

## Observations Concerning the Present Condition of Religion in the United States, Great Britain and Japan

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Any attempt to compare religion in the United States, Great Britain and Japan presents major difficulties. First, an evaluation of present conditions by a historian, who normally enjoys the benefit of some time perspective, invites disagreement by persons of other disciplines more at home in presentist analysis. Second are the perils of comparative history. Although historians have called for more such exercises—for example a comparison of frontiers or of comparative immigration studies<sup>1</sup>—to actually undertake such an exercise invites criticism. Arnold J. Toynbee, for example, perhaps the historian who has attempted comparative history most broadly and prominently, is often accused of reading well and convincingly, except in fields one knows something about. Despite its perils, however, I shall attempt such an exercise; comparisons and analogies are too important to be left only to social scientists, philosophers and theologians.

As if the perils of contemporary and comparative history were not enough, the present study will attempt to examine religious conditions in three highly-developed, industrial societies. Two of these societies, the United States and Britain, are predominantly Christian, even predominantly Protestant. But the third, Japan, is not mainly Christian. Christianity, though a fairly vigorous transplant in modern Japanese society, is the religion of less than one percent of her people.

Furthermore, religion is a multi-faceted part of life which should not be confined to an observation of "the Church," or even the status of Christianity. Religion should try to encompass the whole of spiritual concerns. And where do we turn for evidence concerning the "health of religion"? Are statistics of church membership and attendance adequate? Does a single life of religious quality indicate the strength of spiritual life in that society as a whole? Clearly, we can only attempt the most tentative judgement from imperfect experiences, and a broad but sporadic exposure to the writing appearing on a subject seen as increasingly important as modern society moves beyond mere affluence.<sup>2</sup>

Religion in modern society has been frequently discussed by social scientists, philosophers and historians. Although most are agreed that religion has played a major role in traditional European, American and Asian societies, the development of science, technology and industry in the past three hundred years, has led to a growing materialism, and even an anti-religious atmosphere. Some important scholars have insisted that religion has come to play little or no significant role in modern life. C. Wright Mills, for example, sees the church as an irrelevant institution as compared with the modern corporation or the state.<sup>3</sup> Peter Berger and Max Weber, among

others, insist that religion has become overwhelmed by modern materialism. And Karl Marx has even celebrated religion's fall.<sup>4</sup> Philosophers, theologians, sociologists and economists have joined historians in debating the question of religion's modern role, and a majority of American scholars, at least, seem to agree with Frederick Lewis Allen who, in looking at the role of religion in the United States in the post-World War I period, suggested that, while statistics might indicate that the church was holding its own, it had clearly lost its spiritual dynamic.<sup>5</sup>

Many American church historians appear to agree. Robert T. Handy, for example, claims that American religion from World War II to 1960 suffered a sharp decline. A "religious depression" has emerged, he says, presaged by the economic decline of the 1930's.<sup>6</sup> Yet one major church historian, who has concentrated his studies on the modern mission movement, Kenneth Scott Latourette, insists that Christianity in the U.S.A. after 1920 showed a condition of "mounting vigor." As his major evidence, he indicates the fact that church memberships came to over fifty per-cent of the population of the nation for the first time in 1950.<sup>7</sup>

Latourette judges the condition of Christianity in Britain at mid-century as "shrinking in numbers", and in a bewildered state, with clergy and laity alike searching for basic meaning in a world torn by war and depression.<sup>8</sup> Concerning Christianity in Japan, one of the last areas the Church entered in what Latourette called "the Great Century," he claims that the Church there—beyond the area of "Original Christianity" (Europe) and the "Larger Occident" (areas into which the Church followed Europeans as they migrated, as in the Americas)—was subjected to a drastic testing during World War II, which it "survived and entered upon a day of opportunity."<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps Latourette's observations are optimistic. Certainly his evaluation of Japanese religion operates from a Christian perspective, even bias. But we can at least use his evaluation as a basis from which to offer some observations now, a generation after Latourette wrote. These observations are based on many years of study of the American church, and a much more recent observation and study of Japanese and British conditions. Though this writer has had a more than casual interest in England and Japan over the years, his present study of these two societies has been made possible by a sabbatical leave from an American college, and has resulted in travel in Britain and a year's stay in Japan.

