

Abstract of
LEADERSHIP IN CONTEXT AS APPLIED TO
THE JAPAN MENNONITE BRETHREN CONFERENCE

A Thesis Presented to
the Faculty of the
Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Divinity

by
Philip Gerhard Hamm
May 1981

A B S T R A C T:

In Japan a number of religious groups have grown at an exponential rate since the end of the Second World War. During this same time the Christian church has grown slowly but steadily. One factor which affects the growth of an organization is its structure. Church leadership can either inhibit or accelerate growth depending on how it structures and views the laity.

This study examines biblical and cultural models of leadership with reference to the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference. This study sets forth the thesis that the model of leadership of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference needs to be modified to overcome many of the present leadership problems by incorporating more of the principles found in biblical and cultural models.

A biblical foundation is established through an examination of the functions of leadership described in Ephesians 4:11, 12. Over the centuries three basic models of leadership have emerged: Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregational. The model which a church adopts greatly affects the way it ministers to the world.

Japanese social, economic and religious groups give us patterns with which to compare the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference. A descriptive study of the Japan Mennonite Brethren becomes the reference point for an analysis and practical application of biblical and cultural principles outlined in the previous two sections.

The procedure is based on the concept that the supracultural principles of leadership in the Bible and the cultural models in the host country must inform the transcultural concepts of church leadership.

This study is based on the congregational model of church organization and seeks to approach the subject from a believers' church perspective.

The study shows that there are a number of important areas where the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference which can be modified by

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Without the help in typing and support of my precious wife, Lydia, this project would have been impossible. She has encouraged and helped in innumerable ways to make this study and my stay at seminary very enjoyable.

This thesis is dedicated to the workers in Japan who are labouring to build the Kingdom of God. May God be glorified by their efforts as they seek "to save those that are lost."

Electronic Copy - August 2018

I scanned in my thesis at the request of several people. When I wrote this thesis we used an electric typewriter - yes before the computer word processing! I have not maintained the Turabian format which was required for the Master's Thesis.

A note: Egalitarian in this thesis does not refer to male female relationships but rather seeing clergy and laity as equal but having different roles. This thesis does not deal with the male female leadership debate.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Japan has had excellent national leadership. Present leaders are planning for dynamic growth but are faced with an overwhelming problem of who will carry out the evangelistic work which needs to be done. Because of the escalating cost of property and diminishing foreign financial assistance for the construction of new church buildings, the conference in Japan will need to explore other possibilities for meeting places. The training of future leaders was severely disrupted because of a disbanding of the Osaka Biblical Seminary. A new seminary, the Evangelical Biblical Seminary, has been formed and at present has several students planning on full - time ministry. There is a need for an evaluation of the process of training pastors and leaders for the future. Pastors work diligently to minister to their congregations and to reach out to the community. There is a tendency to attempt the impossible by doing the work themselves instead of involving and training lay leadership. The Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference is in transition from first - generation to second - generation Christian leadership. But this problem lies beyond the scope of this study.

HYPOTHESIS

This study sets forth the thesis that the model of leadership of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference needs to be modified to overcome many of the present leadership problems by incorporating more of the principles found in biblical and cultural models.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Christian church has existed in Japan for over 120 years but comprises less than one percent of the population. We cannot help but question why Christianity has grown so slowly. We might blame the language, the culture or the religions of Japan but it would get us nowhere. We must examine some of the foundational

principles of the evangelistic process and what happens when a person joins the church. Does his conversion impact his web of relationships to lead those with whom he is in close contact to Christ? If it does not then Christianity can never hope to grow to include a large percentage of the population.

In contrast to Christianity, New Religions in Japan have grown phenomenally during the same time period and under the same conditions. This gives us some cause for concern and reflection. Why has Christianity failed to move ahead more rapidly? Has Christianity missed one or more of the dynamic elements inherent in the Japanese culture?

I believe the leadership pattern is a key to unlock the future of the church in Japan. There will soon come a time when missionaries will need to re-assess their presence in Japan. It may soon become economically impossible or impractical to keep missionaries in Japan. The church is maturing and already the role of the missionary has changed from paternal role to servant role. In some cases the missionary has already come under the Japanese church authority. How will the present forms of leadership which have been established by missionaries work in the future?

The Mennonite Brethren began a mission work in Japan in 1950. Over the last thirty years, the missionaries have established a live autonomous church which is growing and developing. Missionaries go to the field with certain ideals and experiences in the church organization. These become tempered and influenced by cultural elements. The resultant organization has many cultural overtones. In the case of church organization, the Bible, church tradition, the missionaries' experience, the sending church, and cultural norms of the host country all work together to produce the final product. A periodic assessment can be helpful to solve problems which have developed because of the leadership structures. Certain adjustments of the present structure must be made if the problems are to be resolved. The Japanese have developed a plan for continued multiplication of churches. Presently there seems to be a serious shortage of future pastors and this greatly affects the possibility of expansion. The situation forces us to examine the present dilemma in the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church and to propose a practical and feasible plan of action for the future.

CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS

Since the churches in North America have sent out missionaries,

supported them with finances and prayer, even paid large sums for the construction of churches in Japan, the North American Churches often want to see an organizational pattern similar to the home model reproduced in the foreign country . The missionaries usually do not critically evaluate the organizational structure of the sending church but accept it as normative. The feasibility of this kind of reproduction must be examined in light of the culture. If the North American leadership model is incompatible with the culture, certain modifications must be made to bring it into line with Japanese models.

This writer is concerned that through an evaluation of this kind, those who have been involved in the Mennonite Brethren mission may feel threatened and criticized. They have struggled with the language and culture and done a tremendous work for our Lord. There have been very positive experiences as the missionaries and the Japanese pastors and laymen have worked diligently together, building the Kingdom of God. This study is not intended to reflect negatively, but rather to evaluate positively and give constructive proposals to build up the foundations where there maybe weaknesses.

DEFINITIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Definitions

Leadership of the local congregation is comprised of believers who are responsible for the administration, for the spiritual life of the group and for evangelism. This group begins with responsible lay people and includes a missionary or pastor but as the church grows, leadership expands to a church council, board of elders or other such responsible group.

Indigenization is the process of adapting the supracultural gospel into traditional cultural methodologies and terms which the hearers can understand and identify with. Traditionally indigenization has been built on the three self movement: self - government, self-support, and self - propagation.³ Tippett has divided the self-governing aspect into two areas: namely, self - functioning and self - determining, and he has added two other self's: self-image and self-giving.

Contextualization is a relatively new term developed by the Theological Education Fund, a fund dispersed by the World Council of Churches. In 1972 they defined contextualization.

It means all that is implied in the familiar term "indigenization" and yet seeks to press beyond.

Contextualization has to do with how we assess the peculiarity of third world contexts. Indigenization tends to be used in the sense of responding to the Gospel in terms of a traditional culture.

Contextualization, while not ignoring this, takes into account the process of secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical moment of nations in the Third World. Those who espouse contextualization say that context must inform theology. The "context becomes part of the content, and analyses of the situation often serve as excuses by which to import radical ideologies and theologies."

Contextualizers tend toward a dialectical approach. Evangelicals still hold to a biblical foundation from which to begin their theologizing." 'Contextualization' to evangelicals . . . has meant utilizing pattern of indigenization and grappling with new influences in modern culture."4

Context-indigenization. Because of the difference in meaning when the term 'contextualization' is used, Fleming has coined the term "context - indigenization." Fleming defines this term as the indigenizing of the gospel in the modern context. This term truly means all that is meant in the traditional understanding of the term indigenization. Yet it seeks to press beyond it by implementing insights of anthropology among other things. At the same time, however, these insights are subjected to the judgment of Scripture. 5

This paper will attempt to follow the context-indigenization principles described above.

New Religions. Religious groups in Japan are based on folk religion, Buddhism or Shinto and have become popular and grown rapidly since the Second World War. They "have their spiritual center in the person and purportedly unique teachings of a founder who comes from the common people, and a reoriented toward the gaining of new members from among the masses." 6

Assumptions

Missionaries should seek to create leadership models which are culturally sound and as free from foreign elements as possible.

There are sufficient religious barriers to cross when a Japanese person considers Christianity. Part of the task of the missionaries to remove as many of the non-cultural elements as possible from the presentation of the Gospel message. He is culturally sensitive to the people he is trying to reach. This study takes seriously the fact that the best models are yet to be found and that there is always room for improvement. This does not mean that what has been done in the past was wrong but as we learn from the past we can grow to become more effective in the future.

This study also realizes that because culture changes, what was operative twenty years ago may need some modification. What has been tried in the past and failed may have been premature and may work when conditions change.

Limitations

This is not a definitive work and does not intend to give all the answers but rather raise questions and propose possible solutions.

The author has spent only three years in Japan and is limited in his understanding of the culture and work of the missionary organization, the Mennonite Brethren Mission in Japan and of the national organization, and the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church. A study of this kind is limited to the available resources in the Archives for Mennonite Brethren Studies, books written on the various topics, personal experiences and conversations with leaders both in North America and Japan. Due to the author's limited ability in the Japanese language he had to use secondary sources on the Japanese organizational structures which have been written in English.

As with any study, the author comes with certain biases. The author is committed to an involved laity and a congregational model of church government. The biblical and cultural models were chosen with this in mind.

PROCEDURE

If we are to take the scriptures seriously we must begin our study with an examination of the biblical concepts of leadership. We are not so concerned in this paper with the qualifications and selection of leadership but with the functions and models which are found in the Bible.

Once we have a firm biblical base we need to have a cultural base from which to evaluate the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference. To examine the various cultural aspects of Japan we will consider social, economic and religious models of organization. We will then examine the present organization of the Japan Mennonite Brethren as a conference of churches and as local congregations. This study will examine the structure, the decision-making process and the training on both of these levels. Much of the information gathered for this chapter was gathered through the use of a questionnaire sent to missionaries and nationals.

These three studies are descriptive in nature so as not to become judgmental nor bias the case unduly. Following the three descriptive chapters the study will attempt to analyze and apply the principles in the biblical and cultural models with respect to the Mennonite Brethren Church in Japan.

- 1 Alan R. Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973), pp. 154- 158.
- 2 Bruce C. E. Fleming , *Contextualization of Theology* (Pasadena; William Carey Library, 1980), p. 86.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 6 Agency for Cultural Affairs, *Japanese Religion* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1972), p. 94.

CHAPTER II

NEW TESTAMENT LEADERSHIP AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

When a missionary begins a church in a new culture he needs to develop a cultural form of leadership if he hopes to plant an indigenous church. How can the best leadership model be determined for churches beginning in new cultures? Do missionaries look to business models, cultural models or biblical models? The Anabaptist movement, of which the Mennonite Brethren are a part, sought to restore for its congregations the New Testament pattern. The question must be raised as to how normative the early church is for later periods. Franklin Littell writes, "Either the message and example of the New Testament are to be a binding norm or they are considered to be historically undeveloped beginning patterns which had to be altered." The Catholic and Protestant state churches agree with the latter statement. "On the contrary, churches and societies on the line of the free churches have understood that the New Testament gives the standards also for the organization of the Church. Thus, the Anabaptists believed that there was a sufficiently developed structure within the biblical literature on which to develop a system, of church organization. At present most of the Mennonite Brethren churches follow a congregational form of government with a church council to give guidance and a moderator to lead the discussion and business meetings. The pastor (usually a full-time professional) answers to the council. The council does not run the church but rather determines agenda for the congregation to process. The present model does not come from a specific model prescribed in the New Testament but is based on scriptural principles of spiritual leadership, body life and unity.

The Mennonite Brethren Conference is relatively young and in some ways is going through the same kind of process that the early church experienced as it began the process of institutionalization.

The various strands of Christianity have different church structures but each claims to be biblical. If these structures

are truly biblical should we not organize our own church in like manner? Since there are several distinct models which claim to be biblical we need a closer examination of the biblical text after which they are patterned.

This study will examine the terminology concerning Leadership as found in Ephesians 4:11,12. The focus of this study is not on the office but on the function of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and those which the above are to equip for ministry, the laity.

Although not mentioned in the Ephesians passage the other functional leadership described in the New Testament is the deaconate. This study also examines several present systems of organization.

TERMINOLOGY IN NEW TESTAMENT LEADERSHIP

Apostles

The term, "apostlos," has the basic meaning "sending out," "delegate, envoy, messenger" (Phil. 2:25, 2 Cor. 8:23) but the New Testament uses "apostolos" primarily for the apostles, a group of highly honoured believers, who had a special function.² The New Testament does not use this word exclusively for the Twelve. Others were also called apostles: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14), James the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:19), Apollos (I Cor. 4:9), Silas (I Thess. 2:7), and Adronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7). Thus, the word "apostle" was also used in a broader sense meaning missionaries, messengers or men sent on a particular mission.

The early Christian apostolate had its roots in the Jewish practice of using ambassadors. There is a famous rabbinic saying,

" the ambassador of a man is like the man himself."³ The ambassador "sent one" had the full authority to act on behalf of an individual and his negotiations were binding upon the one who sent him. The apostles were given authority by Christ to make binding decisions on His behalf (Matt. 18: 18). From the Jewish background we also can realize that "the apostolate is not an office in our sense of the word but a commission limited both temporally and materially."⁴

Ephesians 2:20 states that the apostles are a part of the foundation which was laid by the early church. Some interpret this to mean that today there are no apostles because the

foundation has been laid. "The foundation of the church is laid only once with Christ as the cornerstone. Hence, apostles and prophets belong to the apostolic age only."5

The foundation of the church is quite narrowly defined by those who hold this view. "Just as Jesus Christ laid down a foundation in the lives of his apostles, so did they in the early church, and so it must be done in every place where a congregation of Christians comes into existence."6

The function of the apostle is seen in the present day missionary. Instead of using the Greek derivative "apostle" the Latin derivative "missionary" (Latin- missionaries - one who is sent)7 is generally used by Christians. As missionaries or apostles are sent out they have the task of laying the foundation of new churches, especially as church-planters. There is no question that we have apostles today working in that capacity.

Using the term apostles would set off those sent out as church-planters who lay the spiritual foundations from those sent out as missionary support personnel such as teachers, accountants or mechanics.

We do not need to resurrect the office of apostle which was filled by the Twelve and certainly there is no need for the church to try to trace an apostolic succession, but there is a function, a gift which God gives to His church, which the church-planter fulfills by laying new foundations in new localities.

Prophets

In several Scriptures prophets are linked together with apostles. (I Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 2:20; 3: 5; 4:11; Rev. 18:20). As with the apostles, some believe that the prophets were only for the apostolic age. Churches do not have men with the title of prophet in leadership. Practice should not dictate our structures but if the Bible shows that there is a need for a prophetic function in the church and God gives the gift of prophesy to the church Christians should not neglect it. The gift of prophesy takes on three aspects in the New Testament: predictive prophesy, explaining the Scriptures, and discernment of the secrets of the heart.

Agabus was a prophet involved in predictive prophesy. In Acts

11:27, 28 he foretold the famine which was to take place in all the world. Again in Acts 21:11 he prophesied. This time it was concerning the events which would happen to Paul should he continue on his journey into Jerusalem.

