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KANZO UCHIMURA: HIS LIFE AND HIS WORK  
A Study of the Founder of Non-Church Christianity

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Statement and Significance of the Problem

"I for Japan  
Japan for the world,  
The world for Christ,  
All for God."

These are the words found on the stone over the grave in which Kanzo Uchimura now lies. These words were taken from the inside cover of his Bible where he placed them under the title, "To be inscribed upon my Tomb". They were written when his young heart was burning with zeal to save Japan through Christianity. Looking at the life of Kanzo Uchimura there is no doubt that he really spent his seventy years from 1861 to 1930 for Japan, for the world, for Christ, and for God. But what seems unusual about him is the fact that, until recently, he was comparatively unknown to the largest part of the Christian world.

Since Emil Brunner has introduced Mukyokai (Non-church), the movement which Kanzo Uchimura started, as the "unique instrument of lay evangelism",<sup>1</sup> to the English-speaking world by his lectures and through magazine articles, Western Christianity has begun to wonder what the "Non-church movement" is, and why it carries this paradoxical name. This questioning, in turn, has led to a desire to

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1. Emil Brunner, "Japanese Christianity", The Christian Century, Vol. LXXII, No. 21, May 25, 1955, p. 624.

know something of the founder of the movement.

Added to this particular desire to know about the founder of Non-church, there is a general interest in Japan now, due to the forthcoming Fourteenth World Convention on Christian Education which will be held in Tokyo in August 1958, and because of the Hundredth Anniversary of Modern Christian Missions in Japan which is coming in 1959. So it would seem apropos at this time to write about Kanzo Uchimura and his movement which has, up till now, contributed much to Christianity in Japan and yet has been rather obscure especially for Western Christianity.

Since the Second World War, some Americans, in spite of the difficulty in the problem of language, have studied Non-church Christianity, and have contributed articles to periodicals about Uchimura and his movement. But generally the material on Uchimura has been difficult to find, and even when available not easy to understand.

However, since the writer has the same nationality as Uchimura and fortunately has twenty-one volumes of his works, this thesis will be written in the hope that it may help English speaking people to understand Kanzo Uchimura and the truth of his movement. It will further have the purpose of trying to show how God revealed Himself to Japan through the life of Kanzo Uchimura.

#### B. Delimitation of the Subject

This subject will deal with the life of Kanzo Uchimura and with his work as the founder of Non-church Christianity. It will

investigate Uchimura's concepts of Non-church but will make no attempt to evaluate the present status of the movement, because of a lack of material. There will be no comparisons with other Christian leaders or other Christian movements as this is beyond the scope of this study.

#### C. Method of Procedure

The method of procedure will be to deal first with the life of Kanzo Uchimura as a background for a study of his beliefs. Then a brief study of the Non-church movement will be made. This will be followed by a study of Uchimura's writings to determine his main emphases. There will be a short chapter on the relation of Kanzo Uchimura to contemporary Non-church Christianity, followed by a summary and conclusion.

#### D. Sources

The main sources of material will be Uchimura's complete writings, several books and articles on his life and work, and books and articles on background material.

CHAPTER II

KANZO UCHIMURA: A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

## CHAPTER II

### KANZO UCHIMURA: A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

#### A. Introduction

No movement can be truly understood apart from its founder and the historical background of the time in which it was started. For a movement is, generally, the production of an individual whose whole personality is so inspired by the times into which he is put that he can do no other than to bring into life a new movement. In the case of Kanzo Uchimura, especially, it is true that to know his life and the background of his times, is the same as to know Mukyokai, Non-church Christianity.

It is the purpose of this chapter to introduce the man, Kanzo Uchimura, giving a sketch of his life from birth to death with a brief description of the background of the times where it is necessary.

#### B. Birth and Early Life

##### 1. Background of the Times.

It was the visit of Commodore Matthew Perry to Japan in 1853 with a fine display of force and transmitting the President's letter to Japanese authorities which played a definite part in changing Japan from the old way of life to a new one. At the request of Perry in 1854, Japan and America concluded the Peace Treaty of Ansei. This was the real starting point of modern Japanese History. Up till then Japan had

been under a national policy of isolation, being ruled for the past three hundred years by the Tokugawa shogunate.

After the Peace Treaty of Ansei, Peace Treaties and the Commercial Treaties were concluded one after another between Japan and other foreign countries such as Britain, Russia and Holland. This showed the rapid and remarkable progress and change which took place in Japan.

But as the numbers of Westerners in treaty ports increased and commerce began to grow, the situation quickly became impossible for the shogunate, which had signed all the treaties allowing these changes because of a feeling of powerlessness before the cannon of the foreign gunboats. The trouble was increased by a group of people who were convinced that to admit the Westerners was treason and therefore they should oppose it. They induced the Imperial court, which was beginning to become again the influential political center of the nation to oppose the power at Edo, the capital of the shogunate, and to assert the Emperor's authority and compel the shogun to cancel the treaties. From this there developed a fear of these two powers coming into collision.

The last shogun of the Tokugawa, Yoshihisa Tokugawa, recognized that, in the national condition of much turmoil and unrest, to attempt any longer to keep the dual government would be disaster to the Tokugawa and the nation. In November of the year 1867, he resigned all the power he had, political as well as military, into the hands of the Emperor Meiji. This resignation of the shogun of Tokugawa meant not only the end of the Tokugawa shogunate but also the end of the dominion of the shogun government over Japan which had endured for seven hundred years.



This event was, however, only the prologue to the great epoch-making event in Japanese history which is called the Meiji Restoration, and which took place in the year 1868.

As soon as the Meiji Emperor ascended the throne, political, social, and educational reforms took place all over the nation. These first reforms were climaxed with the Imperial Edict commanding the surrender of the fiefs which had been still in existence even after the resignation of the shogun. This happened in 1871 and was the final blow which at last abolished feudalism in Japan.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Family Background

On March 24th in 1861, eight years after the arrival of Perry in Japan and seven years before the Meiji Restoration, Kanzo Uchimura was born in Edo, as the eldest son of Kinnojo Yoshiyuki Uchimura. Kinnojo Yoshiyuki Uchimura belonged to the warrior class, the group which dominated Japanese society at that time. Indeed, it can be said that this domination was one of the prominent features of the culture of Japan in the eighteenth century. The warrior class, the head of which was called the shogun, had controlled the State in place of the Emperor since the time of Yoritomo (1192). The system of the warrior class closely resembled the feudalism of medieval Europe, and, like it, was primarily military in its forms and ideals. The shogun based his authority on force, and while in theory he was the servant of the emperor, in practice he was the chief power in the state. Underneath the shogun were the

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1. Kenneth S. Latourette, The Development of Japan, p. 122.

great military lords, the daimyo. Associated with the daimyo were minor chiefs and especially the samurai, the ordinary knights or soldiers.

Kinnojo Yoshiyuki Uchimura was one of these samurai who served the Takasaki daimyo, and so was his father who "was every inch a soldier and was never so happy as when he appeared in his ponderous armour, decked with bamboo bow and pheasant-feathered arrows and a fifty-pound firelock".<sup>1</sup> Kinnojo Uchimura was not only a samurai but also a good Confucian scholar "who could repeat from memory almost every passage in the writings and sayings of the sage".<sup>2</sup> The influence this Confucian-scholar father had upon his son, Kanzo, was great indeed. Because of his high culture and ability in ruling men, Kinnojo Uchimura was serving as a close associate of the daimyo at the time of his eldest son's birth.

Of his mother Kanzo Uchimura wrote:

My mother has inherited from her mother this mania for work. She forgets all the pains and sorrows of life in her work. She is one of those who 'can't afford' to be gloomy because life is hard. Her little home is her kingdom, and she rules it, washes it, feeds it, as no queen has ever done.<sup>3</sup>

In her kingdom she had three sons and one daughter besides Kanzo, her eldest son.

### 3. Education.

In this section the writer will trace Kanzo's boyhood education

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1. Kanzo Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, p. 8.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 9.

especially focusing on the things which influenced his future life. His college education will not be included here as it will be dealt with later in greater detail because of its special significance in his life.

a. Samurai Heritage.

Although little Kanzo Uchimura was too young to be stirred by the national reforms taking place around him, yet he must have felt somewhat restless as the family moved from Edo to Takasaki because of the change which affected the warrior class to which his father belonged.

His early education was mostly received in private schools as was customary for the sons of samurai at that time. As the eldest son of a samurai, who was no longer actually such, but was still in spirit a warrior, Kanzo Uchimura must have dreamed that he would also become a knight, faithful and courageous enough to fight and lose his life for his lord. He himself wrote, "My family belonged to the warrior class; so I was born to fight--vivere est militare--from the very cradle."<sup>1</sup> Although he never had a sword in his hand to fight with in fulfillment of his childhood dreams, yet, as will be shown later, his life was really a series of battles with mouth and pen.

b. The Code of Bushido.

It is necessary to take time at this point to explain briefly the nature of the spirit of the samurai in which Kanzo Uchimura was brought up. It is generally called bushido from bushi meaning samurai, and do meaning the way or code. It is not an exaggeration to say that without an understanding of bushido one can scarcely understand Kanzo Uchimura or,

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 8.

for that matter, Japanese culture either. For Uchimura was brought up in a warrior's family and was completely imbued with its spirit. It was so deeply woven in his Christianity that he wrote at one time:

Bushido is the finest product of Japan. But Bushido by itself cannot save Japan. Christianity grafted upon Bushido will be the finest product in the world. It will save, not only Japan, but the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

Noss defined bushido as follows: "Bushido was a system of propriety, preserved in unwritten law and expressing a spirit and ideal of behavior".<sup>2</sup> It was a combination of Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism with most of its ethical substance provided by Confucianism. In bushido, loyalty to one's lord, and fidelity and respect to one's parents, elders, and teachers was the source of all virtues.

There is an old Japanese saying, "The samurai betrays no weakness when starving", which indicates one of the outstanding features of bushido. For the samurai prided himself on the fact that he had no thought of gain either of money or other wealth, and was content with merely obtaining enough to sustain life. A plain and modest life was the way of the samurai, and consequently the whole of it was ascetic, not just the moral life.

Uchimura's short article entitled "Paul and Samurai" is very interesting, for it reveals what he meant when he wrote that Christianity grafted upon bushido would be "the finest product in the world".

Paul, a Jew and a disciple of Jesus Christ, was a true samurai, the very embodiment of the spirit of bushido. Said he, 'It were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make

. . . . .

1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 7, p. 20.
2. John B. Noss, Man's Religions, p. 431.

my glorying void.' I Cor. ix, 15. He preferred death to dishonor, to dependency, to begging for whatever cause. Again he said, 'The love of money is the root of all evil.' I Tim. vi, 10. Commercialism, in his view, was the cause of all evil, individual, social, and national. Then, none was more loyal to his master than Paul was to his. . . . Independent, money-hating, loyal--Paul was a type of the old samurai, not to be found among modern Christians . . .<sup>1</sup>

c. "Religious Sensibilities".

As a Confucian scholar and a loyal samurai, Uchimura's father was not pious, and was even "blasphemous toward heathen gods of all sorts".<sup>2</sup> In spite of this non-religious education by his father, "religious sensibilities"<sup>3</sup> (a term which Uchimura himself used to describe his feelings) were one of the outstanding characteristics in the boy Kanzo Uchimura. It is this "religious sensibilities" which underlay his whole Christian life. Yet his religious experiences in boyhood were completely different from those of Christianity.

It has already been shown in the preceding section that his ethics were based on bushido, while his religious experiences were those of Shinto. The boy, Kanzo, believed sincerely and heartily that "there dwelt in each of innumerable temples its god, jealous over its jurisdiction, ready with punishment to any transgressor that fell under his displeasure".<sup>4</sup> He wrote again in recalling his boyhood, "No retrospect of my bygone days causes in me a greater humiliation than the spiritual darkness I groped under laboriously sustained with gross superstitions".<sup>5</sup> He described how he groped in this spiritual

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 7, p. 60.
2. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 9.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 12.
5. Loc. cit.

darkness in the following passage:

The god whom I revered and adored most was the god of learning and writing, for whom I faithfully observed the 25th of every month with due sanctity and sacrifice. I prostrated myself before his image, earnestly implored his aid to improve my handwriting and help my memory. . . . There was another god whom I feared more than all others. His emblem was a black raven, and he was the searcher of man's inmost heart. The keeper of his temple issued papers upon which ravens were printed in sombre colors, the whole having a miraculous property to cause immediate haemorrhage when taken into the stomach by any one who told falsehood. I often vindicated my truthfulness before my comrades by calling upon them to test my veracity by the use of a piece of this sacred paper, if they stood in suspicion of what I asserted.<sup>1</sup>

The more gods he tried to worship and to be faithful to, the more impossible he found it to worship and to be faithful to all the gods who were counted up to number eight million or more. The struggle in his sincere young heart is well expressed in the following paragraph.

Multiplicity of gods often involved the contradiction of the requirements of one god with those of another, and sad was the plight of a conscientious soul when he had to satisfy more than one god. With so many gods to satisfy and appease, I was naturally a fretful timid child. I framed a general prayer to be offered to every one of them, adding of course special requests appropriate to each, as I happened to pass before each temple. Every morning as soon as I washed myself, I offered this common prayer to each of the four groups of gods located in the four points of the compass, paying special attention to the eastern group, as the Rising Sun was the greatest of all gods. Where several temples were contiguous to one another, the trouble of repeating the same prayer so many times was very great; and I would often prefer a longer route with less number of sanctuaries in order to avoid the trouble of saying my prayers without scruples of my conscience.<sup>2</sup>

It was this contradiction and impossibility in worshipping so many gods that led him to Christianity at a later period. It is evident from Kanzo's experiences that God used even paganism to lead him to a knowledge of Himself and of His salvation.

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Ibid., p. 13.

d. Love of Natural Science.

The following events occurred in the life of Uchimura which were of importance in molding his character.<sup>1</sup> In the fourth year of Meiji (1871), Kanzo was eleven years old and lived with his family in Ishimaki. In June Yoshiyuki (Kanzo's father) Uchimura was appointed to be an assistant secretary of the Takasaki clan and the family moved from Ishimaki to Takasaki. In July his father was dismissed from this job because the clans were abolished and prefectures were established.

It is supposed that at this time Kanzo Uchimura became enthusiastic about fishing in the river Karasu. Apparently he took his study time for fishing to the displeasure of his father and the teacher of the private school. They had no idea what great truth Kanzo learned while he was occupied with the fishing which they thought was only the result of his laziness. It was due to his observations while fishing that a love for natural science, his major course in college, budded in his heart. And it was through his fishing experiences and natural science that he was led to the Creator of all creatures. In recalling this time in his life later, he wrote that true knowledge can be gained, not only by reading books and sitting in class rooms, but by observing realities.<sup>2</sup> It was doubly true in his Christian life.

e. Early Training in the English Language.

Though Uchimura's father was poor, he wanted his eldest son to be educated as well as possible so at the age of twelve he first

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 21, p. 600.

2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, pp. 4, 5.

began to study English. At that time he was in a clan school at Hinokimonomachi in Takasaki. In 1873 when he was thirteen years old he entered Arima school at Akasaka in Tokyo. There is no record of his life in the school at that time, but it can be imagined that Kanzo was thirsty for knowledge and had much desire to learn about the outside world. The fact that he entered the lower class of the fourth grade of the Tokyo Foreign Language School the next year (1874) shows something of his desire for this knowledge. In this school Kanzo was much helped in his English study by the teaching of Mr. M. M. Scott.<sup>1</sup>

But for the English that he learned thus in his early life he could not have gone to the United States even though he wanted to go, and consequently he could not have known Dr. Seely, President of Amherst College, where he studied, and from whom he received a great deal of Christian help, and he could not have written, later, editorials and books in English to appeal to English-speaking people.

#### D. Conversion

##### 1. Three Christian Bands.

As commerce continued to grow between Japan and other nations after the commercial treaties were concluded, Christian missionaries began to cross the ocean and enter the strange new land. These missionaries became the leaders in the formation of three outstanding groups of Christians in Japan, the Yokohama band, the Kumamoto band, and the

. . . . .

1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 21, p. 601.



Sapporo band, all of which were named after the places in which they were brought forth.<sup>1</sup>

a. The Yokohama Band.

In January, 1872, at Yokohama which was the center of Western culture in Japan at that time, missionaries and other Christian foreigners started to have weekly prayer meetings. A number of students, who were studying in the private school of Mr. James Ballagh, decided to imitate this prayer meeting of the foreigners, and so started their own services to which many came. The Yokohama Band was born out of their earnest prayers.

The first eleven members established their own church, "The Church of Christ in Japan". This church had a simple evangelical faith, and the members, though they were converted by Reformed or Presbyterian missionaries, did not wish to belong to any of the foreign denominations. So they made their own constitution and creed. The second article of the constitution of this church reads as follows:

"Our church is not partial to any sect, believing only in the name of Christ in whom all are one, and believing that all who take the Bible as their guide, diligently studying it, are Christ's servants and our brothers. For this reason all believers on earth belong to Christ's family of brotherly love."<sup>2</sup>

b. The Kumamoto Band.

Captain L. L. Janes was the father of the Kumamoto Band. When the Kumamoto clansmen needed an American to head their new school, they asked for a teacher with the one qualification that he must be a warrior. Captain L. L. Janes who was at that time serving as Army

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1. Yasushi Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Period of Meiji, pp. 43-54.
2. Otis Cary, A History of Christianity in Japan, p. 77.

officer at San Francisco came in answer to this request. Janes was not only a fine officer but also an earnest Christian burning with a religious zeal which took him and his wife, the daughter of a minister, to Japan.

Janes did not say a single word about Christianity for three years during which time he administered the school as president, and also taught in it. He used a strict educational method similar to that of West Point and a method of character building which was used by Thomas Arnold of England. When the students had learned enough English to understand, Janes started, for the first time, to tell them about Christianity beginning with the mystery of the universe which naturally led them to belief in theism. Janes also told them that Western culture was based on Christianity and explained to them the necessity of understanding the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

In April of 1876 Janes finally baptized his little band of thirty-five boys. This group, which was called the Kumamoto Band, was soon moved to Doshisha University, a new Christian institution founded by Joseph Hardy Nijima in Kyoto the year before, because there was such severe persecution in Kumamoto that Janes had to close his school.<sup>2</sup>

c. The Sapporo Band.

The third band, the Sapporo Band, was the one in which Kanzo Uchimura was converted and in which he lived his first years as a Christian. Sapporo, the city in which the third band was formed, was in Hokkaido, the

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1. Hisayama, op. cit., p. 45.

2. Ibid., p. 46.

northern most island in Japan. Hokkaido was, at the beginning of the Meiji era, a maiden land. Until that time it was outside of the control of the central government in Tokyo. There was nothing there to be found of tradition, nor were there any historical places, nor traces of culture. It was a bleak place to which a few ruined farmers or the descendants of the lower samurai came wandering seeking to wrest a living from the virgin soil. Their life was very desolate and dreary, and yet there was a sense of newness of life in them. It is really no wonder that the Christian gospel was willingly accepted by these people, for it was brought to them by missionaries who understood them, having come largely of Puritan background and having ancestors who had come to the "brave new world" to find a new life.

The Sapporo Agricultural College which brought forth the Sapporo Band was established by the government in 1875 in Sapporo to educate commissioners of colonization. The influence of Dr. W. S. Clark, the first and temporary president of the college, was so great that one cannot write about Sapporo Agricultural College without mentioning him.<sup>1</sup>

Before he was sent to Japan in 1876, he was a professor of Amherst College in Massachusetts, and had also served as a colonel in the civil war in the northern army. When he was asked by the head of the commissioners of colonization to teach the highest moral principles to the boys, he replied, "There is no better moral than Christianity".<sup>2</sup> After a great deal of argument with the authorities, Dr. Clark won, and

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 52.
2. Loc. cit.

much to the surprise and annoyance of the head of the commissioners of colonization and other officers, he openly started to teach the Bible and to educate the students in the principles of the Christian faith. Dr. Clark stayed in Sapporo for only eight months yet before he left Japan he wrote the "Covenant of Believers in Jesus", and asked all the students to sign who had decided to be Christians. All of the fifteen first term students of the college signed this covenant and were baptized by M. C. Harris who was a Methodist missionary in Hokkaido at that time.

One can easily imagine how this first group of young Christians of the Sapporo Band welcomed the new students with a keen religious enthusiasm and spirit of propagandism. Among the new students was Kanzo Uchimura.

## 2. Rejection of Christianity.

It was in 1877, after Dr. Clark had left the Sapporo Agricultural College, that Kanzo Uchimura was appointed to be a student of this government college and came as one of the second term students. For Kanzo, who had learned to honor his nation above all others, and to worship his nation's gods, to be converted to Christianity seemed to be equal to dying. When he was left a "heathen" all by himself after the other freshmen were all converted by the sophomores, he resorted to a heathen temple with despair and loneliness. There he prayed in the presence of a heathen god. He described this experience as follows:

At some distance from the sacred mirror which represented the invisible presence of the diety, I prostrated myself upon coarse grass, and there burst into a prayer as sincere and genuine as any I have ever offered to my Christian God since then. I beseeched that guardian-god to speedily extinguish the new enthusiasm in my college, to punish such as those who obstinately refused to disown the strange god, and to help me in my humble endeavor in the

patriotic cause I was upholding then. After the devotion I returned to my dormitory, again to be tormented with the most unwelcome persuasion to accept the new faith.<sup>1</sup>

Kanzo was too faithful to his nation's gods to believe in or accept Christianity which he thought at that time to be exotic in its origin.

### 3. Signing of the Covenant of Believers in Jesus and Baptism.

"My first step toward Christianity was a forced one, against my will, and I must confess, somewhat against my conscience too."<sup>2</sup>

Thus writes Kanzo Uchimura in recalling the time when he finally yielded and signed the Covenant of Believers in Jesus which Dr. Clark left for the Sapporo Agricultural College students. This was on December eleventh in 1877 when he was only a sixteen-year-old lad.

