

## The Union Spirit in Japan in the 1880's

by John W. Krummel

Fred Klein, superintendent of the Methodist Protestant Mission in Japan, in a letter dated September 9, 1885, commented, "The union spirit is here among certain ones who wish to swallow all small Missions. They treat you well till they learn your intentions, and when they know you will 'go it alone' then they act, to plant work next to yours, etc. . . . Denominationalism is as strong here, if not stronger than at home."<sup>1</sup> It wasn't all that bad but it was a reality. Looking back it is relatively easy to grasp the general outline of relations between and within the denominational groups in the early period.<sup>2</sup> We can trace, for example, the growth of a strong indigenous church through the cooperation of missions of Presbyterian and Reformed background.<sup>3</sup> Several Methodist missions formed a united church in 1907.<sup>4</sup> However, the complete picture should include the stories of smaller missions which had to struggle to achieve and preserve a denominational identity here if they were to satisfy their supporters. The American churches were not interested in investing money in missions unless they earned denominational dividends. Moreover, the larger missions were given to grand strategies of cooperation which often ignored the smaller missions. A question of interest then is how these smaller missions experienced denominational relations in Japan. I will focus here on the Methodist Protestant Mission.

The Methodist Protestant Church was the outgrowth of a democratic reform movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the third decade of the nineteenth century. By 1880, when it founded its Mission in Yokohama, it had about 120,000 members

---

<sup>1</sup> Ms. letter to F. T. Tagg, corresponding secretary of the MPC Board of Missions (Archives, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.).

<sup>2</sup> My "Church Unity and Mission in Japan," *Japan Christian Quarterly*, Spring 1971, pp. 89ff., discusses the non-theological, denominational, and ecumenical factors which influenced the church union movement in Japan.

<sup>3</sup> Winburn T. Thomas, *Protestant Beginnings in Japan* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959), p. 145; and Otis Cary, *A History of Christianity in Japan* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1909), vol. 2, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> J. Tremayne Copplestone, *History of Methodist Missions* (New York: The Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, 1973), vol. 4, pp. 724-730.

in America. Presbyterian, Reformed, and Baptist missionaries had been in the city since the early 1860's and the Methodist Episcopal Mission had had its center there since 1873. By the time the first Methodist Protestant missionary, Harriett Brittan, arrived there were two of the Union (Presbyterian-Reformed) churches, a Baptist church, and a Methodist Episcopal church, all with Japanese pastors, in the city. There were also two mission schools for girls—Ferris Seminary (Reformed) and Kyoritsu (Woman's Union Missionary Society). Brittan started a third, the forerunner of today's Seibi Gakuen.

The beginning of the Methodist Protestant Mission in Japan was a fascinating blend of denominational pride and inter-denomi-



**Frederick C. Klein**

national cooperation. Its first missionary was an Episcopalian. The first ordained male missionary, Klein, did not come from a Methodist Protestant background. His mother was a member of the Church of the Reformation and his only sister became a Lutheran missionary in Africa. He had, however, been nurtured, converted, and ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church and educated in one of its colleges. Methodist Protestants had participated in mission in Yokohama since 1871 when they began contributing through the Woman's Union Missionary Society to support girls being trained as Bible women.<sup>5</sup> Brittan de-

pendent on ordained Methodist Episcopal missionaries to give catechetical instruction to her pupils, to baptize those who came to Christian faith, and to provide a church home for them.<sup>6</sup> A missionary of the Reformed Church, James Ballagh, welcomed Brittan to Japan and assisted her in establishing the Mission.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the first Methodist Protestant missionaries were involved with, indebted to, and, as things developed, in some ways

<sup>5</sup> *Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the MPC, Annual Report 1880*, pp. 30-40; Mary A. Miller, *History of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Protestant Church* (Pittsburgh: WFMS-MPC, 1896), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Methodist Protestant (MP)*, May 16, 1885, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *MP*, February 19, 1881, p. 7.

frustrated by these groups—the Union Society, the Presbyterian-Reformed missions, and the Methodist Episcopal Mission.

### **Methodist Protestants and the Woman's Union Missionary Society**

Methodist Protestants began contributing to the Union Society in 1870 and from the opening of its mission school, Kyoritsu, in Yokohama in 1871, their offerings were sent there.<sup>8</sup> The recipient of the first scholarship given in 1874 by the Methodist Protestant Board of Missions was Nedzu Eiko.<sup>9</sup> Eventually enough money was being raised to support seventeen girls and the Board stressed that steps must be taken to establish its own Mission in Japan.

