

# Steps to a New World Order: Ecumenism and Racial Integration during the World War II Incarceration of Japanese Americans

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## **Abstract**

ANNE MICHELE BLANKENSHIP: Steps to a New World Order: Ecumenism and Racial Integration during the World War II Japanese American Incarceration  
(Under the direction of Laurie Maffly-Kipp)

The global wars and totalitarian regimes of the first half of the twentieth century led many Protestants to believe that the world's only hope for lasting peace rested in a new world order grounded in Christian ethics. This dissertation examines international campaigns for ecumenism and racial integration during that time and reveals how the Japanese American incarceration changed religious and racial boundaries within mainline American Protestantism. Several months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt allowed the incarceration of nearly 120,000 people of Japanese descent. People struggled with the reality that the United States was fighting a war against ideologies of racial supremacy within fascist regimes while imprisoning American citizens on the basis of their race. If American Protestants could not maintain a just social structure at home, they could not hope to do so globally.

Subsequent reflections on the church's religious and racial structures fostered two unprecedented experiments: church authorities required ecumenical worship within the camps and interracial worship among Japanese and European Americans after the war. In this way, the incarceration ironically created an opportunity to move toward goals of religious and racial unity—steps to a new world order. However, attempts to enforce ecumenical and interracial worship exposed historical tensions among denominations and

challenged preconceptions about the viability and desirability of united worship. The mixed results of these experiments—primarily failures—gradually led mainline Protestants to expand their definition of unity to include pluralist representations of Christianity as imagined by different sects and ethnic groups. As Japanese Americans realized the value of their ethnic congregations, theologians formed the first manifestations of Asian American theology. Broadly, this project explores how religious people and institutions responded to injustice and global strife during this era.

The perspectives and responses of Japanese pastors and congregants, camp administrators and the leaders of national and regional Protestant organizations collude to create a comprehensive view of the situation. Using oral histories, textual sources and visual artifacts, this dissertation contends with race and ethnicity, global ecumenism, the formation of Asian American theology, regional dynamics in the US and the role of religion during war.

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## On Words

Debates over terminology hint at the vast complexities related to the Japanese American incarceration. Just as there are conflicting historical memories of the experience, different groups and individuals adopt different vocabularies when describing these historical events. The rationale behind these choices ranges from an adoption of common parlance to attempts to minimize the perceived severity of the incarceration to a desire to more accurately describe the past. Throughout this dissertation, I will attempt to use words that most accurately describe the legal realities of these historical events. President Roosevelt and other government officials spoke of building “concentration camps” during the war. The War Relocation Authority (WRA), the government agency commissioned to move people of Japanese descent away from the coastal military zone, employed words in these ways: “Exclusion orders . . . evacuated . . . all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien,” initially to “assembly centers.”<sup>1</sup> However, an evacuation brings to mind rescue, not arrest. Calling American citizens “non-alien” made the familiar sound foreign. After this time, the “residents” were transferred to “apartments” in “relocation centers” farther within the interior of the country. Many “evacuees” or “colonists” then “resettled” outside of the camps in the Mid-West or East.

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<sup>1</sup>“Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry,” Western Defense Command and Fourth Army Wartime Civil Control Administration, 3 May 1942. Such orders were printed on publicly posted notices.

Public relations photographs supported the WRA's vocabulary, showing cheerful, industrious residents at work within the centers.<sup>2</sup> Their captions told of pioneering efforts to farm barren land. Some people of Japanese descent, or *Nikkei*, referred to themselves as "colonists" or "pioneers" as well, drawing parallels between themselves and early explorers and settlers of the West, taming desert land for civilization. Supporters and resisters, white and Asian people, citizens and non-citizens regularly used such words for a variety of purposes.

Most public discussions of what happened to *Nikkei* living in the United States during WWII use the words "internment camps" and "internees;" however, these terms have fallen out of favor with many scholars of the period. Roger Daniels' short article, "Words do Matter," outlines the historical usage of these vocabularies and encourages the use of "incarceration" because "internment" is a legal term that refers to the lawful arrest of foreign nationals during a time of war. Daniels points out that the misuse of such language compounds misunderstandings about the Japanese American incarceration and veils the reality of the government's decisions.<sup>3</sup> Limiting the use of "internment" to its precise definition also coincides with the word's use in contemporaneous sources. Most people involved with or affected by the incarceration used "internment" to speak only of Japanese (or German or Italian) nationals in Department of Justice camps.

Given the distinctions among these words, I will speak of incarceration camps when referring to WRA relocation centers, except in places where it would inaccurately,

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<sup>2</sup>Dorothea Lange's photographs showing less idealistic perspectives of the eviction and camp life were censored by the government for decades. Linda Gordon and Gary Y. Okihiro, eds., *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

<sup>3</sup>Roger Daniels, "Words do Matter: A Note on Inappropriate Terminology and the Incarceration of the Japanese Americans" in *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Louis Fiset and Gail Nomura (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 190-214.



anachronistically alter the language of contemporary figures or documents. Similarly, rather than “residents,” “evacuees” or “colonists,” this dissertation examines the lives of “incarcerees” in order to properly acknowledge their incarceration. While arguably a more accurate term, this dissertation will refrain from the use of “concentration camp” because of its common identification with the European Holocaust of the same time period.<sup>4</sup> The definition of a concentration camp simply changed when the atrocities of Nazi death camps became known. I concede that calling any of these sites “camps” can be misleading as well; however, I leave the task of challenging that word to others.

Other words within this project have also changed in usage or definition since the 1940s, particularly those used to identify race. The word “Caucasian” is used to describe the white, Euro-American majority in nearly all primary literature related to the Japanese American incarceration, including government documents, camp newspapers and the personal correspondence of both Japanese and white church leaders. Though somewhat anachronistic, I avoid using the identifier “Caucasian” except where it was used within government regulations or direct quotations.

Japanese terms are italicized only on their first appearance in the text.

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<sup>4</sup>Not surprisingly, use of the term “concentration camp” is highly contested. For an analysis of the debate over this terminology, see Alice Yang Murray, *Historical Memories of the Japanese American Internment and the Struggle for Redress* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 406-419. For an argument supporting this vocabulary, see the introduction of John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

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## Introduction

*The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry.*<sup>1</sup>

*-President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
February 1, 1943*

Fourteen months before Roosevelt made the speech quoted above, Americans saw their world crumble as reports of a Japanese attack trickled to the mainland from the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor. Less than a year before giving these assurances of racial equality, Roosevelt had issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the Secretary of War and other military commanders to incarcerate 120,000 people from the West Coast and Hawaii on the sole basis of their Japanese heritage. Most were American citizens. A number had fought for the United States in World War I.<sup>2</sup> Two months after Roosevelt issued the order, twenty-two-year-old Monica Itoi and her family gathered for an interdenominational

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<sup>1</sup>This assertion marked the day Roosevelt allowed Japanese Americans to join the country's armed forces within a segregated unit. "Letter to the Secretary of War," quoted in "The Concern of the Church for the Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans" (New York: Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, April 1944).

<sup>2</sup>While their children were citizens by birth, Japanese immigrants were not. The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited naturalization to white immigrants, and, decades prior to World War II, the Supreme Court ruled that Asian immigrants were not white, and thus ineligible for citizenship. *Takao Ozawa v. the United States* (1922) decided definitively that no Asian immigrant could become a citizen, despite a smattering of earlier instances where they had been granted citizenship by local judges or in return for their service in World War I. The court conceded Ozawa was an exemplary member of society, but that could not overcome the fact that he was "clearly . . . not Caucasian." Western states used this designation as a way to restrict immigrants from appearing in court, owning land or marrying outside their race. The citizenship trials of WWI veterans are discussed in Eric Muller, *Free to Die for their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 13-15.

worship service “in a dimly lighted makeshift room” under the grandstand at the Western Washington State Fairgrounds.<sup>3</sup> Evicted from their Seattle home, they now lived within an improvised prison camp erected on the Puyallup fairgrounds. Gordon Hirabayashi, a University of Washington student, peered out of his cell at the King County jail, having resisted the unconstitutional order. The Reverend Emery E. Andrews sat at the pulpit of the Seattle Japanese Baptist Church, staring out at the rows of empty pews.<sup>4</sup> His entire flock now lived behind barbed wire. Most would remain imprisoned for the next three and a half years, worshipping at an ecumenical Protestant camp church. Many would never return to their Seattle homes. Those who did fought with the Seattle Council of Churches for over a year to reopen their pre-war church.

Economic competition, war hysteria and political factors provided momentum for the incarceration, but the mass exclusion orders targeted people exclusively along racial lines—“aliens and non-aliens of Japanese descent”—without considering citizenship, military service or evidence of sedition. Most Americans regarded people from Japan and their descendants as members of a distinct race, regardless of their citizenship. Governmental, religious and popular media reinforced this racialization throughout the first half of the twentieth century, segregating *Nikkei*, people of Japanese descent, from mainstream, white American society.<sup>5</sup> As a result, when Japanese forces attacked the territory of Hawaii, many

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<sup>3</sup>Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 186.

<sup>4</sup>Untitled Biographical Summary, 10 May 1946, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, University of Washington Libraries (UW).

<sup>5</sup>Beliefs in inherent, permanent racial characteristics held fast in the minds of most Americans because the successful scientific challenges to the notion of biological race had not been introduced to the American public effectively by 1941. In *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, Matthew Frye Jacobson explained how Americans constructed and redefined whiteness in relation to European immigrants. Americans created scientific explanations to classify seemingly white groups as nonwhite. These “racial” categories were defined by nationality. With this mentality in force, Americans and Europeans

white Americans immediately assumed or were eventually persuaded that American citizens of Japanese descent would naturally side with others of their race and support Japan.

However, many other Americans knew Nikkei personally or simply did not believe that facial features determined one's national loyalty. They thought such prejudice was ludicrous, but very few spoke out and not many listened during the first year of the war. Appalled by the complicity of nearly all liberal politicians and journalists, the American socialist leader Norman Thomas wrote that he had "never found it harder to arouse the American public on any important issue" than the incarceration.<sup>6</sup> The discrimination prompted some individuals to probe their own lives and reconsider the meaning of nationality and the structural boundaries that separated and defined women and men by race. Many people struggled with the reality that the United States was fighting a war against notions of racial supremacy

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developed similar characterizations of Asian nationals. Similar negotiations are revealed in his subsequent book *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* that shows how leaders and media created new racial categories to legitimize foreign policy, particularly American colonization.

Such constructions allowed politicians to incarcerate Japanese and Japanese Americans as a separate race. FDR's executive order could have been applied to Italians or Germans as well, but the history of discrimination and the Nikkei's supposed unassimilability provided pretenses through which politicians could single them out. The forced eviction of Japanese American orphans, including infants and toddlers who had been raised by white Americans, some merely 1/16 Japanese, suggests that government officials considered something within their genetic makeup to be a threat to national security. Some individuals did not know they had any Japanese heritage until ordered to an incarceration camp. John L. DeWitt, "Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942" (Washington, D.C.: Western Defense Command, 1943), 145. Lisa N. Nobe, "The Children's Village at Manzanar: The World War II Eviction and Detention of Japanese American Orphans," *Journal of the West* 38:2 (April 1999): 65-71.

Popular media fortified beliefs in biological racial differences after Pearl Harbor. *Life* magazine trained Americans to distinguish the Japanese enemy from Chinese allies. Designed like a public service notification, the article compared facial structure, hair and stature in a way nearly identical to posters comparing Jews and Aryans in Germany at this time. "How to Tell Japs from the Chinese: Angry Citizens Victimize Allies with Emotional Outburst at Enemies," *Life*, 22 Dec 1941, 81-2. *Life* also photographed a young blond woman posing with a "Jap Skull" sent from her boyfriend on the Pacific front, exposing the inhumane, barbaric disregard some Americans held for Japanese people. "Picture of the Week: Arizona war worker writes her Navy boyfriend a thank-you for the Jap skull he sent her," *Life*, 22 May 1944, 34-35. However, a rash of letters protested the image, as did others a year prior when a full-page *Life* photograph showed another skull propped on a Japanese tank. "Letters to the Editors: Jap Skull," *Life*, 12 June 1944, 6; "Guadalcanal: Grassy Knoll Battle," *Life*, 1 Feb 1943, 27; "Letters to the Editors: Dead Jap," *Life*, 22 Feb 1943, 8. These images demonstrated the dehumanization of Japanese within American society.

<sup>6</sup>Michi Nishiura Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps*, upd. ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, [1976] 1996), 111-112.

supported by fascist regimes while imprisoning American citizens on the basis of their race. Some American Protestants eventually spoke against the incarceration and segregation as “both unpatriotic and unchristian. It is an attack upon the four freedoms that we are supposedly fighting for, and a cheap insult on the sacrifice of the lives of our friends and relatives. It is Blasphemy against our Lord.”<sup>7</sup>

Conflating the values and aims of Protestantism with those of the nation, some Americans saw the incarceration as a threat to both institutions. This dissertation explores how American Protestants struggled to balance dreams of Christian worship free of sectarian and racial divisions with attempts to heal an ugly reality of injustice and suffering caused by the incarceration. As people sought solutions for a lasting peace, the injustice of incarceration led Protestant clergy and laypeople to reflect upon racial and religious hierarchies and structures. If the race-based incarceration was unjust, what did they propose Christians inside and outside of the camps do to alleviate the problem? If physically separating racial minorities was wrong or unchristian, should not similar practices within the church be changed? Should not all possible divisions be removed? A number of incarcerated and outsiders saw possibilities within the chaos of the incarceration to improve themselves, their church and their world. However, the starkly different perspectives of incarcerated, religious leaders outside of the camp and pastors moving in and out of the camps prevented a consensus about how to apply these ideals within a humanitarian response to suffering.

Archival documents, photographs, material culture and oral histories show that the incarceration affected how American Protestants—both white and Nikkei—perceived their own racial, religious and national identities and their relationship to others. For the past

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<sup>7</sup>A Methodist farmer in Vermont made this extraordinary speech after getting to know a Japanese Christian who worked on his farm. A Grange Member Speaks for Japanese Americans, 26 Aug 1944, Jerome County Historical Society, Jerome, ID.

several years, I have sought to see the incarceration through the eyes of both white and Nikkei Christians as they repeatedly reorganized their churches to better represent the ideals of a unified new world order. The image of America as a Christian nation motivated some individuals to change church structures, but those Christians blazed the same trail as others who thought on a more global scale. Both sought a strong moral foundation of American Christianity, but debates surrounding race and ecumenism resonated globally as all adherents to these ideals sought peace through greater unity.

Despite severe racial discrimination in the military and war industries, government propaganda touted the necessity of national unity to win the war. To a similar end, many Christians visualized an essential role for the church in a unified global community.<sup>8</sup> Unity became a powerful concept during these years when so many divisions rent the world. And the incarceration ironically created an opportunity to begin moving toward goals of religious and racial unity. Specifically, it resulted in two sequential experiments: one based on ideals of Protestant ecumenism, the other on desires for racial equality and integration. Before the war, most Christians of Japanese descent worshipped in ethnic denominational churches. But during the war, Protestant Nikkei formed ecumenical churches within the camps. As they left the camps, leaders of national denominational and ecumenical organizations instructed Nikkei to integrate into established, predominately white congregations rather than reform their ethnic churches. For the people who believed in imperatives of religious and racial unity, the changes were not experiments, but rather steps toward a new world order.

To understand the implementation and results of these steps toward unity, this dissertation provides two perspectives: those of the leaders developing such approaches and

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<sup>8</sup>An explicit example can be seen in the series “How Shall the Christian Church Prepare for the New World Order?” and Paul Tillich’s article “Spiritual Problems of Post-War Reconstruction” printed in *Christian Century* and *Christianity and Crisis* respectively during the first year of the war.



those of the people their decisions affected. Since these experiments were carried out in the context of the Japanese American incarceration, the narrative charts the responses of the mainline Protestants to the injustice. Many Protestant leaders responded in the ways they did based on a plan for the greater good: the belief that their actions were steps to a new world order.

While some white leaders volunteered out of basic compassion or to help right an injustice, many were also concerned that the injustice would irreparably harm the world's chance for global peace. This motive explains why leaders responded the way they did; many of their actions did not relate to aiding Japanese Americans. Efforts toward ecumenism, for example, were not made to alleviate injuries caused by the incarceration. Justifications given for the enforcement of ecumenical worship in the camps were not entirely logical. Instead, Protestant leaders used the incarceration as an opportunity to implement unassociated ideals. Unexpected effects of their actions and of the incarceration itself forced Protestant leaders to reassess their original plans and reconsider the role of ecumenism and racial integration within American Protestantism. While my larger argument relates to lofty ideals of American Protestant leaders, the bulk of my dissertation depicts the individuals affected by these policy decisions. Many incarcerated Japanese Christians shared the goals of unity, as did many of the white missionaries and regional leaders who worked with the ethnic community during the war. Other individuals recognized that what seemed most beneficial to global or national peace or true Christianity was not always in the best interest of Nikkei, nor did it meet the basic needs of the incarcerated population. However, their actions unintentionally strengthened the Japanese ethnic churches and acted as a catalyst

for new developments in Asian American theology. Their new world order was subsequently reimagined by the subjects of their experiment.

Liberal Protestants began working towards the broader goal of a new world order decades before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Prior to his presidency, Woodrow Wilson summarized the sentiment popular among political and religious leaders: “The mighty task set before us . . . is to make the United States a mighty Christian nation, and to Christianize the world.” Once president, he believed that America could “lead the whole world” to “peace and regeneration.”<sup>9</sup> Peace movements within mainline churches in the 1930s and 1940s spread the conviction that “America embodied Christian civilization and had a divine call to “reshape the world.”<sup>10</sup> The ideals of these Protestant groups were not merely rhetorical contemplation; the Federal Council of Churches (FCC) actively collaborated with politicians, including presidents of the United States, to develop their goal of a new world order.

The projects developed by John Foster Dulles, a future Secretary of State, illustrate the intertwining nature of Protestant ecumenical organizations and United States foreign policy during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>11</sup> During his tenure as the founding chair of the FCC’s Commission to Study the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace, Dulles developed the “Six Pillars of Peace.” This treatise outlined “the ethical principles upon which world order must

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<sup>9</sup>William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 8-9.

<sup>10</sup>Inboden, 13-14.

<sup>11</sup>Dulles’s work directly influenced the United Nations charter: its founders accepted four of the nine amendments proposed by the FCC. Inboden, 30.

be based” for a “just and durable peace” to be established.<sup>12</sup> Polititians, church leaders and press in the United States and abroad admired the “Six Pillars” and remarked on its usefulness. Associated programs mobilized laity within all mainline denominations in a number of countries.<sup>13</sup>

Nikkei and white leaders and congregants knew the “Six Pillars” rhetoric and its empowering plan to guide the world to peace. In 1938, a Japanese American wrote that Americans “can do much toward the establishment of peace among the nations of the world,” but it requires “a resurrection of Christian ideas and principles.”<sup>14</sup> This reflects Dulles’s belief that all Christians bore a “supreme responsibility” to lead the country as exemplary ethical models.<sup>15</sup> In the Japanese American incarceration camps, pastors discussed the six pillars in sermons and the ecumenical churches participated in international services that celebrated the “unity of Christian people throughout the whole world.”<sup>16</sup> This climate within American Protestantism heightened the urgency and need to unify groups on a domestic level to build a new national faith based on moral law.<sup>17</sup> These motivations fueled the efforts of

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<sup>12</sup>Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 21.

<sup>13</sup>Mark G. Toulouse, *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles: From Prophet of Realism to Priest of Nationalism* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 69 & 73.

<sup>14</sup>Bill Hata, quoted in Sumio Koga, *A Decade of Faith: The Journey of Japanese Christians in the USA (1936-1946)* (New York: Vantage Press, 2002), 24.

<sup>15</sup>Dulles did not see the church’s implementation of a new world order as an evangelistic effort per se. He and other Protestants believed the moral law forming the foundation of the new world order could be accepted by Christians and non-Christians. Toulouse, 121-122. Toulouse, 66-67.

<sup>16</sup>“Rev. Imai Addresses Isseis,” Poston III Christian Church newsletter, 30 Apr 1944, Box 4/Fld 4, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA (GTU). “An Affirmation of the Unity of Christian People Throughout the Whole World,” United Service of International Christian Witness, 24 May 1942, Box 155/Fld 3, Kuroda Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

<sup>17</sup>Toulouse, 62.

Christians working with Japanese Americans. Pastors and volunteers tried to encourage inclusivity and foster justice, and perhaps most of all prepare the United States and the Christians within it to lead the development of a new, post-war world.

While united by these lofty goals, when the subjects of my study called for inclusion, they disagreed what it meant. Was it an invitation for outsiders to assimilate into a predominantly white society or an acceptance and encouragement of pluralism, be it racial, cultural or institutional?<sup>18</sup> The motivations for and methods of integration are particularly worth investigating, since churches continue such efforts today. Examining these past events may guide similarly motivated leaders today. Whether envisioning a world united by religion or race, Protestant leaders chose Japanese Americans as test subjects to realize their dreams of the future.

The first experiment, Protestant ecumenism, had grown as an international movement for the preceding two decades, reaching its height in the 1940s and 1950s. Social reform movements in the mid-1800s sparked the formation of organizations like the YMCA and YWCA, but Protestant leaders did not form the larger, more political interdenominational groups, like the Federal Council of Churches, until the early twentieth century.<sup>19</sup> Many Protestants believed a universal church absent of denominations would better fulfill the needs

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<sup>18</sup>This dissertation uses William Hutchison's definition of pluralism, indicating an "ideal or impulse" toward the "fact or condition" of diversity. William R. Hutchison, *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>19</sup>Since these organizations were relatively new, their use of terminology like "interdenominational" and "ecumenical" was not consistent. While these words have since solidified in meaning, they still are frequently confused. For the purposes of this dissertation, an interdenominational group consists of representatives of different denominations that retain their respective characteristics and identity. Ecumenism is an abandonment of these differences to varying degrees in order to become a more homogenous group. The reality of such ecumenical efforts varies widely because individuals often compete to make the group adopt the doctrine and worship styles of their own denomination. Interdenominational worship is marked by more frequently divergent styles as individuals take turns following different denominational traditions. Camp churches varied in their efforts to establish either interdenominational or ecumenical worship, but most sought to build ecumenical churches.

of Christians and the will of God. That was easier said than done because many pastors were loathe to disrupt their own denominational communities or compromise their own practices, beliefs and hierarchies.

The rising popularity of ecumenism in this era is well documented, but the incarceration was the first time a large population was forced to form ecumenical churches.<sup>20</sup> This experiment exposed broader tensions within American Christianity when some mainline Protestant leaders excluded members or clergy of marginal groups, like Pentecostalism, from their interdenominational churches and mainline groups formed exclusive gatherings. I will examine how this experience changed the preconceptions of Protestants inside and outside of the camps. Did the incarceration lead to greater cooperation among Christian groups or exacerbate existing frictions? How were the perspectives of pastors organizing worship within the camps different from those of church leaders observing or directing practices from the outside? Ultimately, the experience demonstrated the benefits of centralizing social aid efforts within national ecumenical programs, but pastors in the camps had less success constructing functional ecumenical Protestant worship patterns.

The second experiment, racial integration, has troubled Protestant churches for centuries. In 1963, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. remarked that eleven o'clock on Sunday is the most segregated hour in America.<sup>21</sup> From the inception of foreign missions,

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<sup>20</sup>The most analogous situation is interfaith work within the military chaplaincy, where clergymen were obligated to lead services and conduct rituals of religions other than their own to a stressed, artificially constructed constituency. See: Donald F Crosby, *Battlefield Chaplains: Catholic Priests in World War II* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1994); Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Israel A. S. Yost, *Combat Chaplain: The Personal Story of the World War II Chaplain of the Japanese American 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006).

<sup>21</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., "Conscience of America: Social Justice," (speech given at Western Michigan University, 18 Dec 1963), accessed on 27 Feb 2012, <http://www.wmich.edu/~ulib/archives/mlk/transcription.html>.

Protestants organized churches along ethnic lines.<sup>22</sup> In international, ethnically homogenous regions, this was a moot point, but as immigrants from a diverse array of countries entered the United States, domestic or “home missions” were established to address their social needs and bring them into the church—or rather their own segregated church. This system developed in part for pragmatic reasons of language differences, but this model was also applied to black mission churches after the Civil War. White missionaries could have invited African Americans into their established churches, rather than building new ones, but generally they did not.<sup>23</sup> And on the other side, black religious leaders left predominately white churches to found their own congregations and denominations. Segregation went even further in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Protestant and Catholic European immigrants worshiped in churches segregated by national origin.<sup>24</sup> Like the ecumenical experience during the war, forced racial integration within churches was new to American Christianity. Religious leaders in the United States had never before demanded that a free racial or ethnic group join predominately white churches.<sup>25</sup> However, allowing members of non-white races to manage their religious lives autonomously has been a challenge from the

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<sup>22</sup>For the purposes of this dissertation, segregation does not imply an enforced condition, but rather one developed as a result of a variety of cultural and religious pressures. The first attempts at interdenominational cooperation occurred among mission programs as well. Similarly, some leaders forged these bonds for pragmatic reasons while others sought greater unity within the church.

<sup>23</sup>For information on the formation of these black churches, see: Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Reginald F. Hildebrand, *The Times Were Strange and Stirring: Methodist Preachers and the Crisis of Emancipation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995) and William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993).

<sup>24</sup>Catholic immigrants also experienced this drive for distinct worship in Eastern cities, reorganizing their traditionally geographically defined parishes into ethnic churches in the United States. Protestant immigrants desired the same and each national group founded their own church in America. Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865* (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

<sup>25</sup>Enslaved African Americans received religious instruction designed to encourage subservient behavior within predominately white churches.

earliest missions, both at home and abroad. In many instances, white religious authorities hesitated to entirely withdraw their supervision of new mission churches. And since both home and foreign missions came packaged with needed social aid and financial support, groups of new converts could not always take the reins of their churches and operate them independently.<sup>26</sup>

Consistent with this historical pattern, white ministers founded Japanese ethnic churches on the West Coast, but many missionaries had transferred authority to Nikkei pastors by World War II.<sup>27</sup> Japanese pastors led many, perhaps the majority of the country's 101 Japanese churches at the time of the war,<sup>28</sup> but supporters emphasized that "Caucasian superintendents or executives" oversaw nearly all ethnic churches to avoid attracting public suspicion of Japanese Christian leaders after the attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>29</sup>

Regardless of prewar leadership, denominational and ecumenical councils permanently closed nearly all Japanese churches—some built and previously owned by Japanese congregations. National leaders saw the eviction as an opportunity to improve American Protestantism by eliminating the racial segregation of Nikkei. This plan also

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<sup>26</sup>Home missions are those conducted within the missionary's nation. They are most often directed toward immigrants or native populations. Most Protestant denominations sponsored both home and foreign missions. Retired or otherwise returned foreign missionaries often worked among immigrant populations from the country where they were formerly stationed, since they were familiar with the relevant languages and cultures. For an excellent summary of missionary philosophy, see William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>27</sup>White leadership was significantly higher in Seattle than elsewhere. Nikkei pastors led all Japanese Congregational Churches in the US by 1942 except two in Washington. Thomas Alfred Tripp, Congregational Christian Churches: Japanese Churches and Ministers, 1942, Box 5/Fld 13, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>28</sup>Bulletin IV, Japanese Evacuation Committee of the Church Federation of Los Angeles, 2 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 11, Constantine Panunzio Collection (Collection Number 1636), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>29</sup>Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches in Japanese Relocation Centers and Settlements, 20 July 1942, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

required the demotion of Nikkei pastors who had led congregations in or outside the camps during the war. Church authorities encouraged them to find positions as counselors or work as liaisons between white and Nikkei groups within established, predominantly white churches. Nikkei leaders were to work under white ministers, as many had done before the war. However, their efforts focused on Nikkei specifically; denominations were not attempting to integrate other ethnic groups at this time.

The scope of this study encompasses the work and experiences of mainline Protestants and Quakers.<sup>30</sup> The vast majority of Japanese Protestants belonged to Methodist, Northern Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational or Episcopalian congregations before the war, and these denominations held the greatest interest in ecumenism and racial integration at this historical moment. Mainline denominations were a part of a liberal movement within Protestantism that had begun in the nineteenth century. “Liberal” now connotes a particular political agenda, but among mid-twentieth century American Christians, it referred to theological liberals who believed in an inherent goodness within human nature. This philosophy emphasized ethics and an idealized social order over doctrine and granted reason religious authority. These traits spurred denominational leaders to help Nikkei Christians.

My study includes the work of Quakers because of their great activism within relief work, but also because their story functions as a foil to demonstrate possible alternative actions. In her study of mid-century Protestant pacifism, Patricia Appelbaum made this same choice, explaining that “Quakers occupied a sort of borderland with respect to the Protestant

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<sup>30</sup>Japanese Catholic churches do not fit within, nor are they included in this study because they did not participate in ecumenical efforts and did not try to racially integrate parishes after the war.



mainline” at this time.<sup>31</sup> Quaker theological beliefs and style of worship remained distinct, but their social priorities and concerns allied them with liberal Protestantism after World War I. These similar goals fueled cooperation with mainline Protestants working with Nikkei during the war, but the ideology and approach behind Quaker work were distinctly less ambiguous than those of nearly all other Protestants. The groups held different ideas of how best to confront the problems caused by the incarceration. Chapter One emphasizes the distinctions between Quaker and mainline Protestant responses to the eviction, but subsequent chapters reveal increasing cooperation.

Focusing on a single community, Seattle, allows for a deeper investigation of the effects of changes within the churches and provides a more intimate narrative. Moreover, the vast majority of existing publications on the incarceration examine Californian communities and I wish to expand the regional scope of incarceration studies. Scholars have underutilized a number of paper collections containing fascinating material about Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, a larger percentage of Nikkei from Seattle were Christian, providing a greater sample size to study. Seattleites experienced the incarceration and Christianity in a number of unique ways, so I did not limit my research to this region. The text clarifies whether particular events or perspectives in Seattle or Minidoka, the incarceration camp to which most Seattle Nikkei were sent, were representational or exceptional. I also return to the positions of national leaders regularly to demonstrate the reach of their programs.

My research touches on studies of race and ethnicity, regional dynamics in the United States, global Christianity and nationalism, as well as specific topics, like World War II and

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<sup>31</sup>Patricia Appelbaum, *Kingdom to Commune: Protestant Pacifist Culture from World War I to the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 5.

the incarceration itself. Since early European colonization, racial discrimination and segregation within Christian churches have played major roles in this country's history. Christians have used their religion both to support and overcome disparities in citizenship, housing, employment and education. My study expands research on Asian American citizenship and discrimination, and specifically proffers a historical parallel for scholars asking similar questions within African American or other minority studies. The American people are highly invested in ideals of freedom, justice and independence, but many groups regularly limit equality to those sharing the skin color, gender, class and religion of the governing people. How do the excluded fit into American churches? And how are groups racialized in ways that determine their exclusion? How do outsiders who embrace the ideals of the country make a place for themselves within it?

Most books about the incarceration mention the three authorized religions in the camps—Buddhism, Protestantism and Catholicism, but no one has looked inside the church doors to see what was happening, why it looked the way it did or what happened afterward.<sup>32</sup> Religion is far too influential in the United States to ignore, particularly when decisions about worship in the camps reflected international Christian movements and changing attitudes about race and ecumenism within the church. The conclusions of my dissertation

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<sup>32</sup>Duncan Williams' forthcoming book *Camp Dharma* will help fill this void in regards to incarcerated Buddhists. His articles have already made progress in this direction: "Camp Dharma: Japanese-American Buddhist Identity and the Internment Experience of World War II," in *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia*, eds. Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 191-200 and "From Pearl Harbor to 9/11," in *A Nation of Religions: The Politics of Pluralism in Multireligious America*, ed. Stephen Prothero (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 63-78. See also Susan Davis, "Mountain of Compassion: Dharma in American Internment Camps," *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* (Summer 1993): 46-51.

The few studies that mention Christian practices rely on Lester Suzuki's *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II* (Berkeley, CA: Yarbird Press, 1979). Suzuki based his research on personal experience as an incarcerated minister, camp newspapers and JERS data. The book primarily catalogues who ministered at each camp and explains the basic logistics of church organization. The concluding reflections are helpful as a primary source of an incarcerated Methodist minister, but the book contains no analysis and erratic detail.

are not limited to a particular moment of American history, but rather include larger reflections on the reactions of religious individuals and institutions to injustice, racial divisions within churches and the realities of global Christianity during the mid-twentieth century.

Fortunately for my project, the incarceration of Japanese Americans is not an understudied topic and several new monographs appear on the subject each year. However, many major topics like religion remain virtually untouched.<sup>33</sup> Data from the earliest study of the incarceration, though voluminous and extremely detailed, is problematic due to highly questionable research methods. At the time of the eviction, a group of white and Nikkei anthropologists and sociologists under the direction of Dorothy Swaine Thomas at the University of California at Berkeley attempted to analyze the effects of the government project. White researchers had difficulty gaining access to representative daily life in camp, while Nikkei scholars attempted to report objectively on the incarceration of which they were a part. Most field workers concealed their work so people would respond more naturally to their questions, but Nikkei researchers also hid their projects to avoid harassment from fellow incarcerated who would accuse them of spying for the government. The assumptions and biases of the project can be seen in the titles of the Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study's published works, *The Spoilage* and *The Salvage*, referring to those who

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<sup>33</sup>Several brief works survey religious responses to the incarceration. Like Suzuki's book on Christian practice in the camp, Toru Matsumoto's *Beyond Prejudice: A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans* (New York: Friendship Press, 1946) is most valuable as a primary source. Based on similar sources as Suzuki, Matsumoto acknowledged the "tireless efforts" of Christians during the war. His book lists many of the churches' wartime deeds, but mentions their continued "heavy responsibility [to heal] the wounds of mankind" (xiii). Additionally, see Robert Shaffer, "Cracks in the Consensus: Defending the Rights of Japanese Americans During World War II," *Radical History Review* 72:84 (Fall 1998): 84-120; Robert Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment: Defending Japanese American Rights During World War II," *The Historian* 61:3 (Spring 1999): 597-619; and Douglas M. Dye, "For the Sake of Seattle's Soul: The Seattle Council of Churches, the Nikkei Community, and World War II," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 93:3 (Summer 2002): 127-136. Ellen M. Eisenberg explores the minimal Jewish resistance to the Japanese incarceration in *The First to Cry Down Injustice? Western Jews and Japanese Removal during WWII* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

did or did not cooperate with the government.<sup>34</sup> Despite these limitations, its demographic data seem fairly reliable and the opinions of the authors of narrative reports are usually clear. They provided very useful descriptions of religious life in the camp. The researchers' personal remarks added unique perspectives.

Studies of the incarceration began appearing regularly by the late 1970s, after the redress movement urged scholars to learn more about the incarceration and its long-term repercussions. Recently, a number of innovative studies have dug deeper into the historical memory of the event, examining how it is memorialized today, while others utilize recently declassified sources to productive ends.<sup>35</sup> However, a large proportion of these books focus on the perpetrators of the incarceration or other white authority figures and organizations.<sup>36</sup> These are essential topics to examine, but the books' top-down approach overlooks dynamics within the camps, among actual incarcerated. Early scholars who focused on Nikkei often spotlighted exceptional individuals or ways in which Japanese Americans "proved" their

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<sup>34</sup>Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *The Salvage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952) and Dorothy Swaine Thomas and Richard S. Nishimoto, *The Spoilage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946). A number of the JERS participants wrote about their personal experience later in Yuji Ichioka, ed., *Views from Within: The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study* (Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, 1989). For an analysis of the study itself, see Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, *The Politics of Fieldwork: Research in an American Concentration Camp* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup>Examples include Alice Yang Murray, *Historical Memories of the Japanese American Internment and the Struggle for Redress* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Elena Tajima Creef, *Imaging Japanese America: The Visual Construction of Citizenship, Nation and the Body* (New York: New York University Press, 2004); Jasmine Alinder, *Moving Images: Photography and the Japanese American Incarceration* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); and Linda Gordon and Gary Y. Okihiro, eds., *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

<sup>36</sup>See Stephanie Bangarth, *Voices Raised in Protest: Defending North American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry, 1942-49* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); Richard Drinnon, *Keeper of the Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) and Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

loyalty through military service.<sup>37</sup> The literature still lacks adequate, in-depth social studies of family dynamics, gender and religion, and often ignores Nikkei who resisted their situation by refusing to join the US military or who sought repatriation or expatriation.<sup>38</sup>

Discussions of race and ecumenism alongside examinations of memorial services in the camps and Japanese Americans' arguments for pacifism will contribute more generally to scholarship on the role of religion during World War II, an understudied topic.<sup>39</sup> Ingrid Gessner, a German scholar of memory and memorialization, points out that the incarceration must enter American mythology if it is to be properly memorialized. Just as the Holocaust cannot be forgotten within the German consciousness, America's image of "the Good War" must change to include the Japanese American incarceration.<sup>40</sup> The National Park Service has done the most effective work along these lines, just as it regularly tries to adjust America's collective memory to include other ignoble acts.<sup>41</sup> Such efforts work to make the

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<sup>37</sup>Masayo Umezawa Duus, *Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100<sup>th</sup> and 442<sup>nd</sup>* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987); Franklin Odo, *No Sword to Bury: Japanese Americans in Hawaii During World War II* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

<sup>38</sup>Three excellent exceptions include John Howard's book on Nikkei in Arkansas, which attends to gender conflicts, sexuality and Nikkei who refused to submit to working conditions in the camps, Eric Muller's work on the experiences of draft resisters and Cherstin Lyon's study of Japanese American citizenship. John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Eric Muller, *Free to Die for their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II*; and Cherstin M. Lyon, *Prisons and Patriots: Japanese American Wartime Citizenship, Civil Disobedience, and Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

<sup>39</sup>Existing sources include Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms: The Role of the American Churches and Clergy in World War I and II, with Some Observations on the War in Vietnam* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969); Crosby, *Battlefield Chaplains*; Alan Robinson, *Chaplains at War: The Role of Clergymen during World War II* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008); and Gerald Lawson Sittser, *A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

<sup>40</sup>Ingrid Gessner, *From Sites of Memory to Cybersights: (Re)Framing Japanese American Experiences* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Press, 2005), 73.

<sup>41</sup>The NPS and the Smithsonian Institutes receive frequent criticism from groups resistant to the public display of the shadier side of American history or what they see as a qualification of national progress or glory. For example, the curators of a Smithsonian exhibit received hate mail for presenting the incarceration in a negative light, despite public apologies from government officials that acknowledge the injustice. Gessner, 65, 238.

camps a place of remembrance for all Americans, not merely just an incident within Japanese American history. I fully endorse such projects and hope my work will further sharpen the history of American Protestantism and begin transforming the nation's and churches' narratives to include the stories of Asian Americans, decisions made on their behalf and the outcomes of related conflicts.

This dissertation progresses chronologically through the stages of incarceration, since each stage challenged church organization and conceptions of race and American freedom in different ways. The narrative follows the priests, ministers, congregants and Protestant organizations of Seattle, Washington from the months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor to the years following the war. My study moves in and out of the camps, as did many of my subjects, both white and Nikkei. To accentuate the importance of location and the distinction between attitudes and approaches on each side of the fence, voices from outside the camps are juxtaposed with those on the inside in separate chapters. This separation clarifies the development of thought among the mainline Protestant leaders who designed worship structures for Nikkei from outside of the camp in contrast to the responses of incarcerated to those decisions. The narratives unite in the final chapters when Nikkei leave camp.

A prologue briefs readers on the history of Japanese immigration to the United States, summarizes common American attitudes toward Asian immigrants and outlines major events related to the incarceration.

The first chapter examines the period from mid-1941 to the spring of 1942, when Nikkei were evicted from their homes. Quaker and mainline publications, sermons and newspaper editorials prior to and just after Pearl Harbor defended the loyalty of Nikkei, stressed the responsibility of non-Japanese Christians to protect their neighbors from racist

accusations and urged Nikkei to make public statements of loyalty to the United States. Forceful language equated such discrimination with that found in Nazi Germany. Mainline Protestants tempered their tone when the government announced its plans for incarceration in the spring of 1942, but Quakers publicly retained their critical assessment of the incarceration throughout the war and challenged its legality. Why did so many religious leaders moderate their message when they did not believe the incarceration was a just decision? Local churches lightened the burden of eviction—helping sell or rent houses and cars, providing storage for belongings and driving the elderly to camp—but only peace churches challenged the injustice directly. This chapter reveals the perspectives of Nikkei pastors through an analysis of their final sermons given before eviction and their organization of worship and religious activities within the temporary camp in Puyallup, Washington. Both Nikkei and non-Japanese Christians struggled to reconcile their loyalty to America with their government's betrayal and sought biblical parallels with which to frame their suffering. Theological reflections on the incarceration appear throughout the dissertation as incarcerated Christians develop theological responses to their incarceration.

Chapter Two surveys the actions of concerned Protestants outside of the camps. Organizations and individuals helped manage churches in the camp, developed expansive public relations campaigns to improve national sentiments about Nikkei and provided material aid and services. Hope for a more united church inspired mainline Protestant leaders to experiment with ecumenical worship as they tried to build churches and direct worship in the camp churches from the outside. Publications and events sponsored by religious and secular organizations encouraged all Americans to welcome Nikkei as they left the camps and sought to decrease racism generally. Speaking tours of white clergymen and

Nikkei urged free Americans to show compassion to incarcerated and prevent Japanese Americans from losing faith in America. Outsiders aided Nikkei independently or through local congregations and organizations like the American Bible Society, the YWCA or the Student Relocation Council. This portion of the dissertation also includes a close analysis of the unique effects of Southern racial dynamics on white Arkansas evangelicals' interest in the Japanese. Stacks of meeting minutes and other institutional records meticulously recorded the debates that led to these particular responses. Personal correspondence among these leaders and incarcerated stresses the intense commitment many of these individuals had toward their particular responses to the incarceration.

The third chapter returns to Seattle's Japanese community and the white pastors who worked with them in the camps. This chapter looks at the work of clergy at Minidoka and their establishment of an ecumenical church. Some men and women in the camps reveled in what they believed was a spiritually superior united church, while others refused to redefine denominational boundaries and worshipped separately. Generational barriers and a constantly shifting population also hindered united worship. While Nikkei pastors organized and led the camp churches, white church workers who moved to the camps with their congregations filled whatever roles necessary. This chapter unearths the reality of this unique ecumenical experiment through government records, meeting minutes, personal correspondence and oral histories reconstruct life in the camps. Ultimately, did the attempt work? Was ecumenical unity realized? If not, why not?

The focus of Chapter Four remains in the camps, but turns away from church leaders to examine how incarcerated experienced Christianity in the camp. It considers the perspectives of young people and adults, Christians and non-Christians and compares the



attitudes toward Christianity in Minidoka to those in other camps. Many incarcerated Protestants found strength in Christian fellowship and faith. Incarcerees frequently thanked God for giving them the strength to endure the incarceration, and some thanked God for the experience for a number of reasons. Non-Christians' experience of Christianity in the camps varied widely, but this chapter focuses on their role in Christmas celebrations at Minidoka as the holiday unified religious and patriotic elements. Many Buddhists proudly participated in this American holiday. They also joined Protestants and Catholics to organize interfaith memorial services for Nikkei soldiers killed in action. While some of the chapter retains the dissertation's focus on the Seattle community, it also highlights Christian youth culture at a camp in Arizona and the hardships at Tule Lake, where fellow incarcerees attacked Christian Nikkei for cooperating with camp officials. The chapter concludes with an examination of how the war challenged Christian incarcerees in additional ways. Material sources such as artwork, memory books and photographs, as well as oral histories as oral histories, children's essays and poems written in the camps are used extensively in this chapter.

Pushing for unification through racial integration, outside leaders interacted with Nikkei as they left the camps to resettle in the East during the war or return to the West Coast in 1945 to begin rebuilding their lives. Protestants tried to redefine the role of minorities—or at least that of Japanese Americans—within the church. Attempts to begin radically restructuring the racial structures within American Protestantism incited extensive debate about the role of racial minorities within the church. Like the decision to form ecumenical churches, leaders thought the long term benefits of fewer divisions in the church outweighed the temporary challenges to the subjects of their experiment. Free of camp regulations, Nikkei Christians made their own decisions. Most chose to form ethnic fellowship groups or

cease participation in organized religious worship instead of joining predominately white churches. The results of this experiment in the late 1940s reveal the limited extent to which American Christians were interested in, capable of and willing to reform definitions of race in order to end segregation. Japanese Americans eventually developed theological justification for the benefits of ethnic worship. Sources for this chapter include personal and professional correspondence, church newsletters and bulletins, Council of Churches meeting minutes and oral histories.

The afterword reflects on the long-term effects of churches' actions during the Japanese American incarceration, considering people's postwar reflections and the rise of Nikkei's contributions to Asian American theology.

The life of Monica (*nee* Itoi) Sone, a Seattleite from a Japanese Methodist family, frames the narration of this story because it illustrates the experiences of many college-aged Christian *Nisei* during the war.<sup>42</sup> Her autobiography, *Nisei Daughter*, describes her childhood growing up in Seattle, her incarceration at the Puyallup Assembly Center and Minidoka Relocation Center, her subsequent move to Chicago and sojourn at Wendell College during the war. Because Sone composed *Nisei Daughter* in 1953, decades before the collection of oral histories from incarcerated, calls for redress or the publication of nearly all other first and second hand chronicles of the incarceration, it offers a more immediate memory than most sources. Later accounts remain extremely valuable, but, like all memories, are remembered through a lens of the present world and constantly change over

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<sup>42</sup>Nisei are members of the second generation.

time.<sup>43</sup> The experiences of incarcerated lives and societal changes must be taken into account when analyzing their memories, as these events and others unavoidably altered their perceptions of events from that earlier time. These later perspectives are valuable in their own right, but must be differentiated from contemporary primary sources. The narrative of *Nisei Daughter* is useful because it fits in a space between contemporaneous and recent sources, providing a thoughtful perspective on the period not heavily influenced by later events.

By exploring Itoi's experiences and those of other Seattlites, this dissertation reveals the persuasive power of international ecumenical movements to affect the religious lives of thousands of individuals. Working to strengthen American Protestantism and build foundations for a peaceful world, white and Nikkei Protestants experimented with the application of these ideals as they struggled to respond to a gross injustice.

