

Between Sacralization and Secularization

The Struggle for Christian Higher Education in Japan

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IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED that the Meiji Restoration of 1868 marks the beginning of Japan's modernization. While it is frequently pointed out that the "roots" or preconditions for successful modernization go back to developments in the Tokugawa period (i.e., prior to the arrival of Western technology and science), it remains a fact that Japan's modernization and industrialization occurred after the forced encounter with Western civilization in the mid-nineteenth century. Protestant Christianity was a part of this unwelcomed encounter.

The purpose of this paper is to offer some preliminary observations on the transplantation and subsequent development of Reformed Protestantism in modern Japanese society. The aim is to clarify in what sense the process of modernization has posed a "threat" to Christianity in this cultural context. In the case of Japan, this cannot simply be defined in terms of "secularization." At least during the first phase of Japan's modernization, there was a reversal of the standard Western model of religious decline. If we are to accurately grasp the situation of Japanese Protestantism, therefore, we cannot ignore the "contradictory tendencies" and "ambivalent effects" of modernization.¹ The first and foremost threat or challenge for Christianity in the course of Japan's modernization was the process of "sacralization" or the creation of an all-encompassing state religion. Only after we address this initial concern can we move on to consider the threat of "secularization," a serious

problem facing most Christian institutions in postwar Japan. To focus the following discussion, I will briefly describe how one Reformed institution, Meiji Gakuin University, has developed over the course of Japan's modernization.

REFORMED CHRISTIANITY TRANSPLANTED

Nagai Michio has observed that "nineteenth-century Japan was the epitome of confusion and chaos" (1978, 107). The feudal order was disintegrating rapidly by the end of the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), and the new Meiji government was only in the process of building a new order. It was during this transition period, only six years after Commodore Matthew Perry persuaded Japan to open its doors to the West, that the first Presbyterian and Reformed missionaries arrived in Japan. Within three decades, a variety of Reformed church traditions had established a missionary presence in Japan. The Presbyterian Church USA and the Dutch Reformed Church in America sent their first missionaries in 1859, followed by the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1874), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (1877), the German Reformed Church in the U.S. (1879), and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (1885).

It is important to recall that these first Protestant missionaries did not begin their work with a "clean slate." Accompanying the colonial expansion of the Portuguese and Spanish into Asia, Roman Catholic Christ-

ianity had already been transplanted in the sixteenth century. These earliest missionaries met with relative success, but because of their connection with colonial powers and their apparent intolerance of indigenous religions, Christianity came to be regarded as a serious threat to Japan's internal stability and national security. In the early 1600s the military dictator of Japan, Hideyoshi Toyotomi, placed a ban on this foreign religion that led to the execution and persecution of many Christians. Although the edict prohibiting Christianity was rescinded by the government in 1873, Christianity continued to be popularly understood and referred to as a heretical and evil religion (*jakyō*). Protestant missionaries, as the most recent "carriers" of a deviant religion, faced a difficult task.

After two long decades of anti-Christian sentiment and resistance, Japan entered a brief period of *seiyō sūhai*, or worship of the West. The persistent efforts of Protestant missionaries suddenly began to pay off in this new social climate of openness. Even missionaries were overwhelmed by the positive response and rapid growth of mission churches and institutions in the 1880s. In addition to church-planting efforts, by 1882 Protestant missions had established nine schools for boys, fifteen for girls, thirty-nine coeducational institutions, and seven theological seminaries (Watanabe 1959, 48-49).

This brief "honeymoon" period was so encouraging that at the Second Conference of Protestant Missionaries of Japan held in 1883, it was practically assumed that Japan would become a Christian nation in the near future. As Otis Cary observed in his history of this early period, "Some went so far as to say that, if the call sent out by the Conference asking for re-enforcements was heeded by the churches at home, the work of evangelizing Japan could be accomplished within ten years, or at least before the close of the century."² Even non-Christian

Japanese leaders and politicians were advocating that Christianity be adopted as the state religion of Japan. This was understood as an effective strategy for making Japan a recognized member of the international community as quickly as possible (Thelle 1987, 157). By the end of the "glorious" 1880s, Protestant missions were successfully organizing churches, recording baptisms, and watching their enrollments increase in over one hundred mission schools.

