

The New Crusade

Kagawa Preaches Economic Salvation

by **BERTRAM B. FOWLER**

THE GREAT SPIRITUAL leaders of the world have a way of appearing from the most unexpected quarters. When Philip brought word to Nathaniel that he had found the great leader whose coming Moses had prophesied, Nathaniel countered with a question that has ever since summed up our cynicism regarding the appearance of apostles, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Following Christ, Paul came from the ranks of the persecutors of Christianity to establish the teachings of the Messiah as a permanent and fixed philosophy. There have been a few great leaders since then. All of them have been men and women who interpreted the basic teachings of Christianity, opened new vistas, gave fresh impulse to theology, and blazed new paths of action for the human race.

So today the comet of Toyohiko Kagawa's gospel of economic Christianity is blazing across the heavens. Those who know of him and his teachings have accepted him as the great Christian leader of the age. For, following generations of preachers who taught a philosophy of ethics that creaked and groaned as it was bent and twisted to fit an unethical system of economics, this man has come with his flaming gospel of a theology that is practical and applicable to modern problems.

He preaches no Kingdom of God in some distant and shadowy hereafter but the Kingdom of God upon earth, to be brought in by the practice of co-operative brotherhood. And his method of teaching is as practical as is his message. He goes direct to the heart of the problem, to the starving millions of the underprivileged, and shows them how to form co-operatives, how to lift themselves out of intolerable conditions, how to better their present lot. He shows these men the workable plan of consumer co-operation and then tells

them: "This is Christianity. This is economic theology."

As a result Western Christians have been turning to this remarkable man, this man who more than any other figure of our times deserves the title of a present-day saint. The preachers and teachers of America turn to Kagawa, look upon the tremendous change he is working, and ask for counsel, ask him for words of advice. And to them Kagawa answers, "Form co-operatives. Help bring in the Kingdom of God upon earth. Reach out co-operatively and meet the Christians of all lands to build peace and plenty upon earth."

II

TO UNDERSTAND this man who is stirring the churches of the world to action as no man has stirred them in generations, it is necessary to understand his background, the tragic, moving story of his childhood and youth, as well as the stirring and monumental work of his manhood. The story of Kagawa is intensely human. It is a story that is a strange mixture of Oliver Twist, of Roland, of Francis of Assisi. The man and his work tower monumentally today. If his story had ended with his early struggles it would have made merely a story to touch the hearts of men. Instead it has gone on to move them to follow him along the road of a new phase of Christianity, an economic one, probably one of the most important in the whole history of man's developing understanding of the all-inclusive teaching of the great Messiah.

His birth was inauspicious. His father was of the Japanese nobility. His mother was a concubine. When he was four years old, both father and mother died, and he was brought to the ancestral home at Awa to be greeted by his stepmother with the words, "You are the son

of my enemy." In this atmosphere he spent his childhood. He knew cruelty and hatred, this child who hungered for affection and understanding.

When in his teens, he went to live with his uncle in the city of Tokushima. He was still the son of his father. Back of him were the traditions of the Japanese family, before him a career that should square with those traditions. He was taught Confucian precepts. "Be a saint. Be a gentleman." But Kagawa was beginning to wonder how one became either of these when there was no pattern. For as yet he had been presented with no model after which to fashion his life.

He was allowed to attend a mission school because his family believed that he would there learn English, a laudable and practical accomplishment. But at the mission school he found his pattern in Christ.

The next step was theological school. But that step brought the final break with his family. He was cut off from all material support. He was thrown upon his own resources. He had to work his way through college.

He was obliged to cut his studies short when he became a victim of that dread disease, tuberculosis. He won that battle but has gone forward ever since with the handicap of ill-health added to the many others that circumstances and tradition had placed upon him.

Perhaps it was such trials and handicaps that developed that Roland side of his nature, the indomitable courage and blazing zeal. For when he finished his studies in the theological school he turned his back on the pleasant dormitory where he might have lived and moved down into the Shingawa slums of Kobe.

