

Athaley Albania

IC 603 – Spring 2023

For Dr. Wilmer Estrada

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This literature review will include the books, journal articles, and various media research such as podcasts or interviews with information on the geographical area of Japan and the historical connections that Christianity has had to impact the country. These sources are meant to support my research into finding the areas in which Christianity supports, critiques, and redeems the Japanese culture while also developing a theological understanding of how to minister to those in this context.

### **Books**

*Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective – Jeffrey P. Greenman & Gene L. Green*

This is one of the required texts for this course and will serve as a useful resource to build the foundations of how to look at theological and historical research. Although Japanese theology does not have a dedicated chapter in this book, Part One and Part Four create an understanding for the beginning of global theology, and praxis for the church, ministry, and mission. Emphasizing the quality of humility when pursuing mission cross-culturally should be the “first implication for church, ministry, and mission.” We are meant to pay attention to the things and people that matter to the heart of God, building a new kingdom sociology.

*Christianities in Asia – Peter C. Phan*

- Cultural diversity among the Christians in Japan
- Pre-modern Japan
  - o 1549 Roman Catholic mission in Kagoshima
  - o 1603 over 500 Japanese lay assistants had been trained for supportive role in mission, including translation, teaching and preaching. Women also active in social welfare and medical work as members of “misericordia”
  - o 1614 7 hospitals, homes for the elderly, and homes for orphans and children.
    - Approx. 300 000 converts (several times more than today)

1549	Roman Catholic mission to Japan initiated w/ arrival of Francis Xavier, S.J., and two fellow Jesuits in Kagoshima, Kyushu
1563	Conversion of Omura Sumitada (1533-1587), first feudal lord to adopt the new religion.
1587	Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1590) unifies Japan and issues an edict banning foreign missionaries.
1597	Twenty-six Christians crucified in Nagasaki
1601	Converts to Christianity reaches approx. 300,000.
1614	Tokugawa Ieyasu orders expulsion of Catholic missionaries and prominent Christians; severe persecutions, 44 martyred in Arima.
1619	52 Christians put to the stake in Kyoto.
1853	Commodore Perry visits Japan to establish diplomatic relations and open ports.
1859	Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox missionaries arrive in Japan.
1865	“Hidden Christians” reappear and meet Father Petitjean at the Oura Church in Nagasaki.
1873	Meiji government removes public notice boards proscribing Christianity, <b>allows Christian missionary activity.</b>
1889	Article 28 of Meiji Constitution establishes freedom of religious belief.
1901	Uchimura Kanzo established the non-church movement (mukyokai)
1922	Formation of the National Christian Council of Japan.

1929	Beginning of three-year nationwide cooperative evangelistic campaign among Protestants as a part of the Kingdom of God movement led by Kagawa Toyohiko.
1941	Protestant denominations unite to form the United Church of Christ in Japan (Nippon Kirisuto Kyodan)
1945	Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; end of Second World War and Occupation of Japan begins.
1947	Enactment of the postwar Constitution, which includes articles on the freedom of religion and separation of religion and state.
1967	The General Assembly of the Kyodan issues statement entitled “Confession Concerning Responsibility of the United Church of Christ in Japan during WWII.”
2007	Pope Benedict XVI signs decree approving the beatification of 188 martyrs on June 1.

*From the Rising of the Sun: Christians and Society in Contemporary Japan – James M. Phillips*

- Sinai type vs Zion type: most outreach was a combination of the two.
- **Mukyokai: non-church Christianity**
- Christians and Education in Japan: The Mixed Legacy of an Education Boom
  - o Occupation Era 1945-1952
    - Christianity was still prohibited until 1873 so some of the early missionaries began their work through teaching, preparing the way for several of the Christian schools that were to follow.
    - Rising nationalism in the 1930s led to a distaste for all things “Westernized,” including Christianity.
  - o Changing the Patterns of Theological Education
    - Rapid expansion of Christian schools and universities in the postwar period as a response to the education boom was an advantage that was bought at a severe price.

- Universities crises (1968-1971) was significant for all of Japanese education in general as a series of measures began to revise the entire educational system.
- We cannot yet make a measured judgment about the role of Christians in future Japanese education as it is too early.

