

THE ORIGIN OF THE SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

(1859—1918)

By Fujio Ikado

(Continued from the March Issue)

Chapter III

THE EMERGENCE OF THE WHITE-COLLAR CLASS

(1891—1905)

The Rise of Nationalism

Dr. Otis Cary, the well-known missionary-historian, wrote in regard to the period now under review that

Japan is a country of sudden changes. The bright prospects that gave rise to the hope that the country would be speedily evangelized were soon clouded over. Missionaries are usually optimists, and it seemed to most of them that the storm would quickly pass and the sun would then shine out as brightly as before.....yet a full decade must pass ere there would be any very marked improvements..... The reasons for retardation in the advance of Christianity were numerous. Among them much prominence must be given to a great reaction against the acceptance of Western civilization.*

Thus, it can be seen that the missionaries recognized that the nationalistic spirit had begun to affect many Japanese, including even some Christians. Moreover, they had diagnosed this cor-

* Cary, Otis. *A History of Christianity in Japan*. 2 vols. (New York: Fleming H. Revell. 1909) Vol. II, p. 212.

rectly as due to the rejection of Western civilization : a change in attitude which came about mainly because of a succession of unsuccessful attempts to obtain a satisfactory revision of the unequal treaties.

This change of attitude was not unexpected. Throughout the Meiji era two aspects of Japanese nationalism had stood over against each other, and their conflicts and compromises decided the political course of each period. On the one hand, nationalism was the result of pride in the old culture and a growing urge to show the West the strength of "New Japan." On the other hand, it was deeply rooted both in a feeling of admiration for and an inferiority complex in respect to the West. The failure to secure a revision of the treaties annoyed the common people, who had overestimated the significance of the stand the government, in its effort to stimulate national pride, had taken toward the West in order to maintain the majesty of the Emperor.

Government officials themselves were fully aware of the impossibility of a quick revision of the treaties ; but the "Rich Country, Strong Army" policy had been so successful in developing nationalistic activity that the resulting national pride was deeply wounded by this political failure. A wounded pride transformed a nation-wide inferiority complex into a hatred of most things foreign. Violence and riots against the West in younger nations usually stem from such an inferiority complex disguised as national pride in the indigenous culture. In the latter half of the Meiji era, because of the failure in foreign affairs, the national pride of this young nation changed into disappointment in its national power and prestige.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

Dr. Holtom considered this change as a young nation's effort to save its pride by a quick adjustment to the new environment. Describing this tension from the vantage point of the post-World War II years, he wrote :

On the one side have been arrayed the forces of insularity, fear, conservatism, antiforeignism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism ; on the other those of cordiality toward foreign culture, liberalism, incipient democracy and universalism. At one time, one set of forces has been in the ascendant ; at another time, the other ; but more often history has been made by a mingling of the two in which liberalism has appeared in one direction and simultaneously, conservatism and reaction in another.*

Japanese nationalism consisted of a dream of unifying its national life through modernization and disappointment in the face of stark reality. It was this latter that resulted in an inferiority complex in respect to the West and at the same time caused the country to push modernization even more desperately.

Naturally, the government was wise enough to make use of this national feeling to improve its own situation. Here was an opportunity to overcome much internal divisiveness by using the feeling against the West as a tool to unify the national ideology and build a solid foundation for the emperor system. Thus, in promulgating the paternalistic constitution in 1889 the natural rights of man were repudiated. It was said that the Emperor graciously bestowed the franchise on the nobility and commoners but that it was not at all their right as individuals. Under this constitution freedom of thought and belief was granted on the condition that it was " not prejudicial

* Holtom, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

to peace and order and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects."* In other words, the Constitution was implemented to re-establish the family ethics which had been weakened in the period of Westernization.

Government Education System Strengthened

This intent to strengthen ideological unity was nowhere clearer than in the promulgation of the Rescript on Education (1890) by which the government reminded the people that Japan was the only family-nation, and that the only means of elevating the nation's international position was for people to work for the Emperor in perfect unity. This basic principle of family ethics was clearly operative in all public educational and training institutions, but to complete the modernization program and attain spiritual unity the government recognized that it was necessary not only to strengthen the public education system but also to outstrip the number of private schools, including Christian institutions, where Western liberalism, which the government did not want spread further, was still powerful.

The attempt by the state to strengthen the government system of education was not new. It was started in the 1880's, when large grants were made for the establishment of higher schools, and the motive was much the same. For example, before his tragic death in 1889 Viscount Aino Mori, the Minister of Education, was widely known as a progressive and pro-Western leader; but even he issued instructions to the students of normal schools which called for very conservative and even reactionary virtues. Here is one example. "The first and most important

* The Meiji Constitution (1889) Article 28.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

thing for students of normal schools is perfect obedience to authority, the second is perfect friendship, and the third is developing your personality.....”* The ultimate purpose of the “Rich Country, Strong Army” policy was not the development of democracy but a modern family-nation. Therefore, obedience was the most important of all virtues.

To accomplish its ultimate purpose, the first thing the government did was to enlarge the Imperial University of Tokyo where students learned “such arts and sciences as are required for the purposes of the State,”† to and grant to its graduates a privileged status in securing government positions. At the same time, it decided that the president should be selected from among the professors of the Law Department who were accustomed to dealing with official orders and policy. Thus, it made the university merely a training school for the higher civil service and for public schools.

Furthermore, it set up a state examination system for civil service and made it a rule to choose the examination committees from among professors of the Imperial University and government officials. Under this system, in order to attain a high position in the new society, a person had either to be a graduate of the Imperial University or to be able to pass a government examination.

Apparently it was recognized that the time had come to give up the simple optimistic nationalism of the early period, when it was thought that a quick but superficial imitation of Western culture might enable Japan to secure a revision of the unequal

* Aizawa, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-60.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 174-75. Ransome, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

treaties, and instead to devise realistic plans to induce the West to recognize the existence of a modernized Japan and number it among the powers of the world. The law-scholar-ruies-Japan-policy symbolized the government's recognition of the fact that the unification of ideology and modernization could be completed only through the establishment of a huge bureaucracy by which the government could easily control public opinion.

