

KANZŌ UCHIMURA

— Founder of the Non-Church Movement —

Condensed by the editor from
an unpublished manuscript by
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XI

THE CHURCH

Towards an Understanding of Uchimura's Non-Churchism.

The most baffling problem in the study of Kanzō Uchimura is his view of the church. Schismatics and heretics have existed almost since the church was formed, but these have usually been narrow fanatics dogmatically clinging to some single doctrine or groups of doctrines of Christianity. They have been literalists and verbalists. Or they have been dreamy visionaries and utopians, expecting an immediate Second Coming, antinomians rejecting any sort of discipline. They have been anti-rationalistic, have denied any sort of obligation to their nation or society, and have seen no value in culture and art.

Uchimura shows none of the marks of the ordinary sectary. He was a trained scientist; he delighted in nature and the best of literature; he was a good scholar; he valued education; and he was a fervent patriot and a good citizen; in short, in spite of his puritanism he was a humanist of high intelligence and warm sympathies. But above all he was an evangelist who not only knew his Bible from cover to cover but understood and taught it well to a people unfamiliar with Christianity.

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Though not a literalist, with the exception of his ecclesiology, he was orthodox in his beliefs and insisted on the importance of correct doctrine. He was too big a man to start a sect and indeed tried to prevent one from being formed around his name. How a man of this sort could maintain the non-church views he did is the puzzle; it is the combination of qualities in him that is mystifying. The present writer confesses that it may be the fact that he is a Westerner and a churchman which is the obstacle to understanding. Some attempt to understand non-churchism, however, must be made if an essay of this sort is to be undertaken.

The first step towards the understanding of Uchimura's non-churchism is quite obvious and need be mentioned only briefly. It is the recognition that Japanese non-churchism represents an abiding element in the Christian tradition. In one of his chapters on Christian sects Dr. Whale says: "Here we meet a recurrent historic issue; it is the old issue between order and ardour; between authority imposed from without and vitality expressing itself from within; between the correct uniformity of law and the dynamic spontaneity of life."⁶⁵ The history of dissent is as old as the emergence of hierarchical authority in the church. Since that time it has never been without heretics, sects, dissenters and nonconformists. And all of them have maintained that they taught the true teachings of Christ.

The second step in understanding is the knowledge of Uchimura's pilgrimage, especially in his early years. The previous chapters have stressed certain stages in his religious development, and of these too much emphasis cannot be placed on

his first four years as a Christian in Sapporo. The churchless church, the temple without walls and rules, which he so tirelessly advocated in his ministry of almost forty years, was based on the memory of the group of seven companions and their friends who took turns each Sunday in leading worship and preaching; where the Bible was the only authority, where no deadening ecclesiastical power intruded, and where the enthusiasm of youth maintained a vital fellowship and faith. Uchimura believed that this was a miniature of the New Testament ecclesia. This idyll was marred not by any serious internal rift or defection but by the bitter taste of denominationalism from outside. Most happy Christians look back to treasured experiences within an established church as the beginning of their Christian life. How different were the first steps that Uchimura remembered!

The other events which deepened Uchimura's disillusionment with the churches and their official representatives have already been related and need not be repeated here. It must be conceded that Uchimura must share the blame for some of these unhappy episodes. The point is that Uchimura was not the sort of man to bear these shocks with meekness and patience. What had happened to him at the hands of the churches sharpened his eyes to their faults. It would be futile to wonder whether he would have adopted non-churchism without these unhappy experiences. We have observed that he did not break with the churches till two or three years after the lese majesty affair, and then it appears to have been a gradual withdrawing rather than a sharp break. But even before that we can see those tendencies and elements in Uchimura which made non-

churchism a natural though not an inevitable development.

First of all was his hatred of Buddhist priests and association with any professional clergy, which is stressed in two of his autobiographical books. He says that this was part of the samurai tradition, but it must be noted it did not prevent other young Japanese of the same origin from becoming ordained ministers of the church. The objection to many attempts to explain Uchimura by stressing his simon-pure Japanese qualities is that they overlook the fact that some of Uchimura's contemporaries, just as patriotic, just as devoted to Christ, found they could enter the church and serve it all their lives.