In spite of the fact that it was a forced signing a change took place in his heart. Now he had one God instead of eight million gods! The sense of contradiction and impossibility to worship many gods with which youthful Kanzo had suffered went away. He was not sorry at all that he had been forced to sign the Covenant of the Believers in Jesus. The new freedom given by the new faith of monotheism turned his practical world upside down. Kanzo wrote as follows:

My studies were pursued with more concentration. Rejoicing in the newly-imparted activity of my body I roamed over fields and mountains, observed the lilies of the valley and birds of the air, and sought to commune through Nature with Nature's God.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 15.
2. Ibid., p. 16.
3. Ibid., p. 19.

On the second of June the following year he was baptized with six of his good friends by the Methodist missionary, M. C. Harris. In his diary of that day there appears the following entry:

A never-to-be forgotten day. . . . We remember how we kneeled before him, and how tremblingly though resolutely we responded Amen, as we were asked to own the name of Him who was crucified for our sins. We thought that each of us should adopt a Christian name at the same time as we confessed ourselves as Christians before men. So we looked over the appendix to Webster's Dictionary and each selected a name as it seemed well fitted to him. . . . I named myself Jonathan, because I was a strong advocate of the virtue of friendship, and Jonathan's love for David pleased me well.<sup>1</sup>

This was Kanzo Uchimura's first conversion which was followed later by two other major steps upward in his spiritual life.

#### 4. The Independent Church.

The church which Kanzo Uchimura called "the incipient church" was formed by the seven freshmen of the Agricultural College who were baptized at the same time. They had a "democratic"<sup>2</sup> service every Sunday, taking turns in leading it. The room of the one who took the turn became the meeting place and he was their "pastor, priest, teacher, and even servant for the day".<sup>3</sup> For the pulpit they used a flour barrel which they covered with a green blanket. The other six were seated on the floor which was also covered by blankets.

They had a weekly prayer meeting every Wednesday night. The words of their prayers and their hymn singing were not very polished or trained at all, but what they expressed from their hearts, sitting on

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1. Ibid., p. 20, 31.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.

the hard cold floor in the dormitory, or out on a hillside, or by a river in the vastness of nature, was certainly heard and understood by God who knows the feelings of all hearts.

On the first of December in 1878 the seven brethren entered the Methodist church of the missionary M. C. Harris. Uchimura's diary for that day reads as follows:

Dec. 1 -- Joined the Methodist Episcopal Church through Mr. H. The Rev. Mr. H. our beloved Missionary was again in the town, and we joined his church without scrutinizing pro and con of his or any other denomination. We only knew he was a good man, and thought that his church must be good too.<sup>1</sup>

The life of the seven brethren had sometimes sunny days and other times stormy days, but their Christian fellowship deepened more and more as they studied the Bible and prayed together and talked about their daily impressions or about the books that they read with open hearts.

It was after July in 1880, when the first term students graduated from the college, that Kanzo Uchimura and the other brethren began to talk about a plan to make their own church. Selections from Uchimura's diary of this time show best the emerging ideas for making plans to create their own independent church.

Oct. 3 -- Consultation about the new church building.

Now that several Christians have gone out into the active world, we may have a church of our own; and we are not idle in planning for it.

Oct. 15 -- The Revs. Messrs., Den. and P. are here. We meet them at Mr. N's.

Have frequent visits from missionaries this year. Messrs., Den. and P. are Episcopalians. Our movements are calling forth the attention of the religious world, and we are not neglected.

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 28.

Oct. 17, Sunday — Meeting at Mrs. S's. Six baptisms. Holy Sacrament at 3 p. m.

Numbers are being added to our holy company thank God. One thing we were sorry about; i. e. there were distinct tendencies for our having two churches in the little place, one an Episcopalian, and the other a Methodist church. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism", we began to ponder in our hearts. What is the use of having two separate Christian communities, when even one is not strong enough to stand upon its own feet. We felt for the first time in our Christian experience the evils of denominationalism.<sup>1</sup>

However, the realization of their hopes for the church did not come until January, 1882.

After he graduated from college, Uchimura got a job in the Bureau of Fisheries of the Department of Industry in the Office of the Commissioners of Colonization. This meant that he could keep on staying in Sapporo living in a house with four of his brethren and his own brother who had been converted by them. Uchimura and his friends rented a small house for their meeting place and they took turns having Sunday services in their spare time after office hours. The meeting house was like an "inn" for them where they could drop in at any time on their life-journey to recuperate. The members loved the life there, and the leaders did not spare their efforts to make their church better, even offering money from their meager salaries as government officers to make improvements.

To their joy, the afore-mentioned Episcopal church finally united with their church on the eighth of January in 1882. About fifty members came together for the dedication service of the new Sapporo Church.

Their final purpose was, however, to be financially

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1. Ibid., p. 40, 41.



independent from any mission board. The day came at last on December 28 in 1882 when they were able to pay all the church-debt as the result of two years of economy and industry. Kanzo Uchimura describes his joy in the following passages.

We were thankful that we now owed no man anything, except in our sense of gratitude for the help extended toward us, enabling us to use the money without interest for two years.

They do err who think that our church-independence was intended as an open rebellion against the denomination to which we once belonged. It was an humble attempt to reach the one great aim we had in view; namely, to come to the full consciousness of our own powers and capabilities (God-given), and to remove obstacles in the ways of others seeking God's Truth for the salvation of their souls. He only knows how much he really can do who knows how to rely upon himself. A dependent man is the most helpless being in this universe. Many a church complains of its lack of means whose members could afford to spend much upon unnecessary luxuries. Many a church can stand upon its own feet if but its members could forego some of their "hobbies". Independence is the conscious realization of one's own capabilities; and I believe this to be the beginning of the realization of many other possibilities in the field of human activity.<sup>1</sup>

When the Sapporo Church became independent it ended the activity of Kanzo Uchimura for this purpose, and there came "a vacuum" in his heart. This eventually caused him to leave his peaceful home church for the establishment of which he had dedicated his prayers and efforts to such a great extent.

#### E. Education in the United States of America

##### 1. Motivation

Though the process of one's life seems naturally to be carried out, there are always some motivations, whether they are immediate or

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1. Ibid., p. 65.

remote, working in life. To investigate such motivations is very important as it helps to understand the resulting action by throwing light upon it. The motivations of Uchimura's going to the United States which will be examined in this section are, first, an inner vacuum in his heart, and, second, the failure of his marriage which directly led him into the course of going to America.

a. A Vacuum in his Heart.

Kanzo Uchimura's conversion took place as has already been described, when he was sixteen years old. From that time on his youthful passion and energy was spent on activities for a new church, and lay preaching, along with his study of his scientific field.

It was after the Sapporo Church became independent that he began to feel something uncertain, unsatisfying, and doubtful in his youthful heart in spite of his external success. Kanzo expressed the state of his mind as follows:

I descried in myself an empty space which neither activity in religious works, nor success in scientific experiments, could fill. What the exact nature of that emptiness was, I was not able to discern. Maybe my health was getting poor, and I yearned after repose and easier tasks. Or, as I was rapidly growing into my manhood, that irresistible call of nature for companionship might have made me feel so haggard and empty. At all events, a vacuum there was, and it must be filled somehow with something. I thought something there was in this vague universe which could make me feel happy and contented; but I had no idea whatever of what that something was.<sup>1</sup>

What he calls "activity in religious works" is evidently that which has already been mentioned, the creating of a new church and lay preaching. There should also be added the things which he spoke,

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 68.

heard, and observed when, as a representative of the Sapporo Church, he attended the Third Great Gathering of Christians in the Shin-Sakai Presbyterian Church in Tokyo.<sup>1</sup> At this great gathering he saw scenes that he had never before witnessed. He saw "so-called revival"<sup>2</sup> in the congregation which he could not find in himself in his state of mind at that time. He wrote of his suffering and inner struggle:

Having been taught by a fiery Methodist preacher how to obtain this unspeakable gift of spirit, I applied myself earnestly at the work, focusing my mental vision upon my "deceitful heart", meanwhile blinding my eyes to Huxley, Carpenter, and Gegenbaur, as to visions which were infernal in their origin. But Alas! the welcome voice "thy sins are forgiven thee" was not to be caught either by my physical or mental or spiritual tympanum. . . . My disappointment was indeed sore. Shall I explain away "revivals" as a sort of Hypnotism, phenomena psycho-electrical in their origin; or is the profundity of my depravity the real cause of my non-susceptibility to them?<sup>3</sup>

The other thing that he experienced at the Great Gathering was the "hedonistic view of the freedom of spirit engendered among the congregation".<sup>4</sup> Christian teaparties and dinner-parties, free communions, and free love bewildered the country boy, Kanzo Uchimura who had thought more of "grave responsibilities of conquering the dominion of darkness around" him than of Christian social parties. During this stay in "the Turkish-bath-society of metropolitan Christianity",<sup>5</sup> he found that his religion was rapidly inclining toward sentimentalism.

His reference to his "success in scientific experiments" was apparently in connection with his great contributions to biology and

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1. Ibid., p. 69.
2. Ibid., p. 71.
3. Ibid., p. 72.
4. Ibid., p. 73, 74.
5. Ibid., p. 72.

ichthyology which he made while he was working in the Office of Commissioners of Colonization and later in the Agricultural Commerical Office. Research in the culture of ear shells, in the development of herring, and a number of other achievements are his outstanding contributions to the Japanese Academy of Ichthyological Science. It was Kanzo Uchimura who edited the Pices catalogue in Japan including in it five hundred and ninety-nine different kinds of fish. He delivered a number of famous academic lectures for the Ichthyological Academy among which was one entitled "The Relation between the Fishing Industry and Meteorology" and another "The Relation between the Fishing Industry and the Railroads".<sup>1</sup>

In spite of these successes he could not make up his mind which he ought to choose as his life work among the three, biology, ichthyology, or Christian evangelism, in order to be useful both for God and for human beings. "The sentimental Christianity" toward which he could not help being inclined in the Christian Gathering in Tokyo, and also the unsettled state of his mind concerning his life work made the vacuum in his heart larger and more conspicuous. He finally began to dream of going abroad and of visiting Christendom in order to fill this vacuum in his soul. He wrote of his dream as follows:

Failing to find the desired satisfaction in my own land, I  
Rasselas-like, thought of extending my search to a land differently  
constituted from my own,--even to Christendom, where, Christianity  
having had undisputed power and influence for hundreds of years,  
must, I imagined, be found Peace and Joy in a measure inconceivable

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1. Michitaka Uda, "Kanzo Uchimura and Ichthyological Science," Monthly Pamphlet of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 21, p. 2. (Trans. by the writer.)

to us of heathen extraction, and easily procurable by any sincere seeker after the Truth.<sup>1</sup>

b. Failure in His First Marriage.

It may have been because of the inner vacuum in his life that Kanzo Uchimura accepted the love of a girl who was called Taka Asano. After some difficulties, in March, 1884, he married Taka Asano being sure that God had given him the girl as his life partner.

But the marriage lasted only seven months at the end of which Uchimura, after much consideration and suffering, came to the decision that he must divorce his wife. He was so ashamed of his error in choosing his wife that he wrote in a letter to a friend, "Any man errs, but I who made such a great mistake, am lower than an ordinary man".<sup>2</sup> The disappointment and shame which filled his heart in this bitter experience of being deceived by one whom he trusted is well described in a letter to his closest friend, Kingo Miyabe. Kanzo asks his friend to pray that God might lift him up from his despair. He also adds that his parents and some of his friends after talking over some ways for taking away the shock of the experience, have advised him to leave the country for awhile.<sup>3</sup>

Thus twenty-three year old Kanzo Uchimura, who had been strong enough and patient enough to establish the Sapporo Church, and who was bright and earnest in scientific research, prepared to cross the Pacific being almost in despair of life. He expressed his feelings

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 77.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, p. 119, (Trans. by the writer).
3. Ibid., p. 103-106.

in a letter as follows:

To me, the universe is full of inharmony, contradiction and heartlessness. Life is only an Illusion. The surface is lovely and attractive, but take off the veil, and we will see all kinds of sad and horrible sights beneath.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. His Aim in Going Abroad.

Though his motivation to leave Japan seemed to be sentimental and a way of escape, his reason did not leave his emotions the controlling factor. By the time of his departure his aim to go abroad was formed very clearly in his mind. He knew of all the difficulties which would come along with his going abroad--departure from the beloved ones, too much expense for him, wandering in a strange country without a penny. In spite of the difficulties, what impelled him to take this bold step was more than a search after personal satisfaction. He wrote in his book, How I Became a Christian, his aim in going.

The land which gave me birth requires from every one of its youths some unstinted contribution to its honor and glory; and that I might be a faithful son of my soil, I needed experience, knowledge, and observations extending beyond the limit of my country. To be a man first, and then a patriot, was my aim in going abroad.<sup>2</sup>

In another article called Ruzanroku (A Record of Exile) in which Kanzo wrote of his experiences in the United States, he said:

In the autumn of the fourteenth year of Meiji (1884), I went to America with a strange aim. It was to observe the result of Christianity revealed practically in philanthropic work in Christendom.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 105.
2. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 78.
3. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 1, (Trans. by the writer).

Both aims expressed here were essentially the same for the second was included in the first being contained in the phrase, "I needed. . . observations".

### 3. His Departure.

Kanzo's father who had been already converted by his son sent him out with cheer and God's blessing.

Where I see not, Jehovah seeth;  
Where I hear not, Almighty heareth.  
Go my son, be not 'fraid;     <sup>1</sup>  
He thy help, there, as here.

This poem was written by his father in Japanese and later translated by Kanzo into English. His father gave it to his beloved son at the time of the "heart-rending"<sup>2</sup> departure. How often Kanzo repeated this poem to himself and how much he was strengthened by it. For he was after all just a country lad who had left his own small familiar land for a vast continent completely strange to him, and although he possessed a great ambition yet he had no idea how he would attain his goals in the new world.

### 4. At an Asylum for the Mentally Ill.

On the dawn of November 24, 1884 Kanzo Uchimura arrived in San Francisco nineteen days after he had bid farewell to his motherland which he had loved so much that he had had to leave it. He went soon to the east coast where he was met with a warm and kind welcome

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 78.
2. Loc. cit.

by many Christian friends. One of them, Isaac Newton Kerlin, the director of the State Asylum for the mentally ill at Elwyn, Pennsylvania, found work for him as an attendant in the asylum. Kerlin kindly offered him the job until the coming September when Kanzo might have a chance to get into some college.

Thus his aim "to observe the result of Christianity revealed practically in philanthropic work in Christendom" was going to be fulfilled unexpectedly soon and furthermore in an unexpected way.

This section will describe Uchimura's work in the asylum, the deep influence of Dr. Kerlin on him, and the inner struggle from which he suffered far more than from the hard physical work of the asylum.

a. Work at the Asylum.

Uchimura was probably quite shocked with the sudden change-- from an officer in the Imperial Government to an attendant in an insane asylum. However he did not mind at all, for he wrote, "the Carpenter son of Nazareth taught me now an entirely new view of life."<sup>1</sup>

In the asylum he worked for eight months for a weekly wage of sixteen dollars. His job was to take care of twenty-two patients, feeding, clothing, sending them to bed, and bathing them. Besides this, Kerlin, with thoughtful concern for Kanzo, appointed him as "an assistant to a German woman who taught the lowest class (those

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 97.



who could not count above the number four)"<sup>1</sup> so that Kanzo could understand the principles of the education of the mentally retarded.

His hardships, mental and physical, during the life with the inmates of the Asylum must have been beyond imagination. Yet, it is amazing that in the fourteen letters which he sent to his family and friends from Elwyn and which are edited in Volume Eighteen of The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, there is hardly any mention of hard work outside of five short passages. His memories of the past, both doubt and hope for the future, inner struggles regarding the Christian faith, impressions of books he read, and kind friends around him are the topics of the letters.<sup>2</sup>

b. Kerlin and Uchimura.

While at Elwyn Uchimura wrote, "But aside from my internal struggle, my life in the Hospital was very far from being unpleasant".<sup>3</sup> He was able to write this because of Dr. Kerlin, whom he came to count as one of his closest and most trustworthy friends. It is very interesting that Uchimura regarded Kerlin as the one who humanized him.<sup>4</sup> How important a work Dr. Kerlin accomplished in the heart of Kanzo Uchimura is revealed in the following excerpt from his writings.

It was his systematic thought. . . his well-directed will. . . his administrative skill . . .--all these made him a wonder and a study to me, such that I never have seen either in my homeland or anywhere else. If he helped me not in unriddling the tough religious doubts with which I was then afflicted, he taught me

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 1, p. 225, 226, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Ibid., p. 109-152.
3. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 97.
4. Ibid., p. 99.

how to make the most out of my life and religion; that Philanthropy. . . is of but little practical use in this practical world, unless it has a clear head and an iron will to make it a blessing to the suffering humanity. No courses in "Practical Theology" could have taught me this invaluable lesson so well and so impressively as the living example of this practical man. He it was who rescued me from degenerating into that morbid religiosity (if I may so call it) wherein those so afflicted

"Sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched,  
Nursing in some delicious solitude  
Their dainty loves and slothful sympathies."<sup>1</sup>

The friendship between Dr. Kerlin and Uchimura lasted until the death of the former. Though they were different in age, race, nationality, and temperament, the God they believed in was One and the trust they had in each other made them very good friends.

c. Inner Struggle.

According to his book, How I Became a Christian, the most conspicuous experience of Uchimura at Elwyn seemed to be his inner struggle in the Christian faith. His diary of the first day in 1885, the first day of his work in the asylum, reads as follows:

Jan. 1, 1885 -- Cold. Last night felt much about "justification by faith"! Was on duty during night. The first time I took up the work of caring the sick. I thanked God that He opened a way for me.

The first day as an attendant in an asylum. The long cherished line of labor, hallowed by the names of John Howard, Elizabeth Fry, and innumerable other saints and saintesses, was now opened to me. Indeed, I felt I became a saint myself. But already from the very beginning of this my attempt to justify myself by "the works of the law", a voice said deep down in my bosom, "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law".<sup>2</sup>

Though Uchimura had been converted to Christianity and baptized nine years before, his real conversion was a slow gradual process. The

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1. Ibid., p. 98, 99.

2. Ibid., p. 103.

problem of sin and salvation troubled him all the time, which made him devour the Bible and other books in his spare time while at Elwyn.

The other factor that made him think much and doubt much came from the outside not from within himself. This was the problem of denominations. A little less than two months after he landed in America he had apparently been asked to choose a denomination by a few theologians from different groups. His diary of February fourteenth and eighteenth, in 1885, reads as follows:

Feb. 14 — . . . The poor heathen-convert is at loss which to make his own; so I made up my mind to accept none of them. What mortals under heaven can make a "right-choice" out of dozens and scores of denominations, each having its own merits and demerits? Why torment a poor convert. . . and persuade him to be "dipped", when authorities equally as great and pious maintain that even sprinkling is not necessary for his eternal salvation. Be merciful to the poor convert, ye Christian at home", and be broad.

Feb. 18 — Much doubting; not a little troubled. My heart must be fixed upon God. Men's opinions are various, but God's Truth must be one. Unless taught by God Himself, the true knowledge cannot be obtained.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted here that Kanzo and his friends had already been perplexed about denominationalism in Sapporo, which caused them to create their new church. Now again in the United States, with its denominations so numerous that some of them Kanzo had never even heard of, he was faced with the problem of denominationalism, and was again troubled by it.

5. At Amherst College.

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1. Ibid., p. 104, 105.

The climax of Kanzo Uchimura's life in the United States was his study at Amherst College. For it was at Amherst that Kanzo came to know Dr. Seely, the president of the college, without whom, according to Kanzo, his forty years of evangelical life would never have been.

In this section the writer will attempt to focus clearly the relationship between Dr. Seely and Kanzo Uchimura introducing it with a brief statement showing the reasons why Uchimura was led to enter Amherst College.

a. Reasons for Entering Amherst.

Kanzo's wish to study in a college was at last realized when he was admitted as a student to Amherst College in New England. His acceptance was largely due to Mr. Niijima who graduated from Amherst in 1870 as the first Japanese student to get a B.S. in a Western college. From Kanzo's letters to Niijima written in 1885 it is evident that Niijima wrote a letter to Dr. Seely, the president of Amherst, to introduce Kanzo to him, and this helped to make the matter of his admittance go smoothly.<sup>1</sup>

However this was only the immediate factor leading to Kanzo's entrance into the college. There was, besides this, a much deeper and more important motivating force at work in Uchimura's mind and heart which caused him to choose Amherst. The name of Dr. Seely, the president of Amherst College, was quite familiar to Uchimura, and was held with respect in his heart from as far back as

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, p. 162-169.

the time when he was studying in Sapporo College. The wish to meet Dr. Seely and study under his instruction had been his dream since then. This early knowledge of Dr. Seely was apparently given by Dr. Clark, the same man who had had such a deep and lasting Christian influence on Sapporo College. Dr. Clark was also a graduate of Amherst College and had been teaching there before he came over to Japan. Hence it can be assumed that Dr. Clark introduced Dr. Seely to Japan and especially to the ambitious youth in Sapporo College.

Uchimura wrote that while he was a student in Japan that he had chances to read books written by Dr. Seely and that he had great pleasure in memorizing his writings. He agreed with Dr. Seely's opinions on education in Japan, which had been sent to the Educational Office in Tokyo. He was interested in Dr. Seely's opinions on Evolution and thus already was "one of his humble students before he ever met him in person".<sup>1</sup>

Through Dr. Seely's books, through Dr. Clark, and through Mr. Niijima, the yearning for Amherst College was rooted deeply in Kanzo's heart. This was what made him decide to choose Amherst College though he was advised by Mrs. Kerlin to go to Harvard to study political economics, and even though he had the opportunity to go to Cambridge or the University of Pennsylvania with certain financial aids. In a letter to Niijima dated June 2, 1885, he wrote:

. . . My soul longs for "Amherst". I want to carry on my study which I started five years ago, that is interpretation of the Bible by biological and geological facts. . .<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 243, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Ibid., p. 151, (Trans. by the writer).

