

Reviews

IKADO Fujio 井門富二夫, *Sezoku shakai no shūkyō* 世俗社会の宗教 [Religion in a secular society]. Tokyo: Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Shuppan Kyoku, 1972. 589 pp. Tables. Notes. ¥3,000.

This is a veritable smorgasbord of a book. Concerned with the theory of religious organizations, the place of Christianity in the Japanese religious world, the relations between religious organizations and the state, the normative stance of religious organizations in contemporary Japan, etc., it has something for almost everybody. To aid those who do not read Japanese, I will try to summarize its contents in some detail, though no summary can do it justice. But first a word about the author.

Ikado Fujio, born in 1924, after graduating from the University of Tokyo Department of Religious Studies in 1949, went to the U. S. in 1955 and studied at the University of Chicago till 1959. One of the key figures under whom he studied, a man whose influence is evident throughout the pages of this book, is James Luther Adams. After his return to Japan in 1959, he served from 1960–1968 as a specialist on the staff of the Religious Affairs Section of the Ministry of Education and as a Research Fellow of the Institute of Oriental Culture of the University of Tokyo, simultaneously teaching part-time at the University of Tokyo and Tsuda College. Since 1968 he has been Professor of Comparative Cultures at Tsuda College and is presently also a Lecturer at the University of Tokyo. A prolific writer and heavily scheduled public speaker, Professor Ikado is widely known both in the Japanese religious world and in the world of Japanese religious studies. Few people possess the

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qualifications he does for undertaking this kind of study.

The title of this book might lead one to expect a typological study along the lines of H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and culture*. Nothing could be farther from the truth. What the author is trying to do, if I understand his intention correctly, is to explore, in the Japanese context, the meaning of secularization for the existence of religious organizations.

Defining secular society as a mobile society freed from any particular world view or religion as well as from state control, he presents a persuasive argument for the view that secularization is not necessarily anti-religious. To understand secularization in Japan requires a new perception of the character of Japanese society, for it is within this framework that religious organizations exercise their claim to existence.

Traditionally, Japan has been a communal or *Gemeinschaft* society. In such a society religious groups functioned to bring about organic harmony through myth, custom, and ritual. People were born into predetermined "statuses" and into predetermined religious affiliations. In general this pattern was bound up with the fact that traditional Japan was, by and large, a society without vertical or horizontal mobility. In effect it was a society that found spiritual cohesiveness in a single world view represented by Shinto as the religion of the village or community and Buddhism as the religion of the household. Both entailed a parish concept, a mobility-limiting geographical base.

Today's Japan has by no means turned its back on this way of ordering relationships and values, but it differs in important respects from previous tradition and is moving in a different direction. Social mobility, both horizontal and vertical, has undercut the parish system. People who formerly found their identity in small-scale face-to-face forms of relationship are now caught up in large-

scale urban anonymity. Their move away from the family home severed their ties with the old Shinto shrine and Buddhist temple. They have little interest in resurrecting these ties in the new setting, but they do face an identity problem which often takes the form of a sense of loneliness, emptiness, and meaninglessness. The function of religious organizations in this new context is to help people find their own solutions to life-problems by talking about them in groups that give a supportive sense of belonging, talking about them not just as problems common to man but as problems whose true features first come into view when held up to eternal reality.

The form of religious organization most appropriate to this context is no longer the parish-based "church" but the voluntary, purposive "denomination." In this sense secularization signals the advent of the era of inner-directed "organized" religion as over against outer-directed "established" religion. Where "established" religion was made use of by the state for purposes of social control, notably but not solely through the system of parishioner registration (*terauke seido*), "organized" or denominational religion is free of state control, tends to hold a more universal system of values, and is generally characterized by lay-centered movements of common people that emerge in a situation of large-scale population mobility.

In theoretical perspective Ikado's work is intended as a corrective to Max Weber. Weber's idea that Calvinism gave rise to secularism ignored the fact that Puritan Calvinism was largely limited to the gentility. Reflection on this problem led Ikado (in an earlier study) to the conclusion that Weber had given insufficient attention to Methodism as a response to urbanization and a movement of the common people—in effect an analogue to the modern religious movements of Japan. It is this class of phenomena, the class left unexplored by Weber, which Ikado has made

central to his investigation.

Three general problem areas serve at once as the foci of the investigation and the parts into which the book is organized.