At Antioch the prophets were with the teachers ministering to the Lord. Judas and Silas, leading men among the brethren, were sent by Jerusalem with others to share the decision of the Jerusalem council. Acts 15:32 says they "being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message." Thus, the prophets had a ministry of encouraging and strengthening the believers. The passages in I Corinthians 12 and 14 which refer to prophets indicates that they had an active function in the Corinthian church. Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers to "desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy" (I Cor. 14:1). Is the church to ignore that which Paul told the Corinthians to "desire earnestly?"

God gives men the ability to discern the secrets of the heart. This constitutes a special function of prophesy (I Cor. 14:24, 25). Apparently, persons had arisen in the congregation who had been imbued with the particular gift of revealing the secrets of the heart, a charisma that the New Testament also attributes to Jesus (John 2:25; 6:64; et al.) and to Peter (Acts 5:3f). Bittlinger shows that this gift of discernment did not end with the apostolic age but is repeated in church history. Peter says in his speech on the day of Pentecost that "in the last days, God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy'" (Acts 2:17). The Christian church is still in the last days and thus we should be exercising this gift. There should be Christians, gifted by God, who are speaking forth the Word with boldness, foretelling events which are to come, and discerning the secrets of men's hearts to bring them to repentance.

Evangelists

The noun "evangelist (euaggelistes)" is used three times in the New Testament and is used of Philip, of Timothy and those which the Lord gives as evangelists to the church. It refers more to a function than an actual office. As with the other gifts, God equips some to this special kind of ministry in the church. It is not something natural but a supernatural charismata which is used to build the Kingdom of God.

As seen in the example of Philip and Timothy, the evangelist was not stationary in his ministry but moved from place to place proclaiming the Word of God. The evangelists continue the work of the apostles. They are not just missionaries, for, as euaggelion is congregational as well as missionary preaching, so the leader of the community can also be called euaggelistes.¹⁰ The task of the evangelist is to proclaim the good news. This preaching was not just limited to the preaching of the way of salvation. The New Testament Evangelist was, indeed, a preacher of Christ to the unsaved, but his ministry was not fulfilled until he had gathered the converts together as an assembly of the Body of Christ and delivered to them the whole Counsel of God.

Hay believes that the evangelist is similar to our church-planter who goes out in groups to establish local congregations. Once there is stability and elders are appointed, the evangelist moves to another location.¹¹ The mandate of the church includes the evangelization of the world. The whole body of Christ is responsible for explaining the Good News of Jesus Christ to a dying world. Although evangelism is a prime responsibility of the whole church, and to that extent all Christians are to be involved in evangelism, not all Christians are called to be evangelists. Peter Wagner has estimated that only "ten percent of the members have been given the gift of evangelist . . . but every Christian has the role of witness. These two . . . must combine to mobilize the maximum force for evangelism."

Pastor, Elder, Bishop

The word "presbuteros" "is best translated as 'elder' or 'presbyter' and can designate either a person of age or a person in an office. It is used eleven times in the New Testament to designate Christians."^^ The term "elder" was used in the Jewish religious system and was carried over into Christianity. Although it is not exclusively used in the Jewish - Christian setting, it appears as though this was the most widely used term for the spiritual leader in the Jewish segment¹⁵ of the church.

The term "bishop" (episkopos) means "overseer," and is used "of persons who have a definite function or a fixed office with in a group."¹⁶ In the five times it is used in the New Testament (Acts 20: 28; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; I Peter 2: 25) it has been translated bishop and overseer. Since the word is used in the singular in I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:7 (and of Christ in I Peter 2: 25), some have taken it to mean there is a single supreme leader in each church. In these

passages it speaks only of the qualifications of each individual bishop. L. Coenen writes, "Reference to the qualities required in a bishop (singular) in Titus 1:7 offers little support for the theory of monarchical episcopacy with a single bishop supervising all other office holders."¹⁷

Quinn and others attempt to make a case that the term "bishop" was used in the predominantly Greek churches and the term "presbyter" in the Jewish setting.¹⁸ In Acts 20: 28 the Ephesian elders are referred to as bishops. In Titus and Philippians the people written to are clearly in the Hellenistic areas. "Bishop" is used in the first letter to Timothy who was at Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3). Although the word "elder" is also used at Hellenistic locations there seems to be no use of the term "overseer" in the Jewish community. Quinn's argument seems reasonable, but we cannot argue from silence and make a conclusive statement that the word "bishop" was used in the Greek churches and "presbyter" in the Jewish ones.

The concept of a pastor is found only in Ephesians 4:11 as a function of leadership. The word is used elsewhere in the New Testament to signify shepherd (poimen) as found in Luke 2:8, 15, et.al. Although Ephesians 4:11 is the only reference to the shepherd as leader of the people of God, the verb form meaning "to tend as a shepherd" is used three other places ¹⁹ (John 21:16; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2) with reference to the church. There is clear evidence that the terms elder, bishop, and pastor refer to the same people. Acts 20:17 tells us that Paul called for the Ephesian elders to come and meet him and then in verse 28 it tells us that the Holy Spirit has made them bishops (episkopous) to shepherd (pastor) the church of God. In I Peter 5:1, 2 Peter writes, "I exhort the elders among you . . . shepherd the flock of God among you, (overseeing - episkopontes) not under compulsion, but voluntarily . . ." ¹⁹

It is generally admitted that in the Early Church the three titles, presbyter (Elder), Pastor and Bishop, all referred to the ministry of one and the same person . . . However, the three terms are not synonymous, although they designate the same person. 'Presbyter' has reference to rank or office, while 'Pastor' and 'Bishop' have reference to the duties performed.²⁰

The term "presbyter" has the concept of age or maturity; "pastor" refers to a caring function and "bishop" or "overseer" refers to the leadership and guiding functions.

The eldership model in the New Testament was clearly a multiple-leadership model. When leadership at specific locations is mentioned, the plural is always used. Acts 15:2,6,22 says there were "apostles and elders" at Jerusalem. Acts 20:17 and 28 speaks of the "elders of the church" in Ephesus and that they were "overseers." Titus is told to appoint elders in every city (Titus 1:5). Paul addresses the "overseers and deacons" at Philippi (Phil. 1:1). There is no biblical basis for a senior pastor who runs a church like a president of a corporation. This kind of senior pastor model is a business model and not a biblical one. We may note that in the cases where elders are appointed the elders come from within the body which they are to serve.

When Paul left an area which had mature believers he made sure that there were elders in every church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). 21

These verses bring out the process by which the elders received their authority. "In all instances there was a waiting period between the evangelization and the appointment of elders which allowed sufficient time for the acquiring of the necessary experience."²² Since these were young groups someone from the outside led the groups in discernment.

Acts 14:21-23 indicates that Paul and Barnabas initiated the discernment process. Later, Titus went to the churches in Crete to assist in the appointment of elders (Titus 1:5). In the discernment process there was prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23) to determine God's choice men who were clearly men of faith (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). We do not read that these men were chosen for a three or five year period. The implication is that they accepted life-time commitments.

The present systems of calling pastors from outside the local body is not based on New Testament principles. There needs to be more discernment in the local body for pastoral leadership if the New Testament model is to be applied today.

Teachers

In several of the lists of leaders, the category "teacher" (didaskalos) appears (Rom. 12:7; I Cor. 14:28; Eph. 4:11). There was a recognized group of teachers in the Pauline congregations The teachers had two functions: 1) they were responsible

for passing on the tradition, especially the tradition of Jesus' words and deeds and the apostolic kerygma; and 2) the interpretation of the tradition and thus its development.²³

Teachers are found in the Antioch church as a part of the leadership team. The teachers taught the basic truths of the Scriptures. At that time they interpreted the Old Testament as well as expounded the sayings of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles (Acts 2:42). Later, in the Gentile world, the teachings of Paul became normative for church life (2 Peter 3:15). The further the church moved from Galilee and Jerusalem, and the further in time from Christ's ministry, the more important the role of the teacher became to keep the church from being turned aside by "every philosophy and empty deception" (Col. 2:8).

The Priesthood of all Believers

The leadership gifts which God has given to the church are to equip the members of the church for ministry. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are not required to do all the work of the church but are to encourage and build up the laity for their ministry.

The term "laity" has been used in contrast to the clergy and has had the nuance of being less spiritual than those engaged by the church for full-time employment. The Greek word, 'laos,' from which the English word "laity" is derived, designates, however, the whole people of God. Hence, the laity are to be viewed not as a secondary order of Christian. ALL Christians are of one order, the first order. The church can only advance as the gifts of the whole body are exercised for the common purpose of glorifying God and serving man. With the renewal movements of recent times the laity have been seen as the untapped resource which must be utilized for the growth of the church.

Edwin Hatch in his book traces the organization of the early church. He says that as the Christian communities grew, "The need of order became more imperative: the work of administration had to be systematized and centralized: the officers who had the control of orders and administration came inevitably to have a higher relative status than they had had before." ²⁵

The ruling gifts received so much emphasis that the other gifts were no longer recognized and the clergy arose as those people who had the gifts of the Spirit. However, Paul clearly says that we are to submit one to another (Eph. 5:21) and that the body of Christ is to work together in ministry, (Rom. 12:3-8).

The body imagery portrays the necessity of all members working together for a common purpose. Every member has a vital function for the smooth working of the body. No part of the body then is more important. I Corinthians 12:11 tells us that the "Holy Spirit works all these things (ie. giving gifts) distributing to each one individually just as He wills." Spiritual gifts are tailor-made for individuals and individuals are a unique part of the body to which they belong.

Peter pictures believers in another light when he writes, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9). Instead of a select group of men who minister between God and man as we have in the Old Testament there is an emphasis on every believer being in a ministry for God. In the New Testament, Christ is the High Priest and all believers are a priesthood reconciling the world about them to God. Every believer is called to proclaim the excellencies of God who has saved him and given him hope.

Through the gifts given to each believer. Christians are to minister in the church to edify and build up the body of Christ as well as to reach out and minister to the world. Through service and the exercise of the gifts given by the Holy Spirit, the body accomplishes the tasks given to it by God. The church needs leadership to guide and equip but it needs all the members using their unique gifts to accomplish the will of God for the church.

Deacons

The Greek word "diakonos" means "servant," "helper," "deacon as an official of the church." In the verb form it means to "serve, care for, help support." The feminine noun form "diakonia" means "service, aid, support and of the office of a deacon."²⁶ The term, "diakonos" has been translated "minister" twenty times, "servant" seven times, and "deacon" three times in the King James Version.²⁷

Although the seven holy men selected in Acts 6:1-6 are generally referred to as the first deacons, the passage nowhere says it specifically. The apostles did not think it was right to neglect the Word of God to serve (diakonein) tables. They felt it was better to minister (diakoniai) the Word. The ministry of the seven was not just to serve the tables. If that had been their

only function they were somewhat over qualified for the job. These seven had a significant spiritual ministry as well. Stephen was a great preacher and Philip was an evangelist.

The Bible does not give a detailed account of the functions a deacon is to perform within the church. Rather, the qualifications of a deacon are elaborated upon in I Timothy 3:8-13. These character qualities are to guide the selection of the deacons in the church. In summary these men must be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. (I Tim. 3:8-11, 13 NIV) These qualities push the church to select model Christians as deacons.

If we assume the seven men in Acts 6 to be deacons several other qualities are to be added to the above l i s t . Deacons are to be "men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3).

From these qualifications it is evident that the deacons did not just have a ministry serving tables and caring for the materially destitute but they also engaged in a spiritual ministry.

Since Paul refers specifically to the deacons in his salutation to the Philippians (Phil. 1:1) we can conclude that at least in Philippi there was a specific group given to serving the body of Christ. These men were a part of the leadership in the church along with the overseers.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

In the Early Church

Modern scholarship is fairly sure about one thing concerning the leadership styles in the early church. "There is no normative pattern of church leadership in the New Testament, but the diversity of patterns do contain constants which remain significant for the church."²⁸

Davies says, "The Primitive Churches, however, diverse in form, were not formless. The early Christians were neither enthusiastic cranks nor merely a horde."²⁹

If the early church had some form, can we recreate that structure? Can we duplicate the stages that the church went through in developing leadership for its orderly continuation? Schweizer believes that "at first,* the church has no new order, but goes on living in the established Jewish forms: Christian rabbis and elders only show that the old Jewish order is continuous as a matter of course."³⁰ The Christian church did deviate from the Jewish model initially by having the apostles as the main leaders in Jerusalem.

However, the core of disciples did not set down a uniform structure for all new churches to follow. There was not the same kind of structure in all the churches.

Though there was development in Ministry in the first century, it was not uni-linear. It is historically more exact and eventually more instructive theologically to respect the differences in structuring the ministry that existed simultaneously in different churches (Jerusalem; Corinth; Ephesus; Rome; etc.).³¹

Jerusalem - The leadership at Jerusalem began with the apostolate at the center but by the time of the Jerusalem council the leadership of the twelve had already shifted to an organization with "apostles and elders" (Acts 15:2). Deacons (Acts 6:6), evangelists (Acts 8:5), disciples (Acts 9:10) and prophets (Acts 11:27) were also part of leadership in Jerusalem. The organization developed as needs arose and gifts were recognized.

Antioch. The church of Antioch developed a different leadership organization. Antioch "was a lay church, founded by laymen and animated and carried on by laymen. The center of gravity of that church was the laity."³² The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas up to Antioch to assist in the development of leadership. Together with Paul, Barnabas "taught considerable numbers" (Acts 11:26). Five prophets and teachers from five different countries worked together. "One thing is more impressive: None of these leaders assumes an authoritarian position."³³

The church remained for some time an egalitarian church based on a theocratic (pneumacrat) model of leadership.

Paul's Mission Churches

Robert Banks traces some of the structure and practice of Paul's mission churches to the voluntary associations that had come

into being in the late Hellenistic period all over the ancient world.

Although only some were purely religious in character, . . . the bulk were primarily designed to meet the social, charitable and funerary needs of their members. It was in such voluntary fraternities, which could number anything between ten and one hundred members but mostly averaged around thirty to thirty-five, that many people in the Hellenistic world began to find their personal point of reference and to experience a level of community.

Although there were similarities in function, size and frequency of meetings, Banks concludes that the organizational structure of Paul's mission churches was very egalitarian; the leadership functions were never positions; and responsibility for growth was corporate, not selective.

Later Developments. In the first four centuries, the Catholic Church changed its form of leadership. This seems to be based on the view that there was no prescribed order in the New Testament and since the church continued to expand, more and more organization was considered necessary. Irenaeus justified the monarchical bishopric.

Beneath the bishop a series of hierarchical structures developed so that by 251 A. D. , Bishop Cornelius of Rome wrote that in the church of Rome there was "one bishop . . . forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers and door-keepers."³⁵ These offices continued although there was a development of higher leadership until the pope was placed over the entire Roman Church. It was not until the Protestant reformation that new forms emerged which tried to reduce the hierarchical structures and create a more congregational form of leadership again.

Factors in developing leadership models. There are several important factors which must be examined in the development of leadership.

