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HEIRS TOGETHER: CHURCH MEMBER PROFILES OF MENNONITES IN JAPAN AND NORTH AMERICA

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Social scientists have provided us with a substantial body of descriptive, interpretive, and valuative perspectives on various aspects of European and North American Mennonite social and cultural experiences. Materials concerning Mennonites in other cultural contexts, however, are not so readily available. The large quantity of data generated in two "church member profile" projects in North America provides an opportunity to investigate some of the ways in which Mennonites in other cultural settings are similar to and different from North American Mennonites. This paper reports one attempt to draw such a "profile" of Mennonites in Japan. It should contribute to conversations about the meanings of the "internationalization" and "contextualization" of Mennonite "identity."

In addition, the paper extends the "church member profile" of Mennonites in North America conducted by Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder in 1972 and published in 1975 as *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*. That work provided the basis for a number of analyses of the status of Mennonites in North America. In 1982 the Mennonite Brethren in North America revised the 1972 version of the questionnaire and replicated the "church member profile" project. The results of their project were published in *Direction* in 1985. The larger original inter-Mennonite study was revised and administered again in 1989 as the "Church Member Profile II" project, with the findings presented by J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger in 1991 as *The Mennonite Mosaic: Identity and Modernization*. The original 1972 questionnaire and the 1982 revision by the North American Mennonite Brethren provided the basis for a translation and adaptation of the questionnaire, which was administered to selected members of the five Mennonite-related conferences in Japan during the spring of 1986. Because of the recent publication of data from the 1989 "Church Member Profile II" project, it is now possible to report comparisons of the responses of the members of several Mennonite groups in North America (for 1972 and 1989) and Japan (during the spring of 1986).

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Forty years of Mennonite mission and church work in Japan resulted in a total membership in 1986 of approximately 2878 persons, organized in five conferences. The history of Mennonite mission presence in Japan begins with the work of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Osaka in 1949. Mennonite Brethren (MB) missionaries arrived in Japan in 1950 to assume responsibility for further developing the "spiritual" aspects of the MCC work and to establish a Mennonite Brethren conference in Japan. The Mennonite Brethren initially focused their missionary efforts in the Osaka metropolitan area until they expanded their work to the Nagoya area in 1960, again following an MCC relief project. More recently the Mennonite Brethren have further extended their church-planting projects to the Hiroshima and Yokohama areas. In 1986, when this survey was conducted, the Mennonite Brethren conference in Japan consisted of 1515 members in 23 congregations.

General Conference Mennonite (GC) missionaries began work in Japan in 1950. They established a small congregation in Kobe, a port city near Osaka, where the early missionaries attended Japanese language school. More recently, however, GC work has centered primarily in several small cities and towns in the southern, more rural island of Kyushu—although missionaries have worked in the Kobe, Tokyo, and Hiroshima areas as well. During the spring of 1986 the Japanese Mennonite General Conference reported a membership of 722 in 15 congregations.

Mission work of the Mennonite Church (MC) in Japan began in 1949 and has focused primarily on Hokkaido, the most recently developed and still largely rural island in northern Japan, although MC missionaries have served in the Tokyo area also. In 1986 the MC church in Japan reported a membership of 427 in 16 congregations.

Two other Mennonite-related groups in Japan were included in the original design and administration of this study, but the responses from members of these groups will not be reported in this paper. The reasons for their omission appear in the discussion of sampling procedures, appended as Note One. In 1953 the Brethren in Christ (BC) initiated mission work in Japan. Congregations were established in rural Yamaguchi Prefecture in southern Honshu and in the urban areas of Nagoya and Tokyo. In 1986 the BC group reported a membership of 156 in 10 congregations (8 of which are quite small with an average membership of approximately 8 persons). The fifth conference of Mennonite-related groups in Japan is the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches, an association of 58 members in 1986 belonging to five congregations, three of which reported memberships of only three or four persons. The Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches has close relationships

with the Mennonite Church (MC) and Mennonite General Conference (GC); but they are organized and function as an autonomous entity with participation by GC and MC mission personnel. Neither the Mennonite Brethren nor the Brethren in Christ conference is formally associated with the work of the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The many theoretical and methodological limitations of a survey approach to the study of religion will not be reviewed here. Very little direct attention will be given to the many complexities—linguistic and otherwise—involved in adapting a questionnaire that was prepared for a survey of religious and other beliefs and practices in one social situation to a very different cultural context. But one example of the methodological problems is that some of the differences in responses between Japanese and North American Mennonites might simply reflect subtle changes in meanings due to translating questions into Japanese. The questionnaire is replete (in both languages) with vaguely specified response options such as “sometimes” and “often.” We cannot assume that translations of such vague terms will convey the same range of meaning in Japanese that they do in English. The difficulties are even more serious when the translations involve terms for culturally specific experiences such as “conversion,” or complex theological concepts such as “eternal punishment.”

Several steps were taken to alleviate some of the methodological difficulties. The number of items was reduced from nearly 350 in the initial North American church-member profile questionnaire to about 150 in the Japanese version. In deciding which items to exclude and which to incorporate into this study, items which are clearly specific to the North American situation were omitted (e.g., memberships in certain organizations, swearing of oaths in court, opinions about church schools) and several items specific to the Japanese context were added (e.g., attitude toward the emperor, participation in Buddhist ancestral practices, pastoral role in arranging marriages—see Reference Note Two). Items which are more behavioral in nature (e.g., attendance patterns, frequency of Bible reading, financial contributions) were given preference over items concerned with feelings and attitudes (e.g., feeling of closeness to God, doubts about salvation).

Selected items were initially translated into Japanese by Mrs. Sadako Ueda, a member of an MB congregation in the Osaka area. Her draft was reviewed by a designated pastoral contact person from each of the five participating Mennonite conferences in Japan. This initial draft version of the Japanese-language questionnaire was then revised

and pretested with ten members of a Japanese GC congregation and ten members of a Japanese MB congregation (who were then excluded from the sample); and final modifications were made prior to printing and administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaire became a 23-page booklet. (See Note One for a brief discussion of sampling procedures.)

