Secularization Theory and Japanese Christianity: The Case of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan

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The central question of this study is whether the secularization theory formulated by David Martin (1978) can help make intelligible what has been happening in recent years in the largest Protestant body in Japan, the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan.

After proposing working definitions of the terms "religious" and "secular" with particular attention to the idea of "secular religion," the main features of Martin's theory are briefly summarized. Treated as centrally important is his concept of "frame," the religious environment of a society, including the role of the state, at the time it enters modernity.

The Japanese frame as of 1868 is characterized as one in which Shinto was made a de facto state cult (legally defined as a non-religion) without prejudice to popular affiliation with Buddhism. Christianity and other unauthorized religious groups were suppressed as illegal.

In the recent history of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, three series of events are selected for consideration: (1) the 1967 Confession of wartime responsibility and the polarizing debates that followed it, (2) the 1968 decision to participate in the ecumenical Christian pavilion at the Japanese International Exposition of 1970 and the confrontations to which it gave rise, and (3) the 1969-70 maneuvers of faculty and students at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, the major institution of theological education in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, and the further polarization to which they led in the church at large.

An attempt is then made to analyze these events in the light of secularization theory. This leads to a modification in the theory, such that one assumes the coexistence of two frames: the traditional state-over-religion frame and the postwar neutral-state/pluralistic-religion frame. The relationships between Christianity and politics, and between Christianity and social authority, are considered in light of this assumption. Finally, the difficulty of incorporating culturally specific elements is treated.

The conclusion is that, when modified to fit the contemporary Japanese situation, Martin's theory does help one to understand recent developments in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Much of the fascination (and aversion) felt for the term "secularization" appears to stem from its very ambiguity. Few terms employed in scholarly inquiry can have carried such diametrically opposed meanings. On the one hand it is used to indicate the decline of religious beliefs and influence in a population formerly deemed religious (Yinger 1957, pp. 203, 280; Meland 1966, p.3; Wilson 1976, pp. 265-266), on the other to refer to a reorientation of religious concerns from the next world to this – and thus to the emergence of a new form of religious belief and influence (Luckmann 1967, pp. 90-91, 104-105). If it is used in a value-neutral way (Parsons 1971, pp. 98-99; Bellah 1970, p. 227), it is also used in a value-laden way as something to abhor or celebrate (attitudes cited by Swyngedouw 1973, p. 495) – even as part of an ideology of history (criticized in Martin 1969, pp. 17-20, 35-36). The question has been raised whether such a multivocal term can have any positive role to play in scientific discourse without rigorous purgation (Martin 1969, pp. 9-22; Shiner 1967, pp. 219-220; Swyngedouw 1973, p. 496; Tamaru 1978, pp. 36-38). Yet for all its diverse and sometimes mutually opposed meanings, we cannot seem to leave it alone. As to a dental cavity, we keep coming back to it, probing it, hoping it will clear up or go away.

This particular study has a very limited aim: to see if secularization theory can help clarify what has been happening in recent years in Japanese Christianity as exemplified by the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan.

Before this matter can be explored, however, it will be necessary to do three things: (1) to specify why I have chosen to focus on the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, (2) to offer a working definition of the terms "religious" and "secular," and (3) to indicate what is here meant by "secularization theory."

Why the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan? The decision to focus

on the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan (United Church of Christ in Japan) derives not from the notion that it is somehow a "representative sample" of Japanese Christianity as a whole. Such an assertion could hardly be supported. The decision rests, rather, on two considerations, one pragmatic, the other evaluative.

The pragmatic consideration is simply this: of the 43 Christian organizations registered with the Ministry of Education as religious juridical persons as of 31 December 1976 (Bunkachō 1978, pp. 104-106), the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan is the one I know best and concerning which I can most readily lay my hands on the neccessary data.

The evaluative consideration is that since the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan is far and away the largest Protestant body in Japan (132,238 members as of 31 December 1976, followed by the Iesu no Mitama Kyōkai Kyōdan or Spirit of Jesus Church with 84,348, then the Nihon Seikōkai or Anglican Episcopal Church of Japan with 54,223), what goes on in it can hardly be ignored in any picture of Japanese Christianity.

The terms "religious" and "secular." Whatever else secularization may mean, it surely implies some kind of religious change in the direction of more widely secular interests. It behooves us, however, to indicate with some care what these terms will here be taken to mean.

The very juxtaposition of "religious" and "secular" would seem to suggest implicit or explicit acceptance of the widely used distinction between natural and supernatural, sacred and profane, empirical and transcendent. From this perspective the commonsense thing to do would be to set up a dichotomy of realms. One would subsume the sacred, the supernatural, and the transcendent under "the religious" and subsume the natural, the profane, and the empirical under "the secular." Then the more religious a phenomenon, the less secular it would be, and vice versa.

The difficulty with this approach is that the ontological dualism on which it depends denies by fiat the claim of those who affirm that what appears to be secularization can and should be understood as a revolution in religious perspectives and institutions. To accept it might make for a tidy solution to the question of definition, but it would imply a deductive (if not ideological) approach to the data and rule out in advance any possibility of religious meaning in phenomena viewed through the spectacles of the secularization concept.