The second thing the government did was to attempt to bridge the gulf between the university and elementary education by establishing a number of institutions such as high schools,

Table II

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PUBLIC
MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND THEIR ENROLLMENT*

Year	Boys' Schools		Girls' Schools	
	Number	Enrollment	Number	Enrollment
1894	81	22,331	14	2,341
1895	95	30,672	15	2,897
1896	120	40,576	19	4,152
1897	155	52,442	26	6,799
1898	168	61,382	34	8,590
1899	188	68,885	37	8,857
1900	217	77,994	52	11,984
1901	241	88,051	70	17,540
1902	257	94,696	80	21,523
1903	268	97,661	91	25,719
1904	266	100,852	95	28,523
1905	269	104,556	100	31,917
1906	279	108,057	111	35,876
1907	285	110,776	132	41,273
1908	294	114,395	158	46,329
1909	303	127,434	177	51,440
1910	309	121,652	192	55,882
1911	312	124,584	199	59,619

* Aizawa, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-21.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

technological schools, and middle schools. This plan had two aspects, aggressive and defensive. On the one hand, these schools would supply new technicians for industry and white-collar workers for the new bureaucracy. On the other hand, they would be able to reduce the position of mission and other private schools to insignificance whenever the latter were not fully obedient to the basic policies of the government.

The success of the government in attaining this objective is evident in the fact that between 1894 and 1911 the number of middle schools (for boys) increased from 81 to 312 and schools for girls from 14 to 199. Middle school enrollment increased from 22,331 to 124,584 and girl school enrollment from 2,341 to 59,619.

Christian and State Education Conflict

Nationalism and bureaucracy, which were sustained by the family-nation ethics, ran completely counter to Christian ethics, which emphasized individual freedom of thought and firm faith. As time passed the conflict between these two opposing concepts became more intense and coexistence became more and more difficult. The clash was particularly evident in regard to their respective principles of education, for which each sought support through reliance on its own system. This rivalry created a very serious situation for the church. This was the period of the "Conflict of Religion and Education" and "Religious Education and State Education."* In the early period (1872—1890) mission schools were the major source of future church

* Inoue, Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎. *Shūkyō to Kyōiku no Shōtotsu* 宗教と教育の衝突 (*The Conflict of Religion and Education*), Tokyo: Keigyo Sha, 1893.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

members. Some seven- to eight-tenths of the converts at the time had been under their influence.

Apparently the government decided to isolate mission schools, drive them out of society, and cut off the chief source of church membership.* It was in this period that the government took Germany as its model in completing its educational system. In its final form this consisted of six years of elementary school, five of middle school, two or three of high school (a sort of preparatory school for the university), and a three-year university course with three- or four-year professional schools at the high school level, that is, normal schools and technical schools for those who did not go on to university.

Mission schools, such as Meiji Gakuin and Aoyama Gakuin, for example, had their own distinctive system. This consisted of a two-year preparatory course and a four-year common education course (*futsū gakubu*^a) at the middle school level. (The preparatory course was established in the period before the government elementary school system was completed, and the intellectual level of the entering students differed extremely according to their social background.)

From the beginning of the 1890's mission schools became worried because, judging from the intellectual level of the students, the common education course could be classified neither as a middle school nor as a high school. They were also troubled because there was no direct relationship with the government schools. Thus, in spite of their good reputation, mission schools were classified as "Miscellaneous Schools" (*Kakushu Gakkō*^b)

* Faust, *op. cit.*, pp. 35--36.

a. 普通学部 b. 各種学校

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

the students of which had none of the privileges of government school students, such as postponement and reduction of military conscription service, admission of promising students into high government schools without examination, and priority in getting a position in the civil service.* Consequently, in order to enter the university, students were obliged to quit mission schools and re-enter government schools at a lower level.

Dr. Albertus Pieters described the situation as follow :

During the decade 1890 to 1900, the mission schools suffered first a marked decline, and then a considerable recovery. The decline was due to the great anti-foreign and anti-Christian reaction to the growing improvement of the government schools, and to the difference in policy that developed between them and the mission schools. The managers of mission schools were aiming to produce thinkers and students, and with that object in view, were laying great emphasis on the study of English language, so that a graduate from their courses might be able to read the literature of the world with interest and understanding. The government schools, on the contrary, having a practical aim, judged it better to teach the students a little of almost every branch It gradually became clear that the students in government schools had overwhelmingly the advantage from a practical standpoint. They were exempt from military conscription, which took away many mission school students in the midst of their studies. They were more readily employed in the civil service Naturally, when even the graduates of government schools were not all able to find accommodations, there was no chance for others.....†

Under these circumstances the number of mission school students, both girls and boys, decreased rapidly. Taking Meiji Gakuin and Ferris Seminary as two examples, according to the annual reports of Meiji Gakuin in the early 1880's, the common

* Washiyama, *op. cit.*, pp. 273—274.

† Pieters, *op. cit.*, pp. 139—40.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

school course averaged from one hundred sixty to two hundred students, but in the autumn of 1864,—although the students were very proud of the enlarged buildings, which were far better than those of the government middle schools, and a fifth grade had been added to conform to the government school pattern—only 116 students enrolled and even these did not all remain. In fact, 82 students withdrew, mainly in order to transfer to government schools, so that only 28 students finished the academic year.* In Ferris Seminary, during the same period the decrease was so serious that the school was compelled to close some of its advance courses. Although there were 185 students enrolled in 1888, there were only 105 in 1893, 67 in 1895, and 38 in 1896.†

Table III

MEIJI GAKUIN ENROLLMENT‡

Grade	September 1894	April 1895	June 1895
1	13	7	9
2	15	13	5
3	27	10	5
4	23	8	5
5	38	4	4
Total	116	42	28

Thus, the educational work of the church was very seriously affected by the aggressive expansion of the government school system. In 1896 there were twenty mission schools for boys at the common school course level with 1,520 enrolled, and

* The Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America. *Annual Reports*. 1886, p. 70; 1887, p. 70; 1888, p. 76.

