FUTURE OF MISSIONS IN JAPAN

BY ARTHUR JORGENSEN

Now that the war has ended, are there good reasons for the re-establishment of Christian missions in Japan? The answer to that query depends upon other questions appropriate at a moment when the work of the missions in Japan has been brought to a virtual standstill by the vicissitudes of war. What were the conditions under which missions were operating during the years preceding the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States? If the new united, independent Protestant church, known as the Church of Christ in Japan, continues as a united church, what changes in traditional missionary procedures will be called for? Is it advisable for American Christians to propose the re-opening of their missions in the wake of an army of occupation and under conditions which make it difficult for Japanese Christians to express themselves with complete candor on such a proposal?

Many Unanswered Questions

There are other questions the answers to which will not necessarily determine the policies of the leading Protestant missions though they will influence thinking on the subject in some measure. Such questions are: What will the Catholic Church do with respect to its missions in Japan? Historical relationships between the two great branches of the Christian church are such that the policies of either on a matter of such importance cannot but affect the other. Will some of the small missions, with or without denominational affiliations, which are sometimes inspired by more zeal than international good manners, make their individual plans to proceed regardless of common decisions by the leading Protestant missions? There is another question which has little direct bearing on the policies of missions but which cannot, nevertheless, be completely ignored. It has to do with the policies of the large business and industrial concerns which formerly maintained their representatives in Japan. Far-seeing leaders of business will agree that the impact of American life upon Japan should not be exclusively commercial but should include cultural and religious aspects.

In a brief article it is impossible to treat all these questions fully. Some will be touched upon very briefly, and some passed over entirely. The questions have been summarized here mainly to suggest the background against which responsible missionary leaders will probably do their thinking on this subject. Some will say that at least one fundamental question has been ignored; namely, are Christian missions justifiable in the first instance. That would be a valid criticism if this were designed as a theoretical approach which, quite frankly, it is not. The problems connected with the wisdom or propriety of reviving Christian missions in Japan at this time are essentially practical problems, and their solutions will be devised by those who have already given an affirmative answer to the question of whether or not missions are justifiable.

For fifteen years previous to 1940 there was a gradual decrease in the number of missionaries at work in Japan. During 1940 and the first half of 1941 conditions in Japan were such that most of the missions were discussing the pros and cons of complete dissolution. Indeed, some of them did close their work while the rest continued operations on a greatly reduced scale. The gradual decrease was due to normal causes that grew naturally out of the evolving relationships between the Japanese churches and the various denominational missions which had played a part in their development. During those years there was a growing demand by Japanese Christians that the control of all aspects of the Christian movement be placed more largely in their hands. Most of the missionaries in a few missions and some of the missionaries in all the missions sympathized with this demand on the part of their Japanese associates and did what they could to meet it in ways partly or wholly satisfactory to the Japanese Christians. It was one of the most warmly discussed issues in mission councils and conferences.

Relation of Church to Mission

The implications of these developments are clear: as the Japanese churches increased in strength and independence, the missions naturally decreased in numbers and prestige. Apparently few responsible Japanese Christians were inclined to press the apparent logic of these implications by suggesting that in a relatively short time there would be no more missionaries in Japan. On the contrary, these leaders generally protested this logical denouement and insisted that for many years to come a small number of competent missionaries would be needed in promoting the highest

Arthur Jorgensen was for many years a Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association in Japan. After Pearl Harbor he served with the Office of War Information.

This article is the first of a series of three studies on the future of mission work in the Far East. Subsequent articles will deal with China and Korea.

November 7, 1945

317
interests of the churches and the Christian faith in Japan.

In this connection it would seem that a consistent philosophy of missions must recognize that they are temporary. However, it is to be earnestly hoped that, although missions as such will some day cease, they will leave a legacy of cooperation between the churches in various lands that will continue indefinitely. The process of gradual demobilization will begin logically when a vigorous, independent church springs from the labors of missionaries. This is precisely what was going on in Japan where conditions rather than theories were determining the policies of missions. It would be correct to say, however, that although normal relationships between a young national church and foreign missions involve a process of gradual demobilization, they do not involve hasty evacuation. The younger churches can still profit by having associated with them a limited number of wise and experienced leaders from the older churches. But when this point has been reached, decisions with respect to the number and qualifications of persons needed must rest with the younger churches, not with the missions in the field nor with the mission boards in New York or London or elsewhere. This implies no sweeping criticism of missions and mission boards, for some of them were fully aware of tendencies in Japan and were moving willingly towards solutions. At least two or three important missions had made adjustments in policies and procedures that cleared them completely of lurking desires to control developments. Others, it must be admitted, were less blameless.

