UNIQUE BUT NOT DIFFERENT

LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN JAPAN

Shinji Takagi, Conan Grames, and Meagan Rainock

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日本の末日聖徒を理解する

日本語要旨付

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Preface

Unique But Not Different seeks to elucidate how Japanese Latter-day Saints practice their faith as members of a minority religion in a country of 126 million people—a country where Christians constitute less than 2 percent of the population—and to identify the challenges and opportunities that current and prospective members will face in a society undergoing profound demographic, cultural, and other societal changes. While this work is specifically about Japan, the findings are widely applicable to any society in which Latter-day Saints must make personal acculturations as they adopt a new religious identity. We provide a general analytical tool for approaching minority religious practices. By applying a social-scientific perspective, we aim to advance our understanding of how members of The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints outside the United States, and especially in a non-Christian country, come to embrace Latter-day Saint identity and manage their conflicts with the host society.

According to the information provided to the authors, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at the end of 2022, maintained three temples,[1] six missions, twenty-two stakes and eleven districts, and 230 congregations (143 wards and 87 branches) in Japan. The latest reported membership of 129,912 constitutes less than 0.1 percent of the population, but it makes the Church one of the largest Christian denominations in Japan. While most major Christian denominations have experienced declines in membership, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has registered a continuous, albeit modest, growth in recent years. Even so, the Church, too, faces the challenges of rising religious apathy in the country and an adverse demographic trend (Japan's population peaked in 2008 and has since been declining), as the membership growth has decelerated. The activity rate (the proportion of regular church attendees in total membership) remains low, perhaps in the neighborhood of an estimated 20 percent. This is the context that situates this study.

Yet, this work does not directly address the question of why the Church, much less Christianity, appeals to such a small segment of

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1. A fourth temple, in Okinawa, was dedicated in 2023.

Japanese society. Nor do we address, at least directly, the question of why some converts find it difficult to remain active in the Church. Rather, we take an indirect approach to tackling these and other questions. Instead of focusing on investigators who choose not to convert, or on members who choose to drop out of activity, we place the focus of this study on active practitioners of the Latter-day Saint faith. By understanding how they successfully navigate the conflicting demands of church membership, we hope to understand—paradoxically—why others may find it difficult to do so.

This book grew out of the work we prepared for a volume of essays edited by Melissa Inouye and Laurie Maffly-Kipp, who had asked us to write a chapter on how Japanese Latter-day Saints practice their religion. In order to conduct an objective, data-driven analysis, we decided to administer an anonymous survey to practicing Latter-day Saints. As we were preparing the survey, it became obvious that doing justice to the data would require not a chapter but a book. We also recognized that, realistically, we had only one chance to administer a survey, given its time- and labor-intensive nature. Hence our decision to make the survey much more comprehensive than was necessary to complete our assigned task, even though this carried a risk of deterring potential survey takers. This book is an outcome of that decision.

The survey data were collected from October 22 through November 16, 2021, by Meagan Rainock. A link to the survey was sent electronically to about 300 individuals with known email addresses, with a request to forward it to additional people by email or through social media. In addition, the link was posted on several Facebook groups consisting primarily of active Latter-day Saints in Japan. Contrary to our expectations that few would start, much less complete, a survey of fifty-six questions, we were pleasantly surprised to receive between 440 and 530 responses, depending on the question. As is expected from the way the survey was administered, the sample consists almost entirely of religiously active Latter-day Saints.[2] Although the survey does not fully meet the standard of random sampling, these are precisely the type of individuals we had

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2. We define activity status strictly in terms of church attendance throughout this work. Those who reported never attending church constituted only 1.6 percent (or eight individuals) of the 498 respondents who reported their church attendance. Because even these individuals responded to the survey as introduced by their church friends, and they identified as Latter-day Saints in the survey, we maintain that they, too, are "active" Latter-day Saints in an identity-theoretic sense.

aimed to reach. If there is any bias in the sample, it is toward those with active social networks within Japan's Latter-day Saint community. There is no reason not to believe that they accurately represent the population of church members one might expect to meet when attending Latter-day Saint services in Japan.

The title *Unique But Not Different* is meant to capture the sense of what we discovered. Religiously active Latter-day Saints in Japan represent a wide spectrum of Japanese society in terms of political and social views. The overwhelming majority of them have fully embraced the LDS identity and have prioritized this identity in the organization of their lives. The incidence of identity conflict occurs only rarely even in the workplace. By establishing long-term relationships and making conflict-avoiding career choices, Latter-day Saints have found a niche for their particular lifestyle. The survey thus provides prima facie evidence that it is possible to be both a Latter-day Saint and Japanese. Culture, while expecting a certain behavioral pattern from individuals, allows choice and variation. Japanese society is sufficiently tolerant of a range of behavior, allowing Latter-day Saints to be unique in their beliefs and practices but not different from other Japanese people in terms of how they relate to many aspects of Japanese culture.

We hope that this study offers something to each of several groups of stakeholders of the Church. Scholars may find in it a contribution to the literature on the growth of Christianity in a non-Christian culture. Latter-day Saint missionaries may find this work helpful in enhancing their understanding of the cultural background of the members and friends they meet. Latter-day Saint leaders may find particularly useful the statistical profiles of Japanese Latter-day Saints, including why they joined the Church, what they think, and how they practice their beliefs. Japanese Latter-day Saints, for the first time, will discover the political and ideological inclinations of their fellow Saints. These are just a few examples of possible takeaways from the study. The concluding chapter summarizes what different stakeholders may learn from the survey findings. The reader may want to start with the concluding chapter before embarking on the main body of the book.

This work could not have been completed without the help of many. While they are too numerous to mention all by name, we express special thanks to the following friends for helping to disseminate the survey in Japan (in alphabetical order): Akira Amano, Ryuichi Inoue, Yuji Mizuno, Takanori Mochizuki, Kanji Moriya, Haruyoshi Nakamura, Jiro Numano,

Akiko Orito, Hiromi Sakata, Akiko Takaiwa, Koji Tanaka, Takashi Yamada, and Ayumi Watakabe. We also gratefully acknowledge the feedback on preliminary survey findings we received in a virtual focus group meeting organized by Ryuichi Inoue, as well as the helpful responses to our inquiries from Takuji Nagano and Osamu Sekiguchi. Last but not least, we thank Jana Riess and Benjamin Knoll for giving us access to subsample data from the Next Mormons Survey.