As some of the girls will soon be prepared to enter the field as active missionaries, and will naturally drift into such channels as may open for them, it becomes necessary, if we as a church would avail ourselves of their labors, that we should have a regular organized mission work in Japan.<sup>10</sup>

Letters from these girls reporting on their school life, Christian mission, and Japanese customs, were carried in Methodist Protestant church papers. Some of these were from Nedzu. By 1880 she was an assistant at Kyoritsu and went out to conduct evangelistic meetings for women and to help with Sunday schools.<sup>11</sup>

The first Methodist Protestant missionary appointed to Japan was Elizabeth Guthrie, who had served under the Union Society in India and Japan from 1868 to 1878.<sup>12</sup> She had been born in a Reformed Presbyterian manse but raised by relatives, and converted in an independent church pastored by a Methodist Protestant. After returning to America she helped the Methodist Protestant women form their own missionary society.<sup>13</sup> This was organized February 14, 1879, and an appeal published to gain the support of women throughout the church. It called attention

---

<sup>8</sup> *WFMS Annual Report 1881*, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> *Methodist Protestant Missionary*, November 1879, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Proceedings of the Annual Council of the Methodist Protestant Church 1878*, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> *Methodist Protestant Missionary*, November 1879, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Guido F. Verbeck, "History of Protestant Missions in Japan," in the *Proceedings of the General Conference of Protestant Missionaries in Japan 1900* (Tokyo: Methodist Publishing House, 1901), p. 745.

<sup>13</sup> *WFMS Annual Report 1880*, p. 3; *WFMS Annual Report 1881*, p. 37.

to the good that had been accomplished by the Woman's Union Missionary Society, set forth the providential opening in Japan, and appealed to denominational pride.

Women of the Methodist Protestant Church, we cannot be indifferent to this great work and be guiltless. Too long have we been idle. . . . Our own beloved church lying under reproach for delinquency in this matter, appeals to the loyalty of her daughters to remove the reproach, and enable her to assume a position of honor in the sisterhood of churches.<sup>14</sup>

Attempts to work more closely with the Union Society failed.<sup>15</sup> Guthrie resigned from that society in the fall of 1879 and was

appointed to Japan by the Methodist Protestants in the spring of 1880. She died enroute to Japan in San Francisco on May 15, 1880, and was immediately replaced by Brittan who had served under the Union Society in India from 1862 to 1879, and under the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Africa in the mid-1850's. She arrived in Japan September 23, 1880.



**Harriett Brittan**

The understanding between the Methodist Protestant Board and the Woman's Union Missionary Society was that the girls the Methodist Protestants had been supporting in Yokohama and who were prepared for evangelistic work would be transferred to the new Mission to serve as assistants. To this end at its meeting on July 6, 1880, the Board authorized Brittan to serve as its agent in arranging the transfer. It is noteworthy, in this connection, that the Board at this time urged churches that were in arrears on their pledges of support for the scholarships to fulfill their obligations lest the Methodist Protestants lose their rights to the girls. The Board expressed appreciation to the Union Society at this point.

<sup>14</sup> *Methodist Protestant Missionary*, September 1879, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Miller, p. 18; *Proceedings MPC 1880*, p. 24.

We recognize the uniform courtesy and good faith observed by the Woman's Union Society toward this Board, and cherish the desire that cordial sympathy and cooperation between the said Society and our Mission in Japan may be firm and lasting, as we believe such cooperation will be to the material advantage of both societies, and tend to the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.<sup>16</sup>

Such was not to be the case. The relationship may have been complicated by the fact that Brittan had resigned from the Woman's Union Missionary Society as the result of a dispute with its founder.<sup>17</sup>

The problem of "our girls" was discussed at the November 21, 1880, meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board. It decided to try to make an arrangement by which funds already paid to the Union Society would

. . . be applied to the education of as many girls as these contributions will educate upon the terms agreed upon between the Society and our Board, and that we relinquish our claims upon all others, it being understood that all girls thus sustained by us through their whole course shall be subject to transfer upon the terms agreed upon.<sup>18</sup>

