

Book Reviews

Perspectives on Christianity in Korea and Japan: The Gospel and Culture in East Asia

Mark R. Mullins and Richard Fox Young, editors.

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*Reviewed by Thomas Dean,
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"Despite having so much in common and living together in close proximity, Japan and Korea have responded to Christianity differently. But why?" Thus do the editors introduce this volume of comparative essays on the fascinating, complex and seemingly paradoxical story of the divergent trajectories of Christianity in these closest yet most distant of neighbors in East Asia. The importance of the answer to this question goes well beyond the realm of religion, however, since Korea and Japan are still yoked by an unresolved past and a problematic future for reasons intimately related to the differences in the reception of Christianity in both countries.

On one level the histories of Christianity in these two countries share many things in common. Both countries were subjected to Christian missionary campaigns from the sixteenth century on, efforts pursued with renewed vigor at the onset of modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and again after the end of the Pacific War. The puzzle that needs to be explained is why, despite this apparently shared history, Christianity has experi-

enced rapid growth in Korea, whereas in Japan, at least numerically speaking, it has remained stagnant.

In Korea, for example, it is Christianity that has filled the postwar role played by the so-called "new religions" in Japan. In Korea only five percent have joined the new religions, while 25 percent are Christian, a number that continues to increase. In Japan, on the other hand, the figures are almost the reverse: only one percent are Christian while 20 percent have joined the new religions. And so the question gathers added force: Why?

The Problematic of Indigenization

The question may be broken down into several lines of inquiry. Did the differences already exist at the time of initial contact, or did they arise only later? Were they due to differences in the internal political conditions in the two countries? Or was it that Christian missionaries reacted to indigenous religious traditions, or more broadly, the indigenous cultures and societies of Korea and Japan differently? What makes this latter question particularly significant is that, as one essayist observes, "the Korean case stands out among Asian churches as a rare case of indigenization."

The first and second parts of this volume, "The Transplantation of Christianity" and "The Encounter with East Asian Religion and Society," address these issues from a variety of perspectives. Coeditor Richard Young notes that in the initial encounters of Koreans and Japanese with Roman Catholic missionaries in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, there were "already significantly different responses." Japanese conversions

tended to be "sudden and culturally unmediated," whereas the Korean reception was "gradual and culturally mediated." Was this because, unlike the situation in Japan, the first missionaries in Korea were themselves Koreans, not foreign padres?

On the other hand, Christian missionaries, both foreign and indigenous, have for the most part adopted an oppositional stance toward the traditional religions of Korea and Japan—primarily Confucianism and Shamanism in Korea, Shinto and Buddhism in Japan. One particularly divisive issue in both cases, not only religiously but in terms of its larger cultural and social significance, was and continues to be the phenomenon of ancestor rituals. Are they to be taken literally as instances of idol worship, or should they be viewed symbolically as simply civil or state rites?

To the extent that foreign missionaries brought to this contest the Western model of "Christ versus culture," it could be argued that the statistical failure of Christianity in Japan, at least, was due to the attempt to impose a foreign pattern of faith on indigenous patterns of the relation of religion to culture. An indicator for such a claim was the relative lack of indigenous leadership, organization, or forms of worship in Japanese Christianity.

But, as the other coeditor, Mark Mullins points out, "If indigenization is the 'cure' for non-growth, one would expect to find indigenous [Christian] movements to be dynamic and growing." However, as the lack of post-war growth of such movements suggests, "it appears that the degree of indigenization (or failure to indigenize) cannot adequately account for the general lack of response to Christianity in Japan." If it cannot, then neither can it account, by parity of reasoning, for the opposite phenomenon of the phenomenal growth of Christianity in Korea, where the predominant model of the relation of the church to traditional Korean religions remains one of "Christ against culture."

It would appear, therefore, that we have to look elsewhere if we are to understand the historical and continuing differences in the stories of Christianity in Korea and Japan. But if success or failure in indigenization is not to be found in degrees of openness or hostility to indigenous culture or religions, how is it to be explained? If the traditional explanation in terms of acculturation or assimilation is found to be wanting, what alternative hypothesis presents itself?

The "Macropolitical" Hypothesis

It is in its answer to this question that the present volume makes its major and compelling theoretical contribution. By introducing a new explanatory paradigm, one that draws attention to what Mullins calls the "neglected dimension" of these discussions in the past, this collection of essays acquires conceptual unity and realizes its methodological aim of viewing the "Christianities" of Korea and Japan "holistically rather than as discrete and separate phenomena." At the same time it sheds light on the underlying reason why the import of the current volume extends far beyond the limited story it sets out to tell.

To understand the different trajectories of Christianity in Korea and Japan from the time of implantation to the present day, we must, says Mullins, look instead to the "macropolitical realities": the "intersocietal relations" that prevail at any one time. As social theorist Robert Montgomery argues, "the 'perceptions' of the receiving group are shaped largely by international political relations in which groups are divided into dominant or subordinate positions." There are two basic scenarios:

If a religion is introduced from a source not perceived as threatening, while at the same time there exists some threat for which the new religion provides a resource for resistance, then a favorable condition is established for the reception of the new religion.... If, on the other hand,

a group from which a new religion is being introduced is perceived as threatening the existence or distinctive identity of a society, then a condition encouraging resistance to the new religion is established.

This yields the following explanatory hypothesis: the differences in the fates of Christianity in Korea and Japan can be accounted for in large part by the salient differences in their "macropolitical," that is, their respective international political situations. Let us see how this theory helps to solve the puzzle with which we began: Why two countries, apparently having so much in common and living together in close proximity, should have "responded to Christianity differently."

The Colonial Difference

The time is 1919, the setting is Korea, a decade or so after its annexation by imperial Japan. Japan had recently established its credentials as the newest colonial power in East Asia. It had successfully undergone a crash program of modernization, and it had fought and won two wars, first over China, the power then dominant in Korea, and next over the major white power in East Asia, Russia.

