

**“But Our Citizenship Is in Heaven”: Making Christianity “Japanese” and  
Transnational, 1895-1945**

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## Abstract

Tracing the missionary activities of three Japanese Free Methodist leaders -- Kakiyama Masaji, Kawabe Teikichi, and Tsuchiyama Tetsuji -- this study explores the intersection between national citizenship and religious membership. As both the U.S. and Japan consolidated national identities as well as expanded in the Pacific, and as the Japanese imperial government increasingly tightened its control over its citizens, these three Christians navigated the competing borders of national (Japanese) citizenship and religious (Christian) membership claiming a place for themselves both in Japanese society and in the larger transnational Christian community. Working with partners in Japan, the U.S., and China, they continually searched for their place as Japanese Christians, but in the context of Japanese imperial aggression, they faced new challenges. By pointing out the uncertain ground of national, cultural, and religious identity, this study suggests the possibilities and limitations of Christianity to create transnational community outside nation-state boundaries.

In three developing phases, this study explores Japanese Free Methodists' attempts to make Christianity simultaneously "Japanese" and transnational, challenging assumptions that Christianity and Christian missionaries were "Western." Chapter 1 focuses on Free Methodism's first missionary in Japan, Kakiyama Masaji, and narrates how he embraced Christianity, planted Free Methodism in Japan, and continued working as a missionary through strong connections with his American counterparts. This chapter argues that Kakiyama demonstrated that missionaries and those with authority to speak were not always Euro-Americans. Kakiyama believed native initiatives in bringing Free Methodism to Japan were simply following the Great Commission, but, through his mission efforts, Kakiyama also demonstrated the ways Christianity called upon sources of identity outside the State. In this way, Kakiyama helped extend the boundaries of religious identity.

Kawabe Teikichi further extended Christianity's boundaries by launching a series of Pacific West Coast mission trips targeting not only the Japanese diaspora but also Americans he met along the way. In his evangelical work among Japanese immigrants, he showed that Christianity could help Japanese immigrant communities fight against racial and cultural discrimination and integrate them into the larger society. By rejecting a "Japanese" Christianity specifically tailored to Japanese immigrants, he implicitly argued for a universal Christian message that applied to believers of any nation or ethnicity. In so doing, he revealed a transnational aspect of Christianity. While he

focused his evangelical work among Japanese immigrants, he did not confine his missionary career by race or nationality. Chapter 2 argues that, in his “reverse mission,” he demonstrated that Japanese spiritual leaders could transmit the Christian gospel to anyone including white Americans. Thus, Kawabe, as a transnational missionary, redefined Christianity as a more pluralistic and inclusive religion.

Chapter 3 depicts Tsuchiyama Tetsuji’s mission trips to wartime China, which represented an even further development of Japanese Christians’ evangelical mission, while also exposing the limits of transnational religious connections. Tsuchiyama saw his evangelical work in wartime China as the best way to fulfill several ambitions: to consolidate the Japan Free Methodist Church, to win the trust of the Japanese government, and to promote Japanese evangelical missions abroad. His China trips seemed like a great opportunity for Japanese Christians to show their loyalty to both their government and their God. Working with American missionaries, he believed that the Japanese church could demonstrate its independence within the global Christian community. But working on behalf of both God and the government left him and Japanese missionaries vulnerable to criticism that they served the State rather than God. By prioritizing nation-state boundaries and imperial ambitions, his trips undermined Christian claims of global fellowship and equality and revealed the ambiguity of his religious identity. While both Japanese and American Free Methodists believed in a shared heavenly citizenship, they nevertheless sometimes confined their faith within nation-state boundaries.

While many Christians believe that they follow the central Christian teaching that their citizenship is in heaven, and that all souls are equal in God’s sight, this study demonstrates the possibility and the challenges of Christians linked nationally and transnationally.

## Acknowledgements

My interest in exploring the intersection between one's national and religious identities started when I became a Christian at the age of twenty. Since then, both in Japan and the U.S., I have often felt a sense of alienation and wondered if I were an "Americanized" Japanese or a "Japanized" Christian. As I have carried on my studies in history, however, I learned that the definition of any nation, culture, religion, and many other things, are not fixed but require continual exploration. Both my national and religious identities are not fixed but need to be searched for. I also learned, through building and deepening my communion with American Christian friends, that transnational religious connections could go beyond nation-state boundaries. Religion, especially monotheism like Christianity is often criticized as a dividing force, but I have found in my own lie the way it actually brings people together across nation-state boundaries. While this dissertation is just a preliminary investigation of this complex issue, I hope it will contribute to scholarship of Christianity in Japan and of World Christianity.

My personal debts are too many to name. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to many people who helped me directly and indirectly throughout my journey to complete this project. But I would like to name some of the most significant people.

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## Introduction

“There are two things that I ardently love besides my life, one is my native country, Japan, and the other is Jesus Christ, the son of God,” wrote one of the leaders of the Japan Free Methodist Church in 1940 as the nation celebrated the 2600th year of the Imperial reign. “I cannot be myself if I forget about my country even for a moment because I dedicate myself to my homeland both physically and spiritually through God. At the same time, I cannot live without Christ because I receive my spiritual life through God,” continued Uzaki Takesaburo.<sup>1</sup> He is only one example of many other Japanese Christians who searched for ways to balance their religious identity as a Christian with their national identity at a time when that was a problematic balance. Others include Kakiyama Masaji, the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan; Kawabe Teikichi, the successor of Kakiyama who launched several evangelical trips to the Pacific West Coast; and Tsuchiyama Tetsuji, another Free Methodist leader who laid the foundation of the Japanese Free Methodist Church’s foreign mission to China together with American Free Methodist missionaries.

At the turn of the twentieth century through the end of World War II, when these three Japanese Christians were actively evangelizing in Japan, the U.S, and China, both the U.S. and Japan were trying to consolidate national unity as well as expand in the Pacific, projects which often relied on religions. The United States was struggling to

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<sup>1</sup> Takesaburō Uzaki, *Kōkokuseishin to kirisuto no fukuin* (Osaka: Nihon jiyū furī mesojisuto kyōkai shuppanbu, 1940), 1. 宇崎竹三郎『皇国精神と基督の福音』（大阪：日本自由メソヂスト教会出版部、1940）。Translated by the author.



maintain its character as a white Anglo-Saxon, Protestant nation by rejecting and discriminating against many considered “outside,” including Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrants. At the same time, the U.S. government was expanding its territories and control overseas as part of its Christian “Manifest Destiny.” Japan was also increasing its authority both domestically and abroad. The whole system of the nation, including religious institutions, was geared toward the State’s goal of building a powerful Japanese empire. Making Shinto the state religion, the Japanese government forced all the Japanese people to worship the Emperor as a god and absolute ruler. The Japanese people were living under a totalitarian regime. Guided by the belief of Japan as a land of gods, like the belief in Manifest Destiny, Japan tried to expand its control over other neighboring countries to counter “Western imperialism” by establishing the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. Because both countries connected national citizenship with religious identity (“Christian America” and “Shinto Japan”), many Japanese Christians felt marginalized and even threatened. As a result, they urgently searched for ways to balance their “Japanese” and “Christian” identities.

Christianity has long had a marginalized status in both Japanese scholarship and popular beliefs. Many identify Japanese Christians as either “Westernized” who were converted and assimilated by Western missionaries or “Japanized” Christians who created local Christianity rejecting any Western influences. Both views assume that Christianity is a “Western” or “American” religion, and similarly, that Christian missionaries are necessarily Europeans or Americans who travel to the non-Western world to evangelize and plant churches. In fact, many previous works in missionary

studies only focus on Western missionaries and their work in non-Western countries.<sup>2</sup> Few have examined non-Western Christian missionaries. This makes the careers of Kakihara, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama even more important. They provide a window onto transnational Christian missionaries who worked to spread the Christian messages globally without regard to the race or national identity of either convert or missionary. Simultaneously “Japanese” and transnational, they evangelized both Japanese and non-Japanese, including Americans and Chinese. But in so doing they did not reject Western missionaries in favor of a “Japanese Christianity,” but worked with their American and British counterparts in transnational religious alliance. Thus, this study argues, that, by making Christianity simultaneously “Japanese” and transnational, Kakihara, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama and other Japanese Christians claimed a place for themselves both in Japanese society and in the larger transnational Christian community.

The aim of this study is to give a nuanced analysis of claims that Christianity is an agent of “cultural imperialism” or the source of “indigenous” reinvention by negating the simple dichotomy. It looks beyond fixed national and religious identities to examine transnational connections that fundamentally challenged, and in some cases, reinforced national and religious identities. Some scholars severely criticize Western missionaries as an agent of European, and later American “cultural imperialism.” Arthur Schlesinger and

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1966); John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974); William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990); Rui Kohiyama, *Amerika fujin senkyōshi rainichi no haikai to sono eikyō* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1992) 小樽山レイ『アメリカ夫人宣教師—来日の背景とその影響』(東京: 東京大学出版社、1992); Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997); Karen K. Seat, *“Providence Has Freed Our Hands”: Women’s Missions and the American Encounter with Japan* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Edward Said, for example, argued that Western missionaries worked as agents of geopolitical imperialism.<sup>3</sup> By arguing that God and Western flags went hand in hand, they assume that Christianity is a “Western” religion, imposed on non-Westerners, such as the Japanese.

It is true that Japan’s encounter with Christianity was the result of European expansion in the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Since its first introduction to Japan, more than a half century before the Pilgrims on the *Mayflower* sailed from England to the U.S., Christianity was a “foreign” religion, and many Japanese political leaders, with some exceptions such as some Christian feudal lords (*daimyo*), equated Christianity with the threat of Western invasion. According to the cultural imperialism paradigm, Westerners exported Christianity to Japan and imposed it on the Japanese assuming that the actor of that story is Euro-Americans while the Japanese are the acted upon. In this understanding, Japanese Christians are reduced to merely passively accepting “Western” Christianity.

Another strain of studies focuses instead on Japanese Christians, arguing that they rejected “Western” Christianity and created instead an indigenous, “Japanese” Christianity. In fact, despite vicious persecution and the expulsion of Spanish missionaries, a small number of Japanese Catholics continued to nurture their faith for about two centuries without contact with Western missionaries. The faith of these Japanese Christians did not depend on Western guidance. Even when given the chance of

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism,” in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 336-374; Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993). More recently, Ray Moore also argues that MacArthur’s attempt to Christianize Japan during the American occupation of Japan was an example of cultural imperialism. See, Ray Moore, *Soldier of God: MacArthur’s Attempt to Christianize Japan* (Portland: MerwinAsia, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Some scholars argue that Christianity was introduced to Japan much earlier. See, for example, Samuel Lee, *Rediscovering Japan, Reintroducing Christendom: Two Thousand Years of Christian History in Japan* (Lanham: Hamilton Books, 2010).

meeting European missionaries in 1865, with the opening of the country to the outside world in 1858, these “hidden Christians” rejected to reestablish contact with the Catholic priests and chose to be separate.<sup>5</sup> Christianity took root in Japan and became a local religion separating itself from its supposed Western origins. Not only studies on Japanese Catholics but also studies on Japanese Protestants in the Meiji era argue that they, too, rejected “Western” Christianity and chose to separate themselves from it. In the wake of lifting the Meiji government’s ban on Christianity in 1873, the massive influx of European and American missionaries again seemed to confirm the view that Christianity was a “Western” religion. Japanese political leaders saw Christianity as a Western threat to Japan’s national security. Rejecting the Western cultural influences on Christianity, some Japanese Christians such as Uchimura Kanzo, one of the most influential Japanese evangelists who established the Non-church movement, attempted to establish a distinctively “Japanese” form of Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Uchimura searched for “Japanese” Christianity, an “indigenous” Japanese Christian faith separate from “Western” Christianity. In this indigenization paradigm, Japanese Christians rejected “Western” Christianity and transformed the faith into their own “indigenized” religious expression.

These two paradigms--cultural imperialism and indigenization--, however, only illustrate a piece of the Japanese Christian experience. A number of scholars have challenged the cultural imperialism paradigm by arguing that the idea of “cultural imperialism” has a weak ground because, as Ryan Dunch points out, “it is inseparable

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Turnbull, “Acculturation among the *Kakure Kirishitan*: Some Conclusions from the *Tenchi Hajimeri no Koto*,” in *Japan and Christianity: Impacts and Responses*, eds. John Breen and Mark Williams (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 63.

<sup>6</sup> Kanzo Uchimura, *Japan and the Japanese: Essays* (Tokyo: Minyūsha, 1894); John F. Howes, *Japan’s Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo, 1861-1930* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005); and many others for more information about Uchimura’s understanding of Christianity.

from essentializing discourses of national or cultural authenticity,” and because “it reduces complex interactions to a dichotomy between actors and acted upon, leaving to little place for the agency of the latter.”<sup>7</sup> The idea of indigenization also has the same weaknesses, though it focuses more on “acted upon” rather than “actor.” It also pays little attention to the fact that Japanese Christians did not always reject contact with Christians outside Japan. As Dunch argues, national or cultural authenticity is disputable, and bilateral interaction between the actors and the acted existed among Christians. Neither the “cultural imperialism” nor “indigenization” perspectives can explain the experience of the three Japanese Christians, because, rather than incorporating into “Western” Christianity or retreating into a “Japanese” style of Christianity, these Japanese Christians situated themselves at the center of the Gospel.

To address this emerging paradigm, a new interdisciplinary field of World Christianity scholarship has emerged. “One of the tasks of World Christianity,” writes Lamin Sanneh, “is to challenge the tribalism that too often characterizes the work of our colleagues in the academy.” This “tribalism” causes scholars to repeatedly assume that “the term ‘Christian’ actually refers to one tribe, ‘European Christian,’” adds Dale T. Irvin.<sup>8</sup> At the conference “Currents, Perspectives, and Methodologies in World Christianity” held in January 2018, Irvin pointed out, “For most of the modern era ... both in scholarship and in popular understanding throughout the world, European institutions, expressions, and practices have been taken to be normative for all of Christianity.” Thus, “‘world’ gets added to the term [Christianity] when we are seeking to study something

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<sup>7</sup> Ryan Dunch, “Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (October 2002): 302.

<sup>8</sup> Dale T. Irvin, “World Christianity: A Genealogy” (paper presented at the conference of Currents, Perspectives, and Methodologies in World Christianity, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, January 18-20, 2018), 1-2.

more than ‘European Christianity.’”<sup>9</sup> Unlike “global Christianity,” which is “the faithful replication of Christians forms and patterns developed in Europe,” “World Christianity” means “the movement of Christianity as it takes form and shape in societies that previously were not Christian, societies that had no bureaucratic tradition with which to domesticate the gospel,” said Sanneh.<sup>10</sup> In other words, “World Christianity” recognizes “indigenous discovery of Christianity” without rejecting its Western forms.<sup>11</sup>

This study further builds upon these insights by examining the ways that three Japanese Free Methodist leaders understood themselves as Christians within a transnational context. These Japanese Christians help us better understand Christianity as both regional and transnational, by exploring the ways the believers have used their faith to create strikingly original communities that crossed numerous boundaries of culture, language, and politics. That these leaders are Japanese is all the more significant when considering Christianity’s marginal status in Japan, particularly in the era of imperial expansion and the rise of State Shinto, which created both opportunity and risk for Japanese Christians.

World Christianity, we should keep in mind, is not a new invention of World Christianity scholars. From its birth, Christianity itself has been and still is a transnational faith, neither just “Western” nor “Japanese.” It cannot be confined within or defined by any one nation. Since the time of Jesus Christ, how to live as a Christian and as a subject within a nation has been a persistent issue. While some Christians may try to answer the question within the confines of their own countries, they soon notice that their

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<sup>9</sup> Irvin, “World Christianity: A Genealogy,” 2.

<sup>10</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 22.

<sup>11</sup> Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?*, 10.

communion reaches out beyond national boundaries because of Christianity's innate transnational desire to create God's kingdom on earth. As David Maxwell says, "Christianity has always been a missionary religion with universalist aspirations."<sup>12</sup> Other Christians may not be particularly concerned about their nationality, because their relationship to the State already embraces a transnational community of Christians. Wuthnow and Offutt, for example, argue that Christianity "exists in local communities and is distinctively influenced by a national culture and political context," but it simultaneously "has connections with the wider world and is influenced by these relations." If Christianity "spans national borders," as they say, this makes a transnational lens the only one that allows us to see a broader picture of Christian activities.<sup>13</sup> The three Japanese Christians' venture challenged "the pretension of the national state to be the single best way to organize politics and societies."<sup>14</sup> While their Christianity blurred nation-state boundaries, these Japanese Christians also sought to balance out their deep commitment to Japanese national identity. It is this particular delicate balance that this study seeks to explore in detail.

Moreover, a transnational perspective unveils the complex nature of the relationship between the Japanese Christian community and its American partners. It allows us to see transnational exchanges, bilateral or even, multilateral interactions, and surprising attempts at egalitarian relationships among Christians in Japan, the U.S., and other countries such as China. While they at times converged and at other times diverged,

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<sup>12</sup> David Maxwell, "Historical perspectives on Christianity Worldwide: Connections, Comparisons and Consciousness," in *Relocating World Christianity: Interdisciplinary Studies in Universal and Local Expressions of the Christian Faith*, eds. Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell, and Emma Wild-Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 49.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Wuthnow and Stephen Offutt, "Transnational Religious Connections," *Sociology of Religion* 69, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 209-210.

<sup>14</sup> Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 7.

Christians in the U.S., Japan, and elsewhere established and maintained transnational religious connections that often contradicted the fractious state-to-state relationships within they worked. As Ian Tyrrell argues, even if the power between Japanese and American Christians was not equal, “exchange” still happened, and neither side had the complete power.<sup>15</sup> Despite their unequal relationship in the diplomatic arena, these Christians’ exchanges were not unilateral but bilateral and multilateral. Influences flowed in multiple directions. Through transnational connections, they exchanged personnel, money and goods, and in the process, these Christians, as transnational actors, established their own “transnational space” where members became one, relating to each other on a more equal basis.<sup>16</sup> These Christians created a mental and physical “transnational space” out of national boundaries. In so doing, as Tyrrell argues, “the life stories of individuals” challenged “boundaries of race, class, and nationality.”<sup>17</sup> For Japanese Christians struggling against racial and cultural discrimination, Christianity did not “Americanize” them, but provided an opportunity for egalitarian fellowship with American counterparts.

To better explore these issues in detail, this study focuses on the period when the nation-states were forcefully clarifying and expanding their clear national borders with simplified religious membership. During this period, the kind and degree of Japanese Christians’ liminality within the nation was particularly intense. This was, however, merely the latest episode in a long history in which Japanese Christians have always been, and in many ways still are, awkwardly circumstanced in Japanese society, as well as in the larger global Christian community.

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<sup>15</sup> Ian Tyrrell, “Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice,” *Journal of Global History* 4, (2009): 464.

<sup>16</sup> Tyrrell, “Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History,” 467-468.

<sup>17</sup> Tyrrell, “Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History,” 468.



During the period, the U.S. and European nation-states were attempting to expand their territories overseas by bringing “Western” Christianity into their discussion of imperialism, such as U.S. President William McKinley’s belief that Christianity was necessary for colonizing the Philippines. Many, though not all, American Christians superimposed their loyalty to God on to the nation. George Frederick Pentecost, for example, wrote in 1903 after the acquisition of the Philippines, “We love our country and are loyal to our government as we love our God and are loyal to the Kingdom of Heaven.”<sup>18</sup> While Pentecost himself opposed Western imperialism in Asia, naturally many interpreted such assertions as a religious approval of imperial expansion. Even those who opposed overseas expansion believed they should evangelize non-Christian Chinese and later Japanese immigrants on the West Coast because they understood “Christianization” to mean “Americanization.”<sup>19</sup> It was in this situation that Japanese Christians had to find their place and their voice.

Countering Western imperialism, Japan also tried to expand its overseas influence in Asia. The Japanese government skillfully recreated Shinto and utilized it to consolidate national unity. It gradually tightened control over its people by bridging a simultaneous national and religious identity, rooted in Shinto. The Meiji Constitution of 1890 did guarantee freedom of religion, but only within some limits. The Emperor of Japan was considered the only authority for Japanese subjects so that Japanese Christians’ religious monotheistic belief was disputed. The matter became even more complicated

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<sup>18</sup> George Frederick Pentecost, *Protestantism in the Philippines* (New York: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1903), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ryō Yoshida, *Amerika nihonjin imin to kirisutokyō shakai: kariforunia nihonjin imin no haiseki, dōka to E.A. Stōji* (Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentā, 1995), 44. 吉田亮、『アメリカ日本人移民とキリスト教社会—カリフォルニア日本人移民の排斥・同化と E. A. ストージ』（東京：日本図書センター、1995）.

after 1912 when Christian leaders, as well as leaders of sectarian Shinto and Buddhism, were invited to a governmental meeting and asked to cooperate with each other in promoting national morality and in helping the Emperor build his national and religious (Shinto) empire. This put many Japanese Christians in an even more difficult position, forcing them for the first time to work for the government's cause. While the government's intention of utilizing Christianity for its purpose of establishing the Japanese empire was obvious, most Japanese Christians were in fact delighted at this invitation feeling that Christianity was finally officially recognized in Japanese society. Their relationship with the State, however, remained ambivalent because they had to make concessions to accommodate the government's definition of who they were.

Japanese Christians now confronted greater challenges of balancing their national and religious identities. They had to make a grave decision whether they accepted the State's definition of Japanese Christians and whether they were willing to approve of the Emperor as equal to, or perhaps greater than, the Christian God. Some rejected to accept this State's definition of Japanese Christians as incompatible with their religious faith, but many Japanese Christians reluctantly accepted this imposed hybrid form of national Christianity.

In short, this was the time when both the American and Japanese governments used religion to strengthen their nation-state boundaries, Christianity and Shinto respectively. As Japanese political leaders were strengthening the unity of "Shinto Japan" against the "Christian West," Kakiyama, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama needed to show that Christianity was "Japanese" while they continued engaging with the larger transnational Christian community, which was a great struggle for them. As Christian missionaries, they saw their work and community far beyond Japan's borders, actively spreading the

Gospel even further to the Pacific West Coast, to China, and other parts of the world such as Indonesia and Brazil. They continually worked with American Christians but played their own central role. That is, they tried to make their church responsive to both local needs and to transnational connections. By doing so, these Japanese Christians continually challenged fixed nation-state boundaries and the boundaries of Christian faith.

Tracing the missionary activities of these three Japanese with a transnational perspective leads us to a more nuanced understanding of Japanese Christians' missionary activity in China and other neighboring countries. The history of Japanese Christianity during this period needs to be reconsidered focusing on Japanese Christians as actors, rather than passive subjects. Japanese Christians before 1945 have too often been seen as martyrs. Many previous studies on majority Japanese Christians during this period deal with these Christians as a supporting actor behind the State situating them within their nation-state boundaries. Assuming that Christian faith is incompatible with Japanese nationalism and imperialism, these studies see Japanese Christians as helpless victims of the State. These studies on minority Christians, mostly in the group called Holiness Church who did not follow the State line, emphasize the tremendous difficulties those Christians faced, and criticize the State for its coercive policies, as well as those Christians who supported it. They argue that Japanese Christians were persecuted, ostracized, and imprisoned because they refused to worship the Emperor and maintained their Christian faith without concessions.

Focusing on majority Christians who went as missionaries in areas "opened" by Japanese military colonization, other studies do concede that Japanese Christians were actors, but judge them harshly for what they consider their un-Christian behavior and support for imperial expansion. Matsuo Takayoshi, for example, criticizes Christians in

the Congregational Church (the Kumiai Kyokai) because of their mission work to Korea following Japan's imperial expansion.<sup>20</sup> Yamaguchi Yoichi criticizes Tsuchiyama of the Free Methodist Church saying that he should have doubted the Japanese justification of the war for the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere itself because ironically his real friendship with the Chinese Christians greatly contributed the imperial activity of the Japanese military.<sup>21</sup>

Emily Anderson takes a different point of view from these previous scholars and emphasizes the significant role of Japanese Christians in forming the Japanese geopolitical empire in the modern era. In her book, *Christianity and Imperialism in Modern Japan: Empire for God*, Anderson argues that some Japanese Christians willingly and actively supported Japanese imperialism because of their Christian faith. Taking the Congregational missionaries' work in Korea as an example, she says that "a convergence of interests led some Christians and state officials to seek each other out as allies, particularly in establishing the ideological foundation for Japan's expanding empire."<sup>22</sup> Unlike other previous studies, her work assumes that Christianity and imperialism are compatible. Rather than judging, she shows how Japanese Christians tried to maintain their Christian identity and why they allowed themselves to worship the Emperor and participated in imperial pacification work in other Asian countries. Anderson's work is useful to understand Japanese Christians not within Japan but in the global colonial

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<sup>20</sup> Takayoshi Matsuo and S. Takiguchi, "The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part One: The Missionary Activity of the Japan Congregational Church in Korea," *Modern Asian Studies* 13, no.3 (July 1979):401-429; Takayoshi Matsuo and S. Takiguchi, "The Japanese Protestants in Korea, Part Two: The 1st March Movement and the Japanese Protestants," *Modern Asian Studies* 13, no.4 (October 1979): 581-615.