† Yamamoto. *op. cit.*, p. 82.

‡ Washiyama. *op. cit.*, pp. 278-80.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

forty-seven schools for girls with 2,527 enrolled,* while in the same year 120 government middle schools had 40,576 students and 19 girls' schools had 4,152 girls. It can easily be seen from this how much mission schools suffered financially from the loss of students.

Other Causes for Decrease

Missionaries generally tended to attribute the decrease of students and church members to the nationalistic reaction and the rapid expansion of the government educational system; but some causes of the decline in Christian work are to be found in the church itself. These stemmed from the missionaries' anachronistic thinking that Japan was still a young nation to be taken care of by the "chosen people" of advanced countries and that Japan was still a feudalistic country of the samurai and sword. At this time, however, Japan was really well into the first period of its industrial revolution and had almost completed its universal educational system. Therefore, the government no longer had to depend upon the limited samurai and old intellectual class to supply the intellectual leaders for her new enterprises; and students no longer had to go to the big cities for a middle school level education.

Unfortunately, a majority of the leading mission schools did not recognize this new situation. They still retained the boarding school system which in the 1880's had been the best means of attracting promising students, particularly the samurai from the country districts. Moreover, the missionaries simply did not

* H. Ritter. *A History of Protestant Missions in Japan*. trans. by Albrecht G. E., (Tokyo: The Methodist Publishing House, 1898), p. 358.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

recognize that Japan had already made surprising progress, which could not be accounted for by current estimates of Japanese ability and which soon would make Japan one of the great powers of the world. This is not to say that the missionaries and Japanese Christian leaders were too passive or too inept to adapt to the new conditions. Rather they appear to have been bewildered by their underestimation of Japanese ability.

The Industrial Revolution

Japan was changing, both politically and economically, the most important change being the concentration of the population into urban districts and the rapid expansion of industry. The number of commercial organizations was increasing sharply (Table IV), as was the amount of invested capital (Table V). To meet this situation the government was forced to set up a network of day schools at the high school level. Only thus could it supply leadership for the huge developing industry and create a new backbone for this society which, unlike the samurai class, had no direct relation with Old Japan.

Table IV

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF COMPANIES, 1884—1903*

	1884	1889	1893	1894	1899	1903
Agricultural	61	430	171	118	176	249
Industrial	379	2,259	2,919	778	2,253	2,441
Transportation	204	299	195	210	583	702
Commercial	654	1,079	848	2,096	2,676	3,580
Banks	1,097	1,049	703	865	1,943	3,275

* Eitarō Noro 野呂栄太郎 *Nihon Shihon-shugi Hattatsu Shi* 日本資本主義発達史 (*A History of Japanese Capitalism*), Tokyo: Iwanami, 1954), pp. 87—88.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

Table V

INCREASE IN CAPITAL
OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED COMPANIES
(THE PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE FROM
1884 TO 1893, AND 1894 TO 1903)*

	1884	1889	1893	1894	1899	1903
Agricultural	100	657	205	100	194	268
Industrial	100	1,390	1,550	100	231	382
Transportation	100	1,013	1,310	100	240	316
Commercial	100	391	430	100	170	299
Banks	100	241	265	100	267	347

Before the government was required to take the initiative, the missionaries should have established a new system to attract this newly developing class. They at least could have united their schools into a few institutions of greater size and thus have avoided financial and political difficulties, or they could have built up a system which, although it might have been quite different from the government system, nevertheless would have been of such quality that the government could not have ignored it. Furthermore, in order that their system might be accepted by the new Japanese society and be firmly established therein, the subjects of lectures should have been somewhat directly related to the history of this society. Instead, according to *Rikugō Zasshi* ("Talk of the Nation Magazine") of 1890, fourteen of the twenty-nine mission schools at middle school and high school level had no courses in Japanese history! The general policy of emphasizing foreign languages, mainly English,

* *Ibid.* pp. 88--89. In 1894 the commercial code was revised, so we cannot compare the statistics of the period 1884--1889 with that of the period 1894--1903.

resulted after 1890 in a sort of isolation from society.*

Retarded Growth—a Period of Testing

As for the church, this was a period of disappointment. Dr. J. H. DeForest, writing in the *New York Independent* (March 8, 1894) said,†

It has been a hard, discouraging year (1893). There are those who would not say so; but they can not alter the fact that the churches are poorly attended, many a pastor or evangelist having hardly fifty for an audience. There are baptisms every month, perhaps a hundred and fifty on the average among all the Protestant churches....."

But the churches generally were not growing steadily stronger. Partly through fear of the nationalistic policy of the government, and partly because of their being young men seeking jobs and who could not stay long in one place, many members, particularly those baptised after 1890, were leaving the church.

It may not be appropriate to call this a period of general decrease in church membership, but it was certainly a period of extremely slow increase. This is clearly illustrated by the experience of the Church of Christ in Japan (a union of churches of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition), which consistently maintained a membership of more than ten thousand during the period of testing, but made no gain. Moreover, the same thing was generally true of most Christian denominations during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

* Hiratsuka Masunori 平塚益徳, *Nippon Kirisutokyō-shugi Kyōiku Bunka Shi*, 日本キリスト教主義教育文化史 (*A History of Christian Schools in Japan*), (Tokyo: Nichidoku Shoin 日独書院, 1941), pp 128—29.

