

# World Missionary Conference, 1910

*(To consider Missionary Problems in relation to the Non-Christian World)*

## THE HISTORY AND RECORDS OF THE CONFERENCE

TOGETHER WITH  
ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE  
EVENING MEETINGS

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# THE PROBLEM OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN FOREIGN AND NATIVE WORKERS

## II.

BY THE REV. PRESIDENT K. IBUKA

*Address delivered in the Assembly Hall on Monday  
Evening, 20th June*

THE history of the introduction of Christianity into a non-Christian country may be divided into three periods. During the first period, from the very nature of the case, the influence of the missionary is nearly, if not quite, predominant. The third period begins when the Church is firmly established, when it is sufficiently equipped with the institutions necessary to its vigorous maintenance and advance, and when foreign missions have given place to home missions in strength. The second period is the intermediate one: the period when the missions and the Church, co-workers for a common end, are active organisations standing side by side, distinct from one another, yet in many ways closely related. During this period practical questions of great importance and no little difficulty are certain to arise. This is the period now present in Japan.

I know very well that circumstances alter cases; and that right answers in Japan may be wrong answers elsewhere. To which I will add that right answers somewhere else may be wrong answers in Japan. But the best contribution that I can make to the discussion is to select a few questions that have come up in Japan, and to give a brief account of

them—questions that have come up between the Church of Christ in Japan and the missions related to it, but which sooner or later are likely to come up in other countries also, if they have not already done so. The precise forms in which they will present themselves will no doubt differ. They will probably be chiefly determined by ecclesiastical and national characteristics and tendencies. But in some form or other such questions will surely arise in every country as the Churches in those countries come to self-consciousness as Churches, and as Churches of the countries in which they are planted.

I have just referred to the Church of Christ in Japan. That is the Church of which I am a minister; and to make what I am to say clear without explanations in passing, I should say this by way of preface. In its organisation the Church of Christ in Japan is Presbyterian; and it belongs to the Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. It was founded by the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Reformed Church in America, and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. For many years *all* the missions of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Japan have been closely related to it, and have laboured together for its establishment. In many ways this has been of great advantage. To say nothing more, it is manifestly far better to establish in Japan one strong Church Presbyterian in polity than a number of feeble ones. Obviously, however, when questions arise, it is much easier to come to agreement with one party than with four or five. And, finally, it is not unbecoming, I think, for me to say that the Church has found it much more difficult, at times, to persuade some of the missions to look at things from its point of view than others.

## I. THE QUESTION OF THE CREED OF THE CHURCH

If Jude, the brother of James, was inspired when he exhorted his readers to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, the question of the creed of a Church cannot be one of slight importance. Nor

is it strange that missionaries of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, more than thirty years ago, when the Church of Christ in Japan was to be fully organised, should propose that it adopt as its Standards of Doctrine the Doctrinal Standards of their own Churches, namely, the Westminster Confession, the Canons of the Synod of Dort, the Shorter and Heidelberg Catechisms.

The little group of Christians which formed the beginnings of the Church, and of which I myself was one, had formed a simple Confession of its own. Very simple, and no doubt very crude, but really a confession of its faith; and it was very reluctant to exchange it for an elaborate system of theology with which it was very imperfectly acquainted, however excellent the system might be. I do not mean to say that those Standards were imposed upon the Church by the missionaries; but it is certainly true that they were accepted, not cordially and of choice, but simply out of deference to the judgment and wishes of the missionaries, to whom so much was due.

Two or three years afterwards a proposition was made to drop the Westminster Confession and Canons of the Synod of Dort, thus limiting the Standards to the Catechisms. Perhaps it is proper for me to say that the proposition was introduced by myself. But a number of the missionaries were opposed; the matter was left *in statu quo*; and no change was made for some ten years more, when the Synod which revised the Constitution met. Then a new Confession of Faith was adopted.

“The situation in 1890 (says Dr. Imbrie, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) was this:—

“The two Catechisms had been widely taught, and a commentary on one of them was in general use; but the Westminster Confession had failed to gain a hold, and the Canons of the Synod of Dort were hardly known by name. The leaders of the Church were now older in years and experience; and with most of them the feeling had strengthened with the years that no one of the Standards was the Confession of Faith adapted to the requirements of a Church in Japan. Some were in favour of writing a

new Confession, but the difficulties in the way of that were obvious.