<sup>21</sup> Yōichi Yamaguchi, "Ajia taiheiyōka no chūgokudendō: 'Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu' to sonojidai," *Fukuinshugi shingaku* 38, no.2 (2007): 42-43. 山口陽一、「アジア太平洋戦争下の中国伝道—『怨みをこぼつ涙の握手』とその時代—」『福音主義神学』38, no. 2 (2007).

<sup>22</sup> Emily Anderson, *Christianity and Imperialism in Modern Japan: Empire for God* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 18-19.

context and to think about the broader question of Christianity and imperialism. While her focus on the Congregational Church makes sense given the size and influence of the denomination, by focusing on the Congregational Church only in the Japanese context she does not see the same problem Christians in other countries faced as they responded to similar pressures, and how those pressures impacted their faith, work, and transnational connections. Previous studies, including Anderson, look at wartime Japanese Christians as a negative parochial exception among Christians in the world. But, in fact, there are many examples in history that Christians supported nationalism and imperialism. To name a few, some German Christians supported Nazi Germany and some American Christians supported their country's expansionism looking down on non-Whites. Japanese Christians were by no means an isolated exception. Focusing on transnational Christian relations "cutting across national boundaries" allows us to see that the experience of Japanese Christians can be a shared struggle among all Christians in the past, today, and in the future. The history of Japanese Christians, as Tyrell says, needs to be reconsidered not only as a history of Japanese Christians within the context of the national political culture of Japan but also as a story of processes that had their influences in distant regions.<sup>23</sup>

By contextualizing Japanese Christians' missionary activities both in Japan and in the larger Christian community, this study allows us to see the problem that Japanese Christians faced in a different way. Focusing on Japanese Christians' close ties with their American counterparts, which dated back to the late-nineteenth century when Kakiyama Masaji trained in the U.S. and came back as the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan

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<sup>23</sup> Tyrell, "Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History," 463.

in 1895, Japanese Christians developed a complex yet strong relationship with American Christians. In fact, they often shared a similar struggle of reconciling their religious identity to their national identity. In short, the transnational lens helps us see the struggle of Japanese Christians, the struggle they have not because they were Japanese, but because they were Christians in a context of empire.

This study explores Japanese Christians' evangelical mission in three developing phases focusing on three important Free Methodist leaders, Kakihara, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama. Chapter 1 begins with Kakihara Masaji's home mission in a small island called Awaji-shima. Converted by a Japanese friend in Japan, he traveled to the U.S., studied theology at Greenville College, and returned as the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan in 1895. Using his written materials, minutes of the annual conference records and other accounts of the American Free Methodist Church, and newspaper articles, the chapter narrates how he embraced Christianity, planted Free Methodism in Japan, and continued working as a missionary through strong transnational connections to his American counterparts. The chapter argues that Kakihara demonstrated that Japanese Christians were not docile recipients of faith but active leaders in missionary work for the Japanese while believing in Christianity's transnational messages. For him, showing native initiatives in bringing Free Methodism to Japan was simply his way of following the Great Commission, but in so doing Kakihara revealed that Christianity cannot be confined to any single national identity, and that Christian missionaries are not always Euro-Americans. Though financially supported by the denomination's mission board in the U.S., Kakihara took the leadership in the mission work and laid the foundation of Free Methodism in Japan by recruiting other native workers including

Kawabe and by proposing to establish a Free Methodist seminary for the future development of Christian mission in Japan. By actively communicating with his American fellow believers and having a bilateral and more equal relationship than did the political leaders of the two countries, he tried living out the Biblical promise that every human being is equal before God regardless of nationality.

Chapter 2 focuses on Kawabe Teikichi's mission trips to the Pacific West Coast in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The main purpose of Kawabe's West Coast mission was to evangelize Japanese immigrants, but he also evangelized Americans he met on his way. Kawabe worked as an evangelist to help other Japanese immigrants make a decent living, become respectable middle-class citizen, and build Japanese Christian communities in the U.S. For him, Christianity was not a means to assimilate Japanese immigrants to white American society. Instead, Kawabe and other Japanese immigrants realized that Christianity could be a useful way to fight racial and cultural discrimination. Yet while he took pride in and responsibility for his evangelical work among the Japanese, Kawabe did not confine his missionary career by race or nationality. Engaging in a "reverse" mission, Kawabe also worked as an evangelist among Americans. He showed that Japanese Christians would not simply remain pupils to American missionaries. Following the Great Commission like Kakihara, Kawabe demonstrated that the Japanese could missionize Americans.

Succeeding Kakihara's leadership in the Japan Free Methodist Church upon his return home, Kawabe expanded Free Methodism in Japan by establishing several churches in metropolitan Osaka. At the same time, by responding to the requests of the American mission board, Kawabe again took evangelizing trips to the West Coast and other parts of the country, helping the home mission of the American Free Methodist

Church and preaching the Gospel to not only Japanese immigrants but also to Americans and Chinese living there. While he is often recognized as the most distinguished leader of the Japan Free Methodist Church, Kawabe never cut his ties with the global Christian community outside Japan and outside the denomination. Throughout his life, he searched for the best way to serve God, and this often involved deep transnational religious connections with his American and British counterparts. Illustrating his mission trips and his more equal relationship with American and British Christians based on his own writings and books and other written materials published by his American colleagues, the chapter argues that Kawabe, as a transnational evangelist not only for the Japanese but for all, redefined Christianity as a more pluralistic and inclusive religion rather than a “white” and “Anglo-Saxon” religion.

Chapter 3 depicts Tsuchiyama Tetsuji’s mission trips to wartime China in the late 1930s. Converted by a Japanese friend and trained as a minister in the U.S., he became another leader of the Japan Free Methodist Church and a leading scholar in the first Free Methodist seminary in Osaka in the 1920s. As the Japanese government increased its control over the citizens and its power overseas in the 1930s, Tsuchiyama and other Japanese Free Methodists, as well as Japanese Christians in other denominations, felt the urgent need of demonstrating their loyalty to the State. At the same time, they sent missionaries to China after achieving their financial independence from the American mission board in 1932. In this way, they maintained a difficult balance, working in China on behalf of both Christ and the Japanese imperial state. Despite the difficulties and dangers, they believed their China mission would best serve the local Christian community and the larger Christian community abroad. Tsuchiyama, saw his visits to China in the late 1930s as an effective way of accomplishing multiple tasks such as



consolidating the church as an organization, sweeping the Japanese government's distrust of Christianity as a Western religion, helping Chinese Christians, and most significantly, participating in the worldwide Christian evangelical mission to declare the glory of God. For Tsuchiyama, it seemed a great opportunity for Japanese Christians to simultaneously show their loyalty to both their government and their God.

American Free Methodists understood this strategy and encouraged the Japanese mission in China. Tsuchiyama thus left for China in October 1938 and laid the foundation of the Japanese Free Methodist Church's China mission. Based on his own accounts and written materials of the American Free Methodist mission board, the third chapter argues that Tsuchiyama's China mission represented a further development of Japanese Christians' evangelical mission exposing the limits of transnational religious connections when those connections supported the State's empire building. Tsuchiyama's strong belief in the importance of following the Great Commission led him to make evangelical mission trips to China, but, overlapping the images of the State's empire building and Christians' Kingdom of God, his evangelical efforts with the help of the Japanese military became highly controversial.

By narrating the mission work of Kahihara, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama, all three chapters argue that Japanese Christians found various strategies to balance their national and religious identities and to claim a place for themselves both in Japanese society and in the larger transnational Christian community. Without their continuing efforts of challenging existing national and religious borders, they could have been ignored and marginalized in both Japanese society and the larger transnational Christian community. Yet by skillfully navigating competing national and religious borders, they made people

aware the spiritual power Japanese Christians possessed and could share with their overseas counterparts. By pointing out the uncertain ground of national, cultural, and religious identity, this study suggests Christianity's possibilities and limitations as a way of bringing people together across boundaries of politics and nation.

## Chapter 1: “There Is Nothing but Christ”: Kakihara Masaji’s Evangelical Mission in Japan

### I. Introduction

“... sophisticated sermons cannot lead people to life. We should stand up on the words of the Apostle Paul saying, ‘There is nothing but Christ,’ and spread the pure gospel of the vicarious sufferings of Christ in order to save people’ souls,” an old Japanese Baptist minister stated in 1950 looking back on his Christian life.<sup>24</sup> Having been given the Bible and taught about Christianity at an early age by a Japanese Christian friend in his hometown, Kakihara Masaji sailed to the U.S. to study more about the Bible. In San Francisco, he attended a Japanese Methodist church where he decided to dedicate his life to Christ. Then he moved to Greenville, Illinois, to study theology at Greenville College, a newly founded Free Methodist College. After Kakihara finished his study, the Free Methodist Mission Board appointed him as the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan in the late 1895.

Kakihara never considered his new religion as a “Western” faith, and he never hesitated at expressing his own understanding of Christ’s message. He was bold enough to speak his faith even to American pastors. One day, one of his disciples recalled, Kakihara saw an American pastor giving a sermon while standing on the Bible as a literal

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<sup>24</sup> Tokuya Kakihara, ed., *Kakihara Masaji tsuitōshi* (Miyazaki: Hyūga mission Takanabe baputesuto kyōkai, 1952), ix. 柿原篤彌編、『柿原正次追悼誌』（宮崎：日向ミッション高鍋バプテスト教会、1952）。Translated by the author. Kakihara Masaji wrote this in 1950 while he was still an active minister.

demonstration of his commitment to standing firmly on Bible teachings. Kakihara immediately stood up from the pews, came forward, and pushed the pastor all the way to the outside of the church entrance, saying “Never talk about faith with your feet on the Bible!”<sup>25</sup>

Kakihara’s reaction to the American pastor’s sermon greatly surprised the audience partly because he was Japanese. Unwilling to defer to his American counterparts, Kakihara criticized the American minister’s behavior as disrespectful to the Bible. He recalled the Apostle Paul’s argument in Romans: “is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.”<sup>26</sup> Kakihara did not believe that Christianity was an American religion or a Japanese religion. Instead, he understood his Christian communion more broadly, without reference to nation. He therefore believed that before God there was no hierarchy among Christians in spite of the unequal relationship between the two countries and of the pervasive assumption that Westerners teach Christianity to non-Westerners. When he became the first Free Methodist missionary to his native country, Kakihara depended a great deal on the American mission board for financial support, but actual evangelical work in Japan depended on native workers like himself. In fact, when his initial work was failing, he did not turn to the American mission board and await instructions, but instead made his own decisions and asked for native workers’ help. Rather than fully depending on the American mission board, Kakihara led the mission work and laid the foundation of Free Methodism in Japan. While his Free Methodist mission lasted only briefly, Kakihara demonstrates that even

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<sup>25</sup> Kakihara, *Kakihara Masaji tsuitōshi*, 66.

<sup>26</sup> Romans 3:29-30 (English Standard Version).

the earliest Japanese Protestant converts could become active leaders in missionary work, and that Christianity cannot be confined to any single national identity.

Kakihara Masaji's story complicates the common stereotype of religion and nationality by showing how he navigated the competing borders of nation and religion when the U.S. and Japan were increasingly at diplomatic odds. When Japanese political leaders were using Shinto to strengthen the unity of the Japanese state against the Christian West, Kakihara engaged with the larger Christian community creating a sense of religious belonging and building a mutual community while negotiating his national identity as well. Kakihara understood Christianity as being simultaneously "Japanese" and transnational. Therefore, as a Christian missionary, he spread the Gospel to his native land working with Americans, but he took the position of leadership in his Japan mission. He tried to make his church responsive to both local needs and to transnational connections. By doing so, he continually challenged fixed nation-state boundaries and the boundaries of Christian faith. Kakihara's story leads us to question the idea of a fixed national or cultural "authenticity" and to blur the lines between the senders and the receivers of the Christian message.

## II. Preparing Himself as a Christian Missionary

Born in 1871 in Miyazaki Prefecture, the southern part of Japan, Kakihara encountered the Bible at the age of fifteen when a distant relative and Christian convert

named Ishii Jūji gave him a copy.<sup>27</sup> In addition to this early encounter with Christianity, his unhappy childhood may have influenced his decision to embark on a great venture abroad. He had less attachment to Japan and probably had ambition for making his name. Kakiyama was raised by his grandparents following the loss of his parents when he was only seven. He had a hard time at school because of his ungovernable disposition. One day he attacked one of his friends with a knife, another time he fought against a tiger. His friends and teachers did not know how to deal with his aggressive and adventurous disposition. When he was seventeen years old, he left home and became a sailor to learn the art of navigation in Yokohama and Hokkaido. One day he experienced a miraculous rescue from being shipwrecked off the coast of Miyazaki. While he was drifting on the ocean, he earnestly prayed to God for the first time in his life. Having experienced a cleansing of his soul, Kakiyama firmly resolved to believe in God and to sail to the U.S. to study more about Him. Having no money, he paid for his trip by diverting the money he and his brother had been saving for a new business. He did so without consulting his brother because Kakiyama believed he must go by any means necessary.<sup>28</sup> In 1890, he eventually took his passage to California.

Upon his arrival, Kakiyama attended a Japanese Methodist church in San Francisco from 1890 to 1892, where Kawabe Teikichi was a newly appointed pastor. There, during the religious revival, he heeded the call and made a firm decision to join

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<sup>27</sup> Ishii was born in Miyazaki prefecture, but moved to Okayama to become a medical student in 1882. He was baptized at the Okayama Christian Church in 1884 and establishing the first orphanage in Japan in Okayama prefecture in 1884.

<sup>28</sup> Clara J. Christie, "More about Masaji Murahashi," *Free Methodist*, April 15, 1896, 10-11. The name "Murahashi" is assumed to mean "Kakiyama" since there was no other Japanese person with a similar experience. See also, Kakiyama, *Kakiyama masaji tsuitōshi*, 111-113. While Christie and other American authors state the shipwreck was on his way to the U.S., Kakiyama's memorial booklet compiled by his grandson says it was before his voyage to the U.S.

other Japanese believers in dedicating himself to God.<sup>29</sup> While many Japanese émigrés stayed in San Francisco where some formed a Japanese Christian community, Kakiyama left the church and moved inland, which led him to a fateful encounter with a Free Methodist American minister.

After working at the church for some time, Kakiyama left San Francisco and, by chance, met F. D. Christie and his wife in Phoenix, Arizona, who gave him the name “Paul” and urged him to attend Greenville College. According to Clara Christie, one day in October 1893, Kakiyama followed them from the street, where they had their first street service to their church where they continued the service. He was sitting motionless for a while, but, unable to resist the Holy Spirit, he suddenly stood up and said, lifting his hands up to the Heaven, “Praise the Lord! God led me here. I know your Jesus you tell [sic] about. He save [sic] me from my sins. Alleluiah! I am so glad I find a live church. When God saved me[,] he make me free; he give to me life and power.” He spoke a “broken language” and looked “swarthy,” Christie recalled, but his face shone with the glory of God. Interested in helping Kakiyama, the Christies invited him to visit their house at the end of the service. On the next day, Kakiyama appeared promptly and told his American friends about his life, how he had been working in a Japanese mission in San Francisco in the previous weeks, but being dissatisfied with the work there he felt the need of going back to Japan and telling the Gospel to thousands of his people in “heathen darkness.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Teikichi Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan: onchō no nanajūnen* (Osaka: Kawabezenshūkankōkai, 1934), 21-23. 河邊貞吉、『河邊貞吉説教集 第四卷：恩寵の七十年』（大阪：河邊全集刊行會、1934）。See also, Marry A. Tenny, *Still Abides the Memory* (Greenville: Greenville College, 1942), 68-69; Glen Williamson, *Brother Kawabe* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1977), 33.

<sup>30</sup> Clara J. Christie, “More about Masaji Murahashi,” *Free Methodist*, April 15, 1896, 10-11. According to Kawabe’s account, it is assumed Kakiyama was not working in a Baptist mission, but in a Methodist mission where Kawabe was a pastor from October 1889 to October 1892. Kawabe mentions Kakiyama’s name, as well as Sasao Tetsusaburo, as one of the people who expressed their vocation to become a missionary at his church. See Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 21-23.

Clara Christie thought of him as the most “devout Christian in every sense of the word.” After having the conversation, Kakiyama accepted their offer to live with them, and he helped wash the dishes and take care of their children. Later F. D. Christie became convinced that he should send Kakiyama to school to prepare him to be a minister. When Kakiyama heard of Christie’s plan, he made up his mind after praying the whole night, saying, “I thanks [sic] God he let me go.” Then Christie wrote a letter to President Wilson T. Hogue of Greenville College regarding his attendance to the school.<sup>31</sup> Despite his broken language, Kakiyama’s enthusiasm impressed American believers and encouraged them to hold out a helping hand.

The Christies and the people at their church supported Kakiyama’s journey to Greenville, Illinois. They started to raise money soon after they heard about his departure. While they wanted to pay all his railroad expenses and tuition, Kakiyama could not wait until enough money was raised. He strongly believed God would help him, and no one could stop him going. Clara Christie prepared “as many eatables as possible as he could carry” as well as blankets, the Bible, and a pocket dictionary for him. One day at about three o’clock in the morning, Kakiyama said, “I [sic] go. Don’t fear; God keep me. Thank him,” and left for Greenville. Recalling this incident later, Clara Christie said, “And so this Japanese boy full of courage and faith started out on foot to go fifteen hundred miles or more to school. He wrote us a card or letter every day.... His letters were always full of praise and faith. God raised up many friends who gave him to eat and sheltered him from the storms.”<sup>32</sup> He walked to Albuquerque but took a train from there to Greenville receiving some money from the Christies along the way. This encounter with the Christies

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<sup>31</sup> Clara J. Christie, “More about Masaji Murahashi,” *Free Methodist*, April 15, 1896, 10-11.

<sup>32</sup> Clara J. Christie, “More about Masaji Murahashi,” *Free Methodist*, April 15, 1896, 11.



and the church congregation deepened Kakihara's faith and strengthened his companionship with his fellow American believers. This would later prove important as he prepared himself to become the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan.

After the long journey, Kakihara finally arrived in Greenville. He immediately liked the college, and his extraordinary stories impressed his American Christian friends there. He attended the primary school first to study the language and later majored in theology to pursue his dream of becoming a missionary to his homeland. The president of the primary school, the wife of the college president, remembered Kakihara as "the most notable graduate from the primary department."<sup>33</sup> Kakihara demonstrated his intelligence and inspired American congregations with his extraordinary testimonies. Through him, American Free Methodists in Greenville reaffirmed their faith in God. Through him, they came to understand that God did not work only through Americans. Their new transnational religious connections created a sense of religious belonging beyond nation-state boundaries. By showing that even non-Westerners could offer profound testimony, Kakihara extended the boundaries of faith.

### III. Free Methodist Mission to Japan

After completing his studies, the denomination's mission board appointed Kakihara as the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan in October 1895. Before his appointment, Matsumoto Moku, a transfer student from the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary

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<sup>33</sup> Tenny, *Still Abides the Memory*, 68-69; Christie, "More about Masaji Murahashi," 11. The period during which Kakihara stayed at Greenville College calls for further research because of some contradictory statements in different sources.

in Chili, New York, had already started his study at Greenville College and expressed his keen desire to return to his native country as a missionary saying, “If God calls me to go out to work[,] I am ready to go any time.” His American Free Methodist colleagues believed this young Japanese student, majoring in both theology and business, had “already caught the authentic note of New Testament religion and the spirit of Free Methodism.”<sup>34</sup> The 1894 Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church records, “[i]t is worthy of notice that two young Japanese students in Greenville College are desirous of going out to Japan as missionaries.”<sup>35</sup> Matsumoto, however, failed to realize his vision. Moved by Kakihara’s deep conviction, the mission board decided to appoint him as a Free Methodist missionary to Japan in October 1895. President Wilson T. Hogue and Franklin H. Ashcraft, the pastor, raised three hundred dollars for Kakihara’s new outfit and his transportation to Japan.<sup>36</sup> People at the church held a farewell missionary meeting for Kakihara on one Sunday evening.<sup>37</sup>

Kakihara’s appointment delighted American Free Methodists because they highly valued evangelical missions both at home and abroad. The denomination had its

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<sup>34</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (1960; repr., Wilmore: First Fruits Press, 2016), 91.

<sup>35</sup> Free Methodist Church of North America, General Missionary Board, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1894* (Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1894), 194. While the 1894 minutes also note that a Free Methodist woman from Topeka, Kansas, had already been in Japan as a missionary of another denomination, she had never worked as a Free Methodist missionary.

<sup>36</sup> Leslie Ray Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism’s First Century* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Communications, 1960), 455. The following books also mention about Kakihara: Benjamin Winget, *Missions and Missionaries of the Free Methodist Church* (1911; repr., Wilmore: First Fruits Press, 2016), 7-17; Carrie T. Burritt, *The Story of Fifty Years* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1935), 88-89; Harrison Frederick Johnson, *Handbook of Free Methodist Missions* (Winona Lake: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1941), 39; Byron S. Lamson, *Lights in the World* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1951), 79-81; Woman’s Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church, *The Living Faith in Japan* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1957), 5-6; Lamson, *Venture*, 92; Glen Williamson, *Brother Kawabe* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1977), 33. Williamson notes Kakihara’s first name as “Seiji,” but it should be “Masaji” as other writers as well as his great-grand son who compiled Kakihara’s memorial booklet note.

<sup>37</sup> “Will Go as a Missionary,” *Greenville Advocate*, October 10, 1895.

origins in the teaching of John Wesley, an English minister who brought Methodism to American shores in the later eighteenth century. As the movement grew, however, tensions arose between urban believers, centered in New York, and rural believers, centered in northern Illinois. This conflict caused the separation of some reformers. In 1860, under the leadership of Benjamin Titus Roberts, these reformers organized the Free Methodist Church at Pekin, New York “on the foundation of such distinctive principles of original Methodism as the doctrine and experience of Christian holiness, simplicity and freedom of the Spirit in worship, Christian discipline of daily life, and a devoted stewardship,” which emphasized the importance of evangelical mission.<sup>38</sup>

Free Methodists supported a vigorous outreach through world missions as well as home missions. Beginning in 1862, the Free Methodist Church committed itself to worldwide evangelism, declaring in its denominational paper that “[t]he provisions of the gospel are for all. The ‘glad tidings’ must be proclaimed to every individual of the human race. God sent the true light to illuminate and melt every heart.”<sup>39</sup> Its foreign mission work was very small at first, with no mission board and no funds, but the Church established a missionary board in 1882 and sent its first missionaries out to Africa in 1885. Benjamin Winget, the fourth Missionary Secretary who visited Africa, India, and Japan at a crisis in the missionary work around the turn of the century, wrote “[l]et us look on the fields, pray for the laborers to be sent out, give of our means for their going, and say from our hearts, ‘Here am I, send me.’”<sup>40</sup> As a pioneer non-Western Free Methodist missionary, Kakiyama became one of the denomination’s missionaries who acted on this

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<sup>38</sup> Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness*, 557-559.

<sup>39</sup> Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness*, 427.

<sup>40</sup> Winget, *Missions and Missionaries of the Free Methodist Church*, 7-17; Burritt, *The Story of Fifty Years*, 17-19.

motto.

Kakihara's appointment was remarkable for not only the Free Methodist foreign mission but also all American Christian missions abroad, which normally did not appoint non-Americans as missionaries. The Free Methodist Church started its first foreign mission to Portuguese East Africa in 1885 by sending five American missionaries.<sup>41</sup> By the first decade of the twentieth century, it had appointed and sent out fifty-nine missionaries to Africa, thirty-two to India, twenty to China, nine to the Dominican Republic, and thirteen to Japan, but Kakihara was the only "native" missionary.<sup>42</sup> This gave the Free Methodist mission to Japan a very unique status because, as some American Free Methodist authors on foreign mission recorded, it was initiated from Japan itself, not from the United States.<sup>43</sup> In any other denominations, few, if any, American Christian missions abroad were started by natives.

Sailing the Pacific for several weeks, Kakihara came back home in early 1896 and started his mission work on the island called Awaji-shima. He may have selected the location because it was where ancient myth declared the birthplace of Japan, but more likely because he knew Kawabe, his mentor at the San Francisco Methodist Church, was already there working as an evangelist. Kakihara started off full of enthusiasm, but a chilly reception among the villagers chilled his excitement. Kakihara worked hard visiting from house to house and distributing tracts, but the villagers bitterly loathed Christian missionaries, including even Japanese missionaries like Kakihara, partly because of the

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<sup>41</sup> Burritt, *The Story of Fifty Years*, 23.

<sup>42</sup> The destinations and the number of missionaries are cited from Winget, *Missions and Missionaries of the Free Methodist Church*.