As a representative area of what Latourette has called "the Original Area of Christendom", and as the fount of the American Church itself, we should perhaps begin our survey in England. Then, we can move, even as the Christian Church itself expanded, into the United States—a representative area of Latourette's "Greater Occident." Finally, we will consider Japan, nearly the last of the mission areas into which Christianity moved, and where Christian evangelical work was not legal until 1873.<sup>10</sup>

One of the striking characteristics of contemporary British religion is the widely recognized lack of institutional church support by the English people. Sunday is a holiday, not as in the period before 1914, a day of worship and of family church-going.

Churches are not well attended, except for the growing Catholic Church, fed as it is by Irish immigrants and the demands of the Sacramental System. Perhaps typical of the British church dilemma is indicated in the following, written in August of 1981:

We went last evening to Sunday Evensong service at St. Giles, Cripplegate, Church, a Church of England parish church in the fascinating new development in the Barbican area just north of the City proper. Portions of the old Roman and Norman wall skirt the area. But the development is absolutely new, with a business—residential—arts—entertainment complex developing; a new city-within-a-city. And St. Giles is in the middle of this, a fascinating 12th century church, about the only surviving Gothic church in the London area which escaped the Great Fire of 1666, and though bombed in 1940, its walls remained and the gutted church has been beautifully restored.

John Milton is buried there! And Cromwell was married there! Frobisher and John Fox were associated with it. Yet at Evensong last evening, a full vicar of the Church of England, an Edward Rogers, and one of England's finest young organists, Ian LeGrice, serviced four of us, plus the lay reader, for that Evensong service. LeGrice indicated that Evensong is sometimes attended by one person. Even for the morning service seldom do they have 100, from that whole vast parish, now also servicing an area formerly assigned to St. Luke's Church, an 18th century building now in ruins and no longer safe for services.

The Rev. Mr. Rogers spoke of the "Crisis of the Church" in his sermon. Though he posed the right questions, his answers were not convincing. Apparently the new Bishop of London's book was released this week, and it deals with the question. The new Bishop is disturbed; he was formerly vicar of St. Margaret's near Westminster Abbey, thus in a strategic position to serve Parliament. I guess he is determined to get the Church involved in "real things," such as disarmament and arms control.

Yet there is that vast Barbican area, with thousands of people to be served by a parish church, and St. Giles has Evensong for four people! The ritual may drive people away. The organ music, though magnificent and finely done, was perhaps more appropriate for a concert (which LeGrice does) than for worship. There was no choir, and there is none, "except on Sunday mornings—what we can pick-up." Such a dead place, really. And I sat 25 feet from where John Milton is buried—as I struggled with my prayer book, a hymn book with no music, and hymns unfamiliar to me.<sup>11</sup>

This recollection, I think, presents a vignette of England's religious dilemma. Her forms and structures are perhaps too much related to the past, and religious expression seems frozen in architecture, prayer book and music. No trip to a London church is complete without an appeal for some restoration fund. Even St. Paul's, the scene of the royal wedding in late July, made its principal appeal related to the cost of maintaining that historic building—clearly an artistic service, but not a crucial religious endeavor.

Again, as noted two days before the royal wedding:

Perhaps the British took their religion too seriously in the past, as in the Civil War period. Certainly they seem to see only a corner of the meaning of the Church today. I heard magnificent music yesterday, and all of it composed for the Church and wonderfully performed—"by professionals." I heard two remarkable sermons, and witnessed much pomp and ceremony. Perhaps the message was conveyed. But so few heard Dan Jenkins' farewell sermon to his little flock at the United Reformed Church on Regent Square. And only a few hundred of the 3,000 in attendance at St. Paul's heard Cannon John Collins' appeal for a socially-conscious faith. As the Bach Toccata and Fugue in D minor swirled about St. Paul's in yesterday's Postlude, we sat in our seats to absorb the magnificence of the place and the music—as tourist-types (how ironic) came crowding down the aisle, buzzing about this spot "where they're to be married," and so-and-so "will stand here." Photo-flash bulbs popped all about us. It seems to be the pomp and the tradition that the English want, and the Church, especially the Established Church, is but a setting.<sup>12</sup>