This report presents selected summaries, in percentages, of the responses of the members of three Mennonite traditions in a format which permits comparisons by denomination (MB, MC, GC) across time (1972 and 1989 for North Americans, 1986 for Japanese) and across cultures (North American and Japanese). The tables discussed in the narrative appear as an appendix. In order to provide a broad range of information in a limited space, the tables report only selected responses—only “strongly agree,” for example, rather than all five of the responses along a continuum from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

At least some information is given for approximately 100 of the 150 items in the Japanese questionnaire. Fifteen demographic variables have been omitted from this report, because of the complexities involved in comparing the significance of such apparently “objective” indicators as occupation, income, years of schooling, rural-urban residence, or age at the time of marriage in Japan and North America. The narrative which follows includes some references to items not reported in the tables in the appendix.

Like the North American “Church Member Profiles” upon which it is based, this project began with practical rather than theoretical concerns. It is not guided by a specific theoretical model nor is it designed to test a specific set of hypotheses. The report is intended primarily to provide information for people who have pastoral, ecclesiastical, or missiological interests in the Mennonite experience in Japan. For social scientists, the descriptive generalizations suggested in this report might be read as hypotheses to be tested in future analyses of these and other data, perhaps in interaction with other reports on the 1989 church member profiles project or with other studies of the religious and cultural situation in Japan and North America.

COMMONALITIES: MENNONITES IN NORTH AMERICA AND JAPAN

Church member profile data from North America and Japan indicate that members of the three Mennonite conferences in both cultural settings give responses which are quite similar in a number of areas of belief and practice. In many respects Mennonites in both North America and Japan are conservative people. And in a number of ways they ex-

hibit continuity with certain particularities of the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage that they share.

Mennonites are generally "Anabaptist" in their understandings of entrance into Christian faith. Most reject the necessity of infant baptism (78% or more of the members of each conference—Table III). Most report a personal experience of conversion (more than 70% for each conference in 1989—Table I). While many differences in understandings of the historic peace position of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition are apparent (Table III), it is also true that, in each of the Mennonite conferences both in North America and in Japan, fewer than 10% of the members indicate that if they were confronted with military conscription they would respond by entering regular military service.

Mennonites are generally orthodox in their theological convictions. Six indicators of theological conservatism (labeled "Fundamentalist Beliefs" in the North American reports) are listed in Table IV. More than 75% of respondents in each conference believed that the biblical miracles were "supernatural acts of God which actually happened just as the Bible says they did." Nearly as many also believed that the second coming of Christ will be a real event; that a personal devil exists; and that there is some form of life after death. Mennonites are also biblically literate, with high percentages of the membership in each conference capable of recognizing four biblical persons and events. More than 90% of all members could identify Zaccheus, 76% or more were able to identify Herod, and 70% or more could identify the Apostle Paul's "Macedonian Call." Scores on an item concerning the Garden of Gethsemane were somewhat lower, in the 60-70% range. In each case, respondents selected their answers from a list of four options (meaning that random responses would have yielded 25% correct answers).

Mennonites participate actively in the life of their local congregations and maintain regular personal devotional practices (Table II). More than 80% of the members of each conference reported that they attended worship services "almost weekly" or more frequently than that. More than 90% of the members of each conference reported praying "occasionally" or more frequently, with strong majorities of the members of each conference reporting that they prayed daily. Approximately 60% or more of the members of each conference reported that they engaged in personal Bible study "frequently" (though the percentages who reported personal Bible study daily are somewhat lower, as indicated in Table II). Two-thirds of the members of each group reported that they contributed 5% or more of their income to the church or other charitable causes. Responses also show that more than 75% of

the members of each group reported comfortable relationships within their congregations, and more than half of the members of each conference reported that they gave verbal witness to their faith at least sometimes.

While the Mennonite laity are active practitioners of their Christian faith in both personal piety and congregational participation, they are also generally agreed that a professional pastorate is important in the life of the congregation—a significant departure from earlier Anabaptist beliefs and practices concerning church leadership (Table V). More than 75% of the members of each conference indicated that a full-time pastor is a necessity in the life of the local congregation. At least two-thirds of the members of each group (except the Japanese GC) agreed that a pastor should receive seminary training.

Mennonites are quite conservative in their family ideals and practices (Table VIII). Two-thirds of the members of each conference believed that marriage is “a lifelong commitment to be broken only by death.” Virtually all of the members who did not indicate this as their understanding of marriage conceded that a marriage may be terminated, but only in cases of unfaithfulness and only after the failure of all attempts toward reconciliation. Fewer than 10% of the members of any conference reported that they themselves were separated or divorced. But in spite of this strong commitment to lifelong monogamous faithfulness, fewer than 15% felt that a person who has been divorced and remarried may not be admitted to membership in their congregations. More than 90% of the members of each conference indicated that adultery is “always wrong” and that homosexual acts are also “always wrong.” Most agreed that sexual intercourse prior to marriage is “always wrong.” Fewer than 15% found induced abortions acceptable for reasons of inadequate income, to avoid an undesirable marriage, or to prevent the birth of an unwanted child.

This general pattern of conservatism may also be seen in some political attitudes and practices reported by Mennonites (Table VI). More than 75% of the members of each conference (except the MC in North America) indicated that they vote in most of elections. Some additional differences and changes in political preferences and in attitudes toward participation in political activities will be reported below, but it should be noted here that fewer than one-third of the members of any conference felt that political issues should be addressed in sermons or that the church should actively attempt to influence government policies. Fewer than 15% of the members of any conference felt that a Christian should not join a labor union.

Most members in all Mennonite conferences reflected openness to ecumenical understandings and relationships, with only 6% or fewer members in each conference disagreeing with the statement, "Being a Catholic does not give a person any less favor in God's eyes than being a Protestant." Very few members (5% or fewer) would have preferred less inter-Mennonite cooperation than existed at the time, and 65% or more of the members in each group would have liked to see increased cooperation between Mennonite conferences or even a merger of their denomination with another Mennonite group (Table XI).