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<sup>43</sup>Halbwachs speaks of the continual reconstruction of the past, particularly within groups that develop a communal memory. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Chapter 3.

## Prologue

*At [the Seattle public school] Bailey Gatzert I was a jumping, screaming, roustabout Yankee, but at the stroke of three when the school bell rang and doors burst open everywhere, spewing out pupils like jelly beans from a broken bag, I suddenly became a modest, faltering, earnest little Japanese girl with a small, timid voice.<sup>1</sup>*

*-Monica Sone, on growing up as a Japanese American*

This prologue sketches the historical background of Japanese immigration, the formation of ethnic communities and churches on the Pacific Coast and the events of the Japanese American incarceration. Understanding the development of Seattle's Japanese immigrant community and its participation within urban Christian missions sheds light on the immigrants' and white missionaries' responses to the incarceration. An exploration of rumors fostered by yellow journalism, racial prejudices and economic competition contextualizes the environment that led to the government's decision to incarcerate Japanese Americans during World War II.

### **Japanese Immigration to the United States**

Japan's Meiji Restoration of 1868 legalized emigration in the second half of the nineteenth century, and a program of modernization and Westernization encouraged many to go abroad for education or business.<sup>2</sup> As farmers lost their land to high taxes for Japan's new

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<sup>1</sup>Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 22.

<sup>2</sup>The Meiji Restoration marked perhaps the most dramatic societal and structural changes in Japan's history. The country embraced militarization and Western innovations while cultivating a nationalistic "restoration" of Japanese traditions and cultural values.

military and industrialization efforts, many sought opportunities abroad. Men lacking an inheritance or hoping to avoid military conscription also looked eastward to Hawaii and the American West. Most intended to return to Japan, but many stayed, establishing businesses, farms and families in the United States.

Since the Meiji government provided compulsory education for both boys and girls, these immigrants came with more skills, more money and a higher class background than the average Chinese or European immigrant.<sup>3</sup> But most still worked as field laborers or in fish canneries initially. Many farmers on the Pacific Coast welcomed these immigrants to ease labor shortages caused by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Japanese contractors supplied thousands of workers to fill the labor needs in Hawaii and along North America's western coast.<sup>4</sup> Wages were low by American standards, but provided a large enough income that Asian sojourners could send a portion to their families in Japan. Immigrants with greater assets came to the United States for university training or business ventures. Between 1885 and 1924, 275,000 Japanese entered the United States,<sup>5</sup> compared to over sixteen million European immigrants during the same period.<sup>6</sup> Unlike Europeans, most Japanese intended to return home and many did. The Japanese population never exceeded 140,000 prior to World

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<sup>3</sup>Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans, Updated and Revised* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 43-49.

<sup>4</sup>Contractors lured many workers from the cane fields of Hawaii as well as from Japan, promising high wages and better working conditions on the West Coast. Yukiko Kimura, *Issei: Japanese Immigrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988).

<sup>5</sup>Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 8. This number does not reflect the greater number of Japanese who immigrated to Hawaii, which was not yet part of the union.

<sup>6</sup>Sixteen million immigrants entered Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924, so the actual number is considerably higher. "Immigration and U.S. History," posted 13 Feb 2008, <http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2008/February/20080307112004ebyessedo0.1716272.html>.

War II.<sup>7</sup> While Nikkei never amounted for two-tenths of one percent (0.02%) of the total US population,<sup>8</sup> the Japanese community flourished by opening small businesses and operating successful farms.

During the late 1800s, most Asians entered the country through the Port of Seattle<sup>9</sup> and a small Japanese community formed along Yesler Way.<sup>10</sup> Only 125 Japanese lived in Seattle in 1890, but 3,000 Nikkei lived and worked south of the city center by 1900.<sup>11</sup> The area became known as *Nihonmachi*, or Japan Town.<sup>12</sup> Excluded from many white businesses and most residential areas, the community developed its own economy and social networks. Nearly half of the employed Nikkei in Seattle operated their own businesses prior to World War II.<sup>13</sup> The residents of Nihonmachi opened their own barber shops, newspapers, a movie theater, department stores and places of worship, while Japanese midwives, dentists and physicians cared for the community's medical needs. Immigrants could bank at branches

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<sup>7</sup>Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 8.

<sup>8</sup>Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 8.

<sup>9</sup>San Francisco became the primary port of entry in later decades, registering immigrants through Angel Island.

<sup>10</sup>The Japanese community formed near the location of Seattle's original 1850s settlement. The earliest Euro-American settlers had moved north to what is today's city center, building on land farther from the marshy tidal flats of Puget Sound. Junius Rochester, "Yesler, Henry L.," History Link Essay 286, posted 7 Oct 1998, [http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=286](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=286).

<sup>11</sup>Louis Fiset, *Camp Harmony: Seattle's Japanese Americans and the Puyallup Assembly Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>12</sup>After the community's eviction in 1942, locals began identifying this ethnically diverse neighborhood more broadly as the International District.

<sup>13</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 12. Depending on the region, 50-80% of first generation Japanese immigrants to the United States were self-employed. Takaki, *Strangers*, 241. Bill Hosokawa, a Seattle journalist, described the city's stable Japanese community as moderately self-contained and self-sufficient. Bill Hosokawa, "The Uprooting of Seattle," in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, rev. ed., eds. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor and Harry H.L. Kitano (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 18.

of three Japanese banks or two independent Nihonmachi banks.<sup>14</sup> The most common occupation among Nikkei immigrants was hotel management, though the Great Depression led to the closure of many establishments. Prior to the eviction, Nikkei operated 262 hotels and apartment buildings in Seattle and ran ten percent of the city's restaurants.<sup>15</sup> This success is particularly impressive considering that Nikkei constituted only two percent of Seattle's pre-war population.<sup>16</sup>

Outside of the city, skilled Japanese farmers built irrigation systems on supposedly unarable land and introduced continuous crop rotation, a system that allowed a different vegetable, fruit or flower to grow on the same plot of land each season. With hard work, the yield of Japanese farms in America's westernmost states surpassed that of other farms in several crops.<sup>17</sup> By 1941, Nikkei farmed fifty-six percent of King County's agricultural land devoted to truck crops, accounting for eighty percent of the county's asparagus, cauliflower, onions and late peas, and over half of the cabbage, celery, lettuce, spinach, strawberries, snap beans and cucumbers.<sup>18</sup> Japanese truck farmers supplied seventy to eighty percent of the produce at Seattle's Pike Place Market and urban markets in California, as well as half the

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<sup>14</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 11.

<sup>15</sup>Nikkei operated fifty-three restaurants in Seattle. Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 11-12.

<sup>16</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 4 and Takaki, *Strangers*, 180.

<sup>17</sup>Just prior to the eviction, the US Department of Agriculture reported that Japanese farmers grew ninety percent or more of California's peppers, celery and strawberries, over half of the snap beans, artichokes, cauliflower, cucumbers, spinach and tomatoes and substantial market shares of onions, asparagus, cabbage, cantaloupes, carrots, lettuce and watermelon. United States Department of the Interior & War Agency Liquidation Unit, *People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans* (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Interior, 1947), 60.

<sup>18</sup>Truck crops are varieties of fruits and vegetables distributed through farmers markets or small stores for local consumption. They do not include products such as grain or sugar beets, which require processing. Seattle lies within King County. "Wartime Exile: The Exclusion of the Japanese Americans from the West Coast" (Washington D.C.: US Department of the Interior and War Relocation Authority, 1946), 87. Stephen S. Fugita and Marilyn Fernandez, *Altered Lives, Enduring Community: Japanese Americans Remember their World War II Incarceration* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 19.

milk in the Seattle area.<sup>19</sup> This remarkable success, within less than a generation, angered many Euro-Americans who had not achieved so much so quickly.

Labor unions and farming cooperatives pressed state legislatures to pass alien land laws barring anyone unable to become a citizen, which included all Asians, from owning land. The Naturalization Law of 1790 limited naturalization to white immigrants and, eventually, African Americans. It remained in effect for 162 years—until 1952. So while the alien land laws said nothing about Japanese immigrants per se, they and Chinese immigrants were the intended victims. California passed such a law in 1913 and Washington, Oregon and other western states followed in the early 1920s. Many immigrants found loopholes, placing titles in their children's names or informally leasing the land from someone else, but amendments to the laws eventually eliminated these possibilities.

The anti-Japanese rhetoric used to pass such laws focused on racial purity and the economic threat Nikkei posed to white Americans. Like the Chinese, their biology was thought to prevent their assimilation despite having acquired qualities of Americanism.<sup>20</sup> (At the time, “Americanism” described a commitment to American culture and ideologies, a connotation distinct from patriotism.) The American Federation of Labor warned that the “partial adoption of American customs” made Japanese “more dangerous” than Chinese immigrants because of the supposed insincerity of their Western behavior. They claimed Asiatic deceit threatened US labor interests and white society. Opponents also pointed to the ethnic solidarity visible in urban areas. Though artificially enforced by racist housing

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<sup>19</sup>Fugita and Fernandez, 18. Nikkei raised and sold ten percent of the total value of California agriculture by 1920 and constituted two percent of the California population. Takaki, *Strangers*, 191-3.

<sup>20</sup>Americanism was taught in public schools for the benefit of immigrants and their children. George T. Balch, *Methods for Teaching Patriotism in the Public Schools* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1890).



restrictions, ethnic neighborhoods drew accusations that Japanese were unassimilable and uninterested in becoming part of the nation.<sup>21</sup>

Protestant missionaries were among the few white supporters of Japanese immigration. Their early approaches to these debates foreshadowed the varied responses to the incarceration and questions about ethnicity in Protestant churches decades later. Returned missionaries from Asia sympathized with and respected immigrants. Despite violent opposition, these religious men and women protested the exploitation of immigrant labor and called for naturalization rights and more liberal immigration policies.<sup>22</sup> Like antebellum abolitionists, they attempted to overturn so-called scientific racism by showing how the Bible depicts humans as created equal.<sup>23</sup> They explained to the public that the “inferior” cultural traits and lack of assimilation of Asian immigrants stemmed not from innate attributes, but from “pagan” beliefs and the mistreatment they received in the United States, both remediable hindrances.<sup>24</sup> On these grounds, they believed that the cultural and spiritual redemption of Japanese people was possible through religious conversions. While some missionaries promised that Asians would adopt American values and follow Western class and gender prescriptions once they abandoned Buddhism for Christianity, others

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<sup>21</sup>Takaki, *Strangers*, 180, 200.

<sup>22</sup>During anti-Chinese demonstrations, missionaries were burned in effigy. Robert Seager II, “Some Denominational Reactions to Chinese Immigration to California, 1856-1892,” *Pacific Historical Review* 28:1 (Feb 1959): 54-55.

<sup>23</sup>Scientific racism refers to social Darwinism’s survival of the fittest. Some people claimed that these “objective” scientific theories justified subjugating non-white people. For a more detailed explanation of how missionaries argued these ideas, see Jennifer Snow, *Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850-1924* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 27-53.

<sup>24</sup>Snow claims that missionaries did not speak in terms of race in the early nineteenth century despite extreme ethnocentrism. Later Christian leaders used this same ideology to combat racism. Snow, 18, 23.

objected to an argument contingent on conversion and the adoption of Western values.<sup>25</sup>

These latter men and women attempted to secure Asian immigrant rights on grounds of common humanity rather than the power of conversion.

The prolific Congregational missionary Sydney Gulick led the fight against anti-Japanese legislation. Instead of using biblical arguments for equality, he fought scientific racism with evolutionary science. One of Gulick's many books, *The Evolution of the Japanese*, employed scientific language to argue that attitudes, behavior and other cultural attributes came only as a result of "social," not "biological inheritance."<sup>26</sup> The public, including many Christian pastors, regularly dismissed missionaries' ideas, rationalizing that time abroad negatively altered a person's perception of the world and America's priorities. Prominent Protestant pastors like nativist Josiah Strong opposed Gulick and judges brushed pro-immigration arguments aside for being "utopian and idealistic."<sup>27</sup> Similar efforts by missionaries to support Chinese immigrants had also failed. Continued pressure from labor unions and white politicians caused the United States to end immigration from Japan entirely. The Immigration Act of 1924 barred entry to anyone ineligible for naturalization, which included all East Asians.

However, as a growing world power, Japan had the initiative and ability to monitor its communities abroad and improve their living situations. President Theodore Roosevelt accommodated some requests from the Japanese government for the sake of foreign

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<sup>25</sup>Snow, 23.

<sup>26</sup>Snow, 92.

<sup>27</sup>Sidney L. Gulick, *Should Congress Enact Special Laws Affecting Japanese? A Critical Examination of the "Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization" held in California, July 1920* (New York: National Committee on American Japanese Relations, 1922), 30.

relations.<sup>28</sup> In particular, Japanese leaders realized the benefit of having whole families—not exclusively bachelors—abroad. As part of the Gentlemen’s Agreement, the US government halted the immigration of Japanese laborers in 1908, but allowed women to join their husbands in America. Family members and matchmakers exchanged photographs and held weddings in Japan (minus the groom) before the bride departed to join her new husband in the United States. The immigration of thousands of picture brides led to a boom in the second generation; 25,170 Nisei were born between 1910 and 1920.<sup>29</sup> They became citizens by birth as mandated by the Constitution. But even citizenship did not prevent the government from incarcerating them for the duration of World War II.

Nisei grew up listening to swing bands and playing baseball with friends of various ethnicities. If their parents had not given them a Western-sounding name, they still often used one at school. Pressure from Japan protected these children from being isolated in segregated schools, so most Japanese American children received the same education as white children.<sup>30</sup> Most *Issei*, first generation Japanese immigrants, saw opportunities for their children that were unreachable within their own lives and encouraged them to perfect their English, attend university and join American society. Frequently graduating with honors, many Nisei attended college. By World War II, the average Nisei had completed two

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<sup>28</sup>Takaki, *Strangers*, 201.

<sup>29</sup>In 1900, 410 married Japanese women resided in the United States, but by 1910 and 1920, there were 5,581 and 22,193 respectively. Toyotomi Morimoto, *Japanese Americans and Cultural Continuity: Maintaining Language and Heritage* (New York: Garland, 1997), 24.

<sup>30</sup>Integrated schools for Japanese American children came as a result of the San Francisco School Segregation Incident in 1905. Part of the Gentlemen’s Agreement guaranteed Japanese Americans the right to attend public schools, though the law was not always followed. Theodore Roosevelt called California’s intolerant push for segregation “a wicked absurdity.” He asked them to treat Japanese, German, English, French, Russian and Italian children equally, and sent troops to San Francisco to protect Nisei and America’s relationship with Japan. However, after leaving office and no longer responsible for maintaining foreign relations, Roosevelt’s call for exclusion became “increasingly shrill.” He now argued that while Japanese and white people were “wholly different,” if highly civilized, a mixing of peoples would lead to “a race contest . . . fraught with peril.” Morimoto, 20-23. Takaki, *Strangers*, 201.

years of college, a level of education far higher than that of the average American at that time. But racism prevented many college graduates from obtaining professional, white-collar work: only a quarter worked in the professional field for which they had trained. Many returned discouraged to family farms or businesses. A dejected college graduate wrote, “I would much rather be a doctor or lawyer . . . but my aspirations were frustrated long ago. I am only what I am, a professional carrot washer.” In 1940, one in five Nisei in Los Angeles worked at a Japanese-owned produce stall. The Great Depression—when most of the generation came of age—limited employment further.<sup>31</sup>

About nine percent of Nisei were sent to Japan for their education.<sup>32</sup> Some parents thought a stronger knowledge of Japanese would be helpful later in life, while others realized their children would never adopt particular Japanese manners and desired character attributes without time in Japan. Upon their return to the US, they were dubbed *Kibei*, a subsection of the second generation. As some parents hoped, many Kibei acquired social attitudes different from their peers educated in America. Young Nisei women resented Kibeis’ expectations for a submissive girlfriend or wife, while most Nisei complained that Kibei were “too Japanesey” generally.<sup>33</sup> In Japan, many schoolmates and teachers had considered them too American. Isolated from their peers, some Kibei distanced themselves from family as well, feeling personally rejected after being sent away. Once in camp, Kibei declared loyalties to Japan in higher numbers than Nisei proportionately, and WRA authorities suspected them of seditious thoughts or plots as much as or more than Issei.

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<sup>31</sup>Takaki, *Strangers*, 118, 220.

<sup>32</sup>Fugita and Fernandez, 26.

<sup>33</sup>Jere Takahashi, *Nisei Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 83.

As an alternative, many other parents sent their children to local afterschool Japanese language classes, often organized through Japanese temples or churches.<sup>34</sup> Despite attempts to model these schools as American institutions,<sup>35</sup> authorities often suspected such organizations at the war's outbreak of indoctrinating children with Japanese nationalism. FBI agents arrested most language teachers by December 8, 1941 and recorded every Nikkei's attendance record at language schools, believing the affiliation indicated sympathies to Japan.

The first sentences of the autobiographical account, *Nisei Daughter*, written in 1953, characterize the thoughts of many Nisei searching for an identity between Japan and America. Monica (nee Itoi) Sone wrote, "The first five years of my life I lived in amoebic bliss, not knowing whether I was plant or animal . . . One day when I was a happy six-year-old, I made the shocking discovery that I had Japanese blood. I was a Japanese." She made this discovery when her mother explained that she would attend Japanese language school. She responded, "Terrible, terrible, terrible! So that's what it meant to be a Japanese—to lose my afternoon play hours! I fiercely resented this sudden intrusion of my blood into my

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<sup>34</sup> Attendance varied geographically. While about sixty-nine percent of Nisei in California attended Japanese language schools in the 1930s for an average of three years, only twenty-nine percent of Nisei in Seattle matriculated. Morimoto, 73.

<sup>35</sup> Japanese community leaders adopted new textbooks that promoted "the spirit of true Americanism" in lieu of the textbooks published by Japan's Ministry of Education. The new books eliminated most cultural references to Japan, promoted the American ideal of independence and added lessons on American citizenship. More telling, illustrations now depicted white people in a Western setting. For example, rather than showing a Japanese woman breastfeeding on the floor, the new textbook showed a white woman bottle feeding her infant in a rocking chair. Some leaders also discouraged or forbade classroom use of the Imperial Rescript on Education, a nationalistic devotion required in Japanese public schools, and formed a Committee on Americanization to further "the cardinal principle . . . [of] the assimilation of American customs and manners." They hoped such rhetoric would demonstrate their commitment to the United States and cooperation in complement, not competing with, the public school system. However, white authorities took little notice. Morimoto, 42-3, 26-29. Noriko Asato, "Americanization vs. Japanese Cultural Maintenance: Analyzing Seattle's *Nihongo Tokuhon*, 1920," in *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Louis Fiset and Gail Nomura (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 95-119.

affairs.”<sup>36</sup> Describing the experience as a discovery that she was “a Japanese” emphasizes her perception of ethnicity as a total, alien identity. She did not simply acquire an additional attribute and add the adjective “Japanese” to her person, but rather became a whole different being. The realization of her Japanese blood, as she puts it, confused and distressed her: “I didn’t see how I could be a Yankee and Japanese at the same time. It was like being born with two heads. It sounded freakish and a lot of trouble.”<sup>37</sup> Little did she know how much trouble her Japanese blood would cause. Though Itoi attended Japanese language school in the afternoons, she also attended public school and showed little awareness of racial discrimination as a child. When it did occasionally occur, it came as a shock, much like the discovery of her ancestry. However, like many Nisei, racial discrimination heavily influenced her career opportunities as a young adult.

Itoi’s family’s employment, religion, motives for immigration and educational background provided her with a view of America beyond Nihonmachi. She grew up in a Seattle hotel managed by her parents, exposed to a wide variety of people. Her maternal grandfather, a Congregational minister impressed with the freedoms found in America, moved his family to Seattle when her mother was a child.<sup>38</sup> Her father had immigrated earlier, seeking new employment opportunities. Itoi attended the Seattle Japanese Methodist Church with her family and was well-acquainted with several of the white leaders who directed Christian programs for the Japanese community before and after the war and during the incarceration.

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<sup>36</sup>Sone, 3-4.

<sup>37</sup>Sone, 19.

<sup>38</sup>Sone, 6.

Not all Nisei agreed that the dilemma of their generation was the manifestation of two starkly contrasting identities within themselves. Some envisioned their generation as a “blend” of the “best of the East and West” that heralded the entrance of a new “Pacific Era” in American and global history.<sup>39</sup> George Muramoto, a leader of the Young Men’s Buddhist Association, asserted, “Our value to the American public as American citizens rests wholly in the ever present consciousness that we are Japanese. . . . Assimilation does not necessarily mean that we must lose our racial integrity.”<sup>40</sup> Muramoto’s organization and other Japanese American religious groups discussed such issues at regular regional and national conferences, creating a social network among burgeoning leaders of their generation. Eileen Tamura has argued that Nisei’s insistence that they be considered Americans had “much more to do with issues of access than with notions of wholesale assimilation.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Japanese Christians**

Churches and Buddhist temples organized much of community life in Nihonmachi by sponsoring Japanese language schools, Boy Scout troops, athletic teams and social clubs. At least a quarter of the Seattle Nikkei population identified as Christian and attended one of seven ethnic churches: the Japanese Baptist Church (founded in 1899), the Japanese Methodist Church (1904); St. Peter’s Episcopal Church (1906), Japanese Presbyterian (1907), Japanese Congregational (1907), the Catholic Maryknoll Mission—Our Lady Queen

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<sup>39</sup>David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2000), 49.

<sup>40</sup>Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*, 53.

<sup>41</sup>Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*, 52. For a full description of the development of this perspective, see Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

of Martyrs (1925) and a Japanese Holiness church (1935).<sup>42</sup> These Seattle Christians participated in the three national Japanese Church Federations and attended regional ecumenical conferences. A similar number of Buddhists affiliated themselves with the Nichiren or Shinshu temples in Seattle.<sup>43</sup> As states increasingly restricted the rights of Japanese immigrants, religious organizations, both Christian and Buddhist, provided inclusive spaces and opportunities for leadership.<sup>44</sup>

Many immigrants first encountered Christianity through the work of Protestant aid societies and home mission programs. These groups provided families with child care, employment, financial aid and English lessons. Many adults converted after learning about Christianity through language classes that used the Bible as a primer. The missions functioned as a general support system for Japanese immigrants, particularly women, who missed the tight-knit social groups of their hometowns and extended families. As ethnic churches formed, they became community centers that fostered intimacy and social support.<sup>45</sup> Missionaries also reached Issei by organizing youth programs for their children.

It was not uncommon for Japanese parents to send their children to Sunday school and encourage them to join Christian churches while they themselves retained Buddhist

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<sup>42</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 13-14, 103. Over half of the approximately one hundred Japanese Protestant congregations in the US were Methodist or Presbyterian. Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches in Japanese Relocation Centers and Settlements, 20 July 1942, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>43</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 13-14

<sup>44</sup>Derek Chang, "'Marked in Body and Spirit': Home Missionaries and the Remaking of Race and Nation," in *Race, Nation and Religion in the Americas*, eds. Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister (New York: Oxford, 2004), 133-156.

<sup>45</sup>Frank Miyamoto, a Washington native and sociology professor at the University of Washington, described the churches filling this "vacuum." Frank Miyamoto, Interview I, interview by Stephen Fugita, 26 Feb 1998, Densho. Fujin House, a Baptist women's society, was the first Japanese Christian institution to serve Seattle's Japanese community.



customs. Often this decision was made out of “convenience,”<sup>46</sup> since church groups provided safe recreational opportunities to occupy children’s attention, or out of a desire to provide moral instruction and decided “any church is good for you.”<sup>47</sup> An Issei parent explained another commonly held understanding, “I’m Japanese. Buddhism is a Japanese religion. But my children are American. Christianity is an American religion. My children should be Christian.”<sup>48</sup> Some immigrants identified Christianity with American society and wanted their children to succeed in that world. Other parents were just happy to have their children attending church instead of playing “out in the streets.”<sup>49</sup> Many immigrants never attended church, but enjoyed secularized aspects of the religion, like Christmas celebrations. As is true among some American families today, the celebration of major Christian holidays was an act of Americanism more than of Christianity. The Los Angeles Buddhist Temple even hosted Christmas parties where children exchanged gifts and sang “Jingle Bells.”<sup>50</sup> Many Issei learned about these traditions through their children who attended public schools.

For some Japanese immigrants, being American meant being Christian. And for many Euro-Americans, being Christian signified cultural assimilation. Conversion in the United States initiated the individual into a particularly American version of Christianity. An immigrant in Seattle who converted before World War II describes this phenomenon:

In Japan I was a Buddhist of deep faith . . . after coming to America, however, I changed to Christianity because I felt that there was something in it which

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<sup>46</sup>Yosh Nakagawa, interview by Tom Ikeda, 7 Dec 2004, Densho.

<sup>47</sup>Roy Nakagawa, interview by Martha Nakagawa, 20 July 2011, Densho.

<sup>48</sup>Virginia Green, “Japanese Americans in Salem,” Salem Online History, accessed 18 Mar 2012, [http://www.salemhistory.net/people/japanese\\_americans.htm](http://www.salemhistory.net/people/japanese_americans.htm).

<sup>49</sup>Diana Meyers Bahr, *The Unquiet Nisei: An Oral History of the Life of Sue Kunitomi Embrey* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 25.

<sup>50</sup>Bahr, 25.

Buddhism did not have. In Buddhism they talk a great deal about cause and effect, and about destiny, but they have nothing in it which says anything about what one can do himself to change himself or his world. In Christianity, however, we learn that it is possible to alter the way of life and one's destiny by one's own acts. This is the thing which I have come to feel is important, and that is the reason I have given up my Buddhism and taken up Christianity.<sup>51</sup>

The empowering individualism he appreciated is a strong element within American Christianity. In other regions of the world, including Japan, Christian beliefs prioritize community obligations over individual agency. This convert adopted American individualism within his new religious beliefs, supporting the stereotype that conversion to Christianity involved an adoption of American values.

However, some Japanese Christians did not accept these elements of American Christianity. Brian Hayashi showed that select evangelical and Japanese Holiness congregations in California contradicted assumptions that a Christian identity equaled greater Western assimilation. His research revealed that these churches formed strong charitable ties to Japanese institutions with which they sustained continuous religious and political discourse. Hayashi concluded that congregants understood themselves to be part of that transpacific community and resisted joining American Christian associations.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Frank Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984 [1939, 1981]), 50.

<sup>52</sup>However, Hayashi overstated his conclusion, claiming his research represented the views and practices of most Japanese American Christians. His research did not stretch beyond Holiness and other evangelical groups to which relatively few Nikkei belonged. Mainline Protestant and Catholic Japanese congregations in the United States were sponsored by American mission organizations and had no official ties to Japan. Similarly, Hayashi claimed that most Nikkei within every generation and all religious backgrounds were ultimately loyal to Japan and believed in their eventual victory over the United States, but his data suggests that those sentiments primarily came from marginal groups of Issei. Brian Hayashi, *For the Sake of Our Japanese Brethren* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995) and *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). For similar assessments of Hayashi, see Roger Daniels, review of *For the Sake of Our Japanese Brethren*, by Brian Hayashi, *Pacific Historical Review* 65:2 (May 1996): 344-345 and Greg Robinson, review of *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment*, by Brian Hayashi, *American Historical Review* 111:1 (Feb 2006): 223-224.

Other Japanese immigrants did not view their identification as Christians as an adoption of American mores because they or their family converted to Christianity before emigration. A few immigrants may have been able to trace their Christian roots back to the sixteenth century, when Portuguese Catholic missionaries first introduced Christianity to Japan.<sup>53</sup> Japan closed its borders not long after their arrival, and magistrates forced inhabitants throughout the country to prove their indifference to Christianity or face grisly torture and painful executions.<sup>54</sup> Missionaries following Commodore Matthew Perry's forced entry to the nation in 1853 discovered 60,000 *Kakure Kirishitan*, or "hidden Christians," living on the southern island of Kyushu. About half of the *Kakure Kirishitan* converted to Roman Catholicism, but others continued to practice what had become an entirely unique type of Japanese Christianity constructed over centuries.<sup>55</sup> In 1873, the Japanese government instituted broader laws protecting religious liberties, though these were tempered over time to complement growing Japanese nationalism. Japanese Christians still experienced discrimination.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>For an excellent study of the beliefs and practices developed during Japan's "Christian century," see Ikuo Higashibara, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan: Kirishitan Belief and Practice* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001).

<sup>54</sup>This persecution and isolation from priests and other Christian teachers resulted in the creation of a unique religion. Left with no written scripture, believers composed a text that retained remarkably accurate passages from the Bible, but also added elements of Shinto and Buddhism. Believers constructed new rituals and religious objects that enabled them to practice in relative secrecy. For a thorough examination of this group, see Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan: A Study of their Development, Beliefs and Rituals to the Present Day* (Richmond, England: Japan Library, 1998).

<sup>55</sup>Adrian Hastings, *A World History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 400.

<sup>56</sup>For a description of the difficulties Christians encountered in Meiji Japan, see Amy Uno Ishii, interviewed by Betty E. Mitson, July 1973, in *Japanese American World War II Evacuation Oral History Project: Part I: Internees*, ed. Arthur A. Hansen (Westport, CT: Meckler, 1991), 40. Shimada's memoirs offer intimate memories of being a Christian in Japan before his emigration. Shigeo Shimada, *A Stone Cried Out: The True Story of Simple Faith in Difficult Days* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1986).

Though the majority of Japanese Christians joined Protestant denominations through the guidance of Western missionaries in Japan<sup>57</sup> or the United States, others belonged to independent Japanese Christian sects formed in Japan by Japanese around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>58</sup> The most prominent pre-World War II Japanese Christian sect was Uchimura Kanzō's *Mukyōkai* (nonchurch) movement, founded in 1901.<sup>59</sup> Uchimura trained in the United States, but returned to Japan to form an innovative community that rejected the denominational politics he saw in America.<sup>60</sup> In his words, the promotion of *Mukyōkai*, literally an "absence of church," "does not set up institutions or attempt to control other people but rather practices mutual love, encouragement and assistance among its members." He felt that such a strong sense of community and mutual support could not be found within sectarian denominations. It seemed unreasonable to him for Japanese Christians to inherit the historical divisions and quarrels within Western denominations. Uchimura explained that since his church's "unity and harmony are invisible. . . . There is no danger of corruption. This is the true body of Christ, the true Holy Catholic Church."<sup>61</sup> Uchimura privileged individual piety, personal relationships with God and Bible study, and de-emphasized ecclesiastical authority and the sacraments.<sup>62</sup> Uchimura not only rejected certain Western qualities, but sought to strengthen Japanese Christianity through the cultural value of *giri*, a

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<sup>57</sup>The majority of these missionaries came from the United States.

<sup>58</sup>Mark Mullins has investigated Japanese Christianity for decades, exposing several qualities unique to Christianity in Japan. For an exhaustive list of Japanese Christian groups, consult Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 14-5.

<sup>59</sup>Only *Mukyōkai* substantially influenced immigrants to the US because subsequent Japanese Christian sects formed after immigration to the United States ended.

<sup>60</sup>Gordon Hirabayashi, Interview I, interview by Becky Fukuda and Tom Ikeda, 26 Apr 1999, Densho.

<sup>61</sup>John F. Howes, *Japan's Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzō, 1861-1930* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 13, 222.

<sup>62</sup>Howes, 210-11.

sense of moral obligation to the group or others. Mukyōkai might sound like a new denomination, but Uchimura and his followers felt it was something different. Several subsequent Japanese Christian movements followed Uchimura's model of abandoning sectarian divisions and integrating Confucian morality into religious practice.<sup>63</sup>

To prepare for immigration to the United States, some Japanese attended Iguchi Kigenji's school, which taught English, but also gave lessons about Christianity. Iguchi was one of Uchimura's leading disciples, and he made converts and missionaries out of many of his pupils. Many of his converts continued to adhere to Uchimura's brand of Japanese Christianity after immigration, forming religious farming communes in the United States. An outside observer of one such group in Thomas, Washington stated, "Cooperation is not a theory with them, it is a daily practice."<sup>64</sup> He saw the community as a religious group first and foremost and noted that the families worshipped together and always abstained from work on the Sabbath. Since Uchimura's precepts discouraged religious hierarchies, the group had no pastor. The men took turns leading Sunday worship and distributed a journal, *Shin Kokyo* (New Homeland), that discussed their religious beliefs and their transition from Japan to the United States.<sup>65</sup> Most adherents to Mukyōkai joined Western denominations after the incarceration scattered members across the country. Gordon Hirabayashi, a prominent activist against the incarceration, grew up in the Thomas commune. Most Japanese Christians living in the US and Japan belonged to Western denominations, but some followed new movements conceived of in Japan.

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<sup>63</sup>Matsumura Kaiseki's *The Way* was the most successful of these later groups. Mullins, 68-74.

<sup>64</sup>John Isao Nishinoiri's "Japanese Farms in Washington" quoted in James Hirabayashi, "Four Hirabayashi Cousins: A Question of Identity," in *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Louis Fiset and Gail Nomura (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 149.

<sup>65</sup>James Hirabayashi, 150.

In addition to the aforementioned aid missionaries offered to all Japanese immigrants, certain advantages came with conversion and church attendance. Mission churches awarded scholarships to promising young people, sending them to college. Some Christian Japanese entrusted individual white missionaries with their property titles, providing a way around alien land laws.<sup>66</sup> Adherence to Christianity did not guarantee acceptance within a white American community however.<sup>67</sup>

### **The Japanese American Incarceration**

Reports of the bombing of the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor reached the mainland around noon on December 7, 1941. Knowing other Americans would associate Japanese immigrants with their homeland, Nikkei rushed to bury, burn or otherwise destroy items from Japan: Buddhist texts, shrines and images, textbooks, Japanese flags, kimonos, photographs and anything with Japanese writing or obvious ties to Japan. That evening, FBI agents and local police began searching houses and arresting Japanese nationals, including most Buddhists priests, Japanese language school teachers and other community leaders. In Seattle, 116 Japanese citizens were behind bars by December 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>68</sup> The following day FBI director J. Edgar Hoover announced that “practically all” suspicious enemy aliens were

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<sup>66</sup>Government agents foiled these plots as well. In one case, officials confiscated the land of a Japanese farming cooperative south of Seattle upon discovering that a white missionary in Japan was acted as the legal guardian to a ten-year-old daughter of a member of a Japanese group operating a farm co-op south of Seattle. Gordon Hirabayashi, Interview I.

<sup>67</sup>For instance, white Christians in Hollywood protested the erection of a Japanese church in 1923. Lori Pierce, Paul Spickard and David Yoo, “Japanese and Korean Migrations: Buddhist and Christian Communities in America, 1885-1945,” in *Immigration and Religion: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, eds. Richard Alba, Albert J. Raboteau and Josh DeWind (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 132.

<sup>68</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 28.

interned, 1,191 Japanese from the coast and Hawaii among them.<sup>69</sup> Many of these men and a few women remained in Department of Justice camps for the duration of the war, but the military gradually released other individuals after hearings decided their innocence. Government officials closed Japanese-run banks and froze the accounts of Issei, allowing them to withdraw a small amount each week. This caused chaos in Nihonmachi as businesses could not function without funds or access to their accounts.<sup>70</sup> On December 29<sup>th</sup>, federal agents and local law enforcement confiscated all “contraband” material that had not already been taken, including short wave radios, hunting rifles, cameras, weapons, ceremonial swords, binoculars and dynamite used for clearing land. With the belief that Christians would be treated better in the largely Christian nation, an unknown number of Nikkei temporarily attended Catholic and Protestant services.<sup>71</sup> Protestant pastors reported that many of these visitors soon returned to their Buddhist organizations.<sup>72</sup>

Anti-Japanese voices grew in January, pressuring the government to expel people of Japanese descent from the West Coast, if not the entire country. Political and economic factors led to the greatest number of arguments for the removal of Nikkei, but both relied on a foundation of racial stereotypes. Typical of many West Coast residents, the mayor of Los Angeles, Fletcher Bowron, said, “Undoubtedly many of them intend to be loyal, but only

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<sup>69</sup>The number reached 2,192 by mid-February 1942. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, [1982] 1997), 55.

<sup>70</sup>Bahr, 36-37.

<sup>71</sup>Tamie Tsuchiyama, an incarcerated hired by the University of California at Berkeley to log observations during the war made this observation, as did white pastors ministering to Japanese on the coast. Tsuchiyama, “Preliminary Report: Santa Anita,” 31 July 1942, Reel 016, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (UCB). Herbert and Margaret Wilke Nicholson, *Comfort all who Mourn: The Life Story of Herbert and Madeline Nicholson* (Fresno, CA: Bookmates International, 1982), 83.

<sup>72</sup>Gary Okihiro, “Religion and Resistance in America’s Concentration Camps,” *Phylon* 45:3 (Third Quarter 1981): 223.

each individual can know his own intentions, and when the final test comes, who can say but that ‘blood will tell?’”<sup>73</sup> The majority of articles calling for eviction came from politicians.<sup>74</sup> West Coast congressmen, many seeking reelection,<sup>75</sup> the California Joint Immigration Committee, labor groups and business organizations, such as the Agricultural Committee of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the California Farm Bureau Federation, called for immediate action. Without mentioning the financial gains he and other white members would receive upon the eviction of Nikkei, the General Secretary of the Seattle Retail Florists’ Association stated that “they [were] entirely out of sympathy” with the Nikkei. He weakly denied that his position was based on economic bases or personal vengeance, explaining that florists were recommending eviction even at the risk of personal losses from the “hardships [they] might expect from the lack of certain flowers.”<sup>76</sup> The Salinas Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association bluntly stated, “We’re charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons. We might as well be honest. We do. It’s a question of whether the white man lives on the Pacific Coast or the brown man. . . . We don’t want them back when the war ends, either.”<sup>77</sup> Like alien land laws, the mass removal enabled white farmers to physically remove their greatest competition from the marketplace.

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<sup>73</sup>Quoted in Klancy Clark de Nevers, *The Colonel and the Pacifist: Karl Bendetsen—Perry Saito and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004), 107.

<sup>74</sup>Gillett, “The Press and the American Japanese,” Box 8/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

<sup>75</sup>Not all West Coast politicians supported the incarceration. Harry P. Cain, the mayor of Tacoma, WA, insisted that the government make the effort to “make careful selection” between “good citizens and bad citizens,” and Washington State Representative Mary Farquarson supported Gordon Hirabayashi’s legal challenge of the curfew. Tolan Committee Hearings, 11414-5.

<sup>76</sup>Asahel Curtis, Jr., Tolan Committee Hearings, 11610.

<sup>77</sup>Frank J. Taylor, “The People Nobody Wants,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 9 May 1942, 66.



William Randolph Hearst's yellow journalism fanned the flames of prejudice further, regularly inventing stories and sources, fabricating interviews and distorting the reality of wartime America.<sup>78</sup> Controlling major coastal newspapers like *The Los Angeles Herald*, *The San Francisco Examiner* and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Hearst denied the public the truth—that no Nikkei had been found guilty of sabotage in the United States or Hawaii. All the while, he filled the heads of readers with story after fictional story of Japanese spies and saboteurs. More discerning subscribers—and many government officials—recognized Hearst's stories for what they were, but his scare tactics deceived many, if not most, readers.<sup>79</sup> The nation's political leaders did listen to Walter Lippman, a respected journalist who firmly believed all Nikkei must leave the coast.<sup>80</sup> However, Hearst's newspapers were also persuasive. Two years after the war ended, Bowron publicly thanked Hearst for “maintaining fundamental American standards . . . by exposing elements that would destroy our form of government.”<sup>81</sup>

Emily Roxworthy astutely demonstrated how Hearst's aggressive patriotic spectacles, both in print and real life, also negatively affected the fate of Japanese Americans. In addition to false news stories, Hearst published a historical series in the *Los Angeles Examiner* starring rugged California patriots fighting sneaky, effeminate Japanese through

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<sup>78</sup>Edward R. Murrow, John B. Hughes and other radio commentators stirred the flames of hysteria as well. Martin Lee and Norman Solomon, *Unreliable Sources: A Guide to Detecting Bias in News Media* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1992), 93. Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 200.

<sup>79</sup>Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, stated in February 1942 that “the Hearst newspapers are putting on a typical Hearst campaign for the removal and sequestration of all the Japanese along the Pacific Coast. This would be a cruel and unnecessary step. . . . This, of course, is purely hysteria.” Quoted in United States Department of the Interior, *Minidoka National Monument: General Management Plan* (Seattle: National Park Service, 2006), 13.

<sup>80</sup>*Personal Justice Denied*, 80.

<sup>81</sup>Bowron to Hearst, “I Am an American Day,” 27 Apr 1947, *Milwaukie Sentinel*, A2.

immigration and land-ownership legislation. These melodramas gendered and racialized America in clear terms: They lauded aggressive frontier tactics and breathed a sigh of relief that liberal American softies in the East failed to convince Congress to allow further immigration.<sup>82</sup> Printing these “historical” tales in April 1942 made a clear statement about current politics—the government must not fold to liberal demands of leniency. Off the page, Hearst invented a new holiday, “I Am an American Day,” two years before the United States entered the war.<sup>83</sup> In 1942, the parades, self-laudatory speeches and flag-waving patriotism celebrating ethnic diversity pointedly omitted Japanese Americans. The “nationalistic self-righteousness” encouraged by such displays gave white Americans the “moral high ground that justified prejudice” against minorities, particularly Nikkei.<sup>84</sup> The government and media regularly exaggerated claims of racial tolerance throughout the war,<sup>85</sup> since the US publicized the conflict as a war against intolerance, fascism and racial supremacy.

Even the typically progressive children’s author Theodor Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, drew cartoons criticizing the government’s naive lack of action that was allowing fifth

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<sup>82</sup>Emily Roxworthy, *The Spectacle of Japanese American Trauma: Racial Performativity and World War II* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 103-105.

<sup>83</sup>Hearst smoothly transferred his fear-mongering to the threat of communism after the war. When Congress replaced I am an American Day with Citizenship Day in 1952, an “outraged” Hearst mocked, “What next—would Citizenship Day become ‘World Citizenship Day’?” Richard M. Fried, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 95-96.

<sup>84</sup>Roxworthy, 102.

<sup>85</sup>The institutionalized discrimination against African Americans within the military and war industries is well-known and well-documented. See Gerald Astor, *The Right to Fight: A History of African Americans in the Military* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1998); Thomas Bruscino, *A Nation Forged in War: How World War II Taught Americans to Get Along* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010); and Kimberley L. Phillips, *War! What is it Good For?: Black Freedom Struggles and the US Military from World War II to Iraq* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

column Japanese plots to grow.<sup>86</sup> Geisel attacked Jim Crow laws, anti-Semitism and other varieties of racism regularly, but had “one major blind spot:” negative stereotypes of Japanese people.<sup>87</sup> He, like many cartoonists, individualized Germans and Italians, acknowledging the existence of innocent citizens in those nations, but represented all Japanese people as identically programmed robots within a homogenous entity, a characterization that minimized the possibility of individuals who disagreed with Hirohito.<sup>88</sup> Geisel’s prejudice demonstrates the pervasive nature of anti-Japanese attitudes.

The Eatonville Lions Club, located south of Seattle, exemplified the actions of so-called “patriotic” nativist organizations like the American Legion<sup>89</sup> and the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West,<sup>90</sup> which petitioned local and national agencies to remove

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<sup>86</sup>In a one-panel cartoon, Geisel depicted a Japanese man standing under a sign, “Honorable 5<sup>th</sup> Column,” handing out bricks of TNT to Japanese flooding in from coastal states. Another man looks across the ocean with a telescope. No letters to the editor protested the cartoon. “Waiting for the Signal from Home,” *PM*, 13 Feb 1942.

<sup>87</sup>Richard H. Minear, *Dr. Seuss Goes to War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Geisel* (New York: New Press, 1999), 25-6.

<sup>88</sup>Disney cartoons and other mainstream comics represented Japanese in this way, though not always referring to Japanese Americans specifically. Max Fleischer’s *Superman* included two anti-Japanese episodes. “Eleventh Hour” (airdate: 20 Nov 1942) depicted leagues of identical Japanese soldiers, while “Japoteurs” (airdate: 18 Sept 1942) encouraged fifth column fears. While implemented less often, some Japanese were depicted as seemingly assimilated to emphasize their deceitful nature. The “Japoteur” presents himself as a well-dressed, patriotic American businessman, but viewers watch as a picture of the Statue of Liberty in his office turns to reveal a Japanese flag to which the businessman bows. This saboteur lacks the buck teeth and squinty eyes of typical caricatures to further emphasize his masterful “disguise.” Though not of particularly short stature, Superman belittles the character, calling him “little man” as he rescues Lois Lane. The traditional stereotype of effeminate, weak Japanese lost power as United States forces struggled in the Pacific.

<sup>89</sup>While leaders of patriotic and labor organizations released statements criticizing Japanese Americans, not all members supported these actions. A group of dissenting Legionnaires “vigorously protest[ed]” the use of the organization’s magazine to “foster race discrimination and hatred” and considered such actions violations of the constitutions of both the American Legion and the United States. Japanese veterans of World War I retained their membership within some posts of the American Legion. Letter, Box 1/Fld 2, Constantine Panunzio Collection (Collection Number 1636), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>90</sup>“The Japanese in America have the same blood, have been taught the same things, and believe the same things as the Japanese of Hong Kong . . . authorities have wisely removed all Japanese. We must not and cannot allow the exclusion of aliens to be let down after the war. They should be made stricter.” Statement of the Native Sons of the Golden West from KMPC Broadcast transcript, 30 Mar 1942, Box 1/Fld 1, Constantine Panunzio

Nikkei. The club passed a resolution on March 2, 1942 demanding “vigorous, whole-hearted and concerted action . . . toward the removal of all enemy aliens and citizens of Japanese extraction from all areas along the coast.” They based their demands on “daily discoveries” disclosed in Hearst papers that indicated the high “probability of widespread sabotage held in leash until a critical moment.”<sup>91</sup> This statement reiterated the head of the Western Defense Command Lieutenant General John DeWitt’s assertion that “the very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.”<sup>92</sup> In other words, the lack of evidence proved Nikkei’s guilt. The absence of significant fifth column activity only warned of their growing power and the severity of the pending attack. Words like “vigorous,” “critical,” “acute,” “drastic” and “severe” emphasized the urgency of the Eatonville group’s cause, while their description of the opposition’s “namby-pamby pussyfooting” employed Hearst’s feminization of liberals and mocked both the defenders of Nikkei and the government for not corralling aliens long before. The Lions scorned officials who worried about “hurting the feelings of our enemies” or wasted time considering the “minute constitutional rights of those enemies,” when the “certainty” of “a serious fifth column element . . . arising” is “a sore trial to the patience of the vast majority of our loyal citizens.” Fingering all Japanese as enemies, the group felt that constitutional procedure was not just unnecessary, but a vital hazard to “national integrity.”<sup>93</sup>

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Collection (Collection Number 1636), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>91</sup>Eatonville Lions Club, Resolution Passed on March 2, 1942, Box 15/Fld 8, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>92</sup>A group from Gresham, Oregon retained this logic throughout the war, concluding that the additional years with no sabotage indicated even greater proof of its reality. John DeWitt, quoted in “DeWitt on Americanized Japanese,” *The Japanese Exclusion League Journal*, June 1945, 3.