Here he lived in a little room six by six, surrounded by poverty, misery, and degradation in its vilest and most horrible forms. From a beggar with whom he shared his tiny room he caught tracoma and almost lost the sight of one eye. A ruffian who demanded his money knocked out some of his front teeth. He was driven out by the people he had come to help, but returned. He loved these people. He refused to call upon the police for help even when his life was threatened. With the understanding and tenderness of a St. Francis was coupled the courage of Roland.

People or circumstances couldn't make him quit. It took his own convictions to do that.

For five years he worked in this fashion and quit only when he saw the hopelessness of his struggle. He said at this point, "One individual working for individuals cannot change society."

So he altered his tactics, broadened his work. The next five years saw Kagawa working through his second great phase of activity. He got a chance to go to America and study. He spent two years at Princeton, completing his education and studying labor organizations and social work. He returned to Japan to throw himself into the organization of Japanese labor.

In the following five years he organized the Japanese Federation of Labor. He organized the Farmers' National Federation. He started the first laborers' school, the first laborers' newspaper.

Having brought the laborers and farmers together he proceeded to push through the thing that had beaten the intellectuals for thirty years. He was the one responsible for the gaining of universal manhood suffrage. He got the masses their votes. He went further and showed these masses how to pull together to get farmer and labor candidates elected to the National Diet.

III

THOSE WERE five years of accomplishment that were epochal. That phase alone would have been a monumental lifework for any single man.

To Kagawa it was but the beginning. For in his work he saw something beyond all this. He began to perceive a goal toward which he has since steadily been driving. He found consumer co-operation.

In it he saw not merely economic democracy. To him it was economic Christianity. He really perceived the intrinsic and necessary unity of all phases of man's activities and knowledge. For men's lives were based on certain ethical values — brotherhood, liberty, true equality. Therefore, to be sound and enduring, all the rules and methods of business and politics must square with the underlying ethical-democratic foundation of true Christianity.

Preached as a mere intangible outline of a possible Utopia, such a teaching would have been just another collection and vocalization of an abstruse philosophy. But Kagawa doesn't

preach in that manner. He threw himself into the building of co-operatives just as he had thrown himself into the organization of farmers and labor. He showed the people how to build co-operatives and then told them, "This is Christianity. This is the rule of Christian brotherhood, and this is how it works."

There were already co-operatives in Japan. The government had sponsored co-operatives and credit unions since the beginning of the century. But Kagawa vitalized them, brought out the basic tenets of consumer control of the economic system.

He remade the credit-union movement. He added to it marketing and purchasing services. For most of Kagawa's people were so poor that the formation of co-operative stores was out of the question. He worked with what he had, and out of his efforts is growing a co-operative movement that amazes all those who see it.

He has fostered and developed co-operation in all its phases. He has helped to found co-operative schools based on the Danish folk-school system. There are nearly a hundred of these schools now teaching the co-operative technique, spreading the gospel of economic Christianity.



Toyohiko Kagawa

Portrait by Karl S. Woerner

To insure real leadership, Kagawa is working among the university students. In five of the big Tokyo universities he has started consumer-co-operative societies. Thus he is reaching the

coming leaders, is turning out men and women to carry the co-operative idea to their communities.

Throughout the phases of his career he has continued to turn out a veritable sea of literature on the subjects with which he is concerned. Only forty-six years old now, he has something like sixty books to his credit. When interviewed a short time ago, he spoke of several articles he had been asked to write, of a serial that was then running in the co-operative magazine, of another he had promised to write for the magazine *YuBen*, and of his book, *Moral Statistics of Japan*, then being brought out by his publishers.

IV

FOLLOWING his career one is forced to double back repeatedly. For the pages of the story of his life are so packed with incredible labors, with equally incredible accomplishments that one misses points that must be taken up.

It was during his labor-organization days that one event took place that showed Kagawa's growing importance in Japan. He had been thrown into jail with several other labor leaders following the race riots in 1919. While there, he finished a book he was then working on. And, while there, another book of his went from the publishers to the bookstalls. So great was the demand for the book that on the day of its release queues of purchasers formed before the bookstores in Tokyo, eager to buy it.

They do not throw Kagawa into jail any more. The militarists who have brought pressure to bear upon all those who fight and work for peace during the past few years do not touch Kagawa. They do not dare. For they know that if they did there would be a popular uprising.