The early church was structured to meet the needs of the people and to aid the growth of the group as a body in communion with God. "The necessary functions of worship, community, leadership, nurture and witness were all provided for. The book of Acts shows that all these needs were recognized and cared for in the early church." 36

Only after the need of the Greek widows arose did the early church create a structure and program to take care of the situation. The early church was involved in a holistic ministry. This is evidenced by the three actions of the church at Antioch. First, they were concerned for the economically stricken. This is demonstrated by the offering which they took up and sent to Jerusalem. Second, they were concerned for the morally and spiritually needy. This concern was shown by their zeal to bring great numbers to follow the Way.

Third, the believers at Antioch were concerned for the world by sending out two-fifths of their leadership to other parts of the world for the purpose of evangelism. Another important factor in the development of leadership was the care exercised in selecting leadership. Paul did not put elders in charge immediately but waited until a later return visit to do so. This indicates that the early church did things in an orderly and unhurried way. This also indicates the concern for the natural leadership to emerge in the newly formulated Christian communities.

The third factor is that "there is no ministry in the church which is merely the result of human merit." 37 Men are not to be rewarded with church offices because of their wealth or good deeds. The leadership in the New Testament was based on spiritual qualities and gifts.

Modern Ecclesiastical Structures

Although there are many variations, leadership in today's church may be identified according to three basic forms.

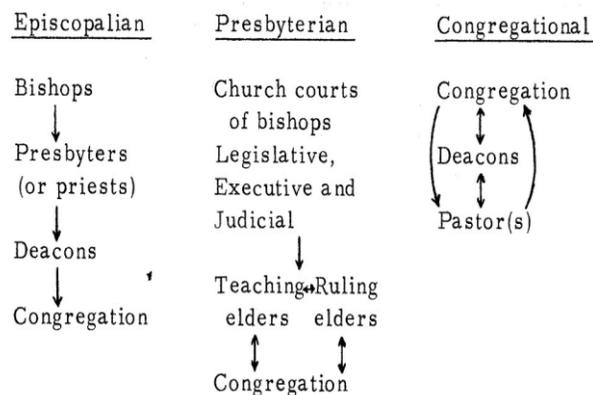


Fig. 1. -- Models of Church Polity ³⁸

Episcopal Structures. With the passage of time from the apostolic age there was a subtle change in ecclesiastical organization.

Christianity became more nominal with each successive generation. Heresies arose and representatives of the clergy were sent to councils to determine orthodoxy. Gradually, through learning and the desire for more power within the church, bishops began to control geographic areas of Christendom. It was only a matter of time until the papal system emerged out of the episcopal system. What began as a gift of encouragement, prophesy, teaching or administration within the total body of believers changed into an authoritarian office often bought with money.

J. L. Schaver has summarized the principles of the episcopal church polity as follows:

- (1) its doctrine of an unbroken succession ... from the apostles to the present time; ...
- (2) among the clergy there is graduation of rank and office;
- (3) authority is entrusted to the clergy and the body of the believers have no share in it; . . .
- (4) the authority of the clergy forms the chief bond of unity and the distinction between the clergy and the laity must be emphasized strongly; and
- (5) the Church must maintain a diocesan episcopate. 39

A diocesan episcopate divides the church into geographic regions with a bishop in charge of each region.

The episcopalian system has a strong central government which can unite and control the church. Such organization might allow for smooth operation especially when the church grows to millions of members. The presbyters or priests minister to the people in the congregation. The deaconate is considered "little more than a probationary office, a necessary prelude to the priesthood."40

This form of church government as practiced by the Roman Catholic Church has a highly authoritarian system which does not follow the New Testament pattern of involvement of all members of the body.

Contrary to the New Testament, it separates and elevates those with gifts of leadership. This system stresses offices instead

of functions of leadership. The authority of those in leadership is based on apostolic succession, a doctrine which cannot be substantiated from the Scriptures.

This is in contrast to other systems in which the congregation has the authority and delegates leaders to exercise it. Although the episcopalian form of leadership guides much of Christendom it does not conform to biblical ideals and thus cannot be defended as scriptural.

Presbyterian Structures.

Presbyterians trace their organizational structure back to the Hebrew synagogue system, which was based on an eldership model. This model had been in effect for several hundred years before Christ. Thus, Presbyterians argue that the system of organization was not created by the apostles.

The apostles could not create what had been in use some hundreds of years before they were born. They themselves were all of them Presbyterians before they were Christians. And these are the two facts . . . :First, that the form of government in the Church before Christ came was Presbyterian; and secondly, that this form of government was not abolished nor altered, but simply accepted and perpetuated by the apostles.⁴¹

This enthusiastic statement does not take into account that the apostles adapted the system very early in the history of the church by adding the diaconate.

In Presbyterian church polity there are courts of bishops which are divided into legislative, executive and judicial functions. These generally decide policy for all churches under their jurisdiction.

Churches send elders to general assemblies who are to act on behalf of their congregation. In this way there is a central authoritative body which maintains unity of the synod or denomination.

Each church has a Board of Elders also called Presbytery, Consistory or Session. The members of this board are usually elected from the church and classified as ruling elders. This concept of ruling elders is taken from I Timothy 5:17 which says "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." "A careful exegesis of this verse will not allow so

emphatic a distinction" between ruling elders and teaching elders. In fact, those who preach and teach, rule as well.

There is an equality of elders in the presbyterian system and the ruling elders are not to be considered above or below the teaching elders. Generally the minister, who is chosen from outside the congregation, is the teaching elder in the church. The laity has the privilege of electing the ruling elders from within their own body to take care of church matters. There is little participation by the laity in determining the direction of the church but they may have a voice in selecting their elders.

The deacons' work concerns temporalities and spiritual leadership is left to the ruling elders. This, again, is a departure from the New Testament pattern.

Congregational Structures. The congregational system is characterized by significant laity involvement and control. All persons in the congregation share a responsibility to determine matters of doctrine and polity.

A denomination which has the congregational or independent church polity is particularly distinguished by the fact that final authority within the denomination rests with the vote of the members of a local congregation.

The autonomy of the local church is considered "the most pronounced principle of this polity." 44 Congregationalism encourages the participation of each of its members in an effort to unite the body of Christ in corporate responsibilities. The point of unity rests in the members of the local church in contrast to the presbyterian system which emphasizes unity on a Synod level and the episcopalian system which sees unity in the Patriarch or Pope. Another emphasis in congregational churches is on the priesthood of all believers. Each member has a vital function in the body and has been given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit to use for the building up of the church. The spiritual equality of believers allows them to take seriously Paul's words to submit one to another.

In the congregational polity, authority is in the hands of the congregation, not in ecclesiastical offices. The deaconate is a ministry of service to the local body and assists in the spiritual and physical care of the congregation. The position of deacon and pastor are generally considered to be functional roles and not hierarchical offices to strive for. The deacons

and ministers are elected by the congregation after a time of discernment and are given authority to lead the church.

Summary

Although those in the Anabaptist free church tradition tend toward Biblicism and consider it possible to recreate a biblical pattern of church polity there is always a tendency to move from the original pattern as the organization increases in size, complexity and age. What begins as a function within the body of the local church may soon become institutionalized and fixed as an office.

This study has shown that the early church did not establish a particular polity but that organizational structures developed as needs arose. The Jerusalem church and the Antioch church had different organizational patterns and this diversity did not seem to cause any difficulty. History shows that the form of church polity was not immutable but that there was latitude in organizational patterns.

Present church organizational structures must be examined in light of the functional roles described in the New Testament according to terminology. Leadership models should reflect an understanding of the roles of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, elders and bishops, teachers, laity, and deacons which is consistent with New Testament teaching. Care must be taken not to just use the right biblical terminology but consider the responsibilities and functions which the terms carry in the Scriptures.

There were functional and cultural adaptations in the organization of the early churches. To create a culturally adapted organization for the Japan Mennonite Brethren church, authentic organizational structures in Japan must be studied.

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CHAPTER III

CULTURAL MODELS OF ORGANIZATION IN JAPAN

INTRODUCTION

To obtain, a contextual model of leadership for the church in Japan we must examine leadership and organizational structures which are found in that cultural context. Many different leadership models could be examined in the social, economic, political and religious structures. These represent the various areas of the life of the people and the sundry kinds of organizations within the country. By examining several representative types of organizations we can begin to understand the decision-making process and the structure of society in Japan.

The social structures in Japan will be represented by a study of the small interest groups or associations which are found in the rural areas. Some of these function very much on an egalitarian level, although others still operate on a hierarchical model. In most cases these associations involve several families functioning together. Generally, all the people in the rural areas participate in some aspect of this kind of organization.

Next will be a general overview of the structures and decision making processes in the business world. The process of decision-making in Japan is uniquely different from that found in the Western World. The process is very structured and hierarchical but allows for planning and decisions to rise from the lower ranks.

In a search for models of organization for the church we can gain much insight from examining modern religious movements in Japan.

There has been a rise in what is reclassified as "New Religions" since the Second World War. These have swept the nation, claiming millions of new converts, while Christianity has plodded on winning only a few thousand annually. By examining two of these successful New Religions we may gain insight into why some indigenous religious organizations have grown tremendously over the past several decades. Both Soka Gakkai and Risshoo Koseikai, have made great advances by organizing and utilizing ordinary lay people to spread their faith. The study

of New Religions shows that using lay persons in an organization makes it possible to advance in a culture seemingly bound by traditional religions.

INTEREST GROUPS

Politically, the country of Japan is divided into forty-seven prefectures or states (ken). These are divided into counties (gun) and cities (shi). The counties are divided into villages or townships (mura and cho). These areas are again subdivided into districts and hamlets (buraku). The social composition of the hamlets is made up of family or kinship groups and various interest groups or associations. This study will only examine the later.

Terms

In both English and Japanese numerous terms describe these village organizations. To describe the voluntary household associations, Cornell uses the term "kumi"¹ which means "a company; a party; a group; a team; a crew; a gang."² When speaking of religious or economic associations, Fukutake uses the term "ko" to express the concept of the small groups in a community.³ The dictionary defines "ko" as "a fraternity; a pilgrim (pious) association; a club."⁴ A third term "koju" is used by Beardsley in Village Japan.⁵ Although used in Beardsley's book in a broader sense, the dictionary limits this term to meaning "a religious association."

The above three terms are used by the various authors to describe groups which are organized and operated in a similar fashion. They function as social, religious, economic and labor groups. We may classify Japanese rural associations into those organized principally to reach goals of social and economic welfare and change (instrumental); those centering primarily upon recreation or other pleasurable activities (expressive); and those combining both sorts of objectives (instrumental-expressive). All of these types are well represented in rural Japan, and the associations may be described as entering most aspects of social life. 7

The numerous associations incorporate most of the people in a given locality into various interest groups. A family unit or person is not restricted to one interest group but may participate in as many as desired. Each group may have any combination of members from the hamlet. These associations are historically ancient and based on a five man group (goningumi)

which was introduced from China but came to be used extensively in the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868). During this time the neighbourhoods were divided into groups of five families and the family heads were to police the others in their group to prevent insurrection, subversion or other criminal activities. If one in the group transgressed he was to be immediately reported or all in the team were responsible for the crime. These five-man associations were used initially to ferret out any Christians. It was a very effective tool to suppress the spread of Christianity in the early seventeenth century.

Although the goningumi gradually diminished in importance, the "system continues to date with considerable modification in spite of the temporary post-war injunction by the Occupation This resiliency indicates the importance of this organization in rural Japan." John F. Embree states that, "Everyone belongs . . . to some kumi, just as in Tokugawa days every house was a member of some goningumi, only today the compulsion is social and economic rather than legal." Thus, the kumi is a vital and integral part of each community and functions for social and economic reasons. With a shift in the population to the cities, the kinship groups in rural Japan are diminishing. Other relationships established in the associations are taking on more significance.

Decision-Making

In Japan, influence from the feudal days is still strong; much of society operates on a hierarchical pattern. One of the unique features of the village associations is the egalitarian principles upon which these co-operative groups are based.

Co-operation is the voluntary working together of a group of people. This implies that there is no "boss" - no person who forces the people thus to work together This joint working of the community not only gets the work done, but keeps the people together by uniting them in a common task and afterward in a common drinking party.¹⁰

Although elected or natural leadership may emerge in these groups, everyone is treated equally. Anyone is permitted to speak up and express his ideas and decisions are made either by secret ballot or group consensus.

Formerly, when these groups were run by landlords, decision making was in the hands of a few family heads as in Figure 2.

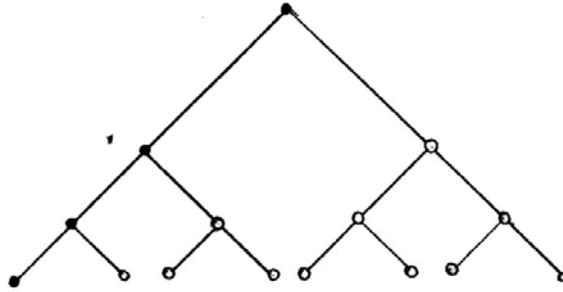


Fig. 2. - - Hierarchical Interest Groups

Each dot represents a family. The solid dots indicate those in the line of decision-making.

With the breakdown of the feudal system, these groups shifted toward an egalitarian form of decision-making as illustrated in Figure 3, 11

Fig. 3. - - Egalitarian Interest Groups

Figure 3a) represents the egalitarian system dividing the community vertically into family groups.

Figure 3b) cuts horizontally across family lines and divides into age groups.

Size and Membership

The size of the group depends very much on the function of the kumi and the size of the hamlet or region in which it operates. These groups can be comprised of two or three families and can grow to as large as sixty. "When more than about sixty houses comprise a single cluster ... they usually are split into two or more koju."¹² A group may accept new members if they move into the region but some kind of associations are exclusive and outsiders are viewed with contempt.

The composition of a voluntary association also fluctuates as households join, leave or recombine, even though the association

itself continues to exist in approximately the same form. Sometimes a single household changes its affiliation from one group to another; sometimes the entire structure of an association may require re-organization. 13

Thus, the associations have a certain amount of flexibility and are much less rigid than the kinship relationships.

Types of Interest Groups

In general the groups are formed to provide mutual assistance in the economic, agricultural context but

The hamlet kumi acted in other matters besides agriculture, providing a system of mutual assistance for all the emergencies and celebrations of human life.... (I)t would be no exaggeration to say that the function of the hamlet kumi extended to every aspect of life in the hamlet. 14

In the small rural areas much of the cooking and heating is still fueled by wood. The community owns a common forest which is controlled by a kumi. The irrigation ditches provide water for the rice fields and these are cleaned and repaired annually by another kumi.

Community projects are carried out by co-operative groups. Rural paths, roads and bridges are repaired by these groups. One function which is well organized is a fire brigade, responsible for fighting fires in the forest or in the community. It is much like the voluntary fire departments found in small towns in America.

Kumi are set up for transplanting rice in spring, and harvesting and threshing in the fall. In former days, kumi were organized for roof-thatching and for building a new house much like the organization for an Amish barn raising bee.¹⁵ There are kumi for marketing agricultural products like rice and tobacco. This type of organization maintains the integrity and independence of individual families but allows them the privilege of working together.