<sup>93</sup>Eatonville Lions Club Resolution.

Their avocation of broad, decisive action against the dark side of their dualistic America sounded strikingly similar to Hearst's narratives of California history. The relatively minor complaint that delay was trying their patience further emphasized their frustration and exasperation with the current course of action.

The Lions sent this resolution to newspapers and various political leaders. The document closely resembled statements from other nativist groups along the coast. People defending and attacking Japanese Americans invoked the constitution and the responsibility of American citizens for opposite ends; however, the latter group believed that some civil rights were reserved for white Americans. Anti-Japanese editorials fed the fears of thousands, turning many Americans firmly against the ethnic population, while economic competitors and politicians continued to pressure the federal government to remove Nikkei from the coast.

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, permitting military officials to exclude whomever they deemed a threat from sensitive security zones. It did not specify any ethnicity or nationality. Prior to that decision, investigations led by J. Edgar Hoover, Lieutenant Commander K. D. Ringle of the Office of Naval Intelligence, Attorney General Francis Biddle and other government officials concluded that families residing on the coast were not a security threat and assured the president that all possible suspects were contained. They explicitly stated that there was no basis for a mass evacuation.<sup>94</sup> Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson also remained unconvinced of the need for further incarceration, and wrote in his journal that an expulsion would "make a tremendous

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<sup>94</sup>J. Edgar Hoover, Memorandum for the Attorney General, 2 Feb 1942, InternmentArchives.com, accessed on 18 Mar 2012, <http://www.internmentarchives.com>.

hole in our constitutional system.”<sup>95</sup> Roosevelt’s decision was strongly influenced by DeWitt, but historian Greg Robinson exposed the president’s long-standing belief that “the mingling of white with oriental blood . . . is harmful to our future citizenship.”<sup>96</sup> In addition to competing with Euro-Americans economically and posing a potential security risk, Roosevelt felt Nikkei were “immutably foreign, dangerous” and unassimilable.<sup>97</sup> Like Theodor Geisel, FDR’s commitment to individual rights and freedom wavered in the context of Japanese Americans due to long-standing cultural assumptions about race. Not a single spy or saboteur of Japanese descent was ever discovered and the US has since officially apologized, calling the incarceration “a grave injustice” perpetrated by “race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership.”<sup>98</sup>

The degree of prejudice against Japanese Americans in the United States territory of Hawaii both before and during the war was significantly less than on the mainland. Most of the people living in Hawaii were Asian, and Japanese comprised forty-three percent of the total population.<sup>99</sup> While white men owned the largest plantations and held dominant political positions, racial diversity from Filipino, Chinese, Portuguese, native Hawaiians and Japanese was long standing and widely accepted. It was not necessary, nor possible in the eyes of most Hawaiians, to incarcerate the ethnic group, though FDR initially asked for their eviction. Island economies could not function without them; social services and agricultural

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<sup>95</sup>Quoted in Takaki, *Strangers*, 390.

<sup>96</sup>On these grounds, FDR supported alien land laws and anti-miscegenation legislation before the war. Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 38.

<sup>97</sup>Robinson, *President*, 7.

<sup>98</sup>An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Public Law 100-383, 100<sup>th</sup> Congress, 10 Aug 1988, InternmentArchives.com, accessed on 18 Mar 2012, <http://www.internmentarchives.com>.

<sup>99</sup>Takaki, *Strangers*, 179.

production would grind to a halt. Japanese Hawaiian soldiers were shocked at the level of prejudice they encountered while training on the mainland. This is not to say the islands were a multicultural utopia, but the multicultural dynamics of the islands varied significantly from the mainland.<sup>100</sup> That eviction orders did not apply to Japanese Hawaiians further demonstrated the lack of security-related motives for the incarceration.

On the West Coast during March and April 1942, families packed their bags—only what they could carry—and sold or rented their houses, businesses, farms and belongings at immense financial and personal loss. Nearly 115,000 people<sup>101</sup> moved to temporary “assembly centers” at fairgrounds or race tracks or directly to one of ten large “relocation centers” in the Western deserts or Arkansas’s poverty ridden deltas. The War Relocation Authority (WRA), the government agency established to manage the eviction and incarceration, obtained land and hastily built two camps in California (Tule Lake and Manzanar), two in Arizona (Poston and Gila River), two in Arkansas (Jerome and Rohwer) and one each in Idaho, Wyoming, Utah and Colorado (Minidoka, Heart Mountain, Topaz and Amache respectively).

After months at the Camp Harmony Assembly Center at the Western Washington State Fairgrounds, the WRA placed Seattle Nikkei on trains and buses leaving the lush, green Pacific Northwest for the dry, brown, flat landscape of Southern Idaho. Functionally an enclosed town for 10,000 people, Minidoka contained administrative buildings, guard towers, two elementary schools, a high school, a hospital and multi-purpose recreation/dining halls in addition to housing. The hastily built center was not completed when incarcerated arrived in

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<sup>100</sup> A small number of Asians were lynched in rural Hawaii in earlier decades. Howard, 51.

<sup>101</sup> Another 6,000 Japanese Americans were born in the camps. Brian Komei Dempster, ed., *Making Home from War: Stories of Japanese American Exile and Resettlement* (Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2011), 199.

the early fall of 1942. Stoves were not delivered and installed until mid-December, nor was the plumbing for the public showers and toilets functional when the camp opened. The barracks, constructed of wooden frames covered in tar paper, baked in the heat of summer and allowed cold winds to enter throughout the winter. The WRA borrowed land for Minidoka from the Bureau of Land Reclamation, and it was indeed land that needed to be reclaimed. Hurried mass construction on desert land tore up the ground, making the windy, dusty area even more intolerable. In oral histories taken decades after the war, nearly every former incarcerated from most camps complained about the suffocating dust storms and subsequent acres of mud.

Once settled in their cramped barrack apartments, Nikkei could gain employment for token wages at the schools, hospital, kitchens, the co-op or the WRA-initiated, but incarcerated operated camp newspaper, *The Minidoka Irrigator*. All incarcerated employees fell within a three-tiered pay system in which professionals received \$19/month, laborers or kitchen help made \$12/month and others were paid \$16/month.<sup>102</sup> The WRA also hired non-Nikkei civilians to work alongside incarcerated as teachers, doctors and nurses. White employees received seven or more times the amount given to Nikkei in the same position.

The disruption of family life was one of the most immediately realized effects of the incarceration.<sup>103</sup> Many families lost their male heads-of-household during the December 1941 arrests, and the incarceration eliminated their role as provider. Family hierarchies inverted as younger generations spoke better English, could negotiate government policies

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<sup>102</sup> *Life* magazine reported that incarcerated would make \$54 to \$94 per month, but this did not come to pass. "Coast Japs are Interned in Mountain Camp," *Life*, 6 Apr 1942, 15-19.

<sup>103</sup> Among other studies on family life, Leonard Broom and John I Kitsuse, *The Managed Casualty: The Japanese-American Family in World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956).



more easily as citizens and communicate more effectively with camp administrators.<sup>104</sup> The WRA barred Issei from some camp leadership positions. Gender roles shifted as women, freed from cooking and other household chores, embraced the opportunity to develop new hobbies or seek employment. Communal meals resulted in a “disintegration” of daily family life as children sat with friends at meals, often seeing their parents only at night.<sup>105</sup> But daily routine set in as Nikkei adapted to life behind barbed wire.

With very few exceptions Nikkei could not return to the West Coast until the final year of the war, but those passing a security investigation were not required to remain in the camps for the duration. This allowance changed the demographics of camps considerably, as young people could leave more easily than the elderly or families with small children. A number of young people soon left for colleges east of the exclusion zone and many workers followed. The WRA urged incarcerated to apply for security clearance and leave as soon as possible.

In 1943, the government confronted incarcerated with multiple loyalty tests. In January, the US military began accepting Japanese American volunteers for a segregated combat unit. While some individuals worked with military intelligence to use their valuable language skills, most joined Japanese Americans who were already servicemen at the time of Pearl Harbor. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion were exclusively Japanese American units that fought in Europe, becoming one of the most

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<sup>104</sup>An early scholar of Japanese American communities, Yuji Ichioka, traced the prewar roots of these rifts. Camp church leaders regularly reminded members of the commandment to honor thy father and mother as they “witness[ed] the alarming and distressing breaking up of family life.” Ichioka, *Before Internment: Essays in Prewar Japanese American History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). “Community Christian Church Bulletin,” Jerome Relocation Center, 27 June 1943, Box 5/Fld 7, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>105</sup>Kenji Okuda to Norio Higano, 10 July 1942, Box 1/Fld 9, Higano Family Papers, Accession No. 2870-1, University of Washington Libraries.

decorated units in American history. Soldiers fought for different reasons, but many hoped to prove their loyalty to America. The WRA and many Nikkei praised volunteers and draftees and all camps sponsored public ceremonies in their honor, but tense disagreement existed among incarcerated.

The other test of loyalty was a questionnaire to be submitted by every incarcerated Nikkei over the age of seventeen. Eric Muller's study of the government's loyalty tests, *American Inquisition: The Hunt for Japanese American Disloyalty in World War II*, demonstrated that the tests revealed more about the administrative agencies that wrote the questions and decided their ramifications than it did about the Nikkei themselves. No agency successfully decided upon a definition of loyalty and the actions of Nikkei played nearly no role in the resultant tests.<sup>106</sup> Within the most contentious version of the questionnaire, two questions became particularly problematic:

27) Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, whenever ordered?

28) Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

Confusion arose immediately as incarcerated did not know what the effects of their answers would be. Did answering yes to number 27 volunteer oneself for the armed forces? Were Issei to become stateless people if they answered yes to number 28, since they were not eligible for US citizenship? Was that question meant to trick Nisei into admitting they did at one time have an allegiance to Japanese Empire?

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<sup>106</sup>Eric Muller, *American Inquisition: The Hunt for Japanese American Disloyalty in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2007), 3-4.

Would incarcerated who answered no to both questions be sent to Japan or lose their US citizenship?

Answering these two questions led to family disagreements and divisions and left the government with no clear determination of loyalty. Some people answered “no-no” to avoid separation from family members after it became known that those who answered in this way would be sent to Tule Lake. This camp would now only hold incarcerated deemed disloyal by the government. Incarcerated at Tule Lake, who might have otherwise answered “yes-yes,” gave negative responses in order to avoid another forced move. Life at Tule Lake changed dramatically as administrators increased security measures and built a stockade, essentially a jail within a jail. Violence within the camp increased significantly as well. Resentment grew between the two groups. The Japanese American Citizenship League denounced “no-no boys,” some of whom harassed members of the former group for “collaborating” with their jailers. But many people understood the ambivalent nature of the questionnaire results.

On December 18, 1944, after upholding three decisions condoning the curfew and the constitutionality of the incarceration, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of Mitsuye Endo, a young Nisei woman who disputed the legality of detaining someone whom the government itself had found to be loyal.<sup>107</sup> The court concluded, “It is beyond the power of the War Relocation Authority to detain citizens against whom no charges of disloyalty or subversiveness have been made.”<sup>108</sup> Fifteen days later, the United States reopened the West

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<sup>107</sup>For a succinct summary of these trials, see Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 217-225.

<sup>108</sup>United States Supreme Court, *Ex Parte Mitsuye Endo*, 323 US 283 (1944).

Coast to Nikkei and began closing the camps.<sup>109</sup> Many Nikkei relocated to areas with Japanese communities established during the war like Denver, Detroit or Chicago because they feared discrimination on the West Coast. An estimated seventy-five percent had lost their property, so there was also little to return to.<sup>110</sup> But most eventually returned to the West Coast. About half of the released population resided in the former exclusion zone by early 1946.<sup>111</sup>

Though not included within this study, the incarceration in Canada followed a similar, but more severe path. The government confiscated property and fishing boats, generally without any compensation. While they sent all people of Japanese ancestry inland, complete camps with communal dining, employment and schools did not exist. The Canadian government spent two-thirds less money per capita than the United States for the incarceration.<sup>112</sup> Prior to the eviction of women and children, male Japanese Canadians were sent to either forced labor camps or prisoner of war camps, so even fewer families remained intact. Many women were sent to ghost towns without basic services. Former coastal residents, primarily from British Columbia, could not return for four years after the end of the war. Furthermore, thousands were forcibly repatriated to Japan.<sup>113</sup> Christian reactions to

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<sup>109</sup>Tule Lake residents remained incarcerated until Japan surrendered in August 1945, but some Tuleans stayed until March 1946.

<sup>110</sup>Robinson, *Tragedy*, 257.

<sup>111</sup>Robinson, *Tragedy*, 256.

<sup>112</sup>Linda Di Biase, "Japanese Canadian Internment," University of Washington Libraries, last updated 20 Mar 2000, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/subject/Canada/internment/intro.html>.

<sup>113</sup>While scholarly literature on the Japanese Canadian incarceration is not as abundant as that on Japanese American studies, good historical summaries can be found in Roy Miki, *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004) and Patricia E. Roy, *The Triumph of Citizenship: The Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1941-67* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007). Stephanie Bangarth, *Voices Raised in Protest: Defending North American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry, 1942-49* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008) provides plentiful information about the few

the Canadian incarceration closely resembled those in the United States. Few churches opposed the expulsion of Japanese from the coast, but pacifist groups like the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order challenged the appropriateness of making Canada exclusively a “white man’s country” and sending Japanese of all generations to Japan.<sup>114</sup> Supportive Canadian churches led strikingly similar attempts at ecumenism and post-war integration as well

### **Religion in the Incarceration Camps**

Within the camps, the WRA supported free religious worship, except for all forms of Shinto and any type of emperor worship. In the decades preceding the war, the Japanese government combined elements of traditional folklore with other religious practices to form what became known as State Shinto, a strongly nationalistic religious ideology. The WRA authorized Nikkei to organize one Buddhist church, one Protestant church and one Catholic church in each camp. This forced both Buddhists and Protestants into an odd ecumenical experiment during the war where leaders of different sects or denominations had to work together to form a unified Buddhist church and a federated Protestant church. While some clergy and congregants embraced this collaboration, many did not.

The religious composition of the camps constantly changed as people left camp and joined different religious groups, and official tabulations of adherents and attendance varied

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groups that attempted to aid Japanese Canadians. Roland M. Kawano, ed., *Ministry to the Hopelessly Hopeless: Japanese Canadian Evacuees and Churches in WWII* (Scarborough, ON: The Japanese Canadian Christian Churches Historical Project, 1997) details the response of Canadian churches to the incarceration.

<sup>114</sup>Fellowship for a Christian Order, “Japanese Canadians,” Reel 371, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

widely and conflicted radically.<sup>115</sup> A 1943 WRA study estimated that over half of the incarcerated population was Buddhist, a quarter identified as Christian and a significant minority, fifteen to twenty percent, claimed no affiliation. Over two-thirds of the Issei, but less than half of the Nisei, identified as Buddhist.<sup>116</sup> Based on an amalgamation of data, a quarter to a third of Nisei likely adhered to Christianity. Incarcerees of both generations attended Christian churches in higher numbers at Minidoka than in other camps as Seattle had more Japanese Christians and fewer Buddhists than other coastal areas.<sup>117</sup> While the total number of Buddhists was high, practice was often limited to holding Buddhist funerals for family members and perhaps celebrating major holidays.<sup>118</sup> However, many Buddhists found their faith strengthened through the solidarity and communal nature of camp life and, as Christians discovered as well, the abundant free time inherent to camp life allowed for deeper studies of their religion. A Buddhist priest in California remarked, “People do not have much to do now. . . . As far as I am concerned I should like to see them come to church for other reasons, but if they come, we shall try to make them good Buddhists and good

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<sup>115</sup> Attendance and adherence records from the camps were not kept faithfully and show data incongruous with the changing population in camp. For example, a WRA report stated that based on “church attendance at the centers . . . indicated that about 42.5% are Buddhist, 42.5% Protestant and 15% Catholic.” Aside from the problematic math and the fact that many if not most incarcerees attended no religious services regularly, this data conflicts with every other account. “WRA Quarterly Report, Oct-Dec 1942, Box 7/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>116</sup> This report states that twenty-two percent of Issei and thirty-five percent of Nisei were Christian at the time of the war. For detailed charts of adherence rates (arranged by generation, occupation and camp) compiled by sociologists working in the camps, consult Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *The Salvage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 65-71. “Nisei Assimilation,” WRA Community Analysis Report No. 9, 21 June 1943, Box 6/Fld 19, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>117</sup> A sociologist in Seattle claimed that over half the city’s Nikkei were Christian, but other estimates state adherence was less than a third. Frank Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, [1939, 1981] 1984), 45. Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 13.

<sup>118</sup> While this minimal level of observance describes the practice of people of many religions, the Buddhist organizations in the incarceration camps tended to count all adherents, while the Christian churches usually counted only those who attended services regularly.

Americans.”<sup>119</sup> Many incarcerated also converted to Christianity during the war and the larger, multi-faith community participated in Christian activities, like camp-wide Christmas celebrations. A small number of older Issei adhered to Seicho-No-Ie, a monotheistic New Thought movement that incorporates aspects of Buddhism, Christianity and Shinto. Since US officials did not associate Seicho-No-Ie with State Shinto and the religion lacked a large following in the US, camp directors allowed them to meet with little interference.<sup>120</sup>

The incarceration changed Buddhist practices in the United States substantially as religious leaders removed potentially suspicious features and changed the outward appearance of their religion to appear less foreign. The largest Buddhist organization changed its name from the North American Buddhist Mission to its current moniker, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), renamed an upper tier of leaders bishops and changed its primary symbol, which resembled a swastika, to the Dharma wheel. The BCA also institutionalized changes that had already begun. Buddhist churches now met for weekly worship services, something that did not occur in Japan, organized choirs and led their congregation in songs such as “Onward Buddhist Soldiers” and “Buddha Loves Me This I Know.”<sup>121</sup> Buddhists encountered many of the same challenges as Protestants as they formed ecumenical Buddhist churches, combining all sects into one congregation. Similarly, many

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<sup>119</sup>JERS Report, “Tanforan Assembly Center,” Summer 1942, Reel 016, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>120</sup>Philip Schafer (Acting Project Director, WRA) to Harry L. Stafford, 25 May 1943, Box 2/Fld 1, Harry L. Stafford Papers: Records, 1942-1946, College of Southern Idaho.

<sup>121</sup>Duncan Williams, “Camp Dharma: Japanese-American Buddhist Identity and the Internment Experience of World War II,” in *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia*, eds. Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 191-200 and “From Pearl Harbor to 9/11,” in *A Nation of Religions: The Politics of Pluralism in Multireligious America*, ed. Stephen Prothero (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 63-78.

practitioners enjoyed the unity, while others found the change unwelcome and began meeting separately.

Nikkei belonging to Christian churches were privileged to some extent, even if government restrictions did not differentiate among members of different religions. First, Christians simply knew more white people and thus had more contacts on the outside to facilitate their release. Second, Catholic churches, Protestant denominations and missions boards arranged employment, housing and scholarships for Nikkei who wished to resettle<sup>122</sup> in the East. Despite Quaker and ecumenical groups urging denominations not to favor their own members, many gave preference to their devotees, and some even refused to house or accept non-Christians to their schools.<sup>123</sup> Third, in many instances, these friends and associates looked after property, stored belongings or cared for pets that had to be left behind during the incarceration. While Euro-Americans may have misperceived the degree of assimilation signified by an immigrant's Christianity, it drew the ire of some Nikkei making that same assumption. Within some incarceration camps, Japanese Christians increasingly attracted resentment from some Nikkei and became the victims of physical violence as well as social disdain.

As explained earlier, debates among Protestant church leaders shifted from promoting denominational unity to the possibility of racial unity as more Nikkei left the camps. Protestant denominations instructed former incarcerated to join predominantly white churches. However, most Nikkei stopped attending church altogether, preferring to skip organized

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<sup>122</sup>While the WRA used the term "relocation" to describe the process of moving Nikkei into the incarceration camps, "resettlement," a word common to the WRA and this dissertation, refers to the movement of people from the camps to locations east of the coastal military zone.

<sup>123</sup>Allan Austin, *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 44.



worship entirely rather than attend unfamiliar churches. By 1949, most denominations conceded and resurrected the pre-war churches.

## Chapter One: Responses to the Attack on Pearl Harbor

*On a peaceful Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, Henry, Sumi and I were at choir rehearsal singing ourselves hoarse in preparation for the annual Christmas recital of Handel's "Messiah." Suddenly Chuck Mizuno . . . burst into the chapel, gasping as if he had sprinted all the way up the stairs.*

*"Listen, everybody!" he shouted. "Japan just bombed Pearl Harbor! It's war!"*

*The terrible words hit like a blockbuster, paralyzing us. Then we smiled feebly at each other, hoping this was one of Chuck's practical jokes. Miss Hara, our music director, rapped her baton impatiently on the music stand and chided him, "Now Chuck, fun's fun, but we have work to do."*

*But Chuck strode vehemently back to the door, "I mean it, folks, honest! I just heard the news over my car radio. Reporters are talking a blue streak. Come on down and hear it for yourselves."*

*With that, Chuck swept out of the room, a swirl of young men following in his wake. . . The rest of us stayed, rooted to our places like a row of marionettes. I felt as if a fist had smashed my pleasant little existence, breaking it into jigsaw puzzle pieces. An old wound opened up again, and I found myself shrinking inwardly from my Japanese blood, the blood of an enemy. I knew instinctively that the fact that I was an American by birthright was not going to help me escape the consequences of this unhappy war.<sup>1</sup>*

*-Monica Sone*

Once the news sunk in, Monica and her brother, Henry, careened home from the Japanese Methodist Church (Figure 1)<sup>2</sup> to be with their parents. They found their mother "sitting limp in the huge armchair as if she had collapsed there, listening dazedly to the turbulent radio, . . . her face frozen still."<sup>3</sup> Monica's father thought the story was false propaganda until he heard the news on both American and Japanese radio broadcasts.

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<sup>1</sup>Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 145-6.

<sup>2</sup>"Japanese Methodist Church Group Photo" (denshopd-p182-00146), Densho, Ouchi Family Collection.

<sup>3</sup>Sone, 146-48.



**Figure 1: Seattle Japanese Methodist Church, 1930s**

Source: Ouchi Family Collection, Densho

Several miles north of Nihonmachi, Floyd Schmoe, a Quaker botany professor at the University of Washington, hurried home from church that Sunday to find five Nisei women “huddled in the basement listening to the radio; they were frightened beyond tears.”<sup>4</sup> His family regularly hosted university students and their current boarders now feared leaving the protection of the Schmoe house.

Soon after the Reverend Emery Andrews’ Sunday morning benediction, members of his Japanese Baptist congregation returned to the church with news of the attack. Some

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<sup>4</sup>Floyd Schmoe, “Seattle Peace Churches and Relocation,” in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, rev. ed., eds. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor and Harry H.L. Kitano (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989), 117.

Japanese Christians congregated at home like the Itois, while others gathered in their churches, waiting to learn their fate within the global calamity. Everett Thompson, the Itois' pastor, and Andrews quickly set to work calling and visiting their parishioners. Many white pastors interpreted messages for Nikkei when the police and FBI agents raided their homes that evening.

Chapter One follows the stories of these and other Christian Seattleites as they negotiated new racial and civic boundaries formed after that infamous December day. It sets the scene for the rest of this dissertation by mapping initial reactions of Quakers, white mainline Protestants and Japanese Christians to the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the eviction and incarceration of coastal Nikkei. In the confusing months following the attack, Protestant leaders urged Americans to show their patriotism through Christian charity and exhibit the good will necessary to ensure a “more desirable world order.” They repeatedly asserted that Christian patriotism was the “surest and quickest step toward rebuilding our torn world.”<sup>5</sup> While diversity existed within every group, this chapter compares their general strategies, highlighting the bold, decisive actions of individual Quakers and their American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the cooperative inclinations exhibited by well-intentioned, but slow-moving mainline leaders and the shock, confusion and determined perseverance within the Japanese Christian community. By detailing the events leading up to the incarceration and determining the initial perspectives of Christians, this chapter helps make sense of their later choices. Memoirs, court hearings, press releases and sermons provide plentiful source material for this period, from the months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor to the expulsion

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<sup>5</sup>Santa Maria Ministers on Enemy Alien Control, 4 Feb 1942, Box 3/Fld 24, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

of Nikkei from their homes and the creation of Seattle's first ecumenical Japanese congregation in an assembly center.

### **Quaker Responses to Pearl Harbor Attack**

Quaker leaders recognized and acknowledged the great threat to Nikkei well before the United States entered the war. Seven months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the West Coast section of the AFSC circulated a letter warning of the emergency that would follow the United States' entry into a Pacific war. At this early date, they expressed a conviction that all Japanese Americans will become "'Japs' and . . . find it impossible to avoid the caustic backwash of war hysteria"<sup>6</sup> The AFSC's description of the potential situation as "disastrous" and "caustic" contrasted sharply with statements made by mainline churches, which, after Pearl Harbor offensive, still only described the situation as "unfortunate."<sup>7</sup> Having adhered to this portentous message, Quakers, also known as the Society of Friends, were prepared to begin working to restore Nikkei's civil rights soon after the Pearl Harbor attack.

Known throughout American history as activists who worked for abolition and other human rights causes, Quakers formed the AFSC in 1917 to facilitate the work of conscientious objectors during World War I. They worked alongside the US government to aid European refugees<sup>8</sup> and provide medical care on the front and fought domestic injustices like the Immigration Act of 1924. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Clarence Pickett, the

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<sup>6</sup>"Friends and the Japanese Americans," May 1941, Box 1/Fld 42, Floyd Wilfred Schmoe Papers, Accession No. 496-8, University of Washington Libraries (UW).

<sup>7</sup>Victor L. Nutley and Gertrude L. Apel, Seattle Council of Churches and Christian Education, Statement for release Monday, December 8, 1941, Box 15/Fld 11, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>8</sup>The AFSC received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947 for this work.

AFSC executive secretary, declared his commitment to “breaking the force of this calamity which has come upon the Japanese population.” Pickett and other Quaker leaders charged the entire populace with the task of eradicating the threat. Beginning in February 1942, a monthly bulletin updated Quakers on the West Coast on developments and recommended specific actions that each individual could take.<sup>9</sup>

While the individuals within mainline Protestant organizations working to alleviate the problems caused by the incarceration had established careers within the church, the majority of Quaker workers came from other occupations. For example, a number of Quaker faculty members at the University of Washington requested and were granted leaves of absence to aid Japanese American students and other Nikkei during the war. Floyd Schmoe’s work exemplifies that of many Friends who coordinated their efforts through the AFSC. Foreseeing the magnitude of challenges Nikkei were to face, Schmoe took a temporary leave of absence from his job as a botany professor at the University of Washington without delay. He and his wife first went to Hawaii, thinking the situation there would be worse than on the coast. Realizing their error, they soon returned to Seattle where Floyd Schmoe was appointed secretary of the city’s AFSC office.<sup>10</sup>

With a Quaker friend, UW sociology professor Robert O’Brien, Schmoe facilitated the transfer of university students to schools in the country’s interior, a project later centralized through the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council.<sup>11</sup> The AFSC devoted many resources to securing university placements for the 700 Nikkei students

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<sup>9</sup>Information Bulletins, Pacific Coast Branch, AFSC, Box 1/Fld 14, Constantine Panunzio Collection (Collection Number 1636). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>10</sup>Floyd Schmoe, interview by Kitty Barragato, 25 Feb 1989, American Friends Service Committee Oral History Collection.

<sup>11</sup>O’Brien also took leave from the university, eventually directing the student relocation program. He wrote a book about the effort after the war. O’Brien, *The College Nisei* (New York: Arno Press, [1949] 1978).

in Oregon and Washington<sup>12</sup> and sent Thomas Bodine to help Schmoe and O'Brien in Seattle.<sup>13</sup> In the months following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Schmoe visited nearly one hundred schools to find placements for Nikkei students. Only three schools turned him down, including Princeton University and a Bible college in Caldwell, Idaho. Princeton's president claimed they could not protect Nikkei students adequately,<sup>14</sup> while representatives of the Christian school replied blatantly, "We don't want any Japs here."<sup>15</sup> Schmoe's job also entailed sneaking students to the train station after curfew. Describing this process, he later wrote, "We hid our 'criminal' students under a blanket in the back seat of the car. . . . Their only crime was that they had not been born white."<sup>16</sup> He continued these efforts throughout the war, regularly visiting incarceration camps to encourage college-aged students to take advantage of the student relocation program. By the end of the war, such programs helped over 4,000 incarcerated students attend 600 colleges and universities outside of the restricted zone.<sup>17</sup>

Quaker representatives readily and regularly combated prejudices against Nikkei in considerably different ways than did mainline Protestants. Never a group to mince words,

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<sup>12</sup>During the fall term of 1941, 3,252 Japanese Americans were enrolled in college or university on the coast. Of the 553 college students in Washington State 458 studied at the University of Washington. O'Brien, *The College Nisei*, 135-136. For more on this subject, see Gary Okihiro, *Storied Lives: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

<sup>13</sup>Bodine had never met a Nisei before taking this position. He had been scheduled to fly to Shanghai to work with Jewish refugees on the behalf of the AFSC before the United States entered the war. Allan Austin, *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 14.

<sup>14</sup>Schmoe, interview by Barragato.

<sup>15</sup>Schmoe, "Seattle Peace Churches," 117.

<sup>16</sup>Schmoe, "Seattle Peace Churches," 117.

<sup>17</sup>Louis Fiset, *Camp Harmony: Seattle's Japanese Americans and the Puyallup Assembly Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 116-7.

Quakers vigorously and wholly condemned racist actions of the government and community members.<sup>18</sup> The most apparent differences between Quaker and mainline Protestants were the former group's absolute condemnation of the incarceration and willingness to accept full blame for it. AFSC statements intended for Japanese and public consumption frequently contained humble admissions of guilt and requests for forgiveness. They fully acknowledged all attitudes and actions that may have contributed to the inequality and injustices committed against Japanese Americans. The prewar statement demonstrated the Friends' attitude, listing the many things "we" have denied them, such as "full freedom in a free land," equal social and economic opportunities, legal rights to naturalize and own property and "chiefly . . . our friendship and willingness to understand."<sup>19</sup> Despite having fought against such discrimination, Quaker publications never suggested they were any less guilty than other Americans. They also assumed complete responsibility for negative characterizations and the plight of Japanese Americans, acknowledging that the group's future depended "almost entirely upon our attitude." The 1941 statement declared, "We have failed as a society because we have failed as individuals. As individuals we must begin to make amends."<sup>20</sup> This extremely apologetic statement charges Nikkei with nothing, and asks for nothing but forgiveness. In addition to public statements, the AFSC wrote letters directly to the Nikkei community that stated their disagreement with the government, "acknowledge[d] this

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<sup>18</sup>The Fellowship of Reconciliation, an ecumenical group similarly devoted to social justice, printed a flier comparing Hitler's acts toward Jews and the United States' actions against Nikkei and advising actions for US citizens. Caleb Foote, "Japanese Evacuation Shows Totalitarian Trends," FOR, Box 1/Fld 13, Constantine Panunzio Collection (Collection Number 1636). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>19</sup>"Friends and the Japanese Americans."

<sup>20</sup>"Friends and the Japanese Americans."



mistake and [took their] share of the blame” for the incarceration.<sup>21</sup> One letter confessed, “Had there been real understanding it would not have come about and it is to our shame and regret that we failed to build that understanding in time to avert this tragedy.”<sup>22</sup> For most Quakers, the existence of injustice equaled an obligation to act.

In terms of intent, Quaker confessions and pleas for forgiveness were always followed by pledges to remedy the situation. These vows specifically and frequently acknowledged that “simply making life as comfortable as possible . . . in the detention camps” was insufficient and promised to restore Nikkei’s full rights and place in all American communities.<sup>23</sup> Like promoters of the social gospel decades earlier, Quakers sought to remedy the source of the problem rather than alleviate its symptoms.<sup>24</sup> This attitude appeared again and again in wartime Quaker publications.

While the leaders of most mainline Protestant churches believed the most effective way to help incarcerated would be through working with the government, most Quakers disagreed. The AFSC issued orders to “be careful not to actually assist in the evacuation and . . . do nothing that might destroy the Japanese confidence” in Quaker volunteers.<sup>25</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup>The AFSC sent these apologies to community leaders and printed them in publications read by the Nikkei community. For example, in 1942, the AFSC bought space in the Christmas edition of the *Minidoka Irrigator*, Minidoka’s semi-weekly newspaper, to “humbly ask forgiveness.” “American Friends Service Committee Sends Greetings,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 25 Dec 1942, 3.

<sup>22</sup>Letter to Americans of Japanese ancestry, Box 1/Fld 42, Floyd Wilfred Schmoe Papers, Accession No. 496-8, UW.

<sup>23</sup>Letter to Americans of Japanese ancestry.

<sup>24</sup>The social gospel was a movement within liberal Protestantism during the late 1800s and early 1900s that developed the concept of “sinful social structures” and the need to overcome them. At that time, religious reformers focused on problems associated with industrialization, child labor, urbanization and the poor living conditions of immigrants. Foundational works of the social gospel include Washington Gladden’s *Social Salvation* (1901) and Walter Rauschenbusch’s *Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917).

<sup>25</sup>Thomas R. Bodine, Japanese Evacuation Report #7, 26 Mar 1942, “Bainbridge Island,” Camp Harmony Exhibit, University of Washington Libraries, last revised 20 Dec 1999, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/harmony/Exhibit/bainbridge.html>.

organization retained this cautious attitude throughout the war. Friends organized and managed some programs at the government's request, but those projects focused on helping Nikkei leave the camps, not helping incarcerate them.<sup>26</sup> Similar to the way in which they aided European refugees,<sup>27</sup> AFSC members walked a very fine line while helping Nikkei. Individual Friends stood at the extremes of this stance as well. Some reconciled working for the WRA in order to work for a greater good,<sup>28</sup> while others refused to aid Nikkei in any manner on the grounds that this encouraged the government to do an inadequate job.<sup>29</sup> Many Quakers answered the WRA's plea for teachers in the camps, but others believed it was wrong: "That's helping the government, and you ought to resist!"<sup>30</sup> Government agencies took advantage of the fact that religious groups would provide the necessary extra relief, much as they do today when managing refugee communities in the United States.

### **Mainline Protestant Churches' Response to the Bombing of Pearl Harbor and the Eviction**

Mainline Protestant representatives spoke more hesitantly than Quakers. Nearly a full year after the AFSC's prewar letter was written, the Seattle Council of Churches, a Protestant

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<sup>26</sup>Some incarcerated requested the churches to focus on spiritual needs, since the churches' aid looked like cooperation with the government. Akira Kikuchi to unnamed, prior to 26 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 7, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>27</sup>Yukako Otori, "Quaker Goodwill and American Benevolence: Quäkerspeisung and American Involvement in Post-WWII Germany" (paper presented at the Nagoya American Studies Summer Seminar, Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan, 27 July 2010).

<sup>28</sup>Robert O'Brien, for example, was only permitted to take military leave from the university, so he took an unpaid position from the WRA. He laughed that it "may have looked ridiculous to my Quaker Meeting but it made it possible for me to do the things that I wanted to do." Robert O'Brien, interview by Howard Droker, 24 April 1975, Robert W. O'Brien Papers, Accession No. 2420-003, UW.

<sup>29</sup>A woman in Pennsylvania refused to donate clothing for this reason. Theodore Wilbur, "American Friends Service Committee Efforts to Aid Japanese American Citizens during World War II" (MA thesis, Boise State University, 2009), 64.

<sup>30</sup>Shizue Seigel, *In Good Conscience: Supporting Japanese Americans During the Internment* (San Mateo, CA: AACF, 2006), 99.

ecumenical group, hinted that the Christian public's apathy may have had something to do with the government's disregard for Nikkei and their civil rights, but they never suggested that Christians or the general American public were to blame. The incarceration was rarely mentioned within mainline Protestant statements without debating the legitimacy of possible security concerns or the need to protect Nikkei through incarceration. Nor did non-Quaker religious leaders demand action from churches or individuals beyond telling Nikkei congregants to "keep calm." As this dissertation demonstrates, national Christian support was given to Nikkei frequently in hopes of improving the church as a whole and the future world order rather than in a straightforward defense of justice. The attitudes of Quaker and mainline leaders foreshadowed the social work done on the behalf of Japanese Americans during the war.

While many liberal Protestant leaders privately believed the incarceration was entirely unjust, most did not stand by their promises to protect Nikkei from discrimination. They could not have guessed the intensity of the approaching conflict, but the vast majority did not try to protect the civil rights of Nikkei as they were revoked, one by one, after the Pearl Harbor attack. After the government announced its plans for the total incarceration of Nikkei on the coast, many of the already limited number of Christian voices warning of the potential negative effects of such injustices fell silent. Once given, few fought the eviction orders. While some Christian groups provided aid to alleviate the trials of eviction and improve living conditions in the camps, few condemned the incarceration until a later date.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>The Congregational Churches, for example, mobilized relatively quickly to find homes for Nikkei Congregationalists to live within the interior of the country, but was very careful to avoid criticizing the government "in the interests of fairness" and because they thought it was "better policy to give the government the benefit of the doubt so far as motive is concerned." Robert Inglis to Douglass Horton, 20 Mar 1942, John Bennett to Dwight Bradley, 29 Apr 1942 and Bennett to Truman Douglass, 18 May 1942, Box 1/Fld 5, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

The response of a group of ministers in Southern California typified the action of most churches. They publicly expressed their regret, but “did not criticize the policy, . . . contented . . . with deploring its apparent necessity and wishing well . . . its victims.”<sup>32</sup> A number of leaders criticized other mainline Protestants for being too openly critical, believing it would harm their cause and relationship with the federal government.<sup>33</sup> Others may have felt it was a hopeless fight or that vociferous opposition would limit their ability to help in other ways. Whatever the reason, organized efforts quickly shifted from protecting Nikkei on the coast to planning their post-war lives.

Redolent of the canyon splitting the pre-war assumptions of Quakers and most Protestants,<sup>34</sup> a statement from the Seattle Council of Churches prior to December 1941 expressed radically different suppositions than those found in the pre-war AFSC notice. The Council formed in 1919 as, according to its website, “the worldwide ecumenical movement began to flourish.” Like most national and international ecumenical groups, liberal enterprises in themselves, the Council presented itself as an activist organization committed to peace, economic justice and religious and racial tolerance.<sup>35</sup> Toward that end, they released a “Message to the Japanese in the Pacific Northwest” in November 1941 to commend the ethnic community for its good citizenship. The notice sadly and inaccurately assured Nikkei, “You have nothing to fear from the American government or the American

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<sup>32</sup>“Ministers Express Good Will to Japanese Evacuees,” *Christian Century*, 8 Apr 1942, 453.

<sup>33</sup>Bennett to Bradley, 29 Apr 1942.

<sup>34</sup>Scholars and adherents debate whether or not Quakers should be categorized as Protestants. I consider them Protestant on the grounds that they, like Puritans and Methodists, split from the Anglican Church protesting similar issues of Lutherans, Moravians and other groups that left the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>35</sup>“Ecumenism Takes Root in Seattle,” Church Council of Greater Seattle, accessed 29 Mar 2012, <http://www.thechurchcouncil.org/subpages/history.html>.

people.”<sup>36</sup> Observing the growth of local and international tensions, Protestant leaders hoped to “assure” Nikkei Washingtonians of the “sympathy and co-operation of the Churches.” They “urged” the minority group to “confer with any Christian Church pastor” if “any problem . . . [arose].”<sup>37</sup> The purpose of the Council’s message was to calm and offer support to Nikkei—not alert the public or congregants to a pending crisis.

It remains unclear whether the false prediction of mainline Protestants was due to naiveté, ignorance or a blatant attempt to deny the harsh nature of humanity. Did the Quakers’ foresight signify that the AFSC had a more realistic notion of America’s nativist, racist nature? Did they better understand the precarious status of the Japanese ethnic community? The Society of Friends’ long history of social activism suggests they were more prepared for the occasion. These visions of different futures may have influenced the immediacy by which Quakers took charge relative to other groups that denied the severity of the situation.

While not as vehement as the AFSC, mainline Protestants made immediate statements in defense of Nikkei after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Alongside objections from educational institutions, religious groups provided some of the few counterpoints to propaganda found in Hearst publications.<sup>38</sup> Several white Christian pastors in Seattle and representatives of national organizations wrote editorials and submitted press releases defending Japanese Americans. Worried for the physical safety of Nikkei, Protestant groups invoked Christian

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<sup>36</sup>Race Relations Department of the Seattle Council of Churches, Message to the Japanese in the Pacific Northwest, 3 Nov, 1941, Box 15/Fld 11, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>37</sup>Message to the Japanese in the Pacific Northwest.

<sup>38</sup>While the Seattle Council of Churches read and saved anti-Japanese proclamations, they did not make direct rebuttals until the end of the war. Individuals, however, frequently confronted local rabble-rousers and national publications utilizing racial stereotypes and false information.

and patriotic responsibilities in an attempt to dampen flames of racist hysteria. The Seattle Council of Churches published this statement the day following the attack:

We urge our people to remain calm and not be carried away in a wave of hysteria. Sane thinking and a sober, prayerful attitude now will save us. . . . It would be most unfortunate if our Christian people would . . . add to the difficulties and trials of the Japanese-Americans who now become victims of unfortunate circumstances because of the present situation. . . . We urge that as long as the Japanese people within our borders remain loyal to our country, we shall not be guilty of discriminating against them in our community life, and particularly in holding of jobs, and in enjoying the privileges of this country . . . this is no hour to forget the traditions and principles of our great nation.<sup>39</sup>

This statement addressed Christians specifically, but invoked patriotic ideals to counter violent actions of those who might—and did—attack Japanese Americans. It also addressed concerns that white employers would fire Nikkei workers. The interdenominational organization did not use strong language to halt potential discrimination, but rather encouraged calm rational actions.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly lucid and placid, the Federal Council of Churches in Christ in America (FCC), the Home Missions Council of North America and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America released a joint statement on December 9<sup>th</sup>. It “call[ed] upon the church people of this country to maintain a Christian composure and charity in their dealings with the Japanese among us.”<sup>41</sup> This statement contrasted with the Seattle Council of Churches’s piece significantly in that it invoked not civic duty, but Christians’ religious obligations. The FCC’s imagined audience of “church people” was potentially broader than the “Christian

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<sup>39</sup>Nutley and Apel.

<sup>40</sup>Bishop Shaughnessy, the Roman Catholic bishop of the Seattle Diocese, wrote a similar statement to be read in every Catholic church in the city. His message focused on the sin of hatred and emphasized the importance of loving one’s neighbor, particularly “our fellow American citizens of Japanese extraction . . . who are no less loyal than others.” Shaughnessy, “Official Pastoral Letter,” *Catholic Northwest Progress*, 12 Dec 1941.

<sup>41</sup>“Church Leaders Urge Christian Attitude Toward Japanese in U.S.,” 9 Dec 1941, Federal Council of Churches, Box 15/Fld 11, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

people” addressed by the Seattle Council because the latter spoke of “our people” specifically. The FCC likely intended their message to envelop all moral people by implying that good, right-acting Americans would follow their suggestions. Both the secular and religious media used concepts of American and Christian morality and ideals interchangeably, affirming the correctness of their churches’ and their nation’s belief system as one and the same.

The articles and editorials within *Christian Century*, a magazine posited as the voice of mainline American Christians,<sup>42</sup> charted the attitudes of progressive American Protestants toward Japanese Americans and the incarceration. Letters to the editor provide a broad view of national opinions of the Japanese incarceration, though most articles came from California. Both the letters and main articles showed significantly more compassion than could be found in most secular sources. However, like the mainline churches it represented, *Christian Century*, “for the most part, acquiesced to the government’s decision [to incarcerate Nikkei] despite convictions of justice, equality and human rights.”<sup>43</sup> Like the FCC and the Seattle Council of Churches, its editors avoided direct confrontation with the injustices perpetrated by the federal government.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Originally a Disciples of Christ publication, it became increasingly nondenominational after 1900. Its prominence rose throughout the twentieth century, despite relatively low subscription numbers. Since a significant percentage of issues went to university and public libraries, the magazine’s readership is difficult to estimate. Elesha J. Coffman, “Constituting the Protestant Mainline: *The Christian Century*, 1908-1947” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2008), 154.

<sup>43</sup>Marshall M. Sumida and Paul M. Nagano, “Review, Resolve and Redress of the Internment of Japanese Americans During World War II,” *American Baptist Quarterly* 13:1 (March 1994): 96.