Several of the Korean contributors explain what happened next. Before 1919, Christianity had already stepped into the vacuum created by the failure of neo-Confucianism and Buddhism to respond to the Korean people's desire for modernization. But now, with the rise of the Independence Movement of 1919, Christianity, along with messianic forms of Buddhism and other indigenous religious groupings, once again identified itself with Korean national aspirations and the struggle for the "recovery" of national identity.

The scene shifts to postwar Korea 1945, after the defeat of Japan and the occupation of Japan by the United States. It was Christian missionaries from America, once again,

who, during the long Japanese occupation, held up the vision of democratic ideals and supported the struggle for Korean national independence against the hated oppressors.

Because of these repeated demonstrations by the Korean church of its solidarity with Korean national aspirations and struggles, Koreans did not feel they had to reject their culture and history by converting to Christianity. The church was not opposed to but rather "sought to preserve Korean culture and champion the aspirations of the Korean people in the face of oppression." It was this that "enabled Christianity to become truly Korean," to be not only "in" but also "of" Korea.

In other words, when viewed from this macropolitical level, it becomes clear why the story of Christianity's development in Korea differs from its counterpart narrative in Japan. The history of Christianity in both countries was shaped primarily by Japan's colonial policies. As one commentator notes: "The Korean experience is, in certain respects, the obverse of the Japanese.... The Japanese are the imperial nation for whom the Americans were the rivals, and the Koreans are the colonized nation for whom the Americans were liberators." For Korea, the colonial power came from the East, not the West. Thus, there was not the same association between colonialism and Christianity in the Korean mind.

To the extent, therefore, that "the Korean case stands out among Asian churches as a rare case of indigenization," it is in large part because of the intertwining of "indigenization" and nationalism in Korean opposition to Japanese colonial rule.

The Japanese Difference

But does this macropolitical thesis work to explain the relative failure of Christianity to take indigenous root in Japan? In the postwar period, with the defeat of Japanese ultranationalism, the collapse of State Shinto, and

American prestige at an all-time high, there was a spiritual vacuum waiting to be filled. Why was it the "new religions" and not Japanese Christianity which stepped in to answer this need?

As coeditor Young points out, while orthodox Christology has not made headway in postwar Japan, the figure of Christ has become a prominent feature in many of the mythologies of the newer religions. Nevertheless, there remains an overall ambivalence even about this "extra-ecclesial Japanese Christ."

According to the macropolitical thesis, however, this does not appear to make sense. Given the transformed international political relationship between Japan and the United States—the shift from rival colonial powers to partners in the construction of a new, democratic world order—the way should have now been open for Christianity, previously perceived as "foreign," to become a full-fledged indigenized religion of Japan. And yet this did not happen. Why?

The short answer is that, despite its shocking defeat in the war, a remarkable postwar economic recovery has brought Japan to a position of regional and global dominance. As a result, Japan today is experiencing a resurgence of nationalism. The essence of this new nationalism, however, as one essayist points out, "is not dependent upon revival of the political religion of the imperial cult." Rather, "the general public is searching for a national identity based on rational achievement...its reviving pride is now directing it towards some new and most probably innocuous form of nationalism...an inoffensive liberal Japanese nationalism of the future."

While Japan's regional and global nation-state partners may be relieved by this bit of sociological forecasting, the implications for the indigenization of Christianity in Japan are rather more sobering. Given the resurgence of national pride in their new-found prestige as a major world power, the fact is, as one

essayist concludes, "Most Japanese do not see any way in which Christianity is superior to their own religious traditions."

Church Problematics: Korea

This brings us to the third and final part of the volume, "The Future of International Mission." What is the probable future of Christianity in Korea and Japan? What forms of collaboration with the West are desirable or realistic?

One issue immediately stands out. Despite the vastly different historical circumstances, it is one that is common to both Korea and Japan, and bears directly upon the future relation of Christianity in both countries to the churches of the West. That is the contestation, imported from the West and more or less present from the beginning, between two models of Christianity, two models of the relation of church to culture and society. Implicated in it are two models of the missionary context. On the one hand, there is the bible- and worship-centered model of traditional evangelism and individual salvation tending to a hierarchical and authoritarian structure. On the other, there is the orientation to social justice and political engagement, with social service (education, medical) falling somewhere in between.

These two models, especially of Protestant Christianity, continue even today to make it difficult for the churches of Korea and Japan to overcome the denominational divisions of transplanted Christianity and discover a unity of purpose in their respective social and cultural settings, to express, as it were, "the unity of the whole church." This continuing split is especially significant for both Korean and Japanese Christianity if they are to successfully meet the challenge of their different yet inextricably linked futures in Asia.

The situation is particularly crucial in Korea, the one "rare case of indigenization" in East Asia. As one Korean contributor dramatically observes, "Korea is no longer a

missionary country...the Christian Gospel has been indigenized in the soil of Korea." The Korean contributors are of one mind that the central task facing Christianity as they look forward to the twenty-first century is the realization of a unified Korean church in a reunified Korea. If so, this means that the future of Christianity in Korea once again appears to rest on a "macropolitical" linkage between indigenization and nationalism. But for this future to be realized, the Korean church must successfully overcome its own internal divisions.

One symptom of this division is the inferior status of women in the Korean church. Behind this lies the continuing difficulty of the Korean church to address its shamanistic elements. Christianity has had liberating effects for women, opening up, for example, access to higher education. Nevertheless theological education continues to follow male neo-Confucian patterns. As a result, women, who make up 60 percent of Korean Christianity, are the major vehicles through which Korean Christianity continues to be strongly influenced by shamanism. The unity of the Korean church, therefore, depends in part upon a constructive theological accommodation with the shamanistic roots of Korean Christianity. That in turn requires a transformation of a patriarchal and authoritarian structure based on an exclusivist model of "Christ against culture"—of Christ against women, who are "the *minjung* of the *minjung* [oppressed]."