The roots of Meiji Gakuin can be traced back to this earliest period of Protestant missions and the collaborative efforts of missionaries from the American-Dutch Reformed Church, American Presbyterian Church, and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Established in 1877, Meiji Gakuin began as a theological school run primarily by missionaries for the training of the earliest Japanese Protestant leaders. It soon diversified and grew to include a seminary, a middle or preparatory school (a five-year program), and an upper division of two to three years that was roughly equivalent to a liberal arts junior college and a college of commerce.

Following World War II, Meiji Gakuin was reorganized according to the new government regulations and guidelines and today consists of a middle school (junior high), two high schools, and a university with undergraduate studies in five faculties and eleven departments. The graduate school offers Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in a number of fields. Approximately 12,000 students are enrolled in the university undergraduate and graduate studies programs. In the remainder of this essay I will examine more closely the religious dimensions of modernization and consider how Meiji Gakuin University has responded to the twin challenges of "sacralization" and "secularization" during Japan's modern century.

RELIGION AND MODERNIZATION
RECONSIDERED

Until very recently, most sociologists and historians of religion have understood the impact of modernization on religion in largely "negative" terms. Following Max Weber, it has been generally assumed that the necessary concomitant of modernization is the "disenchantment of the world" through rationalization and, ultimately, secularization. Peter Berger, for example, explains that the traditional task of religion was "the establishment of an integrated set of definitions of reality that could serve as a common universe of meaning for the members of a society" (1969, 134). This traditional function of religion could no longer be performed as the sacred canopy of medieval Catholicism began to disintegrate under the impact of the Reformation, the development of industrial capitalism, modern science, and the modern nation-state. In short, the modernization process in the West involved a shrinking of the "sacred canopy" and the replacement of a religious monopoly by a market situation in which various "sub-worlds" compete for allegiance. Furthermore, Berger argues, there is "a tendency toward the secularization of the political order that goes naturally with the development of modern industrialism. Specifically, there is a tendency toward the institutional separation between the state and religion" (1969, 130).

For many years this pattern of secularization has been regarded as a global process explaining the consequences of modernization for religious institutions and individual religiosity. "During the last century, only one social science thesis has come close to universal acceptance among Western intellectuals—that the spread of modernization spells doom for religious and mystical beliefs" (Rodney Stark 1990, 201). In spite of the influence of Western science and technology, this socio-logic

regarding modernization and secularization developed on the basis of European history does not fit the case of Japan's modernization. This is not to say that Japan is "unique" but simply to stress that a unilinear conception of modernization cannot adequately account for the course of development in non-Christian and non-Western regions of the world.

It was the creation of a "sacred canopy" after the Meiji Restoration that facilitated the first period of modernization and industrialization. The restoration of imperial rule in 1868 initiated a series of changes that radically transformed the role and status of religion in Japanese society. Prior to this religio-political transformation, Japan was composed of numerous groups divided by diverse commitments, including clans, politicized Buddhist sects, as well as protest groups comprised of peasants and small landowners. Politically, Japan was divided into 270 political domains (*bakuhan*), each ruled by a regional feudal lord. According to Maruyama Masao, it was not until the Meiji Restoration that national consciousness truly developed and led to "a sense of political solidarity and national unity" (1974, 327). Describing the socio-political situation of the late Tokugawa period, Maruyama recalls the observations of Fukuzawa Yukichi who said that it was as if the "many millions of people throughout Japan were sealed up in many millions of separate boxes or separated by many millions of walls" (1974, 331). There was also a religious dimension to this situation. While the common people were monitored and controlled by the Buddhist temple system during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), they were hardly integrated under a "sacred canopy." For the most part, the Japanese populace was divided into particularistic village communities and united around local Shinto cults. In fact, it was during the period prior to modernization that religion

functioned as the legitimizer of sub-worlds throughout Japan.

