



The Norwegian-American Lutheran Experience in 1950s Japan: Stepping up to the Cold War Challenge

Kate Allen, John E. Ingulsrud

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Stepping Up to the Cold War Challenge: The Norwegian-American Lutheran Experience in 1950s Japan describes the events that led to the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC), an American Christian denomination, to respond to General MacArthur's call for missionaries. This Church did not initially respond, but did so in 1949 only after their missionaries had been expelled from China due to the victory of communist forces on the mainland. Because they feared Japan would also succumb to communism in less than ten years, the missionaries evaded ecumenical cooperation and social welfare projects to focus on evangelism and establishing congregations. Many of the ELC missionaries were children and grandchildren of Norwegian immigrants who had settled as farmers on the North American Great Plains. Based on interview transcripts and other primary sources, this book intimately describes the personal struggles of individuals responding to the call to be a missionary, adjusting to life in Japan, learning Japanese, raising a family, and engaging in mission work. As the Cold War threat diminished and independence movements elsewhere were ending colonialism, missionaries were compelled to change methods and attitudes. The 1950s was a time when missionaries went out much in the same manner that they did in the nineteenth century. Through the voices of the missionaries and their Japanese coworkers, the book documents how many of the traditional missionary assumptions begin to be questioned.

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