Our survey was coded and executed under the responsibility of Rainock, who maintains exclusive access to the raw data. We felt that, given Takagi's and Grames's existing social networks in Japan, this arrangement would give an extra layer of assurance to the protection of anonymity already embodied in the survey. This work is based on the de-identified summary Rainock has provided. Takagi was principally responsible for drafting chapters 1–2 and 4–6, while Grames drafted chapter 3. The chapters subsequently went through several iterations so that everyone's views were fully reflected. We assume collective responsibility for the content of the survey, the views, opinions, and interpretations expressed, and any errors that may remain.

The book is organized as follows. Chapter 1 explains the context for the Church in Japan, the theoretical approach that we take, and the demographic and other characteristics of survey respondents. Chapter 2 describes the personal and social profiles of Latter-day Saints in Japan, including their social and political views. Chapter 3 discusses the personal conversion experiences of survey respondents, especially regarding what they found was particularly meaningful to the formation of their Latter-day Saint identity. Chapter 4 turns to investigating their religious beliefs and adherence to religious practices. Chapter 5 then examines the issue of identity conflict; that is, how survey respondents mitigate any conflicts they may experience between Japanese culture and their religious practices. Chapter 6, the last of the six main chapters, discusses the broader challenges and opportunities faced by the Church amidst Japan's changing cultural institutions.

For the benefit of those who want a quick review of the findings of the book, we have prepared a concluding chapter (chapter 7), which provides key findings in summary form addressed to various stakeholders or audiences: researchers and scholars of the Latter-Day Saint movement; missionaries and mission leaders assigned to Japan by The Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-day Saints; Church leadership more broadly; Japanese members; and the general public. As assistance to Japanese readers, more-

over, we have attached to the end of this volume an executive summary, with the titles and legends of tables and figures, and an afterword prepared in the Japanese language. We offer these as a small token of gratitude for the generosity of nearly 600 Japanese Latter-day Saints who have made this study a reality.

January 2023

Shinji Takagi
Conan Grames
Meagan Rainock

An Approach to Understanding Minority Religious Practices
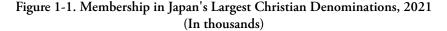
1-1. Introduction
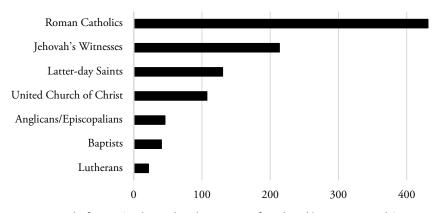
This book, based on a representative dataset of religious participation collected in late fall of 2021, applies a social-scientific method to advance our understanding of the religious beliefs and practices, as well as the social identities, of Japanese members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to Japan's official government statistics,[1] the Church had a membership of 130,192 at the end of 2021 (Bunkachō 2022). Even though this makes the Church one of Japan's largest Christian denominations (Figure 1-1), Latter-day Saints remain a distinct minority group in a country of 126 million people where Christians constitute less than 2 percent of the population,[2] and they often face cultural obstacles to the full exercise of their religion.[3] We attempt to understand what they believe, how they practice their faith, and how they manage the conflicts they may encounter as members of a minority religion in Japan. We further seek to

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1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is incorporated in Japan as a religious corporation under the Religious Corporation Law (*Shūkyō Hōjin Hō*). The Church voluntarily complies with the government's request to provide the Agency for Cultural Affairs (*Bunkachō*) with basic activity data annually, including the numbers of members, foreign and domestic missionaries, and places of worship.

2. According to official government statistics (Bunkachō 2022), Christians constituted 1.6 percent of the population in 2021, but this number was an underestimation of the true share of Christians. Some large Christian groups (notably the Unification Church and Jehovah's Witnesses) do not share their membership data with the government. Latter-day Saints constituted about 0.1 percent of the population.

3. Any obstacles Latter-day Saints may face in Japan are not legal but cultural. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by Article 20 of the Constitution of Japan, which reads: "Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity." Official translation from the Prime Minister's office.

**Figure 1-1. Membership in Japan's Largest Christian Denominations, 2021
(In thousands)**

Note: end of 2021 (peak number during 2021 for Jehovah's Witnesses only).
Sources: Bunkachō, *Shūkyō Nenkan* (Tokyo: Bunkachō, 2022); for Jehovah's
Witnesses only, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania (2021).

explore the challenges and opportunities current and prospective members face in a country that is undergoing profound demographic, cultural, and other societal changes.

To understand the religious beliefs and practices of Latter-day Saints in Japan and to uncover any conflicts and challenges they may experience as they practice their religion, we utilize the de-identified summary of an anonymous survey (the "Japan LDS Survey") of more than 500 individuals administered by Meagan Rainock in late 2021. Cyril Figuerres, a former manager of the Church's research division who presided over a mission in Japan, discusses how difficult it is to retain, let alone convert, Japanese people as practicing Latter-day Saints (Figuerres 1999). Based on proprietary information made available by Church leaders, we estimate the share of Japanese Latter-day Saints who attend church at least once a month to be, at most, 20 percent of those on the official membership records. This is somewhat lower than but not too far from the average weekly attendance rate of about 25 percent in Asia and Latin America observed in the early 1980s (Heaton 1998a). In this book, however, we do not directly address the question of why it is difficult for a Japanese person to accept and practice the Latter-day Saint faith. Rather, our primary concern is to understand how the Latter-day Saint identity is embraced, and how the Latter-day Saint faith is lived, by those individuals who have

found a way of successfully navigating the conflicting demands of church membership in the host society.
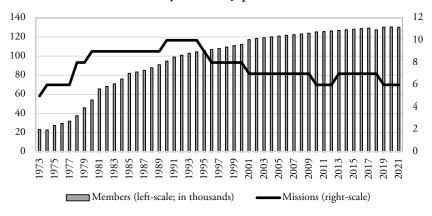
The rest of this introductory chapter is organized as follows. Section 1-2 presents a brief historical and contemporary context for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan, with a particular focus on the rapid growth of church membership during the post-World War II period through the early 1980s and the subsequent deceleration of growth in active membership in recent years. Section 1-3 presents the analytical framework ("identity theory") we use to frame the discussion and provides our operational definitions for culture and identity. Section 1-4 explains how the survey was administered as well as the broad demographic characteristics of those who responded to the survey, such as their gender, age, geographical profile, and marital status. Section 1-5 provides the respondents' religious and socioeconomic characteristics, including their employment, church activity, and membership status (i.e., converts vs. second- and third-generation members). Finally, section 1-6 presents a conclusion.

