of purification. Insofar as recruitment is concerned, Mahikari promises quick and miraculous healing, and recovery of health is a primary motivation of most first-time visitors to the practice hall. But health is a common-place this-worldly benefit (現世利益 *genze riyaku*) of many New Religions, and to follow this further would be to digress. The Savior was quite explicit that evil spirits can be held accountable for about eighty percent of humanity's misfortunes, and it is therefore to the question of how spirits are purified that attention will be directed.

"I am the Divine Magician," Su-god declared to the Savior in one revelation (15/8/1961), and, in another, "human beings can become magicians," too (15/10/1960; Okada 1982, pp. 129, 105). The source of this empowerment is the amulet, or *omitama*, which recruits receive after a mandatory three-day training course. How the amulet is thought to function is a matter of considerable dispute among scholars, but to *kamikumite* (神組手 lit. "they who walk hand in hand with each other and God"), as Mahikarians are called, it encircles the wearer in protective light. Its energy has no half-life; unlike a battery, it never dies out. Even if the amulet lies unused on

a shelf, it has a residual power, although senior members claim that frequent usage by a devout believer will enhance its effectiveness (i.e., the thickness of its rays). Unless it is defiled (e.g., dropped in dirt or water or stepped on), the *omitama* will accompany a *kamikumite* into the afterlife, for it is now customary for the amulet to be cremated with a deceased member. The magic of Mahikari, in short, is that the amulet requires neither belief nor faith to be activated. The "try it and see" advice of *kamikumite* to newcomers is not just pragmatic (or scientific as Mahikari would have it) but symptomatic of the magician.

The amulet is thus a shield against harmful influences from the outside, but spirits already residing in one's body can only be dislodged by undergoing the exorcism ritual called *okiyome*, or purification, the invariable format of which runs as follows: The preliminaries described earlier (prayer, etc.) having been completed, the active performer raises a palm over the forehead of the partner in the passive role, discharging True Light (originating either from the altar scroll if the pair are sitting in the practice hall or from the amulet itself if elsewhere). When the primary soul is being cleansed, the passive participant may begin to sway from side to side. A defensive response to True Light called spirit-movement (靈動 *reido*) is considered proof of possession.

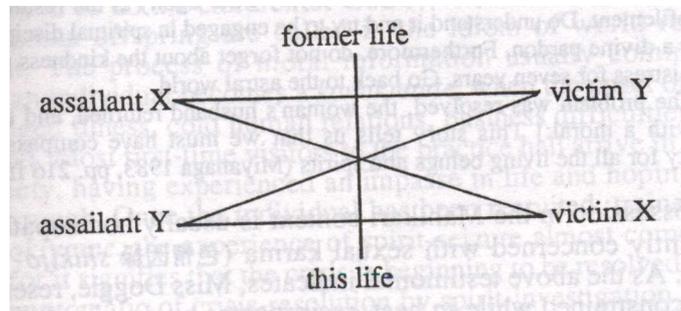
Insofar as Mahikari is concerned, possession is an induced or learned behavior. That is to say, it occurs only inside the practice hall, and few *kamikumite* exhibit abnormality in workaday life before participation in the exorcism ritual. The experience of possession is lucid; members are conscious throughout and remember afterwards what happened. Although *kamikumite* often speak of "hair-raising" first-visit spirit-movements, in most cases these begin to surface only after an individual has been in the practice hall three months or more--ample time to observe and master the required routine.

Spirits that become manifest during purification are liminal. They are malevolent and therefore dangerous, but they are not absolutely evil either (deities, it should added, do not possess). They belong neither to this world nor to the after-world. Their

proper place is the astral world (靈界 *reikai*) where they await a rebirth to be determined according to their merits by the tutelary deities of Su-god. It is characteristic of Japanese spirit-lore in general and of Mahikari as well, that aggrieved spirits who hold grudges against the living, or who are hungry and cold without the warmth of human flesh, are believed to roam the world of the living in search of appropriate victims. The difference is that Mahikari links the alleged increase in the number of such spirits to the disruption of natural lifestyles due to modernization.

Possession is not, however, an arbitrary misfortune; there is always an explanation based on cause and effect logic - no matter how forced, eccentric, and irrational it may seem to non-believers. The original *casus belli* is reconstructed as follows: When the spirit movements of a *kamikumite* become pronounced, a staff member trained to perform spirit investigation (靈査 *reisa*) interrogates the manifesting spirit (who speaks or gestures with the mouth or body of the passive participant) and from its responses pieces together a diagnosis, a process that may take months or even longer. Admonition (お諭 *osatoshi*) is an essential element of the ritual, for the spirit must be told to return to the astral world because to torment the living will only make its destiny worse. Each session is concluded with the command "*Oshizumari!*" (お静まり *Peace! Be still!*)

The originality of Mahikari is mainly its radical reidentification of who the real victims and assailants in an instance of possession are, as they are unmasked during the purification ritual. Possession is indeed a crisis, but the word "possession", which is suggestive of intent to harm, is problematic in the context of Mahikari. Following the analysis of Miyanaga Kuniko (1983), a pattern that can be found almost invariably in accounts of spirit investigations is that the victim of possession in this life was the assailant of the aggrieved spirit in a previous life. To redress this wrong, the victim in the past becomes the assailant in the present. The exchange of roles can be diagrammed thus:



"The assailant," as Miyanaga puts it, "has to experience the misery of the victim by himself being victimized by his original victim" (1983, p. 222). In this light - True Light, as it were - possession is to be understood less as punishment than as a plea for the redress of a wrong. What appears, then, to be a crisis is actually the initiation of reconciliation.

Possessing spirits are generally resentful spirits, less often ancestors, and only rarely animal-spirits. To illustrate this process, the third-person testimonial (体験 *taiken*) of a *kamikumite* will be narrated below, primarily because of its brevity, even though it concerns the spirit of an animal. Entitled "Miss Doggie's Story", it runs as follows:

A middle-aged woman, the mother of two children, visited a [Mahikari] center for consultation because her husband began to have an affair with another woman three months earlier. Immediately she was given a purification ritual. Her possessing spirit was identified as a female dog she had kept in her family for seven years.

Under spirit investigation, [the spirit of the dog said:] "When I was kept in her house, she threw water over my men [male dogs] and blocked me from fulfilling my natural desire to preserve my bloodline. She even locked me up inside the house, so I barked and bit around in vain to let her know I wanted intercourse which I understood was my right given by the divinity. But, she was totally oblivious to my communication. After all I had to leave this present world for the astral world [i.e., died], because of too much frustration. As my resentment remained as strong as before, I possessed her body for revenge. I also drove her good husband to go to another woman to let her know the importance of compassion and harmony. However, she did not reflect on her own misdeed but wished to get her husband back. She is too selfish. Please,

make her know that even a dog has this much [sense]." This was an opinion that Miss Doggie stated with a sad and annoyed expression.

[In giving admonition, the teacher says:] Your agony is the result of your own defilement. Do understand it and try to be engaged in spiritual discipline and ask for a divine pardon. Furthermore, do not forget about the kindness given by your mistress for seven years. Go back to the astral world.

[The problem was resolved, the woman's husband returned, and the story ends with a moral:] This story tells us that we must have compassion and sincerity for all the living beings and spirits (Miyana 1983, pp. 216 ff.).

Possession in the Mahikari context is usually homeopathic and frequently concerned with sexual karma (色情因縁 *shikijo-innen*). As the above testimonial indicates, Miss Doggie, resentful of being constrained while in heat, reciprocates by denying her master the normal sexual relations she had enjoyed with her husband, who begins to chase other women. The sequence of role exchange is exactly as diagrammed above: The victim (Miss Doggie) resents the assailant (her master), and after death possesses the assailant, who in turn becomes the victim. Reconciliation is achieved through spirit-investigation, and knowing what originally went wrong - no matter how outrageous it may seem - results in mutual compassion. Their bondage to one another is thereby terminated, the dog-spirit returns to the astral world, and husband to wife. "The real magic of the [exorcism ritual]", as Winston Davis observes, "lies in the fact that some people emerge from the experience in greater control of their lives, and with their health restored" (1980, p. 153).

It has already been observed above that evil is not understood in Mahikari to be absolute. Possessing spirits are not intrinsically demonic; their salvation is also the salvation of the *kamikumite*. In the overall monistic structure of world-renewal religion, there is no room for a rigid dichotomy between good and evil, even where Su-god himself is concerned, for he is the totality of *yang* (strict) and *yin* (lenient) tutelary deities and human spirits (分御霊 *wake-mitama*, divided spirits), who in the process of creation were refracted from his originally unitary essence. World-renewal deities, beginning with Omoto's Ushitora no Konjin, have all undergone a process of self-discipline (修業 *shugyo*), to refine themselves or, as it is often

said, polish their souls, so that they become even better at being gods. They are not less than divine for having had to do so, for the critical quality is their capacity for readjustment. Cosmic imbalances can and do occur - the present age is one such instance. Likewise, the emphasis in Mahikari is on renewal through harmonization, not punitive retribution.

If divine beings occasionally stand in need of self-correction, so much more so do the children of God (神の子 *kami no ko*), as their human offspring are called in the idiom of world-renewal religion. The process of moral reformation usually commences before an individual becomes a *kamikumite*, when the onset of crisis (prolonged illness, cold human relations, business difficulties, etc.) is sensed. Most first-time visitors to the practice hall arrive in a state of anxiety, having experienced an impasse in life and hoping for a breakthrough. Once the individual has been recruited, trained, and given *okiyome*, the experience of spirit-seizure almost comes as a relief, for it signifies that the crisis is beginning to be resolved.

Symptomatic of crisis-resolution by spirit-investigation, is that neither party, the possessing spirit or its victim-in-this-life, demands repentance (懺悔 *zange*) of the other. Despite the often terrifying stories that circulate in Mahikari, what spirits require is that their victims own up to their *mistakes*. Genuine malicious intent is rare. Exorcism reveals wrongs that have been committed almost invariably out of ignorance, as in the case of the woman who did what any sensible pet-owner should do - restrain her dog from breeding indiscriminately. Saving knowledge is thus a new awareness of mistakes that could have been avoided, if one had only known better (Miyana 1983, p. 251). What *kamikumite* learn from their experience of exorcism becomes the basis of their operational, day-to-day morality, and to hear them speak of a newfound concern with altruistic love (利他愛 *rita-ai*) as a result of their purification is not uncommon.

Once *kamikumite* have become sensitized to the reality of the spirit-world, they remain wary of further signs of disturbance. It is imperative, however, that seizures decrease in frequency and intensity after the loose ends of an investigation have been tied

together, otherwise the power of Su-god could be called into question. Repeated possessions are therefore rare. But precisely why the ritual is therapeutic is problematic in the extreme, and the sym-bolic projection of repressed guilt has been one line of interpretation provocatively discussed by Winston Davis (1980, pp. 115-160).

Externalization of nearly all life's problems is indeed distinctive of Mahikari (and of much of world-renewal religion in general) and differentiates it from heart-renewal religions (心直し宗教 *kokoro-naoshi shukyo*) such as Rissho Koseikai 立正交成会, which internalize difficulties encountered in the outside world. Whether despite or because of the exorcism, numerous *kamikumite* among the many I have known claim to have been subjectively renewed, if not always absolutely healed in an objective, empirical, or scientific sense. I see no reason to dispute this, considering how little we know of the mind and how it functions. Nonetheless, the dropout rate among *kamikumite* is high, estimated at eighty percent, and remains high at all ranks, from fresh recruits to senior members, especially if a dilemma arises between trusting Su-god or modern medicine. As of yet, little is known about these dropouts, but many of them, as Miyanaga suggests (1983, p. 254), must have difficulty overcoming the dread of spirits to which Mahikari has exposed them.

The Last Opening of the Celestial Rock Door

Religion in Japan has long been geared to the satisfaction of specific human needs and the fulfillment of personal wishes; if religion is to enhance this life, its benefits must be tangible, not delayed until the after-world. In modern urban society, this expectation has, if anything, been heightened. Deprived of the solidarity of the household system mentioned earlier, and often engaged in occupations that do not guarantee life-time employment, the clientele of New Religions seeks an instantaneous pay-off to its investment in religion in terms of this-worldly benefits - a pragmatic attitude the wider society finds only slightly less repugnant than spiritism itself. Mahikari's self-understanding vis-a-

vis other established religions arises out of this general orientation: religions that do not deliver the required goods and services (better health, financial rewards, personal happiness, etc.) have outlived their usefulness.

It was noted above that modernity has induced in Mahikari a sense of imminent cataclysm, the Baptism of Fire, toward which the world is accelerating. To slow this headlong rush toward self-destruction so that humanity might develop the spirituality to avert catastrophe, Su-god established the great historical religions of the world, which Mahikari calls brake-religions (ブレイキ主教 *bureiki-shukyo*). The vitality these religions once had, however, is no longer available, for they have declined into mere teachings (教え *oshie*) disinterested in salvific action against possessing spirits. Considering the danger to which these worn-out religions are exposing the world, Su-god elected Okada to be the savior by revealing to him the supra-religion (崇教 *sukyo*) of True Light, a religion of action and not only talk, in comparison to which the established religions in a word-play on the character "religion" 宗教 *shukyo* are 醜教 ugly teachings and 衆狂 group-insanity ¶.

As critical as it is of the established religions, Mahikari sees itself as the agent of their renewal and not at all discontinuous with them. As such, the Mahikari attitude toward other religions is symptomatic of world-renewal religion as a whole, and its myth of Su-god is but a variant of the withdrawal and return of the good god found in Omoto, as mentioned earlier. All such world-renewal myths pivot around a motif originally derived from *Kojiki* 古事記, an early Japanese chronicle which includes the story of Amaterasu who hid within a cave in the High Plain of Heaven to protect herself from the impertinence of her brother Susano-o and other kami. As she is the solar-deity, her withdrawal is naturally catastrophic, and her subsequent return is world-renewing.

In the modern revision of the *Kojiki* myth, to which has been added millenarian connotations, the present age is the final opportunity for humanity to open the Rock Door of Heaven (Okada 1986b, p. 8). This act of emerging from hiding is expressed in a spatial metaphor as the coming of God from the rear (裏 *ura*) to the

fore (表 *omote*) of salvation history. God has, however, spoken fragmentarily during his absence through messengers, the founders of the world's great religions. Paralleling the polarity between "front" and "rear" is therefore another pair of opposites: "revealed truth" and "concealed truth". What has thus far been revealed in the existing religions has proved insufficient to brake the downward spiral of humanity, and now is the critical moment to "put on the throttle" in renewal of the world.¹¹

In the idiom specific to Mahikari, this is the era of unification of the five religions (崇盟五道 *sumeigodo* [Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islam, and Christianity are implied]), which can be reinigorated by the practice of exorcism and healing: "[Mahikari no waza] is the wondrous method to revive the Five Major Religions and all other teachings" (Okada 1986b, p. 12). It will be seen below that Mahikari does indeed actively engage Christians, among others, to practice the purification ritual as Christians. Orthodoxy in the overall structure of the Savior's teachings was, however, a priority almost as high as orthopraxy, and Okada invested immense energy in unveiling what he considered to be the esoteric parts of other religions, Christianity in particular. Okada saw himself as the agent of its renewal in part because he believed he had had an intimate association with Jesus Christ in a former life - a not at all unprece-dented claim in world-renewal religions (see Young 1989a) - and that he was the Spirit of truth (真理の御玉 *shinri no mitama*) whose coming Jesus had prophesied (Jn. 15:26; Okada 1986a, pp. 89-90). With this license, a nationalistic view of world history centered on Japan, and utilizing a discredited pseudo-scientific etymological art called *kotodama* (言霊 lit. "word-spirit"), the arcane catalog of Okada's "concealed truths" fills several Mahikari volumes. A prominent theme is that Moses and Jesus were Japanese-Jews (日系人 *nikkeijin*, lit. "Japanese descendants") and that both died in Japan.

¹¹ On the Celestial Rock Gate symbol in world-renewal religions, see Young 1989b, and on the origin of the unity-teaching in the same tradition see Young 1988.

Insofar as public relations are concerned, Mahikari refers to the process of religious revitalization as a return to the origin (元帰り *moto-gaeri*), Su-god, whereby the religions again become what they were intended to be when they began. The esoteric knowledge described above is largely kept by Mahikari to itself, and *kamikumite* are initiated into such matters mainly at the intermediate and advanced levels of training. Nonetheless, a "smarter-than-thou" attitude toward Christians and followers of other religions is pervasive. Moreover, if the public (*omote*) position is that Mahikari is helping religions recover their original efficacy, in private (*ura*) it teaches that the religions, as presently constituted, are beyond repair and that Christians and others ought to "jump ship" while they still can:

Those who have become awakened, start departing. Depart. It is the time of Heaven when the karmic fate has come for religions to let men depart from religious denominations and sects to become ones of Supra-Religious Teachings as soon as possible (Okada 1982, p. 148).

And while Mahikari emphasizes to recruits that Christians who practice the purification ritual can continue to affiliate with their churches, its prayerbook contains a spell to ward off missionaries (1986b, p. 19) and the following hymn in which a Christian might well find reason to be disassociated from further church involvements: "It is a falsehood [偽り *itsuwari*] to call oneself a disciple of Jesus without the spiritual training of saving others by exercising the Art of Spiritual Purification with True Light" (Okada 1986b, p. 139).

Insofar as my own experience of *kamikumite* goes - which, though extensive, is not yet a basis for generalization - no one of Christian background, once recruited, has stayed in the church for long afterwards. A breach is always effected, though my evidence points to the personal predilection of the individual as much as to admonition from Mahikari. As the following account indicates, the believer's experience of the exorcistic ritual is decisive:

Ms. Nakata used to go to a Protestant church. Although she thinks that the Savior, Okada, was greater than Jesus Christ, she continues to regard herself as a Christian. She likes to point out that when Jesus cast out evil spirits in the country of the Gerasenes (Luke 8:26-33), the spirits entered a herd of swine that went berserk and drowned themselves. Okada, on the other hand, was able to save not only the demoniacs, but the demons themselves (Davis 1980, p. 168).