<sup>43</sup> Lamson, *Venture*, 90; Winget, *Missions and Missionaries of the Free Methodist Church*, 75; Burritt, *The Story of Fifty Years*, 88; Johnson, *Handbook of Free Methodist Missions*, 39; Lamson, *Lights in the World*, 79.

previous foreign missionary's gross misbehaviors, but also because of Christianity's foreign image. Almost no one came to Kakiyama's evangelistic meeting in the town of Fukura in Awaji in early 1896.<sup>44</sup> He reported to the mission board that he visited over four thousand houses and spoke about the Gospel to more than thirteen thousand people by distributing tracts and talking face-to-face, but with very little result. He deplored, "I couldn't able to gather [a crowd] yet. The field is large and works are plenty, but the worker is only myself."<sup>45</sup>

Kakiyama had almost lost his bearings, but instead of asking the American mission board to send American missionaries, he instead depended on Kawabe and his wife, who had left the Methodist Church and had already begun his non-denominational mission in Awaji in 1895. They brought him a ray of hope. Being Kawabe's former student in San Francisco, he had great confidence in Kawabe's superb talents and unswerving devotion. Out of desperation, he immediately wrote to the Free Methodist mission board strongly recommending the Kawabes as Free Methodist missionaries, even though he did not consult the couple. Kawabe was not sure whether he should work for an established denomination again because he was feeling more comfortable working without any denominational affiliation. Nevertheless, he wrote the board explaining that he "prefers to work and supporting [supports] himself and do what missionary work he can..., rather than not have Mr. Kawabe and wife accepted."<sup>46</sup> He claimed he could not work without the Kawabes. Upon his request, the board inquired with an American missionary about Kawabe's background, and then formally decided to accept them as Free Methodist missionaries. The board found them trustworthy and capable missionaries

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<sup>44</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 212.

<sup>45</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1896*, 216-217.

<sup>46</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1896*, 216-217.

who had “a like spirit of zeal and self-sacrifice,” and were “well educated in the Japanese language,” and “sufficiently acquainted with English to be able to read our books and write quite well.” Kakiyama had married a Christian Japanese woman working in the Salvation Army. When she agreed to work with her husband, four missionaries, all native workers, took entire responsibility for the Free Methodist Japan mission in 1897. To the board, he reported that they had distributed “tracts at nearly all of the fifty thousand houses of Awaji,” and baptized three or more people including a Buddhist priest. The board highly evaluated these Japanese missionaries who were “abundant in labors, with very encouraging fruit as the result.”<sup>47</sup>

While the Japanese workers did all the actual labor, they could not have done their mission work without the help of American Free Methodists, who sent not only Bibles, hymnbooks, and tracts but also paid all the expenses including the salaries of these Japanese missionaries. The board even paid a debt Kakiyama had contracted while he had been sick. But all these expenses were made upon his request. The 1898 minutes of the denomination’s annual meeting note that Kakiyama’s strong will persuaded the board to give him full financial support. He insisted that “he must go and tell them [the Japanese] what great things God had done for him and preach the ‘good tidings’ of great joy.” Within three years of arriving in Awaji, he enlisted several other native workers, including a man called Sunaga, besides his wife and the Kawabes. While he gave a part of his salary to Sunaga to help the mission work before the American board officially accepted him, it was mission’s money.<sup>48</sup> In the initial stage of the Free Methodist Japan mission, both American financial support and Japanese evangelical labor proved an indispensable

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<sup>47</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1897*, 226.

<sup>48</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1898*, 246-247.

partnership.

Moreover, Kakiyama expressed his clear vision of the future of Free Methodism in Japan to the American mission board. Envisaging the future development of Free Methodism in Japan, he, as early as 1896, requested \$100 for a deposit to secure a place for future missionary work in a large city. He asked again for further financial help to fulfill his vision. One of the needs of Japan he represented to the board was the establishment of a “Christian workers’ school,” a Free Methodist seminary. Kakiyama asserted, “In order to [do] this we need: (a) Money to buy land and erect a suitable building; (b) a good missionary, who is well educated, has good judgement, good Bible knowledge, and burning fire—he ought to be a leader of Japanese Free Methodism.” He did not make himself clear about whom, an American or a Japanese, he thought might be “a good missionary,” but he did suggest that the school needed “[a] good Japanese teacher” who could teach theology in the Japanese language and guide [Japanese] young people. Kakiyama then nominated himself for the teaching position and elaborated a plan. According to his plan, he could study in Greenville again for a year or two to prepare himself for that post while the Kawabes could take care of the mission work in Awaji during his absence. If needed, he maintained, he could assist the Kawabes by writing letters from Greenville.<sup>49</sup>

Kakiyama was ahead of the mission board turning over various ideas for the future Japan Free Methodist mission in his mind. Calculating all the expenses for realizing his vision, he asked the board for money, adding “if the board thinks best.” Nevertheless, Kakiyama demonstrated his initiative and his confidence in his own work for the Free

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<sup>49</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1897*, 226.

Methodist mission in Japan. In fact, he impressed the board, which concluded that “[t]he zeal and aggressiveness of our missionaries in Japan are very commendable,” and that “the fruits from their labors are specially encouraging.” While the board acknowledged the need for continued American financial aid, it also hoped for the complete independence of the Japan Free Methodist Church noting that it was “reasonable to expect much towards self[-]support of native missionaries in Japan.”<sup>50</sup>

Kakihara was also concerned about the self-support of the Japanese church. To raise mission money, he started a small business selling rice in Osaka, but the business went bankrupt, which eventually led him to withdraw from the mission work. He had also grown discouraged over the few converts. While he continued evangelizing Japanese villagers in Fukura, this initial work bore little fruit. No one came to his evangelical meetings for more than a year. While Kawabe and other workers were based in Shizuki, another town in the island, Kakihara alone was in Fukura, where the misbehavior of missionaries in other denomination had caused villagers to turn away from Christianity. It was only after Kawabe moved to Fukura upon Kakihara’s request that their Awaji mission started growing. While Kakihara oversaw the denomination’s mission, he found it hard to maintain his motivation. Despite Kawabe’s encouragement and support, Kakihara often left the island leaving the work to Kawabe.<sup>51</sup>

#### IV. Mission Continued

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<sup>50</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1898*, 246-248.

<sup>51</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 212-217.



Soon after, Kakihara suddenly informed the board of his resignation from his work without consulting the missionary secretary. To the board, he claimed that he had been robbed, and owed money due to debts caused by becoming surety on a loan.<sup>52</sup> To Kawabe, Kakihara claimed that he had to move to Osaka to work in rice business to raise money for self-supporting mission. Kawabe tried to dissuade him from leaving, but he found that Kakihara lost his enthusiasm in Awaji mission.<sup>53</sup> To his family, Kakihara later explained that he had moved back to the U.S. in 1902 stopping his mission work in Japan to examine the creation of the universe written in the book of Genesis.<sup>54</sup> While the reason of his resignation is unsure, Kakihara's Free Methodist mission work in Japan was now succeeded by Kawabe.

While his resignation disappointed American Free Methodists, that did not mean he had also left God. Kakihara left the Free Methodist Church, but he adhered to his religious faith and maintained his Christian mission as a Baptist until his death.<sup>55</sup> Continuing his faith journey in a different denomination, Kakihara's search for his identity as a Japanese Christian did not cease. As a Free Methodist and then as a Baptist, Kakihara did not depend solely on Americans for a better understanding of Christianity. He used his own intellectual and spiritual gifts to explore faith questions that interested him.

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<sup>52</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1899*, 249-250. Kakihara did not explain in detail the reason for leaving the Free Methodist mission. In his declaration at the establishment of the Takanabe Christian Church on June 6, 1949, he only explained his departure as "because of some circumstances." See Kakihara, *Kakihara Masaji tsuitōshi*, 4,8. Ishii Jūji also noted that he was helping Ishii's orphanage in Okayama prefecture during this time. See Jūji Ishii, *Ishii Jyūji nisshi Meiji30nen* (Miyazaki: Ishii kinen yūaisha, 1968), 212-213. 石井十次『石井十次日誌（明治30年）』（宮崎：石井記念友愛社、1968）.

<sup>53</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 216-217.

<sup>54</sup> Kakihara, *Kakihara Masaji tsuitōshi*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Kakihara, *Kakihara Masaji tsuitōshi*, 4.

Leaving for the U.S. again, he urgently felt the need to study how to understand the Bible's description of creation. In pursuing this quest, he audited some courses at several universities and carried out fieldwork in southwestern fields and mountains trying to understand Creation from a geographical point of view. But even here his Christian faith was nurtured by his transnational religious companionship with American Christians such as Dr. Roy Mason, a pastor of the Buffalo Avenue Baptist Church in Tampa, and another American man named White, the president of the Amazing Grace Mission. He became affiliated with the Baptist Church and made a mission tour across the U.S. holding up his belief in the centrality of the Bible in Christian faith. He continued nurturing his commitment to God through transnationally.

At the same time, Kakihara never forgot about his national identity. While the U.S.-Japan relationship deteriorated in the late 1930s, he, as a Japanese, determined to go back to Japan to launch a peace movement. First, he moved to California in 1940 and established a mission station in Los Angeles the next year. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, however, he was arrested and sent to an internment camp, where he continued his mission work within the camp. In 1947, Kakihara finally came back to Japan under occupation through the influence of U.S. Representative Paul Kennedy and worked as a Baptist missionary. Despite his age, Kakihara devoted himself to his evangelical work giving lectures and having evangelical meetings in Tokyo, Miyazaki, and other parts of Japan. In 1949, a few years before his death, Kakihara established the Takanabe Baptist Church in his home town, Takanabe, Miyazaki, with the help of American Christians as well as his own money sent from the U.S.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Kakihara, *Kakihara Masaji tsuitōshi*, 4-9.

By crossing national and religious borders, Kakihara engaged transnational religious interactions not only in the Free Methodist Church but also in a larger Christian community. At the same time, however, he continued to make Christianity “Japanese” as well. Kakihara believed “we must have our citizenship in Heaven to get into the eternal spiritual world, Paradise.”<sup>57</sup>

## V. Conclusion

Becoming the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan, Kakihara challenged some widespread assumptions about Christianity and Christian missions. While the Free Methodist Church was an American-born denomination in the mid-nineteenth century, its spread into Japan at the turn of the twentieth century depended on Japanese believers like Kakihara who had a complex relationship with their American counterparts. Kakihara and his fellow believers in the U.S. crossed the boundaries of the sender-receiver relationship. Contrary to expectations, Kakihara did not act as a docile agent of the newly started American Free Methodist foreign mission, nor did he hope to establish an indigenized Japanese Free Methodism. Unlike some other Japanese Christians, Kakihara actively engaged his American counterparts and had a bilateral and more equal relationship than did the political leaders of Japan and the U.S.

Not only did he challenge the prevalent notion of Westerners missionaries and Western Christianity, Kakihara demonstrated that Christianity could be simultaneously

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<sup>57</sup> Kakihara, *Kakihara Masaji tsuitōshi*, 38.

“Japanese” and transnational. Working as a Japanese Christian missionary beyond denominations, he made Christianity responsive to both local needs and to transnational connections. Neither the “cultural imperialism” paradigm nor the “indigenization” paradigm can fully explain Kakiyama's lifelong engagement with Christianity. Only transnational perspectives can allow us to see how he sought to establish a shared Christendom, through bilateral exchange of people, money, goods, and ideas. Kakiyama kept challenging the national boundaries and creating a transnational space where they prayed for each other to the same God.

In the process, Kakiyama and other native Christians challenged nation-state boundaries by establishing their own collective sense of Christian membership sometimes within and other times beyond their national identities. Between their transnational Christian community and the emerging American and the Japanese political empires, they tried to balance out their individual religious faith within the context a broader national ideology. Free Methodists in both Japan and the United States were, of course, not free from imperialistic ideologies, which limited the transnational nature of Christianity, but Japanese Christians demonstrated how permeable nation-state boundaries were.

For both Japanese and American Christians, their transnational religious connections allowed them to distinguish the core of their religious beliefs from its peripheral cultural expressions, which made them ponder over whose religion Christianity is.<sup>58</sup> This suggests to the possibility that Christianity can unify and not simply create divisions. Following in the footsteps of early Japanese Christian leaders such as Nijima Jo, who built a Christian school in 1875 in Kyoto, Japan, Kakiyama and

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<sup>58</sup> This question is taken from the title of Lamin Sanneh's book, *Whose Religion Is Christianity: The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003).

his American counterparts, explored “the frontiers of a global Christianity,” challenging the idea of “Western” Christianity.<sup>59</sup> When they said, “our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,”<sup>60</sup> they subordinated their national citizenship to their religious membership. For them, Christianity expanded the scope of their identity beyond the nation.

Seeking to answer the question, “whose religion is Christianity?” Kakihara came to see that Christianity was for everyone. The 1920s saw the “indigenous” church movement develop worldwide, but Kakihara’s experiences preceded that transformation of Christianity from a “European,” or “American,” religion into a more inclusive and diversified Christianity.<sup>61</sup> In finding this answer, Kakihara was hardly alone. Other Japanese Christians, including Kawabe who succeeded his leadership of the Japan Free Methodist mission, came to share and then even expand on Kakihara’s initial insights.

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<sup>59</sup> Gavin James Campbell, “‘An Unbroken Chain between Us’: Thoughts on Missionary Encounter,” *Doshisha American Studies* 51 (2015), 16. Here the term “global Christianity” does not mean “Europeanization” or “Americanization” of Christianity but means “world Christianity” as recent studies of world Christianity define.

<sup>60</sup> Philippians 3:20 (English Standard Version).

<sup>61</sup> Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 62-64; Albert Monshan Wu, “The Quest for an ‘Indigenous Church’: German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Indigenization Debates of the 1920s,” *The American Historical Review* (February 2017): 86.

## Chapter 2: “God Gave Me a Challenge of Speaking to White Americans”:

### Kawabe Teikichi’s Mission to the Pacific West Coast

#### I. Introduction

After Kakihara Masaji resigned from the Free Methodist mission in Japan, Kawabe Teikichi succeeded Kakihara’s leadership in the denomination. Because Kakihara’s engagement with the mission was short-lived, some say that Kakihara’s contribution to the church was simply to find Kawabe.<sup>62</sup> Addressed as “Brother Kawabe,” Kawabe is recognized today as the founder and the most distinguished leader of the Japan Free Methodist Church. Bishop Elmer E. Parsons, for example, admired him as “a patriarch and prophet combined,” and above all as “a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.”<sup>63</sup> Another Bishop Wilson T. Hogue also praised Kawabe as “a man of excellent repute among his own countrymen, and also with missionaries of other denominations.” Though he had no formal theological training, Kawabe was well respected as an excellent evangelist among American Christians who called him “the St. Paul of Japan.”<sup>64</sup> He was a transnational evangelist who demonstrated how Christianity could be simultaneously “Japanese” and transnational to those both inside and outside of Japan. In so doing, he

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<sup>62</sup> Wilson T. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America* (Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1915), 284; Junichi Hatano, “Furīmesojisuto nihonsenkyōkaishi 120nen,” *Mattakiai*, February/March 2016, 1. 畑野順一、「フリーメソジスト日本宣教開始 120 年」『全き愛』(2016. 2/3).

<sup>63</sup> Glen Williamson, *Brother Kawabe* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1977), 7.

<sup>64</sup> Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America*, 284.

extended the boundaries of Christian faith as well as tested the power of nation-state boundaries.

While Hogue evaluated Kawabe as “a man of integrity and devotion, a richly evangelical preacher and in all respects loyal to Free Methodism,” Kawabe did not confine himself within any single denomination.<sup>65</sup> Before he joined the Free Methodist Church, Kawabe was led to Christianity at the Methodist Episcopal Church in California and became an ordained deacon of the church, but he was bold enough to leave the familiar church to defend a particular Christian faith. While he made his first West Coast mission trip as a Methodist minister, he became an “evangelist at large” before he came back to Japan. Even after joining the Free Methodist Church, he did not confine his Christian faith within the teachings of the denomination. Instead, he actively sought ways to better serve God through his ties with American and British Christians outside the denomination. In his mission work, he did not wait for instructions from the denomination’s mission board.

Kawabe was free from denominationalism partly because he was aware of more serious divisions among Christians. Crossing the Pacific Ocean, he arrived in San Francisco in the late nineteenth century, at the dawn of the establishment of Japanese community when he and other Japanese new-comers faced a hostile, racist host society. Many Japanese, including Kawabe, were attracted to Christian churches for help in adjusting to the American society and to form one backbone of a Japanese Christian community. Like other Japanese Christians, he wanted to be respected as a Japanese rather than being fully assimilated into white-dominated American society. He rejected racism

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<sup>65</sup> Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America*, 284.

because he believed it violated Christ's teachings.<sup>66</sup> After making an active choice to become a Christian and a minister, he worked among the Japanese in this new land without rejecting his national identity as Japanese. Not being satisfied to confine his work to the Japanese at the San Francisco church, he soon launched an evangelical trip to other parts of the Japanese diaspora on the West Coast and in British Columbia. While he returned to Japan and worked as the leader of the newly founded Free Methodist Church following this missionary work, Kawabe once again carried out another West Coast evangelical mission trip, this time at the request of the American mission board. He did not regard becoming Christian as becoming an American. Instead, he believed that only through the Christian gospel could converts of any race or background become respectable. Using Christianity as an "equalizer," not an "assimilator," Kawabe devoted himself to proving that Christianity could be a "Japanese" religion by building Japanese Christian communities outside of Japan as well as within Japan.

Moreover, as a transnational missionary, Kawabe challenged the general expectation that kept him, and other Japanese believers, confined to a missionary career only among the Japanese. During his evangelical trips to the West Coast, he engaged in a "reverse" mission among Americans. Contrary to the general assumption that Christianity was an American or Western religion, he found out that many Americans needed the Gospel. Kawabe was reluctant at first, but he changed as he increasingly identified himself as a Christian more than as a Japanese. Overcoming his sense of racial and cultural inferiority, Kawabe spoke boldly to white Americans as his equal. Realizing that

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<sup>66</sup> Ryō Yoshida, *Amerika nihonjin imin to kirisutokyō shakai: kariforunia nihonjin imin no haiseki, dōka to E.A. Stōji* (Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentā, 1995), 9-10. 吉田亮、『アメリカ日本人移民とキリスト教社会—カリフォルニア日本人移民の排斥・同化と E. A. ストージ』(東京: 日本図書センター、1995)。



the most serious division among people was between the “saved” in Christ and the “unsaved,” he proved that the Japanese could be missionaries to anyone at all, regardless of race or national identity.

While he demonstrated that Christianity could also be a “Japanese” religion, Kawabe never confined Christianity to any nation. He eagerly worked with Japanese Christians and non-Japanese Christians alike, seeking always to increase the power and audience for the gospel message. From the beginning, Kawabe’s Christian faith was a product of transnational religious connections. He had never cut his ties with the global Christian community outside Japan in his both domestic and foreign missions. Rejecting “Japanese” Christianity as a separate form of “Western” Christianity, Kawabe revealed a transnational aspect of Christianity.

Though certainly not all, many American counterparts nevertheless accepted Kawabe’s understanding of transnational Christianity. When the relationship between the U.S. and Japan was unfavorable and unequal, Kawabe and American Christians established relations that were more brotherly and more equal than those of their respective nations. They were experiencing different levels of exchange, interaction, and encounter from those of their nation-states. Working closely together in Christ, both American and Japanese Christians were transformed into transnational figures whose work blurred nation-state boundaries.<sup>67</sup> Demonstrating Christianity could be both “Japanese” and transnational to both Americans and the Japanese, Kawabe extended the existing boundaries of Christian faith even farther than did his predecessor Kakiyama. Through his evangelical mission, Kawabe redefined Christianity from an emphasis on

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<sup>67</sup> Ian Tyrrell, “Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice,” *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 460.

“white” “Anglo-Saxon” Christian practices to an understanding of Christianity that was more pluralistic and inclusive.

## II. Becoming a Christian Evangelist

Kawabe Teikichi was born in a small village in Fukuoka prefecture in 1864, when Japan was undergoing a rapid change after Commodore Perry’s arrival after the full opening of Japan to the outside world in 1854. He, according to his father, had a compelling ambition to win a name for himself since he was a child. As he grew and knew right from wrong, he felt indescribable anxiety increasing day by day. He was born in a Buddhist family and well acquainted with Buddhist teachings, but he felt that they never helped calm his anxiety. At a private school, he studied the Chinese classics, but the harder he studied and tried to practice the teachings, the more his anxiety grew. One day he met a man from the same village who went to Osaka and built a fortune, he felt. Young Kawabe then thought that making money was the quickest way to relieve his anxiety and to have peace of mind. Believing that getting out of his small village should be the first step to realize his dream, Kawabe, at the age of seventeen, decided to leave home to become famous and rich.<sup>68</sup>

In metropolitan Osaka, Kawabe started selling rice and candles, which brought him a good profit, but he could never be satisfied with what he gained. The more he had,

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<sup>68</sup> Teikichi Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan: oncyō no nanajūnen* (Osaka: Kawabezenshūkankōkai, 1934), 116-119. 河邊貞吉、『河邊貞吉説教集 第四卷：恩寵の七十年』（大阪：河邊全集刊行會、1934）。See also, Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 16-19.

the more he wanted. As he was striving to make a fortune at a stroke, he heard about the prosperous America where many people realized their American dreams. Knowing his strong character, Kawabe's father did not stop him but sent his son off with a promise of keeping his Buddhist faith and of shunning Christianity, which was reviving in Japan with the influx of Western missionaries. Thinking that English was a prerequisite to succeed in his American commercial venture, he started to study English in his spare time. He taught himself English for a while, but he soon found out he needed someone to try out his self-taught English. Searching for a better opportunity of making more money and a language-study assistant, he moved to Tokyo where he soon found an American man who happened to be a Christian missionary.<sup>69</sup> But Kawabe considered this encounter with the American missionary only as an excellent opportunity to learn spoken English ignoring the missionary's religious messages. While Kawabe did not show any interest in Christianity at this point, this encounter might have prepared him to believe the religion in his later life.<sup>70</sup>

In October 1885, Kawabe sailed across the Pacific Ocean to the U.S. to make himself a fortune believing this would bring him peace of mind. Running an export-import business in San Francisco, he quickly succeeded in his business and accumulated wealth, but after several years he had realized that financial security alone could not fill the overwhelming emptiness in his heart. He asked himself, "What do I do now after achieving my material success?" "Am I doing okay?" "Is this all I should pursue since I was born?" Not being able to find a satisfactory answer to any of these questions, Kawabe

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<sup>69</sup> Teikichi Kawabe, *Kami no kawa daikan* (Osaka: Kawabezenshūkankōkai, 1941), 4. 河邊貞吉、『神の河 第二巻』(大阪：河邊全集刊行會、1941). According to a note added by Oya Saichi, an editor, Kawabe learned English in Tokyo from Merriman Harris, who he later met in San Francisco, but Kawabe did not mention Harris's name as his English teacher in Tokyo.

<sup>70</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 116-119; Williamson, *Brother*, 16-19.

was going in and out of a Christian church, but, as he confessed later, he did so only to seek connections for his business and opportunities to practice English, not to seek spiritual salvation.<sup>71</sup>

Christian churches attracted newly arrived Japanese like Kawabe because they offered English language classes, housing, job information, and even referrals. The ties to church gave these Japanese their place in the new land. Established by the Japanese for the Japanese residents, the church Kawabe attended was the first Protestant church of that kind open to the Japanese immigrants and functioned as their home, school and community center. It started when a few Japanese young men in San Francisco attended an English class at the Methodist church in Chinatown in the 1870s. They began to meet regularly in the basement of the church and to study the Bible and English under the guidance of Otis Gibson, the superintendent of the Chinese Mission. Baptized by Gibson, one of them named Miyama Kan'ichi organized a small group called the Japanese Gospel Society, or *Fukuinnkai* in Japanese, which grew into the first Japanese Methodist Church in the U.S. in 1879 and evolved into the “mother” church of all Japanese American Methodist Churches in the U.S. formally founded in 1886.<sup>72</sup>

Though he attended the church, Kawabe spent night after night alone in his room feeling uncertain. One day the death of his friend's only son changed his spiritual life. Coming to the U.S. penniless, Yamato Miki became an extremely successful

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<sup>71</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 4-6; Kawabe, *Kami no kawa dainikan*, 1-4; Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 19-21.