1-2. Historical and Contemporary Background

The beginnings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan are traced to the turn of the twentieth century, when in 1901 the Church dispatched apostle Heber J. Grant and his three companions to this then-emerging nation, making it Asia's first country in which Latter-day Saint missionary work was carried out on a sustained basis. Compared to its investment in European countries at that time, the Church's general lack of commitment to prewar Japan is evident in the number of missionaries assigned to labor in the field: for a country of 45–55 million people (about half the population of the United States at the time), the number averaged 12.5 and never exceeded 20 at any given time. The small number of converts (174 men and women from 1901 to 1924) was in large part a reflection of this. Yet, the Church was not quite prepared to increase its missionary force. It instead closed the Japan Mission in 1924, and missionary work did not resume until 1948 when a modest number of missionaries returned to restart the work following the end of World War II. However, it was only in 1968 that the Church's geographical expansion began in earnest, with a division of Japan's single mission (the "Northern Far East Mission"). The Church has since doubled and then tripled the number of missions (and missionaries) and penetrated virtually every corner of Japan.

The Church has seen a sixfold increase in its membership since the early 1970s, with most of the growth taking place through the mid-1990s

Figure 1-2. Membership and Missions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan, 1973–2021

Members (left-scale; in thousands) — Missions (right-scale)
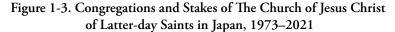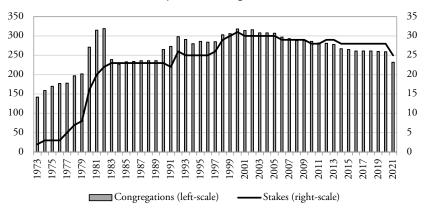
Sources for membership: Bunkachō, *Shūkyō Nenkan*, annual issues, supplemented by official church data and Deseret News (1995–2001); for the number of missions: various Church publications and authors' personal knowledge.

(Figure 1-2). Along with membership growth, the numbers of congregations (wards and branches) and of stakes (umbrella organizations comprising wards and branches) have correspondingly increased as well (Figure 1-3). At the end of 2021, the Church operated 232 congregations and 25 stakes throughout Japan. It should be noted that, following the initial growth spurred by the split of the mission in 1968, the number of congregations has not changed much since the early 1980s. The peak was in 1982 at more than 300, and the number has since declined through consolidation of smaller units into larger ones. Likewise, the number of stakes increased rapidly during the 1970s (following the establishment of the first stake in Tokyo in 1970), but the peak was reached in 2000 at 31. The variations in the number of units in recent years (when membership did not change very much) largely reflect the Church leadership's changing views on optimal organizational size.[4]

The Church now maintains congregations located in various municipalities across the country. It is not far from the truth to state that anyone living in or near a city of more than 150,000 can find a Latter-day

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4. In June 2021, for example, eight stakes around Tokyo were consolidated into five stakes, according to the official statement, in order to enhance member experience by allowing more members to attend larger units. Further consolidations took place during 2022 in Hokkaido and the Kinki region, reducing the number of stakes in Japan to 22 currently.

Figure 1-3. Congregations and Stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan, 1973–2021

Congregations (left-scale) —— Stakes (right-scale)
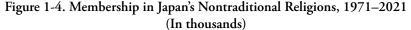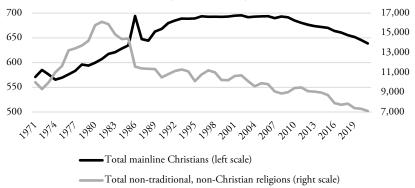
Sources for the number of congregations: Bunkachō, *Shūkyō Nenkan*, annual issues; for the number of stakes: various Church publications and authors' personal knowledge.

Saint meetinghouse within an hour's driving distance. The stronghold of the Church is in the region around Tokyo, which accounted for about a quarter of all congregations and stakes at the end of 2021. The region around Osaka, another population center, accounted for more than 15 percent of congregations and stakes. Yet the geographical distribution of the units does not fully reflect the distribution of Japan's general population. Relative to the population, the most successful area of the Church is Hokkaido, where there is a unit for approximately every 200,000 persons. The corresponding number for the Tokyo area is more than 700,000, and the average for Japan is about 470,000 persons per unit.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has established its presence among the Christian denominations in Japan through years of sustained membership growth. Its membership growth exceeded 15 percent per year during 1970–80 and maintained momentum (at more than 5 percent per year) through the early 1990s. As noted, however, the growth decelerated sharply in the 1990s and virtually ceased in the early 2000s. Despite continued baptisms, the numbers remained flat due to a declining birthrate, elderly deaths, and emigration. Yet, this "stagnation" contrasts with the experience of most other religious groups. Not only did those religious groups begin to experience stagnation earlier, but they have also more recently seen absolute declines in membership (Figure 1-4). For example, nontraditional religions (that is, "non-Shinto, non-Buddhist,"

Figure 1-4. Membership in Japan's Nontraditional Religions, 1971–2021
(In thousands)

Total mainline Christians (left scale)

Total non-traditional, non-Christian religions (right scale)

Notes: "nontraditional" refers to non-Shinto, non-Buddhist religions (classified as *shokyō* in *Shūkyō Nenkan*). Mainline Christians refer to those who belong to Christian churches with historical roots in prewar Japan, which include Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan; Anglican Church in Japan; United Church of Christ in Japan; Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church; and Japan Baptist Convention. Source: Bunkachō, *Shūkyō Nenkan*, annual issues.

but excluding Christian, religions) began to suffer membership declines in the 1980s. The membership growth of mainline Christian churches ceased in the 1990s, and a sharp decline in membership has been observed since the end of the first decade of this century.

