The Non-Church Movement and *Bushidō* : Why Schools and Private Classes were Deemed Better than Churches for the Japanese Christian Mission

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＜**Abstract**＞

　　The starting point for this study is the identification of factors—specifically those factors that are unrelated to attrition from church membership rolls as a result of secularization—that underlie the discrepancy between the number of people who believe in the teachings of Christ and the number of people who have become church members. One major clue that I explore is the stance of the "non–church movement," in which self–professed Christians neither attend church nor get baptized. The non–church movement has its roots in a group founded more than a century ago by the Japanese Christian Kanzō Uchimura. Uchimura was born a member of the *samurai* class, and he drew heavily upon the ethical framework of *bushidō,* or the "code of the *samurai,*" as he dedicated his life's work to the Christian mission in Japan. Uchimura's Christianity was a Japanese form of the religion, which he himself characterized as "Christianity grafted upon *bushidō.*"

　　In this paper, I analyze the historical contexts and features of the non–church movement as well as *bushidō.* The focus is an examination of the reasons why Uchimura believed that schools and private classes were better

suited to the Christian mission in Japan. The following result was obtained : The non–church movement rejects the holy sacraments, but in their stead puts emphasis on the study of the Bible in groups of followers, and this a contributing factor to the preference for schools and private classes.

Introduction

According to the Japanese government's *Statistical Survey on Religion* of July 2012, there are about 2,770,000 Christians in Japan. Meanwhile, the number of Christians in the country who belong to churches numbered only about 1,070,000 persons as of 2012 (*Christian Yearbook 2012*, Kirisuto Shimbun Co., Ltd.), which accounts for roughly 0.8 percent of the population. This roughly 0.8 percent level has stayed more or less constant since 1988. In fact, statistics compiled by the government show that the total number of Christians is more than double the number of Christians that belong to a church. This difference is attributable to differences in how Christians view their relationship with churches in defining themselves. It is the difference, for example, between those that view themselves as Christians because they have been baptized and belong to a church, and those that view themselves as Christians irrespective of baptism or church membership.

There are traditional views that hold that the church is the body of Christ, and connections with the church affirm one as a Christian (I Corinthians 12 : 27). Actions to affirm oneself as a "branch of Christ," such as being baptized, receiving sermons, and taking holy sacraments, in most cases require going to church. However, the phenomenon of fewer people going to church (younger people in particular) and of church congregations being made up predominantly of the elderly, is not a new one. It is easy to attribute the attrition from church membership rolls to general secularization. In this paper I hypothesize that there are elements present in Japanese spiritual culture that are unrelated

to secularizing forces but that nevertheless drive Christians to reject the church as an organization. Put differently, it is my contention that there are historical–cultural circumstances unique to Japan that underlie the discrepancy between the number of people who believe in the teachings of Christ and the number of people who have become church members.

One source of insight I intend to use here to explore this hypothesis is the stance of the "Non–Church (*mukyōkai*) movement," in which self–professed Christians neither attend church nor are baptized. The Non–Church movement has its roots in a group founded more than a century ago by the Japanese Christian Kanzō Uchimura. To this day, adherents to this school of thought do not perform baptisms or other holy sacraments, but instead hold meetings centered on study of the Bible. Uchimura was born in Edo in 1861 to a family of low–ranking *samurai* serving the Takasaki Domain (Takasaki–*han*). Being born a member of the warrior class, and he drew heavily upon the ethical framework of *bushidō,* or the "code of the *samurai,*" as he dedicated his life's work to the Christian mission in Japan. Uchimura's Christianity was a distinctly Japanese form of the religion, one which he himself characterized as "Christianity grafted upon *bushidō*" (Uchimura [1982], p. 162).

In this paper, I address two main issues. The first issue entails understanding the precise meaning of "Christianity grafted upon *bushido,*" and to answer this question, I analyze the historical contexts and features of the Non–Church movement as well as *bushidō*. The second focus of this paper is an examination of the reasons leading Uchimura to believe that schools and private classes were better suited to the Christian mission in Japan than churches.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In the first chapter, I review the history and significance of the Non–Church movement. In the second chapter, I give an overview of *bushidō*. In the third, I review previous studies and discuss the relationship between the Non–Church movement and *bushidō*. In the fourth chapter, I outline how in the Non–Church movement, more effort has

been put into establishing schools than churches, and examine the reasons for focusing on schools rather than churches for the purposes of the Christian mission.