The remainder of this report focuses on differences which appear to exist between the several conferences that constitute the Mennonite family of churches in Japan and North America. But these differences occur within the context of a larger consensus which continues to characterize all three Mennonite conferences in both cultural settings. That consensus, some of the components of which have been outlined in this section, reflects a high degree of theological orthodoxy, continuity with at least some of the features of the historic Anabaptist movement, and strong tendencies toward conservative attitudes and practices in family relationships, political participation, and other personal attitudes, behaviors, and relationships.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: JAPANESE AND NORTH AMERICAN MENNONITES

These patterns of belief and practice which Mennonites in North America and Japan hold in common should not prevent us from noting some of the ways that Mennonites in Japan differ from their North American counterparts. The cultural contexts are quite different; so it should come as no surprise that Japanese Mennonites are not clones of the North American conferences which sent the missionaries who initially established Mennonite churches in Japan. Of course some of these apparent differences might actually reflect differences in the meanings of critical English and Japanese terms used in the questionnaire itself (e.g., "conversion experience," "discipline" of church members, "doubt" concerning theological affirmations). Other patterns of differences in the responses of Mennonite church members might be attributed primarily to differences in the Japanese and North American political and cultural contexts (e.g., the decrease in acceptance of abortion in North America and the readiness to affirm issues related to "peace" in Japan). Other differences might be traced to the selection and the programs of specific missionary personnel who left strong imprints upon the Japanese churches. For whatever reasons, Mennonites in Japan do give some responses which differ from those of the sending North American conferences.

Mennonites generally hold an understanding of entrance into Christian faith which includes a personal conversion experience; but Japanese and North Americans apparently experience conversion somewhat differently (Table I). For most North Americans, conversion is a more singular experience (fewer than 10% of the members of any conference reported four or more experiences) while approximately 40% from all Mennonite groups in Japan reported that they had experienced conversion four or more times. More than half of the members of each North American conference reported that their conversions occurred in some kind of public meeting, while conversion is a public event for fewer than one-third of the Mennonites in Japan. Members of the Japanese Mennonite conferences reported an average (mean) age for their conversions (23 years) that is more than ten years higher than the average age of conversions in North America (12 years). Similarly, the mean age for baptism is nearly ten years higher in Japan (24) than in North America (15). For Japanese Mennonites, then, conversion occurs later in life and is a longer and more private process than among North American Mennonites, who tend to experience conversion at an earlier age and in a more fully institutionalized public setting.

Mennonites are generally orthodox in their theology, but Japanese Mennonite responses to several items differed substantially from North American responses (Table IV). Several of these differences were related to beliefs about eschatology and life after death. A striking difference is in responses to the statement, "All persons who die not having accepted Christ as their redeemer and savior will spend eternity in a place of punishment and misery." The three North American conferences showed higher (but declining) levels of agreement with this statement, and the three Japanese conferences each reported lower levels of agreement with this statement than did their North American counterparts. Similarly, the Japanese reported lower rates of agreement with statements concerning the existence of a personal devil, life beyond death, and the reality of the second coming of Christ. In these areas, then, Japanese Mennonites appear to be less "fundamentalistic" than North American Mennonites. And, we might note, it seems that their experiences of conversion to Christian faith are motivated by considerations other than expectations of what might await us beyond death.

In three of five indicators of "Anabaptist Beliefs" (Table III) Japanese Mennonites conform more closely than North American Mennonites to what has been widely acknowledged as the "Anabaptist Vision." Virtually all (96% or more) Japanese Mennonites agreed that a Christian should not participate in war. More than 85% agreed that faithful Christians should expect persecution. And more than two-

thirds of the members in each Japanese conference agreed that "Jesus expects Christians today to follow the pattern which he set in his own life and ministry." North American Mennonites indicated substantially lower levels of agreement with each of these statements. On the other hand, North Americans, are more likely than Japanese Mennonites to support a vision of the church which includes discipline of its members.

In spite of lower levels of commitment to the concept of discipline within the congregation, Japanese Mennonites, like their North American counterparts, are actively involved in personal and corporate religious practices (Table II). They were, in fact, more likely than their North American Mennonite counterparts to indicate that they engaged in personal Bible study "daily" and that they contributed money to the church according to a regular pattern. On the other hand, Japanese Mennonites were more likely to report that they had never personally attempted to lead another individual to faith in Christ, a finding which is consistent with a more pastor-centric notion of church leadership which characterizes Mennonites in Japan. North American Mennonites have become more receptive to increasing the number of women in church leadership, thus moving closer to the more open Japanese positions on this issue (Table V).

We have noted some of the ways in which Mennonites in both cultural settings indicate conservative attitudes and practices concerning family relationships. But Japanese and North American attitudes and values concerning family patterns also differ in several respects (Table VIII). Japanese were even more likely than North Americans to indicate that it is "always wrong" to view movies rated for "adults only." On the other hand, Japanese Mennonites are more open than North Americans to marriages between Christians and non-Christians and to accepting persons who have been divorced and remarried into membership on the basis of profession of faith (rather than a public confession of wrong). Japanese Mennonite attitudes toward abortion under certain circumstances are quite similar to what North American attitudes were in 1972, but the 1989 North American data indicate several changes in the direction of the "pro-life" position. As a result, substantial differences exist at present between Japanese and North American attitudes toward abortion in cases where the health of the mother, a fetal birth defect, or rape is involved. During the time between surveys, North American Mennonites became less likely to agree that it is always wrong to gamble or to drink alcoholic beverages, thus moving closer to the generally more open Japanese position on those issues (Table IX).

Several differences in political attitudes and practices may also be noted. We have already observed that Japanese were far more likely than North Americans to indicate that Christians should not participate in war (Table III). North Americans have also become more likely (Table VII) to agree that the church should actively promote peace; so they are moving closer to the Japanese position on that issue. But Japanese Mennonites were more likely to agree that it is wrong for Christians to own stock in corporations which produce materials for military use and that Christians should refuse to pay the portion of their income taxes which goes for military purposes. Japanese Mennonites were less likely to indicate that they would choose alternative service in response to the draft. Instead, they indicated more often that they would avoid conscription through legal (27%) or even illegal (12%) means.