Church Problematics: Japan

The situation brought about by this split in the church is only slightly less critical for the future of Christianity in Japan as well. Here too, if less dramatically than in the situation of a divided Korea, the linkage between indigenization and nationalism is at the core of the struggle between the evangelical and the social activist wings of the church. On the one hand, there is the fear, in the face

of resurgent nationalism and memories of the recent and still unresolved past, that recent court decisions and publicly funded Shinto rituals are weakening the line separating state and religion in Japan. This has resulted in calls for Christian theologians to develop a constructive theology of "engagement with the state" a theological framework, however, that is not yet there. On the other hand, equally concerned but perhaps more moderate voices ask, "What is good about Japanese society and culture that can be affirmed or acknowledged in some way by the churches?" Why, in the new, transformed democratic Japan, continue to focus on points of "tension" rather than build upon points of "cultural continuity"?

There is a related area in which the future of Christianity in Japan also remains particularly problematic, The "Christian" identity of universities founded by Christian missionaries seem increasingly threatened by the forces of secularism. Among possible options (embrace secularism in the academy; hold out against it as long as possible; try to integrate faith and learning), perhaps the most promising is to identify areas where Christian universities can better address needs not being met in contemporary Japan. For example, through dialogue with Christian schools elsewhere in Asia, Christian universities in Japan could come to view their new mission context as one of helping Japan to see itself in a context that is distinctively Asian. At the same time, the critical self-reflection afforded by such intra-Asian/inter-Christian dialogue might help them to understand their own problematic relationship to Japanese culture and society in the past.

Postcolonial Christianity

The final essay of the volume suggests that there is a deeper identity crisis underlying the conservative-liberal split, not only in the churches of East Asia but in those of the

West as well, what may be called "the perplexities of postmodernity." These include a crisis in the legitimation of traditional authorities, the challenge of mass popular culture to the privileged status of modern intellectuals (including professional theologians of the West), the rise of new religious movements, the erosion of traditional codes of morality. It also includes the post-colonial erosion of the global structure of domination that characterized the imposition of Western modernization.

The introduction of Christianity into East Asia was part of the larger insertion of Western colonial power into the area. As a result, Christianity played a central role in the modernization of both Korea and Japan.

Traditionally, Christian mission has been firmly based upon the principles of modernity...the assumption of the superiority of the West...it was the task of missionaries to take with them Western science and technology, Western medicine, Western education, Western social welfare, and Western ideas of democracy.

Now, however, the future of Christianity in East Asia, therefore, will be "inhibited" or "facilitated" by the macropolitical considerations that shape the emerging postmodern and postcolonial era in the region.

Both postmodern, postcolonial Korea and Japan pose a direct challenge to the assumptions of the superiority of Western modernity, though, as we have seen, for different reasons. In the new postwar democratic Japan, 99 percent of the people have chosen to reject Christianity. In postwar Korea, on the other hand, Christianity has become thoroughly indigenized. Thus, insofar as traditional patterns of Christian mission from the West were shaped by modernity, "there is simply little left to be done in either Japan or Korea." Rather, "Japanese and Korean Christians will be the ones setting the agenda and deciding the policies for mission in the twenty-first century."

The volume concludes that "theology and mission strategies will increasingly be defined by Christians in the non-Western world." In fact, it may very well be that "the West itself becomes the new mission field of the twenty-first century." The reality of Christianity in a postmodern, postcolonial world is that by the turn of the millennium "there will be more Christians in Africa and Asia than in Europe and North America combined." For the West "it will mean learning from, and perhaps taking orders from, those who are nonwhite, non-Western, and above all, non-American."

Again we see the power of the "macropolitical" hypothesis behind this projected scenario. The wider political and cultural consequences of Asia's economic success are already beginning to be felt. If East Asia is destined to play an even more important role in global affairs in the coming century, its expanded influence will be evidenced in the political and cultural arenas as well, not simply the economic. The era of colonialism is over. The emerging new world order will not be the traditional one of a hierarchical structure of dominance or hegemony. Power will increasingly be shared by a number of countries or regional groupings. It will no longer be a Western world in the once-familiar sense. It will be far more Asianized than has been the case since the rise of modernity. Global Christianity will be similarly transformed.

Central to any such postcolonial order in Asia is the relation between Korea and Japan. Here, because of their shared but inverse colonial past, the Christianities of Korea and Japan may have a unique contribution to make. The divergent-*because*-linked histories of Christianity in Korea and Japan bear painful witness to the need for better communication and collaboration between scholars and missionaries in these two countries. They also show why it is critical for these two nations in particular to strive together to overcome the bitterness of

the past and construct a different, mutually shared future. By joining this work of national and international reconciliation, the Christian churches of Korea and Japan may for the first time be able to "dwell together" as neighbors. For the first time they may have a truly common story to tell.

A Heart at Leisure from Itself: Caroline Macdonald of Japan

Margaret Prang

Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995. 346 pp. Hardback.

*Reviewed by Kathryn Tietz Treece,
Tokyo*

Caroline Macdonald started out her twenty-five-year career in Japan in 1904 as a YWCA missionary; she ended it as a highly-regarded mentor to a host of labor union leaders and social democratic politicians. However, she herself was most proud to be known as "the mother of prisoners," referring to her extensive work with incarcerated criminals and her international reputation in prison reform. Throughout the entire period, she was also a member of the Japanese church, originally at Fujimichō where she became the first woman elder, and later at the Shinanomachi Church, of which she was a founding member. Until her untimely death from cancer in 1931, her career in Japan was remarkable for its energy, nontraditional twists, talent for friendship, and depth of understanding of the Japanese people.

In this biography of Caroline Macdonald, Margaret Prang has written a well-researched book that seems to mirror Macdonald's own approach: immersion in, and mastery of, the political, social and religious ferment of the first quarter of the twentieth century in Japan. Like Macdonald herself, the book is straightforward, intelligent and without

self-glorification. Indeed, Ms. Prang, a retired professor of history at the University of British Columbia, wrote the book to answer for herself: "Why do we know next to nothing about a person whose contemporaries thought her so outstanding?"