† Quoted by Cary, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

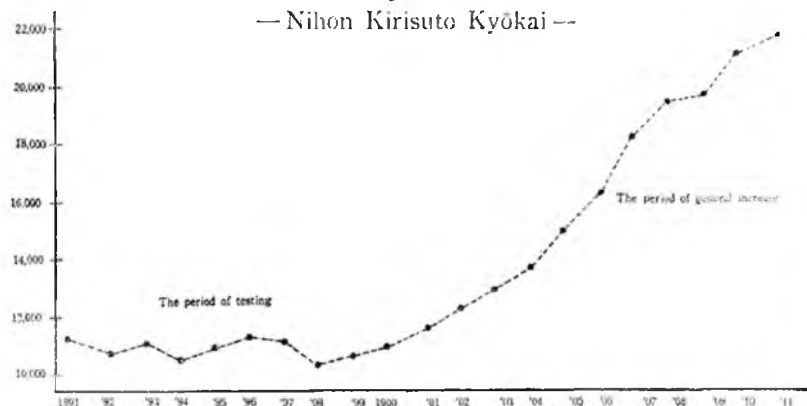
SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

In some cases, however, there was actually a slight decrease. According to a study made by Henry Loomis, the total number of Christian communicants and baptised children of all Protestant denomination was 38,710 in 1895 and 38,361 in 1896.*

Table VI

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN 1891--1911.†

—Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai—



However, in order to make clear the position of the Protestant churches in this period of testing, let us compare the rapid rate of increase in memberships during the 1870's, and 1880's, and the situation during the 1890's. Between 1872, when the first Protestant convert was baptized, and 1879, church memberships grew to 2,701 or an average of 390 a year. In the following decade it increased to 28,997, not including child baptisms, and in some years as many as five thousand adults joined the church. (See p. 67)

* Ritter, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

† Yamamoto, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-32.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

Then came the period of retarded growth, but the reason for this was not merely a decrease in the number of adult baptisms. There was also a sharp increase in the number of those dropped from the membership rolls because of non-attendance or improper conduct. This can be accounted for in part by the nationalistic reaction, in part by the shift in emphasis of the missions from the individual mission school student to a development of various student movements integrated into general student life, and in part to a change in the social charac-

Table VII

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN
WORK FOR 1890 AND 1896

Item	1890	1896	Increase	Decrease
Missionaries	577	680	103	
Organized churches	297	378	81	
Baptized adult converts	4,431	2,513		1,918
Baptized children	468	1,068	600	
Non-attendance	153	1,394	1,241	
Improper behavior	33	1,208	1,175	
Total membership	32,380	38,361	5,981	
Boy's schools (boarding)	18	20	2	
Students in above	2,676	1,520		1,156
Girl's schools (boarding)	43	47	4	
Students in above	3,083	2,527		556
Day schools	56	105	49	
Students in above	3,426	6,856	3,430	
Sunday schools	514	837	323	
Students in above	24,115	30,624	6,509	
Theological schools	21	17		4
Students in above	350	223		127
Japanese ministers	129	281	152	
Contribution of members	¥69,324	¥60,504		¥8,820

ter of Japanese Protestants.

Among these three factors, the nationalistic reaction may be said to have been the most important cause for the retardation in growth, but throughout the entire Meiji period, and not particularly in the 1890's, both the government's dislike of Christianity and the opposition of the native religions to Christianity was very clear. In some places, even Buddhist and Shinto religious leaders allied themselves with the enemies of the Christians. Therefore, it was not governmental and religious hostility alone, but other causes also that fostered the negative aspect of Christian character in Meiji Japan.

Sunday Schools Remain Popular

In reviewing the situation during the 1890's some surprising elements may be noted. For example, although the church itself experienced retarded growth, the Sunday schools and day schools (mainly elementary schools, kindergartens, and other lower level schools) experienced a remarkable increase. Moreover, the rapid increase in infant baptisms was in marked contrast to the decrease in adult baptisms. Before the 1880's attendance at Christian Sunday schools meant the isolation of children from their playmates and the breaking of Japanese social customs. Therefore, because the parents were afraid to cause any trouble for their children, infant baptism was not popular, even in Christian groups.

Why, then, did infant baptisms and Sunday school attendance increase? One of the main reasons was that parents began to recognize that these schools provided moral training which the national religions had forgotten or given up since

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

the social ideals of Old Japan had changed at the beginning of the Restoration. Another was that, because the government did not yet recognize the importance of child education, these institutions offered a convenient form of child training for the newly developing white collar class. And it was only in this class and in the new spontaneous student movement that the church succeeded in taking the initiative.

Table VIII

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER AND ENROLLMENT
OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS*

Year	Number	Enrollment
1881	25	838
1888	272	12,559
1890	514	24,115
1896	837	30,624
1908	1,006	84,160

The new intellectual class, which had been imbued with an admiration for Western culture and had been brought up in the Western style of education, had already come to a firm belief that, in an age in which hereditary status no longer meant much, education provided the only chance for children to climb the social ladder. This was no longer the period of the Restoration. After 1900 the pace of social change became faster, and the demand for Sunday schools, kindergartens and other lower level schools exceeded the supply of these institutions. *The Christian Movement in Japan* for 1908, for example,

* Ikado, Fujio 井門富二夫. "Waga Kuni Purotesutanto ni okeru Shin-to Kozō no Hensen" 我が国プロテスタントにおける信徒構造の変遷 (Change in the Social Structure of Japanese Protestantism), Journal of Religious Studies (Tokyo University), No. 139 (July, 1954), p. 20.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

reported that the churches and missionaries could not possibly take in all the children who applied for entrance, *and that they had to keep a waiting list.**

In the comparatively early period of the development of these schools, a missionary in a local district reported that

the ratio of the children of Christian families to other children in the Sunday school of my church is quite small, that is, only one to ten or twelve. In the Sunday schools attached to other out-stations and native Christian groups, the children with a Christian background were as rare as a blue diamond. Every school has been crowded, and therefore we do not need to advertise schools. Sometimes students volunarily bring friends to school, but in most cases, their parents force them to join..... In the beginning we opened these schools at nine, but as children used to come earlier and to wait before school, we recently decided to change the time from nine to eight forty-five.†

Shift in Type of Membership

Before the 1890's the majority of Protestant members were young adults who had been converted in mission schools while they were learning foreign languages. Their intellectual desire brought them under the influence of missionary pioneers who, fortunately for the Japanese, were mainly men of talent, patience, and self-control, rather than persons of emotional enthusiasm. Under the splendid leadership of these missionaries, young men, particularly the samurai, were trained to take a lively interest in the discussion of moral and intellectual matters. Such persons were keen to attend these discussions, since they had an instinctive urge to seek a new ideal for the new social order,

* Faust, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

† Kurihara, Motoshi. 栗原 基 *Buzeru Sensei Den*, *ブゼル先生伝* (*A Biography of Miss A. S. Buzzell*), (Sendai: 仙台, n.d.) pp. 263-65.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

and they were able to recognize both the meaning of their needs and the nature of what they were seeking.