And Kagawa makes no attempt to soften his words or hide the nature of his philosophy, which is that of universal peace and brotherhood. He is outspoken in his arraignment of those who would plunge the nation into another war. But he is Kagawa, the one to whom the great masses of the common people look with veneration and adoration.

In fact the government is glad to turn to him when it gets stuck on a social problem. It called upon him to organize the social work

in the city of Tokyo. He was offered a salary of nine thousand dollars and the use of an automobile. Kagawa took the job but refused the salary and the car. He spent ten days each month at the City Hall and accomplished a complete reorganization of the Bureau of Social Welfare.

It was Kagawa who was responsible for the passage of a bill that appropriated twenty million yen for slum clearance and the erection of sanitary dwellings in five of Japan's largest cities.

It was Kagawa who personally led relief work following the earthquake of a few years ago.

But it is consumer co-operation to which he pins his faith now. In his own words, "I am pouring my prayers and the reddest blood of my life into the work of carrying forward this quiet, undramatic economic reform."

V

ONE OF THE most important phases of his work is the forming of medical co-operatives. Uncounted thousands of poor people have long been without any medical attention. The Japanese slums, in the villages as well as in the cities, have been cut off, by too-large fees, from the medical aid they so sorely need. Kagawa is pushing the formation of medical co-operatives and the setting-up of co-operative hospitals with astounding success. This phase of the movement is sweeping Japan.

He has turned to the poor fishermen who form a large part of Japan's population. He is showing them how to organize to get for themselves better boats, better equipment, and better prices for their products.

Kagawa is launching plans to remake the whole of Japanese economy. He is fostering a movement for the planting of nut-bearing trees on the slopes where no other crops will grow. And these slopes represent a large percentage of the total acreage of the islands. He is showing the people how to use acorns that formerly were left to rot on the ground in some sections, how to mix the ground nuts with a percentage of grains to make poultry feed.

On Musashin Plain about ten miles out of Tokyo is a little farm that someone has described as being in essence a "one-acre evangelism" project. Here, on a farm one acre in size, Kagawa has placed a young Christian, a

graduate of the Imperial Agricultural School. The one-acre farm has become a model of what can be done on such a small plot. More important, it is the center of a growing co-operative community. A child from each home in the community brings to the farm four eggs a day. In a year's time it is expected to have a fund of two thousand yen with which to start a credit union for buying fertilizer, seeds, and other necessities to improve farming in the community. Plans have been laid for the opening of a consumers' co-operative store as soon as enough capital shall have been accumulated for a start.

All over Japan the same movements are under way. They are going forward with gathering speed because of the energy given to them by the remarkable man who has brought to these humble people the hope of a new day, a day that can be ushered in through their own efforts. And the vitalizing part of the whole thing is its dynamic heart of practical theology.

The center of each one of these transforming villages is the gospel school, a practical school of Christian brotherhood in action. It teaches each group what it needs to know, whether it be beekeeping, fish culture, goat keeping, or handicrafts. But with the teaching goes the philosophy: "This is Christianity. In this manner does the teaching of Christ show you how to build a better life. For the teachings of Christ are brotherhood, co-operation, love — the brotherhood love and socialized love that will save all men and all society."

VI

THIS is the story that has been coming out of Japan during the past few years. It is the story of a movement started by the man who in the world today is standing head and shoulders above his fellows. His greatness comes perhaps from his selflessness and courage. For, with all the royalties that come from his books, regardless of the fact that he has built up a magazine that today has a paid-up circulation of a million, Toyohiko Kagawa is a poor man as the world counts riches. He lives in the simplest, most humble fashion. The modest home that he occupies outside Tokyo has become something in the nature of a shrine. For to it and through it there flows a continual stream of visitors, suppliants, rich and

poor, askers and givers, seeking their leader.

In the midst of this household that grows as the work grows is Mrs. Kagawa, Kagawa San's right hand. This is the living center of the tremendous work that has spread throughout the Empire. And the house itself is worth perhaps a few hundred dollars. The worth of that household not only to Japan but to the whole world cannot be computed in terms of money. For to many thousands of religious leaders all over the world who acknowledge Kagawa's greatness, this little house is the house on the crossroads of the world.