Even van Gennep's idea of "the pivoting of the sacred" runs into an insurmountable difficulty. His view that "sacredness as an attribute is not absolute" (1960, p. 12), that it is the social stage and role that bring into play the concepts of sacred and profane, that "whoever passes through the various positions of a lifetime one day sees the sacred where before he has seen the profane, or vice verse" (1960, p. 13) – all this represents a distinct advance, not least because it requires researchers to use such concepts more as tools than as principles, to use them with what Ernst Troeltsch once referred to as "versatility" in the adopting of different points of view. Even this highly flexible approach, however, strictly separates the concepts of sacred and profane, religious and secular. The concept of a "secular religion" illustrates its basic difficulty. On this view the idea of a secular religion is a contradiction in terms. Yet much of the current debate over secularization hangs precisely on whether a given phenomenon is to be understood as a secularization of the religious or a sacralization of the secular. Van Gennep's dichotomy, however versatile, cannot be expected to help resolve this matter.

What is needed, then, is an approach that will permit one to treat as a possibility the idea that secularization may involve religious meaning. If one may be permitted to select only a portion of the approach pioneered by Luckmann in his *The invisible religion* (1967), I would like to take as my starting point this statement:

> Symbolic universes are objectivated meanings-systems that relate the experiences of everyday life to a "transcendent" layer of reality. Other systems of meaning do not point beyond the world of everyday life...(1967, p. 44).

As applied to the ideas of "religious" and "secular," this would mean that the difference between the two could be construed as a difference in degree of comprehensiveness (cf. Douglas 1975, p. 76). For present purposes, then, the following definition is offered: *a religious meaning-system is one in which everyday experiences are related to a transcendent level of reality, a secular meaning-system one in which everyday experiences are not so related.*

The question of how such a definition can accommodate the idea of a "secular religion" recurs at this point. In light of the previous discussion a secular religion may be characterized as a meaning-system that rejects religion as an appropriate self-designation while at the same time relying on assumptions and attitudes that can be understood as implying belief in or reliance on a transcendent level of reality.

No basis has been provided for arguing, however, that all secularization is bound to end up, if carried to its logical conclusion, as a secular religion. The argument is intended to support only the view that secularization *may* have positive religious meaning (cf. Ikado 1972, pp. 10-11). It leaves open the possibility that secularization may also entail the diminution of a religious universe of meaning. The question of how to distinguish these two consequences may be deferred for the present.

Secularization theory. At the risk of emasculating David Martin's admirable formulation of "A theory of secularization: Basic patterns" (1978, chap. 2), I should like to try the experiment of seeing how it fits, or might be modified to fit, the situation of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan.

The main features of Martin's theory may be set forth in

brief. First of all, he limits himself to the West and Christianity. Second, he postulates "that at certain crucial periods in their history societies acquire a particular frame and that subsequent events persistently move within the limits of that frame" (1978, p. 15; cf. p. 27). The crucial periods to which he has reference are the times when societies enter the modern stage, and he is particularly interested in what happens after this entrance has been made (1978, p. 13). Third, he distinguishes between two types of frame, the monopolistic and the pluralistic. This feature of the theory is clarified in the following generalization: "Where there exists one religion possessed of a monopoly society splits into two warring sides, one of which is dedicated to religion. Similarly where there are two or more religions (or distinct forms of the same religion) this does not happen" (1978, pp. 17-18). Fourth, he proposes a continuum ranging from total monopoly on the one hand to total laissez-faire on the other, and on this continuum he locates various societies as of the time they entered modernity. Their locations he calls "categories," which he identifies as follows:

1. *Total monopoly* – where one religion exercises influence over a whole society. Essentially, this category pertains to the Catholic countries, namely, Spain and Portugal, Italy and Belgium, France and Austria.
2. *Duopoly or mixed* – Protestant societies in which Catholics constitute a large minority, such as Holland, Germany, and Switzerland.
3. *State church* – a Protestant church-state nexus counterbalanced by various forms of religious dissent, as in England and Australia, New Zealand and Canada, and to some extent in Scandinavia.
4. *Pluralism* – the type of society in which no religious bodies have an organic link with the state, all being mutually competitive. This type is exemplified by the U.S.A.

Martin then proceeds to work out the socio-logic of these basic

categories by analyzing five "universes of relationships": the Anglo-American and Scandinavian group, the Catholic group, communist regimes, the mixed group, and cultures subjected to external domination. In general terms his argument is that the more monopolistic a society at the time it enters modernity, the more social change tends toward internal violence in which religion is a major issue (unless the whole society must unite against an external threat), whereas the more pluralistic a society, the more social change is accommodated within a climate of political stability.

To lift up only the foregoing features, here taken as particularly germane to the present inquiry, has the virtue of economy but the vice of omitting great blocs of important and illuminating material, both empirical and analytic. Perhaps what has been presented, however, will suffice as a springboard from which to plunge into the Japanese situation.