Second, we note that Uchimura was a leader with many of the qualities that a good leader possesses : a good mind, initiative, courage, determination, aggressiveness and a tender love for his fellows. He was the last of his class in college to become a Christian. He was the leader of "the incipient church" in Sapporo. He led his class in studies and was its valedictorian. With skill and pertinacity he led his father to Christ. He himself chose his first wife, a thing that was almost unheard of in the Japan of his day, even among Christians.

Third, there were all the characteristics which make prophets. His foundness for the prophetic figures of Christendom has been mentioned. He loved his country passionately ; he hated corruption and assailed with bitter invective political leaders, and the rich who exploited the poor. As the prophets attacked the cultus so Uchimura abhorred ecclesiasticism. Above all, he was a dreamer of dreams, a visionary and a seer. He dreamt of an ennobled and purified Japan that would be the leader of the nations. When this dream was dispelled it was replaced

by his belief in the Second Coming ; apocalypticism is a form of prophetism. With all the urgency of the note, "Thus saith the Lord," Uchimura left his native city to carry his new message to his people Just as Jeremiah foretold the day when the law would be written in the hearts of his people and all would know the Lord, so Uchimura believed the church would be unnecessary, and the "churchless church" is a Christian prophet's dream of the bride of Christ which he tried to realize in this world.

This is not a full sketch of the exceedingly complex character and qualities of this remarkable man, but an attempt to highlight traits which go to explain his views of the church And it must be remembered, moreover, that Uchimura did not imagine the faults of the churches of his time ; no one today can be blind to the mistakes that they made.

Uchimura's Method

The first Protestant missionaries reached Japan in 1859, but because of the ban on Christianity only a handful of Japanese were baptized before 1873. Though the notice-boards prohibiting Christianity were removed in that year the growth of the new religion continued slowly for the first ten years. Between 1883 and 1889, however, there was a phenomenal increase in the number of Christians : they sprang from 5,000 to 25,000. There is no doubt that many who were not ready for baptism were accepted into the churches. Meanwhile missionaries hurried to the country to reap the harvest and report the triumphant statistics to their boards at home. Then the reaction set in. Not only did the number of candidates for

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baptism fall off sharply, hundreds of members left the churches. The causes for this are complex and need not be described here ; the most important was a resurgent nationalism with all its anti-foreign manifestations. The too rapid growth in the eighties, the great influx of young and inexperienced missionaries, the increased emphasis on denominations followed by the recession of the nineties constituted a grave crisis for Protestantism in Japan. It was precisely at this juncture that Uchimura returned from America, prepared to throw himself into the battle. Inevitably he was convinced that missionary and Japanese Christian methods of evangelism were not only unsuited to Japan but positively harmful.

It has frequently been observed that the membership system of Western Protestant churches was strange to Japan. There was nothing like it among Japanese religions. "Missionaries complained that while large numbers would attend open meetings, few accepted baptism. The inertia against joining the church was never completely overcome."⁶⁶ The method Uchimura followed — of gathering students and disciples into a group for indoctrination and training — was the traditional method of teaching young men in Japan. In view of the large withdrawals from church membership, which was a great scandal to believers, he was convinced that something less formal and more in harmony with Japanese traditions was called for.

Of all the *bete-noires* of ecclesiasticism, denominationalism was one of the most offensive to Uchimura. The fruitless attempts of the first great pioneer missionaries to Japan towards the formation of a united church had been followed by unin-

hibited sectarian competition. Denominationalism was something that had laid its clutching hand on Uchimura when he was a babe in Christ; it was contrary to the spirit of his Master; it divided Japanese Christians and made independence and self-support almost impossible. Again and again he assails sectarianism. "It is an arrogance approaching that of the Evil One, who presumes perfection in himself alone, apart from all others. . . . A man or a party (call it a 'church' if you will) which says that it alone is right, places itself in God's place, and arrogates to itself an honour which belongs only to the Almighty."⁶⁷

What is Non-churchism

The usual difficulties of gathering together the thought of Uchimura on any doctrine have been noted by others than the present writer. "It is almost impossible" says Raymond Jennings. . . . "to organize all of his statements on the Church and deduce from them a doctrinal structure of truth that is coherent and logically consistent."⁶⁸ This is due partly to Uchimura's method but partly also because his view of the church does not admit of "logical consistency."