In order to deal with the problems of internal chaos and the threat of Western imperialism, the restoration government pursued a policy of uniting the people of Japan under the canopy of a state-sponsored and emperor-centered civil religion. This meant that Buddhism lost the state patronage it had enjoyed during the Tokugawa period, and Shinto was revived to provide the foundation for the new political order. Richard Rubenstein points out that "whereas the West initiated modernization with a rejection of the highest religious and political authorities, not excluding regicide, and tended to equate modernization with secularization, Japan undertook modernization under the authority of its supreme religio-political authority and in defense of the values of its traditional civilization" (1989, 116-17). The national religion created by the restoration bureaucrats, however, differed considerably from the previous forms of Shinto belief and practice. It was largely an "invention of tradition" (Hardacre 1989) projected back on Japanese history, rather than a true restoration. From the Meiji Restoration until the end of World War II, the government used and developed the Shinto religious tradition to unify and integrate the heterogeneous population and mobilize the people for nation-building, modernization, and military expansion. The evolution of this civil religion and increasingly restrictive policies toward religious minorities over the next half century combined to create an extremely difficult situation for Christian institutions.

UNDER THE SACRED CANOPY: FROM RESISTANCE TO ACCOMMODATION

The initial period of rapid growth for Christian churches and institutions ended almost as quickly as it had begun. The leaders of the Meiji government established an

alternative ideology to control the process of Japan's modernization: Western technology and learning would be adopted without Christianity. As the strong arm of the state took control of Japan's modernization, the role of Christian institutions was quickly overshadowed.³ This is not to deny the significant contribution of Protestant mission work to Japan's modernization, particularly in the fields of education and social welfare.⁴ However, because Protestant Christianity "failed to influence in any essential way those who held positions of decisive authority within the power structure of the nation, its influence was never determinative for the society as a whole" (Best 1966, 173).

Although the new political order provided for religious freedom, it was carefully defined and restricted. Article 28 of the 1889 Meiji Constitution reads as follows: "Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief." Subsequent official interpretations and government directives clearly reveal that the clause "duties as subjects" would be used to undermine the principle of religious freedom on many occasions.

Before the end of the century, Meiji Gakuin and other Christian schools would feel the restrictive effects of the educational philosophy and policies of the new order. The Imperial Rescript on Education, issued in 1890, provided the normative framework for education and modernization. It articulated a family-state ideology that was legitimized with reference to the divine origin of the emperor and the people of Japan. This document not only reinforced the traditional Confucian virtues of loyalty and filial piety but also defined the purpose of education rather narrowly as teaching children to be loyal citizens who would serve the needs and interests of the emperor and the state.

The Rescript was soon followed by more specific government regulations. The first critical challenge for Meiji Gakuin came with Directive No. 12, an order issued by the Ministry of Education on August 3, 1899, which prohibited religious education in private schools. Even before this directive was issued, Christian schools were already having a difficult time. The nationalism and patriotism being advocated by the Meiji government was reinforced by the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), and this atmosphere generally discouraged students from enrolling in "foreign" schools.⁵ The directive, however, represented a "crisis" situation and a conference of Christian schools was quickly organized to address the issue. On August 16 conference participants reached a consensus and called on "all officers and teachers of Christian schools to take a firm and decided stand upon this matter, not yielding any Christian principle for the sake of securing or maintaining government privileges" (Lamott 1938, 15). Following this recommendation, Meiji Gakuin's board of directors met and decided to relinquish their status as a government-recognized middle school and return to the status of a miscellaneous specialty school so that religious education could be continued. Many other Christian schools soon responded in the same way. In light of the strong Christian opposition and the fact that government schools alone could not meet the demands for an educated work force, the authorities gradually backed away from strictly enforcing this regulation. Although Meiji Gakuin continued religious education, from 1903 the government recognized its middle school graduates and granted them permission to attend the government higher schools.