The True Jingle Bells of God are Ringing Far and Wide [真の神
来電鈴は鳴り渡る *makoto no jin guru beru wa nari wataru*]

The Savior was fond of the Christmas tune, "Jingle Bells", and - with a play on its phonetic characters in Japanese: 神 [*jin* God] 来 [*guru* (or *kuru*) coming] 電鈴 [*beru* bell] - it has become a metaphor of Mahikari's overseas missionary expansion. Evangelism in foreign parts is ardently encouraged, and in North and South America, the traditional fields of missionary endeavor by Japanese New Religions, Mahikari has made more rapid progress than, for instance, Nichiren Shoshu 日蓮正宗, in enlisting recruits from outside of Japanese immigrant communities. Under the leadership of a Latvian-born *kamikumite*, Andris Tebecis (b. 1943; see Tebecis 1982), Mahikari's advances in Australia and New Zealand have been carefully consolidated. One hears of wholly unexpected routes of diffusion: under the new Soviet policy of *glasnost*, liberalized travel restrictions will permit a party of Latvians to undergo primary *kenshu* (training) in Mahikari's Singapore practice hall in 1990 to be conducted by Tebecis.

As is often the case with new religious movements world-wide, Mahikari in the West has been especially effective in recruiting disillusioned Christians. But the Francophone nations of black Africa and the Caribbean, where a colonial syndrome is still prevalent, are the spheres of Mahikari's most spectacular progress. French, Swiss, and Belgian missionaries first introduced Mahikari to the Ivory Coast, the Congo, and Zaire, from which it spread to French Caribbean islands such as Martinique and Guadelupe where African slave-culture and spiritism continue to flourish (see Hurbon 1980).

Even in the post-colonial context, the equilibrium of traditional culture is precarious, threatened both by modernity and the Christian monotheism of established, western-educated elites. In

these areas, Mahikari and its corollary, Japanization, is to a certain extent displacing Christianity and westernization as a role-model. Those who see themselves as victims of colonial ideologies, who in private adhere to the beliefs and practices of African primal religions but in public profess abhorrence of them in order to secure educational and occupational privileges, are now enabled to find in Mahikari an alternative legitimation of indigenous ways. Associated abroad with the immense prestige of Japanese economic power, Mahikari reinforces the values of technological society toward which developing nations aspire at the same time that it preserves and transforms pre-modern spiritism. In short, as Laennec Hurbon (1986, p. 158) says: "Mahikari is a way of renewing links with the traditional heritage; but at the same time it is an instrument for criticizing modernity, and it can rid the individual of his inferiority complexes."

Over the past several years, I have collected a number of testimonies and life-histories from African *kamikumite* in Tokyo, from which the following has been selected (and abbreviated) in order to exemplify the pattern of meaning such individuals find in Mahikari:

Jean, a Congolese in his mid-30s, studied at the Sorbonne and recently graduated from Tokyo's Keio University with a doctorate in economics that he hopes will qualify him for a position with the finance ministry in Brazzaville. As an intellectual, it would seem he has radically assimilated western values (and a degree of Marxist ideology) through his education abroad, but this process actually began at home where he was raised a Jehovah's Witness. From the Witnesses Jean acquired a church-and-culture-in-conflict attitude, the "ascetical ethos" of the discipline of hard work, and a conviction that those who believe in the Bible will be immune to spirit possession.

This faith in the Witnesses' teaching was shattered when two of Jean's brothers died in circumstances he felt so strange he could comprehend them only as an act of traditional sorcery - the curse of a neighbor with whom his family had been feuding over several generations. Convinced that the Witnesses were helpless to prevent

him from becoming the next victim, Jean took initiation into the mysteries of the Rosicrucians, who are active in the Congo, but was likewise disappointed. While consulting practitioners of traditional magic, Jean's latent, indigenous world-view underwent reconstruction, and he became resentful of having to disguise his belief in spiritism in order to excel in the mission-school system.

Jean described to me his first experience of the Mahikari purification ritual, performed by *kamikumite* he met after coming to Japan for advanced studies, as an "electric shock" from head to toe. Indeed, his reaction was so virulent that *kamikumite* advised him to receive purification for shorter periods and at longer intervals than is usual, so malevolent was his possessing spirit thought to be. His spirit-seizures are nowadays less violent than they were when he was recruited several years ago, and Jean feels that spirit-investigation will eventually reveal the breach between his family and its assailants. While he awaits the final exorcism, Jean is confident that the power of True Light is superior to both the good and evil forces of African primal religion, but - most significantly - that Mahikari, unlike Christianity, fulfills rather than destroys what he proudly calls his *negritude*.

While the penetration of Mahikari into black Africa requires far more systematic research than has been possible here, we who have been assuming - as the Jodo Shinshu theologian, Sasaki Shoten, quoted at the outset of this study - that Japanese New Religions such as Mahikari are premodern and outdated, are now confronted with the possibility that spirit-belief is not only a match for modernized Japan but also for modernizing Africa.

A Response to

"Magic and Morality in Modern Japanese Exorcistic Technologies: A Study of Mahikari"

Glenn G. Gano¹²

In a day when the imperative for many of us is church planting, I am happy there is a missionary with the interest, the training and the resources to introduce and interpret new religions for the benefit of many of us who witness the activity, but may not understand the origin and comprehensiveness of some of these religious phenomena. We have had members of our missionary community who have researched and written on New Religions to the benefit of each of us. Some who come immediately to mind are Harry Thompson, Delwin Schneider, Clark Offner, Noah Brannen, Notto Telle, David Reid, Tucker Calloway and Ken Dale. We need the insight and information into the religious experience of this country such colleagues can provide. I think we have every reason to expect much more from the mind and pen of Richard Young.

We have a micro-mission and a macro-mission it seems to me. The micro-mission is to lead men and women to faith in Jesus Christ and into local branches of his Church. The macro-mission is to continue seeking to create a greater understanding of Christianity and Christian values in Japanese institutions and in society at large. This can be considered pre-evangelism. For this mission we need much greater understanding.

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The concern of most of us, as we consider the New Religions, is probably pragmatic. "What do they have that we don't?" "How do they attract so many converts when our churches number so few?" What is our response to Mahikari's charge that "religions that do not deliver the required goods and services (better health, financial rewards, personal happiness, etc.) have outlived their usefulness?"

Richard Young has not given specific answers, but there are plenty of implications between the lines. He is *not* subject to the criticism leveled at the book Clark Offner wrote with Father Henry Van Straelen in 1963. While checking my copy, I found a book review clipping from the *Asahi Evening News* which stated:

The introduction should not be missed, but the final chapter offering conclusions should be read only by practicing Christian missionaries who need renewed hopes and an explanation--if not an excuse--for the failure of Christian evangelism in Japan over the past one hundred years.

The paper just presented should really be read carefully. It is scholarly, clearly conceived and elegantly written. The bibliography is short and focused, the quotations are carefully chosen and sparingly used. That the author is familiar with a much wider literature is evident. The content is compact and the words are weighted. Reading prompts reflection an oral presentation prevents. Re-reading and reflection are essential for one not well versed in the vocabulary of comparative or of Japanese religions. This paper is ready for publication in journals of a more specialized nature than our book, but it will certainly be a credit to the Hayama Missionary Seminar's thirty-first annual report.

The New Religions: An Overview

Veteran attenders at Hayama have been greatly encouraged by the number of young men who have begun attending in recent years. Since the author focuses on one aspect of one of the neo-new religions, it might be helpful to them to set it in a broader context. While the earliest of the New Religions were founded in the first half of the 19th century and suffered restrictions, if not outright

persecution during the prewar and wartime periods, most are postwar phenomena.

Professor Hori Ichiro, in his Haskell Lectures at the University of Chicago, provides a good basic summary of New Religions:

The theories of the new religions are dynamic in comparison to formalized theologies of the traditional sects; but while they reject the doctrines and dogmas of the older religions, their own message is not based on new or creative insights. The founders know, however, how to relate a simple message to the frustration and fragmentation of the general populace. Underlying the new religions is an age-old shamanistic element transformed into modern shape and coupled with residual features of traditional ancestor worship (Hori 1968: 220).

Hori mentions the "astute organizational ability and commercialism" of the founders and explains their appeal:

For the most part the new religions promise to solve the problems of the masses by magico-religious formulas without undercutting the framework of the old social order. This means that what these new religions provide is a subjectivistic temporary "solution" of people's problems, so that converts are made to feel that they can start their lives afresh in the midst of a troubled world and enjoy better human relations within the context of their newly acquired religious group (Hori 1968: 223).

What are some of the general characteristics of the New Religions? H. Neill McFarland listed several in a 1960 article:

These cults are examples of socio-religious phenomena which, for over half a century, have been reasonably well understood by anthropologists. Among such cults, wherever they have been discovered, there is discernable a remarkably standard pattern of development in which at least five factors are recurrent: 1) social crisis intensified by an intrusive culture; 2) a charismatic leader; 3) apocalyptic signs and wonders; 4) ecstatic behavior; 5) syncretic doctrine. The milieu from which they arise, described in the words of anthropologist Margaret Mead, is "the ferment of half abandoned old and half understood new" (McFarland 1960: 60).

In *The Rush Hour of the Gods*, published seven years later, McFarland listed as recurrent characteristics of the New Religions of Japan charismatic leadership, concrete goals, community identification, highly centralized organization, construction

projects, mass activities and syncretic mystery and novelty (McFarland 1967: 71-96).

Offner and Van Straelen, in their book *Modern Japanese Religions*, mention twelve characteristics, among which are doctrinal simplicity with primary emphasis on physical and material benefits, eschatological character, enthusiasm, individualism, and lay leadership. The authors also observed that the New Religions give new respect to women. A number of the founders of these religions were women as are many of the preachers, teachers, and believers (Offner 1963:34--37). They conclude, "Finally, an outstanding characteristic, even the *raison d'etre* of certain New Religions is faith healing. It is also one of the main attractions of these religions" (Offner 1963: 37).

This leads us to the inscription preceding the title of Young's paper, which notes that the "fastest growing interest in Japan centers on the new religions, and they, in turn, all center on healing and deliverance."

Spirits and Spiritism

The title of the paper, "Magic and Morality in Modern Japanese Exorcistic Technologies," is intriguing. Young is very careful in his use of words and chose technologies rather than *exorcistic practices, rituals* or *rites*. This seems to remove the exorcisms from the realm of religion and transfer them to some secular, scientific, or techno-logical dimension. The focus, however, is spiritual. Rather than with healing and deliverance, this paper is concerned with spirits and spiritism. Healing and deliverance are derivative. In our rational culture, where modern science has dominated the school curriculum for a century, belief in spirits seems an anachronism. Young suggests that spirit-belief be considered "an expanded modality of logic ...not simply compatible with modernity, but...also capable of enhancing the meaning of life in Japan's highly urbanized and industrialized society where often a sense of disconnectedness prevails that no dose of pure, scientific, or empirical reason appears able to cure." He states he is not establishing whether or not there is a scientific basis for spirits, but

he presents evidence leading towards the conclusion that spirits are real. Most of us can accept the concept of the reality of spirits in the world view of primitive, animistic people. But among Japanese? Today?

The most difficult part of the paper for me is the section headed "Mean Streets, Malevolent Spirits." It is difficult because it forces one to consider the reality of spirits. Considering spirits a causal element in the environment is an unfamiliar experience. That spirit belief in Japan has increased with modernization and urbanization seems to contradict common sense. It is surprising that the 19th century rural-based new religions, such as Tenrikyo and Konkokyo, while honoring parent-deities, attributed little importance to spirits, whereas the 20th century urban-based neo-new religions such as Omotokyo, Seicho-no-Ie and Reiyukai give considerable attention to them. It seems to me that this discussion of spirits raises the primary missiological issue contained in the paper. Young has narrowed his discussion to the exorcistic ritual and does not discuss spirits direct-ly, except in this section. Much in the paper, however, is related to this broader topic.

How do we approach the concept of spirits and spiritism in our ministries? Do we really encounter this phenomena in our relationships with students, church members, neighbors and acquaintances? What do we do when this happens? Do we believe, reject, ignore, reinterpret, demythologize? If the reality of spiritism is on the rise, as Mahikari claims, then we need greater understanding.

Okada Kotama, the founder of Mahikari, linked spirit proliferation with modernization. Young indicates elsewhere that Mahikari and other world-renewal type religions, such as Omotokyo, Seicho-no-Ie, and Sekai Kyuseikyō, have their roots in the Shinto tradition (Young 1989: 26). But note that Mahikari was founded in 1959. Japan's economic takeoff had begun. Social change has continued to accelerate. A number of us have lived through this period. What is the relationship of this social change to spiritism?

Since Mahikari is active in Africa, African references seem appropriate. George Oosthuizen, a researcher in new religious movements in South Africa stated this in a paper on demonic

power: "Spirit possession reflects the human suffering involved in the transitional stage from the traditional microcosmic world view. The all pervasive influence of evil spirits on the minds of people affects their adaptation to the new situation" (Oosthuizen 1988: 6). He contends that "Spirit possession, bewitchment, and sorcery could be related to a person's psychosocial crisis, especially in rapid social change. To project one's weaknesses on evil spirits who possess or influence one's behavior has an effect on the concept of guilt" (Oosthuizen 1988: 19). (Young also refers to Winston Davis' discussion of the exorcistic ritual as the symbolic projection of repressed guilt). Exorcism is an important function of pastoral ministry in Africa, Oosthuizen believes, because "social, economic and political issues can lead to maladjustments and to belief in the omnipresence of evil forces or an evil force" (Oosthuizen 1988: 13).

Father Michael Singleton, an apostolic anthropologist, wrote of his experiences with exorcism in Tanzania. His descriptions resembled those of the diviners in South Africa and of the spirit identification specialists in Mahikari. But Singleton discovered a middle way between ridiculing the spirits and superstition and accepting them as real spiritual beings.

One can act as if the spirits were real, not merely to humour the fantasies of sick minds, but because in a psychosociological sense the spirits are real. One can interpret the idiom of spirit possession downwards to situations of stress and so forth, rather than upwards into the realms of philosophy, theology, and concordance of the Bible with traditional cultures (Singleton 1977: 112).

Mahikari interprets the spirits upwards, eventually to the astral world.

Mahikari and the Spirits in Japan Today

Mahikari's mythology comes out of Japanese religious tradition just as do the examples elicited come from African cultural tradition. The operation of the spirits, initiation rites, the methods

of exorcism, the healing connection, rituals, amulets, etc., bear close family resemblances. Okada Kotama has constructed his religion with cultural elements readily at hand. Original innovations are evident, but basically it seems a rearrangement of interchangeable parts.

Nevertheless, he has responded to contemporary concerns of urban people. His *daku-doku* defilement, which the true light purges, includes toxic wastes and other pollutants from modern industry, medicines and chemical residue in processed foods. Also, he addresses problems related to sex. Though his beliefs and practices are drawn from the traditional religious - some would say folk religious- traditions of Japan, he is aware of the problems people face today in urban surroundings and has devised a remedy.

Evidently Mahikari's serious treatment of spirits and development of elaborate methods of exorcism and healing have met the felt needs of many. This paper gives no indication that people are pressured to enter the Mahikari *dojo*, so presumably they enter freely out of need, interest or curiosity. That eighty percent of them drop out is a damning statistic. Can it be true? Does the fact that eighty percent drop out confirm Okada's dictum that religions that do not deliver the goods have outlived their usefulness? This is a topic in need of research. Perhaps in a future paper Young will answer some of these questions.

One other topic in this section drew my interest. It was the role of the spirit investigator. "Crisis-resolution by spirit-investigation" could title a very interesting paper. Who are these people? How are they selected and trained? How reliable is their analysis? Are they also subject to the eighty percent dropout rate? Is there an organizational hierarchy through which believers advance? It is clear that this paper has whetted our interests in this neo-new religion.

I am sure each of us has struggled with the interpretation of demons and evil spirits in the Gospels and with principalities and powers in the Epistles. I have deliberately focused on non-Biblical interpretations partly for reasons of time, and partly to stimulate discussion in our contemporary, and especially, Japanese context.

Mahikari and Overseas Mission

The final section, "The True Jingle Bells of God Are Ringing Far and Wide," discusses, in a preliminary way, Mahikari's expansion overseas. This is certainly a missiological concern. Evidently the French-speaking countries of Africa and the Caribbean, as well as New Zealand and Australia, are areas where successes have been registered. The nationality and language of the missionaries may be a factor, but certainly the closeness of the spirit world in the French-speaking areas - which the Zairian testimony confirms - are strategic areas for advance.

As Protestant missionaries followed the merchants into Asia and Africa in the nineteenth century, are missionaries of Japanese religions following the *shosha* (large Japanese trading firms) into target areas, as Young suggests? The enormous prestige of Japan's economic influence is having an effect on third world nations. Young states that Africans steeped in traditional culture can find in Mahikari, "an alternative legitimation of indigenous ways." His speculation that "Mahikari and its corollary, Japanization, is to a certain extent displacing Christianity and westernization as a role model" requires further evidence. The paucity of figures in Young's paper makes it impossible to estimate the extent of Mahikari's expansion overseas, but the brief, tantalizing suggestions need substantiation. A myriad of questions need answers. Does the eighty percent dropout rate apply overseas? Do people who leave Christian churches for Mahikari return? Can Mahikari "reinforce the values of technological society toward which developing nations aspire at the same time that it preserves and transforms pre-modern spiritism?"

Two Further Questions

Is the spirit-belief practiced by Mahikari, as Young suggests in his final sentence, "Not only a match for modern Japan, but also for modernizing Africa"? This is a profound question for the future. Another relates to our mission. Does this evidence underline a great omission in Christian propagation in areas where spirit belief is strong? Charles Kraft answers by saying:

The African expects that anyone speaking of God will automatically be concerned with healing and exorcism. If, then, the person of God attempting to communicate Christ in traditional Africa will not or cannot address the illness problem effectively, the person can expect to make little, if any, impact on African worldview with an *inadequate proclamation of Christian truth*. For that person has failed to follow the example of Christ, who, dealing with people with similar expectations in this regard, combined in himself what we of the overspecialized West regard as two different tasks--the ministry of proclamation and that of healing (Kraft 1979: 305-6).