England has real religious concerns, and certainly many people in England have a mature Christian faith. But the expression of this, if we are to judge by the literature which has been produced in this century, tends to be in the form of a retreat to tradition itself, as in T.S. Eliot, or in the form of argument and aplogia, as in the case of C. S. Lewis. Both are established literary masters, sophisticated practitioners of language, image and metaphor. Both are sensitive seekers for meaning in a world of philistinism and materialistic shallowness. Where others such as Yeats, Lawrence and Joyce have found themselves, their vision or modern materialism to celebrate or bewail, Eliot and Lewis have found meaning in traditional religious belief. That both are read and absorbed is evidence of a certain religious interest and concern. Yet this concern does not translate, usually, in changed conduct and institutional commitment. Religion in England today seems to have become an intellectual matter participated in as a literary exercise. Even Bishop Robinson's basically church-related analysis in *Honest to God*, is a highly literary, sophisticated analysis of the problem of belief for

modern, educated persons.<sup>13</sup> Britain's major religious figures in this century, in fact, have almost all been churchmen who wrote, who have participated in the dynamic dialogue of literature—W.R. Inge, William Temple, Evelyn Underhill. The era of the active religious leaders in England seemed to end with World War I—William Booth, George Williams and Florence Nightengale all died between 1905 and 1912.

If C.S. Lewis seems to be the major writer speaking to British religious problems since 1945, perhaps the most significant, representative American voice is that of Martin Luther King, Jr. A Negro, thus a member of a discriminated-against minority, King became the principal spokesman of the rising Civil Rights Movement, a social-action dimension of American church life growing directly from King's religious commitment, and from the Black Church itself. To a remarkable degree, the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement in America has come out of the Black Church. This may be due in large part to the fact that the Black Church was the first institution in the life of the American Negro that he could totally call his own, and away from "Whitey's" financial control. It seems due, in part, too, to the liberal Christian, social-action bias of the Movement's best-known leaders—King, Jesse Jackson, Ralph Abernethy, Andrew Young, etc. Clearly, the Civil Rights Movement owes a great debt to the Black Church, and the Movement has consistently appealed strongly to the religious traditions and commitments of the white community to work efficiently in largely non-violent ways.

Furthermore, American theological thought has also reached unusually high levels of accomplishment since World War II. In a nation that had produced few theologians of merit before 1945—some have said that Jonathan Edwards was the only important religious thinker produced in America prior to 1945—suddenly American theological thought has flowed fully with the work of Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr, Nels Ferre, Elton Trueblood, Charles Hartshorne and the work of the great German immigrants from Hitler's Germany such as Paul Tillich. Reinhold Niebuhr's work might well have served as our example of the dynamic of American Christianity, especially as demonstrated in his insightful *Irony of American History*, and *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*.<sup>14</sup> Yet probably Martin Luther King's great speech before 200,000 people at the 1963 March on Washington, best placed the yardstick of the divine imperative beside the American practice. "I have a dream," he said. "A dream deeply rooted in the American Dream." And he might have added, closely related to the basis of his own religious faith. "I have a dream, that someday little white girls and boys will be able to play with little black girls and boys, way down in the red hills of Georgia. I have a dream."<sup>15</sup>

There is a considerable dynamic in the American church. Though memberships in traditional, mainline Protestant churches have dropped, and the growth of the Catholic and other ethnic churches is modest, there is a great growth in the mass-appeal, evangelistic churches, the so-called "Third Force Churches." Although many sectarian aberrations are pursued by some of these groups—snake-handling, spiritualism, peace-of-mindism, single-issue politics, faith-healing, American-firstism, and Zionism in various forms—this vitality that keeps being drawn into the American church as

a whole, prevents it from settling into over-intellectualism, smugness or ritualism. True, evangelism is not dead in the England of the revivals of Wesley and Whitefield, but Billy Graham's crusades have had to be imported into England, as they were in the days of Charles G. Finney and Dwight L. Moody. And in England today, Graham's crusades have borne scant fruit.