1. What is the Non–Church movement?

1.1 Historical background

The philosophy of the Non–Church movement can be traced to Uchimura Kanzō's 1893 work *Kirisuto–shinto no nagusame*（*"Consolations of a Christian"*）, in which Uchimura first uses the word *mukyōkai,* or "Non–Church"（Uchimura ［1980］, p. 36）. Swiss theologian Emil Brunner, who resided in Japan from 1953 to 1955, introduced non–Japanese readers to the Non–Church movement, which he characterized as a reform movement led by Christian laity.（Nakazawa and Kawada ［1974］, p. 110）When Uchimura first used the word *mukyōkai,* he was describing the state of not belonging to any church. Uchimura himself is thought to have fallen into this "churchless–state" in part as a consequence of an incident in which he did not show the full measure of respect at an unveiling of an imperial rescript.[1] Uchimura recounts being criticized within the church as a Unitarian, an atheist, and a heretic（Uchimura ［1980］, pp. 25－26）.

Mukyōkai began as a movement in 1900, when Uchimura Kanzō began a Bible study group at his house with 25 students（Mullins ［1998］, p.159）. *Mukyōkai,* Uchimura insisted, was a church for those who have no church, and lacked an organization.

1.2 Significance and characteristics

Perhaps the most concise definition of the philosophy of the Non–Church movement was given by Toraji Tsukamoto when he described it as embodying the intent of Christianity that does not rely on the church, and the intent of

Christianity without the church (Tsukamoto [1967], p. 268). This has direct bearing on the question of "salvation." Again, to paraphrase Tsukamoto, this form of Christianity is such that one can live a wholly Christian life and die a Christian, without depending on the church, without viewing the church as a condition of salvation, and without having any connection to the church whatsoever (*ibid.*). The church is a target of criticism in the Non-Church philosophy. Through rejection of the sacraments performed by churches, the Non-Church movement paradoxically offers the promise of "true sacraments." The position of the Non-Church movement is that, even when it comes to the concept of the church, in rejecting the "visible church" one accepts an "invisible church" (Hakari [1989], p. 303). This paradoxical position is largely in concert with "Jūjika shinkō", the belief of the cross. (ibid., p.24, cf. Uchimura [1983], p.347) Theologically, this system of belief is part of Lutheranism. The Non-Church movement maintains the belief that salvation lies in the crucifixion of Christ and is achieved through faith alone, a hallmark of reformism (Saburō Takahashi [1994], p. 89).

The theology underlying the Non-Church movement might at first seem to have little basis. However, one can reasonably argue that theological foundations exist in the sense that the Non-Church movement evangelizes through what Luther called a "universal priesthood of believers," it preaches a return of Christ, and it places an emphasis on Christology. The defining characteristics of the Non-Church movement can be summarized by the following three features.

First, the movement takes the form of "Japanese Christianity." It is a distinctively Japanese mode of Christianity, one that frees the religion from its Western traditions and fuses it with the ideals of *bushidō* and "representative men of Japan." [2]

The second defining feature is the strong emphasis on the notion that members should take interest in Bible study and real-world social matters. The

greater part of Non–Church movement meetings are taken up by Bible lec-
tures. The reason is that, as Uchimura himself shares, even if one is "aban-
doned" by the church, one is connected to Christ through the presence of the
Bible (Uchimura [1980] p. 27). Moreover, there are more than a few adher-
ents to the Non–Church movement that made major contributions to the field
of biblical hermeneutics (Toraji Tsukamoto, Kōkichi Kurosaki, Masao Sekine,
Gorō Maeda, and others). In addition, there have been members that have re-
flected the group's high level of interest in social issues, including Hisao Ōt-
suka (1907－1996), a specialist on the work of the pioneering sociologist Max
Weber, and Tadao Yanaihara (1893－1961), an authority on international eco-
nomics and president of the University of Tokyo.