Macdonald was the fourth of five children born to Dr. Peter and Margaret Macdonald of Wingham, Ontario. The family's active and often discussed faith was "a liberal evangelicalism rooted in the Free Church Presbyterianism of western Ontario." Like other Canadian Protestants of the time, their church life had an interdenominational and ecumenical character, which tied in well with the great missionary movement of the last period of the nineteenth century.

Caroline found expression for her faith when she turned away from graduate study in physics and mathematics at the University of Toronto and instead took a job as the first university-educated general secretary of the Ottawa YWCA. Having heard many a sermon on "social Christianity," she now had the opportunity to combine personal evangelism with social service, the typical YWCA approach. A few years later, her vision expanded when the World's Committee called for development of "Y's" in foreign mission fields. Thus, in 1904, Caroline stepped onto the dock at Yokohama as the first YWCA secretary in Japan.

In her ten years of work with the "Y," she planned the first international conference of any kind ever held in Japan, the World's Student Christian Federation in 1907, with 600 delegates from twenty-five countries; oversaw the completion of the first and second permanent YWCA hostels in Japan in 1908-09; ordered all "Y" meetings to be conducted in Japanese, which she mastered; and on one of her furloughs, studied theology as the only female student at a seminary in Scotland.

These were all accomplishments to be proud of, yet even more impressive were the friendships she made. Her life story reads

like a Who's Who of preeminent Japanese Christians of the time: Tsuda Ume, Kawai Michi, Nitobe Inazō, Baroness Ishimoto (Katō Shizue), Tagawa Daikichirō (president of Meiji Gakuin), and her beloved pastor Rev. Uemura Masahisa. Such connections meant that she had her finger on the pulse of almost every issue facing Japanese society and the church during the progressive years of the Taishō era, from the ongoing and pressing need for women's education (she was a force in founding Tokyo Joshi Daigaku), to the first major protest of Protestants in Japan against giving the state power to regulate religious ceremonies (she did the English translation).

Macdonald's vocation shifted dramatically one evening in 1913 when she learned that Yamada Zen'ichi, a young man attending her Bible class, had just murdered his wife and two small sons. This shocking event took her into the world of the courtroom, criminal justice, and the prisons themselves. Having worked mostly with educated middle- and upper-class women, she now found her heart and imagination increasingly drawn to the most marginalized people of Japanese society, the prisoners; almost all men. She resigned from the YWCA in 1915, and became a freelancer who had to find her own means of support, which she did successfully to the end of her life.

What was so admirable about Macdonald's style was her complete willingness to work with the Japanese, to enable them, to encourage them, and to show them off, in the best sense, to the rest of the world. It gave her great pleasure, for instance, to go to the International Labor Organization's world meeting in Geneva at her own expense to translate for Matsuoka Komakichi, representative for Sodomei. She was not disappointed in the effect which his "open and friendly manner" and "quiet dignity" had on the other delegates. Another example was her abiding friendship with Arima Shirosuke, governor of Kosuge, and later Tokyo, prisons.

She championed his work whenever foreign visitors came, one of whom concluded that Arima was "one of the highest types of prison officials...anywhere in the world." While Caroline had long known this to be true, it pleased her to help others know it as well.

In all her work, there is no hint of condescension, only an intelligent desire to find a way to meet the needs of those she worked with. This she did with incredible energy, vision, and sensitivity. In fact, it would be easy to lose track of Caroline Macdonald as a person, given all that she so selflessly accomplished for so many varied persons, but this well-researched and evenly written biography keeps bringing the focus back to Caroline's motivating theology. Though she always remained deeply attached to the importance of individual reformation, she gradually shifted her understanding of the Kingdom of God to include social transformation, as well. The author asserts, "That did not mean that she had become a secular reformer, but only that the declaration of St. James that 'faith without works is dead' was the core of her theology" (258).

One thousand people attended Macdonald's memorial service in Tokyo. She was declared "a leader in Christian socialism in Japan." Yet what impressed Hugh Keenleyside, the eminent Canadian diplomat, was that "while organizing and directing the work of others she had herself lived and worked 'among the very lowest classes of community' and that 'there is not the faintest trace of self-advertisement in the whole of her career'"—a comment that perhaps answers author Prang's original question about this little known and scarcely remembered missionary.

It was former prison governor Arima, however, who tried to verbalize how and why Caroline could be so much "for" the Japanese people. He found the answer in "her absolute conviction that every human

being was a child of God," enabling her to practice her faith effortlessly, putting her beyond every prejudice of religion, race, or class. It was the congruence between her and her actions that "amazed all of us who were near her."

Naming the Present: God, Hermeneutics, and Church

David Tracy

Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, and London: SCM, 1994. xiv + 146pp.

*Reviewed by Joseph O'Leary,
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If David Tracy were an Anglican, he would probably be a bishop. His utterances in *Concilium*, collected here, sustain a tone of liberal common sense that one would welcome from episcopal lips. Tracy is a stout advocate of the values of modernity, which he lists as follows: "the reality of reason as communicative; the hopes alive in all the new counter movements to a dominant techno-economic realm; the drive to a Jamesian cultural pluralism and a genuine political democracy undivorced from economic democracy" (9). He believes these values to be threatened in a church "where even the genuine gains of modernity first released by Vatican II after two centuries of Catholic resistance to modernity are now stymied at every point by those whose views are not post-Enlightenment at all but, at best, pre-Enlightenment" (10).

Sometimes he offers a slightly different, rather stereotyped image of modernity as the "evolutionary history of the triumph and taken-for-granted superiority of Western scientific, technological, pluralistic and democratic Enlightenment," and opposes to it a postmodernity sketched in idealizing aesthetic terms: "the reality of otherness

and difference—the otherness alive in the marginalized groups of modernity and tradition alike—the mystics, the dissenters, the avant-garde artists, the mad, the hysterical. The conscience of postmodernity, often implicit rather than explicit, lives more in those groups than in the elite intellectual classes constituting their ranks" (3–4). There is nothing here that does not already belong to the imagination of literary modernism. Tracy falls short of the more precise analysis of postmodernism as "the cultural logic of late capitalism" given by Fredric Jameson.