THE FRAME

Society and the traditional religions. Japan's change from a premodern to a modern state, marked by such features as population movement to urban centers, growth of heavy industry, establishment of a nationwide educational system, decline in importance of kinship bonds and ties to the land, increase in bureaucratic organizations, and increase in roles based on contract and achievement (cf. Munakata 1976, p. 101), is usually said to have begun with the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The restoration was occasioned by what was perceived as an external threat, namely, the "black ships" of Commodore Perry of the U.S.A. Though serious disputes occurred within Japan over whether to accede to the U.S. demand for a treaty of amity, rightly seen as a precedent for relations with other countries, and whether to maintain the shogunate or replace it with a political system governed by the Emperor (Abe 1978, pp. 110-111, 119), these disputes did not split the nation. It united, rather, under the

aegis of the Emperor and the restoration government.

The place of religion in Japanese society at that time can perhaps best be understood by drawing a distinction between religious roles in relation to people in general and religious statuses relative to the government. The major institutional forms of traditional religion were Shinto and Buddhism. So far as government standing is concerned, they occupied quite different positions. The premodern government, the shogunate, had made Buddhism an agency of social control and a de facto state religion (Murakami 1968, p. 14). Its priests were paid by the state, and every household of commoners (farmers, craftsmen, and traders) was required not only to affiliate with a Buddhist temple but also, after 1662, to obtain annually from the priest a document certifying in effect that the possessor was a Buddhist temple supporter innocent of dangerous connections such as adherence to Christianity or other underground faiths (Kasahara 1977, pp. 4-6; cf. Anesaki 1963, p. 260). When the restoration government took over, it simply threw out Buddhism and replaced it with Shinto. In order to purify Shinto of its Buddhist accretions, the separation of the two was decreed (Bunkachō 1970, pp. 9-10), and a short period of anti-Buddhist iconoclasm began. This iconoclasm terminated about 1871 when Buddhist leaders managed to have the government set up an agency for the supervision of temple affairs (Murakami 1968, p. 40). Shinto, however, defined as a non-religion, was established under the authority of the Emperor as the state cult (Kasahara 1977, p. 310). Some 190,000 Shinto shrines, classified into various ranks, were declared places for the observance of state rites. Shinto priestly offices were made appointive rather than hereditary, but the stipends of those appointed were guaranteed by the government.

With regard to people in general, however, it is important to recognize that the notion of exclusive adherence to one

religion was almost inconceivable. Most people regarded Shinto as the religion of communities and local groups, Buddhism as the religion through which they buried and venerated the dead of their households (Morioka 1975, p. 6). With no sense of incongruity or disloyalty, they participated in both. Consequently, though the early Meiji years were in many ways times of tumult and turmoil, on the whole one can recognize the Japan of that time not as an internally divided society at war over the issue of religion, but as a society largely united under the authority of the Emperor.

Marginal groups. That Christianity had only a negative part to play, whether in the later years of the shogunate or the early years of the restoration government, hardly calls for documentation. Prior to the restoration, it was considered subversive of a social order in which every person had an assigned place and role and in which opportunities for social mobility were strictly limited (cf. Sugimoto and Swain 1978, pp. 165, 236). During the first years of the Meiji government, it was regarded as a threat to the state-promulgated dogma of theocracy that so neatly fitted the government's "urgent need for a spiritual symbol around which to unify the new nation" (Abe 1978, p. 120). Not until 24 February 1873 were the notices prohibiting Christianity removed, and even then Christianity, though tolerated, remained technically illegal.

Christianity, however, was not the only illegal religious body in early Meiji Japan. Groups like Kurozumikyō, Konkōkyō, and Tenrikyō, until granted legal recognition (in 1876, 1900, and 1908 respectively), were considered illegal and subjected to severe persecution. The "legal recognition" system, moreover, was by no means incidental to the overall frame. It was a logical consequence of an assumption that guided government religious policy from 701, when the law of the land was first codified, to 1945, when World War II

ended. This assumption was that religious organizations existed to serve the interests of the state. Those accorded legal recognition were rewarded with government protection and tax exemptions, but had to submit to government control and supervision. Unauthorized religious organizations were suppressed (Kawawata 1972, p. 162).

This, then, was the "frame" established in Japan at the time that the Meiji government initiated its policy of modernization within a format of Shinto revivalism: a state ideology and cult counterbalanced by an extensive, highly proliferated, and recently disestablished Buddhism – not to mention a number of smaller, persecuted religious groups that, like Christianity, had only a negative role to play in the national myth.[1]

THE NIHON KIRISUTO KYŌDAN

Ambiguous origin. The Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan came into being in June 1941 as an aggregation of some thirty-four previously autonomous Protestant denominations. Its for-

1. It should be mentioned that later in the same period, particularly 1882-1889, Christianity attracted a number of converts, first from the former samurai class, later from the urban white-collar class (Ikado 1972, pp. 292-304). This was due at least in part to the fact that Christianity was regarded as a basic element in the Western civilization to which Japan looked for modernization models (Thomas 1959, pp. 172-173, 176). "Nation building" was thus a motivation to conversion (Ogawa 1973, pp. 268-269). During this time, Christianity may be said to have played a minor but positive role in the still growing national myth.

