

nonsense, outspoken Canadians in Nagano, Wonsan, and Chientao.

Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement

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A REFERENCE VOLUME covering the nature and scope of the contemporary ecumenical movement has been needed for some time. This massive volume, jointly published by WCC Publications and William B. Eerdmans, is an attempt to record in one source the concerns and issues of the ecumenical endeavor.

The compilation of the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* required the initiation of a substantial project headed by a noteworthy editorial board. The product, a reference work of nearly twelve hundred pages, reflects the efforts of the board, six editors, and the more than four hundred writers who provided entries covering a broad range of topics. The selection of the contributors was crucial. Emilio Castro, general secretary of the World Council of Churches when the project commenced, writes in the preface:

Writers and editors from a wide range of contexts and Christian traditions—chosen for their familiarity with how the 20th-century ecumenical movement has unfolded and for their engagement in the diversity of issues on the agenda of the churches as they grow towards unity—have worked together to create a resource whose scope and usefulness go far beyond what any individual could produce.

The aim of the project, according to Castro, was to “stimulate a continuing passion for the unity we seek” by providing a single resource work useful to the student of ecumenism. The result is an encyclopedic work covering topics ranging from doctrinal issues to specific projects, with terminology common to ecumenical discussions given considerable attention. Reports of recent ecumenical events, global, regional, and local in nature, are enhanced by a treatment of the historical quest for Christian unity.

A volume so comprehensive in its coverage is limited necessarily by numerous introductory articles limited in purpose and depth. Complete examinations, for example, of important developments in every geographic region are beyond the purview of the editorial board. However, writers provide succinct coverage of particular geographical areas.

Japan and the broader context of Asia are among the topics addressed by the editors. The life and witness of the church in Japan is given attention in three primary entries: “Asia, Northeast; Japan; Kagawa, Toyohiko; and Theology, Asian.” Mention of Japan is made elsewhere, as well, perhaps most significantly in terms of implications conveyed in the article entitled “United and Uniting Churches.”

Readers interested in Japan most likely will view these entries as an overview of church life in Japan rather than three distinct units addressing separate topics. Impressions gained by readers are of paramount concern. Therefore, some brief comments regarding the general direction of the entries as a whole are in order.

First, the assertion that an Asian theology has developed is subject to considerable debate. While the attempt to identify some common themes is an important one, the variety of contexts within Asia, diversity of theological streams, and multitude of ap-

proaches to mission suggest that any characterization of Asian theology as a monolithic enterprise is premature. Even if common themes and practices can be identified, diversity and the reasons for it demand serious attention. In the case of Japan, theological pluralism is the norm, yet theological traditions, some shared ecumenically, have developed that inform the practice of ministry and engagement in mission. What it means to be the church remains a pressing question for many Christians in Japan.

Second, any portrayal of the church in Japan requires an understanding of both the historical context and contemporary dynamics. In the postwar (World War II) environment, among Protestants the United Church of Christ in Japan emerged as the largest church, but Lutheran, Anglican, Baptist, Protestant, and evangelical, as well as Roman Catholic and Orthodox church bodies deserve fuller consideration. Ecumenical cooperation among these bodies is a subject worthy of exploration.

Third, the United Church of Christ in Japan is the product not simply of a union forced by the government during wartime, but concerted ecumenical effort dating from

the introduction of Protestantism into Japan. Capitulation to state pressures was not limited to Protestants, nor did it begin during World War II. The basis and identity of the United Church of Christ in Japan was reconsidered and confirmed in the early postwar period. Persons desiring to study the church in Japan in particular and ecumenics in general would benefit from a thorough examination of these events and processes.

No single work can suffice as an authoritative source for addressing the whole of the ecumenical venture. In the case of Japan and Asia, a forthcoming dictionary of Asian Christianity, scheduled for release within five years, will make available in the English language material crucial to the researcher. *Christianity in Japan, 1971-90*, edited by Kumazawa Yoshinobu and David L. Swain, conveys a reasonably comprehensive summary of developments in Japan over the past twenty years. Other resources in English are likely to appear in the near future. These materials, combined with the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, will well serve persons wanting to become acquainted with the current ecumenical scene in Japan.

Book Notes

Akurei to seirei no butai: Okinawa no minshū kiritusokyō ni miro kyūsaikan
[A Stage for Demons and the Holy Spirit:
The Soteriological Structure of Okinawan
Charismatic Christianity]

IKEGAMI Yoshimasa
Tokyo: Dōbutsusha, 1991.

THIS FASCINATING BOOK by a Tsukuba University anthropologist is based on in-depth

field research in Okinawa and a case study of an indigenous charismatic Christian church founded in the late 1970s. The church has subsequently grown to a membership of over one thousand. This study suggests that the success of charismatic Christianity in Okinawa is related to the effective reinterpretation of the traditional shamanistic spirit world and the stress upon healing, exorcism, and speaking in tongues.