Between 1972 and 1989 North Americans became more politically conservative and more likely to expect their church to address political issues (Table VI). Japanese Mennonites were less likely than North Americans to identify with the conservative political party in their country and less likely to agree that the church should encourage its members to study political issues, to vote, or to engage in political activity. Japanese Mennonites were also less likely than North Americans to agree that it is proper for the minister to address political issues in sermons. They were more likely than North Americans to agree that Christians may participate in peaceful demonstrations.

With respect to Mennonite identity (Table XI), Japanese Mennonites were less likely than North Americans to feel that it is important to retain "Mennonite" in church names or to oppose union between their denomination and another, non-Mennonite group. On the other hand, they were more likely to agree that the teachings of their denomination "more accurately reflect the Word of God than the teachings of any other denomination."

One of the issues which must be addressed by the members of a specifically religious community in every cultural context is how they will relate to other religious traditions within their socio-cultural environment. For Mennonites in Japan, this means decisions concerning various aspects of the Shinto and Buddhist religious traditions. Japanese Mennonites have adopted various positions concerning Shinto and Buddhist practices (Table X). Shinto is the indigenous Japanese folk tradition which provides ritual means for the celebration of the deities (*kami*). The *kami* are specially present in household (*kamidana*), neighborhood (*jinja*), national (*jingu*), and other altars and shrines. Mennonites in Japan do not hold uniform opinions concern-

ing the acceptability of issues such as the presence of a household altar (*kamidana*) in the household in which a member resides; participation in local shrine festivals (*matsuri*); visits (*mairi*) to Shinto shrines; or use of the Shintoistic rope and paper decoration (*shimenawa*) which is customary during the New Year celebration. Japanese Mennonites were not united in their response to the statement, "There is no problem with attending a [Shinto] festival as a spectator since it is more of a custom than a religious event."

Since early in the Tokugawa era, Japanese Buddhism has been closely associated with the household unit. Christianity and many of the "New Religions" are generally viewed as personal faiths for the individual. Shinto is practiced with the household, community, and nation as the central religious units. But Buddhism has become widely recognized as the custodian of rituals of death, funerals, and memorials for the ancestors ("funeral Buddhism"). The household or lineage (*ie*) carries these religious observances. Even today, most Japanese households who have lost a member to death will contain a Buddhist altar (*butsudan*), a primary function of which is to memorialize the departed. Japanese Mennonites hold different positions concerning the presence of these Buddhist memorial altars within their households. Positions differ widely on whether it is acceptable for members to participate in funerals conducted according to Buddhist rites; whether members may sponsor Buddhist memorial rituals (*hoji*) in honor of deceased relatives; whether members may participate in the summer festival (*bon*), which, according to Buddhist tradition, celebrates the return visits of the spirits of ancestors of kin and community; or whether it is acceptable for members to celebrate the summer star festival (*tanabata*), which has more remote associations with the Buddhist tradition.

In sum, then, Japanese Mennonites differ from North American ones in the stage of life and the process by which they enter Christian faith. They are more dedicated in their commitments to and personal involvement in several activities within the life of the church. They understand Christian faith to include a commitment to follow the example of Jesus, and they expect that this commitment may result in persecution. They are more likely than North Americans to advocate pacifist positions on several issues. But Japanese Mennonites are less likely to give categorical answers in matters related to eschatology and life after death. They are less likely to include discipline of members in their concept of the church, they are more likely to accept marriage with non-Christians, and they more readily accept into membership persons who have been divorced and remarried.

Japanese Mennonites appear also to see fewer direct linkages between their religious beliefs and practices and the history of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement. This is true even though they express stronger identification with many of the distinctives of that spiritual tradition than do North American Mennonites.

North American Mennonites reflect a growing identification with conservative political positions and accept a more active political role for the church. An increasingly restrictive view of abortion on the part of North American Mennonites might be related to this tendency to identify with the agenda of political conservatism. Japanese Mennonite conferences differ in their attitudes toward Shinto and Buddhist practices.

DENOMINATIONAL DISTINCTIVES: MENNONITE CONFERENCES IN JAPAN

Thus far this article has suggested several characteristics which Mennonites in North America and Japan seem to share, and some areas in which the two sets of Mennonites appear to differ. But survey responses also indicate differences among the three Mennonite conferences within Japan. The members of each of the Japanese Mennonite conferences exhibited characteristics which make them different from each of the other Japanese conferences. In some of these differences the Japanese conference reflected continuity with the sending North American conference. But each of the Japanese conferences also had its own characteristics, differing from both the sending conference and from the other Mennonite groups in Japan. Some of these particularities are described in the comments which follow.

Mennonite Brethren in Japan

Like their North American counterparts, Japanese MBs expressed stronger adherence to several theological beliefs which are generally associated with the Protestant Fundamentalist movement than did members of the other Japanese conferences. This is true even though the degree of confidence with which they expressed those convictions differed substantially from the responses given in North America (Table IV). Japanese Mennonite Brethren were more likely than other Japanese Mennonites (but less likely than North American MBs) to believe "definitely" that the unsaved will suffer eternal damnation; that there is life after death; that the second coming of Christ will be a real event; and that Satan is real and active in the world. They were more likely than members of any other conference, Japanese or North American, to believe that the earth was created in six 24-hour days. And they were far more likely than other Japanese Mennonites to iden-

tify with a specific eschatological position, i.e., "Jesus will return with his church after a seven year period of tribulation on earth to rule for a 1000 year 'millennium'").

A number of indicators suggest that Mennonite Brethren both in Japan and in North America are strongly committed to distinct boundaries between the church and the world. MBs were more clearly committed to religious endogamy than were the members of the other Mennonite conferences (Table VIII). Japanese MBs were not as likely as North American ones to agree that it is "always wrong" to marry a non-Christian, but they were far more likely than other Japanese Mennonites to indicate the importance of marrying within the faith. The number of Mennonite Brethren who indicated they would "always disapprove" of the marriage of a church member to an adherent of another religion, a disinterested or understanding non-Christian, or even a Roman Catholic Christian was consistently higher than the responses of the members of the other Japanese Mennonite conferences. This pattern of greater commitment to religious endogamy is reflected, also, in the expectation generally shared among Japanese Mennonite Brethren that the pastor should play a role in the selection of marital partners (Table V). Japanese Mennonite Brethren were also less likely than the other Japanese Mennonites to agree that women should play a stronger leadership role in their churches (Table V).

