

## **Science for Ministry in Japan: The Theory and Practice of Christian Ministry in the Face of Natural Disasters**

### **Executive Summary**

This project will construct a new field at Tokyo Christian University called “Care Studies,” integrating dimensions of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual knowledge, and testing our findings in practice. It will accomplish this by investigating three questions: A.) Natural Theology: How does God care for humanity through nature? How are we to understand trials like the one visited upon Japan in the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011? How might theology respond to the predictions of natural science? B.) Positive Ethic of Care: Is there something distinctive about the ethic of care seen in the actions of Japanese people when facing natural disasters? How are physical and psychological rehabilitation and healing related? What light may positive psychology shed on such questions? C.) Christianity and Community: What is the public role of religion following disasters that require emergency community planning? Specific activities include: 1.) Study groups focusing on relevant natural sciences, medicine, nursing, and the relation of social care and Japanese *Omoiyaru* Ethics, 2.) Study groups, seminars, and workshops focusing on the ministerial training of local care workers, and 3.) Symposia on themes emerging from activities 1.) and 2.). Concrete outputs will include 18 study groups, 9 seminars, 6 workshops, 3 symposia, 12 website postings, 6 articles, curricula that emerges from leader and participant feedback in 1.) and 2.), and 1 monograph and eBook after completion of the project.

### **Project Description**

Through the experience of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident of March 11, 2011, previously quietist Japanese Christian ministries were impacted afresh with the reality that “God is the ruler of nature’s laws while simultaneously being the source of the inner morality of the heart.” In the history of Japanese Christianity, Kagawa Toyohiko was a rare exception who took seriously the challenge of natural theology. This project will build on Kagawa’s theology by presenting a new interpretation of Christian social work and offering a way for Christian ministries to cooperate with those of other Japanese religions.

We will execute our project through the following activities:

#### **1.) Study Groups on Natural Science, Medicine, Nursing, and Spirituality**

Main Leaders: With Inagaki Hisakazu (Christian Philosophy, Science and Religion) as leader, and scholars such as Thomas Hastings (Theology), Itami Kentaro (Public Philosophy, Kagawa scholar), Kashiwagi Tetsuo (Psychiatry), Kanao Yuji (Atomic Energy), Kawa Masako (Nursing), Shimazono Susumu (Religious Studies), Nakayama Yoshio (Engineering), Fujito Tatsuma (Psychiatry), Matsushima Koubou (Psychology)

will participate in leading these study groups.

Objective of this Activity: In the half-century since Kagawa Toyohiko published *Cosmic Purpose* (1958), human origins have been reinterpreted in light of the “Big Bang” theory. As a clarification of the relation between the laws of nature and a religious world-view, critical realism has been offered as an explanation drawing on developments in the philosophy of science and the philosophy of religion. While it may seem that the “selfish gene” and altruism move in opposite directions, four-world theory has formulated a unique epistemology to integrate them. This in turn speaks to the need to think in terms of a theory of spiritual care that contributes to the purpose of human life, which is happiness or well being. Recent research on well-being and happiness in positive psychology has much to contribute to our inquiry.

In the face of the recent nuclear accident that will continue to produce radioactivity for thousands of years into the future, theodicy’s classical struggle with suffering is no longer sufficient. While earthquakes and tsunami are of the natural order, and hence difficult to avoid, we seek to explore what it means to pray the personal prayer, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

## **2.) Study Groups on Social Care and Japanese *Omoiyaru* Ethics**

Main Leaders: With Inagaki Hisakazu as the main leader, Iwata Mieko (Christian Ethics, researching Kagawa’s wife Kagawa Haru) will work as a secondary leader, and Okabe Taku (Social Security), Kishikawa Yoji (Social Work), Shinde Mari (Home Economics), Tohata Hiroko (Welfare Policy), Hosoda Miwako (Medical Policy), Hotta Satoko (Caregiving), Murata Ayako (Family Welfare), Miyajima Kiyoshi (Child Welfare), Yoshihara Takeshi (Finance) will participate in leading these study groups.

Objective of this Activity: While it appears that the character of *omoiyaru* (the demonstration of active consideration for others) in the face of disasters is particular to the Japanese, is it somehow different from a Western view of altruism or what feminist scholars have called an “ethic of care”? We will consider neuroscience research on male and female differences and compare an “ethic of care” with and “ethic of justice,” with special reference to the Japanese social and cultural context. As a case study, we will explore the contributions of Kagawa Toyohiko and Kagawa Haru to see how their work may be interpreted in terms of the relationship between Christian social care and the Japanese *omoiyaru* ethic. As a way of helping to overcome Japan’s experience of a negative birthrate and rapid aging, we will evaluate the traditional Japanese view of male and female and articulate a fitting contemporary social ethic for the Japanese character that seeks a work-life balance for women.