Non-churchism is feared, says Uchimura, as something destructive like anarchism or nihilism. However, though it looks destructive, actually it is constructive. . . . The prefix *mu* in the term *mukyōkai* is to be read as *nai* (which means "is not")

* In Volume IX of the Complete Works (*Doctrinal Writings* II) there are no less than twenty-one studies in the section "Concerning the Church." In what follows we shall draw largely from seven of these with a few references from other of Uchimura's writings.

and not as the *mu*, which is a strong negative in certain nouns and found in the verbs *mu ni suru* (bring to naught, negate), or *mushi suru* (neglect or ignore).

Non-church is a meeting-place for those who have no church, just as an orphanage is a place for children who have no home. The true church is really non-church, for in heaven there is nothing like a church. “And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Rev. 21:22).

However, Uchimura admits, as long as we live in this world, we have to have a place to meet. Some people gather in churches made by men’s hands and there praise God. But there are many homeless children in the world and there are many non-church believers: the non-church is the place for such to gather.

“What is our church like and where is it? It is the universe, it is nature itself which God created. The ceiling of our church is God’s sky, studded with stars; its floors are the green fields, its mats (*tatami*) flowers of all kinds; pines are its musical instruments, its musicians are the birds of the forest, its pulpit yon mountain’s high peak — and God Himself is our preacher.”⁶⁹

What the New Testament Says About the Church.

The New Testament word for “church is *ekklesia*, which is derived from *ἐκκλησιᾶ*. That is, the New Testament word is different from the English “church” or the German *Kirche* which are derived from *kuriakon*, a Greek word usually referring to a building like a temple or a shrine. The secular

Greek use of the word *ekklesia* can be found in Acts 19:32 and 39; the former verse describes an unofficial meeting of the Ephesian municipal assembly, the latter a "lawful assembly," that is, a meeting duly summoned.

With the Jews the *ekklesia* was "half-political, half-religious"; I Kings 8:65 ("Solomon held a feast, a great congregation") and Nehemiah 5:7 are cited. "From early times an *ekklesia* was a gathering of the common people; there is deep significance in the fact that the early Christians used this word and not the former (i.e., *kuriakon*) to refer to their gatherings."⁷⁰

In the four gospels which record the words and doings of Jesus the word is rarely found; apart from Matthew, it is not found at all, and in Matthew only twice. Matthew 18:15—17 is dismissed with a brief discussion since, in effect, the use of the word here can be explained as well by the Uchimurian as by the traditional interpretation.

The exegesis of Matthew 16:18 is interesting. Obviously *ekklesia*, being a Greek word, was not used by Jesus; further it could refer only to the church that came into existence after him. The emphasis here, says Uchimura, is not on "church," but the "I" and "my" which Jesus uses. Peter has confessed Jesus to be the Messiah. "Peter, you have declared me to be the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Indeed it is so. I am he. You are Peter, and on the rock of your declaration shall I build my congregation (*kaishū*)."^{*}

The verb used here for "build" is *δικοδομησω*. This can be

* In passing, a significant point should be noted here. Uchimura does not avail himself of the exegesis which interprets this passage as a saying of the early church read back into the words of Jesus. It is in the Bible and Uchimura accepts it as authentic.

used of erecting a building or forming a family, a household.⁷¹ When Jesus said he was building his *ekklesia*, he simply meant that he was building his *katei*, his household of faith. Nothing was further from his thought than the founding of an organization that with popes, bishops, and regulations would more closely resemble a government.⁷²

Unfortunately Christ's disciples, "departing from their Master emphasized the church until it became the thing it is today." Paul shares in this stricture, but he maintained the original idea expressed in *ekklesia*; the church consisted of "those who were called from." He himself was *κλητός* — called to be an apostle, just as the church consisted of those who were called by God, that is, the church was not something that was made. Only those who were called by God into it were real members; its origin, formation and completion were all of God. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). "... the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).... The church must have no racial or national distinctions, as shown by Gal. 3:28.