<sup>44</sup>This pattern of immediate, but dwindling defense of Japanese Americans could be seen in secular sources as well. Clarence Gillett charted pro-and anti-Japanese American articles in the two largest San Francisco newspapers and found that the total number of positive stories dwindled after December 1941, while articles calling for the group’s eviction rose exponentially in the first months of 1942. In the final three weeks of February, papers printed fewer than twenty positive articles and over one hundred negative stories. Gillett, “The Press and the American Japanese,” Box 8/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Full of pertinent questions about pacifism and the church's role in a future, postwar world order, the *Christian Century* gave minimal attention to the situation of Japanese Americans until Nikkei were filling assembly centers. From December 1941 to February 1942, *Christian Century* editors printed a few cautionary tales about cases of discrimination, but most reports suggested that the situation on the coast was under control. By late March, however, the magazine reported tragic stories of violent harassment and suicide that had occurred over the previous few months. Articles and editorials voiced harsh opinions and warnings—including “Hitlerism Threatens the California Japanese,” but the government had announced their decision weeks earlier. *Christian Century*'s call for the federal government to control local political forces with “axes to grind” was too late.<sup>45</sup> Editors may have prepared issues of the weekly magazine far in advance, their presses were slow or perhaps the dates do not reflect when an issue appeared on newsstands. Their March 11<sup>th</sup> issue cautioned against conniving politicians, racist labor unions, fear based on unproved rumors and anger over the currently grim situation in the Pacific.<sup>46</sup> A week later, *Christian Century* articles warned that the United States might be “convert[ing] a difficult minority problem into an incurable cancer” by aggravating loyal Japanese American citizens and inflicting a “kind of wound which goes deep and festers long.”<sup>47</sup>

As the eviction proceeded, *Christian Century* editors softened the tone of articles, avoiding direct condemnation of the government and the incarceration, but enthusiastically praised pro-active Christian individuals. The magazine also educated readers. Given the amount of yellow journalism associated with the incarceration, simply reporting the facts

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<sup>45</sup>“Hitlerism Threatens the California Japanese,” *Christian Century*, 11 Mar 1942, 309.

<sup>46</sup>“Hitlerism Threatens the California Japanese.”

<sup>47</sup>“Japanese Ordered From Coastal Areas,” *Christian Century*, 18 Mar 1942, 340.



constituted a valuable service. Several readers living on the West Coast shared stories about honest, loyal individual Nikkei they knew or worked with in an effort to personalize the injustice and reduce blanket prejudices against the minority.<sup>48</sup> Most subscribers lived on the East Coast,<sup>49</sup> and lacked a way to receive reliable first-hand information. A Japanese American recommended an issue of *Christian Century* to a Nisei friend, citing his “relief” after reading so many negative attitudes in other sources.<sup>50</sup>

Galen Fisher, co-founder of the Northern California Committee for Fair Play for Citizens and Aliens of Japanese Ancestry, wrote the longest, most articulate of *Christian Century*’s articles about the incarceration. He skillfully presented information about the situation and allowed readers to reach their own conclusions. This tactic avoided directly accusing the government and, arguably, was a more effective way to gain the sympathy and understanding of readers. In a straightforward manner, Fisher listed the factors leading to the incarceration and the ways in which it was unconstitutional.

The article speculated why more people, particularly Christians, “did not speak out against the government action. In another rhetorical attempt to gain supporters, Fisher provided the “mass of intelligent people in the churches” an excuse for allowing the injustice to occur: Americans “could hardly conceive that the authorities would adopt” such a program when the attorney general and head of the FBI explained it was unnecessary. This hypothesis was likely accurate for many people, but contrasts immensely to Quaker statements that accepted full blame for the injustice. By providing a generous explanation why Americans

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<sup>48</sup>A few examples, George W. Chessman, “Letter from a Friend in Trouble,” 22 Apr 1942, 533 and Robert S. Osgood, “Eyewitness Report,” 15 Apr 1942, *Christian Century*, 500.

<sup>49</sup>“Our Continental Campaign,” *Christian Century*, 24 Sept 1925, 1180-1.

<sup>50</sup>Kenji Okuda to Norio Higano, 4 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 9, Higano Family Papers, Accession No. 2870-1, UW.

allowed the incarceration to happen, Fisher structured his prose in a way that expressed an assumption that readers will be more vigilant now that they know all the facts. With ignorance no longer an excuse, active support was the only ethical response. He recommended they “follow every stage . . . with a cooperative but a critical eye” in case an “unexpected” opportunity to aid Nikkei arose.<sup>51</sup> Again, his conclusion is much softer than the Quaker publications that demanded a long list of responsibilities from their readers.

While messages like Fisher’s helped balance the inflammatory nature of other news sources, the voices remained singular and isolated. Few mainline Christian organizations approached Fisher’s level of criticism, but their leaders recommended his articles to congregations, journalists and social organizations seeking information on the incarceration.<sup>52</sup>

*Christianity and Crisis*, a publication founded by Reinhold Niebuhr to counter the more pacifist *Christian Century*, expressed more decisive criticism of the incarceration.<sup>53</sup> While Niebuhr accepted aggressive military actions like the firebombing of Dresden and the use of nuclear weapons,<sup>54</sup> his magazine sharply criticized the incarceration. The *Christianity and Crisis* article “A Blot on our Record” clearly states that the government had no

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<sup>51</sup>Galen Fisher, “Our Japanese Refugees,” *Christian Century*, 1 Apr 1942, 424-426.

<sup>52</sup>Congregational Committee on Christian Democracy, “You Can Do Something About It,” 1945, Box 3/Fld 14, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>53</sup>Mark Hulsether, *Building a Protestant Left: Christianity and Crisis Magazine, 1941-1993* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999).

<sup>54</sup>*Christian Century* published pages of letters decrying the fire bombing of Dresden and Japan, while *Christianity and Crisis* accepted the tactic as necessary and actively supported the military through programs for chaplains and endorsed the army’s “political education” program. Hulsether, 28. The latter refused to rule out the possibility of a moral use for the atomic bomb and eventually supported the United States’ nuclear weapons program during the Cold War. Hulsether, 32-24.

legitimate excuse for its action.<sup>55</sup> Editors did not publish this article until late April, when the course of events could not be changed, but critical attention to the issue became a regular topic.<sup>56</sup>

John Bennett, an editor for *Christianity and Crisis*, and other leading Congregationalists working with Nikkei disagreed with the magazine's decision, arguing that opposing the government was "not good policy." Bennett wrote that it would be wiser to "assume evacuation" rather than try to prevent it.<sup>57</sup> Conversely, a group of ministers in Santa Maria, California argued that the "highest patriotism" requires Christian citizens to reject the "totalitarian methods which we have decried."<sup>58</sup> Most likely through the leadership of Clarence Gillett, the group released a statement citing both practical and ethical reasons why an incarceration should not occur. Significantly, the Santa Maria group released this statement in early February 1942, showing that at least one mainline organization worked to prevent the incarceration. Within the Seattle Council of Churches, aid for the Japanese community largely faded from view until the eviction and incarceration of Seattle Nikkei became imminent.

Behind closed doors, Seattle Church Council members acknowledged the injustice of the government's actions, listing and confirming the non-security related motives. They determined that the pending incarceration was "an after thought and undoubtedly . . . a result of pressure from various patriotic groups" and their "economic jealousy." These voices grew after successive US defeats on the Pacific front. The group also rejected the argument that

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<sup>55</sup>Henry Smith Leiper, "A Blot on Our Record," *Christianity and Crisis*, 20 Apr 1942, 1-2.

<sup>56</sup>The most substantial example was Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Evacuation of Japanese Citizens," *Christianity and Crisis*, 18 May 1942, 2-5.

<sup>57</sup>Bennett to Bradley, 29 Apr 1942.

<sup>58</sup>Santa Maria Ministers on Enemy Alien Control.

the incarceration would protect Nikkei from “race riots.” The Council described Nikkei as “victims” of the resulting “panic.” Members concluded that government officials and their own congressional representatives “have washed their hands of the question of civil liberty.” The public could not have accessed the minutes from this meeting, and the Council never shared their conviction with the public.<sup>59</sup> While the report explicitly asserted that council members believed there was no military cause for the incarceration, all efforts described before this meeting and their plans for the future revolved “pretty much solely” around alleviating the stress of incarceration, *not* preventing or ending its reality. In lieu of direct condemnation, the Seattle Council and most other religious groups criticized how the government organized the eviction.<sup>60</sup>

Nearly every mainline church similarly skirted condemnation of the incarceration itself. The Federal Council of Churches sent a letter to President Roosevelt to express its “grave concern” about this situation that “jeopardizes . . . democracy,” but did not directly condemn the incarceration or acknowledge its unconstitutional, unjust nature. Instead, without subtly the FCC wrote that the incarceration “savor[ed]” of discrimination and totalitarianism and warned that the Japanese “conclude that we are practicing race

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<sup>59</sup>Believing the Council made these condemning statements publicly, Douglas M. Dye concluded that the Seattle Council actively protested the incarceration in addition to encouraging moral civic behavior. He also credits the Council with the work of Emery Andrews and Floyd Schmoe, who worked independently from the ecumenical group. Dye, “For the Sake of Seattle’s Soul: The Seattle Council of Churches, the Nikkei Community, and World War II,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 93:3 (Summer 2002): 132.

<sup>60</sup>Prior to this meeting, the Council tried to convince the government to obtain more social service workers to prepare Nikkei for the move, but their pleas went unanswered. The Council met with military officials and wrote over thirty letters to government officials, offering “positive and constructive suggestions.” Report of the Meeting of the Social Welfare and Service Committee, 26 Mar 1942, Box 15/Fld 5, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

discrimination.”<sup>61</sup> The vast majority of Nikkei were already living in camps when the FCC wrote this letter.

Once the eviction began, mainline Protestant organizations released official statements giving their views on the incarceration.<sup>62</sup> The Northern Baptist Convention’s resolution from late May 1942 exemplified these documents. It registered their “deep concerns” for a democracy that “placed racial discrimination . . . above the law,” denying “full citizenship rights,” ignoring the fifth and fourteenth amendments of the Constitution and violating “Christian principles.”<sup>63</sup> Congregational churches identified the same crime as “favoritism among God’s children,” but conceded that national security “justified” the eviction of Japanese nationals.<sup>64</sup> A few Christian groups expressed frank dismay at the country’s “deplorable failure to apply Christian standards”<sup>65</sup> or were “ashamed at the ease with which certain economic and political pressure groups . . . so drastically changed the lives of this great number of people.”<sup>66</sup> Many Protestant groups framed their commitment in Christian terms that echoed the sentiments of John Foster Dulles, pledging to “Christianize attitudes toward racial minorities.” They voiced concern not only for the nation, but for the

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<sup>61</sup>The vast majority of Nikkei on the coast were already incarcerated by this date. Letter to the President of the United States, 29 Apr 1942 as quoted in “The Concern of the Church for the Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans” (New York: Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, April 1944), 6.

<sup>62</sup>In the spring of 1944, the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans compiled these statements in a publication, “The Concern of the Church for Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans,” to be disseminated among Protestant churches and given to government officials.

<sup>63</sup>Northern Baptist Convention Resolutions, 30 May 1942, quoted in “The Concern of the Church,” 7.

<sup>64</sup>Congregational Christian Churches of the United States, General Council, June 1942, quoted in “The Concern of the Church,” 8.

<sup>65</sup>Church Federation of Los Angeles to Dies Committee, 15 June 1943, quoted in “The Concern of the Church,” 19.

<sup>66</sup>National Inter-Collegiate Christian Council, Sept 1942, quoted in “The Concern of the Church,” 15.

“future of the World Mission and that new and better Order in which, under God’s providence, we are to have our part.”<sup>67</sup> Similar attitudes would motivate support for incarcerated and movements for ecumenical and racial unity.

A few smaller organizations expressed more direct condemnation of the incarceration. The California Synod of the Presbyterian Church denounced the incarceration without hedging their accusation. The synod used straightforward language to claim that the incarceration policy “involved racial discrimination” and a “suspension of the constitutional rights” of Japanese Americans.<sup>68</sup> The Northwest Oriental Evangelization Society “deplore[d]” the removal of citizens to “concentration camps” and urged the government to allow Japanese Americans “who wish to” do so to return home, particularly women married to non-Nikkei men.<sup>69</sup> This brief resolution did not explain why Nikkei should be released, but the message was clear: release citizens immediately. Fremont Baptist Church in Seattle also offered decisive views on the incarceration. They expressed “deep concern” for the unchristian and unconstitutional precedent set by this case where “democratic rights have been infringed upon and racial discrimination placed above law.”<sup>70</sup>

The statements from the Oriental Evangelization Society and the Fremont Baptist Church are exceptional in another way as well. When recommending the release of Nikkei or other actions, they included the small phrase, “if they [the Nikkei] wish.” This simple

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<sup>67</sup>Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, Resolution Regarding Japanese American Resettlement, 5 Dec 1942, quoted in “The Concern of the Church,” 11.

<sup>68</sup>Quoted within the Northern California Office of the Fellowship of Reconciliation’s “Church Measures the Evacuation,” 26 Oct 1942, Box 53/Fld 2, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>69</sup>Northwest Oriental Evangelization Society Resolution, 28 May 1942, Box 15/Fld 8, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>70</sup>Resolution to be Presented to the Resolutions Committee of the Northern Baptist Convention, May 26-31, 1942, Fremont Baptist Church, Box 15/Fld 8, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

qualification acknowledged the choices of the imprisoned minority, something rarely seen in the dozens of statements otherwise deciding the fate of tens of thousands of individuals. The text did not represent mere rhetoric; Nikkei were rarely consulted by white leaders at this or other stages of the incarceration, causing increasing difficulties as the incarceration progressed and national groups planned the minority group's future. This lack of consideration demonstrates the racial hierarchy in churches at this time and the paternalism of its white leaders.

On behalf of multiple interdenominational Protestant organizations, Frank Herron Smith, superintendent of the Japanese Methodist churches in California, released a statement in March 1942 to all Japanese pastors explaining how the churches would aid their congregations. The letter explained necessary details about storing belongings and transferring church property titles to the denomination, but also emphatically stated what the church would not be doing: "We do not have the capital or the land to set up purely Christian colonies in the mid-West." In addition to these practical pieces of advice, Smith reassured them that church representatives have visited the camps and vouched that basic needs would be met, if accompanied by "plenty of wind and dust." He explained that outside pastors had already been assigned to preach during the early weeks of camps, so Nikkei pastors need not worry about that task. The final bullet point read, "TRUST IN THE LORD." The message that followed told pastors, "Some [of you] are running around like chickens with their heads cut off. Keep calm. . . . War is terrible and you should be thankful it will not be worse for you. Let us as Christians keep our heads, cooperate with the authorities, and believe that all

things work for good to those who love God.”<sup>71</sup> Rarely did church leaders demand such explicit obedience from their congregants or clergy.

Prior to and after America’s entry into the war, the Seattle Council of Churches “congratulate[d]” the Japanese for their “good record . . . for being law-abiding people” and their “above average . . . good citizenship and observance of the best social usages.”<sup>72</sup> They reminded non-Japanese that “most [Nikkei] . . . have . . . demonstrated their loyalty to our country and to the American way of life . . . and are no less a part of these United States than are the rest of us.”<sup>73</sup> While well-intentioned, the Council’s statements assumed the subordination of Nikkei within a racial hierarchy. Within this context, only the white majority had the authority to define who was or was not a part of the nation. A number of editorials intended for non-Japanese readership contained similar statements, describing the ethnic community’s exceptionally low rates of crime and unemployment. Several church leaders and other sympathizers urged Nikkei to declare their loyalty publicly to help quell the rising animosity against members of their ethnicity.<sup>74</sup> And in a critical situation such as this, what else could be done?

Some white pastors struggled to describe a world with government-imposed distinctions without creating an “us/them” dichotomy. John Coleman Bennett, an influential scholar of social ethics teaching at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA, threw his

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<sup>71</sup>Frank Herron Smith to pastors and religious leaders, 26 Mar 1942, Box 15/Fld 27, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>72</sup>Message to the Japanese in the Pacific Northwest.

<sup>73</sup>Nutley and Apel.

<sup>74</sup>The editors of a secular newspaper on Bainbridge Island published such remarks in *The Bainbridge Review: War Extra* on December 8<sup>th</sup>, writing “Island Japanese, as never before, must prove their mettle as loyal Americans. They must realize they will be the objects of intense scrutiny. They must not resent this. They must welcome it.” Quoted in Mary Woodward, *In Defense of Our Neighbors: The Walt and Milly Woodward Story* (Bainbridge Island, WA: Fenwick, 2008).



Nikkei students a going-away party prior to their eviction. He delivered a fascinating farewell speech that illuminated common, if complicated, sentiments about racial and national categories within the nation and Protestant churches at this time. The talk expressed the regret and shame he felt about the situation and praised his Nikkei students. Bennett hesitated to make generalizations about all Japanese, acknowledging that “there is no uniformity among them,” but still organized the speech around “four qualities” he “very often noted among Japanese students.” Specifically, he highlighted their warmth of piety, courtesy, toughness and mysteriousness, all common racial stereotypes.<sup>75</sup>

Bennett speculated that their “warmth of piety . . . may come from the fact that they are closer to actual conversion.” Very few Japanese students, if any, came from families that were Christian many generations prior to the war. Bennett’s statement alluded to the fact that, unlike most Americans, Christian faith was not taken for granted within their culture or families. Since their faith did not stem from generations of tradition, conversion represented a real, deliberate decision.<sup>76</sup>

Bennett then lauded the students’ courtesy, commenting that “the Japanese, unlike American students, realize the extent of the importance of the dignity of the faculty. I fear that next year,” he continued, “without this Japanese leaven in our community, there will be an even worse condition among us.” Perhaps this was merely a jest, poking fun at the white students, but the cultural trait of formal courtesy was used in multiple ways against Nikkei before, during and after the war. Most Nikkei typically did treat authority figures, whether

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<sup>75</sup>John C. Bennett, “To our Japanese Friends,” late spring 1942, Box 155/Fld 3, Kuroda Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>76</sup>Converts themselves considered that question. A Nisei Baptist from Seattle, Yosh Nakagawa, wondered how his understanding of religion varied from someone born into a tradition. He felt he “had to think about religion” because most of his community was of a different tradition. Nakagawa, interview by Tom Ikeda, 7 Dec 2004, Densho.

they be parents, teachers, government officials or other elders, with greater outward respect than did other Americans, but many white Americans misinterpreted this formal courtesy. Newspaper articles covering the eviction always noted the calm, polite acquiescence of Nikkei. Some onlookers interpreted the courtesy and good-natured obedience as distasteful subservience, either labeling Nikkei cowards for not revolting and standing up for themselves or viewing it as proof of their trickery and insincerity. After the war, such courtesy would contribute to their reputation of being a model minority, a backhanded compliment used to denigrate less successful ethnic groups and pressure Japanese Americans to conform.

Like many Westerners, Bennett observed “a certain toughness” within Nikkei, explaining that “the Japanese can spend less, eat less and work more than the rest of us. They can sit longer in one spot reading the same book than is the case with Americans. They are the students to whom I am most inclined to suggest that they work less and play more.” This “toughness,” a perception that something in Asian blood makes them different from others, had fueled nativist arguments for nearly a century. Nativists claimed that the frugality and self-sacrifice of Asians was due to physical differences, giving them an unfair capacity to work for lower wages—wages they claimed were below the living wage of a white worker.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, Bennett noted that his Japanese students conveyed “a certain mysteriousness,” recalling Westerners’ historical fascination with all things foreign and exotic. However, the mysteriousness Bennett described through anecdotes seemed to stem more from his frustrations with not understanding his students’ every move, scholastically or in daily life. Unlike the other three qualities, he did not elevate their mysteriousness as

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<sup>77</sup>Nativists claimed that following what resembled a respectable Protestant work ethic without a religious foundation would lead to disastrous results. Additionally, this behavior supported nativist fears that deceitful Asians were using prized American qualities in order to triumph over American citizens. Laurie Maffly-Kipp, “Engaging Habits and Besotted Identity: Viewing Chinese Religions in the American West,” *Material Religion* 1:1 (March 2005): 92.

something positive, but listed it as yet another differentiating factor. This specific quality was frequently cited as the reason Nikkei needed to be imprisoned—it was not possible for white people to discern if a Japanese person was telling the truth.

Bennett's conclusion returned to his initial point that all Japanese are different individuals and assured the soon-to-be-evicted that the school will miss them "not because you are Japanese—but because you are yourselves and our friends." He listed the many laws and acts of racial discrimination and segregation for which the school is "ashamed," and pleaded that students "keep free from bitterness." He asked Nikkei to "try to understand us, just as we try to understand you," again referring to their "mysterious" character. Knowing many churches would not accept Nikkei into their congregations, he hoped they would "not be tempted to generalize" these experiences with the "whole Church." Many Americans thought Asians were distinctly different and unlikely to adapt fully to American culture. Bennett agreed, but did not condemn that status.

While Bennett's message was heartfelt and caring, he did not affirm Japanese Americans' identity as Americans. Bennett's categorization excluded Nikkei from the realm of America entirely, despite his demonstrated commitment to preventing harm caused by the incarceration.<sup>78</sup> For Bennett, Nikkei remained entirely other. The line he drew between Japanese and Americans physically and socially marked significant, insurmountable differences. Unlike white Americans who called for the eviction, Bennett did not necessarily view these differences negatively. He accepted and welcomed Nikkei and their inherently different character. Perhaps because of this mindset, he made greater efforts than many other

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<sup>78</sup>Bennett worked on the Congregational Council for Social Action, which proposed various plans to help people avoid the camps in early 1942. Bennett to Gillett, 2 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 5, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

individuals and organizations to ask Nikkei what type of aid they desired.<sup>79</sup> He never presumed to know what was best for them, but worked toward agreeable, efficient methods, conscious of generational differences and needs.

Bennett's perspective was somewhat similar to that of the AFSC. Most Quaker leaders did not believe that immigrant groups had to relinquish cultural traits and adopt American ones. Unlike other Protestants, AFSC representatives rarely listed assimilation as a reason why the public should accept and not fear Nikkei. More frequently, they cited Nikkei's cooperation, thrift, good neighborliness and citizenship, their "innate love of beauty and cleanliness" and "cunning" children.<sup>80</sup> While these characteristics suggested ethnic stereotypes, they are all positive attributes.

While it seems that Bennett did not speak out for or against racial integration after the war, his speech demonstrated the difficulties surrounding the issues of race and nationality. Many progressive Christian leaders did not consider race to be a foundational problem within American society in the 1940s. Bennett's *Social Salvation: A Religious Approach to the Problems of Social Change* (1935) failed to mention the issue of race even once.<sup>81</sup> Despite the fact that he spoke within and for a religious institution, he did not place these categories within the church, except to speak of his high hopes for the work of Japanese pastors ministering to "[their] people" in the incarceration centers. Such delineation was and remains common and would hinder employment for Nikkei in predominantly white churches. If each race is so mysterious to the other, how could one effectively offer pastoral care to that

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<sup>79</sup>Bennett to Gillett, 2 Apr 1942.

<sup>80</sup>"Friends and the Japanese Americans."

<sup>81</sup>Bennett, *Social Salvation: A Religious Approach to the Problems of Social Change* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935).

other? The experience of the incarceration led white pastors to consider the social costs of racial segregation and convinced many to work for integration as Nikkei left the camps.

### **Japanese Christian Responses to the Pearl Harbor Attack and the Eviction**

The responses of Nikkei Christians during the months prior to eviction were indicative of their experiences during the war. Many found solace in their faith, and pastors tried to retain a sense of normalcy within their churches. They had to determine proper levels of cooperation with government officials and negotiate with higher powers in their denomination or local church councils.

Life in the Japanese ethnic churches proceeded with few alterations, but the war and preparations for their eviction increasingly occupied parishioners' attention. Slight schedule changes accommodated evening curfews, but regional conventions, Christmas and Easter celebrations and revivals occurred as planned until each church's final days. The number of war-related activities such as Red Cross first aid classes also increased. As time progressed, Japanese pastors broadcasted new restrictions and other important information about the pending eviction in weekly worship bulletins. Special notices informed congregations of the formation of aid programs for Japanese Americans and referred readers to related articles in national Christian publications.<sup>82</sup> Sermons called for peaceful, Christian behavior.

Sermons with titles such as "Being Christian in Times like These" and "Reweaving our Lives" appeared more frequently as Nikkei pastors focused on the growing crisis in their

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<sup>82</sup>Salem Japanese Community Church Bulletins and Young People's Bulletins, Dec 1941-24 May 1942, Salem Japanese Community Church, Salem, OR, Box 75/Fld 6, Hoshimiya Family Papers, Japanese American Research Project Collection (Collection 2010) Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

community.<sup>83</sup> Nearly every pastor encouraged congregants to remain as free of resentment and bitterness as possible, knowing their attitudes would determine much of their quality of life over the next few years. Some framed this impulse within patriotic messages, even citing the gratitude Nikkei owed Americans for bringing Christianity to Japan.<sup>84</sup> Others tried to convince their congregants through pragmatic facts. One pastor stated bluntly,

This is the only country we have. . . . Let us not be deceived about Japan. We can never go there and weave ourselves into her pattern of life. . . . We Nisei are too strongly saturated with American democratic ideals. Our thoughts, our language, our feelings and our aspirations are all American, and we have known no other.<sup>85</sup>

This pastor warned congregants not to “talk irrationally” about going “back” to Japan, a country most had never even visited. He fully acknowledged the many flaws of America, but reminded Nisei of their own imperfect nature and the necessity of forgiveness.<sup>86</sup> Sensible rationale like this might not have been easy to accept, but many did and benefited from the mindset.

The task of fostering hope and positive attitudes within congregations was immense, and many Christian leaders used Biblical parallels either to give perspective to their situation or offer their congregations hope. Analogies between the incarceration and the trials of Abraham, Moses and Jesus could be found in pre-eviction sermons, as well as messages that denied those similarities. Showing distinct irritation with such comparisons, Lester Suzuki, a

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<sup>83</sup>Andrew Kuroda, Young People’s Bulletin, 22 Mar 1942, Salem Japanese Community Church, Salem, OR, Box 76/Fld 2, Hoshimiya Family Papers, Japanese American Research Project Collection (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Royden Susu-Mago, “Reweaving our Lives,” in *The Sunday Before*, eds. Allan Hunter and Gurney Binford (Los Angeles: n.p., May 1945), 23-26.

<sup>84</sup>Kenzon Tajima, “New Pilgrims,” in *The Sunday Before*, 39-42.

<sup>85</sup>Susu-Mago, “Reweaving our Lives,” 25-6.

<sup>86</sup>Susu-Mago, “Reweaving our Lives,” 25-6.

Methodist minister,<sup>87</sup> pointed out that while God promised Abraham great blessings, their community had “no such promise,” and, in reference to Moses, commented that “ours is a strange exodus,” since Nikkei were leaving their homes, not slavery. Suzuki did find a useful comparison in Jesus, however, and went as far as to compare Nikkei to Jesus and early Christians. Just as Jesus was reviled, Suzuki insisted, “We are reviled.”<sup>88</sup> It did not seem to matter to Suzuki that his examples were persecuted or killed for standing by their faith, not for their undeniable ethnicity. Nor did he address the reasons for the Nikkei’s suffering.

Other Nikkei pastors found positive parallels to Abraham, noting in particular that God’s promise to him was only spiritual—Abraham himself did not see its realization for Israel did not flourish for nearly a thousand years.<sup>89</sup> Many other leaders compared their situation to that of the Jews during the Babylonian exile.<sup>90</sup> Observing that the Bible “is full of . . . evacuation stories,” the Reverend Yamazaki focused on the “mass evacuation” of the Exodus. He viewed the incarceration as a test in the wilderness. An Issei himself, Yamazaki reminded Nisei that the older Hebrew generation died without seeing the Promised Land.

His sermon charged the Nisei:

Many of us of the older generation erred in many ways in the past. I do not want our youth to repeat these errors. . . . Even if [Issei] perish in the wilderness and disappear from the picture, they will not fail; the Nisei will find a way to a better and newer world. . . . Why not accept this Evacuation as

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<sup>87</sup>Lester Suzuki led the English-speaking members of the Centenary Japanese Methodist Church in Los Angeles until his eviction on May 1<sup>st</sup> and wrote the one published source devoted to religion in the camps, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II* (Berkley, CA: Yardbird Press, 1979).

<sup>88</sup>Suzuki, “Facing Evacuation,” in *The Sunday Before*, 16.

<sup>89</sup>Sokei Kowta, “Abraham, the Migration Leader,” in *The Sunday Before*, 33-38; Tajima.

<sup>90</sup>Hideo Hashimoto, “The Babylonian Exile and the Love of God,” 10 May 1942, in *The Sunday Before*, 28.

a test and a great opportunity to prove our faith in Christ and loyalty to our country?<sup>91</sup>

Yamazaki's words bestowed Nisei with a great responsibility. Only they could fulfill their parents' hopes for a prosperous life in this country.

Many Japanese groups, both religious and secular, advocated cooperation to minimize conflict and alleviate tensions. Similarly, Lester Suzuki expressed indignation and exasperation with Nikkei congregants who were accepting aid inefficiently or were not visibly appreciative of white Americans visiting their church. Referring to a church social with white Christians, he wrote, "If we are so disinterested as to make a measly showing, then what they do to us is none of their fault."<sup>92</sup> Despite their imminent incarceration, or perhaps because of it, Suzuki wanted his congregants to show their gratitude for aid and fellowship. Similarly, he quoted 1 Peter, telling his church, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."<sup>93</sup> In that sermon, he elaborated that Nikkei must obey the government because God is pleased with those who "suffer for well doing," like Jesus. He concluded with an affirmation of his faith that God will strengthen them as long as they "increase their Christian zeal in order to maintain what little faith we have."<sup>94</sup> Most Nikkei pastors judged their congregation less harshly, but still accepted a degree of guilt.

Some pastors shared the attitudes of Quakers, acknowledging that they and their congregants were equally responsible for creating a world in which such circumstances were

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<sup>91</sup>John M. Yamazaki, "We Shall have our Easter or Easter Before Evacuation," 5 Apr 1942, in *The Sunday Before*, 43-48.

<sup>92</sup>Suzuki, "The Methodist Voice," 25 Mar 1942.

<sup>93</sup>The New Revised Standard Version translates the King James Bible's "froward" as "harsh."

<sup>94</sup>Suzuki, "Facing Evacuation," 16-17.



possible. The sermon of a Nisei Methodist pastor in Fresno, California, spoke of the community's failure to fulfill "a great mission . . . to be the bridge-builders of the Pacific." He cited their similarities to Jonah in their past indifference, self-centeredness and sinfulness in "going [in] the opposite direction from the[ir] God-given destiny," distracted by personal desires and wills. Because of these failures, he said, they were partially to blame for the eviction.<sup>95</sup>

Other Nikkei pastors expressed decisively critical judgment of the injustice, but reminded people of its possibilities. Andrew Kuroda, the pastor of the Salem Japanese Community Church, wrote a long letter to friends and associates before entering a temporary camp in Portland, Oregon. He described the situation broadly, but focused on the requirements of Christians in this situation and his "determin[ation] to use this crisis for opportunities to promote the cause of the Kingdom of God."<sup>96</sup> Many other pastors held his position that "we cannot afford to waste this suffering. We have to make use of this evil to bring good."<sup>97</sup> Similarly, another called for his congregation to follow Christ's example and turn their false conviction "into redemptive power."<sup>98</sup> Kuroda's final comments resonated with the criticism made by white Christians in the early months prior to Executive Order 9066, calling the "injuries" of the incarceration "the very essence of Hitlerism we are fighting." He called for Americans to "steadfastly [remain] Christian and militantly

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<sup>95</sup>Hashimoto, 27-32. Kenzon Tajima's sermon before leaving for an assembly center also mentioned Nikkei's culpability for "the war system and present world-society which is built on the war system." Tajima, 39-42.

<sup>96</sup>Andrew Kuroda to Friends, 6 May 1942, Box 155/Fld 3, Kuroda Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>97</sup>Kuroda to Friends, 6 May 1942.

<sup>98</sup>Quoted by A. Hunter in "Japanese Taken to Owens Valley," *Christian Century*, 15 Apr 1942, 510.

[practice] Christian principles . . . to atone a little . . . for this mass injustice.”<sup>99</sup> Kuroda urged his congregants to follow the government’s orders, but insisted that guilty white parties atone for their criminal actions.

In a letter to the local newspaper written the evening before eviction, Kuroda was more positive, but did not contradict his statements given to a different audience. He assured the public that he and other residents and citizens of Japanese descent would “wholeheartedly cooperate with the government program of the national defense.” Comparing their “sacrifice” to men and women going to the front or working in factories, he cried, “Long live America and democracy!”<sup>100</sup> While critical of the incarceration, Kuroda accepted it and worked for positive ends. Throughout the war, he carefully framed his views for different audiences. After a few months at Tule Lake, he wryly wrote of this “wonderful opportunity for Christians: . . . Problems [and people] are abundant.” Christians “don’t have to go around to look” for them.<sup>101</sup> So while Kuroda offered positive, encouraging remarks about the possibilities for Christian work in the camps, he simultaneously reminded readers of the appalling crisis of the incarceration. This tension was seen within the texts of many pastors working in the camps.

The Japanese Christian beliefs of Gordon Hirabayashi led him to challenge the injustice in a more direct manner. Hirabayashi grew up in a rural Mukyōkai farming commune in Thomas, Washington. Hearing his parents’ emphasis on Jesus’ message to

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<sup>99</sup>Daunted by the proposition of ministering to the needs of 4,000 Nikkei in these “tremendous conditions,” he also asked for prayers and moral support. Kuroda to Friends, 6 May 1942.

<sup>100</sup>Kuroda, Letter sent to the *Oregon Statesman*, 1 June 1942, Box 155/Fld 3, Kuroda Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010) Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>101</sup>Letter from Kuroda to those on the outside, Summer 1942, Box 155/Fld 3, Kuroda Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

“turn the other cheek” and observing their actions of leading by example affected him more than he initially realized. When the United States began a peacetime conscription in 1940, he realized that his upbringing had given him a strong “pacifist orientation.”<sup>102</sup> After two years in the ROTC, Hirabayashi registered as a conscientious objector because he could not reconcile a “military solution” with a “peaceful way of life.”<sup>103</sup> He also joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), an interfaith pacifist group committed to social justice.<sup>104</sup>

Nikkei curfew laws provided the first opportunity for Hirabayashi to act on his beliefs. On March 28, 1942, these laws expanded to include all Nikkei in Seattle. A similar curfew for Issei had been instated on February 4<sup>th</sup>.<sup>105</sup> All Nikkei were forbidden from traveling more than five miles beyond their homes and had to return home by eight.<sup>106</sup> Nikkei truck farmers ignored the law or rushed to employ non-Nikkei to bring their produce to market. Some doctors and midwives were given special passes, though many others risked

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<sup>102</sup>Uchimura Kanzō, the founder of Mukyōkai, considered pacifism the “touchstone” of true faith. John F. Howes, *Japan's Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzō, 1861-1930* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 200.

<sup>103</sup>Gordon Hirabayashi Interview II, interview by Becky Fukuda and Tom Ikeda, 26 Apr 1999, Densho.

<sup>104</sup>Like the AFSC, FOR was founded during World War I to provide social aid and work towards peace through nonviolent means. They published similarly condemnatory statements about the government's decision to incarcerate Nikkei. Caleb Foote (FOR), “Japanese Evacuation Shows Totalitarian Trends,” 20 May 1942, Box 1/Fld 13, Constantine Panunzio Collection (Collection Number 1636), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. For more on FOR's work, see Paul R. Dekar, *Creating the Beloved Community: A Journey with the Fellowship of Reconciliation* (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing, 2005).

<sup>105</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 80.

<sup>106</sup>The University Friends Meeting moved to the house of their one Japanese member, since the curfew made it impossible for him to otherwise attend. Thomas R. Bodine, Japanese Evacuation Report #7, 26 Mar 1942, “Bainbridge Island,” Camp Harmony Exhibit, University of Washington Libraries, last revised 20 Dec 1999, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/harmony/Exhibit/bainbridge.html>.

arrest to visit patients.<sup>107</sup> After weeks of dutifully following the curfew, the unfairness of the situation dawned on Hirabayashi and he began intentionally violating the curfew. He described such racial discrimination as “unchristian, undemocratic [and] un-American.”<sup>108</sup> As the date to register for eviction approached, Hirabayashi presented himself and a record of his violations to the FBI. Despite their willingness to overlook the offenses, he persisted and also refused to register for eviction or leave with his family. As one of only a few people to refuse to comply with laws associated with the incarceration, Hirabayashi wrote a statement explaining his actions to the public:

Over and above any man-made creed or law is the natural law of life—the right of human individuals to live and to creatively express themselves. . . . If I were to register and cooperate under those circumstances, I would be giving helpless consent to the denial of practically all of the things which give me incentive to live. I must maintain my Christian principles. I consider it my duty to maintain the democratic standards for which this nation lives. Therefore, I must refuse this order for evacuation.<sup>109</sup>

He cited examples of individuals who gave their lives for the establishment of American legal rights, but also acknowledged those Nikkei who registered with the government and were facing this “tragedy admirably.” Hirabayashi praised the “sympathetic and honest efforts” of army and government personnel assigned to carry out the eviction as well. Though his mother worried, Hirabayashi’s parents supported his decision and “both said they understood and . . . admired [him] for taking a stand.”<sup>110</sup> Other children from Hirabayashi’s

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<sup>107</sup>Susan L. Smith, *Japanese American Midwives: Culture, Community and Health Politics, 1880-1950* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

<sup>108</sup>Hirabayashi to Eleanor Ring, 18 Feb 1944, Box 1/Fld 7, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

<sup>109</sup>Hirabayashi, “Why I Refused to Register for Evacuation,” 13 May 1942, Box 1/Fld 6, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

<sup>110</sup>Hirabayashi initially approached the American Civil Liberties Union, assuming they would take his case, but the national board refused the case. AFSC and FOR members and state senator Mary Farquarson helped bring his case to the Supreme Court, which pronounced the racist curfew and eviction laws constitutional. Gordon

Mukyōkai community applied for conscientious objector status as well and told strikingly similar stories about their upbringing.<sup>111</sup>

Some Nikkei were “disappointed” that Christian churches did not fight more strongly against the incarceration. Many concluded that some churches are “built on purely secular values of national loyalty that place military necessity and expediency over righteousness and justice.”<sup>112</sup> Decades after the war, several Nikkei pastors acknowledged the aid given by a small minority within the church “once the plight of the evacuation and internment took place,” but wondered, “where was the church when an innocent and powerless minority were forcibly removed from their homes . . . into concentration camps in the wilderness of America.” Others lamented that churches “failed” in this “golden opportunity . . . to stand up and affirm its authenticity.”<sup>113</sup> However, those same individuals affirmed that “without the church, many of us would be indeed lost!”<sup>114</sup> A few people spoke against the incarceration on the behalf of American churches, and hundreds of people, if not thousands, provided small, but meaningful, comfort through words, donations or deeds that sustained many Nikkei’s faith in humanity and Christianity. These mixed feelings and reactions of American Protestants reflected disagreements within the entire country.

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Hirabayashi Interview II. For more on this trial (*Hirabayashi v. United States*, 320 US 81 (1943)), see Eric L. Muller, “Hirabayashi: The Biggest Lie of the Greatest Generation,” 18 Aug 2008, UNC Legal Studies Research Paper No. 1233682, accessed 20 July 2011, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1233682>.

<sup>111</sup>Gordon Hirabayashi Interview II.

<sup>112</sup>Sumida and Nagano, 96.

<sup>113</sup>Sumida and Nagano, 103, 194.

<sup>114</sup>Sumida and Nagano, 95.

## Tolan Committee Hearings

In February and March of 1942, Representative John Tolan of California held hearings on the coast to gauge tensions and attitudes related to Japanese Americans. Anyone from the community could present their view of the situation. Fifty-five people came forward in Seattle, only twelve of whom opposed a total incarceration. Eight of the twelve represented Christian organizations, while the others were university students and faculty members.<sup>115</sup> The statements of Quakers, mainline Protestants and Japanese Americans resembled those made earlier in the war.

Religious leaders avoided the use of religious arguments, instead focusing on empirical data or the values of America. Speaking for the local AFSC, Floyd Schmoe invoked America's honorable traditions, caring for prisoners of war, welcoming minorities and supporting a justice system by which individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty. He warned that violating these principles could create a "dangerous fifth column" and aid the Japanese government by affirming a "'Holy War' of race."<sup>116</sup> The pastor of the Seattle Japanese Methodist Church, Everett Thompson, suggested that the United States government would be "repeating the deed that Hitler perpetrated against the Jews." Even if their methods were "gentler, . . . the basic injustices would be the same," permitting "Hitler's spirit" to "conquer" the nation.<sup>117</sup> He echoed Schmoe's sentiment that making this into a "race war of tinted peoples against the whites" would be "play[ing] into the hands of Japan's

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<sup>115</sup>Schmoe, "Seattle Peace Churches and Relocation," 117.

<sup>116</sup>Schmoe, Tolan Committee Hearing, 11527.

<sup>117</sup>Ellen Eisenberg, "'As Truly American as Your Son:' Voicing Opposition to Internment in Three West Coast Cities," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 104:4 (Winter 2003): 542-565.

propaganda.”<sup>118</sup> Neither of these men invoked Christian arguments, but spoke to practical concerns of national security and identity. Similarly, the YWCA and the Northwest Oriental Evangelization Society encouraged the government to decide the fates of Japanese Americans “on an individual basis” in order to preserve “the very thing our country is fighting for,”<sup>119</sup> freedom and justice. Non-religious arguments dodged accusations that religious leaders based their support for Nikkei on idealistic, naïve notions of neighborly love.

Consistent with prior declarations, the Council’s statement to the committee used mild language and did not criticize the government. The Baptist pastor Harold Jensen delivered the Seattle Council of Churches’s official statement to the Tolan Congressional Committee. The Seattle Council dismissed the idea of incarcerating Nisei by saying they saw “no reason why American citizens of enemy alien lineage should be involved in the discussion of evacuation” and expressed their faith that the government would not base their decision on ethnic heritage.<sup>120</sup> Perhaps their rhetoric was intended to shame government officials by refusing to acknowledge the possibility of American injustice or they simply did not wish to contradict the government’s pending decision. Despite the Council’s indirectness, Jensen spoke against a mass evacuation decisively on his own behalf.<sup>121</sup> Church leaders along the West Coast gave a similar range of testimonies at the Tolan Committee.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Thompson, Tolan Committee Hearing, 11608.

<sup>119</sup>“Exhibit 19—Statement by Mrs. Claude H. Eckart, Tolan Committee Hearing,” 11613; “Exhibit 2—Statement by Rev. U. G. Murphy,” 11597-8.

<sup>120</sup>Howard Jensen, Tolan Commission Hearing, 11564-7.

<sup>121</sup>Jensen, 11572.

<sup>122</sup>In San Francisco, a panel composed of Protestant representatives argued against wholesale incarceration and the California Council of Churches’ president submitted a loyalty pledge signed by 1,400 Japanese Californian

Seattle's Japanese community contributed their views to the Tolan Committee as well. The Seattle Council hurriedly interviewed 327 Japanese Christian families in Seattle to ascertain their thoughts on the potential incarceration and presented the results to the Committee. Most families, not surprisingly, wished to remain in Seattle.<sup>123</sup> Seattle's Japanese American Citizens League submitted a printed statement declaring their total loyalty and co-operation, but insisted they be allowed to remain in their homes to fight alongside other Americans. They protested that they could make agricultural contributions to the war effort and found the idea of being "given a place of safety when our friends and neighbors remain behind . . . repugnant."<sup>124</sup>

In the end, the hearings mattered little. FDR and other government officials made their decisions regarding eviction before its completion and ignored the investigation's later conclusions. The Tolan Committee responded, "The fact that in a time of emergency this country was unable to distinguish between the loyalties of many thousands of its citizens . . . calls into question the adequacy of our whole outlook upon the assimilation of foreign

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Christians. While the national American Civil Liberties Union disagreed, a rabbi representing the Northern California ACLU claimed a mass incarceration would be unconstitutional. Ellen Eisenberg explains that complex social networks among white and Nikkei Protestants resulted in few positive testimonies, noting the lack of such relationships in Portland. The Portland Council of Churches' statement to the Tolan Commission merely asked that the federal government respect family units, cover the financial cost of the move itself and provide schools and health care for the incarcerated. Jews, lacking close ties to Nikkei and embroiled in a fight to protect European Jews, raised little protest. Eisenberg, "As Truly American as Your Son." Exhibit 4—Statement by the Portland Council of Churches, Portland and Seattle Hearings, National Defense Migration, 11390. Ellen Eisenberg, *The First to Cry Down Injustice? Western Jews and Japanese Removal During WWII* (Landham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

<sup>123</sup>Japanese Seattleites expressed concerns about being moved to farmland, since they lacked agricultural skills and were unprepared to cultivate large tracts of land. Only seventy-one Seattle families had agricultural experience. Jensen, 11570.

<sup>124</sup>Emergency Defense Council, Seattle Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, Summary Report Submitted to Tolan Congressional Committee on National Defense Migration, 1942 (denshopd-i35-00147), Densho.



groups.”<sup>125</sup> Many other people within the government also realized the precedent a race-based incarceration might set for future race relations in the country.

## **Eviction**

In the late spring of 1942, the Reverend Andrews watched his congregation slowly trickle into Camp Harmony, the temporary assembly center hastily erected on the Western Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup. On Mothers’ Day, his church was finally empty. He “sat in the pulpit chair,” gazing at the “vacant pews” and “visualized Sunday School boys and girls, teachers, young people, church choir and the various individuals.”<sup>126</sup> Employed by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Andrews led the Seattle Japanese Baptist Church from 1929 to 1955, at which point he resigned to allow a Nisei to take his place. The man everyone knew as Andy devoted not only his career to the mission church; he also gave most of his life to Seattle’s Japanese American community, Baptists, Buddhists and non-religious Nikkei alike. He organized and led a variety of programs at the Japanese Baptist Church, including English language classes, basketball tournaments and, of course, religious services and Christian education seminars. For thirty-eight years, he held the position of scoutmaster for the first Nisei Boy Scout troop in Seattle.<sup>127</sup> After December 7th, he

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<sup>125</sup>Report of the Congressional Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, May 1942, quoted in “The Concern of the Church,” 3.