At the March 22, 1881, meeting of the Executive Committee it was reported that the Union Society had agreed to turn over seven girls for the amount of money already paid.<sup>19</sup> However, there were not seven trained girls available in Yokohama. Moreover, the Union Society missionaries there were reluctant to release their most valuable assistant, Nedzu, even though Brittan and the Board insisted on having her. On August 7, 1881, the Board resolved to receive any or all of the seven as soon as they could be transferred. It also moved a resolution of protest against the Union Society for withholding the services of Nedzu. She was transferred that fall but died of cholera on July 3, 1882.<sup>20</sup> The matter was

---

<sup>16</sup> Ms. journal of the Board of Missions of the MPC, Records Collection #36 (Archives of The United Methodist Church, Lake Junaluska, N.C.) Henceforth, in this article this will be noted as MPC-BM Journal.

<sup>17</sup> Records of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., vol. 5, #121, and vol. 56, #202, on microfilm (United Mission Library, New York).

<sup>18</sup> MPC-BM Journal.

<sup>19</sup> MPC-BM Journal.

<sup>20</sup> MP, August 12, 1882, p. 2.

discussed again by the Executive Committee on January 9, 1882, and the Methodist Protestants agreed to reduce the number claimed to five. The remaining four were transferred in the fall of 1882.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the Mission hired Emily Cooper, a Eurasian educated at Kyoritsu, to serve for one year from September 1883.

The Woman's Union Missionary Society served as a catalyst for the development of support for foreign missions among Methodist Protestants. It also provided indirectly the expertise of its former missionaries in the organization of the denominational Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Protestant Church and in the founding of the Mission in Japan. Unfortunately, the foundation of the Mission ended a decade of harmonious relations on a discordant note. As a matter of fact, the Union Society was, in Japan, closely related to the interests of the Reformed Church. Its founder, Sarah Doremus was a member of that church; and her husband, Thomas Doremus, contributed generously to its Mission in Japan.<sup>22</sup> Kyoritsu sent its pupils to the Kaigan Church, which although ostensibly non-denominational was in fact Presbyterian-Reformed. Moreover, the Women's Union Missionary Society was a cooperating member of the Presbyterian-Reformed Missions Council from its inception in 1876.<sup>23</sup> This was never a factor, however, in the tensions that developed between the Union Society and the Methodist Protestants. It was not denominationalism in a doctrinal sense that created difficulty, but rather the imperative the Methodist Protestant Church felt to establish its own identifiable colony overseas.

### **Methodist Protestants and the Presbyterian-Reformed Group**

The Methodist Protestant Mission in its early years benefited from the goodwill of Presbyterian and Reformed missionaries. Ballagh helped Brittan establish the Mission school, rent property, and gather her first students. He introduced her first Japanese interpreter and assistant, Harada Ryoko, a graduate of Ferris.<sup>24</sup> The first site of her school (opened October 28, 1880) was a small bungalow rented from Ballagh at No. 48 Bluff. The original location of Kyoritsu (1871-1872), Ballagh had later used it for

---

<sup>21</sup> MP, February 3, 1883, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Verbeck, p. 782.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> *WFMS Annual Report 1881*, p. 18; MP, February 19, 1881, p. 6.

his own school. It is now part of the Ferris campus.<sup>25</sup> In 1881 Ballagh wrote a testimonial to the good work of Brittan for publication in Methodist Protestant church papers at home.<sup>26</sup> Others did what they could to be helpful, including introducing students. For example, Ishiguro Taka learned about the school from James C. Hepburn, a Presbyterian missionary. She studied in the Methodist Protestant school from 1882 to 1890 and later married a Methodist Protestant preacher.<sup>27</sup> In 1883 Hepburn loaned Brittan \$6,000 (Mexican) to help purchase No. 120 Bluff for the Mission.<sup>28</sup> After leaving the Methodist Protestants in 1885 she taught at the Presbyterian girls' school in Tokyo for half a year.