However, during and after the 1890's the church began to seek new members from among the youth who were being educated under the newly established educational system, the primary characteristic of which was mass production. On account of its stress on family ethics, this system was an effective governmental tool for the destruction of that individuality and initiative which should have been the essential backbone of the Christian movement at the time. Christian kindergartens and Sunday schools provided the only antidote to this non-religious and anti-individualist government education, because the Christian schools were thought to be the only ones that could carry out Froebel's ideas.* But alone they could accomplish little.

Thus, the membership of the church shifted to the newly developing white-collar class which had no reason to complain of the government's bureaucratic control over individuals, as did the samurai at the beginning of the era. This new class, which was destined to be the bureaucratic core of Imperial Japan, having been nurtured with school texts censored by the government, consisted of people of a type far different from the independent samurai Christians of the earlier period.

In the 1890's and 1900's the future members of the church were in government schools where an extremely science-centered Western learning was being taught; and while they were receiving this education, the samurai class, the old supporters of the church, was being absorbed into the upper or lower strata

* Faust, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

of the new society. Consequently, in this intermediate period the church did not have any definite source for new membership such as the samurai class in the beginning or the urban white-collar class after 1910.

In spite of the government's anti-Christian sentiment at this period, however the parents whose children had attained school age and the young students in government higher schools could not help having some respect for this foreign religion, which had been regarded as the essence of Western culture. Their superficial Japanism and national pride were only masks to hide their genuine admiration for the West. Therefore, under the cloak of Western learning, they still sought a chance to approach foreigners, and this was the reason why the Christian day schools, in contrast to the old boarding schools, suddenly began to flourish again and why various student movements, such as the YMCA, Christian Student Association, and Christian summer schools, became popular.

But, while this was for the church very definitely a period of retarded growth, the *Rikugō Zasshi*, a Christian magazine, could proclaim in the summer of 1889:

Come to our churches and look at our sincere audiences. The absolute majority of our present members are, to your surprise, young men and young ladies. Almost all people recently baptized are young people..... The total membership of the first summer school opened on the Dōshisha campus counted more than five hundred, two hundred of whom gathered from remote local districts. All major schools sent their representatives to the conference. These students represented such famous schools as the Imperial university, the state higher schools, the higher commercial schools, and other state schools, and private schools including mission schools. These young men are becoming the major power among the church members, and the future of Japan and the church depends on these young men.*

* Sanami, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 99.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

Moreover, this tendency continued throughout the entire period of testing, when the church and mission schools were suffering bitterly from the anti-Christian sentiment that spread over Japan.

Judging from such reports dealing with the change in the social character of Christian adherents, we can easily infer from the above that, at a time when society was beginning to be reorganized along modern capitalistic lines, the most urgent mission problem was how to devise new methods to attract and hold future church members educated in a mass production system. Basically this was the problem of developing leadership.

A New Situation

Optimistic missionaries, who were waiting for the government to change its educational and religious policies again, simply did not understand what lay behind the government's apparently highly emotional effort to suppress private schools and to construct a public school system despite a sadly unbalanced budget. Certain it was that mission schools were then in a critical state, because modern subjects were taught in the government schools where Christianity had no place, and the missionaries found it very difficult to get students who would become the core of the church's future membership. Consequently, in spite of their spending considerable amounts of money on the schools in the hope of developing future native leaders, many mission schools were in fact either nearly empty, or "Christianity had been so wrapped up in other subjects as

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

to convert them into secular schools to all intents and purposes.”*

The missionaries did not particularly want to follow the government schools but, as the industrial revolution developed, they began to understand that there was something wrong in their education policy so some attempts were made to adjust to this new situation. The first step was to appoint Japanese principals. The second was to bring the schools into conformity with the government system, because unless this was done it would be impossible to attract students who wanted to climb the social ladder.[†] Protestants in general and missionaries in particular were really a little tired of struggling with the government, and they decided to pretend to surrender. Although “recognized schools” (*shitei gakkō*[‡]) had to conform strictly to all the government requirements as to discipline, all mission schools petitioned the government to grant their licenses as middle schools and by the end of the 1890's they had received this recognition.

The government, however, recognized education as a most important missionary method and sought to obstruct it. It knew what the churches really wanted and was watching to see how they would adjust to the new conditions. It did not have to wait long. The test came in 1899 when the Ministry of Education issued the famous Order No. 12,[‡] which pro-

a. 指定学校

* Ransome, *op. cit.*, pp. 105—106.

† Tucker, H. G., *The History of the Episcopal Church in Japan*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), pp. 146—47.

‡ Holtom, D. C., *The National Faith of Japan* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, & Co., Ltd., 1938) p. 47 footnote: “Order Number Twelve of the Department of Education, Aug. 3, 1899 (Meiji 8. 3. 32), translated from *Genhō Tokyo Fu Gakurei Ruisan, Ippan Hō no Bu* 現行東京府立学校規則一般法の部 (“Collected Comparative School Regulations of Tokyo Urban Prefecture, Section on General Matters”), p. 33.” →

hibited all religious practices and instruction in the "recognized schools." This was a very serious blow. The schools were confronted with a dilemma. If they did not teach religion, the reason for their existence was gone. If they taught religion, they would lose their students because of the lack of special privileges. Some mission schools tried to compromise for the sake of retaining their license, Others bitterly resisted the order and finally gave up their licenses. A few closed down. How this struggle developed need not further detain us. The important thing is that this order exposed the depth of the government's antagonism towards Christian education. But this was the last of a series of anti-Christian actions which the Meiji clan government undertook in order to suppress the samurai's resistance and to keep the young men away from Christian influence.