<sup>126</sup>Untitled Biographical Summary, 10 May 1946, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>127</sup>“History,” Japanese Baptist Church, accessed 4 Sept 2010, <http://www.jbcseattle.org/history.html>.

consistently spoke in defense of Japanese Americans and against any type of incarceration, receiving an investigation by the FBI in response.<sup>128</sup>

But before Andrews' congregants moved into the makeshift housing in Puyallup, Nikkei living on Bainbridge Island became the first Japanese Americans in the country to enter an incarceration camp. Located across Puget Sound from Seattle, their close proximity to US Navy facilities prompted Lieutenant General DeWitt to call for their "evacuation" on March 24, 1942, the very day he issued Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1, which announced the eviction of all Nikkei from the West Coast. Bainbridge residents had six days to sell or lease their farms, store belongings, find homes for pets, bid neighbors farewell and pack the following, "not exceeding that which can be carried by the family or individual":

- a. Blankets and linens for each member of the family;
- b. Toilet articles for each member of the family;
- c. Clothing for each member of the family; [and]
- d. Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls, and cups for each member of the family.
- e. All items carried will be securely packaged, tied, and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions received at the Civil Control Office;
- f. No contraband items may be carried.<sup>129</sup>

While church groups helped other communities pack and move into the camps, the Bainbridge Islanders, being the first, received relatively little aid from mainline groups. The AFSC stationed a group of volunteers on the island to act as "observers' and errand-boys," bringing bank forms and contracts from Seattle to Nikkei temporarily confined to the island.

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<sup>128</sup>Throughout the war and after, many white leaders working with Nikkei, including Andrews, Floyd Schmoe, Herbert Nicolson and Ralph Smeltzer, received attention from the FBI. Biographical Note, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>129</sup>Contraband items included radios, cameras, printed material in Japanese and other items confiscated before the eviction. "Instructions to All Japanese Living on Bainbridge Island," 24 Mar 1942, "Bainbridge Island," Camp Harmony Exhibit, University of Washington Libraries, last revised 20 Dec 1999, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/harmony/Exhibit/bainbridge.html>.

Characteristic of later reports, the *Seattle Times* described the Bainbridge Nikkei as “wistful and willing,” having “no apparent antagonism to the evacuation order.”<sup>130</sup> The news media consistently misrepresented the attitudes of Nikkei. During the Seattle eviction, a photographer persistently asked a couple to pose in the doorway of the bus taking them to an assembly center. The caption of the photograph of Nisei “grinning widely to cover their embarrassment” read, “Japs good-natured about evacuation.”<sup>131</sup> Perhaps the appearance of smiles relieved the conscience of outsiders who wanted to believe the situation was not as bad as it appeared. Some outsiders, like Bennett, read their stoicism as toughness, complimenting their bravery.<sup>132</sup>

Other witnesses on the West Coast attempted to correct these positive perceptions. A reader wrote to *Christian Century*, “The daily press leaves the impression that the Japanese-Americans evacuated from the coast are happy over the move, but . . . most of them in our district are not.”<sup>133</sup> The consistently sympathetic *Bainbridge Review*, a progressive secular newspaper, confirmed that no Nikkei caused a “disturbance, although some wept when the actual moment came for boarding the ferry.” Acknowledging the turmoil that boiled within many evicted people, the *Review* described their appearance as “outwardly calm.”<sup>134</sup> However, other articles and letters in same issue perpetuated the notion that Nikkei were

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<sup>130</sup>“Bainbridge Japanese Wistful and Willing, Aliens Register to Leave Island Monday,” *Seattle Times*, 25 Mar 1942, 10.

<sup>131</sup>Sone, 171.

<sup>132</sup>For a further analysis of these photographs, see Jasmine Alinder, “Displaced Smiles: Photography and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II,” *Prospects* 30 (2005): 519-37.

<sup>133</sup>F. E. Raymond, “Not in the Headlines,” *Christian Century*, 15 Apr 1942, 500.

<sup>134</sup>“Evacuees Sing on Trip,” *Bainbridge Review*, 2 Apr 1942, 1.

pleased to do their part in the war effort for the sake of national security.<sup>135</sup> In some cases, reporters likely believed their narration, while others printed what they thought white subscribers wanted to read.

Given the situation, Bainbridge Nikkei looked remarkably dignified. Photographs show women in furs, the occasional older man dressed in his World War I dress uniform and dozens of small children and teenagers. The eyes of most adults express extreme sadness, but only small children showed the fear and confusion adults concealed. Many Issei held their composure in the face of cameras and curiosity seekers, but broke into tears after boarding buses.<sup>136</sup> Friends and neighbors, high school classmates and curious observers lined the Bainbridge docks to watch Nikkei, one-seventeenth of the island's total population, board the ferry. From there, Islanders took a train directly to Manzanar, bypassing the usual period at an assembly center.<sup>137</sup> Just under a year later, the WRA granted Islanders permission to rejoin other Washington Nikkei at Minidoka.<sup>138</sup>

Over the course of the war, church aid was most visible to Nikkei during the weeks when the WCCA called for individual neighborhoods to report for removal to the temporary camps. Churches all along the coast stored belongings, found homes for pets and helped families sell or lease their homes, businesses and automobiles. The Reverend Andrews marked a grid onto the JBC's gymnasium floor; each family could fill one square with their

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<sup>135</sup>Allan Hunter, a minister, wrote of "bewildered but cheerful" Japanese mothers and noted the lack of tears on the day of eviction. Hunter "Japanese Taken to Owens Valley," *Christian Century*, 15 Apr 1942, 508. He offered similar observations in "War Exiles Hold Little Bitterness," *Christian Century*, 6 May 1942, 608.

<sup>136</sup>Eleanor Breed, diary entry, 27 April 1942, quoted in *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience*, ed. Lawson Fusao Inada (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2000), 43.

<sup>137</sup>"Evacuees Sing on Trip." While Manzanar was considered an assembly center at this time, it became a more permanent relocation center.

<sup>138</sup>Paul Ohtaki, "Find Friends at Minidoka," *Bainbridge Review*, 11 Mar 1943.

belongings. As they delivered items to the church, they signed an itemized contract with the Washington Baptist Convention that released the churches of any liability.<sup>139</sup> In one touching case, a young Japanese man appeared at the door of a Berkeley Congregational Church and asked if they would store “a square box wrapped in . . . white silk.” He explained, “These are the ashes of the children and my mother.”<sup>140</sup> The pastor quickly consented and removed the box to a secure location. The WCCA often used church buildings for registration and staging areas where families waited for trucks or trains to transport them to their assigned camp. Women of the church prepared sandwiches and drinks, watched children and generally stood by to comfort Nikkei families. Other people volunteered to drive elderly people directly to the camps to ease the difficulties of moving and transferring baggage. Throughout May and June, the government summoned Nikkei living in Western Washington to register and move to Puyallup. White friends, pastors and teachers came to say their goodbyes, and many “wept openly” as the convoy of busses pulled away.<sup>141</sup>

The Seattle Council reminded Christians of their obligation to respect all people and ensure equality of rights among them. They hoped Christian citizenry would “express itself quickly before it becomes a custom to accept whatever the government does as being the correct way to do anything.”<sup>142</sup> Concerning the “rapid increase of racial tensions in the United States,” the council cautioned that Americans must not allow the “temporary suspension . . . of the rights guaranteed by our Constitution . . . to become permanent . . .

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<sup>139</sup>Storage Receipts, Spring 1942, Box 4/Flds 32-35, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>140</sup>Breed, diary entry, 25 April 1942, in *Only What We Could Carry*, 41.

<sup>141</sup>Sone, 171.

<sup>142</sup>Report of the Meeting of the Social Welfare and Service Committee, 26 Mar 1942.

when the military emergency is past.”<sup>143</sup> Reminiscent of Quaker statements, a man wrote *Christian Century* to remind “each citizen in every state” of their “share of moral and civic responsibility” for the situation, stemming from naturalization restrictions.<sup>144</sup>

However, the general American populace supported the incarceration and the Seattle Council criticized Christians’ general “lack of interest.” Many, likely most, congregations did not offer aid. Some were hesitant or outright opposed to aiding people they thought to be the enemy. While not speaking to the Nikkei situation in America directly, a retired Episcopalian rector in Philadelphia denounced missions to Japan on the basis that members of the race could never become Americans or Christians. He said, “Can you Christianize a Jap? Indeed, can you make an Occidental out of an Oriental? Nay, any more than you can change a leopard’s spots.”<sup>145</sup> In his mind, there would have been no reason to aid a people who would never be allies or Christians. Other American church members volunteered while retaining fundamental racial and national distinctions. For example, encouraged by her pastor’s sermon, a deaconess offered, “I’d be glad to take a Japanese cat, if it will get along all right with my American cat.”<sup>146</sup> She wanted to help, but still imagined severe distinctions between Japanese and American culture, extending their pervasiveness to include household pets.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>Statement Regarding Minority Groups and the Bill of Rights, 6 Dec 1943 as quoted in “The Concern of the Church,” 20.

<sup>144</sup>Frank D. Campbell, “Race Snobbery,” *Christian Century*, 4 Mar 1942, 290.

<sup>145</sup>“Rector Denounces All Missions to Japan,” *Christian Century*, 21 Jan 1942, 93.

<sup>146</sup>Breed, diary entry, 26 April 1942, in *Only What We Could Carry*, 42.

<sup>147</sup>The loss of loved pets was one of the most difficult parts of leaving for some families. Dozens of former incarcerated recalled abandoning animals. Neighbors and church members adopted animals only to watch them run away or die, pining for their families. Dogs chased the families’ cars to the registration site; cats disappeared from their new homes. Shig Yabu, interview by Tom Ikeda, 23 Feb 2010, Densho. “Mass Removal” (denshopd-i36-00024 ), Densho, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* Collection, number PI-28046; “Saying

Observers today might criticize the choice to provide only small favors—sandwiches and storage—when Nikkei might have benefited from people speaking publicly against the government’s actions. The Seattle Council of Churches acknowledged that “strenuous pressure” on the government to improve conditions could help, but decided that “continued visitation and hospitality” was the most important concern.<sup>148</sup> Slightly alleviating an injustice does not equal efforts to fight it, and many Nikkei were wounded by the church’s minimal efforts. Yet for many incarcerated, this was the first time since the attack on Pearl Harbor they witnessed kindness from white Americans. They saw that many Americans did care for them. On “E-Day,” as Monica Itoi called Evacuation, Expulsion or Eviction Day, she and others were grateful to see her youth minister Everett Thompson and Emery Andrews.<sup>149</sup> Incarcerated expressed similar sentiments when outsiders sent Christmas presents to children in the camps. These small gifts showed incarcerated that they had not been forgotten and that there were kind people on the outside who supported and cared for them. Additionally, since the army frequently made inadequate preparations for holding or transporting large numbers of people, the churches’ contributions were necessary.<sup>150</sup>

### **Camp Harmony**

As their bus pulled into the Puyallup fairgrounds, Monica Itoi and others observed “an entire block filled with neat rows of low shacks, resembling chicken houses. . . . The bus

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Goodbye to Dog During Mass Removal” (denshopd-i34-00053), Densho, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community.

<sup>148</sup>Report of the Meeting of the Social Welfare and Service Committee, 26 Mar 1942.

<sup>149</sup>Sone, 171.

<sup>150</sup>On several occasions the army purchased spoiled food or an inadequate amount and asked local churches to serve light meals. Ralph Smeltzer, “These are American Refugees: Part Two—Facing Opposition,” Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (UCB).

. . . drove through a wire-fenced gate,” and to their dismay, they found themselves “inside the oversized chicken farm.” They stood in “ankle deep . . . gray glutinous mud” waiting for their housing assignment.<sup>151</sup> Monica surveyed the new, if crude, housing that would be their home for the next several months. Her family, like Nikkei in every center, stuffed mattresses with straw to cushion their army cots, built furniture from scrap lumber and stood in long lines for every meal. While most California camps were windy and dusty, incarcerated at Camp Harmony battled the “carnivorous Puyallup mud” until the weather improved in late summer.<sup>152</sup>

Most scholarly works about the Japanese American incarceration focus on life in the ten camps constructed for the duration of the war, but the majority of Nikkei faced the initial trauma of incarceration before that time. While the relocation centers operated for years, community organizations, Nikkei leadership and patterns of daily life formed in the coastal assembly centers. The Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA), the precursor to the WRA, housed most Western Washington Nikkei in the shadow of a large wooden rollercoaster at the Puyallup fairgrounds for several months before going to Idaho. They based living quarters at Puyallup and other centers on the military’s “Theater of Operations” housing, designed for temporary use and ease of construction.<sup>153</sup> Camp Harmony held 7,390 Nikkei from Western Washington and Alaska by the end of May 1942.<sup>154</sup>

Beyond meals, the WCCA did not plan activities, school or adequate employment for the denizens of assembly centers. Incarcerated and volunteers from the outside quickly

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<sup>151</sup>Sone, 173.

<sup>152</sup>Sone, 180.

<sup>153</sup>Jeffery F. Burton et al., *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 35.

<sup>154</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 112.



organized worship services, Sunday schools, Boy Scout troops, English lessons, lecture series and even correspondence courses to enable students to finish the school year within the camp. Most area school administrators waived the final month of coursework for graduating seniors, and 412 high school seniors received diplomas at a ceremony held at the fair grandstand. Soon after, the president of the University of Washington traveled to Puyallup with several university deans to bestow bachelor degrees upon nine seniors.<sup>155</sup>

Young Nikkei Protestants at Camp Harmony were not stymied by the dearth of clergy during the initial weeks of camp. A Seattle Council of Churches report used a militaristic metaphor to describe the first week in camp:

Like parachute troops who are fighting almost as soon as their feet hit the ground, the young people in the Puyallup Assembly Center began setting up Sunday School the very day they landed. Working efficiently they mobilized their forces of experienced teachers, drafted new ones where necessary, adopted graded lessons, secured the supplies necessary. . . . In all these things abundant initiative and energy came from the young people themselves.<sup>156</sup>

Redolent of the can-do rhetoric of wartime America, this action-filled passage heralded the achievements of individuals who were not hindered but rather inspired by wartime limitations. But despite the apparent self-sufficiency of this Christian group, the Council emphasized the need for contributions from outside readers.<sup>157</sup>

Nikkei volunteers and white church leaders quickly organized Sunday services and other activities. Six hundred Nikkei attended the Protestant Sunday service on May 10<sup>th</sup>, less

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<sup>155</sup>O'Brien, interview. Since that time, many West Coast universities and colleges have granted honorary degrees to their evicted students.

<sup>156</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup,” 8 Sept 1942, Box 15/Fld 4, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>157</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

than two weeks after the camp's opening.<sup>158</sup> Attendance nearly tripled the following week as more people entered camp and learned of services.<sup>159</sup> White and Nikkei leaders offered more activities and by June over 2,500 incarcerated persons attended a Protestant function each week.<sup>160</sup> The total population of the camp peaked around 7,000 that summer, so about a third of the camp was participating in some Christian activity.<sup>161</sup> Issei pastors conducted Sunday worship services, weekly Bible study and regular prayer meetings in Japanese. The Issei clergy at Camp Harmony represented five denominations, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Holiness.<sup>162</sup> Sunday school, worship, youth fellowship and a Sunday school teachers' training class filled the rest of the week's schedule.<sup>163</sup>

The WCCA's official policy on religious liberties in the camp stated:

It is the desire of this office to adhere to the American principle of religious freedom regardless of sect or denomination, race or creed, and to tolerate no discrimination against any religious denomination which the Japanese constituency or group within the Center have requested.<sup>164</sup>

Later policies forbade Shinto practices specifically, as they were associated with emperor worship and Japanese nationalism. This declaration more vaguely prohibited services used as a "vehicle to propagandize or incite the members of the center," which could include

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<sup>158</sup>Everett Thompson to Theresa McCoy, 13 May 1942, Seattle Council of Churches and Christian Education, Box 15/Fld 1, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>159</sup>Thompson to McCoy, 20 May 1942, Seattle Council of Churches and Christian Education, Box 15/Fld 1, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>160</sup>Thompson to Frank Herron Smith, 24 June 1942, Box 15/Fld 1, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>161</sup>Burton, *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 363.

<sup>162</sup>"Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup."

<sup>163</sup>Thompson to Smith, 24 June 1942.

<sup>164</sup>Policy—Religion within WCCA Reception and Assembly Centers, Presented to Seattle Council of Churches on 20 May 1942, Box 15/Fld 21, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

Shinto practices and others. Most likely intentional, this lack of specificity granted the camp director power to be lenient or restrictive. Generally, authorities allowed incarcerated to “promote religious services,” “request . . . Caucasian assistance” from the outside and transfer Nikkei clergy to other camps if a population was without a religious leader.<sup>165</sup> At Camp Harmony, the WCCA granted permission for nearly all religious gatherings, but inexplicably rejected Protestants’ plans for a Vacation Bible Camp.<sup>166</sup>

All printed matter within the camp had to be approved by the Press Relations office. Upon entering camp, officials seized all Japanese print matter that had survived the frequent raids following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This restriction foiled the plan of white church members who bought out a Nihonmachi bookstore with the intention of starting a camp library with the books.<sup>167</sup> WCCA rules permitted Japanese Bibles, but guards permanently confiscated many.<sup>168</sup> The Center Manager granted pastors permission to speak to groups in Japanese if congregants could not understand English, but religious groups could not print bulletins or other material in Japanese initially.<sup>169</sup> In practice, this rule conflicted with the government’s pledge to protect religious liberty because it outlawed Buddhist texts in Japanese. Since most Buddhist leaders were still held in Department of Justice internment camps, this ruling placed heavy burdens on an already disadvantaged religious group. Administrators eventually relaxed security, allowing camp newspapers and religious texts to be printed and distributed in Japanese.

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<sup>165</sup>Policy—Religion within WCCA Reception and Assembly Centers.

<sup>166</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

<sup>167</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.” Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 112.

<sup>168</sup>Sone, 188. Doris Hayashi, “JERS Religion Report,” Tanforan Assembly Center, Summer 1942, Reel 016, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>169</sup>Policy—Religion within WCCA Reception and Assembly Centers.

Tight security restricted religious worship in other ways as well. Contacting Nikkei outside of official visiting hours or away from the official visitation location required great efforts by friends and clergy. Despite attempts bar and corral visitors, white pastors of Japanese churches, representatives of the Seattle Council of Churches and other individuals frequently visited Camp Harmony. Gertrude Apel, the Council's general secretary, proudly pledged that "the Church [would] continue to minister to its people no matter where they are, under whatever conditions."<sup>170</sup> Meanwhile, Apel almost passionately enforced visitation rules at Camp Harmony. She required all representatives of the Council to sign a strongly worded form, promising to obey WCCA rules and not "abuse the privilege of visitation by issuing public criticism of the camps." She warned, "An inspection visit should not be carried on under the guise of religious service."<sup>171</sup> Apel was very aware of the fact that church work was a "privilege" that camp officials could revoke at any time, were trouble to occur. Even outside journalists and photographers could obtain only limited views of the camp. During these months, the late spring and summer of 1942, ministers relinquished their ability to protest the existence of the camps in favor of maintaining direct contact with their congregants.

A fat folder within the Seattle Council of Churches archives at the University of Washington holds dozens of letters requesting passes for Thompson, Jensen and many other church representatives. Divided into four districts by high barbed wire, the structure of the Camp Harmony quadrupled the amount of work required to provide religious programs for all incarcerated. On most Sundays, white pastors from Seattle, Tacoma, Puyallup and Sumner

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<sup>170</sup>"Protestants in City and State Unite to Serve Japanese."

<sup>171</sup>"Council of Churches Visitor's Agreement Before Issuance of Passes to the Japanese Camps," May 1942, Box 15/Fld 21, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

drove to the camps—often without remuneration for their time or rationed gas. Over the summer, more than fifty different clergymen worked with the four groups of young people. Most came from Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Episcopal or Presbyterian churches, those with the highest number of members at Camp Harmony, but representatives of evangelical churches also visited.<sup>172</sup> Since guests could preach only if invited directly by incarcerated, it would have been difficult for unrepresented denominations to enter the assembly centers. Father Leopold H. Tibesar, the parish priest of Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs in Seattle, moved to Puyallup and ministered to Nikkei Catholics daily during their time at Camp Harmony. He said a mass in Area A's mess hall on the first Sunday of incarceration.<sup>173</sup> Before coming to Seattle in 1935, Tibesar worked with Japanese colonists in Manchuria. He moved to Idaho with his church members from Camp Harmony in September.

Outside clergy led the English-language activities with the help of Tsutomu (Tom) Fukuyama, a newly ordained Nisei Baptist.<sup>174</sup> Fukuyama's early religious life exemplified the experience of many Nisei. Growing up in the strawberry farms on Bainbridge Island, Fukuyama attended a Congregational Sunday School with friends, but was not "serious" about religion. Seattle Baptists Florence Rumsey and Esther McCullough, both of whom would move with the congregation to Idaho, made positive impressions on Fukuyama during their regular visits to Bainbridge. A Nisei preacher originally from Bainbridge led Fukuyama to get baptized at fourteen. In his final semester at Berkeley Baptist Divinity School, he returned home and received an "emergency ordination" at the JBC on April 30, 1942, two

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<sup>172</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

<sup>173</sup>Fiset, *Camp Harmony*, 103.

<sup>174</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

weeks before his twenty-fifth birthday, to alleviate the dearth of clergy.<sup>175</sup> Fukuyama preached occasionally and busied himself with camp youth groups, but lacked ministerial experience and could not enter all four sections of the camp.

The Council called Everett Thompson to act as a full time minister for the incarcerated Christians.<sup>176</sup> Thompson had spent years conducting missionary work in Japan before moving to Seattle and spoke fluent Japanese. Prior to his appointment, Thompson explained that “the Japanese themselves have repeatedly requested that . . . workers in their various churches be permitted to come into the camp.” Unable to meet the full needs of Christians at Camp Harmony, outside workers trained Nikkei to lead Sunday School and other church activities. But Thompson explained that “young people . . . want Americans, not their parents or the Japanese pastors to teach . . . classes.”<sup>177</sup> If the young people requested “Americans,” their desire could have been simply for English speakers, as many Issei church leaders did not have good English. But other reports relay an “eager[ness for] Caucasian preachers” specifically.<sup>178</sup> On the other hand, no Nisei pastor lived outside at this time, so requesting outside aid meant requesting aid from white Americans, however phrased. In Seattle, white ministers led most Protestant youth groups before the war. Andrews and other white leaders of Japanese ethnic churches spent the late spring driving back and forth from Seattle to Puyallup, helping in whatever way they could.

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<sup>175</sup>Tom Fukuyama, *My Spiritual Pilgrimage: Autobiographies of Asian American Baptist Ministers*, compiled by the Asian American Baptist Caucus, 1976, Box 10/Fld 8, Pacific and Asian American Center for Theology and Strategies collection, GTU 2001-9-01, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA (GTU).

<sup>176</sup>“Protestants in City and State Unite to Serve Japanese, Call Rev. Everett W. Thompson,” 26 Apr 1942, Box 15/Fld 22, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>177</sup>Thompson to McCoy, 13 and 20 May 1942.

<sup>178</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

Once established, the congregations at Puyallup needed material supplies and other basic aid. Thompson informed his superiors that donors had provided Sunday school material for all ages and other committees were providing recreational equipment and library books.<sup>179</sup> Seattle churches donated or loaned Bibles, hymnals, choir robes, draperies and communion sets. Church members persuaded the Army to provide trucks to transport three pianos and several pulpits from the Japanese church buildings in Seattle.<sup>180</sup>

White volunteers also delivered forgotten items and helped incarcerated close unfinished business deals. A number of families did not successfully close sales or arrange to lease their homes and businesses before their eviction, so outsiders acted as liaisons between incarcerated and their banks or business partners. Often, visitors simply came to visit with friends, former students and neighbors. They first met across chain link fences and later, for those who could obtain passes, in large visitation rooms. A church report described how people visited to “perpetuate the old ties and to repudiate the disgrace and ignominy which the high barbed wire symbolized.”<sup>181</sup>

*Nisei Daughter* describes the consolation provided by religion at this time, even though church had not been a central part of Itoi’s life in Seattle. Services under the grandstand at Camp Harmony with Nikkei and white ministers gradually lifted her depressed, angry attitude about the incarceration. On Sunday, her family

came to an abrupt halt, free from the busy round of activities in which we submerged our feelings. . . . It was a great comfort to see [Thompson] and the many other ministers and church workers. . . . We felt that we were not entirely forgotten. With battered spirits we met in the dimly lighted makeshift

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<sup>179</sup>Thompson to Smith, 24 June 1942.

<sup>180</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

<sup>181</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

room which served as our chapel under the baseball grandstand and after each sermon and prayer, we gain[ed] new heart.<sup>182</sup>

“Bit by bit,” Itoi remembered, “our minister kept on helping us build the foundation for a new outlook.” Itoi and others found particular comfort in Psalms and other scripture. Amid the chaos and uncertainty of the eviction, Itoi began reading the Bible “more slowly and conscientiously, . . . finding new meaning and comfort.” She wrote, “The room seemed filled with peace and awe, as if walls had been pushed back and we were free.”

This liberating sense of peace gradually led Itoi to believe “this was not the end of our lives, . . . but just the beginning.” After struggling to attain training and professional employment after high school, Itoi had become “tense and angry . . . about prejudice, real and imaginary.” While the eviction was the greatest transgression, she reflected that “there was little to be gained in bitterness and cynicism. . . . It was more important to examine our own souls, to keep our faith in God and help to build that way of life which we so desired.”<sup>183</sup> Christianity provided her with the strength to think rationally and take the best actions to meet her goals instead of becoming increasingly bitter, angry and resentful of her circumstances. Numerous Nikkei felt that only their faith—whatever it was—got them through the war. However, while some gained positive determination from the incarceration like Itoi, the treatment during World War II ruined others.<sup>184</sup> Once she realized the army and WCCA officials would not abuse them or threaten them physically, Itoi concluded that “the

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<sup>182</sup>Sone, 185.

<sup>183</sup>Sone, 186.

<sup>184</sup>The protagonist of *No-No Boy*, , resembled Nikkei the author saw after the war whose lives, socially, economically and mentally, were destroyed by the incarceration. John Okada, *No-No Boy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, [1957] 1976).



greatest trial ahead . . . would be of a spiritual nature.”<sup>185</sup> Many other incarcerated Christians expressed similar sentiments.

Representatives of the many Seattle groups working in the camps formed the Evacuees Service Council to coordinate their activities. This group was not religiously affiliated by definition, but most members represented Protestant organizations. The YMCA, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, public schools, the Social Workers’ Association, the AFSC, the Seattle Council of Churches and other groups worked together within the Service Council.<sup>186</sup> While volunteers and church employees worked tirelessly to provide necessities and found ways to occupy the seemingly endless hours in camp, everyone knew their time in Puyallup was limited. Any programs established at Camp Harmony would have to be approved by a different director and possibly be subjected to different government regulations elsewhere. In the end, fewer restrictions existed in the relocation centers.

Again, incarcerated did not know where they would be sent or when. In late June, the Reverend Thompson and others believed everyone incarcerated in Puyallup would be transferred to Tule Lake in California. Nisei volunteers from Camp Harmony left to construct barracks at that camp a month earlier,<sup>187</sup> but were shocked to hear that the WRA planned to transfer the remainder of Camp Harmony to Idaho instead. After improving their barrack apartments and acquiring jobs first at Camp Harmony and then Tule Lake, some declined the offer to move yet again to Southern Idaho, despite the separation from close friends and family members. On September 12, 1942, the final trainload of incarcerated left Camp Harmony for Minidoka Relocation Center.

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<sup>185</sup>Sone, 186.

<sup>186</sup>“Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup.”

<sup>187</sup>Thompson to Smith, 24 June 1942.

When Monica imagined her new life in Idaho, she envisioned “sun-baked terrain, dried-up waterholes [and] runty-looking sagebrush,” an accurate picture that only left out the unrelenting wind and dust, something she would discover on her first day at Minidoka.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>Sone, 189, 192.

## **Chapter Two: The Organization of Protestant Aid**

Throughout World War II, national Protestant organizations and solitary individuals pooled their resources or worked alone to remedy challenges created by the incarceration of Japanese Americans. When evictions commenced, local pastors and leaders of national denominational and ecumenical organizations prioritized meeting the pastoral needs of Nikkei Christians by helping them organize and staff churches in the camps. Once this immediate concern abated, Protestant leaders debated how to approach the greater problem. Mainline churches did not confront or fight the incarceration directly, but tried to heal and alleviate its harms. They hoped their work in the camps and their public relations campaigns would strengthen the country's Christian foundations as well as minimize suffering that could lead to greater problems and dissent. Individuals and nonsectarian groups with specific aims, such as the American Bible Society and the YWCA, developed their own approaches to alleviating the suffering in camp.

This chapter examines and considers the effectiveness of the broad scope of programs and services designed and implemented by Protestants outside of the camps. Most aid from outside the camps took one of three forms, all of which contributed to Protestant goals of harmonious unity: supporting worship practices of Japanese Christians, developing public relations campaigns on their behalf and providing Nikkei with material aid and services. All three elements addressed primary goals for peace and unity. Requiring Nikkei pastors to design and implement ecumenical worship structures reduced divisions within the church.

Nationwide campaigns to decrease prejudices against Nikkei sought to weaken racial tensions within the country more broadly and directly benefited Nikkei by creating more welcoming communities. Some Nikkei gratefully accepted material aid ranging from scholarships to Christmas presents, but others saw underlying complexities to these exchanges. Religious leaders saw an opportunity to improve national unity and American Protestantism within the disruption of the eviction.

Compassion and the need to right an injustice motivated Protestants' drive to help Nikkei, but larger dreams of global unity also fueled their efforts. In the 1930s, leading theologians, such as John Bennett and Richard H. and Reinhold Niebuhr, perceived a growing crisis in America and the rest of the world.<sup>1</sup> Most churches vociferously supported the United States' involvement in World War I, only to watch it create greater disunity in the world. This failure and the Depression resulted in widespread disillusionment and hopelessness, paving the way for Hitler and other totalitarian regimes to provide scapegoats and salvation. Social trends during the flapper era also drew accusations of moral decline. As global conflicts increased in the late 1930s, Reinhold Niebuhr and others saw World War II as *the* point of crisis; not another link in a chain, but the decisive moment of justice. Therefore, succeeding to turn the moral tide in their favor was crucial. Visions of a new world order led by American Protestants inspired many ministers and congregants. Many

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<sup>1</sup>As Christian Realists, Bennett and Reinhold Niebuhr did not believe humankind could create a utopic social order, but saw the crisis of World War II and believed Christians were obligated to the use a universality of Christian ethics to promote peace. See *Christianity and Crisis*, a journal they co-founded to express these views and Richard Wrightman Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, [1985] 1996).

leaders thought a spiritual revival would be the only effective weapon against totalitarianism and domestic divisions.<sup>2</sup>

To approach the problems of growing global strife, mainline Protestant leaders founded a number of ecumenical organizations. The Federal Council of Churches (FCC) formed in 1911. The American Council of Christian Churches formed in 1941, and church leaders conceived of the National Council of Churches in the early 1940s.<sup>3</sup> American leaders thought the nation's moral direction would not shift if people remained isolated in their traditional congregations—divided by denominational, national and ethnic loyalties. Members of these interdenominational groups discovered specific benefits of interdenominational cooperation to approaching certain challenges and projects.

The Japanese American incarceration exemplified the disunity liberal Protestants feared would eliminate the possibility of the United States and its Christian population guiding the world to a perfected world order. This realization, or simply a sense that the country could not withstand further, deeper rifts within society, spurred their response to the incarceration. They had no reason to hope for global influence if the country could not sustain peace within its own borders. A deliberate focus on religious unity as a step towards global unity lay at the heart of the churches' plans.

The ecumenical movement encouraged American Protestant leaders to form interdenominational aid societies to address the needs of Nikkei and inspired leaders to experiment with ecumenical worship in the incarceration camps. Prior to the first national

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<sup>2</sup>Gerald L. Sittser, *A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 2-6.

<sup>3</sup>International leaders planned the World Council of Churches in 1937, but the outbreak of World War II delayed its formation until 1948. Similarly, ecumenical leaders did not officially charter the National Council of Churches until 1950. More conservative Protestants formed the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942. Sittser, 127.

meetings to discuss Protestant relief work in May of 1942 denominations and ecumenical groups formed committees to alleviate difficulties caused by the incarceration. The FCC and the Home Missions Council of North America founded and authorized the ecumenical Protestant Commission for Japanese Service<sup>4</sup> to coordinate worship in the incarceration camps, find placements for white church volunteers and manage financial contributions.<sup>5</sup> Less than a year later, the same councils founded the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese-Americans to help former incarcerated find jobs and housing as they left camp. Some denominations formed their own committees like the American Friends Service Committee, which cooperated with the two larger organizations above. Congregational churches organized the Congregational Christian Committee for Work with Japanese Evacuees,<sup>6</sup> which directed its greatest efforts toward a national public relations campaign to battle negative attitudes and stereotypes of Nikkei outside of the camp.

In addition to expanding interdenominational aid work, the constitution of new congregations within the camps offered ecumenists the opportunity to extend their vision of unified Christianity to the congregational level—to build churches free of sectarian divisions. The incarceration provided a chance for churches to start afresh. However, the leaders of the

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<sup>4</sup>Leaders adopted this name after deciding the original title, the Western Area Protestant Church Commission for Wartime Japanese Service, was “too long for most people to remember.” Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, 26 June 1942, Box 15/Fld 31, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>5</sup>The Foreign Mission Conference, Notice signed by Roswell Barnes, 2 May 1942, quoted in “Documents Bearing on the Function of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service,” December 1943, Box 4/Fld 2, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>6</sup>After a year Congregational leaders renamed this group the Citizens’ Committee for Resettlement, and changed it to the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy in 1945 to reflect its broadening scope. For clarity, I refer to it as the Congregational Committee throughout my dissertation. “Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy: Background and History,” 1945, Box 1/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Gillett, “Changes in Organization,” 24 Aug 1945, Box 1/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

FCC, Home Missions Council and Protestant Commission would not personally participate in the experiment and did not ask the subjects of their project—Nikkei—if they shared this vision.

The Protestant Commission hosted monthly meetings throughout the war where denominational representatives and other concerned individuals planned the future of the Japanese churches. In the summer of 1942 before most Nikkei moved from assembly centers to the incarceration camps, Commission members and other Protestant leaders decided to support only ecumenical Protestant worship in the camps. Many incarcerated Protestant pastors had already joined forces to minister to Nikkei in the assembly centers. In December 1943, nearly fifty representatives of WRA centers, resettlement areas, Protestant denominations and ecumenical groups designed the structure of Nikkei's postwar worship.<sup>7</sup> Participants spoke of prioritizing unity, both religious and racial, at every meeting.

While the vast majority of participants in these conferences were white, members of the Protestant Commission organized a conference specifically for Nikkei pastors in July 1943.<sup>8</sup> But even at that meeting, Nikkei held subordinate roles. White leaders chaired all sessions, presented all reports and, though it was usually the task of Nikkei at other meetings, offered the opening prayer for most sessions.<sup>9</sup> National leaders allowed limited discussion about plans for the Japanese churches' future, but upheld decisions about ecumenism, racial

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<sup>7</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, University of Washington Libraries (UW).

<sup>8</sup>The Commission's executive committee estimated that financial support could be gathered to allow for one-third of Nikkei camp ministers to travel to this meeting. They selected delegates in relation to the size of their denomination in the camp. For example, since Methodists had the greatest number of ordained Nikkei working in the camps, the Commission suggested they send nine Nikkei delegates, while Episcopalians sent only two. It appears that the Commission wanted to construct a representative style of ecumenism or sought to avoid conflict between the denominations' leaders. Chapman to Japanese Church Committee, 3 June 1943.

<sup>9</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943, Box 15/Fld 3, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW & Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

integration and resettlement made at prior meetings. Nikkei pastors were not given the opportunity to vote for alternative possibilities. The conference provided an arena where religious leaders outside of the camps could inform incarcerated Nikkei pastors about the plans they had already made for Japanese American Christianity. White leaders also pressed the importance of assimilation harder than usual at the conference for Nikkei pastors, presumably for the minority's benefit.<sup>10</sup>

Poor communication between outsiders and camp workers exacerbated the challenges of administering worship policies. White leaders also encountered resistance to their plans for Nikkei worship. Many Nikkei had no inclination or intention of following many of the directives made without their consent. In some cases, they agreed with the ultimate aims, but were not interested in following plans when they had not been part of the decision-making process. The Rev. Kodoma from Heart Mountain Relocation Center and other Nikkei complained that the Protestant organizations planning worship for incarcerated and resettlers only asked the opinion of only one Nikkei. Further, they protested that this sole Nikkei contact was not personally acquainted with the eviction, incarceration or resettlement.<sup>11</sup> After receiving this feedback, white religious leaders acknowledged that Nikkei wanted to know more details about plans for their future and did not return to the topic.<sup>12</sup> This response suggests that national leaders only heard part of what Nikkei requested; they failed to

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<sup>10</sup>Five Nisei, five Issei and three white leaders participated in this discussion, representing eight different camps and seven denominations. Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943.

<sup>11</sup>Nikkei made similar complaints about the WRA. They claimed that if the government had consulted them, a more effective plan in which they were personally invested may have been possible, resulting in positive gains for both white administrators and Nikkei. Clarence Gillett, Notes taken at the Conference of Japanese Christian Leaders, 16 Dec 1943, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>12</sup>Chapman to Fisher, 12 July 1944, Box 1/Fld 6, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.



mention that Nikkei wanted to play a role in making those decisions, not simply hear more about them. This dissonance reflected most encounters between white outsiders and people, white or Japanese, living at the incarceration camps.

### **Outside Support for Worship and Religious Life in the Camps**

Given the importance Protestant leaders placed on worship practices and the time spent determining their ideal forms, they placed considerable trust in the director of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, Gordon Chapman. However, he could not control all outside influences from interfering with camp worship. Visiting evangelists violated orders to limit their attentions to Christians in the camp and churches near the camps established relationships and exchanges with Christian incarcerated. While Chapman generally encouraged the latter interactions, Southern Baptists in Arkansas entered camps with missionary zeal exceeding his normal allowances.

The FCC and Home Missions Council charged Chapman with two main duties: assign Nikkei and white pastors to the individual camps and coordinate financial contributions to the camp churches, but he envisioned even broader responsibilities. While Nikkei pastors went where the WRA sent them, Chapman occasionally arranged transfers to meet the camps' varying needs. The allocation of non-Nikkei ministers generally occurred in two stages: Missionaries and other religious leaders wrote Chapman to request assignments within a camp and Protestant Nikkei requested pastors to work at their camp churches. Since WRA rules only admitted outside pastors invited by incarcerated, this involved considerable coordination. When Nikkei pastors disagreed about which candidates to invite, this step became a significant hurdle. Next, the camp's Interfaith and Community Activities

Committees and the camp director had to authorize and issue an official invitation, but they generally accepted the recommendations of the camp's Protestant church leaders.

Since Chapman could not simply dispatch missionaries to any camp, he devised a system that worked relatively smoothly. He discussed characteristics of different camps with approved outside volunteers and requested that they visit or personally correspond with the church board within the desired camp. At the same time, Chapman provided a list of missionary candidates to Nikkei church leaders, who submitted their desired choices.<sup>13</sup> In essence, Chapman operated as a matchmaker. However, the lengthy process delayed the arrival of white volunteers and the initiation of many church programs.<sup>14</sup> Such delays were particularly frustrating for groups who had requested outside help before moving into the camps.<sup>15</sup> Minidoka avoided this delay completely, since so many prewar white pastors moved with their congregations, bypassing the matchmaker. The Protestant Commission relied on the cooperation of dozens of individuals and their willingness to move to desolate locations around the country at any given time.

Upon learning about the incarceration, many qualified returning missionaries volunteered through the Commission to work at the camps, but many other people applied for these positions as well. On August 25, 1942,<sup>16</sup> the Swedish ship Gripsholm returned many men and women to the United States who had been working as missionaries in Asia.

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<sup>13</sup>Members of the Protestant Commission hoped this was as fair a system as was possible. It complied with WRA policies by prioritizing Nikkei preferences. Chapman to Gillett, 11 Aug 1942, Box 1/Fld 9, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>14</sup>Chapman to Virginia Mackenzie, 17 Nov 1942, Box 1/Fld 38, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>15</sup>Paul Fujihana to Chapman, 27 July 1942, Box 1/Fld 23, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>16</sup>The ship's crew made another exchange a year and a half later, docking in Jersey City on December 1, 1943. Lars Hemingstam, "Drottningholm and Gripsholm: The Exchange and Repatriation Voyages During WWII," accessed on 26 July 2011, <http://www.salship.se/mercy.asp>.

Since most spoke Japanese fluently, they were valuable leaders who could work with both Issei and Nisei. Some missionaries requested specific camps, but most offered to go anywhere they were needed.<sup>17</sup> Retired missionaries who spent time in Japan also volunteered to live at the camps if their skills were needed. One such missionary, Laura Bodenhamer, told Chapman that she and her husband were “anxious to finish [their] days with these brethren in the Camps.”<sup>18</sup> Chapman suggested that volunteers unsuited to the hardships in camp help with resettlement in Eastern cities.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the duties of assigning clergy to different camps and resettlement locations, it became Chapman’s job to field complaints about Nikkei and white missionaries who were causing discord within the camps.<sup>20</sup> In the case of Nikkei clergymen, he could do little but encourage the individuals to resettle.<sup>21</sup>

Chapman denied former missionaries exhibiting too great an evangelistic passion access to the camps. A man named Owen Still asked Chapman for permission to lead Issei Bible study and show a “stereopticon” presentation of the life of Christ. This plan initially sounded innocuous, but Still then explained his intention to complement these entertainments with “personal work . . . talk[ing] to individuals—especially Buddhist individuals—about the

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<sup>17</sup>Betty Evans to Chapman, 17 Sept 1942, Box 1/Fld 5, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Gladys Kaiser to Chapman, 17 Nov 1942, Box 1/Fld 39, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>18</sup>Laura Bodenhamer to Chapman, 6 Aug 1942, Box 1/Fld 29, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>19</sup>Chapman to Marcia Kerr, 8 July 1942, Box 1/Fld 38, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>20</sup>Paul Osumi to Chapman, 30 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 17, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>21</sup>Chapman to Smith, 6 Dec 1943, Box 1/Fld 17, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

Master.”<sup>22</sup> Still disapproved of the WRA prohibition against outside ministers entering the homes of non-Christians because he believed teaching “one family at a time” led a significant “number of people . . . to give up Buddhism.”<sup>23</sup> Chapman denied Still’s request. Some Japanese pastors agreed that white missionaries had greater success with Buddhists than did Japanese clergy and requested them to go “house to house, putting a scripture portion or New Testament into each home . . . especially among the Buddhists.”<sup>24</sup> But the Commission agreed with the WRA that explicit evangelism to Buddhists was inappropriate and prevented missionaries inclined towards those tactics from entering most camps. Due to the sensitive nature of the situation, Chapman also rejected most requests from people unassociated with Japanese missions.<sup>25</sup>

The Commission also coordinated the financial subsistence of the camp churches. Being a government agency, the WRA did not pay the salaries of pastors within the camps and incarcerated made miniscule wages, so financial support for the churches had to come from outside sources. Mainline denominations provided salaries for their own pastors and contributed funds to ecumenical relief groups like the Protestant Commission and the Student Relocation Council.<sup>26</sup> Regional church councils and individual congregations also gave money to the Commission, charging Chapman to use it where it was needed most. As the war

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<sup>22</sup>Owen Still to Chapman, 3 June 1942, Box 1/Fld 24, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>23</sup>Still to Chapman, 27 July 1942, Box 1/Fld 24, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>24</sup>Jean McNaughton to Mrs. Chapman, 6 Oct 1942, Box 1/Fld 32, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>25</sup>Chapman suggested these people apply for teaching positions at the camps, since there was a severe shortage in some places. After many Nikkei ministers resettled outside of the camps, Chapman asked if any were still interested, but most had lost interest. [illegible] to Chapman, 9 Apr 1943, Box 1/Fld 32, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>26</sup>Thomas to Andrews, 26 July 1943, Box 1/Fld 3, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

continued, denominations became more reluctant to provide funds to ecumenical organizations and a great number of individuals and regional groups failed to follow Chapman's guidance.<sup>27</sup>

Denominations and home missions groups agreed to follow the WRA's pay schedule to support incarcerated pastors, drastically cutting the ministers' prewar salaries. The WRA did not regulate wages coming from outside of the camp, but the national groups limited salaries to nineteen dollars a month, the maximum WRA wage. Denominational and home missions groups agreed that Nikkei pastors working in the centers should receive more than other incarcerated, regardless of prewar employment contracts.<sup>28</sup> Some denominations changed the stipulations of established pension payments to incarcerated retirees as well.<sup>29</sup> In reality, many incarcerated earned slightly over nineteen dollars, since some denominations paid pastors' wives a stipend; others provided an extra clothing allowance; and some supplemented the salaries of ministers with children.

Denominations disagreed about who should pay certain pastors. Which denomination should pay for clergymen who had been working in a prewar ethnic church of a denomination other than their own? Was their previous employer obligated to pay their salaries or did it fall to the group through which they were ordained?<sup>30</sup> Since the Salvation Army headquarters refused to financially support their incarcerated officers and adherents,

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<sup>27</sup>Cooperation varied by denomination. Willard Wickizer to Chapman, 14 Feb 1945, Box 1/Fld 18, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>28</sup>Several Nikkei pastors went into debt waiting for religious organizations to agree on a pay scale. Thomas Alfred Tripp to Harley Gill, 9 Feb 1943, Box 1/Fld 7, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>29</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943.

<sup>30</sup>Chapman to Gillett, 4 Feb 1944, Box 1/Fld 12, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

other organizations supplemented the salaries of Salvation Army pastors.<sup>31</sup> Salvation Army officers are required to be self-supporting, a possibility that did not exist in the camps or resettlement areas.<sup>32</sup> While many people wanted incarcerated officers to contribute to their own churches<sup>33</sup> to “heighten their sense of self-respect,”<sup>34</sup> the Salvation Army refused to make any exception for this exceptional situation. Frustrated with their policy, Chapman wrote Colonel Holland French, the field representative for the Western Area of the Salvation Army, numerous times to explain that his officers were “all doing religious work” and were “eligible for compensation.”<sup>35</sup> While the denomination contributed to the Protestant Commission,<sup>36</sup> it was not enough to pay these pastors’ salaries. National Salvation Army leaders also gave incarcerated officers inadequate guidance to prepare for future ministries outside of the camp.<sup>37</sup> A number of Nikkei Salvation Army officers left the denomination because it did not support them during or after the war.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Lester Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II* (Berkley, CA: Yardbird, 1979), 18.