Billy Graham's crusade came to Japan in 1980, and large crowds heard him in the vast ball-parks of Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima and Nagoya. But though interest was high, conversions were few. The whole Christian movement, although quite strong and financially pretty well able to pay its own way, represents but a tiny portion of the religious picture of Japan today. In fact, one new religion—a new Buddhist sect in the tradition of the thirteenth century prophet, Nichiren—Sokka Gokkai, has a membership fifteen times larger than all the Christian churches in Japan combined; and Sokka Gokkai was not founded until the 1920's. The twentieth century has seen, in fact, the formation of over 170 new sects in Japan, some of whom have bloomed in the sunshine of religious freedom since 1945.<sup>16</sup> Although major growth in the strength of Japanese religion may have been in the new religious groups such as P.L. Koyodan, Rissho Koseikai, Reiyukai, Seicho No Ie and Sekai Kyuseiko—which together number 13 million to add to Sokka Gokkai's 15 million—many traditional sects of Japanese Buddhism retain a strength of many millions, especially in the Jodo or Pure Land sects, and in Zen.<sup>17</sup>

Religion appears alive and well in Japan, though blatant commercialism and materialism associated with business-dominated politics has been immensely strong in post-war Japan. Most Japanese appear to be mainly concerned with their own material well-being, and easily become loyal corporation men and women, disciplining themselves to the demands of their employers today, even as Mikadoism may have disciplined them to the needs of the state in the 1930's and 1940's. Today the Japanese work hard and long. And frequently they expect their religion to serve economic purposes—part of Sokka Gokkai's growth appears to stem from a belief that honest work will have its rewards in this life. But frequently religious belief in Japan costs something too, and some Japanese seem willing to pay its costs. The ranks of the Buddhist priesthood, especially Zen, are quite full and monks of all ages are in evidence. And then, there is the life of Japan's best known Christian, Toyohiko Kagawa.

Kagawa's faith, arrived at while attending a Christian school in Shikoku, certainly cost him a great deal. He held to his firm pacifism all through Japan's venture with militarism from 1931 to 1945. Reviled as a traitor at home, though never imprisoned for any length of time (in contrast to Gandhi in India and conscientious objectors in the United States during World War II), Kagawa held to his simple love ethic and his sincere effort to live out the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. He lived for a number of years in one of Japan's worst slums, and refused to serve a usual parish pastorate because of what he believed to be the hollowness of "church-centered religion." He was a pioneer in Japanese welfare reform, in Japan's cooperative movement, and was one of the founders of the Japan Socialist Party. He insisted that "There

is no revelation but love. God should not be sought for in books, nor in the organization of institutions." He "should not be looked for theoretically, but God should be loved. God reveals himself in love . . . . Creation is an ornament designed by love."

Christ to Kagawa was "the supreme . . . revelation" of the character of God's compassion, yet the love for Jesus makes demands on Christians.

Leave to the Greeks their theories of divinity!  
Abandon to their musty libraries those scholars  
Who fail to love humanity . . . .

Is your love-citadel completed friends?  
Have you entered into your rightful inheritance?  
Of death to self and service to others.  
Have you done your portion of road-breaking  
For the way of the Cross? . . .<sup>18</sup>

Though he died in 1960, the Japanese, even Japanese Christians have not known what to make of Toyohiko Kagawa. Fundamentalists disagreed with his theology and lack of an evangelical emphasis. Fellow liberals in the Kyodan, the Church of Christ in Japan, were put-off by his criticism of institutional "church-centered religion." Americans, too, have been disturbed by his bitter criticism of American bombing of Japanese cities—"American militarism" he called it, as blatant in his mind as "Japanese militarism". Where in the 1930's Americans looked on him as the "great product of mission activity" and the "voice of a better Japan," his socialism and consistent pacifism has bothered many Americans in the 1940's and 1950's. And his lack of theological sophistication has laid him open to criticism of naivete and inconsistency. Kagawa himself recognized this. His only defense was the love demand of Jesus himself—and with a life many have compared to that of St. Francis of Assisi.

Kagawa lived out his life and died naturally in Buddhist Japan—in a Shinto Japan that often reviled him for his loyalties and his faith. Yet Japan allowed him to live his witness, and even bought his books.<sup>19</sup> In England C.S. Lewis had to make his "real reputation" in literary scholarship before his compatriots were prepared to read his religious statement in *Mere Christianity*. And in the United States, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated.