Part I (pp. 73-252) is entitled "A tentative theory of religious organizations in contemporary society." Under this heading Ikado sets himself two tasks. The first is to consider the organizational features common to voluntary religious associations in a secular society characterized by population mobility and separation between religious organizations and the state. The central question here is : how do religious organizations in secular society conceive their role and how do they organize to carry it out ? At this point Ikado's procedure takes a noteworthy turn. Instead of surveying and classifying the ideas and organizational structures of various voluntary religious associations, he first inquires into the meaning of mature, religiously oriented existence, then defines the voluntary religious organization as the locus of faith-development through dialogue, pointing to the *hōza* (religiously oriented group counselling sessions) as a means of personality formation. "Evangelism" or propagation of a faith is linked to dialogical skill that takes as its point of departure not religious teachings or symbols but the concerns of the other. To some extent this is a *descriptive* account of what goes on today in many religious organizations, but I was particularly struck by the fact that in this section Ikado also seemed to set forth a *prescriptive* account. He says in effect : this is the way to do it. I am inclined to think that this approach, which Ikado explicitly acknowledges as that of "normative science" (*kihanteki kagaku*), reflects a cultural expectation placed on the scholar of religions in Japan. Be that as it may, the existence of this normative facet is one point that needs to be kept in mind when reading this book.

The second task is to comprehend through typological analysis how the principal religious organizations have been trying to modern-

ize their structures and functions so as to attain greater effectiveness in industrial society. This is more than a question of structural reform. It is question of the meaning and purpose the organization exists to serve. Investigation of this question in the case of religious organizations whose parish base has been disintegrated by population movement and secularization leads Ikado to trace the process by which “churches” have become “denominations” in law even while retaining their “church mentality.” On the assumption that evangelism may be the key to changing this mentality, he next contrasts the prewar religious *kō* groups with the contemporary *hōza* groups, emphasizing how the former tended to be clergy-centered associations in a relatively stable society, associations limited by ties to kin and locale and favoring vertical relations. By contrast the *hōza* groups tend to be voluntary, lay-centered evangelistic associations in a mobile society, associations favoring functional relations while still leaving some room for the vertical. The clergy serve not as “emperors” but as “expediters,” people who encourage and assist lay people in the work of evangelism. Among the new religious movements, Sōka Gakkai, P. L. Kyōdan, Seichō no Ie, and Risshō Kōsei Kai are brought forward as prime examples of this form of association, while among the principal “established” religions, the *Dōbōkai undō* (“movement for increasing companions in faith”) of the Shinshū Ōtaniha receives special attention as a promising adaptation of the *hōza* approach. (By the same token Protestant Christianity in Japan gets its knuckles rapped for its anachronistic clergy-centeredness.)

Part 2 (pp. 253–400) turns the spotlight on Japanese Protestant Christianity with the title “Social strata and religious organizations : The social character of Protestantism in Japan.” Here Ikado casts a wide net. Beginning with an analysis of the historical situation and atmosphere in New England that led Puritan Christians to

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undertake evangelism abroad, he notes that the sense of responsibility to "save souls" went hand in hand with a sense of responsibility to impart "culture," notably through educational work and the teaching of English. This latter feeling coincided, in Japan, with people's desire to learn English in order to obtain government positions—which had the indirect effect of separating Christianity from the common people. Christianity remains a minority religion, but its influence in the realms of education and social reforms cannot be exaggerated.

The next question is: what happened to Japanese Protestant Christianity around the turn of the century when urbanization and population mobility first began to make themselves felt? The observation Ikado makes central to his consideration of this question is the difference in character between the early Japanese Protestants, who tended to be people of samurai background opposed to an emperor-centered state, and the later Protestants, who tended to be white-collar workers with a compromising attitude. He attempts to get at this shift in character by tracing the changing Protestant response to the government's successive policies toward religious organizations.

This is followed by a chapter that compares Protestant Christianity with other religious organizations in Japan, paying particular attention to how they come to grips with population mobility as one of the conditions of their existence. The main points here are three: (1) when people come from the provinces to the big cities, they often seek some way of preserving their identity, which means preserving their old value system as expressed through veneration for the ancestors, household-oriented ethics, the *oyabun-kobun* pattern of human relationships, etc.; (2) other modern religious movements, exemplified by Konkōkyō, Risshō Kōsei Kai, etc., are working hard to get close to these people in their daily lives and

be helpful to them where it counts ; (3) Protestant Christianity, on the other hand, is still largely a "Sunday religion." In the same connection it is noted that whereas Shrine Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity as "established" religions lay considerable stress on the ownership of shrines, temples, and churches, the rapidly growing new religious movements are much more likely to make use of individual homes for their local meetings. "Religion or real estate"—that is the question.

The final chapter in this part poses the problem : what posture should be taken by the United Church of Christ in Japan (*Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan*), here considered representative of Japanese Protestant Christianity, as a "denomination" in contemporary industrial society ? Once more reverting to the point that present-day Protestantism in Japan is too clergy-centered, too Sunday-centered, too much of a "we're waiting for you" kind of religion, Ikado lays the responsibility for this state of affairs squarely on the shoulders of present-day Japanese Protestants. He alleges that they are indifferent to the changes in society that condition their existence and are overly attached to western traditions and models. Here again the meaning of population mobility for evangelistic methods comes into play. In an earlier day when people stayed put, preacher-centered evangelism may have had something to commend it, but that day is long past. Social mobility, the freedom of religious organizations from state control, the fact that two-thirds of the population of Japan claim no institutional religious affiliation while eighty percent of the same people affirm the importance of religious faith—if "secularization" in the Japanese context means these things, then it is up to Protestants to abandon their martyr complex and their cliquish western-oriented feeling of elitism and open their eyes to the opportunities that lie before them to help people find fulfillment and wholeness. To this end it is essential to understand the