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Elemental Cosmology, Esoteric Soteriology and the New Missiology

**by Johannes
Aagaard¹³**

This paper is the essence of three presentations given at the 1990 Hayama Seminar. The task, as formulated in the title, is so vast that it ought to result in a rather heavy book. As a paper, it omits by necessity a number of in between considerations, but it is hoped that this paper will introduce some perspectives on the

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relationship between cosmology and soteriology and the consequences for a new missiology.

A new missiology is much needed. The present scope of missio-logical thinking does not include the mandate for mission to the great world religions in their contemporary reality. Because of their expansion throughout the world as new religions movements under the "rainbow" umbrella of the New Age, the missionary obligation of the people of God has changed radically within a single generation. In the evangelization of the world, however, this recent generation has bypassed its most urgent task by evading the issue of the New Age religions.

Will it be possible to arouse this missionary vision now? Will a new missiology come into being in order to respond to this new situation? Time will show.

The Cosmological Approach

While soteriology has been at the center of contemporary theology for the last two generations, and ecclesiology has been in focus the last generation, cosmology has rarely been taken seriously. It has been taken for granted that the natural sciences, especially modern physics, have taken up the interpretation of our world or cosmos, while the church is left with the questions of salvation. As a consequence, the Gospel has lost its points of reference and has become something "out" of the world. Even though political theology in its various forms has reacted against this otherworldliness, and even if the political dimensions of the Christian faith bring the reality of this world into focus, neither has touched upon the real issue - reality itself. What is real? What is this life all about? What is the nature of this world? How does it subsist? And how do we exist in it? A short restatement of this problem, as seen and understood by all world religions, is that the status (*stasis*) of this world is unsatisfactory. That is the starting point of all the great world religions.

In some religions the reaction against the status or *stasis* of this world is expressed by *ex-stasis* because the way *out* of human limitations is seen, as in charismatic movements within or outside

Christianity, as the focal point. In other traditions the solution looked for is *en-stasis* since the focus is on interiorization, the entering *into* inner realities, as in various yogic traditions and in some Christian schools of meditation. The genuinely Christian approach, however, is found in the *ana-stasis*, the radical transformation of the resurrection, which means a total and holistic or catholic approach to reality. This approach is possible because of the sacramental nature of the Christian faith.

By definition, a *sacramentum* consists of *verbum plus elementum*. In this formula the necessary unity of soteriology and cosmology is fixed. A sacrament, or rather *the* sacrament, is the church itself, by which the divine word assumes human and elemental reality in our cosmos. That is why the church is called the *mysterion*, the mystery or secret which was and is prepared in creation in such a way that humanity only reaches its goal and consummation in the revelation of God, the three in one, manifested in Jesus Christ and fulfilled in the *parousia*, in which God will be all in all. God is not yet all in all, but already is in the celebration of that coming reality in our eucharistic fellowship, which is the people of God, the body of Christ and community of the Holy Spirit. This celebration is possible, or rather made possible, by the Holy Spirit in the name and power of Jesus Christ when God's Word unites with God's elements!

The necessity of an elemental theology is therefore the heart of a genuine cosmological approach. By cosmology I do not mean cosmogony, for cosmogonies are many and vary from generation to generation. Modern science has its versions, and they, too, are relative, as is all scientific insight, but remain necessary for the time being. An elemental theology and a cosmology built thereon are not relative in the same way. As a part of creation, the elements will endure as long as creation endures, but they are not innocent creatures. In spite of being God's creation, they are perverted by human sin and *hubris*, pretending to be themselves creators and gods, while they were meant to be servants and friends and family members of humankind. Therefore, all the elements, too, in the last days will be annihilated by the transformative fire of the final

judgment. That annihilation will be the eternal victory of God over all the perversions of the elemental reality.

The Elemental Approach

A neglected fact is that the elements represent the natural status of life, which we all share. "It is elemental, Dr. Watson," means that anyone could have reached the same conclusion that Sherlock Holmes did. In the same way, the meaning of life and of God's creative power is an elemental fact that all people at all times could realize. That observation is the basis of the argument of Paul's letter to the Romans and of his missionary theology, namely, that no one has ever gone astray and been lost because there was no other possibility! God has never let a single person down! The elemental relation to God was always there. Sin and damnation are never a result of the absence of the knowledge of God but of disobedience!

This elemental reality is shared by all nations in all generations from the day of the first creation until the present. We all share the same elements. In all religious philosophies the same elements are the basis of their speculations and are the carriers of their insights and interpretations. All Japanese, Tibetan, Indian, Greek and European/American elemental approaches are basically the same.¹⁴ This neglected fact is, as it was for many centuries, the given basis for a genuine natural theology. The need for a natural theology was never so great as it is today. But instead of using the natural elemental theology that is in all cultures, fake natural theologies are invented, thereby implanting foreign elements into the faith. The natural elements are the only means that can serve as the legitimate basis for a universal natural theology. All other elements are counterfeits and have led us astray.

The Natural Elements and Natural Theology

St. Francis' great hymn or cantata, "To the Sun," is a hymn to God the creator, a hymn in which the elements are participating in

¹⁴One strange exception is found in Chinese religious philosophy, where the elements vary but as a system are still fundamentally similar.

the praise of their originator and father. Earth as the mother, water as the sister, fire as the brother and air/wind/sky as the father are part of the cosmic chorus together with the burning sun, the silver moon, the gentle death and all things. . .lifting up their voices and singing the praise of "our God and king." This great Alleluia is the expression of the Christian faith in God as creator and savior. In this great Alleluia the elements are in their right position as members of the family of God, as servants of God. This is the beginning of the final consummation, in which God will be all in all, the goal towards which we are making pilgrimage. This pilgrimage is made possible by the supremacy of Christ, as Paul's letter to the Colossians proclaims. In Christ human beings become the opposite of the "elemental spirits of the universe." If in Christ we die to those elemental spirits of the universe, we are born into the new life in the freedom of the Gospel.

The natural elements are the elements of nature in so far as nature means the corrupted nature of this old world. But the natural elements are also the elements of the assumption of our human nature by God in Christ. *Assumptio carnis* means the salvation of us, our nature and our world in the form of a new creation. This means that the natural elements are the necessary and obvious basis of a genuine *theologia naturalis*, a natural theology by which we can communicate with all human beings and with nature as expressed in the animals, plants and "things" of our world.

Points of Contact and Points of Contrast

To communicate is a matter of language, not just verbal but also body language. A genuine natural theology can give us what we need, a language for communicating the Gospel, for translating soteriology into a meaningful cosmological frame of reference. This does not mean that a natural theology is another way of adapting or compromising the Gospel. Not at all. The opposite is the case. Points of contact that are found in a genuine natural theology are first of all points of contrast, because genuine dialog always takes place in a sincere and open-minded confrontation. This is very clearly seen in relation to the elements.

As stated already, all human beings know about the elements. Their elementary understanding and interpretation are a part of all the language of this globe. The elements, however, everywhere have developed into elementals! This is registered by Paul in the many texts in which he deals with *stoikeia tou cosmou and exousiai*, expressions for the projection of the elements in the form of elementals. Paul describes this process as a perversion or a degrading status in which humankind worships and serves the creature rather than the creator (Romans 1).

There is no compromise, but there is a real confrontation in Paul's conclusions. He communicates because he has found points of contact in these points of conflict. He is understood, and he makes himself understood. What he describes in this first chapter to the Romans is probably the esoteric systems of his own time, the mystery religions in which the elementals were served and worshipped instead of the creator. In these esoteric cults, perverse sexual practices were made obligatory for the initiates. In Tarsus, for instance, an important temple for homosexual rituals has been found. Paul thus speaks out of his own observations when he describes the degradation of humankind. Again, the nature of that degradation was religious by nature. The list of perverted conduct by which Paul finishes his first chapter of Romans is a list of conclusions that all have their premises in religious aberration - the divinization of the elements as elementals and the substitution for the liturgy of God the creator with the worship of the divinities of this world and this age.

In our contemporary world not much has changed. Similar esoteric and occult systems flourish. The text of Colossians is more relevant than ever. Also, today the ritual perversions lead people into ethical degradation. Today the divinities of this world, the elementals, have caught humankind in their clutches. And today the church must confront such cults and rituals, which blind people and lead them away from God their creator. This mission is in fact more relevant than ever, for such cults and sects are more numerous than ever in history.

The New Age as the Old Age

A surprising fact is that the so-called New Age is nothing but the Old Age *redivivus* ! What we see now introducing itself as the new world is simply the old world in another version. It is of course out of the question to present in this paper the multitudes of the new religious movements, which nowadays are filling the earth and manipulating its people. A whole library already exists for that purpose. The common denominator, though, of all this religiosity in all these new religions is the New Age. It is, in its widest sense, simply "the rainbow movement," in which all colors are acceptable as long as they are alternatives to the old religions, especially Christianity.

The root causes of the New Age thinking are found in the theosophist schools of thought. Theosophy was born out of a hatred of Christianity. In fact, all the syncretic attempts to find the *religio occulta*, which is considered to be the center of all religions, have been made to counter the Christian mission. In India the first theosophists contacted Dayananda Saraswati, the arrogant and militant Hindu guru, who created his Arian Society to finish off Christianity. In Sri Lanka they contacted Gunananda, who played the same role as Dayananda but in a Ceylonese-Buddhist setting. This anti-Christian bias is still felt in the New Age. Christians are welcome only in so far as they have given up all attempts to see God in Christ as a unique phenomenon in history. Christianity, as one of many religious options, is welcomed. But that of course is not Christianity any longer, but a New Age version of it.

The New Age is building itself up on the basis of an astrological fiction, whereby it is maintained that Christianity is the age of the fish(es) or Pisces, and the New Age is the age of Aquarius. Christianity as the old age of Christ is passing away, while the New Age as the age of Man is the coming age. This fiction, which has no basis in facts, is a typical piece of manipulation by the minds of superficial people. But it has caught fire. A New Age feeling has come into existence, which brings Christians into doubt.

In fact, the New Age is nothing but the Old Age come back. The Age of Aquarius is the age of the law, be it the law of Manu, the *dharma* of Buddha, the law of Moses or of Islam. And the Age of Pisces is the age of the Gospel, if there is any meaning at all in this astrological speculation. Such speculations are man-made, inventions of human imagination. But that does not make them less operative. We, therefore, cannot deal with them by ignoring them, but must put forward alternative visions without manipulating people into accepting something which is by nature a matter of faith as if they were scientific facts.

The New Age religions are, indeed, not scientific facts. They are deeply rooted in the traditions of the various Yoga schools, the psychomental experimentations of Yoga. We will, therefore, take a hard look at some of the essential yogic presuppositions, which are operative in the theosophical thought-forms in the New Age projections. In the next section I shall give the main lines of the New Age ideology by presenting some of the esoteric insights from theosophy and anthroposophy.

New Age Ideology: The Esoteric System of Theosophy

Charles Webster Leadbeater (1847 or 54 - 1934), known as "Bishop Leadbeater," was the second to Annie Besant as was Henry Steel Olcott, known as "Colonel Olcott," to Madam Blavatsky. Leadbeater, who has written a whole library about occult matters, has had a decisive influence on the so-called Liberal Catholic Church, the church of theosophy, and on the Freemasonry that is connected with theosophy, the so-called Scottish Rite, which is also active in France and in many parts of the world. Leadbeater is a good choice to represent theosophy, for in his way of thinking and in his world view/cosmology the theosophical dimension is found in a refined and reflected form that continues to influence the New Age movements.

Among his many books, the monograph, *The Chakras*, edited in 1927 and reprinted many times, can serve as a guide to his way of thinking. Behind his insights are found the scholarly works of Sir John Woodroffe, who already in *The Serpent Power*, published in

1918, under the pseudonym Arthur Avalon, began the translation of Indian Tantric texts on occult matters. But in Leadbeater's writings such scholarship is taken into the theosophical context, established by the above mentioned "mothers" and "fathers" and communicated by Leadbeater and his colleagues, such as Ernest Wood and Christmas Humphreys, who are all theosophical interpreters of original Oriental material.

Leadbeater puts forward his psycho-cosmogram on the basis of the Hindu yogic tradition called Laya-yoga, which he understands as a specific perspective on Hatha-yoga. He seems to evade this latter term, but he cites regularly from the Shiva Samhita, the Gheranda Samhita and the Hatha-yoga Pradipika, the three major Hatha-yoga texts. Although he seems to know, he minimizes the fact that the tradition from which he is developing his ideas is the Tantric tradition. The reason is probably the simple fact that both the terms Hatha-yoga and Tantra are loaded terms in an Indian context, since the leading theosophists, including Leadbeater, did write and publish from the Indian center in Adyar, now a part of the city of Madras.

Leadbeater states the general principle of his psycho-cosmogram like this:

Each *chakra* is considered to be especially connected with one of the elements - earth, water, fire, air, ether and mind. These elements are to be regarded as states of matter, not elements as we understand them in modern chemistry. They are thus equivalent to the terms, solid, liquid, fiery or gaseous, airy and etheric, and are somewhat analogous to our subplanes and planes - physical, astral, mental, etc.¹⁵

In his cosmogram he also connects the elements and *chakras*¹⁶ with various forms and colors, Sanscrit letters, divinities, fairies, animals (*vahanas*) and various benefits.

In order to understand the theosophical meaning given to the system of elements and *chakras*, we first have to understand the

¹⁵*The Chakras*, 1969, p. 74.

¹⁶Literally, "wheel," or center of psychic power (ed.).

theosophical doctrine of "the bodies," for the *chakras* are seen as points of connection at which energy flows from one "body" to another "body."¹⁷ The formula is in itself important: Man *is* a soul and owns a body, several bodies in fact.¹⁸ First of all, man has "the etheric double." Through this "etheric body" flows the streams of vitality, which keep us alive and make the use of the brain possible. The "etheric body" is the bridge from the physical world to the astral world. The *chakras* are to be found in the "etheric body;" and in spite of the often stated fact that this "etheric body" is invisible, the *chakras*, according to Leadbeater, can be seen, even if only by clairvoyance. The *chakras* are "saucer-like depressions or vortices on the surface of the "etheric double."¹⁹ They are normally glowing dully; but when awakened and vivified, they are seen as blazing whirlpools, greatly increased in size and resembling miniature suns.

From The Primary Force (or simply The Force) comes the life-stream into our world, which enters individuals through "the open mouth" of each *chakra*. The Force itself is sevenfold like the colors of the rainbow, to which it corresponds. The rainbow, therefore, is the New Age symbol par excellence, and all its seven forms operate in each of the centers. This inrush of energy is what makes life possible.

There is an interesting detail, which may be more than a detail, in the *chakra* system of Leadbeater. There is no Swadhishtana-chakra, which should be situated close to the generative organs. Leadbeater does not deny its existence; but he makes it explicit that "the arousing of such a center would be regarded as a misfortune, as there are serious dangers connected with it."²⁰ As a substitute Leadbeater and after him most theosophists operate with a "spleen center," a *chakra* which is situated "over the spleen." This center for him has to do with the remembrance of astral flights, levitation, etc. Because the Swadhishtana-chakra is missing in the system,

¹⁷*The Chakras*, p. 3.

¹⁸*The Chakras*, p. 2.

¹⁹*The Chakras*, p. 3.

²⁰*The Chakras*, p. 5, note.

the relevance of the sexual force in this connection is not understandable. Since in both Laya- and Hatha-yoga this is the master key to the whole manipulative yogic system, some ambiguity is introduced into the theosophical system. The "missing *chakra*," however, may find its most immediate explanation from the fact that this *chakra* is also missing in the Tibetan Buddhist system! It is a well-known fact that Madam Blavatsky, the founding mother of the theosophists, always claimed to have close contact with the masters from Tibet, and on this point an influence from the high North may be seen, whatever that may imply in the wider perspective.

The Esoteric System in Theosophical Freemasonry

Freemasons are a strange lot. Some are representatives of a sort of Christian deism; others, however, are clearly occult. Charles Webster Leadbeater, in *The Hidden Life of Freemasonry*,²¹ has revealed some of the inner processes of the ways in which the elements are dealt with in this type of Freemasonry.

In the chapter, "The Three Symbolical Journeys," the content matter is somewhat like a series of imaginative events. In fact, they are initiations! "They are invisible to the physical eyes, but nevertheless perfectly real, because they are made by thought."²²

Through the first door one passes out of the physical world into the next stage of life in the lowest part of the astral plane, where he is presented to something to remind him of the bondage to sensual pleasure under which he has suffered, and the fear, hatred, malice or revenge which is the result of his former life.

At the second portal the candidate is introduced to the elements of earth and water, representing the solid and liquid subplanes of the astral world. Turning to the north, the candidate makes a suitable offering to the earth elementals; and turning south, he makes a similar offering to the water elementals. These nature-spirits gather around the candidate as his bodyguard on the

²¹Adyay, Madras, 1926, cited according to the 1975 edition.

²²Adyay, p. 197.

continuing journey. The guardian of the candidate introduces him to the elementals as a blinded child of mortality, seeking immortality. This is made clear when he gives earth to earth, water to water, thus giving up his former belongings. If the candidate clings to the order of matter, he will not be able to continue on the spiritual journey. But if he is ready to shake off matter from his astral body, then he can pass to the higher levels.

At the third portal he is introduced to the elementals of the air and to the elementals of the fire, respectively, turning east and west. Once more he gives to the elementals what belongs to him, and he can then pass through as their friend. The act of offering to the elemental spirits is the act of giving up all adherence to matter, thereby purifying the astral body. Being trained while still alive, the mason after death can go through these portals rapidly to pass on to the heaven-world.