Over the next several decades Meiji Gakuin recorded steady growth, particularly in the middle school and college. The college began to expand its curriculum and in 1916 received government permission to

begin programs in literature, teachers' training, and commerce. With student interest shifting to commerce and economics, it soon became apparent that programs in humanities and liberal arts would not be competitive. By 1927, the student body of Meiji Gakuin had grown to 1,372, with 885 in the middle school and 460 in the college. Of the 460 students enrolled in the college, 354 were studying in the commerce program and only 106 in the English literature and theology programs. The increase in enrollment continued into the next decade, but this was accompanied by a decline in the percentage of Christian students.

The growing influence of military leaders on Japanese government and politics began to affect Christian institutions seriously by the mid-1920s. Each year there was tighter control and regimentation in education. The government began to require all schools to include military training and drills as a part of their education. The Ministry of Education maintained that military training and shrine visits were necessary to develop love of country and loyalty in the hearts of students. Compulsory military training was introduced into the middle school of Meiji Gakuin from 1925 (Lamott 1938, 34), but the college took several years to comply. The chancellor presented the directive to the board of trustees and to the student association for serious discussion. The majority of students were initially against the government's policy, so for two years the college refused to establish the military training program. As the number of students in the commerce department increased, however, many became worried that the failure of Meiji Gakuin to cooperate with the government would make it more and more difficult for them to find employment following graduation. It was also understood that those who did not receive military training while in school would be required to serve for a longer period when conscripted for military service. In 1928 the issue

was reconsidered by the student association, and the majority voted to have military training on campus. Although a group of theology students made a special appeal to the administration, the school board recognized the results of the "democratic" process, and from April 1928 an army officer was assigned to Meiji Gakuin to provide regular military instruction and drills (Dohi 1980, 365-66). By this time, the seminary enrollment had shrunk to twenty-seven, and there were only 164 Christian students in all the schools combined. Two years later the seminary withdrew from Meiji Gakuin and merged with Nihon Shingakkō (Japan Theological School). The loss of key Christian faculty would become apparent in the following decade as Meiji Gakuin faced additional governmental demands.

By the late 1930s the government became increasingly totalitarian, and members of every religious group were required to conform to the state-defined orthodoxy. Christian schools were allowed to exist only if they agreed to support the nationalistic and militaristic policies of the state. The government eventually defined Shinto as a "nonreligious" institution of the state and participation in its rituals came to be viewed as the "patriotic" duty of all Japanese citizens, regardless of personal religious convictions. For many years public schools had been the primary carriers of this state religion. From 1891 the Imperial Rescript on Education had been distributed to all public schools along with a portrait of the emperor. Ceremonial readings of the Rescript were essentially religious events, which included rice-cake offerings to the scroll on which the Rescript was written. Shrine visits (*jinja sampai*) became regular school-sponsored events and most schools maintained a god shelf (*kamidana*) and enshrined the imperial photo, various *kami*, and sometimes a talisman from Ise Shrine.

The Ministry of Education came to expect Christian schools to collaborate with public schools in this educational task and by the late 1930s required private schools to enshrine a picture of the emperor to use during ceremonial readings of the Imperial Rescript on Education. Although Meiji Gakuin initially resisted this government policy, pressure mounted, and in 1938 a special area was enclosed at the corner of the chapel building to enshrine the sacred object. This was symbolic of a more fundamental shift in the educational philosophy of Meiji Gakuin. In March 1938 the school board revised the articles of the constitution so that a clause on education according to the Imperial Rescript preceded the former one on education according to Christian principles.⁶ From this time on, readings of the Imperial Rescript and visits to Yasukuni Shrine and Meiji Shrine were included in school ceremonies. The situation only worsened in the 1940s. Study time became shorter and shorter as schools were expected to support the war effort more fully. From 1943 schools were almost totally co-opted for the war effort. Many students were drafted and early graduations were instituted so that students could be sent more quickly into military service. Most of the remaining students were mobilized as laborers and sent in groups to work in munitions factories.