Religious leaders have sent to this house for a message from Kagawa to Western Christians. To everyone he returns the same answer: "Form co-operatives and reach out to meet co-operatively your brothers in all lands." That is his message. It epitomizes his lifework, that amazing lifework that has already packed into each one of its phases the lifework of the average leader.

Throughout the Western states of America, where consumers' co-operation is growing with tremendous speed, Kagawa's name is one to conjure with. The tremendous swing of the Protestant churches to this movement of economic Christianity can be partly attributed to Toyohiko Kagawa. For it was he who gave the phase its real and dramatic meaning.

Kagawa's Kingdom of God movement has reached the West. It has been translated there into terms of action. The results obtained by Kagawa in the almost impossible conditions of the Japanese slums have been something of a revelation to these American leaders who have sought for an economy that would square with the deep and significant teachings of Christianity and democracy.

Kagawa comes to America this year in response to a growing demand. He is being brought over by the Rauschenbush Foundation. But the calls for his appearance are already multitudinous.

The churches have heard his message. They wish to hear it from his own lips. They want to hear him voice it, even though they already know what that message will be: "Form Co-operatives. Help to bring in the Kingdom of God through economic action."

This is the message of Kagawa, the apostle of brotherhood and Christianity in the affairs of men.

The People's Business

The Truth About Taxes

by ROBERT H. JACKSON

MR. EDWARD E. LOOMIS, who wrote on "Taxes and Labor" in the December FORUM, dislikes taxes — apparently all taxes. Emotionally, I am in sympathy with him. From childhood we hear about death and taxes as the twin evils all must face. Nearly all revolutions have been contributed to by a hatred of taxation.

Mr. Loomis especially dislikes wasted tax money. Every straight-thinking person will agree with that view. No government — federal, state, or municipal — functions without some waste. In times of extreme pressure to meet emergencies, government, like private business, experiences greater costs and greater wastes. Private business too has waste, has unreasonable salaries and extravagant bonuses and useless relatives on payrolls. These also cost the public, the consumer, and the stockholder heavily. But so far in this country indignation is directed against only governmental waste.

However, after I have sympathized with his emotional opposition to taxes and his plausible generalities about economy, I am brought face to face with the realities by Mr. Loomis' statement (the italics are mine):

While we must expect private business to pay its *fair share* toward the support of all *proper* governmental activities, still, in the interest of sound and lasting prosperity, we cannot afford anywhere to suffocate established business with taxes for the support of projects which mean little more than a *political distribution of public funds*.

This statement brings us exactly to the point that every tax discussion reaches. Argument as to taxation always becomes one of the propriety of the purpose and then of fair distribution of the burden. To these problems Mr. Loomis makes only a very indefinite contribution. His specific grievance is the railroad burden, and here he seems to have a sound case — but one of such long standing that it is not a

case against this administration, as it has been apparent for some years that the tax load of the railroads was out of proportion to their revenues.

II

THE CHALLENGING note in Mr. Loomis' article, couched in generalities, is in its undertone of big-business psychology. Its attitude is that the only people who are money-wise are big businessmen, that only government is extravagant, that taxes should never increase, and that all tax money is wasted. Mr. Loomis, to support his condemnation of the government, compares the federal outgo of 1935 with the outgo for the first 124 years of the nation's existence. Is it fair to compare the cost of a frontier government in log-cabin days with the cost of government under conditions of 1935? Is it fair to throw into a comparison the cost of administering a nation of 48 states with the cost of administering one of 13 colonies or a government of 120,000,000 people with the government of a few million?

Unless Mr. Loomis is different from the average man, his own expenditures — even for the depression year, 1935 — would have kept his grandfather in pocket money for a lifetime, and, unless his is different from most families, his children have an idea of expenditure that will make his own look conservative.

These advancing costs of individual existence are caused by a progressing standard of living. Increasing taxes result from a collective standard of living that has increased at least as rapidly as our individual standard of living.

Moreover, the government has been driven to a very large part of this increasing expenditure by demands of business. The most significant change in living conditions of this country is due to motorizing the nation's transportation. Three principal elements contributed to