## **3.) Practical Training of Local Care Workers**

Objective: We will consider the theological context in leveraging the role of religious institutions in community planning and the cooperation among religious groups in the wake of natural disasters. We aim to stimulate civil morality, as it is informed by the various religions, and contribute to an emergent democracy. While many TCU students, faculty, and graduates are already participating in volunteer activities in the region hit by the earthquake and tsunami, we seek to develop Christian ministries

that contribute to regional welfare and long-term post-disaster spiritual care by launching a “Churches of Care Project” with churches that are able to provide local care. As in Wheaton College Graduate School’s Humanitarian Disaster Institute (HDI) Applied Research Lab, we also want to begin a collaborative research program that considers specific issues such as PTSD.

Study Group Activities: With Inagaki Hisakazu as the main leader, Yamaguchi Yoichi (Practical Theology, History of Japanese Christianity) will work as a secondary leader, and Ikeda Gyōsin (Pure Land Buddhism), Inaba Keishin (Sociology of Religion), Inoue Takashi (Social Welfare), Okamura Naoki (Practical Theology), Kataoka Masako (Nursing), Kawa Mikio (Social Security), Kihara Katsunobu (Philosophy of Social Welfare), Kobayashi Takanori (New Testament Studies), Sumiyoshi Eiji (Community Work), Nakazawa Hidekazu (Nursing Education), Hiroi Ryousuke (Social Planning), Joseph Poulshock (Linguistic Evolution), Yamato Shohei (Buddhist Studies), Randall Short (Old Testament Studies) will participate in leading these study groups.

Seminar Activities for Seminarians, Ministers, and Church Leaders: In conjunction with a special course in TCU’s ministerial training program, these seminars will provide training in the skills of local community leaders and care workers. Each seminar will have around 30 participants from among current TCU seminarians and students with other majors and local pastors and church leaders. Under the leadership of Yamaguchi Yoichi, these seminars will treat the themes of “religion and science” and “Christianity and other religions” in the concrete context of the recent Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami of March 11, 2011. Those who are working in stricken areas will be invited as guest speakers, and some of the seminars will take place in the stricken areas according to the following schedule for the first year:

I. The Work of Local Churches in Response to the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami

A. “The Churches and Diaconia,” Asaoka Masaru (Iwate Church Network, Iwate Prefecture)

B. “The Churches and Community Welfare,” Yoshida Takashi (Tohoku Help, Miyagi Prefecture)

C. “The Churches in a Nuclear-Powered Society,” Naito Shingo Fukushima Church network, Fukushima Prefecture)

II. The Cooperation of Christianity and other Religions in the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami

A. “Religious Cooperation in Disaster Relief Efforts,” Kawakami Naoya (Iwate Prefecture)

B. “Religious Dialogue and Cooperation in Disaster Recovery,” will invite a Buddhist Priest (Miyagi Prefecture)

C. “Religion and Nuclear Power,” (Progress in Religion and Scientific Technology) will invite a Shinto Priest (Fukushima Prefecture)

Seminar Activities on Life Care: These seminars will be led by Iwata Mieko and conducted in conjunction with the TCU Theology Department’s classes on “Women

and Society,” “Christian Ethics,” and “Christian Worldview.” These seminars will be opened up once a year to the public and will include current TCU students and participants from outside of TCU.

I. “Caring for New Life,” Kumiko Jenkins (Japan Alive)

II. “Caring for Growing Life,” Sekine Michiko (Dojin Foster Home)

III. “Caring at the End of Life,” Noda Kazuhiro (Life Works Funeral Company)

Churches of Care Project Seminars: These seminars will take place three times each year in coordination with our “Churches of Care Project,” which we implemented in 2012. Each seminar will involve about 40 participants.

#### **4) Symposia**

Each year we will conduct the following symposia on themes that are relevant to the above three activities.

I. “A Consideration of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident: How Might we Control High Technologies?”

This symposium will treat this theme from the perspective of natural theology (150 participants).

II. “Continuities and Discontinuities in Neurological and Societal Gender Differences”

This symposium will treat the issue of gender, which is so important in care giving, from the perspective of neuroscience (400 participants).

III. “The Public Role of Religion in Community Building”

This symposium will be the capstone of the three-year project. We will consider the possibilities for an emergent democracy of building networks for inter-religious cooperation and communities of care.

#### **Strategic Promise**

Realities attending disasters require cooperation between religion and science. Personal bonds are forged out of the moral practice of volunteers, which are then realized as social capital in networks of inter-group trust.