After a day's work, the people generally enjoy an evening of feasting and drinking prepared by the one who received the benefit of the kumi activities. Thus, these community organizations are not only for work but also for play.

Certain social groups are designed specifically for social and recreational activities. Some small groups meet together to make specialty foods for New Year celebrations. Other groups are formed to help prepare for and celebrate weddings. These have greatly diminished as the wedding receptions are now generally held in wedding banquet halls or hotels.

Some associations are created by age groupings (as shown in Figure 3b). The Youth Association, composed of young men between fifteen and twenty-five, represents one of the most popular of this form. Before the Second World War the national government encouraged the formation of these groups throughout the country for purposes of encouraging participation in the war. Today, they supply energetic manpower for various community festivals and projects. In rural communities, young ladies' organizations often exist but they are not as popular. During the war, women's groups were organized by the government to encourage patriotic participation. These continued after the war as social groups but are waning in importance today. Since there are large numbers of elderly persons with free time, many communities have organized Old People's Associations.

Many of the small groups have been organized specifically for religious functions. Several family units are united by having a common guardian deity. Small shrines are erected to this kojin or ujigami (tutelary deity) which are then maintained by a koju. The families also celebrate an annual festival together. 16 These religious groupings are organized for Shinto deities as well as for Buddhist sects. The kumi are especially operative in time of disaster and crisis. Everyone in the kumi assists when there is a funeral. Since the funeral is accompanied by a feast it is not reasonable that the bereaved family prepare the feast. The kumi assists by contacting distant relatives, preparing the necessary food and freeing the bereaved family of all obligations.17

In summary we see that these groups have a long history of a form of egalitarian function within a hierarchical society. These neighbourhood organizations are not just neighbour or kinship groups but also have a horizontal organization by age levels. They are created for economic, social and religious functions; thus, they are "the most important social unit in village life second only to the household.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES IN JAPANESE BUSINESS

Background

Japanese businesses have several unique features which clearly rise out of past social history. The country was run by feudal lords until the Meiji Reforms in 1869. Many of the cultural organizational structures are still hierarchical. This is also true of today's businesses. "Since the entire Japanese society is based upon familism, it should not be surprising that the Japanese corporate structure, too, is organized on the basis of familism."¹⁹ The employee has a strong sense of dependency upon the company and the company is expected to provide for its workers.

Much of the Japanese business philosophy has been adapted from Confucianism which teaches that "the basic aim of a society is to live in harmony, which is possible through obedience and leadership." ²⁰ To achieve harmony, those who are in authority must be obeyed. To maintain harmony a worker must conform to the system and not be too individualistic. The leadership, on the other hand, must be in control and maintain the unity and harmony "wa" of the organization.

The other fundamental quality which permeates business relationships is loyalty. A subordinate is always loyal to his superior. He would never betray, disrupt or cause economic difficulties for his company. The company, on the other hand, is loyal to its employees, supplying recreation, housing, social events and other benefits to those who have come under its protecting hand.

Organizational Structure of Management

The Japanese corporation is clearly a hierarchical structure. At the top is the president. "The president symbolizes the corporation to outside organizations and entities but he is also responsible for maintaining harmony(wa) among the vital parts of the organization.

He, together with the members of the board of directors, most of whom are in top management within the company is responsible for all crucial decisions. The directors are usually senior men who have worked their way up the corporate ladder of management and are currently managing a division of the company. Even within this group there is a type of hierarchy. This group is generally self-perpetuating.

Junior members are usually more reserved in discussions, realizing their indebtedness to the senior members who have

coached them for many years and have personally chosen them to succeed them when they are forced to retire. Each level of management has a staff which assists the management. Personnel may include specialists who research and inform, secretaries, and other clerical assistants.

Each division of a major Japanese company is divided up into three or four departments. These in turn are divided into sections. In some firms these sections are again divided into smaller units called sub-sections and are presided over by sub-section chiefs. 22 These are the lowest level of management. As we shall see later, it is from the lower echelons of management that most of the work is carried on. In the Japanese company it is of utmost importance that the work is done smoothly and cooperatively as one big team.

Thus, Japanese managers are much less concerned about who performs a task and where the responsibility lies than about how individuals within the organization work together harmoniously toward the accomplishment of the goals of the collectivity. 23 Chie Nakane states that "the leader's *raison d'etre* is not so much to direct the project nor to develop his own research, as to serve as a pivot for human relations and keep the peace." 24 This is in contrast to the American system of management where the upper management makes most of the decisions and determines the tasks of the lower management and the workers. In the American system there is also a high value placed upon the individual and the importance of each individual to get ahead. In the Japanese system the emphasis is on the collective and on working together to achieve for the benefit of the company. Thus, the individual in Japan submits himself to the company to seek its highest welfare so that "each employee is strongly identified with the enterprise, even to the point that the interests of the individual employee and the enterprise are the same and inseparable." 25

Scale of Promotion

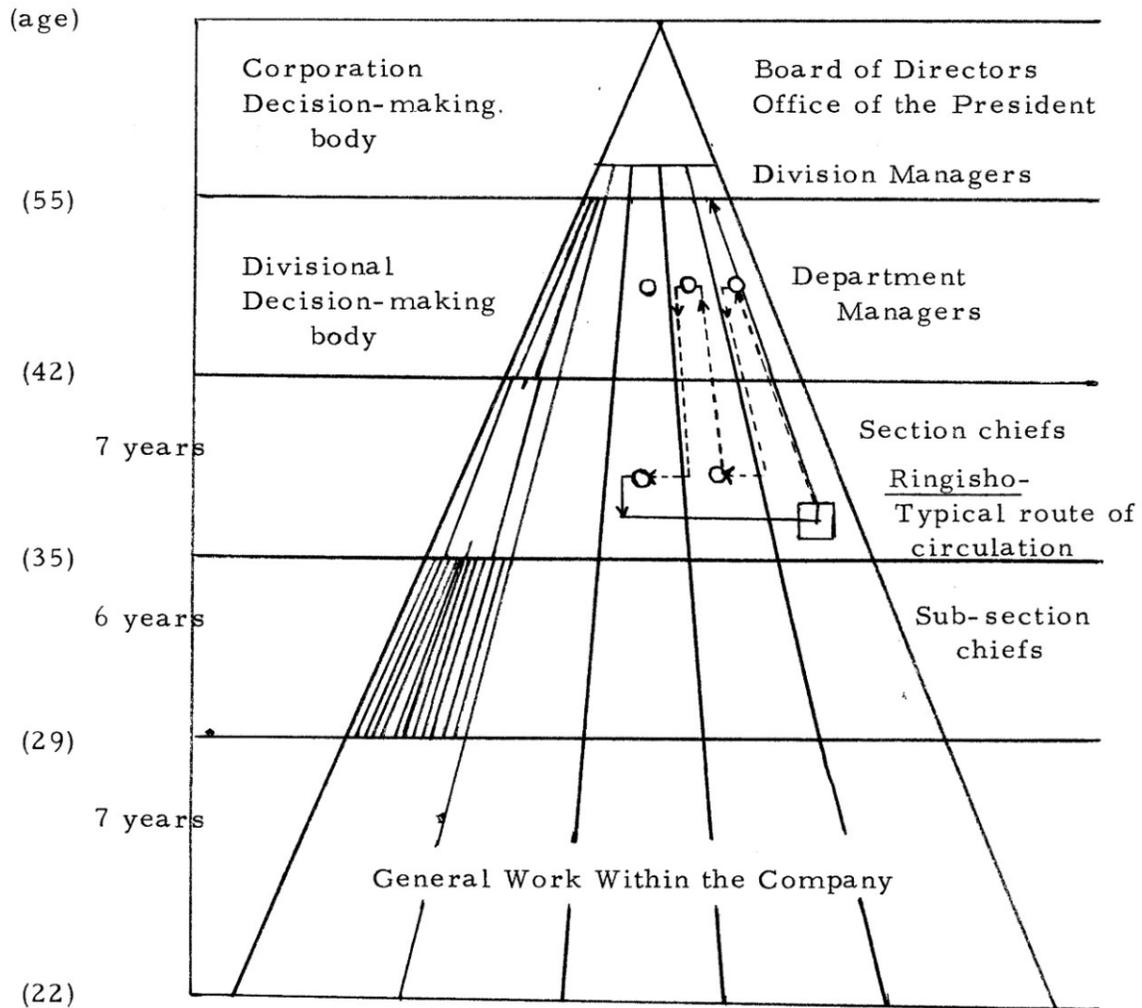


Fig. 4. --General Structure of Japanese Business²⁶

Hiring and Promotion

The familism of the Japanese employment philosophy becomes evident in the hiring and training system of companies. Much care is taken to find just the right person to hire for future management. The Japanese go to the top universities in the country to select several graduates who will be trained and groomed by the company in the coming years.²⁷ The Japanese do not usually seek well trained professional management in other corporations as Americans often do.

Once a person is hired by a company as a permanent employee he continues with that company for life. No matter how skilled and knowledgeable a young person may be, he is started at the bottom and must work his way up through the system. He has become part of a team and thus works together for the benefit of the company.

The leader consults fully with his subordinates and tries to bring out their initiative and abilities. The subordinate speaks up without fear but gives his full support to his superior, regardless of the latter's ability or lack of it.

The Japanese have a system which allows freedom to those who are in lower management to develop programs and projects for the good of the company. Thus, although they must bide their time, they can take some initiative and work diligently for their company. Since there is no clear line of authority and responsibility, other than the seniority system, new workers must find their way in a system which assigns general duties but has no clear job descriptions.

Wages and promotion are not directly related to a person's abilities but rather, how long he has been with the company. Twice a year employees receive a special bonus. The size of this bonus is not based on individual effort but on how well the company as a whole has performed. The amount received will also depend upon the length of service in the company. 29

Decision- making

The company decision-making process has been tempered by certain underlying cultural norms. As stated there is a mutual commitment by the company and the employee that employment is for life. The system must be so designed that if a poor judgment has been made, those responsible will be able to keep face and not have to leave the company. Such a provision is possible because of an important Japanese concept, "amaye".

"Amaye" is the concept of dependency and avoidance of responsibility. Typically, in a large corporation, no single officer is responsible for a given decision, nor does any one person receive credit for it. 30

Thus, many of the decisions are made in committees which do not work on a majority vote but on discussion and consensus.

At the heart of Japanese management lies the ringi system. The word ringi consists of two parts - rin, meaning "submitting a proposal to one's superior and receiving his approval," and gi meaning "deliberations and decisions." 31

William Brown has summarized this process quite concisely.

1. The drafting of a plan by middle management (ringisho).
2. A careful horizontal consideration.
3. A careful vertical consideration.
4. The formality of affixing the seal (stamp of approval and authority).
5. The lack of clarity in authority and responsibility. 32

Although plans are not necessarily initiated in the lower ranks of management, they must prepare a detailed account of the proposal and how it will be executed. Those who draft this document then consult with other departments on the same level. When the document is complete, this ringisho makes its way around the various offices and levels of management as outlined in Figure 4.

After the various managers have approved the document and affixed their seal (seals are used instead of signatures), the ringisho makes its way up to the top. If the proposal can be handled on a divisional management level it needs only the seal of the divisional management. If the document is of great consequence, it could be the subject of discussion for the board of directors, but a less significant document need not have such rigorous treatment at the upper level. As the ringisho rises through the ranks everyone becomes familiarized with the contents. Once approval has been granted by top management the plan is immediately executed because everyone concerned knows what part they have in carrying out this plan.

If the ringisho contains an agenda which must be brought before the board of directors, a decision is reached on the basis of consensus. The Japanese would rather not make a decision on an item than to push through a decision in which there is not complete agreement.

In the Japanese view, a ten-to-two vote is not a proper basis for a group decision.... The proper result of a ten-to-two vote should be some form of non-decision that would permit further consideration by the group. 33

The consensus process within a committee is an expression of the Japanese ideal of each member being able to express his own opinion. If there are differing opinions much time is given to discussion to find some mutual, middle road with which all can agree in principle if not in detail. Sometimes there has been considerable compromise to reach an agreement for the sake of the group and to maintain harmony. Those within the group keep track of the compromising and return the good will at some future date. The task of the president or chairman of the committee is to keep harmony and to summarize the arguments for and against and "then deftly produce a 'solution' decision which would represent reasonable compromises, including actions to be taken by all sides to effect a total compromise." 35

The Japanese have incorporated into their system a unique process for reaching decisions. As Westerners, we may consider this process time consuming and indecisive but in a culture where harmony is considered one of the highest virtues, this process can be considered very successful.

Summary

In a society which values such elements as familism, loyalty, conformity, harmony, collectivism and giri, the style of management is uniquely different from our culture which emphasizes individualism, clear lines of authority, mobility and individual advancement. Japanese businesses have designed a system which incorporates cultural expectations and have not sacrificed success. This system has proven to be effective as it has allowed Japan to become a leading economic power in the world.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES IN "NEW RELIGIONS"

Background

Japan has been considered a difficult field to penetrate with the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ. One reason Christianity has generally been considered a foreign religion is that it demands complete loyalty while traditional Shinto and Buddhism allows its members religious pluralism, however, unlike classical Shinto and Buddhism, some of the New Religions are highly intolerant of other belief systems.

They tend to be exclusive and very dogmatic claiming their way to be the only true way. In contrast to the slow growth of Christianity these religious groups have mushroomed in

membership. This indicates that it is possible for religious groups to grow in the atmosphere of the traditional beliefs in Japan.

One of the strengths of these New Religions is the ability of the leaders to involve a high percentage of the common people of Japan. Rissho Koseikai and Soka Gakkai have been particularly effective in using the ordinary lay people. The founders of these movements were not priests nor clergy but ardent seekers after a religious dimension for their lives and the lives of others. They sought to spread their beliefs to others who found the traditional religions empty and meaningless. They found a vast audience that was groping for meaning in life and were able to convince this group of people to join ranks and spread these new beliefs to others.

Although the organizational structure is not the main source of growth, the rapid growth could not have taken place without a proper and effective organizational structure. These groups can serve as a model for other organizations which desire to grow.

The New Religions reflect a clear vertical organizational structure which generally descends from a charismatic leader or figurehead.

Throughout much of Japanese history, ... social and political structures have tended to be rigidly stratified and strongly authoritarian. This tendency is also reflected in the highly centralized organizations of the New Religions.

The Japanese people have been conditioned by a feudal system to submit unquestioningly to those in authority over them. Once they become a part of a religious group they tend to continue this pattern. "Organizational operations rest significantly upon the oya-ko ("parent-child") pattern which in innumerable variations has governed relationships between individuals and groups in Japan since a very early date." 37

In the two lay movements examined in this study, the hierarchical structure has been carefully continued in their organizations. Clear lines of authority and responsibility create a sense of security. Such lines are easily identified in a hierarchical structure.

A structure with definite levels challenges persons to step-up through the organization and also shows them how they can move from one level to the next. In contrast, it is more difficult to

know when a person is maturing and ready to take on more responsibility in an egalitarian system.