The stagnant or negative growth of Christian and other nontraditional religions in Japan has occurred against the background of the general population's decelerating growth during the past few decades. Japan's population peaked in 2008 at 128 million and has been declining since. A statistical analysis of growth dynamics suggests that the stagnation of the growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in recent years has been largely driven by the adverse demographic trend, but, unlike many other religious groups, the relative success of its missionary work has, to a considerable extent, offset the negative demographic impact by adding new members (Rainock and Takagi 2020). In this interpretation, church membership in Japan grew rapidly when Japan's general population was increasing, but growth began to stagnate when the population growth decelerated. This process may have begun in the 1980s, when Figuerres (1999) observed no "real growth" in active, faithful members. New converts, averaging around 700 per year, have been just enough to make up for the attrition of active membership.

1-3. Analytical Framework

We maintain the perspective of "identity theory" throughout the book to motivate and frame our discussion. Identity theory is a sociological framework that aims to understand how individuals align their behavior with the roles expected from membership in a particular group. As such, it is ideally suited to investigating the transplantation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a foreign cultural setting. The Church, as a highly centralized organization, does not lend itself to a significant cultural adaptation in the mode of religious worship or practice. The *General Handbook* of instructions, prepared in Salt Lake City and translated word for word into Japanese, governs church administration. Thus, acculturation in the sense of cultural adaptation, if any, must take place primarily at the level of individuals, who must translate the meanings associated with their Japanese and Latter-day Saint identities into individual religious practice. Further, identity theory captures the reality of complex modern societies where individuals, having multiple identities, decide on a course of action when faced with competing expectations from the various social groups to which they belong. In this framework, individuals are seen as "agentic" (that is, actively choosing their behavior) in interaction with the bounds of norms accepted by the respective groups. Our focus is on how individual Latter-day Saints navigate the expectations of church membership against the competing demands of their memberships in various groups within the larger society.

What Is Culture?

Culture defies a simple definition (Minkov 2013; Hammersley 2019). In fact, there is no universally accepted scholarly definition of culture. Here, we take the view that the idea of culture is "a tool by which we reach understanding" (Morris 2012), a theoretical construct that offers an "interpretive framework" (Vivanco 2018). Accordingly, we broadly operationalize the concept of culture as referring to the set of beliefs, worldviews, values, meanings, institutions, and behavioral patterns, which are widely shared by a group of people. Three aspects of culture bear emphasis. First, elements of culture are often learned through the process known as "socialization" and are transmitted across and within generations. Second, as a result, culture has an element of inertia or persistence, which manifests itself as customs, traditions, and norms. Change is often resisted by those who belong to an older generation or have otherwise spent significant time and effort investing in what Pierre Bourdieu (1986)

Profiles of Japanese Latter-day Saints

2-1. Introduction

Having established the demographic, religious, and socioeconomic characteristics of the survey respondents in the previous chapter, our task now is to describe the personal and social profiles of religiously active members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan, including their political and social views. The purpose of this chapter is to understand how they live and think as members of Japanese society. An important perspective we maintain throughout this chapter is how they compare to the larger Japanese population whenever comparable data are available. When we consider their political and social views, we obtain those of the general public from the widely reported surveys conducted from time to time by the *Asahi Shinbun*, a major national daily, and the Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai (NHK), Japan's public broadcasting station. These two outlets are deliberately chosen, first, to ensure that comparable data exists close to the time the Japan LDS Survey was taken and, second, to ensure that we have reasonably unbiased benchmarks for comparison. It is generally believed that the *Asahi* leans progressive on most political and social issues, while the NHK leans somewhat more conservative. In a few instances where comparable data are available, we also compare the profiles of Japanese and American Latter-day Saints to provide an additional perspective.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. Section 2-2 provides a glimpse of Latter-day Saint family life in Japan, including the relative shares of intra- and inter-faith marriages and the number of children a man or a woman typically has. Section 2-3 discusses the cultural background of Latter-day Saints, including their educational attainment and foreign experience. Section 2-4 is about what we call "sociability"; that is, the respondents' personal disposition that determines how they build friendships and relate to others. Section 2-5 discusses the respondents' own perception of their ideological inclination; that is, how they place themselves on the conservative/progressive spectrum. Section 2-6 turns to their political views, including political party support and the nationally contentious and divisive issue of national defense, while section 2-7 reports their social views related to such contemporary issues as same-sex
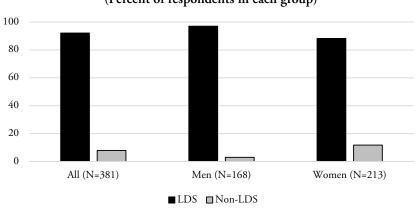
Figure 2-1. Member Status of Current or Former Spouses
(Percent of respondents in each group)

Source: Japan LDS Survey.

marriage, separate surnames for husband and wife, a female monarch, and government policy on immigration and refugees. Finally, section 2-8 presents a conclusion.

2-2. Family Life

Intra- vs. Inter-faith Marriage

We learned in the previous chapter that nearly 85 percent of men and women who reported their marital status were either married or widowed. Along with those who reported that they were divorced (about 4 percent of the respondents), this means that nearly 90 percent of the respondents had current or former spouses. The survey asked respondents if their current or former spouses were also Latter-day Saints, to which 381 individuals responded (Figure 2-1). Of these, 97 percent of men and 88 percent of women stated that their current or former spouses were also Latter-day Saints. The higher percentage for men probably means that women outnumber men both in convert baptisms and in active church membership, so women are more likely than men to be married or to have been married to nonmember spouses. It can also mean that, in Japan, as elsewhere in the world, men tend to have greater control over the selection of their marriage partners. Regardless, the overwhelming majority of religiously active Latter-day Saints in Japan appear to live in a Latter-day Saint household where both husband and wife are members.
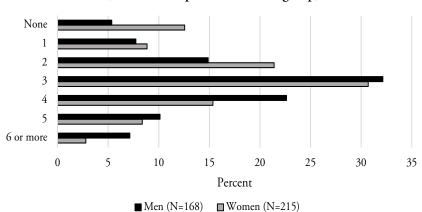
Figure 2-2. Number of Children
(Percent of respondents in each group)

Source: Japan LDS Survey.