The Lord was the spirit of the church. Men could be in the church only if they were in the spirit of Christ. "And he is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18). When Paul says, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones" (Eph. 5:30), he does not mean that Christ and the church are separable — Christ being the soul, the church the flesh, as it were — but that both Christ and the church are completely spiritual beings. He means that "both are joined together just as all parts of a body are joined together. In the

scientific language of today the church is a spiritual organism.”

“ Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all ” (Eph. 1 : 23). This means that wherever the spirit of Christ exists in its fullness, there is the church. The church is the same as the kingdom of heaven. Say not lo, here, or lo, there, for He has ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God. Paul’s view of the church, if we examine it closely, is something that is completely separated from the earth.

But shortly after Paul died, or even before he died, the *ekklesia* became transformed into a completely this-worldly church and many blemishes appeared in it, as is obvious from I Timothy 3 and the seven churches of Asia described in the Apocalypse. “ Therefore in regards to the church, let us leave the apostles and return to the simple Christ. What Christ called ‘ my church ’ has no danger of degenerating. It is a household whose only rule is love. ‘ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them ’ ” (Matthew 18 : 20).⁷³ This is the great text of the non-churchers. Uchimura quotes it again and again as his followers have since.

In the study “ What was the Early Church Like ? ” Uchimura continues along the line indicated above to fill in his picture. The scripture on which this is based is the second chapter of Acts. The early church was primarily a fellowship where the believers tried to realize the kingdom of God on earth ; therefore they called it the “ community of saints. ” They worshipped God together, but as is shown by Acts 2 : 44, 45 every sort of human activity such as “ housing, clothing labor, relief, education and so forth was conducted in it. ” The experiment failed, but, says Uchimara, their boldness in trying

it deserves commendation.⁷⁴

There are many places in the New Testament where the church is shown to be a gathering in a home: Philemon 2, 3; I Timothy 3:15 are cited. Nowhere is the church referred to as a building. The early church must have been completely different from the organized church of today. It is where the Holy Spirit is; it is the invisible spiritual fellowship of those who have received the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵

Non-Churchism's Attitude to the Church.

Uchimura's attitude to the church is ambivalent. His criticism of the church as being hardened, corrupt, a power group and so on can be found scattered through his writings almost anywhere. He calls it "a lying synagogue of Satan, part of this world which will vanish when this world passes away."⁷⁶

On the other hand he concedes that God has used the church. "Non-churchism will not say that there must not be any church, but will say that there may or may not be."⁷⁷

In the dialogue "The Problem of the Church," replying to the question, "If the church is as evil as all this, why has God permitted its continued existence? Since the beginning of Christianity has there ever been a time when there has been no church?" Uchimura answers: "God has permitted the existence of the church under certain conditions: to wit, when the believers do not make the church supremely important (literally, 'put it in the highest position'). The church is a result, not a cause. Faith is not based on the church, the church is based of faith. As long as the church is a manifestation of faith, God permits it to exist."⁷⁸

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The questioner cites the Old Testament to show that God has taught His people through the cultus. Uchimura is always talking about the Spirit, but a man has five senses. Should he not use these as well as the Spirit to worship God? The answer: "In a sense you are right. I envy your happiness in going every Sunday to a church with chiming bells to have your senses purified by sublime music and to listen to the honeyed discourse of a preacher robed in white."

But the Bible says also that a cult is unnecessary, and Uchimura quotes passages from the prophets where the cultus is condemned: Amos 5: 23; Isaiah 1: 1-14. There are many others, he say.⁷⁹

Change in the church over the centuries is emphasized to show that the historic church itself has constantly had to break away from previous forms to maintain its life.