In this study Rissho Koseikai and Soka Gakkai are being examined from among over 170 New Religions that are registered with the Ministry of Education under whose auspices religious matters are handled by the Japanese government. Both are lay movements within the Nichiren type of Mahayana Buddhism. Since they are lay movements, we in the believers' free-church tradition may identify best with their organizational structures. Nichiren (1222-1282) was a Buddhist monk who came to believe that only he had a proper way of salvation as taught in the Lotus Sutra.

By chanting the Daimoku ("Namu Myoho Renge Kyo") a person could eventually receive salvation. Nichiren was fiercely intolerant of all other religious groups in Japan. Those groups which base their theological heritage on Nichiren Shoshii have the same fanatical intolerance toward others even within the Nichiren tradition.

Rissho Koseikai

History and Background. Rissho Koseikai was begun by Mr. Nikkyo Niwano and Mrs. Myoko Naganuma in March 1938. They both had been members of Reiyukai, another one of the New Religions, but decided to begin their own religion.

"An approximate literal translation of Rissho Kosei-kai is 'society to Establish Righteousness and Foster Fellowship.'" This group interprets the intent of this name to mean "'a society of laymen who seek the perfection of their character and the attainment of Buddhahood by following the religious teaching of Lord Buddha.'"³⁸ Their concept of establishing righteousness is "to hold before the people the ideal of a true faith that involves a concern for the whole of society." The concept of fellowship is "to aim to be a faith-oriented fellowship of harmoniously related believers who seek perfection of character, enlightenment and eventual Buddhahood."³⁹ This group was started by lay people and continues to be a lay movement with teachers and leaders of the hoza (counselling group) but no official clergy. "It is a layman's religion, without emphasis on an organized clergy."⁴⁰

With this high involvement of lay volunteers Rissho Koseikai has become a movement which has been "practically the only religion today which has been able to penetrate deep into the working classes,"⁴¹

Organization.

As with most of the other New Religions, Rissho Koseikai has built headquarters to which the faithful come to worship and receive teaching. About 25,000 people visit the headquarters in Tokyo every day to participate in the daily activities. The Great Sacred Hall which has 22,840 square meters of floor space and a capacity of over 50,000 is the center for worship, counselling sessions, and the administration of this sect.⁴²

The nation is divided into 30 dioceses (kyoku) each of which has several churches (kyokai, 222 in all), and the churches in turn have sub-units called branch churches (shibu), where the actual work of propagation of the faith is carried on Each church has an average of 7,000 households while each branch church consists of approximately 1,200 households.

The branch churches are divided into regional groups called chiku which consist of an average of 200 households each. These are again subdivided into smaller units (kumi, about 40 households each), and these in turn are broken down into neighbourhood groups (han, about 10 households each).⁴³ In addition to these geographical divisions the age levels are divided into a Men's Division, a Women's Division, and a Youth Division.

Responsible, trained leadership at each level reflects a clear hierarchical model. Each member who wishes to advance in the organization attends training sessions where he will "receive intensive instruction in doctrine and teaching methods. Periodic examinations are given and if the individual successfully passes the examinations he is promoted to a higher level of leadership.⁴⁴ "Dale also points out that, in addition to this training, a leader must be appointed "on the basis of actual ability to win converts and influence people."⁴⁵ The teachers constantly emphasize that each member must share the blessings he has received with others no matter how new and immature he is in the faith. Every member is considered a missionary.

In recruiting membership, the family is stressed and not the individual. Membership is built entirely on the family. The name of the applicant is not enough for membership - the names of his parents, of his wife's parents and a list of the posthumous names of the deceased members of the family must be submitted.⁴⁶

The members can attend a worship service any day of the week at the Great Sacred Hall in Tokyo. There members read the Lotus Sutra in unison, chant the Daimoku and sing a hymn. They also participate in the hoza.

The hoza is one of the most important functions of Risshoo Koseikai. Literally translated "ho" means law and za means sitting. Thus, the purpose of these small groups is "to sit together and learn the meaning of Buddha's Law"⁴⁷ as it applies to every day, practical problems in a person's life. Those attending the hoza unburden their hearts of their problems and the leader then explains how the person can overcome. "This 'advice' is given boldly and explicitly, with positive force emanating from religious authority and charismatic power."⁴⁸

Most of the hoza meetings take place in the Great Sacred Hall in Tokyo but they "also meet in homes and at local halls and branch churches."⁴⁹

Summary.

Rissho Koseikai is a highly structured lay movement which has reached many in the lower class in Japan with a program that centers on worship and a teaching - counselling style that meets the needs of many individuals. There is training of leadership but innate dynamic leadership qualities are essential in persons appointed to leadership positions. Rissho Koseikai has grown from 30 individuals in 1938 to 4,849,476 adherents in 1970 with 3,145 teachers of which about two thirds are women. The great number of lay participants even in leadership is a clear illustration that a clergy centered religion is not necessary for effective propagating of faith.

Soka Gakkai

Background.

Soka Gakkai does not claim to be a separate New Religion but a lay movement which is a part of Nichiren Shoshii (Nichiren Orthodox Sect). Tsunesaburo Makiguchi developed a theory of value based on what is good, beautiful and profitable. Together with his disciple, Josei Toka, they "worked as close confederates in linking Makiguchi's theories with the intolerant and chiliastic doctrine" ⁵² of Nichiren Shoshu. They officially organized a group of about sixty people in 1937 under the name Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creation Education Society). In 1943 Makiguchi, Toda and twenty-one other members of the nearly 3,000 members were incarcerated for "refusing to participate in the

rites of the national cult of Shinto." 53 Makiguchi became a martyr when he died in prison, but in 1946 Toda reorganized the few followers who had remained steadfast under the name Soka Gakkai(Value-Creation Society). Toda had a great ability to organize and motivate and in 1951 set a goal of converting 750,000 families in the next seven years.

Evangelism and Membership.

This goal of 750,000 families was reached in 1957 mainly through a forceful evangelistic method called "shakubuku ('break and subdue'), essentially a tactic of destroying another's resistance and converting him by the force of one's own arguments." 54 Soka Gakkai defines shakubuku as "the merciful deed of saving those who are troubled with various kinds of misfortunes arising from heretical religions." 55 In the early years this was accompanied by much coercion. Groups of young energetic members would not leave people alone until they would consent to join Soka Gakkai. This method of evangelism, although attributed to Nichiren himself, occasionally gave Sooka Gakkai a bad image because of some of the excesses of zealous followers. Members are also told that this kind of evangelism will guarantee them spiritual benefits. Those who join are made to promise to bring three new members to faith in Soka Gakkai. This accounts for some of the rapid growth of the movement. Shakubuku is seen as the only way in which the Soka Gakkai's ultimate goal of worldwide dissemination of their truth can be reached.

If a person agrees to become a member he has to get rid of any trace of any other religion in his life or home. This act is called hobobarai, "removal of evil religion," 56 and is performed" by burning Shinto and Buddhist images and tablets or anything related to Christianity." 57

However, Soka Gakkai soon realized that destroying the religious paraphernalia in a home in which not all were becoming members, led to strife and opposition, hardening other family members against becoming Soka Gakkai followers. Thus, members are instructed to destroy only those things which are personal possessions and will not cause family conflict. Eventually, evangelistic methods shifted from shakubuku to a soft sell approach called shoju, "gradual conversion through tentative acceptance of the 'wrong belief' of the other party." 58 After hobobarai, the convert is taken to the nearest Nichiren Shoshu temple where he receives a wall scroll with the Daimoku inscribed upon it. This is to be hung up in the home and worship is performed twice daily before this sacred object.

The Daimoku is regarded as a rallying cry, a prayer containing unlimited power, a way toward the salvation of non-believers, and an expression of firm belief in the doctrines and mysteries taught by the Lotus Sutra.

Organization,

Soka Gakkai is highly organized having vertical, horizontal, diagonal and functional dimensions so that a person is tied to the group in many ways. The vertical organization is based on the oya-ko (parent-child) principle, in which the person who has been able to bring about conversion in another becomes responsible for the spiritual progress of his convert. "He must be constantly the mentor and the source of help and guidance, and he must see to it that the new believer attends meetings and participates in Gakkai activities."⁶⁰ This discipling process functions in a vertical way within a hierarchical system based upon the shakubuku relationships.

The smallest unit in this vertical structure is the family (shotai). A kumi (unit) is made up of ten to twelve families. The leader of this group (kumi-cho) would be the one who is responsible for the conversions within the group. The kumi often meets in the leader's home for discussion group meetings (zadankai). Potential converts are invited to these unit meetings and in this setting shakubuku can be carried on without using strong-arm tactics. Clark Offner says that these meetings for instruction and mutual encouragement provide opportunities for dealing with the individual problems and doubts of believers, for testifying to benefits received and for seeking to convert unbelievers who have been invited to attend Sutras are studied, and although the text is usually beyond the understanding of the common man, the explanation is given in plain, down-to-earth terms. ⁶¹

The kumi are kept "to a size which permits intense and constant face to face contacts." ⁶² As the kumi grow larger they are subdivided into two units but these are united into a "group" (han). The former leader (kumi-cho) becomes the leader of this "group."

Generally, a han grows to ten kumi before it is redivided and the whole "group" becomes a district (chiku). A district is made up of 500 to 1000 members and there are about 15,000 districts in Japan and 475 overseas. Above the district is the chapter (shibu) which is comprised of one to two thousand families.

Several chapters make up a local headquarters or soshibu (general chapters). These are all united by the central headquarters. This vertical system is based entirely on human ties which begin through the conversion experiences (discipler-disciple relationships) and not necessarily by geographic regions.

Since it may be difficult to disciple a convert who lives in a different part of the country and since management people are often transferred to branch offices in different places, many members of Sooka Gakkai could be lost due to the distance. Under the vertical structures neighbours could be members but because they were won by a different web of relationships they may not know of the other's membership to Sooka Gakkai. A horizontal block structure has been developed to take care of these problems.

The block system starts with a minor block. Each family belongs to the minor block in its geographic region as well as its particular kumi (unit). The "block" is the next geographic sector followed by the major block, general block and the joint block. The joint block is directly governed by the central headquarters at the Taiseikiji Temple.

The diagonal structure comes through the organization of members by divisions and peer groups. This provides for interaction with persons of the same sex, age, interests, and locality. The peer group structure is divided into three divisions: The Men's Division, the Women's Division and the Youth Division. The Youth Division has been further developed into the Young Men's Division, the Young Women's Division, the Student Division (university), the High School Division, the Junior High Division and the Boys' and Girls' Division. Many social and physical activities are planned for each of these divisions and this encourages solidarity to Soka Gakkai.

The functional dimension is achieved through the Study Department and the Cultural Bureau. Soka Gakkai believes it is very important for its members to be well versed in its theory. Members may attain various ranks of learning. They may become Assistant Lecturers, Lecturers, Associate Assistant Professors, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors. In 1966 there were a total of 1,173,437 members who had reached the different levels by writing exams. These people are then qualified to give lectures at meetings designed for teaching. 64 The Cultural Bureau seeks to encourage cultural pursuits.

Culture is defined in broad terms as there are the Economics Department, Education Department, Public Opinion Department, Science Department and Art Department. These departments are study groups which assist Soka Gakkai in research and explaining the Society's policies to the respective disciplines. These are also used to draw in outsiders from the various disciplines into the organization. The Cultural Bureau also seeks to improve Soka Gakkai's image by encouraging participation in the arts such as music, drama and orchestra.

There are a number of other functional departments like the Pilgrimage Department, Financial Department and an Overseas Department. The Pilgrimage Department organizes "the trips of over three million believers each year to the Taiseikiji, the Head Temple of Nichiren Shoshu." 65

The Society has carefully plotted its goals and then moved ahead carefully but deliberately to reach them. The decision-making process could be likened somewhat to the ringi process found in business where a proposal is drawn up by the proper department and submitted to the president and board of directors. When a consensus is reached by the board the president issues an official ruling or policy. With the strong vertical, horizontal or diagonal lines these policies can descend.

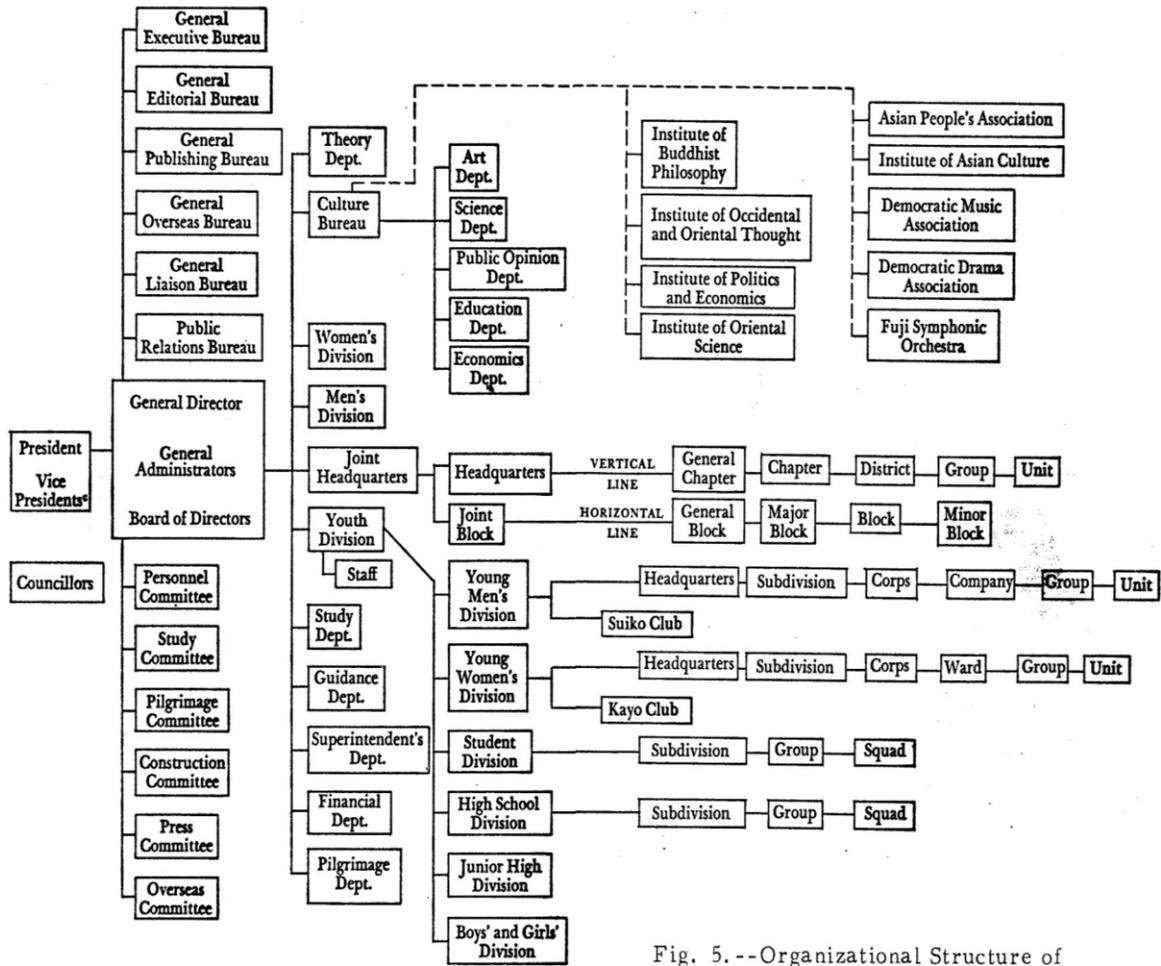


Fig. 5.--Organizational Structure of Sōka Gakkai

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- 2 K. Masuda, ed., *Kenkyusha's New Pocket Japanese-English Dictionary* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Ltd., 1964), p. 576.
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- 10 Embree, *Suye Mura*, p. 112.
- 11 Erwin H. Johnson, "Status Changes in Hamlet Structure," *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 158.
- 12 Beardsley, *Village Japan*, p. 255.
- 13 Cornell, *Japanese Villages*, p. 183.
- 14 Fukutake, *Rural Society*, pp. 99, 100.
- 15 Materials are brought together and prepared prior to the work day. A large working force works diligently and enjoys meals together. The project is usually completed in one day.
- 16 Cornell, *Japanese Villages*, p. 188.
- 17 Fukutake, *Rural Society*, p. 104.
- 18 Beardsley, *Village Japan*, p. 258.
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- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 22 Michael Y. Yoshino, *Japan's Managerial System* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1968), p. 201.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 203.
- 24 Chie Nakane, *Japanese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 76.
- 25 Yoshino, *Managerial System*, p. 203.
- 26 There are many segments to each division with more people in management positions in the lower portions of the management scale as illustrated in the Production Division. Adapted from Robert J. Ballon, *Doing Business in Japan* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1967), p. 168.
- 27 The top universities, because of their difficult and fiercely

competitive entrance examinations, have already selected some of the best talent in the country.