Japanese Mennonite Brethren were stronger in their commitments to several expressions of a peace position than were North American MBs; but as with their American counterparts, these commitments were weaker than those of the other Mennonite conferences in their region (Table VII). Japanese Mennonite Brethren were more likely than their North American counterparts, but less likely than their Japanese Mennonite compatriots, to agree that members should not own stock in a company which produces war goods; that the church should actively promote peace; that capital punishment is unnecessary; and that members should not pay the military portions of their income taxes. Japanese Mennonite Brethren were less likely than any other Mennonite group to indicate that they would select an alternative service option if confronted with military conscription.

The Japanese Mennonite Brethren differed substantially from both the other Japanese Mennonite groups and the North American Mennonite Brethren in their understandings of the church's role in political matters (Table VI). They were less likely than other Mennonite groups to agree that the church should encourage political activity; that political issues should be studied in church; or that political issues should be discussed in sermons. They were less likely than the other Japanese

Mennonites (but similar to North American Mennonites in 1972) to agree that a church member should participate in a peaceful demonstration. And they were less likely than other Japanese Mennonites to agree that their church should cooperate with other organizations in opposition to government support for the Yasukuni Shrine. Like Mennonite Brethren in North America, Japanese MBs were more likely than other Mennonite groups in Japan to support the conservative political party in their country.

Also with respect to matters of personal ethics, the Mennonite Brethren in Japan tended to differ from the other Japanese Mennonite conferences (Table IX). They were more likely to indicate that it is always wrong to smoke tobacco, gamble, or drink alcohol. Their position on each of these issues was very close to the present (and increasingly open) attitude of Mennonite Brethren in North America. The Japanese Mennonite Brethren were more likely than the members of any of the other Mennonite groups to indicate that it is always wrong to view adult-only movies (Table VIII).

Mennonite Brethren maintain greater distance than the other Mennonite groups in Japan from several (but not all) practices associated with Japanese Buddhism and Shinto (Table X). The Mennonite Brethren were more likely to agree that it is always wrong for church members to have a Buddhist ancestral altar or a Shinto altar in one's home; to sponsor a Buddhist memorial service; or even to participate in a Buddhist funeral. With members of the Mennonite Church (MC), the Japanese Mennonite Brethren also generally disapproved of visits to or attendance at Shinto shrines or festivals and to the use of the *shime-nawa*, New Year's rope decoration with Shinto connotations.

This pattern of stronger resistance to certain of the institutional practices of the surrounding society continues in the area of economics. The Mennonite Brethren were more likely than members of the other Japanese conferences to agree that a Christian should not accept employment which would regularly require work on Sunday. And they were more likely to indicate that their giving to the church and other charitable causes followed a regular pattern.

While the Mennonite Brethren in North America scored higher than the members of any of the other North American Mennonite conferences on a series of items related to Bible knowledge, this pattern of proficiency in Bible knowledge is not apparent among the Japanese Mennonite Brethren. In only one of four items concerning biblical knowledge do Japanese Mennonites appear to differ by conference. Fewer MB (69%) than GC (82%) or MC (80%) members were able to identify the "Macedonian Call." The Mennonite Brethren were like MC members in

their ability to identify Menno Simons (50%) and Ulrich Zwingli (59%). Fewer Mennonite Brethren than members of the other Japanese conferences were able to identify (from a list of four options) Michael Sattler (41%) or Uchimura Kanzo (75%) or Uemura Masahisa (37%), the latter two having been important leaders of Meiji-era Protestantism in Japan.

The Japanese Mennonite Brethren were more likely than the members of any other Mennonite group to agree that Christians are to follow the example set by Jesus (Table III) and that the teachings of their denomination "reflect more accurately the Word of God than the teachings of any other denomination" (Table XI). They were more likely than other Japanese Mennonites, but less likely than North American Mennonite Brethren, to agree that the church should discipline its members (Table III).

In general, then, the Mennonite Brethren in Japan are distinctive from other Mennonite groups in Japan in professing clear and strongly held theological convictions which are both "Anabaptist" and "fundamentalist." They expect strong, male-centered pastoral leadership, and they maintain a clear sense of boundaries between the church and the familial, political, and other religious institutions of the surrounding society. They were more likely than other Japanese Mennonite groups to agree that church members should marry within the Christian faith and that the church should discipline its members to maintain a conservative lifestyle, in matters both of personal ethics and of political involvement. Japanese Mennonite Brethren are more likely than other Japanese Mennonites to encourage non-participation in a number of the activities associated with Japanese Buddhism and Shinto. In many but not all of these tendencies, the Japanese Mennonite Brethren reflect the position of North American Mennonite Brethren within the larger community of churches associated with the Anabaptist heritage.

In many respects, the distinctives of the Mennonite Brethren conference in Japan approximate the ideals of Harold S. Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" of the church. But the Japanese Mennonite Brethren appear to hold these convictions without a strong sense of continuity with the Anabaptist movement, being less informed about Menno and Sattler than were members of the other Japanese conferences. And they were less likely than any other Mennonite conference to agree that it is important to maintain the name of Menno in designating their church or conference.

Mennonite Church in Japan

The members of the Mennonite Church (MC) in Japan differ in several respects from the other Mennonite conferences in Japan but, unlike with the MB, few of the differences seem to reflect the particularities of the Mennonite Church in North America. MC Japanese were less likely than members of the other Japanese Mennonite groups to report that they engaged in personal Bible study or daily prayer (Table II). Apparently they were more self-consciously Mennonite than were other Japanese Mennonites. At least they were more able to identify Menno Simons and Michael Sattler; they were more supportive of the use of "Mennonite" in naming churches and churchly organizations (Table XI); they were more likely to report that they would choose to enter alternative service if confronted with military conscription; and they were more generally opposed to payment of the military portion of their taxes (Table VIII).

