

Everyone is Different, Everyone is Special: Considering Multicultural Programs within the Catholic Tokyo International Center

みんな違ってみんないい：カトリック東京国際センターの多文化実行への考察

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1. Purpose of Study

This presentation delineates the affects migration policies of the Japanese government have on the Catholic Tokyo Archdiocese (TAD) and analyzes the evolution of its multicultural stance of this institution's future. The purpose of this study is to better understand how the policies toward initiating multiculturalism at the grassroots level have changed in accordance to immigration trends. This is achieved by focusing on the Catholic Tokyo International Center (CTIC) and its ability as an appendage of the TAD to advance multiculturalism within its younger generation through its summer youth programs.

2. Research Guidelines and Methodology

This study is based upon ethnographic and observational research conducted within the TAD from the period of 2008~2011. Attending more than 15 churches over this period, I interviewed Japanese, Filipino, and Japanese-Filipinos (JF) Catholics to better understand how cultural practices and beliefs are passed down from one generation to the next.

Studies were limited to JF children, their families, and Catholic communities with large JF attendance. The large percentage of Catholics within the Filipino migrant community offers an appropriate location to study how beliefs are transferred within a multicultural setting such as the Japanese-Filipino family. The TAD was chosen for the high numbers of Filipinos living in the greater Tokyo area, which according to 2009 statistics numbered 55,864 residents (Arikawa 2011).

3. Setting the Historical Landscape: Japan, the RCCJ and CTIC

After WWII, the repatriation of Japanese citizens from wartime annexed territories left Japan with a labor surplus. As production rates grew into the 1970s a booming economy produced a greater need for labor that led to new immigration policies. Invitations toward “newcomer” migrants in the 1980s began to change the

ethnic landscape of Japan. By 1991, Japan's bubble burst and with it also Japan's need for immigrant labor. As Japan entered an economic recession it cracked down on illegal migration and tightened its immigration policies (Komai 1995; Lie 2001).

Immigration policies over the past thirty years have had lasting repercussions on the population of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan (RCCJ) due to newcomer countries comprising heavily of Catholic believers. Currently, the RCCJ consists of more than half foreign believers, making even slight changes to foreign policy produce adverse affects. CTIC, the organization that has dealt with the majority of multicultural issues within the TAD, is where grassroots programs have been at the forefront of caring for hundreds and thousands of migrants. Although CTIC began by offering guidance and support to foreigners in need, in 2010 it changed its scope to address multicultural issues of not merely a single ethnic group, but all multicultural issues regardless of majority of minority status.

4. Focusing on the CTIC Youth Programs

The change of CTIC multicultural programs is reflected, amongst other places, within its summer youth camp. The evolution of this camp's goals are explained in four steps: 1) the summer camp first targeted multicultural children for their vocational possibilities while working with religious orders. 2) Next, CTIC opened its own camp independently as a means of expanding its mission to all multicultural children. 3) Then, CTIC shifted its focus toward multicultural families as a means of targeting the roots of multicultural children's identity problems. 4) Finally, CTIC constructed a separate program to empower multicultural junior leaders to take over the future RCCJ. These four steps offer a glimpse of CTIC's evolution as it has struggled to embrace its ethnic diversity since its 1990 conception.

5. In Conclusion

This study has used CTIC and its youth program to better understand the evolution of multicultural policy within the TAD. What first began as a response to Japanese immigration policy, CTIC now has managed to pave its own path toward a multiculturalism in which all its members—not only migrants—can participate.

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