Started by Western missionaries who emphasized congregational formation, Japan’s Christian ministries have tended to be inward looking. Coupled with a traditional Confucian ethos, this tendency survived the post-war period and became the organizational norm of Japan’s hard-working middle class. But today’s Christian ministries are being drawn into service outside the church and, through cooperation with the sciences and public institutions, are becoming a driving force in the creation of civil society. Volunteer Christian activities with churches in the affected regions, in coordination with NPOs and government agencies, reveal the importance of this work in forging bonds.

While Christian social welfare agencies were formerly constrained by strong government control, the situation has changed since the legal reforms of 2000. Just as the issue of reconstruction following the recent disaster was emerging, Christian ministries were beginning to transcend their congregations and take up their expected role in civil society. As a response to this expectation, this project will give birth to new forms of public philosophical collaborative research and practice.

### **Capacity for Success**

PL Inagaki Hisakazu was a theoretical physicist before turning to philosophy and has engaged issues of public philosophy and religion since the 1990's. He was a fellow on the "Science and Christianity" seminar funded by the JTF (Oxford, Alister McGrath, 2003-2005) and leader of the "Emergent Hermeneutics and Philosophy of Complex Systems" research project, part of the JTF-funded Local Sciences Initiative (Metanexus, 2006-2008). Based on this research, he published a special issue on "Science and Religion" in TCU's journal *Emergence* (Vol. 11) and helped translate McGrath's *The Science of God: An Introduction to Scientific Theology* (Kyōbunkan, 2005). From 2008-2011, he was responsible for TCU's Christian Welfare program, and as head of TCU's Kyōritsu Christian Institute (KCI) worked to reconstruct the field of social welfare and care from the perspective of public philosophy. CPL Yamaguchi Yoichi was Principal of TCU's Tokyo Christian Theological Seminary from 2000-2011, and as head of the Faith and Culture Center (FCC), held nine "Seminars for Congregational Ministry" in 2012 focused on the role of churches in post-disaster reconstruction. Iwata Mieko, who is conducting research on Kagawa Toyohiko and his wife Kagawa Haru, is part of a join research project of the KCI, is working on the theme of "Gender and Social Care: An Ethic for Civil Society" (2012-2014). TCU has a Pastoral Major and a Christian Welfare Major in our School of Theology, hence we provide an ideal environment for pursuing this project that treats themes of religion, welfare, science, and local society. Further, we have already secured the cooperation and participation of leading scholars in Theology, Religions, Philosophy, Natural Sciences, Buddhism, Sociology, Social Welfare, Psychiatry, Nursing and other relevant fields.

### **Expected Outputs**

1. 1 Project Website within TCU and KCI's website (<http://www.tci.ac.jp/institution/kci/>) that will publicize the findings of study groups, seminars, and symposia in newsletters, Ezines, pdfs, podcasts, and YouTube videos (for symposia).
2. We will draw from 1. for TCU publications:
  - A. *Emergence* (Kyōritsu Christian Institute, biannual): study group reports.
  - B. . *Kyoritsu Brochure* (Kyōritsu Christian Institute, annual): symposia and seminar reports.

C. FCC Booklet (Faith and Culture Center, annual): workshop reports.

3. Seminars will emphasize interactive exchange among participants as a means of deepening discussion. Some seminars will take place in disaster-stricken regions and community welfare centers, thereby practically informing further theoretical reflection on the science of care.

4. Participating scholars will write 5 academic papers and 5 essays each year, participating master's degree students will write 6 theses, and doctoral candidates in our new doctoral program that will begin in 2014 will write 2 dissertations related to the project.

5. 1 project monograph will be published by an academic publisher after the project.

### **Expected Outcomes**

Western thought traditions developed the Enlightenment ideology with the confidence that human beings are able to check the destructive power of nature. In its dialogue with this Enlightenment ideology, Christianity gave excessive weight to reason, and developed natural theologies as "proofs of divine existence through human reason's gaze at nature." Once this was determined to be impossible, mainline Western theology completely rejected natural theology.

The Christianity that has been preached in Japan continues to reflect the influence of this Western modern theology that lacks any natural theology. This has further exacerbated a church-centered understanding of Christian ministry. However, the recent disaster has clearly awakened the Japanese people to an "uncontrollable power at work in nature." Japanese Christianity is thus beginning to deeply reflect on the classical natural theological question of how God speaks through nature. Hence, the level of interest has been raised in the work of religious worldviews with views of nature and the entire cosmos.