**Diminution of Missionary Activity**

This normal and apparently inevitable development in the relation of mission to church when the latter achieves a certain strength and independence was responsible for a reduced missionary staff in Japan and for substantial diminution in the range of mission activities during the fifteen years before 1940. But it was certainly not responsible for the condition to which missions were reduced in 1940 and the first half of 1941. Other factors with their roots in mounting nationalism, an inquisitive and jealous government, and the universally treacherous mire of war psychology, began now to operate. For the purposes of this article, it is enough to observe the important consequences which these factors brought to the Christian churches and missions of Japan. All funds from foreign sources were declined, and all missionaries in executive and administrative positions were relieved of their responsibilities. This applied to both branches of the church, Catholic as well as Protestant. From the middle of 1940 to the middle of 1941, these actions and the pressure of the mood or moods which inspired them, resulted in a seventy-five percent reduction of the Protestant missionary staff in Japan. Another consequence was a hastily conceived and, in part at least, officially inspired union of practically all the Protestant churches.

This new union in what is now known as the Church of Christ in Japan was unquestionably in line with long-prevailing views of a few prominent Japanese leaders within the various denominations. Some of them had worked diligently for many years for this consummation of their hopes. But in view of action taken by the denominations as late as 1938 on this very question of union, it would seem fair to say that without government pressure, exerted doubtless in very subtle ways, the odds would have been against them. The established system of denominations rested upon a combination of sentiment and vested interests which could hardly have been circumvented without the play of influences emanating from official sources. Whether this union will persist, once the pressure is removed, remains to be seen. But at any rate there it is, shorn of the various branches through which the denominational missions from abroad had made their cooperation effective.

**Need for Unified Policy**

This situation presents something new in the history of Christian missions. It is certainly pretty clear that twenty to twenty-five denominational boards in this country cannot act independently in choosing and sending missionaries to one united church in Japan. It could not be done in this diffuse way even if it were known that the one united church in Japan was prepared to receive missionaries from the United States. As a matter of fact this problem was under consideration even before the war by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, an organization dealing with questions of mutual concern to practically all the leading mission boards of the United States and Canada. The war removed the problem from the realm of immediate practical concern. Even with the ending of the war the first question is not, how shall missionary relationships be administered, but rather, are there to be any such relationships to administer.

The most important question is whether the missionary agencies of this, and indeed of other countries, will be sensitive to the extraordinarily delicate considerations involved in any proposal to send missionaries to Japan under present conditions. There are precedents which are not too encouraging. The nations from which most missionaries come have for some generations been the exponents of power — power that has been exercised freely throughout the world. The nations wielding this power are now, and have been for some time, in political and economic control of
five and a half of the six continents of the earth. It is probably not solely a coincidence that the expansion of missions has paralleled this expansion of western power.

**Power vs. Principles**

The peoples of the controlled areas have been made aware on several occasions that to meddle with the prerogatives of missionaries was to bring upon themselves the prompt and sometimes harsh restraints of power. Too often the so-called non-Christian lands have had reason to believe that these missionaries represented the princes of power as well as the Prince of Peace. For this missionaries were sometimes to blame and sometimes not. Like other men they are part of a concrete world of political and economic forces from which it is difficult to extricate themselves, even when they would prefer to do so. However, on this point the history of missions is fairly clear. It reveals an increasing unwillingness on the part of missionaries to stand on their political prerogatives when to do so might bring upon the people among whom they work the weight of superior power.

Under the conditions now prevailing between the United States and Japan, any proposal to re-establish missions in Japan bristles with these problems in an acute form. We must ask ourselves whether it is possible to give effect to any such proposal without linking the reappearance of missionaries with the power that now controls Japan's destiny; or, to put it bluntly, without giving the Japanese people the impression that our missionaries are now returning as the spiritual emissaries of an army of occupation. In one sense the problem seems hopeless, for it is obvious that no missionary can return to Japan during the period of military occupation without first securing the consent of the military authorities. And will not many Japanese honestly believe that he comes also at the behest of those authorities? It will be easy to interpret the granting of consent as based on a plan to use missionaries in achieving the aims of military occupation. If there are missionaries who contend that all this is unreal and fantastic, it is enough to say that they are Americans who lack the imagination to see these conditions through the eyes of Japanese, a fact which by itself is enough to disqualify them for missionary service in Japan at this critical time. It may be added that statements in this paragraph imply no criticism of the aims of military occupation, nor does it question the wisdom and magnanimity with which General MacArthur has hitherto given those aims expression in his occupation plans.

As one reflects on the apparent difficulties, one very crucial question recurs. It is this: What are the sincere desires of Japanese Christians with respect to the possible return of missionaries? Conceivably, leaders of the Protestant church in Japan, especially that considerable number who have had long and friendly relations with individual missionaries, will welcome the return of a few even during military occupation. Until we know definitely, it would be presumptuous to plan to return. At this point it should be emphasized that many prominent Christian leaders in this country are less concerned with the main subject of this article, namely, the possibilities of re-establishing missionary activities, than they are with the possibilities of renewing the ties of friendship that existed between Christians in the two countries for nearly eighty years. In that connection something happened recently which may have an important bearing on the possibility and desirability of renewing friendly connections between Christians of Japan and the United States.