<sup>72</sup> The church is now called Pine United Methodist Church. See “Who are we?,” accessed September 13, 2018, <http://www.pineumc.org/aboutus.htm>. Gerald H. Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 281; Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America: A History Volume 1* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2010), 293-295; David Yoo, “Religious History of Japanese Americans in California,” in *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities*, eds. Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 129-130.

businessperson in a short time. Kawabe was often at Yamato's house where he found everything he desired. Yamato had a fortune and a wonderful wife and a son. Kawabe thought that Yamato and his family were living an ideal life, and he wanted to have the same. Sharing a similar ambition and enthusiasm, Yamato treated Kawabe like a younger brother. One day, Yamato's son, Miyake, contracted prevailing diphtheria and passed away in several days. He was with the devastated parents to support them. Mourning for the death of his son, Yamato warned Kawabe, "When Miyake was trying to breathe his last breath, I realized that my money was as useless as the sands of the beach.... Don't make the mistake that I have made. Try, if you can, to find a true sense of values and keep it always." "Thank you, Sir, I will, Sir," Kawabe replied, but in fact he did not know how.<sup>73</sup>

Feeling entirely lost, Kawabe worked even harder to escape from his anxiety. But, ironically, he found even more and urgent anguish. After many agonizing nights, Kawabe started to see what Yamato's words meant. When he had understood that making money could never solve his problem and satisfy his soul, he felt his "spiritual eyes were beginning to open," which marked the beginning of his new life. He realized only religion can fill his spiritual hunger. Living in San Francisco as a Japanese, he could have chosen to visit a Buddhist temple or a Shinto shrine, but he chose Christianity which was new to him. He decided to take a chance on this religion. Having an inquiring mind, he started to attend church regularly. Unlike his previous church visits aiming at studying English and making connections for his business, he was wishing to know much more about Christianity. As he became an earnest seeker, Kawabe found his biased understanding of

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<sup>73</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 5-7; Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 21-24.

this “foreign” religion gradually melting away.<sup>74</sup> As he knew more about Christianity, he actively digested many aspects of Christian faith such as belief in the only God, original sin, and the vicarious sufferings of Christ. He became certain that only Christianity, not Buddhism or Confucianism, could give him what Yamato called “a true sense of values.” As Kawabe was diligently studying Christian teachings, his conversion came on Thanksgiving Day in 1887. He later wrote:

I experienced an X ray from heaven which shined into my heart. The words of John 18:8, “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement,” suddenly exposed the things in my heart that until now had been hidden. All my innermost secrets were exposed, and the truth of God was shown to me.... I was the worst of sinners, a hypocritical Pharisee, a cursed sinner. For the first time in my life, before God I was ashamed, and with tears I confessed my sins, repented, and worshiped the Lord of the cross. From my heart, I believed in Jesus as my Saviour and received forgiveness. I heard the Lord say to me, ‘My child, rest, for I have forgiven your sins ... and you have become a child of God.’ This assurance was clearly given to me. My salvation had come, not by my good works, but my faith only in the Lord. I knew my sins were all forgiven, and I had become God’s child. I could not refrain from giving vent to tears of Joy. Hallelujah!<sup>75</sup>

Kawabe found that Christianity was not a “foreign” religion only for foreign people but was exactly what he had been searching for. A month later, on Christmas day, Kawabe received baptism from Merriman Colbert Harris and became a member of the San Francisco Methodist Church.<sup>76</sup>

Harris had just come back to the U.S. in 1886 from his thirteen-year Methodist mission work in Japan, where he had been working as a Christian missionary in Japan since 1873. As the first Protestant missionary in Hokkaido, Harris baptized some Japanese students including Uchimura Kanzo and Nitobe Inazo, who later became the leaders among Japanese Christians.<sup>77</sup> Harris then returned to the U.S. and became the superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal mission to the Japanese immigrants on the U.S.

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<sup>74</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 5-7; Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 21-24.

<sup>75</sup> Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 26.

<sup>76</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 7-10; Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 26-27.

<sup>77</sup> The students later formed the famous Sapporo Band.

West Coast until 1904 when he again moved back to Japan as a Methodist missionary bishop.<sup>78</sup> To expand the Japanese church's mission, Harris worked with a Japanese Methodist named Miyama Kan'ichi who in 1881 was appointed to work for the Japanese-American community in San Francisco and who later became an ordained elder in the California Conference.<sup>79</sup> Succeeding Miyama's work, Kawabe also contributed to the expansion of Christian missions among the Japanese diaspora, but he had to take several more steps to start working on the job.

In December 1888, a Bible verse urgently struck Kawabe. It said "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."<sup>80</sup> The words pierced his heart, he later wrote, "just like a double-edged sword."<sup>81</sup> Being unable to fully deny his acquisitiveness even after his baptism, he discovered the difficulty of committing himself to both running a successful business and following the will of God. This weighed heavily on his mind and made him feel miserable in his conviction. He prayed and prayed in seclusion fasting and asking God's will for him. In the meantime, in 1889, Kawabe was elected a chairperson of the Gospel Society, a quasi-pastoral position, to take charge of the church's evangelical work. This made him lean more in the direction of serving God exclusively and of more neglecting his business aside. He could not clearly hear God's voice directly at that time yet, but he soon made his full commitment to Christ and

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<sup>78</sup> Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 281. Since then, he stayed in Japan until he died in 1921.

<sup>79</sup> Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, 281; Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America*, 293-295; Lester E. Suzuki, "Persecution, Alienation, and Resurrection: History of Japanese Methodist Churches," in *Asian American Christianity: A Reader*, eds. Viji Nakka-Commauf and Timothy Tseng (Castro Valley: The Institute for the Study of Asian American Christianity, 2009), 57-58.

<sup>80</sup> Matthew 6:24 (New International Version).

<sup>81</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 11. Translated by the author.

announced his decision publicly. Accepting God's call to live as an evangelist more than anything else, Kawabe decided to withdraw from his successful business. This surprised many of his business supporters, but he devoted himself to reading the Bible and praying to God paying no attention to their negative reaction.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, while he was working on evangelical work and studying theology with some other Japanese Christians under Harris, Kawabe had received a "new baptism of fire." Repeating both sins and repentance for a year and a half since he became a Christian, he was still feeling miserable. One day, one of his friends in the study group who acutely felt his sinfulness went on a seven-day fast and received the Holy Spirit while he was praying in seclusion. After Kawabe heard about this new baptism of fire, he wished to have the same experience. Stirred by his friend, he went on an eight-day fast seeking to be completely filled with the Holy Spirit. Finally, on August 7, 1889, while he was praying, the Bible verse, "...the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin," came to him convincing him of his sanctification and filling him with the peace of mind for which he had long sought.<sup>83</sup> During another sixty-day seclusion, he for the first time heard the voice of God directly saying, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."<sup>84</sup> Since then, Kawabe followed the call without a doubt and lived the rest of his life as a transnational evangelist.<sup>85</sup>

Many Japanese men and women in the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century left Japan for the U.S. to study, to find work, and to make a fortune. Especially after 1885 when the Japanese government approved its citizens to travel

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<sup>82</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 11-14.

<sup>83</sup> 1 John 1:7 (New International Version).

<sup>84</sup> Mark 16:15 (New International Version).

<sup>85</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 11-20; Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 27-30.



abroad, thousands of displaced Japanese farmers moved to California as agricultural workers to replace Chinese workers. As many immigrants at the time experienced, these Japanese immigrants faced great hardship not only because they were new-comers but also because they were Asians. As previous Chinese immigrants faced racial and cultural discrimination, these Japanese struggled in many ways. Laws, restrictions, and even outright violence blocked them from gaining access to even basic rights, such as housing and education. It was in this difficult situation that religious institutions, especially Protestant churches, played an important role in the establishment of Japanese immigrant communities in California by providing various social services to help those Japanese, mostly young men, adjust to American society.<sup>86</sup> Kawabe was one of these Japanese who left Japan for the U.S. in the late nineteenth century seeking for things they could not get in their home land. Though, at first, he was searching for wealth, Kawabe found Christianity instead. His Christian faith was born, bred, and nurtured within both a “Japanese” and transnational setting, rather than one exclusively. In the process, he understood that Christianity was neither American nor Japanese, and that he himself as a citizen of Heaven more than anything else. Some American Christians like Harris helped him believe that Christianity could correct the unequal relationship between Americans and the Japanese. For Kawabe, Christianity was not a foreign religion to be simply imported but something universal transcending all human-made thoughts and ideas. Thus, as the Bible says, Kawabe believed that Christianity could, and should, reach out to all.

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<sup>86</sup> Yoo, “Religious History of Japanese Americans in California,” 121-124.

### III. First West Coast Mission Trip as a Methodist Missionary

A religious revival came in the fall of 1889 while Kawabe was preaching the Gospel at the San Francisco Japanese Methodist church with Harris, which was the first Japanese Methodist Church in the U.S. and which had grown from the Japanese Gospel Society.<sup>87</sup> Kawabe recalled that he had baptized more than four hundred people in the following three years which demonstrated the rapid growth of the church. The revival spread to other cities in California, and the church gained more workers meeting the demand. About twenty believers, including Kakihara Masaji, decided to dedicate their lives to God's work. Joining the California Methodist Church conference and receiving ordination, Kawabe started to feel a great responsibility for saving more non-Christian Japanese dispersed to other areas on the Pacific West Coast such as Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, and British Canada.<sup>88</sup>

San Francisco had the biggest Japanese immigrant population in the 1880s, but, as Japanese agricultural labors increased and were dispersed over a wide area, Christian churches needed traveling evangelists who could follow the workers and speak to them in their native language. While some denominations had to summon a Japanese pastor from Japan, the Methodist Church was lucky to have Kawabe, an ideal person for the post. The 1892 report of the Methodist Church noted how enthusiastic Japanese Christians were to preach the Gospel everywhere including public assemblies, highways, hospitals, prisons, lodging houses, and gambling houses and how they were blessed with a great

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<sup>87</sup> Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America*, 294. The church still exists today as Pine United Methodist Church.

<sup>88</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 21-15.

harvest.<sup>89</sup> Soon, given a complimentary train pass from Chinda Sutemi, a member of the San Francisco Church who served as Japanese Consul in San Francisco, and two-hundred dollars raised by the congregation, Kawabe, began evangelizing Japanese immigrants who knew no language but their own.<sup>90</sup> In this first West Coast mission trip, he demonstrated that Christianity could create links among the Japanese immigrants by helping them build Japanese Christian communities here and there outside Japan. Believing that Christianity was the only religion for the Japanese which could make them respectable human beings, he showed that Christianity could be a remedy for racial inequalities and other problems they faced in their new homes. For Kawabe, as well as other Japanese Christians, Christianity was an “equalizer,” not an “assimilator.”

On October 20, 1892, Kawabe embarked on his first West Coast mission that lasted three months. Starting from Portland, Oregon, he visited more than thirty cities by train in the first month. Then he moved to Spokane, Washington, and the surrounding areas and even further to the Vancouver area.<sup>91</sup> In the first month alone, he distributed 1168 tracts titled “The Doctor of Our Souls” and “Believe Him Now,” and spoke the Gospel directly to 432 Japanese.<sup>92</sup> He enthusiastically preached about God’s forgiveness and unconditional blessings to Japanese railroad workers in humble temporary dwellings, prostitutes in brothels, and gamblers in casinos, and criminals in prisons.

When Kawabe visited the Japanese on the West Coast, many of them were low-

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<sup>89</sup> Yoshida, *Amerika nihonjin imin to kirisutokyō shakai*, 32-24; Suzuki “Persecution, Alienation, and Resurrection: History of Japanese Methodist Churches,” 60.

<sup>90</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 21-25.

<sup>91</sup> The cities Kawabe visited included Portland (Oregon), Molalla (OR), Prescott (OR), Glenns Ferry (Idaho), Bliss (ID), Kimiah (ID), Minidoka (ID), Weippe (ID), American Falls (ID), Inkom (ID), Rupert (ID), Clayton (ID), Marsing (ID), Irwin (ID), Montpelier (ID), Nezperce (ID), Boulder (Wyoming), Cokeville (WY), Farson (WY), Waterford (WY), Granger (WY), Pocatello (ID), Medvale (ID), Clifton (ID), Nampa (ID), Buttecity (ID), Caldwell (ID), Oatfield (OR), and Huntington (OR).

<sup>92</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 81-82; Suzuki “Persecution, Alienation, and Resurrection: History of Japanese Methodist Churches,” 60.

skilled laborers frantically struggling just to get by and facing many problems such as alcoholism, prostitution, and gambling. Because of these “unfavorable” Japanese immigrants, anti-Japanese sentiment grew into a public movement in the 1890s. Newspaper articles, for example, frequently denounced Japanese prostitutes, and the city of San Francisco decided to remove Japanese students from public schools. Since the establishment of the Gospel Society, the Japanese Christian churches stood on the side of these Japanese immigrants and conducted their evangelical work among the Japanese immigrants aiming at moral reforms to improve their negative image. In fact, Harris worked hard and, in fact, succeeded in reversing the city’s decision to remove Japanese from the public schools.<sup>93</sup> Kawabe’s work was a part of the moral reform of the Methodist Church, though he had a higher goal of spiritually “saving” these people.<sup>94</sup> Through his evangelical work among Japanese immigrants, he helped to improve the quality of their lives without forcing them to abandon their Japanese national identity. Kawabe’s goal was to lead them to Christ because he believed everything else needed would follow after their conversion.

As he traveled, however, Kawabe noticed that he himself was still struggling between his national and religious identities. One day, he saw a Japanese man washing dishes at a white-American-owned inn in Huntington, Oregon. Instead of evangelizing him, Kawabe avoided him because he felt embarrassed that the man was his own people, Japanese. He was soon ashamed of how he felt and asked God forgiveness. As a Christian and a former successful Japanese businessman, Kawabe might have identified himself as

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<sup>93</sup> Yoshida, *Amerika nihonjin imin to kirisutokyō shakai*, 63-64.

<sup>94</sup> Ryō Yoshida, “1915nen Kariforunia nihonjinimin protesutanto kyōfukatsudō,” *Kyōiku bunka* 22 (March 2013): 1. 吉田亮「1915年、カリフォルニア日本人移民プロテスタントの矯風活動」『教育文化』22 (2013. 3. 20).

a member of American Christian community, a culturally superior group to non-Christian Japanese immigrant communities. Consequently, he did not want to be grouped with people in the inferior group when he saw fellow Japanese immigrants barely making a living. Humbling himself, he once again convinced himself of the importance of the Holy Spirit in him that made him an instrument of God's work.<sup>95</sup> As he continued traveling, Kawabe could not help ignoring the fact that he was a Japanese, a member of a supposedly inferior group. While eventually he overcame some of the difficulties of being a Japanese evangelist, becoming Christians did not always guarantee full equality for the Japanese in American society.

At other times, however, Kawabe's nationality worked positively when he evangelized the Japanese because he could speak to them in their native language. During his stay in Oregon for a week, Kawabe, with some Japanese people he knew, spent much time on visiting brothels and casinos where many Japanese immigrants were working and spoke the Gospel to them. While they were already familiar with Buddhism or Shinto, they had never heard about Christian Gospel so that they listened to Kawabe with a great interest. Although some assumed that Christianity was not for the Japanese, at Prescott, Oregon, for example, he succeeded in persuading fourteen Japanese workers who had never thought about themselves as sinners. After Kawabe's testimony of the atonement of Christ, all of them confessed their sin and thirteen of them made the decision to become a Christian then and there.<sup>96</sup> In Kimiah, Idaho, everyone at an inn was already in bed after their hard work. It was midnight, but he woke them up to speak to them believing that knowing the sacred love of God had the first priority over human feelings.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 79-81.

<sup>96</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 43-44.

<sup>97</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 49-50.

Speaking boldly to the Japanese workers in their native language, Kawabe won many Japanese converts to Christianity.

Kawabe gave these Japanese immigrants hope and a path to respectability in American society. In Spokane, he spoke to a group of Japanese prostitutes. He visited six brothels, but only three of them opened the door for him.<sup>98</sup> While he left tracts and prayed for the prostitutes at the other three brothels whose door remained closed, he spoke to five prostitutes exhorting them to believe Christ. To one prostitute who said she did not need the “Western” religion because she had a Japanese religion already, he emphasized, “Christ is for everyone, especially for sinners everywhere regardless of the East or the West.” While she did not make an immediate decision to accept Christ, he was satisfied because he was convinced that Christ had already captured her soul. In fact, he learned later from others that many Japanese prostitutes in Spokane gave up their business and accepted Christ as their Savior.<sup>99</sup> He also visited a prison in South Westminster, where one prisoner repented of his sin and converted to Christianity.<sup>100</sup> He helped these Japanese immigrants living at the bottom of the society improve the quality of their lives within their existing Japanese national identity. Indeed, Kawabe believed that only Christianity could manage to build this bridge between their old and new homes. Through their conversions, Kawabe observed Christianity’s transnational aspect as well as its local aspect.

Kawabe’s visit had a great impact especially in Portland and in Steveston, called “Sutebusuton” by the Japanese, where he helped the Japanese residents establish

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<sup>98</sup> For more information about Japanese prostitutes in Spokane, see Kazuhiro Oharazeki, *Japanese Prostitutes in the North American West 1887-1920* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016), 84-86.

<sup>99</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 94-95.

<sup>100</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 123.

communities. In Portland, he revisited and opened the Portland Japanese Methodist mission in 1893. He started his work at a rented hut with only two seekers whom he had met in his first trip, but the number of believers eventually increased to more than one hundred. Moreover, the church members, with the assistance of Kawabe, launched a moral reform campaign among Japanese residents. This Portland Japanese Methodist church continues even today as the Epworth United Methodist Church, which was one of the fruitful results of Kawabe's first West Coast mission trip.<sup>101</sup> In Steveston, British Columbia, too, Kawabe's visit to the Japanese fisherman's community in his evangelical mission led to the establishment of a church to serve the Japanese community.<sup>102</sup> He was their community leader as well as spiritual leader. Succeeding in building Japanese Christian communities on the Pacific West Coast, he claimed that Christianity could be a religion for the Japanese. Contrary to a general belief that Christianity is a religion for Westerners, Kawabe demonstrated that a Japanese evangelist like him could show how Japanese converts could become Christians without being assimilated to Westerner society.

While Kawabe's evangelical mission was mainly toward the Japanese on the West Coast, he also took every opportunity of speaking to non-Japanese. In fact, in the

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<sup>101</sup> Linda Yamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon's Hood River Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 50; Eiichiro Azuma, "In This Great Land of Freedom: The Japanese Pioneers of Oregon Chapter 2-Early Japanese Life in Oregon," accessed May 14, 2012, <http://discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2017/10/30/oregon-2/>, originally published as Lawson Fusao Inada, Akemi Kikumura, Mary Worthington, and Eiichiro Azuma, *In This Land of Freedom: The Japanese Pioneers of Oregon* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 1993); George Azumano, "Epworth United Methodist Church (Portland)," and George Katagiri, "Japanese Americans in Oregon," The Oregon Encyclopedia, accessed July 26, 2016, [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/epworth\\_united\\_methodist?church\\_portland/](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/epworth_united_methodist?church_portland/) and [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/japanese\\_americans\\_in\\_oregon\\_immigrants\\_from\\_the\\_west/](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/japanese_americans_in_oregon_immigrants_from_the_west/); Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōsyū daiyonkan*, 174-175. Some sources note Kawabe's first name as "Sadakichi," but it is correctly "Teikichi."

<sup>102</sup> Mituso Yesaki, *Sutebusuton: A Japanese Village on the British Columbia Coast* (Vancouver: Peninsula Publishing, 2003), 30-31.

first two days of his trip on board to Portland, he had already started trying to evangelize Americans. Despite some difficulties, Kawabe's actual work went beyond his chief aim of evangelizing the Japanese. When he faced more than ten white Americans, Kawabe noticed himself "hesitating to approach white Americans to talk about God," which he observed was a sign of his spiritual weakness.

Kawabe hesitated because he knew that Americans perceived the Japanese negatively. Like other Japanese, he faced a great deal of racial discrimination throughout his trip. In Pocatello, Idaho, for example, an innkeeper refused to let him spend the night, and a barber likewise refused to cut his hair. Other Americans looked coolly at him and abused him with foul language.

The discrimination was not limited to non-Christian Americans. As George Frederick Pentecost, a prominent American Presbyterian evangelist said in 1905, Americans believed they, designated by God, were the only great successful Christian missionaries who could bring American civilization and the Gospel to Asia.<sup>103</sup> Not only Presbyterians, but also some American Methodists believed that Christianity is the only religion to save Japanese immigrants, and that American Protestant civilization represented the pinnacle of religious culture.<sup>104</sup> American Free Methodists, too, identified themselves as superior Christians who had to follow the "Manifest Destiny" given by God to bring civilization and Christian Gospel to all.<sup>105</sup> Consequently, he had to make a confession of making excuses not to speak to Americans. White American's sense of racial and cultural superiority, attached to the general assumption of "Western"

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<sup>103</sup> George Frederick Pentecost "America in the Philippines," *Pacific*, May 11, 1905, in Yoshida, *Amerika nihonjin imin to kirisutokyō shakai*, 30-31.

<sup>104</sup> Yoshida, *Amerika nihonjin imin to kirisutokyō shakai*, 95.

<sup>105</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1960), 90.



Christianity, inflicted extra burden on Kawabe in preaching the Gospel to white Americans even if he changed the way how he identified himself.

But Kawabe never gave up his vocation as a transnational evangelist challenging the widespread general assumption that only Western missionaries could transmit Christianity, and that the object of evangelism was mostly non-Westerners. Every time he was insulted, he had to repeat a line from the classic hymn “I am [the] child [of] a king.”<sup>106</sup> Another time, to stir up his mind, Kawabe reminded himself:

God gave me a challenge of speaking to white Americans. That is a great challenge because they look down on the Japanese and refuse to even talk to us. Because they were born in the so-called ‘Christian’ nation, they, even though they only know Christianity without believing it, have an arrogant attitude toward the Japanese whom they believed were savages.<sup>107</sup>

In other words, Kawabe was warning that the assumption of Western missionaries was wrong. He acknowledged that God showed that “retreating himself behind Christ allowed him to preach the Gospel to anyone even to white people, just like Jesus’s disciples felt that they could not help speaking about what they had learned after the Pentecost.”<sup>108</sup> He, too, felt that he could even work among Americans by identifying himself more as a “citizen in Heaven” rather than a Japanese. Realizing that the most serious division among people was between the “saved” in Christ and the “unsaved,” and that Christianity could transcend national differences, Kawabe insisted that the Japanese could be missionaries to Americans and people of any nation.

In fact, among about 600 people Kawabe directly spoke to in the first month of his trip, 153 were white Americans, and eight were Chinese.<sup>109</sup> Kawabe preached to

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<sup>106</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 65-66.

<sup>107</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 96-97. Translated by the author.

<sup>108</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 27.

<sup>109</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 81-82; Suzuki “Persecution, Alienation, and Resurrection: History of Japanese Methodist Churches,” 60.

everyone regardless of their race, nationality, and religious faith. Whenever he had a chance, he gave his testimony to non-Christian Americans and the Chinese workers, including atheists. Kawabe realized that one's national (and ethnic) identities and religious identities did not always match, and that that was exactly why he could and should work as an evangelist for all.

In fact, on his trip, Kawabe could reach many Americans in the train, at the train station, hotel, and restaurant taking every opportunity. In Seattle, for example, he spoke to two atheists. One day, having an animated discussion about religious beliefs, he could not help uttering strong language when he heard their blasphemous remarks against God. This time he failed to persuade the atheists in Seattle, but he kept trying.<sup>110</sup> Another time in Minidoka, Idaho, Kawabe again talked to a white American who was reading the atheist magazine "The Truth Seeker." After giving him a testimony and having a discussion, Kawabe saw the man interested in his talk and asked the San Francisco church to send him some Christian booklets praying for his salvation.<sup>111</sup> In Incom, Idaho, he found a poor-looking white American man standing vacantly at the station. Addressing him, Kawabe testified about God, and gave him some material help.<sup>112</sup> Kawabe realized that not only Japanese immigrants but also many white Americans needed spiritual guidance as well, and that he could be the one to guide them to Christ.

During his trip, Kawabe's target was not limited to Americans without faith. He also talked to Americans who had religious faith. He claimed his Christian faith was equal to those Americans and did not hesitate to criticize their faith if he found any defect. Whenever he had a chance, Kawabe challenged Catholics and Mormons. On his way to

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<sup>110</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 98-99.

<sup>111</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 51-52.

<sup>112</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 56.

Nanaimo, British Columbia, for example, Kawabe met a young Catholic boy who had cheated on paying his boat fare. While the boy claimed that he could compensate for his crime later, Kawabe persuaded him to apologize to the ship's crew and pay the fair immediately. He was shocked and grew even more skeptical of Catholicism.<sup>113</sup> In Pocatello, Idaho, Kawabe met an enthusiastic Mormon. He later claimed that in conversation he had driven "his Spiritual sword through into the man's heart."<sup>114</sup>

Kawabe not only challenged some Catholics and Mormons but also some Congregationalists and even Methodists, whose faith was similar to his. Listening to a pastor's sermon at one white Congregationalist Church in Vancouver, for example, Kawabe questioned the pastor's sermon because, he thought, it was not the Gospel but only moral philosophy. Troubled in his heart, he wrote a letter of advice and prayed for the white American pastor.<sup>115</sup> He also criticized some churches of his own denomination. When he joined a revival meeting held by a white Methodist church in Jefferson, Oregon, he noted that he felt no revival spirit among the congregation. Kawabe left the meeting praying for what he considered a real revival.<sup>116</sup>

While criticizing some American Christians, Kawabe also had transnational religious connections with other Americans whenever he could. At a white Methodist church in Portland, for instance, he promoted good fellowship with American brethren giving them his own testimony and explaining what God had done for Japanese churches in San Francisco. Kawabe felt certain that this opportunity was a manifestation of God's glory.<sup>117</sup> In Glenns Ferry, Idaho, he praised God together with a white Baptist, who

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<sup>113</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 143.

<sup>114</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 65.

<sup>115</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 138-139.

<sup>116</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 169.