　　Third, generally speaking, embracing the Non–Church movement has
meant that, at least ostensibly, one does not belong to an existing church :
one's position is one's own. Strictly speaking, however, Non–Church beliefs ex-
ist both within and outside of the church. This underscores the fact that one's
stance as a member of the Non–Church movement is unrelated to one's mem-
bership (or lack thereof) of a church (Tsukamoto [1967], p. 291). The Non–
Church movement is critical of existing churches, which are seen as already
being secularized. As a consequence, it does not matter whether one is a mem-
ber of a church or not, because one is part of the secular world regardless.
From this perspective, adherents stress the importance of maintaining a Non–
Church form of faith. Inherent in this vein of thought is the independent, evan-
gelistic aim of Christianizing modern society, and in a manner unrelated to the
church (Sekine [1949], p. 61).

2. An overview of *bushidō*

　　In the following, I present an overview of *bushido*―the way of the *samurai*
or way of the warrior―which formed the spiritual foundations for Uchimura

and other Meiji–era Christians. The philosophy of *bushidō* attracted broad attention in the West with the publication in 1899 of a book in English of the same title by Inazō Nitobe.

Nitobe recounts that while he was studying at the University of Bonn between 1887 and 1888, he was asked by the Belgian jurist Émile Louis Victor de Laveleye how Japan could impart moral education without religious education. Nitobe was unable to give an immediate answer, and this incident is what prompted him to write *Bushidō : The Soul of Japan* a decade later (Nitobe [1998], p. 23). Nitobe was not particularly well–versed in Edo literature : in fact, he was under the mistaken impression that he himself coined the term "*bushidō*" (Bennett [2004], p. 15). He nevertheless is widely credited with communicating to the broader world the ethics of the erstwhile warrior[3] class (義 rectitude, 勇 courage, 仁 benevolence, 礼 politeness, 誠 veracity, 名誉 honor, and 忠義 duty of loyalty), and with it, important features of the spiritual culture of Japan.

A search for the historical roots of *bushidō* in Japanese history inevitably leads to the Mononobe, a clan of soldiers best–known for being tasked with guarding the imperial treasures (treasured swords) of the Yamato Dynasty. It is thought that these warriors subsequently came to be called *mononofu* after their clan name (Tomio Takahashi [1986] I, p. 45). Like their contemporary *masurao,* the *mononofu* developed an ethical value system out of their sense of duty as officials serving the imperial court, and out of that system was borne the "way of the *masurao*" (*masurao–no–michi*) code of ethics, a precursor to *bushidō*. Takahashi makes the case that those who adhered to the *masurao–no–michi* code considered themselves general bureaucrats, while those who followed the way of the *mononofu* considered themselves both warriors and bureaucrats, and that both groups complemented each other.

Etymology aside, *bushidō* has had different connotations and entailed different things through the ages. There is little doubt that *bushidō* has always

been associated with martial systems of thought (Kanno [2004], p. 18). Those systems of thought generally fall under the following four historical categories or phases.

The first phase is ancient *bushidō*. As described above, warriors belonging to this early system comprised civil servants charged with managing weapons at the imperial court. The second is Kamakura *bushidō*. Under this system, one used martial arts (bows and arrows in particular) to protect the life of one's lord, and to that end showed willingness to lay down one's own life as well as the loyalty required to leave behind one's own parents and family. According to Takahashi, *bushidō* as an ethical system was first established in the Kamakura period (Tomio Takahashi [1986] I, p. 50). The third phase is *bushidō* of the Edo period, when there were no longer actual battles for the *samurai* to fight. There were two currents of thought in this phase. One is represented by the work *Hagakure,* which extolls the virtues of death in service to one's lord (a school of inspired by the Nabeshima clan).[4] The other is *shidō* (the Zhu Xi school of thought), based on a Confucian system of ethics. The fourth phase is Meiji *bushidō*. Coming to prominence in the middle of the Meiji period, after the *samurai* class had been abolished, this phase of *bushidō* evolved as Japan sought to establish its identity as a modern nation. This form of *bushidō* is of particular interest as it was developed in large part by modern Japanese Christians such as Inazō Nitobe, Kanzō Uchimura, and Masahisa Uemura.