Klein after his arrival on September 23, 1883 on at least one occasion turned to the Presbyterian field treasurer for a short term loan to tide the Methodist Protestants over a period of financial difficulty.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, they introduced to him a number of the teachers he employed in the Mission's educational projects. Klein's most important Japanese co-worker in Yokohama was Tamura Toku hired in early 1886.<sup>30</sup> He was in charge of all Japanese teaching in the Methodist Protestant boys' school and assisted in its girls' school. Superintendent of the Mission Sunday school organized in April 1886 with 100 students, charter member and trustee of the first Methodist Protestant church, organized on July 11, 1886, he was instrumental in the revival that swept through the Mission in January 1887. Tamura was converted and baptized in 1885 by Okuno Masatsuna in the Presbyterian-Reformed Church, and came to Klein with the understanding that he would receive theological training. Klein neglected this and by April 1887 Tamura was thinking of leaving the Methodist Protestants to enter the Presbyterian-Reformed theological seminary in Tokyo. Klein had several anxious months before he was able to persuade Tamura to remain with the Mission.

---

<sup>25</sup> Teruo Nagai and Yasuo Yamazika, *Seibi Gakuen Hachijunen Shi* [The Eighty-year History of Seibi Gakuen] (Yokohama: Seibi Gakuen, 1961), p. 17; Miki Nakao, editor, *Kyujunen Shi Yowa* [Untold Tales of a Ninety-year History] (Yokohama: Kyuko-kai, 1970), p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> MP, August 13, 1881, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Nakao, p. 95.

<sup>28</sup> Copy of the mortgage, Klein File, Records Collection #36 (UMC Archives)

<sup>29</sup> Copy of the IOU (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>30</sup> MP, January 16, 1907, p. 6; Tokujiro Matsunaga, *Nihon Mifu Kyokai Nempu* [A Chronology of the Japan Methodist Protestant Church] (Tokyo: Shinai Shadan, 1967), p. 45.

He came to us from the Pres. Mission. . . .but his friends in Tokyo have gotten him into the notion of leaving us and have offered him better opportunities of preparation for the Ministry at their Theological Seminary. It only shows how poorly equipped we are to compete with these strong Missions.<sup>31</sup>

As a matter of fact, Tamura did receive his theological tutelage under the Methodist Protestants and remained a faithful pastor in that church until his death in 1945.

Methodist Protestant relations with the Presbyterians were further strained in the spring of 1887. The Southern Presbyterians attempted to win over a student-assistant from Klein's boys' school. The young man had been entirely supported by the Methodist Protestants for several years and they expected him to become a preacher. The Southern Presbyterians opened their first work in Japan in the boy's home town in Shikoku in 1885. Klein reported that ". . . an Elder of the Church came to see him some time ago, and from that he became dissatisfied. . . ." <sup>32</sup> Also, about this time one of the older girls, also a student-assistant and scholarship recipient, in the Methodist Protestant girls' school became involved with a teacher.

They had been corresponding, then they went to Tokyo, rode together in same jinrikisha which is far from right among the natives, and spent the night in the same house with him at his friends, and in the same room, though she solemnly affirms she did no sin. . . .The teacher has lied several times over the case, and we have about decided to send him off. He belongs to the Union Church [Presbyterian-Reformed]. . . .*He is nothing short of a spy here, and tells all we do to the Union church people. . . .*<sup>33</sup>

From 1885 to 1887 the Methodist Protestants, the Methodist Episcopal Mission, and the Presbyterian-Reformed Missions Council competed to be the first to place a resident foreign missionary in Nagoya. The fourth largest city in Japan and strategically located, it was a promising field. There were already two churches there with Japanese pastors—a Methodist Episcopal church organized in 1878 and a Presbyterian-Reformed church founded later. This fact did

---

<sup>31</sup> Letter to Tagg, April 12, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>32</sup> Letter to L. W. Bates, April 14, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>33</sup> Letter to Tagg, May 23, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives). Emphasis added.

not inhibit Klein, however. He realized that because of the enthusiasm for all things Western at that time, the first foreign missionary to reside in Nagoya would preempt the opportunities for helpful contacts with businessmen and the government schools. He felt like a David engaged in struggle with two Goliaths even though all three missions were handicapped by lack of personnel. Klein won the race and arrived in Nagoya on June 10, 1887, the Board having finally sent a man to replace him in Yokohama. The Southern Presbyterians came in second in late August and the Methodist Episcopal Mission followed in January of the next year.