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importance of dialogue in human encounter, and to see that the primary agents of meaningful dialogue are not the clergy but lay men and women. Taking this point seriously would involve restructuring the church organization in such a way that denominational administrators would emerge not as members of a hierarchy but as "bureaucrats" or enablers. The kind of evangelism recommended for a reoriented Protestantism is not the "crusade" type of a Billy Graham but "indirect evangelism," that is, communication through mass media, not as a substitute for personal dialogue but as preparation for it.

Part 3 (pp. 401-585) bears the title "Religious organizations in a society characterized by separation between religious organizations and the state: Denomination theory." Ikado views the "denomination" as qualitatively different from both "church" and "sect." The church-type, following Troeltsch, is defined as an organization that oversees a specific geographical area, an organization marked by a sharp distinction between clergy and laity. Where corporate possession of real estate is involved, the agent for the corporation is a clergyman, not a layman. The sect-type, on the other hand, recognizes the faith of its members, the faith they hold in common, as authoritative, but while in its early stages it acts like a voluntary association, with the passage of time it tends to become once again a church. Both types presuppose an integrated relation, or at least an atmosphere of integration, with the state. By contrast, the denomination-type, also a form of voluntary association, arises in a secularized situation, a situation in which religious organizations are free of state control. It entails, with regard to religious organizations, the possibility of a religiously pluralistic society. To speak of the "modernization" of religious organizations in the context of secularization is to speak of "denominations."

Applying this typology to Japanese religious organizations, Ikado

denies (p. 440) that there are as yet any real denominations in Japan. The "established" Buddhist, Shrine Shinto, and Christian bodies, with their elitist orientation, can at best be called "church-like denominations." Even the modern religious movements, since they in fact rely heavily on ties with kin, locale, and place of work and since, while giving lip service to the principle of voluntarism, they sometimes put tremendous pressure on people to participate in the organization, should perhaps be identified as "sect-like denominations."

After one chapter tracing the historical development and content of three forms of popular religion in America (fundamentalism, positive thinking, and the business creed) and another critically surveying the quality and timing of religious radio programs (in connection with the theme of indirect evangelism), Ikado concludes his study with a fascinating chapter on the kinds of problems that need to be taken into consideration in working out legally and morally the relationships between religious organizations and the state. The extent to which religious organizations incorporated as juridical persons should be allowed to engage in business enterprises and the debate over whether religious bodies should be accorded tax exemption are only two general headings for the bag of complex problems Ikado here discusses with sophistication and deftness.

This summary, lengthy as it is, cannot begin to suggest the richness of the data Ikado presents during the course of his study. A review, however, cannot stop short with a summary. Some attempt must be made to assess the value of the book.

After reading it, I found myself wishing that the author had drawn out the implications of his investigation for a general theory of religious organizations. It was his acute observation of a deficiency in Weber's theory that led him to this investigation in the first place. It seems a pity that after completing the investigation

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he did not return to the subject of general theory and relate the two explicitly.

A second weakness concerns the structure of the book. Though the author never departs from the announced theme of his investigation, he does not make clear in his methodological prologue precisely what areas he intends to investigate and why. The three parts into which the book is divided manifestly stand in some relation to the research problem, but in the absence of a research design explaining the course to be followed, the investigation sometimes seems to be guided only by intuition.

Regrettably, it must also be noted that in style the language of the book is diffuse, repetitive, and difficult to read.

Having said that much, however, it is only fair to observe that despite these weaknesses, this book amply repays the effort it takes to read it. For my own part I found myself instructed not only about the modern Japanese religious world but also about the religious history of the U. S. The idea of exploring how religious organizations in a society in process of secularization conceive their purpose and shape their structures so as to help disoriented people find themselves through shared religious dialogue—this idea, in Professor Ikado's able hands, has borne rich fruit.

From quite another angle, the book can also be read as a passionate *cri de coeur*, the plea of a socially informed and humanly concerned man that the religious organizations of his country, regardless of tradition, shed their anachronistic attachment to old ways and engage in a mutually supportive competition to serve men and women seeking a sense of solidarity, wholeness, and meaning in life. This plea is not obtrusive, but it can be discerned as a "ground bass" that strikes a persuasive note of moral urgency.

I highly recommend this book. In addition I have an earnest request to make of the publisher: that scholarly books of this kind

(and this book too, if it is reprinted) be provided with an index. To publish so rich a study and undercut its usefulness by omitting an index is not only self-contradictory, it is almost a crime.

The book may be ordered at the following address: Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Shuppan Kyoku, 1-551 Totsuka-machi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160.

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