<sup>117</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 41.

believed in the Holy Spirit and his salvation with joy and thankfulness.<sup>118</sup> In Vancouver, Canada, participating in a Sunday service at a white Methodist church, Kawabe, with the Canadian pastor and the congregation, prayed for foreign missionaries together in tears and expressed their thankfulness to God.<sup>119</sup>

In these meetings with American Christians whose faith he shared, Kawabe transcended nation-state boundaries and revealed Christianity's possibility of becoming a unifying force rather than a separating force among peoples with different nationalities. In his "reverse" mission, Kawabe demonstrated that, despite difficulties, Christianity was not exclusively an "American" religion, and that Japanese Christians like him could lead even Americans to Christ. Kawabe demonstrated Christianity's transnational possibilities, working as a bridge between Americans and the Japanese in America's racially divided society. In so doing, he extended the boundaries of Christian faith.

#### IV. Going back to Japan as an Evangelist at Large

In the meantime, Kawabe saw the change in his Christian faith. His conviction in the Second Coming of Christ and his experience of Divine healing of his own disease led Kawabe to think that baptism meant immersion, not sprinkling, like Christ's baptism described in the Bible.<sup>120</sup> While the Methodist Church accepted sprinkling and pouring as well as immersion as baptism, he denied the former two as valid forms of baptism. This discrepancy caused Kawabe an emotional inner struggle because it was difficult for

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<sup>118</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 45.

<sup>119</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 127.

<sup>120</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 176-179.

him to stay in the denomination without making a concession to accommodate the church's position as a steward (deacon) and an elder-to-be in the Methodist Church. Not only did Kawabe not want to give up his membership and leave behind everything he had gained at the church, he also did not want to disappoint his mentor Harris.<sup>121</sup> As he prayed and fasted, however, Kawabe decided to receive baptism again by immersion following what he believed. Expressing his decision to Harris, Kawabe prepared himself to leave the church.

Feeling called to become an evangelist at large, a position the Methodist church did not recognize, Kawabe declared at the denomination's annual meeting his withdrawal from the Methodist church and his desire to work as an evangelist. Unexpectedly, the church decided to continue its support of his evangelical work in Portland accepting both his withdrawal and his belief in immersion. Receiving baptism by immersion on the seashore in Alameda, California from a pastor named Ludlow, he continued his work in Portland but freed himself from any human-made denominational constraints. He preached, evangelized, sanctified, and healed many people in Portland, and helped the church grow rapidly. Kawabe eagerly extended the boundaries of Christian faith, but it did not mean he accepted any belief. He in fact had little patience for Seventh Day Adventists and their interpretation of the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>122</sup>

Rather than waiting for instruction from the American Methodists including his American mentor Harris, Kawabe always explored the boundary of his Christian faith rejecting the general assumption that Christian faith was defined only by Westerners. Demonstrating his autonomy in defining Christian faith, Kawabe formed an independent

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<sup>121</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 179.

<sup>122</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 179-182.

and equal partnership with his American counterparts. He worked independently from Americans, but he always worked together with them maintaining his transnational religious connections. In so doing, he revealed a transnational aspect of Christianity. Continuing his practice, Kawabe established a similar partnership with British evangelists upon his returning to Japan.

In January 1894, Kawabe, recorded that God told him to “go back to Japan.” The command surprised him because he was praying that somebody else, not himself, would evangelize Japan, and because he had no means to travel back. All he had in his pocket was a five-cent coin for a street railway ride. But firmly believing all he needed for God’s work would be given, he started preparing for his journey to his native land packing all kinds of Christian books and tracts. Soon, one American Christian man in Seattle, named Charles Black who had never even met Kawabe, heard about him and offered to pay the entire amount of his mission expenses including his passage to Japan. He accepted the offer believing that the offer was God’s answer to his prayer. When two other American Christians made similar offers, Kawabe felt encouraged to follow God and to work for Him who abundantly provides all the necessary material supplies as well as spiritual ones.<sup>123</sup>

On his way to the San Francisco port in early February 1894, Kawabe attended a Christian Alliance meeting held in Oakland where he and his friend Sasao Tetsusaburo, who was working in Seattle, were ordained as an evangelist at large. They left San Francisco on February 21, 1894 via Hawaii and to Yokohama to serve a larger ecumenical Christian community in Japan rather than working for one denomination. Arriving in

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<sup>123</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 183-184.

Yokohama in mid-March, Kawabe was shaken by witnessing fellow Japanese people worshipping idols, which further strengthened his resolve to evangelize the Japanese.<sup>124</sup>

Kawabe started his work in Japan by evangelizing his family in April 1894, converting his father, a fervent Buddhist, to Christianity. His mother, and brothers also grew increasingly interested in Christianity. Then, he, with other Japanese evangelists who had experienced the San Francisco revival including Sasao, started his evangelistic work at a rented house in Tokyo. They studied the Bible together, preached at churches as invited preachers, launched their own work visiting houses and distributing religious tracts, and made mission trips all over Japan. Their ministry was later called “the small flock,” which was recognized as the first Holiness work in Japan. Kawabe and these Japanese Christians were forerunners of the Holiness Movement in Japan.<sup>125</sup>

It was during this time that Kawabe made significant interactions with Barclay Fowell Buxton, an English evangelist. While he had been ordained a deacon and a priest in the Church of England, Buxton came to Japan as an independent missionary appointed by the Church Missionary Society in 1890. Like Kawabe, he, too, experienced entire sanctification. Starting his non-denominational ministry in Matsue in 1891, Buxton attracted many young Japanese evangelists and preached the doctrine of sanctification and the pure Gospel to them for a decade. These Japanese evangelists were called “the Matsue Band,” some of them later became the leaders of the Pure Gospel Movement.

In April 1895, Buxton invited Kawabe to speak at a special meeting in Matsue. There Kawabe met many Japanese Christian leaders who were trained by Buxton and

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<sup>124</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 184-186.

<sup>125</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 187-191. See also, Hiroo Kudō, “Nihon ni okeru seikaundō no rekishi,” *Seika*, April 25, 2016, 2-3. 工藤弘雄「日本における聖化運動の歴史」『聖化』59, 2016. 4. 25; Yoshimasa Ikegami, “Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements in Modern Japan,” in *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, ed. Mark R. Mullins (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 128-129.

were working with him as evangelists. While they all believed the Second Coming of Christ and salvation, some disagreed with Kawabe's preaching about sanctification and salvation. Taking neither side in the dispute, Buxton looked happy to see the Japanese Christians helping build a religious revival in Japan by themselves. In fact, some of the Japanese members including Kawabe became the leaders of the worldwide religious revival in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>126</sup>

Kawabe's transnational and trans-denominational religious connections with Buxton continued. In 1898, Buxton met Kawabe, Sasao and other Japanese evangelists at a meeting in Osaka, later called the *Kansai saikai*, the oldest ecumenical solemn assembly in Japan still active today.<sup>127</sup> Kawabe and Buxton helped each other as partners in advancing the Holiness Movement. Like his relationship with Harris, his relationship with Buxton revealed how Christians could transcend nation-state boundaries and be united. Though the scale is much smaller, their work demonstrated the possibilities of a worldwide ecumenical movement started at the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh.<sup>128</sup> Exploring the boundary of his Christian faith, Kawabe demonstrated Japanese autonomy in defining Christian faith. His independent and equal partnership with his American and British counterparts revealed a transnational aspect of his faith.

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<sup>126</sup> David D. Bundy and Masaya Fujii, "Barclay Fowell Buxton, Japanese Christians, and the Japan Evangelistic Band," *Journal of World Christianity* 8, no.1 (2018): 59-60; Ikegami, "Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements in Modern Japan," 128-129; Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 196-197.

<sup>127</sup> "Dai 108 kai 'kansai seikai' kaisai Osaka kishinosato kyōkai," *Christian Today*, August 8, 2006, accessed June 23, 2018, <http://www.christiantoday.co.jp/articles/72321/20060808/news.htm>. 「第108回「関西聖会」開催大阪岸之里キリスト教会」『クリスチャントゥデイ』2008. 8. 8.

<sup>128</sup> Dale T. Irvin, "World Christianity: A Genealogy" (paper presented at the first Currents, Perspectives, and Methodologies in World Christianity, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, January 18-20, 2018), 15.



## V. Free Methodist Mission in Japan

During his evangelical trip around Osaka and Mie after a prayer meeting in Kyoto, the Methodist missionary Willard E. Towson asked him to go to the small island of Awaji-shima near Osaka. Towson was affiliated with Tobu, eastern, Methodist Church in Osaka, which had provided Kawabe with both financial and spiritual support. At the second meeting in Kyoto in October 1895, the members decided to send Kawabe and another man, Sunaga Tokutaro, and his wife to the island. They also urged Kawabe to get married before leaving Osaka. Marrying a Christian woman named Nakayama Ryuko, a younger sister of one of Kawabe's Christian friends, in early January 1896, Kawabe left for Awaji-shima with his wife and the Sunagas.<sup>129</sup>

Two days after the wedding, Kawabe and his wife were already working as Christian evangelists on the island, where he knew no one. Kawabe and Sunaga traveled around Shizuki, a port town, on the island visiting house by house with religious tracts on the weekdays and had worship services and Sunday schools on weekends. While they were the only ones who attended their first Sunday service on January 18, 1896, they gradually gained a wide audience in six months. At the end of the first year, more than twenty people gathered at their church becoming faith seekers. It was during this time that Kakihara came to the island as the first Free Methodist missionary to Japan.<sup>130</sup>

One day in early 1896, Kakihara, Kawabe's former disciple in San Francisco, visited Kawabe in Shizuki to ask for his advice and support for his Free Methodist mission work. Knowing Kakihara's inexperience and weakness, Kawabe agreed to support him

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<sup>129</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 198-208.

<sup>130</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 209-211.

while declining to join the Free Methodist ministry. But without consultation, Kakiyama rushed into recommending Kawabe and his wife as missionaries to the Free Methodist Mission Board, which greatly surprised Kawabe. While he was reluctant to work under any denomination again, Kawabe felt sorry for leaving Kakiyama alone. Submitting the matter to God in his prayer, Kawabe decided to accept the position. Before sending the signed contract to the Free Methodist board, however, he added the condition that he would continue working as an evangelist at large and maintain his practice of immersion.<sup>131</sup> The board then decided to formally employ the Kawabes and reserved the funds for their salaries after it had received a favorable report about Kawabe from Merriman C. Harris, who had baptized him in San Francisco back in 1887.<sup>132</sup> Even after his acceptance to the Free Methodist Church, Kawabe worked freely and kept his ties with a non-Free-Methodist missionaries like Towson of the Southern Methodist Church, who was also free from denominationalism. Towson, who had been actively engaging missionary work in Osaka, willingly accepted Kawabe's joining to the Free Methodist Church, and they continued working together.<sup>133</sup>

While Kawabe's Awaji mission did not start growing right away, he eventually succeeded in capturing many souls living on the island.<sup>134</sup> Moving the town of Shizuki to Fukura upon Kakiyama's request in June 1897, Kawabe was deeply disappointed at the poor result of his hard work. Feeling lonely after Kakiyama and his family left for Osaka

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<sup>131</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 211-212; Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 33. Williamson notes Kakiyama's first name as "Seiji," but it is correctly "Masaji."

<sup>132</sup> Free Methodist Church of North America, General Missionary Board, *Proceedings of the General Missionary Board Third Annual Session for the Quadrennium of 1894-1898* (Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1898), 210; Free Methodist Church of North America, General Missionary Board, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1896*, 216-217.

<sup>133</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 214-215.

<sup>134</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1897*, 226.

in September, Kawabe with his wife kept praying for the people in Fukura. Realizing that evangelical meetings were no use for reaching people in the town, he performed wayside speeches with an accordion to get an audience.<sup>135</sup> It was only after the circulation of a story of the miraculous healing of Kawabe's only son in mid-1898 that people started coming to his evangelical meetings. When Kawabe's son had caught a serious infectious disease but was healed by Kawabe's prayer without medical treatment, a non-Christian woman who was taking care of the son testified to the power of prayer and God's mercifulness.<sup>136</sup> After Kakiyama withdrew from the Japan Free Methodist mission and left, Kawabe took over Kakiyama's leadership working together with American missionaries.

Inheriting the entire Southern Methodist Church's evangelical work on the island of Awaji by transferring in his negotiation with Towson in December 1897, Kawabe, like Kakiyama, started to pray for extending his mission work to other parts of the island and even to Osaka, a metropolitan city in the mainland in near future.<sup>137</sup> Preparing for the future expansion of the work, he requested the American mission board to send American missionaries. At the board meeting held in October 1902, it decided to send two American couples, Wesley F. Matthewson and his wife Minnie Matthewson, and August Youngren and his wife Anna Millican Youngren. They left for Japan the following year. While Matthewson and Youngren were both appointed as superintendent of the mission successively, they mainly supervised the mission accounts and took care of other office work such as sending written reports. Matthewson, for example, devoted himself to affairs

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<sup>135</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 215-220.

<sup>136</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 275-276; Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 34. Williamson notes the woman was "a non-Christian young nurse," but Kawabe mentions her as "an old lady who was taking care of him."

<sup>137</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daiyonkan*, 221-222.

connected with securing property and housing for church buildings. With native workers, the Youngrens opened the work at Sumoto, another town in the island of Awaji, and the Matthewsons worked in Osaka and help the work of Kawabe. Benjamin Winget, the Missionary Secretary, recorded, “Both Japanese and missionaries from the home land [are] having the unity of the Spirit among them all.”<sup>138</sup> The board was also willing to “provide more liberally, means and workers, for the enlargement and establishment” of Free Methodist mission work in Japan. A number of American individual believers in the U.S. donated money for supporting the denomination’s Japan mission because they believed that they could have “good hope of enlargement and more abundant fruit.”<sup>139</sup> In fact, only one year after the American missionaries arrived, the board highly evaluated the work saying that there had been “more manifest fruit here than in any other part of our foreign work.”<sup>140</sup>

With American missionaries’ help, Kawabe started evangelizing in Osaka when an all-Japan exposition was held in the Tennoji area of the city for four days in March 1903. Attracting an enormous crowd of people from all over the country, the exposition provided a great chance for Christians like Kawabe to minister to a great number of people. In front of the main gate, he and other Japanese Free Methodists together with other Japanese Christians in other denominations and held a big evangelical meeting. Assuming the responsibility for giving sermons for two days, Kawabe had great success speaking to 2500 people and even in one day leading more than sixty people to make a resolution to

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<sup>138</sup> Benjamin Winget, *Historical Sketch of Member of the Free Methodist Church of North America: Who Have Gone out to the Foreign Field as Missionaries* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1903), 14; Benjamin Winget, *Missions and Missionaries of the Free Methodist Church* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1911), 76-80; Carrie T. Burritt, *The Story of Fifty Years* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1935), 88-90.

<sup>139</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1903*, 282-283.

<sup>140</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1904*, 292-293.

believe Christ. In total, 10,000 people listened to the Christian message, and several hundreds of them were converted. To follow up some of these converts, Kawabe rent a small house in Minami Ward for a counseling center. Several months later, he had the first Sunday service in Osaka and baptized five men and women. It was a small group, but he was convinced that it was going to grow into a bigger church just like Paul's first group. In fact, the group grew into the Nipponbashi Church, the first Free Methodist church in Osaka, and by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, it boasted "the largest Christian congregation in the city" of Osaka and was "the largest Free Methodist church in the world."<sup>141</sup> In the year 1909 to 1910, the church, including five out-stations, counted 311 members, the greatest number compared to other Free Methodist mission stations abroad, such as 170 in Africa, 61 in India, and zero in China.<sup>142</sup>

Kawabe's leadership in the development of the Free Methodist Church was unquestionable, but the support of the American mission board and of American missionaries should not be underestimated. The American mission board provided a great amount of appropriations including the money needed for opening churches in Osaka, while Japanese Christians themselves raised some money.<sup>143</sup> For 1908 to 1909 alone, the General Missionary Board sent \$7,287 for the Japan mission including \$ 2,812 for salaries and living expenses of nine American missionaries, \$887 to cover the rents of ten stations in Awaji, Osaka and Akashi, \$1985 for nineteen Japanese workers, and \$1500 for building a chapel at Nipponbashi.<sup>144</sup> Besides the financial support, American missionaries gave

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<sup>141</sup> Teikichi Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daigokan: onchō no nanajūnen* (Osaka: Kawabezenshūkankōkai, 1934), 67-73. 河邊貞吉、『河邊貞吉説教集 第五卷：恩寵の七十年』（大阪：河邊全集刊行會、1934）。See also, Williamson, *Brother Kawabe*, 53-55.

<sup>142</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1910*, 381.

<sup>143</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū daigokan*, 104-105.

<sup>144</sup> Free Methodist Church of North America, General Missionary Board, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1908*, 355.

the Japanese workers a lot of support in the actual mission work. The report in 1908 noted, for example, that American missionaries effectively worked for evangelizing Japanese children through Sunday school work.<sup>145</sup> The growth of the Japan Free Methodist Church in the early twentieth century was a result of transnational cooperation between Japanese Christians and their American counterparts.

Since the arrival of the first American Free Methodist missionaries to Japan in 1903, American missionaries annually reported how well local workers and American missionaries maintained transnational religious connections despite some conflicts and differing opinions between them. The report in 1905, for example, praises:

our [Free Methodist's] native workers and [American] missionaries in Japan have blessed union and fellowship with each other. More fruit, according to the number of workers and the means expanded, has [had] been seen in Japan than on any other part of our [Free Methodist's] foreign missionary work.<sup>146</sup>

While the Japanese workers like Kawabe occasionally expressed their desire to be more independent from the American mission board, they showed their “willingness...to go forward in fellowship and harmony” with American missionaries “without having the reins in their [Japanese] own hands.”<sup>147</sup> Overall, “[t]he spirit of love and harmony among the missionaries and native workers” prevailed in this transnational project of evangelizing the Japanese.<sup>148</sup> Evaluated as a “devoted and highly appreciated native worker,” Kawabe was a big part of the successful relationship between the two parties.<sup>149</sup> From the outset, American Christians had always thought highly of Kawabe. Visiting Japan in 1912, Winget again emphasized how Kawabe greatly contributed to the

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<sup>145</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1908*, 329.

<sup>146</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1905*, 299.

<sup>147</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1907*, 318.

<sup>148</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1909*, 340.

<sup>149</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1907*, 318.

remarkable success of the Japan Free Methodist mission. He acknowledged:

The labors of our missionaries and the Japanese preachers and workers have been attended with far greater manifest results in this field that [sic] on any other of our work in foreign lands.... From the beginning until the present time [1912] our work had been characterized by an intensely evangelistic spirit. In the beginning, before we had any missionaries there from the home land, a few native workers, who were aided financially by our Board, planned to give the gospel message to each village on the island of Awaji, and to give each of the 200,000 people of that island some knowledge of the Lord. Probably the success of the work is due more largely to the evangelistic spirit of our leading Japanese preacher, Brother Kawabe, than to any other individual. His spirit has been contagious among the Japanese, and other pastors and workers who have been raised up are manifesting a like spirit of evangelism.”<sup>150</sup>

In making this comment, Winget maintained that transnational cooperation was the key to the effective foreign missionary work, and that, as Kawabe demonstrated, the Japanese could successfully take the lead in developing Christian churches among themselves.

## VI. Second West Coast Mission Trip as a Free Methodist

On December 26, 1920, Kawabe received an invitation from the Free Methodist Mission Board asking him to visit the U.S. to help evangelize Japanese immigrants in California and to participate in the denomination’s annual meeting and some camp meetings. Recalling the San Francisco revival thirty years ago and worrying about these Japanese amid growing anti-Japanese sentiment, Kawabe believed that this invitation was God’s calling, and he started praying for his trip. A month later, he thought, God answered his prayer and prepared him for his second evangelical trip to the Pacific West Coast.<sup>151</sup> He then left Yokohama for the U.S. on March 11, 1921. His wife, Ryuko, accompanied

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<sup>150</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1913*, 365-366.

<sup>151</sup> Teikichi Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokkan: onchō no nanajūnen* (Osaka: Kawabezenshūkankōkai, 1935), 156. 河邊貞吉、『河邊貞吉説教集 第六卷：恩寵の七十年』（大阪：河邊全集刊行會、1935）。

him aboard and worked with him this time.<sup>152</sup> Because of bad seasickness, he could not actively evangelize on board, but even so he distributed tracts and preached the Gospel whenever he could. As a result, he led several people to Christ during his three-week crossing. In this second trip, he was more confident in preaching the Gospel to white Americans in English. While anti-Japanese sentiment was intensifying in the U.S., Kawabe enjoyed religious companionship with his American counterparts.

Kawabe's experiences as a transnational evangelist again rejected the general assumption of "Western" Christianity and "Western" missionaries and redefined Christianity as a more pluralistic religion. Invited to both Japanese and American Free Methodist churches as well as churches of other denominations on the West Coast, in the mid-West, and even on the East Coast, he extended his influence much more than before. Feeling at home and genuinely welcomed, he was sure that he could successfully work as an evangelist among Americans. He again transcended nation-state boundaries and revealed Christianity's possibility of becoming a unifying force rather than a separating force among peoples with different nationalities. In this second "reverse mission," Kawabe confirmed, despite the increasing difficulties, that Christianity was not exclusively an "American" religion, and that Japanese Christians like him could lead others, including Americans, to Christ.

Upon his arrival in San Francisco on March 30, 1921, Kawabe immediately moved to Los Angeles by train to participate in the foreign mission meeting held next day. In the train, he enjoyed a conversation with a black American waiter who happened to be a Methodist. At the train station, he found William B. Olmstead, the new Missionary

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<sup>152</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokan*, 187-189.



Secretary who succeeded Winget, and other American Free Methodist leaders welcoming him. The meeting, organized by the Southern California Home Mission to promote Free Methodist foreign mission, attracted many people from all over the U.S. Much to his surprise, Kawabe found his name on the program as the first speaker of all. While preaching in English to the American audience was still a great challenge for him, he looked up to God, just as he learned thirty years ago, and gave a sermon titled “The Origin and Development of Free Methodism in Japan” as he was asked. During his speech, he wondered if the audience could fully understand his English, but, when he finished speaking, the hall resounded with thunderous cheers, and everyone was shouting “Halleluiah,” and “Amen.” Hundreds of people came to him to shake hands with a satisfied look. He thought that the Holy Spirit, working upon him and the audience, made him achieve this great victory. Throughout the meetings, Kawabe believed, many American, Mexican, and Japanese participants touched the Holy Spirit and received great blessings. Among them were thirty-three young men and women who decided to dedicate themselves to mission work.<sup>153</sup>

At another meeting, Kawabe talked about the importance of establishing a Bible school in Japan. When he saw the American audience shouting, jumping, shaking hands, hugging each other, and even dancing with joy and thankfulness, he thought he was experiencing the real Pentecost. Kawabe was impressed with American generosity on behalf of his cause. At the end of the meeting, they gave more than \$4,300 mostly in cash, which became the largest amount of money collected in a meeting in Free Methodist history.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokkān*, 159-160.

<sup>154</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokkān*, 189-192.

In the meantime, Kawabe visited his respected teacher, William E. Blackstone, who taught him the belief of the second coming of Christ through his 1908 book *Jesus Is Coming*. Since then, Blackstone had continually inspired him to work as an evangelist. Kawabe had looked up to him as his mentor. Knowing how Blackstone assumed the responsibility of spreading the Gospel to everyone in the world and loved every individual as valuable, he even believed that Blackstone was one of the reasons why God had not yet destroyed the U.S. As soon as he arrived, Blackstone asked Kawabe to join him and visit a Japanese couple because Blackstone needed a Japanese evangelist to reach the Japanese greengrocers who could not understand English. Moved by Blackstone's everlasting passion for spiritually saving as many people as possible regardless of race, Kawabe happily agreed to help his mentor visit the couple and preach to them the Gospel in Japanese.<sup>155</sup> Even after he became a Free Methodist, Kawabe's transnational and trans-denominational religious connection continued.

One time in Hermon, Los Angeles, Kawabe felt unnerved when he was about to speak to two thousand mostly white American Free Methodists. There, under a large tent, he felt painfully self-conscious about his poor physique. Facing the large American audience, he felt he was exposed to public ridicule. But instead of retreating, Kawabe, as he learned in his first trip, prayed that the audience could not see his unattractive appearance but through him could only see Jesus Christ. Seeing himself as God's messenger, he boldly started talking about numerous examples of God's miraculous works in saving many Japanese souls. Soon, he found many Americans were moved to tears and to sing joyfully. Finishing his talk, he saw many people came to him to shake

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<sup>155</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokan*, 161, 199-201.

hands. Feeling that it was God that let him speak freely and fearlessly in English, Kawabe used this incident to take more confidence in his belief that even Japanese Christians like himself could work as effective evangelists even among white Americans.<sup>156</sup>

Another time, in June in San Gabriel, a suburb of the city of Los Angeles, where the Southern California Free Methodist Woman's Missionary Society established a church in the middle of the vast living area of more than 800 Japanese farmers, Kawabe was asked to help their ministry. There, an American female Free Methodist named Almayer and her family dedicated themselves to evangelize the Japanese. Walking under a blazing sun, he visited these Japanese who were scattered all over the area and invited them to church meetings. Reflecting on the difficult conditions in which these Japanese brethren had moved from rural areas of Japan to another rural areas in the U.S., barely making living in either place, he realized that the difficulty of reaching out to them was more than a problem of language. Kawabe wondered if their lifestyle might be one of the reasons why Americans had turned against the Japanese immigrant.