28 Erwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese-* (Cambridge; The Belknap Press, 1977), p. 187.

29 Allen Dickerman, *Training Japanese Managers* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 19.

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"*Japanese Culture and Behavior*, ed. by T. S. Lebra and Wm. P. Lebra (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), p. 180.

33 Long, *Management in Japan*, p. 62.

34 The technical Japanese term for this concept is *giri*. For a discussion of *giri* see Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. , 1946), pp. 133-176

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43 Kenneth J. Dale, *Circle of Harmony* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975), p. 30.

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48 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

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51 Cultural Affairs, *Japanese Religion*, p. 256.

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53 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 198.

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- 56 Kiyooki Murata, *Japan's New Buddhism* (New York: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1969), p. 148.
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- 59 Thomsen, *New Religions*, p. 91.
- 60 White, *Sookagakkai*, p. 88.
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- 62 James Allen Dator, *Sooka Gakkai: Builders of the Third Civilization* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), p. 5.
- 63 Ibid., p. 7.
- 64 Dator, *Soka Gakkai*, p. 144.
- 65 White, *The Soka Gakkai*, p. 99.

CHAPTER IV

JAPAN MENNONITE BRETHREN LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1948 the conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America decided to send workers to Japan to establish a Mennonite Brethren affiliated community. 1 In 1949, Rev. H. J. Thielman sent under the Mennonite Central Committee to help the Japanese by giving aid to a poverty stricken area of Osaka. He was to pave the way for others who would follow him to establish indigenous congregations. In 1951, a church was formed of those who had been baptized. On January 25, 1952 a council was organized consisting of missionaries and Japanese lay leaders. In 1958, when the church membership numbered 169, 2 church representatives formed the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference Council. This Council was the body which determined policy for the brotherhood of the six churches. In 1964, the missionaries and the nationals formed separate organizations. The missionaries were legally incorporated as the Mennonite Brethren Mission and the national conference became a legal entity under the name Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference. It was not until April 18, 1966 when the leaders and church representatives met in their annual conference that the national church assumed complete autonomy.3

DEVELOPMENT OR ORGANIZATION

The missionaries began to delegate responsibility to the Japanese as soon as possible. The young Christians in the churches were encouraged to assume church responsibilities as part of their growth to Christian maturity. When the missionary could sense that certain individuals were well enough established in the faith they used these Japanese Christians in leadership capacities. The Japanese began assuming leadership by becoming involved in Sunday School teaching, leading women's groups and taking care of the treasury. The men were encouraged to lead the Sunday morning worship services. The missionaries then organized church councils which were advisory boards. As the men on these councils matured in their faith and gained more church experience they were given more and more responsibility for the operation of the church. When the church was large and

mature enough it began to elect these councils. The missionaries remained in charge until the national pastors were trained and experienced enough to take over the tasks of pastoring the church.

There were and still are some difficulties with turning leadership over to a new leader. The Japanese people are very loyal to their spiritual mentors. Since the missionary is usually the spiritual father there are very strong attachments to the missionary which must be broken if the new leader is to work effectively. Sometimes the missionary continues to exert influence in the churches he has pastored even if he is involved in another church planting location. 4 This kind of influence is not only limited to the missionary but also occurs if a pastor moves to a new church.

In organizing the churches the missionaries sought diligently to encourage the brotherhood concept and a congregational model of leadership.

They centered their expansion of churches in the large city of Osaka, Japan. They determined to begin evangelistic centers spaced throughout the city so as to be accessible from any part of Osaka. This cluster concept has built a real sense of unity within the conference because of the interaction which was possible between the churches. The missionaries also encouraged the formation of congregational churches to involve all the members in the work of the church. They saw this as the biblical norm which could best carry on the work in the church.

They examined several other cultural models like Soka Gakkai but saw in them only the strong central leadership. For the most part the missionaries attempted to establish a congregational model of organization like that used by the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America. 5

PRESENT CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

To formulate the constitution of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference, a committee of six was established consisting of nationals and missionaries. They worked together to write down the general practices in the churches which had been organized by the missionaries. The North American Mission office suggested that the missionaries construct a conference based on the Constitution of the North American Mennonite Brethren Church. 6 Consequently, there are presently many similarities between the North American Mennonite Brethren Church and the Japan Mennonite

Brethren Conference. Churches in Japan elect one representative for every twenty-five members or parts thereof to attend the quarterly meeting of the conference. The pastors are automatically voting members of the conference by virtue of their office. At the annual conference the representatives elect the pastors and some lay persons to be members of conference committees for a two year term. The committee with most responsibility is the Executive Committee which is made up of a chairman, vice-chairman, two secretaries and two treasurers. The Board of Reference and Counsel handles all spiritual matters. Other committees are Christian Education, Theological Education, Evangelism, Publishing, Foreign Missions, Camp, Relief, Trustees and Missionary Affairs Committee.

The Missionary Affairs Committee (MAC) consists of three missionaries and three nationals. The missionaries are represented by the Mission Executive Committee and the Japanese are represented by the chairman of the Executive Committee, the Evangelism Committee and the Board of Reference and Counsel. MAC is responsible for positioning missionaries and monitoring their work. Since 1966, the missionaries have had non-voting representation on the committees of Evangelism, Christian Education, Theological Education, Reference and Counsel, and Camp Committees.

One of the marks of maturity of a church is its concern for evangelism and the mission of the church. The Evangelism Committee is responsible for planning the location of new evangelistic centers.

The Japanese have begun to assume responsibility for developing new churches. Presently there are two churches which are being supported by the conference until they are self-supporting. The Japanese Mennonite Brethren have caught a sense of world mission and the task of the Foreign Mission Committee is to encourage the participation of the churches in world mission. In 1976 the Manabes, supported by the conference, were sent out under Wycliff Bible Translators to Indonesia. The conference has an understanding of apostles as being God's gift to the church and are attempting to be faithful to the great commission. The history of the Mennonite Brethren in Japan includes numerous occasions when the special gift of evangelism has been exercised with power and effectiveness.

The committees of the conference assist the churches by coordinating and developing policies or materials in their respective areas. They have a limited authority to make

decisions on their own and implement them. Before a committee submits a recommendation for major projects or policies to the quarterly conference assembly, they frequently consult with the other pastors at the monthly pastors and missionaries fellowship meetings and reach a consensus on the matter. This follows the cultural pattern of decision-making by consensus as discussed in Chapter III. Decision-making may be influenced by several key leaders in some cases, but in other cases their influence is not taken into immediate consideration. The pastors feel it is important to present a united front when bringing recommendations to the general quarterly meetings.

DECISION-MAKING

The professional clergy dominate the committees and thus are primarily responsible for the direction and decision-making within the conference. The united front of the clergy could overwhelm the representatives at the conference and make the conference a place where information (the group is informed of the pastors' decisions) is given out rather than where policy is truly worked through and a true congregational process carried out.

Those matters which seem most important and controversial are generally discussed at the conference and a consensus must be reached. Those matters which are of less consequence are often voted upon and are passed with a two-thirds or one-half majority vote.

Over the years there has been a shift in who makes major decisions. In 1960, between sixty and seventy percent of the decisions affecting the denominational programs were made by the missionaries. Since that time national leadership has matured and the conference has come to be independent of the missionaries but the missionaries still participate in the various committees as non-voting members. "Even though he is not chairman a senior missionary carries a lot of 'weight' on a committee." ⁷ But because of the shift in power the pastors have become the major policy shapers in the conference. The church representatives also have input into policy formulation and are considered a part of the decision-making process. The average church member has little say in conference matters except through his church representatives.

In the local church the pastor is influential in most of the decisions affecting the congregation. The missionaries make most of the outreach, financial and operational decisions when

beginning a new church. "As the church develops more and more is decided through the church." 8 Another missionary estimated that presently about eighty-five percent of the decisions were made by the pastors.9 The church council works together with the pastor and helps in the decision process. Important decisions which affect the congregation are brought to the church body for discussion.

CHURCH PROGRAMS AND LEADERSHIP

Church members can become involved in a variety of programs within the local body. Sunday School teachers are instructed how to train children and the teachers in turn teach the children the concepts of the Bible. Recently, youth groups have been started on the local level to involve teen-agers in Bible instruction and youth activities. The ladies meet together weekly for Bible studies and fellowship and some of the churches have monthly men's meetings.

The local church organizes its members to assist in the tasks of the church. Programs are often directed by committees which arrange for personnel and materials. There is an attempt to involve all adult members of a local church in some part of its work. The church council and the pastor attempt to discern the abilities of the members in the church and encourage them to exercise their gifts.

TRAINING OF MEMBERS

The Mennonite Brethren Church is concerned about the spiritual growth of its members. Before a person becomes a member of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church, he is instructed in the Confession of Faith. People are expected to attend the Sunday services and be taught through the pastor's sermons. At home Bible studies, ladies' meetings and men's meetings there is an emphasis on learning how to live as a Christian.

In 1958 through 1960, a comprehensive training called "Every Member Bible Study" was made available to members in the Osaka area. The intent of those meetings was to give a more complete training to the membership. Today the Evangelical Biblical Seminary offers night courses two nights a week at the seminary for lay people. If individuals show potential and desire to study for the ministry they can receive credit for their work. Four years of night classes is the equivalent to one year of full time study. The Seminary is also designed to train pastors who study for three years as well as learn through field

education. Special workshops for Sunday School teachers which help to train and make their ministry more effective are offered in local churches.

The Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference has grown to a membership of over 1000 in 22 established churches. 10 The mission has focussed on cities, building a cluster of congregations so that the individual churches do not feel isolated. Several of the congregations have planted daughter churches and from them have emerged additional independent groups. The conference is now facing difficulties in training leadership to assume pastoral responsibilities for these new and growing congregations.

In Japan people are heavily involved in their company work. This does not allow them time to assist in the church as the laity in North America can. There is also a heavy reliance on the professional pastor. Due to past experiences one of the missionaries questions the effectiveness of a non-professional pastor in a society that requires specialization and has means of certifying that specialty. Working in city areas where there are many contacts from professionals in the audiences our problem today is pastors without university education and who cannot reach people above them - they are below them educationally. 11

This missionary seems to call into question the possibilities of having lay pastors because of the high respect for professionalism in society and because the pastoral "office" is seen as a professional position by society. These difficulties will be dealt with in the following chapter.

SUMMARY

The Japan Mennonite Brethren Church has shown steady growth since its inception in 1950. There is some lay leadership beyond the local church level, but much of the decision - making process is carried on by the pastors. The people are encouraged to become involved in the program of the local church and the men who show potential are encouraged to become a part of the leadership of the congregation. There has been some difficulty in training pastors. More pastoral leadership is needed to take over the new congregations which have been started by missionaries in the past six years.

- 1 Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, Yearbook of the 44th General Conference (Hillsboro: M. B. Publishing House, 1948), p. 40.
- 2 Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, Yearbook of the General Conferences (Hillsboro: M. B. Publishing House, 1960), p. 57.
- 3 Nihon Menonaito Burezaren Kyodan Shingi Inkai, Nihon Menonaito Burezaren Kyokai to wa, trans., by Philip Hamm (n. p., 1976), pp. 27, 28.
- 4 Harry Friesen, Mennonite Brethren Missionary in Japan, Response to questionnaire question #22, p. 120. See Appendix I.
- 5 Jonathan Bartel, Mennonite Brethren Missionary in Japan, Response to questionnaire question #4, p. 118/ See Appendix I.
- 6 Friesen, Questionnaire, question #5, p. 118.
- 7 Ibid., question #6, p. 121.
- 8 Bartel, Questionnaire, question #3, p. 120.
- 9 Friesen, Questionnaire, question #4, p. 121.
- 10 Hilda Dueck, "Japan M. B. Church Marks 30th Anniversary," Christian Leader, January, 1981, p. 9.
- 11 Friesen, Questionnaire, question #5, p. 121.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION

In the study and creation of leadership models a scriptural base must be maintained while incorporating the effective elements found within the culture. Through a careful synthesis, a model of leadership can be created which will foster biblical principles without becoming syncretistic and which will uniquely fit the culture in which the missionary works.

CREATING A BIBLICAL MODEL

A problem arises when missionaries believe that our Mennonite Brethren forefathers have developed the only biblical form of leadership and that departure from familiar structures would be equivalent to departure from the faith. Chapter II demonstrates that no one absolute model of leadership is prescribed in the Scriptures but there are principles which must be incorporated into every structure.

From the study of Ephesians 4:11, 12 it becomes clear that every believer is responsible and the only difference in service between the leadership and the "saints" is one of gifts. Therefore, the pastor should not be considered as the only minister in the congregation. All members must exercise their gifts and the pastoral leadership is to encourage and equip the people for their specific tasks of ministry. Several specific terms are used to describe the different aspects of leadership, namely: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and deacons. These need to be incorporated in every church model. The Japan Mennonite Brethren Church has attempted consciously or otherwise to incorporate these gifts into the church. They have made use of apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers. There needs to be a strengthening of the prophetic ministry with regard to the predictive prophesy and the discernment of the secrets of men's hearts. The deaconate also needs to be strengthened in the churches.