In this way Uchimura was able to study at Amherst College, and learned from its school life more than he had ever expected. A report of this life especially on the subjects taught and the classes attended, is given in his book Ruzanroku.

b. Dr. Seely and Kanzo Uchimura.

Though there is little space to tell of Uchimura's school life which was so enriching for him, it is not possible to pass over without a pause the friendship between Dr. Seely and Uchimura. For the influence of Dr. Seely on Kanzo Uchimura was such that he later wrote, "the Lord revealed Himself to me through Dr. Seely so that I was really converted, that is turned back, there".<sup>1</sup>

At this point it ought to be recalled that Kanzo Uchimura was troubled with the problem of sin and salvation while he was working in the Asylum at Elwyn. There he was engaged in what he called philanthropic works believing that in so doing he would be a good Christian. Yet he found that not only could he not find real joy and peace in his soul, but also that he suffered from his own selfishness "to put my flesh in subjection and to so discipline myself as to reach the state of inward purity, and thus inherit the kingdom of heaven".<sup>2</sup>

With this agony in his heart Uchimura came to Dr. Seely and in him saw at last true Christ-likeness. A short article entitled, "The Teacher Who Has Given Me Faith", tells how he met God

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 131.

2. Ibid., p. 97.

through Dr. Seely.

I hoped to see my ideal Christian in him. But unexpectedly he was completely different from that ideal. It was not scholarly knowledge, dignity, or activity, but it was child-like humility that I saw in him. He was great in theology and philosophy, yet that greatness was not written upon his face. I saw that he presented all his greatness and his scholastic knowledge to Jesus Christ. Through this my view of Christianity was changed completely. I felt as if I had come in contact with a new Christianity. One day Seely called me in and said, "Uchimura, it is not good that you look into yourself. You should look outside of your own heart. Why don't you look up at Jesus Christ who redeemed our sin on the Cross instead of looking into yourself? What you are doing is acting like a child who pulls up the root of a plant after he has planted it in a pot, to make sure whether it is growing or not. Why don't you trust God and Sunshine, and wait for your growth without worry?"<sup>1</sup>

Kanzo's soul was awakened by these words of Dr. Seely.

Shortly after this encounter he wrote in his dairy:

March 8 -- Very important day in my life. Never was the atoning power of Christ more clearly revealed to me than it is today. In the crucifixion of the Son of God lies the solution of all the difficulties that buffeted my mind thus far. Christ paying all my debts, can bring me back to the purity and innocence of the first man before the Fall. Now I am God's child, and my duty is to believe Jesus. For His sake, God will give me all I want. He will use me for His glory, and will save me in Heaven at last.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Seely thus became Kanzo's spiritual father. It should be added that Dr. Seely taught him not only Christianity but also the importance of learning, learning which comes from faith. At the same time Kanzo was warned of the danger of scholarship which is not attended with faith. This advice Uchimura kept all of his life.

His New England college life which he "entered in heaviness

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 1, p. 399-400, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 120.

of heart" came to an end with triumphant gloryings in his Lord and Savior when in July, 1887, after two years of college, Kanzo graduated with the degree of B.S., in spite of his position as a special student.<sup>1</sup> During the two months of summer vacation he stayed all alone in the dormitory to prepare for entrance into a theological seminary in the coming September. Recalling this time he wrote:

The time thus spent was the best I have had in my life. Serene loneliness, beautiful natural surroundings, constant presence of God's Spirit within me, reflections upon Past and Future,--indeed the whole hill was beautified into a Zion, a Home of my God.<sup>2</sup>

Kanzo left Amherst and Dr. Seely on September 13, 1887 and with lingering steps turned toward Hartford Seminary.

#### 6. At Hartford Seminary.

In spite of a prejudice against ministers and priesthood Uchimura determined at last to study in a Seminary. The decision he made to enter seminary was prompted by "the contact with Clergymen of high and noble order".<sup>3</sup> Dr. Seely was, of course, one of these because he was a minister and theologian. Besides this influence from the outside, Uchimura himself had begun to understand that theology was not hollow and non-utilitarian, for the sense of the reality of his spiritual experiences was increasing in him.<sup>4</sup> Kanzo justified his study of theology as follows:

Indeed I saw the reason of my hatred of Theology. If spirit is real, as rice and potatoes are real, why despise Theology and

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1. Ibid., p. 131.
2. Ibid., p. 133.
3. Ibid., p. 135.
4. Ibid., p. 136.



praise Agriculture? If it is noble to grow corn, and feed myself and my hungry fellowmen with the fruits of God's Earth, why ignoble to learn of His Laws to appropriate His Spirit to our-hungry souls, and be made nobler and manlier thereby?<sup>1</sup>

In another place Uchimura questions thus:

If, as its etymology indicates, Theology is the science of God, what true sons of Adam can excuse themselves from reverential study of the same? What science of God's universe is not Theology? And what actions of man can be right and true if not guided by the science of God? O My Soul, be thou a theologian then.<sup>2</sup>

However, poor health obliged him to give up his study of theology at Hartford Seminary after only a few months. In a letter to his father dated January 23, 1888, he revealed his illness telling of how he had been troubled with chronic insomnia for a half year and of how he felt fatigued with his life in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Kanzo took the doctor's advice and decided, after much prayer and consideration, to leave seminary and go back to Japan putting to an end his twenty-two years of school life. Later, in looking back at this experience, he was able to discover the wisdom and reasonableness of God's Providence in it. For Uchimura came to the conclusion that seminaries and trained ministry were not the essentials which Occidental Christianity made them. He expressed this view very clearly in the following paragraph:

American seminaries, established expressly to train young men for American churches, are not the fittest places to train one destined for fields otherwise circumstanced than that country. Besides the exegetical studies of the Old and New Testaments, much that is taught in these seminaries may be dispensed with

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1. Ibid., p. 136, 137.
2. Ibid., p. 136.
3. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, p. 208.

without detracting much from the usefulness of practical workers in missionary lands. . . . Not sceptic Hume, nor analytic Baur are we to grapple with, but with the subtilities of Hindoo philosophies, the non-religiosities of Chinese moralists, together with the confused thought and actions of new-born nations, materialistic in their new aspirations, but spiritualistic in their fundamental conceptions. "Church" in the common acceptation of the term as used by the Occidental Christians is wholly unknown among my countrymen, and it is yet a grave question whether this institution, valuable though it doubtless is in other countries can be planted with any hope of stability among the people to whom I belong. The method of moral and religious teachings to which we have been accustomed during twenty centuries of our national existence is not that of sermonizing upon texts and delivery from pulpits. With us we make no distinctions between moral and intellectual trainings. School is our church, and we are expected to bring up our whole beings in it. Idea of specialty in religion sounds extremely odd, and even repulsive to our ears.<sup>1</sup>

A further passage concerning this problem of the church and its ministry is important here because the ideas expressed in it throw much light on later actions and words in the life of Kanzo Uchimura.

And what about means and arts of soul-converting, church-member-making, and other similar business? A soul converted to Christianity by means and arts can be reconverted to heathenism also by means and arts. We in this materialistic century make too much out of environments. Darwinism seems to have converted Christianity at last. Good choirs, pleasant church sociables, young ladies' basars, free lunches, Sunday-school picnics, — all such are now considered as important means to keep up spirit, and much of "Pastoral Theology" seems to be occupied with such business.<sup>2</sup>

So ended the period of study and learning in exile with the achievement of the aim which had been in his mind when he set forth. In the three years in which Kanzo Uchimura was in America there were sown the seeds of true faith, true discipleship, and prophetic calling. Much of what occurred in later years in the ministry of Uchimura

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works, Vol. 15, p. 141, 142.
2. Ibid., p. 142.

had its roots in these fruitful yet bitter years of study abroad.

## F. Ministry

### 1. Background of the Times.

Rapid advance and change which came with the establishment of new ideologies and organizations, new institutions, national and Christian, would require hundreds of pages to properly describe. But here the details need not be narrated as the desire is to mention only roughly the trends of the period, considering especially those events which had a close relationship to the activities of Kanzo Uchimura.

During the time of Kanzo's stay in the United States there was established the so-called Meiji Absolutism which was in force for about twenty years. The Imperial Constitution, which was promulgated in 1889, the year following Kanzo's return to Japan, and the Imperial Rescript on Education, issued the next year, were the most important documents of the period. As constitutional government, which gives the people the right to participate in their politics, contradicted the fundamental principles of Absolutism, they had to be harmonized by establishing a class system at whose top was placed the emperor, and then by teaching an ethic of obedience to the Emperor whose line of divine succession was unbroken for ages eternal. Thus the Constitution was formed purposely to emphasize the Emperor as the source of all authority and sovereignty. This was called Tennoism. The ethic contained in the Educational Rescript not only was the

standard of the moral code, but also it enlightened the people on the theory of Tennoism. This absolutism of the Tenno system could be interpreted as a kind of Nationalism standing against Westernism which was also a parallel ideology at that time.<sup>1</sup>

Through victory in the Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895) this nationalism came into force more strongly, and militarism being added to it, was developed further into the concept of the divinity of the Emperor.

The victory in the Sino-Japanese war also helped Japan to take her place among the powers of the World. As a consequence foreign funds began to be invested in the country which resulted in the great development of modern Japanese capitalism. This capitalism together with militarism drove Japan to another war, namely the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905). It was success in this war which laid the foundation for Japan's later policies of military expansion and conquest.

Thus the latter part of the period of Meiji was rather chaotic. Yet an examination of each ism, Westernism, Nationalism, Militarism, Capitalism, Socialism, and Naturalism reveals the fact that each one had a reason for its development and there was a cause-and-effect relationship among them.

It is interesting to see how Protestant Christianity, new to Japan, fulfilled its mission during this half century, standing against all these ideologies also new to her. Uchimura was one of

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1. Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Period of Meiji, p. 180.

the Christian men of this period who left his unique footprints in the Japanese Christianity of this period.

Although Emperor Meiji was absolute, he was such a man of ability and power that it was said that but for him such a great transformation in Japan could not have taken place. The Emperor died on July thirtieth in 1912 after a reign of forty-five years. The Taisho Emperor, who succeeded his father, the Emperor Meiji, was on his throne for fifteen years until the time of his death on December 25, 1926.

The most significant event of this period was the outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918) which changed the condition of Japan as well as of the world. The war gave Japan an opportunity for "fishing in troubled water", and she kept on using a policy of aggression toward China. As a natural result capitalism came into full sway, and epicurism and moral decadence began to prevail with the new riches. Americanism was welcomed, and here and there patches of shallow imitations of America could be seen in the lives of the people. An inferiority complex to Western countries which gave rise to this Americanism, and a superiority complex to China were the two elements which stood out when the culture of this period is examined. It has been said that in this period one can see the core of the crisis which came upon Japan in the years of the Second World War.<sup>1</sup>

At this time Kanzo Uchimura sensed this coming crisis for

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1. Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Periods of Taisho and Showa, p. 7.

his nation, and so he started a movement related to the second coming of Christ. In this respect it can be said that Uchimura was a prophet who, like the prophets of old, warned and prophesied the destruction of his nation which actually came fifty years later.

One more event which should be mentioned here, is the great earthquake in Tokyo which occurred on September first in 1923. The fire, which was caused by the earthquake, destroyed most of the city of Tokyo. Seeing this ruin Uchimura cried out in his article "A Sample of the Last Day":

. . . suppose the angel had passed Shimbashi and Ueno (the district for amusement) with the sword of judgment on his waist on Aug. 31st, the day before the great earthquake. Could he have found a single house which is necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom of God? I don't think there was any . . . As it is written in the Bible, the angels would have said, "Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." (Rev. 16:7)<sup>1</sup>

It is easy to see from this passage that what was in the mind of the prophet, Uchimura, and what could not keep his mouth closed was a sense of sin in the Japanese people including himself.

Thus this period superficially appeared modernized and peaceful, but beneath the surface were many problems and crises which were carried into the Showa period, the period of the present Emperor, Hirohito.

## 2. As an Educator and Social Reformer.

When Uchimura left the United States he felt inspired to serve Japan by sharing with his people the Gospel of the Cross which

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 4, p. 367-368.  
(Trans. by the writer).

he had experienced with his whole person while he was at Amherst College. However by the time he really began his life as a pure evangelist in fulfillment of his inspiration, he had gone through bitter and publicly violent experiences as an educator, an author, and an editor of a newspaper.

This section will describe this life of his before it was shifted into full-time evangelism.

a. Failure as an Educator.

Many of the Christians in Japan were waiting for Uchimura's return from America with great anticipation. Niijima wanted him to come to his Doshisha University, but this Uchimura refused to do, because he did not agree with the financial policy of the University which depended on foreign support. So the first job Uchimura got after returning from the United States was as temporary head teacher in Hokuetsu Gakkan, a boys high school in Niigata. This school was, according to what Kanzo heard before he actually went and saw it, "established and supported by volunteers of the Hokuetsu district and aimed at higher general education with the spirit of Christianity".<sup>1</sup> In reality an American Congregational missionary, Doremus Scudder, and some other missionaries were helping in this school.

However Uchimura had to leave this new job after only three months. Because he had a different idea from the missionaries' of what Christian education was, and because he was against the volunteer's

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, p. 281, (Trans. by the writer).

financial dependence on a foreign mission board which was contrary to the original principles as he had heard them, he had a difficult time as the head teacher. In recalling the event, he wrote, "Even though I am a Christian, I have been isolated from the foreign missionaries since then."<sup>1</sup> This also shows his strong emotional feelings, one of his distinguishing characteristics.

In his thirtieth year, in 1890, Kanzo began to teach English and physical geography in the First High School in Tokyo where only the brightest boys were allowed to enter to prepare for Tokyo Imperial University, the best university in Japan.

Here again he went through experiences which revealed his strong character. One day, in the fourth month after he became a teacher of this school, there occurred an event which shocked the entire nation. This was the so-called "Lese-Majeste affair" in the First High School. The details of this event and its analysis will be left for a later chapter, but the simple fact of the case was that Kanzo Uchimura did not bow before the seal of the Emperor on the Imperial Rescript on Education which was being presented at a special ceremony in the school. Uchimura wrote, in a letter to Bell,<sup>2</sup>

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 1, p. 362. (Trans. by the writer).
2. David C. Bell. Bell was one of Uchimura's closest friends whom he first met in Washington during his stay in the United States. The meeting came about entirely by chance while they were riding a horse-drawn car in the capital city. Uchimura fell into conversation with Bell and continued on after alighting at their destination for about fifteen minutes. Then they exchanged addresses and parted to meet only two other times--one in Boston, and much later again in Japan. But over the years correspondence between the two friends occurred frequently. Seventy-nine of his letters to Bell are included in the "Works of Kanzo Uchimura". Bell, a deeply religious man, supplied Uchimura with much literature and thus deeply influenced his thought and spiritual development.



all that happened on that day, and explained why he did not bow.<sup>1</sup>  
As a Christian, his conscience did not allow him to worship the  
Emperor.

Unfortunately when the event gave rise to a great public  
discussion, Uchimura developed a severe case of pneumonia which shut  
him up in bed for more than a month. He was dismissed from the First  
High School in the beginning of February because he was considered a  
disloyal and unfaithful citizen. So it was that Kanzo Uchimura, who  
had had to leave Hokuetsu Gakkan because he was a patriot rejecting  
foreign interference, now was being called "traitor", a name which he  
had never thought he would have to bear.

This event at the First High School was followed by a very  
sad personal loss. On April 23, 1891, Kazuko, his young wife whom he  
had married the year before, died, worn out from the long hours of  
nursing him in his severe illness. Because Kazuko left her husband  
with the cry of "traitor" all around him and in such distress, some  
people call this period "his dark days". But Kanzo himself, in his  
dark valley, not only found a refuge in God, but thanked Him for  
giving him those trials. His book, Kirisutoshinto no nagusame  
(Christian Comfort), published in 1893 was his account of the faith  
which he learned from God through his experiences of the dark days  
from 1888 to 1892.

b. As an Author.

After the "Lese-Majeste affair", he taught in a few schools

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 1, p. 266.

here and there, but his enthusiasm was, he confessed, almost lost in the experience at the First High School. With the termination of his teaching at Kumamoto Eiwa School, Kanzo Uchimura left the world of education. His feeling at this time was expressed in a letter to Bell dated, June 25, 1893.

I feel very sorry to leave educational work now after preparation in the United States and five years practice in Japan. . . . Everybody wants to take advantage of me, but the principles, discipline, and training, that I want to apply to my educational work do not seem to be agreeable to either Christian missionaries or educators of this country. Therefore I am obliged to take this last means, that is, to engage in writing with the convictions that I gained through my observations and experiences which I had in a foreign country.

The articles and books which were published in this period are sufficient to show how much he used his pen for expressing himself instead of teaching from the platform in the class-rooms. Of course it should also be mentioned that he gave sermons and Bible study whenever he had a chance to speak the gospel of his Lord. All his writings of this period are collected now in the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, together with many of his later writings. He said, humbly, that his writings were not counted as literary works, but his talented, powerful, and free expression, and furthermore his ideas, thoughts, and feelings, overflowing between the lines, draw the reader into the world of his experiences and thoughts. It was during this period that "Justification of the Korean War" was written in English, and the book, How I Became a Christian, was published in Japanese, English, German, Swedish, Finnish, and Danish. Besides these, there were many

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, p. 325, 326, (Trans. by the writer).

other articles and books about which there is not space to write here.

One personal event, in this case not tragic but instead happy, should be added here. In 1894 Uchimura became the father of a girl whose name was Rutsu (the Japanese equivalent of Ruth) and who was born to him as the child of his third wife, Shizu. This was followed, after three years, by the birth of his only son, Yuski, who became a source of great joy to Uchimura.

c. As an Editor.

His life as a writer was carried on, in a different way, when he was employed by the Manchoho, the most powerful daily newspaper company in Japan at that time. Uchimura took charge of the English column as an editor-in-chief.

Through the Manchoho Uchimura could now give his prophetic warnings to one-hundred-twenty thousand readers. He discussed such things as the policies of British and American colonialism, and politics and social problems in Japan. Social wickedness and moral decadence which prevailed in Japan at the time were pointed out by his sharp, strong pen. Some of the politicians and capitalists were perplexed by his writing, but the common people received some hope for a brighter future from his words. He could really speak out for the heart of Christianity to both Japanese and English-speaking people, for he wrote not only in English but also in Japanese.

Yet, in spite of this success, he still did not feel that he was doing his life work--that he was doing the right thing. Upon his resignation from Manchoho as the editor-in-chief, Uchimura launched, in the following year, a magazine called Tokyo Dokuritsu

Zasshi (Tokyo Independent Magazine), the first issue being sent out on June 15, 1898. In the first and second issues of this magazine Uchimura, the Editor-in-chief, explained its aims.

Tokyo Dokuritsu Zasshi, with some English articles.  
Published two times every month--Tenth and twenty-fifth.  
Will discuss society, politics, literature, science, education and religious problems, with honesty, freedom, and courage. It will not speak unless with strong conviction. No contribution will be accepted unless it is a unique and independent thought. There will be no criticism of books without thorough, careful reading of them. There will be no acceptance of advertisements which are not recognized as honest. The chief editor and the owner of the magazine will take responsibility for all that is written in the magazine.<sup>1</sup>

From this passage it can be seen that Uchimura, with the help of other contributors was proclaiming Christian righteousness and morality although he had stopped writing in the newspaper.

However, he apparently felt some lack of real spiritual worth in this project, for he made plans to publish independently a magazine with less secular taste. Thus there soon appeared the monthly magazine The Biblical Study which was published continually until his death.

But before he entered the field of pure evangelism which, he was more and more certain, was his life work, he had one more chance to express his ideas and thoughts through the Manchoho. He was invited by the Manchosha again to be a guest editor from 1900 to 1903. He wrote much criticism on current topics attempting to fight against the wickedness of his world.

Before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, that is in

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1. Ibid., p. 393, (Trans. by the writer).

the year 1903, Uchimura proclaimed his belief in non-violence through the Manchoho and his magazine, The Biblical Study. For him this was a complete change for ten years earlier he had proclaimed a justification of the Korean War. But now he stood up as a believer in non-violence against the military government and even against his Christian brethren among whom were The Reverend Uemura and The Reverend Ebina, two famous Christian leaders in Japan at that time.<sup>1</sup>

It is natural at this point to wonder how Uchimura could proclaim this belief after his proclamation of the justification of the Korean War. There seems to be some contradiction and wavering as one examines his earlier statements and his words written during the Russo-Japanese War. However this is a problem which will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter of this thesis.

Because the basic position of the Manchoho in regard to the Russo-Japanese War was one of support of the government and agreement with its war policy, Kanzo Uchimura handed in his resignation as an editor for the paper. Thus his life as an educator and an editor came to an end with his resignation from the Manchoho.

### 3. As an Evangelist.

In an article entitled "My Experiences in Social Reform Work" there is a section called "Entered into My Call at Last". The beginning of this section reads as follows:

I felt hatred toward reform work which has been secularized. I decided to engage in something else which is

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1. Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Period of Meiji, pp. 274-277.

not secularized and I discovered it in Christ--evangelism.

But I should say one word about my Christianity. I believe in Christ and the Bible but I don't belong to any Church or denomination. There is no Pope, deacon, or pastor who rules me. Therefore I have not got any permission for evangelism from anybody. . . . It is all right as long as I keep this Christianity which does not depend on foreign missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

So his work of evangelism, which he took as his call after various other crisis experiences in life, had a real individual and independent element.