Ironically enough, Klein's victory was possible only because of Presbyterian contacts. The person who invited him to Nagoya in the first place and became his legal guarantor there was Yamane Torajiro, a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.<sup>34</sup> His most important co-worker in establishing the work there was Toyoda Kazuo, whose mother was a member of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church. Toyoda resigned his position as a teacher in the Aichi Prefectural Teacher's College to work under Klein in the Yokohama boys' school in the summer of 1886, and was soon after baptized and received into the Methodist Protestant Church.<sup>35</sup>

Klein was exultant over his triumph and wrote, "We have just come at the right time and my prompt action has gained us the place."<sup>36</sup> However, he was disconcerted to discover two representatives of the Presbyterian-Reformed Missions Council visiting the city to prospect for property and positions in the government schools for the Southern Presbyterian missionaries they planned to send to Nagoya in the fall. Klein cautioned his replacement in Yokohama to reveal nothing of the Methodist Protestant plans in Nagoya to the Presbyterians.<sup>37</sup> His Japanese friends rented property for him in an ideal location and it was soon purchased with the intention of buying up adjacent property for a Mission center with a school, church, and residences. The Presbyterians in the meantime attempted to buy that same adjacent property for their Mission. When Klein protested the Southern Presbyterian missionaries attributed it to a misunderstanding and graciously allowed the Methodist Protestants to have it.<sup>38</sup> Klein did not reciprocate

<sup>34</sup> MP, March 13, 1886, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Yaehiko Usui, et al., *Nagoya Gakuin Shi: 1887-1961* [Nagoya Gakuin History] (Nagoya: Nagoya Gakuin, 1961), p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Letter to Tagg, June 18, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>37</sup> Letter to T. H. Colhouer, June 13, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>38</sup> Letter to the Board, July 23, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

their kindness when he took a teaching position promised to the Southern Presbyterians in one of the government schools. One of their missionaries taught in the school during September but had to leave because of illness. The position was to be held open for his replacement. However, this person's arrival was delayed. Klein snapped up the post when it was offered to him by the school in mid-October although he knew the Southern Presbyterian would arrive before the end of the month. He wrote, "We may as well gain influence over the students there as they, and help out our expenses too. . . ." <sup>39</sup> On November 3, 1887, the Emperor's birthday, Klein was invited to the review of the troops and a banquet given by the governor. He commented, "Only the foreigners teaching in government schools are invited. This leaves our Presbyterian friends out in the cold."<sup>40</sup> Evidently, he did his gloating in private as other letters reveal pleasant enough social relations with the Presbyterians. Moreover, the Presbyterians, Methodist Protestants, and Methodist Episcopal people cooperated in holding evangelistic meetings. Klein reported one on Sunday, November 13, 1887, in the largest theater in Nagoya with 1,000 present and twelve addresses delivered! <sup>41</sup>

### Methodism—Protestant and Episcopal

Methodism was introduced into Japan in 1873 by missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal and Canadian churches. The Evangelical Association sent missionaries in 1876. The Methodist Protestants followed in 1880, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1886, and the United Brethren in 1895. From the beginning the Canadian and Methodist Episcopal Missions cooperated closely, using the same hymnal and a common terminology and style in translating their respective *Disciplines*. They also adjusted their evangelistic work so as to avoid overlapping. Such cooperation broadened to include the other groups and attempts at union continued through the years. However, when it was achieved in 1907 it included only the three larger missions, the Canadians and the two episcopal Methodisms.

The Methodist Episcopal Mission in Yokohama extended fellowship to Brittan and assisted in her school work. First, Milton Vail and then Julius Soper, both ordained Methodist Episcopal

<sup>39</sup> Letter to Bates, October 11, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>40</sup> Letter to Bates, November 2, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>41</sup> Letter to Tagg, November 14, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

missionaries, conducted special classes in their Sunday school for teenage girls from Brittan's school and baptized four or five of them. Until the arrival of Klein they also visited the Methodist Protestant school regularly and drilled the students in the catechism. The understanding was that whenever a Methodist Protestant church was organized in Yokohama the girls who had been taken into the Methodist Episcopal fellowship would be transferred to it.<sup>42</sup> This was done. However, some of the girls were lost along the way through marriage to Japanese Methodist Episcopal preachers.<sup>43</sup> Klein was especially irritated in September 1885 when one of the Methodist Protestant scholarship girls, who had been baptized in the Methodist Episcopal Church, was taken off by her father to marry the business manager of the Methodist Episcopal college in Tokyo. Scholarship students were expected to repay the Mission with a term of service and usually legal documents were drawn up to assure this. However, no document could be found for this girl. Nevertheless, Klein attempted to prevent the marriage in separate conferences with her father, her fiance, and one of the Methodist Episcopal missionaries, but to no avail.<sup>44</sup>