Chapter IV

THE EMERGENCE OF THE "NOMINAL CHRISTIAN"

(1906--1918)

Missionary Leadership Changes

The opening of the twentieth century was marked by a number of noticeable changes. Before the 1890's members of

"The separation of general education from religion is very necessary to educational administration. Accordingly, in all schools established by the government and in all public schools (privately) founded and, also, in all schools wherein the curriculum is fixed by law, religious instruction and the holding of religious services are prohibited even outside the regular curriculum."

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

the middle class usually engaged in teaching, civil service, religious work, or business. They were self-employed entrepreneurs or salaried professionals, men and women of individual character who had a personal interest in their work or profession. As a result of the industrial revolution, however, the new middle class, the white-collar class, grew steadily larger. This was composed of educated urban residents, wage earners, and office workers, newly graduated from the expanding government schools, who were inclined to admire everything Western. And it was they who became potential candidates for church membership to replace the samurai class which began to disappear in the 1880's. If the government did not act against the church again, as it had done in issuing Order Number 12, it appeared that the church might once again grow, but it would continue to have a definitely middle class constituency.*

This period was marked by a change in missionary leadership. The pioneer missionary leaders had almost all died or retired, and with their replacement the emphasis changed. The newly arrived missionary recognized that the age of private education in which any unique teaching method could be employed by each and every missionary had passed, and that the period of mass education under Japanese leadership had arrived.

* Sen Katayama. 版山潜, *Fijoden* 自叙伝 (*An Autobiography*), (Tokyo: Iwanami 岩波書店, 1951), p. 218: "Christianity had already become the tool of the rich. Even some of its leaders like Masahisa Uemura said to me, 'we are just as happy if laboring people do not come to our church.' But many clerks and low-income salaried men attended Uemura's church. These people themselves were (white collar) laborers of a sort, but this is how they felt about other laborers."

Government Policy Changes

Moreover, in the early years of the new century the government began to change its religious policy. The general reasons for this were apparent. The treaties had been revised in 1899, and having gained both self-esteem and foreign recognition as an advanced modern state, the government felt that henceforth it could relax its pressure. Furthermore, the rapid development of the public school system, and the military victories produced a feeling of self-confidence. Just as Japanese nationalism had gained strength because of an inferiority complex towards Western culture, so Japan, having regained her self-confidence, could afford to be more tolerant.

As a result of the changed atmosphere in the first decade of the twentieth century the vitality of the church began to recover and both the missionaries and Japanese leaders became optimistic. They had good reason to be. In one decade, for example, the membership of the Church of Christ in Japan almost doubled. Moreover, in line with the changed attitude, the government eased the enforcement of Order No. 12 and restored the special privileges to all Christian schools. The order had worked great hardships not only on Christian schools but on Buddhist schools also ; and in the end, while continuing on the statute books, it became to all intents and purposes a dead letter.

What were the specific reasons for the government's giving up so easily on an order that was issued originally to halt the expansion of Christianity?

After the Russo-Japanese War the religious policy changed

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

from suppression to toleration, and thereafter the government sometimes even attempted to make use of religious forces to combat the rising socialist movement. Apparently it was convinced that the political foundation of the empire was so firm that there was no need to fear interference by foreign countries. It was also certain that Christianity could no longer be a major influence over the intellectual class, as it had been in the Meiji era. The government system had overcome the Christian system in education, and Christianity was considered only as an accessory for students showing sentimental admiration towards Western culture. In the period of the white-collar-class church which now began, the most important problem that the church faced was that of the "nominal Christian."

The missionaries, however, believed that mission schools had survived the storm because their schools surpassed the government schools both in language instruction and in moral education. What they failed to recognize, and what the government saw, was that almost all students of this period were merely making use of the mission schools as steppingstones to higher education in government schools. Actually the Christian students were lost in the crowd. There was very little evidence of spiritual life in the schools. The students were not interested in the religious program so much as in the language instruction which gave them some advantage in passing the entrance examination for government schools. After Western education had become popular, few probably really wanted to be in mission schools, handicapped as they were by financial difficulty and religious education. They enrolled because they recognized the advantage of missionary-taught English language

instruction.

Mission Schools Conform

In order to survive, mission schools as a minority group felt that they had to conform to the government school system. Consequently, they had completely lost their unique color. They only served a society which demanded language instruction.

One discerning writer in considering this situation wrote :

Since about 1903, the Christian atmosphere of Meiji Gakuin has rapidly been weakened. In the past the school was a sacred place for young Christians, but now it is regarded only as a preparatory school for the state schools and the Christian discipline of the school has lost its meaning. I feel very sorry that many students so easily forget their *alma mater* as soon as they graduate.*

Another writer said :

I was a student of Ferris Seminary when Japan was changing from an old, feudalistic country to a modern, industrial empire (i.e., 1903--1906). In the period before our time, the students were educated through rigid religious discipline and also entirely enjoyed the quiet scholarly life, while in the Taisho era after us the school was widely known as the leading girl's middle school and the students enjoyed their secular privileges as students in a well-equipped school. The days when I was spending my youth in the school should be called a transition period. Christian faith which had been the backbone of religious education and which was also the vital source of Christian action against social evils, lost its power and transformed itself merely into a habitual rite. And during my school days YWCA activity also lost its religious function and became a kind of social club.†

Thus, having integrated their educational system with that of the government, the religious education of the mission school

* Washiyama, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

† Yamamoto, *op. cit.*, pp. 120--22.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

lost its original purpose of producing thinking converts, who would be devoted to evangelism and able to withstand the pressures of nationalism and scepticism. Christian leaders hence failed to find a new means of attaining a place of unique influence in the educational world.