   As a separate matter, the principle of freedom of religious belief under the protection of the state was communicated to religious leaders as an intrinsic part of government policy in 1875 (Bunkachō 1970, p. 84). Moreover, freedom of conscience "within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects" was guaranteed by the Constitution of 1889. But since Shinto (later more narrowly defined as Shrine Shinto in distinction from Sect Shinto) still functioned as the state cult even though legally characterized as a non-religious public juridical person (Kawawata 1972, pp. 162-163), these alterations did not involve any basic change in the frame.

mation was attended by both internal and external pressures. Internally, the desire for a united Protestant Christianity in Japan can be traced back to the earliest period of Japanese Protestant history (Morioka 1970, pp. 70-72; Ogawa 1973, pp. 273-276). From this perspective, the emergence of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan in 1941 seemed providential. Externally, the pressure to unite came from the wartime Ministry of Education in accordance with its policy of establishing government control over religious organizations as part of a nationwide system of mobilization (Kuwabara 1978, p. 89). From its inception, therefore, the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan rested on an uneasy combination of "sacred" and "secular" motivations.

With the end of World War II and the freedom to remain in or leave the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, some groups such as the Anglican Episcopal Church, the Japan Lutheran Church, most of the Baptist churches, etc., chose to withdraw. Even among those that chose to remain, however, one continuing source of disagreement was that of the relationship between church and state. Internal disputes having to do with this relationship, particularly during the years 1967-1970, may serve to focus the concern of this study. Three related concatenations of incidents stand out with particular prominence.

Confession of wartime responsibility. On Easter Sunday, 26 March 1967, Suzuki Masahisa, then Moderator of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, issued a statement that can be seen as the beginning of a major internal polarization.[2] It was

2. The issuing of the Confession was not something the Moderator did arbitrarily. At the 14th General Assembly of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan a proposal was made that the church issue a statement on its responsibility for the war. This proposal, though not passed, was referred to the Executive Committee. At its meeting on 20-22 February 1967, this committee debated the matter, revised the proposed statement, and voted 19-2 that it be issued in the form of a letter over the name of the Moderator (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1968, p.58).

entitled the *Dai niji taisenka ni okeru Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan no sekinin ni tsuite no kokuhaku* ("Confession on the responsibility of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan during World War II"). In essence it presented three points: (1) a confession that the church was mistaken to have approved of and supported the war, (2) a request for forgiveness, and (3) an expression of anxiety as to the course being taken by postwar Japan and an affirmation of determination to fulfill the role of loyal critic.

The initial debates were mild. The chief points at issue were two. First was the matter of whether the Confession struck a satisfactory balance between those who wanted to emphasize that the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan had been formed under government pressure and those who wanted to emphasize that its formation was an answer to prayer. Second, it was protested by some that the Confession went too far when it said that recognition of the error committed in the name of the church was "unanimous." The protestors held that this kind of acknowledgement had already been made on 9 June 1946 in a statement former Moderator Kozaki read to the National Assembly of Christians. This protest, however, merely extended the scope of the debate, for though some interpreted Kozaki's statement as a confession and asked why they were now being called on to repeat it, others viewed its remarks on error and repentance as merely incidental to its call to mission (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1968, p. 59).

Debates over the Confession coincided with an election for the governorship of Tokyo. Those opposed to the Confession and to Moderator Suzuki supported Matsushita, a Christian candidate backed by the Liberal Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party. The pro-Confession group supported Minobe, candidate of the Socialist and Communist parties, and among these supporters was Moderator Suzuki, acting "in an individual capacity." The division over the election intensified the drift toward polarization.

On 6 July 1967 the Executive Committee of the church appointed a special "Five-Man Committee," headed by Professor Kitamori Kazoh of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, to deal with matters relating to the Confession. This committee, after meetings with opponents of the Confession, submitted a rather neutral report in September, but in this way the name of Professor Kitamori was definitely linked to the Confession of wartime responsibility.

Expo. The journalistic abbreviation "Expo" refers to the Japanese International Exposition of 1970. At a general meeting of the National Christian Council on 19 March 1968, it was decided to support the idea of an ecumenical Christian pavilion at Expo. Invited to participate were the Catholic Church in Japan, the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, and other churches and groups related to the National Christian Council. The cost of the pavilion was estimated at ¥100,000,000, of which ¥30,000,000 was to be raised by the Catholics, ¥35,000,000 by the Protestants, and ¥30,000,000 through contributions from overseas.

The theme for Expo as a whole was "Human Progress and Harmony." For the Christian pavilion, it was reworded to read "Eyes and Hands – the Human Discovery" followed by the subtheme "Harmony through Reconciliation – Progress through Creation." The theme chairman was Professor Kitamori.

At its 15th General Assembly (21-24 October 1968), the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, after re-electing Suzuki as Moderator and Ii as Vice-Moderator on the first ballot, voted to participate in the Expo Christian pavilion (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1969, pp. 83-84). This decision led to further polarization.

Advocates of participation in the Christian pavilion argued that it was important for Christianity to have an opportunity to communicate the gospel to the hundreds and thousands

of people expected to visit Expo. They further argued that the chance to present an ecumenical witness on such an occasion was too valuable to pass by. Opponents argued, however, that since Expo was sponsored by the government and was intended to demonstrate Japan's economic (and by implication, potentially military) power to the world, a power derived from exploitation of people in other countries of Asia, participation in Expo would contradict not only the church's continuing opposition to the Yasukuni Shrine bill (a bill that would make Yasukuni Shrine a non-religious institution and support it with tax money) but also the Confession of wartime responsibility (which sought especially the forgiveness of "our brothers and sisters ... of Asian countries") (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1970, p. 61).