His method of evangelism was centered in Bible study which took two forms. One was a group meeting for Bible study in his home and public places and the other was the publishing of his magazine, The Biblical Study which has been mentioned before. The name "Non-church Christianity" which people now use in referring to Uchimura's followers was given public acceptance after Kanzo Uchimura published, in 1901, a little magazine entitled, Non-church. This magazine was published continuously by Uchimura up to the eighteenth number when it was discontinued at his wish.

So his life at last came to be like the words written on the cover of his magazine "Pro Christo et Patria". His ministry seemed to have been changed with the launching of the Biblical Study from "Pro Patria et Christo" to "Pro Christo et Patria". The former part of his active life as a social reformer sprang from his patriotism though there was basically a Christian spirit in his heart stimulating a sense of Biblical morality in Japanese hearts. But the latter part of his ministry was spent in pure evangelism for Christ because he

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 1, p. 367, 368, (Trans. by the writer).

realized that pointing out the wickedness or sin of the Japanese people would not always be the way to bring them to repentance but could make their hearts harder and make them hypocritical in attempting to cover their sins. He came to possess the conviction that a true reform can only result from changing the thinking of individuals through the study of the Bible.

One thing which caused Kanzo Uchimura the severest agony of spirit and yet made his faith in the resurrection real was the death of his only daughter, Ruth, who was taken from him at the age of nineteen. Kanzo Uchimura himself delivered the address at her funeral and spoke of the day as her wedding, sending her to her Heavenly Bridegroom. He became sure of Heaven, the resurrection, and eternal life through this bitter experience of personal loss.

Up to this time Uchimura had not understood clearly the belief of the second coming of Christ. He, who believed in evolution as a scientist, had thought that the world of human beings would gradually evolve into the Kingdom of God. But, in reality, Uchimura saw evil increasing more and more with wars and moral degeneration. He was pushed to the point where he could not but believe in the last judgment of the world with the second coming of Christ, and that it is by the second coming of Christ that we have eternal peace.

As this revelation gradually dawned in him through the experience of the loss of his daughter, there came the third and the last change in his spiritual life. Looking back to these three great moments in his life Uchimura wrote as follows:

A great moment in my life was when I found myself, or

rather, was found by God,--to be a sinner. For years, my supreme effort was to make myself pure and holy before Him. Another great moment was when I found my righteousness, not in me, but in Him who was crucified for my sins. For years, I tried to realize in myself and others the gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. A third, and perhaps the last great moment in my life was when I was shown that my salvation is not yet, and that when Christ shall appear again, then, and not till then, shall I be like Him. Conviction of sins, salvation by faith, and hope of His coming,--these were three steps by which my soul was lifted to the joy and freedom of the heavenly vision.<sup>1</sup>

At this point it should be mentioned that Bell, who had been Uchimura's life-long friend since their meeting in Washington, was the one who helped Uchimura experience his third great change. Bell, who was himself a firm believer in the second coming of Christ, did not let a single day go by when he did not pray for Uchimura. He sent books and magazines with articles concerning the second coming of Christ to Uchimura to encourage him to see the truth of it.<sup>2</sup>

It was the outbreak of the First World War followed by America's participation in the war which disappointed Uchimura so greatly that he could not help but cry out to the people concerning the second coming of Christ, telling them to repent of their sin and to have hope in the Kingdom of God. Uchimura was disappointed, in the first place, to think that the Christian countries of Europe would go into war, and, in the second place, that even America, which he believed to be a Christian nation, at the last minute, would declare war rather than, as he expected, buy out the warring nations by paying the damages of the war with her riches, and thus end it.

Uchimura delivered quite a number of lectures on the second

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, p. 418.
2. Megumu Masaie, The Life of Kanzo Uchimura, pp. 265-266.



coming of Christ in Tokyo and other places in Japan during the years 1898-1919. The movement created a great sensation among the people of Japan. It might have been that at this time Uchimura was described as "a prophet who prophesies like a lion's roar".<sup>1</sup> But the movement was hindered by strong opposition from some groups in the church. This Uchimura took as God's will, and so, at last, he completely devoted himself to Bible study through his magazine, The Biblical Study, and a small group meeting at his house. Instead of giving lectures in public places, he gave himself to his magazine and his assembly.

Uchimura humbly confessed that he had understood only half of the truth of the Bible until he believed in the second coming of Christ. He expressed his joy and thanksgiving for the change in himself in the following passage:

The reason why all the Bible was not clear to me was not because of a lack in my knowledge of the words but because of the lack of my belief. I believed in God, in Christ as the Son of God, in His salvation, resurrection, and ascension, but I could not believe in His second coming literally. So an important part of the Bible seemed dim as if I were looking at a mirror. . . . I have been depending on the Bible for forty years (by the grace of God) but I have never appreciated it as I do now. Truly if we read the Bible in the light of the belief of the second coming of Christ the Bible will be completely different. . . . The thanksgiving and joy with which I am now filled cannot be described. Now I can hold the Bible to my breast as "My Book" just as Martin Luther did.<sup>2</sup>

So Kanzo Uchimura ministered to the Japanese people until his death through his Bible study having received a strong faith

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1. Yasusada Hiane, "A Prophet Who Roars Like a Lion", Monthly Pamphlet of The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 15, p. 6.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 167, 168, (Trans. by the writer).

after passing through three great crises in his soul.

#### G. Death

From the time that the doctor told him that his heart was enlarged, Uchimura gradually became weaker and weaker. On March 28, 1930, on an early spring day when the cherry blossoms, the symbol of the spirit of Japan, were beginning to open their pretty petals, his life was quietly translated from this earth to Heaven, his home for which he had been so often yearning. In accordance with his will, the Bible meeting was dissolved, and the publication of the Biblical Study was discontinued.

So passed a great man, prophet, teacher, reformer, evangelist, from the troubled world of mankind.

#### H. Summary

"One morning the world was so surprised to see the country of Japan appear in triumph breaking her wall of old tradition",<sup>1</sup> said Tagore, an Indian poet, who visited Japan in 1915. These words express well the historical period in which Kanzo Uchimura lived his seventy years of life.

Throughout this chapter the writer has tried to present the life of Kanzo Uchimura against the background of Japanese history

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1. Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Period of Taisho and Showa, p. 10, (Trans. by the writer).

by giving brief paragraphs at the beginning of each section where such background was necessary. In the first section of the chapter Uchimura's birth into a samurai family in a country of eight-million gods was described.

This section was followed by the account of his discovery of one God instead of many gods, through the early American missionaries. Here the material given was largely concerned with the activities and problems of his early Christian life in Sapporo Agricultural College.

His life of exile in the United States including his motivation and aims for going abroad was discussed in the next section. It was shown how he learned "practical theology" from Dr. Kerlin, how he found his spiritual father in Dr. Seely, and how he came to realize that he had to live as a patriotic Japanese Christian.

In being a good patriot Uchimura failed to get along with the missionaries, and in being a good Christian he was cast out by the Japanese people as a traitor. And yet Kanzo Uchimura did not stop proclaiming Christian justice to Japan and to the world as an English editor of the newspaper Manchoho. The account of these years was briefly described in the last section concluding with his life of pure evangelism, in which he found his true calling from God.

Though the period of the last section of his ministry covers fifty years, more than half of his life, the writer has not given much space to it for it will be discussed in greater detail in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER III

KANZO UCHIMURA AND NON-CHURCH CHRISTIANITY

### CHAPTER III

#### KANZO UCHIMURA AND NON-CHURCH CHRISTIANITY

##### A. Introduction

After having examined the life of Kanzo Uchimura in some detail together with the brief historical background of his time in the first chapter, it is possible now to see some of the motivating causes which led Uchimura to form the Non-church Christianity movement.

In this chapter the writer will attempt to examine specifically the causes which came both from without and within Uchimura, and which led him to formulate the Non-church concept. This will be followed by a brief description of how Non-church came to birth in the country of Japan as Uchimura's movement. The last section will deal with the principles of Non-church Christianity which Uchimura maintained including its unique characteristic of New Protestantism, and with his views of the church and the sacraments of Baptism and Communion.

##### B. Motivating Causes for the Formation of Non-church Christianity

###### 1. First Impressions in the U.S.A.

Before Kanzo Uchimura visited the U.S., the image of the of the country was, in his mind, that of a Holy Land. "My idea of

Christian America was lofty, religious, Puritanic,"<sup>1</sup> confessed Uchimura expressing his reverence for Christendom and English-speaking people. The image became real when he at last became acquainted with Dr. Kerlin, Dr. Seely and other kind Christians on the East coast. However he saw and heard that which he had never dreamed of as belonging to Christendom during his trip from the west coast to the east. He encountered racial discrimination and saw the world of mammon worship of which he had been told and yet had not been able to believe. A question of how Christendom could be this way was thus set within his heart.

2. Disappointment in Seminary and the Church in the U.S.A.

As has already been mentioned before,<sup>2</sup> Uchimura came to the conclusion, at the end of his stay in America, that the organized church in America was too doctrinized, too institutionalized, too formalized, and too secularized, partly because of the general trends which were prevailing in America at that time, such as materialism, pragmatism and secularism. Qualben, in his general survey of American Protestantism treats the time when Uchimura stayed in the U.S. He characterizes it as follows:

Church life became less revivalistic and individualistic, and more churchly and confessional. The churches founded their organizations on creeds, rather than on institutions. Materialism gained considerable ground. . . . Efforts have been made to make church services more impressive and appealing by developing a greater wealth of forms with more fullness of ceremonial beauty.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, p. 80.
2. Ante, p. 38, 39.
3. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church, p. 471.

This statement is quite in accord with Uchimura's view. For him the real Christian faith was not a doctrine, or a creed, or worship in a beautiful church, but was meeting Jesus Christ with the whole personality as a sinner who can be free only by accepting Christ as the Savior. This was the experience which Dr. Seely helped Kanzo to find at Amherst College.

### 3. Disagreement with Missionaries

The reader may recall the fact that Uchimura was obliged to leave Hokuetsu Gakkan, the Christian School where he worked first after returning from America, because of some disagreement with the missionaries.

Primarily, he did not agree with the attitude of the missionaries in presenting Christianity to the students. According to one of Kanzo's letters to Bell in this period, he seemed very happy teaching the one-hundred-sixty boys, giving them lectures not sermons -- he especially emphasized this point<sup>1</sup> -- five times a week on the prophet Jeremiah.

They listen to me enraptured, identifying Japanese patriots with noble spirit whom they have known with the weeping prophet Jeremiah. I am trying to exterminate their idea that Christianity is the religion for the weak and to show them that real heroic patriotic spirit is possible only when it is filled with the Spirit of Jesus. . . . We don't force them to or even encourage them to bring the Bible with them but most of them, though they are all heathens except a few, willingly purchase the Bible and take notes following the Bible passages while they are listening to me.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, p. 242.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, pp. 241, 242, (Trans. by the writer).

From his own boyhood experiences Uchimura knew well how hard it would be for these Japanese boys to come to know Jesus Christ, as on presenting Christianity, he stood on the same level as they did. He appealed to them first through patriotism or the spirit of bushido which was not beyond their understanding. He even dared to point out the similarity between Christianity and Buddhism. In his little article entitled "To Young Missionaries" he writes as follows:

As far as Japan is concerned, there are many things in bushido and Buddhism which come very close to Christianity; and by judicious use of these, preaching of Christianity in this country is made very much easier to my countrymen. As far as my own experience goes, I have had very little occasion of coming into sharp conflict with the representatives of the old religions. I try to find the common ground on which we stand, and then try to present my beliefs in their own words. . . .

Much to Uchimura's regret, the missionaries at that time could not comprehend his method. This truly shows the attitude of the early missionaries of the modern period, an attitude which has, only recently, been well summarized in the book Christianity and Asian Revolution. One paragraph reads as follows:

The attitude of Agressive Condemnation

. . . The early missionaries had only a very superficial knowledge of non-Christian religions, and because of their confidence in the superiority of the Christian civilization of the West they regarded the non-Christian as the heathen who in his blindness bows down to wood and stone. Christianity alone was the absolute truth, and everything else was the work of evil.<sup>2</sup>

Sixty years before this was written, Kanzo Uchimura, boldly pointed out in public this weakness of the missionaries.

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, p. 576.
2. Rajah B. Manikam, Christianity and Asian Revolution, pp. 187-188.



A second point of disagreement with the missionaries which Uchimura held was in regard to the content of their work. According to Kanzo's article "To Young Missionaries" he was against missionaries teaching too much Christian civilization. He emphasized again and again that Christian civilization, by which he probably meant Western civilization, could be taught by other than Christian missionaries.<sup>1</sup> Of course missionaries used athletics, swimming, bowling, all sorts of social gatherings, English compositions, et cetera, as the means of their evangelism. But they apparently put too much emphasis on civilizing the Japanese people and forgot to evangelize them. Kanzo wrote:

Japan and the whole world need the pure simple gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And remarkable to say, so little is taught by Christian missionaries in the gospel, and so much is taught in other things than the gospel.<sup>2</sup>

But Uchimura did not mean that the missionaries must not teach civilization. Civilization ". . . is a fruit of Christianity and all Christians cannot withhold it, when opportunity is offered to present it to those who have it not," he wrote. Then he concluded "But it is the gospel which they are to carry to the world. . . . The gospel, and not civilization, is the power of God unto salvation."<sup>3</sup>

Besides this mistake of the missionaries in civilizing Japan instead of giving the pure gospel, Uchimura pointed out the materialistic tendency in their message. In his article entitled

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, pp. 574-577.
2. Ibid, p. 574.
3. Ibid, p. 575.

"Materialistic Christianity", he made clear what he meant by this.

They say that if you believe Christianity your country will become wealthy, your home will prosper, you will succeed, your illness will be removed, peace will come, and you will have a victorious life with increasing ability. They have told us everything will come out good, and everything good in the world will be given by believing in Christianity. But in reality things did not come out as the missionaries told us. So we were often disappointed and we even thought that the reason why happiness did not visit us was because our faith was wrong. God should have approved our faith and given us wealth, health, and prosperity. Thus we have had doubt many times.

As the first chapter of this thesis has shown, Uchimura's life was not good at all physically or materially, though he was spiritually so blessed. His life itself was an example of the words of Jesus, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you. . . ." (Matt. 5:11), and ". . . ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. . . ." (Matt. 10:21,22). This is why Uchimura could not agree whole-heartedly with promises of worldly goodness instead of real spiritual blessing as the result of accepting Christianity.

#### 4. Conditions in the Japanese Church

In terms of Christianity, Cary calls the period of 1889-1900 "The Period of Retarded Growth".<sup>2</sup> One of the prominent reasons for the retardation of Christian growth in this period was political and social pressure by nationalism, which had gradually come into force through Meiji Absolutism,<sup>3</sup> and climaxed with the promulgation

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 9, pp. 101-102, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Otis Cary, History of Christianity in Japan, p. 212.
3. Ante, p. 40.

of the Imperial Constitution and the issuing of the Imperial Rescript on Education. Although freedom of religion was formally admitted by Article XXVIII of the Constitution,<sup>1</sup> Tennoism, the establishment of which was the final purpose of the Constitution,<sup>2</sup> was not in accord with Christianity, which would not admit the divine authority and sovereignty of the Emperor. It is, therefore, understandable that there was a tendency to denounce Christianity not in an aggressive way but in a negative way. The "Lese-Majeste affair" in the First High School, for which Kanzo Uchimura was condemned as a traitor, was one example of national denunciation.<sup>3</sup>

This nationalism affected many Japanese Christians who "in their enthusiasm for Western Civilization had taken Christianity as a part of it"<sup>4</sup> and who now as a reaction "wished to put away Christianity with other things that seemed opposed to the spirit of old Japan."<sup>5</sup> Regarding this ultra-nationalism which affected many of the prominent Christians, Cary writes:

They wished to disprove the reiterated charge that they were the slaves of the foreigners. The desire to show their independence often led them to oppose the beliefs and the advice of the missionaries, which otherwise they might have accepted.<sup>6</sup>

Thus there was much discussion among the Christian leaders on the matter of independence from the foreign countries and the necessity of having a Japanese Christianity. However, in reality,

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1. Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Period of Meiji, p. 201.
2. Ante, p. 40.
3. Ante, p. 45.
4. Cary, op. cit., p. 215.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Ibid., p. 216.

they did not succeed in realizing their ideal Japanese Christianity which would have satisfied their nationalistic sentiment.

On the other hand many of the church members took it as a matter of fact that the church should be helped by the missionaries, who, by then, numbered 527 representing twenty-seven Protestant denominations.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the political pressure, a decrease in the number of students in mission schools, and a low attendance in the churches, the missionaries did not lose their courage and continued their work, some of them bearing the faults which Uchimura pointed out, and some not. They gave help to the Japanese in all matters, but failed to teach them to be independent even financially. Most of these church members, not being able to grasp the spirit of Christianity, enjoyed the external church life which seemed very civilized and attractive to their eyes. This life was the life which struck Kanzo when he went up to Tokyo from Hokkaido for the Third Great Gathering of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> They were baptized, attended church services and partook of the Lord's Supper, yet their practical life was not that of true Christians. The tendencies of materialism and secularism which Kanzo had seen in the United States were transferred into the Japanese church.

However, at this point, it ought to be noted that two Christian leaders who were successful in attempting to be independent were motivated, not by nationalistic sentiment, but by pure

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, p. 296.

2. Ante, p. 24.

evangelistic faith. One was The Reverend Uemura who belonged to the Yokohama Band<sup>1</sup> and the other was Kanzo Uchimura, whose Japanese Christianity will be examined in detail in the next section of this paper.

The Reverend Uemura was the head of the Church of Christ in Japan, which had, at its birth, a spirit of independence as has been indicated.<sup>2</sup> Uemura felt the need for a training place for ministers which would be completely free of all financial, organizational and other ties with missionaries. So he established the Tokyo Shingaku Sha (Tokyo Theological Company) in 1904 which became, later, Tokyo Theological Seminary, and which contributed much in educating ministers and evangelists as well trained churchmen in the pure orthodox faith.

Another important cause of retardation in the Christian Church in Japan was the entrance of liberal theology. It caused great agitation in the Japanese church and especially when it met the spirit of independence stirred up by nationalism. Liberal theology based on Biblical higher criticism was mostly introduced through magazines and books. According to Cary "these were eagerly read by many of the leading preachers, whose minds were naturally inclined to favour whatever was new."<sup>3</sup> By means of this new idea of liberal theology they tried to be independent from their former teachers, the missionaries. One result of this fusion of the spirit of independence from the missionaries with liberal theology can be seen in

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1. Ante, p. 14.
2. Ante, p. 14.
3. Cary, op. cit., p. 216.

the crisis at Doshisha which occurred in 1895. There is no need here to narrate the events of the Doshisha crisis, but for any desiring further information there is a detailed record of it in Cary's book History of Christianity in Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the believers, including prominent Christian leaders, facing the new liberal theology, began to doubt and to wonder whether they might have been deceived by the missionaries who had taught them the orthodox faith. Consequently there were many who left the church with confusion and disappointment.

The Christian Church in Japan really underwent a series of severe trials in this period. There was the invisible pressure by nationalism, there was in the church itself a lack of vitality as a reaction to the enthusiasm of the early period along with a degenerating tendency in Christian moral life, and there came liberal theology into the church to stir up the predominant Christian leaders.

##### 5. Japanese Christianity

One more important cause for the formation of the Non-church movement is found within Uchimura himself. This was his persistent longing for an independent truly native form of Christianity for Japan.

The reader will recall the activities of Kanzo Uchimura when he made the Sapporo Church independent after he was graduated from Sapporo Agricultural College. There were no particular causes then which motivated Uchimura to make this church independent from the

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1. Ibid., pp. 255-260, 265-268, 277-282.

support of the mission boards except the problem of denominationalism.<sup>1</sup> The spirit of independence within Uchimura himself was the primary motivation. And this strong spirit which was in him had been cultivated as the spirit of bushido since he was a little boy. "To prefer death to dishonor, to dependency, to begging for whatever causes",<sup>2</sup> was the spirit which he had inherited from his father and grandfather who were both samurai. It is easy to imagine how much more confident Uchimura became of his independence after he became a Christian and found Paul's words "Owe no man anything, save to love" (Romans 13:8). His life was literally an example of this verse.

It is natural, therefore, that this strong spirit of independence should be applied to his Christianity and to his view of the nation as well as of the individual life. The more he came to know Christianity which is universal and not a foreign religion, and the more he found that there was nothing but Christianity which could save the land of Japan, the stronger his conviction became that there should be Japanese Christianity.

At this point it seems best to quote a few passages written by Uchimura himself to see just what he meant by the words Japanese Christianity.

Christianity is a universal religion, so it is independent. If it were a religion of England or of America, we would have to depend on Englishmen or Americans. However since it is universal it is also a Japanese religion and consequently it has

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1. Ante, p. 21.
2. Ante, p. 9.

no reason to depend on foreigners. Dependent Christianity is not a true religion.<sup>1</sup>

Uchimura wrote further to emphasize that Japanese Christianity was not a special Christianity for Japan nor was it a Christianity which was remodeled so as to become really Japanese instead of foreign.

It is true, that we have "One Lord, one faith, one God and Father of us all" (Ephesians 4:5). I know well that there is no distinction such as Japanese Christianity or American Christianity. The whole creation is one, yet it has a great variety. In that variety there exists beauty and power. . . . If the Japanese truly believe Christianity, it is natural that there will come out Japanese Christianity. But the fact that there has not been Japanese Christianity proves that Christianity has not penetrated into Japanese hearts. . . . Since Christianity is universal it is completely manifested through the contributions of each nation. Christianity which is manifested through the Japanese is Japanese Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, with this conviction that there should be Japanese Christianity which does not depend on foreigners, Uchimura finally entered into his career as an evangelist. It was soon after this that the word "non-church" came into public use and was associated with Kanzo Uchimura and his Japanese Christianity.