**Invitation to American Christians**

The event referred to was a recent broadcast from Japan picked up by monitors of the Federal Communications Commission. This broadcast quoted the Rev. T. Miyakoda, formerly secretary of the National Christian Council of Japan and at present one of the secretaries of a somewhat similar organization comprising the various religious faiths of Japan. In referring to the visit of a group of well-known Japanese Christians to the United States in the spring and early summer of 1941, Mr. Miyakoda spoke of an informal plan for a return visit by American Christians. Since that plan was interrupted by the war, he made it clear that the united Protestant church in Japan would now welcome such a group of representative Christians from the United States. It is possible to view this as only a reflection of the characteristic eagerness of any Japanese to even the score of hospitality. Probably it is much more than that. It would be a mistake, however, to view this broadcast as an indication of what Japanese Christians feel with respect to the possible return of missionaries. Nevertheless, it is important in that it seems to open a door for possible contact between Christians of the two countries. Indeed, coming from a man in Mr. Miyakoda’s position, this intimation of a welcome awaiting them in Japan lays upon the group of prominent American Christians who entertained the Japanese representatives in 1941 the definite responsibility of seeking ways and means of returning the visit. This will doubtless require considerable negotiation under present somewhat complicated political relationships. Through such contact and the intimate exchanges of thought and purpose which a meeting of leading Christians would provide, it should be possible to raise and answer questions without embarrassment. Candid discussion between like-minded men in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
and friendship would naturally deal with some of the problems of cooperation between the Protestant bodies of the two countries. By this process it should not be difficult to discover whether or not the sending of a few missionaries from this country to Japan would be in line with conceptions of cooperation held by Japanese Christians.

Now having acknowledged that there are difficulties in the way, I feel impelled to add a few words regarding my own views on the kind of missionaries to be sent to Japan in the event that the difficulties are resolved. In the first place it seems to me very probable that a small number of carefully chosen missionaries can serve a useful purpose in the Japan that is emerging from fifteen years of domination by war psychology and officially inspired nationalism. But there should certainly be nothing that even suggests another "invasion" of Japan by missionaries. For this reason it is essential that the various sending agencies in this country cooperate in choosing this limited number from the very ablest men and women formerly in service in Japan. It is no reflection on the group of former missionaries to say that only a few men and women measure up to the delicate and complicated task confronting the missionary in Japan today. If the responsible agencies think in terms of hundreds, whether from former missionaries or from new candidates, they will fail. If they think in terms of tens they may succeed.

With regard to this subject of the human equation in international contacts, the emphasis upon choosing the right persons applies not only to Christian missionaries but also to the representatives of American business and cultural interests in Japan. The fact that all these representatives are unofficial serves only to stress the importance and possibilities of their influence. It is not enough to choose a missionary for his zeal, or a business man for his skill in doing business, or an exchange professor for his competence in a certain field of knowledge. Each of these is essential in its own sphere but by itself it is not enough. There must also be emphasis upon character, a broad, enlightened viewpoint, and the capacity to mingle gracefully with all classes of people in an alien culture. With such qualifications, unofficial representatives of a variety of interests in this country can contribute substantially to the reorientation of Japan in the world of free peoples now in the making.

UNRRA IN CHINA

BY AGNES ROMAN

The liberation of the Far East now makes more urgent than ever the immediate appropriation of substantial funds for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. In present virtually all funds appropriated have been committed for supplies and services. The UNRRA Council at its third session in London last August requested a contribution to its Administration of one percent of the national income for 1945 from nations not occupied by the enemy during the war. The request states that this is to be the final contribution by the member governments. This does not, however, mean that funds are available for UNRRA until the respective legislatures pass on the appropriations. In the United States, Congress originally authorized $1,350,000,000, but has not yet appropriated $550,000,000 of this amount. It is hoped that somewhat over $200,000,000 of the expected appropriation will be used on the China program. Should Congress appropriate the additional $1,350,000,000 called for by President Truman in an address to Congress on September 8, the relief and rehabilitation needs of China can be met more adequately.

Aside from funds, the extent to which it will be possible to satisfy China’s supply requirements will depend partially upon world supplies. The allocation of supplies hinges upon the decisions of the combined Supply Boards—the Combined Production and Resources Board, the Combined Raw Materials Board and the Combined Food Board. UNRRA may advise the Boards, but UNRRA has no control over the determination of sources or quantities of supplies to be made available to liberated areas.

The area to which the China relief and rehabilitation program applies is divided into eleven regions including Manchuria and Korea and excluding the provinces of Sikang, Tsinghai, Sinkiang, and Tibet and Outer Mongolia. Parts of Free China\(^1\) have been included for special reasons: for example, it is considered more economical to aid in the production of some relief and rehabilitation goods in Free China to meet the needs of the liberated areas than to purchase and ship them from abroad.

Because of the impossibility of foreseeing accurately

---

\(^1\) Although the use of the terms “Free China” and “Occupied China” no longer applies, these expressions will be used in this article in view of the distinction made in UNRRA’s China Program between areas which had been invaded by the enemy and those which had not.