3. The relationship between the Non-Church movement and *bushidō*

3.1 Previous studies

There are no previous studies this author is aware of that directly take up as their primary themes both the Non-Church movement and *bushidō*. There are, however, more than a few analyses of Kanzō Uchimura's Non-Church movement and studies that, within the history of *bushidō* from the ancient to

modern eras, identify the influence of "modern *bushidō,*" particularly among Meiji–era Christians. Caldarola's *Uchimura Kanzō to mukyōkai* (1978), for example, is arguably the first work to paint a full portrait of the Non–Church movement, encompassing the establishment of the movement and its relationship with formal churches, in addition to the essence and structure of the movement and the state of the movement today. In this work, Caldarola interprets the relationship between *bushidō* and Christianity as a duality of continuity and discontinuity. Pointing to the examples of Kanzō Uchimura and Danjō Ebina's conversions to Christianity, he argues that these Japanese Christians believed that Christianity represented the perfection of the spirit and true meaning of Confucianism. The *samurai,* whose ethics were rooted in the spirit of Confucianism, were destined to see their moral code destroyed together with the collapse of the feudal system as a result of the Meiji Restoration. But by replacing their feudal masters with a personal god, they preserved their *bushidō* ethos.

Jun'ichirō Kuniya's article "Uchimura Kanzō ni okeru dentō to kindai–ka— Bushidō to Kirisuto–kyō wo chūshin to shite—"(1968 ; *"Tradition and Modernization in [the writings of] Uchimura Kanzō : With a focus on *bushidō* and Christianity") analyzes the relationship between *bushidō* and Christianity in the context of tradition and modernization. Here, Kuniya makes note of Uchimura's likening of *bushidō* to a "small light" and Christianity to a "large light," and interprets Uchimura's perception of *bushidō* as being a path for people to take that is completed by Christianity. Kuniya goes on to note Uchimura's invocation of the virtues of *bushidō* (honesty, bravery, shame, etc.) as corresponding with the words of Paul and the life of Jesus, and concludes that *bushidō* and Christianity are continuous and organically connected, affirming, as a result, Uchimura's own notion of "Christianity grafted upon *bushidō.*" What is particularly noteworthy with regard to the views presented in Kuniya's paper is his criticism of Uchimura's relative ease in accepting this continuity. As a Christian

living in a non–Christian culture, Uchimura undoubtedly had to make a multitude of difficult and existential decisions on a personal level. Nevertheless, at the level of a Japanese national, we find no evidence of Uchimura struggling between his love of the "two J's" (Japan and Jesus). According to Kuniya, Uchimura takes the noetic "light" of *bushidō* and associates it with a form of idealism that transcends reality (Kuniya [1968], p.57). It is in this manner that *bushidō* and Christianity are seen as continuous.

Kuniya also expresses serious doubts about whether *bushidō* can be considered to constitute "Japanese morals." In point of fact, *bushidō* comprised the morals of a small ruling class, and one can go only so far in extrapolating this set of morals to the Japanese people as a whole. Kazō Kitamori, for example, asserts that the systems of ethics among the majority of the average townspeople were based on the type of deep anguish or pain expressed as *tsurasa* in kabuki theatre, views which he builds upon and expounds in *Kami no itami no shingaku* ("*Theology of the Pain of God*"). In any case, there is plenty of room for debate regarding whether *bushidō* is the proper perspective with which to view "Japanese morals" in their totality.

In *Christianity Made in Japan : A Study of Indigenous Movements* (1998), Mullins devotes much attention to Uchimura and the Non–Church movement. In Chapter Four, Mullins puts forth the notion that Uchimura's Christianity are characterized by a "Confucian–oriented *bushidō* tradition" (Mullins [1998], p. 62). Mullins also takes issue with Caldarola's characterization of the Non–Church movement as a Zenlike Christianity" (Caldarola [1979] p. 90) Mullins counters that Uchimura's soteriology is explicitly rooted in faith rather than Zen, and that the core of the Non–Church movement is not meditation but lectures in Biblical teachings and sermons. In Mullins' view, while Uchimura's Non–Church movement originated in Confucian–based *bushidō,* it has elements that are akin to Kamakura Buddhism in its reliance on faith as the source of salvation.

3.2 Modes of indigenization of Christianity

As the founder of the Non–Church movement Uchimura Kanzō himself proclaimed, the movement has, since its inception, Non–Church always been a form of "Christianity grafted upon *bushidō*" (Uchimura [1982], p. 162). Kiyoko Takeda, a prominent authority on the transmission of Christianity in the context of Japanese spiritual culture, classifies the modes of the "indigenization" of Christianity according to the following five categories : submersion, isolation, opposition, "grafting," and apostasy.