The story of Meiji Gakuin during this first phase of modernization is hardly unique. In the ultranationalistic environment of the 1930s and 1940s, Christians who did not comply with the government directive to worship at the shrines of State Shinto, a duty of all loyal citizens, not only faced persecution but also serious doubts concerning their identity as Japanese nationals. While there were certainly religious deviants during this period (mostly communists and a few Christians), "the government's thought control programme succeeded at least in one significant way: if

by the outbreak of World War II there were still people who were not inculcated with the 'new faith,' few of them were prepared to admit it; in fact, most remained silent" (Nefsky 1991, 52). Many other mission schools also started as institutions for the training of Christian leaders and pastors but as modernization and industrialization got underway began to develop departments of commerce and economics (Amagai 1989, 214-17). When the pressure to support the war effort became intense, some schools moved into science and engineering as well. The departments of theology, which had been at the center of many mission schools, were shut down or merged into existing theological seminaries.

The "nationalization of the academy," to adapt the title of Marsden and Longfield's 1992 volume, was a process that transformed almost all Christian schools in Japan into tools of the state until the end of World War II. This is not to deny that many Christian educators resisted the government directives on a number of occasions but simply to recognize that the pressures became increasingly unbearable. In the end, accommodations were made for institutional survival.⁷ Writing in the 1940s regarding the difficult predicament of Christians in wartime Japan, D. C. Holtom made the following observation:

The Christian movement in Japan today is still too weak, in numbers as well as influence, to take more than a subordinate position when powerful forces in the state set about turning all the resources of the national life into directions that cut across those along which the Christian church has traveled. Under the circumstances the church has only two roads open to it: persecution and martyrdom or compromise and accommodation. The Japanese Christian church has chosen the latter (Holtom 1943, 95).

Most Christian schools, likewise, chose the path of compromise and accommodation during this difficult period. At least during this first phase of Japan's modernization, Christian schools became "carriers" of civil religion and agents of sacralization.⁸

POSTWAR DEVELOPMENTS

With the defeat of Japan in 1945, political conditions finally became more favorable for Christian institutions. Under General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers during the U.S. Occupation, the new "Bill of Rights" issued in October effectively dismantled the old social order. State Shinto was disestablished and reduced to a voluntary organization, and the Religious Bodies Control Law (which had both suppressed and used religious minorities for state purposes) was abolished. This disestablishment and political deregulation of religion represents one aspect of the postwar secularization of Japanese society that must be regarded as a positive development rather than as a "threat" for Christianity in Japan. For one of the few times in Japanese history, the religious economy of Japan has been a "free market," and Christians have been able to practice their faith and engage in religious activities without fear of government reprisal.

By the 1950s, Japan's economic recovery was underway, and due to the boost provided by the Korean War, "industrial production had risen to 134.5 percent of the prewar level" by 1953 (Hane 1982, 247). The progress of industrialization required a major population shift from rural areas to the cities. The demographic changes related to postwar industrialization helped to create a more favorable environment for Christian missionary activities. Urbanization favored the growth of Christian organizations, since they were largely concentrated in metropolitan areas, unlike Shinto shrines and

Buddhist temples (Morioka 1975). Robert Lee's 1967 study of the United Church of Christ (Kyōdan) during the early postwar period indicates that it was actually quite successful in attracting new members. From 1947 to 1951, for example, the Kyōdan recorded over 10,000 baptisms each year (compared with less than 3,000 for 1990). Membership retention, however, was more difficult. While churches have continued to report membership increases, annual statistics have indicated for decades that no more than one percent of the Japanese people are church members. The hard reality is that the rate of defections and the increase in the Japanese population have kept Christian churches from gaining a larger share of the market in Japan's religious economy. New indigenous religious movements, on the other hand, have capitalized on the population shift and the deregulated religious economy and, according to the most reliable Japanese scholarship, have the involvement of between ten and twenty percent of the population.

MASS EDUCATION AND SECULARIZATION

While most Christian churches have recorded only minimal growth during the postwar period, Christian schools have grown phenomenally from the late 1950s as a result of demographic changes and rapid economic growth.⁹ The increase in postwar student enrollment has been particularly evident at the university level. Between 1955 and 1983, private universities recorded a fourfold increase in enrollments and "accounted for slightly more than seventy percent of all students attending college" (Japan 1987, 33). With the sharp rise in the college student population, many universities admitted considerably more students than their authorized number and began to face the problems of "mass education." Christian schools were no exception. At Meiji Gakuin University, for example, the enrollment

more than doubled from 5,510 in 1962 to 12,052 in 1969.