Uchimura declares that he has never urged anyone to become a non-churcher. On the other hand, when a certain person said that he wished to be baptized by a bishop, Uchimura raised no objections. Also, "I have had the privilege of participating in the erection of an influential church. On my advice it applied for admittance to the Methodist Church." Uchimura was fond of citing this case to prove the he was friendly to the church.⁸⁰

What he would like to see is a Methodist or Episcopalian evangelist who forgets all about his church in his preaching. "I firmly believe that such an evangelist would achieve tremendous results in evangelism and his church would profit unexpectedly. The life of a church is like a person's life — if it hold its life dear, it will lose it."⁸¹

Uchimura warns church members not to give up Christianity

because of disgust with the churches. "There is no reason for leaving Christ and his Gospel because churches which are its institutional vestments are soiled and odious."⁸²

He will have no sheep-stealing by non-churchers. Non-churchers should not "try to enter the garden of the church and steal its tame deer and sheep." Non-churchism must go to the heathen as Paul did. There are so many thousands of non-Christians that there is no need for non-churchers to ally themselves with the few Christians that are to be found in Japan. "Let us make our allies the pure unbelievers, let us advance into the spiritual jungle and catch its lions and tigers."⁸³

Non-Churchism is Primarily for Japan.

Much of Uchimura's objection to the churches lay in their foreign origin and refusal to grow naturally on Japanese soil. "If there must be a church in Japan in this twentieth century, it must not be the Roman Catholic Church of sixteen hundred years ago, the Calvinistic Church of Geneva of four hundred years ago, nor the English Methodist Church of two hundred years ago. Today Japanese believers must receive the truths of Christianity in their hearts, taste deeply the grace of God's salvation, then without any compulsion from outside, hold a church that has developed naturally The church is made by God, not man. It is something that He builds on our faith according to time and circumstances."⁸⁴

How long would the Japanese churches continue today if their subsidies were cut off? But the church, as history has shown, has succeeded outside its country of origin.⁸⁵

The church's duty is "to preach the salvation of Christ and

not preach the church. Leave the church to God and the believers. . . . Those who preach the church along with the Gospel are destroying the Gospel. It is a mistake to say that you cannot have the diamond unless you take the box which holds it. It is enough for us evangelists to give to poor souls the diamond of the Gospel.”⁸⁶

Secular forces such as organized bodies should not be necessary for the spread of the Gospel. . . . There is no society for the spread of Dante’s and Shakespeare’s works but they are welcomed and read with respect all over the world. There is no reason why the Bible, the revelation from heaven, depending solely on its own worth, should not be spread through the world.”⁸⁷

The Form of Non-Churchism.

“Non-church should become the church. This does not mean that it should return to the existing church but that it should be the churchless church, namely the spiritual community of believers that does not need a church. I fully admit that this community would very likely become a so-called church. In that case, however, it should be broken up again immediately. The church is to be forever constructed while being forever destroyed. The church is like the body of a living being for which sclerosis is most to be feared.”⁸⁸

In the dialogue in reply to the query, “Do you intend to remain a non-church believer to the end,” Uchimura replies: “Until I can enter a church that maintains this sort of free faith, I intend to stay as I am. However, faith must be expressed in some form. Though the church does not make faith,

faith will ultimately build a church. Accordingly, since there is one faith, there is no reason why sooner or later, there should not be one church.”⁸⁹

The reply to the query as to whether Uchimura intended to build a church provides the beginning of the study, “The Problem of Building a Church.” He says that he has preached the gospel for about forty years without one. Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church, like God, “dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 16:31). On the strength of this, it is not necessary to build a church. “While this word stands, Christianity without a church is possible.”⁹⁰

There are many other passages which could be included under this head, but the writer has found nothing more definite than the above concerning church government, organization, or authority in the church.

Some Objections to Non-churchism Answered.

Objections and criticisms of non-churchism occur in many places in the dialogue referred to. There remain a few covering points not dealt with elsewhere.