During the thick of the debates, many of which involved heated attacks on him, Moderator Suzuki fell ill. After an operation on 9 June 1969, he died of cancer of the liver on 14 July 1969. Vice-Moderator Ii automatically became Moderator.

About this time, another political issue came to the fore, namely, whether to support or oppose the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty that was due for renewal in 1970. Here again the anti-Expo and anti-treaty *shakai-ha* (socially oriented faction) encountered the pro-Expo and pro-treaty *kyōkai-ha* (church oriented faction). Once more political division exacerbated internal dissension.

Anti-establishment students in Christian schools, lighting on the Christian pavilion issue, made it a bone of contention not only with Christian school administrators but also with leaders of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan. A delegation of students from the Theological Department of Dōshisha University, in a meeting with General Secretary Takakura, demanded that the action of the 15th General Assembly be rescinded. On being told that he did not possess that kind of authority, they then demanded a meeting with Moderator Ii.

When he met with them, Moderator Ii accepted their petition to meet with the Standing Executive Committee and promised to hold an open session of the committee on 1 September 1969.

This special session brought together not only Moderator Ii, Secretary Kimura, General Secretary Takakura, and six members of the Standing Executive Committee, but also members of the Anti-Expo Kwansei Clergy, The Struggle Committee of Kansai Gakuin Theological Department, the League of Christian Fighters from Meiji Gakuin, the Tokyo Union Theological Seminary [Student] Committee for Struggle against Expo and Yasukuni Shrine, etc. – over 150 persons in all (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1970, p. 61). Originally the meeting was scheduled to last from 1-5 p.m. In the event it continued until 2 September at 7:30 a.m.

Dominated by opponents of Expo participation, the meeting was conducted amid much booing and heckling. The chief arguments of the opponents were: (1) It is nonsense for the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan to approve the Confession of wartime responsibility and oppose the Yasukuni Shrine bill on the one hand, and then participate in Expo, which has such a close connection not only with the state establishment but also with the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. (2) It is absurd to justify participation on the ground of evangelistic witness and spend ¥100,000,000 on a building when it is known already that there will be little evangelistic impact. (3) Cooperation with the Catholic Church is also held up as a reason for participation, but this overlooks the fact that there is opposition to Expo participation in the Catholic Church too.

During this meeting, Professor Kitamori, Chairman of the Expo Christian Pavilion Theme Committee, was struck on two occasions.

At length, the anti-Expo groups presented Moderator Ii with an ultimatum: either to consider the Expo problem one of profound importance for the life of the church and convene

a special General Assembly to decide the church's attitude toward it, or to cut forthwith all ties with the members of the protesting groups.

After a recess to confer with the Standing Executive Committee members, Moderator Ii announced that a special General Assembly would be convened either in the name of the Executive Committee or in his own name. Before it could be held, however, another series of events intervened.

Tokyo Union Theological Seminary. During its stated meeting on 2-4 September 1969, the faculty of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, the major school of theological education in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, issued a statement deploring the physical violence to which Professor Kitamori had been subjected. The statement called on the clergy present at the 1 September meeting, whatever their attitude toward Expo participation, to "reflect" on their failure to stop or rebuke those who struck him, thus giving tacit consent to their actions.

In response a group of Tokyo District clergy issued a statement of their own on 6 September 1969. It said that they *had* restrained those bent on violence, and it reprimanded the faculty not only for error but also for adopting an ostensibly "above the tumult" stance on the matter of Expo participation. It challenged them to make their position on Expo clear (*Kirisutokyō nenkan*, 1970, p. 62).

The Executive Committee of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, on 11 September 1969, held a meeting previously announced as open to committee members only. Acceding to the demand of vociferous anti-Expo auditors, however, they opened it to all who wished to attend. This too turned into an all-night session. In the end, thirteen of the seventeen committee members voted to approve the convening of the special General Assembly promised by Moderator Ii. They instructed him to send out a letter to all church districts urging discussion of

the Expo problem as they elected delegates to the assembly. Moderator Ii sent out such a letter on 18 September 1969.

Even earlier, though, district assemblies in certain areas had reached such a pitch of turmoil over Expo that their meetings had to be called off. The Osaka District managed to hold a special assembly on 2-3 September, and at this time some 120 anti-Expo students, accepted as associate delegates, forced the Vice-Chairman of the Christian Pavilion and the Business Affairs Chief of the Christian Pavilion to tender their resignations (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1970, p. 63). Hyōgo District had to adjourn its meeting of 14-15 May, but held another assembly on 1 July 1969, at which time the District voted to oppose Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan participation in Expo. In Tokyo District the Standing Committee met on 26 September with some forty anti-Expo students and pastors as auditors. This too proved to be an all-night session. It was decided to hold a special Tokyo District assembly on 14 November 1969 to air the Expo problem, and the Standing Committee was to meet again on 7 November to prepare the agenda. On that very day, however, all the officers of Tokyo District resigned, thus paralyzing further action. As it turned out, the major districts (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Kyoto, Osaka, and Hyōgo) found it impossible to meet to elect delegates. Nonetheless, a special General Assembly was convened on 25-26 November 1969. But since anti-Expo youth, students, and clergy burst into the assembly with demands for a thorough prosecution of the Expo issue, proceedings were suspended for that purpose and no actions were taken.