### C. The Birth of Non-Church Christianity

As an evangelist, Kanzo Uchimura began to publish his magazine The Biblical Study in 1900, and in 1901 to hold a Bible study every Sunday morning in his home.<sup>3</sup> It was at this time that

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1. Uchimura, *The Works of Kanzo Uchimura*, Vol. 9, pp. 69-70. (Trans. by the writer).
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12. (Trans. by the writer).
3. *Ante*, p. 51.



one of the members of the Sapporo Independent Church, which had been kept open in spite of many troubles since the time of its establishment, asked Kanzo's opinion on the necessity of baptism and the Lord's Supper. To answer this question he wrote an article entitled "The View of the Abolition of Baptism and the Lord's Supper" which appeared in the sixth number of his magazine The Biblical Study. In it he expressed the opinion that salvation comes only by faith and not by sacraments, though he believed that there was value in them in cultivating Christian faith. He listed eight points for his view of the abolition of the sacraments, the last of which is included here, for it seems to be the conclusion of the whole article.

The Eighth. It does not matter whether the word church is used or not. The most essential thing is to believe in Jesus Christ. There are people who believe in Christ with all their hearts without being baptized. There are people who disgrace the name of Jesus Christ even though they partake of the Lord's Supper. . . . If a person feels the danger of falling without partaking of the Lord's Supper, then he will be sure to fall someday even though he partakes of it. On the contrary a person who is chosen by God can keep his faith even without partaking of it. Therefore let us practice the theory of the abolition of the Lord's Supper. . . . I believe that we should not use the Lord's Supper, first, to abandon all the superstitious ideas and misunderstanding of it, and then should manifest its true meaning; that is we should think first only of the spiritual power and then think of the expression of the power of the spirit. Here, in this point, does not the message of the Independent Church exist?<sup>1</sup>

After he published this article, it must have become very certain in his mind that there was no need of an organized church

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 285, (Trans. by the writer).

with pastors or ministers to give the Lord's Supper and baptism. This also seems to be the fruit of his experience of long before in the meeting with his seven Christian brethren in the college dormitory. The result of his conviction was quickly expressed in the publication of the magazine called Non-church in the following month, in which he wrote an article entitled "The View of the Abolition of Baptism and the Lord's Supper". In the preface of the first number of the magazine Uchimura wrote:

"Non-church" may sound like anarchism of Nihilism and it may give the impression that it is a magazine of destructionism. But it is not. Non-church is a church for those who have no church. . . . The prefix "non" is to be understood merely as "non", not in the sense of "negate" or "neglect". . . . True church is a non-church, as it is written in the Revelation, "I saw no temple therein" (Rev. 21:22). It is only in this world that there are positions such as bishop, deacon, minister or teacher. In heaven there is neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper. . . . But as long as we live in the world, we need an earthly church. . . . Then what is our church and where is our church? The universe created by God, and nature -- this is our church. Its ceiling is the firmament embroidered by stars, its floor is the green field. . . .and the preacher is God himself.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Non-church was born in Japan almost forty-two years after Protestant Christianity was introduced to the country.

#### D. Principles of Non-church Christianity

##### 1. Its Basic Nature -- New Protestantism

Just as Luther stood up against Roman Catholicism holding fast to his conviction of justification by faith, so too Kanzo Uchimura stood up against Protestantism in Japan which was beginning

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1. Ibid, pp. 228-231, (Trans. by the writer).

to become institutionalized. He tried to complete the true spirit of Protestantism and himself, called his faith New Protestantism as over against Protestantism which had existed for nearly four hundred years. The following passage is his brief explanation of his New Protestantism.

Protestantism is above Catholicism as faith is above works. But Protestantism is mostly faith in a formula, a noble and grand formula though it undoubtedly is. The New Protestantism must be faith in the Living Savior, and so be raised above the Old Protestantism. It is not the Bible that saves us, but the living personal Saviour. "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." -- John 8:36. Neither the church nor the Bible can make us free, but the Son can. New Protestantism is nothing more or nothing less than faith in Jesus Christ, the resurrected, living Son of God. And the world is ripe, I believe, for such a faith,. . .<sup>1</sup>

Thus Kanzo Uchimura proclaimed the freedom of faith in Jesus Christ as Paul had proclaimed, nineteen-hundred years before the freedom of the Gospel among the Gentiles after he himself had experienced the new life in the resurrected living Christ. The object of Kanzo's faith was the Living Christ and not a doctrine or creed. He said:

Christianity is the fact which is experienced, as it is written, "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life". (1 John 1:1)<sup>2</sup>

He also said that Christianity was not ritual, not church, not theory, or not morality.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, his conclusion was that in order to keep faith in the Living Christ, it was not necessary to have institutions or organizations for they only harden the living faith and put

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, p. 536.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 9, p. 65, (Trans. by the writer).
3. Ibid, p. 63-65.

it into a frame.

So also his New Protestantism which he proclaimed to the Japanese people was independent from any financial help. This is the reason why he is called a Japanese Luther. A quotation from his writing entitled "Need of Re-reformation" indicates this spirit of Luther.

The world needs Re-reformation of the Christian Religion. The Reformation of the sixteenth century ended as an arrested movement. Protestantism institutionalized was a return to the discarded Roman Catholicism. We need another Reformation to bring Protestantism to its logical consequences. The new Protestantism must be perfectly free without a trace of ecclesiasticism in it, -- a fellowship, not an institution, -- free communion of souls, not a system or an organization. Practically, it will be churchless Christianity, calling no man bishop or pastor, save Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And who can say that God doth not intend Japan to be the country where such Christianity is to appear, the new experiment to be tried in the spiritual history of mankind, to begin Christianity anew in the Land of the Rising Sun?<sup>1</sup>

## 2. View of the Church

To understand Uchimura's view of the church it is best to quote his article entitled "True Church" which he wrote in 1921 in a little magazine called Spiritual Fellowship.

He began with a paragraph:

The church exists, yet it doesn't. Therefore, there should not be non-church Christians, yet there should be. We can say that Christ established the church and at the same time that Christ did not establish it.<sup>2</sup>

This statement will be a striking one with a seeming contradiction for every Christian who believes Christ is in the Church. And it is

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, p. 534.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 223, (Trans. by the writer).

true that Kanzo Uchimura believed that the Church is the body of Christ, and its head is Christ as will be made clear by a later statement. But there is no way to tell whether Uchimura meant "the Church" or "a church" when he used the word "church", because there is no article or capital in Japanese. However it seems logical and consistent to interpret the following paragraph by considering his use of the word "church" as referring to an organized, four-walled church.

The church, which is the so-called church and has deacons, elders, theologians, constitution and creed, and which tries to expand its force by maintaining its faith and appealing to public opinion as a government or a political party does, is not the church which Christ established. We hold Non-churchism openly against this kind of church. However Christ established His church which is different from this. He said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:80). This is the true church that Christ established. Its center is Christ, and people who gather around are the believers who willingly do His will in His name. Although it says "two or three. . ." it does not mean that there should be a small number, but it means it is all right if there are only two persons. However one person is not right. Yes, the believer cannot be one, but he needs his fellowman. . . . Thus the church has the simplest and yet the deepest and purest relationship with Christ. There is the true church where more than two believers have fellowship in Christ's name. . . I hope that this kind of church will be established everywhere in Japan. The early church was all of this sort. The house of Priscilla and Aquila was the church (Romans 16:3-5). It is also written, "Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea and Nymphas, and the church that is in their house" (Colossians 4:15), indicating that there was also a church in this believer's house. The house of Philemon was also a church (Philemon 2). Thus there is not any necessity for holding a dedication ceremony for the church with the permission of a deacon. Where there are more than two believers there can be a church, yes, there has been a church. . . . We should have directly a relationship with Jesus Christ, love one another, and work together . . . . It does not matter how many people, hundreds or thousands of people. We should establish our true church having Jesus Christ in our midst.<sup>1</sup> . . . . .

1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, pp. 223, 224, (Trans. by the writer).

Then how did Uchimura, who devoted himself to Bible study and who had orthodox faith, interpret the church which is described in the New Testament? To understand his views it will be necessary to consider his article on "Ecclesia (the original Greek word translated into church)".<sup>1</sup> Uchimura went to the origin of this word "ecclesia" and maintained that it was different from the English "church" or the German "kirche" which are derived from the Greek "Kuriakon". "Kuriakon" is a purely religious term meaning "God temple" or "chapel", while "ecclesia" means a congregation of common people who are called, and, in the early Christian community, was used for the Christian assembly at home. To further affirm this idea he examined the word "build" in the words of Jesus to Peter, ". . . and upon this rock I will build my church;" in Matthew 16:18. Uchimura wrote:

The original word build is "oikedomeso" and it means "construct" and not "institute". The meaning "to make a home" can be derived from the original meaning "to construct a house". It is obvious that Christ, in using this special word, meant to make a family-like group instead of a government-like institution . . . . What beautiful words they are, ". . . on this rock I will oikedomeso my ecclesia". . . . An ecclesia like a warm home -- this was what Christ wanted us to make.<sup>2</sup>

So Uchimura called his Sunday meeting for Bible study "assembly" (which means simply "gathering") and kept it as a "spiritual organization".<sup>3</sup> Naturally he was always careful to avoid any hint of organization in his assembly. He expressed his feelings in

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, pp. 248-257.
2. Ibid, pp. 251, 252. (Trans. by the writer).
3. Ibid, p. 254.

an article with the heroic title "The Forward March of Non-churchism".

The following is a passage from this article.

Non-church should become Church. It does not mean, however, that it should return to the existing church, but that it should become Churchless church, namely the spiritual community of churchless believers. I admit willingly that this community will be very likely to become a so-called church. In that case, however, it should again be broken down immediately. The church is to be ever established, while being ever destroyed like the body of every living being for which the most formidable thing is crystallization or stiffening. Non-churchism intends to destroy the crystallized church and at the same time to construct the living church. If Non-church becomes so-called church again, we ourselves should destroy it by Non-churchism. The Kingdom of Christ is growing in such a way. Therefore we can go forward assuredly.

Thus Kanzo Uchimura labored on for the building of Christ's ecclesia among the Japanese people.

### 3. View of the Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

It is not surprising that Uchimura's view of the church is consistently reflected in his view of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Uchimura did not believe in baptism and the Lord's Supper as long as they were rituals in the church. Concerning this he wrote:

I do not believe in baptism and Holy Communion as a ritual of the church. However sublime it may be, a ritual cannot save a man. . . .<sup>2</sup>

But he believed in baptism and Holy Communion as symbols of faith.

He wrote in answering the question, "What does baptism symbolize?":

Baptism is a symbol of a Christian's death and resurrection with Christ. . . . It means that a new self is born. A simple form of baptism symbolizes the deepest Christian faith. It is not a ritual to cleanse our sin. It is not a ceremony to make faith

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 231, (Trans. by the writer.
2. Ibid, p. 285. (Trans. by the writer).

public to society. Neither is it an entrance ceremony that the church gives to a person who becomes a member. It is a symbol of revolutionary faith which is bestowed upon a Christian.<sup>1</sup>

Uchimura also referred to the view of Paul on baptism, quoting a passage in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius: lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name... . For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. . . ." (Cor. 1:14-17).

Uchimura desired to live just like Paul who was, according to Uchimura, a man of soul and who believed, ". . . the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal". (II Cor. 4:18).

Further he maintained that a spiritual baptism, that is a baptism by the Holy Spirit was the indispensable thing, whether one received baptism by water or not. He believed the ritual deeds could not save one from sin but faith in Christ's death and resurrection. Uchimura, thus, took an entirely spiritual meaning for baptism and so was especially against any church law which said that only an ordained minister could give baptism. He, himself, administered baptism to those who wished, at any cost, to be baptized as a symbol of their faith, taking them to the River Tama in the suburbs of Tokyo. According to Uchimura baptism of itself had value, but at the same time it was not necessary. Jesus' words found in Matt. 28:19 and Luke 22:19b were ascribed by him as a spiritual teaching for it is written in John, "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is

. . . . .

1. Ibid, p. 287. (Trans. by the writer.)



of no avail" (John 6:63).

Concerning the Holy Communion Uchimura believed that it was a symbol to remind Christians of Christ's passion. It was also an expression of thanksgiving by those who received eternal life from Christ. As a matter of fact when he joined the church of Mr. Harris in Hokkaido when he was a college boy he partook of Holy Communion as well as receiving baptism. These were very valid for him at that time, and, for him, according to his diary that was a "never-to-be forgotten day".<sup>1</sup> As long as Holy Communion was partaken of with true spiritual validity, he would never be against it. One example of a time when he himself administered Holy Communion was when he had to bid a final farewell to his beloved daughter three hours before she died. Kanzo, his wife and his dying daughter had a simple form of Holy Communion, which was, according to him, the only means that he could find to express his faith, hope and love at this time of desperation and yet of hope in the future promise to meet his daughter again in Heaven.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally Uchimura did not have any Holy Communion at his Sunday Assembly. His uniqueness is shown in his idea that Bible study itself is Holy Communion. His article "Baptism and the Lord's Supper" expressed this idea of his in these words:

Of course there is no spiritual life in wine and bread. Bread is bread and wine is wine and it is nothing more than that. The flesh and blood of Christ, even if we could take it, could not nourish our souls. Jesus Christ himself said, "It is the

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1. Ante, p. 19.

2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 292.

spirit that gives life, flesh is of no avail: the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. . . . Bread represents flesh, and wine blood, but flesh and blood mean eternal life. And the true expression of eternal life is not Christ's blood and flesh but his words, which are written in the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

In a further statement he says:

To take Christ's flesh and blood, so that we partake of his life, is exactly the same as it is to read the Bible. To study the Bible with devotion is true holy communion. Jeremiah says, "Thy words were found, and I ate them, and thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord, God of hosts!" (Jeremiah 15:16). . . . Like Jeremiah we have to eat the words of God, digest them, and take into our lives the life of the living words. When we read the Bible daily in order to receive this life, we partake of Holy Communion daily.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it is clear that Uchimura did not deny baptism and Holy Communion. He felt a danger in the fact that the sacraments were becoming only traditional forms of the Christian church, and especially as the church was getting more systematized and organized. He was afraid of losing the spirit of the sacraments which Augustine defined as the visible form of the invisible grace of God.<sup>3</sup> He put the invisible first above all things. This is really the essence of Protestantism.

As free as Uchimura was from the rituals of baptism and the sacraments, he warned the readers of his magazine, The Biblical Study that they should not be loose. He wrote:

Though Non-churchism keeps freedom, that does not mean it has looseness. We are not bound by the formal ritual but we should firmly keep the essence of the Gospel. We have not any worldly relationship with the orthodox church, but we wish to "contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the

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1. Ibid, p. 290. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Ibid, p. 291. (Trans. by the writer.)
3. Ibid, p. 286.

saints."<sup>1</sup> (Jude 3). We esteem freedom but we are not Unitarian  
.....

To be strict in spirit but free from ritual was Kanzo's  
view of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

#### E. Summary

In this chapter the writer has attempted to show what  
Non-church Christianity is. It is not surprising that to some it  
must sound quite paradoxical especially for those who can hardly  
think of Christianity apart from the church.

Megumu Masaike, one of the followers of Kanzo Uchimura,  
points out three elements which are characteristics of Non-church  
Christianity and which sum up the main points of this chapter. He  
says of it ". . . it is spiritual, it is Japanese and it is indepen-  
dent".<sup>2</sup> From what was stated in the first section as the motivating  
causes for the formation of Non-church Christianity, it is obvious  
why Non-church may be described by the two attributes, independent  
and Japanese. This was also shown in the second section as the  
writer attempted to describe how Non-church became known to the  
general public. The last section, in which the writer attempted to  
state the principles of Non-church Christianity, demonstrates clearly  
how the last remaining attribute, the spiritual quality, applies to  
Non-church Christianity though there may be many theological problems

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1. Ibid, p. 233. (Trans. by the writer.)

2. Megumu Masaike: The Life of Kanzo Uchimura, p. 179.

in it.

In reading through this chapter it may have seemed that Non-church is one of the most radical sects in all of Protestantism. And, in fact, it is true that in its origin it had just such a reactionary character. It was however something more than that from the beginning, just as early Protestantism had deeper roots than mere reactionary revolt. "First the faith of the Cross, then Non-churchism as its-conclusion. . . ." <sup>1</sup> wrote Uchimura. Here is indication of the fact that Non-churchism was the unavoidable expression of Uchimura's deep faith which came from his personal meeting with Jesus Christ and knowing Him as the Saviour. Thus the movement sprang from living spiritual experience rather than from intellectual speculations.

Non-church can no more be separated from Uchimura than can Lutheranism be separated from Martin Luther or Methodism from John Wesley. The movement was part of the man, and the man was the initial part of the movement.

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 246.

CHAPTER IV

OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS OF KANZO UCHIMURA'S TEACHING

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KANZO UCHIMURA'S TEACHING

A. Introduction

The subject which will be discussed first in this chapter is Uchimura's emphasis on Bible study, which cannot be separated from his Non-church Christianity. Because of this latter fact the writer feels that the investigation of Uchimura's Bible study will give the reader more light in understanding Non-church Christianity.

The second subject to be dealt with will be his particular isms which are patriotism and non-war-ism.<sup>1</sup> They are so outstanding in Uchimura's teaching that one cannot put them aside when one talks about him. They also are so unique that one can find value in studying them historically or sociologically without reference to Non-church Christianity. However, the writer will attempt to examine these two isms to see their nature in the light of Christianity which is, the writer believes, the root of the two.

B. Emphasis on Bible Study

1. His View of the Bible

Uchimura's article "In what sense is the Bible the Word of

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1. The Japanese word hisenron is usually translated "pacifism" but the actual meaning of the word as used by Uchimura is "non-war-ism".

God?" begins with a sentence "I believe that the Bible is the Word of God". But right after that he explains that he does not agree with those who hold to the idea of verbal inspiration. According to Kanzo Uchimura the Bible was written by men in whom the Holy Spirit worked to help to reveal the truth of God to human beings. Since the Bible was written by men who were limited in their power and knowledge, finding obscure expressions or errors in time, place, or arrangement is unavoidable. He believed, however, these problems cannot change the fact that the Bible is the Word of God. He expressed his conviction in these words:

. . . Then why is the Bible the Word of God? Because, in the Bible, there is written that which no one can write except God. . . . The fact that there are some errors in grammar, mistakes in historical events, or lack of scientific evidence is not so important in revealing God's will. We do want to know the truth of the human world and the universe, which the Bible reveals to us completely. That the Bible is perfect lies not in the form of the words or sentences, but in God's will revealed all through the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God because it is filled with the Words of God.<sup>1</sup>

In another place Uchimura quoted John 5:39 "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me. . . ." He said that this verse is the essence of the Bible, that is, the uniting spirit of both the Old Testament and the New Testament is Christ, and the Bible is the witness to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In spite of this unmovable truth that the Bible is the Word of God and its message is the witness to Jesus Christ, Uchimura

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 9, p. 171 (Trans. by the writer).

recognized the fact that for those who cannot see the truth in the Bible, it is not the Word of God, nor the witness to Christ. The Bible becomes truly the Word of God only when men respond to the truth revealed in it. From this he reached his conclusion of the necessity of sincere Bible study. This is the idea which must have led him to devote himself to such intense study of the Scriptures.

## 2. The Aim of his Bible Study

As has been mentioned before, Uchimura, after he had fought against evils in the society of Japan as the editor of the Manchoho, came to the conclusion that a true reform can only result from changing the thinking of individuals through the study of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> To show his conclusion in his own words, his declaration which was put on the first page of the first issue of the magazine The Biblical Study, will be quoted directly. This declaration was preceded by Paul's words, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel" (Romans 1:16), in big letters. Then it began as follows:

The Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth were given through Jesus Christ. The magazine The Biblical Study is the rebirth of The Tokyo Independent Magazine. The latter came out to destroy, but the former, to give life. That had a sword to hurt, but this is going to give a balm to heal. To blame was the job of the latter, but this mission is to comfort. Justice is given to destroy but love comes to give life. It is a reasonable order to set forth justice first and to spread love next. . . . The Biblical Study is now coming to you in the right time. . . .<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ante, p. 52.
2. Megumu Masaike, The Life of Kanzo Uchimura, p. 161, (Trans. by the writer).



Most of what Uchimura had done not only in The Tokyo Independent Magazine but also as the editor of the Manchoho, was to point out the social injustices which prevailed in Japan, as has been stated before.<sup>1</sup> Therefore his declaration quoted above must have been his true and honest confession when he looked back on his life as a social reformer. But this did not mean that he gave up all social efforts after he started his life as an evangelist. Within him there was a great deal of zeal for social action all through his life. His movement regarding the second coming of Christ, which he started in 1917, was one example of the irresistible expression of his faith against social injustice. When he looked at the reality of human society he could not but recognize the sin of the individual lying at the root of social injustice. He found that there was no way to start social reform other than for each individual to recognize his bondage to sin and his powerlessness, and ultimately to find hope only in the salvation of the Cross and the second coming of Jesus Christ. He wrote, "Radical reformation should be started by sincere Bible study. . . . First of all we should reform our souls by studying the Bible, the Word of God, and then work towards the reformation of the nation."<sup>2</sup>

Thus his Bible study was aimed at the salvation of the individual soul which is a cell in the building of a society, a nation and the world.

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1. Ante, p. 48.

2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 9, p. 202, 204. (Trans. by the writer.)

### 3. His Principles of Biblical Interpretation.

The lecture, "Bible Study and Social Reform", that Uchimura delivered in 1902 soon after he started his evangelical work has a short passage in it regarding what Bible study is.

Bible study is neither literal analysis of the Bible nor archaeological investigation. However this does not mean that we should take every word of the Bible as it is and recite it blindly. Bible study is to discover the unique and united spirit which is in the Bible all through, from its beginning to its end.<sup>1</sup>

For Uchimura this unique and united spirit of the Bible was nothing but Jesus Christ. Therefore he was really, as Brunner says, "a tied man, tied to Jesus Christ and His gospel in an absolute way".<sup>2</sup> He absolutely believed the gospel of salvation promised in Genesis, and the eschatology in Revelation. This was the foundation, for him, in interpreting the whole Bible.