It is suggested that a church is necessary for the protection and encouragement of a man's faith in its early stages. To this Uchimura replies that at first he had thought so also. But he has known many who, having received the warm protection of the church, later became back-sliders, whereas many people “without the services of the church have preserved their faith magnificently. Faith depends on God, not on man. “The Lord knows those who are his’” (II Tim. 2:19).⁹¹

Is not the church necessary to safeguard doctrine? Uchi-

mura replies that the church for all its organization has not been able to maintain purity of doctrine. Heresies have grown up within the church; sects have split away from the church with perverted doctrines. Pure doctrine can be preserved not by external regulations and creeds but by the Holy Spirit and love. Faith comes directly from God and can be maintained only by infusions of grace from above and within. (Cf. Galatians 2:21.)⁹²

Since men are social animals, asks the questioner, is not the church necessary? The spiritual nature of Christians grows with the fellowship of the church. . . . Uchimura replies: "Of course man is a social animal. But he is also, as Kant has said, a most unsocial animal. The deepest part of him can never be satisfied with social intercourse. When a man comes close to God he does not come close to others. He cries 'Abba Father' and goes directly to God" Second, the bitter quarrels within the churches and between denominations frustrate this desire for fellowship in people who become members of the churches. . . . Third, though non-churchism has no organization or rules, there is warm fellowship within its gatherings. Uchimura testifies emphatically to this. "People who have not experienced this cannot believe it," but it is there.⁹³

The Sacraments.

After explaining the English word "sacrament" by its closest Japanese equivalents, Uchimura quotes Augustine's definition of a sacrament as "the visible sign of an invisible grace." Thus defined sacraments are not limited to the sacraments of the church. Nature itself is a sacrament, and Paul so under-

stood it: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. 1:20). Human relationships, e. g., of father and son, husband and wife, are sacramental.

The sacraments of the church are baptism and holy communion. Uchimura does not accept them as "rituals, rites" (*gishiki*) of the church. There is no saving value in them; bad men have been baptized and good men have remained good without receiving them. A so-called Christian believer may participate in holy communion and continue in evil doing.

However Uchimura does accept them as "symbols." "Baptism is a symbol for the faith of the believer of the death and resurrection of Christ." It is not mere "purification," but symbolizes also "the death of the old self and the rising from the tomb of the new self in newness of life."

The meaning of holy communion is conveyed in Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-21 and I Cor. 11:23-25. It is firstly, a memorial: "This do in memory of me." Secondly, it is a thanksgiving and a holy gathering: "When we eat the Lord's flesh and drink his blood we are feeding our souls." Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh . . ." (John 6:53-55).

The sacraments have no value in themselves. They mean participation in the spirit of Jesus. The believer's life is Christ; every day he needs to take the life of Christ. "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, they are life" (John 6:63).

It will be remembered that Uchimura had his second wife baptized just before her death ; twenty-one years later he himself baptized his daughter Ruth and then conducted the sacrament of the Lord's supper for her, his wife and himself just before the daughter died. He refers to this in his study "Baptism and Holy Communion"⁹⁴ and says he did it to communicate the faith, hope, and love of Christianity in symbols of things which could not be expressed in words.

There is a curious passage in one of the pages of "How I Became a Christian." One September evening at Amherst College the thought came to Uchimura that

"this 'death to sin' can be accomplished, not by looking into my sinful heart, but by looking up to Jesus crucified Gratitude filled my heart, and I wished to commemorate the day by partaking the Lord's supper. So I pressed a little juice out of a cluster of wild grapes, and put it in a little porcelain dish. Also I cut a small piece of biscuit. I placed these upon a cleanly-washed handkerchief, and I sat in front of them. After a thanksgiving and prayer, I took the Lord's body and blood with very thankful heart. Extremely sanctifying. I must repeat this again and again."

This is followed by the story of a Japanese whom Uchimura knew who one summer afternoon felt a strong conviction of sin and a sense of release through the forgiveness of Christ. He wanted to be baptized and there was no minister to be found within twenty-five miles.

"Just then, however, a summer shower of the most refreshing sort came pouring upon his district. He thought the heaven itself was inviting him to the holy ceremony. So he rushed right into the midst of the rain and there in a reverential attitude had his whole body drenched by the 'heavenly water.'"