In the *topos* of Japan that has experienced this overwhelming disaster, the rehabilitation of God as the controller of nature's laws and also the moral source at work in the human heart will henceforth have a huge influence on Christian ministries.

In the history of Japanese Christianity, Kagawa Toyohiko was a rare example of a thinker who took natural theology seriously. Kagawa's theology, when viewed along with his social work, offers several new possibilities for interpretation. This research will in turn help clarify the meaning of his "solidarity economics" as a challenge to market economics.

We expect dissertations will be written on the Kagawas, with a new focus on the contribution of Kagawa Haru. Also, many TCU exchange students from Asia and Africa will write doctoral dissertations on Christian ministry as Science of Care relevant to the risk societies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Enduring Impact**

The “uncontrollable power at work in nature” is related to the Japanese people’s prototypical religious worldview as natural religion. Traditionally, natural religion influenced Shinto and esoteric Buddhism, and this “uncontrollable power” issued in the virtue of *akirame*, a concept bearing the multiple meanings of resignation, acceptance, and consolation. However, the recent man-made calamity of the Fukushima nuclear accident has revealed the severe limitations of a magical natural religion that seeks to pacify the gods of earth in response to the wonders of nature.

In a nation like Japan that is proud of its technological prowess, religion can not be merely an interpretative response to the “uncontrollable power at work in nature,” but must be accompanied by moral meaning-making as an aspect of human wisdom and a notion of “responsibility.” Consequently, Shinto, Buddhist, and Christian dialogue has entered a completely new era in which we must address the question of whether or not human wisdom and morality will be able to keep our high level technologies in check. In Japan, where a plurality of religions coexist in a mature society that has achieved a high level of technological and economic development, questions surrounding the recovery from the recent disaster raise huge questions about the state of humanity’s spirituality. Can humanity’s spirituality keep pace with the development of our sciences and technologies? The Japanese people, who have correlated economic development with the consumption of electricity, are learning not merely to serve the desires of human beings as defined by a market economy as *homo economicus*, but to serve the lives of human beings within an ecological harmony.

Taking the reconstruction after the recent disaster as an opportunity, we believe it is important to enter this new stage of dialogue with natural religion. This is not simply an internal matter for Japan, but will surely have a significant impact on humanity’s ways of knowing and living in our global age.

The project monograph that will come out of our theoretical research will be used as a text for teachers in Japan’s Christian secondary schools and universities, and the materials produced from our practical research will be used as curricula in Christian churches and social welfare institutions.

**Request Amount** 120,000 +30,000=150,000 US \$

**Total Project Amount** \$264,700

**Additional Funding From Other Sources** Yes

Including a percentage of salary for five staff members, facilities costs for hosting meetings, research funds, Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (proposal in progress) Total \$114,700

**Proposed Project Date** April 1, 2014

**Proposed Project End Date** March 31, 2017

**Relation to Sir John Templeton’s Donor Intent**

We find deep resonance with the convictions expressed in the December 7, 2012 Templeton Report entitled “Humility as a Way of Life.” In general, the Japanese people live in a markedly different cultural climate from that of Western monotheism. In a word, we may characterize Japan as polytheistic. Animistic Shinto and esoteric Buddhism have established the basic custom of ancestor veneration. Within this context, the denominations of reformed Mahayana Buddhism, or so-called Kamakura Buddhism, exercise a particular influence on social and governmental affairs. On the other hand, economic life reflects a modern rationalism, and especially a numerical rationalism whose exultation of productivity is in close agreement with Shinto values. Yet, given the intractable problems of Japan’s mature society with its shrinking population and rapid aging, it is unclear how we will be able to sustain the axiology of prosperity based on continual economic growth and nurture the Japanese Confucian ethic of life as consideration of the other as an expression of “Humility as a Way of Life.” In the midst of such complexities, a huge question that arises for subsequent academic research is whether or not the values of minority Christians can contribute to Japan’s civic morality.

In Japan, the spirit of inquiry motivating individual scientists reflects Sir John Templeton’s search for Ultimate Reality. However, the social value produced from this scientific development has merely emphasized utilitarian application. At such a time as this, for a people who have experienced the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami and Fukushima Nuclear Disasters, there is no word that resounds so clearly as Sir John’s words, “Humbleness makes for a transformative dynamic in life, opening the human mind and soul to love.”

### **III. Personnel**

Project Leader Hisakazu Inagaki (CV attached)

Project Co-Leader Yoichi Yamaguchi(CV attached)

Additional Request Contact Name(s) See 5. above

History with the Foundation Oxford Seminar etc.

**IV. Organization** Tokyo Christian University (Kyoritsu Christian Institute=KCI),  
The Faith and Culture Center (FCC)