The fourth mode, "grafting," is a representation of the position of Japanese Christianity in its Non–Church form. This "grafting" form is, according to Takeda, an attempt to select elements that might prove to be indications of real potential from among values inherent in Japanese spiritual traditions, and to seek to realize with them the truths of Christianity (Takeda [1967], pp. 10 – 11)

Most representative of these values is *bushidō*. Both Uchimura and Nitobe were born to the *samurai* class, and it is not unreasonable to conclude that they understood the relationship between the Christian God and Man through the ethos of *bushidō*.

In spite of the above, Takeda herself places Uchimura's Christianity within the "opposition" mode of indigenization. Though Uchimura's beliefs contain elements of old, traditional Japanese values and norms that are contradictory and incompatible with Christianity, she nevertheless classifies them as an indigenized form of Christianity. If we look at actions that Uchimura took, we see that they were not in opposition to *bushidō,* but rather the church as a system and the missionaries representing it (Uchimura [1980], p. 27, 36).

In Takeda's classification system, the mode that is most distant from the church is the fifth : apostasy. In this conception, apostates are those persons that have left the church because they could not endure the distortion to Christianity as it took root within Japanese spiritual foundations (for example the in-

creasing prominence of Confucian ethics within the church or dominance of family collectives within the church) or those who, despite being labelled apostates, chose to leave groups of other Christians in the hopes of realizing certain values inspired by Christianity. People in this category have not left the Christian faith as such. On the contrary, they can be seen as examples of people who, as a consequence of their pure adherence to the faith, have left the church because they were no longer able to tolerate the "Japanization" of Christianity within the church. To this author, this category represents the same sort of stance as the Non–Church movement, i.e. one that is critical of the secularization of the church. It should be noted that these four categories do not necessarily correspond on a one–to–one basis with individuals. Takeda herself acknowledges that individuals often straddle multiple categories (Takeda [1967], p. 77). She further notes that one can find isolationist, oppositional, and "grafting" tendencies in Uchimura's approach to Christianity. Takeda concludes that, among the different modes of indigenization of Christianity within the cultural and spiritual substrate of Japan, the grafting and opposition modes are desirable.

4. Discussion

Uchimura left the church for what could be described as personal reasons, specifically because of the uproar after his failure to show sufficient reverence in front of an imperial rescript. Following this, he arrived at his own way of furthering the Christian mission, namely the Non–Church movement. In his activities, he strove for a distinctly Japanese form of Christianity : "Christianity grafted upon *bushidō*." The more obvious features of this form of Christianity are the absence of baptisms and other sacraments and the focus on lectures on and discussions of the Bible at gatherings. Uchimura rejected rituals as artifices that ossified the clergy as a privileged class. Furthermore, he believed

that schools and private classes were more conducive to furthering the Christian mission in Japan than churches. We naturally come to the question of why he came to that conclusion. There have been many educators among the ranks of adherents to the Non–Church movement. One recent example is Sukeyoshi Suzuki, who envisioned evangelism in educational institutions rather than churches.

In answering this question, it is useful to look again upon the system of ethics embodied by *bushidō*. One of the virtues in *bushidō* is "duty of loyalty." In this context, "duty of loyalty" means being obedient and swearing fidelity to one's superiors（feudal lords）（Nitobe［1998］, p.145）. Together with benevolence and politeness, this virtue occupies a central role in Confucian morals. In Meiji–era Japanese society, Confucian ethics were reflected in the values of loyalty, obligation, filial piety, and similar values. Mullins notes that Uchimura looked to the "Confucian educational model based on a personal relationship between teacher and disciple"（Mullins［1998］, p.62）According to Mullins, Uchimura felt that churches in their conventional form were not suited to Japanese customs and culture, and instead decided to create organizations along the lines of schools or *juku*（private classes）. There are still, in fact, quite a few examples of Christianity's influence in the field of education. For example, Christian universities and junior colleges in Japan, total 96 out of the 1167 educational institutions nationwide（counting only those schools that belong to the Association of Christian Schools in Japan, the Japan Association of Catholic Universities, or the Japan Federation of Catholic Schools as of 2012）, account for about 8 percent of the total.