Meanwhile, at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, leaders of the Student Self-Government Association issued on 12 September 1969 a communication calling for withdrawal of the faculty statement of 3 September. It declared that until this statement was withdrawn, they would not cooperate in any way with the school. The majority of students approved this action at an assembly on 26 September (*Kirisutokyō*

nenkan 1970, p. 66). The student communication also called for an all-school debate, but a joint steering committee meeting scheduled for 24 September came to nothing, and one scheduled for 1 October was not held. With this, the students entered on an undeclared strike.

On 19 November the school began to receive second semester registrations (originally scheduled for 1 October), but the Self-Government Association, holding that in view of the faculty statement the nature of the seminary as a whole had become questionable, declared that until clarification had been reached through general debate they would refuse to attend classes. This froze the registrations. Four student leaders, moreover, began a hunger strike to force agreement to an all-school *taishū dankō* (literally, a "mass meeting for interorganizational negotiations," but actually an assembly in which massed students would shout down all opposition and compel all but the hardiest to submit to their views). But whereas the faculty wanted to limit debate to the problem of the frozen registration process, the Self-Government Association insisted on the right to raise questions about the seminary as a whole. Neither side would budge, and from this point on, polarization proceeded apace.

On 24 November 1969 the hunger strike was called off, and the entire school was closed off with barricades erected by protesting students. The faculty then issued a statement saying that it would enter into no negotiations with the Self-Government Association until the barricades were removed. Thus the opposition between faculty and students that had developed since the faculty statement of 3 September became even more rigid.

Entrance examinations for seminary applicants were scheduled for 16 February 1970. Hoping to prevent hostile students from breaking up the examinations, the faculty determined in secret to hold the examinations at over ten undisclosed locations in metropolitan and suburban Tokyo.

Through information conveyed by a sympathetic professor, pro-barricade students located two of the sites and, after fighting with anti-barricade student guards, managed to force discontinuation of the examinations there. At another site, the home of a seminary professor, the pro-barricade students, frustrated by locked doors, broke a window and forced their way in. On this occasion they physically abused another professor who was present.

At this point, however, a neighbor, disturbed by the commotion, called the police. From this time on, the affair could no longer be considered intramural. Two students were indicted on suspicion of trespass.

On 11 March 1970 the seminary called in the riot police to remove the barricades. The students behind the barricades were ordered to leave, but of the eight present at that hour (6:50 a.m.), three refused and were placed under arrest. Thereupon the school surrounded the premises with an iron fence, set up a checkpoint, and notified students that registration and classes would begin on 17 March. Non-registering students were invited to submit applications for leave-of-absence by 31 March. Students who neither registered nor applied for leave-of-absence were warned that their names would be struck from the rolls. Some 87 students chose to register, 10 to take a leave-of-absence. The remainder, about one-fifth of the student body, left the seminary.

In district assemblies held throughout the nation between March and May 1970, the action taken by Tokyo Union Theological Seminary was hotly debated. The violent words and actions that characterized the all-night meeting of 1 September 1969 had counterparts in many local meetings. In the five major districts feelings ran so high that delegates dared not assemble for fear of outbursts of violence (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1971, p. 61).

Thus the rift that formed with the announcement of the Confession of wartime responsibility widened into a gulf

during the confrontations over Expo, and related actions at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, sending shock waves throughout the church, served to make the polarization even more intense.

This sketch of events, detailed though it may seem, has omitted many developments on the one hand and stopped far short of the present on the other. But perhaps enough data are in hand to permit one to look at them from the perspective of secularization theory.

SECULARIZATION THEORY REVISITED

Reframing. The first point to note about what has been happening in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan is that although older people tend to predominate in the anti-Confession, pro-Expo, pro-Seminary faction and people of younger years in the pro-Confession, anti-Expo, and anti-Seminary faction, the generations are too thoroughly constitutive of both to permit one to speak with confidence of a "generation gap" that might be a consequence of different types of socialization. Yet we clearly have to do here with a *conflict of norms.* It may be advisable to begin by specifying what they are.

Those opposing the Confession, favoring participation in Expo, and supporting the action of the Seminary in calling for the riot police may be regarded as consistent adherents to the kind of norm implicit in the frame established in 1868 and perpetuated until 1945. In accordance with this frame, the government is a legitimate authority, and the church will do well to cooperate with it unless an important issue is at stake. With some tentativeness it may be suggested that people socialized in the years prior to 1945 find it easier to take this line than to question or oppose it.

On the other hand, those favoring the Confession, opposing participation in Expo, and criticizing the Seminary can be thought of as exponents of a different norm. For them the government is by no means the kind of authority whose

legitimacy is to be accepted unquestioningly until an issue arises. On the contrary, they see government and big business as joined in a spiral of mounting exploitation, pollution, and dehumanization that only waits to be completed by a revival of military power and a state-inculcated ideology. In this situation the church, as they see it, must be vigilant, ready at any time to mobilize opposition to unacceptable government actions. This norm, it may be suggested, is particularly appealing to people socialized in the years following 1945.