From that time on the man regarded and confessed himself as a baptized Christian. Uchimura's comment is :

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“I do not disturb other peoples in their reverence toward the host and golden chalices; and I do not wish myself to be disturbed in my preference in these matters. The pith of the whole affair is He Himself, and men do differ in their ways of appropriating Him. Liberty in non-essentials.”⁹⁵

The present writer has been unable to discover how frequently Uchimura participated in the Lord's Supper with his followers in his mature years. It is possible that he did it occasionally. Tsuku Sakata has said that “When it was necessary for the spirit (*reikon*) of his followers, he has on occasion even administered baptism.”⁹⁶ Dr. Yasaka Tagaki, one of Uchimura's disciples, has told the present writer that Uchimura on request baptized his wife before her death — for which he was criticized by his non-churchers. . . . His position on the sacraments seems clear; they are symbols which may be used or ignored according to the circumstances. The experience of the living Christ is the important thing; the sacraments are non-essentials.

Before discussing Uchimura's beliefs about the church, one further statement of his should be added — his last word on the matter. It is a brief untitled paper written a few weeks before his death.

“My non-churchism was not an ism for its own sake but an ism for faith's sake. I preached it as a consequence of returning to the belief that a man is not saved by his works, but his faith. Therefore a man who lacks the experience of repentance from sin cannot understand it, while a man who has this noble experience will welcome it. This ism was not something for attacking the church but for declaring the way of faith.”

The cross comes first, says Uchimura, non-church follows. He had criticized the churches severely but only because at

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times their teaching did not meet with the "truth of the gospel." He had disliked American missionaries, but had not "intended to dislike the churches themselves." While preaching non-churchism, he had on

"numberless occasions acceded to their request and helped them. The churches did not help me but I believe that on many occasions I have helped them. This was because while I knew their bad side I knew their good side also. . . . *I am not a non-churcher such as is popular today.* I have not the boldness to attack the weak church of today. For the brief remainder of my life I want to preach the gospel of the cross. The gospel of the cross will destroy the churches that should be destroyed and raise up the churches that should be raised up. I am a non-churcher who am completely indifferent to the problem of the church. I want to become a non-churcher who excludes the church as a church and 'ism' as an 'ism'.

"For I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified'" (I Cor. 2:2)⁹⁷

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| 65— <i>The Protestant Tradition</i> , p. 127 | 72—Ibid., pp. 166, 167. |
| 66—Winburn T. Thomas: <i>Protestant Beginnings in Japan</i> , p. 172 | 73—Ibid., pp. 168—171. |
| 67—SW., VII, p. 268. In Uchimura's English. | 74—Ibid., p. 172 |
| 68—Op. cit., p. 45 | 75—CW., VIII, p. 694 |
| 69—CW., IX, p. 210—212. | 76—CW., IX, p. 171 |
| 70—CW., IX, pp. 163—164 | 77—Ibid., 224. The study "Concerning Non-Churchism." |
| 71—The Japanese word <i>katei</i> is very similar to the Greek <i>οικος</i> or <i>οικια</i> . Uchimura does not comment on the Greek, because <i>katei</i> is so close to the Greek. | 78—CW., VIII, p. 697 |
| | 79—Ibid., p. 695 |
| | 80—Ibid., p. 702 |
| | 81—Ibid., p. 703 |
| | 82—CW., XV, p. 544. In Uchimura's English. |

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- 83—CW., IX, pp. 216—217. In the study, "The Advance of Non-Churchism," 1907.
- 84—CW., VIII, p. 698
- 85—Ibid., p. 701
- 86—Ibid., p. 702
- 87—Ibid., p. 703
- 88—CW., IX, p. 216
- 89—CW., VIII, p. 710
- 90—CW., IX, pp. 207—210
- 91—CW., VIII, p. 700
- 92—Ibid., pp. 708—709
- 93—Ibid., pp. 705—708
- 94—CW., IX, pp. 192—198
- 95—CW., XV, pp. 124, 125
- 96—Jennings, *op. cit.* p. 50
- 97—CW., IX, pp. 239—241