Number of Children

There were 383 currently or previously married individuals who reported the number of children they had (Figure 2-2). Here, we report the numbers separately for men and women in order to minimize possible double-counting (of husband and wife). We observe that, for men and women, the largest number of them (32.1 percent for men and 30.7 percent for women) had three children; 22.6 percent of men and 15.4 percent of women had four children. Comparing these percentages to a 2016 survey of American Latter-day Saints, as reported by Riess (2019), Japanese family sizes most closely resemble the size of American families that belong to the "Boomer/Silent" generation, but they are greater than American "Generation X" families. Among Japanese survey respondents, the average number of children was 3.2 for men and 2.6 for women (the corresponding figures when those without children are excluded were 3.6 and 3.0, respectively). Latter-day Saint women in Japan on average appear to bear about one more child than their non–Latter-day Saint counterparts, whose total fertility rate (the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime) was 1.3 in 2021 and has never exceeded 2 since 1961 (MHLW 2021a).

These findings can be compared to those reported by Heaton (1998b) based on a survey of Latter-day Saints in fifty-nine congregations in five cities between the summer of 1981 and the end of 1984 (Table 2-1).[1]

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1. The sample consisted of all adults who attended church on a particular Sunday, with a follow-up random sampling of non-attenders.

Table 2-1. Comparing the Number of Children Born to
a Latter-day Saint Woman in Japan between the Early 1980s and 2021
(Percent of total, unless otherwise noted)

Number of children	General population (1981–84)	LDS population (1981–84)	Japan LDS Survey (2021)
0	20.6	10.4	12.6
1	26.1	27.8	8.8
2	40.0	33.6	21.4
3 or more	13.3	28.1	57.2
Memorandum			
Average number of children	n.a.	1.9	2.6 (2.8 for those over 40; 1.9 for those under 40)

Notes: for 1981–84, the number of children born to a married woman over the age of 16 in a married-couple household; for the Japan LDS Survey, the number of children born to a woman.
Sources: Heaton (1998b), Table 14.1; Japan LDS Survey.

Heaton found that, while Latter-day Saints had above-average fertility, the differences from the national average were not as large as those observed in the United States. Moreover, he found no conclusive or consistent pattern between religiosity and the number of children (e.g., a more religiously active Latter-day Saint woman did not necessarily have more children than a less active one). He thus concluded that Japanese Latter-day Saints were "only weakly" influenced by their religious faith in making their reproductive decisions, ascribing this behavior to the failure of the "pronatalist tradition and cultural orientation" to take root against the background of more culturally acceptable fertility patterns.

The findings from the Japan LDS Survey seem to contradict such an interpretation based on the 1980s data. That Japanese culture affects reproductive decisions is indisputable, clearly evident from the fact that the average number of children has declined over time among religiously active Latter-day Saint women (2.8 for women over the age of 40 vs. 1.9 for those under 40)—even allowing for the possibility that some of those under 40 are yet to have more children. At the same time, the number of children a Latter-day Saint woman in Japan typically bears in our sample was significantly larger than the population average (NB: 57 percent of Latter-day Saint women had three or more children in 2021). It is therefore equally indisputable that pronatalist ideology—centered in Latter-day Saint theology that defines the purpose of procreation as providing homes for God's spirit children—has taken root among religiously active Latter-

day Saints in Japan. Heaton's divergent findings may be explained by the nature of the Latter-day Saint population in Japan in the early 1980s, which predominantly consisted of relatively new converts who were just beginning to raise families, and also possibly by the sizable presence in his sample of religiously non-active Latter-day Saints.[2]

2-3. Cultural Background

Education

Sociologists have long observed a positive influence of education on religious participation, based almost exclusively on Christian samples in the United States (Iannaccone 1990; Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, and Waite 1995). The most straightforward interpretation may be to consider education as contributing to the stock of religious human and social capital. Christianity is a rather sophisticated religion in the sense that it requires its devotees to read scripture and to conceptualize a system of abstract ideas. Religious participation also increases social capital (for example, connections to work and volunteer opportunities; mentors who can write letters of recommendation; social activities to practice soft skills), which may in turn increase educational attainment.

The impact of education on religiosity, however, seems to differ depending on how religiosity is defined. For example, highly educated Christians are more likely to report weekly church attendance than less educated Christians; but if religiosity is defined as belief in supernatural phenomena (such as belief in God) or daily prayer, the impact of education becomes negative (Schwadel 2011). This is complicated by variations across denominations; for example, education has a strong, positive effect on most religiosity measures for Latter-Day Saints, but a neutral effect for mainline Protestants in the United States (Pew Research Center 2017). In the non-Christian context of Japan, Miller (1995) found that education had a negative effect on the likelihood of membership in a new religious movement. Takagi (2016), observing that converts to The Church of Jesus

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2. According to Heaton (1998b), the weight of non-attenders randomly sampled was adjusted to align with the population size. Given that some 80 percent of Latter-day Saints in Japan do not regularly attend church, it is uncertain how the weight was adjusted. If 80 percent of the adjusted sample indeed included those religiously non-active (many, if not most, of whom likely no longer identified themselves as Latter-day Saints), it is not clear what effect such a large proportion of these individuals would have on findings from the sample.
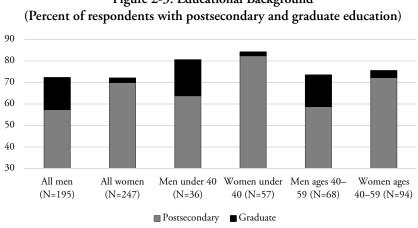
Unique But Not Different

Figure 2-3. Educational Background
(Percent of respondents with postsecondary and graduate education)

Source: Japan LDS Survey.

Christ of Latter-day Saints during the pre–World War II period predomi-nantly came from those who were receiving (or had received) education at the country's most prestigious institutions of secondary and higher educa-tion, argued that education allowed the individualization of religion and thus made religion a matter of the choice for the individual. The positive influence of education is broadly supported by the Japan LDS Survey, which shows that the Latter-day Saint population is, on average, more educated than the general population.