Uchimura rejected organizations and rituals, instead placing emphasis on gatherings rooted in personal relationships. The outcome of this stance was the Non–Church movement. Moreover, as noted above, within the movement there was a kind of invisible structure, namely a system of ethics that valued hierarchical personal relationships. This structure was rooted in Confucian morals

and notions of loyalty that also informed *bushidō*. It has been noted that, because there are no observed sacraments mediating prayer between God and worshippers in the Non–Church movement, leaders of study groups often possess certain charismatic qualities（Mullins［1998］, p. 63）.

This brings us to the following question : Did Uchimura consider the formation of a church based on these types of Confucian, internal personal relationships impossible under the church models that existed at the time? To answer this new question, I examine below the issue of how Uchimura viewed the church during the period when he felt abandoned by it, focusing on his own personal circumstances as well as how he saw the church in a more fundamental sense.

As I mentioned above, in *Kirisuto–shinto no nagusame*（"*Consolations of a Christian*"）, Uchimura recalls being maligned and criticized in various ways within his church. The notion, however, that he felt abandoned by his own church merely for these personal reasons almost gives one the impression that he was overly sensitive. His sense of having been maligned was likely affected in no small part by the fact that among those leveling the criticisms were not only learned doctors of theology but also foreign missionaries. The reason is that the criticisms by these people were not just *ad hominem* ; they were rooted in differences in theological views. That is to say, in effect, they made Uchimura aware of issues concerning faith and the nature of the church.

Another source of insight into Uchimura's view of the church can be found in the theological dialogues he had with missionaries in his works on ecclesiology. In these works, he discusses a range of issues, including the nature of church gatherings, the verifiability of the validity of biblical hermeneutics, and the significance of the sacraments. He states, for example, that "The house of the living God is the heart of the believer in which the Holy Spirit resides" （Uchimura［1981］, p.105）, and that "People's faith should build churches, but churches should not build faith" (*ibid.* p. 111). Uchimura felt that a church no

longer premised on faith (i.e. a clergy and church system which performed the sacraments merely as a matter of ceremony) should be "destroyed" by prophets (*ibid.,* p.108). He further took the position that the Christian mission could be advanced without the church. He argued that the Holy Spirit works "not only within the church" (*ibid.,* p.116). Theologically speaking, Uchimura's stance and position are thoroughly in keeping with Luther's "universal priesthood of believers" and reliance on the Bible alone (Saburo Takahashi [1994], p.89).

Constraints of space do not allow for an adequate discussion of the sacraments that Uchimura did not deem necessary for his Christian mission. From the point of view of certain denominations, the symbolic significance of the sacraments should not be treated in an ambiguous manner. The point should at least be made, however, that the objects of criticism by the Non-Church movement are not the sacraments themselves, but the pastors and clergy who perform the rituals merely as a matter of form or ceremony.

Hakari points out that by rejecting the sacraments, the church itself becomes sacramental (Hakari [1989], p.303). For example, the Bible containing the Gospel, tends to draw more emphasis precisely because, and to the extent that, there are no religious symbols present other than the Word itself. Furthermore, in interpreting the Word in the Non-Church movement, *sensei* ("teachers"), namely those more skilled at teaching than other participants, tend to become more charismatic than would a pastor at a conventional church. The "teacher-centrism" mentioned previously is one manifestation of this phenomenon. This is because the medium connecting God with the faith of the participants is what is written in the Bible, and in the Non-Church movement, it is the teachers capable of interpreting those words that hold the key to this medium. Indeed, it has been pointed out that one of the reasons for rejecting the sacraments is that they obscure the Biblical message of salvation through faith and invite dependence upon a separate class, namely the clergy (Saburo

Takahashi〔1994〕, p.83〕; in reality, however, the rejection of the sacraments
leads to the above-mentioned teacher-centrism by which certain persons are
given absolute authority. In this regard, Furuya notes that this characteristic of
Japanese Christianity links it to the *samurai* class (Furuya〔2003〕, pp. 107 –
108).

　　Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the "teachers'" interpretations of
the Bible are valid. This, in fact, was a point about which Uchimura was criti-
cized by a missionary. Uchimura, for his part, harbored doubts about the very
existence of "valid" biblical interpretations. One of the problems that has been
cited about the Non-Church movement is that there are no institutions to edu-
cate people to lead Bible study groups (Mullins〔1998〕, p. 63). The root cause
of this is that the Non-Church movement is without fundamental theological
doctrines. This is likely related to the reliance in *bushidō* tradition on the oral
transmission of teachings from generation to generation. In reality, the number
of Christians who belong to Non-Church movement groups with these charac-
teristics is even smaller.[5]

　　Furuya observes that 25 percent of adherents to the Non-Church move-
ment are Christians who have left a church. He puts forth the argument that as
long as there churches, there will be people dissatisfied with them, hence the
Non-Church movement will continue.