“When the Synod met, a resolution was introduced making the Apostles’ Creed the Confession of the Church; and then followed a memorable discussion. The argument in favour of the Apostles’ Creed was this:—

“. . . . The Church in Japan is face to face with Buddhism, Confucianism, and Agnosticism. Its Confession should therefore set forth the great essential truths of historical Christianity; but it should not be a symbol dividing those who worship Christ as Teacher, Master, Saviour, and Lord. The Apostles’ Creed meets these conditions. It is brief and simple; it is a Confession for ministers and people alike; it proclaims the essential facts of Christianity; and it is the Confession of Faith of the Universal Church. That was the argument in favour of the Apostles’ Creed. The argument in reply was this:—

“Admitting the duty of a Church to adopt a Confession suited to its own needs, admitting also that so much may be said in favour of the Apostles’ Creed, it still remains true that the Apostles’ Creed alone does not meet the needs of the Church of Christ in Japan to-day. There are truths of transcendent importance which are contained in it, if at all, only by implication: the atonement, justification and sanctification in Christ, the need of the regenerating grace of the Spirit, the supremacy of the Scriptures. These are vital truths which are denied in Japan to-day; and they should be proclaimed in the Confession of the Church.

“In the afternoon of the second day further discussion was postponed, and all sat down together at the table of the Lord. The next morning a Confession was presented for consideration. In form it was the Apostles’ Creed which so many desired, with an introductory statement containing the truths which it was generally agreed called for confession. On hearing it read, one after another expressed approval. It was then copied on large sheets of paper and tacked on the wall behind the pulpit, so that all might study it. This went on for two hours; and then the Confession was adopted with deep feeling.

"It had been a time of great anxiety. Some had feared the discussion would end in schism; and the relief that followed a unanimous decision can easily be understood. The Moderator gave thanks from a full and overflowing heart. Sobbing was heard all over the room. Tears of sorrow were exchanged for tears of joy."

The Confession is so brief that I will read it—

"The Lord Jesus Christ, whom we worship as God, the Only Begotten Son of God, for us men and for our salvation was made man and suffered. He offered up a perfect sacrifice for sin; and all who are one with Him by faith are pardoned and accounted righteous; and faith in Him working by love purifies the heart.

"The Holy Ghost, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, reveals Jesus Christ to the soul; and without His grace man being dead in sin cannot enter the Kingdom of God. By Him the prophets and apostles and holy men of old were inspired; and He, speaking in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the supreme and infallible Judge in all things pertaining to faith and living.

"From these Holy Scriptures the ancient Church of Christ drew its confession; and we, holding the faith once delivered to the saints, join in that confession with praise and thanksgiving."

Then follows the Apostles' Creed.

## II. THE QUESTION OF CO-OPERATION

If the importance of a question may be measured by the feeling which it excites, the controversy it calls out, and the difficulty attending its settlement, this is by far the most important question which the Church of Christ in Japan and the missions related to it have ever had to face. For fifteen years it has appeared and reappeared; and for three or four years it has been engrossing. It would be quite impossible in the time at my disposal for me to give its history, which is highly complicated, or to set it forth in detail. All that I can attempt to do is to define the

question clearly ; to speak of it in general ; and to state the conclusion at last reached, and which it is hoped will work out satisfactorily.

The missions of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Japan, for more than thirty years, have had for their title, "The Missions Co-operating with the Church of Christ in Japan." In the broad sense of the word they have always been co-operating missions ; and for that co-operation the Church always has and always will cordially own itself a debtor. But the word co-operation in the present question, for historical reasons which I cannot now take time to give, is used in a particular and closely restricted sense. Unless this is clearly understood everything will be in a maze.

The word co-operation as used in connection with this question means co-operation in administration. Or to be still more definite it means an equal share in the general care or supervision of a certain kind of evangelistic work carried on by the missions related to the Church. Note carefully that I say "a *certain kind* of evangelistic work." For this is a most important limitation.

Missionaries do much and highly valuable evangelistic work that may be described as purely personal ; a work of the individual for the individual. They visit in hospitals and in private houses ; they have visitors who come to their homes for Christian conversation ; they distribute Christian literature ; they give instruction in the Scriptures to various classes—students, soldiers, and others ; they hold meetings regularly in public places ; they make evangelistic tours. With evangelistic work of this kind—*i.e.*, work of the individual for the individual, apart both in fact and in purpose from anything of the nature of ecclesiastical organisation—the question of co-operation has nothing to do.