Somehow the offering to the elementals (of the four elements) is combined with worship by bowing down to the Devas of the N, S, E and W, to the zenith and to the nadir (opposite of zenith) and to the center, all in all, seven orders. The whole ritual takes place in the Masonic Temple and is part of the reenactment of the mysteries. In his description of "The Fittings of the Lodge," Leadbeater tells more about this part of the ritual:

At the initiation of candidates in the Co-Masonic Lodges. . .the four Rulers of the elements are invoked, and the consequences of that are very real and bene-ficial, little as many members of the fraternity may be aware of the fact." [These four Rulers are] "the four Devarajas. . .the four great orders of *devas* connected with the elements, earth, water, air and fire. . .[and these] great Rulers. . .are agents of the law of karma, which is always balancing and adjusting the affairs of man."²³

Those Devas are also called "Angels," and "the invoking of angelic aid" is a synonym for the offering to the elementals, who are organized in three elemental kingdoms, which are again combined in various ways with the lower and higher mental plane and the

²³Adyay, p. 79.

astral plane of mankind.²⁴ All these "powers" can be appealed to only by the rightly initiated official, who can virtually get support from "astral myrmidons," arranged by their Deva captain for the specific purpose in question. All the forces of the various planes are at his disposal at the right time.²⁵

Theosophical Freemasonry is thus one of a large number of mystery religions which have appeared all over the world in this century. They are rooted in the classical religions of the East and in Western occultism, often in the form of theosophical and anthroposophical systems.

The Esoteric System of Anthroposophy

Rudolph Steiner, the founding father of anthroposophy and also "The Christian Community," is probably today the most influential of all the New Age masters. His thoughts or imaginations are accepted far beyond the limits of his own institutions. The main idea in his system is the gnostic idea that all matter was formed as a result of the descent of the spirit, but now - after the turning point - a respiritualization is taking place. Even matter can now be redeemed since the redeeming descent of Christ has happened.

The present cosmic embodiment Steiner calls "Earth," of which our earth is just one part. After Earth follows Jupiter, which is more spiritual than Earth and corresponds with "the spiritual water" of Moon. Similarly, Steiner goes on developing his psychocosmogram, including "spiritual air" and the various planets - all in a cosmic symmetry.²⁶ The first of the macrocosmic stages Steiner calls "Saturn." In that stage very little differentiation has taken place. But gradually the etheric body was developed "on Sun," and the astral body "on Moon." Thus the physical, etheric and astral bodies of man have evolved out of and correspond to the physicality, ether and astrality outside of man.²⁷

²⁴Adyay, p. 132 f.

²⁵Adyay, p. 160 f. A myrmidon is an unquestioning follower or subordinate (ed.).

²⁶See Geoffrey Athern, *Sun at Midnight*. The Aquarian Press, p. 107f.

²⁷*Sun at Midnight*, p. 109.

Man is thus composed of all nature and all elements, but through its "I" it is of the same essence as Christ himself, though at the same time individual. The role of Ahriman and Lucifer in Steiner's think-ing cannot be described here.²⁸ Their influence, however, meant that matter was condensed too much, and this became a real problem for the serpent, which coils back towards its own tail and reverses the "fall" into matter by the spiritualizing process, the Christ movement. Salvation thus seems to consist in transcending material identifications through finding the true "I" of the objective Spirit, an understanding of salvation in which the Oriental and the Christian parts mix according to Steiner's imaginative spirit.

Steiner is normally interpreted as a breakaway from the theosophical tradition, much more at ease with the Christian tradition, even if his gnosticism is not normally acceptable to the churches. A fuller analysis of his cosmological thinking, however, makes it necessary to revise that understanding. Steiner seems to be part and parcel of the general Hindu and theosophical orientation when it comes to cosmology and its consequences in soteriology. But it is correct that he has developed the theosophical concepts and ideas in a way whereby an ethical Christian dimension comes to the forefront.

His most important and most characteristic book is probably *Die Philosophie der Freiheit*, published in 1984, but in our context his book *Hvorledes erhverves kundskab om hojere verdener*,²⁹ is more to the point. I will consequently deal mainly with this book in the following.

According to Steiner, only people who have *klarsyn*, clairvoyance, can enter the worlds beyond the senses, but such people can communicate with those who do not have this ability. He gives

²⁸But see, for instance, his booklet, *Christ in Relation to Lucifer and Ahriman*. Spring Valley, New York, 1978. 40 pp.

²⁹Published in the periodical *Lucifer-Gnosis*, 1904-1905. Since I have been unable to find the English version, *The Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, 1904, I will refer to the Danish edition.

some hints about the difficult schooling, which is necessary to develop the occult insights that he has received. He describes, for instance, the fire test, the water test and the air test, whereby the candidate is trained and tested in order to secure genuine insight. Only after such tests can the candidate enter the temple of higher knowledge. Arriving in that temple, the candidate is served the drink of forgetfulness so that he is liberated from the lower memories. After that he is served the drink of remembrance so that he can keep the secrets in his soul in such a way that they become part of himself, whereby he breathes and sees with the soul and hears and speaks with the spirit.

The most important part of the training, however, seems to be the development of the *chakras*. To understand how this is done, one has to remember the nature of "the bodies." Apart from the physical body one can develop an etherical and an astral body. The etherical body, also called "the etheric double" in relation to the physical body, is in between the physical body and the astral body. The etherical body is more or less of the same size as the physical body, while the astral body is much larger and penetrates both other bodies. The main point in the training is the necessity of moving the etherical body by moving the *chakras*. The *chakras* are seen as organs of the etherical body, and by moving the organs, one moves the body. How to move the *chakras* is not directly explained, probably because it is part of the oral instruction. But somehow yogic exercises are presupposed, exercises in meditation and concentration whereby the etherical body is moved in all directions.

The *chakras*, as described by Steiner, correspond to the classical Hathayogic "lotuses" of the body, having respectively 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16 and 2 leaves (like the phases of the moon). His description of the *chakra* with 6 leaves is interesting. Although he does not state that he speaks about the Swadhistana, the sexual *chakra*, he emphasizes the necessity of finding a balance between the sensual and the spiritual ability of man in order "to allow for sensuality." By developing this *chakra*, however, one reaches contact with powers of higher worlds, as they appear in the world of the soul.

At the other end of the spine the *chakra* with the two leaves seems to comprise both the eye *chakra* and the final *chakra* in one entity, whereby one can reach contact with spiritual creatures. The means for that is the inner light developed in that *chakra*. Steiner considers this a real new birth, not just symbolically. Only when that happens will concepts like karma and reincarnation become experiential realities; and contact with the great initiates, the spiritual masters, will become a personal reality. The whole process is developed in order to open up the true worlds, the higher worlds, from where our own world can have its relative meaning and importance. This meaning is given only to the initiates and spiritually developed persons. All the others are dependent on the insights of these spiritual leaders.

It seems that anthroposophical cosmology depends on this way of imagination. The interest in aura reading for instance gets its explanation and meaning when one understands that each *chakra* develops its own color, depending on the speed it has. By deciphering the colors, one can see in what the *chakras* suffer, and healing can be sought for accordingly. It is a well-known fact that many of the modern healers are influenced by the Steiner way of thinking, and we see part of the reason in this understanding of the *chakras*. The healing process seems to be related to the ability of the lotuses to open up to the influences from the astral world and mediate this influence via the etherical body to the physical body.

Steiner refers to Buddha as the background of these imaginations, and he even maintains that understanding of the operation of the *chakras* comes from Buddha. In this respect, however, he is dependent on classical Hatha-yoga texts from the Middle Ages, more or less in the same way as Leadbeater.³⁰

Yogic Presuppositions

It is important to notice to what degree Leadbeater and Steiner draw on the insights of Yoga, which can also be seen in the presen-

³⁰Steiner uses the form *chakram*, which could indicate his dependence on the South Indian tradition from Adyar.

tations of other occult "spirits" from the last generations. This brings us to a study of the yogic presuppositions that are found in the cos-mology or world view of the New Age in general. In the following, an attempt will be made to get down to the operative issues of Yoga. This is important not only to understand the functional nature of the cosmologies of the New Age, but also to understand the nature of the worldwide Yoga movements, which constitute a distinct and important part of the New Age religions.

Some 15-20 years ago one could see the proliferation of the Marxist "cells" as the most important international trend in contemporary society. Today, a similar but quite different proliferation of Yoga classes can be seen as the decisive phenomenon of the contemporary development of society. Yoga is never taught without a *yogin*. If it is, there can be no real Yoga. Even though the participants in the Yoga classes may not know about the *yogin* hidden behind, they are still under his influence, directly or indirectly, not the least by means of the yogic ideology, which is taken into their bodies directly by means of the various exercises. The clarification of the ultimate meaning of these exercises may be reserved for a few "illuminati," but the yogic cosmology/worldview will gradually become part of the life-style of the participants.

Raj-yogi and Hatha-yogi as the Masters of the Elements

Patanjalis Yogasutra with Vyasas commentary has had a decisive influence on most sorts of yoga, probably for 2,000 years. The cosmology of the Yogasutras are therefore of fundamental importance for our theme. We will call this sort of Yoga Raj-yoga.³¹ In the commentary to III, 43 this conclusion is drawn:

Now from the Smyama [which is the one word for the three highest levels of the eight-step Yoga ladder] upon the appearance which exists in these five elements in their five respective appearances, the visibility of the manifestation of those appearances and also the mastery over them appear. There the *yogin*, after con-

³¹The text used is by Bangali Baba, *Yogasutra of Patanjali with the Commentary of Vyasa*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.

quering the appearances of the five elements, becomes the master of the elements. On account of that mastery, the elemental powers become subordinate to his will like the cows following their own calves.³²

And to III, 44 the commentary runs like this:

The Mastery. . . means that he becomes possessed of control over all the elements and elemental powers and is not subject to control over others. The Creative Power. . . means that creation, destruction and aggregation all depend upon his will. . . As he wills, so becomes the position of the elemental powers. . . the earth does not resist the working of the Yogi's body by its hardness; he can pass even through a stone. The sticky water does not wet him. The hot fire does not burn him. The air in motion does not carry him. His body becomes concealed even within the coverless ether and he becomes invisible even to the Siddhas [perfect beings].³³

Here we have the key to a main trend in the New Age religions in which the will to secure "pan-determinism" is at the center. This is done by means of modern versions of this old Samayama scheme.

Hatha-yoga is the name of the medieval perfection of the older Raj-yoga. Because Hatha-yoga has developed the know-how of the classical yoga, to separate Hatha-yoga from Raj-yoga is meaningless. The heart of Hatha-yoga is to inform or instruct about the ways and means for developing mastery over the elements and the elements.³⁴ In *Shiva Samhita* the way of concentration is "the five-fold *dharana* forms of concentration on Vishnu, by which the command over the five elements is obtained" (III. 63). This is simply done by concentrating successively on the *chakras*. Thereby the elements cease to cause any harm to the great Yogi (III. 64).

Below we shall in some detail see how this approach is realized and what the five-fold *dharana* implies. When the *yogin* in this way

³²Bangali Baba, p. 89.

³³Bangali Baba.

³⁴In this context I shall mainly use texts from *Shiva Samhita* and use the edition translated by Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu, 3rd. ed., 1979. But similar interpretations can be found in Gherand Samhita, while Hatha-yoga Pradipika is somewhat different, since it seemingly ignores the elements.

"conquers the six wheels," that is, the *chakras*, he also conquers "all elements and the elementals" (III. 78) and in fact also conquers death.

This is enough as a short presentation of the specific Hatha-yogic approach at this stage. Now we need to turn to see how that approach becomes reality and mythology as one and the same thing.

Cosmology and Mythology in Hinduism

In analyzing *Shiva Samhita* as an operative text today, there is no doubt that the cosmological emphasis of the text is transformed into mythology by means of Kundalini symbolism. The goddess Kundalini dwells at the root or the bottom of the spine. She is like a serpent and sleeps like one; but she is the power, the *shakti* of the divinities.³⁵ Cosmologically, Mother Kundalini is the mother of the three qualities (*gunas*), *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*, which are constitutive of the totality of what exists. A passage from *Shiva Samhita* gives a clearcut presentation of the sort of micro-cosmogram which is operative:

When the *avidya* [illusions] has an excess of *tamas*, then it manifests itself as *Durga*, and the intelligence which presides over her is called *Isvara*.

When the *avidya* has an excess of *sattva*, it manifests as *Laksmi*, and the presiding intelligence is *Vishnu*.

When the *avidya* has an excess of *rajas*, it manifests as *Saraswati*, and the presiding intelligence is *Brahma*.

The fact that all the manifestations are by female deities, while the male deities preside over them, is important. But both dimensions are there and are part and parcel of the same divinities included in the cosmological totality. They are "creations," that is, they are finite. They do not exist in the real sense of this word, but come into being as manifestations of the *gunas* and as "children" of *avidya* (illusion).

Outside this illusionary world is found only the One, the great and glorious One that manifests everything. That One alone, in the

³⁵*Shiva Samhita*, V, 57ff.

real meaning of the term, "is." That One is Param Brahman or Shiva. Everything which has come into being is therefore on the way back to that One which alone is. The eternal return is the model. The Kundalini, which is catching its tail in its own mouth,³⁶ is the great symbol of this eternal return by means of the "Serpent Power."³⁷ We cannot here describe the whole set up, which makes that return possible in the yogic physiological scheme,³⁸ but the occult physio-logy is included in the following analysis even if it is not made explicit.

At any rate, the functional aspect of this cosmology is the possible arousing of Kundalini - of its being forced into the spinal cord (Sushumna) with all the risks of a wrong arising - of aiming at a regular ascent from *chakra* to *chakra* until the final solution in Sahasrara.³⁹ Passing through the *chakras*, all the powers deposited in the *chakras* are released and given back to the meditating subject, who thereby becomes more powerful and divine.

The aim of these manipulations is the achievement of power, control and command over everything else and everyone else.⁴⁰ The major instrument for this purpose is the yogic physiological syndrome as such, all the techniques combined into the One power-game. But more important than any other technique is the combination of *pranayama* (controlled breathing) and *mantra-jap* (continuous repetition of mantras). Both are related to sexual repressions. By such means persons are put under control, deities are brought under dominion, and the meditator becomes the lord of the world and the vehicle of all power.

The result of this overwhelming power is found in the exercise of the *siddhas* (supernatural powers) which play such a dominant

³⁶*Shiva Samhita*, V, 57.

³⁷Lit., "1000-spoked," lotus of 1000 petals, the topmost *chakra* (ed.).

³⁸*Shiva Samhita*, II, 8f, 12f.

³⁹At this point the techniques of the semen-mystique, the transformation of the semen into soma, elixir, amrit, etc., and the techniques whereby this is realized should have been presented.

⁴⁰*Shiva Samhita*, V.

role in both the older Patanjali-yoga and in the medieval Hatha-yoga texts (for instance *Shiva Samhita*), as well as in the New Age religions. But such *siddhas* are only results. On his way to total power the yogi should gradually become divine, equal to Brahma and Vishnu and Shiva, and this aim is in fact found beyond such powers in the final dissolution into the One, Param Brahman or Shiva.

The relation to the divinities is thus an important part of the struggle for power. The attitude to the gods and goddesses is similar to the attitude to the elements and the elementals and has to do with mastering them. The various divinities are made manageable first of all by means of yogic manipulations. The yogic subject is on his or her way towards the ultimate divinity or rather towards the ultimate divinization, and on that way the gods and goddesses can be either hindrances or assistances to one's realization. They thus have to be pacified and made instrumental to one's own purposes.

The final aim, however, is the dissolution or fusion into Shiva/Param Brahman/the One. In spite of this ultimate aim the factual emphasis in the yogic exercises is on the stations on the road to that aim, symbolically realized by means of the arousal of the Kundalini.

The hypothesis of this presentation includes the thesis that all this mythology is the decisive carrier of nearly all New Age phenomena. As a consequence of this basic reality of the New Age, we are in fact - if the hypothesis holds water - set in a very peculiar situation as missiologists *anno domini* 1990.

Mission to the Lost Sheep

Churches either are growing or dying; hence church growth is an important and necessary dimension of the life of churches. In fact, churches *are* growing. At the beginning of this century, by far the largest part of Christianity was found in the northern hemisphere, but now it is turned upside down. By far the majority of Christians are now found in the southern hemisphere. But church growth is not the only form of mission. Mission is also, and not the

least, the breaking out of the old and the breaking into the completely new *oikoi*, new worlds of human life and reality. That does not happen just by growth, for growth means an enlargement of what already exists. Mission in this second sense requires something new to come into existence, as when the Christian churches came into existence in the Hellenistic world by Paul's mission, while the growing church is more in the line of Peter, the apostle of church growth.

The new world of the New Age and the new religious movements needs a new type of mission, which implies a breaking out and a breaking into a world that is quite different from the present world of nearly all the churches. This need is most clearly seen when one deals with the multitudes of young people who as rucksack-people are on the move all over Asia. Because this mass movement, comprised of many hundreds of thousands of young people, cannot be reached by the existing churches, a new mission has to be formed and has been formed by the Dialog Center International (DCI) - an organization based in Aarhus, Denmark, with an international committee and staff - that trains and sends volunteers to India, Nepal and Thailand.

Since in all Asian cities one finds international English speaking congregations, in which people congregate from many nations and denominations, the DCI has become an international English speak-ing mission to the young people who belong to the mass-movement of travelers and pilgrims to Mother Earth. The DCI serves its population in prisons, hospitals, or psychiatric clinics, those who are "shipwrecked" and in real trouble. But the DCI also serves the ordinary youngsters who flock to the Hindu or Buddhist *ashrama* or monasteries, where they are Hinduized or made Buddhist without ever really registering what happened to them. In such a process someone necessarily serves as a catalyst. Although the DCI neither can nor will hinder people's becoming Hindus or Buddhists, the DCI in dialog with such people will promote an awareness about the real issues that are at stake in such a process.

The DCI is a Christian movement. As such, the DCI is obviously trans-confessional or even post-confessional, including without difficulties Pentecostals, Roman Catholics, and all the variations from main-stream Christianity in the same teams and missions. Its volunteers are genuine missionaries, who take their Christian stance as a presupposition to understand what happens within the various religious and new-religious movements that offer themselves to the international youth-culture and its many representatives on Khaosan Road in Bangkok, in Thamel in Kathmandu, at McLeod Ganj in Dharmasala, on the beach in Goa, in the temples of Bodh Gaya, or in all the other places where the same sort of people convene and assemble on their eternal traveling. The DCI wants to be a Christian presence in all such places and a clear-cut Christian witness to all those who search for the meaning of life.