What I am proposing, then, is that in order to understand the nature of the events that have recently taken place in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, it makes sense to postulate two coexistent frames. In the first, government and religious organizations alike largely accept the traditional view that religion should serve the interests of the state. This will be referred to as the "state-over-religion" frame. In the second, originally imposed as a consequence of defeat in war but continued in law despite the end of the occupation (see Kawawata 1972, pp. 162, 165, 168-169), the relationship between government and religious organizations is organized on the pattern of U.S. pluralism. No religion has an organic connection with the state. Religious teaching (and the teaching of an allegedly non-religious state ideology) is eliminated from the public school system, and the state is strictly neutral in its treatment of the various religious organizations. This will be referred to as the "neutral-state/pluralistic-religion" frame.

The polarization within the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan comes into view as a conflict between people oriented to one or the other of these two frames – leaving aside those who side now with the one, now with the other. (As suggested above, I do not mean that all Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan members socialized before and during the war will belong to the state-over-religion frame or that all those socialized since the war will belong to the neutral-state/pluralistic-religion frame. Though it does

seem likely that one should be able to detect a statistical tendency of this kind, the point here is to establish the possibility of two frame-related orientations, not to determine who belong to them.)

Relationships. The issues that have brought Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan members into confrontation can be treated under the headings of the relationship between Christianity and social authority on the one hand, and the relationship between Christianity and politics on the other.[3]

So far as our data show, the issue of the relationship between Christianity and politics became a matter of internal dissension in two connections: the 1967 election for governor of Tokyo, and the matter of supporting or opposing the 1970 renewal of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. In both cases the intra-church divisions took place in a way that accords with the two-frame assumption. At the time of the election, opponents of the Confession of wartime responsibility were identified as supporters of the right-wing or conservative candidate, proponents as supporters of the left-wing or progressive candidate. Likewise with regard to the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the implication is that the former, in accordance with the position of the dominant conservative party, gave the treaty their support whereas the latter, in parallel with the progressives, opposed it. Given the percentage of Christians in Japan at that time (0.96% in1968), this tumult within the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan was little more than a tempest in a teapot, for though people throughout Japan took sides on the treaty issue, their doing so did not

3. Within the church, confrontations are more likely to take place over theological issues such as Christology, biblical interpretation, the confession of faith, and the nature of the church. In focusing on the relationship with politics and social authority, I do not mean to imply that the theological discussions are mere epiphenomena. It may be suggested, however, that if the two-frame assumption helps make sense of the issues here selected for consideration, it may also throw some light on the dynamics of the theological debates.

result in a religious division. In fact one might suggest that the general practice of participating both in Shinto festivals and Buddhist household rites (quite apart from knowledge of or adherence to their teachings) contributes to a climate of political stability in that it minimizes the possibility of conflict over the issue of religion. In the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, however, the increased spread of Christian voters across the political spectrum (I think this is a correct description of the postwar situation) appears to have close links with religious dissension. This might be due in part to the circumstance that their religious options are at once more limited and more demanding than those of the general populace.

Under the heading of the relationship between Christianity and social authority, attention focuses on the matter of attitudes toward the legitimacy of the government, readiness to cooperate with the government, and attitudes toward the emperor system. Unfortunately, the research data known to me do not permit one to distinguish among Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan members a tendency toward one or the other of two poles in regard to these matters. What can be said here, therefore, will of necessity be somewhat conjectural. But if the two frames are taken as ideal types, one would expect that people belonging to the state-over-religion frame would on the whole tend to accept the government as legitimate (even if bound to oppose it on critical issues), to be ready and willing to cooperate with it (not least as a way of improving the status of Christianity) and seek its protection, and to favor the emperor system (even while hoping that it can be purified of its religious elements). Conversely, one would expect that people belonging to the neutral-state/pluralistic-religion frame would on the whole be more ready to question the legitimacy of the government, to balk at cooperating with or appealing to the government, and to view the emperor system with disquiet if not disfavor. By the same token, whereas the neutral-state/pluralistic-religion frame would facilitate

adoption of the view that the church should for religious reasons be active (if not activist) in sociopolitical concerns, the state-over-religion frame would make it easier to accept more privatization of religion. Though an ideal type is by definition nothing but a mental construct, one would further expect that the more intense the polarization between Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan members over such issues, the more evident an empirical approximation to these ideal types will become. By rights, these surmises should be framed as hypotheses and tested through research, but unfortunately the situation within the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan at present makes such research unfeasible. To the extent, however, that the earlier account of events in the recent history of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan is deemed accurate, the conjectures advanced here will not seem altogether far-fetched.

So far as data now in hand are concerned, then, these two sets of relationships appear congruent with the assumption of a state-over-religion frame and a coexisting neutral-state/pluralistic-religion frame.

But if the dissension in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan is understood as a conflict of norms deriving from the coexistence of frames of more general social import, it must be expected that similar conflicts have ensued or will ensue in other religious groups. Such similarity would seem most likely in groups comparable to the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan in respect of marginality, cultural deviance, and emphasis on individual freedom of conscience. It would be sought first, therefore, in other Protestant Christian groups, second in the Catholic Church, and, a trailing third, in the new religions.