Members of the Japanese MC church, on the other hand, gave several indications of less clear boundaries between themselves and the "world" around them. They were less likely than the members of the other Mennonite groups in Japan to feel that the teachings of their denomination are more faithful to the teachings of God's Word than are those of other denominations (Table XI). They were less likely to respond that smoking tobacco (Table IX) and viewing adult-only movies are "always wrong" (Table VIII). They were more likely than other Japanese Mennonites to respond that divorced and remarried persons may be admitted to church membership upon their profession of faith in Christ rather than requiring, also, a specific confession of sin (Table VIII). They were less likely to indicate that participating in the *bon* festival and sponsoring *hoji* (Buddhistic death memorials) are "always wrong" (Table X). They were less likely than other Japanese Mennonites to indicate that they support the (conservative) Liberal Democratic Party and also were less likely to support positive feelings toward the emperor. MC Japanese were like North American MC members in indicating that alternative service is their preferred response to a military draft. They were like Canadian MC members in indicating low support for the conservative party in their country (Table VI). The members of the MC church in Japan were less likely than the members of any other Mennonite group to agree that the church should discipline its members (Table III). In many of these responses the members of the Japanese Mennonite Church differ both from the other Mennonite groups in Japan and from the Mennonite Church in North America.

Mennonite General Conference in Japan

General Conference Mennonites (GC) in Japan also differ in several respects from the other Japanese Mennonites. They reported older ages for conversion and baptism (Table I). They indicated a stronger sense of lay leadership in the church, with fewer responses indicating that a full-time pastor with seminary training is necessary or that the pastor is primarily responsible for sermons (Table V). In several areas Japanese GC Mennonites drew a less sharp boundary between the church and the world. They expressed less opposition to participation in the *bon* festival, and they were more open to attending or visiting Shinto shrines (which they view as having more to do with cultural tradition than with religious faith); to using the traditional but Shinto-related *shimenawa* rope decoration during the New Year season; and to participating in the *tanabata* festival (Table X). They also were more willing than other Japanese Mennonites to contemplate abortion under certain conditions (Table VIII). And the Japanese GC Mennonites were more open to a political role for the church, with more members indicating that the church may encourage its members to vote; that it is appropriate for members to participate in peaceful demonstrations; and that the church should cooperate with other groups in opposing government support for the Yasukuni Shrine (Table VI). They were less likely than the members of any other Mennonite conference to indicate that they believed "definitely" in the existence of a personal devil (Table IV). Like the Japanese MB but unlike the Japanese MC, Japanese GC Mennonites appear to differ from the other Japanese conferences in the direction of the sending North American denomination.

CONCLUSIONS

Mennonites in North America and Japan share numerous characteristics, but the conferences in Japan are not simply clones of their parent denominations. The diversity which has been part of the Anabaptist movement since its origins is as apparent among the Japanese Mennonites as it has been elsewhere. And this diversity is compounded by the missionary transmission of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith across the great cultural divide which separates Japanese from North Americans of European origin.

Some of the features which Mennonites in Japan and in North America appear to share as "heirs together" of a common faith-tradition are a conversionist understanding of entrance into Christian faith; a strong commitment to both personal piety and active participation in the life of a congregation; a biblically informed and generally orthodox theology; a conservative view of family and personal ethics; and a strong

sense of boundary between church and world. Many of these qualities are part of what has been celebrated as the "Anabaptist Vision." But we might reasonably wonder about the sources of these faith commitments to which Mennonites give common assent. Since scarcely more than one-half of the Mennonites in Japan were able to identify Menno Simons or Michael Sattler, it seems doubtful that the Mennonite story itself has served as a vehicle for the transmission of this form of Christian faith to them. We might hypothesize, rather, that the strong sense of conversion, religious commitment, and boundary between church and world which characterizes Mennonites in Japan originates in their experience as first-generation converts. Perhaps it is this first-generation religious experience which gives rise to the "Anabaptist Vision," whether that be in sixteenth-century Europe or in twentieth-century Japan. The dilemma with which the church must continue to struggle in every historical and cultural context is how to express this radical form of Christian faith in institutional forms which will enable its perpetuation and transmission both to succeeding generations and to persons yet outside the faith.

Since in every context cultures provide the institutional forms in which faith is expressed, it should come as no surprise to note that Mennonites in Japan and North America differ from each other in significant ways. In part, at least, the world-views of Mennonites in North America reflect the social and cultural location within the middle-class, small-town, and recently urbanizing niche which North American Mennonites generally occupy. The predominantly conservative world-views reflect this social and cultural location. Similarly, some of the ways in which Mennonites in Japan differ from their North American counterparts may be rooted in Japanese cultural assumptions. Japanese generally profess a stronger commitment to peace than do Americans. Japanese are generally more comfortable with stronger and more centralized and hierarchical leadership than are North Americans. Abortion has not become the divisive moral-political issue in Japan that it is in the United States. Japanese have not generally been as categorical and exclusivistic in their religiosity. For Japanese Mennonites, conversion is a more gradual and private process than for North American Mennonites. And traditional understandings of the afterlife (and hell in particular) seem difficult for Japanese to accept; they seem to be increasingly difficult for North Americans also. In fact, one of the many intriguing topics to which these data might contribute is the issue of the relationship between conversion and fear of eternal damnation. Virtually every Japanese Mennonite respondent professed a personal experience of conversion, but only a few more than one-third believed "definitely" that "All persons who die not having accepted Christ as

their redeemer and savior will spend eternity in a place of punishment and misery." Those facts suggest that the role that fear of hell plays in the complex motivations for conversion certainly merits continued theological as well as cultural and psychological investigation.