Since most Christian schools define their purpose in terms of *jinkaku kyōiku* (character education), the inflated admissions policy created a serious dilemma. Even the official history of Meiji Gakuin points out that "character education" requires many opportunities for personal interaction between faculty and students.¹⁰ An advisor system was instituted in 1957 to cope with the increasing number of students, but it became impossible for this system to address the needs of a student population that doubled the following decade. Although the number of full-time faculty increased from 84 to 155 during this period, by the late 1960s the faculty-student ratio had become 1 to 75.7 (Meiji 1977, 470-474). "As in the West," Everett Kleinjans observed almost three decades ago, "mission schools soon found themselves in the vicious economic circle of admitting more students in order to meet budgets.... The results were predictable. The integrated, Christian, liberal, personalized education which was the ideal of the founders became mass education" (1966, 140).¹¹

It is not just "personalized" education that has become problematic. Christian institutions are now struggling with the problem of internal secularization. In a society where only one percent of the population claims to be Christian, the decision to expand with the student population and build a medium- to large-size university is ultimately a decision to secularize.¹² There simply are not enough Christian academics to staff Meiji Gakuin and the many other mission schools in Japan. Recent statistics from Meiji Gakuin University helpfully illustrate the dilemmas facing all Christian schools in Japan. In 1992 only 23.5 percent of the 264 full-time faculty members were Christian. An analysis according to age is more revealing: the percentage for faculty aged sixty and above is 33.9 percent, declin-

ing to 5.9 percent for the younger faculty members in the twenty-eight to thirty-four age bracket.¹³ The number of Christian students varies according to year and faculty, but ranges anywhere from two to four percent. Looking back over the past several decades, it is apparent that the religious composition of the faculty more closely reflects that of the student body with each passing year.

In light of these trends, it is not surprising that in most faculties there is serious discussion and debate on the role of Christian studies in the curriculum and on what is referred to as the "Christian code" (i.e., the requirement that the president be a member of an evangelical church and adhere to the Confession of Faith of the United Church of Christ in Japan).¹⁴ An integrated and explicitly Christian liberal arts education no longer seems feasible at Meiji Gakuin and many other Japanese universities with Christian roots. Nevertheless, the respect for "traditions" and "predecessors" in this society suggests that for the foreseeable future Christianity will be a significant "minority" presence on campus.

For many years, the university has required all freshmen students to take "Introduction to Christianity" to fulfill one of the liberal arts requirements and an elective in Christian studies during their junior or senior year as a requirement in their major field of study. While the freshman requirement in Christian studies appears to be relatively safe for now, in recent years two faculties have either dropped or made optional the additional course in Christian studies. The pressure to revise the Christian studies curriculum will undoubtedly increase over the next few years.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

The official history of Meiji Gakuin published in 1977 ended with the suggestion that Christian faculty, staff, and students learn to be a "creative minority" and the

"salt of the earth" within the largely non-Christian university community. This should not be interpreted to mean that Christians should aggressively evangelize or proselytize the non-Christians on campus. Rather, they should make every effort to create an institution where true human development is facilitated, to guard against dehumanizing and alienating trends, and contribute to reconciliation. The establishment of the new Faculty of International Studies and the International Peace Research Institute in 1986 reflects these broader concerns and was understood as a natural extension of the university's Christian heritage. As a Christian university, furthermore, Meiji Gakuin has the responsibility for playing a similar role in the larger society.