The early church used different models of leadership in different locations and adapted the leadership structures as the church grew and expanded in new areas. It is evident that the church maintained plurality of leaders in a local setting. In the believer's church, authority is in the hands of the

congregation, not in the ecclesiastical offices. This principle must be kept in mind when we set up structures which are responsible for decision-making. The episcopal model usually deviates from this basic scriptural principle. If authority remains in the hands of the congregation in a presbyterian model, then the principles of the presbyterian system can be used in creating an Indigenous model. The congregational model is suitable for smaller churches and helps to encourage participation by every member. There is usually a clearer understanding of the laity and their gifts for ministry in the congregational model. There is also less chance of the leadership positions becoming exclusive offices which are aloof from the laity.

The Japan Mennonite Brethren was originally designed with the intention of following congregational lines. It appears that there has been a shift towards a presbyterian system over the years since the majority of the church decisions are made by the pastor and there is a strong influence in conference decisions by the pastors as a group.

EGALITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Several principles in the cultural models mesh with the biblical principles discussed above. The egalitarian base in the interest groups shows that the biblical principle of submission to one another is not out of place in the culture. Mennonite Brethren leadership should continue to uphold this ideal and guard against elevating the professional clergy. By limiting the ordinances of baptism, communion and benedictions to the clergy there has been a tendency to elevate the professional ministry above the laity, making the ordinances almost sacramental. Consequently, the laity find it difficult to identify with the pastor and to encourage and exhort them.

The village interest groups historically have had a religious dimension. The culture allows this kind of small group to meet and encourage participation by every member. There is usually a clearer understanding of the laity and their gifts for ministry in the congregational model. There is also less chance of the leadership positions becoming exclusive offices which are aloof from the laity.

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The village interest groups historically have had a religious dimension. The culture allows this kind of small group to meet and worship together. The religious interest groups also band together at the time of death of one of their members. Robert Banks explains in Paul's Idea of Community that Paul based the organization of his mission churches partially on the pattern of groups which banded together for social and funerary needs of their members. These groups practiced community and met the needs of their members. The Japanese funeral kumi work together by families, treating the family units equally and working together harmoniously. Extending this to the Mennonite Brethren Church we must re-emphasize the importance of working together and encouraging one another in times of stress. Even within our churches with an average membership of about forty-five there could be kumi organized for physical and funerary needs much like deacon or caring groups in North American Mennonite Brethren Churches.

DECISION-MAKING

Although the episcopal system of church government parallels the feudal system of hierarchy and familism found in Japanese business structures, this system fails to allow for the biblical norm of the priesthood of all believers. The episcopal system may appear to be expedient in decision-making but it usually leads to nominalism and a lack of lay involvement. The presbyterian system can also lead to paternalism if the laity are not involved in decision-making. The Japan Mennonite Brethren Church seems to be heading toward a form of paternalism evidenced by the fact that several of the older Japanese

brethren are very influential in the decision-making process to the extent of being the deciding factor on some issues. When committees make recommendations to the conference meetings, a consensus has already been reached among the pastors. The pastors feel it is important that they are not divided so as to cause confusion at the conferences. When the recommendation is presented for acceptance not many of the lay representatives would feel free to speak up against the proposals of the pastors. This could lead to the misuse of power and authority by the pastors.

The early church used consensus among the elders especially when they were deciding judicial matters between Christians. Hatch writes, "The Christians like the Jewish presbyters exercised a consensual jurisdiction in matters of dispute between Christian and Christian."¹

In our study of business in Japan we noted that there was also great emphasis on using a consensus approach to decision-making. We have already spoken in the previous chapter of the consensus process which the Mennonite Brethren brotherhood uses to come to decisions.

There is a tendency either to move to a majority vote or to have the pastor make most of the decisions in an attempt to facilitate the decision-making process. This may seem expedient but it bypasses much of the important discussion which brings people together. By coming to a consensus the people see the decision as their own and will give their all to help accomplish the goals and decisions which they have reached. If decisions concerning outreach and the church program are made by the pastors there will be difficulty in motivating the congregations to participate.

The business model, although hierarchical, allows for those near the bottom to contribute to the system through the process of the ringisho. In the Mennonite Brethren churches there does not seem to be any room for the initiative of younger members. While they may teach Sunday School or help with the youth program, they are not presently included in the process of decision-making beyond the local level. Presently, the only possibility is that they may be asked to be a church representative at the Conference Quarterly Meetings.

The Mennonite Brethren pastor in Japan finds himself pressed by an enormous work load. An effective use of the laity to help formula the church programs and policy would allow the lay people to grow in the knowledge of the larger conference programs. Such involvement would also increase the sense of

loyalty and commitment to the church. The system of allowing younger members of the business community to design the policy and direction of the company has worked to develop company loyalty and concern for its well-being. The church in the same way should take seriously the fact that all believers are led by the Holy Spirit and can function as responsible members using the gifts with which they have been enabled.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE LAITY

The New Testament believers were actively engaged in evangelism. When persecution came the people were dispersed but continued to engage in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:14; 11:19-23). Christians in Japan are often asked by their companies to move to different locations. When this happens, instead of sharing their faith in their new setting they often revert and are lost to the church. They also feel awkward in attending a new church in the area they have moved to. This is partially because of the intense loyalty which most Christians have for the ones who are responsible for introducing them to their spiritual pilgrimage. Another problem results from the present emphasis in the Mennonite Brethren church on full-time ecclesiastical leadership in every church. Lay people find it almost impossible to establish a center for witness if they move from their present church to a new location because of this emphasis and the strict regulations reserving ordinances as a function of the full-time pastors. The present leadership justifies their ecclesiastical position by saying that people are extremely busy working for their company (10-12 hours per day) and would not be able to have an effective ministry to others. Although it is true that men are busy in their companies, Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai have been able to effectively involve the laity. Therefore we need to question the validity of this argument.

Since the present system does emphasize the need for a high proportion of professional pastors

. . . the "laity" have become very reticent about accepting leadership roles, both because they have come to accept a fairly stereotyped picture of the job specification of the "ordained" leader (he should be omniscient and omnipresent in every church-related activity), and because they have grown accustomed to the "ordained" minister taking the initiative. As a result the laity tends to manifest an excessive passivity in that it accepts the de facto leadership's undisputed right to define its

rules for it and suffers in comparative silence that same leadership's benevolent paternalism.' 2

Kirk's statement may be somewhat strong for the Japan Mennonite Brethren church but his point that the laity may become stagnated beyond taking initiative is valid. When that happens it soon succumbs to the clergy and an episcopalian system emerges.

When it comes to involving the laity in the work of evangelism, we have much to learn from the New Religions in Japan. Both Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai are lay movements developed without the aid of highly trained clergy. The Soka Gakkai have made extensive use of lay leaders who become more responsible as they become more effective evangelists. The larger the group of converts related to a person, the greater the prestige and responsibility a Soka Gakkai leader commands. In Rissho Koseikai every member is expected to be a missionary. Those who prove to be effective communicators and are able to pass the examinations for leadership are promoted through the ranks. The rapid expansion of these two groups is possible only through the extensive use of lay people. The Christian church must learn from this example and develop a trained laity through an organized program of teaching. If Christians hope to reach any sizeable portion of the population they must utilize a host of zealous laity, powered by the Holy Spirit.

REDUCING MEMBERSHIP LOSS

The Christian church in Japan has been plagued by a high percentage of reversion and membership loss throughout its history. Between the years 1890 and 1902 the annual average rate of membership loss for the Congregational Church was ninety-four percent.³ Not all the denominations faced the same loss during this crisis period but each of the six groups which Yamamori analyzes averaged over forty-seven percent annual loss during the same time span. Fortunately, this kind of loss has not continued throughout the history of the church in Japan. ⁴ In fact, some groups like the Holiness Church have been able to keep the membership loss at a minimum and as a result have grown tremendously. The Holiness Church was able to win families and not just isolated individuals. "When someone underwent a definite religious experience and became a member of our church, he was sure to guide other members of his family and his acquaintances to Christ." Tosaji Obara went on to say, "Because of the web of relationships that exist among the members, we experience very little membership leakage."⁵

Rissho Koseikai also enrolls the whole family even if only one of the family becomes a member. This indicates a desire to keep the family together and establish ancestral records which are used in the veneration of the dead. Soka Gakkai encourages family conversion by insisting on counting membership by family units. Soka Gakkai also tries to tie members together in a variety of web relationships. The conversion tie binds the convert to the one who introduced and won him to Soka Gakkai. This is a vertical bond. The horizontal relationship is represented by the geographic dimension. All members in a geographic region are united for meetings and rallies. Grouping people together by age levels and sexes demonstrates a diagonal dimension. The cultural dimension unites people with similar interests and skills. This four dimensional web of relationships developed by Soka Gakkai has the potential to involve the members in a variety of activities and relationships, forming a tight web of relationships and thus reducing membership loss. In the village, kumi are divided by age level and also by interest. There is a common bond and the people feel a special kind of unity through this type of organization.

Organizationally, the Mennonite Brethren have used several means to establish a web of relationships for its members. Transgenerational meetings are held in twenty-three locations on Sundays for worship. The church has done well to win whole families. This needs to be continued and expanded into a holistic family training program. The church needs to encourage the men to use their position as head of the household to serve their families and to train them in the Word of God. First generation Christians need to be taught how to do this so that the church does not become nominal. This can best be done with a strong men's program in the churches. The Mennonite Brethren have developed the horizontal and diagonal web relationships. The churches encourage the development of graded Sunday Schools for the children and youth. Presently, missionaries are engaged by the Japan Conference to develop youth work in the churches. The women meet weekly for Bible study and fellowship. In some of the churches the men meet to unite them into a peer group. The vertical bond could be incorporated by introducing a program in which members of the church become spiritually responsible for the stimulation of growth and maturity of new believers. The churches should try to incorporate some of the social activities of the kumi such as meeting the needs of those in distress, helping in the event of a death of someone's family member, or even working on projects together which may affect the whole community. In these ways the church can build relationships

between church members and help to reduce membership loss. The biblical correspondence to the discussion of membership loss can be found in the parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7).⁶ In Japan much more effort is expended finding new converts than attempting to go out after marginal members and bring them back into the life of the church.

The Mennonite Brethren have classified about fourteen percent of its members as inactive.⁷ These people are marginal members who have not been attending church nor participated in the life of the church.

In talking to several Japanese pastors in 1978, it appears as though little effort is being made to incorporate these people into the mainstream of the congregation.

COUNSELING GROUPS

One of the unique features of Rissho Koseikai often attributed as a factor in its rapid growth is the hoza. These group counseling sessions give practical and religious guidance to persons who are searching for help. The program which mostly closely corresponds to this in the Mennonite Brethren Church is the ladies' meetings. The weekly Bible study is often more than just studying the Bible. The women often share their family and social problems and work together to support each other. Unlike Rissho Koseikai, there is little or no training in the area of counseling. The Mennonite Brethren Church must develop a program to train lay people to counsel those with problems who come to the church to find solutions and support. The Christian church is sometimes seen as a last resort. We need to be ready to help all those who come when they reach the point of distress and are searching for meaning in life.

SUPPORT AND WATCH-CARE

The village interest groups which band together to help with labor shows the concern that the Japanese can have for each other. When there is a task which is too large for anyone individual they join together as a cooperative to accomplish the task. In the event of a funeral the community helps in the preparations and continues to expend aid after the funeral. In Soka Gakkai there is also a real concern for those who have been led to the faith. In the words of one woman leader quoted by Noah Brannen, "They depend on me. I am their leader in the faith. Not only do we meet to study the teachings in my home, but I have to keep in touch with them to see if they are sick,

or in trouble, or in need of help in any way." He goes on to comment that "She has had a telephone installed in her home at [an initial] cost of three times her husband's monthly salary so that she can keep in touch with the members in her charge." 8 Responsibility for care is not in the hands of professional clergy but in the heart of enthusiastic, trained members.

The Christian church needs to realize that the laity can have a dynamic counseling ministry. A new member should not be left on his own to find his way in ministry. Rather, he needs to be guided and to see a structure through which he can receive training and encouragement. Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai have designed training programs to teach doctrine and leadership principles. In the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church we see that there is a concern, for the discernment of spiritual gifts but after a person has been assigned to a position there needs to be a time of training and discipleship. The Japanese finds himself unable to function unless he is first given the position. After the church recognizes the position, the missionary [or pastor] will disciple the believer to function by having a period of minarai-learn by watching or kunren-training. 9

Although the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference has a Bible School and Seminary, it is not convenient for many of the members to attend; thus, a more versatile program of training needs to be considered.

CLERGY

One of the present problems facing the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference is the lack of trained pastors. The present policy of the conference is to train its own leaders at the Evangelical Biblical Seminary in Osaka. They have set up a three year training course for all those who are to be pastors in the Mennonite Brethren churches. Presently there is a shortage of pastors. Several of the missionary-led churches have grown to the point where it is very important that they be taken over by national leadership. There are several students in training at the seminary but it will be several years before they are fully trained. If the present system of one paid pastor per church is to be maintained many more pastors must be recruited and trained. The conference has planned to start at least one new church per year. The need for pastors is a very serious problem facing the conference. At the base of this problem lies the presupposition that every church needs a professionally trained, paid pastor. A professional pastor is necessary because of the kind of worship experiences currently used in the congregations.

If a sermon is essential to worship, it is unrealistic to expect a lay person to serve as pastor. Not many lay people can prepare such a discourse and maintain a full-time job. Part-timework is almost unheard of in Japan; unless the pastor is self-employed there is little chance that a part-time person can be employed.

In the past Mennonite Brethren have begun and continued churches with some degree of effectiveness by using lay pastors. Instead of one sermon there were several short expositions given by several lay members. One option the Japanese Church should consider would be using lay persons to lead the study of a Bible passage during the worship hour. The Sunday service could be a time of sharing and mutual exhortation. At present the Mennonite Brethren in Japan are tied to a system which does not seem to allow for rapid expansion.

The present leadership system is very top-heavy with paid clergy and in such a situation growth is difficult. An analysis of the ratio of paid clergy to membership reveals that the Mennonite Brethren have proportionately many more clergy than other religious groups. McGavran has studied the various classes of leadership and how they affect church growth. He discusses five classes of leadership.

"Class One leaders are those who serve the existing church" and generally carry on "the maintenance ministry of the church. "Class Two leaders are volunteers who are engaged in the evangelism and outreach of the church. Class Three are the leaders of Bible studies, cell groups and small churches. These may be partially paid or volunteers. "Class Four leaders are the paid professional leaders of large, well established congregations ... Class Five leaders travel from one country to another, ..., and are part of the world church." 15 For a church to grow, McGavran says, that Class Two leaders must be numerically as strong as those in Class One. Because Class Three workers are those engaged in leadership of small groups or churches, this group should be significantly larger than Class Four. An analysis of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church reveals a significant number involved as Class One leaders. Class Two is not numerically very strong. A significant number of Class Three leaders have not been developed in the Mennonite Brethren Church. According to church growth principles this group should be significant in size. In Soka Gakkai this is a very large group. In contrast, the clergy, as seen from the ratio of the clergy to membership is disproportionately large.