Believing that only Christian Gospel could change Japanese immigrants into respectable members of society, Kawabe spoke to them about Christ. He also spoke at some tent meetings and house meetings for about two weeks. As time passed, one day, twenty-six people expressed their decisions to believe in God. With American co-workers, he was gradually winning many faith seekers. In addition to the Almayers, sixty-seven American Christians who had listened to Kawabe in Los Angeles moved to this area to join him in his evangelical work. He was impressed by these American believers who willingly spent their time evangelizing the Japanese. Almayer's seventy-five-year-old

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<sup>156</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokan*, 168, 204-205.

father and her fifteen-year-old son, for example, regularly visited the Japanese, became a friend with their children, and even gave them a ride to Sunday school every week. Feeling thankful to these American Christians working for the Japanese, Kawabe was convinced again that Christian Gospel made people transcend national and racial differences.<sup>157</sup>

In early August, Kawabe visited the Japanese Methodist church in Portland, Oregon, where he used to minister thirty years ago. He felt a great sorrow to see only thirty-four people attended the meeting. Back then, this was the place he had gained more than one-hundred believers only in a year. Seeing the church declining, he preached the congregation about the importance of receiving Pentecostal fire and prayed for their sanctification, hoping to revive the spirituality among them.<sup>158</sup>

Kawabe moved to the mid-West and other parts of the country. One of the meetings he attended in the area was the Wabash Conference in Indiana celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. At one of the meetings he was asked to speak, he urged the American audience to fulfill the needs of establishing the Osaka Bible Training School. According to one of the participants, Elizabeth Wigg Lund, “The hearts of the people were stirred to added diligence to spend and to be spent for God.” The American audience was moved and generously made offerings believing that their money was spent for God’s precious work. About \$200 was raised for the Bible School in Japan.<sup>159</sup> He continued his evangelical trip for several more months visiting, Peoria, Washington D.C., New York City, Buffalo, and Canada. In the late October, Kawabe participated in the general

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<sup>157</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokan*, 209-212.

<sup>158</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokan*, 170-171.

<sup>159</sup> Elizabeth Wigg Lund, “Our Twenty-fifth Anniversary,” *Missionary Tidings* 25, December 1921, 15. See also, Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokan*, 175.

missionary board meeting in Chicago and spoke again to an American audience. Kawabe was encouraged to see the ardent faith and love of American Christians who again generously contributed so much money for the Japan mission even during a period of economic downturn.<sup>160</sup>

Throughout his eleven-month trip, Kawabe preached the Gospel and gave testimonies to tens and thousands of white Americans, Mexicans, and the Japanese. Many were converted, sanctified, healed, and dedicated themselves to a Christian life. Many Americans made monetary contributions. In total, Kawabe collected more than 40,000 yen to establish the Osaka Bible Training School.<sup>161</sup> Concerning the visit of Kawabe and his wife, William B. Olmstead, the Secretary of the Missionary Board, wrote admiringly in his annual report:

In harmony with the action of the board, they were invited to come to America and spend at least nine months. They landed in San Francisco the last day of March, and since that time they have been constantly at work, either among their own people on the coast or throughout the church. Their labors have been greatly blessed of God. Their presence among us has been an encouragement to the home work, and we believe their visit here will be the means of strengthening our work in Japan.<sup>162</sup>

Olmsted emphasized the importance of transnational connections and appreciated Kawabe's work in evangelizing the Japanese both in the U.S. and in Japan, but his evangelical mission work in fact extended to Americans. When he talked to Americans about God's work in Japan, he was in fact testifying that "their" God was also God for the Japanese. When he worked together with American believers for Japanese immigrants, Kawabe was demonstrating Christianity's possibilities of bridging the racial divide between Americans and the Japanese. In so doing, he extended the boundaries of

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<sup>160</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokkān*, 219.

<sup>161</sup> Kawabe, *Kawabe Teikichi sekkyōshū dairokkān*, 185.

<sup>162</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Free Methodist Church 1921*, 322.

Christian faith as a transnational evangelist for all.

## VII. Conclusion

“We want to express our appreciation for the deep sympathy you manifested for the work of soul-saving in Japan. We also thank you for the warm kindness shown to us wherever we have been in America,” Kawabe and his wife wrote to their “Free Methodist brothers and sisters” before leaving for Japan in 1922.<sup>163</sup> Their close rapport continued when Kawabe, at the age of seventy-four, made his third mission trip to the U.S., including Hawaii and British Canada, from June 1936 to May 1937 even though the relationship between the two countries had worsened considerably since the early 1920s. Yet he continued to explore the transnational possibilities of evangelical fellowship, despite whatever diplomatic problems arose between the U.S. and Japan.

As a young ambitious man, Kawabe found in Christianity the peace of mind he had long been looking for. While he had at first thought it was a “foreign” religion, he realized his understanding was wrong. Devoting himself to finding out the true meaning of his faith, he unexpectedly quit his dream of becoming a billionaire and dedicated himself to Christ. Beginning as a Methodist minister, he decided not to confine himself within any single denomination. He left the Methodist Church and came back to Japan as an evangelist at large. Later he joined the Free Methodist Church, but his evangelical work remained trans-denominational because he always sought ways to better serve God.

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<sup>163</sup> Teikichi and Ryūko Kawabe, “Leave-taking Address,” *Missionary Tidings* 26, February 1922, 21.

Rather than binding himself to any particular denominational teachings, he continued working with Protestant Christians of any denomination.

Like Kakihara, Kawabe's evangelical work among the Japanese both in the U.S. and in Japan reinforced his sense that Christianity could be a "Japanese" religion. He first worked at the San Francisco church, but later launched evangelical trips to other places among the Japanese diaspora in the U.S. and in British Columbia. He evangelized these Japanese immigrants using Christianity as an "equalizer" not as an "assimilator." As a Christian, he believed that the Japanese were equal to white Americans, an assessment with which his American counterparts agreed. Like other Japanese Christians, he opposed racism because he believed it violated Christ's teachings. But he never equated Christian conversion with becoming American. Kawabe believed instead that the Christian gospel could make anyone a respectable human being.

Kawabe's career was remarkable for his willingness to evangelize Americans outside the Japanese immigrant community. This made his American evangelical trips "reverse" missions that countered the general assumption that Christianity was an American religion, and that the converting meant becoming "American" or "Western." He at first felt uncomfortable facing an American audience, but Kawabe found that he could preach to Americans when he identified himself as a Christian rather than as a Japanese. Overcoming his sense of racial and cultural inferiority, he spoke boldly to Americans as an equal. Realizing that it was not just non-Americans who needed salvation and missionary crusades, Kawabe went even further, proving that the Japanese could be missionaries in the U.S. or any other part of the globe.

This also meant that Kawabe never downsized Christianity to any single nation or race. Even in his evangelical work in Japan, Kawabe always worked with a global

Christian community, forming partnerships with other evangelists like Harris and Buxton, and with emerging movements in global Christianity like the Holiness movement. Rejecting “Japanese” Christianity as a separate form of “Western” Christianity, he explored the transnational reach of Christianity. When the relationship between the U.S. and Japan deteriorated or came under strains caused by racial prejudice, Kawabe and Western believers tried to maintain brotherly ties and to create a more equal relationship within a shared transnational space. Kawabe’s Western partners shared his understanding of this transnational Christianity. In this way, Kawabe extended the spiritual boundaries of Christian faith even farther than Kakihara. Through his evangelical mission, Kawabe redefined Christianity for both himself and his transnational partners.

Japanese Christians continued to challenge a lingering assumption that Christianity was a “Western” religion. In addition to demonstrating native initiatives and launching “reverse” missions, Kawabe started to expand the Christian community even further to other parts of Asia. Visiting Keijyo in Korea and Mukuden in China in early 1910 as a missionary, he sought to make so-called South-South links between the Japanese and people in other parts of Asia. Kawabe pushed to extend the Christian community from one non-Western country to another, a controversial ambition left to the next great Free Methodist leader, Tsuchiyama Tetsuji.



## Chapter 3: “Now We Have to Give”: Tsuchiyama Tetsuji’s Mission in Wartime China

### I. Introduction

“Ever since the war [between China and Japan] broke out[,] I have been much grieved[,] and my sympathy has been aroused for the Chinese, and especially the Christians, particularly when we learned that Kaifeng, where some of our mission stations are located, had become the battle zone. I had been praying and watching for an opportunity to do something for the Chinese churches.”<sup>164</sup> Such thoughts preoccupied Tsuchiyama Tetsuji’s mind after Japan’s occupation of Manchuria in 1931 and its creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo in the following year. As the leader of the Japan Free Methodist Church, Tsuchiyama felt an urgent need to help fellow Chinese Christians, but the Church could not send any pastor because of a shortage of manpower in wartime Japan. Ruth Mylander, an American Free Methodist missionary in Japan, also expected Japanese ministers to work in China. Tsuchiyama felt ashamed of the inactivity of Japanese Christians during this critical time.<sup>165</sup> His prayer, however, was answered shortly after a visit of American missionaries. Stopping by several churches in Osaka on their way back to their second mission to China, Cecil Troxel and his wife Ellen of the national Holiness Association Mission spoke about Chinese Christians’ sincere prayer for

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<sup>164</sup> Tetsuji Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross or An Account of My Trip in China* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1940), 7.

<sup>165</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 7.

the Japanese.<sup>166</sup> Moved by the story, the board members finally decided to send Tsuchiyama to China despite the difficulties and dangers. Tsuchiyama thus left for China on October 30 in 1938.

When he arrived at the Free Methodist Church in Kaifeng, American Free Methodist missionaries welcomed Tsuchiyama and gave him a warm reception. Facing Chinese Christians, he expressed Japanese Christians' deep sympathy to their Chinese brethren for their sufferings, and he handed out an offering of six hundred yen collected from Japanese Christians back home. Giving a sermon one night, he felt touched by the large Chinese audience and by the many who came forward to shake hands with him after the meeting.<sup>167</sup> Tsuchiyama praised God, believing that the evening had demonstrated a good opening for the Japan Free Methodist Church.

Tsuchiyama's trip to China in the late 1930s reveals how he and other Japanese Free Methodists navigated the competing boundaries of nation-states and Christian faith when Japanese imperialism was at its height. Since the lifting of the government's ban on Christianity in 1873, the 1930s saw the most difficult time for Japanese Christians. As the Japanese government increased its control over the citizens and its power overseas, Tsuchiyama and other Japanese Christians felt the urgent need of demonstrating their loyalty to the State, so they could counteract a widespread suspicion that Christians opposed Japan's national polity. They particularly feared that the government would shut down all of their religious activities. Responding to the government's urge for all citizens,

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<sup>166</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 8.

<sup>167</sup> In the Japanese version of *Victory of the Cross*, he noted that there were about 500 Chinese Christians participated in the meeting. See, Tetsuji Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu; jihenka tairiku imon dendōki* (Osaka: Nihon jiyū Methodist kyōkai syuppanbu, 1939), 101. 土山鐵次『怨みをこぼつ涙の握手: 事変下大陸慰問伝道記』(大阪: 日本自由メソヂスト教会出版部、1939).

including Christians, to participate in the nation's empire building in Asia, Tsuchiyama launched his controversial evangelical trips to China. In this context, he used his visit to China as an effective way to demonstrate how Japanese Christians could support the State and its imperial ambitions. In so doing, Tsuchiyama could allay concerns that Christians could not conform to the broader Japanese society.

Tsuchiyama, however, was not a docile agent of the government. His trip to China also had its own evangelical purposes. Acknowledging his goal as building a transnational Christendom through his networked relationship with fellow Chinese and American Free Methodists, he actively defined the meaning of Japan's China mission as a part of the worldwide evangelical mission to build a larger Christian community. While American missionaries worked together with them, Japanese Free Methodists were not passive helpers of their American counterparts. For Tsuchiyama, it was a great opportunity for Japanese Christians to show their loyalty to both their government and their God simultaneously. He believed that his visit to China in the late 1930s was the best way of simultaneously consolidating the church, sweeping away the government's distrust of Christianity, helping the Chinese in a critical situation, and, above all, following the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations."<sup>168</sup>

Overlapping the State's goal of establishing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and his own goal of building a shared Christendom, Tsuchiyama made several evangelical trips to China. Ironically, however, his China mission exposed the limits of transnational religious connections when those connections supported the State's empire building. At the same time, however, Tsuchiyama's mission represented a new stage in

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<sup>168</sup> Mathew 28:18-20 (New International Version).

the relationship between Japanese Christians, the Japanese state, and the larger global Christian communion. While Kakiyama's had largely evangelized at home, and Kawabe had begun "reverse" missions to evangelize in the U.S., Tsuchiyama demonstrates a new phase in the maturation of Japanese Christianity, reaching out to evangelize beyond the US-Japan relationship.

## II. Becoming a Christian Minister

In 1885 in Kumamoto, the southern part of Japan, Tsuchiyama Tetsuji was born of parents who had typically eclectic religious beliefs that unconsciously accommodating Buddhism and Shinto into a syncretic whole. His parents earnestly believed in this syncretic religion because they believed that the "god of children" had answered their prayers when he was born. They had even given up the hope of having their own child, adopting instead a child from one of their relatives. As a result, his birth brought his parents great joy. When he was only two years old, however, he became seriously sick. No doctor could help him, but his life was miraculously spared after his mother's earnest prayer to the god.

Tsuchiyama was brought up in this typical Japanese religious atmosphere worshipping both Buddha and many gods, burning candles and incense, offering sacrifices at the family altar, and visiting both temples and shrines. These religious practices nurtured the young boy's religious devotion and reverence toward the gods. During his childhood, he did encounter Christianity when some Roman Catholic nuns visited his hometown to find orphans, but they only reinforced his assumption that

Christianity was a foreign religion. Like all the other children, young Tsuchiyama ran off as soon as they saw these Western missionaries. His family opposed Christianity, and so he learned to do the same.<sup>169</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, Tsuchiyama had a strong prejudice against Christianity, identifying it as part of the Western threat.

After he graduated from secondary school in Kumamoto, Tsuchiyama moved to Tokyo for his higher education, hoping to become a teacher “to encourage moral education based upon the teaching of Confucius, [and] to make men and women of strong character who would be the builder of the future Japan.” After Japan’s victories over China and Russia, young Tsuchiyama and many other Japanese youth became “intoxicated with an ambition to accomplish some great tasks for the sake of their fatherland” and desired to dedicate themselves for building up a “rich country with a strong military” that could compete with the Western powers.<sup>170</sup>

Hoping to become a teacher, Tsuchiyama moved to Tokyo in 1906 and studied for a high school entrance examination, but he lost his sense of purpose after failing the exam. It was in this time of disappointment that he received a letter from his adopted brother who had been in the U.S. asking him to come and to support his agricultural business. Having read about the prosperous country, Tsuchiyama became attracted to the prosperous America and desired to become rich through business there. Soon his growing ambition led him to formulate his determination to leave Japan. The night before his departure in August 1905, all his family members gathered for his farewell party. At the party, his mother begged him, “Dear son, tomorrow morning you are to leave home for

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<sup>169</sup> Tetsuji Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light* (Chicago: Light and Life Press, 1927), 7-11; Kazuo Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage* (Tokyo: Aishin syuppansha, 1956), 5. 金田数男『世紀の伝道者 土山博士の面影』（東京：愛信出版社、1956）。Translated by the author.

<sup>170</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 11.

America, a Christian country, but you must never become a Christian. If you become converted, you will be disloyal not only to your parents, but to your ancestors who kept their strong faith in Buddha and the national gods.” Tsuchiyama answered, “I will never become a Christian, mother, although I go to the Christian land, for I hate Christianity very much.”<sup>171</sup> He then set off on his journey in search of fortune.

Tsuchiyama arrived in Los Angeles where his adopted brother ran a successful strawberry farming business in a nearby town. After a while, he became a sales manager and worked diligently, but due to illness he was soon disappointed and felt lonely in the strange country. Even more disappointing was his own unexpected misbehavior. One day a Mexican man came to his store and teased, “You, idiot Japanese! Stop behaving so arrogantly and stop doing business here. Everyone, you shouldn’t buy things at this Jap’s store. They are just dopes!” While Tsuchiyama had at first several times politely asked the man to leave the store, he finally ran out of patience and shouted, “You, Mexican! That’s more than enough of your jokes. Get out of my sight!” Then the Mexican attacked Tsuchiyama, who deflected the attack, took a gun, and fired at the man. The bullet missed its target, but Tsuchiyama immediately turned himself in to the police feeling great regret for his irrecoverable mistake. He shocked himself through his willingness to shoot, and this led him to a Christian church in Pasadena where a Japanese Christian named Matsunaga preached the Gospel of forgiveness to Tsuchiyama. Nagged by a fear that he could not govern his temper, he sought release from the sense of guilt. He wished to confess and to accept Christ’s atonement but stalled when he remembered his promise to his mother. Matsunaga’s words nevertheless stuck with him and supported him during his

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<sup>171</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 11-13; Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 7-10.

time in Pasadena where he had to financially support himself with a job while studying in high school. Struggling with both his poor English and financial difficulties, he had to work before and after school every day. He had to change jobs several times and ate only twice a day.<sup>172</sup>

Once, a morning star shining brighter than usual reminded Tsuchiyama of a short Japanese poem he learned at primary school. The poem, “O thou Brooklet, soon to be mighty seas, Creepest awhile merrily beneath th’ leaves,” strengthened his determination to endure all his difficulties. After this experience, he started to ask questions he had never asked before, such as “What is life?” “Why did I come to this world, and what will be the end of my life?” At the end of his busy day, he felt an “indescribable loneliness and agony,” and “[s]eparation, sorrow, suffering, and finally death--all these dark thoughts” filled his heart. “The philosophical idea of the pantheistic gods of Buddhism and the mere moral teachings of Confucianism” could not satisfy his lonely heart.<sup>173</sup> Tsuchiyama felt he could not find the answers to these burning questions within the Japanese religions he had followed as a boy.

After a terrific mental and spiritual struggle, Tsuchiyama started to read the Bible with a hungry heart. He had once rejected the Bible, but he now thought it “became very interesting and sweet” to his soul. When he read the Bible verses, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” and “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst,” Tsuchiyama felt he had discovered

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<sup>172</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 13-15; Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 15-18, 22. The quotations are translated by the author.

<sup>173</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 14-16.

new hope for not only this life, but the one after.<sup>174</sup> He felt as if through the Bible the dark night in his heart and mind dissolved into morning sunrise. But again, his promise to his mother not to become a Christian stood in his way. Desperately feeling an urgent need to convert to Christianity, he decided to write his mother:

Mother, I attempted to shoot a Mexican man. The bullet fortunately did not hit him, but I am a sinner who attempted to kill a person. I cannot bear this burden of guilt. Visiting Mr. Matsunaga, a Japanese Christian, I heard about Jesus Christ who can redeem me from sin. Now I'm certain that believing Christianity and accepting Christ as my Savior is the only way to escape from my sense of guilt and restart my life. I promised you not to become a Christian before I left Japan, but please forget about our promise and please give me your permission for my conversion.<sup>175</sup>

While at first his mother firmly rejected his appeal, she finally capitulated and gave him her permission because of his persistent persuasion. Even though she did not fully understand the religion his son wanted to believe, she wrote, "I think I understand your situation. If you insist, you can believe in Christianity, but make sure that it is only for you. Please don't make your brothers and sisters believe the religion. If you do, I feel terribly painful." Receiving the letter, Tsuchiyama in the fall of 1908 visited Matsunaga, to share the good news, and he confessed his decision to be converted, which delighted Matsunaga for a great deal. He started to attend church regularly and was finally baptized and became a member of a Congregational Church.<sup>176</sup> When he made a public confession, he felt Jesus Christ coming into his heart bringing him "from darkness to light."<sup>177</sup> Tsuchiyama's financial difficulties continued, but he eventually found work in a Christian home in Pasadena, where he found communion with the Christian family, and where he stayed until he graduated from high school.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> John 3:16, 6:35 (King James Version).

<sup>175</sup> Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 19.

<sup>176</sup> Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 18-21.

<sup>177</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 17-21.

<sup>178</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 22-25.



One day at a special evangelistic meeting at the church in the winter of 1908, Tsuchiyama became interested in the ministry. A few days later while he was praying, he thought he clearly heard the call of God. While he had never felt a vocation to become a minister, he accepted the call to dedicate his life to evangelical work.<sup>179</sup> To pursue this new ambition, he left Pasadena after graduating from high school and entered a Christian college on the West Coast. Unfortunately, he felt that the college did not meet his expectations to build up his Christian character. He often complained, “Is there no college in this Christian country which will satisfy my desire? Are all Christian colleges corrupted like this one?”<sup>180</sup> After a while, he went back to Pasadena and attended Nazarene University. While its small student body and makeshift buildings disappointed him, its spiritual atmosphere highly pleased him. He ignored some of his friends’ opposition and ridicule of the small school with shabby buildings because he knew they did not know what he wanted. He wanted “a deeper spiritual experience.” In fact, on November 26, 1911, he experienced the Holy Spirit cleansing him from all sin and filling his heart with perfect love. After this experience, he started to see the world differently. For him, “[a]ll surrounding nature seemed to be joyfully praising the Lord, the Creator.” For five years at the university and the university church, Tsuchiyama experienced a blessed spiritual life influenced by the “intensely burning missionary zeal” under the leadership of the university president and “the divine, fiery message” of the pastor.<sup>181</sup>

While Tsuchiyama was joyfully preparing himself to become a preacher, his family in Japan showed strong opposition. His father warned, “When you became a

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<sup>179</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 26-27.

<sup>180</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 29.

<sup>181</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 28-30; Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 22-23.

Christian we were all very glad, but to become a minister is too much. If you come home as a minister, we will be ashamed of you, for all our community believe in Buddha and the national gods and they hate Christianity.”<sup>182</sup> The father harshly condemned his decision to become a minister as selfish, because a relative had refused to his brother any financial support for a college education after hearing about Tsuchiyama’s decision to become a minister. His father’s final note to cut him off from the family gave him a bitter trial, but he thought God supported him with the words in the Bible saying, “Be not afraid of anything, for I am with you always. Write home and tell them that you cannot change your purpose.”<sup>183</sup> He then followed the words and prayed for a job opportunity during the summer vacation so that he could support his brother going to a college himself instead of asking his relative. He wrote his family a letter promising he would financially support his brother, but also insisting that he could not change his plan to become a minister. His firm determination in his letter eventually melted his family’s opposition. They replied:

We thought that you would never be happy and satisfied if you become a preacher. But we have now found a new spirit by your last letter. We know the money which you earned is necessary for your own college expense, but you are willing to share it with your brother. This certainly must be the spirit of Christianity. We have found that the time has already come in Japan for us to accept Christianity.<sup>184</sup>

Tsuchiyama finally persuaded his parents to agree with his vocation. He challenged their stereotypes about “Western” Christianity and convinced them that Christianity could be a religion for the Japanese.

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<sup>182</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 31-32.

<sup>183</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 33.

<sup>184</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 34.

### III. Joining the Japan Free Methodist Church

Upon his graduation from Nazarene University, Tsuchiyama advanced his study at Drew Theological Seminary where he underwent further preparation for becoming a minister. At Drew, he again had to work while studying, but he managed a little time to excel in his studies especially in the Greek language. It was during this time that he became acquainted with some Free Methodists who asked him to go to Osaka to take charge of a newly established Bible training school. At first, he wanted to refuse the offer because he had better alternatives. But after praying, he reluctantly agreed to go to Osaka upon his graduation because he was shown it was God's plan. After making the decision, however, he was offered a fellowship for advanced study in Europe because of his skill in Greek language study. This proposal threw him into a state of indecision. On the one hand, "a vision of the map of Japan which was covered with dark clouds of sin and grief" urged him to hurry back to Japan to join many of his Japanese Christian friends in evangelizing his fellow countrymen. On the other hand, "a vision of honor, position and money" made him hesitate to make a decision. He reasoned that Japan needed Christian scholars, and that he could serve God in Japan after pursuing his advanced degree in Europe. But one day in his prayer, he thought he heard a small voice of God saying, "Give up all and go back to Japan," which made him follow "the definite call of God to go to Osaka."<sup>185</sup>

Thus, in September 1918, Tsuchiyama came back to Japan with diplomas in

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<sup>185</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 42-44; Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 36-38; Carrie T. Burritt, *The Story of Fifty Years* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1935), 92-93.

theology. After seeing his parents for only a short time in his home town, he moved to Osaka and took charge of the Free Methodist Theological Seminary. While there were some Japanese scholars teaching at the seminary, his educational background stood out among the teachers at this small school.<sup>186</sup> There he believed his most important work was to “train native Christian workers” because other seminaries in Japan lacked either the evangelistic spirit or education. He was proud of the Osaka seminary having “the harmony between spirituality and intellectuality in the training of Christian ministers and Bible women.” He tried to infuse a fresh intellectual air into the religious enthusiasm already existed at the school and to combine the two. When he introduced a Greek language class into the curriculum, learning Greek became popular not only among the students but also among lay believers as well.<sup>187</sup> Praising the seminary in 1926, Eva Bryan Millican, an American missionary to Japan since 1911, said, “Two-thirds of the preachers and their wives, also single evangelists and Bible women, in the Japan Conference, have received their training in this school. The success of our work is due as much, if not more, to the work of this school than to any other factor.”<sup>188</sup>

While he had been busy working as the seminary’s principal and as an evangelist for a decade, Tsuchiyama had never forgotten to advance his Bible study. In fact, after attending the 1927 General Conference of the denomination in the U.S., he went to Princeton Theological Seminary to rewrite his manuscript on the book of Colossians, and, as he planned, he finished revisions in a year and received a Master of Sacred Theology degree from the Princeton seminary.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 45-46; Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 42-44.