Most of the Bible lectures which he delivered in his Bible study meetings and also those which were published in The Biblical Study are now collected in the seven volumes of The Works of Kanzo Uchimura.<sup>3</sup> The lectures and writings cover all the books in the Old Testament and the New Testament. There is not sufficient space here to give concrete examples to show how Uchimura studied and interpreted

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 185, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Emil Brunner, "A Word of Introduction to the New Edition of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura", Monthly Pamphlets of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 9, p. 1.
3. Vol. 9, Christianity, Part I. Vol. 10, Christianity, Part II. Vol. 11, The Old Testament, Part I. Vol. 12, The Old Testament, Part II. Vol. 13, The Life of Christ. Vol. 14, The New Testament, Part I. Vol. 15, The New Testament, Part II.

each book of the Bible. However, in the rest of this section, the writer will attempt first, to describe the general trend of the lectures, and then to quote several passages from them to give the reader some flavor of these lectures.

Uchimura, who aimed his evangelical work towards the common people, did not use any learned style such as is used by Biblical scholars. His words were plain and straightforward, in other words, he expressed boldly what he perceived in the Bible along with his own meditations, experiences, and application to the Christian life and to the social conditions at the time. Therefore many times one finds inconsistency in his writings. But this he himself explained in his essay "The Story of an Oval". In it he says, "The truth is not a circle, but it is an oval. It is not drawn around one center but two centers".<sup>1</sup> According to him the truth is hard to accept with the mind but it is what can be perceived by the heart. He gives examples of what he means in the existence of humanity and deity in Jesus Christ, and mercy and judgment in Christianity. Thus in order to explain the truth in words, he found that he had to use the two centers which truth has. When Goro Maeda, an Old Testament scholar, says, "It is impossible to define Uchimura's faith and thoughts unitarily"<sup>2</sup> he exactly points out this paradox in his ideas.

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 102, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Goro Maeda, "The Bible Interpretation of Uchimura Sensei", Monthly Pamphlet of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 11, p. 6, (Trans. by the writer).

As free and bold as Uchimura was, it does not mean that his interpretation was dogmatic or self-righteous. He was a very careful student of the Bible, looking up the Greek, Hebrew or German Bible and consulting with various sources which he could get at that time in Japan. He humbly confessed, after he investigated the problem as to whether the Pastoral Epistles were written by Paul or not, that he was very happy that he had the opportunity to learn how important it was to study the Bible historically and as literature.<sup>1</sup> To study the Bible was hard work for the ordinary Japanese at that time because of the lack of books and the lack of knowledge of foreign languages. However, Uchimura did it with his great spiritual energy and perseverance because of his sense of call.

Zenta Watanabe, a Japanese Old Testament scholar, regards Uchimura as the one who taught him to stand on the Bible. He says, ". . . what I found in this magazine<sup>2</sup> was a new view of the Bible. This new view of the Bible was not explained theologically, but it was affirmed with an undescribably pure and vital ability and expression."<sup>3</sup> In the same article Watanabe repeats that he was taught by Uchimura "to obey the Bible which made the man, Uchimura, instead of following an established ism".<sup>4</sup>

The following passages give some glimpses of what it was in Uchimura's writings that taught Watanabe to stand on the Bible,

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, p. 384.
2. "This magazine" refers to The Biblical Study by Kanzo Uchimura.
3. Zenta Watanabe, "The Man who Taught me to Stand on the Bible", Monthly pamphlet of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 3, p. 7, (Trans. by the writer).
4. Ibid., pp. 6, 7. (Trans. by the writer).

and also helped others who heard and read them to see the witness of Jesus Christ in the Bible.

The first passage quoted indicates Uchimura's idea of returning to the Bible itself.

Read the Bible itself. Don't read much about the Bible. Life is in the Bible itself not in a discussion on the Bible. One who has doubts about the Bible is usually one who reads the Bible little but hears or reads much about it.<sup>1</sup>

The second passage is from his article "The Old Testament and Faith", and gives an idea of what he thought of the Old Testament.

Without an understanding of the Old Testament, the New Testament cannot be understood. . . . Without trembling to hear the thunder on Mt. Sinai, we cannot come to the gospel of salvation on the hill of Golgotha. The Merciful Father is the fearful Father at the same time. After we know God as a fire that quenches us, we know the Father who forgives us with his abundant mercy. The Old Testament is the premise of the New Testament and the New Testament is the conclusion of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the study of the Four Gospels of the New Testament he writes:

All that one should know about Christ is written in the Four Gospels. If you want to know Christ, read them many, many times. Continue reading them for many years. Then wait until your experience in life will give you a good answer for what you cannot understand.<sup>3</sup>

Study Matthew as Matthew itself. So do Mark, Luke and John. Don't try to harmonize the four gospels. The main purpose of each gospel is to create the image of Christ in the readers' hearts and not to tell the historical facts only. The Gospel is

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 5, p. 55, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 11, pp. 412-414, (Trans. by the writer).
3. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 13, p. 391, (Trans. by the writer).

the book of the good news, it is not a biography.<sup>1</sup>

But he writes about the Book of Acts:

The Book of Acts is a history. Therefore you should not consider the records as the eternal and universal type of the facts. The way that the Holy Spirit works through the believers differs, depending on time and situation. . . . It is a very sad thing that there are many people who mix the historical fact and the truth. When we distinguish these two strictly, we can interpret the Bible correctly and apply it rightly to our Christian life.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand in the article, "But for Paul", Uchimura writes:

. . . Paul did not make Christianity difficult but made it deep. He made it into a religion to go into the utmost depth of the human heart. . . . Paul is the father of Christian theology. But his theology is not just for the sake of theology. It is not to establish a new theology but to destroy the old useless one. Paul's theology is obviously anti-theology. . . . His theology based on his conviction expressed in the words, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus" (Galatians 6:17), is powerful enough to destroy any theology.

The Gospels were not enough to sting sinners' consciences and to draw them into the presence of God to receive His grace of salvation after exposing every single evil which exists in the darkness within. Human sin is too deep. The gentle words of Jesus were not enough to destroy it. This is why God called Paul who was born in sin and let him experience His grace in salvation of sin, and then through Paul God gave a way for all people to receive His grace.<sup>3</sup>

However Uchimura, when he started his series of lectures on the life of Jesus Christ after he finished a series of sixty lectures on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, describes his impression as follows:

We have come into the Gospel leaving Romans. We feel as

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 5, p. 207, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 14, pp. 328, 329, (Trans. by the writer).
3. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 15, pp. 4-6. (Trans. by the writer.)

if we have come into a great natural forest after having been in a big man-made park. As great as Paul was, he was a man of strenuous efforts, while Jesus was the Son of God and was a saint by nature. Reading Romans I feel as if I were drinking distilled water, but the gospel gives me a pleasant feeling as if I were drinking water springing up from a rock. Jesus has no discussion but has aroma, there is no theology but irresistible inspiration. I don't know why but I feel as if I were assimilated into Jesus while I am reading about his words and deeds.<sup>1</sup>

A certain foreigner who was studying about Uchimura once asked Goro Maeda, "Is Uchimura's interpretation of the Bible worthy to contribute to the Biblical academy at present?" It ought to be understandable to the reader, who has had a glimpse of Uchimura's lectures, why the foreigner asked this question. And at the same time there ought to be some understanding of the reason why Maeda answered firmly, "Yes," to this question.<sup>2</sup> Kanzo Uchimura neither intended to be a professional Biblical scholar nor was one, but rather was a layman who devoted himself to giving the gospel of salvation only through Bible study. It is really not a question of whether his interpretation is worthy to be given to the Biblical academy or not. As Watanabe says, the Bible made Kanzo Uchimura, and so he helped others to stand on this Bible which gives salvation from sin through Jesus Christ.

#### 4. His Bible Study Meetings.

As has been mentioned before, Uchimura's Bible study took two forms. First, he published a magazine The Biblical Study in

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 13, pp. 386, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Goro Maeda, "The Bible Interpretation of Uchimura Sensei," Monthly Pamphlet of Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 11, p.6.

1900 and through it gave Bible study to the readers.<sup>1</sup> The wish to publish a magazine of Biblical interpretation had been in his mind since he was at Amherst College and even the name to give his magazine had been inscribed in his heart. This wish was realized in the birth of The Biblical Study fifteen years later.<sup>2</sup>

In 1901 the Bible study assembly began when Uchimura allowed others, although limiting their number to twenty-five, to join his family meeting every Sunday morning. The meeting was called Tsunohazu Bible Study Meeting, Tsunohazu being the name of the place where Uchimura lived.

By 1905 the readers of the magazine had increased and those readers, including the members of the assembly, made small Christian fellowship groups here and there. Apparently Uchimura encouraged them to meet together in their homes to pray and to study the Bible in order to deepen their faith and for Christian fellowship.

In 1907 he moved to a new place, not far from where he had lived, in the suburbs of Tokyo. By then the members of his home assembly had increased to about forty because he no longer put any strict limitation on the number. But his meeting was not opened publicly until 1913 when, after a small hall was built attached to his house, he suddenly announced that anybody who was a reader of The Biblical Study could come to his meeting after having obtained permission from Uchimura himself.

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1. Ante, p. 49.

2. Megumu Masaike, The Life of Kanzo Uchimura, p. 158.



Tateo Kanda who was a regular member of the meeting at that time describes the form of worship which was followed at this meeting. However, before he describes the worship, Kanda gives a little information about the meeting place and the members of the meeting, which ought to be included here:

In those days the meeting was held at a small hall, adjacent to Mr. Uchimura's own home at Kashiwagi in the suburbs of the old Tokyo. A square wooden building which could perhaps hold a maximum of 150 people was pretty well filled every Sunday morning with a select but mixed congregation: select in the sense that each had to get personal permission from Mr. Uchimura to attend the meeting, as Uchimura refused casual visitors; mixed in the sense it had as its members the cream of young intellectuals, old shopkeepers, officials and students, blind men and ex-convicts, people from all walks of life and social strata. He was discriminating in giving permission to people to join his meeting, and I for example had to wait for some time, until after I entered the Daiichi Koto Gakko, before I got it.<sup>1</sup>

Then he describes the worship as follows:

At 10 or 10:30 on Sunday morning the meeting began as Mr. Uchimura appeared from a door facing the congregation and took his position behind a table which served as pulpit. A sort of hush then prevailed in the room, as one could almost hear his footsteps coming across the garden from his study. An imposing figure in frock-coat, a rugged face, noble forehead and deep piercing eyes suffused with compassion, his presence was altogether striking, God speaking out of his whole personality. The meeting began by hymn-singing, Scripture reading, collection, and members one by one reciting a verse or a passage that he or she had chosen and learned during the past week. This was a significant feature, though not all who gathered could take part in it every time. Then followed usually a guest-speaker or assistant giving a brief talk or witness. The main part of the service was of course Mr. Uchimura's sermon, which generally consisted of an exposition of a Scripture passage or passages. Sometimes it took the form of a series of talks, weeks on end, on a topic or even on a whole book. There he poured himself out in his forth-right way of speaking, and one felt one could peep into the depth of his independent thinking and passionate feeling. He

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1. Tateo Kanda, "Mukeyokai Worship," The Japan Christian Quarterly, July 1956, Vol. XXII, No. 3, p. 229.

was well-read and his judgment was sane and balanced. As far as I can remember, he was never extreme in his denunciation of the denominational church, his emphasis being always on the interpretation of the Scriptural passage in question. The prayers both at the beginning and the end were always most inspiring. One felt one was listening to blank verse, the pulsation of the inmost soul of a poet enthused by a mystical union with God.<sup>1</sup>

After he started the movement of the second coming of Jesus Christ he "forsook his hermit life of intellectual aristocracy and stepped out into the middle of Tokyo".<sup>2</sup> Until the great earthquake in 1923 destroyed a large part of the city of Tokyo, including the Eisei Assembly Hall which Uchimura chose as the third assembly hall for his Bible lectures, he gave series of Bible lectures to audiences whose number averaged six hundred. It was, according to Kanda, "a phenomenal 'success' in the days when other churches were at their wits' end how to fill their empty pews".<sup>3</sup>

It was during this time that the series of sixty lectures on Romans ~~was~~ given by Uchimura to the audience who filled the hall every Sunday morning. In the preface of his first volume of "The Study of Romans", in which the sixty lectures were collected and published, his zeal, which was poured out in those lectures, is well expressed in these words:

I had one desire in my life. That was to tell the Gospel of the Cross of Jesus Christ to all the people of Japan . . . . That opportunity finally came. God prepared the place for me. . . . I was given the opportunity to deliver lectures on the Bible every Sunday for four years from May in the eighth year of Taisho<sup>4</sup> to June in the twelfth year of Taisho. . . . The

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1. Loc. cit.
  2. Loc. cit.
  3. Ibid, p. 230.
  4. The eighth year of Taisho is the year 1919, and the twelfth year is 1923.

audience covered all classes, Christians from various denominations, Christians who did not belong to the church, those who claimed themselves non-Christians and even the priests of Buddhism. They were an audience the like of which had not ever been seen since Christianity came to Japan. It was the climax of my life...

I gave lectures on Daniel, Job, Romans and a part of the synoptics. But Romans was the book I was most interested in . . . . Without understanding Romans there is no real understanding of Christianity. . . . To give lectures on Romans meant to tell my own experiences of faith. . . . Therefore the series of sixty lectures were for me a successive joy. It was the delivery of the Gospel of God's grace. It was a propagation of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. There was no greater pleasure than this. . . .

It is I, the writer of this book, that most feel the imperfectness of this book. . . . As Paul says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. . .", the Book of Romans that Paul left to us is really a treasure, yet the interpretation which I gave to it was but an earthen vessel. But even an earthen vessel is better than nothing, therefore I dare to offer this book to you all.<sup>1</sup>

After the Eisei Hall was burned the meeting moved back again to Uchimura's own Bible hall, which was reconstructed for the larger audience. And yet, he had to give two meetings, morning and afternoon, dividing the audience into two groups. This meeting in the Bible Hall continued until his death when the meeting and the magazine were put to an end in accordance with Uchimura's last will and testament.

### C. Emphasis on Particular "Isms"

#### 1. Patriotism

From the statements given so far, it is already obvious that Kanzo Uchimura was an ardent patriot. This section will examine two

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1. Uchimura, The Study of Romans, Part I, pp. 1, 2, (Trans. by the writer).

events in which one can see from different angles the kind of patriotism which he had. One event was the so-called "Lese-Majeste affair" which created a great wave in both educational and religious circles in Japan, and the other was Uchimura's declaration which justified the Sino-Japanese War. The conclusion will investigate the nature of Uchimura's patriotism.

a. An Analysis of the "Lese-Majeste affair".

The "Lese-Majeste affair" was discussed so much publicly that the information given about it varied greatly. Therefore it seems best to examine this event according to the explanations Uchimura himself wrote. In his personal letter to Bell, dated March 6, 1891, Uchimura explained rather in detail what the nature of the event was and how he really acted in the situation.

On January 9th we had a special ceremony to receive the Imperial Rescript on Education in the high school where I was teaching. After the principal's address and the reading of the Imperial Rescript, each teacher and student was required to go up to the stage to bow to the seal of the Emperor on the Rescript in the same attitude as we bow to the relics of our ancestors according to the ritual of Buddhism or Shinto. I was not ready at all to respond to such an unfamiliar ritual. . . . My turn to go up to the stage and bow was the third, therefore there was hardly time enough to consider the matter. Consequently with doubt and hesitation I took the better way judging from my Christian conscience. In the presence of sixty teachers (all of them were non-Christians, as the two Christian teachers besides me did not attend the ceremony) and more than a thousand students, who were ranged in stately rows, I did not bow, because of my Christian standpoint. It was a fearful minute for me. Soon I learned the result of my action. The teachers and students now found a good reason to express the anti-Christian feelings against me and against Christians in general. . . .

Some of the enraged students and even the teachers began to stone me. . . . All the newspapers and magazines, urban and rural, discussed my deed. They generally disagreed with me. For a week I had visitors, teachers and students, and I asked them, with the greatest mildness that I could, whether they could find

something in me which was against the Rescript in my daily actions, talk, and faithfulness to the Emperor. I also told them that the Emperor gave the Rescript to his people not just to be bowed to but to be kept in their daily life. My logic and witness was enough to shut their mouths as individuals. However their anger and prejudice as a group could not be stopped. Then I contracted a severe kind of influenza.<sup>1</sup>

So Uchimura had to stay in bed with a high fever while the storm of arguments was raging around him. His letter continued:

The principal of the high school admitted and praised my deed which was done according to my conscience. But he assured me that bowing was not worshiping the Emperor but showing respect to him, and he almost pleaded with me to bow though it would be a humiliation for me in order to follow the national tradition, as that was the only way to calm down the students who could not understand me. . . . I acknowledged that bowing did not mean necessarily worship, but at that time what had caused me to refuse to bow was not actual refusal but hesitation, which was a conscientious scruple. Since the principal had claimed that to bow was not to worship my conscientious scruple was taken away. Though I still believe that the ceremony is rather ridiculous I agreed to bow for the sake of the school, the principal, and my students.<sup>2</sup>

The bow was performed by his friend, a substitute, as Uchimura could not get up from his sick bed. The event was tentatively calmed down with this, and Uchimura was dismissed from the school.

However, this led to strong opposition to Christianity by ultra-nationalists in the educational fields. A most famous thesis which attacked Christianity was entitled "The Conflict between Education and Religion" by Tetsujiro Inoue, the first professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University. Inoue attacked Uchimura, claiming that he not only lacked a sense of obligation as a loyal subject of the Emperor but also that he disturbed public peace and order. Consequently Inoue concluded that Christianity, which Uchimura

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, pp. 265-266. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Ibid., pp. 266-267. (Trans. by the writer.)

represented, was not in accord with the Japanese national policy, Tennoism, because of its intolerant monotheism, while Buddhism which had had a warm and gentle past, influenced Japan to be peaceful.<sup>1</sup>

To answer Inoue's argument, Uchimura boldly declared his conviction in forceful words which "had never been used before, for a defence of Christianity against the heartless attack of a 'philosopher' in a land where Christianity was despised."<sup>2</sup>

To prove that Christians are disloyal to the country and disrespectful to the Imperial Rescript, you have pointed out that Christians do not obey the ritual which you think right. But here is more superior respect than the ritual, that is the practice of the Rescript. Which is more disrespectful, not to bow before the Rescript or not to carry out its principles? I undoubtedly believe that our benevolent Emperor will appreciate our acceptance of it into our practical life better than formal acceptance. . . . Does your fair philosophical insight regard us Christians as those who are less loyal to the country, affectionate to our brothers and sisters, filial to parents, true to friends. . . . than Buddhists, Confusians, Shintoists and non-religionists? Disloyalty, disobedience, untruthfulness. . . are not the characteristics of Christians.

You regarded me as a disloyal subject to Japan because I did not worship the Imperial Rescript. But what do you think of the fact that one who worships the picture of the Emperor every morning attends a barbarous banquet every evening? Or have you not ever noticed that those who worship the Rescript take sake<sup>3</sup> cups and talk of things which are disgusting?<sup>4</sup>

Many Christians supported Uchimura but public opinion declared him a traitor.

b. An Examination of his Justification of the Sino-Japanese War

Uchimura, who was regarded as a disloyal subject to his country, proclaimed the righteousness of Japan in fighting against

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1. Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Period of Meiji, p. 204.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 18, pp. 318-319. (Trans. by the writer.)
3. A sweet rice-wine, the alcoholic beverage of the Japanese.
4. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, pp. 16-17. (Trans. by the writer.)

China as soon as the war broke in August of 1894. Uchimura contributed his thesis, "Justification of Korean War" which was written in English, to the famous magazine, The Kokumin no Tomo.

This thesis begins with a sentence:

There was a time in World's History when mankind went to war with no meaner motive than to establish Righteousness upon the face of the Earth. This materialistic century, however, conscious alike of the "lusts" that actuated all its wars, as of the unavoidable-ness of the same, has come to believe "lusts" as only and just causes for wars, and to know of no war that has not "lusts" for its primary aims and purposes.<sup>1</sup>

However, he continues concerning the Sino-Japanese War: "We believe that the Korean War now opened between Japan and China to be such a war, -- I mean, a righteous war"<sup>2</sup> After this he quotes a few righteous wars in history, such as the fight of Gideon against the Midianite, the war that the Greeks waged against the Persians, and the war that Gustavus Adolphus carried into the heart of Germany to deliver it from Catholic oppression and thereby saving Protestantism for the world.<sup>3</sup> Further he explains the righteousness of the war:

Righteous we say, not only in legal sense, for legalities can be manufactured as sophistries of all kinds, but righteous in moral sense as well -- the only kind of righteousness that can justify any war.<sup>4</sup>

Uchimura knew that "war was a thing most to be avoided, and if 'lusts' were the primary aims, no wars should be the first and last policy".<sup>5</sup>

However, he gives the reason why Japan was led into the war:

But China behaved against us, now for more than a score of years,

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1. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 16, pp. 26, 27.
2. Ibid, p. 27.
3. Ibid, p. 27, 28.
4. Ibid, p. 28.
5. Loc. cit.

as unneighborly and insolently as we have ever been able to bear in our history. . . . Indeed we killed our own that we might avoid conflicts with our neighbor, -- so desirous have we been of peace. But how did China act against us in 1882, and again in 1884, and ever since? Constant affrontary against us in Korea by its constant interference with our friendly policy with that nation.<sup>1</sup>

In another article, "A Discussion on the Relationship between Japan and China in the Light of World-History", he writes as follows:

The relation between Japan and China is that of a little country and a big country, the former representing new civilization, the latter, the old civilization. There are not a few examples in the history of human progress where two countries which had relationship such as Japan and China were confronted with and strove with each other. The old, because of its vastness, dispises the new; the small, because it is new, dispises the old. The conflict cannot be stopped. To expect the encounter to procede peacefully where a right and a counter current meet, is against the law of the universe and against the current of history.<sup>2</sup>

Before the war Uchimura had already written an English article "Japan: Its Mission" for the Japan Daily Mail. In the introduction of the paper he maintained that a nation as a unit must have a work peculiar to itself for the welfare and progress of the whole, and as the earth has a definite aim, so also the individual is destined for a specific work in his time and place. He also added:

As a self-centred man is the least and meanest of mankind, so a self-seeking and self-satisfied nation is the weakest and most back-ward of all nations. Japan cannot be an exception to this eternal law.<sup>3</sup>

Then to answer the question as to what Japan's mission was he investigated geographical features, ethnic characteristics, and historic

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 34, (Trans. by the writer).
3. Uchimura, The Complete Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 16, p. 17.



indications of Japan. In his conclusion he wrote:

Japan's mission may be multifarious: but the one who has laid much stress upon is grand enough to call forth the highest aspiration of the nation. To reconcile the East with the West: to be the advocate of the East and the harbinger of the West; this we believe to be the mission which Japan is called upon to fulfill. We stand in our relation to Asia as did the ancient Greeks in relation to Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Uchimura thus clarified the mission of Japan with firm conviction and furthermore declared to the world the justice of the Sino-Japanese War, believing sincerely that it was a part of Japan's mission. So again for the magazine The Kokumin no Tomo Uchimura wrote an article, "What is the purpose of the Sino-Japanese War?" stating his ideal. He wrote:

If the purpose of our foreign expedition were to destroy China, it would cause a miserable result instead of a glorifying result... Our purpose is to civilize the Orient and preserve its peace and promote its progress. The peace of the Orient only comes from vitalizing China, which is the great purpose of the Korean War....