Another useful point of comparison between our three societies and the religious health of each, might be the way each of the religious communities has dealt with the problems posed by World War II. The experiences were very different. Britain suffered greatly, but prevailed through hardship to victory. The United States suffered little, yet was overwhelmingly successful. Japan was utterly crushed despite a total effort. And one of Japan's principal wartime institutions was a blatant Mikadoism, an official State Shinto dedicated to the success of Japan's military adventure, and

centralized in such famous places as the Heian Shrine in Kyoto and the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. Yet many, perhaps even most Buddhists and Christians in Japan were aware of their dual citizenship, and knew ultimately that they had higher loyalties to religious commitments beyond the state. Clearly, militarism's failure in 1945 forced many religious Japanese to rethink and perhaps even to mature their own religious commitment.

In Britain and the United States, on the other hand, religion never had to contend with the utter disappointment of a failure of the state, and the embarrassment of a religion which totally supported that state. The Church of England has an inherent state connection, and the concomitant danger of a kind of Mikadoism or "king worship" is easily reinforced in times of national crisis, or at times of high pagentry such as a coronation or a royal wedding. During World War II, the church and the state were more bound than at other times—Churchill's ringing words are so often accompanied by the vision of St. Paul's in flames; and both Churchill and World War I's Unknown Soldier are buried in the central aisle of Westminster Abbey, Britain's most enduring symbol of the merger of church and state.

The United States has made much of the principle of the separation of church and state. Yet in times of peril the blessings of the Divine hand are sought and assumed, as in Manifest Destiny, or the great crusades of light as opposed to darkness led in the twentieth century by the Presbyterian lay-divines, Woodrow Wilson and John Foster Dulles. What has been called the "American Civil Religion" has, in fact, emerged.<sup>20</sup> But its high priests have been mostly politicians and presidents. Lincoln, Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy have been its major spokesmen, and its shrines are almost exclusively in Washington, D. C., and are dedicated to Abraham Lincoln or to Thomas Jefferson, or to the nation's dead as at Arlington National Cemetery. The churches, aside from the Washington Cathedral perhaps, have largely escaped civil encroachment, and have remained as preaching-posts and worship centers in, but not of the state. One explanation of the relative crisis in British as opposed to American and Japanese religion, could be the over-close relationship between church and state that seems to persist in Britain unchallenged.

Britain also is the sole representative of the "Original Area of Christianity", while the other two societies represent areas where Christianity has been present at most four hundred years. Yet the apparent health of the Christian community in Poland and Germany seems to allay this explanation of an older, more mature thus more quiescent community. The Polish Church's struggle with Communism seems to have created an amazingly significant spiritual dynamic there, and the life of the German Church, shown in the theological speculations from Bonhoeffer to Pannenberg, seems to demonstrate immense depth and importance. In some areas of the "Original Area of Christendom," then, there is great creativity and life.

In summary, it seems to this writer that there is considerable religious vitality in both Japan and the United States, in part reflected in the spirit of religious experimentation present in both countries, and in part reflected in the kinds of expression



that both societies have demonstrated within a broad spirit of toleration. In Britain the religious health is not nearly so evident, perhaps not so much because of any formal limitation to toleration as it is due to British attitudes toward the state and tradition, and to "proprieties" that limit the arena within which religion is allowed to operate.

