

to make an artistic attempt to deal with these long-term and deeply embedded scars and have made a major contribution toward healing the wounds.

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**Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements**

Mark Mullins

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In *Christianity Made in Japan*, Mark Mullins presents the result of over ten years of field work on twelve Japanese indigenous Christian movements. These movements reveal another side to Christianity in Japan, a side often rejected by the missionary Christian churches and largely ignored by scholars of religion. The wealth of insights gained by Mullins' study indicates that the attention he has given to these groups is long overdue.

Mullins approaches his topic as both a committed member of a church that has transplanted itself in Japan (viii) and a sociologist of religion. As part of the missionary church in Japan he reflects on what these movements can reveal about Christianity's failure to take root in Japan, focusing particularly on the issue of inculturation. As a sociologist Mullins offers a consideration of such themes as global cultures, religious vitality and charismatic figures.

The first three chapters place the Japanese indigenous Christian movements within their respective historical and theoretical backgrounds. Chapter One provides a brief summary of some of the issues involved in the transplantation of religion to a foreign culture, leading to a discussion of indigenization as the process by which a foreign religion is

no longer perceived as an alien or deviant phenomenon (6). Mullins contends that, while small or even insignificant in the number of believers they have attracted overall, the indigenous movements provide us with perhaps the only opportunity to see what an indigenized Christianity might look like in this country, since the missionary churches are still perceived as Western imports. The subsequent chapter deals with the development of the more Western-style Christianity in Japan, while Chapter Three provides a sociological consideration of the emergence of indigenous movements. Taken together they present the historical and theoretical framework of this study.

Previous research on the indigenization of Christianity in Japan has focused on Uchimura Kanzō and his Nonchurch Movement. Mullins likewise begins with this movement, pointing out that it has functioned as the fountainhead of indigenous Christianity in Japan and given rise to many other movements (54). However a major contribution of this present study, with the perspective offered by the wide variety of groups under consideration, is the observation that Uchimura's group was like the missionary Christian churches that he rejected in attracting followers mainly among intellectuals and thus does not present a complete picture of Japanese Christian indigenization. The more interesting story is what happens to Christianity when it is taken up by the "riff-raff," to borrow a term used by Mullins in his final chapter (201).

Chapters Five and Six present this story, the first dealing with two groups that incorporate popular Confucian ideas of self-cultivation (The Way and The Christ Heart Church). The latter chapter focuses on three Pentecostal (or, to use Mullins' term, Apostolic) movements: The Spirit of Jesus Church, The Holy Ecclesia of Jesus and The Original Gospel Movement. In this way the present study serves to highlight the fact that these indigenous movements both reflect some of

the common characteristics of new religious movements in Japan (the emphasis on self-cultivation and personal religious experience) as well as provide local examples of the current worldwide growth in pentecostal movements.

Ancestor veneration has been seen as a major problem for Christian inculturation not only in Japan but throughout Asia and Africa. A chapter is devoted specifically to this problem, exploring how it has been dealt with both by the missionary churches and the indigenous movements in Japan. The belief that the spirits of the dead remain active, causing either good or bad effects on the world of the living, is one of the enduring characteristics of Japanese religiosity, illustrated especially by the activities of some of the new religious movements. Mullins' research indicates that some of these indigenous movements, through vicarious baptism or other rites, offer a means to pacify the ancestor spirits and transform them into benevolent guardians, thus contributing in a small way to the re-enchantment of the world through their recognition of the interdependence of the visible and invisible realms (121).

If these groups are so successful in incorporating elements of both Japanese religiosity and contemporary spiritual movements worldwide, we are left with the question of their failure to attract a large following. In Chapter Eight Mullins examines the comparative growth of the indigenous movements and the missionary churches. He finds that many of these movements are in even greater decline than the mainline churches in Japan. Clearly inculturation is not a sufficient strategy for church growth in

this context, and Mullins attempts an exploration of other factors involved, focusing finally on a contrast with the growth of Christianity in Korea. In the end, however, little new light is shed on the issue, beyond the conclusion that inculturation will not act as a panacea for church growth in all situations. Nevertheless, as this book argues, the Japanese Way of Christianity presented by these groups is important in and of itself, both for the missionary churches and for researchers of religion in Japan.

While covering a wide range of material and topics, the book is relatively brief and accessible even to non-specialists. Only six of the indigenous movements are treated at length in the text; brief resumes of the other groups are provided in an appendix. The appendix also provides a bibliographical guide to all twelve of the movements, an important resource for future research on these groups.

*Christianity Made in Japan* is a pioneering work, offering fresh insights for missiologists, religious researchers and Christians with an interest in Japan. These insights are in need of further refinement and development, of course, and we can only hope that other researchers will take up Mullins' invitation to pick up where he has left off. The book is published by the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture and the University of Hawai'i Press as part of the Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture. As a member of the Nanzan Institute, I must admit that I might be biased towards the merits of this work. I have little fear, however, that my judgment on the importance of this book will prove to be unfounded.