



## Unique But Not Different *Latter-day Saints in Japan*

By Shinji Takagi, Conan P. Grames, and Meagan R. Rainock

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### Description:

*Unique But Not Different: Latter-day Saints in Japan* offers an insightful exploration into the experiences of Japanese members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, shedding light on their integration of religious identity within a predominantly non-Christian society. Through comprehensive survey data collected from active practitioners, authors Shinji Takagi, Conan Grames, and Meagan Rainock delve into the challenges and opportunities these Latter-day Saints face. In doing so, they examine the diverse social, political, and ideological backgrounds of Japanese Latter-day Saints, providing valuable insights for scholars, missionaries, Church leaders, and members alike.

With meticulous analysis, the authors navigate topics ranging from personal conversion experiences to religious beliefs and adherence to cultural practices. They examine how Japanese Latter-day Saints successfully negotiate identity conflicts and contribute to the broader societal landscape amidst Japan's evolving cultural institutions. Offering statistical profiles and key findings tailored to various stakeholders, *Unique But Not Different* serves as an indispensable resource for understanding the complex dynamics of religious identity and acculturation in Japan, while also providing valuable insights applicable to minority religious practices worldwide.

“Provides readers with remarkable insights into the Japanese membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints two decades into the twenty-first century.”

—Reid L. Neilson, Former Assistant Church Historian and Recorder, and author of *Early Mormon Missionary Activities in Japan, 1901-1924*

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## Praise from early reviewers

- “*Unique But Not Different* by thoughtful observers Takagi, Grames, and Rainock, provides readers with remarkable insights into the Japanese membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints two decades into the twenty-first century. Mining statistical data from their own survey work, these scholars capture what it means to be a Latter-day Saint in Japan, including the opportunities and challenges associated with church membership in a minority faith in East Asia. They provide a valuable guide to those of us who research this global faith tradition and seek the latest religious data on a country whose past we study.” —Reid L. Neilson, Former Assistant Church Historian and Recorder, and author of *Early Mormon Missionary Activities in Japan, 1901-1924*
- “*Unique but not Different* offers two important interventions into the field of Mormon history: it both expands the geographic scope and captures the experience of common Latter-day Saints. Written with a brisk pace and filled with fascinating information, this book will be a crucial source for understanding Mormonism’s increasingly global reach.” —Benjamin E. Park, author of *American Zion: A New History of Mormonism*
- “*Unique But Not Different* is a must read for all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who love the Japanese people, have served a mission in Japan, spent time in Japan, or just want to understand the Japanese people and culture better. Based on responses and input from approximately 500 Church members in Japan, the authors have done a great job of letting the data speak for themselves. Through reading this book, you will understand better the demographics and profiles of Church members in Japan, trends in religious conversion, religious beliefs and practices of the Japanese people, and conflicts for the Japanese people while both trying to live the gospel and be successful in the Japanese culture, life, and workplaces. This book provides a thoughtful discussion of the challenges the Church and its members will face in the future. As one who has spent nearly six years in Japan as a missionary, I absolutely loved the book and, by reading it, gained a much better understanding of the reasons I had the experiences I did while serving there.” —W. Steve Albrecht, president of the Japan Tokyo Mission (2009–12)

## About the Authors

[Shinji Takagi](#) (MTS, Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, Vanderbilt Divinity School; PhD, economics, University of Rochester) is professor emeritus of economics at Osaka University, Osaka, Japan. A specialist in international economics, Professor Takagi has also held senior positions at the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC and visiting professorships at Brigham Young and Yale Universities, among other places. The author of nearly two hundred publications in economics, he has also published more than a dozen publications in Mormon history and biblical studies, including in the *Journal of Mormon History*, *BYU Studies Quarterly*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception*, and *Christianity & Literature*, and currently serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Mormon Studies Review*. His previous book on Japan, *The Trek East: Mormonism Meets Japan, 1902–1968* (Greg Kofford, 2016), won the Mormon History Association's biennial Best Book on International Mormonism award. He divides his time between two homes in Ashburn, Virginia and Fukuoka, Japan, where he holds an honorary position as Distinguished Research Professor at the Asian Growth Research Institute in Kitakyushu.

[Conan P. Grames](#) is an international lawyer who has lived and worked in Boston, New York, San Francisco, Princeton, NJ, Washington DC, and Tokyo. His twenty years' experience living in Japan was divided almost equally between his legal career and time as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving as a young missionary in the Northern Far East Mission, then as president of the Japan Sendai Mission, public affairs director of the Asia North Area, and executive secretary to the Asia North Area Presidency. He is a graduate of the University of Utah and Harvard Law School. Conan is fluent in Japanese and has written and spoken extensively on the history of the Church in Japan. He and his wife, Cindy, are the parents of six married children and currently live in Draper, Utah.

[Meagan Rainock](#) holds a PhD in sociology from Vanderbilt University. As a researcher versed in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, she focuses on the experiences of marginalized communities as they navigate social institutions. Past research projects span the topics of health and well-being, race and ethnicity, social control, and social psychology. She currently performs research and teaches college courses as a Vanderbilt-Fisk Postdoctoral Scholar in Nashville, Tennessee.