Against both Nygren's opposition of God-given *agape* and human *eros* and the over-optimistic tendency to identify them, Tracy argues for a catholic model in which *eros* is transformed by *agape*: "There seems no doubt that the *caritas* tradition present in Catholic Christianity from Augustine to our own day is the paradigm worthy of our communal reflection" (97). But in Augustine, Johannine *agape* is rethought in terms of Neo-Platonist interiority as an infused habit; the metaphysics of love developed in scholasticism makes the structures of this synthesis ever more precise, but becomes increasingly estranged from the Johannine sense of God's initiative of liberating love and from the precise contours of the communal experience of *agape*. Tracy fails to take the Lutheran point that such a construction can be an encumbrance. He finds "a correlation possibility of synthesis" in John and in "the insistence of Paul that Christian love is both gift and command, that Christian love both challenges and fulfills all authentic striving" (97). This risks reading later metaphysical concerns with synthesis into the biblical text. Can any firmly constituted model of human love over against *agape* be found in the New Testament? Its aim rather seems to be to make *agape* the single law of all relationships. To say that the "extreme" ideals of New Testament *agape* "do not accord with our ordinary experience of

love, fidelity, intimacy, friendship" (98) is to undermine the unity presupposed in John 15:13, "No one has greater *agape* than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

The hallowed Catholic syntheses between faith and reason, grace and nature, *agape* and *eros*, begin by constructing these metaphysical dualities themselves, which have little biblical basis. If Protestantism sometimes has misunderstood itself as having to set in opposition the pairs that medieval Catholicism synthesized, its deeper insight is that the pairs themselves are part of a metaphysical grid which need not be imposed on the event of salvation. Tracy champions a Catholic "sensibility" marked by "an analogical imagination that attempts to order the relationships of God and humankind, nature and history, justice and love, *agape* and *eros* by means of the transformative focal meaning of God's grace in Jesus Christ" (99). But could this "rage for order" be itself a metaphysical distraction from the humbler task of letting the essential bearing of the Good News come into view?

Speculation on nature and history, justice and love, seems rather remote from the urgency of the Gospel message and of the need it is supposed to meet. The Lonerganian picture according to which "the *eros* of inquiry and the call to true value are sublated (preserved, yet surpassed) in the higher synthesis of the *agapic* and *erotic* love of *caritas*" (105) seems to me a shaky synthesis of diverse phenomena. Such an overly ambitious metaphysical map of the relations between cognition, conscience, feeling, and grace can get in the way of perceiving and living these phenomena which are each in turn characterized by great historical and cultural diversity.

The Haiku Seasons: Poetry of the Natural World

William J. Higginson

Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1996
171 pp. Introduction, Bibliography,
Index

Reviewed by Noah Brannen,
Tokyo

After a brief first chapter in which the author points out the centrality of the seasons to the essence of haiku, chapters 2, 3, and 4 trace the history of the season motif in the Japanese poetic tradition, beginning with the *tanka* of the *Kokinshū* (ca. 905), chapter 2; developing in *renga*, "linked poetry," which was popular in the fourteenth century, chapter 3; and maturing in the short 5-7-5 syllable haiku form which began in the latter part of the fifteenth century and looks to Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) as master of the form, chapter 4. In chapter 5, the author introduces the *saijiki*, which, to use his own definition in the final chapter, chapter 6, is a kind of poetry almanac.

Since the *saijiki* is really what the author seems to want to talk about in his endeavor to foster the international haiku seasons project and encourage the writing of haiku in English and other foreign languages, I was curious to know what others have written about it. Neither Henderson nor Blyth, from whom the author gleans his definition of haiku, have much to say about *saijiki*, though Blyth organizes his four volumes on haiku by the seasons. Keene, in *World Within Walls* as well as his earlier *Landscapes and Portraits*, has an extensive treatment of haiku and the history of its development, but in his glossary the word *saijiki* does not appear. I was sure I had run across the word somewhere, so I turned to my trusty *Kenkyūsha Dictionary*. Foiled again! Japanese-

Japanese dictionaries came to the rescue and I finally learned that a *saijiki* is “a book which classifies the seasons which appear in haiku with accompanying explanations and examples; based on Chinese almanacs which recorded the year’s festivals and events” (Iwanami’s *Kokugo Jiten*).

But despite the centrality of *saijiki* and the seasons to this book on haiku, according to the author, “the inclusion or not of a season word has to do with rules, not with essences...,” (29) and the poet (*haijin*) is free to include a season word or not. The book contains a number of examples of haiku, Japanese, English, Spanish, Afrikaans, French, Dutch—all translated into English, but one is still looking for that “essence” when finished reading. The author offers the following definitions: “A haiku is the expression of a moment of vision into the nature of the world, the world of nature” (R.H. Blyth), and “[A haiku is] a record of a moment of emotion in which human nature is somehow linked to all nature” (Harold G. Henderson) (26). To these he adds what may be considered his own definition:

If a poet writes a brief poem that captures a moment, that dives deep into the mystery of the simplest things and actions presented to us every day, chances are we will see nature’s face within it, that it will be a haiku (29).

It may be that examples are the only way to discover the essence of haiku. Seasons appears to be the key for this author. Another might concentrate on the form, as Joan Giroux does in her scholarly yet sensitive introduction, *The Haiku Form* (Tuttle, 1974), though she also relates haiku to Zen and includes a chapter on the use of a *kigo* (season word) as well.

Frankly, I was disappointed with *Haiku Seasons*, though it did make me aware of the growing dialogue between haiku writers throughout the world. I felt the author did not delve deeply enough into the elements that

make haiku worthy of being recognized as among the greatest poetry in the world. He mentions Ezra Pound’s *logopoeia* (play on words), which Pound described as “the dance of the intellect among words,” but he failed to deal with the two other elements which Pound presented as essential to all poetry, *phanopoeia* (imagery), and *melopoeia* (which, to Pound, bordered on Zen intuition).