The DCI also wants to promote a serious feed-back to the Christian congregations at home and in the country of their service, for this mission to a new culture and a new people is highly relevant for the life of the growing churches, which tend to become centered on themselves and their specific world. The DCI consequently has chosen always to work *in* and *with* the churches, but never *under* the churches. That is an article whereby its mission stands or falls.

A New Missiology

Since 1961, when the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council were united, church and mission have gradually integrated. "The whole church with the whole Gospel to the whole world" was the theme for the WCC in the early sixties and was picked up by the Lausanne movement in the eighties. To a large extent today missionary societies have accepted the concept that their job is to assist churches in their mission as growing churches. In the same way, the Lausanne movement has accepted church growth as a special interest, but on a massive scale.

The church has become the center of missiological thinking that theoretically adheres to the *missio dei* theology, but has in fact

focused upon an ecclesiology that has church growth at the center, following the Petrine model. There is nothing wrong in that if, at the same time, the Pauline model is also functioning; that is true, however, only in rare cases. When it does happen, it occurs with a "bad missiological conscience" and more by instinct than by deliberate planning. A new missiology is, therefore, needed as a supplementary model for contemporary mission, not as a substitution of it. The newness is found especially in the following areas.

1. It deliberately promotes free missionary engagement anywhere in the world *in* and *with* but not *under* the existing churches. This mission is loyal and fair to the mission based on church growth (Paul in relation to Peter) but is not bound by it.

2. It deliberately takes up as its target populations the centers of the great world religions, the "Areopagus," so to speak. First of all, this new missiology calls a spade a spade and discards the cosmetic descriptions of the world religions for their factual and contemporary realities. In other words, the hard and often brutal face of human religions must be confronted without as well as within Christendom. Religion has to be recognized as the worst and the best products of human civilization; for the triune God is at work within all religions, not just as an affirmative, but also as a confrontative presence. *Religionskritik* is thus the most important form of critique and the necessary basis for all religious dialog.

3. The new missiology is comprehensive in its factual engagement. It will not choose between the WCC or the Lausanne approach. Neither is the whole; and beyond both, new missionary mass movements, such as Youth with a Mission, Youth for Christ, Operation Mobilization and similar movements, are factual expression of the missionary zeal that was and is the expression of the Christian *specificum*.

4. The new missiology is consequently a typical *inter*-missiology, which is inter-racial, inter-national, inter-confessional and inter-religious. Such a missiology by nature transcends the trenches

built by people to protect themselves, who have, in fact, trapped themselves.

5. This new missiology can become a real challenge only if and when it tries out in praxis its own theories, because missiology can never come to life as a mere spectator. It has to be an actor as well. Doing missiology, therefore, is as important as doing theology. Some modern missiologists seem to believe that the purpose of missiology is to study and reflect on "third world theology." But that is a fatal mistake unless the missiology in question comes out of the third world. The so-called first world needs more than any other part of the world a genuine missiology related to its own praxis, as well as to missiology in general.

Because the situation of the mission to the first world has become most critical, a conscious effort in its own right is needed. The sad fact is, however, that nearly all financial and personnel resources from the first world go to the third world. Few resources are available for inventing and realizing mission to the populations in the northern hemisphere. There are many excellent missionary societies, but they have no mandate - or believe, at any rate, that they have no mandate - to be missionaries at home. The actual organizations that operate at the home-base have missed the vision of mission to the factual contemporary world with its religious upheavals, first of all in the form of the New Age and other new religious phenomena.

On the other hand, the missionary societies are not able to operate freely in the areas to which they are bound by tradition and history, for they have "given over" their authority to the "sister churches." Today the societies are just handmaids of the churches. Although this upside down dependence has necessary and fine dimensions, as a whole it has come to mean an incredible immobilization of the world-wide mission of the church and a tragic degeneration of many classical ventures and model projects. The nationalization of the Christian world mission, and that is what it has come to mean, has done away with the necessary international perspective of world mission. The missions that have pledged to operate in mission only *under* the local churches are

thereby seriously hampered, and in such ways that do not serve the genuine interests of the local churches.

An example will illustrate the dilemma. Often, when excellent personnel leave their country as refugees, they cannot serve their home church; that is part of the dilemma. They offer their service to other churches abroad; but because these churches are identified with their specific bases, they will normally not be able to welcome such offers. The refugees will then try the missionary societies, whose staff will welcome the offer, but will soon have to withdraw any positive response. The reason is that the "sister churches" with whom they cooperate and *under* whom they work will not accept such foreigners on their staffs. They may welcome Western staff but not staff from churches very close to themselves! Hence, the mission societies cannot act as they want to act to engage the refugee in their mission because they are vetoed by the local churches, who will not offer a good position to such a foreigner.

Therefore, it is not factually correct to say that missions today do not make a distinction between "home mission" and "foreign mission." Missions today are more entrenched than ever in national and confessional or denominational ghettos. All over the world there are, for instance, more Lutheran churches and missions than ever! The churches of the southern hemisphere are even more denomination-oriented than the churches in the northern hemisphere.

The most striking feature of present day missions and missiology is its nearly total neglect of the factual world missions of the world religions. The world missions of Christianity and those of Buddhism and Hinduism in various forms bypass one another! They practically never meet and are ignorant about one another. This is the most urgent task of inter-missiology: to bring the parallel missions together in an enlightened dialog, in which both parties acknowledge and challenge one another in honesty and with the will both to learn and to teach.

Between the Scylla of syncretism and the Charybdis⁴¹ of fundamentalism, a sound inter-missiology can steer the ship towards its real goal: the *parousia* and the Kingdom of God.

Response and Epilogue

Robert Lee⁴²

Even though Johannes Aagaard's article, actually a prolegomenon for a book, was reduced to a Hayama-size paper (by the editors at his request), it remains a remarkable essay. It at once isolates an urgent missiological issue for the '90s - "the mission to the lost sheep" - that has been largely ignored in the missiological thinking of this past generation. Further, his analysis of the religion of this New Age movement not only contextualizes, that is, provides a missio-logical approach that is both theological (a "natural theology") and practical (a dialogue), but in the process he offers a pungent critique of contemporary missiology with suggestions for moving beyond its present limitations.

The New Age Youth Movement

Aagaard correctly draws attention to a vast youth movement ("the lost sheep") that is alienated from Western civilization and its residual Christendom culture. This youth movement came into prominence in the United States in the '60s and '70s with two

⁴¹The Charybdis is a whirlpool on the coast of Sicily opposite the rock Scylla on the Italian coast.

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tendencies. One was a radical critique of the structures of western society accompanied by a commitment to direct political action, like that of the SDA (Society for Democratic Action), that sometimes became violent. This part of the youth movement (with its parallels in the Japanese Zengakuren) has, except for minority groups, largely col-lapsed into establishment society. This group, however, did in time spawn an ideology and worldview that continues to be reflected in the political theologies of liberation theology in South American and other third world countries.

The second tendency of the youth movement was a rejection of western culture and society that took the form of withdrawal from society to create the so-called "hippie" communes, accompanied by the quest for a new identity, usually in the direction of cosmic consciousness. This group, less threatening to the established political order, has been largely ignored by society as a whole and by the church in particular. This movement, as Aagaard points out, has rapidly expanded and become international, as today hundreds of thousands of young people from western countries (including some from Japan) are in constant pilgrimage, primarily in Asia, searching for the roots of their new-found religion of the Age of Aquarius (to replace the religion of the Age of Pisces). This group, too, as Aagaard has delineated, has created its own "theology" for the New Age.

New Age Cosmology and Soteriology

In Part II, a difficult but rewarding section, Aagaard describes what he called in his lectures the "pizza effect"⁴³ in the New Age religion, namely, a process by which the New Age movement dressed up ancient and medieval versions of Indian Tantric Yoga religion with the "toppings" of the modern occult interpretations of theosophy, Freemasonry and anthroposophy to create a contemporary esoteric soteriology. To provide a contextual framework for understanding this new esoteric/occult soteriology, Aagaard

⁴³Originally, in southern Italy "pizza" was a simple piece of dough baked without toppings. After the toppings were added in the New World, "pizza" became famous internationally as an Italian specialty.

suggests that although the Indian *kundalini* mythology is the carrier of this tradition, an Indo-European elemental cosmology is presupposed in this theology.

In western thought an elemental cosmology based upon the four elements - fire, water, earth and air - has had a long history, beginning before Aristotle in ancient Greece from the fourth century B.C. and continuing into the seventeenth century A.D. In China five elements - fire, water, earth, wood and metal - were used also for a cosmology that supported a soteriology (of mortality). Aagaard argues that this elemental cosmology is universal and is found in all the religions in Japan (Shingon), Tibet, India, ancient Greece, Europe and, with a variation, in China. Hence he concludes that because these elements "represent the natural *stasis* of life, which we all share," and are a part of God's creation, they "can serve as the legitimate basis for a universal natural theology," "the point of contact" for dialogue with the pilgrims of the New Age.

In India Tantric (esoteric) Yoga also has a long history from the fifth century A.D. in Hindu, Buddhist and, to a limited degree, Jain religions and is practiced today in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Theologically, Tantric Hinduism teaches that the Supreme (nondual) Reality is also the Bisexual Primordial Being depicted as Shiva (male) - representing pure, passive, transcendent consciousness - and *shakti* (female) - representing divine creative energy or mental activity. The truth of the absolute non-duality of the universe (the macrocosm) is to be realized in the human body (the microcosm) in the union of Shiva/shakti. Mythically, the body represents the uni-verse with the spinal cord as the famous Mt. Meru; the three nerve connections along the left, right and middle of the spine as the three sacred rivers in India; and the breathing process as the course of time. Physiologically, a tube runs from the bottom of the spine to the base of the skull past the six centers (*chakra*) of increasing psychic power. At the base of the spine lies the dormant female force (*shakti*), coiled like a serpent, called *kundalini*. The purpose of Laya-yoga exercises is to awaken *kundalini* and force her to rise progressively to the top *chakra*, *sahasrara* (pictured as a 1000-petaled lotus) to unite with Shiva,

the male force. This union is described as the "transcendently blissful realization of supreme non-duality" (NEB 1: 812).

Although not developed by Aagaard, this *kundalini* mythology, when understood theologically, has a remarkable similarity to Neoplatonic mysticism, which has entered the Christian tradition through such influential works as Augustine's *Confessions*. Neoplatonic philosophy holds

that there is only one reality - according to which the universe exists as a series of emanations or degenerations from absolute unity. From the transcendent One arises self-conscious mind or spirit; from the mind comes soul or life; and the soul is the intermediary between the spheres of spirit and sense. Matter is the lowest and last product of supreme unity; and since the One is also the real and the good, the potentiality of evil is identified with unformed matter [like a dormant *kundalini* ?] as the point of departure from the One. Evil itself is thus the least real of all things, being simply the deprivation or absence of good. Neoplatonic mysticism relies on the principle that the inward is superior to the outward: to reach the good, which is the real, one must "return into" oneself; for it is the spirit at the heart of man's inmost self that links him to the ultimate unity (NEB 2:365).

A few scholars have suggested that Plotinus (d. 270 A.D.), the central figure in neo-platonism, was taught by an Indian, Ammonius Saccas (d. 242 A.D.), who was the key figure in bringing Indian philosophical traditions, such as the Upanishads, into contact with the Greek intellectual traditions (McNeill, p. 416).

The New Age religions add to this esoteric soteriology the modern interpretations and occult practices of theosophy and the later developments from Freemasonry and anthroposophy. Theosophy, too, as a mystic religious philosophy has a long history in the western (Greek) tradition and reveals a remarkable similarity to some Asian traditions, such as the Upanishads, as suggested above. Most scholars, however, have argued for a parallel but independent development until modern times. In Madam Blavatsky (1831-1891) and through her Theosophical Society (founded in 1875), the two streams clearly merge. One of the society's controversial claims is that there is a brotherhood of Great Masters who have perfected themselves and are directing the spiritual evolution of humanity.

They assert that the universe is evolving through seven planes, from the physical, emotional or astral planes progressively to the final divine plane. Mankind is also evolving in the same sevenfold progression, governed by the laws of *karma* and reincarnation. As described by Aagaard, this small group has had tremendous impact, functioning as a catalytic agent in both the twentieth century revival of Asian Buddhism and Hinduism and the promotion of western interest in eastern thought.

Dialogue: Three Issues

Dialogue for Aagaard is not reduced to finding the common points of affirmation, but rather "the points of contact which are found in a genuine natural theology [and which] are first of all points of contrast" and confrontation. Using chapter one of Romans, Aagaard shows that Paul's "natural theology" is one of confrontation because the elements have been perverted by human sin and finally divinized and worshipped. Dialogue is first of all a confrontation "to promote an awareness about the real issues" among the "lost sheep...who flock to Hindu or Buddhist ashrams or monasteries, where they are Hinduized or made Buddhist without really register-ing what happened to them."

Dialogue is put into practice by a corps of volunteers trained at DCI and sent to Bangkok, Katmandu, Dharmasala, Goa, Bodh Gaya and other places. We would love to listen in on this dialogue, but beyond confrontation the paper does not delineate the meaning or process of dialogue. We do have hints along the way: (1) that natural theology provides "a language for communicating the Gospel, for translating [Christian] soteriology into a meaningful cosmological frame of reference"; (2) that a sacramental theology "by definition consists of *verbum plus elementum*" in which "the necessary unity of soteriology and cosmology is fixed"; (3) that "the church is called the mystery" where "when God's word unites God's elements" is celebrated; and 4) that in St. Francis' hymn. "To the Sun," the elements properly worship God as creator and savior - a possibility because the incarnation means a salvation "in the form of a new creation."

One would expect Aagaard's wide-ranging analysis and interpretation of the New Age religion to be provocative and to raise fundamental issues. Here I will limit myself to three sets of questions: (1) on internal consistency - the possibility of a natural theology, the basis for dialogue, given Aagaard's theological stance; (2) on the meaning of soteriology - in what sense is the New Age religion salvific? and (3) on a comparative note - the universality of his elemental cosmology for the interpretation of the new religious movements of the New Age in the light of Richard Young's paper on a new religion in Japan.

A Natural Theology?

The first question - on the possibility of a natural theology based on an elemental cosmology - immediately becomes problematic when Aagaard, following Pauline theology, insists that the elementals are religious aberrations. Can one really develop a meaningful "corrected" Indian cosmology for communicating Christian soteriology? The route of a sacramental theology is suggestive in unifying soteriology and cosmology. For Aagaard the mystery of this unity is disclosed in the church, which is actualized in the eucharistic fellowship and celebration of God's Word uniting with God's elements - *verbum* and *elementum*.

Verbum here cannot mean any *mantra* but the divine manifestation of God in Christ Jesus. *Elementum* is more ambiguous. One could interpret Aagaard's statement that "the divine word assumes human and elemental reality in our cosmos" in a Barthian sense, in which all that is known is finally revealed in Jesus Christ, who actualizes our true humanity, which is the meaning of the idea of "a new creation." Obviously, this route cannot easily lead to a "natural" theology, but does develop into a powerful revealed doctrine of the unity of creation and soteriology, as Karl Barth has shown.

There is another option for understanding a sacramental theology that comes to mind because of Aagaard's own stance as a confessing Lutheran. One could follow Luther, himself, in his neoplatonic understanding of the presence of the divine in the

sacramental elements. "Luther said that God is nearer to everything than anything is to itself. He is fully in every grain of sand, but the whole world cannot comprehend him. He transcends everything finite, although being in it" (Tillich, p. 78). This mode of thinking moves in the ontological direction of *coincidentia oppositorum*; namely, in everything finite the infinite is present, and in the same way the finite is in the infinite. This mystical type of thinking is close to, if not compatible with, much of Asian thought and the esoteric soteriology of the New Age religions. In his presentations, however, Aagaard did not move in this direction.

The problems of developing a "natural" elemental theology become even more severe when we note that Aagaard already (1) rejects the worldview of the New Age as built "on the basis of an astrological fiction," (2) rejects the occult soteriology of theosophy, Freemasonry and anthroposophy, (3) sees the Hindu cosmology as falsified by the *kundalini* myth, and (4) interprets all of this in Pauline terms as religious degradation.

While I find Aagaard's case against the New Age worldview, occult soteriology and *kundalini* mythology persuasive, I should point out a more positive interpretation by those who seek a "natural" theology, namely, (1) that the New Age worldview represents historical reality accurately as the final rejection of the residual Christendom worldview and an entrance into a post-Christian or post-modern era,⁴⁴ (2) that occult soteriology does represent an attempt to discover transcendence in a less dualistic mode, and (3) that the *kundalini* mythology may preserve a valid understanding of the problem of the integration of body, mind and nature found in Indian religion. All of these solutions are also fraught with severe difficulties. In his presentations Aagaard has wisely avoided the "Scylla of syncretism," but has not shown how he can avoid "the Charybdis of fundamentalism." Dialogue has

⁴⁴Aagaard's view of the meaning of the New Age and my understanding of the "post-modern" era will be pursued in a forthcoming publication of the Tokyo Mission Research Institute.

been reduced to a confrontation that immediately leads to a parting of the ways on questions of cosmology and soteriology.

Toward a Post-Modern Soteriology

Theologians and sociologists enjoy coining phrases such as "post-liberal," "post-Christendom," "post-Christian," and "post-modern" (each with a slightly different meaning,⁴⁵ to describe the contemporary and/or coming historical reality. In simpler language, the modern or post-modern era can be depicted theologically as one of a loss of radical transcendence or a collapse of metaphysical dualism, which has dominated orthodox western theology. In Tillich's terms, "the modern mind overleaps the strict dualism of a divine sphere in heaven and a human sphere on earth which developed in the ancient world. The divine is not in some place alongside of the world or above the world, but is present in everything human and natural" (Tillich, p. 78). For those of us who work in Asian countries such as Japan, which have not developed a philosophy of metaphysical dualism, modernity may be a blessing that we have yet to appreciate or understand.