But the missionaries of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches are closely and peculiarly related to the Church of Christ in Japan. From the beginning they have been of their own choice either full or associate members of its Presbyteries. It is only recently and as an outcome of this question of co-operation that a number of them have ceased

to be such members. And a most important part of their evangelistic work has been and will continue to be the formation of companies of Christians with the express purpose of building them up as congregations, eventually to be organised as churches, of the Church of Christ in Japan. The phrase which has come into use to describe evangelistic work of this kind is work done by the mission "within the Church or in connection with it." And it is with work of this kind, and this kind only, that the question of co-operation has to do.

But what is meant "by an equal share in the general care or supervision" of this kind of work? By an equal share is meant that the general care shall be exercised by a Joint-Committee composed of equal numbers of missionaries chosen by the mission, and of Japanese ministers or elders chosen by a Presbytery, or the Board of Missions of the Church. And what is meant by general care or supervision? It does not mean that missionaries in evangelistic work are to be set aside and left without duties of their own. What it means is perfectly clear from all the plans of co-operation that have been agreed upon and are now in operation. General care includes four things—(1) The Joint-Committee shall decide regarding the places to be occupied. (2) It shall appoint the Japanese evangelists to be employed. (3) It shall prepare annually estimates of the funds which it regards as necessary for the work of which it has the general care; these estimates to be forwarded through the mission to its Board. (4) Subject to the appropriations of the Board, it shall determine the salaries to be paid to Japanese evangelists and the amount of aid to be given to congregations under its care. This is what is meant by general supervision. The immediate or particular supervision remains with the missionary unless the mission prefers to relegate it to the Joint-Committee. Or, as it is expressed in one of the agreements now in operation, "The executive responsibilities of the work shall be exercised by the members of the Joint-Committee appointed by the mission."

I have already said that the question has been before the Church and the missions off and on for fifteen years, and

that for several years it has been acute. I will now try to state the arguments pro and con as fairly as I can.

The argument of those opposed to co-operation is this:—The missions related to the Church have for many years co-operated with it much to its advantage. They are now no less devoted to its interests than they have always been; and there is no good reason why they should be asked to co-operate in this restricted sense of the word. To relegate this general supervision to a joint-committee, even though the committee be composed of missionaries and Japanese in equal numbers, is to curtail the independence of the missions in the management of their affairs. The funds expended in this work all come from Churches in America; the missions are the representatives of those Churches, and as such representatives should have exclusive control in the administration of such funds. The Japanese ministers or elders who would be appointed to serve on the joint-committees are pastors, or teachers, or editors, or other busy men in other callings of life. They have not the time at their disposal that is necessary for the due performance of the duties required; and even if they had the time, they are not so fully fitted for the work as specialists by training and experience in it.

The argument in favour of co-operation is this:—It is now more than thirty years since the Church was first founded; and there are among its ministers and laymen many whom the missions often and cordially recognise as deserving of respect and confidence. It has a history and a life of its own; and it has long felt itself to be a Church. It has a Synod with six Presbyteries, comprising eighty churches financially independent, supporting their own pastors, and doing the work of churches. During the last year its contributions were fifty thousand dollars.

In its spirit the Church is evangelistic; and for fifteen years and more it has had a Board of Missions of its own actively engaged in evangelistic work and in bringing aided congregations to financial independence. Two years ago a Presbytery was organised in Formosa, which was wholly

the outcome of the work of this Board; and in economy, in insistence that aided congregations shall give as they are able, and in general efficiency of administration, it will bear comparison with any of the related missions. It is reasonable to suppose that the Japanese members of joint-committees will bring to such committees the same qualities that the members of this Board of Missions have brought to this Board, the same knowledge of Japan, of the people of Japan, of the congregations, and of the evangelists to be employed.

The question of the administration of funds—especially of trust funds—is not one to be considered lightly. But it does not necessarily follow that the gifts of foreign Churches should always be administered exclusively by the missions because the missions are the missions of those Churches. The essential thing is that the funds shall be administered by men accounted worthy. Nor are funds, important as they are, everything. The congregations already established are largely the work of the Japanese ministry; the same will be true of those yet to be established; and life work as well as funds has a title to consideration.