<sup>187</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 50.

<sup>188</sup> Burritt, *The Story of Fifty Years*, 96.

<sup>189</sup> Arleta Richardson, *Love Shining through Tsuchiyama*, ed. Sharon Elliott, trans. K. Lavern Snider

Besides his work at the school and his own study, Tsuchiyama took charge of the Third Free Methodist Church in Osaka. The church grew as the denominational work developed. Since its foundation four years earlier, membership in the church had increased to 130.<sup>190</sup> For the development of the denomination, both native workers like Tsuchiyama and American missionaries worked together in harmony. In the city of Osaka, with a population of more than two million people, there were three other churches established besides the First Church where pastored by Kawabe Teikichi. Besides these four churches, Japanese Free Methodist congregations were established in Wakayama, Kobe, and on Awaji Island, where the first church had started. In 1926, there were a total of sixteen Free Methodist churches with eighteen Japanese preachers and eight foreign missionaries.<sup>191</sup> The Japan Free Methodist Church dramatically developed under Tsuchiyama's leadership.

#### IV. Self-propagating, Self-supporting, and Self-governing

Tsuchiyama, however, was not satisfied with this recent progress, seeing Japan as “a wide, ripe field for Christian reaping.”<sup>192</sup> Agreeing with Tsuchiyama, W. B. Olmstead, the Missionary Secretary of the Missionary Board, also recognized Japan as a promising mission field. Olmstead proclaimed:

Japan is not yet Christianized.... For a quarter of a century God has been giving us some wonderful spiritual victories, but the past has been largely a time of seed sowing. Now the fields

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(Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1986), 53-54; Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 56-57.

<sup>190</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 50-53.

<sup>191</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 56-57.

<sup>192</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 57.

are white for the harvest. In the name of our Lord, who gave His life for us and for them, and who told us to go and teach and disciple them, we should go forward with courage and faith.<sup>193</sup>

Olmstead meant “we” as both American and Japanese believers. Together with American Free Methodists like Olmstead, Tsuchiyama envisioned a further development of the denomination, a greater hope of Japan becoming a Christian nation. For Tsuchiyama, everything happening in modern Japan seemed desirable for that goal. Since the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1886, he believed, Japan had been influenced by “universal and democratic ideas” and was “no longer an isolated Oriental feudal state,” but was “a constitutional power in the world,” which led the nation “to abandon a narrow policy even in religious affairs.” Not only was the prohibition of Christianity removed, but Christianity was now “recognized as one of the three chief religions in Japan.” The development of trade brought about the introduction of railroads, steamships, telegraph, and postal systems which “prepared the way for the entrance of the Gospel into every part of the country.” Looking at the advancement of education and greater access to Christian materials, Tsuchiyama saw the high literacy rate as “a wonderful opportunity for Sunday-school work,” and English language teaching as “an ample opportunity for spreading the knowledge of the English Bible and Christian thought.” He firmly believed that Christianity could supply the need of constituting “the foundation of spiritual life” in Japan.<sup>194</sup>

To achieve this grand plan, Tsuchiyama with other Japanese Christians believed that Japanese Christian churches needed more autonomy from the American mission board. Concurring with Tsuchiyama, the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist

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<sup>193</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 58.

<sup>194</sup> Tsuchiyama, *From Darkness to Light*, 59-64.

Church of North America, in June 1923, sent Olmstead to discuss the possibility of organizing the independent Japan Conference. Closely scrutinizing the different works of the missionaries and of the native workers to evaluate their roles in the mission, Olmstead concluded that there should be an independent Japan Conference, and he helped develop its future program.<sup>195</sup> Meeting Tsuchiyama and other Japanese Free Methodist leaders while visiting almost all the Japanese churches, Olmstead found out that they shared the same faith and goals in their evangelical work. During his stay, Olmstead participated in the first annual meeting of the newly organized Japan Conference and enjoyed meeting all fourteen ordained Japanese pastors and more than fifteen hundred Japanese members and probationers.<sup>196</sup>

Having Christian communion with Japanese believers and witnessing the growth of Japanese churches, Olmstead became confident in the mission's native leadership. While he maintained the need of sending more American missionaries to Japan, Olmstead emphasized their supporting roles in the mission work. He asserted that American missionaries should have "wisdom and humility" and should "keep themselves in the proper relation to the Japanese leaders, always remembering that our [Americans'] sole purpose in Japan" was "to assist in establishing a Japanese Church" that was "self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing."<sup>197</sup> Both Japanese and American Free Methodists aspired to an independent Japanese Church that would better serve their mutual goal of spreading the Gospel in Japan and around the world.

The independence of Japanese churches, however, did not mean their separation

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<sup>195</sup> The General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church, *Annual Report of the Missionary Secretary Rev. William B. Olmstead* (The Free Methodist Publishing House: Chicago, 1924), 3-10.

<sup>196</sup> *Annual Report of the Missionary Secretary Rev. William B. Olmstead*, 11, 20.

<sup>197</sup> *Annual Report of the Missionary Secretary Rev. William B. Olmstead*, 14-19.

from the American churches. Olmstead, in fact, highlighted their transnational religious connections as different from the relationship between the two countries. He acknowledged that the year 1923 saw the greatest strain on both American missionaries and the Japanese Church in the history of Free Methodism in Japan. Many unexpected events, such as the Great Kanto Earthquake, the burning of the First Church, and the passing of the Immigration Act in 1921 caused political upheavals and deteriorated the U.S.-Japan relationship. Because the immigration law undermined the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” by strictly restricting the entry of Japanese immigrants to the U.S., the Japanese government issued protests, and declared that May 26, the effective date of the law, was a day of national humiliation. The public press also sensationalized the matter, urging the withdrawal of all foreign Christian missionaries from Japan. But Olmstead appreciated that this was “not the feeling of the native church.” As he observed, the conditions went back to normal within a year, and missionaries were never deported.<sup>198</sup> Free Methodists got through what Olmstead called “the greatest strain on both American missionaries and the Japanese Church” in 1923, but more obstacles were ahead of them in the following decades. Regardless of the deteriorating public and national relationships between the two countries, the Japan Free Methodist Church, a private institution, maintained favorable relationships with its American counterpart.

Maintaining its relationship with its American counterpart and experiencing rapid growth, the Japan Free Methodist Church finally declared its self-sufficiency in December 1931. Since the dawning of the Free Methodist’s Japan mission in 1895, the American mission board had provided almost all the mission’s financial needs, including

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<sup>198</sup> *Annual Report of the Missionary Secretary Rev. William B. Olmstead*, 17.



the salaries of Japanese workers, but, after the Great Depression in 1929, Olmstead notified Tsuchiyama about the American board's financial difficulties. While it was not easy, Japanese Free Methodists made their unanimous decision for self-support. Tsuchiyama proclaimed, "we can no longer depend upon financial support from abroad for our workers. This will certainly be a point of change in the Free Methodist Church. Our pastors must now be supported by faith and faith alone."<sup>199</sup> Receiving the decision from Japan, an American Free Methodist executive noted, "The home [American] church will always remember the message that came from Japan in the midst of an unparalleled economic depression in 1932." The Japan Free Methodist churches "have thrown off all support from the Commission on Missions" and "requested that funds normally sent to them be appropriated for the churches in China, India, and Africa." He noted how Americans were impressed and heartened by "this generous act" and praised the Japanese Church for its "large investment in the world outreach of Free Methodism."<sup>200</sup> After achieving its goal of becoming "Self-Propagating, Self-Supporting, and Self-Governing," the Japan Church was ready to meet greater challenges. Now independent, members were expected to take more responsibility in the world Christian mission, especially in Asia.

## V. Sending Missionaries to Wartime China

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<sup>199</sup> Free Methodist Church of North America, General Missionary Board, *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church 1933* (Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1933), 270; Richardson, *Love Shining through Tsuchiyama*, 67-70; Teikichi Kawabe, *Kawabe teikichi sekkyōsyū dairokan: oncyō no nanajyūnen* (Osaka: Kawabezensyūkankōkai, 1935), 313-315. 河邊貞吉『河邊貞吉説教集 第六卷：恩寵の七十年』（大阪：河邊全集刊行會、1935）。

<sup>200</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1960), 98-99.

Several factors led Tsuchiyama to make his evangelical trips to wartime China. One of them was the split of the Japan Free Methodist Church into two parties as a result of the publication of a controversial Bible guide on the Book of Genesis in 1931. Introducing a new understanding of the Creation called “higher criticism,” the book was regarded as heretical, as were the two Free Methodist pastors who wrote and published the book. Under Tsuchiyama’s leadership, the Church put the case to trial and decided to expel these two pastors from the denomination. This decision then led many church leaders and believers who were sympathetic to them, and who opposed Tsuchiyama, to leave the denomination. Tsuchiyama thus needed to consolidate the unity and increase the strength of the remaining church by striving for a common cause.<sup>201</sup>

Equally pressing for the denomination was the urgent need of demonstrating Japanese Christians’ loyalty to the State. Since the end of the Tokugawa period, Japanese Christians had faced continual suspicions about their patriotism and loyalty, and about their relationship with Western missionaries. To meet these concerns, many Japanese Christians sought some unique “Japanese” attributes to their faith. They also sought to promote an ecumenical movement that would amalgamate all Protestant groups into one denomination. This would, they hoped, make their presence known and demonstrate their willingness to cooperate, a position the imperial government took advantage of later for its own purposes. Related to these issues, imperial expansion after the Sino-Japanese War presented Japanese Christians with additional thorny questions. The Japanese government expected all religions to work on behalf of imperialistic domination, and Japanese Christians were therefore urged to help shoulder the responsibilities for “pacification”

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<sup>201</sup> Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 71-74; Nihon jiyū mesojisuto kyōdan, *Senkyō kaishi 120ssyūnen kinenshi* (Osaka: Miura insatsu, 2016), 4.  
日本自由メソジスト教団『宣教開始百二十周年記念誌』（大阪：ミウラ印刷、2016）。

work in newly acquired overseas Japanese territories.<sup>202</sup>

While their evangelical work among Japanese diaspora in Hawaii and on the American and Canadian West Coasts was positively recognized, their work within Japan's expanding Empire, in places like Taiwan, Korea and Manchuria, relied on the assistance of the Japanese military and therefore caused much controversy. Nevertheless, Japanese Christians quickly sent missionaries after Japan acquired Taiwan at the end of the Sino-Japanese war in 1895. The first Japanese missionary, a Presbyterian named Kawai Kumesuke, established the first church in Taihoku in 1896 with help of Taiwanese and Canadian Presbyterians. Other denominations quickly followed. With the influx of Japanese residents in Korea in 1905, the Congregationalist Church took the lead and launched missionary efforts that both spread the Gospel and supported the government's colonization of Korea and big businesses like Mitsui. Manchuria also attracted Japanese missionaries of all the major denominations including the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, and the Methodists. The number of Japanese missionaries dramatically increased after the Manchurian incident in 1931.<sup>203</sup> Thus, Tsuchiyama's mission trip to China was part of a larger trend among Japanese Christian churches seeking to further develop outside Japan. Ironically, deteriorating international relationships among the U.S., China, and Japan boosted Japan's China mission.

At the same time, in accordance of the events such as the Manchurian Incident in September 1931 to May 1933, the establishment of Manchuko by the Japanese government in March 1932, Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in February

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<sup>202</sup> A. Hamish Ion, "The Cross under an Imperial Sun: Imperialism, Nationalism, and Japanese Christianity, 1895-1945," in *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, ed. Mark R. Mullins (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 69.

<sup>203</sup> Ion, "The Cross under an Imperial Sun: Imperialism, Nationalism, and Japanese Christianity, 1895-1945," 77-82.

1933, the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 to 1945, and the Pacific War in 1941 to 1945, the Japanese government imposed even closer controls on its citizens, especially on Christians because Christianity was understood as the enemy's religion. The government kept its eye on Christians because it was skeptical about their loyalty to the nation. Launching the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement in 1937, for example, the Ministry of Education issued a notice to the Japan Free Methodist Church, as well as to other denominations and other religious organizations, making sure that the spirit of loyalty and patriotism pervaded every aspect of church activity.<sup>204</sup>

Tsuchiyama, however, understood the empire slightly differently. Agreeing with the government's official position, he considered the war against China as a war against communism, which he considered the enemy of the Japan, humanity, and God. He thus believed that Japanese Christians should support the empire as guardians of evangelism.<sup>205</sup> As the Japanese military's control increased in China, he thus thought he "definitely caught the vision and heard the Macedonian Call." He desired to visit Chinese Christians who were undergoing fiery trials believing that God would supply all the means for his China trip. Comparing his trip to the Apostle Paul's visit to Jerusalem, Tsuchiyama believed that Japanese Christians who willingly gave an offering for the Chinese Christians were just like Christians in the Macedonian churches who had also willingly made an offering to suffering Christians in Jerusalem. He was certain of "a great blessing for their [Japanese] own hearts as well as for the Chinese" and of the great joy of Jesus Christ looking at "[h]is followers were loving and helping each other" while their

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<sup>204</sup> "Sōmukyoku kokuchi," *Mattakiai* 252, October 10, 1937, 7. 「総務局告知」『全き愛』252号 (1937. 10. 10).

<sup>205</sup> Tetsuji Tsuchiyama, "Jikyoku no ninshikito jyūgo no mamori," *Mattakiai* 251, September 10, 1937, 1. 土山鐵次「時局の認識と銃後の護り」『全き愛』251号 (1937. 9. 10).

nations were fighting. In his mind was a Bible verse, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”<sup>206</sup> In spite of the danger, he was determined to fulfill his duty “to please Christ, and do all for His glory; to comfort the Chinese Christians, and to investigate conditions there.”<sup>207</sup> Before Tsuchiyama’s departure for China, all thirty Free Methodist preachers gathered together to have a special prayer meeting for four days.<sup>208</sup> The church, in short, united with Tsuchiyama to simultaneously serve the State and God. Tsuchiyama’s trip reflected these overlapping commitments and demonstrated both the possibilities and the limits of transnational religious connections. As would later be revealed, the ultimate goals of the empire and God’s Kingdom would never match. Still confident that they might, Tsuchiyama left for China in high spirits.

Tsuchiyama left Japan for China via Korea on October 30, 1938. In Korea, he preached and had fellowship with Korean Christians in several places. Before he left for Tientsin, China, a Japanese preacher named Shimizu, the district elder of the Holiness Church, and a Western missionary named Troxel joined Tsuchiyama and accompanied him afterwards.<sup>209</sup> The meeting of these Korean, Japanese and American Christians showed how they tried to maintain their own transnational space despite worsening diplomatic conditions. But at the same time, Tsuchiyama also visited some Japanese military camps to express his sympathy and gratitude for their work. This complex balance between Christian fellowship and Japanese patriotism continued to be a persistent theme throughout his mission trip.

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<sup>206</sup> Matthew 25:40 (King James version).

<sup>207</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 8-9.

<sup>208</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu*, 19.

<sup>209</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 11-13.

In Peking, Tsuchiyama first visited the Chinese Language School where forty to fifty American missionaries were studying the Chinese language. He also visited some Japanese churches, the Holiness Church and the Congregational Church, and the Su Tei School, a school for Chinese students which Shimizu had conducted for twenty years. Tsuchiyama felt the intimate relationship between Shimizu and his wife and all the Chinese boys and girls revealing the success of their work. While he had Christian fellowship at these places, he faced rejection when he visited the Bible Training School of the Oriental Missionary Society of Peking. There an American missionary welcomed him, but she seemed puzzled when he asked her to give him a chance to preach to the Chinese students. He asked again, but the missionary gave no answer. He insisted saying, “To establish peace in the Orient is the mission of the Christians. I came from Japan to get an understanding with the Chinese workers and to do something for peace between Japanese and Chinese. Unless we Christians become one[,] who can solve this problem and settle this trouble in the Orient?” “Well, then, come tomorrow and you may have an hour to speak,” the missionary finally answered reluctantly. On the next day, he faced the whole student body feeling an anti-Japanese atmosphere. But once he started talking about the Gospel in which they all believed, he could feel their attitude changing for the better. The president of the school also expressed anti-Japanese sentiment at first, but he and his wife completely changed their attitudes as they listened to Tsuchiyama’s sermon and explanation about his purpose of coming there for the sake of Chinese Christians.<sup>210</sup>

A similar thing happened in Tientsin where Tsuchiyama went back from Peking

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<sup>210</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 13-14; Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu*, 40-44.

on November 16. Revisiting the National Holiness Association Mission and Bible School, he tried again to get permission to speak to the Chinese students at the school. Tsuchiyama asked the American missionaries, “Will you give me some chance to talk to your [Chinese] students.” They refused, explaining that, “We have plans made for a revival meeting in the school for a whole week.” Refusing to back down, Tsuchiyama continued, “Well, I have come at just the right time. You should let me speak at one meeting.” “But we have a special evangelist for this occasion. We are afraid it will interrupt this meeting if you preach,” answered the missionaries. After much bandying of words, Tsuchiyama left the school disappointed. One of the missionaries, however, came to visit him later that evening and asked, “Will you come to eat breakfast with us tomorrow morning at seven o’clock? Then from eight o’clock you may have one hour to speak in our chapel service.” Tsuchiyama leaped for joy at this good news because he had been praying for the opportunity to have contact with the Chinese students at this school.

Looking at a letter the missionary handed to him, Tsuchiyama found it was from Troxel who had visited Osaka before. The letter said, “Hearing that you have come to China I am very happy. I am sorry I am now inland for preaching and cannot return until next January, but I am sure that the other missionaries will be glad to introduce you to the Chinese students.” Tsuchiyama thought, “If this letter had not come that night I might have lost the opportunity to contact these students, but it came at just the right time. I am sure this was God’s answer to the prayers for Tientsin.”<sup>211</sup> It seemed this letter persuaded other missionaries to let Tsuchiyama speak to the Chinese students. The missionaries gave him a warm reception, but they hesitated to let him speak to the Chinese because they

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<sup>211</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 16.

were aware of many Chinese in the audience who suffered great hardships during the war and felt hatred against the Japanese. Tsuchiyama knew that “[t]his was true everywhere, all through the country.”<sup>212</sup> He, nevertheless, wanted to preach the Gospel to the Chinese believing that building a transnational connection to the Chinese was a vital mission for Japanese Christians.

As the missionaries and Tsuchiyama himself predicted, he faced a tense atmosphere when he stood in front of the Chinese students on the next day. But, as he started talking, the entire atmosphere gradually changed to a warmer one. The missionaries’ anxiety disappeared. In his message, he emphasized the love of God manifested on the Cross. He told them “how the Japanese people were praying for the suffering Chinese people,” and how he came to China “carrying a present offered by the Japanese Christians, who had been constrained to do this by the love of God.” His interpreter, John Moe, “a man blessed of God and a skillful master of the Chinese language” according to Tsuchiyama, interpreted the language as well as the tender spirit. Moe expressed his emotions, “I was conscious of the Lord’s help while interpreting. The congregation repeatedly broke out weeping as mention was made of the war. Never in my thirty-four years in China have I seen a Chinese congregation weep as much as they did.”<sup>213</sup> After the message, everyone, the Chinese, Americans, and the Japanese Christians, prayed together, and the whole student body “broke out with loud sobbing and crying.” The Chinese students came to him one by one, greeting him with a friendly handshake and asserting, “Let us labor together for Christ.” Following the meeting, the Chinese students including the female students even invited him to visit their dormitory

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<sup>212</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 15-16.

<sup>213</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 17.



rooms. Even the cook at the school invited him to the kitchen to entertain him with a Chinese hot bread called “manto,” a Chinese sweet cake. Tsuchiyama’s rich transnational Christian fellowship with Chinese and American believers made him think it was the realization of an event in the Bible. “Truly the gospel and the Cross broke up the enmity and made us all one. What seemed to be such difficulties, even to the missionaries, were overcome by the Cross,” recalled Tsuchiyama.<sup>214</sup> Later Moe also noted:

One of the results of this meeting was the deliverance from an unforgiving spirit of a young [Chinese] man who had again and again been forward to get sanctified but never seemed to obtain the experience. In the testimony meeting he [the young Chinese student] said, “While listening to the testimony of Mr. Tsuchiyama I came to see I was harboring something in my heart, an unforgiving spirit, which hindered me in obtaining the blessing [that] my heart was longing for. But I have now come to realize that God loves the Japanese as well as the Chinese, and as Christians we should love one another.”... Mr. Tsuchiyama’s message in testimony was made a blessing to many. He was indeed a messenger of the Lord.<sup>215</sup>

Tsuchiyama’s message seemed to reach to Chinese Christians, and they were united with Japanese Christians in Christ as he hoped.

In Tsinan, Tsuchiyama was accompanied by a Japanese pastor in the church of the Omi Brotherhood named Nishimura who had graduated from the seminary in Osaka more than a decade earlier. Now together in China, Tsuchiyama and Nishimura encountered another harsh reality. They visited Tsiro University where an American missionary worked. Nishimura knew the missionary because he had met her in Japan when she had visited Omi for a week on her way to China. Remembering the warm welcome she had received in Japan, the American missionary seemed to feel embarrassed not to give them an equally open-armed reception. She seemed hesitant to let them come onto the campus. Tsuchiyama, however, insisted on visiting because he had always

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<sup>214</sup> Tsuchiyama referred to Ephesians 2:13-15. Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 16-19.

<sup>215</sup> *Call to Prayer*, missionary publication on mission in China published by the National Holiness Missionary Society and the World Gospel Mission in March 1939, in Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 17.

worked easily with Western missionaries, and he was eager to reach the students. The American missionary reluctantly let them into the room, where Tsuchiyama saw four Chinese professors of the university and a Y.M.C.A. secretary sitting at a table. They looked very surprised and became silent seeing the Japanese visitors. No Japanese, even Kagawa Toyohiko, one of the most famous Japanese evangelists, had ever been allowed to visit this university since the Japanese attack on China. The missionary had hesitated to welcome them because of this strong anti-Japanese sentiment. Tsuchiyama, nevertheless, started to deliver his message of “the love of Christ manifested on the Cross” and told the Chinese professors of “the prayers of the Japanese Christians who were offering their love to the Chinese Christians.” He also explained, “We are praying for the peace of the Orient. It is for that purpose that we have come to visit your country.” One of them replied, “We, also, are hoping for peace.” After his talk, as they prayed together, Tsuchiyama saw their eyes fill with tears. He once again experienced the power of “the love of God,” which destroyed enmity and ill feelings among the intellectual Chinese. He glorified “the Victory of the Cross” again.<sup>216</sup> Tsuchiyama’s enthusiasm changed their attitudes and made “good Christian fellowship” possible.

Tsuchiyama and Nishimura left for Kaifeng via several other cities. They went through some battlegrounds and from the train windows saw many monuments to the dead Japanese soldiers. On their way, they visited some Japanese military camps and had fellowship with Japanese soldiers. From Kyokufu to the Confucian Shrine, the soldiers gave them a ride with five Chinese men carrying guns to protect the Japanese. That night the soldiers gave the Japanese Christians a warm reception at their camp and offered them

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<sup>216</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 20-21; Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu; jihenka tairiku imon dendōki*, 64-73.

a place to sleep. Tsuchiyama expressed his deep gratitude to the soldiers, and the soldiers expressed no hostility toward the Christians but welcomed them and begged them to talk about Japan. Tsuchiyama heard gun shots several times and saw a Chinese woman crying at a tomb, but he believed that these unfortunate incidents happened because the Japanese military was fighting for the Japanese and on behalf of the Chinese against the Communist threat.<sup>217</sup> On his way back to Japan, from Hsueh to Nanking, Tsuchiyama and Nishimura took a Japanese military train because no ordinary train was available. While it was not a passenger train, they had to receive special permission to ride. In the train, they had pleasant conversation with the military officers and soldiers sitting on the baggage. Taking this as his “opportunity to give a testimony,” Tsuchiyama spoke about the Gospel to them. Besides enjoying Christian fellowship, he took the opportunity to visit Japanese soldiers and to have his own evangelistic campaign among them.<sup>218</sup> In this way, he equated his work among the Chinese seminary students with his work among the Japanese soldiers, not noticing the inherent contradiction between the two.

Finally, Tsuchiyama and Nishimura reached Kaifeng to meet American Free Methodist missionaries and Chinese Christians there. When they arrived in the evening, however, no one was at the station to welcome them. They became disappointed because Tsuchiyama had sent a telegram to James Hudson Taylor, one of the Free Methodist American missionaries, and asked them to meet at the station. Wondering if the telegram had not reached the missionary, they took a rickshaw to the city to find a hotel to stay in. Without knowing the Japanese language, the Chinese rickshaw man carried them around in the dark streets and finally dropped them off at a Chinese hotel. On the next day, Sunday,

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<sup>217</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 26.