Soon after his arrival the Methodist Episcopal and Canadian Missions invited Klein to join them in united work. They were interested at this time in cooperating in education. In 1883 the Methodist Episcopal Mission had consolidated its educational work for boys in a school in Aoyama, Tokyo. R. S. Maclay, superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, and George Cochran, of the Canadian Mission, were eager to make this a pan-Methodist institution. Klein sympathized with their efforts to stem the tide of western infidelity that was spreading out from the public higher schools and the national university but felt he could not cooperate with them. The basis of union they were proposing was too "episcopal" for democratic Methodist Protestants.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, he transmitted the proposal to his Board. Its response was unequivocal.

As our mission work in Japan which is just being planted so successfully and seems so full of promise for the future, and as it is the plan and purpose of the Board in harmony with the wish of the

---

<sup>42</sup> MP, May 16, 1885, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> MP, August 8, 1885, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Letter to Tagg, September 15, 1885 (WTS Archives).

<sup>45</sup> Letter to Maclay, January 16, 1884 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

church to maintain *a distinctive denominational work* we think it best to adhere carefully to that plan and purpose and would instruct our missionaries to operate on that line at least until our own work is fully established.<sup>46</sup>

Interestingly enough, however, at the Japan Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1884, Klein was listed as a member of the governing body for the Aoyama school. This board was composed of the six Japanese members of its legal holding body, and eighteen foreigners including in addition to Methodist Episcopal missionaries, the American legate, and representatives from the Canadian, the Evangelical, and the Methodist Protestant missions.<sup>47</sup> There is no evidence that Klein ever participated in the deliberations of this board. Indeed, letters he wrote to Maclay and Cochran in 1887 concerning "your school" reveal that he knew nothing about its operation.<sup>48</sup> In 1888 it was replaced by a board of trustees limited to members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Klein complained of the larger missions establishing work beside that already started by smaller missions. However, he himself began work in a neighborhood in Yokohama where there had been two Methodist Episcopal chapels and a day school for some years. Both missions entered Fujisawa about the same time. The Methodist Episcopal Mission began holding religious services there sometime in 1885.<sup>49</sup> Whether this was before or after Klein began negotiations in August of that year to establish a school there is unclear. In any case, it seems to have been behind his outburst in the letter quoted at the beginning of this article. He opened his school there in February 1886.

In 1885 it was Klein's opinion that Methodist Episcopal polity could not succeed in Japan.

The M. E. government will not suit Japan, and they know ours is better and they will strengthen themselves against us. . . . There is oft complaint made that desirable converts leave one Mission to

<sup>46</sup> MPC-BM Journal. Emphasis added.

<sup>47</sup> *Minutes of the First Session of the Japan Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Tokio, August 28 to September 3, 1884*, p. 31-2.

<sup>48</sup> Letter to Maclay, April 15, 1887; letter to Cochran, April 20, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>49</sup> Wade Crawford Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions* (New York: Board of Missions of The Methodist Church, 1957), vol. 3, p. 711.

enter another. They are a very changeable people. . . .They are remarkably independent. That is why M. E. polity will not suit them.<sup>50</sup>

However, he soon became more favorable toward pan-Methodist cooperation. This was in large part a result of the formidable competition which was expected to result from a projected union of the Congregational (ABCFM) work and that of the Presbyterian-Reformed Missions Council. In the face of this, Klein thought closer cooperation with other Methodists would be to the advantage of the Methodist Protestants as their Mission was so small and isolated and, consequently, not respected.<sup>51</sup>

We must stir ourselves or get left. The Presbyterian and Congregationalists have about united and they make a great church among the natives, and Methodism will suffer if we do not put forth a good front. The natives are not troubling themselves much about our differences. They are so independent that they will fix all these things themselves as soon as they have the chance. They are thirsting for one solid church for Japan, and those who have united with kindred Missions and churches are striving to do more on that line.<sup>52</sup>

Reporting to the Board in May 1886 on the church union movement in Japan, Klein gave a particularly interesting analysis of the factors involved.