Mennonites in Japan differ from the sending North American conferences in ways which often appear to reflect their shared cultural background; but Japanese Mennonites also differ from each other, in ways which cannot be explained simply by the fact of their common culture. The Mennonite Brethren differ in numerous respects from the members of the other Japanese Mennonite conferences. In most, but not all, of these differences, they reflect the position of the Mennonite Brethren in North America. Like North American MBs, Japanese Mennonite Brethren tend to be more fundamentalistic in their theology; more hierarchical in their ecclesiology; more separatist in their view of relationships between the church and world; more reserved in their attitudes concerning family relationships and personal ethics; more conservative in their politics; and less committed to their Mennonite heritage than are members of the other Mennonite conferences in Japan. In some respects the Japanese Mennonite Brethren differ not only from their Japanese compatriots but from the North American Mennonite Brethren as well. Most of these differences are in this same fundamentalistic, separatist direction.

If the Japanese Mennonite Brethren differ from their fellow Japanese Mennonites in a direction that makes them more like the sending North American conference, the members of the Japanese Mennonite Church (MC) differ most substantially from their sending conference. The members of the Japanese MC church are less pious, less committed to a disciplined church, less politically conservative, and less reserved in their personal ethics than either their Japanese Mennonite compatriots or the members of the North American sending conference.

The members of the Japanese General Conference display fewer points of particularity than do either the Japanese MB or the Japanese MC churches. Like the Mennonite Brethren, Japanese GCs seem to differ from the other Japanese groups in the direction of the sending denomination. They are less fundamentalistic, more politically engaged, more open to abortion, and less opposed to participation in cultural activities linked with Japanese religious traditions. They appear to differ from all other Mennonite groups in their openness to lay leadership within the congregation.

Other studies will be required to sort out the elements which have given rise to the commonalities that the groups share as well as the particularities which distinguish each of the Mennonite conferences in

Japan and North America. No doubt these elements arise from the dynamics of the religious continuities, linkages with other cultural and religious movements (evangelical and other), and autonomous Mennonite conference decision-making. While the future remains open for each of the Mennonite conferences—North American as well as Japanese—to decide for themselves, nothing about these present profiles sets any of these groups decisively apart from others or from the larger Anabaptist-Mennonite family of churches. We need appropriate national and international structures which express both the commonalities and the differences within the Anabaptist-Mennonite family of churches.

APPENDIX
MENNONITES IN JAPAN AND NORTH AMERICA:
SELECTED TABLES

The Tables which follow have grouped responses by denomination (Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite) with three columns of information for each conference: 1972 and 1989 responses for North Americans and 1986 responses for Mennonites in Japan. Numbers in the Tables are percentages of respondents giving the answer which is indicated. Consult previously published "church member profile" materials for complete statements as they appeared in the questionnaires. For a Japanese-language version of the questionnaire contact the author.

Table I. CONVERSION AND BAPTISM

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86
1. Personal conversion experience: Yes.	93	95	97	81	82	93	65	71	96
2. Four or more conversion experiences.	5	4	40	10	4	45	11	5	39
3. Age of conversion (mean)	13	12	22	13	13	12	14	14	27
4. Age of baptism (mean)	16	16	23	14	14	23	16	17	29
5. Conversion occurred in public meeting	56		26	72		32	55		23

Table II. PERSONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86
1. Attend worship (almost weekly)	97	96	91	94	92	84	86	88	82
2. Personal prayer (daily)	82	84	83	78	77	63	73	75	73
3. Personal Bible study (daily)	42	36	50	30	26	36	28	27	56
4. Small-group Bible study (weekly or more)	55	41	41	44	33	40	39	33	37
5. Contribute 5% or more	79	82	75	66	75	70	63	69	65
6. Witness to others sometimes, very often	69	69	64	68	62	53	60	62	60
7. Tried to lead someone to faith in Christ (never)	13	13	54	8	10	47	9	9	51

Table III. ANABAPTIST BELIEFS

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA	NA	JA	NA	NA	JA	NA	NA	JA
	1972	'89	'86	1972	'89	'86	1972	'89	'86
1. Infant baptism not necessary	86	89	81	86	84	78	75	81	78
2. Christians should take no part in war	54	56	99	87	78	98	66	65	96
3. Christians should follow pattern set by Jesus' life and ministry	51	45	82	56	45	67	48	49	72
4. Church should discipline members	76	78	56	58	55	36	54	55	46
5. Christians should expect persecution	76	75	89	70	63	86	71	62	88

Table IV. ORTHODOX BELIEFS

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA	NA	JA	NA	NA	JA	NA	NA	JA
	1972	'89	'86	1972	'89	'86	1972	'89	'86
1. Miracles are supernatural acts	95	96	92	92	90	92	81	87	76
2. Existence of personal devil	97	97	89	95	89	81	86	85	67
3. Second coming of Christ real	97	97	89	91	89	69	83	84	69
Post-tribulation millenium			55			9			14
4. Life after death	97	97	83	93	91	70	87	91	68
5. Eternal punishment for unsaved	85	78	55	77	60	21	60	52	27
6. Creation in six 24-hour days	54	44	62	53	47	44	43	43	46

Table V. CHURCH LEADERSHIP

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA	NA	JA	NA	NA	JA	NA	NA	JA
	1972	'89	'86	1972	'89	'86	1972	'89	'86
1. Full time pastor necessary	88		98	89		96	77		84
2. Seminary-trained pastor desirable	75	85	91	48	67	86	68	83	55
3. Pastor responsible for sermon			73			66			37
4. Expect pastor to help arrange marriage for members			80			58			59
5. More women in leadership	26	53	58	29	50	77	40	58	79
6. Ordain women: Yes	12	27		12	45		30	59	
No	69	49		67	43		41	23	

Table VI. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86
1. Voted in most elections	70	85	79	20	45	88	76	84	88
2. Church should encourage members to vote	94		67	47		64	92		79
3. Church should study political issues	82	89	32	52	69	60	82	89	56
4. Church should encourage political activity	38	67	5	19	43	10	48	62	17
5. Minister should discuss political issues in sermons	13	29	8	13	25	26	23	31	20
6. Members may participate in political demonstrations	24		28	22		46	34		55
7. Attitude toward Japanese emperor: Respect			29			16			36
No feelings			56			55			40
8. Church should cooperate with groups opposed to Yasukuni Shrine			22			46			55
9. Support for conservative party—									
Japan: Liberal Democrat Party			51			14			33
Canada: Progressive Conservative	33	58		20	23		34	47	
U.S.: Republican conservatives	52	68		29	40		36	42	