TABLE 1

RATIO OF CLERGY TO ADHERENTS

	Meeting Places	Clergy (Aliens) 11	Adherents	Clergy / Adherent
Totals	234,233	367,979 (3,374)	160,640,274 11	1/436
Shinto	92,248	77,858 (2)	70,321,823	1/903
Buddhism	93,779	132,439 (23)	81,319,934	1/614
Soka Gakkai 13 (Nichiren Shoshu)		329	16,201,488	1/49,245
Rissho Koseikai	3	145	4,849,476	1/1,542
Other Religions	41,828	141,307	8,256,753	1/58
Christianity	6,378	16,375 (3,349)	741,764	1/45
Protestants	4,584	6,774 (1,081)	387,854	1/57
Mennonite 14 Brethren	15	26 (9)	584	1/22

The current problem of recruiting more pastors could be a blessing rather than a concern. This could be a way in which God is redirecting the church to develop a larger proportion of its membership to accept lay leadership and actually have groups that are pastored by lay people. If the church can develop its lay leadership, the present difficulties can be resolved. It will mean that every church will not have its own paid pastor. One pastor would serve several congregations. This is being tried in several churches with the development of daughter churches. This program must be supplemented with a vigorous training program if it is to be successful in continuing to reach new converts.

PRACTICAL AND SIMPLE DOCTRINES

The New Religions in Japan are characterized by a simple doctrine. One of the reasons for their existence is that the old

religions did not put beliefs in terms that the Japanese could understand. The New Religions have reduced their doctrinal statements (if they can be called doctrine) into simple proverbs which are easy to learn and follow. They have simplified the process so that any common person can follow and teach it to others.

Soka Gakkai has developed a manual called Shakubuku Kyoten for instructing members in how to win other people to the faith. It has been a major achievement to have placed in the hands of hundreds of thousands of humble but eager "evangelists" a manual which has aided the movement in the winning of so many converts. This book is more than a Japanese equivalent of the "Four Spiritual Laws." It contains arguments on how to win people of all faiths. The people study and even memorize major portions of this book to be able to counter the arguments of potential converts. Since many of the people have not been sufficiently indoctrinated in their own religious beliefs Soka Gakkai presentations confuse the potential convert about his own religion. In this confused state, many are persuaded to join Soka Gakkai. The Christian church is in need of a manual which will expose the errors of other religions as well as answer the arguments posed by such groups as Soka Gakkai.

Christians have often emphasized the need for orthodoxy to the neglect of orthopraxy. New Religions have shown the effectiveness of using short pithy sayings to communicate to the masses. On the other hand Christianity has been accused of making simple doctrines difficult. Instead of continually preaching dogma a sermon on marital difficulties might be in place. The Mennonite Brethren pastors may not preach on as obscure topics as many other denominations, but a word of caution may be in order.

MEETING IN HOMES

One of the present problems facing the Japan Conference is the high cost of constructing church buildings. The Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services of North America has helped build the churches in which the Japanese meet. In times of inflation continuing such a generous program has become impossible. Mission funds have been cut and consequently this kind of assistance is no longer available. The Japan Conference has been taxed to the limit to support and maintain its present program; thus there has been reluctance to start new churches because of the inability to raise sufficient funds for future church buildings. The Japanese seem hesitant to open their homes for

house fellowships because culturally the Japanese are reserved and do not generally entertain in their homes. However, when close friendships are established there is more openness to invite others in. The kumi began meeting in homes for religious services which were then followed by business relating to the village. The Japanese did not restrict their meetings to any one home but rather rotated to all the homes in the community. This practice has also been followed by the New Religions. "The stupendous growth of Soka Gakkai through the use of house meetings, with few buildings being constructed for local groups, shows conclusively that great religious movements are -110- possible without the extensive use of buildings. 17 Rissho Koseikai also uses homes for its hoza groups. Especially for those who cannot go to the central headquarters, home meetings are crucial to spiritual well-being. The house meetings provide a relaxed atmosphere where people do not have to observe such a strict dress code as they would if they attended a formal church service.

The Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference has utilized the use of homes for some of its meetings. Missionaries often started congregations by having Bible studies in their homes and then expanding them to worship services. When there was a good nucleus of members the group began to look for a lot on which they could build a church. Other members have allowed the young fellowship groups to meet in their living rooms and several have donated space on their property to erect a portable building in which they could hold meetings. New groups of believers should consider continuing in homes and dividing when they grow too large rather than building a church. They could still be united and meet monthly as a large group in rented halls or a regional facility.

Using the house church model in expansion has great potential for the rural areas of Japan. In many places it will be difficult to win a large enough number of converts to support a full time pastor. In these areas the concept of a Christian kumi would be a vital type of organization.

If several households in one area can be reached with the Gospel and formed into a church they can have a sense of identity and feel the responsibility for the evangelism of their hamlet. If they have no financial commitments to a large building program several of these small groups can unite to call a pastor to serve them. They could also unite to build a regional headquarters where they could come together in celebration meetings and for training.

The Yoido Island Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul, Korea offers a model which demonstrates the feasibility of this working in the orient.¹⁸ The church is organized into house churches which meet in homes throughout Seoul. The lay leaders of these groups come weekly to the main training center which has a sanctuary holding 8,000. In 1978 the church membership had reached 48,975 with 2,910 house fellowships. ¹⁹

CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS

One of the common features of the New Religions is that they all have a central headquarters in which they have a sense of identity. The headquarters draws adherents from all over the country to pay homage and receive instruction. There is a sense of unity and awe created by these pilgrimages. Because the central headquarters have such great importance in the program of the rapidly expanding New Religions, one must ask whether this kind of center would not be important for the Mennonite Brethren. In fact this desire has been expressed in the past by some of the pastors. At present the conference owns the seminary building which is a functional building for teaching but not a place where people come to worship and celebrate together.

SUMMARY

The basic structure of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference is sound but there are areas where the present system can be improved. As a church which comes from the Anabaptist tradition it is important to keep the biblical principles of spiritual gifts and the priesthood of all believers as an integral part of our organizational structures. It appears as though we are moving towards a more familial, presbyterian system. However, there are structures in the culture which allow for an egalitarian system of leadership and cooperation. Thus, we are not super imposing a foreign element on our church structure when we organize and follow a congregational model of church government. Decision-making has been done pre-dominantly by the pastors.

This may cause the laity to withdraw and hinder the congregational decision-making process. While the pastor is ultimately responsible to God for the spiritual state of the church he is pastoring, he is not responsible for doing everything in the church. By assigning planning tasks to the younger members of the church and then giving guidance only when asked, a pastor can incorporate the ringisho concept into his church.

This could also lead to a higher involvement of the laity in the church program and can develop potential Class Three leadership.

Through a conscious effort to build a web of relationships within the church and to aggressively pursue the inactive members, membership losses can be cut down. For those who become converted there must be a conscious effort to teach the elementary principles of the faith in a clear and simple way. These principles must take on practical meaning for the daily life of the believer. Part of the support of these groups should be such that they help answer the practical problems of everyday life.

From the study of New Religions it appears that the central headquarters is more important than local churches. The Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference should consider constructing a central headquarters sometime in the near future. They should also consider developing more house churches for evangelism and for planting daughter churches.

Making the above changes does not guarantee that the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church will grow numerically like Soka Gakkai or Rissho Koseikai but it should lead to a more indigenous form, of church organization.

- 1 Hatch, *Early Christian Churches*, p. 72.
- 2 J. Andrew Kirk, "Comments on 'Leadership and/or Service: Models of Ministry,'" *Gospel in Context*, II, No. 4 (October, 1979), p. 23.
- 3 Tetsunao Yamamori, *Church Growth in Japan* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974), p. 74.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- 6 This parable may be better titled "The Parable of the Caring Shepherd" for the shepherd was concerned for all the sheep. When one went astray he left those who were safe, and without care for his own comfort, searched and brought home the one that had gone astray.
- 7 Personal notes at a pastor's meeting at Nosegawa Camp, Osaka on December 6, 1976 indicate that there were 851 members and only 732 active members.
- 8 Noah Brannen, *Soka Gakkai: Japan's Militant Buddhists* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 18.
- 9 Henry Ayabe, "Disciplining in the Organizing of a Church," *Japan Harvest*, XXIX, No. 3 (1979), p. 14.
- 10 *Cultural Affairs, Japanese Religion*, pp. 239,254,256,261.
- 11 Aliens are included as part of the total clergy. Males and females are included.
- 12 Adherents exceed the total population which was 103,720,060 as of December 31, 1970, p. 238.
- 13 Figures for Soka Gakkai are taken from Nichiren Shoshu. Not all adherents of Nichiren Shoshu are members of Soka Gakkai but all Soka Gakkai members are adherents of Nichiren Shoshu. The staff of Soka Gakkai is not reflected in the clergy figure but full-time leadership and staff are paid by publishing companies run by Soka Gakkai.
- 14 The 1980 figures have changed so that 34(15) clergy serve 1000 members in 23 locations giving a ratio of 1/29.
- 15 Donald A. McGavran and Win C. Arn, *How to Grow a Church* (Glendale: Regal Books Division, G / L Publications, 1973), p. 89-93.
- 16 Neil Braun, *Laity Mobilized: Reflections on Church Growth in Japan and Other Lands* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 149.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- 18 John Stetz, "Biggest Little Church in the World," *Church Growth Bulletin*, XIII, No. 1 (1976), pp. 78-83.
- 19 "World's Largest Church Grows Through House Units," *Church Growth Bulletin*, XIV, No. 5 (1978), p. 195.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis is to examine biblical and cultural models of leadership and relate them to the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church. Certain organizational problems can be resolved through recommendations made in the previous chapter. To this end the hypothesis that there are areas which need to be modified in order to overcome some of the present leadership difficulties has been proven.

The development of lay leaders will help relieve the need for trained pastors. The ratio of paid personnel to membership is twice that of other Protestant groups and many times that of Buddhism or Shinto. The present policy of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church to concentrate on increasing the membership of the existing churches is a move in the right direction. However, if this policy works to the exclusion of developing new house churches, the growth of the churches may stagnate in several years when the present churches are full.

The study does not consider the problems of transition between first and second generation Christians. The biblical text deals with the first generation of Christians and does not address this problem. 1 New Religions are at the same stage of development as the Mennonite Brethren work and thus they are experiencing some of the same difficulties. How will they handle the generational change? In several years these religions will be an excellent reference for observing change. As the early church moved into the Patristic period it went through similar generational changes. The writings of the early church fathers should be examined to understand the transition from first to second generation Christians.

One danger which will face the church as it moves into the second generation is the institutionalization of the present structures. At a time when the context demands flexibility the church often sets up a traditional pattern, losing much freedom and spontaneity. The present leadership must be sensitive to this danger. This transition period in the life of a movement needs study to ensure guidance and strength for the life of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Japan.

It is the hope of the author that his study will serve as an aid to the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference. Ideally, consideration of the results of this study could strengthen the church in Japan and make it more effective in the winning of Japan to Christianity. May God be glorified in and through His Church.

1 A study of the seven churches in Revelation 2, 3 begins to give indication of the condition of the churches as they moved into the second generation.

2 Hans Kasdorf has analyzed the transition from first generation to second as it relates to conversion. See Kasdorf, *Christian Conversion in Context* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1980), pp. 149-164.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MASTER OF DIVINITY THESIS

"LEADERSHIP IN CONTEXT"

ORGANIZATIONAL, STRUCTURES

1. How were the mission churches governed once there was a core of believers, but before there was a constitution?

2. What prompted the formation of a constitution?

Check the appropriate:

- desire to hand over responsibility
- work getting to much for missionaries
- request by the nationals for autonomy
- legal difficulties
- natural growth of church
- one step in a plan
- other _____

3. How many people were directly involved in planning the constitution?_____

4. Who set up the constitution?

Check one of the following:

- only nationals
- only missionaries
- missionaries with national assistance
- nationals with missionaries

5. Check the appropriate one(s):

The leadership structures were determined and laid out:

- by the Mission in America
- by the Mission in Japan
- by the nationals

6. Was the constitution something which wrote down the existing established order or did it develop new concepts? If it developed new concepts what were they?

7. Were existing models of leadership in the Japanese culture

carefully examined before the final plan for leadership was drafted?

Circle one: yes no

If yes, which ones? _____

8. What are the various Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference committees?

9. To whom are the various conference committees responsible?

10. Do the individual committees make recommendations to the conference assembly or can they make decisions and implement them on their own?

11. Are there lay people in the present Japan Mennonite Brethren conference leadership structure? Circle one: yes no
If yes, what is their role?

12. Do those in leadership in the churches know who are on the conference committees? Circle one: yes no

13. What percentage of the members of the conference committees would the average layman know by name?

14. What are the strong points of the present structure of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church?

15. Are there any weaknesses in the present structure of the Japan Mennonite Brethren Church? Circle one: yes no
If there are any weaknesses what are they? If you have any suggestions on how these weaknesses can be improved include these in the answer.

16. Have you examined any other effective models of leadership in Japan? Circle one: yes no
If yes, which one(s): _____

Why are they effective?

17. Could these principles be used in any church?
Circle one: yes no
18. Could they be employed in our Mennonite Brethren churches?
Circle one: yes no
19. What problems were there in turning administration over to the Japanese when a missionary had begun a church?
20. If there were problems, did the problems arise immediately or after some time?
21. Does every Mennonite Brethren Church have the same organizational structure?
22. As a church grows what are the steps in organizing the individual churches?
23. How are people selected for church positions?

Check the appropriate phrase(s):

- by examining spiritual gifts
 by taking anyone who shows potential
 by involving everyone and appointing them to some task

24. Who assigns the jobs in the church?

Check the appropriate and state the jobs they assign:

- church council (which jobs)
 the pastor (which jobs)
 the congregation (which jobs)
 other (which jobs)

25. What percentage of the lay people know who are in all the various church committees?

DECISION-MAKING

1. In 1960 what percentage of decisions affecting the denominational programs were made by: pastors, missionaries, church representatives, church members?
2. In 1980 what percentage of decisions affecting the denominational programs were made by pastors, missionaries, church representatives, church members?
3. What percentage of the outreach, financial and operational

decisions in the missionary-led churches are made by the missionary? ___ %

4. What percentage of the outreach, financial and operational decisions in the national church are made by the pastor? ___%

5. What issues do church councils discuss and decide?

6. What part in decision-making does the missionary have in the Japan Mennonite Brethren Conference today?

7. Is the conference decision-making influenced by several key leaders? Circle one: yes no
If yes, who?

8. Are conference decisions made by majority vote or consensus?
If majority vote, what percentage is needed? ___ %

9. Are church decisions made by majority vote or consensus?
If majority vote, what percentage is needed? ___ %

TRAINING

1. In 1958- 1960 there was a comprehensive training for all members called "Everymember Bible Study." How is this kind of training being carried on today?

2. What kind of discipleship training is being done?
Check the appropriate one(s):

- baptism instruction preaching
- Bible studies Sunday School for m e m b e r s
- ladies meetings men's meetings
- other _____

3. Does the pastor give a special Bible and leadership training to the members of the church council? Circle one: yes no

4. As a missionary or pastor, what is your strategy to train the leadership in the church God has placed you?

5. Do you think that as a leader you could encourage lay leaders to become pastors themselves? Why or why not?

Please return this questionnaire as soon as possible to:
Philip Hamm

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