It is the outcome of their [the Japanese] remarkable native independence, and expression of Oriental imperialism. . . .and has gained favor with most of the native pastors. Perhaps the latter feel somewhat the judicious restraints put upon them by the Missionaries. . . . Just now the Ministers of the nations are meeting Japan's representatives in Conference for the revision of the Treaty, looking to mixed residence and giving foreigners access freely to the interior under Japanese laws. This important matter has excited the native mind to an unusual degree, and it is reasonable to suppose that with the prospect of full state rights the native should desire full church rights etc. The Missionaries have already publicly advocated on moral grounds the revision of the Treaty. . . .<sup>53</sup>

Klein commented favorably on the degree of unity already achieved between the Canadian and the Methodist Episcopal Missions. They

<sup>50</sup> Letter to Tagg, September 9, 1885 (WTS Archives).

<sup>51</sup> Letter to Tagg, May 3, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>52</sup> Letter to Tagg, May 13, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>53</sup> Report, May 28, 1886 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

were now going to unite their forces in publishing and had invited the Methodist Protestants and the Evangelical Association to join.

There is a growing need for a native religious paper with Methodist doctrines, etc. There is one by the Congregational and Presbyterian people called undenominational but not strictly true in fact. Theological books in native language is a great want, as are S. school books etc. . . . I could assure the Committee of no financial help at present save by purchase of what the Mission needed. . . .<sup>54</sup>

The Board's cryptic response was, "We endorse fraternity among Christians everywhere, but any movement that would result in organic unity we consider tantamount to an extinction of Methodist Protestant Missions."<sup>55</sup>

About this same time Methodist Protestant papers in America carried an article on the qualifications for missionaries by T. H. Colhouer, the clergyman who was to replace Klein in Yokohama a year later. He wrote that missionaries should have a "holy Christian denominational enthusiasm."

While we do not believe that any ecclesiasticism can convert souls, yet it is no more than justice to allow the hen that hatches her young to have the pleasure and honor of. . . .raising her brood. And as the unconverted heathen must be gathered into some branch of the Church. . . .and as they would be likely to feel most at home among those who were instrumental in their salvation, there can certainly be [no] wrong in bringing them into the Methodist Protestant Church where they will be led on by its ordinances to edification and perfection in Christ.<sup>56</sup>

No doubt this expressed the mind of the church in America but Klein had come to see things differently in Japan.

In the spring of 1887 he hired, G. W. Elmer, a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church and assistant in the American Bible Society in Yokohama, and his wife, a former Methodist Episcopal missionary, to work in the two Methodist Protestant schools in Yokohama. Klein's contacts with Methodist Episcopal missionaries increased. He was enthusiastic about a proposal to create a union Methodist committee to prepare a series of com-

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> MP, August 7, 1886, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> MP, May 22, 1886, p. 1.

mentaries on the New Testament, and cooperated in launching a union Methodist paper that year.<sup>57</sup> He was in contact with Maclay concerning the possibility of including the Methodist Protestants in a comity arrangement,<sup>58</sup> and pressed the importance of this upon his own Board, citing the strength that the several Presbyterian and Reformed missions had achieved through such cooperation. "If some solid form of expression could be given to the natives that as Methodists we are one in doctrine, and harmonize though we may differ in polity, it would be a strength to us all."<sup>59</sup> Klein even anticipated participating in union Methodist schools.

We may be led to take steps in the near future looking to the adoption of some plan by which all the Methodist Missionaries may work in harmony and together in certain fields, and we have good schools where now the schools are weak or have none at all.<sup>60</sup>

He was particularly hopeful that the Methodist Protestants would be given a monopoly in the Nagoya area.

I think there will be a move towards union of Methodists in Japan so as to have one church in the land with still our own interests preserved by each branch being a distinct field. The M. E. Conference will be held in Tokyo in August and Bro. [I. H.] Correll [M. E. missionary] told me yesterday that an effort will be made to win the Bishop over to the matter and if that is done things can perhaps be worked. You at home would have to appoint a commission and settle the matter from the representations of the conditions as reported from here by us. . . . The fact that we are booming is having the effect of making them recognize our etc., and we will be able to say so and so if you want us in.<sup>61</sup>

He admits in this letter that it will be difficult to get the Methodist Protestant Board to go along with this. As it was, the Methodist Episcopal missionaries found it impossible to gain the support of their non-resident bishop. At their annual conference the bishop appointed a missionary to take up residence in Nagoya alongside Klein.