Japanese leaders, therefore, quite naturally changed their emphasis from evangelization through mission schools to evangelism through young people's movements and through various Christian student conferences and activities which attracted the students of government schools. And because these movements were so deeply connected with the students' everyday life, even those students who lacked church-going habits were able to take part.

Actually church attendance was small in proportion to its membership. This was partly due to the fact that the membership was geographically scattered and partly to the lack of a church-going tradition, but it was also due in part to the fact that a majority of the membership consisted of government school students whose religious life was strictly limited by school regulations.

This change in basic evangelistic policy resulted mainly from the leaders' realistic judgement that mission schools could no longer be a major source of future membership. According to *The History of the YMCA of Keiō Gijiku (University)*, this change of mission policy became very clear by the end of the first decade of the new century.

At that time the leaders of various student movements were all shouting for "the state-school-first policy." Their strategy was not necessarily bad. Their judgement was like this: first, the

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

government forced private schools to reorganize their system in conformity with the state system as to curriculum and discipline, and they descended to a minority status in a hostile society, losing their uniqueness; secondly, they thought that the strict hierarchy of the state educational system was to some extent a weak point of the system, because, if the students of its lower schools were all converted, the university would soon be full of Christian students. . . . We do not necessarily blame the leaders for their attitude but we can not understand at all why they entirely ignore private schools, and can not be satisfied with their policy.*

Thus, Christianity was expanding among the students of state schools, and the churches located near such schools became crowded with students. Among the government school students many famous leaders of the Taishō and Shōwa period, such as Takeshi Fujii^a, Sakuzō Yoshino^b, Shōgo Yamaya,^c were enlisted, and judging from their intellectual leadership, sincerity and faith, they were more influential among young church members than the mission school graduates of the same period. However, government school students on the whole tended to consider Christianity merely as a part of Western culture and as a means of enjoying their student life. Some knowledge of Protestantism was becoming somewhat popular among the people and, as the white-collar class expanded, church membership increased, but very few of the graduates settled down in one church as permanent members.†

a. 藤井武 b. 吉野作造 c. 山谷省吾

* *Keiō-Gijuku Kirisutokyō Seinen Kai Sanjū Nen Shi* 慶応義塾キリスト教青年会三十年史, (*History of The Young Men's Christian Association of Keiō-Gijuku University*), (Tokyo: Keiō YMCA, 1932.), pp. 57--58.

† *Hongō Kyōkai Sōritsu Gojū Nen*. 本郷教会創立五十年, (*The Report of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Hongō Church*) (Tokyo: Hongō Church, 本郷教会 n.d.), p. 92.

Secular Student Interest

Students and young members tended to gather in certain churches whose ministers were famous as thinkers and church leaders. They were not necessarily going to accept the faith. They went to satisfy their intellectual curiosity. In criticism of this opportunism Dr. Faust wrote: "One more temporary hindrance is found in the peculiar trait of Japanese to follow leaders rather than principles." In their thinking these young men could not distinguish between religion and hero worship, which was encouraged by the state education. This was not faith, but rather intellectual sentimentalism stemming from that inferiority complex towards Western culture which had distinguished the past period.

This tendency was not confined to government schools. It also affected the students of leading mission schools. In connection with the Protestant semi-centennial in 1909 one speaker declared that most students used the educational and religious facilities to fulfill their secular interest, and that many of them never became permanent members of the church. Indeed, some were said to try to forget Christianity after their graduation, since it might hinder their worldly success.

Actually many Christian students clearly failed to distinguish between Christianity and Western learning. To quote one speaker :

Do students generally become Christians? Unfortunately we can not say that they all do. Graduates of Christian schools usually are indifferent toward the churches. Even those who become Christians as students do not identify themselves with it after they have graduated. This has led to the development of

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

the phrase "Student Christian". Because they have tired of Christianity in school, we can not approach them later*

Therefore, Christian leaders could not be very optimistic simply because the political climate was apparently favorable to the mission schools and churches.

During the period between the Russo-Japanese War (1904—1905) and World War I (1914—1919), the improved utilization of agriculture and other natural resources, and the extensive development of financial, commercial, and manufacturing enterprises resulted in a very substantial increase in the national wealth and income of Japan. Therefore, the white-collar class in urban districts expanded, and this new middle class could afford to send their children to higher schools. Higher education became one of the qualifications for membership in the middle class. Consequently, enrollment in educational institutions greatly increased, and there was a rapid expansion of both the mission schools and the churches.

Unfortunately for the churches, however, the quantitative increase in membership resulted in a qualitative lowering of its faith. One reason for this appears to have been the change in the character of mission schools from boarding schools to day schools. This situation can be illustrated by the change at Ferris Seminary as described by one of its graduates.

Before my graduation (about 1910), 80 per cent of the total number of the students were boarding scholars. But after that time the number of day scholars began to increase, and at last

* *Kaikoku Gojū-shūnen Kinen Kōen Shū* 開國五十周年記念講演集 (*The Collected Addresses of the Conference for the Fiftieth Anniversary of Christian Missions in Japan*), (Tokyo: Japan Evangelical Union, *Kaikoku Kinen Taikai*, 開國記念大会, 1910), p. 65.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

day students assumed the leadership of all school activities, when they outnumbered boarding students. In comparison with boarding students who closed themselves into the school campus and put themselves under the strict regulations of the boarding house, day students were more sociable and flexible in adjusting to the changing environment.....When day students came to hold the majority, the school's color changed and the school became more and more secular.*

Thus, by about the end of World War I, boarding students—the factor which had long made mission schools different from secular schools—almost disappeared from mission schools, and Christian moral education and the group life in the dormitory were almost forgotten.

Moreover, as the feudalistic family ethics was naturally weakening in a modern industrial society, the government attempted to secure its survival by the development of nationalism. Thus, a government-created public opinion along the line of common national ethics took the place of the older family ethics.