This took concrete form in 1988-89 when the entire country was trying to come to terms with the illness and impending death of Emperor Shōwa. With the state, mass media, and extreme rightists encouraging all citizens and institutions to observe self-restraint and mourning, leaders at Meiji Gakuin feared that, with the neo-nationalistic mood, individual rights and freedoms might once again be suppressed by the authorities. After serious deliberation, the president issued a statement representing the Deans' Council's decision that "when the present Emperor passes away" Meiji Gakuin University would "not take special action of any kind: for example, classes will not be canceled, students will not be advised to call off the University Festival and the flag will not be flown at half-mast." The statement goes on to explain that

it is imperative to halt and reverse the growing tendency in Japan to obscure and erase, through the glorification of the memories of the present Emperor as a person, the historical fact that the era of Shōwa, which was the period of his reign, was a time when wars of aggression

were waged in the name of the Emperor (Sakamoto 1989, 23).

Subsequently, a number of lectures, symposia, and faculty-student discussions of the emperor system and the emperor's war responsibility were held on both campuses between November and December 1988.¹⁶ In spite of governmental pressure and threats from rightists, Meiji Gakuin took a public stand and clearly indicated its intention to educate individuals so that they will understand and contribute to a truly democratic society.

As the history of modern Japan and Meiji Gakuin clearly illustrates, this is hardly an irrelevant task for Christian institutions.¹⁷ Notwithstanding this important potential contribution to Japanese society, it is likely that the identity of Meiji Gakuin as a Christian university will become increasingly precarious over the next several decades. Like many other schools in Japan with Christian roots, Meiji Gakuin appears to be following the path of Protestant universities and colleges in the United States.¹⁸ The trend toward secularization in the post-war period has been accelerated by the rapid increase in student enrollment that requires recruitment of academically qualified faculty outside of the Christian community. Christians are in the minority, and it is too early to tell whether the majority will ultimately allow for a "consistently inclusive pluralism" (Marsden 1992, 38) and preserve a niche for traditional Christian views.

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NOTES

¹ Christian Parker (1992, 577) and Munakata Iwao (1976, 100) both point to the inadequacy of the "received wisdom" on the relationship between religion and modernization.

² This is found in Cary's summary of the Second Conference of Protestant Missionaries (1909, Vol. 2, 166), Tuttle Reprint Edition, 1976.

³ For example, Protestant missions pioneered in the field of education for girls and women, but the government subsequently stepped in and began to dominate this area. William Bunce explains: "From the time of the opening of the first school for girls in Japan in 1870 to the time when government schools for women were being promoted around 1900, the history of education for women in Japan is almost identical with the history of the Christian schools for girls. In 1905, Christian high schools for girls represented 70 percent of the total number of girls' schools. However, by 1930, government education for women had advanced to the point where the Christian schools totaled less than 5 percent" (1955, 158).

⁴ This is a point generally recognized by Japanese scholars. (See, for example, the work of Sumiya Mikio [1961] and Morioka Kiyomi [1976]).

⁵ In spite of the relatively good facilities, which included "large grounds, a four-story dormitory, and a three-story lecture hall," Meiji Gakuin experienced a steady decline in enrollment. "During the seven years following 1894, its junior college division graduated only nine students, and its high school division only twenty-nine" (Kishimoto 1956, 262).

⁶ These developments are described quite objectively in the official history published by Meiji Gakuin (Meiji 1977, 367).

⁷ Tōhoku Gakuin, a Christian school in Sendai related to the German Reformed Church, for example, seemed to have an even more difficult time than Meiji Gakuin. Not only was military training instituted in the late 1930s but also the school buildings and chapel were taken over for military purposes. The school only survived the difficult

war years by establishing a new department of aeronautic engineering. The difficulties of Tōhoku Gakuin during the war period are described in the account of its one-hundred year history (Tōhoku 1989, 882-904).

⁸ Reflecting on the Protestant movement in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea between 1865 and 1945, A. Hamish Ion rather critically suggests "that missionaries, even after more than 70 years of Christian work in Japan, had failed to instill courage into Japanese Christians. In sharp contrast to the Japanese, the steadfastness of Korean and Taiwanese Christians in the face of persecution reveals no lack of courage.... The Japanese Christian movement failed to resist the demands of the Japanese government for complete state control over the movement. Despite the long exposure to Christian ideals and values, indigenous cultural values and national concerns remained paramount in determining the reactions of Japanese Christians" (1993, 5-6). While Ion's generalization is basically correct, there were significant exceptions to this pattern of collaboration with the government by some sectarian Christian groups during this period (see Mullins, 1994).