The significance of the New Age movement is that it is representative of a post-modern culture, of a movement that has rejected western culture based upon Christendom's presuppositions, that is not tied to the particularities of the religious traditions of either the West or the East, and that is on the move to discover the best of both. On the way, as Aagaard points out, there are many charlatans and misguided people, but as a whole the movement does indicate a new era in human history. The New Age movement represents a people whose loyalties now transcend the particular nation-states from which they arise and, correlatively, whose faith

⁴⁵For usage, see George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Theology in a Postliberal Age*; Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Religion in a Post-Christian Era*; Harry Harootunian, *Postmodernism in Japan*. My use of "Christendom" as equivalent to western Christian culture follows that of the 16th century Anabaptists, who saw the "fall" of the church in the "Constantinian synthesis." For the history of the Anabaptists, see George Williams, *The Radical Reformation*.

also transcends the limitations of the theologies and ideologies of those nation-states. On the road they seek the "unknown god," who is not limited to the "nations" but is truly universal (or "international").

The New Age movement, of course, is just as parochial as many other new religious movements, as the Japanese are quick to point out. (See the discussion on Mahikari below.) It, too, is a historical phenomenon, a consequence of the alienation of many young people in a post-Christendom West. In sociological terms it represents a group (which has become a movement) who have discovered that "expressive individualism,"⁴⁶ the hallmark of the modern self-understanding, in the end is a "beleaguered, empty and minimal self." These "true seekers," the harbingers of the future, need to be taken seriously because in many ways they are dealing with what Aagaard calls "the real issue. . . .What is this life all about? What is the nature of this world?. . . And how do we exist in it?" Esoteric soteriology, at the least, may be asking the correct questions, even if we do not like the answers given.

Finding a point of contact, such as the elemental cosmology proposed by Aagaard, is a beginning, but dialogue must go further. As Aagaard points out, "the most urgent task of inter-missiology [is] an enlightened dialogue in which both parties acknowledge and challenge one another in honesty and with the will both to learn and to teach." Here, I would like to stress the need "to learn." Beyond the contextual framework of an elemental cosmology is the issue of "contextualization," a process of listening and learning. As suggested by a third-world liberation theologian, the late Orlando Costas, quoting Juan Luis Segundo (p. 8), such a process requires the questions arising out of dialogue to be "rich enough, general enough and basic enough to force the theological community to change its customary conception of life, death, knowledge, society, politics and the world in general." Correlatively, the responses to

⁴⁶For an important analysis of American individualism, see the recent study by Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and commitment in American Life*.

the new questions require changing the customary way of interpreting Scripture and doing theology and missions.

Dialogue in the context that Aagaard has proposed cannot stop at the level of an elemental cosmology or a new natural theology because of the limitations Aagaard, himself, following the Apostle Paul, has specified. To go further, we need to accept Aagaard's prophetic judgment in announcing a new era in human history, symbolized by the New Age movement. Then, too, we must join this pilgrimage, not in the sense of a pilgrimage to Mecca as in Islam, but in the sense of a return to the "Old Age," in this context the age of the "renouncer" (*sanyasin*) in ancient India with its parallels in the ancient Near East and China during the first millennium B.C., the so-called Axial Age" (Jaspers, p.1). The renunciation of a culture or civilization is not new in human history, as the *sanyasin* in India, the sage philosophers in China and the Hebrew prophets in Israel and their successors have revealed. Perhaps, in our new age the specific critique of the New Age movement with its "bias" against Christianity needs to be accepted as a prophetic judgment. What the New Age movement finally seeks cannot be limited to a new "cosmology," however necessary that may be, but must include the issues that Paul raised at his Areopagus - the problems of soteriology - or in terms of this New Age, what the meaning of life is, how one can save the badly fragmented self, and how one can integrate body, mind, spirit/soul *and* nature.

For this coming dialogue, Aagaard has already inaugurated a movement. Here I note several necessary conditions that he has laid out and request a more specific material content. First, the necessary conditions for dialogue are important: DCI members (1) receive special training, (2) demonstrate concern for the human condition of the New Age members in their service to the ones who are "ship-wrecked," (3) function as "catalysis" to preserve the voluntariness of faith, and (4) individually have a "Christian stance as a presupposition to understand what happens within the various religious and neo-religious movements." On material content I suggest that beyond cosmology the issue of soteriology can and should be raised in terms of the questions of the *kundalini* myth

(assuming that Aagaard's earlier analysis is correct), for Christians, too, have a "serpent" problem. For since at least the time of Augustine, Christians have inherited a tradition that is badly distorted,⁴⁷ a legacy that western Christendom has yet to come to terms with.⁴⁸ We need to learn more from Aagaard and the DCI to discover the questions being asked and the answers being proposed in the dialogue along the road to Katmandu.

Elemental Cosmology Versus Shinto Mythology

On the third question regarding the universality of the elemental cosmology as the master key to understanding the new religious movements of the New Age, Richard Young's paper on the Japanese new "new religion," Mahikari, offers an instructive comparison. Although Young does not systematically discuss the cosmology of the Mahikari religion, he does provide enough information to link clearly this movement to the indigenous (Shinto) strand of Japanese religion, rather than to any Indian (Buddhist) or Chinese (Confucian-Taoist) derived traditions.

Shinto as a codified tradition is historically late with beginnings in the *Kojiki* (712 A.D.), but not clearly differentiated from the Buddhist tradition until the late Tokugawa period by such figures as Motoori Norinaga (1730 - 1801). This Shinto worldview differs sharply from that of the "great world religions," which are all in some sense universal. Further, the latter are all characterized in some degree as world-denying religions or in Aagaard's language, "the *stasis* of this world is unsatisfactory." Hence, the world religions are all also soteriological religions. Shinto, however, may be better understood as an ethnic or national religion and, in contrast, is a this-world (i.e., Japan) affirming religion.

In Shinto cosmology the world is still one (monistic); thus the divine-human continuity is pervasive. The gods (*kami*) are manifold - noble, lowly, strong, weak, benevolent, or malevolent. They

⁴⁷For a fine historical study, see Elaine Pagel, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent*.

⁴⁸For a Roman Catholic critique of the Augustinian heritage, see Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*.

are not ultimate or transcendent like Yahweh, nor omnipotent or omniscient like the Christian God; but they are the channels for manifestations, the production of all things human, animal, or nature. The chief characteristic of the major *kami* is *musubi*, the mysterious, generative and harmonizing power. As described in the earlier texts, "man is a child of the *kami*," or in other terms, life is *kami*-given. Human beings, although divine in nature, are seen as small, weak and totally dependent upon the higher powers of the *kami*, who are seen as parents or ancestors. In fact, everything is due to the will of a *kami*, including both good and evil. Evil is not sin in the Christian sense, but an impurity that can be readily cleansed. Human nature is seen as "natural" or pure and simple; and human relations focus upon sensitivities to feelings, to the giving and the receiving of pleasure. Here (in Motoori Norinaga) there is an explicit rejection of both the Buddhist and/or Confucian cosmology and social order, which are seen as "unnatural" and disharmony.⁴⁹

From a western and from Aagaard's elemental cosmology perspectives, this Japanese worldview may seem particularistic and even parochial, but from the Japanese perspective there is no hesitation to assert both its particularity and its universality. That its focus on technique (and not soteriology) seems incompatible to a western or modern understanding of religion, as reflected throughout Young's paper, misses the point of the nativistic worldview of Japanese religion. For the Japanese, (western) modernization, including its emphasis on "universality," belongs in the realm of "western technology" in contrast to Asian or Japanese culture. The extension of the Japanese non-dualistic worldview into the modern or secularized worldview, in which radical transcendence has collapsed into this world, is not only compatible but "natural" for such nativistic religious traditions as the Mahikari. In this worldview the *kami* function well because they are world-

⁴⁹For an understanding of Shinto as developed out of late Tokugawa, see the excellent study entitled *Motoori Norinaga, 1730 - 1801*, by Matsumoto Shigeru, originally a Harvard dissertation, with comparisons to Old Testament concepts.

affirming, offering needed human benefits (and not unneeded western soteriology). That the Mahikari have drawn positive response in African states with a more archaic than a world-denying religious heritage should be no surprise and should raise further the question of the universality of the post-Christendom worldview reflected in Aagaard's understanding of the New Age.

Toward a New Missiology

Aagaard has also provided us with a pungent critique of contemporary missiology and mission practice. He points out that mission, whether the World Council of Churches (WCC) or the Lausanne version, has been reduced to church growth, with the consequence that the missionary societies have been further reduced to "just handmaids" of the local or national churches. This "nationalization of the Christian world mission. . .has done away with the necessary international perspective of world mission" and has brought about "an incredible immobilization of the worldwide mission of the church today." Further, this church growth missiology has "missed the vision of mission to the factual contemporary world. . .first of all in the form of the New Age and other new religious phenomena." In short, "the so-called first world needs more than any other part of the world a genuine missiology related to its own praxis;" that is, "a conscious effort in its own right is needed."

Although missionaries in Japan may disagree in detail with Aagaard's analysis of contemporary missiology and mission practice, most would readily agree with his sharp critique of the shortcomings of the contemporary mission that has brought about an incredible immobilization of the worldwide mission of the church today. Many would also respond positively to his proposed solutions.

Aagaard does not reject the church-growth missiology, which he identifies with the Petrine model of missions, but rather insists

that this approach must be complemented by a Pauline model,⁵⁰ which is characterized by "the free missionary engagement anywhere in the world *in* and *with* but not *under* the existing churches." In this way, the new missiology becomes "comprehensive in its factual engagement" and will allow new para-church mission organizations, such as his DCI and other similar groups, to "target population centers of the great world religions." As Aagaard states:

The most striking feature of present day missions and missiology is its nearly total neglect of the factual world missions of the world religions. . . This is the most urgent task of inter-missiology: to bring the parallel missions [of Buddhists and Hindus] together in an enlightened dialog. . .

For Aagaard, "the new missiology is consequently a typical INTER-missiology, which is inter-racial, inter-national, inter-confessional and inter-religious." Such a missiology becomes real when it comes to life in praxis. "Doing missiology is an important, at least, as doing theology."

A Japanese Response to the "New Missiology"

Although on the Hayama Seminar program Joshua Tsutada spoke first, the clarity of his vision for the mission of the Japanese evangelical church is sufficient to warrant constructing a Japanese position on contemporary missiology and mission practice for comparison purposes. At first glance, the two positions appear to be polar opposites.

Whereas Aagaard argues for "free missionary engagement. . . *in* and *with* but not *under* the existing churches," Tsutada describes this approach as like one "in the days of the Judges when 'everyone did according to what seemed to be good in his own eyes.'" He insists "that the whole of Christian activities and mission work should be related in such a way that the church is the center of the whole." Whereas Aagaard sees that the transfer of authority to "the

⁵⁰Aagaard has argued this differentiation in his essay, "The Double Apostolate," in the first issue of the DCI related magazine, *Areopagus*.

sister-churches," which led to their "nationalization," has resulted in an "incredible immobilization of the whole worldwide mission of the church," Tsutada sees just the reverse. He sees the necessity of the "de-westernization of the church culture among the national churches," which in Japan led to a reorganization of the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA) and the formation of a stronger national evangelical church to enable the church in Japan to fulfill its missionary role in the world and in Asia in particular. Further, in powerful, nation-state language, he asks rhetorically: "Is it not that God has been preparing this nation [Japan] to be stronger economically than otherwise in order that the church therein should carry out God's task of expansion of His Kingdom and building up the churches of Jesus Christ all around the world?"

Aagaard, on the one hand, suggests that the solution to the "incredible immobilization" is to leapfrog over the problem by developing the older mission-society structure into an international missionary community, which is inter-confessional or "trans-confessional or even post-confessional, including Pentecostals, Roman Catholics and all the variations from mainstream Christianity in the same team and missions." Tsutada, on the other hand, sees that the earlier confusion and disunity of the Japanese evangelical church were the historical consequences of the work of mission societies and independent missionaries "outside of the church," whose "works have been supported, not by the units of local churches or denominations, but rather by numbers of individual Christians who personally chose to support certain works." Thus, para-church organizations that literally work "around or beside the church" and Christian movements which have no basis in nor relationship to the church, such as the AD 2000 and the Lausanne movement," are problematic. Tsutada concludes that "the church in Japan has now come to the realization that the whole matter can be set right when everything is done having the church at the center."

These sharp differences in the positions of Aagaard and Tsutada may be seen as two sides of the same coin viewed from different historical perspectives, which provide different contexts and require

different strategies. Aagaard stands historically in a Christendom (Europe) or a post-Christendom era in which the church has yet to rediscover its mission. In that context, mission societies in the past creatively fulfilled the function of missions in place of the churches. In the case of the DCI, Aagaard has added dialogue with a double-edged function to the "lost sheep" and also "to the Christian congregations at home and in the country of their service." Aagaard vigorously justifies his missiological strategy with the biblical example of the differentiation (not the separation) of the double apostolate of Peter and Paul. Further, he indicates that the historically new reality of the New Age youth movement requires not only a special mission strategy but also a rethinking of the general theory and practice of contemporary missiology, which has failed to meet the needs of the New Age.

In contrast, Tsutada stands historically in a "pre-Christian" world in which the life or death of the church is synonymous with active evangelism or the absence of evangelism; or, as Aagaard himself has stated, "churches either are growing or dying." In other terms, the fracturing (or even the differentiation) of the local church from its mission not only hinders the growth of the young church into maturity but in fact threatens the integrity and life of the local churches in a non-Christian world. Tsutada finds support for his position in contemporary missiology, which has declared that the age of the "modern missionary paradigm," created by William Carey and the mission societies, has ended.⁵¹ He justifies his church-centered approach with a contemporary *missio dei* theology, in which the mission of God is being fulfilled in the body of Christ, of which the Japanese church is a branch. In quasi-Old Testament terms he, too, sees a new historical reality in that the "Great Capitalist God - who looks around the different parts of the world at each point in history and grants wealth and other blessings to the

⁵¹For a historical discussion, see Wilbert R. Shenk, "Mission in Transition: 1972 - 1987" and his unpublished essay, "The Modern Missionary paradigm and its Transformation" (along with Aagaard's essays) in a forthcoming Tokyo Mission Research Institute publication.

people and nations that do his work of missions" - has in these last days passed the "man-date of heaven" first from the British to the American and now to the Japanese nation.

An attempt to resolve or reconcile immediately these divergent positions would be artificial, since they are descriptive of the state of missiological thinking and practice today. The difference, however, may be less in theory and more in practice because the two positions do reflect different historical realities. Although in theory Aagaard and Tsutada both hold to a *missio dei* theology of mission, the two positions not only diverge but also reflect internal inconsistencies.

For example, although Tsutada speaks of "in the beginning was the church around the world," "the holy catholic Church as the body of Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the church," of which the Japanese church is a branch, in practice this "church," like the WCC, is reduced to a membership status, to member-groups of WEF, EFA, and JEA - hardly a "holy catholic church." Tsutada recognizes this issue on his agenda of unfinished business: "3. The liberal churches: their place in relation to the church, if any." Secondly, in his paper there is a too easy conflation of the understanding of the church in Japan with a "Japanese church" in Aagaard's sense of the "nationalization" of the local churches. Tsutada's definition of the unique role of the Japanese church in terms of the economic hegemony of the Japanese nation-state raises several unresolved historical issues. Again Tsutada is partially aware of these concerns in his agenda: "8. . .the matter of war crimes" of the Japanese soldiers in Asia during the Pacific War. Tsutada, in his use of Old Testament history fails to recognize that religion and national polity became clearly differentiated in Israel's exilic and post-exilic experience and reaffirmed in Jesus' teaching ("render to Caesar. . .to God"). Further, in the New Testament one's religious identity as a Christian is prior to that of political citizenship. The fusion of religion and nation-state ideology or identities in both the history of western Christendom and recent Japanese history (in the religious ideology of the East

Asian Co-prosperity Program) should be instructive to emerging churches in a pre-Christian environment.

Since Tsutada's and Young's papers are reviewed by other respondents elsewhere in this report, here I will add only a comparative observation in the context of the three papers. Tsutada and Young not only represent the church in Japan but also two polarized factions of the church - the JEA and NCC related churches. With the emergence of a united evangelical church in the restructuring of JEA, the two factions face a "crisis" in the Japanese sense of the danger of greater polarization or opportunity for reconciliation. Here we need to learn from Tsutada's theology and Aagaard's missiology. From Tsutada's ecclesiology we need to proclaim: "first there is the holy catholic church as the body of Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the church. . .then a part of the body is the Asian church, and in that part is a Japanese church." Aagaard's proposal for a new INTER-missiology then offers a constructive approach toward a new ecclesiology, which is not only inter-racial and inter-national but also inter-confessional and inter-religious. In this context Aagaard's efforts to maintain the autonomy of his missionary movement needs to recognize the theological concerns raised by Tsutada about "who is the Head of the church," and the practical questions about the relationship of his movement to local churches. In this process there is need for serious rethinking to discover the meaning of the Gospel in the context of both the New Age, as depicted by Aagaard, and the new "new religions" in the modern age, as described by Young. Tsutada, Aagaard and Young have, indeed, initiated a conversation that needs to be continued.

The excitement generated this year by our three guest speakers indicates that the Hayama spirit is still alive and the dialogue will continue.

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Proverbs 3:1-12

Instructions About Integrity and Piety

Paul B. Overland⁵²

Opening Comments

A. Definitions. The first twelve verses of Proverbs 3 divide neatly into six groups of "units," each of which is characterized by an imperative portion followed by an incentive portion. Within the six units, we can distinguish three sections: an introduction (vv. 1-2), a body of four "instructions" (vv. 3-10), and a conclusion (vv. 11-12).

B. Context. The Book of Proverbs may be divided into two sections, according to the extent of continuity found in material. Chapters 1-9 tend to favor extended teachings, while chapters 10-31 prefer isolated sayings.

The content of chapters 1-9 may be grouped along one of two themes. The material either extols the virtue of wisdom, or else presents teachings which embody actual wisdom instructions. On either side of the passage we are about to study, we find teaching which extols the virtue of wisdom ("The Quest for Wisdom," 1:2-22, and "The Value of Wisdom," 3:13-26). Between these lies a passage which presents teaching which contains actual wisdom instructions.

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C. Form. Proverbs 3:1-12 contains several literary devices relating to form or structure which the sage has pressed into his teaching to give it shape and texture. By paying attention to these devices, we can hear more accurately, more sensitively the original intent of the author.