Table VII. CONCERNING PEACE

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86
1. Church should promote peace	47	53	62	54	68	71	65	74	69
2. Select alternative service if drafted	48	50	20	86	73	42	62	59	31
3. Should not own stock in military industry	29	36	64	55	51	79	39	45	83
4. Should not pay military tax	7	9	27	12	11	57	15	15	46
5. Capital punishment not needed	17		37	46		55	50		55
Government should provide death penalty			48			27			29

Table VIII. FAMILY

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86
1. Marriage is a life-long commitment	84	81	74	78	71	74	69	64	69
2. Premarital sex is always wrong	92	91	89	85	84	80	79	78	85
3. Adultery is always wrong	86	97	97	86	97	94	86	96	98
4. Wrong to marry non-Christian	66		51	44		10	27		10
5. Wrong to marry adherent of another religion			79			49			42
6. Wrong to marry Roman Catholic			38			5			8
7. Accept as members persons who are divorced and remarried:									
If confess wrongs	46	52	24	38	43	14	36	38	24
If profess faith in Christ	18	20	63	14	19	71	35	30	62
8. Abortion acceptable if:									
Mother's health in danger	74	57	74	67	53	77	81	68	89
Fetal birth defect	47	16	46	43	21	44	58	33	54
Pregnancy due to rape	46	24	43	41	30	35	56	40	54
9. Wrong to view adult movies	55	44	78	54	49	51	33	42	67

Table IX. PERSONAL MORALITY

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86
1. Always wrong to smoke tobacco	76	72	74	66	72	39	50	60	58
2. Always wrong to gamble	74	56	63	80	65	47	66	55	51
3. Always wrong to drink alcohol	51	37	36	56	50	19	35	31	20

Table X. BUDDHIST AND SHINTO PRACTICES (JAPAN ONLY)

	MB '86	MC '86	GC '86
1. Never have Buddhist or Shinto altar in home	82	62	61
2. Never participate in Buddhist funeral	60	25	39
3. Never sponsor <i>hoji</i> memorial rite	74	55	62
4. Never participate in <i>bon</i> festival	39	34	24
5. Never attend Shinto festival	64	66	51
6. Never visit Shinto shrine	85	84	72
7. Never use <i>shimenawa</i> rope	82	86	55
8. Never participate in <i>tanabata</i> festival	38	30	22
9. Shinto shrine festival is "cultural," not "religious"	43	40	50

Table XI. MENNONITE IDENTITY

	MB			MC			GC		
	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86	NA 1972	NA '89	JA '86
1. My denomination is more faithful than others	32	23	49	32	28	29	21	17	42
2. No previous membership in other denomination	80	68	78	89	80	75	84	78	70
3. Should retain "Mennonite" in church name		67	51		78	68		80	59
4. Should increase cooperation with other Mennonite groups	49	51	49	53	44	55	52	46	52
Should merge with other Mennonite group	14	14	20	15	20	23	26	26	24
Support stronger Mennonite ties: Total	63	64	69	68	64	78	78	72	76
5. Both parents Mennonite	75	61		82	72		77	70	
Mother Mennonite			10			10			14
Mother other Christian			6			3			5
Father Mennonite			7			6			11
Father other Christian			3			1			3
6. Identify Menno Simons			50			62			51
7. Identify Michael Sattler			41			71			61

Note One: Sampling Procedures

Because of limitations in time and financial resources, sampling procedures differed for each of the five Mennonite-related conferences in Japan. With the Japanese Mennonite Brethren, a two-stage process similar to that employed in the North American profiles was used. First, twelve of the twenty-three congregations of the conference were randomly selected. One of these twelve congregations decided not to participate, but too late for a replacement to be selected. Twenty persons from each of the remaining eleven congregations were then randomly selected from congregational membership lists, resulting in a sample of 220 Mennonite Brethren. In the absence of resources for an alternative arrangement, pastors were asked to assume responsibility for administering and returning the questionnaires. Anecdotal reports indicate that procedures for administration varied from formal meetings following the Sunday morning worship service to casual distribution to individual members. 184 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 84% for the Japanese Mennonite Brethren.

Sampling and administration of the questionnaires were even less carefully controlled for the Japanese Mennonite Church (MC) and Japanese General Conference Mennonites (GC). A simple procedure for obtaining a random sample of approximately 50% of the members of each of these conferences was suggested but congregations and individual members were actually selected by pastoral contact persons without careful controls. This almost certainly resulted in biases in the direction of what one conference contact person termed the "good and faithful" members who tended to be present and conveniently available to the pastors who distributed the questionnaire. 127 of the 200 questionnaires which were distributed to pastors of the MC church were returned, a response rate of 64% (assuming that all of the questionnaires were actually passed on to members). 99 of the 200 questionnaires distributed to GC pastors were returned, a response rate of just under 50% (assuming, again, that all questionnaires were given by pastors to members). So we cannot assume that the Japanese responses are representative of the total membership with the same degree of confidence that we may have about the more carefully controlled North American data.

Pastoral contact persons were asked to distribute questionnaires to the entire membership of the ten Brethren in Christ congregations (156 members) and the five congregations of the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches (58 members). The 55 responses from members of the Brethren in Christ churches and the 33 responses from members of the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches are not included in

this report because the numbers are quite small and the sampling procedures were not controlled carefully enough to provide even the limited degree of confidence concerning the representative quality of the responses which is possible with the three larger groups.

Note Two: Concerning Japanese Terms Used in this Paper

The *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha Publishing Co., 1983) is a generally accessible source of introductory information concerning the Japanese social, cultural, and religious institutions and practices to which references are made in this paper.

Note Three: Concerning Japanese Religious Traditions

Further information on the generalizations made in this discussion of Japanese religious traditions may be found in Morioka or other analyses of religion in Japan.

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