There was no more courageous army in world history than that of Cromwell and his iron clad soldiers. Their courage came from their love of humanity. Their sincerity which felt compassion for the weak, changed into violent rage. . . . Who says revenge is a characteristic of the Yamato race? Our courage comes from great love.<sup>2</sup>

Thus according to Uchimura, Japan, by the Sino-Japanese War, would save Korea from the oppression of China, and would help China to be in a right position for establishing peace in the Orient. "We are going to engage in battle as a savior of Asia,"<sup>3</sup> he wrote. But for his ardent patriotism, Uchimura could not have proclaimed such a thing so firmly and trusted his own country to such a great

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1. Ibid., p. 24.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, pp. 45, 46, 51, (Trans. by the writer).
3. Ibid., p. 47.

degree at the time of the Sino-Japanese War.

However, when the war ended in 1895 with victory, Japan became, contrary to Uchimura's expectations, ambitious and proud, getting much in reparations from China. It is beyond one's imagination to understand how greatly Uchimura was disappointed with and ashamed of his country. A sentence from a letter to Bell indicates his shame at that time. "A righteous war changed into a somewhat piratical war, and a prophet who has written its justification is now in shame".<sup>1</sup> The next year, 1896, he wrote for the magazine, The Kokumin no Tomo for which he had written his "Justification of the Korean War", the long article entitled "Observation of the Times". The following is a passage from it.

They proclaimed that the Sino-Japanese War was a righteous war, and I, who was such a foolish man, took their declaration seriously and I appealed to the world with my article "Justification of Korean War" in my broken English. Japanese politicians and journalists must have laughed at me in their hearts saying, "O, you, an honest man! You are too good!" They are never afraid of saying that the righteous war was only so in name. . . . All the nation was busy celebrating the victory, emptying thousands of bottles of beer, killing hundreds of cattle, and catching Chinese soldiers as if they were hunting wild boar. . . . As soon as Japan became a victorious country she ignored the independence of the neighboring countries which had been the original aim. She was occupied with the development of the new territory, expanding a new market. . . . If Japan is a nation of love and justice why doesn't she respect the honor of China? Why don't the Japanese lead Korea? . . . . I grieved over the fact that the nation spoke justice with her lips without believing it in her heart.<sup>2</sup>

From that time on Uchimura, first, as an editor and then as an evangelist, with the same ardent patriotism with which he declared the justification of the Sino-Japanese War, tried to make the Japanese

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1. Uchimura, *The Works of Kanzo Uchimura*, Vol. 19, p. 359. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 79. (Trans. by the writer.)

people recognize their sins and evils.

c. The Nature of his Patriotism

The most important fact of the "Lese Majeste Affair" was that Uchimura denied the divinity of the Emperor with his firm belief that there was only one God in the universe whom he could worship. From this fact two important conclusions can be drawn: the first is that his patriotism was based on Christianity, and the second, that his patriotism did not come from so-called nationalism which was blind and narrowhearted.

The following quotation shows there existed in Uchimura love for Jesus and love for Japan without any contradiction.

I love two J's and no third; one is Jesus, and the other is Japan.

I do not know which I love more, Jesus or Japan.

I am hated by my countrymen for Jesus' sake as vaso,<sup>1</sup> and I am disliked by foreign missionaries for Japan's sake as national and narrow.

No matter; I may lose all my friends, but I cannot lose Jesus and Japan.

For Jesus' sake, I cannot own any other God than His Father as my God and Father; and for Japan's sake, I cannot accept any faith which comes in the name of Foreigners. . . .

Jesus and Japan; my faith is not a circle with one centre; it is an ellipse with two dear names. And I know that one strengthens the other; Jesus strengthens and purifies my love for Japan; and Japan clarifies and objectivises my love for Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

It ought to be apparent from Uchimura's statements already quoted that his motivation for proclaiming the justification of the Sino-Japanese War had no self-centeredness nor intolerance in its foundation. But here another passage is added to show that he

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1. A somewhat dispising nickname given to Christians.

2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 7, p. 170.

recognized that the mission of Japan existed as a part of the world which is under God's plan. The following is a quotation from his article entitled "Christianity and Patriotism".

It is mistaken patriotism to act as if the whole world existed for our country and that our country had supremacy over the world. Japan exists for the world. To accomplish its mission is indispensable for all human beings in order for them to have the welfare which God had planned. I serve the world by serving Japan. England, America, France. . . Japan, China and Persia, all the countries are necessary for the accomplishment of the world's plan. Without even one of them the accomplishment will fail. As one needs one's individuality a nation needs its nationality. With individuality and nationality both an individual and a nation can serve the whole world. This, I believe, is the view in the Bible.

We are Japanese. God needs Japan. Without Japan God's will will not be done on the earth. . . . Therefore, for God and for the world we have to serve Japan.<sup>1</sup>

The words on his tomb stone, which were quoted at the very beginning of the thesis,<sup>2</sup> condense exactly in a verse his idea expressed in the quotation above. This is his patriotism in its true sense.

## 2. Non-war-ism

In the last part of the preceding section Uchimura's shame, disappointment, and repentance at seeing the result of the victorious war were described. In this section, the reader will see Uchimura stand up to cry out against war, changing bravely his attitude from that of justifying war to that of renouncing it. First the reason for his change will be examined, and then the practice of his non-war belief during actual war time will be described. Lastly, the nature

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 4, p. 389. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Ante, p. 1.

of his non-war-ism will be investigated.

a. Reasons Why Uchimura Became a Non-war-ist.

The title of this section is quoted from Uchimura; except for a change of the pronoun "I" to "Uchimura". This title belonged to an article in which he publicly clarified the reasons for a change in his views. So it seems best to examine his reasons according to this article.

His confession is frankly stated in the first paragraph of the article. It reads as follows:

I was born in a warrior's family and fighting is my profession which I inherited from my ancestors. Most of what I heard and read from my childhood had something to do with wars.... As a result I did not, until lately, realize that a war is evil and though it was almost twenty-four years since I became a Christian I still remained as one who justified war. I, who regarded the book, "The Life of Cromwell," written by Carlyle as one of the best books next to the Bible, thought that we should carry out justice with a sword.<sup>1</sup>

Following this confession Uchimura pointed out four main reasons for his change of position. As the first reason he wrote:

It is needless to say that the most forceful cause which has made me a non-war-ist is the Bible. It is especially the New Testament. The more I study the Bible the more I find that a quarrel of any kind should be avoided. When I see the spirit in the New Testament as a whole instead of picking up words here and there, I realize that a fight, even though it is international, is not right. I have found for myself that I cannot believe that the gospel of the Cross justifies a war in any case.<sup>2</sup>

At this point, in order to see more clearly how he came to the conviction that the Bible teaches non-warism, the writer will

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 293, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 294. (Trans. by the writer.)

examine his article, "The Gospel of Peace," the subtitle of which is "Absolute Non-War". This was written before he wrote "The Reason Why I Became a Non-war-ist". Uchimura maintained that absolute peace is the one and only thing that the New Testament teaches in regard to this matter of violence. It is clearly seen in Jesus Christ the Lord of peace who gave his life to the enemy without any fighting. Concerning the wars in the Old Testament he wrote:

The opinion that we can keep war because the Old Testament admits it, is a wrong idea which comes from misunderstanding the spirit of the Bible. The Bible is a book which records the developmental revelation of God. It cannot be said that God revealed himself absolutely from the beginning. It is not that God accepted war and let the warriors of the Old Testament fight, but it is that God passed it over until men perceived their sins because their hearts were so hardened. Therefore when God sent His Son to the world God let him tell the gospel as follows.<sup>1</sup>

Then, at this point, Uchimura quoted Matthew 5:38-42 of which the writer will quote only a line. "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: . . . ." This gospel, according to Uchimura, absolutely disapproves of revenge and the fighting which goes along with revenge. True peace and freedom can be given not by the sword but only by the sacrifice of life as Jesus himself gave us freedom by shedding his blood in an act of non-resistance.

The second reason which Uchimura pointed out for his changed attitude to war was his own experience in life. He did not explain particularly what kind of experience he had, but he wrote:

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 294. (Trans. by the writer.)

A few years ago I was condemned severely by some people, but I took the attitude of non-resistance with great endurance following the advice of one of my friends, and as a result I received a great peace in my heart.<sup>1</sup>

He added that then he really understood the teaching of Paul in the twelfth chapter of Romans.

As the third reason for his change he cited the history of the past ten years both within and without Japan. He mentioned the Sino-Japanese War and the Spanish-American War. Evils in war and evil which results from war made Uchimura think that an earthly war can never produce true peace but only produces another bigger war.<sup>2</sup>

The fourth and last reason that made Uchimura a non-war-ist was the Springfield Republican which was published in the city of Springfield in Massachusetts in the United States. He wrote:

I confess that I have been a reader of this newspaper for the past twenty years. There is no newspaper that I have read for such a long time even among Japanese papers. . . . This newspaper is the noblest and fairest that I have ever read. . . . The sound arguments and eminent views of the world famous pacifists which I read in this newspaper finally defeated my warlike arguments completely.<sup>3</sup>

These, then, are the reasons why Uchimura changed from his pro-war ideas to a non-war position. As firm and independent as Uchimura was, he was not afraid to change his mind for the sake of justice as is shown in the following writing:

Ism is not for oneself. It is for a nation, society or human beings. To carry out one's own ism is not in order to win fame

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 294, (Trans. by the writer).
2. Ibid., p. 295. (Trans. by the writer.)
3. Loc. cit.

nor is it to manifest one's own innocence for self-satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

b. The attitude of Uchimura during the Time of War.

In spite of Uchimura's great efforts in proclaiming non-war through the Manchoho and his magazine, The Biblical Study, a war did break out between Japan and Russia in February 1904. The attitude which Uchimura took during this war seemed to bring condemnation to him at the time and is still discussed even today. For example, the writer would like to cite one event which is described by Masaike in his book, The Life of Kanzo Uchimura.

One day in December 1903, just before the war broke out Uchimura got a letter from a young man. In the letter he told of his decision that he would rather be shot than perform any duty of military service or pay any war-time special taxes. He based his position on Uchimura's absolute non-war-ism. Upon reading this, Uchimura answered at once telling him that his decision was so important that he had better wait until Uchimura himself went to see him and talked it over with him. So Uchimura went to the young man's home which was several hundred miles away from Tokyo. He told the young man that once the war started, to accept obediently military service and pay taxes was the duty of the nation and it was what the Bible taught.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning this event there was some criticism that Uchimura's action was contradictory to his claims. His article entitled "A Non-war-ist's Death in Battle" is his answer to explain this

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1. Ibid., p. 273. (Trans. by the writer.)

2. Masaike, The Life of Kanzo Uchimura, p. 219.



contradiction. A few passages will be quoted from it to show his viewpoint.

The country finally went into war and according to the law the country will command us, non-war-ists, to be in military service. We should obey the commandment holding back our tears and having a feeling that we are going to help our brothers out of a trouble into which they have gone with wrong judgment. This is the most moderate and the most appropriate way to stop the war at this miserable time. . . . Suppose one of us refuses his military service. Then some other person will be called away to the war. This means that our refusal ends with another's sacrifice. Therefore, we should be willing to take part in the suffering for the sake of others. War can be abolished only by the tragic death of many non-war-ists.<sup>1</sup>

Further on Uchimura wrote a passage that he used to give to his friends who had to go to the front at the military call.

Go, pacifists of both countries! Face a danger which nobody else can. Sacrifice yourself for the war which you hate. Don't hate your enemy though you have to fight against him, as we have really no enemy. Accomplish your duty and only wish that your death will be a redemptive death. Though people push you into death, God is waiting for you in Heaven, where you will shake hands with your enemy. Don't give up seeking for peace until your death.<sup>2</sup>

Then he concluded the article with the following words:

It seems paradoxical that non-war-ists make the best warriors, but it is an undeniable fact. They, as Christian gentlemen, made a way, sacrificing their lives, for the abolition of war. At the time of the realization of the true peace those who will be glorified are not the ones who advocated non-war with a pen, but those who shed their blood as the victims of war. May eternal glory be upon them!<sup>3</sup>

Another criticism which was made of his non-war-ism was that Uchimura stopped his proclamation of it when the war began but at the end of the war he again started to cry out. In contrast a

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, pp. 297-298. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Ibid., p. 299. (Trans. by the writer.)
3. Ibid., pp. 299, 230. (Trans. by the writer.)

peace movement was started by socialists at the risk of their lives in spite of the severe pressure which the government put upon them.<sup>1</sup>

This criticism is not in accord with Masaike's statement in which he says that Uchimura wrote many articles on non-war even during the war.<sup>2</sup> The writer also has found several articles in the volumes of The Works of Kanzo Uchimura on the subject which have dates from the war time. However, in Uchimura's article, "The Attitude which a Non-war-ist should take in War Time", an answer is given to this question. He writes:

Before the war broke out, we tried, as much as we could, to cry against war. However, since the war came against our wish, our means of action against war came to a conclusion. Non-war means pacifism and to deny war is a negative phase of peace. Because we failed to stop the war and keep peace, we have to think how we can recover peace as soon as possible. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Further he writes:

Pacifists cannot do much in the time of war. But there is only one thing that we don't do. That is to justify the war quoting the words of Jesus Christ, the Lord of peace. . . . We Christians who know the spirit of Christ know too well that war is not the spirit of Christ. . . . There is nothing that is more obvious than the fact that Christianity has the spirit of loving enemies and non-resistance.<sup>4</sup>

Apparently this argument must have been intended for the Christians who agreed with the war and helped it at that time, among whom were Hisashi Uemura and Danjo Ebina representing the Yokohama band and the Kumamoto band respectively.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Kunio Oka, "Anti-war--Pacifism--Peace Movement", Monthly pamphlet of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 12, p. 6.
2. Masaike, The Life of Kanzo Uchimura, p. 218.
3. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 273. (Trans. by the writer.)
4. Ibid., pp. 277, 278. (Trans. by the writer.)
5. Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Period of Meiji, pp. 275, 276.

Uchimura maintained absolute non-war-ism all the rest of his life.

c. The Nature of his Non-war-ism.

It seems almost needless to say, after examining the reasons for Uchimura's change from pro-war to non-war and his attitude during war time, that his non-war-ism was rooted deeply in the gospel of peace of Christianity. The peace which he aimed at was not an earthly peace but eternal peace which God reveals to human beings through His son Jesus Christ. For the sake of the peace of God he tried to avoid war, yet once the wrath of God came upon the people as His judgment on them, he willingly obeyed the judgment without ceasing to seek for the peace of God. This spirit of non-war-ism made him say, "War can be stopped only by the tragic death of many non-war-ists",<sup>1</sup> and "Accomplish your duty and only wish that your death will be a redemptive death".<sup>2</sup>

An article which Uchimura wrote in 1917 twelve years after the Russo-Japanese War tells clearly the nature of non-war-ism. The title of the article is "Clear Indications in the Bible Concerning the Abolition of War". The following passages are quoted from it.

Non-war would be proclaimed in every case. But war cannot be stopped by non-war. The reason why we advocate non-war is not because we believe that war is stopped by it. According to the clear teaching in the Bible war cannot be stopped by the power of man. . . . War can be stopped by the revelation of God's might. The abolition of war is in God's hand. It will be realized by the second coming of Christ, the Judge, whom God has appointed.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ante, p. 108. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Ante, p. 108. (Trans. by the writer.)
3. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 2, p. 392. (Trans. by the writer.)

Then Uchimura quotes Isaiah 2:4 to prove this, "And he will judge between the nations, . . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; . . . neither shall they learn war any more". This is followed by a question he himself set forth, "Why then do we proclaim non-war?". And to this he answers:

The reason why Christians proclaim non-war is not because they expect that non-war will be realized on this earth but because they believe that it is what God wills.<sup>1</sup>

He adds another reason:

The proclamation of non-war quickens the second coming of Christ. We should have a right preparation for receiving Him again. And that preparation is exactly the proclamation of the gospel of peace as it is written, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14)<sup>2</sup>

Then he repeats, "War cannot be stopped by the proclamation of non-war", and goes on by getting down deep into the root of the matter saying:

It is not a question of whether we can stop war or not. It is a question of justice or injustice. . . . War is unrighteous and unjust. War is the climax of sin. Therefore we claim non-war and prepare the way for our Lord as John the Baptist did.<sup>3</sup>

So the voice of Uchimura's proclamation of non-war was, like the voice of John the Baptist, a cry for repentance to prepare the way for the returning Lord to the people of Japan who were living in pride, injustice, and moral decadence. It was his hope in this non-war-ism which drove him into starting his movement regarding the second coming of Christ which has been previously mentioned in the

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1. Ibid., p. 393. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Ibid., p. 394. (Trans. by the writer.)
3. Ibid., p. 395. (Trans. by the writer.)

first chapter. The image of Christ, who was delivered into the hands of his enemies, and died on the Cross for man's sin, and who will come again for the judgment, was never away from his heart. From this image came his non-war-ism.

#### D. Summary

As was stated in the introduction of this chapter the first section was to give the reader a better understanding of Non-church Christianity. First Uchimura's view of the Bible was examined followed by the aim of his Bible study. In the third section the principles of his Bible interpretation were shown largely through passages quoted from his interpretations of the Bible. Finally the picture of his Bible study was described with a brief history of the meeting.

To examine the true nature of his patriotism the "Lese-Majeste affair" and his justification of the Sino-Japanese War were analyzed and examined. To examine the nature of his non-war-ism an attempt was made first, to investigate the reasons which caused Uchimura to change from pro-war to non-war, and then to describe the practice of his non-war-ism in the time of war.

Thus in the second section, as was stated at the outset of this chapter, there was clarified the fact that both Uchimura's patriotism and non-war-ism were the natural result of his faith in God, Jesus Christ, and the gospel of salvation, as was also his Non-church Christianity.

CHAPTER V

KANZO UCHIMURA AND CONTEMPORARY NON-CHURCH CHRISTIANITY

## CHAPTER V

### KANZO UCHIMURA AND CONTEMPORARY NON-CHURCH CHRISTIANITY

#### A. Introduction

It is natural that, after having studied Kanzo Uchimura's life and work, a question arises of how the spirit of Non-church Christianity lives in contemporary Japanese Christianity.

This chapter is planned to attempt to answer that question. However, there are some difficulties in doing so because of the nature of Non-church Christianity, as the reader may already have surmised from what has been given. The Non-church Christianity which Kanzo Uchimura tried to realize was not a denomination or a sect. There were neither external organizations inherited from Uchimura, nor official successors who formally succeeded him in his work. Uchimura was not concerned that his work should be perpetuated after his death. He believed that whether the work that God had done through him, an individual, would be continued or not depended completely on God's will. Therefore, though there are now many followers who independently, with free expression, carry the gospel of Christ to the unevangelized, one cannot put one's finger on any certain thing and say that it is what Uchimura left.

Since Non-church has no ecclesiastical organization, baptism nor the Lord's Supper, another difficulty lies in finding any statistical records for Non-church groups which are generally regarded as Uchimura's spiritual inheritance.

There should be added here another reason which is personal for the writer. Being away from Japan, the writer has not been able to collect much material or to do research on the actual state of the meetings of Non-church Christianity. Fortunately W. H. H. Norman has written an article, "Non-church Christianity in Japan", for the International Review of Missions for the October 1957 issue, which gives the latest information the writer has been able to get. Hence the writer must rely on this source, which seems to be well written after actual and careful research, for most of the statistical figures.

In this chapter, the attempt will be made first, to emphasize the fact that contemporary Non-church Christianity is not a heritage that was given to successors, but was something followed voluntarily or rather irresistibly by those who were given faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior, through their sensei (teacher, rabbi or master) Kanzo Uchimura, just as Uchimura was given it through Dr. Seely, his spiritual father. The writer has expressed it as a spiritual heritage since no other words seem to fit properly.

Following this section the main current leaders of Non-church Christianity will be commented on with their Bible study meetings and publications. This will be followed by a brief survey of the position of Non-church Christianity in Japanese Protestantism at present. Lastly the tendencies of contemporary Non-church Christianity will be stated in brief.