*Christianity: The Japanese Way – Carlo Caldarola*

- **The Mukyokai Movement – Uchimura**

- o “spiritual” Japan vs “materialistic” western Christianity
  - The Mukyokai movement is a critique on the narrowness of Western Christianity. – see salaried ministers as “salesmen of God.” *Kamisama no Kaisha*
  - Pattern of denouncing priests generally but keeping personal friendships and relationships with individual ministers continues today within the Mukyokai movement.
- o Uchimura believes that physical characteristics of the earth influence the development of a civilization, and through faith there is Divine Providence that affected development of humankind and the mission of each country through geographical configurations.
- o The concept of Justice appeared from the Sun Goddess religion; purity valued – purification ceremonies *Misogi* and *Harai*. Filial piety as an expression of justice. *Bushido* evolved to encompass the virtues of loyalty, sincerity, filial piety, politeness, honor, and love.

- The concept of faith as the spiritual underpinning of the Japanese culture emerged from the religious awakening marking the end of the Heian and beginning of the Kakamura periods.
  - Fujii concluded justice and faith concepts were developed through Divine Providence to prepare Japan for the advent of Christianity.

*The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650 – C.R. Boxer*

- Christian culture and missionary life
  - Works published by the Jesuit mission press were 1) translated from a European language into Japanese. 2) works adapted from Japanese originals like Heike Monogatari. 3) linguistic works, grammars, and dictionaries which reflect the greatest credit on their originators and mark the beginning of the serious study of the Japanese language.

*Christian Theology in Asia – Sebastian C. H. Kim*

- Masao Takenaka (1925-2006)
  - Indigenization of Christian theology in Japanese context. God is the rice of life rather than bread in Asian contexts.
  - Nozomu Miyahira – reconstruct Christian theology to be consistent with both Christian theological tradition and appropriate Japanese cultural climate. Trinity being understood by applying Japanese concepts.
  - Masaya Odagaki – Hermeneutical Theology; explains God in terms of nothingness, that God or the divine being cannot be objectified as something to be comprehended, not atheism but non-theism. A divine duality.

## **Journal Articles**

*Host-directed short-term missions: Interviews with Japanese Liaisons – Ron Barber Jr.*

- Move toward a host-directed approach to STM built upon listening to hosts. These will develop/promote missiologically responsible/effective partnership between STM guests and hosts.
  - o Long-term connection
  - o Developing cultural awareness
    - Managing cultural encounters
    - Describing spiritual landscape
  - o Emphasizing relationships
- Listening to the hosts
  - o The Japanese hosts
  - o Decision making
  - o Examining expectations
- Social Aspects of STM?
  - o Economic costs/benefits

*Competing Visions of Mission and Unity among Japanese Protestants and Missionaries in Japan (1859-1912) – Thomas John Hastings*

- Rival perspectives on mission and unity among certain Japanese church leaders and Western missionaries.

- In this post-missionary and postcolonial era, we should fully expect that Japanese Christians will be gifted with new ways to express their own distinctive experience of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and when this happens, the worldwide Christian movement will be challenged and encouraged as Christ is refracted in new lights through the prism of Japan's beautiful culture. p.195

*Making Your Grave with the People – Thomas John Hastings*

- “No, my wife and I are determined to make our graves right here with these people.”
  - o Pastor K
- Commit their entire lives to the people of their congregation and broader community.
- “We should not romanticize the churches of the Global South, which now account for two-thirds of the world's Christians, but neither should we ignore them, [...]”

*An Outstanding Mission Work in Japan: A Case Study of the Yohan Tokyo Christ Church – Jun Ki Chung*

- The Japanese go through three phases whenever they encounter a new religion.
  - o 1. Welcome the new religion while preserving their traditional religion of Shintoism.
  - o 2. Integrate/assimilate new religion into their culture.
  - o 3. Reject original structure of new religion and accept the transformed “Japanized” version of it.
- Reasons for “success”
  - o Strong spiritual leadership
    - Experiential spirituality

- Ability to simplify complex problems of the world.
- Establishing clear goals and striving toward them
- A leader who boldly acknowledges his own mistakes through self-examination.
- Training disciples as “wild” leaders who will meet any challenge with acts of faith.

o Small Group Activities and Healing Ministry

- Inspiration of hope: constant contact, hearing testimonies of transformation gives hope to others that they “can be transformed.”
- Commonality: inferiority complexes/feelings of “why me?” – mutual sympathy, realization that they are not alone.
- Group cohesion: cultural value found in the church. “Attraction that group members feel about the group and its members.” Devotion/loyalty from relationships based on mutual love among the members.
- These three factors work together.
- Learning through interpersonal relationships
- Imitation: of characteristics of a leader/other members. Healing takes place when one can imitate how another has overcome similar problems. Self understanding also further develops in this process.