I found the English left much to be desired. It is all very well, in keeping with the *saijiki* tradition, to explain what the poem really means after the English translation has been given, but some of the translations just didn’t make sense in terms of English syntax, and others were totally mistaken, in my interpretation. Of course I realize that a poem may be taken several ways, but I will leave it to the reader to judge if the English does justice to the Japanese original in the following:

neko no goki
awabi no kai ya
kata-omoi
 the cat’s food dish
 the shell of an abalone...
 one-sided longing

Shūwa (d. 1714)

In interpreting this poem (in *saijiki* style), the author is so bent on relating the haiku to the season, spring, when female cats are in heat, that he misses, I think, the fact that the poet isn’t talking about cats at all and *kata-omoi* stands for “unrequited love,” because, as with the abalone shell, it is one-sided.

danjiki no
mizu kou yowa ya
inabikari
 while fasting
 a midnight longing for water...
 rice-lightening

Hekigoto

One can understand the thirst for water in the middle of the night if one is fasting, but

what in the world is "rice-lightening"? Etymologically the joining of rice (*ina*) and lightening-flash (*hikari*) may have come about because the farmers connected lightening with a good harvest, but why not translate the word as the dictionary does, "lightening," and reverse the image? During a period of fasting, one has finally managed to forget the hunger pains and dozed off to sleep, and then a bolt of thunder wakens you and you see a flash of lightening. All you can think of is you need a glass of water.

It may be that neither of these haiku were translated by the author of this book. Credit is given to Ueda Makoto (*Bashō and His Interpreters*), however, for the following puzzling English rendition of a haiku by the master:

*tsuru naku ya
sono koe ni bashō
yarenubeshi*

a crane cries...
by that voice the bashō
shall be ripped

Bashō

The reader needs to know not only that a *bashō* is a banana plant, but that Bashō Matsuo took his name from the tree he planted in his garden when he moved to Edo in 1672, where he served as inspector of the public waterworks while pupils came to sit at his feet and write haiku. Yes, he could hear the cry of the crane, but he, Bashō, was not moving (*yarenubeshi*) from this spot!

A Biographical Dictionary of Methodist Missionaries to Japan: 1873-1993

John W. Krummel, editor
Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1996. 342pp.
Introduction, Bibliography, Index

This bilingual illustrated hardbound dictionary includes entries for 1,534 persons who served in Japan under the United Methodist

Church and its predecessor bodies (Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, Methodist Protestant, Evangelical, and United Brethren churches), the Methodist Church of Canada, the Free Methodist Church, and the Wesleyan Church, U.S.A. It lists not only career missionaries but also short-term missionaries, contract workers, volunteers, visiting scholars, and Methodists who worked in Japan under such agencies as the YMCA, YWCA and WCTU.

Each entry gives basic biographical data and includes information on the individual's unique contributions, publications, honors, etc., as well as references which point the reader to further sources of information.

This dictionary will be of value not only to those interested in church and mission history but also to the student of intercultural exchange, as well as to those investigating other aspects of the modernization of Japan such as education and social work. (This descriptive note is taken from the order form from Cokesbury, U.S. distributors.)

A History of Japanese Theology

Yasuyo Furuya, editor and translator
Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans
Publishing Co., 1997 161 pp.
Introduction, Bibliography, Index

*Reviewed by Thomas Hastings,
Tokyo Union Theological Seminary*

The present reviewer learned of the existence of this book one cold February afternoon while visiting the religious center of neighboring International Christian University where Rev. Dr. Yasuyo Furuya, the book's editor and translator, was professor and chaplain for thirty-five years until retiring in March 1997. The book was hot off the presses and, sensing my interest, Dr. Furuya graciously loaned me his only copy for review.

As well as being a well-known teacher, theologian, pastor and advocate of ecumenism, he has been a long time friend of many people in the missionary and expatriate community and a regular contributor and supporter of the *Japan Christian Review* and its predecessor, the *Japan Christian Quarterly*.

Drawing together the efforts of a rather diverse group of Japanese theologians, the volume presents an outline of the three successive generations of Japanese theologians and a concluding chapter on the post-1970 theological situation. It is a translation of the Japanese original which appeared some years ago, thus it misses the important contributions of Kuribayashi, Kinukawa and others.

Even with this limitation, the book is the first English history of Japanese theology to be written completely by Japanese scholars. Generally speaking, it provides a helpful introduction to a very complex subject. Readers interested in how the Christian theological debate has taken shape in this country will get a good sense of the general trends, and specialists, who need to dig into the original sources, will find the bibliography alone well worth the price of the book.

In the introduction, the editor addresses the dilemma posed by a volume on Japanese theology: Is there really any such phenomenon worthy of being called theology here? First he weighs the negative responses of Kumano and Ishihara who thought that the Japanese church was not mature enough to give birth to real theology. Then he quotes Karl Lowith, a German philosopher who spent five years in Japan and concluded that Japanese scholars "live on two stories, as it were: a lower, fundamental one, in which they feel and think in the Japanese manner, and an upper one, in which they line up with European knowledge from Plato to Heidegger, and the European teacher wonders: Where is the staircase, to take them from one story to the other"? He then briefly reviews the postwar generation's attempt to

escape from what Ohki termed the so-called "Germanic Captivity" of theology in Japan. Furuya concludes, "In answer to the original question of whether 'Japanese theology' exists or not, this book maintains an open mind," leaving it for readers to judge.

Given the limitations of space, I will offer only a general introduction and a few comments on each chapter. The first chapter by Akio Dohi introduces the four towering figures of Ebina, Uemura, Kozaki and Uchimura. After a brief biographical sketch of each, Dohi describes some of the lively theological debates which were current in the Japanese church of their day, as well as the variety of opinions about what direction Japanese Christianity should take. In what is the most coherent chapter in the book, Dohi gives us a well-rounded portrait of these four individualists who laid the ground work for the Japanese churches and Christian movements.