But the central point in the discussion should always be kept clearly in mind. The question has to do with evangelistic work “within the Church or in connection with it.” Nor is it contended that the general care of that work shall be exercised by the Church to the exclusion of the missions, though the contrary has sometimes been intimated. The right of the missions to the general care of work done by the missions has never been denied. In all the plans of co-operation now in operation the administrative body is a joint-committee in which all have equal powers. In one of these plans it is expressly stated that the mission does not “disclaim its right to an equal share in the general care of the work.” The Church has always recognised this right as a right of the missions. What it asks is that the missions recognise the right of the Church. And in asking this the Synod believes that it is asking only what a General Assembly or Synod in America or Scotland would ask if the conditions were reversed.

In 1906 the Synod adopted two resolutions defining a co-operating mission, and inviting the related missions to formulate plans of co-operation in accord with the definition. With the explanations now given, the meaning and intention of those resolutions will be clear, and I will now read them.

They are as follows:—

“A co-operating mission is one which recognises the right of the Church of Christ in Japan to the general care of all evangelistic work done by the mission as a mission within the Church or in connection with it; and which carries on such work under an arrangement based upon the foregoing principle, and concurred in by the Synod acting through its Board of Missions.”

“The several missions hitherto known as the missions co-operating with the Church are cordially invited to formulate plans for co-operation in accord with the foregoing resolution, and approved by their respective Home Churches or Boards of Foreign Missions; and to confer with the Board of Missions of the Church of Christ in Japan regarding them.”

Three of the related missions have accepted this invitation, and are now carrying on their work under plans of co-operation. But three of them declined to accept it. Accordingly the Synod, at its last meeting, offered to these missions an alternative; which, to distinguish it from plans of co-operation, is commonly called the plan of affiliation. The main features of this plan are as follows:—

1. Men doing evangelistic work under the direction of affiliated missions shall be men licensed or ordained by a Presbytery; and ministers so ordained shall be associate members of Presbytery and Synod.

2. Congregations connected with affiliated missions shall be reported in the statistics of the Church as belonging to affiliated missions; but they shall have no organic connection with the Church. They shall be mission organisations.

3. When such organisations have attained to financial independence, and desire to be organised as churches, they shall apply to the Presbytery for organisation; and when

so organised shall be churches of the Church of Christ in Japan.

This plan of affiliation was offered by the Synod, not because it was what the Synod wished, but in remembrance of the past, for the sake of harmony, and to prevent the formation of new denominations. The plan has been accepted by the three missions which declined co-operation, and thus all the related missions are now either co-operating or affiliated.

Before leaving the subject I am anxious to make one thing perfectly clear. It may have been inferred that the missionaries of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches as a body have opposed co-operation. That is by no means the case. While many of them have been opposed—some strenuously—many others of them have stood firmly with the Church, and have done all in their power to bring about co-operation. And I should be strangely lacking in appreciation if I failed to add that throughout the discussion the Church has always had the most generous and helpful sympathy of a majority of the Boards of Foreign Missions. So true is this that I cannot refrain from quoting two extracts from the official correspondence.

The secretary of the Board of the Reformed Church in America writes thus:—"The Board holds that the Church of Christ in Japan has an undoubted right to say on what conditions it will accept and recognise the work of a mission as co-operating with itself. In the action of the Synod it seems to the Board to have asked nothing more than it had a right to ask."

And the secretary of the Board of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. writes as follows:—"There is one further thought that we wish to suggest. The problem now raised is inevitable. It has arisen, or it will arise, in every land where the work of founding the Christian Church is under way. We are sure that the problem can be solved, and we believe that the privilege of solving it is now given to the Church of Christ in Japan. It is the problem of cordial, harmonious, co-operative work with the missionary force in the field, during the period intermediate between that of the

first founding of the Church and that of its full establishment, when foreign missions shall be needed no more because their place will have been taken by home missions in power. The solution of this problem in Japan will be a rich gift to the Church of Christ in other lands."

I said when I began that the introduction of Christianity into a non-Christian country may be divided into three periods. The first period—the period of the first founding of Christianity in Japan—is now past. The third period is yet to come, and for that period other men must answer. The period now present is the intermediate one—the time of transition; and times of transition are commonly times of difficulty. For this period we are responsible, and for the way in which its difficulties are met we—Churches and missions alike—shall be judged.