- Other Cultural and Socio-Anthropological Factors

- o 1. Beginning of a Japanese church. – intentional focus on reaching Japanese people regardless of the large Korean attendance. Did not pivot the focus.

- o 2. Application of the *samurai* culture to Japanese disciples: *bushido*. Evaluate the situation of life stoically, give absolute loyalty to his lord, share deep friendships with his friends, and, above all, must do their absolute best in completing their duty. – relate to commitment to the God of the Bible.
  - o 3. Effects of “hallyu”: the Korean wave. Reconciliation between Korean and Japanese intellectuals through fellowship in Christ. Their faith is a cause of praise and celebration.
- The gospel of Christ is victorious against “self-centered, consumer-oriented postmodern culture in Japan and to the rest of the world.
- Recommendations for further growth:
  - o Self-examination
    - Unity, holiness, apostolicity, catholicity
  - o Strengthen the sacrament of Holy Communion
    - Christ’s sacrifice and redemptive death become [...] a present reality that we experience, participate in, and enjoy.
  - o Incorporate practices of solitude and silence into its own spiritual training.
    - From solitude we gain inner confidence, strength, vision, and energy that we cannot gain from the outside.
    - Silencing of our words, greed, and thoughts allows for God to converse with our inner being. God knowing our inner hearts, the center of our existence, and to learning the fullness of God’s love and abundance.
  - o Becoming too goal oriented is in danger of producing artificial results.

- Japanese Pentecostalism should bear the fruit of the mission in Japan.
- The Japanese are either the most or the least religious in the world depending on how you think about them. *Mu-Shukyo* meaning irreligious population is about 70%. Many do not think of themselves as believing in a particular religion.
- Actions are more important than thoughts. There is greater respect in participating than believing.
- Religious plurality was only questioned by Christianity and faced rejection.
- Sense of belonging and identity come from participating in rituals, *bushido* plants a sense of duty and obligation. Social pressures are more likely to encourage someone to participate in rituals rather than belief in its effectiveness.
- *Goriyaku*: seeking for worldly benefits. Can be through divination, talismans, or going to the shrine to be prayed for.
- High value on experiential. Religious truth is the one that benefits them the most.
- Entry point into Christianity cannot be acceptance of the absoluteness of Christ, it will take time for the Japanese to accept that because of their existent views.
- “[...] truth is experiential and personal. [...] they are looking for communities in which spiritual experiences are tangible and real. We have to start with personal experience.” – Makito Nagasawa
  - o The ministry of Jesus was total, visible, and tangible.
- Suggested mission Approaches:
  - o Change from and individualistic approach to an identity approach/feeling of belonging. Openness and vulnerability follow the feeling of acceptance.
    - Belong > Experience > Believe.

- Discipleship can start before “conversion.” Allow people to be within the field of God’s influence, free of pressure to “convert” to the Christian faith. Being relational is highly valued.
- Expect that people will experience something spiritual when in fellowship.
  - A power encounter is one of the most effective points that non-believers can experience. Christian faith has spiritual power.
- Truth encounter: When they come to the realization of being loved and accepted, experience God’s work in their lives, then they will be ready to learn biblical truth. Connect their needs/wants with the Biblical truth. Putting the word into daily practice will help them experience God’s love and power and be blessed.

**Interview – Priscilla Balona**

Priscilla is currently living in Saitama with her family. She is ethnically Filipino, but she was born in Tokyo and has lived in Japan her whole life. Her dad moved to Japan for a job opportunity, and eventually was able to start his own business while her mother felt called into ministry when living in Japan. They have been doing ministry, intentionally with overseas Filipino workers and with other Filipinos who live in Japan and are married to Japanese nationals. She was a valuable resource to learn about what life is like in Japan currently for a Christian, and with the added nuance of being born and raised there, but not seen or accepted as “Japanese” although she is in the process of becoming naturalized. From her experience, the Christian community sticks together since they usually go to Christian schools their whole lives and their time is filled with serving in their ministry. Her family started doing the house church model two years ago with the intentionality of pursuing discipleship. They are seeing how this

house church model has benefitted their ministry and those they were discipling are now discipling their own house churches.

### **J-Cats Podcast**

This podcast focuses on Japanese contextual and theological studies by Jon Robinson who is a missionary in Japan, for missionaries. The podcast searches the contextualization practices and ideas from Japanese literature, history, and conversations with Japanese people, helping missionaries present Christianity in a familiar, non-foreign way. He uses many sources from other missionaries and theologians who have dedicated their ministry and study to reaching the Japanese people.