⁹ While the percentage of Japanese Christians has remained about the same, it is important to note that this minority group has continued to play a major role in the field of private education. When compared with the number of private schools associated with other major religious organizations in Japan, the disproportionate role of Christians in this field is striking. By the early 1960s, for example, the number of Christian schools exceeded the number of Buddhist and Shinto related institutions combined. While there were 652 Buddhist-related schools (10 universities, 1 junior college, 77 high schools, 68 junior high schools, 1 elementary school, 410 kindergartens, and 85 "other"), and only 92 Shinto-related schools (2 universities, 1 junior college, 5 high schools, 6 junior high schools, 1 elementary school, 45 kindergartens, and 32 "other"), there were 840 Christian-related educational institutions (22 universities, 47 junior colleges, 106 high schools, 116 junior high schools, 33 elementary schools, 445 kindergartens, and 71 "other"). The miscellaneous institutions in the "other" category include specialized schools for religious education and training (theological schools or seminaries in the case of Christian-related schools). (Nihon 1961, 133).

¹⁰ This figure includes both the daytime and evening divisions (*Ibid.*, 1977, 482).

¹¹ Like most university campuses in Japan, from the late 1960s to early 1970s Meiji Gakuin faced student protests and demonstrations against the alienating bureaucratic system and high tuition costs of postwar mass education. John Nakajima (1991) discusses the campus protests at Christian universities in the 1970s, giving particular attention to the situation at Meiji Gakuin University.

¹² As David Sills pointed out many years ago: "Decisions made for the purpose of solving immediate problems often determine the ultimate character of an organization" (1969, 177).

¹³ A similar pattern exists among university employees. While 8.8 percent of 193 staff are Christian, the percentage is 15.6 for those age 50 and above but 0 for ages 22-29.

¹⁴ The latter issue is still under serious consideration, with the past and present presidents both advocating an elimination of this requirement. Some outside observers have asked the obvious question: how can a university that claims to be "Christian" be led by someone who does not share that faith commitment? Recognizing that the "code" will more than likely be revised in the near future, some Christian faculty are already discussing ways of maintaining the Christian presence in such a situation by requiring that at least one of the vice-presidents be Christian, creating a committee for Christian education that would oversee the strengthening of the Christian studies curriculum, and expanding the current chapel program and ministry to students.

¹⁵ Some faculty members are already proposing that Christian studies be removed from the curriculum and classroom, suggesting that Christianity be confined to the chapel program and various club activities.

¹⁶ Richard Young, a professor in the Faculty of International Studies, offered the following reflections on the university's recent public stance: "In short, Meiji Gakuin's error—as its antagonists would have it—was deliberately to make the emperor a subject of independent intellectual enquiry at a time when Japan at large was being swept up by a wave of nostalgia, genuine or contrived, that anesthetized the public conscience. Needless to say, as a member of that same academic community, I view what happened there as something eminently right, rational, and—interpreting the situation as a Christian scholar—an expression of its value-informed prophetic conscience. As such, Meiji Gakuin's experience deserves to be memorialized, for it

exemplifies to some extent the function that Christian education must perform vis-a-vis society and the state" (1990, 68).

¹⁷ David Reid points out that Christian schools in particular have an important role in educating Japanese students in the constitutional principle of the separation of religion and state, the foundation for truly democratic society that protects the rights and freedoms of individuals (1991, 57-58).

¹⁸ In his recent book, *Daigaku no shingaku* [Theology of the university] (1993, 285 ff), Furuya Yasuo points out that schools with Christian roots in Japan are struggling more seriously with how to preserve their Christian identity than their counterparts in the West. He also suggests that future relationships with Christian universities in Asia, where Christianity is a dynamic force and still taken seriously (South Korea, for example), may encourage secularizing schools in Japan to reconsider their roots and eventually lead to a revitalization of their Christian character. Personally, however, I do not regard this to be a realistic or likely scenario.

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