<sup>32</sup>French to Chapman, 22 Sept 1944, Box 1/Fld 8, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>33</sup>Among others, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Congregational Christian Committee for Work with Japanese Evacuees, 15 Sept 1942, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>34</sup>Unsigned to A.C. Knudten, 12 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 13, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>35</sup>Chapman to French, 6 May 1943, Box 1/Fld 8, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Bovenkerk to Chapman, 5 Oct 1944, Box 1/Fld 1, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>36</sup>French to Chapman, 20 June 1944, Box 1/Fld 8, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>37</sup>Chapman to French, 24 Oct 1944, Box 1/Fld 8, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>38</sup>Suzuki, *Ministry*, 18.

Because Chapman felt the Commission should help Nikkei however possible, his work never focused on the camp churches exclusively. For example, when he realized Issei had few ways to pass the time in camp, he arranged for the Commission's cadre of missionaries, most fluent in Japanese, to screen popular Japanese reading material for the WRA. Chapman promised that these men and women's "Americanism [was] beyond question," and that they understood the "necessity for guarding against all subversive activity . . . contrary to American democratic principles."<sup>39</sup> This translation project did not relate to Protestant worship in the camps, but Chapman offered assistance because he could.

Incarcerated Christians greatly appreciated the Commission's services, but some people outside of the camp disagreed with the range of his sense of authority. The Japanese Church Federation of Northern California officially recognized the Commission's authority and requested that the WRA give Chapman access to Nikkei Christians in the camps and the authority to help organize their churches.<sup>40</sup> They also sent the FCC an overnight telegram, which said they were "entirely satisfied with his activities." They asked the Council to cooperate with Chapman and name him the "official representative for all the Christian Japanese living in the various centers."<sup>41</sup> While no one asked Japanese pastors if they desired help from a program like the Protestant Commission, these Nikkei from California offered their approval.

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<sup>39</sup>Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches in Japanese Relocation Centers and Settlements, 20 July 1942, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>40</sup>E.J. Kawamorita To Whom It May Concern, 1 May 1942, Box 1/Fld 48, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>41</sup>Kawamorita to the Federal Council of Churches, telegram, 2 Sept 1942, Box 1/Fld 48, Gordon K. Chapman, Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

Chapman's extension of authority sometimes clashed with the desires and duties of white volunteers and other aid groups. Some white missionaries hired through the Commission felt badgered, protesting that their autonomy was not respected as they were pulled in different directions by different organizations and individuals. When Chapman expressed extreme frustration when Howard Hannaford and his wife decided to relocate from Tule Lake to work for a Japanese ministry program in Chicago, Howard replied that they felt "frozen" in an "intolerable" situation. He protested that the Commission was "interfer[ing]" with their own "freedom of action" by trying to direct their employment elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> He questioned "the propriety of the Protestant Church Commission's having the right to control appointments of Caucasians made by independent bodies like a city church federation."<sup>43</sup>

Since the Commission's main directive was to help structure church leadership for Nikkei, Chapman believed his authority remained with those populations, whether they lived in the camps or outside. He understood that the Commission had been charged with the responsibility to support an ecumenical program for this population and did not think resettlement should interfere with that program. He continually reiterated the grounds for the Protestant Commission's authority, arguing that it was the "most inclusive of all interested agencies; . . . has the most complete information at its disposal at any given time; and is closer to the actual work."<sup>44</sup> He worried most that Protestants' ecumenical experiment begun in the camps would fail if denominations competed for former incarcerated. Chapman complained that church "workers seem to be moving in without regard to anyone except

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<sup>42</sup>Hannaford to Chapman, 9 Nov 1943.

<sup>43</sup>The executive secretary of the Disciples of Christ's Committee on War Services also "found it difficult to cooperate" with the Commission and felt the organization overstepped its level of authority. Hannaford to Chapman, 9 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Wickizer to Chapman, 14 Feb 1945.

<sup>44</sup>Memorandum of the Protestant Commission, 21 Sept 1944.



those of their own denomination.”<sup>45</sup> The Commission’s publicity campaigns asked for all white churches to welcome Nikkei, but became frustrated when individual congregations or regional councils acted upon this directive independently.<sup>46</sup> Chapman complained that they contact Nikkei “without uniform reference either to the Home Missions Council or the Protestant Church Commission.”<sup>47</sup> Several reports showed Chapman straining for control.

Complicating the question of who held ecclesiastical authority over Japanese Christians, the FCC and Home Missions Council formed the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese-Americans to work with Nikkei outside of the camp. Since the Protestant Commission aided worship within the camps, ecumenical leaders thought a separate group should work with Nikkei outside the camps. This division of duties seldom worked in practice, and tensions grew as the groups fought for authority and territory. Both groups wanted to direct Nikkei and white pastors to specific communities in need of pastoral care and, of course, the individuals voiced their own opinions. The constant movement disrupted religious work everywhere as new pastors joined or left churches. They settled on a problematic compromise where both had to approve the movement of pastor, a process that slowed resettlement.<sup>48</sup> Since both groups represented mainline denominations, they ostensibly employed these pastors; their actions were not entirely as authoritarian as it may appear.

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<sup>45</sup>Chapman to Gillett, 12 June 1943, Box 4/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>46</sup>Memorandum of the Protestant Commission, 21 Sept 1944, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>47</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943.

<sup>48</sup>Points agreed on . . . , 12 Nov 1942, as quoted in “Documents Bearing on the Function of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service,” December 1943, Box 4/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

When Mark Dawber of the Home Missions Council alluded to the termination of the Protestant Commission in 1945 when the camps began to close, Nikkei pastors and congregations voiced their continued support for the services provided by the Commission. The rumor alarmed a number of Nikkei leaders who relied on the Commission's help and did not wish to be directed by a wholly new organization or find a church independently. Californian Nikkei group sent the Home Missions Council a telegram stating, "We Japanese delegates to the special conference on the future of church work in California ask your body for the fullest support of the Protestant Commission, whose services are keenly needed in this critical period."<sup>49</sup> Nikkei leaders at Gila River also requested the Federal Council of Churches continue supporting the Commission's work within the camps and during resettlement. These messages spoke of the Commission's "invaluable service" and their "grave misgivings" of any plans to dissolve it. They believed the utmost value of the Commission laid in the fact that its constituency of former missionaries could "work . . . as if they were of [the Japanese's] own number, intimately, understandingly, and wholeheartedly," something denominational leaders in the East could never manage.<sup>50</sup> Based in New York, the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese-Americans drew criticism for their geographic origin and lack of historical relations with Nikkei. These Nikkei acknowledged that they needed help from the outside, but only wanted it from pastors who knew them personally. The statement strengthened Chapman's argument that the Commission's work should continue since he and other members knew the involved party personally.

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<sup>49</sup>Minutes and Findings of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 11-12 Jan 1945, Box 15/Fld 30, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>50</sup>The Granada Christian Church expressed similar sentiments. Y. Tsuda, Chairman of the Gila River Ministers Council, to the Federal Council of Churches and Chapman, 11 Jan 1943, Box 1/Fld 48, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. "In Appreciation of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service," *Granada Christian Church News*, 21 Feb 1943, Reel 303, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

The Home Missions Council consented to Chapman's desire to shift the priorities of the Commission rather than disband the organization. Chapman instituted a pro-active system for scheduling outside preachers and other church workers to fill the growing gaps in leadership within the camp churches and acted as a "liaison agency between center churches" and those outside.<sup>51</sup> The Commission also offered incarcerated information sessions and private counseling to prepare for their lives outside of camp. Chapman did not drastically change the Commission's earlier programs, but the Home Missions Council's approval reasserted the Protestant Commission's authority in the face of growing participation from other ecumenical and denominational groups.

While the WRA and the Protestant Commission tried to prevent most types of evangelism, they allowed and supported occasional, isolated events that, in theory, an incarcerated could avoid entirely. When several professional evangelists expressed a desire to lead such services, camp directors and Chapman facilitated their efforts. Most camp revivals drew high Christian participation and do not seem to have disrupted camp life. However, at least one approved evangelist violated the behavior expected by WRA administrators and Nikkei.

Gordon Chapman arranged for the Reverend Douglas Noble to drive his Wayside Chapel to six camps and several Western resettlement communities.<sup>52</sup> Chapman enthusiastically described the chapel to his brother, Ernest, quoting a newspaper article:

The Wayside Chapel is a caravan outfitted with folding chairs, a portable altar, public address system, phonograph records of religious music, moving

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<sup>51</sup>Minutes and Findings of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission, 11-12 Jan 1945.

<sup>52</sup>Gordon Chapman to Ernest Chapman, 8 Mar 1945, Box 1/Fld 13, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Douglas W. Noble, Report to the Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. on Wayside Chapel Tour to War Relocations Centers, March 15 to May 6, 1945, Box 1/Fld 13, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

picture projector and films, Bibles, and so on. . . . He is equipped 'to take religious service, Christian pastoral activities, counseling work, boys' and girls' group programs, infant baptism, and church school classes, into out-of-the-way places.'<sup>53</sup>

Noble led a busy schedule, leading six meetings in two days at Manzanar. While Noble was disappointed by time limitations at Poston, between six and seven hundred Nikkei attended each of his revival meetings. Thirty Postonians "came forward and gave their hearts to the Lord Jesus."<sup>54</sup> Young people particularly enjoyed Noble's films, music and mobile chapel. After a performance, he would return groups of people to their barracks, singing hymns over the mobile chapel's public address system as he drove through the camp. By the end of his tour, Noble had addressed nearly five thousand people and several thousand religious tracts were given to incarcerated or recently resettled Nikkei. Over sixty individuals made "decisions for Christ and His Way."<sup>55</sup>

These alternative worship opportunities seem to have attracted converts or at least revived the interest of less-active Christians, but they came at a cost. While many incarcerated enjoyed Noble's visits and were persuaded by his message spiritually,<sup>56</sup> he deeply offended others. Minidokans complained that Noble spoke to Nisei as if they were not Americans, but rather "Japanese from Japan." A report from Topaz claimed that Noble said he "did not like the Buddhists." Chapman softly cautioned Noble that whether the reports are "true or not," he should not make such comments because Nisei "resent very

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<sup>53</sup>Gordon Chapman to Ernest Chapman, 8 Mar 1945.

<sup>54</sup>Noble to Chapman, 26 Mar 1945, Box 1/Fld 13, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>55</sup>Noble, Report to the Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church.

<sup>56</sup>Noble to Chapman, 26 Mar 1945. A Japanese pastor in Salt Lake City highly praised Noble's "sincerity . . . and humble ministry." Howard N. Toriumi to Chapman, 13 Apr 1945, Box 1/Fld 13, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

much” when people suggest they are not American. He recommended that Noble “stick to [his] positive Christian message . . . and refrain from all reference to Buddhists.”<sup>57</sup>

The project director at Gila, L. H. Bennett, harshly complained that Chapman did not fully describe the “sound truck” and Noble’s plan to broadcast loud Christian music throughout the camp. This aural invasion violated his sense of “responsibility” to the “entire resident group in matters of this kind.” Bennett explained that he and his staff were “cautious . . . not [to] disturb the emotional tenor of a people who look to us for guidance and protection in certain matters.”<sup>58</sup> He worried that Noble’s actions offended non-Christians in particular. These incidents demonstrated the risk of allowing outside evangelism into the camps, even when invited by incarcerated. The success of earlier revivals by nationally respected religious leaders may have convinced Chapman that Noble would be no different. The Protestant Commission and WRA worked hard to avoid the impression that they were evangelizing to Buddhists, but were not always successful.

Despite the Protestant Commission’s efforts and WRA’s rules banning personal evangelism in the camps, they failed to regulate regional influences of religion within the two camps located in Arkansas, Jerome and Rohwer. Expressing enthusiastic evangelistic intentions, Arkansas’s white religious leaders participated in camp church services and other religious activities to a much greater degree than in other regions of the country.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Chapman to Noble, 4 May 1945, Box 1/Fld 13, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>58</sup>L.H. Bennett to Chapman, 10 Apr 1945, Box 1/Fld 13, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>59</sup>Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU; Kazuo Ikebasu, Community Activities Report, 20 May 1943, Box 5/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Arkansan Christians saw the incarceration as a test of their faith and commitment to the gospel. The President of the Executive Board of Arkansas Southern Baptists announced, God “brought to our very doors the greatest opportunity for . . . winning to Christ those of pagan faith we have ever witnessed.”<sup>60</sup> T.L. Harris called for white Christians to embrace these unique conditions for evangelism. Ministers elsewhere joked about the “captive audience” in the camps,<sup>61</sup> but the words above show that some Arkansans believed God sent thousands of non-Christians to Arkansas for the express purpose of evangelism. The war made most foreign mission fields inaccessible, heightening pressure to evangelize to these seemingly foreign people. Since Baptists couldn’t reach non-Christians abroad at this time, they felt the least they could do was minister to Buddhists delivered to their own state.<sup>62</sup>

Knowing that “providence [had] placed . . . thousands of Japanese . . . within [their] borders” only “temporarily,” churches and individuals in Arkansas mobilized to begin their evangelistic efforts. Outside leaders believed that “every one who is won to Christ now will be henceforth a missionary to his own people wherever he may go,” so Arkansans needed to approach and persuade Nikkei before they left the camps. Evangelists pinned their hopes on the younger generation in particular who they thought was “ready to accept the salvation of our Saviour” (and spoke better English). The editors of regional denominational journals, like the *Arkansas Baptist*, urged clergy to visit the camps, meet the Christians there and help bring others to Christ.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>T.L. Harris, “Thinking of Rohwer and Jerome,” *Arkansas Baptist*, 17 March 1943, 3.

<sup>61</sup>Paul Nagano, interview by Stephen Fugita (primary) and Becky Fukuda, 25 May 1999, Densho.

<sup>62</sup>The editor of the *Arkansas Baptist* commented alongside Harris’ article, that “we disqualify ourselves as fit Christians to send the gospel abroad . . . if we fail to accept the Baptist responsibility immediately at hand.” Harris agreed that the incarceration might very well be a part of God’s “great plan of evangelism.” Harris.

<sup>63</sup>Harris.

The Little Rock Council of Protestant Ministers sent a pastor to preach at the camps every month<sup>64</sup> and other pastors came independently, including Congregationalists, Free Methodists, Presbyterians, Salvation Army officers,<sup>65</sup> Episcopalians<sup>66</sup> and a local Catholic priest. An Episcopalian publication in Arkansas reminded readers of their “great Christian duty and privilege” to welcome these “visitors.”<sup>67</sup> Episcopal priests visited the camps, bringing gifts and altar pieces.<sup>68</sup> Protestant pastors in McGehee, the town closest to Rohwer, similarly urged locals to take a neighborly “American Christian” approach to supporting religious activities in the camps.<sup>69</sup> These comments from mainline Protestants do not suggest that they shared the missionary zeal of Southern Baptists, but they still visited the camps in great numbers.

This heightened interest in the newcomers overcame obstacles that reduced interaction in other states. Rohwer and Jerome, located about a twenty-five minute drive from one another, were located in an exceptionally rural area. On today’s highways, the trip from Little Rock, the home of many visiting preachers, takes a little over two hours, but others came from Fayetteville—five hours away. Given the limitations of tire and gas rationing and poor roads, preachers sacrificed considerable time and material resources to

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<sup>64</sup>Community Activities Section, History/Final Report, Box 1/Series 2/Fld 2, Nathaniel R. Griswold Papers, UA.

<sup>65</sup>William Cary Anderson, “Early Reaction in Arkansas to the Relocation of Japanese in the State,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 23:3 (Autumn 1964): 207.

<sup>66</sup>R. Bland Mitchell to Reifsnider, 5 Aug 1942, Box 1/Fld 26, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>67</sup>Some white pastors ignored the camps completely. Mitchell, “Our Japanese Visitors,” *The Arkansas Churchman*, Nov 1942, 3.

<sup>68</sup>Mitchell, “A Visit to Jerome,” *The Arkansas Churchman*, Jan 1943, 4-5.

<sup>69</sup>Sponsored by the McGehee Ministerial Alliance. John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 168.

travel to these distant camps.<sup>70</sup> They made these sacrifices despite the state's poverty and other great needs. With the significant exception that Nikkei had limited freedom of movement, the incarcerated had a notably higher quality of life than many Arkansans outside of the camps. They received superior health care, education and nutrition.

Normally, evangelistic Southern Baptists would not be allowed to enter the camps: they had no prewar history with Japanese Americans and were not approved by the Protestant Commission, but a particular set of circumstances led to their admittance.<sup>71</sup> In addition to the enthusiasm of area pastors, three other factors contributed to the prominence of local clergy to the camps. First, an exceptional dearth of clergy stalled the foundation of Rohwer's Nikkei-led ecumenical church for three months. White clergymen and laity from the outside and from within camp administration preached and led services to fill this void, establishing their presence within the Protestant community. Mainline missionaries were less willing to relocate to Arkansas, so Rohwer and Jerome lacked their help and moderating influence. Second, the borders of Jerome and Rohwer were "highly permeable," permitting Arkansan preachers to come on their own accord.<sup>72</sup> Outsiders in Arkansas could initiate their ministries without invitation, based on personal urges or denominational encouragement.<sup>73</sup> Third, the racial politics of the South may have encouraged the work of outsiders.

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<sup>70</sup>"Gas Rationing Hits Amache," *Granada Christian Church News*, 13 Dec 1942, Reel 303, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>71</sup>Policy—Religion within WCCA Reception and Assembly Centers, Presented to Seattle Council of Churches on 20 May 1942, Box 15/Fld 21, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>72</sup>Up to seventy-five incarcerated at Jerome received shopping passes each day, but administrators reduced the allowance to an average of sixteen per day after "more stringent" rules went into effect. After these measures, however, the Community Activities supervisor, Nat Griswold, complained to the director that the pass system had "entirely broken down." At Rohwer, people regularly entered and left the camp without passes, even those on stop lists. Howard, 127.

<sup>73</sup>Highlights of Community Activities from Sept 20 to Dec 31, 1942, Box 1/Series 2/Fld 18, Nathaniel R. Griswold Papers, UA.



Lacking the historical and personal conflicts with Nikkei and intense racialization that promoted discrimination in the West, Southerners deemed Nikkei “white” within the South’s largely binary racial system. Many Southerners insisted everyone treat Nikkei well specifically because they were not black in order to reinforce a binary racial system.<sup>74</sup> This categorization meant that Nikkei interacted with white Arkansans on a more equal level than elsewhere. Historian John Howard argued that white Arkansans and Nikkei incarcerated were unified by the fact that both groups were “not black.”<sup>75</sup> Racial lines dissolved further in a macabre American Minstrel show at Jerome that starred “Caucasians and non-Caucasians, islanders and mainlanders” together on stage—all in blackface.<sup>76</sup> This act united white and Japanese Americans in opposition to African Americans.

All of these factors contributed to stronger bonds between incarcerated and locals than was seen in the Western camps. Photographs, camp newspapers and correspondence show that Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and YMCA members within the camp either merged with chapters on the outside or co-sponsored camping trips, summer camps and leadership retreats around the state.<sup>77</sup> Young incarcerated attended club meetings and events outside of camp,

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<sup>74</sup>Southerners instructed Nikkei to use “white” facilities and refused to give them the most laborious types of employment. Jason Ward explained that Southerners considered those jobs—digging ditches and picking cotton—to be “black” jobs, causing many farmers to hesitate or refuse to give them to Nikkei. In addition to the potential confusion of a group working at both “black” and “white” jobs, people worried that incarcerated would demand higher wages and establish a precedent for minority advancement. Southerners had usually classified the small number of Chinese in Arkansas and Mississippi as “white.” Jason Morgan Ward, “No Jap Crow’: Japanese Americans Encounter the World War II South,” *Journal of Southern History* 73:1 (February 2007). James W. Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and White*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988), 4-5.

<sup>75</sup>Howard, 149.

<sup>76</sup>“Minstrel Show is Held,” *Denson Tribune*, 5 May 1944, 1. For more on the significance of blackface, see Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006) or John Strausbaugh, *Black Like You: Whiteface, Insult & Imitation in American Popular Culture* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 2006).

<sup>77</sup>Bulletin of the Young People’s Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church, 4 June 1943, Box 4/Fld 5, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters Collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU.

but white children and adults also met inside the camps.<sup>78</sup> Aside from camp sports teams occasionally competing with outside leagues or choirs performing at local churches, this level of interaction was much less common elsewhere. That Arkansan parents allowed their children to interact with Nikkei makes a significant statement. But while church bulletins and administrative records show that evangelical leaders successfully established a strong presence in camp, they did not succeed in winning any more converts than did Protestants in Western camps.

The degree, type and frequency of interaction between Christians in the incarceration camps and those from nearby churches and ecumenical organizations outside varied widely. While some outside churches initiated contact with incarcerated, they usually offered aid or fellowship, not evangelism.<sup>79</sup> At Heart Mountain, local churches served coffee and gave a “warm welcome” to incarcerated as they arrived.<sup>80</sup> The Colorado Council of Churches delegation visited Granada to survey the needs and services of the church and the wider camp.<sup>81</sup> Modeling an open house between Protestants inside and outside of camp at

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Clearwater Clarion Call: Clearwater Baptist Church News,” 25 Aug 1943, Box 4/Fld 7, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU.

<sup>78</sup>Kazuo Ikebasu, History of Rohwer Community Activities Section, 20 May 1943, Box 5/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>79</sup>Local Episcopalian leaders had a more official relationship with incarcerated, since adherents in the camps officially counted within their organization of dioceses. The superintendent of Congregational Churches in Idaho, Dr. Harry Johnson, visited Minidoka, but had no official authority over the camp church. Twenty to thirty Minidokans attended the Idaho Baptist Assembly in 1943 and 1944, and reportedly were “well received” by Baptists from around the state. Fukuyama to Adkins, 19 Sept 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW. Andrews to Thomas, 11 Aug 1943 & 14 Aug 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>80</sup>Fisher to Chapman, 31 Aug 1942, Box 1/Fld 51, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>81</sup>“Colorado Church Council Visits the Granada Center,” *Granada Christian Church News*, 1 Nov 1942 [misdated 1 Nov 1941], Reel 303, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB; Suzuki, 210.

Minidoka, many Nikkei pastors sought to introduce themselves to their new neighbors.<sup>82</sup> At a few camps, like Minidoka, these events established relations that continued throughout the war.<sup>83</sup> Throughout the war, choirs from Minidoka and other camps would visit local churches and local pastors would give guest sermons,<sup>84</sup> but YMCA and Scout groups did not merge as in Arkansas.

While the Protestant Commission encouraged liaisons between camp and local churches and officially held the greatest authority over religious services and worship in the camps, it could not prevent regional groups and individuals like Douglas Noble from affecting elements of Protestant life in the camps.

### **Public Relations on Behalf of Nikkei**

Voicing a widely held belief, Galen Fisher, an active member of the Congregational and Fair Play Committees, insisted that a “persistent and long term” public relations campaign must be implemented throughout the nation, both publicly and within congregations, to “create a public opinion favorable” to resettlement.<sup>85</sup> The leaders’ primary goals were to reduce racial prejudices nationally and find or form supportive communities to welcome former incarcerated. A coordination of these efforts among Protestant groups began

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<sup>82</sup>One hundred twenty-eight local church leaders attended Minidoka’s open house. Religious Services, undated, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB. Reifsnider to Chapman, [late] Nov 1942, Box 1/Fld 14, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>83</sup>Minidoka’s Federated Church reportedly maintained “a splendid working relationship with the Snake River Valley Ministerial Association.” Reply to Questions of Religious Policies, 30 Mar 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>84</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 20 Nov 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>85</sup>Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Committee for Work with the Japanese Evacuees, 21 July 1942, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

during the summer of 1942,<sup>86</sup> and in October, WRA officials and religious leaders developed a systematic approach to public relations regarding the situation. Quiet during the evictions and incarceration,<sup>87</sup> mainline Protestants felt it was time to become “more aggressive as far as public opinion was concerned” and dedicated resources to meet that objective.<sup>88</sup>

Many people believed that resettlement would fail without a full “conversion of public opinion,” so Protestant committees supporting Japanese Americans placed a great amount of emphasis on public relations. Led by Clarence Gillett, the Congregational Committee wrote the largest number of pamphlets for its own denomination and the general public,<sup>89</sup> but the Fellowship of Reconciliation,<sup>90</sup> the AFSC, the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play<sup>91</sup> and other groups contributed as well. Each denomination and ecumenical regional groups published their own educational pamphlets, but also funded national campaigns.<sup>92</sup> Protestant public relations efforts took three major

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<sup>86</sup>Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches, 20 July 1942.

<sup>87</sup>Proclamations immediately responding to the bombing of Pearl Harbor preceded this silence.

<sup>88</sup>Fisher, Round Table on Japanese Evacuation.

<sup>89</sup>The Congregational Committee created a multi-faceted public relations campaign within its own denomination soon after its formation in the spring of 1942, and then contributed to the campaign to reduce the prejudices of all Americans. The Congregational campaign included a supplement to *Social Action*, the Congregational social justice publication, articles in *The Missionary Herald*, and personalized letters to ministers around the country and brochures to inform the public about the incarceration and related relief work and confront common racial prejudices. John Bennett to Dwight Bradley, 29 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 5, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>90</sup>Caleb Foote (FOR), “Outcasts! The Story of America’s Treatment of her Japanese American Minority,” Feb 1944; Fellowship of Reconciliation, “The Church Measures the Evacuation, Oct 1942 and “American Refugees,” undated, Box 53/Fld 3, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>91</sup>“Homeward Bound,” undated and “American Fighting Men Speak Out,” Feb 1944; Yori Wada, “Beyond the Horizon,” undated, and many others, Box 53/Fld 4, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>92</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Commission, 22 July 1942, as quoted in “Documents Bearing on the Function of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service,” December 1943, Box 4/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

forms: combating race prejudice and discrimination through print media, educating and encouraging sympathetic actions from Americans at the congregational level and disputing negative portrayals of Nikkei in the media.

The pamphlets, magazines, denominational bulletins and editorials in secular newspapers used a wide variety of approaches to improve America's opinion of Japanese Americans. Many arguments focused on or mentioned peripherally Christianity's relationship to the nation, such as the Colorado Council of Churches reference to the "genuine Christianity" that "undergird[s]" American democracy.<sup>93</sup> Other publications from Protestant groups abandoned religious rhetoric, instead appealing to democratic responsibilities and scientific studies of racism. Some pamphlets contained the sermons of incarcerated ministers or articles from national magazines and newspapers.<sup>94</sup> Many included personal stories and quotations from West Coast religious and educational leaders because organizers thought that "the convictions [of] Christian people on the West Coast" would influence other outsiders the greatest, since these people knew Japanese Americans personally.<sup>95</sup> Still others used photographs and cartoon figures to persuade readers of the loyalty of Japanese Americans.

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<sup>93</sup>"The Japanese in our Midst," 1942, updated in 1943, Box 53/Fld 2, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>94</sup>Advisory Meeting: Congregational Committee on Christian Democracy, 14 Aug 1945, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. American Baptist Home Mission Society, "Democracy Demands," undated, Box 53/Fld 2, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>95</sup>Fisher, Round Table on Japanese Evacuation.

Many pamphlets used the rhetoric of Americanism, which blended values of “true Christianity” with those of “true America.”<sup>96</sup> “A Touchstone of Democracy,” published by the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches in 1942 and updated in 1943, used this language, telling readers, “It is our responsibility as citizens to help [Nikkei] keep their faith in democracy. It is the responsibility of the Church to help them keep their faith in God.”<sup>97</sup> Within this publication, John Bennett “condemn[ed] . . . the public . . . for accepting” the incarceration “with complacency” and called for America’s atonement. He declared that the fate of Nikkei “will be a major test of integrity of the Christian churches and of the realities of democracy.”<sup>98</sup> To Bennett, the obligations of Christianity and democracy were complementary and both required Christian citizens to actively support Nikkei. Even secular newspapers argued that Nikkei should be welcomed back into communities on the basis of America’s Christian foundation. *The Billings Gazette* mentioned the obligation to protect the exemplary human rights “Divine Providence” granted the country.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>A thick pamphlet assembled in April 1944 was aptly titled, “The Concern of the Church for Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans.” Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, “The Concern of the Church for Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans,” Apr 1944, Box 53/Fld 2, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>97</sup>Clarence Gillett et al., “A Touchstone of Democracy: The Japanese in America” pamphlet (New York: Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches, June 1942 & June 1943), 3.

<sup>98</sup>Gillett, “A Touchstone of Democracy,” 3.

<sup>99</sup>Samuel Nagata, “O California, Dear California,” *Billings Gazette* pamphlet, undated, Box 8/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

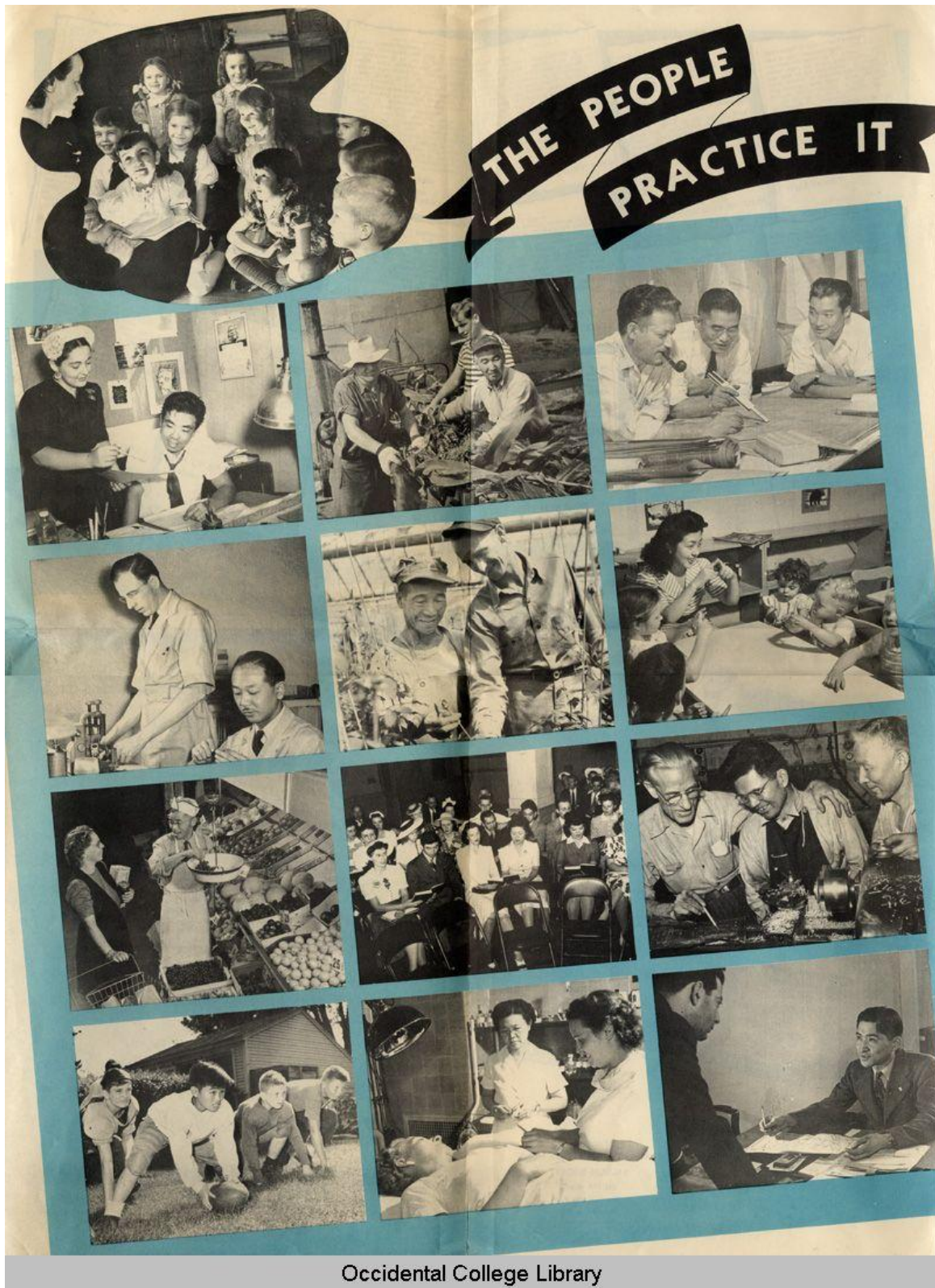
Other Protestant publications reminded readers what “Democracy Demands” as a political system (Figure 2).<sup>100</sup> The American Baptist Home Mission Society specified that democracy demands that “papers speak up for it” and “people practice it.” To demonstrate this message, the publication contained excerpts from newspapers across the country and pages of photographs of Nikkei. Most of the quotations refer to citizens’ responsibility as Americans,<sup>101</sup> while the photographs depicted Japanese American engineers, teachers, grocers, children playing football, university students, doctors and soldiers. The glossy pamphlet implies that Nikkei are democratic Americans worth helping and worth having in American communities. The photographs invited viewers to imagine these people working and living normal lives rather than thinking of their abnormal, criminalized lives behind barbed wire. The images showed readers outside of the camp that Nikkei were exemplary citizens just like them. Other pamphlets, like “A Touchstone of Democracy,” describe Nikkei’s exemplary American attitudes, such as their perseverance through hardship. Contributors called Nikkei within and outside of the camps “colonists” and pioneers,” tying their experiences to those of iconic early Americans. An article by Galen Fisher compared a

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<sup>100</sup>American Baptist Home Mission Society, “Democracy Demands,” 1944, Japanese American Relocation Collection, Special Collection Department, Mary Norton Clapp Library, Occidental College Library, Occidental College, Los Angeles.

<sup>101</sup>The photographs resemble those of Ansel Adams, who photographed Nikkei neatly dressed, working in an array of professions. Ansel Adams, *Born Free and Equal: The Story of Loyal Japanese Americans, Manzanar Relocation Center, Inyo County, California* (Bishop, CA: Spotted Dog Press, 2001). For more on photography within and about the incarceration centers, see Jasmine Alinder, *Moving Images Photography and the Japanese American Incarceration* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Gerald H. Robinson, *Elusive Truth: Four Photographers at Manzanar* (Nevada City, CA: Carl Mautz Publishing, 2002); Linda Gordon and Gary Y. Okihiro, ed., *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006); Elizabeth Partridge, ed., *Dorothea Lange: A Visual Life* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).





Occidental College Library

**Figure 2: "Democracy Demands," American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1944**  
 Source: Japanese American Relocation Collection, Special Collection Department, Mary Norton Clapp Library,  
 Occidental College Library, Occidental College, Los Angeles



Japanese American community in Utah to “a modern Joseph Smith—minus the Book of Mormon.”<sup>102</sup>

Some pamphlets addressed general problem of racism with science. In hope of dispelling racial misunderstandings, a group of religious leaders and anthropologists composed and distributed a booklet entitled “The Races of Mankind” in 1943.<sup>103</sup> Through conversational explanations of racial theory and comic illustrations, the authors Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish<sup>104</sup> differentiated between physical racial characteristics and nationality. They first state that the world contains three races: Caucasian, Negroid and Mongoloid. Explaining that non-physical characteristics stem from a person’s upbringing, the text distinguishes learned behavior from biological traits. The pamphlet addressed misinformation propagated by Nazi propaganda, clarifying that Aryan and Jewish are not racial designations. This pamphlet addressed the root of some people’s prejudices in an approachable, non-confrontational and non-condescending manner.<sup>105</sup>

Congregations responded positively to these publications. The Protestant Commission, the Congregational Committee and other groups mailed these pamphlets to white pastors in resettlement areas, denominational boards, regional ecumenical councils and the leaders of social action and women’s groups within individual congregations throughout

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<sup>102</sup>Galen Fisher, “The Drama of Japanese Evacuation,” in “A Touchstone of Democracy,” 30.

<sup>103</sup>Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish, *The Races of Mankind*, Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 85 (New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1943).

<sup>104</sup>Weltfish also published an article outlining the political repercussions of racism in America. Gene Weltfish, “Racism: Japan’s Secret Weapon,” *Far Eastern Survey* 14:17 (29 Aug 1945): 233-237.

<sup>105</sup>The Presbyterian missions board released a pamphlet containing of anecdotes of Asian minorities succeeding with help from people of other races. America. Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, “What Does Race Matter? To a Chinese American, To a Japanese American,” 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1947, Box 8/Fld 8, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

the war.<sup>106</sup> Many churches wrote to the Protestant Commission, requesting educational material and pamphlets to use in vacation Bible schools or Sunday school. They asked for pen pals within the camps for their young people and offered to send donations.<sup>107</sup> As Nikkei began returning to the coast, the Congregational Committee extended their educational campaign, sending educational material to around five hundred California public school principals and librarians to ease the adjustment of new students. After receiving “widespread and cordial” feedback from recipients, they planned another mailing at the beginning of the 1946 school year.<sup>108</sup> Pamphlets and magazine articles sought to dispel prejudices and increase unity within the country, much like the programs for ecumenical and interracial worship.

In addition to educating Quaker and mainline congregations, many pamphlets instructed congregations how to help alleviate the pain caused by incarceration. The brochures suggested congregations and non-religious social groups give small gifts or simply make a gesture of friendship, such as requesting a pen pal in the camps.<sup>109</sup> The Congregational Committee encouraged local Congregational Social Action groups and the

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<sup>106</sup>Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of the Citizens Committee for Resettlement, 21 Jan and 22 May 1944, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>107</sup>Requests for Publicity Materials, Box 1/Fld 49, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>108</sup>Minutes of the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy, 10 Sept 1946, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>109</sup>Congregational Committee on Christian Democracy, “You Can Do Something About It,” 1945, Box 3/Fld 14, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. AFSC, “Gifts for War Sufferers in the United States,” Box 53/Fld 2, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Homer L. and Edna W. Morris, Memorandum on problems caused by evacuation orders, summer 1942, Box 1/Fld 14, American Friends Service Committee, Midwest Branch, Accession No. 4791-1, UW.

Congregational youth organization, the Pilgrim Fellowship, to help with their larger public relations campaign.

At a national meeting of the Pilgrim Fellowship, leaders resolved to “express . . . fellowship and unity” with Nikkei Christians in light of the “national failure to fulfill . . . Christian convictions and democratic principles.”<sup>110</sup> Specifically, the young people wanted to help alleviate conditions in the incarceration centers, educate the public about this discrimination and “maintain and enforce constitutional guarantees of civil liberties.” In addition to extending fellowship to local Nikkei and sending funds and material donations to incarcerated and resettlers, one of the Fellowship’s primary goals was public education.<sup>111</sup> Their public statement condemned the “intolerant public” who “fanned the flames of racial antagonism because of lack of understanding, vested interests [and] false patriotism.”<sup>112</sup> They hoped their efforts would increase “tolerance and friendliness which will make it safe for government authorities to release Japanese.”<sup>113</sup> Other youth groups, like the World Student Christian Federation, made similar efforts to educate the public and offer hope and friendship to incarcerated young people.<sup>114</sup>

Speaking tours expressed the same messages as the pamphlets but tied the message to a relatable individual. Recognizing that Nikkei speakers often had a greater effect on

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<sup>110</sup>Resolutions from Deering on the Pilgrim Fellowship and Aid to the Japanese Americans, no date, Box 1/Fld 15, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>111</sup>Merle Easton, ed., “Newsletter of the Department of Junior High Work,” Nov 1943, Box 3/Fld 25, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>112</sup>Resolutions from Deering.

<sup>113</sup>The National Pilgrim Fellowship’s Program of Assistance to the Japanese Americans, no date, Box 1/Fld 5, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>114</sup>“That Fellowship May Not Be Broken,” Apr 1943, Box 1/Fld 52, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

audiences than white men and women speaking for or about them, the Congregational Committee and other groups arranged for former incarcerated to give talks in their new communities and hired a few Nisei for national speaking tours. Financially supported by the Congregational Committee, Setsuko Matsunaga, a former sociology student from the University of Washington,<sup>115</sup> spoke to dozens of groups around the country, including organizations that typically supported the incarceration like Lions' Clubs and American Legion groups.<sup>116</sup> The Reverend Daisuke Kitagawa visited Episcopalian churches and civic groups to "present the camp story and the church angle."<sup>117</sup> A women's auxiliary group felt that there would be "complete understanding" if more people like him could "educate" Americans around the country. The group pledged financial support and prayed for the "courageous . . . women of Minidoka" after hearing Kitagawa speak.<sup>118</sup>

Similarly, the Fellowship of Reconciliation hired Perry Saito, a conscientious objector from Aberdeen, WA studying for the Methodist ministry, to speak with service groups, chapters of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) and student groups in the Midwest and New England.<sup>119</sup> Saito told audiences about his family's patriotism and devotion to "American principles," explaining:

We are not complaining one bit [about the incarceration] because we are Americans, if the American soldiers can battle with bullets, we can afford to

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<sup>115</sup>Citizen's Committee for Resettlement: Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, 21 Jan 1944, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>116</sup>Letter from the Publicity Chairman of the Citizens' Committee for Resettlement, Box 1/Fld 5, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>117</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943.

<sup>118</sup>Reprinted in "The Minidoka Churchman," 24 June 1944, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU.

<sup>119</sup>Klancy Clark de Nevers, *The Colonel and the Pacifist: Karl Bendetsen—Parry Saito and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004), 226.

battle with mosquitoes. We are not complaining because of the physical hardships. All we want is to be recognized as Americans. . . . You can be American even though you have a face that looks like an enemy.<sup>120</sup>

He told Lion's Clubs that his father learned English by memorizing the Gettysburg Address.<sup>121</sup> Like many people, his concepts of Christianity and Americanism overlapped significantly and he described his work in religious terms. Saito considered his sermons and speeches about racial equality an attempt to "Christianize other areas of human relations."<sup>122</sup> However, pacifism was so unpopular during the war that it cast doubt on Saito's entire message. Some Christians did not believe his pro-American claims. The FBI followed Saito's actions closely, interviewing children at summer camps where he spoke or pastors with whom he worked. A Congregational minister questioned Saito's descriptions of the camps and described him to the FBI as "subversive," claiming he would "commit acts against the United States if he had a chance to do so."<sup>123</sup>

The speaking tours may have made a positive impact overall, but they also stirred a negative response from groups that commonly resisted Nikkei rights. The Teamsters Union criticized religious groups for sending Nisei speakers into "important war production centers of the Midwest." Their international newsletter claimed that "secretly hostile Japs" had "hoodwinked" the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Reformed Church into organizing and funding such tours, allowing them to spy for Japan and organize Nikkei working in the

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<sup>120</sup>de Nevers, 228-9.

<sup>121</sup>de Nevers, 12, 230.

<sup>122</sup>de Nevers, 235-6.

<sup>123</sup>de Nevers, 228.

area.<sup>124</sup> The article proposed that Nikkei who were leaving the incarceration camps planned to “infiltrate labor unions and establish a new espionage system . . . to prepare for the next Pearl Harbor.” However, Nikkei were no longer the only threat because they had “ingratiated themselves into unsuspecting religious denominations” in an attempt to fuel support for a “Christian peace” that would “leave Japan strong enough to eventually destroy,” not just the United States, but Christianity itself.<sup>125</sup> The author of this *Teamster* article believed that protecting Christianity meant fighting the false “Christian peace” described by many mainline Christians of the time.

Hesitation to enter the political arena in support of Nikkei and other minority groups diminished over the course of the war. By 1943, Protestant leaders began voicing louder opposition to the legalization of further discriminatory laws. Church groups wrote letters protesting legislation that would have canceled the US citizenship of Japanese Americans in 1943.<sup>126</sup> While most argued for the preservation of democracy and Americanism, a California group justified racial equality on the grounds that “in violating Christian principles, one violates the spiritual basis of western civilization and of democracy itself.” The same group warned of “historical repercussions” of the “racial warfare” such legislation implied.<sup>127</sup> When anti-alien laws began appearing on ballots once more, a number of religious groups leapt into action, forming lobby groups and petitions to fight their

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<sup>124</sup>“Hostile Japs Hoodwink Churches: Spread Propaganda for Jobs in War Centers,” *The International Teamster*, Feb 1944, 17-18.

<sup>125</sup>“Hostile Japs Hoodwink Churches.”

<sup>126</sup>Letter from Alfred Tonness, Executive Secretary of the Sacramento Council of Churches, 2 Sept 1943, Box 53/Fld 4, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>127</sup>Alphonzo E. Bell, president of the Church Federation of Los Angeles, and Donald H. Tippet, president of the Southern California Council of Churches, to Members of the California Legislature, 30 Jan 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

success.<sup>128</sup> Colorado Congregationalists helped defeat an anti-alien land law in 1944 and the Congregational Committee campaigned against California alien land laws in the fall of 1946. The group also lobbied Congress to extend naturalization rights to all immigrants and to pass an Evacuee Claims Bill that would reimburse Nikkei for some of their financial losses.<sup>129</sup>

The Seattle Council of Churches and many Christian groups in California began vocally supporting the return of Nikkei to the coast in early 1944. A resolution passed that January stated the Seattle Council's approval of the "return of loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry . . . at such time as . . . there is no further military necessity."<sup>130</sup> While the statement implied that there actually was military cause for the incarceration, a possibility the Council privately rejected in 1942, it supported the return of Seattle's Nikkei. Furthermore, the following month, the head of the Seattle Council of Churches, Gertrude Apel, argued that "to ask some Americans of Japanese ancestry to serve in the armed forces and confine others, of unquestioned loyalty, to restricted areas seems wholly inconsistent."<sup>131</sup> The Seattle Council promised to assist the Washington State government and help integrate Nisei into "normal community life."<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, the Council publicly scolded the governor, Arthur B. Langlie, for his unabashed stance against the return. Council leaders and the Quaker activist

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<sup>128</sup>Minutes of the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy, 10 Sept 1946, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>129</sup>Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy: Background and History, 1945, and Seido Ogawa, Report of the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy, June 1948, Box 1/Fld 2; and Committee for Christian Democracy, "A Primer on Prejudice by Law," 4 Mar 1946, Box 3/Fld 14, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>130</sup>Resolution adopted at the annual meeting of the Washington State Council of Churches and Christian Education, 11 Jan 1944, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>131</sup>Gertrude Apel to Delos Emmons (Commanding General of the Western Defense Command), 21 Feb 1944, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>132</sup>Apel to Emmons, 28 Mar 1944, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

Arthur Barnett publicly condemned his attitude and ignorant equation of Japanese Americans with the Axis power. They reminded him and the public that no Nikkei had been charged with “an overt act against the government.”<sup>133</sup>

By the fall of 1944, California church groups, including the Roman Catholic Interracial Council of Los Angeles, were denouncing the incarceration without reservations, condemning the “un-American, unconstitutional and un-Christian” motives that continued to fuel such “Nazi” policies in the United States.<sup>134</sup> One church directly accused President Roosevelt of continuing the incarceration for “political” gains.<sup>135</sup> Denominational groups, including the Methodist General Conference, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Northern Baptist Convention and the Congregational Christian General Council also released statements in mid-1944 supporting the return of Japanese Americans to the Pacific Coast.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to writing letters or distributing petitions protesting discriminatory legislation, a number of West Coast pastors spoke to their congregation about these political issues. Like the group above, some complemented pragmatism with religious arguments why Americans must support Nikkei. A sermon given by E. A. Day in Pasadena, CA argued

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<sup>133</sup>Douglas Dye, “For the Sake of Seattle’s Soul: The Seattle Council of Churches, the Nikkei Community, and World War II,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 93:3 (Summer 2002): 133.