1. Imperative Plus Incentive. What appears at first glance to be a series of twelve isolated verses actually reduces to a set of six imperative segments (several of which contain more than one imperative verb) coupled with an incentive (or motive) clause.⁵³

2. Ratio of Imperative/Incentive Verbs. It is instructive to notice the quantity of verbs used to express imperatives, in comparison to the number used to convey incentives. The number of imperative verbs (14) is precisely double the number of incentive verbs (7). This may be seen in the chart below. The variation between affirmative and negative verbs is summarized under the two columns headed "Verb Charge." We find that incentives routinely avoid a negative tone.

Chart of Imperative/Incentive Verb Ratio, and Verb "Charge"

Unit	Ratio of Imperatives to Incentives	Verb Charge (imperative)(incentives)	
Intro. (1-2)	2:1	- / +	+
A. (3-4)	3:1	- / + / +	+
B. (5-6)	3:1	+ / - / +	+
C. (7-8)	3:1	+ / + / +	+
D. (9-10)	1:2	+	+ / +
Concl. (11-12)	2:1	- / -	+
Totals	14:7	9+ : 5-	7+ : 0-

⁵³The final instruction (vv. 11-12) presents an explanation to motivate the youth, rather than promising a future benefit. Verse 12 explains how the painful punishment referred to in v. 11 can derive from a loving God. An explanation, not a benefit, is used to motivate the youth.

After noting these general aspects of form, we are better equipped to hear the content, the message of Solomon's teaching. We will first examine the text with the help of a fresh translation, followed by an outline.

Translation

Our usual translations must sacrifice the beauty of the original language to achieve readability in a modern language. This loss is particularly evident in poetry. To permit us to see some of the beauty found in the original grammatical patterns, I would like to offer the following translation of Proverbs 3:1-12. It will sound a bit unwieldy to the English ear since it reflects Hebrew word order whenever possible.

- 1) My son, my instructions may you not forget,
And my commands, may your heart guard them:
- 2) For length of days and years of life
And peace will they increase for you.
- 3) Loving kindness and truth--let them not forsake you.
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the slate of your heart.
- 4) Then you will discover favor and [be esteemed as having] sound sense
In the eyes of God and man.
- 5) Rely on the Lord with all your heart [or intellect],
On your perception do not lean.
- 6) In all your ways know Him,
Then He will straighten out your paths.
- 7) Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and turn from evil.
- 8) Healing will it be to the core of your being [lit., navel]
And a refreshing drink to your bones.
- 9) Honor the Lord out of your wealth
And from the chief of all your revenue.
- 10) Then shall be filled, your storehouses, with plenty
And [with] new wine your vats will burst!
- 11) The discipline of the Lord, my son, do not reject,
Nor feel loathing for His reproof.
- 12) For whom the Lord loves, He reproves,
And [He reproves] as a father, the son in whom He is pleased.

Outline

Themes within the text may be outlined as follows:

- I. Introduction: Parental Guidance (vv. 1-2)
- II. Integrity
 - Instruction A, vv. 3-4
- III. Piety
 - Instruction B: The Mental Sector (vv. 5-6)
 - Instruction C: The Self-Perception Sector (vv. 7-8)
 - Instruction D: The Wealth Sector (vv. 9-10)
- IV. Conclusion: Divine-Parental Discipline (vv. 11-12)

Our study of the text will take up three concerns under each unit. First, elements of form will be highlighted. Second, the meaning of the unit will be summarized. Third, we will consider how this truth can be brought to bear on our lives (application).

I. Introduction: Parental Instruction (vv. 1-2)

A. Form

1. Imperative / Incentive Pattern. Even though the first unit (vv.1-2) serves as an introduction, still it follows the imperative-incentive form found in the ensuing instructions (vv. 3-10). A negative imperative (prohibition) tells the youth what he should not do. A positive imperative follows, telling him how he ought to respond.

2. Framing Devices. Three devices link the outer units together. They may be said to "frame" the passage.

a. Repetition of *ki*, (For, Because). While each even-numbered verse presents an incentive, only two of these are clearly introduced by the particle "for," "because." The first occurs in the earliest imperative-incentive pair (v. 2), with the second appearing in the last pair (v. 12). By limiting the use of "because" to the start and finish of the text, the sage achieves a sense of closure.

b. Repetition of "Son." The term "son" (*ben*) occurs only three times in this text. "My son" (*benîi*) occurs in v. 1 to open the first imperative, and again with the last imperative in v. 11. As

if to mirror the use of "son" as the first word of the entire text, it recurs in v. 12, as the next-to-last word of the text.

c. Concept of Training. Among the six imperative segments, only the outer two ask the youth to open receptively to the teaching, advice, reproof which he receives from superiors. In the first instruction, it is parental instruction which belongs to this concept of training. In the last instruction, the concept of training is found in divine discipline.

d. Ratio of Imperative Verbs and Incentive Verbs. The ratio of imperatives to incentives found in the first instruction (vv. 1-2, 2 imperatives : 1 incentive) recurs again only in the last instruction (vv. 11-12).

B. Meaning. We can better appreciate the meaning of the introduction when we notice the sense of progression imbedded in two pairs of expressions. First, in v. 1 a pair of words is used for teachings: "instruction" and "command." Since the terms move from singular (instruction) to plural (commands), the sage may have wanted us to anticipate that several specific commands would follow. This is exactly what happens in vv. 3ff.

Second, in v. 2 there seems to be a progression between the expression "length of days and years of life" to "peace." "Length of days" and "years of life" both refer to longevity, while the promise of peace moves beyond mere quantity. Peace deals with the quality of one's life.

C. Application. Introductory summons is designed to foster a receptive attitude in the heart of the "son." The sage hoped that he could capture the pupil's interest if he could promise a long and peaceful life. He asks us the same question today. If we care about longevity and peace, then we stand to benefit by the instructions which the sage is about to share. Do I intend to merely toss them aside with careless indifference? Or will I "hide them in my heart"?

II. Integrity (Instruction A, vv. 3-4)

The sage's instructions (vv.3-10) can be reduced to two main concepts. These concepts are integrity and piety.⁵⁴ Instruction A (vv.3-4) is concerned with integrity, while Instructions B-C (vv.5-10) deal with issues of piety. First we will focus on the theme of integrity.

A. Form. The incentive segment of Instruction A contains three verbs. Some have proposed deleting the third phrase ("Write them on the slate of your heart"), evidently because it makes v.3 unusually long.⁵⁵ However, v.3 is not the only incentive containing three verbs. The following two incentive segments also contain three verbs (vv.5, 7). Due to this continuity of form among vv.3, 5, and 7, it seems premature to delete the third verbal phrase in v.3.

B. Meaning

1. Loving kindness and Truth. Often found together, loving kindness (*hesed*) and truth (*emet*) form a hendiadys in which the leading term, loving kindness, seems to be the dominant term.⁵⁶ Sakenfeld defines *hesed* as "free acts of deliverance" (Harris 1980:305-7). Gluck calls it covenant faithfulness (*ibid*). Here the combined expression encompasses both compassion and moral rectitude expressed in the second member, "truth."

The meaning of loving kindness can be appreciated as we study its opposites. "Treachery" (*ma'al*, related to an Arabic term for "whisper") stands opposed to loving kindness. Other contrasts include being unreliable, making a promise but failing to make good on it, manipulating others, pretense, affectation, being puffed-up.

⁵⁴I am using the term "piety" to refer to the idea of man's devotion to God, or man's heart-felt reverence for God. In case we may have associated any negative, affectatious notions with "piety," I hope we will be able to set them aside for the period of our discussion.

⁵⁵See BHS critical apparatus. The editors cite the lack of this phrase in the Septuagint, and suggest that it may have crept in from Proverbs 7:3.

⁵⁶*Hesed* is often rendered "mercy" in earlier English translations. Later versions use "lovingkindness" (*New American Standard Bible*) "love" (*New International Version*).

2. Let them not forsake you. This implies that simply to possess a faithful character at one time does not ensure that I will always be faithful. Like a strong friendship or marriage, it must consciously be maintained.

3. Bind them, Write them. Although the verb "to bind" (*qashar*) appears 44 times in the OT, only five occurrences are of interest to us, for only five times is the term used with a symbolic meaning, "to fix in one's mind" (as in Prov. 3:3). If some of these usages were found to occur prior to the writing of Proverbs, it would raise the possibility of an inner-Biblical connection.⁵⁷

4. Deuteronomic Usage of "Bind." It turns out that only two occurrences appear outside Proverbs, both of them in Deuteronomy. Could it be that the sage was thinking of the Deuteronomy passages when composing Proverbs 3:3? This possibility is strengthened, since the verb "to write" which follows "to bind" in the Proverbs passage also follows "to bind" in each of the Deuteronomy passages.⁵⁸

What exactly is the theme in these parts of Deuteronomy? Are they insignificant passages, or do they form prominent parts of Scripture, which we might expect to find echoed elsewhere in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 6 presents the famous "Shema" instruction: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD is one," followed by the precept which Christ ranked as the greatest command: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:4-5), cf. Matt. 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27). When the expressions "bind" and "write" recur in Deuteronomy 11, the primary theme once again is the command to love God (Deut. 11:1, 13, 22).

This suggests that the Proverbs passage may form a commentary or re-presentation of the Deuteronomy teaching, as

⁵⁷On the concept of inner-Biblical exegesis, see Fishbane's volume listed below.

⁵⁸"Bind" and "write" occur in Deut. 6:8 and 9, respectively, and again in Deut. 11:18 and 20, respectively.

seen through the eyes of the sage. If so, how has the sage sharpened our focus on the greatest command?

First, we find a shift from a binding on one's hands (Det. 6:8) to binding about one's neck, and second, from writing on doorposts and gates (Deut. 6:9) to writing on one's heart. Since the neck was a place for hanging ornaments (Prov. 1:9), and since the verb "to bind" is attested with the notion of decorating a person with jewelry (Is. 49:18), it follows that the expression "bind them about your neck" in Proverbs 3:3 is encouraging the listener to value and display this precept as if it were a prized pendant, an extravagant gold chain. Reflecting on Deuteronomy 6, the sage has moved in a direction distinctly different from later Jewish interpretation which would enshrine the Shema passage in a formal, austere string tied around the finger.

C. Application

1. Taking Truth to Heart. Can we not make the same mistake? When I seize on a divine precept for my life today, I need to beware of pressing it to legalistic extremes. In doing so, I prove only that I have missed the intrinsic beauty and profound worth of that jewel. How embarrassing!

If "binding around the neck" implies a shift from a merely functional reminder to an adornment, then "writing on the heart" refocuses the Deuteronomy passage once again.⁵⁹ In place of external reminders chiseled in doorposts and gates, the sage applies the chisel to the slate of the heart.

Taken together, the expressions "bind about your neck" and "write on the slate of your heart" in seven short Hebrew words encompass two profound concepts. The sage's advice must not be relegated to dusty formalism, but treasured as a precious ornament. Its message must make an impression far deeper than placards, posters, or bumper stickers. My very heart must bare to the indelible stylus of this truth. As noted earlier, that jewel, that pre-

⁵⁹The expression "slate of the heart" occurs in only two other locations (Prov. 7:3 and Jer. 17:1). The notion of writing on the heart (without mention of a slate) may be seen in passages such as Jer. 31:33.

cept intended for the heart was: the exhortation to fix compassion and honesty as the footings of one's character.

2. Integrity before Piety. Although remarkable similarities link the manner of expression in Proverbs 3 and Deuteronomy 6, there is a significant divergence in the content of that expression. The central theme in Deuteronomy involved love for God. In Proverbs 3:3-4 (Instruction A) we find no mention of love and only a passing reference to God.⁶⁰ In contrast, each of the sage's remaining three instructions contain explicit mention of God, as does the conclusion.⁶¹

Later we will examine whether Instructions B-D may correlate to the concept of love for God. Even if they do resume this central theme from Deuteronomy 6, we are left with the enigma: With his distinctly spiritual agenda (evident from references to God in vv. 5-12), why has the sage omitted essentially all spiritual impact from his forceful, initial instruction? Why does he wait until the second instruction (vv. 5-6) to confront the youth with his responsibility toward God?

I believe that with this strange sequence the sage is making a powerful statement about priorities: Integrity must precede Piety.

a. Jesus Cleansing the Temple. Let's first look at the principle in a negative light. Christ's Triumphal Entry brought Him eventually to the temple (Mark 11:11). When He reached the temple, He did not begin teaching. He did not heal anyone (or if He did, we are not told). Mark states that He "looked all around." What did His eyes take in? The following day we learn the answer. Instead of a place where all peoples could freely commune with God, He found the temple transformed into a vulgar robbers' den. It had degenerated to an extravagant but vacuous shell - a religious institution whose leaders lacked the integrity to own Jesus as LORD

⁶⁰*Eohim* forms part of a merism in the expression, "Then you will discover favor and sound sense in the eyes of God and man."

⁶¹In addition, these subsequent references to God use the tetragrammaton, a name for God which is more personal, more intimate than *Elohim*. These uses more closely resemble the appellation, "the LORD your God," found in Deut. 6:6.

of that Temple. The shell had to be emptied, cleansed of that poison which results when piety is placed before integrity.

b. The Centurion's Faith. A second New Testament incident helps me view the relation between piety and integrity in a more positive light. This incident takes place far from the sacred temple halls and doctors of theology. One day Jesus encountered a military man. He was astounded by the uncomplicated, undiluted faith residing in the soldier. "I do not deserve for You to come under my roof," the centurion had protested. "Only say the word, and my servant will be healed" (from Luke 7:6, 7, personal translation).

At first glance, the centurion's explanation seems to have little connection with the puzzle of how he came to have such great faith: "For I, too, am a man who has been placed under orders,⁶² with soldiers under me" (Luke 7:8, personal translation). What he seems to be saying is this: in the authority structure of the military, the commander grew accustomed to the link between the spoken order and the performed deed. Among soldiers of integrity, the command was as good as the act. Because of his respectful belief in Jesus' integrity and authority, it was not hard for him to transfer the same confidence to Jesus' spoken word of deliverance for his servant.

Initially, I was impressed by the integrity, the reliable character, the faithfulness of the centurion. This corresponds to truth, the second trait of the pair in Proverbs 3:3. Then I began to wonder whether I could find any trace of kindness, compassion, that first member of the sage's pair.

Two elements point to a loving character within the soldier. First, when one of his employees lay at death's door, he felt the pain personally. He might have ignored the sick slave as a disposable piece of property.⁶³ He chose not to. The second sign of compassion in the centurion comes from an unexpected and

⁶²Note the explicit reference to accepting structured authority in *hupo exousian tassomenos*.

⁶³In v. 7 *pais* should be rendered "slave," not "son," based on *doulos* in vv. 2 and 10.

incontrovertible source: those who should be his enemies. The Jewish elders should have despised this soldier as a leader of wretched occupation forces. Instead, we find those Jewish elders imploring Jesus to help the foreigner. "For he loves our people," they explained (v. 5).

Because of his kindness, because of his integrity, this centurion, who should have been bitterly hated by the Jews, discovered their favor instead. And the divine Christ pinned on him the highest commendation possible: "I'm telling you, not even in Israel have I found such [phenomenal] trust!" (Lk. 7:9).

The sage was absolutely right. The centurion planted kindness and truth, and harvested "favor...in the eyes of God and man" (Prov. 3:4).

Kindness and integrity must come before piety. If I reach for heights of "spirituality" while ignoring the basics of inner authenticity, I will be worse than a hollow humbug. I will be guilty of peddling a deadly gospel, devoid of any good news (2 Cor. 3:6).

Bridging Element, vv. 4b-5a. Subtle mention of God at the end of v. 4 smoothly bridges from a section containing no reference to the divine (vv. 1-4a) to a section containing fairly continuous teaching about God (vv. 5-12). Let's turn our attention to the remaining three Instructions.

III. Piety (Instructions B, C, and D, vv. 5-10)

After laying a foundation of kindness and integrity, the sage spends the next three Instructions talking about our relationship with God, or "piety" (Instructions B-D, vv. 5-10). If we examine these Instructions closely, I believe that we will detect not merely a rambling stream of suggestions, but rather an inclusive group of counsels.

A. Form. Instruction B follows the pattern of three imperative clauses followed by one incentive verb, a pattern begun in Instruction A. While the imperative phrases are as long as those in A, the incentive is considerably shorter in B than in A. If the imperative/incentive length of A is designated as long/long, B would be designated as long/short.

The reverse occurs in Instruction C. Although the quantity of imperative and incentive verbs remains 3:1 (as in A and B), the length of phrases shifts to short/long. This "theme and variation" pattern-playing between Instructions A, B, and C suggests that A should not be viewed apart from B and C, despite a change in content. It further suggests that our thoughts concerning "integrity before piety," based on the relationship between A and B-D, were valid.

Instruction D is unique since two verbs, not one, occur in the incentive (v. 10). Perhaps these two positive verbs were intended to contrast another unique feature, the occurrence of two negative verbs in the following imperative segment (v. 11).

B. Meaning. With Instructions B, C, and D, the sage puts his finger on three sectors which make up our person. He then defines piety in terms of that part of life.

Instruction B: The Mental Sector (vv. 5-6). Notice the four nouns used as objects in Instruction B (vv. 5-6): heart and perception, ways and paths. The last two, "ways" and "paths," form a clearly synonymous pair. This suggests that the first two, "heart" and "perception," should also be treated as synonyms. At first, "heart and perception seem as different as "emotion and intellect," or "feeling and cognition." However, unlike our English usage, the Hebrew term for heart (*lev*) encompasses intellect as well as emotions. When used parallel to "perception" (as it is here in v. 5) we are better off rendering *lev* as "intellect" or "mind" rather than "heart."⁶⁴

In v. 6 we find another term relating to the mind--the Hebrew expression *da'ehu*. Many have memorized this phrase as "acknowledge Him." Literally it means "know Him." "Know," used as an imperative, can contain four shades of meaning in Hebrew. First, it can mean to fathom, thoroughly plumb, consider a course of action (Ps. 139:23, 1 Sam. 25:17, Jud. 18:14). Second, it can mean to take

⁶⁴When *lev* is modified by terms deriving from *bin*, to perceive, BDB translates the pair as "intelligent mind" (cf. Prov. 2:2, 8:5, 14:33, 15:14, 18:15; BDB p. 524).

stock of a condition, admit (Jer. 3:13, Is. 33:13, 2 Kings 5:7). Third, it can mean to know that a fact is true (Gen. 20:7, Ps. 46:10 [Heb. v. 11], Ps. 100:3, 1 Sam 20:7). Fourth, it can be used concerning knowing God personally (1 Chron. 28:9, Jer. 31:34). This last meaning seems best to fit the sage's usage. It is instructive to note that the expression most closely resembling Prov. 3:5 occurs in David's admonition to Solomon to know God.⁶⁵

Even the terms "way" and "path" show a connection to the mental part of life more than to any other part. For the sage, "way" and "path" refer generally to the direction of one's life, particularly as that direction issues from a conscious choice made in the past. Since choice is a function of the mind, we can safely infer that, like "heart," "perception," and "know," we should also connect "way" and "path" with the idea of mental activity.