#### B. Spiritual Heritage

The reader may recall that Uchimura's Bible study meeting



and the publication of the Biblical Study were put to an end at the time of his death according to his will. This fact is significant for it shows his respect for other's freedom of faith, and also his conviction that for the spirit there is no necessity of any form which may be rather an obstacle.

One of the followers of Uchimura expressed as follows his impression at the dissolution of the Bible meeting to which about three hundred and fifty regular members gathered.

We feel very sorry that the meeting which was the battle field of Uchimura's evangelism and also which will be the home of the souls of thousands people who came to hear his teaching is going to be dissolved. . . . We don't know now whether this dissolution is following God's will or is the best way for evangelism. But we only can believe that this is God's will. There is no doubt, at least, that this is the best way to be faithful to the spirit of Uchimura sensei. Probably sensei would tell us all from Heaven, "Church have I none, but what I have that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, walk". (ref. Act 3:6)<sup>1</sup>

So all the people who used to attend Uchimura's meeting were scattered like sheep who had lost their shepherd, getting no visible forms from him but with firm faith in their hearts. But Uchimura was not the shepherd for them, for he had helped them to find and to follow their true shepherd, who is Jesus Christ. So they were not discouraged. Each of them began to preach the gospel to others in his or her own way believing that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

As a result of this, today, some of them have meetings at home with the family, others have a larger meeting for people from the outside. University students have a vacant class room for their

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1. Hyoei Ishihara, Thoughts and Belief of Kanzo Uchimura, p. 179. (Trans. by the writer.)

meeting; to the sick people their own room in the hospital is the place where they can share devotions with other patients. This was Uchimura's wish that they be free according to their own faith. Thus, the number of the meetings is large and the number of the followers cannot be counted. According to Norman the figure of 20,000 is given which is much less than the 50,000 that Brunner estimated.<sup>1</sup> According to the Christian Yearbook of 1951, Maeda estimated between 50,000 and 100,000. However, whatever the figure may be, Uchimura's spirit is here and there all over Japan in the small groups and the large groups, as they strengthen their own faith and give the light of the gospel to others.

It is in those who consider themselves as pupils or spiritual children of Kanzo Uchimura that Brunner saw "family-likeness". He points out four characteristics of this family-likeness as follows:

- 1) They are all very independent Christians, expressing their Christianity in their own individual way.
- 2) They are all faithful and ardent students of the Bible, without being biblicistic literalists.
- 3) So far as my acquaintance with them goes, I have found them to be men earnestly trying to live as followers of Christ without showing any form of legalism in their way of living.
- 4) It so happens that all of them are men of high standing in their own fields of academic studies.<sup>2</sup>

Maeda's article, which he wrote for the Christian Yearbook of 1953, contains two additional statements which should be included in this list.

The first of these statements says that "they are all

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1. W. H. H. Norman, "Non-church Christianity in Japan", The International Review of Mission, Oct. 1957, Vol. XLVI, No. 184, p. 385.
2. Emil Brunner, "A Word of Introduction to The New Edition of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura", Monthly pamphlet of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 9, p. 1.

completely independent from foreign missions and foreign supported organizations."<sup>1</sup> The other is concerning what Brunner wrote under his fourth point. His opening phrase, "It so happens. . ." indicates that he must have met only the main leaders of Non-church who are of high standing in their own fields of academic studies. But the actual condition is that which Maeda describes in the following passage:

However, Mukyokai adherents are not only intellectuals but also common people. Especially in rural areas it is improving. Magazines are sent from various leaders, and the articles help in the conduct of family worship and Bible study with full respect to Japanese customs and ethics. H. Ishihara and H. Masaie (both editors of their own periodicals) are working as itinerent leaders among farmers and fishermen. Development among both intellectuals and non-intellectuals is one of the characteristics of the recent Mukyokai movement.<sup>2</sup>

The gospel for common people--this was also the spirit of Kanzo Uchimura.

#### C. Current Leaders of Non-church Christianity

It is only for convenience sake that the word "leader" is used here, because, according to the Non-church people, its characteristic is that there are not any special ministers or leaders, but all belong to the priesthood, and so all are equally the learners of God's Word and the evangelists of the gospel. As has been mentioned before, numerous meetings are held here and there and yet no clear records can be found concerning them. Therefore, in this section, only three outstanding meetings led by three prominent followers of

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1. Maeda, "Mukyokai (The Non-church Group)", The Christian Yearbook, 1953, pp. 320-321.
2. Loc. cit.

Uchimura will be examined along with their publications.

1. Meetings.

The three largest meetings at present are:

1. Marunouchi Bible Lecture
2. Imai-Kan Bible Lecture
3. Kurozaki Bible Study Meeting

The Marunouchi Bible Lecture is led by Toraji Tsukamoto who had already started his own independent Bible study while Uchimura was still alive. The Marunouchi is a place in the center of the city of Tokyo. Tsukamoto rents a room in this big building, where every Sunday morning the meeting is held centering in his Bible lecture. He could have had a successful career as an officer in the Home Office, but he chose the way of an evangelist.<sup>1</sup>

The ~~Imai-Kan~~ Bible Lecture is led by Tadao Yanaibara, who retired from the presidency of Tokyo University in December of 1957. He is a scholar of economics and an authority on colonial policy. Norman writes about Dr. Yanaibara:

Dr. Yanibara is the president of Tokyo University. (The significance of this should not be missed. It is as though the Chancellor of Oxford University or the President of Harvard conducted a church in his spare time, preaching every Sunday.)<sup>2</sup>

Imai-Kan is the name of a hall in the suburbs of Tokyo near Yanaibara's own home, where many people come to hear his Bible lectures every Sunday morning.

The Kurozaki Bible Study Meeting is in Osaka and Kokichi

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1. Norman Hisayama, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Periods of Taisho and Showa, p. 139.
2. Norman, op. cit., p. 384.

Kurozaki is the leader of the meeting. Kurozaki, like Tsukamoto, gave up a good position in the Sumitomo corporation to devote himself to evangelism and the publication of Bible commentaries, which will be dealt with more fully later. Like Tukamoto he rents a room in a modern office building in down-town Osaka for his Sunday meeting. Besides this meeting he holds services every Saturday afternoon in a smaller hall set beside his own house.

All three meetings are held in the same way that Uchimura used in his days. Norman expressed his impression, when he attended Dr. Yanibara's service in these words:

At the Mukyokai services which I have attended, the leader entered the hall and the congregation rose. He wrote the scripture lesson and the hymns of the day on a blackboard. After a hymn he led in prayer, using quite simple language -- "You" in addressing God instead of "Thou". . . . a young man read the lesson, and then the sermon-lecture, never less than an hour in length, more commonly an hour and a half, was delivered. A hymn, followed by prayer from the leader, concluded the service. There were a few announcements, then the congregation rose as the leader left the platform. I have been impressed by the atmosphere of reverence in the meetings I have attended. . . . There was no whispering, no noise. At the meetings I attended I have been reminded of Mary. The Church, I said to myself, is Martha, cumbered about much serving.<sup>1</sup>

The other large meetings are apparently conducted along similar lines. From these large meetings small study-groups spring up. In all probability the smaller groups meet in a more informal way than the large meetings.

## 2. Publications.

Just as Uchimura had a monthly magazine, so, too, each of

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1. Norman, op. cit., p. 385.

these three leaders publishes a monthly magazine "containing some or all of the sermons or expository lectures of the month, comments on current topics and a journal or diary".<sup>1</sup> Tsukamota publishes the Seisho Chishiki (The Knowledge of the Bible), Yanaibara publishes the Kashin (Tidings of Joy), and Kurosaki the Eien no Seimei (Eternal Life). Including these three magazines more than twenty magazines are published by Non-church people.<sup>2</sup>

Besides these monthly magazines, even though they are laymen, they publish many interpretations of the Bible as a whole or on books of the Bible. Kurozaki completed three volumes of Abridged Commentaries on the Old Testament in 1952. Before that he had published ten volumes of New Testament Commentaries, one volume, Abridged, of a New Testament Commentary, and a Greek-Japanese Concordance. Tsukamoto was the pioneer in translating the New Testament into colloquial Japanese.<sup>3</sup> Norman comments on the publications of Non-church people as follows, "There is no other group in Japan, its size being borne in mind, that is as prolific in Christian literature as Mukyokai (Non-church)".<sup>4</sup>

#### D. Position of Non-church Christianity in Protestantism in Japan

The reader may recall the three Christian bands which were formed at the beginning of modern Christian missions in Japan, which were mentioned in the first chapter.<sup>5</sup> It is very interesting to note

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1. Ibid., p. 386.
2. Maeda, "The Churchless Christianity Movement (Mukyokai)", The Christian Yearbook, 1951, p. 183.
3. Maeda, "Mukyokai (The Non-church Group)", The Christian Yearbook, 1953, p. 321.
4. Norman, Op. cit., p. 386.
5. Ante, pp. 13-17.

that the three main streams of Protestantism in Japan at present have developed from those three bands. The bands, though they were led to Christianity originally by the missionaries, made efforts to be independent from foreign aid and to establish their own churches to evangelize the Japanese people, in contrast to the denominational groups which have grown under the leadership and help of foreign mission boards. In this sense the three bands have had a unique development as Japanese Protestant groups, having men of independent, firm, heroic samurai spirit (because most of them came from samurai families) as their early leaders. Non-church Christianity, which came out of the Sapporo band, is one of these three leading Protestant groups.

It is not the aim of this section to trace the development of these three bands, but rather an attempt will be made to see the characteristics of the three groups in relation to each other so that a general survey of the Protestant movement in Japan will be made.

The Kumamoto band which was merged into Doshisha was the foundation of the Japan Congregational Church and hence their Christianity has political, social, and ethical tendencies. Their theology has liberalism at its base.<sup>1</sup> The Yokohama band, although its theological base was Calvinism and its church politics were based on Presbyterianism, advocated the making of a non-denominational church without

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1. Michio Takaya, "Non-denomationalism and Non-churchism in Protestantism in Japan", Monthly Pamphlet of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 18, p. 4.

any ties with foreign denominations. In this sense what was declared in their constitution has been faithfully kept by them. The Rev. Uemura was the head of this church of Christ in Japan and his outstanding work has already been referred to in the second chapter of this thesis. The Sapporo band which was formed under the influence of Dr. Clark inherited New England Puritanism since this was the home of Clark. Its theological basis was not very clear from the beginning but it has been said that "the view of salvation through the Cross is very definite as in Calvinism but the view of the church is weak".<sup>1</sup> This analysis has been proved exactly in Uchimura's Non-church Christianity. Uchimura himself expressed this tendency as he looked back on his Christian life.

I myself was strongly influenced by Calvinism. . . . If there were theology in me it would be Calvinistic. But I don't belong to a Calvinistic church and I am extremely hated by the people of Calvinistic churches. Yet if Calvinism were taken away there would be left only a faint faith in me. The hymn "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me" expresses well my faith and also expresses the essence of Calvinism.<sup>2</sup>

Michio Takaya summarizes in brief the tendencies of these three streams stating the future hope for Protestantism in Japan. He says:

In short, the Kumamoto band experienced Christianity politically, the Yokohama band understood it confessionally, and the Sapporo band understood it spiritually. And those tendencies are the streams of Protestantism in Japan at present. The hundredth anniversary of modern Christian missions is coming near. It is already several decades since the churches were established. Young believers groups are now in the third generation. The sense of heroism at the beginning of the Meiji era is now changing. The color of denominations is being weakened. The theological stand is becoming social as well as conservative and is developing

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 6, p. 454. (Trans. by the writer.)



internationally, too. With the one hundredth anniversary as a turning point we hope that there will be new union and development along with continuing honor to Protestant history in Japan.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of Takaya's hope, there is hardly any desire for unity either from Non-church groups or denominational groups. Maeda, a Non-church follower, has expressed his hopes for unity in the following words:

The prayers of Mukyokai people last year and every year were that the time may come soon when the names Mukyokai and Protestantism are no more necessary and all may be one through Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

But this is not the general hope of all Non-church followers. Nor do the organized churches make any serious efforts to bridge the gap between these main Protestant streams.

#### E. Tendencies in Contemporary Non-Church Christianity.

In order to see the tendencies in contemporary Non-church Christianity, some criticisms from without Non-church and some reflections from within Non-church will be examined.

Tsutomu Oshio who is a theologian and a pastor of a church in Tokyo says:

Non-church has now come down to the third generation. Many unknown believers live in society keeping their faith firm and pure. But Masao Sekine is the only one who is in the position of a leader of the younger generation. . . . As an evangelist and a Bible scholar Sekine is trying to open a new phase of Non-churchism. . . . But if I criticize objectively, the meaning and the work of Non-church as a group seem to have reached an end in these years. That is to say, it can now be said that there has come into existence a new denomination that is called Non-church and that is Japanese in nature.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Takaya, Op. cit., p. 5. (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Maeda, "The Churchless Christianity", The Christian Yearbook, 1951, p. 184.
3. Hisayana, Modern Japan and Christianity, The Periods of Taisho and Showa, p. 140. (Trans. by the writer.)

This criticism points out plainly that Non-church has become a denomination, and Oshio, who knew that Uchimura's intention regarding Non-church was not to make a denomination, criticizes it for thus coming to an end.

Concerning this tendency to sectarianism in Non-church Christianity, many people outside of Non-church seem to agree to its existence also. For example, Norman comments in his article, "The truth of the matter is that Mukyokai is simply another Christian sect".<sup>1</sup> He also quotes the statement of Taijiro Yamamoto who is one of the followers of Uchimura, but is against some of the other followers.

Yamamoto Taijiro. . . says that though he belongs to Mukyokai by definition, he is not a Mukyokai man in the way in which others are. He . . . says that Mukyokai today is nothing more than a sect. . .<sup>2</sup>

This further gives evidence to the fact that there are divisions even in the Non-church group and some of the followers, like Yamamoto, admit its sectarianism. Norman further adds another comment of a Japanese who says "that Mukyokai is a sect 'with all the faults of the churches, and maybe a few more'.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Yanaibara, the leader of one of the three big meetings, perceives this danger. He comments on it in his lecture, "What is Religious Reformation Today?", which he delivered on the anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. He admits that Non-church is a claim and a movement by men, although its true nature is a pure gospel and

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1. Norman, op. cit., p. 391.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Ibid., p. 392.

a pure faith. And he gives warning of the danger of its isolationism from others saying:

. . . if Non-church were fixed in a certain form and we were satisfied with Non-church itself and lived placidly and comfortably in it, there would be a danger of self-satisfaction and isolationism.

The pure gospel is the work of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God gives the power to work towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth following His government. As long as Non-churchism follows His way of government there will be meaning in its religious reformation. But if it falls into self-satisfactory formalism and also into isolationism, the chariot of God's government will proceed on leaving Non-church behind.<sup>1</sup>

This is a sincere warning against the danger of sectarianism and isolationism into which it is falling, delivered by a leader who acknowledges and understands the spirit of Kanzo Uchimura who said once, "If Non-church becomes so-called Church again, we ourselves should destroy it by Non-churchism. The Kingdom of Christ is growing in such a way."<sup>2</sup>

Besides this another problem is also seen in the Non-church group. Tsukamoto, who is also one of the three eminent leaders of the contemporary Non-church, suggested a limitation of Non-churchism in his practical program saying, "Since our meeting has become bigger and bigger in numbers there come many things that I cannot manage by myself. Then there comes along the necessity of system and of organization to a certain degree."<sup>3</sup>

However, whatever the danger or the limitation may be, it is certain that God is using the vital power of the Non-church groups for the evangelism of Japan through their Bible study meetings and

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1. Tadao Yanaibara, "What is Religious Reformation Today?", Kashin, Vol. 20, No. 12, p. 8 (Trans. by the writer.)
2. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 10, p. 233. (Trans. by the writer.)
3. "The Present Status of Non-church Christianity," Christian Newspaper, Tokyo, October 25, 1954.

publications, showing the way to salvation in Jesus Christ.

#### F. Summary

Though very brief in scope, the survey of Contemporary Non-church Christianity was made in order to see how the spirit of Kanzo Uchimura persists in Non-church today.

The writer hopes that the difficulty of giving statistical information, which was stated previously, has been explained by the statement on spiritual heritage which was the legacy of the followers of Uchimura. Concerning the current leaders of contemporary Non-church Christianity, only three, who are leading rather large-sized meetings now, were examined along with brief information on their meetings and publications. Then the position of Non-church Christianity in Protestantism in Japan was described showing it as one of the three streams which were rooted in the three Christian bands established at the beginning of modern missions in Japan. By investigating the tendencies of Non-church Christianity today, the dangers of sectarianism and of limitation of the principle of non-organization were pointed out by reference to some criticisms by Church people and reflections by Non-church people.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The hope was expressed at the outset of this thesis that by it English-speaking people might come to an understanding of Kanzo Uchimura, who was the founder of Non-church Christianity, and the truth of his movement which gives vital power to Christianity in Japan today.

With this idea in view, Uchimura's life was first described in detail with a historical background of the times, since the historical background and his life were very important to his Non-church Christianity and the outstanding isms which he proclaimed. Uchimura's birth into a samurai family and his religious feelings toward the Shinto gods, love of science, and early training in the English language were described to give a better understanding of his later life. The conversion of the sixteen-year-old lad, Kanzo, at the Sapporo Agricultural College was one of the three greatest moments of his life, for this was the beginning of his Christian life. In regard to this it was pointed out that two things, his faithfulness to the Shinto gods which created in him a struggle with contradictions, and the impossibility of worshipping so many gods, were used by God to lead him into Christianity. Following his conversion, Kanzo's activities with his seven Christian brethren to make the Sapporo Church independent from foreign aid were described. Here, already, emerging elements which led to the birth of Non-church Christianity ten years later were pointed out. His life in the United

States of America, where Uchimura found his spiritual father, Dr. Seely, who brought him the second great moment in his life, had a big part in his spiritual development although his stay was only for three years. What God gave Uchimura in the United States was not only faith in the salvation of Jesus Christ but also ardent love for his country. Thus, the aim "to be a man first, and then a patriot," was fulfilled, and even the vacuum and hurt in his heart, which were the direct motivations for his going abroad, were filled and healed by the time that he came back to his beloved country, Japan. His short life at Hartford Seminary at the end of his stay in the United States was briefly given because it throws an important light on his formation of Non-church Christianity. The life of his ministry, though it covered more than half of his actual life, was stated very briefly except for his movement concerning the second coming of Christ, for his ministry was dealt with in more detail in later chapters. The statement of his death concluded the review of the life of Kanzo Uchimura.

Most of the sources for this chapter came from his book How I Became a Christian: Out of my Diary which also was given another title, The Diary of a Japanese Convert, at the time when it was published by Fleming H. Revell Company, in Chicago, in 1895.<sup>1</sup> If anyone wants to know more about this wonderful experience of conversion which many of the people of Christendom have difficulty in understanding well, the writer recommends reading this book as it is

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1. Uchimura, The Works of Kanzo Uchimura, Vol. 21, p. 609.

written in English by Uchimura himself.

Following the first chapter, the study then moved to Non-church Christianity which Kanzo Uchimura founded. Though the records of his life show why he started the movement, the writer attempted to re-examine in particular the motivating causes for the birth of Non-church Christianity. Although a number of motivating reasons were found for the formation of the Non-church idea, perhaps the strongest and most important of them all was the last one discussed, namely, his desire for a Japanese Christianity. It was this longing for an independent, truly indigenous Christian church in Japan which drove Uchimura to formulate his Non-church-ism. In the last section of the third chapter, the outstanding principles of Non-church Christianity were examined. Because these are very much questioned and debated and Non-church Christians at present "minimize"<sup>1</sup> them in their interpretation, they were examined according to Uchimura's own writings.

In chapter four the outstanding characteristics of Uchimura's teaching besides Non-church Christianity were dealt with. First an examination of his Bible study was made to give more concrete ideas of his Non-church movement as well as to show his unique creative Biblical interpretations. Then, after a study of his patriotism and non-war-ism, it was realized anew how much Uchimura was also a child of the times when Japan was growing towards the wide world outside with her old and new culture. But, at the same time, it was seen that both emphases in his teachings came from the same root as his

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1. Norman, op. cit., p. 390.



Non-church-ism, that is, Uchimura's faith in God, Jesus Christ, and the gospel of salvation.

The last chapter dealt with the survey of contemporary Non-church Christianity in order to see how the spirit of Kanzo Uchimura has been inherited by his followers. Though there is a lack of statistical information about Non-church groups at present, it was shown that there are numerous meetings, small and large, working for the Kingdom of God all over Japan. The Bible study meetings held by current leaders and their publications were briefly described. In the last two sections it was pointed out that, whatever the danger Non-church is now facing it is still marching on towards the hundredth anniversary of modern Christian missions as one of the three main streams of Protestantism in Japan today.

In coming to the conclusion of this study a few things can be said about the inevitability of the rise of Non-church Christianity at that particular time in Japanese history. It is evident that God was working through Kanzo Uchimura to meet the need of his times using him as a reformer, prophet, and evangelist. What the church needed at that time was the true gospel of Christ, not external institutions or organizations. What the Japanese people needed was repentance from sin. Kanzo Uchimura was truly one of the witnesses of the faith who are described in Hebrews 12:1,2 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us". He was also a conscience for Japan as one writer has said: "Japan lost most of

her conscience by the death of Uchimura, which has been shown in the history of Japan since then".<sup>1</sup>

So it is, that whatever problems still exist in Uchimura's Non-church principles, and whatever crisis the contemporary Non-church group is facing, the writer hopes that the spirit of Uchimura, "Go ye and preach the gospel", will be forever present in the hearts and minds of all Christians who are united in one through Jesus Christ.

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1. Izumi Yanagida, "Kanzo Uchimura, the conscience of Japan", Monthly Pamphlet of the Works of Kanzo Uchimura, No. 17, p. 3. (Trans. by the writer.)

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