

DISCUSSIONS

CHURCH AND MISSION IN JAPAN

IN the October number of this Review Dr. Arthur J. Brown well set forth the gravity of this problem and powerfully defended the Presbyterian solution sometimes called 'co-operation by definition.' Good reasons were given for regarding this as the best solution for the Presbyterian and Reformed missions, but other missions have found other solutions at least equally satisfactory to themselves, and as a contribution towards the science (or art) of missions that of the American Board's Mission is here presented, not in the least in antagonism to Dr. Brown's article but to give a fuller statement of our policy than he has done. He has indeed given the substance of it in the quoted words 'we have nothing to do with each other in doctrine, in polity or in dollars,' but these words taken alone may give an altogether mistaken idea of our policy.

'We have nothing to do with each other in doctrine or in polity'—that is, the Kumiai Churches (the Congregational Churches of Japan) are entirely self-governing, the mission having no shadow of authority over them, though as a matter of fact the doctrines and polity of these Churches are substantially the same as those of the Congregational Churches of America. 'We have nothing to do with each other in dollars'—it is true that a few missionaries have become members of Kumiai Churches and as such make contributions to those churches and have occasionally been sent as delegates to the general conference; also not a few are associate members of Kumiai Churches and as such make some contribution to them, but the American Board and its mission, as a board or a mission, make no grant or subsidy to the Kumiai Churches for any part of their work. As a body the Kumiai Churches are entirely self-sustaining as well as self-governing, supporting their own dependent churches and carrying on their own missionary work both in Japan and in Korea and China. On the other hand they have no control whatever over the work of the mission or of any station or individual member

of the mission. If a station finds a good place for opening new evangelistic work, and has means for improving the opportunity, it does so without asking the permission of any Japanese committee or board or superintendent, and carries on the work with no sort of responsibility to any Japanese authority. Likewise the mission carries on its kindergartens, kindergarten training school, etc., independently of any Japanese superintendence, and if it has put its college for young women under a board of managers which contains some Japanese members they are elected not by any Japanese body but by the Women's Board in Chicago on nomination by the mission. (The Doshisha is under the control neither of the American Board nor of the Kumiai Churches, but has its own funds and its own trustees who have no relation except as individuals to the Kumiai Churches.)

Nevertheless we claim and believe that this policy is not one of 'separation,' but is a form of true 'co-operation' (and a very good form too), not indeed 'co-operation by definition' nor any other kind of official co-operation, but such as may truly be called unofficial or fraternal or friendly co-operation.

First and foremost, the mission and the Kumiai Churches recognize and esteem each other as fellow-workers for one common purpose, working together not only in general for the spreading and establishing of Christianity in Japan, but also specifically for the planting of what are known in English as Congregational Churches. By the standing rules of the mission and the Kumiai Churches, pastors and evangelists are invited to attend the former's annual meeting as corresponding members, and the missionaries are invited to hold the same relation to the local and general conferences of the latter. We frequently, as individuals, have occasion to confer with Kumiai pastors, and should not think of entering upon important new work without getting the (unofficial) advice of the pastors most likely to be able to give it, which counsel is always gladly given as from one Christian brother to another. These consultations relate to such questions as where work may best be opened and what workers may best be sent there. We find them effective and profitable though unofficial; they are friendly and fraternal, and we cannot admit that our work is 'divorced' or 'separated' in fact from that of the Kumiai Churches although it is independent of their supervision.

Secondly, the pastors of the mission-aided churches are associate

members of the Annual Conference of the Kumiai Churches, welcomed as brethren to all its meetings and share fully in all privileges except that of voting. The statistics of these churches, with the names of their pastors and of all the members of the mission, are printed in full in an appendix to the Year Book of the Kumiai Churches (according to its last issue there are 103 Kumiai Churches and 31 mission-aided churches); and as fast as they become self-supporting they become full members of the Kumiai body. The following may be taken as typical. This station, having discovered within its field a promising opening for evangelistic work which none of the churches was able to occupy, sent a theological student to open work there. As a result of some months' work a dozen or so people are asking for baptism. A missionary and an assistant pastor of one of the city churches go to-day to examine and baptize them. From the beginning they assume a part of the expense of the work, and more as fast as they are able, and as soon as they become numerous enough to warrant it they will be organized as a mission-aided church. Thereafter the station will aid them in the finding and supporting of a pastor, sending its grant in aid not to the pastor but to the church, with the hope and expectation that within a few years they will become entirely self-supporting and then will become full members of the Kumiai body and will cease to have any formal relations with the station. Meanwhile they will be a mission-aided church associated with the Kumiai body.

Four years and more ago Dr. Brown found the mission 'happy' in this policy, and it is safe to say that the mission is no less happy in it to-day, and that no one of us wishes to change it. It seems to us desirable that a body of churches which calls itself self-supporting should be so in reality and should not include as part of its work that which is done with foreign money. Also it has been our experience that it is easier to maintain entirely cordial and harmonious relations with our Japanese brethren on this plan than on any other. So, while other missions may find other plans better suited to their circumstances or their polity, we rejoice in this as being for us the very best, and we maintain that it is a very genuine and true kind of co-operation.

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