There were 442 individuals who identified their educational attain-ment in terms of the number of years of formal schooling, counting from first grade in elementary school (Figure 2-3). Japan's educational system changed drastically during the early post–World War II years, so we felt that the best way to gauge educational attainment was to ask the num-ber of years of schooling, as opposed to the identification of educational institutions they had attended (such as high school, college, and univer-sity). In Japan, the first nine years are compulsory, so those who did not complete nine years of schooling (six respondents) were either born before the postwar educational reforms or had a special circumstance (such as ill-ness). Though not compulsory, virtually everyone in recent years (though not in the earlier years) receives an additional three years of education through twelfth grade, so the focus here is on postsecondary and graduate education. Clearly the share of Latter-day Saints with postsecondary edu-cation was higher among those under the age of 40 than among those ages 40–59: the share rises from 73.5 to 80.6 percent for men and from 75.5 to 84.2 percent for women. A slightly higher percentage of women received

A Summary of Major Findings

7-1. Introduction

This concluding chapter summarizes the major findings from the Japan LDS Survey, viewed from various groups of stakeholders: scholars and researchers of religion, the general public, Latter-day Saint missionaries and mission leaders, Latter-day Saint leaders (including those based outside Japan), and Japanese Latter-day Saints. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a rare modern phenomenon. From a relatively small membership base largely confined to the Great Basin in the western United States at the turn of the twentieth century, it has grown to become a global religion of nearly seventeen million members with more than 31,000 congregations scattered across the world within a short span of time.[1] As such, the survey provides scholars and researchers with microdata on an aspect of that global growth in a particular location. Ours is the first comprehensive and systematic survey of Japanese Latter-day Saints designed to identify what they believe and how they practice their religion. It offers Latter-day Saint leaders and missionaries valuable tools with which to understand the cultural background of the people to whom they minister. Japanese Latter-day Saints will discover from the survey who their fellow Saints are and what they think.

The following summary of major findings is presented as a set of bullet points, organized in terms of what we think might be the takeaways for different groups of stakeholders. Unlike the preceding chapters where we based our views strictly on the quantitative evidence from the survey, in this chapter we take the liberty of expressing our personal views more freely in some instances, extrapolating from the survey findings as well as the voluntary comments of respondents. Because similar messages are relevant to different stakeholders, the takeaways are necessarily overlapping in some cases though they may be worded differently (e.g., the ideological inclinations of Japanese Latter-day Saints are of interest both to the general public and to fellow Latter-day Saints). The summary is intended to help the reader digest the various strands of data presented in the book in order to draw a manageable conclusion. It is also intended to motivate the reader to read the rest of the book if he or she is starting with this summary.

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1. The numbers are from the "Church Newsroom," accessed March 24, 2023.

7-2. Takeaways for Scholars and Researchers

- Culture exerts a powerful influence on individual religious choices. There is no other way to explain why so few in Japan are Christians, much less members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Yet, culture allows choice and variation, providing not a single choice, but a menu of possible actions in a given situation. Even with little institutional acculturation, the Church can find converts in a small segment of the population with the strength of its message. The survey provides prima facie evidence that it is possible to be both Japanese and a Latter-day Saint.

- Religious conversion most often takes place at a young age. More than 90 percent of Latter-day Saint converts in our sample (almost all of whom are active practitioners) joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints before the age of 30, with the average age being 22.1. Moreover, around 30 percent of them identified knowledge of or familiarity with Christianity prior to their conversion. These findings are consistent with the predictions of the large literature on the sociology and economics of religion.

- The overwhelming majority of active Latter-day Saints in Japan have fully embraced a new religious identity. Around 90 percent (depending on the metric used) of them feel socially accepted by their peers and families, feel comfortable practicing their beliefs, hold strong religious convictions in different doctrinal areas, and fully comply with outward religious practices (such as Sabbath observance and the Word of Wisdom) that are expected of Latter-day Saints.[2]

- The Church, as a highly centralized organization, provides little room for institutional acculturation, making it necessary that acculturation, if any, takes place at the individual level. The most visible manifestation of individual acculturation is seen in the career choices of Latter-day Saints in Japan. In our sample, the share of Latter-day Saints in the professional occupations (estimated to be between 28 and 42 percent, depending on the definition) was considerably higher than the general population share of 18 percent. More than 60 percent of

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2. The Word of Wisdom refers to the Latter-day Saint practice of abstaining from the consumption of alcohol, tea, coffee, tobacco, and addictive drugs. Because tobacco is no longer widely consumed in Japan, the survey did not inquire about the respondent's observance of this aspect of the Word of Wisdom.

the survey respondents stated that Sabbath observance had been an important consideration for their career decisions.

- Another method of individual acculturation is building long-term relationships, by which the overwhelming majority of Latter-day Saints seem able to avoid conflict in the workplace, for example, as regards the pervasive practice of social drinking. Anonymity creates conflict in the wider society. Whereas the share of Latter-day Saints who encountered frequent conflict with family in various areas never exceeded 2 percent, 13 percent experienced conflict with the custom of serving green tea "frequently" (another 20 percent "occasionally"). When they are anonymous members of society, there is little they can do to reduce the incidence of conflict with such a pervasive social institution.

- The survey dispels any notion that the Church, as a minority religion, predominantly attracts social misfits. Only 12 percent reported that they had felt they fit in poorly with their peers while they were in secondary school. Moreover, the ideological spectrum of Latter-day Saints in Japan closely mirrors that of Japanese society, from the most conservative to the most progressive. They are a diverse group of individuals, with a large percentage of career professionals, who do not constitute a subculture of Japanese society.

- The joint influence of culture and foreign religion is evident in reproductive decisions. In line with the national trend, the average number of children a woman bears during her lifetime has been declining among the Latter-day Saint population: the average for those under the age of 40 was 1.9, whereas the average for those over the age of 40 was 2.8. Yet, the average number of children has consistently exceeded the national average (now about 1.3), undoubtedly influenced by the pronatalist theology of the Latter-day Saint faith.