This was the situation in which Christianity found itself in the beginning of the twentieth century and it was evident that ultimately it could not escape political coercion by an anti-Christian society. The social status of salaried people, which is what Christians mainly were, depended on their chance in the labor market, on their educational background, and on their obedience to their employers and to the political authority of the community. Consequently, the parents of Christian students and the majority of church members had to think of their insecure position in the community before they criticized social

* Yamamoto, *op. cit.*, pp. 118—19. 148

evils. And this is why—just at the time day students began to predominate over boarding students—Christian resistance to the nationalistic policy of the government was considerably weakened.

The Nominal Christian

Observing this change in the social structure of Protestantism and trying to understand what was going on in the church, Dr. Albertus Pieters concluded that, while Christianity had helped modern education create the people called the white-collar class, in the process Christian activities had been narrowed to the limits of the social character of the salaried people who formed the core of the modern Christian community. On the one hand, his study of the professions of about three thousand mission school graduates, showed that thirty-five percent were still studying in higher courses. On the other hand, we observe that the schools produced very few candidates for the ministry and Christian service. No doubt this was partly because of the small financial remuneration for Christian work, but it was mainly because of a lack of faith and proper Christian discipline in the Christian community.

Dr. Pieters summed up the situation as follows: "..... the results of Christian education are disappointing in the following particulars: in the fewness of graduates, considering the number and equipment of the schools and the length of the time they have been at work; in the failure to influence to a deep religious conviction such a large portion of the students; in the unsatisfactory character of so many who profess conversion, and in the fewness of candidates for the ministry."*

* Pieters, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

Table IX

THE PERCENTAGE OF MISSION SCHOOL GRADUATES ENGAGED IN VARIOUS PROFESSIONS*

In the ministry or some other Christian work	3
Teachers	12
Civil Service	5
Businessmen, farmers, etc	28
Military service	1
Miscellaneous callings	2
Still at school in higher courses	35
Deceased	7
Unknown	7

The students of mission schools, considered as the elite in the Christian community had thus lost their qualification for being Christian leaders. Moreover, the situation among church members in general was very similar to that of the students, and it is this white-collar character of modern Christians that has created a problem for the church since the end of the Meiji era.

One of the characteristics of the white-collar class is its compromising attitude towards authority. The spirit of samurai heroism joined with Christian ethical insight and a passion for righteousness had long since disappeared from the church.

This compromising attitude of Christian leaders stemmed in part from the social position of Christians as an absolute minority fearful for its very existence. But it must be considered also in connection with a tendency to conform to the authorities. In identifying the church's policy with the religious policy of the government, the church to some extent succeeded in bor

* *Ibid.* pp. 145--46.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

rowing prestige from the community authority and thus secured a feeling of stability. This was the reason why the church willingly joined the government sponsored Conference of Three Religions in 1912, which regarded religion as a tool to stabilize the social order. It was this attitude which caused Kanzō Uchimura to blame church leaders for their betrayal of the socialist friends of Christianity. At the time of the Conference, Christianity had about eighty thousand members. It had already grown to be a powerful political force, which neither government nor other religions could ignore. Why then did the church need to cooperate with the government in its promotion of nationalistic control over religious and secular liberal movements, rather than follow its earlier course of heroic resistance?

One answer is certainly that the white-collar members outnumbered the older members was came from the early Meiji generation. This white-collar intellectual majority tended toward obedience to authority. By compromising they attempted to defend their common interest from political coercion. Thus, this attribute of the class-group proved stronger than any force arising within the Christian community which might have led to a separate and independent course of action apart from the class as a whole. The white-collar Christians and the samurai were poles apart in their essential character.

The passive policy of the church in the pre-World War II period grew out of the very nature of the church membership and was not primarily due to the political repression of the government. The tragic situation of the church in that period really resulted from the fact that the samurai consciousness of

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

being "chosen" and the early Christian zeal for the evangelization of Japan had been transformed into an "elite consciousness" of middle-class-educated bureaucrats and professionals. Such prestige had to be safeguarded. Because of their timid attitude toward the state, the church lost its intellectual and moral leadership in society and drifted with the main current of national life.

Thus, it is only by taking account of the social character of modern Protestants as a special group within the white-collar class as a whole, that the historical relationship between the Japanese government and Protestants can be adequately explained. The most important and difficult problem today for the church to solve is how to re-educate these nominal Christians along lines of true Christian discipleship.

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SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

No. 1

THE INCREASE OF STUDENTS IN
MEIJI GAKUIN AND FERRIS SEMINARY*

Year	Meiji Gakuin	Ferris Seminary
1900	.....	69
1901	.....	96
1902	.....	105
1903	160	139
1904	137	165
1905	102	195
1906	252	237
1907	328	204
1908	342	230
1909	.....	232
1910	.....	232
1911	.....	223
1912	.....	206

No. 2

THE INCREASE OF NATIVE CHRISTIANS, 1872—1889

	Number of Churches	Native Christians	Including Children
1872 (March)	1	16	16
1876	16	1,004	.....
1878 (May)	44	1,617	.....
1879	64	2,701	2,965
1881	83	3,811	4,412
1882	93	4,367	4,987
1883	...	5,591	6,598
1884	120	7,791	8,508
1885	168	10,775	11,678
1886	193	13,269	14,815
1887	221	18,019	19,829
1888	249	23,564	26,403
1889	274	28,997	31,875

* Washiyama, *Fifty Years of Meiji Gakuin*, pp. 298—99; Yamamoto, *Sixty Years of Ferris Seminary*, pp: 110—11.

SOCIAL STATUS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY

No. 3

THE PROPORTION OF MEN AND WOMEN MEMBERS
IN YOKOSUKA NIHON CHURCH,
1885—1902*

Year	Men	Women
1885	300	100
1886	114	100
1887	97	100
1888	131	100
1889	133	100
1890	140	100
1891	128	100
1892	130	100
1893	126	100
1894	120	100
1895	123	100
1896	124	100
1897	113	100
1898	96	100
1899	122	100
1900	121	100
1901	110	100
1902	126	100
Average	131	100

* C. Katakozawa, "The Construction of Protestants in the Meiji Era," in *Journal of History of Christianity*, No. 7 (October, 1956), pp. 49—50.