In the second and longest chapter, Toshio Sato gives a helpful introduction to the writings and thought of the "second generation" disciples of Ebina, Uemura, Kozaki and Uchimura. He categorizes the major theological currents of this era under the headings of Evangelical, Social and Dialectical theologies. One can still find vestiges of all three "types" of theological persuasion in evidence today. However, in the opinion of the present reviewer, Barthian dialectical theology continues to be the dominant force, at least in Protestant circles. While Sato suggests that the "radicalism" of Barth is one reason for his theology's overwhelming reception, one can not help but wonder whether another reason may lie in the historical situation during which this theology found its way onto Japanese soil. Though, in his own context of the rise of national socialism in the 1930s, Barth intended precisely the opposite effect, his absolute distinction between the divine revelation of the Word of God and human religion was surely welcome relief for a minority Japanese church which had to

rationalize its forced ritual obedience to the imperial cult. Sato's short section on "Japanese Christianity" is an illuminating reminder of how easy it is for Christians, given the right circumstances, to confuse their nationalistic and religious aspirations. The remainder of the chapter provides a brief introduction to the significant Protestant, Mukyōkai and Catholic theologians up to the end of World War II.

The third chapter by Seichi Yagi opens with a brief description of the postwar situation, characterizing it as an opportunity for Japanese Christianity to assert its "independence" from the West while maintaining "the purity of Christian faith in a non-Christian milieu." For a book supposedly aimed at a Western readership, among whom Kitamori would likely be among the only two familiar Japanese names (Koyama Kosuke is the other), it is puzzling to find that Yagi gives Kitamori such a limited and dismissive treatment. Further, he gives almost equal treatment to Akaiwa and Odagari who, compared with Kitamori, are minor at best and whose positions reveal more about their own eccentricities than contribute to the theological enterprise.

Next, in the longest section of the chapter, Yagi launches into a rather arcane philosophical discussion of Takizawa on the relationship between Buddhism and Christianity, a discussion which presumably holds more interest for the writer than the reader. After a short section on Noro and existential theology, Yagi concludes this somewhat disjointed chapter with a description of postwar contributions in biblical studies. Even though he mentions, without naming, the "ecstatic speech movement" (*Genshi fukuin*, founded 1948) which grew out of Mukyōkai, it is regrettable that Yagi fails to consider this and other indigenous Christian movements as other attempts of Japanese Christianity to assert its "independence" from the West (i.e., Iesu no Mitama Kyōkai, founded 1941, and Sei Iesu Kai, founded 1949). While

Yagi claims that Christology was the focus of this stage of development in Japanese theology, it is clear from what he says that the main arena for that debate was the academy and not the community of faith.

The final chapter of the book by Masaya Odagaki begins by characterizing the general spirit of the post-1970s era as an attempt to move beyond Barth and Bultmann on the one hand, and modern science's subject-object dualism, on the other. After a short discussion of the problem of framing the question of the knowledge of God after the collapse of the subject-object dichotomy, he suggests a kind of convergence between certain literary and philosophical trends in the West and the Eastern concept of Nothingness. This reviewer has serious problems with Odagaki linking together such divergent thinkers as Derrida, Rorty, Kuhn, Polanyi and Whitehead under his category of *meontology*. For example, contra Odagaki, Kuhn, following the more profound Polanyi, does not in fact "reconsider the legitimacy of scientific knowledge," but rather explores the tacit and fiduciary nature of all human knowing, not by annihilating either subject or object but by revisioning them in terms of a more positive and humane relationality. Odagaki claims that post-1970s Japanese theology "has been strongly influenced by the Zen philosophy of Kitaro Nishida," (especially his notion of the "self-identity of the absolute contradiction"). He continues, "The fact that theology since 1970 has been influenced by Nishida's philosophy means, therefore, that we have now begun to establish an original Japanese theology which has adopted the oriental ideas of Nothing and Field."

The next section, in which he revisits Takizawa and Yagi on the relationship between Christianity and Buddhism, will be of some interest to specialists in this dialogue. Though Odagaki goes on to mention Doi, Muto, himself, Inoue and Endo, we want to conclude by considering what he

says about the editor of the volume, Yasuyo Furuya. Furuya has long been a spokesman for the need of the Japanese church to move beyond its world-denying "Barthianism" as well as a strong voice for ecumenism and interreligious dialogue in a pluralistic age. Like Pannenberg, for instance, he insists that the claims of Christianity must be brought into the public sphere for the needed encounter with other religions and world-views. However, while attempting to interpret Furuya's commitment to Christian uniqueness and universality under the category of Nishida's "self-identity of the Absolute Contradiction," Odagaki completely ignores the fact that Furuya is, at heart, an evangelist/apologist of the gospel. It is hard to understand why Odagaki does not even mention the ecclesiological commitment which undergirds Furuya's theological work. In the Epilogue, Furuya quotes from *Theology of Japan*, a book which he co-authored with Hideo Ohki.

The *Theology of Japan* is made possible by the establishment of theological existence through "conversion," and at the *topos* of theological existence provided by the "event of the resurrection." That *topos* is the "Church." In that sense, the "theology of Japan" is Church theology, who's *Sitz* is the "Church."

This historical grounding provides a much needed balance to Odagaki's rather speculative abstractions.

Though there are still some vestiges of the so-called "German Captivity" of Japanese theology in this book (i.e., the use of obscure academic terms to explain concepts which could be stated more plainly and the fashionable sprinkling of untranslated German words), it is an important witness to the depth and variety of theological reflection which has occurred in Japan since the Meiji period. On the question of whether or not Japanese theology has "come of age" or not, this reviewer wants to sound a note of hes-

itation based on the recent trends as depicted in the book's final chapter. If, as Odagaki claims, Japanese theology is developing its own distinctive character under Nishida's influence, we might wonder how such a theology, which roots its identity in a convergence or integration of Buddhist and Christian mystical notions of Nothing/God, will give new direction and strength to an already overly individualistic Japanese church (cf. Furuya's more recent *Nihon Dendoron*). On the question of whether or not there is any such thing as Japanese theology, we want to conclude with a resounding yes and, in this reviewer's opinion, that theology finds its primary expression in the worship of the churches and, secondarily, in the tomes of academia insofar as they have their taproots in that worshipping community.