What is left out? Even if one were to imagine, contrary to all realistic expectation, that the pluralistic frame had totally replaced the traditional frame, it would still be inconceivable that Japanese and U.S. societies could be treated as theoretically interchangeable. Secularization theory as here

presented has left out, that is to say, the dimension of cultural specificity.

This point may be illustrated from three angles: language, the teacher-disciple relationship, and the permissive attitude toward violence.

That the Japanese language mirrors hierarchical concepts of social relationship is well known. One uses, for example, one class of verb endings when speaking to a superior, another when speaking to an inferior, and still a third when speaking to a friend or equal – though as Lebra has observed, the Japanese language, while rich in "status-indicative expressions," is "rather poor in status-neutral vocabulary" (1976, p.70). But when so-called radical students address their professors in a *taishū dankō*, they often use curt, rude, even insulting language. This has been described as a dramatic way of avoiding linguistic submission to the establishment (Higa Masamori as cited in Lebra 1976, pp. 71-72). The effect of such linguistic inversion has to be felt in order to be understood, but its impact in confrontations cannot be ignored.

The teacher-disciple relationship in Japan is a bond that can range from mere formalism to utmost dedication, but it always represents some idea that a disciple is an "insider." Such relationships often last a lifetime and, though not without burdens, can involve great emotional satisfactions. On the other hand, the teacher-disciple relationship can also be cut. It may not be too fanciful to regard the incident in which Professor Kitamori was slapped as a symbolic rejection of his role as a teacher in the church. In this sense it can be viewed as a "licensed and expected" contravention of an ideal normative system (Abrahams and Bauman 1978, p. 196). That the slapping was a form of hostility hardly need be argued. The point here, rather, is that in the Japanese cultural context this slapping can be seen as a message conveyed through symbolic inversion of a relationship that would

ordinarily have called for deferential language and physical distance.

The violence directed toward Professor Kitamori, the physical abuse of another seminary professor, the use of sticks and clubs not only to threaten but also to injure and draw blood (*Kirisutokyō nenkan* 1972, p. 68) – such acts are not without precedent elsewhere, but a cultural element appears to come into play as regards the ease with which such behavior is excused in Japan. The basis on which it is excused is not the principle that in certain situations violence can be tolerated. It is the view that purity of heart on the part of the relatively powerless perpetrator excuses his violence. This, together with a ready sympathy for those whose ideas are ignored in the shaping of a consensus (cf. Reischauer 1977, p. 188), gives a certain culturally supported expectation of impunity to those who choose to employ violence.

In these and other ways, then, cultural elements play an important and irreducible role in the process of religious change seen in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan. The problem to be noted here is not that such elements cannot be woven into the theory, but that the theory provides no criteria whereby to assess which elements are relevant and which are not.

An unanswered question. The question deferred for later consideration was that of how to determine whether secularization represents a decline or a reorientation of religious interests. With specific reference to the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan and the events of 1967-1970, which assessment, if either, is to be made?

One way of answering this question might be to ask the principals. This, however, would be inconclusive because some people insist that the anti-Expo "radicals" are selflessly devoted to working out in society the implications of Christian discipleship (not necessarily churchmanship), some contend

that their views on Christ and the church are heretical and will lead to the mongrelization of Christian faith, and many are simply too confused or apathetic to answer the question.

Another way might be to answer the question in terms of criteria proposed by the inquirer. This, however, would be equally inconclusive because the assessment as to decline or reorientation would vary from person to person in accordance with their conceptions of history and religion. As Glock and Stark put it, "Ideological commitments to different conceptions of what it means to be religious cannot be resolved scientifically" (1965, p. 85; cf. Fenn 1969, p. 114).

For the present, therefore, this question is unanswerable and must remain so until we learn to take account of the problem of metatheoretical assumptions to which Luckmann (1977) has directed us.

CONCLUSION

The focal question of this inquiry has been whether the secularization theory proposed by Martin (1978) can help make intelligible what has been happening in recent years in the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan. In my judgment this question can be answered in the affirmative if the theory is modified to accommodate the idea of two coexistent frames.[4]

This judgment rests primarily on the evident coherence

4. Whether this theory can help make intelligible the developments in Japanese religion and society as a whole is quite another question. One of the main problems of determining its applicability on the larger scale would be that of transplanting it from a cultural context where religious adherence is exclusive to one where it is not. Since one could still determine a frame (or frames) and analyze relationships, however, this problem would not seem insurmountable.

For a discussion of secularization in relation to Japanese religion and society as a whole, see Swyngedouw (1976, 1978b). For an argument supporting the view that the concept of secularization as a crisis in institutional religion is *not* applicable to Japanese society as a whole, see Yanagawa and Abe (1978a, 1978b) – and for an opposing view, Swyngedouw (1978a).

between the theoretical structure and the data. It would be more secure, I believe, if it had been possible to show that the more factors *a, b,* and *c* come into play, the more a trend toward *x, y,* and *z* can be seen among Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan members. Unfortunately, neither theory nor methodology presently permit that kind of demonstration. Nonetheless, this study has suggested a number of areas in which specific hypotheses can be formulated and tested. It is to be hoped that this may be undertaken in the not too distant future.

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