<sup>134</sup>Resolution of the Catholic Interracial Council of Los Angeles on the Subject of American citizens of Japanese Descent and Alien Japanese, 6 Sept 1944, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB; *The Church Call*, a newsletter of the First Methodist Church in Santa Maria, CA, 22 Sept 1944 and 9 Oct 1944, Box 53/Fld 3, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>135</sup>“What of President’s Promise?” *The Church Call*, a newsletter of the First Methodist Church in Santa Maria, CA, 22 Sept 1944, Box 53/Fld 3, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>136</sup>Quoted in “‘Return the Evacuees,’ Say the Churches,” *The Church Call*, a newsletter of the First Methodist Church in Santa Maria, CA, 22 Sept 1944, Box 53/Fld 3, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.



that God loves people of every race equally and racist acts and thoughts distance Christians from God. After methodically addressing each practical concern and argument against the freedom of Nikkei, the preacher quoted a Methodist bishop who said, “You may have race prejudice if you want it; you may have Jesus Christ if you want Him. You can’t have both.”<sup>137</sup> He and other Christian leaders believed racism and Christianity, as well as racism and Americanism, were incompatible.

While pastors and regional groups increasingly defended Nikkei rights, mainline Protestants’ public relations campaign also required combating prejudices from a defensive position, attempting to correct negative stereotypes in the media. Clarence Gillett corresponded regularly with the editors of newspapers and magazines, clarifying or correcting facts about the incarceration and defending the loyalty of Japanese Americans. In many cases, journalists simply did not know the facts. *Time* magazine and the *L.A. Times* both responded to Gillett’s letters with gratitude for clarifying their details.<sup>138</sup> When addressing falsities in the media, Gillett did not refer to religious justifications or his position as a minister, choosing to fight public battles with simple logic. He refrained from using Committee letterhead, using blank stationary instead. Even when describing the work of the Congregational Committee, his letters never mentioned Christian or humanitarian motivations, only pragmatic logic.<sup>139</sup> Perhaps he thought this approach provided the

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<sup>137</sup>Albert Edward Day, “God’s Design for Living or Americanism and Christianity Begin at Home,” preached 7 Nov 1943, Box 8/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>138</sup>Gillett, Correspondence with Media Representatives, 1943-1944, Box 3/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>139</sup>Gillett to William Loeb at *The Daily News*, 18 Mar 1943, Burlington, VT, Box 2/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

strongest argument or did not want people to think his argument was swayed by his close relationships with Japanese Americans.

Many religious leaders responded to common prejudices and correct particular rumors about Nikkei or the camps. Father Tibesar wrote a detailed article from Minidoka for the *Seattle Times*, describing loyal, American incarcerated and the substandard living conditions within the camps.<sup>140</sup> Similarly, the Denver and Colorado Councils of Churches released a flier with the heading, “Hate is Moral Poison: The Church Answers Propaganda against Americans of Japanese Ancestry with these Facts.” The word “hate” is printed in fallen, cracked, three-dimensional block letters; steam or smoke curls upward to show the destruction caused by hate. The councils’ pamphlet methodically refuted rumors of sabotage and preferential treatment in the centers, and warned against the potential harms of discrimination.<sup>141</sup>

Protestant leaders also combated negative depictions of Nikkei in popular youth culture, recognizing its power to influence both children and adults. Racist views flourished within popular entertainment, reinforcing stereotypes that characterized people of Japanese ancestry as a homogenously deceitful population that never questioned the superiority or sanctity of the Japanese emperor. While the American Protestant community could not prevent such depictions from entering the public’s consciousness, but they could publish articles and distribute pamphlets to dispel misrepresentations and criticize the producers and publishers of such material.

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<sup>140</sup>Tibesar, “Are Japanese Evacuees Getting a Fair Break,” *Seattle Times*, 14 Nov 1943, magazine section.

<sup>141</sup>Denver and Colorado Councils of Churches, “Hate is Moral Poison: The Church Answers Propaganda against Americans of Japanese Ancestry with these Facts,” undated, Box 3/Fld 14, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

A *Little Joe* comic strip, syndicated around the country, revealed anxiety about sending Christmas gifts to incarcerated and outright fear of Japanese Americans, drawing the ire of Emery Andrews. The cartoon depicted a white housewife sending a tall pile of presents to an incarceration camp against the warnings of a ranch hand, a mustached man wearing a large cowboy hat. The woman wears an apron and a small child trails after her in each cell. She instructs the man, “You take these gifts to those poor Japs—right now! And don’t forget—tell them merry Christmas!” Even the kind woman calls them “Japs,” acknowledging the pervasive nature of that slur throughout the country. The man returns to the house with a return gift from incarcerated. Expecting treachery, he opens the package with a long string. Sure enough, the package explodes. The naïve woman learns her lesson and shouts, “Oh-h-h! Those awful, inhuman beasts! They tried to kill us!” The man concludes, “Yep—I still claim Japs jest don’t understand kindness.”<sup>142</sup>

Not only does this comic exhibit appalling prejudice against all Nikkei, it mocks mainline Protestantism and clergy, embodied as a naïve woman, for being so gullible and distracted as to be organizing Christmas donations for a dangerous people. The *Little Joe* comic claimed Japanese Americans were so completely different from white Americans that they cannot even understand kindness. The comic’s author, Robert Leffingwell, suggested that any attempt to treat Nikkei as human beings, like sending Christmas gifts, was a wasted effort and would fail. More extremely, it told readers that any contact with or proximity to incarcerated could be life-threatening. This seems to be the source of anxiety over the gift giving—that it encouraged contact with Nikkei, a group so cruel that they “grinned a lot” when presenting the gift-wrapped explosive, showing glee at the imminent disaster.

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<sup>142</sup>Robert Leffingwell, “Little Joe: Give Till it Hurts?,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 Dec 1943.

Leffingwell depicted them as something other than human, unworthy of America's sympathy.

Andrews opened a retort to Leffingwell with the sentence: "You aren't funny." He described Japanese Americans who bought more war bonds, donated more to the Red Cross and volunteered in greater proportional numbers to the armed forces than any other ethnic group. He concluded, "If you only knew what happened in the relocation centers this Christmas and Christmas last year, you would make a public apology for the ignorance portrayed in your 'funny' strip."<sup>143</sup> Andrews' detailed paper collection at the University of Washington includes no response to this letter. Like many others, Andrews worked ceaselessly to educate others and correct their prejudices.

Protestant leaders struggled with their decision to knowingly make official resolutions about social issues like the incarceration with which the "rank and file" in their churches disagreed.<sup>144</sup> Some feared that forcing a viewpoint that many saw as political—not religious—could "antagonize" people, decreasing the likelihood that congregations would support the issue. Acknowledging that point, the Protestant Commission intentionally left Issei out of most publications about resettlement. Issei could leave the camps as well, but mainline Protestant leaders did not want to push their case further, deciding it would be "bad publicity" to mention that fact publicly.<sup>145</sup> During one of the national ecumenical meetings "it was pointed out that excessive publicity is sometimes harmful, and the quieter methods

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<sup>143</sup> Andrews to Leffingwell, 29 Dec 1943, Box 1/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>144</sup> Royal J. Montgomery to Thom B. Keehn, 19 April 1943, Box 1/Fld 5, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>145</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943, Box 15/Fld 3, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

preferable.”<sup>146</sup> Despite lingering notions of a social gospel and a firm belief that “Jesus would indict the churches as well as the legislators” for their “racial antipathies” and lack of “true Christian attitudes,”<sup>147</sup> many pastors hesitated to push unpopular views upon their congregants. Few pastors pressed the issue with their white congregants and some submitted to their congregants’ demands to bar Nikkei from the church building.<sup>148</sup>

Many white pastors balked when asked to help Nikkei. After sending an enthusiastic letter to the Seattle Council of Churches, the executive secretary of the church council in Buffalo, NY quickly withdrew his offer of support when Seattle pastors responded positively. He described the proposition of hosting Seattle Nikkei as a “serious spiritual challenge” and stated that not contemplating the matter would be “craven and unworthy,” but apparently contemplation was adequate. He decided that the physical, political and financial risks to himself, his family and the Council were too great and declined to help any Japanese Americans.<sup>149</sup>

### **Services and Material Aid from the Outside**

The range of aid provided to Nikkei by Protestant groups ranged from knitted layettes for new mothers to full scholarships and help with college admissions. Churches on the West Coast or those near the camps often donated materials for the altar, while other groups sent monetary donations. Protestant organizations with narrower agendas helped in their own way. Groups like the YWCA addressed the recreational needs of young people in the camps,

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<sup>146</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943.

<sup>147</sup>Montgomery to Keehn, 19 April 1943.

<sup>148</sup>Riichi Satow in *The Issei: Portrait of a Pioneer, An Oral History*, Eileen Sunada Sarasohn, ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1983), 245-6.

<sup>149</sup>Charles Warren to Ross Sanderson, 10 Aug 1942 and Ross Sanderson to Charles Warren, 17 Aug 1942, Box 15/Fld 1, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

while the American Bible Society and seminary libraries addressed literary needs, providing Christian literature in Japanese and resources for incarcerated pastors. The AFSC tried to alleviate the injustice in every possible way, from sending hundreds of balls of yarn to the camps<sup>150</sup> to fighting for Nikkei's rights to a college education, employment and, ultimately, their freedom outside of the camps.

Recreational organizations extended their services into the camps. The YMCA and YWCA hired Nikkei to operate clubs or gyms in "nearly all centers."<sup>151</sup> The YMCA also hired a Nisei to integrate Nikkei into YMCA clubs outside of the camp as they resettled across the country.<sup>152</sup> Though not as prominent as the YMCA, the YWCA visited all camps to advise administrators on the importance of supplying recreational activities for girls. The first YWCA within a camp opened at Manzanar in August 1942.<sup>153</sup> Similarly, the director of inter-racial activities for the Boy Scouts of America visited each center to help organize troops, introducing them to local troops outside the camp, forming new groups or resurrecting troops from the coast whose membership was largely intact.<sup>154</sup> The Scouts also sponsored Nikkei adults' attendance at national leadership conferences during the war. Both the Y and Boy Scouts encouraged activities and exchanges with local groups outside of the camps.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup>Minutes of the Monthly Meeting, Pacific Coast Branch, AFSC, 1 Aug 1942, Box 1/Fld 13, Constantine Panunzio Collection (Collection Number 1636), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>151</sup>Minidoka lacked such a group. Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice: A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans* (New York: Friendship Press, 1946), 40.

<sup>152</sup>WRA Semi-annual Report, Jan-June 1943.

<sup>153</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 40.

<sup>154</sup>WRA Semi-annual Report, Jan-June 1943, Box 7/Fld 11, Gillett.

<sup>155</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 42.

The American Bible Society (ABS), an evangelical publishing group, planned their contribution of Bibles to the camps before the eviction was complete. They hoped to assign a clergyman to sell Bibles door-to-door in the camps at cost, but the Protestant Commission and the WRA would not allow it. Instead, they extended their plan to send Christian literature to Japanese prisoners of war to include all incarceration camps and resettlement communities.<sup>156</sup> They could only print an abridged copy because printing plates containing the full New Testament were all in Japan. Texts in Japanese were already difficult to obtain during the war, and the ABS's leaders worried that presses in Japan would be damaged in the war, limiting the immediate postwar production of full Japanese editions of the New Testament.<sup>157</sup> The Protestant Commission helped the ABS by raising funds from its constituent denominations to supplement the project and enable a larger printing. They hoped eventually to supply 10,000 partial New Testaments and 40,000 to 50,000 volumes of the gospels in Japanese.<sup>158</sup> By the end of the war, the ABS had contributing over 15,000 copies of an abridged New Testament in Japanese. The ABS also reprinted special tracts for incarcerated Nikkei, including several written by Japanese Christians.<sup>159</sup>

J. Stillson Judah, a librarian at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, organized a different literary project: a rotating library for incarcerated ministers within the WRA

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<sup>156</sup>American Bible Society, undated, Box 4/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>157</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Commission, 26 June 1942, Box 15/Fld 31, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW. Chapman to Eric North, 25 Apr 1944, Box 1/Fld 47, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>158</sup>A special imprint of these editions honored the Commission for its work. Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, 21 Aug 1942, Box 15/Fld 31, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>159</sup>Chapman to E. Marshal Taylor, 12 Dec 1943, Box 1/Fld 55, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

camps.<sup>160</sup> The Protestant Commission and Congregational Committee supported operational costs by paying for postage, while eleven seminaries and many individuals donated or loaned books.<sup>161</sup> Judah initiated and ran the program with exceptional speed and efficiency. As he requested the donations and recommendations from seminaries, Judah wrote letters to each of the ten ecumenical camp churches, asking what titles they would like.<sup>162</sup> Nikkei ministers responded, each requesting between five and fifteen titles, by October 1942, only a month after the inception of the pastoral library system.<sup>163</sup> Judah tried to accommodate these requests, while seminaries mailed many titles of their own choosing.

Nikkei ministers responded to the library program with enthusiasm and appreciation. Clergy at Heart Mountain assembled library shelves out of apple crates.<sup>164</sup> Many people appreciated the aid provided by books on theology, homiletics (sermon writing), biblical interpretation, pastoral care and Christian fiction. Like other aid programs, Judah's efforts reminded some incarcerated people that people "still cling on to the ideal of the Kingdom of God,

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<sup>160</sup>John Bennett suggested that the Pacific School of Religion Library coordinate the effort. Minutes of the Congregational Committee, 15 Sept 1942. Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 2 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 1, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>161</sup>Correspondence between librarians and Judah, Fall 1942, Box 1/Fld 2, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>162</sup>Box 1, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>163</sup>White missionaries stationed at the camps likely used the collections, they did not correspond with Judah about titles or exchanges. Lester Suzuki to Judah, 19 Oct 1942, Box 1/Fld 10 and George Aki to Judah, Box 1/Fld 19, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU. Correspondence, Box 1/Flds 9-20, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>164</sup>Yoshikazu Horikoshi to Judah, 26 Jan 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.



who try to practice the ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man . . . when this world is full of bitterness, hatred and strife.”<sup>165</sup>

The promise of ecumenism affected the libraries’ content and Judah’s own attitudes as he acquired books that conflicted with his liberal preferences. He tried to “make each library as representative of all fields of Christian literature as possible”<sup>166</sup> by finding books that appealed to ministers of all denominational backgrounds. Judah solicited bibliographies of books considered essential for ministry by professors at a variety of seminaries. Judah quickly discovered the extent of ecumenical complexity when he realized that some lists did not share a single title.<sup>167</sup> However, through these discussions, his prejudices against conservative Christians lessened.<sup>168</sup> When George Aki, a Nisei pastor in Arkansas, shared his difficulties about conflicting theologies and approaches in his Arkansas camp, Judah express his liberalized attitude and cautioned Aki “to be careful before judg[ing people] too quickly.”<sup>169</sup> Judah’s expanded appreciation of religious diversity affected not only the book collections, but ministerial life in the camps.

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<sup>165</sup>Junichi Fujimori to Judah, 18 Feb 1943, Box 1/Fld 13, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>166</sup>Judah to Martin Rist, Iliff School of Theology, 15 Nov 1942, Box 1/Fld 2, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>167</sup>Judah to Rist, 17 Mar 1943, Box 1/Fld 2, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>168</sup>Judah makes this observation in several letters. Bovenkerk to Judah, 24 Jan 1944, Box 1/Fld 24, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>169</sup>Judah to Aki, 17 Mar 1943.

Judah intended his library to address pastoral care and evangelism, and it did so in unexpected ways.<sup>170</sup> Correspondence between Judah and Nikkei pastors concerning new titles, lost books and exchanges became a conduit for pastoral counseling for incarcerated ministers who had few colleagues with whom to consult or commiserate. Judah responded with specific advice, as above, and by sending individual books to meet pastors' immediate needs. When Aki struggled to determine his role in the war, Judah sent several books that he thought might assist Aki's "quest."<sup>171</sup> He believed his library had the power "to weld the new faith into their hearts so that they will become better and stronger Christians."<sup>172</sup>

Rather than attending to incarcerated persons' pastoral needs or other religious concerns, the American Friends Service Committee placed its greatest emphasis on improving the situation of Nikkei as speedily as possible through legal services, scholarships and smaller material provisions. Many individual Quakers tried to improve public opinion about the incarceration through speeches or editorials, but the AFSC concentrated resources on physical aid and services. Within the camps, workers like Floyd Schmoe gave lectures and helped individuals arrange security clearance and find jobs or scholarships. Outside of the camps Quaker groups arranged the first hostels in urban areas to host Nikkei as they left the camps and fought with civic leaders to ease discriminatory laws. Of the AFSC's many programs, it

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<sup>170</sup>When the camps began to close, Dorothy Felter, an assistant librarian at the Pacific School, arranged for the books to be returned to seminaries or, when they eventually reopened, donated to ethnic churches. Biography, Finding Aid: J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>171</sup>Aki worked with Judah at the Berkeley library before the war, so they had an established relationship. Judah to Aki, 15 & 17 Mar 1943, Box 1/Fld 12, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

<sup>172</sup>Nao Kodaira, at Minidoka, agreed and requested books for new converts, including a man interned in Lordsburg, New Mexico. Judah to Aki, 14 Apr 1943, Box 1/Fld 12, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU. Kodaira to Judah, 9 Mar 1943, Box 1/Fld 14, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

placed the greatest efforts on resettling Nikkei, frequently through the Student Relocation program.

The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, founded by the AFSC with aid from other religious and civil liberty groups, helped students fund and secure admission to schools in the Midwest and East. When the federal government denied UC Berkeley's president's request to establish a program for this purpose, the WRA asked the AFSC to coordinate this work in May 1942.<sup>173</sup> While they and other groups were already helping students on an individual basis, a standardized system increased the likelihood of successful placements and expedited the process of government clearance for students and schools. In the early months of the war, some students went to communities unwilling to accept them, resulting in difficult, sometimes frightening encounters. In response to complaints from the surrounding community, the University of Idaho retracted admission to six Nisei after their arrival. Fearing a lynch mob, the sheriff placed the two female students under protective custody in the Moscow jail until transport out of town was secured.<sup>174</sup> To avoid such encounters, the AFSC's Student Relocation Council hoped to "create receptive attitudes in the communities" in addition to "finding sources of financial aid and selecting and certifying students."<sup>175</sup> WRA leaders hoped this would smooth transitions for other resettlers.

Raising funds to pay tuition and fees for students was the organization's greatest challenge. Congress limited funds, responding to complaints about the government

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<sup>173</sup>Allan Austin, *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 18 and 27.

<sup>174</sup>Austin, 29.

<sup>175</sup>Austin, 28.

educating the “enemy” while “American boys” joined the military.<sup>176</sup> Many schools offered special scholarships to Nikkei, but these were insufficient for students with incarcerated families who had no way to earn enough money for room and board. Denominations and other Christian organizations gave the Student Relocation Council regular donations through 1946, and incarceration centers raised money for scholarships as well.<sup>177</sup> The Baptist and Presbyterian churches and the World Student Service Fund (a coalition of the YMCA and YWCA) donated the most scholarship money, over \$30,000 each.<sup>178</sup> From July 1942 to January 1945, the Student Relocation Council supported 741 Japanese American students.<sup>179</sup>

While the Student Relocation Council attempted to prevent favoritism by religion or denomination, many religiously affiliated colleges only accepted their own adherents and many churches earmarked their contributions for Christian students. For example, one Methodist fund first considered Methodist Nikkei attending Methodists schools, then Methodists at non-Methodist colleges and finally, if funds remained, non-Christians might receive aid.<sup>180</sup> Within denominations that did not discriminate regarding the religious identity of their scholarship recipients, like Presbyterians and Congregationalists, white congregants and some pastors voiced concerns that this policy would leave their “own young

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<sup>176</sup>The federal government otherwise allowed the Council to continue its program, though insisted the Navy clear each college before matriculating Nikkei. Austin, 65-66, 50.

<sup>177</sup>Austin, 63-64.

<sup>178</sup>The Catholic, Congregational, Episcopal, Reformed and Methodist Churches donated between \$41,000 and \$16,000 each. The AFSC, Disciples of Christ, Free Methodists and Lutherans gave one or two thousand each and the United Brethren gave \$325. Report of the National Student Relocation Council, Jan 1945.

<sup>179</sup>The Council ended its work in 1945, reallocating aid and responsibilities to the Home Missions Council. Report of the National Student Relocation Council, Jan 1945, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>180</sup>Austin, 44.

people . . . inadequately cared for.”<sup>181</sup> While not all Buddhists felt discriminated against,<sup>182</sup> they comprised only fifteen percent of financial aid applicants in 1943.<sup>183</sup> However, the quarter of applicants reporting no affiliation may have included Buddhists reluctant to identify their faith for fear of discrimination. While not quite sixty percent of college age Nisei were Christian, they received sixty percent of the aid from the Student Relocation Council. The World Student Service Fund (WSSF), which offers student aid in times of war, tried to correct this imbalance by prioritizing Buddhist scholars.<sup>184</sup> However, churches and denominational colleges gave an unknown amount of money directly to students,<sup>185</sup> the majority of which likely went to Christian Nisei. So while the Student Relocation Council approximated a proportional distribution of financial aid, Christian incarcerated likely received a disproportionately large amount of total national aid.

While many incarcerated benefited from scholarships and resettlement hostels, every single incarcerated child received an annual Christmas gift. Designed to boost morale in the camps and raise awareness among Americans outside of the camp, outside Protestants sponsored “America’s Biggest Christmas Party.”<sup>186</sup> The AFSC and Home Missions Council matched mainline denominations with incarceration camps and assigned them the duty of

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<sup>181</sup>Bryant Drake (president of Doane College) to Gillett, 7 Aug 1943, Box 2/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Austin, 44.

<sup>182</sup>“Do the Buddhist Students Feel Left Out?” undated, Box 4/Fld 6, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>183</sup>“Distribution by Denomination of Students who have Applied to NJASRC,” undated, Box 4/Fld 5, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>184</sup>Austin, 22 and 165.

<sup>185</sup>Austin, 44.

<sup>186</sup>Home Missions Council of North America, “America’s Biggest Christmas Party,” Box 2/Fld 3, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

providing those children with presents at Christmas.<sup>187</sup> During the first year, Minidokans received an astonishing 17,000 presents from Protestant groups.<sup>188</sup> Some outsiders extended the benefits of the gift program by attaching names and addresses to presents, requesting a pen pal. Tad Fujita, an incarcerated at Topaz, corresponded with a woman from Massachusetts for thirty years following the war, after she sent his son a pocket knife at Christmas.<sup>189</sup> These connections built bridges between their cultures and repaired rifts caused by the incarceration.

Churches gave small gifts, but the act reassured Nikkei that free Americans had not forgotten them. Typical of many recollections, a former Rohwer incarcerated said, “Just when I thought everybody out there hated us, I get this present and it restored my faith in mankind again.”<sup>190</sup> That impression was a primary goal of large and small AFSC projects. They hoped people understood that the Christmas program, for example, was not simply “a kindly gesture to provide holiday cheer,” but a chance to assure incarcerated of the “continuity” of

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<sup>187</sup>For example, in 1942, Baptist and Episcopalian churches in the United States gathered gifts for children at Minidoka. In 1944, Minidokans received gifts from the Northern Baptists and Methodists. This distribution method led to the members of some camps favoring those Protestant denominations over others. For example, Presbyterian churches sent gifts to Heart Mountain, so Presbyterianism had a good reputation in that camp. However, even if that might have been the case during the incarceration, those impressions seem to have faded over the years. In later oral histories, few people mentioned the source of the gifts, and those who did, usually reported that they came from Quakers, perhaps due to the strong presence of AFSC aid in the camps. Fumiko Uyeda Groves, interview by Larry Hashima, 16 June 1998, Densho. “7,000 Gifts Received Through Two Churches,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 19 Dec 1942, 8. “Delivery of Gifts to Start Today,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 16 Dec 1944, 1. Chapman to Hannaford, 12 Oct 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>188</sup>Extra gifts were distributed to various youth groups, nurseries and hospital wards. In later years, the total number of gifts decreased, though senior citizens were added to the group of eligible gift recipients. “17,000 Gifts Donated Hunt,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 30 Dec 1942, 2. “Religious Groups Gather Gifts for Evacuee Children,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 11 Dec 1943, 4.

<sup>189</sup>Sandra C. Taylor, *Jewel of the Desert: Japanese American Internment at Topaz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 157.

<sup>190</sup>Interview with Calvin K. Hara, April 1982, Series 3/Box 5/Fld 16, Rosalie H. Wax Papers, BANC MSS 83/115 c, The Bancroft Library, UBC.

their “friendship and concern.”<sup>191</sup> Other incarcerated saw the gifts as proof of the true goodness of America. Tom Fukuyama of the Minidoka church wrote, “The number of gifts shows that the heart of America is essentially warm and the vociferous race mongers constitute only a small minority.”<sup>192</sup> The range of types of gratitude for Christmas gifts typified how many recipients of Protestant aid felt.

Just as Nikkei were touched by the kindness shown by church members during the eviction, many incarcerated deeply appreciated small tokens from the outside and more significant aid, such as scholarships. Long after the war, a Sansei wrote of the necessity of small acts, “We needn’t all be Stowe or Schindler. . . . Tides are turned not only by the words and deeds of historic figures, but by the quiet and enduring heroism of ordinary people acting in good conscience.”<sup>193</sup> Incarcerated also expressed their gratitude to groups like the Congregational Committee that worked to “overcome unthinking prejudice and bring about fair-minded public sentiment.” Harper Sakaue, a Nikkei pastor, praised them, “You constitute the type of fellow citizens that bolsters our faith in democracy. . . . Those reassuring deeds call out the best in us to be worthy of your full confidence.”<sup>194</sup>

## **Conclusion: Gift Economies**

While Nikkei greatly appreciated aid from the outside, suggesting that it came without strings attached simplifies the exchange. While some gifts such as scholarships benefited Nikkei in an externally tangible way, the majority of exchanges occurred on a more

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<sup>191</sup>Information Bulletin, Southern California Branch, AFSC, 10 Oct 1944, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>192</sup>“Variety of Events Marks Second Christmas in Hunt,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 25 Dec 1943, 1.

<sup>193</sup>Seigel, 264.

<sup>194</sup>Harper Sakaue, “Clearwater Clarion Call: Clearwater Baptist Church News,” Sept/Oct 1944, Box 4/Fld 7, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU.

subtle, complex level. Aid from the churches could be explained as charity, but it is unclear that incarcerated people saw themselves as recipients of charity. Despite financial limitations, incarcerated people gave to organizations like the Red Cross generously, distinguishing themselves from most recipients of charity.<sup>195</sup> While Nikkei expressed gratitude, a sense remained that America owed them such compensation for their suffering. White Quakers shared that view, sometimes describing their support as an inadequate apology for decades of discrimination. Statements such as this reframe aid as payment for a debt. However, many donors likely would have characterized their gifts as selfless, generous charity—not something they owed a people the country incarcerated. Most exchanges lay between these two extremes, conveying the complexity of the situation.

Thinking about the commodification of intangible goods helps frame the exchange between outsiders and incarcerated people. In the simplest paradigm, the former provided material goods and services; they received emotional rewards of satisfaction in return. Adam Smith talked about these types of reciprocation acting as a part of an “interiorized form of commerce” and Bourdieu helpfully describes such tradable goods as “symbolic capital.”<sup>196</sup> Donors, both individuals and church organizations, received this symbolic capital, self-fulfillment or other positive emotions, in exchange for their actions or simple gifts. Self-fulfillment and satisfaction were the most apparent capital granted to individuals outside of the camps. Helmuth Berking confirms that Western cultures frequently view self-fulfillment

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<sup>195</sup>“Christmas Seals Sold,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 19 Dec 1942, 8. “Christmas Seal Drive to Start Next Monday,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 25 Nov 1944, 1.

<sup>196</sup>Mark Osteen, ed., *The Question of the Gift: Essays Across Disciplines* (London: Routledge, 2002), 13, 18.



as an exchangeable commodity.<sup>197</sup> Christians outside the camp likely felt good about themselves and their churches for giving to the incarcerated.

Like other forms of anonymous charity, donations to incarcerated alleviated the guilt of individual Americans without the messiness of having to address the greater systematic problems of poverty or racial prejudice. Donors could feel satisfied that they were helping without having to change or protest the system. Indeed, Christmas gifts and other aid fortified existing social inequalities. The exchange relieved the guilt of white Protestants who did little to resist the incarceration of their neighbors and Christian brethren.

While many Americans outside of the camp gave without thinking about personal rewards, this boost in self-esteem and a relief of guilt may have been tied to an abstract or subconscious sense of good will that the individual could “exploit in the future.”<sup>198</sup> We cannot know exactly what givers imagined as future favors, if anything, but perhaps they attached their gift to an idea of resultant, obligatory conformity and loyalty to the United States among incarcerated. Other contributors saw the annual Christmas gifts as an evangelistic tool. In a thank-you letter, a Minidoka church employee wrote that an incarcerated had said that “seeing all those gifts coming in from religious groups . . . made [her] think more seriously of spiritual matters than [she’d] ever done before.”<sup>199</sup> Whether or not anyone actually said that, the message gave the outside donor the impression that her act encouraged Christianity in the camps. Conscious of the unseen elements within such exchanges, a number of non-Christians worried that accepting aid from Christian organizations would

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<sup>197</sup>Osteen, 18.

<sup>198</sup>Osteen, 17-18.

<sup>199</sup>Shigoko Soso Uno to Alice W. S. Brimson, 11 Jan 1943, Box 1/Fld 3, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

obligate them to attend church or be subjected to other forms of evangelization.<sup>200</sup> They did not wish to be indebted to Christians in this way.

Mark Osteen described this indebtedness as the Godfather Paradigm, where favors increase the prestige of the giver and obligate recipients to an unstated vow or future debt.<sup>201</sup> In the case of incarcerated individuals, this debt presumably would involve a promise to not speak against the inaction of the churches and instead applaud the aid, however small. And most Nikkei did wait for decades before publically criticizing the churches. Whether Nikkei personally benefited from the aid or not, the public nature of the churches' support demanded Nikkei respond with gratitude. However, the power of the gift did not require the public gaze. While many incarcerated pastors did not want to lead ecumenical worship, they rarely if ever complained after voicing their initial objections. As the war progressed, their increasing appreciation and gratitude for the Protestant Commission's financial and organizational support likely made pastors feel indebted to it and other Protestant aid groups. While the Commission never demanded incarcerated individuals' cooperation with the ecumenical program in exchange for its services, its power in the relationship, strengthened through the services it provided, still demanded complicity.

Georg Simmel, a German sociologist, claimed that society would collapse without gratitude, as it is the foundation of social behavior. He wrote that the "essential ambiguity" of the gift and the intangibility of gratitude solidify the power inequalities that structure our world.<sup>202</sup> This paradigm of obligatory gratitude, for small gifts or help finding a job, can be seen in during and after the war politics of American Protestants' relations with the Japanese

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<sup>200</sup>Gillett, Notes taken at the Conference of Japanese Christian Leaders.

<sup>201</sup>Osteen, 18.

<sup>202</sup>Osteen, 14.

Americans. The churches' aid was amplified by the lack of aid from other sources. If anyone was looking or grasping for a savior in this situation, Protestant churches were the dominant candidate.

The receipt of gratitude may have been very valuable for church institutions. National denominations risked losing control of Japanese American congregants during the war when Protestant Nikkei were jumbled into ecumenical churches and primarily led themselves. Had they done absolutely nothing during the war, they would have had little claim over Japanese Americans after the war. However, they retained control during the war through limited but visible, aid and through the obligatory gratitude it demanded. Marcel Mauss, an anthropologist who laid foundational theory about the gift, explained, "It is not individuals but collectivities that impose obligations of exchange and contract upon each other."<sup>203</sup> Aid strengthened preexisting bonds between Protestant Nikkei and national churches, while also solidifying the churches' power and domination within a stratified racial hierarchy. Receiving the gifts reaffirmed the Japanese Americans' lower social status and their sense of obligation to the outside churches.

Mixed motives characterized all exchanges: churches did not aid incarcerated simply to ensure their obedience, nor were incarcerated forced to comply. A study of Christian involvement with the incarceration requires consideration of the full range of motivations and responses.

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<sup>203</sup>Mauss researched the organization and morality of gift giving among Pacific Northwest Native Americans and Pacific Islanders and claimed their models underpin our own giving today. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 5.

## Chapter Three: The Ecumenical Experiment

A violent dust storm welcomed Monica and her family to Minidoka. Before finding their assigned barrack, “sand filled [their] mouths and nostrils and stung [their] faces and hands like a thousand darting needles. . . . Hanging on” to her father and brother’s jackets, “gasping and blinded,” they tumbled inside. While the air was clearer in their roughly assembled quarters, “dust poured in through the cracks like smoke.” Just as quickly as it had started, the sky soon cleared, leaving no trace of the storm but howling children, stinging eyes and “thick layers of dust covering the dining tables and benches, . . . filling teacups and bowls.”<sup>1</sup> A year later, the *Minidoka Irrigator* described how “fiendish folds of savage dust storm . . . wrapped around” the new arrivals.<sup>2</sup> This was their new home.

As the War Relocation Authority finished building Minidoka Relocation Center during the fall of 1942, the scattered clumps of buildings slowly began to resemble a functional, if spartan and regimented, town. Once construction ended, the 950 acres in southern Idaho held administrative buildings, a compound for the military police, warehouses, staff housing, a hospital, two fire stations, an auditorium, two elementary schools, a high school, two watch repair shops, two dry cleaners, two barber shops, a beauty parlor and eight stores, two of which were devoted to mail-order purchases. For recreation, incarcerated built a gym, several Japanese gardens, thirteen baseball fields, playgrounds, an improvised ice

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<sup>1</sup>Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 192-3.

<sup>2</sup>“Looking Back Through the Files: September 1942,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 25 Sept 1943, 4.

skating rink and, after a boy drowned while swimming in the irrigation canals, two swimming holes. Each of the thirty-six residential blocks contained twelve barracks, a mess hall, a recreation hall and a building with a communal lavatory, communal showers and laundry facilities. Eight guard towers and, for some of the war, barbed wire surrounded the area. A cemetery was established after a few months in camp.<sup>3</sup> Residential blocks, school classes and individuals grew victory gardens to supplement their meals, many of which came from cans. The gardens also reduced the amount of dust created by the sudden destruction of fragile soil during the construction of the camps.<sup>4</sup> The WRA paid incarcerated to work in larger fields and raise hogs and chickens.

Incarcerated settled into a routine, working or attending school. Many left camp temporarily to work on local sugar beet farms during the harvest. Within the camp, they attended church activities, competed in sporting events, went to dances and lived as normal a life as was possible. Monica's father took a position as an internal security guard, while she worked with her sister at the camp hospital.<sup>5</sup> A number of men and women, young and old, used their abundant free hours to learn more about religion, either Buddhism or Christianity. Some sought consolation or an explanation for this injustice, but others were simply curious and now had time to delve into the subject.

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<sup>3</sup>United States Department of the Interior, *Minidoka National Monument: General Management Plan* (Seattle: National Park Service, 2006), 20-27. Jeffery F. Burton et al., *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 205.

<sup>4</sup>Kenneth I. Helphand, *Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2006), 170, 178. WRA Yearly Summary Report-Crops, Roy Y. Nakatani Papers, Small California Collections, Mss2.N163, Holt-Atherton Department of Special Collections, University of the Pacific Library (UP).

<sup>5</sup>Sone, 194-5.

This chapter examines how Nikkei and white church workers imagined and formed an ecumenical church within Minidoka Relocation Center. The Protestant Commission and other groups instructed incarcerated to form ecumenical churches, but provided few further guidelines. While outsiders and some incarcerated revered the concept of ecumenism, Commission members did not know what ecumenical worship should look like or how pastors of different denominations and theologies would lead an ecumenical church any more than did the Nikkei pastors. In addition to the challenges of leading a church within an incarceration center, Nikkei pastors had to define and construct what was for most of them a new type of church.

Without a firm definition of ecumenism and little to no experience leading worship outside of their denominations, many complications and conflicts characterized the experimental ecumenical worship. After describing the WRA's policies on religion in the camps, this chapter first charts how Nikkei pastors and the Protestant Commission defined membership and ordination and how these decisions and others shaped the ecumenical churches. The second half of the chapter discusses the specific challenges encountered by Minidokan pastors, both in terms of ecumenical constructions and ministerial life in the camp.

### **WRA Policies on Religion**

In order to understand how Nikkei pastors developed ecumenical churches in the camps, it is necessary to understand the rules under which they lived. While not overtly restricting the three main religious bodies in camp, Buddhists, Catholics and Protestants, the WRA devised a self-monitoring system that gave incarcerated the power to regulate one another. The WRA also made guidelines about the use of state property for religious purposes. Leaders of the WRA formed a Committee on Religion to reconsider its policies on

religion as they transferred Nikkei from the assembly centers to the relocation centers during the late summer of 1942.

On paper, the WRA remained committed to a definition of religious freedom similar to that used in the assembly centers: freedom for all groups not directly associated with Japan and its emperor. However, while the Committee recommended that “the cornerstone of religious worship within the centers should be a continuation of religious worship among the Japanese prior to the evacuation,”<sup>6</sup> WRA administrators decided to follow recommendations from the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council and the newly formed Protestant Commission to support ecumenical churches.<sup>7</sup> Few Nikkei worshipped in ecumenical churches before the war, so the practices in camp were not straightforward continuations of religious worship prior to the eviction. The WRA followed the Committee’s recommendation to form an interfaith council within each camp to “decide all questions affecting religious conduct within the center.”<sup>8</sup> A Community Activities Committee had to approve religious events or new hires within the camp churches.

Granting free worship with one hand, the WRA constructed an innocuous-sounding apparatus for limiting worship with the other. The Committee on Religion hoped the interfaith council would suppress “pseudo cults” by deciding “whether there was a sufficiently large constituency within the relocation areas to justify establishment of such

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<sup>6</sup>WRA Committee on Religion, “The problem of setting up a policy for religious worship,” Files of the Poston Christian Church III, Reel 213, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (UCB).

<sup>7</sup>Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice: A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans* (New York: Friendship Press, 1946), 98.

<sup>8</sup>WRA Committee on Religion, “The problem of setting up a policy for religious worship.”

religious organizations.”<sup>9</sup> But what was to stop them from suppressing marginal Christian or Buddhist denominations in order to support the ecumenical project? No evidence suggests that interfaith councils consciously tried to weaken marginal groups or stomp out resistance to ecumenism, but the WRA granted them that power. The Protestant Commission protested granting an interfaith council such authority, but the WRA rejected Chapman’s proposed amendment.<sup>10</sup> Promoting the status quo—ecumenical churches—became a natural function of the interfaith councils.

However, it seems unlikely that the WRA would have consciously restricted particular Christian denominations, while preserving freedom of religion in the camps. Adherents to smaller, new religious movements from Japan were allowed to meet and practice within the camps, despite concerns of camp administrators who suspected adherents held nationalistic beliefs. Followers of Seicho-no-Ie, a religious group unaffiliated with Buddhism or Christianity, practiced openly in most camps.<sup>11</sup> Given that laxity, surely the WRA would not have hobbled a group of English-speaking Baptists requesting permission to worship separately. When Episcopalians began breaking away from the ecumenical churches, the WRA did not interfere.

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<sup>9</sup>The interfaith councils would also serve to keep out groups “which have no other purpose than proselytizing.” WRA Committee on Religion, “The problem of setting up a policy for religious worship.”

<sup>10</sup>The contentious rule was an improvement over the first draft of WRA policies, which read, “Along lines determined by the evacuees, complete freedom of religion is to be enjoyed at all relocation centers.” This could be read in two ways: either incarcerated would determine the level of religious freedom and choose to limit it or they alone were responsible for acting upon this freedom. Gordon Chapman to Charles S. Reifsnider, 26 Oct 1942, Box 1/Fld 14, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA (GTU). Milton Eisenhower, Memo to All WRA Employees and Cooperating Agencies, 29 May 1942, Box 3/Fld 42, Harry L. Stafford Papers: Records, 1942-1946, College of Southern Idaho (CSI).

<sup>11</sup>The FBI recommended that members be permitted to hold services “on the condition that [the administrators] secure the names of the members participating.” Like traditional dancing and music, knowledgeable employees assured the WRA that the group had “no political significance.” Philip Schafer, Acting Project Director, to Harry L. Stafford, 25 May 1943, Box 2/Fld 1, Harry L. Stafford Papers: Records, 1942-1946, CSI.



Four WRA policies regulated the use of state property and resources by religious groups. First, Nikkei pastors could not be paid a salary by a federal agency,<sup>12</sup> but were permitted to accept one from their denominations or other outside groups.<sup>13</sup> Second, religious groups could share available WRA buildings or accept outside funds to build a separate building for worship.<sup>14</sup> Third, as in the assembly centers, religious leaders from the outside could enter camps “at the specific request” of incarcerated, but they were not to be given housing unless otherwise employed by the camp administration.<sup>15</sup> The latter rule limited the number of white clergy members who could work at the camps because most sites were extremely rural, with little available housing. The multiple small towns near Minidoka contributed to its relatively large number of white church volunteers.

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<sup>12</sup>Unlike federally funded hospitals (or military camps), the camp hospitals could not employ chaplains, but ministers could visit if patients requested their presence. Religious Workers Meeting, 10 Nov 1942, Minidoka Project, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>13</sup>While no religious groups established year-round denominational schools, they were permitted to do so through the use of outside funds. WRA Semi-annual Report, Jan-June 1943, Box 7/Fld 11, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). WRA Administrative Instruction No. 32, 24 Aug 1942, Box 1/Fld 12, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, University of Washington Libraries (UW).

<sup>14</sup>Heart Mountain Relocation Center received \$10,000 from the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church for an “attractively planned church” in December 1942. The Protestant Commission initially envisioned constructing multiple church buildings in each camp, but quickly realized the impracticality of spending their sparse resources on structures that would only be used for a few years. WRA Administrative Instruction No. 32. WRA Quarterly Report, October-December 1942, Box 7/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches in Japanese Relocation Centers and Settlements, 20 July 1942, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>15</sup>A few religious workers temporarily lived on site despite this rule. To minimize transportation costs, some workers stayed in camp one or two nights a week. In one case, camp administrators hired a returned missionary as a social services advisor. While his knowledge of the Japanese language and culture aided administrators, administrators arranged the unpaid position so he could live on the project. The camp director called the experiment an “unqualified success.” WRA Administrative Instruction No. 32. Howard Hannaford to Chapman, 1 June 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Chapman to Henry Bovenkerk, 24 Feb 1943 and Ralph Merritt to Chapman, 18 June 1943, Box 1/Fld 1, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

## **Foundation of the Ecumenical Churches**

The initial foundations of Protestant churches in each incarceration camp varied, but most resulted in similar ecumenical structures, constitutions and activity schedules. Worship usually began on the first Sunday incarcerated spent in camp, whether Nikkei ministers had arrived yet or not. Local clergy or members of the camp administration led services if no Nikkei was in a position to do so. As additional ministers arrived, they debated and reassessed the ideal form and style of Christian worship. Until a critical mass of clergymen arrived (no women held the topmost positions), worship styles and religious activities varied, as different ministers asserted their leadership. By the time white church volunteers arrived at camps, Nikkei pastors had already established their basic approach to ecumenism and the churches' leadership structure. The former missionaries and leaders of ethnic churches filled positions as needed when they arrived. Most never took significant roles in church leadership.

The formation of the Tule Lake Union Church typified the way in which Nikkei pastors established churches in the incarceration camp. A group of young Christians requested a local pastor to deliver a sermon for their first Sunday in camp because the first resident minister, Andrew Kuroda, did not arrive until the following week. Kuroda, an English-speaking Issei, had led the Salem Japanese Community Church in Oregon until his eviction. For the second Sunday in Tule Lake, Kuroda organized a Sunday school, led a morning Issei worship service and arranged for an outside lecturer to engage fifty young people in the evening.<sup>16</sup> He immediately began planning a unified Protestant Church that strongly resembled the church he led in Salem. As additional pastors arrived, some wished

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<sup>16</sup>James Sakoda, "The Christian Church in Tule Lake," 1 Oct 1942, Reel 181, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

to retain the cohesion of their prewar congregation apart from other Protestants, while others demanded divisions along denominational lines; still others favored Kuroda's ecumenical solution. By the end of July the last large group of incarcerated had arrived; Tule Lake reached its critical mass of 15,000 and all Tulean clergymen shared their views on the composition of the church. Not long after, they christened the Tule Lake Union Church, an ecumenical church consolidating all Protestant leaders and adherents in the camp.<sup>17</sup> Several months later, the Hannafords, retired missionaries from Japan, volunteered to work at the church, commuting from a nearby town.