Someone or Nothing? Nishitani's Religion and Nothingness as Foundation for Christian-Buddhist Dialogue

Russell H. Bowers, Jr.

Asian Thought and Culture Series, Vol.27.

General editor, Charles Wei-hsun Fu
New York: Peter Lang, 1995. 251pp.

Hardcover

*Reviewed by J. Nelson Jennings,
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Christian-Buddhist dialogue is a thriving enterprise, both academically and in terms of the interaction between faith practitioners in everyday life. The appearance of yet another study which seeks to deal with some of the basic, introductory questions of this dialogue may thus strike one as needlessly repetitious, offering nothing new to an ongoing research task that demands focused attention on more advanced details and issues. The goals and presuppositions of a study as thorough as the one under review here,

however, offer implicit insights instructive to any careful reader, no matter what level of familiarity or expertise the reader may have. Along with a lucid presentation of a vast amount of material, it is the assumptions embedded within *Someone or Nothing?* which make for a stimulating read that is worth the time and effort of anyone interested in Christianity, Buddhism and the various facets of their interaction.

While any reader will find the book worthwhile, this published version of Russell Bowers' doctoral dissertation for Dallas Theological Seminary undoubtedly will be greeted with a variety of responses. As is the case with most any academic work, general readers will find the extensive and detailed references throughout the text quite daunting. On the other hand, readers who are largely unfamiliar with, yet interested in, the overall topic of interreligious dialogue will be rewarded if they muster the courage to take on the challenge of reading this work. Not only will they learn a great deal about some of the recent history of interfaith encounter, they will also become more familiar with how the Kyoto School of Philosophy as a whole, and how the thought of Nishitani Keiji in particular, has become a major topic of discussion in many quarters of religious and philosophical research. As for those who are already familiar with Nishitani's *Religion and Nothingness*—the work Bowers considers in some detail as a possible foundation for Christian-Buddhist dialogue—what will prove more helpful than the explicit content is the implicit message within this sympathetic but critical attempt to examine Nishitani's thought.

North American evangelicals will feel most at home with this book. That is Bowers' own stated position as he attempts to "raise one more voice calling for interreligious interaction on the part of evangelical Christians" (19). Bowers goes to great lengths to allow Nishitani to speak for himself. Practically an entire, substantial third of the

book's five chapters is devoted to giving "A Synopsis of *Religion and Nothingness*" (47–91). Before reaching that point in the book, however, the perceptive reader will already have noted the U.S. foundation of the book, e.g., in certain telling statements such as, "Until mid-century there was no systematic study of Buddhism here" (26; Bowers has just mentioned America in the previous sentence). The reader who is sensitive to the depths of human interaction inherent in interreligious dialogue will also have encountered some of the occasional, irritating expressions that betray the book's monocultural perspective, e.g., "Grasping Kyoto thought is not easy because *the Japanese* hide their feelings...." (42; emphasis is reviewer's).

Even so, the reader who is more persuaded of the religio-philosophical viability of Nishitani's thought than is Bowers' own conclusions to his study will be able to overlook some of these limitations. For one, the book's thoroughness, while carried out within its own self-described "Christian worldview" (95), leaves the reader with a sense of the tremendous effort exerted to understand Nishitani on his own terms. Moreover, the kindness of tone helps to keep the book's bite on its intellectual conclusion ("Christianity and Nishitani are talking about utterly different and even contradictory *Weltanschauungen*"; 140) instead of on any pejorative rhetoric.

Thus more than these relatively insignificant slips of the pen (including a thesis writer's dreaded typos, e.g., the misspelling of "Abilmelech" [34], a missing parenthesis [180, n.80]), what does not satisfy those readers more sympathetic than Bowers with the Kyoto School in particular, and Mahayana Buddhism in general, are the book's "two basic presuppositions [which] underlie the discussion" entitled "The Question of Truth and Religious Truth": "First, it is assumed that there is an external reality to which, if one is interested in knowing the

truth, one must conform his ideas.... Second, it is assumed that the law of noncontradiction holds in religious matters as it does in all others" (36). Quite naturally, Bowers appeals to these two assumptions later in the book, and his study's conclusion inevitably follows. Hence while he makes a genuine, even valiant effort to give Nishitani a fair hearing, Bowers' framing of these basic presuppositions prevents the book from going any deeper than it does in terms of assuming a posture of self-criticism that arises within the kind of dialogue which the book advocates (at least on the surface) right up through the last sentence (155).

One factor contributing to Bowers' unwillingness—or inability—to take the risk of questioning the allegedly unbreakable alliance between the book's basic assumptions and Christian theology is the shocking fact that he has not dealt with Nishitani in the Japanese language, but only via English translations. There is brief interaction with certain, crucial Japanese terms, e.g., *mu*, *ku*, and *soku* (46–47). However, a glance through

the extensive Bibliography (213–44) will confirm the total absence of Japanese materials, as well as only a minuscule sampling of non-English, European materials. One must not, however, quickly brush aside this book as being unworthy of any consideration. Besides the winsome manner in which he presents evangelical theology's critique of Nishitani, Bowers does a remarkable job of representing—without ever having directly encountered it linguistically or in actuality—the Kyoto philosopher's thought. One hopes, however, that the next evangelical attempt at examining Nishitani or his like will be equipped to do so in the thinker's original language. Not only would such a study provide the non-Japanese reader further insight into the true nature of such a philosopher's thought. It might also indeed interact with the power of a philosopher like Nishitani in a way that will help evangelical theology further realize its potential to thrive beyond the confines of modern, North American and European categories of thought.