<sup>57</sup> Letter to Vail, March 23, 1887; letter to I. H. Correll, October 18, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>58</sup> Letters to Maclay, May 3 and May 12, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>59</sup> Report, April 14, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>60</sup> Letter to Tagg, May 13, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

<sup>61</sup> Letter to Bates, June 18, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

It may be that Klein was sanguine in his expectation that the Methodist Episcopal Church would turn over its work in the Nagoya area. On the one hand, it was an isolated pocket far distant from other Methodist Episcopal fields and would have been an ideal location for working the Methodist Protestants into the overall Methodist comity arrangement. However, the first Methodist Episcopal converts had been baptized and organized into a church in that area in 1877 and by 1887 the work was large enough to be organized into a district with ten circuits. They would have had to transfer their pastors along with their people to the Methodist Protestants who at this point did not have even one Japanese preacher. It was almost too much to hope for. However, during the early months in Nagoya the local Methodist Episcopal pastor worked with Klein in operating joint afternoon Sunday schools although each group had its own morning services.<sup>62</sup>

### Conclusion

From 1883 to 1887 Klein's attitude toward Methodist union in Japan changed from outright rejection to active support. He continued to work for such a union until he finally left Japan in 1893. This was in the face of his Board's unchanging denominational policy and the lukewarm attitude of his co-worker, Colhouer, in Yokohama. Klein's experience in Japan had taught him something of the independent spirit of the Japanese Christians and their indifference to denominational differences. His change of mind was also a result of frustration in the face of the competition of the larger missions, both Methodist and Presbyterian-Reformed. As for the other Methodists his position became that of "if you can't beat'em, join'em." As for the even larger Presbyterian-Reformed Mission Council, joining forces with his Methodist kindred would create a united front. The idea of a truly comprehensive Protestant union was, of course, as unthinkable for him as for many others in that day. Only the force of circumstances pressed the possibility and desirability of Methodist union on him. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of missionaries on the field for such cooperative arrangements was never matched by their churches at home. The larger they were the less they felt the need of cooperation. The smaller they were the more precious was the maintenance of their denominational distinctiveness. The case of

---

<sup>62</sup> Letter to Tagg, October 1, 1887 (Klein File, UMC Archives).

Fred Klein and the Methodist Protestant Mission illustrates the tension experienced by missionaries from the smaller denominations caught as they were between the realities of the situation in Japan and the expectations of their supporting churches at home.

### MICROFILM NOW AVAILABLE

Journal of Chicago Deutschen Conferenz, M. E. Church, 1872-1923. \$55.00.

Diary of the Rev. Thomas Nixon (Mississippi), 1815-1872. \$30.00.

Proceedings of Little Rock Conference, M. E. Church, 1879-[1911-13]1914-23[1924-25]1926. \$25.00.

Minutes of Nordwestlichen Deutschen Conferenz, M. E. Church, 1864-1875. \$9.00.

Minutes of Methodist Federation for Social Service, 1907-1930. \$7.00.

Minutes of Virginia Conference, M. E. Church, 1800-1840. Manuscript. \$12.50.

*Virginia Conference Sentinel*, 1836-1837. \$6.50.

Diary and miscellaneous papers of Joseph Flavius McCulloch (1856-1934). Methodist Protestant. Diary covers years 1880-1886. \$8.40.

*Daguiti Naimbag a Damag* (Good News). Periodical published by United Brethren in the Philippine Islands. Vols. 1-26, 1905-1930. \$200.00.

Minutes of Allegheny Conference, U. B. Church, 1868-1930. \$68.00.

Minutes of Erie Conference, Evangelical Association, 1882-1923. Printed German. \$28.00.

Minutes of Pittsburgh Conference, Evangelical Association, 1887-1894; United Evangelical Church, 1895-1922. Printed English. \$42.60.

Journal of North Illinois Conference, Methodist Protestant, 1861-1882. Manuscript. \$10.00.

*Methodist Advocate* (Atlanta), M. E. Church, 1869-1883. \$96.00.

Catalog of other materials on microfilm, \$1.00.

Commission on Archives and History

P. O. Box 488

Lake Junaluska, North Carolina 28745