Conclusion

　　The discussion above has enabled us to make the following two observa-
tions. First, in the Non-Church movement, which is a distinctly Japanese form
of Christianity, there are elements present that are deeply rooted in the ethical
system of *bushidō*. Second, the Non-Church movement rejects the holy sacra-
ments, but in their stead puts emphasis on the study of the Bible in groups of
followers, and this a contributing factor to the preference for schools and *juku*–

style private classes over churches.

Nevertheless, the following two questions remain. Can "teachers" replace all aspects of the sacraments? And has the "graft" linking *bushidō* and Christianity been successful? The first question involves an extremely metaphysical issue, namely whether there is a fundamental contradiction inherent in having a real, individual person serve as the medium symbolizing the "essence" of the teachings. It seems that Uchimura thought of the elimination of the symbolic aspects comprising the church and the elimination of a separate class of clergy as being on the same conceptual plane. This line of inquiry further gives rise to the question of whether the teacher–centrism seen in the Non–Church movement has not, by virtue of the movement's elimination of symbols, given rise to a new class system. The second question arises from the fact that it is not precisely clear just what type of Christianity has been grafted upon what type of *bushidō,* As Ienaga argues, Uchimura's *bushidō* may, after all, be nothing more than an "illusion" he projected upon Japan by drawing upon the Puritanism he studied in the West (Bennet [2009], p. 17). If we accept the notion that in Christianity as a religion, the Bible is both an object for intellectual analysis and interpretation as well as a foundation for culture and practice in daily life, then does not the Non–Church movement place too much emphasis on the former?

One thing that is clear from the questions above is that the Non–Church movement offers a counter example useful for thinking about what religion entails in Japan. In its very focus on meetings emphasizing the study of the Bible rather than on church life, the Non–Church movement seems destined to approximate the organizational structure of schools for the purpose of such study.

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Notes

1   On January 9, 1891, during a ceremony held at the main hall of the First Higher
School unveiling an Imperial Rescript on Education, Kanzō Uchimura did not bow
deeply enough to the emperor's signature. Not only was he criticized for this by his
colleagues, but his actions garnered broad public attention. As a consequence of this
incident, Uchimura resigned from teaching in February of the same year.

2   Nambara [1972], p. 89. As "representative men of Japan," Uchimura lists Takamori
Saigō (considered a key architect of Japan), Yōzan Uesugi (a feudal lord), Sontoku Ni-
nomiya (an agricultural leader), Tōju Nakae (a village schoolteacher), and Nichiren (a
Buddhist monk). cf. Takahashi [1986] II, p. 267.

3   *Mononofu* is one of the etymological predecessors of the word *bushi,* meaning a war-
rior. *Mono* on its own is thought to denote weaponry, while the approximate meaning
of *fu* is "master" (Takahashi [1986] I, p. 44). *Mononofu* has a long history of broad us-
age as a native Japanese word. *Takeo* and *masurao* both have meanings denoting a
brave warrior.

4   *Hagakure* is made up of the teachings of the *samurai* of the feudal domain of Na-
beshima, in what is now Saga Prefecture. One of the most famous lines is, "The way of
the *samurai* is found in death. When there is a choice between life and death, there is
only the quick choice of death. It is not very difficult…. (I.2)." cf. Takahashi[1986] II,
p. 203. According to Takahashi, the term *bushidō* in *Hagagure* is limited in meaning in
that it refers not to the way of the *samurai* in general, but only to the way of *samurai*
of Nabeshima (*ibid.* p. 207). *Hagakure* speaks of *bushidō* in its narrowest sense : it ex-
tolls the virtues of absolute loyalty to one's lord, honor in death, and preparedness to
die (Bennett [2009], p. 51).

5   There are statistical data that put the figure at 35,000 in 1982 (Caldarola, *Uchimura
Kanzō kenkyū* ["*Uchimura Kanzō Studies*"], p. 97. cf. Furuya [2003], p. 105.)

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