Recall for a moment the first sector listed in Deuteronomy 6:5: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your *heart*." It is the same term as "heart" or "mind," as we are suggesting, in Proverbs 3:5. If our hunch is right, if Solomon was making an interpretative statement about the great command in Deuteronomy, he is saying that our love for God must begin with our mental, decision-making powers. The Proverbs 3 passage is steering us away from interpreting "heart" in Deuteronomy 6:5 as the center of our feelings.

Before moving to Instruction C, we should note a shade of meaning which distinguishes "way" (*derek*) from "path" (*'orah*). "Way" refers to progress in a purposeful fashion (note the related verbal form meaning "tread" or "march," BDB, p. 201). I am traveling along a "way" when I am sure of my goals and confidently march along. "Path" (primarily a poetic term) carries the notion of

⁶⁵"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever" (1 Chron. 28:9, NASB). Note the concepts common to Prov. 3:5: 1) a father-to-son exhortation, 2) admonition to know God ("LORD" in Prov.), and 3) mention of whole heart for serving God ("all" heart for "relying" on God in Prov.).

wandering or journeying (BDB, p. 72).⁶⁶ Used as a metaphor, "paths" seem to refer to those times when we find ourselves groping along uncharted terrain, continuously in search of the right way, but never quite sure we've discovered it. It is the frantic, endless circles of one lost in the forest which most need the sage's promise of supernatural "straightening."

Instruction C: The Self-Perception Sector (vv. 7-8). If Instruction B deals with the mind, Instruction C (vv.7-8) concerns self-perception. The focus turns from mental prowess for solving external problems (Instruction B) to inner esteem or self-worth (Instruction C). We are told that we should show greater concern for revering God than for measuring our self-worth.

Perhaps there is no sin so calculated to render the core of a person shriveled and parched than living a lie (v.8). The antidote for a distended self-esteem comes in a solid dose of reverence for God (v.7b). Of course, supposed reverence for God will itself be ostentatious, unless I am willing to steer a U-turn, veering away from patently evil activities.

In Hebrew thinking, the sector of one's life most closely correlating to the idea of self-perception in Instruction C would be the soul (*nephesh*). The Hebrew "soul" represents a man's inner being, his essential self (BDB, p.659-61). The soul is capable of experiences such as being hungry, weary, abhorring, desiring, trembling, loathing. So we can see that "soul" encompasses one's appetites, emotions, and passions. This contrasts the intellectual, volitional connotation of heart (*lev*) as used in v.5.

The Hebrew idea of "soul" is a slippery concept, assuming a different flavor depending on its context. If in Proverbs 3:7-8 Solomon intended to write a commentary on the Deuteronomic command to "love God with all your *soul*," his omission of the word "soul" may have been deliberate. To have used "soul" would

⁶⁶It should be noted that in other passages "path" seems to have lost the notion of wandering. In these instances the distinction with "way" may be one of size, where "path" would be a more personal, unique segment of travel than the wider, more visible "way" (cf. Ps. 25:4), and means essentially the same as "way."

have only perpetuated the ambiguity found in Deuteronomy. By using a soul-related concept like self-perception, he successfully clarified to which sector of life he was referring.

Instruction D: The Wealth Sector (vv. 9-10). After the segments dealing with the mind and with self-perception, Instruction D advises the youth concerning wealth (vv. 9-10). As the terms "wealth" and "revenue" suggest, this segment moves away from concepts like intellectual prowess or personal worth. The sector of life which the sage spotlights in Instruction D is the sector of surplus, of abundance. The primary meaning of "your wealth" is monetary abundance. "All your revenue" refers to income which one has produced.

Turning again to Deuteronomy 6:5, it is instructive to note that the third sector, often rendered "you shall love the LORD your God ...with all your *strength*," actually connotes "assets" or "that which one possesses in abundance" rather than "power." The sage's focus on wealth (Instruction D) corresponds closely with the third phase of Deuteronomy 6:5.

C.Application: Instruction B: Intellect in the Service of Piety (vv. 5-6). The impact of Instruction B is perhaps the most startling and explosive of all the sage's writings. Because of the secular, non-theological content of much of Proverbs, it has been perceived as a eudaemonistic document, verging on humanism. It is true that the sage often pushes the youth to apply his skills and to assume personal responsibility. However, in this instruction we find the sage holding up the one skill in which he excelled above all others: his intellectual powers. He declares, "I'd sooner rely on God than venture alone on my brilliance. I'd sooner trust His insight than depend on my perception. So in those times when I feel sure of myself, I will seek to know Him intimately. When life runs smoothly, I will guard myself against tumbling into the trap of thinking that I can get along without God. When the smooth road has come to an end and I am left with dark, groping nights, I will discover Him cutting a straight road through my wanderings."

Solomon, the most brilliant, forged his intellect into reliance upon God and molded his confidence into intimacy with God. I

would be a fool to do anything less. If we have followed the sage's inner-Biblical clues correctly, this marks out the path to loving God with all of our hearts.

Instruction C: Self-Esteem Indexed by Piety (vv. 7-8)

To teach a lesson concerning self-esteem, the sage begins to talk of a skill about which he deserves to be extremely proud. Wisdom is his forté. "However," he cautions, "all we get when we measure ourselves by ourselves is a stiff neck. That sort of evaluation only deposes God and rationalizes its way into evil." Instead, the pathway to rejuvenation first must pass through dethronement of self, followed by profound reverence for God.

In all probability, Solomon would have explained part two of the Deuteronomic command by saying, "To love God with all your *soul* you must develop a self-esteem which has been indexed by reverence for God."

Instruction D: Wealth Ruled by Piety (vv. 9-10).

The sage's hardest lesson may stem from his words about wealth. "I earned it, I deserve to keep it!" expresses our natural feeling. How dare the sage suggest that I ought to package up some of my earnings and surrender them to God?

Solomon defends his advice with the one word, "honor." In the tangible realm, there is one way to flesh out my credentials as one who actually trusts God (v. 5), one who truly reveres God (v. 7). I must act out my confidence in and honor for God by rendering tangible gifts.

Two problems sabotage the area of giving. In the first place, I must become convinced that God has a right to my wealth. Once I've determined to give, the second saboteur lies in my heart attitude as I go through the motions of giving.

As far as God's right to my wealth, Solomon answers: "God is not looking for your wealth. He wants to know whether you consider Him worthy of honor. If you decide that He is worthy, then one method of expressing that honor is through tangible wealth."

Second, Solomon answers the attitude problem with two words. Those words are "honor" and "chief (or first)." It's easy for me to

treat giving like one more bill I am obliged to pay. Take the phone bill, for example. I appreciate NTT's efficient service, and I pay for the service used. But I have yet to pay a phone bill, motivated by any desire to honor NTT. Solomon is saying that I must not treat the act of giving like the irksome chore of paying a monthly bill. Instead, as I give, my heart should be saying, "With this fraction of my wealth, I'm trying to show how very much You deserve my worship and honor." Incidentally, the warped motive of "giving to God in order to impress men" will die a sudden death when my giving is driven by a genuine desire to honor God.

Solomon also teaches the right attitude in the word "chief." Whether it connotes "earliest" or "highest quality," the phrase "the chief of all your revenue" declares an unmistakable priority (v. 9b). If my gift of honor has been delayed, then begrudgingly paid, it has degenerated into an honor which has been shrunken, atrophied, pickled.

Incidentally, while vv. 9-10 address material wealth quite clearly, I would be a legalist if I failed to see that my reserves of non-material wealth (prestige, influence, managerial and technical skills) can also be used to honor God.

Earlier I suggested that Instruction D may correspond to the third phase of the command in Deuteronomy: loving God with all our strength or abundance (Deut. 6:5). If this correlation is correct, Solomon presents here a useful converse to Paul's more familiar teaching, centuries later. Instead of saying, "God loves the cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7), Solomon declares, "The cheerful giver loves God - with all his strength."

IV. Conclusion: Divine Parental Discipline (vv. 11-12)

A. Form. Now we come to the final unit of imperative-plus-incentive. Since vv. 11-12 aim at influencing the youth's attitude toward all of the preceding instructions, it is best to treat these lines as a conclusion, rather than one more in the series of instructions. The conclusion is similar to the introduction in that it seeks to cultivate receptivity to a group of teachings. It also resembles the

introduction in its repetition of "son" and its use of "for" to begin the incentive clause.

Two aspects of form set it apart from the other units. First, this is the only unit which contains two negative imperatives. Thus it is the only imperative segment to end on a negative note. This double use of negative terms seems to increase the intensity we feel in the conclusion. Second, in contrast to all the other units, the incentive clause offers an explanation, not a promise.

B. Meaning. A question arises whether the discipline or reproof mentioned in this unit should be taken positively (as in the self-discipline of an athlete in training), or negatively (as punishment for wrong). The terms "discipline" and "reproof" differ slightly. "Discipline" may function either positively (as training) or negatively (as punishment). "Reproof" carries a negative tone, referring to verbal correction.⁶⁷ When we combine the negative tone of "reproof" together with reactions such as "reject" and "loathe" also found in this concluding unit, it seems that the sage has in mind a negative sort of discipline. He is concerned with how the youth will respond to the sort of advice that pinches and stings his conscience.

As the youth ponders his own compassion and honesty, as he considers the integrity of his piety, as he reviews several sectors of his love for God, he has felt the drilling sting of conviction. If he chooses, he can get up and walk away from it all, canceling the effect of the reproof. So the sage finishes his sermon by daring the youth to view the pain of rebuke in a positive light.

His rationale is simple. When a father's discipline is both driven and curbed by love, it does not wreck the father-son relationship. Rather, the very discipline proves that the loving bonds remain strong.

A Paraphrase

⁶⁷The same holds true for the verbal form "reprove" (v. 12), which in Hebrew is closely related to "reproof."

"Perchance you, my son, have heard something in these four instructions which make you squirm a bit. God cares about you more than to limit His involvement in your life to a level of benign benevolence. At times He displays His love (and it truly is love, like a father's) in a way that causes pain. Repress your instinct to flee the pain! Take to heart what He is saying (in the above instructions). Act on it. If needed, repent. Change your attitude about relying primarily on your own intellect, about measuring yourself by yourself, and about hoarding your wealth from God. Don't flee the pain of His reprimand. Accept it with the confidence that His motives are tender - just as if He had just bestowed on you some costly, longed for blessing!"

C. Application. What has Solomon unveiled about my relationship with God? Do I feel the sting of reproof? Centuries later the writer of Hebrews will quote the sage to help Christians realize: periods of discipline serve to demonstrate, not disprove, our family bonds with our Heavenly Father (Heb. 12:5-6). He expands the sage's germ idea, saying that without discipline we do not belong in God's family. We are without heritage, illegitimate children (Heb. 12:8). If I would not be utterly destroyed by His discipline (which is designed for my good, as the writer of Hebrews will add [Heb. 12:10]), I must know Him intimately, until I am thoroughly convinced that He is indeed my loving Father.

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Announcement

1991 Hayama Missionary Seminar

Japanese Education: Servant or Master? Implications for Christian Ministry

Date and Place: January 7-9, 1991 - Amagi Sanso

Contact: Tim Boyle at (0298) 55-1907

Recommended Reading:

***The Enigma of Japanese Power*
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Tributes and Memorials

A Remembrance of Gordon K. Chapman⁶⁸

(May 22, 1895 - January 30, 1989)

I remember Gordon Chapman as a man dedicated to Christ and to all of Christ's church. Gordon was one of the three who served on the *ad hoc* committee to plan the first Hayama Missionary Seminar and the central figure in the early leadership of the movement. As chairman or behind the scenes planner he gave much thought and time to the annual seminar and carried the burden for its success in prayer.

He himself was rather conservative in his theological position, but he earnestly felt that men of varying background have rich contributions to give and to receive. He wanted the entire Christian body to benefit from such sharing. He could not tolerate slipshod thinking but insisted that the work of the Lord demands the best from each one. He was impartial and expected to find dedicated scholarship in every area of the missionary community. Thus he set a high standard and expected those who presented papers to this seminar to dig hard and bring forth valuable material to bless all who attended.

Gordon and his wife, Catherine, served as missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, now the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, from 1921 until 1967. His brother, the Reverend Earnest N. Chapman of the same board, served as missionary in Japan from 1917 to 1960. The two brothers and their wives served as missionaries to Japan for a total of 179 years.

⁶⁸See also "In Memoriam," *Japan Christian Quarterly* 55:184.

While working as a missionary of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan or the Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai in the earlier years, Gordon consistently reached out to share fellowship with missionaries of many denomi-national backgrounds. He liked to tell of his relationship to Uchi-mura Kanzo, the founder of the Non-church Christian movement. Uchimura blamed missionaries for hindering the progress of the Gospel in Japan by their denominational divisions and foreign economic support. Yet, he had high respect for some missionaries.

One summer when a number of missionaries were gathered in Karuizawa, Uchimura Sensei was in Karuizawa also. Gordon proposed to the missionaries that they ask the famous Bible teacher to come to speak to them. At first there was considerable hesitation to invite one who had such a low view of the foreign missionary in this country. But in time they agreed to ask him, and Gordon took the message to Uchimura Sensei. The teacher was impressed and gladly came. The missionaries in turn were amazed by the man's brilliant and powerful presentation of the Word of God and also by his complete dedication to Christ. Thus a better relationship resulted from the bringing together of servants of the same Lord who had been "almost enemies."

This was like Gordon Chapman. He held his own views of Bible doctrines quite firmly but, at the same time, he went out of his way to find what was good in those of different views. He loved all who belonged to Christ. He was quick to show appreciation and slow to criticize. His own views are recorded in a number of articles which are preserved in the early volumes of the Hayama Missionary Seminar Annual Report, especially those of 1964, 1965, 1967. He faithfully pointed to the Bible as the Word of God and the basis for evangelism, church growth, stewardship and the training of lay lead-ers. He often pointed out that the magnificent growth of the church in Korea was due to such emphasis on the Word of God and prayer.

As one who knew Gordon well and worked closely with him, I wish to say that he was a choice vessel of the Lord who was greatly used to bring together the minds and hearts of missionaries working

for Jesus Christ in Japan. After thirty one years this seminar still reflects his vision and dedication. Because of his dedication to Christ he was dedicated to the entire church of our one Lord.

We are saddened to learn of Gordon's leaving this world in this past year. But the Hayama Missionary Seminar rightly takes special note of his homegoing and gives thanks to God for him. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit let us continue to pursue those goals which we share with him to the glory of God.

William L. Hinchman⁶⁹

Remembering Ferd Ediger⁷⁰

(January 21, 1923 - December 4, 1988)

Ferdinand and Viola Ediger came to Japan in 1953 as missionaries of the General Conference Mennonite Mission. They worked in Miyazaki Prefecture and later in Tokyo, leaving Japan in 1982. We have learned with deep sorrow that Ferd was called to his heavenly home December 4, 1988.

Not a great deal is to be found about Ferd in the annual Hayama Missionary Seminar publications. Those of us who were here during the 1960s and 1970s recall how faithful he was in attendance at the Hayama Seminar sessions and how beautifully he served all those who came. Opening the 1964 Hayama Annual Report, I found in the table of contents the program for that year. The very first words were these: "Assignment to rooms and getting acquainted . . . Ferd Ediger in charge." That is an accurate introduction to Ferd. He was a servant of Christ and a servant of all

⁶⁹Chapman, Hinchman, and Paul Peachey were the co-founders of the Hayama Seminar (eds.)

⁷⁰See also "In Memoriam," *Japan Christian Quarterly* 55:185.

of us, quick to volunteer for jobs that others shunned. And he served with a heart-warming smile.

Again in the 1966 Annual Report Ferd's name is included. This time it reads: "7:00 - 7:30 pm. . .Prayer together - Ferd Ediger." This, too, tells, a lot about Ferd. Through him and a number of men like him the Hayama Seminar has been deeply meaningful and permanent because of our experiences of praying together. Even when minds do not quite meet on some matters, our hearts meet in Christ, and as Christian brothers we learn to pray for one another. We owe much to Ferd for such spiritual leadership.

Ferd was a big man, an impressive physique! If he entered the little *ofuro* in the old Lacy Kan in Hayama by the sea, there was little space left for others! But his spiritual size was equally notable. He was a rare spirit among missionaries, a truly humble man. We thank God for giving Ferd Ediger to us for a while. He was a source of power and inspiration to all of us. He led us to depend only on God.

William L. Hinchman

A Word of Tribute

At the 1990 Hayama Missionary Seminar four men attended their last seminar as active missionaries or ministers in Japan. All four plan to leave Japan during the year 1990 for retirement, semi-retirement or a different area of Christian service. We honor these men for the many years of service they have given to the Christian mission in Japan and thank them for the contributions they have individually rendered to make the Hayama Missionary Seminar the

important annual event it has become for so many of us. May God bless them and continue to guide them into useful paths of Christian service in the years ahead.

George Olson. 40 years in Japan. Missionary. Japan Evangelical Lutheran Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Roy H. Jensen. 36 years in Japan. Missionary. The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM).

Stanley R. Dyer. 34 years in Japan. Missionary. OMS International, Inc.

Charles Ray. 12 years in Japan. Missionary. The Japan Mission of the Foreign Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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