<sup>218</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 34-37.

November 27th, at a Baptist church they visited, they discovered the whereabouts of the Free Methodist church. Directed by the Baptist missionaries, they finally arrived at the church, but again they found no one there because the missionaries had been moved to a mission compound outside the city when the war started. They kept standing in a daze because they could not communicate with them in either English or Japanese. Communicating by writing the Chinese characters, however, a Chinese man eventually directed them to the missionary compound. They went along a narrow and dusty street, which seemed dangerous. When they finally reached the missionary compound, Tsuchiyama felt unspeakable joy. “My, my, my,” said Alice Taylor. Showing her surprise and delight, she welcomed them at the entrance. In an energetic way, she explained, “Your telegram came[,] and we went to the station to meet you last night, but as the time had been changed so that your train arrived earlier all the passengers had gone[,] and we missed you.” When Tsuchiyama asked, “Then my telegram did reach you?” “Yes,” she answered and continued, “But we did not know why you came. We guessed you came as a soldier who had been called to the army. Otherwise we could not understand why you had come.” When Tsuchiyama and Nishimura explained that the purpose of their visit was to encourage suffering Chinese Christians and Western missionaries and to have Christian fellowship, she and other missionaries were moved and said, “My, you have come so far from Japan in such a time of trouble.” While Tsuchiyama was anxious to give a sermon to the Chinese congregation at the Sunday service that would start in an hour, Taylor told him not to speak at the morning service because it was too dangerous. There was no Japanese army nor Chinese police officers there to protect the Japanese from non-Christian Chinese who might have come from neighboring villages to attack them. But she allowed Tsuchiyama to speak at the night meeting where only believers were

supposed to come. He was given another chance to preach to the Chinese congregation in Kaifeng.<sup>219</sup>

The time had come. When he entered the church at night, Tsuchiyama was surprised to see a large audience before him. It was much larger than the audience in the morning and the church building was packed. He wondered if they had come knowing that a speaker was Japanese. Only a dim light in the center of the building cast a pale light on the congregation. He felt uncomfortable, but, recalling that the Apostle Paul did not count his own life, he made up his mind to fulfill his duty even though he might be attacked. Encouraged by “the boldness of the Holy Spirit,” he stood on the platform risking his life and started to deliver his sermon while Wood interpreted. Soon, he found his audience moved to tears by his message. Even after the message, no one left the church. Without responding to Taylor’s repeated closing announcements, they stood firm. In the meantime, the Chinese Christians having tears in their eyes stood up one by one and thanked Tsuchiyama for his visit. Everyone enjoyed singing hymns in both Chinese and Japanese. When Taylor told them to stay, giving up on dismissing the audience, the Chinese audience started to move forward to shake hands with the Japanese Christians tearfully and lovingly. Tsuchiyama thought “[s]uch fellowship cannot be gained without the love of God, and again the Cross had torn down the barrier of enmity and brought reconciliation.”<sup>220</sup>

Before the meeting, Tsuchiyama handed six hundred yen to the Chinese Church as a present from the Japanese Christians to help the evangelical and refugee work of the

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<sup>219</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 26-28; Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu; jihenka tairiku imon dendōki*, 96-100.

<sup>220</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 29; Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu; jihenka tairiku imon dendōki*, 101-104.

Free Methodists in China. Recollecting the decision Japanese Free Methodists made six years ago, he was filled with deep emotion. The Japanese Free Methodists, both ministers and lay delegates, made a unanimous decision to be financially self-supporting in December 1932. Greatly appreciating the sacrifice and love of American friends for helping them for many years, the Japanese asked to use the money budgeted to Japan for the work in China. Olmstead, the general secretary of the American mission board, was impressed with this Japanese decision and commented on this saying, “This is a bright spot in the history of the Free Methodist Church.”<sup>221</sup> He was deeply touched with the fact that they came to China, met Chinese Christians, and had face-to-face transnational Christian fellowship with every one of them even in a time of national confrontation among the three countries. While they were in Kaifeng, He spoke twice a day and accepted the young Chinese visitors every night until late. But besides giving sermons to the Chinese audience and promoting a good fellowship with the Chinese and Euro-American Christians, Tsuchiyama also visited the Japanese army headquarters to get information about the present condition of the area and to express his appreciation.<sup>222</sup>

On the next day, Tsuchiyama delivered a message at the church in the city attended by many Chinese Christians who were suffering severely from the war. Some believers had lost their family members and had their houses burned; others had experienced dreadful trials. He wondered how he could reach these three hundred Chinese people who had experienced indescribable hardship. “I was sent by the Japanese Christians, who are eagerly praying for you and who gave an offering of love,” he began. “We hope for real peace in the Orient to be established, and it is for this that the Christians

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<sup>221</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 29; Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu; jihenka tairiku imon dendōki*, 104-106.

<sup>222</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 28-30.

are praying. The purpose of the Japanese military here was to suppress the Communist revolt, not to fight against the Chinese people. It was not for occupation or depredation but for bringing the eternal peace in the Orient.” As he spoke, Tsuchiyama felt that “souls were blessed and hearts were melted.” When he finished, one poor Chinese woman came forward and claimed:

I have had four brothers killed in the war, but I am sure they must be in heaven. My house was burned, and I was left alone. I am so thankful that the Japanese churches remember us in prayer and show such warm sympathy. You came so far, even into this part of China, risking the danger. My heart is full of thanks and so encouraged. No more will I hate the Japanese, but hereafter I will love them more than ever before.<sup>223</sup>

When they heard the women’s strong testimony, both the whole Chinese congregation and the two Japanese Christians burst into tears. It was another moment that the “Victory of the Cross” seem to break down the wall between enemies. At the end, the Chinese pastor of the church, who also had experienced severe trials himself, stood up and emphasized:

I cannot find any suitable word of thanks or appreciation for the prayers and the offering sent by the Japanese Christians. Much as I would like to send some present to your home church I have nothing, but here are some words of God which you may take. They are from the Book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah and has never been so real to us as they are at this time.<sup>224</sup>

The Chinese pastor also seemed to believe the “Victory of the Cross.”

When they returned to the missionary compound, Tsuchiyama found all the Chinese students waiting for him to invite him for dinner. It was a wonderful feast with “blessed fellowship in Christ” with more than twenty dishes. When he told Taylor, “I am surprised at such a big dinner. I never dreamed of having such wonderful entertainment,” she answered, “This is probably the first time in this school that we have had such a feast.

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<sup>223</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 30-31.

<sup>224</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 31. See also, Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu; jihenka tairiku imon dendōki*, 107-113.

Usually they eat very poor food, and after this they will go back to their usual fare, but this was done to show their welcome to you.” The feast was their expression of love. Many students came to listen to him at another meeting that night and asked him to stay longer and hold a revival. On the next day, Tsuchiyama sent a telegram to Japan writing, “Great victory and warmest reception at Kaifeng.”<sup>225</sup>

During their stay in Kaifeng, Tsuchiyama and Nishimura stayed at the Taylors’ house. Arriving in 1926, James H. Taylor, a grandson of Hudson Taylor who founded the China Inland Mission, and his wife, Alice Taylor, oversaw the Training School in Kaifeng. Sending its first missionaries to China in late 1904, the Free Methodist Church of North America had opened its mission stations in Chengchow and Kaifeng in Hunan Province. To encourage Chinese leadership in evangelical mission work, the mission board printed the first Free Methodist Discipline in Chinese in 1922 for a better understanding of Free Methodist principles among Chinese Christians. Then the mission reorganized a training school for evangelists in 1923, which they understood as the key to a permanent success of their mission. Like in Japan, Chinese workers were assuming a great deal of responsibility in Christian mission work, and some churches became self-supported by the end of the 1930s. In 1932, one of the American missionaries stated, “A revival spirit prevails throughout the entire [China] conference.” She continued:

It is China’s hour of opportunity to receive the gospel. It is the church’s hour of responsibility to give it. Unless Christ comes to China today, tomorrow[,] nationalism and communism will have won the day and China with her more than 400,000,000 souls will be frozen in the cold, dead arms of atheism. Our mission field in the north of Henan, with the strategic cities of Kaifeng and Chengchow as its center, presents an unparalleled opportunity for the Free Methodist Church to make its contribution in meeting this challenge.... What will the harvest be? China with Christ or China without God and without hope? Our church must help to answer this question.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 31-32; Tsuchiyama, *Urami wo kobotsu namida no akusyu; jihenka tairiku imon dendōki*, 113-116.

<sup>226</sup> Helen I. Root, *Our China Mission* (Chicago: The Woman’s Missionary Society Free Methodist Church, 1932), 3-15; Byron S. Lamson, *Venture*, 101-112.



Sharing this American view, Tsuchiyama made his evangelical trip as a member of the larger Christian community, though he did not see it was also part of the imperial mission.

Tsuchiyama was in China when the Free Methodist Church in China was growing. He believed that he was there not as an enemy but as a brother to both Chinese and American Christians in Christ. While James Taylor was away from home, his wife, Alice Taylor, entertained and helped him visit and talk to Chinese Christians. He was impressed with the American missionaries' devotion both at work and at home. Raising two small children, they continued their evangelical mission despite the dangers. He was impressed with their "missionary spirit." He was also thankful for Wood, who worked as his interpreter, and Pearl Reid who also accompanied him on church visits. Whenever Tsuchiyama and Nishimura went out on bicycle, Reid and Wood guarded them.<sup>227</sup> In spite of the deteriorating political relationship among the three countries, Tsuchiyama certainly created a transnational space with Chinese and American believers in wartime China despite the controversial nature of his mission.

Feeling the victory greater than they had expected and filling their hearts with thankfulness, Tsuchiyama and Nishimura left Kaifeng in the early morning of December 1st. Tsuchiyama felt a stronger attachment to the Chinese Christians than ever before. The Chinese students prayed for their safe trip home, and the American missionaries saw them off at the train station. Through this trip to China, Tsuchiyama held an unshakable belief in "very blessed fellowship between Japanese and Chinese." He had no doubt that "[e]nemy had been broken down by the Cross."<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 32-33.

<sup>228</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 34-37.

Realizing that “the making of real peace in the Orient rests on the shoulders of the Christians,” Tsuchiyama felt the responsibility of the Japanese Christians towards China more than ever before. With this conviction, he asserted, “The Japanese church has so far received from America and Europe, but now we have to give out, and there is a great task to be done in Manchuria and China.” Based on this firm belief, Tsuchiyama sent Oda Kaneo, another Japanese Free Methodist pastor, as the first official Free Methodist missionary to China, and he himself made several more trips. Witnessing “a missionary spirit” spurring the whole Japan Free Methodist Church, Tsuchiyama envisioned, “a new program” before Japanese church, “a missionary enterprise to the whole Orient.” He continued, “We cannot think of thousands of souls living without Christ while we enjoy His saving grace. Our Japan church is rapidly becoming missionary-conscious.”<sup>229</sup> When he published a book about his mission trip, first in Japanese and later translated into English, Tsuchiyama was contented with the book’s enormously positive reception among both Japanese and American readers, though he overlooked the ambiguous nature of his trip.

## VI. Conclusion

Tsuchiyama sent himself to wartime China as a Japanese missionary. As a Japanese Christian, Tsuchiyama was convinced that making his evangelical trip to China in the late 1930s was the best way to simultaneously accomplish the goals of

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<sup>229</sup> Tsuchiyama, *Victory of the Cross*, 38-39; Kaneda, *Seiki no dendōsha Tsuchiyama hakase no omokage*, 117-119.

consolidating the Japan Free Methodist Church, winning the government's trust of Japanese Christians, helping Chinese Christians, and, most importantly, taking part in the world evangelical mission that up to that point had been carried out mostly by European and American missionaries. In so doing, he claimed a place for Japanese Christians in both Japanese society and the transnational Christian community. Working with Chinese Christians and Western missionaries, he secured a place in the transnational Christian community: working with the Japanese imperial government, he and his fellow Christians were admitted as full members of Japanese society. In this way, Tsuchiyama extended existing religious and national boundaries, and challenged the notion of Christian membership as a capitulation to the West. Serving both his country and his God, Tsuchiyama attempted to win the trust of both the Japanese government and of his fellow Chinese and American Christians. He demonstrated that Japanese Christians could be both Japanese and Christian at the same time, and that Christianity is simultaneously "Japanese" and transnational.

While his China mission represented a further development of Japanese Christians' evangelical mission, it also exposed the limits of transnational religious connections when those connections supported the State's imperial project. It also exposed the moral complexity and ambiguity of their dueling identities. Tsuchiyama and other Japanese Free Methodists, as well as American missionaries in Japan and China, could not have a critical eye on the State's brutal empire building in China because they underestimated the power of transnational religious connection by placing it below nation-states, not above. Tsuchiyama's campaigns helped blind him to the ways he was reinforcing the supposed "necessity" and "benevolence" of Japanese imperialism. This is a sharp reminder to Christians even today. When their religious establishment of

transnational Christendom and the political establishment of national empire overlap, Christians must be cautious not to make their goal smaller than it could be. Even if nation-states seem to help their Christian mission work, Christians should not superimpose their religious goals on the State's geopolitical goals because the State's and Christians' goals are intrinsically different. The State's empire needs clear boundaries by separating people and confining its citizens in its nation-state boundaries. Christendom, however, unites people in a community that transcends any human-made boundaries. Once a war starts, the State uses religion to bind people together within its boundaries. When they cooperates with this aim, religions like Christianity lose their "touch of salt."

As Japanese Free Methodists demonstrated, transnational religious connections certainly blurred nation-states boundaries. Even in the wartime, Free Methodists in the U.S., China, and Japan could maintain transnational religious connections showing that Christianity can be simultaneously local and transnational. While Free Methodists' transnational network could not always overcome national boundaries, some Christians had transnational connections that opened up communities and identities beyond nation-state boundaries. Hilary E. L. Elmendorf shows, for example, some American Christians in the post-war period went beyond nation. Working with Japanese Christians, they formed counter-narratives of the atomic tragedy after World War II, sharply disputing the ways their governments narrated the events of the war.<sup>230</sup>

As these Christians demonstrated, Christianity can transcend national boundaries. A transnational network that rises above national boundaries therefore seems a key for us

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<sup>230</sup> Hilary E. L. Elmendorf, "Divine Intervention: Japanese and American Christian Narratives of the Pacific War, the Atomic Bombing, and the American Occupation" (PhD diss., Washington State University, 2011), 5-8, accessed November 14, 2018, [https://research.libraries.wsu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2376/2844/Elmendorf\\_wsu\\_0251E\\_10058](https://research.libraries.wsu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2376/2844/Elmendorf_wsu_0251E_10058).

to find a way to be ourselves. These Japanese Free Methodists continually challenged existing national boundaries and the boundaries of Christian faith after the war ended. Their national and religious identities did not completely oppose each other. As Japanese Free Methodists experienced in a limited way, transnational networks can help us to distinguish core religious beliefs from peripheral differences, such as denomination and creed, and that can challenge ideas fabricated for ideological ends. In this way, Tsuchiyama's fellowship with Chinese Christians and his work with the Japanese military demonstrate the constant tensions between division and unity, a division he hoped to overcome by using the State to advance his Christian work, but which nevertheless left him hopelessly tangled.

## Conclusion

The Japanese Free Methodists' close rapport with American Free Methodists continued even after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. "I was astonished and grieved and so were many of our Japanese Christians and friends," recalled Ruth Mylander, the last Free Methodist missionary who stayed in Japan until she was deported to the U.S. in September 1943. When Mylander spoke to Kawabe, he gripped her hand and said, "Now is your chance to pray! Pray for the sown seed. I am praying for the seed sown by all the missionaries who must leave their fields in Japan, China, and Manchuria, and that all these missionaries will pray—those who are left, those leaving, and those in their homelands. I, myself, am giving all my time to prayer."<sup>231</sup> Since 1895, the American Free Methodist Church had sent more than twenty missionaries and spent many thousands of dollars for the Japan mission. But after the Pearl Harbor attack, the government ordered the unification of all Protestant churches, including the Free Methodist Church, into the Church of Christ in Japan. This led some American Free Methodists wonder, "Has it been in vain?" "Why this waste?" Mylander responded by reaffirming "the permanence of the faith among our [Americans and Japanese Free Methodists'] Christian community" and "the final value of our [American] investment in Japan."

While some Japanese denominations wanted to separate themselves from foreign influence, the Japan Free Methodist Church hoped to maintain its relations with its American counterpart.<sup>232</sup> Regardless of the conflict between their countries, these

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<sup>231</sup> Ruth Mylander and Helen I. Root, *Japan Investment* (Winona Lake: The Woman's Missionary Society Free Methodist Church of North America, 1944), 17, 22.

<sup>232</sup> Mylander and Root, *Japan Investment*, 3, 5, 7.

Japanese and American Christians maintained a transnational religious connection which together they had built and nurtured for over half-a-century.

The partnership had been pioneered by Kakihara Masaji who created a rapport with his American counterparts and demonstrated that Japanese Christians were not always recipients but could actively evangelize Christian faith among themselves while still believing in Christianity's universal message. By following the Great Commission, Kakihara exercised initiative in bringing Free Methodism to Japan. In so doing, Kakihara challenged the general assumption of "Western" Christianity and "Western" Christian missionaries revealing that Christianity cannot be confined in any single national identity, and that Christian missionaries are not always "Westerners." While Kakihara later transitioned to Baptist ministry, his involvement in the Free Methodist mission in Japan and the U.S. formed an essential part of his spiritual life until his death in 1951.

Kawabe Teikichi extended Christianity's boundaries even further by launching his Pacific coast mission trips as an evangelist not only for the Japanese diaspora but also for Americans. He showed that Christianity could help Japanese immigrant communities fight against racial and cultural discrimination, while simultaneously reaching out to others during his mission. In his evangelical work among Japanese immigrants, Kawabe revealed a transnational aspect of Christianity by rejecting "Japanese" Christianity as a separate form of "Western" Christianity. Evangelizing Americans, Kawabe demonstrated that Japanese spiritual leaders could transmit the Christian gospel to anyone. Demonstrating Christianity's possibilities of bringing a more equal relationship between the Japanese and Americans, he redefined Christianity as a more pluralistic and inclusive religion. His rapport with American Free Methodists survived World War II and lasted until his death in 1953.

Tsuchiyama Tetsuji's China mission represented an even further development of Japanese Christians' evangelical mission, but also exposed the limits of transnational religious connections. While Kakihara's and Kawabe's missions demonstrated the possibilities of transnational Christianity to make connections and build a shared community among people with different nationalities, Tsuchiyama's mission to China exposed its limits by prioritizing nation-state boundaries and imperial ambitions. This undermined Christian claim of global fellowship and equality. By making evangelical trips to wartime China, Tsuchiyama believed that the Japanese church could demonstrate its independence within the global Christian community. He saw his China mission as the best way to fulfill a number of ambitions: to consolidate the Japan Free Methodist Church as an organization, to win the trust of the Japanese government, and to promote its foreign evangelical mission following the Great Commission. Thus, while both Japanese Free Methodists and American Free Methodists believed in a shared heavenly citizenship, they nevertheless sometimes confined their faith within nation-state boundaries. In this way, they occasionally undermined the power of genuine transnational religious connection and blinded themselves to the brutality undertaken by their nations, such as the Japanese invasion of China.

As this study has demonstrated, each in their own ways Kakihara, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama searched for what it meant to be Japanese and Christian. They believed the central Christian teaching that all souls are equal before God, and that Christian citizenship is ultimately in Heaven. Their story helps us understand what Klaus Koschorke calls "the polycentric history of world Christianity" by giving examples of "the variety of regional centers of expansion, plurality of actors, multiplicity of indigenous initiatives, and local appropriations of Christianity" focusing on some



distinctive aspects such as “indigenous initiatives,” “reverse missions,” and “South-South links.”<sup>233</sup> Kakihara, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama, whose missionary activities span the end of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, pursued Christianity beyond its Western expression. Believing that spreading the Christian message to everyone everywhere was their supreme mission, these Japanese Christians made Christianity simultaneously “Japanese” and transnational, and in the process, they claimed a place for themselves both in Japanese society and in the larger transnational Christian community. Navigating the competing borders of Japanese citizenship and Christian communion, they revealed Christianity’s possibilities, as well as limitations, as a unifying force among people with different nationalities. In so doing, they continually challenged nation-state boundaries and the boundaries of Christian faith.

The rapport among Japanese, American, and Chinese Free Methodists, in both foreign and local missions, allows us to see how Christians and non-state actors could jointly create religious identities through transnational connections, and how those transnational networks could continue regardless of national circumstances. Political circumstances changed, but not their shared ultimate goal of building a global religious movement. Under adverse circumstances, the demands of national citizenship did not overwhelm Japanese Free Methodists’ religious membership. They did not always merely obey State directives, because their religious identity often caused them to look beyond the priorities of the Japanese government. Even when the State severely limited their

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<sup>233</sup> Klaus Koschorke, “Transnational Links, Enlarged Maps, and Polycentric Structures in the History of World Christianity,” *Journal of World Christianity* 6, no.1 (2016): 34; Klaus Koschorke, “Revisiting the Munich School of World Christianity” (lecture at the first Currents, Perspectives, and Methodologies in World Christianity, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, January 18-20, 2018). While Koschorke did not mention “reverse missions” as one of the aspects, I consider them as an advanced form of “indigenous initiatives.”

religious activities, these Japanese Christians refused to merely submissively support the State's priorities, and at times, as Tsuchiyama demonstrates, used the State to help expand their sphere of influence and the empire for God. As world Christianity does not reject Western Christianity, they did not cut their ties with American Christians.

At the same time, Japanese Free Methodists exposed the limitations of their transnational community by taking the legitimacy and power of nation-states for granted. When they followed government orders, they could not fully exercise the power of their transnational religious connections. Unlike the case of the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union at the turn of the twentieth century, but like many cases of Christian mission in the past, the Japanese Free Methodist Church relied on Japanese imperial power to spread the Christian Gospel. Unlike Margaret and Mary Leitch in the 1880s, Japanese Christians could not entirely reject "the idea of a purely 'national' Christianity" while they constructed a "Christian, transnational space." The Leitch sisters "moved *through* the nation-state, negotiating its institutions and making use of them, but mentally they occupied a different space from the nation ... and constructed a shared Christian culture beyond nation."<sup>234</sup> Japanese Free Methodists tried to do likewise, but at time fell short in trying to share Christian culture that extended beyond the nation. This was not unique to Japanese Christians. American Free Methodists also struggled to see beyond the ambitions and identity of their own nation.

Challenging the borders of nation and religion remains a significant issue even in contemporary Japan and other places in the world. Though Buddhism has obviously played an important role in Japanese religious life, many assume that Japanese national

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<sup>234</sup> Ian Tyrrell, "Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice," *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 469-470.

identity is closely related to the “traditional” beliefs of Shinto. The general assumption is that the Japanese believe Shinto, while Europeans and Americans believe Christianity. When the Group of Seven summit was held at the Ise Grand Shrine in Mie Prefecture on May 26-27, 2016, for example, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he had chosen the location so that participants of the summit could feel the “beautiful nature, rich culture, and traditions of Japan.”<sup>235</sup> Without any particular evidence, Abe assumed Shinto is a part of what he calls the “traditions of Japan.” While a few criticized Abe’s remark, the majority of Japanese seemed to take it for granted continually marginalizing Japanese Christians.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, Christianity is still widely assumed to be a “Western” religion. In Great Britain, for example, Christianity is the state religion, while in the U.S. Christianity is recognized as a civil religion.<sup>237</sup> American Christianity is frequently manifested in the public sphere as among the nation’s most important political and cultural symbols. Recent reports on President Trump’s ardent evangelical Christian supporters seem to perpetuate the image of Christianity as a parochial religion. These assumptions, however, ignore not only the experience of Japanese Christians but also Christianity’s ability to inspire allegiances that go beyond the familiar confines of ethnicity, race, and nation.

In this way, new directions in the study of World Christianity contribute to our understanding of Christianity by enlarging its meaning, but much work still needs to be done to define Christianity. World Christianity is inclusive, but that does not mean it can accommodate every perspective. In a similar way, defining the “Japanese Christianity” is

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<sup>235</sup> “Abe’s Pro-Shinto Motives in Spotlight with Choice of G-7 Ceremony Venue,” *Japan Times*, May 27, 2016, 3.

<sup>236</sup> “Abe’s Pro-Shinto Motives in Spotlight with Choice of G-7 Ceremony Venue,” 3

<sup>237</sup> Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 1-21.

also still in process because there is no consensus about what even “Japanese” really means. As Ryan Dunch points out, “national and cultural authenticity” is disputable.<sup>238</sup> Japanese Christians have long been searching for what “Japanese Christianity” means, but, as Tsuchiyama revealed, believers risk subordinating religious identity to national identity when they accept the government’s definition of “Japanese” identity. If, as Abe has implied, Japanese identity “naturally” includes Shinto practice, Japanese Christians must further question how they can balance their religious and national identities. This dissertation, however, demonstrates that in the work of Kakiyama, Kawabe, and Tsuchiyama, Japanese Christians have a living legacy upon which to form an identity profoundly rooted in both nation and in heaven.

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<sup>238</sup> Ryan Dunch, “Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (October 2002): 302.

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