## NOTES

1. The call for more study of comparative frontiers results from the influential writings of Frederick Jackson Turner, especially his seminal essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1892). This essay contends that the frontier of settlement provided the focus for the process by which Europeans were made "Americans." But little has been done with similar geographies and similar processes in comparing what happened in Russian history because of her Siberian frontier, or in Chinese history because of her inner-Asian frontier.  
Similar calls for comparative studies have been made by American historians dealing with the important, perhaps the key characteristic of American history, immigration. The studies of Marcus B. Hansen, Karl Wittke, Oscar Handlin and others, need to be broadened to study the effects on other societies enjoying an influx of large numbers of new immigrants. The impact of urbanization on American society has been pioneered by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., and Richard Wade. Similar, perhaps broader studies are needed of the influence of the rise of cities upon other societies.
2. For recent studies suggesting the insufficiency of modern technology and the affluence it brings, and the need for a more satisfactory value system, more in keeping with the new conditions in post-industrial, post-energy-crisis society, see:  
Herman Khan and Thomas Pepper, *The Japanese Challenge: The Success and Failure of Economic Success* (Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle, 1981); Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (New York, Random House, 1980); and Peter Passell and Leonard Ross, *The Retreat from Riches: Affluence and Its Enemies* (New York, Viking, 1973).
3. C. Wright Mills, *The Causes of World War III* (New York, Ballentine, 1960) pp. 29-32.
4. See Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: A Criticism of Political Economy*, edited by Friedrich Engles and condensed by Serge L. Levistky (Chicago, Henry Regenery, 1967) pp. 222-223; Max Weber, *Bureaucracy*, in C. Wright Mills, editor, *The Images of Man* (New York, Brazillier, 1960) pp. 171-173; and Peter Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change* (New York, Doubleday Anchor, 1976) pp. 42-44.
5. Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties* (New York, Bantam, 1946) pp. 222-223.
6. Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York, Oxford, 1971) pp. 184-225.
7. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York, Harper, 1953) p. 1410.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 1387-1393.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 1448.
10. St. Francis Xavier introduced Catholic missions into Japan in 1549, but Christianity was "stamped out" and forbidden during the early Tokugawa period in the early seventeenth century.
11. Richard B. Drake, *Diary of Our English Trip*, personal library, p. 17.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
13. See Bishop John A. Robinson, *Honest to God* (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1963). C. S. Lewis' major apologia concerning his Christian faith are *The Screwtape Letters*—a view of this world from the perspective of hell—*The Problem of Pain*, and *Mere Christianity*. One of Lewis' biographers, Chad Walsh, has called him, "Apostle to the skeptics."
14. Reinhold Niebuhr has questioned the frequently misused assumption that "God has been on our side." Both the *Irony of American History* and *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, suggest that American history needs to be re-read as tragedy, even in the same light that Amos suggested for the northern kingdom in the eighth century B. C.
15. For Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, most insightful narrative and analysis of his own career, see *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York, Harper, 1958).

16. William H. Forbis, *Japan Today: People, Places, Power* (Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle, 1975) pp. 102–103.
17. See Douglas M. Kentrick's "Religion in Japan," a useful, readable and surprisingly insightful essay in *Fodor's Japan and Korea, 1981* (New York, David McKay, 1981) pp. 59–60. But see also William K. Bruce, *Religion in Japan: Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity, Report by the Religion and Cultural Resources Division, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for Allied Powers, March, 1945* (Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle, 1980) pp. 173–176.
18. Cyril J. Davey, *Kagawa of Japan* (New York, Abingdon, 1960) pp. 88–89. The poem is taken from Kagawa's *Meditation on the Cross*.
19. Japanese society, though it has remained traditionally Buddhist/Shinto/Confucian, has a great interest in Christianity. Kagawa's books in their day were widely read, and a recent best-seller has been Shusaku Endo's *A Life of Jesus* (1973), translated into English by Richard A. Schachert, S. J., and available in a 1978 edition.
20. This phrase has been used frequently in recent religious analysis of American society, especially by Martin E. Marty in such books as his *Righteous Empire: the Protestant Experience in America* (New York, Harper, 1970); and Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York, Seabury, 1976).

Particularly useful studies of the historic belief in the merger of American democracy and Christian purposes are seen in Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny* (Glocester, Mass., Peter Smith, 1958); Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (1963); and Ralph Henry Gabriel, *The Course of American Democratic Thought* (New Haven, Yale, 1956).

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## Summary

# Observations Concerning the Present Condition of Religion in the United States, Great Britain and Japan

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Despite the difficulties inherent in a comparison of contemporary religious life in three very different industrialized societies, and the author's own imperfect knowledge, especially of Japanese and English society, this study purports to see considerable religious vitality in Japan and the United States, and considerably less in Great Britain. Evidence is presented as to the difference in institutional vigor observed, and the difference in operative freedom of religious expression in these three societies. As representative voices of these societies, the lives and works of C. S. Lewis, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Toyohiko Kagawa are examined.