7-3. Takeaways for the General Public

- The age profile of the Latter-day Saint population in Japan broadly mirrors the country's aging population. Based on our sample, we estimate that more than 40 percent of active Latter-day Saints are over the age of 60.

- Japanese Latter-day Saints, despite their commitment to the same religious beliefs, are a diverse group of people. They represent a good cross section of Japanese society, from the most conservative to the

most progressive, in terms of their political and social views. In our
sample, the average self-assessment of their place on the ideological
spectrum was about right in the middle.

- On political issues, the views of Latter-day Saints differ little from those
  of the general population: 65 percent supported a strong Japan–U.S.
  alliance (cf. the national share of 50–70 percent), and 36 percent sup-
  ported amending the constitution in favor of explicitly recognizing the
  right of self-defense (cf. the national share of about 30 percent). The
  share of those with no political party support (54 percent) was larger
  than the national share of around 43 percent, which translates to a
  smaller share of those who supported the ruling Liberal Democratic
  Party, given similar shares of support to the opposition parties.

- On contemporary social issues, Latter-day Saints tend to be more
  conservative than the general population, except for immigration, for
  which 41 percent expressed support (cf. the national share of 33–40
  percent). Latter-day Saints in our sample expressed particular opposi-
  tion to legalizing same-sex marriage (even though the question was
  phrased, not as a moral issue, but strictly as a citizenship right), with
  only 24 percent expressing support (cf. the national share of 65 per-
  cent). Likewise, support for allowing separate surnames for husband
  and wife was particularly weak among the Latter-day Saints, with only
  36 percent expressing support (cf. the national share of 67 percent).

- Latter-day Saints tend to have somewhat larger families than the na-
  tional average, reflecting the pronatalist theology of the Latter-day
  Saint faith: 72.0 percent of men and 57.2 percent of women in the
  survey had three or more children. Even so, in line with the national
  trend, the average number of children Latter-day Saint women bear
  during their lifetimes has been declining, though the average number
  has remained higher than the national average (i.e., about 1.9 vs. the
  national average of 1.3 in 2021).

- Religiously active Latter-day Saints in Japan tend to marry within the
  faith: 97 percent of men and 88 percent of women, who were either
  married or divorced, reported that their current or former spouse was
  also a Latter-day Saint.

- Japanese Latter-day Saints are on average somewhat more educated than
  the general population, with 72 percent of both men and women having
  received postsecondary education (the share increases to more than 80

percent for those under the age of 40). However, the educational advantage of Latter-day Saints may be diminishing as 80 percent of high school graduates in Japan currently go on to receive postsecondary education.

- Japanese Latter-day Saints, compared to the general population, have far more experience living in foreign countries (even excluding their experience as missionaries), with 22 percent having lived abroad for more than a year for work or school in 2021 (the share increases to 35 percent for women under the age of 40). In contrast, the estimated national population share, at most, was 6–9 percent.

- The share of Latter-day Saints in professional occupations (estimated to be between 28 and 42 percent, depending on the definition, in 2021) is considerably higher than the general population share of 18 percent. This has allowed them to practice their religion more freely without experiencing frequent conflict in the workplace.

7-4. Takeaways for Latter-day Saint Missionaries and Mission Leaders

- Conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints most frequently takes place at a young age. More than 90 percent of the Latter-day Saint converts in our sample (the overwhelming majority of whom were active members) joined the Church before the age of 30, with the average age of 22.1. The average age of conversion, however, has been increasing in recent years for reasons we cannot fully explain. It may be that parents have become more protective of their children than in the past and do not readily grant permission to be baptized. Also, the Church is better known now than in the past, making it more acceptable to older adults. It may also be that mission leaders are placing more emphasis on finding adults with families than in the past. These remain our speculations.

- The largest share (37 percent) of religiously active Latter-day Saint converts experienced no opposition of any kind to their conversion, possibly because our sample included only those who had actually joined the Church (therefore, this may not be the average experience of all Japanese who investigated the Church). A smaller but almost equal share (36 percent) reported family opposition to have been the biggest obstacle to their conversion. In our view, this reflects the fact that most of the converts joined the Church before the age of 30. No male convert who joined the Church after the age of 30 reported

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日本語要旨

本研究の動機とあらすじ

　　本書は、2021年10月から11月にかけて実施した、日本における末日聖徒イエス・キリスト教会の会員を対象としたサーベイ（アンケート）調査に基づいて執筆された。おもにソーシャルネットワークを通して実施されたサーベイの性格上、回答者は、ほぼ例外なく、末日聖徒として強いアイデンティティを持つ、いわゆる「活発」会員である。したがって、なぜより多くの日本人が教会に入会しないのかという改宗の問題、なぜ改宗した者の一部が教会にとどまらないのかという定着の問題は、本研究の対象外である。本研究の焦点は、末日聖徒が宗教的少数派として、何を信じ、どのようにホスト社会との軋轢を管理しているのかという宗教実践の問題に置かれる。

　　本書の表題「*Unique But Not Different*」は、「個性的、されど特異にあらず」とでも翻訳されうるのであろうか。そこには、本研究で明らかにされた知見が秘められている。すなわち、日本の末日聖徒は、社会の下位文化集団ではなく、政治観や社会観の面で、両極を含む社会の広範囲な立場を代表する多様な構成員の集団であるという、新鮮な発見である。大多数は、末日聖徒としてのアイデンティティを心から受け入れ、そのアイデンティティを優先すべく日常生活を営んでいる。社会学や社会心理学の文献で「アイデンティティの衝突」と呼ばれる現象は、末日聖徒の間では、職場においてさえも、稀である。このように、本研究は、日本人のアイデンティティと末日聖徒のアイデンティティを合わせ持つことが可能だという、一応の証拠を提供する。

　　上記のように、本書では、複雑な現代社会における個人による社会行動の分析に適した「アイデンティティ理論」の枠組みで議論を進める。現代社会において、個人は複数の集団に属している。各個人は、親や子として家族に所属する一方、学生として学校、雇用主や従業員として職場にも所属している。中には、信者として教会、ボランティアとして非営利団体に所属する者もいる。ここで、アイデンティティとは、所属する集団や組織によって求められる役割が象徴する「意味」や「意義」を指す。時として、個人は、合わせ持つ異なるアイデンティティが衝突する場面を経験する。そのような衝突があるとき、優先されるアイデンティティには「顕著性」があると言われる。「アイデンティティ

の顕著性」という概念が、ホスト社会における少数派宗教行動を分析するため、容易に適用されうることは明らかであろう。

　日本人としてのアイデンティティに付随するのは、言うまでもなく、日本文化が求める一定の行動様式である。「文化」の普遍的な定義はないが、「集団によって広く共有される信条、世界観、価値、意味、制度、行動様式の集合」と考えられよう。文化の特徴として、それが「社会化」と呼ばれる過程を通じて学習されることにより、一世代から次世代に継承されること、その結果、持続性があることが言える。同時に、技術革新や社会環境の変化により、時代にそぐわなくなった側面は変革を迫られる。日本文化は、今まさに、こうした変革の時代に置かれているのである。日本の末日聖徒が社会で経験する衝突が稀だという事実は、この文脈で理解することもできよう。

　以下、本研究から得られた結論の要点を、掻い摘んでまとめてみよう。

日本の末日聖徒

- 大多数の回答者は、末日聖徒のアイデンティティを優先すべく生活を営んでいる。およそ84％（48％）は、教会堂から30分（15分）以内に居住していると回答した。既婚者、離婚者、寡婦・寡夫に質問したところ、男性の97％、女性の88％が、配偶者は教会員である（あった）と回答した。

- ファミリーサイズは、宗教、文化、それぞれの影響を受けている。社会全体の傾向に対応して、末日聖徒女性が生む子供の数は、40歳以上の平均2.8人から、40歳未満の平均1.9人に減っているが、それでも社会平均（1.3人）より0.6人ほど多い。男性の72％、女性の57％は、3人以上の子供がいると回答した。

- 社会の高齢化は、末日聖徒にも影響を与えている。回答者の41.5％が60歳以上の高齢者であった。これは、おおむね、日本における高齢者の割合に相当する。

- 回答者の72％（40歳未満に限ると83％）は、13年以上の教育を受けており、日本社会の平均修業年数を上回ると推測される。ただし、現在、大学や専門学校に進む高校卒業生の割合は80％を超えており、今後、末日聖徒が有する教育上の優越性は縮小するであろう。

- 伝道経験を除外しても、末日聖徒の22％（40歳未満女性に限ると35％）は、外国に1年以上居住した経験があると回答した。日本全体について同様な統計は存在しないが、大きく見積もっても、6〜9％程度だと推測される。平均的末日聖徒は、平均的日本人よりも、国際経験が豊かである。

図表のタイトルおよび凡例項目

（断りのない限り、凡例は、上から下、左から右に表示）

第1章

表1-1. エンダウメントを受けた回答者（全回答者に対する割合、％）

受けている、受けていない、合計

表1-2. 回答者の専任伝道経験（各集団別全回答者に対する割合、％）

（左から）有経験（うち外国伝道）、無経験、合計
（上から）全回答者、40歳未満全員、全男性、40歳未満男性、全女性、40歳未満女性

表1-3. 婚姻状況の日米比較（各集団別全回答者に対する割合、％）

（左から）日本全回答者、日本男性、日本女性、米国全回答者、米国男性、米国女性
（上から）既婚者、離婚者、寡婦・寡夫、未婚者、その他（米国のみ）、合計
（注）以下、日米比較は、相互比較性を確保するため、両国とも、最低週1回教会に出席する末日聖徒に限り、加えて男女別に比較する。

図1-1. 日本における主要キリスト教派信者数（2021年、千人）

カトリック教会、エホバの証人、末日聖徒、日本基督教団、聖公会、バプテスト教会、ルーテル教会

図1-2. 末日聖徒イエス・キリスト教会の会員および伝道部数（1973～2021年）

棒グラフ：会員数（千人）、線グラフ：伝道部数（右縦軸）

図1-3. 末日聖徒イエス・キリスト教会のユニットおよびステーク数（1973～2021 年）

棒グラフ：ユニット数、線グラフ：ステーク数（右縦軸）

図1-4. 日本における非伝統的宗教信者数（1971〜2021年、千人）

黒線：正統派キリスト教信者、灰色線：非仏教・非神道信者（右縦軸）
（注）ここでは、「正統派キリスト教」とは、戦前にルーツを有する教派で、カトリック中央協議会、日本聖公会、日本基督教団、日本福音ルーテル教会、日本バプテスト連盟の5宗教法人、「非仏教・非神道」とは、文化庁『宗教年鑑』において「諸教」と位置付けられている宗教法人を意味する。

図1-5. 回答者の男女別構成比（%）

黒：男性、灰色：女性

図1-6. 回答者の年齢別構成比（対各集団別全回答者、%）

（それぞれ、左から）全回答者、男性、女性

図1-7. 回答者の地域別構成比（%）

北海道、東北、北関東、東京、南関東、東海、北陸、近畿、中国、四国、九州、沖縄

図1-8. 回答者の教会出席頻度（全回答者に対する各集団の割合、%）

週2回以上、週1回程度、月1〜2回、年数回、稀に出席、出席せず

図1-9. 回答者の会員歴（各集団別全回答者に対する割合、%）

全回答者、40歳未満全員、全男性、40歳未満男性、全女性、40歳未満女性
（それぞれ、上から）改宗者、2世会員、3世会員

図1-10. 会員歴の日米比較（各集団別全回答者に対する改宗者の割合、%）

全回答者、男性、女性
黒：日本、灰色：米国

図1-11. 回答者の婚姻状況（各集団別全回答者に対する割合、%）

既婚者、寡婦・寡夫、離婚者、未婚者
（それぞれ、上から）全回答者、男性、女性

図1-12. 回答者の雇用状況（各集団別全回答者に対する割合、%）

常勤、専業主婦、定時制、退職者、失業者、学生
（それぞれ、上から）全回答者、全男性、全女性、40歳未満女性

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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*, B*YU 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 his 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 (PhD, Sociology, Vanderbilt University) is a researcher versed in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and who 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.