Minidoka's pastors had a slight advantage over Tuleans because most had collaborated with one another at Camp Harmony and planned their new church's structure and leadership before leaving for Minidoka. In early August 1942, a few weeks before the first incarcerated left for Idaho, Protestant leaders from Camp Harmony and the greater Seattle area began planning the Minidoka church. They decided how to structure worship, considering denominational churches, united churches and federated churches before deciding on the last.<sup>18</sup> Records do not indicate how much pressure non-Nikkei leaders exerted at this meeting, if any. Suspecting Tom Fukuyama would be the only Nisei minister within this large community, Nikkei pastors asked the Protestant Commission to send additional church workers, "preferably returned missionaries from Japan," to work with Nisei and other young people.<sup>19</sup> This request was a formality, since five white Protestant workers

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<sup>17</sup>Sakoda, "The Christian Church in Tule Lake."

<sup>18</sup>Protestants used words like union, ecumenical, community and federated inconsistently, making it difficult to understand what they were discussing. Seattleites apparently differentiated between united and federated, but the Minidoka church operated identically to Tule Lake Union Church. "Minutes of the Inter-Area Church Council Meeting with the Church School Faculty, 7 Aug 1942, Box 1/Fld 3, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW. Sakoda, "The Christian Church in Tule Lake."

<sup>19</sup>Minutes of the Inter-Area Church Council Meeting, 7 Aug 1942.

from Seattle already planned to follow their congregations to Idaho.<sup>20</sup> More followed later. The Nikkei pastors from Seattle continued making compromises and adjustments during the first months at Minidoka, adapting to the WRA's rules, finding worship space, meeting clergy from the Portland Assembly Center and welcoming their white pastors in the late fall of 1942.

Managing space within the camp was the first challenge for incarcerated religious leaders at Minidoka, one over which they had little control. While the camp remained at its maximum capacity for six months or so space was at a premium. Religious groups and leaders at Minidoka lacked private buildings, so they shared the use of public recreation halls with different groups throughout the week. Some of the first visitors from the outsiders complained that Nikkei had to worship in recreation halls with insufficient furniture or smelly, noisy mess halls.<sup>21</sup> WRA administrators soon assigned community groups, including religious organizations, spaces to share. This allowed the Federated Church to cease its peripatetic existence and begin meeting in the same recreation halls consistently. Since they shared the spaces with a variety of groups, church workers had to remove "altars or other equipment peculiar to [their] own use" after each meeting to facilitate cooperation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>The wives of Andrews and Thompson are not listed as officially missionaries at Minidoka. The missionary couple who had been leading the Japanese Congregational Church in Seattle, Charles and Cora Warren, volunteered to move to Minidoka as well, but their health did not allow for the rigorous work required of camp pastors. Instead, the Warrens moved to Salt Lake City to work with the established Japanese Congregational group there, welcoming new members as they left the camps for work in that area. Warren to Harvey Coverley, Assistant Regional Director of the WRA, 31 Mar 1942, Box 1/Fld 9, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Gillett to Warren, 10 Sept 1942, Box 1/Fld 9, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>21</sup>Article from *Missions*, Jan 1943, 26, Box 1/Fld 1, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>22</sup>By the end of 1942, Seattle churches and schools had loaned Minidokans eighteen pianos, four organs, over two-thousand folding chairs and many benches and tables, so it became difficult to avoid permanently occupying a building, at least in appearance. WRA Administrative Instruction No. 32. Report for quarter

Workers built cupboards in these shared buildings to store hymnals and altar accoutrements,<sup>23</sup> but discontent still arose when groups did not clean the space sufficiently.<sup>24</sup>

Shared public space did not provide the privacy necessary for pastor care or room for permanent altars where individuals could worship privately, outside of the church's designated time. Transitioning from chairing the Japanese Church Federation in Seattle to leading the Protestant Church Council at Minidoka, the Issei Congregational pastor<sup>25</sup> Nao Kodaira found the initial lack of private chambers for study or pastoral counseling nearly unbearable.<sup>26</sup> Without an office, he had few alternatives to working in his bachelor dormitory. While Kodaira and other pastors were never given individual chambers, camp administrators allocated a room for the Federated Church's office and another for the church's library and meeting room.<sup>27</sup> A few Protestant camp churches had their own buildings from the beginning of the war, but most obtained private space as people resettled and more space became available.

Sympathetic camp administrators also found small spaces where Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Buddhists could erect permanent altars where adherents could offer

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ending 31 Dec 1942, 29 Jan 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>23</sup>Reply to Questions of Religious Policies, 30 Mar 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>24</sup>Interfaith Council Meeting, 14 Sept 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>25</sup>Kodaira was ordained as a Congregational minister, but worked at the Seattle Presbyterian church. Chapman to Clarence Gillett, 4 Feb 1944, Box 1/Fld 12, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>26</sup>Kodaira to Townsend, 1 Sept 1942, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>27</sup>The Protestant Young People's Church Council also requested space for a church office and a pastor's study within a week of their arrival. Minutes of the Protestant Young People's Church Council, 8 Sept 1942, Box 1/Fld 3, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

devotions at any time of day. The Episcopalians at Minidoka constructed an elaborate altar where daily services were held in remembrance of former church members who died in the war. Icons and scripture adorned the walls and skilled church members constructed elaborate candelabras to optimize the small space. A dark curtain draped the back wall, establishing a backdrop for a small, ornate cross.<sup>28</sup> With the substitution of a cross for a crucifix, the Episcopalian altar somewhat resembled the Catholic altar at Minidoka (Figure 3).<sup>29</sup> At the daily Catholic mass, the priest lighted a candle and prayed for enlisted Catholic and non-



**Figure 3: First Communion Class, Minidoka Catholic Church, 1943**

Source: National Archives and Records Administration Collection, Densho

<sup>28</sup>“The Altar of the Church of the Holy Apostles,” photograph printed in “The Minidoka Churchman,” 1 Apr 1945, Reel 331, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>29</sup>“First Communion Class” (denshopd-i37-00683), 1943, Minidoka Catholic Church, Densho, National Archives and Records Administration Collection.

Catholic Minidokans. The altar held a “special scroll” containing the names of every soldier from Minidoka.<sup>30</sup> Members of other denominations may have viewed this as an unnecessary privilege, although the Federated Church eventually acquired private office space as well. Leaders and members of the Federated Church left their worship spaces relatively spartan. The church occasionally displayed flowers, a precious commodity in the desert, or a United States flag, but its empty walls resembled the plainness found in their prewar churches. The contrast between the ornate Episcopal shrine and the plain ecumenical Protestant church represented some of the difficulties of merging churches with significantly different worship styles.

### **Defining Ecumenism**

Agreeing upon the meaning and aims of ecumenism was a greater problem than defining the word itself, though pastors spent more time disagreeing about the latter. Ecumenism was a global movement whose adherents tried to build a truer, stronger Christianity through union. Nikkei pastors who preached and believed in the strength of this ecumenical ideal naturally approached the creation of an ecumenical church differently than those who simply understood that Baptists and Methodists and others were to meet together in the same building each Sunday. Andrew Kuroda and Tom Fukuyama both advocated establishing unified, ecumenical churches in their camps, but each envisioned different goals, approaches and realities.

Believing in the grander goals of ecumenism that inspired the implementation of this structure by outside leaders, Kuroda took a systematic, intentional approach to ecumenism. Having worked within such an organization before the war, he brought knowledge and

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<sup>30</sup>Father Clement Boesflug, Newsletter of Minidoka’s Catholic Church, 1 Apr 1945 & 1 May 1945, Reel 331, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

experience to the camp. Kuroda expended efforts to educate his fellow ministers and congregants about this type of worship. More than other pastors, his approach emphasized how commonalities among worship practices formed the “common heritage of Christendom” through “unity in the purpose, significance and historical relationship” of devotional acts.<sup>31</sup> Kuroda encouraged his colleagues to study an ecumenical worship service designed after a comprehensive study of Protestant hymnals and liturgies (the schedule of what happens during a religious service).<sup>32</sup> The service utilized core elements found within many denominations.

Kuroda tried to enlighten his congregation as well as his fellow pastors. He knew the lack of “denominational consciousness” of young incarcerated was more often the result of indifference than intent. He called for a “definite program to educate people ecumenically,” so Christians would embrace the beauty of common truths among Protestants and see their moral power within society. While most people on both sides of the fence saw the ecumenical camp churches purely as a wartime experiment, the optimistic Kuroda hoped Tulean Christians would spread these viewpoints within their denominational churches after the war.<sup>33</sup> Trusting his translation of ecumenical ideals into worship, Kuroda asked new members not to choose a denomination until or if it became necessary outside.<sup>34</sup> Few, if any, other camp churches devoted time to discussing ecumenism with congregants. Kuroda wanted congregants to know that their church’s ecumenical design was not a decision made

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<sup>31</sup> Andrew Kuroda, Memorandum, Fall 1942, Box 155/Fld 3, Kuroda Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>32</sup> Kuroda, Memorandum, Fall 1942.

<sup>33</sup> Kuroda, Memorandum, Fall 1942.

<sup>34</sup> Kuroda, “Tule Lake Union Christian Church,” 12 Nov 1942, Box 155/Fld 3, Kuroda Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.



out of convenience, but rather an intentional opportunity to experiment with a sacred, true manifestation of Christianity.<sup>35</sup> Kuroda embodied the manifestation of what the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council and the Protestant Commission desired for pastors in the camps. But without an established connection with the ideal of ecumenism, other Nikkei pastors may not have wanted or been prepared to embrace this ideology or its practical application.

The young Baptist pastor Tom Fukuyama took a more casual approach. He frequently joked about how “liberal” he must appear to outsiders for speaking at churches of all denominations. After speaking at several Methodist churches in the area, he wrote to his fiancée, “Tom could be a good Methodist! Anyway, he’s far from the orthodox Baptist.”<sup>36</sup> This attitude surprised and impressed local church leaders, who did not expect him to speak at non-Baptist churches or attend their regional conferences.<sup>37</sup> This perspective fit his admiration for the sentiment, “A Christian is one who is at home anyplace in the world.”<sup>38</sup> He was as comfortable in other pulpits as he was preaching in a Baptist church, but still thought in terms of sectarian divisions. Fukuyama’s understanding of ecumenism more closely resembles what occurred in the camps.

Most Nikkei pastors in the camp, like Fukuyama, thought of ecumenism as a finite action rather than an ideal to work towards. Their observations and disagreements focused on the visible manifestations of ecumenical worship: Is everyone worshiping in the same

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<sup>35</sup>Kuroda, “Tule Lake Union Christian Church.”

<sup>36</sup>Fukuyama to Betty Adkins, 10 Nov 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>37</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 10 Oct 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>38</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 1 Oct 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

building at the same time? After familiarizing themselves with the WRA's regulations and plans for an interfaith council and locating worship space, the pastors' first challenge was to agree upon a definition of ecumenism. Defining ecumenical Protestantism required incarcerated to first agree upon a definition of Protestantism. These decisions subsequently dictated who qualified as a church member and who would be considered part of the camp's clergy. Since mainline Protestants outnumbered other Christians in the camp and responded to requests from the Protestant Commission and other mainline groups, they defined ecumenism, not marginal groups like Holiness, Salvation Army or Mukyōkai. As a result, the ecumenical church's hierarchy, structure and worship styles strongly resembled mainline Protestantism. Sometimes these continuities were decided for pragmatic reasons that inadvertently discriminated against marginal Christians, but mainline Nikkei clergy also intentionally designed structures that would excluded worship styles or beliefs they disliked..

In an attempt to define the particularities of an ecumenical church, several church leaders wrote constitutions to outlined beliefs, doctrine and practices. They hoped the documents would manage foreseeable conflicts. Upon request, the Protestant Commission used the constitution composed in Poston Relocation Center<sup>39</sup> to create a generic constitution that they believed could be used by any Protestant church.<sup>40</sup> Pastors needed only to fill in the church's name in the provided spaces. While no surviving evidence indicates that this exact constitution was used by camp churches, it formed a useful template from which to work. The document declared that church membership would consist of "persons who are already

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<sup>39</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, 21 Aug 1942, Box 15/Fld 31, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>40</sup>Tentative Constitution of . . . Protestant Church, undated, Box 4/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

members of the Christian churches,” a phrase inviting broad interpretations. The “required . . . confessions of faith” were as follows:

- a. I believe in God the Almighty, who is the creator and Father of mankind.
- b. I believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God and as the Saviour of mankind.
- c. I believe in the Holy Spirit
- d. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church (Universal)
- e. I believe in the Bible as the Canon of the Church and standard of our faith.

All mainline denominations that regularly participated within the ecumenical churches agreed upon these beliefs. Intentionally vague phrases throughout the rest of the constitution allowed for different sacraments and interpretation of ritual. The Protestant Commission’s constitution acknowledged the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but included space for church members to define the significance of communion individually and choose their own “mode of baptism.” The stated purpose of the church, “to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and to realize the Kingdom of God among mankind,”<sup>41</sup> was similarly open to interpretation. The gospel could be shared in any manner and the Kingdom could be literal or metaphorical, in heaven or on earth. Such openness avoided the disputes over membership and communion that occurred in some camps.<sup>42</sup>

New converts posed one of the greatest challenges to fostering ecumenical Protestant identities. The fact that many incarcerated converted to Christianity during the war presented

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<sup>41</sup>Tentative Constitution.

<sup>42</sup>Poston’s constitution pronounced that “believers” would observe the Lord’s Supper six times per year. Heart Mountain’s original constitution limited membership to baptized Christians, which barred Salvation Army members and Quakers who do not perform baptisms. It also barred members refusing to drop their denominational affiliations. To “keep peace and harmony,” Heart Mountain’s pastors liberalized membership requirements. Constitution of the Poston Christian Church, Files of the Poston Christian Church, June 1942, Reel 260, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB. Unoura to Chapman, 13 Feb 1943, Box 1/Fld 51, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Kojiro Unoura to Chapman, 6 Feb 1943, Box 1/Fld 51, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

problems inherent to a temporary ecumenical church. When converts left camp, what church should they attend? If a person joined an ecumenical church and had never belonged to anything else, what denomination would he or she be? Because the two largest denominational groups at Minidoka and many other camps were Baptists and Methodists, converts could not simply obtain a generic Protestant baptism. While they could always change affiliations later, they had to choose baptism by immersion, as occurs within Baptist and most Holiness Churches, or a sprinkling of water, like Methodists and other Protestants. As young people started families in the camps, doctrinal differences determined when their children were to be baptized—as infants or adults (Baptists do not baptize infants). Baptism means significantly different things within different denominations. All camp pastors agreed that the choice of denominational affiliation rested with the individual. Converts likely chose the denomination of close friends or family or that of an inspiring minister in camp.

While pastors willingly compromised when delineating church membership, defining clergy was much more contentious. Mainline pastors had to work closely with accepted clergy and entrust them with their congregation. With guidance from the Protestant Commission, pastors in the camps decided that a man must be ordained or officially recognized by a denomination to join a camp's board of clergy. While not a requirement, they hoped candidates also had seminary training. In questionable cases, the Protestant Commission advised congregations to consult the applicant's denomination.<sup>43</sup> Camp churches could hire who they liked, but could not pay for an unaffiliated pastor. When not contingent on finances, churches made compromises. Tule Lake Union Church compromised

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<sup>43</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service, 21 Aug 1942.

and allowed a leader of the Laymen's Christian Church to join the ministerial board at Tule Lake as an evangelist, but not a minister.<sup>44</sup>

Practically speaking, the Protestant Commission required a definition by which to judge clergy, since it organized the salaries of these men. If a denomination refused to pay a pastor, the Commission tried to raise funds for the man. The Commission lacked the financial support to support all people who met their qualifications, let alone those who did not. When an ordained man no longer affiliated with a denomination wished to work at a camp church, the Commission sometimes paid his salary, just as they helped Salvation Army officers, whose denomination would not support them.<sup>45</sup> The rule provided the Commission with a systematic way to turn away lay Nikkei within the camp who wished to serve within the church<sup>46</sup>

Intentionally or not, this policy discriminated against certain Christian churches. Marginal Christian groups lacking a hierarchy familiar to mainline Protestants were automatically shut out. A group like Mukyōkai that used only lay leaders could not join the ecumenical clergy. Not only did these Christians lack formal religious training, they had no denominational board to consult. Members of Mukyōkai and other disadvantaged types of Christianity volunteered as Sunday school teachers, choir directors or youth leaders in the camps, but rarely influenced the structural formation of the camp congregations or worship services. Some people also may have worried that Mukyōkai's Japanese origins would draw suspicion; and the camps' clergy policy gave churches the discretion to accept or deny such

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<sup>44</sup>Sakoda, "The Christian Church in Tule Lake."

<sup>45</sup>Chapman to French, 6 May 1943, Box 1/Fld 8, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>46</sup>Chapman to Jutaro Yokoi, 19 May 1944, Box 1/Fld 9, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

candidates. While omitting marginal groups may have been intentional in some cases, the circumstance was just as likely to be a side effect of the ecclesiastical structures of the dominant denominations or financial limitations. Groups like Mukyōkai may have been unintentional casualties of mainline organizational patterns.

Defining the boundaries and role of ecumenical churches gave mainline pastors the power to block certain types of Christianity from practicing in the camps. As the majority, they could shape how they wanted ecumenism to look. In some camps, mainline Protestants formed ecumenical churches in order to control worship styles. At Tanforan Assembly Center, they denied a Holiness Nikkei access to the pulpit and rejected the group's proposal of a rotational preaching system.<sup>47</sup> By voting to "keep the group unified as possible," they were voting to remove unpopular worship styles. In the end, "ecumenical" services in every camp closely resembled those of mainline Protestant denominations. Contributions from marginal groups that expressed the diversity of Protestantism were not welcome. This provided a way for mainline Protestants to claim unity while preserving the practices they saw as normative.

The experiences of Holiness groups in the camps demonstrate how ambiguous definitions of ecumenism permitted a range of acceptance and discrimination within the ecumenical churches. Many mainline Protestants disapproved of the boisterous worship they associated with Holiness and Pentecostal Protestants. "The excesses . . . and abnormal conduct" of a group of exuberant Issei at Manzanar "greatly disturbed" Henry Bovenkerk, a white missionary. He could not "believe that such demonstrations are helpful either to the

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<sup>47</sup>Doris Hayashi, Notes on Young People's Council, Summer 1942, Tanforan Assembly Center, Reel 016, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

Christians individually or to the influence of the church in this community.”<sup>48</sup> This concern for the camp’s church helps explain the responses of mainline Protestants at Tanforan. Many feared that “revivalistic” worship would damage their church. Ultimately, Bovenkerk and the pastors at Tanforan did not believe emotive, evangelistic preaching was “representative . . . of the American Christian Church,” nor could it be a positive influence within the community.<sup>49</sup> Such pronouncements were not uncommon.

However, the ecumenical experiment also expanded Christians’ definitions of Christianity. Holiness or other Pentecostal pastors usually sat on the board of ministers since their theology and clerical structures did not differ greatly from mainline Protestantism. At Minidoka, a Nikkei Holiness pastor from Seattle acted with equal authority alongside Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopalian leaders.<sup>50</sup> While it is unknown whether he was welcomed with open arms or only begrudgingly, he shared equal responsibilities for preaching and leading services. The majority of comments from camp church records or correspondence about Holiness members during the final years of the end of the incarceration revealed a note of positive surprise. Gordon Chapman of the Protestant Commission expressed his pleasure “with the fine attitude . . . demonstrated again and again by . . . Holiness ministers” in the camps. He said they “have not only cooperated heartily with the community churches in the various relocation centers, but in most cases have been recognized as true leaders by Christians of all denominations.” He praised individuals’ “deep spiritual influence” and noted how one evangelical had become “a tower of strength” at

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<sup>48</sup>Bovenkerk to Chapman, 6 May 1943, Box 1/Fld 1, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>49</sup>Bovenkerk to Chapman, 6 May 1943.

<sup>50</sup>“Reply to Questions of Religious Policies.”

Topaz, the camp in Utah.<sup>51</sup> These comments are notable because such behavior was expected and assumed of mainline pastors, who rarely received such singular praise, despite comparable achievements.

### **Ecumenism at Minidoka**

Learning how best to implement ecumenism at a congregational level resulting in fluctuating levels of denominational independence at Minidoka throughout the war. Pastors initially permitted denominational clubs to form within the ecumenical church,<sup>52</sup> but later encouraged them to open enrollment to all constituents of the ecumenical church.

Episcopalians' participation within the ecumenical program moved in the opposite direction as the group became increasingly independent from the federated church. However, the most complete division within Minidoka's Federated Church was generational. Other individuals and religious groups, like the Seventh Day Adventists, almost never joined other Protestants for religious activities. Whether pastors tried to translate the ideal of ecumenism into worship practices or merely wanted all Protestants to refrain from denominational meetings, their practical approaches and interest changed over time.<sup>53</sup>

Mainline leaders in the camps sought to unite Protestants of different denominations and generations through church groups and camp-wide events. Many Seattleites had moved their prewar church groups to the camp without changing their denominational constituency. Members enjoyed the familiar companionship and return to routine, but most welcomed

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<sup>51</sup>Chapman to Roy P. Adams, Oriental Missionary Society, 16 May 1944, Box 1/Fld 31, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>52</sup>They stated that "provisions may be made for special denominational Communion Services, prayer meetings, and the like at other hours on Sundays or week days." Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches, 20 July 1942.

<sup>53</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 19 Sept 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.



other denominations when prompted. Margaret Peppers, a white Episcopal deaconess from Seattle, continued leading her prewar Ladies' Aid Society, which integrated missionary and social aid work with devotional practices. At the suggestion of Everett Thompson she organized Issei women's groups open to all.<sup>54</sup> Choir members from the different prewar churches similarly united as one.

Youth groups were the most successful non-denominational group in all camps. In addition to weekly meetings for young people, Protestant leaders organized Church Vacation School much like those offered before the war, but now church members only had the option of one Protestant school. With few other recreational options, most Minidoka parents chose to send their children to the religious summer school.<sup>55</sup> The inspiration for this program came from collaboration between Gordon Chapman of the Protestant Commission and WRA officials in Washington, D.C. encouraged all camp churches to sponsor Protestant Church Vacation Schools,<sup>56</sup> but Minidoka's leaders invited Buddhist and Roman Catholic leaders to teach separate courses as well.<sup>57</sup> The administrators, schoolteachers, federated church leaders and volunteers at Minidoka divided school children into one of the three authorized groups. Given permission to use the school buildings, they attended religious instruction, joined in athletic events and worked at handicrafts and art. During the first summer at Minidoka, five Buddhist priests led sessions for Buddhist children, while the Catholic

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<sup>54</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>55</sup>Of the 329 students at Huntville Elementary School (one of the Minidoka's two elementary schools), 240 enrolled in the school. Arthur Kleinkopf, *Relocation Center Diary*, 28 June 1943, 218.

<sup>56</sup>Each session ran two weeks. "Church Vacation Schools to Start," *Minidoka Irrigator*, 27 June 1943, 3.

<sup>57</sup>Thompson to Gertrude Apel, 18 June 1943, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

Vacation School benefited from the aid of two nuns from the Maryknoll School in Seattle.<sup>58</sup>

With their disproportionately large amount of support, Protestants were able to hold a separate class for each grade level within each school, including high school, twenty total classes.<sup>59</sup>

Catholics followed the curriculum of the Seattle Maryknoll School,<sup>60</sup> while classes for Protestants used “standard” interdenominational texts.<sup>61</sup> Since the reading material likely presented one narrative, a wide range of biblical interpretations and denominational traditions were left out. Perhaps in an attempt to avoid conflict, leaders designed classes that would allow teachers to avoid denominationally contentious material. Protestant high school students chose among sessions such as the “Life and Teachings of Jesus,” “Modern Christian Heroes,” the “Christian Roots of American Democracy” and more introspective topics like “On Being a Real Person.”<sup>62</sup> Church leaders offered elementary students a similar range of topics, including Christian poetry and early Christian history.<sup>63</sup> At the conclusion of two weeks of summer school, a commencement ceremony led graduates through pledges of

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<sup>58</sup>Father Tibesar had planned to hold small classes in his office before the nuns arrived. Thompson to Apel, 18 June 1943.

<sup>59</sup>“Church Vacation School,” “The Federated Church Herald,” 4 Jun 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

<sup>60</sup>“Catholic Summer Schools Start,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 14 Aug 1943, 8.

<sup>61</sup>Thompson to Apel, 18 June 1943.

<sup>62</sup>“Christian Summer Schools Offer Many Courses,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 31 July 1943, 6.

<sup>63</sup>After a brisk 15-minute worship meeting, students attended three 40-minute classes each morning before turning to more recreational activities. “Federated Church Summer School,” 3-13 August 1943, Reel 331, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB. Poston’s Daily Vacation Bible School sponsored similar activities, but students met for lessons for only one hour of the day. Poston religion report, 24-29 Aug 1942, Reel 259, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

allegiance to the United States and Christian flags and the Bible. Protestants and Catholics combined their services, while Buddhists arranged a separate ceremony.<sup>64</sup>

While summer school sessions followed an ecumenical pattern, a number of Minidoka's Vacation Bible students also attended denominational summer camps around the country before the school year began. Some camps required no payment while others gave half scholarships to incarcerated.<sup>65</sup> Most mainline denominations sponsored incarcerated children—and adults—to attend their summer camps.<sup>66</sup> Fukuyama volunteered at a Baptist summer camp where he gave lessons about home mission programs and how they worked with different racial groups in the United States.<sup>67</sup> Experimental ecumenical camps inside the church and denominational camps outside reflected the pattern of adult worship during the incarceration.

However, WRA staff and church volunteers offered a camping experience for children remaining in camp that extended their ecumenical summer education. In 1944, 138 boys and girls “vacationed” in the Sawtooth Mountains at a Baptist Church Camp.<sup>68</sup> A high school science teacher led that program with the help of eleven Nikkei cooks, church workers and other volunteers. Arthur Kleinkopf, the school superintendent, reported that they had a “glorious time” and the program “was even beyond expectations . . . and no trouble of any

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<sup>64</sup>“Church Vacation Schools Hold Commencement,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 17 July 1943, 5.

<sup>65</sup>Fukuyama, A Report of my Work at Minidoka, August 1942-August 1945, Box 7/Fld Evacuation—Japanese American, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>66</sup>Participating denominations included Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. “Summer Camps,” “The Federated Church Herald,” 4 Jun 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

<sup>67</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 20 July 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>68</sup>Kleinkopf, 31 July 1944, 414.

kind had occurred.”<sup>69</sup> While primarily recreational, Minidoka camping excursions were sponsored by multiple denominations with the understanding that the experience would be ecumenical.

Unlike the ecumenical activities above that could ostensibly avoid challenging their unity, doctrinal and liturgical differences forced Christians to find creative solutions and make compromises. Episcopalians faced this challenge when working with other mainline denominations. For doctrinal reasons, Episcopalians in all camps met separately for communion. While Episcopalians are permitted to participate in eucharist (communion) services led by non-Episcopalians, the former do not believe their consecration of the host achieves the same end. In a space between Catholics’ transubstantiation, in which the bread and wine turn into the literal body and blood of Christ, and the symbolic reenactment of the Last Supper conducted by most Protestant churches, Anglicans believe in consubstantiation, where the Real Presence of Christ unites with the bread and wine. Since only an Anglican priest can affect that transformation, Episcopal incarcerated required the presence of their own clergy. As occurred among incarcerated Catholics, a shortage of Episcopal Nikkei priests required the leaders of several local Episcopal churches to visit some camps regularly to administer the sacrament.

Minidoka’s resident Episcopal priest, Joseph Kitagawa, initially led separate communion services, but eventually offered full church services. Observing the initial arrangement, an outside Episcopalian assessed, “Bishop Reifsnider [the bishop appointed to coordinate Episcopal activities for Nikkei] told them we would cooperate, but also insisted

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<sup>69</sup>Kleinkopf, 4 Aug 1944, 416-7.

on having our own Communion services. The result is rather confusing.”<sup>70</sup> While Episcopal priests made efforts to avoid scheduling their services and Sunday School meetings at the same time as those offered by the federated church, few of their congregants opted to attend both meetings. Episcopalians at most other camps followed a similar process of divergence.<sup>71</sup>

Theological and liturgical difference may have encouraged Episcopalians to break away from the ecumenical church. The Federated Church was limited to whatever educational materials it received as donations, so leaders had little control over the content. Jane Chase, an employee of the Episcopal diocese of Oregon, worried that “her” children were absorbing inaccurate, by Episcopal teachings, information at the Federated Sunday School. She examined the workbooks the children were “puzzled about” and found “they were good Baptist material with a most literal interpretation of Genesis.” One question asked, “‘Why does the serpent crawl on his belly,’ and they were evidently supposed to explain it literally as a curse of God.” Bemoaning the students’ eventual need to “unlearn most [of the material] someday,” Chase noted that Deaconess Peppers planned to teach separate lessons for Episcopalians, but worried this would just confuse the children further.<sup>72</sup> Episcopalians ultimately found moving back and forth between their church and the ecumenical church too difficult.

The issue of mixed Sunday School materials did not bother just the Episcopalians. Reliance on outside aid led to a haphazard religious education program. Since the Baptist

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<sup>70</sup>Jane Chase, “My Dear Bishop: A Report from Minidoka, 23 Nov 1942,” *Idaho Yesterdays* 44:2 (Summer 2000): 6.

<sup>71</sup>A JERS employee observed a similar “schism” at an Arizona camp. “Religious Life in the Gila Community,” 2 Nov 1942, Reel 284, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>72</sup>Chase, 6.

Home Mission Society donated the material described above, the text naturally supported Baptist theologies. Young Minidokans also received religious magazines from the Presbyterian Board.<sup>73</sup> Since denominations divided aid responsibilities by camp and age group, few young people followed the same denomination's interpretations throughout their time in camp.<sup>74</sup> After a year of attempting to forge ecumenical teachings from denominational sources, leaders purchased their own material and asked the Protestant Commission for a partial reimbursement.<sup>75</sup>

Divergences within theologies and biblical interpretation influenced the choices of some Episcopalians, but liturgical differences also played a role. The predominance of leaders from low church traditions may have exacerbated conflicts with Episcopalians accustomed to higher church practices. The liturgies of high churches are more elaborate and exhibit more formal clerical dress, incorporate incense and processions into the service and decorate the sanctuary with more images and ornaments than are found within low churches. While variations exist among congregations, Roman Catholics and Episcopalians generally design services that are more complex liturgically than non-Episcopalian Protestants. The high proportion of Baptist and Methodist pastors within the camps naturally caused worship services to more closely resemble a style from those traditions. One of Thompson's reports hinted that liturgy may have been a topic of discontent, though the comment could be his

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<sup>73</sup>Reifsnider to Gillett, 17 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 12, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>74</sup>For example, in 1943, Congregationalists supplied materials for Minidoka's upper grades, while Methodists provided for young Sunday School students. The Protestant Commission coordinated some of these donations, but Chapman never managed all educational donations to any one camp. A.C. Knudten to Gillett, 4 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 12, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>75</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943. Chapman to Gillett, 6 June 1944, Box 1/Fld 9, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

way to describe the attitudes of Episcopalians. Amidst other complaints about this rift between Episcopalians and other denominations, he once dismissed the religious group by vaguely concluding, “Of course, they are high church,” as if that explained why Episcopalians declined to fully merge with other Protestants. Episcopalians’ desire for more structured or elaborate services may have influenced this comment.

Episcopalians at Minidoka may never have been interested in or committed to the ecumenical program. Most evidence of this nature comes from sources outside of Minidoka’s Episcopal Church, so do not tell us what Episcopalians were thinking. Jane Chase described their lack of interest during the first months of camp. She wrote, “The Methodists and Baptists are all enthused over forming a Federated Church and quite resent our even having our own Communion Service. . . equally of course our people don’t like it.”<sup>76</sup> The resentment she felt may not have been widespread, but it existed. Thompson complained that Episcopalians lacked commitment to the ecumenical project and “instinctively” prioritized their separate church over unified efforts.<sup>77</sup> He considered them to be the “most thorny problem” in the church,<sup>78</sup> believing they imagined or wanted “a federation of churches rather than a Federated Church.”<sup>79</sup> However, Thompson seemed to have a greater problem with the Episcopal Church and its hierarchy broadly because he only says complimentary things about Kitagawa and even somewhat excuses the denomination’s separation, suggesting that hierarchical pressures were forcing Minidokan Episcopalians to

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<sup>76</sup>Jane Chase, “My Dear Bishop: A Report from Minidoka, 23 Nov 1942,” *Idaho Yesterdays* 44:2 (Summer 2000): 6.

<sup>77</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>78</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>79</sup>Thompson to Gertrude Apel, 18 June 1943, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

arrange and attend separate services.<sup>80</sup> A history of Japanese American Episcopalians written decades after the war supported Thompson's charge by failing to mention even the existence of Protestant ecumenism within the camps.<sup>81</sup> Ecumenism was not their central goal.

The spirit of ecumenism applied to all units within the church, not just denominational. The division between generational groups was pronounced in every camp. Leaders constantly attempted to facilitate cooperation between the two with little success. Some Nisei complained that there were too many "Japanese programs," which they believed should be discouraged in order to "promote more distinctly American programs."<sup>82</sup> In addition to language barriers, the groups favored different styles of worship, different theologies and different activities. Protestant Nisei sponsored regular social events that welcomed non-Christians, while Issei activities were largely comprised of Bible study groups and prayer meetings. Issei typically preferred a more conservative interpretation of the Bible as well. Aside from obligatory cooperation on holidays, the two groups rarely interacted. The pattern continued after returning to Seattle, when the generations formed separate churches.

In the case of Minidoka, the generational rift within the federated church was exacerbated by a disagreement over the presence of charismatic missionaries from the outside.<sup>83</sup> Marie Jeurgensen, an Assemblies of God missionary, and Miss Johnson, a former

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<sup>80</sup>Thompson to Apel, 18 June 1943.

<sup>81</sup>Andrew N. Otani, *A History of Japanese-American Episcopal Churches* (1980).

<sup>82</sup>Chapman to Reifsnider, 26 Oct 1942.

<sup>83</sup>Also demonstrative of the division between Issei and Nisei in the Federated Church, each group regularly sent separate checks to the same source for foreign missions or war relief. For special holidays when Issei and Nisei worshiped together a single check might be sent. The Federated Church School sent yet another separate amount. In 1943, members of the Federated Church School at Minidoka gave \$540 to foreign mission efforts. They gave even more the following year (\$569). Mary Imayanagita to Gillett, 26 May 1944 & Fukuyama to



Nazarene pastor from Washington, visited Minidoka and “won the approval” of the Reverend Kodaira, who, on the behalf of the Issei Council, requested that the WRA approve their continued work in the camp. The Nisei Council opposed this decision on the grounds that the two women had no former members within the camp, a prerequisite of the WRA’s policy on outside religious workers.<sup>84</sup> The subtext of their stand, however, seemed to have more to do with the Nisei’s negative opinions about Pentecostalism, despite Jeurgensen’s insistence that she and her denomination fully supported their ecumenical work. In any case, she explained that her organization was “absolutely free from what is usually termed ‘Pentecostal.’”<sup>85</sup> A white missionary who knew her in Japan confirmed that she was “quiet and well-behaved” and explained that even though Assemblies of God was identified as Pentecostal, they “did not seem to be particularly noisy . . . and seem to be doing a good work.”<sup>86</sup> When the two generational councils at Minidoka met, their debate, as Thompson described it, “produced more heat than light” and leaders could not reach an amiable conclusion.<sup>87</sup> However, Juergensen did join the missionary staff at Minidoka.<sup>88</sup> In this case, a combination of generational and denominational tensions affected ecumenism.

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Gillett, 11 Jan 1945, Box 1/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA; Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943; Fukuyama, A Report of my Work at Minidoka: August 1942-August 1945, Box 7/Fld Evacuation—Japanese American, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>84</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>85</sup>Marie Juergensen to Chapman, 5 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 20, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>86</sup>Chapman to Thompson, 16 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 20, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>87</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>88</sup>Protestant Ministers and Missionaries Now Laboring in W.R.A. Relocation Centers, Mar 1944, Box 4/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

As Episcopalians and young people moved further from a united church, Protestant ministers devoted to ecumenism tried to use holidays as an opportunity to mend the divisions of generation and denomination in the church, but had little success. Denominational unity did not ever fully manifest itself at Christmas. Episcopalians offered a separate mass on Christmas Eve as an addition to the religious programs in 1942, but they celebrated at the same time as the Federated Church the following year. The Episcopal Bishop of Idaho led services with Reverends Shoji and Kitagawa on Christmas in 1943.<sup>89</sup> The presence of the Bishop of Idaho on an important holiday acknowledged that their denomination had not forgotten Episcopal incarcerated, but it also suggests they, or at least this bishop, had little interest in the camp's experimental ecumenism. In 1943, Issei and Nisei were invited to celebrate Christmas services together.<sup>90</sup> While the Nisei and Issei usually united for these celebrations, the interactions did not inspire a reunification.

Other people simply had no interest in ecumenism. They were happy within their denomination and saw no reason to leave it. While most Salvation Army officers were incorporated within federated church councils,<sup>91</sup> Adjutant Tozo Abe led separate, well-attended meetings at Heart Mountain from October 1942 to the end of the war. Two more officers helped him lead services and evangelize to incarcerated with no religious affiliation.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>“Special Episcopal Christmas Service,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 18 Dec 1943, 3. “Church Program,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 18 Dec 1943, 4.

<sup>90</sup>“Issei-Nisei Christmas Services,” *Minidoka Herald*, 19 Dec 1943, 1.

<sup>91</sup>The Salvation Army shares its central theological beliefs with mainstream Protestantism and recognizes an official ordination. The most significant difference between the two is that the former does not acknowledge or practice the sacraments of baptism and communion. Members of the Salvation Army who participated in ecumenical services at camp likely understood the rituals differently than other attendees.

<sup>92</sup>Suzuki, *Ministry*, 232-3.

Like the Episcopal services, Abe's were held at an early hour so his congregants could also attend the ecumenical church, but few did so.<sup>93</sup>

Several camps supported autonomous Seventh Day Adventist congregations that never attempted union with ecumenical groups. Individual Adventists joined the latter, perhaps due to their denomination's shortage of clergy in the camps.<sup>94</sup> Since only five ordained Adventist Nikkei lived in the camps and no white pastors, not every camp had a continuous, autonomous Seventh Day Adventist congregation, though two hundred Nikkei Adventists lived along the coast at the time of Pearl Harbor.<sup>95</sup> The Idaho Conference of Adventists eventually hired William Hiroshima as a pastor for the twenty Adventist Minidokans, but the group was never formally recognized by camp authorities or the interfaith council.<sup>96</sup> Hiroshima bicycled around camp to lead weekly meetings and Bible study groups.<sup>97</sup> At Granada, in Colorado, incarcerated Adventists received a large number of visitors from the outside.<sup>98</sup> Granada was the only camp to list an Adventist pastor within the Federated Church.<sup>99</sup> This minister, George Kiyabu, held Adventist prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings, youth fellowship on Fridays and Sabbath School and services on Saturdays in addition to preaching in the ecumenical church on Sundays. These Adventist

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<sup>93</sup>Suzuki, *Ministry*, 232.

<sup>94</sup>A pastor at Heart Mountain wrote that the Seventh Day Adventists were the only group "outside of [their] folds." Unoura to Chapman, 6 Feb 1943.

<sup>95</sup>Bill Knott, "Prisoners of Hope," *The Adventist Review*, 28 Sept 2000, 8-13.

<sup>96</sup>"Reply to Questions of Religious Policies," 30 Mar 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>97</sup>Bill Knott, "Surviving Injustice," *The Adventist Review*, 28 Sept 2000, 14-23.

<sup>98</sup>Knott, "Prisoners of Hope," 8-13.

<sup>99</sup>"Protestant Ministers and Missionaries Now Laboring in WRA Relocation Centers," Mar 1944, Box 4/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

meetings and events were listed in the ecumenical church's newsletter.<sup>100</sup> Through these efforts, Kiyabu educate non-Adventists about his religion.<sup>101</sup> At camps with fewer members, Adventists met for informal Bible study and a local pastor would occasionally visit to conduct services. Despite relatively small numbers, Adventists held occasional evangelistic meetings in camp,<sup>102</sup> including one that attracted 800 attendees.<sup>103</sup> At least fifty Nikkei converted to Adventism in the camps and dozens more joined the church while attending Adventist colleges in the east that welcomed Nikkei students.<sup>104</sup>

### **Duties of the Ecumenical Churches**

Regardless of disagreements over doctrine and practices, the camp churches had unique roles to fulfill. After a year in camp, the Federated Church at Minidoka defined its three primary aims: "assistance in personal problems, aid in relocation, and the development of Christian faith and character."<sup>105</sup> Many of the Nikkei too proud to approach the Social Welfare Division, too uncomfortable to ask the WRA for help or those who did not wish to reveal their personal problems to strangers, would willingly talked to pastors or women missionaries in confidence. The Federated Church organized a social services committee to

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<sup>100</sup>"Seventh Day Adventists News," *Granada Christian Church News*, 1 Nov 1942 [misdated 1 Nov 1941], Reel 303, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB; Lester Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II* (Berkeley, CA: Yardbird Press, 1979), 210.

<sup>101</sup>"We are Seventh Day Adventists," *Granada Christian Church News*, 13 Dec 1942, Reel 303, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>102</sup>"Radio Preacher to Speak at Rally," Heart Mountain General Information Bulletin, 15 Oct 1942, Box 1/Fld 12, Constantine Panunzio Collection (Collection Number 1636), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>103</sup>Knott, "Prisoners of Hope."

<sup>104</sup>Knott, "Prisoners of Hope."

<sup>105</sup>"Religious Activities in Minidoka," *Minidoka Irrigator*, 25 Sept 1943, Welcome Tuleans Issue.

counsel these people and help meet physical needs through donations.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, congregants often trusted church leaders more than WRA officials when weighing options for resettlement. Items relating to resettlement appeared in church bulletins frequently, and it was a topic of church-sponsored lectures in all camps. Regular meetings about resettlement met a practical need and directed the attention of incarcerated towards their futures beyond the barbed wire. Church attendance or membership was not necessary. Stressing the former two aims, the church advertised its open door policy, “For those of you who haven’t discovered this haven, we extend you an invitation to visit us. The Church exists to help people. It is assisting in the relocation of family units and students. It will do anything humanly possible to assist people.”<sup>107</sup> Church leaders did not force themselves on non-Christians, but wanted to clarify that they would help anyone and everyone.

WRA officials depended on the churches’ help as well, not only in terms of resettlement, but for disciplinary and morale problems within the camp.<sup>108</sup> Religious leaders regularly met with camp officials to discuss morale and help mediate disputes between incarcerated and administrators.<sup>109</sup> The WRA staff at several camps asked Christian leaders to manage juvenile disciplinary problems. A white teacher observed this practice at Minidoka: “I had only one discipline problem, and I didn’t blame him one bit. He had a right to be as angry as he was. Between Father Kitagawa and Father Tibbisart [*sic*], they took care of the

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<sup>106</sup>Fukuyama to DeYoung, 14 Dec 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>107</sup>“Busiest Office in Hunt,” “The Federated Church Herald,” 2 Jan 1944, Box 1/Fld 6, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

<sup>108</sup>Robert W. Coombs, interview by Henry Yui, 3 June 1993, Florin Japanese-American Citizens League Oral History Project. Ralph Merritt to Chapman, 18 June 1943, Box 1/Fld 1, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>109</sup>James Sakoda, “The ‘Residue’: The Unresettled Minidokans, 1943-1945,” in *Views from Within: The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study*, ed. Yuji Ichioka (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, 1989), 263.

situation, and he became a very well-adjusted young man. It worked out very well.” Camp administrators recognized the stress caused by the incarceration and frequently hesitated to inflict unwarranted punishment, perhaps realizing that a further limitation of rights could intensify problems. We cannot know today if administrators referred troublesome youth to Christian clergy in hope of their eventual conversion and affirmation of American life or simply because pastors were the closest thing they had to counselors or social workers.

Notably, the development of Christian faith was the last priority of the Federated Church’s three goals, but that is not to say spiritual counseling was not a priority of pastors or that evangelism did not occur in the camps. Perhaps the greatest and most vital challenge for ministers in the camps was to keep their congregants—and themselves—from losing faith entirely in the face of such uncertainty. Many tactics looked identical to activities on any church calendar—skits, dances, Bible study, prayer meetings and musical groups. For example, when asked in an interview how ministers kept the spirits of their congregation up, Nagano recollected a chorus book he and friends compiled, *101 Choruses*. For him, “hymns of assurance and joy” were “very therapeutic . . . it meant so much . . . to have that very naïve and simple faith in God in a time of uneasy, unknown future.”<sup>110</sup> Musical distractions were popular in all camps and the churches held regular “singspiration” gatherings to lift one another’s spirits.

Within their preaching and pastoral counseling, some ministers continued metaphors used in the months prior to incarcerations. Daisuke Kitagawa, the brother of Minidoka’s Joseph Kitagawa, felt that he preached the best sermons of his life during this time as people were more receptive, worshipping with greater sincerity. He later wrote that he and the incarcerated congregation “shared the awesome sense of standing before the Judgment

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<sup>110</sup>Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.

Seat.”<sup>111</sup> The bond created by common difficulties increased solidarity within the Japanese Christian community and encouraged creative theologies among congregants and with their pastor.

Paul Nagano invoked the story of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness to describe the experiences of Japanese American incarceration. He identified with the experience of aimless, unproductive wandering for an uncertain period of time in an environment quite similar to the “wilderness” described in the Book of Exodus. Just as the Israelites were restricted from establishing a stable community for forty years in the desert, the incarceration put the lives of students, farmers and other Nikkei on hold, halting the progress of individuals and communities. Jitsuo Morikawa, another pastor at Poston, and several white church workers made a similar parallel, using the theme “A Home in the Wilderness.” They expanded the metaphor to include Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness and spoke of the incarceration as their cross to bear.<sup>112</sup> Decades after the war, Nagano extended the metaphor, claiming the incarceration “identified and set them apart as a people” just as the wilderness experience did for the Israelites.<sup>113</sup> This uniqueness helped solidify his interest in reformulating a Christian theology that would be meaningful for Japanese Americans.

Daisuke Kitagawa used a different aspect of the same metaphor, quoting the Israelites’ complaints in the wilderness. The liberated Israelites moaned, “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread

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<sup>111</sup>Daisuke Kitagawa, *Issei and Nisei* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 71.

<sup>112</sup>Poston religion report, 2 Aug 1942, Reel 259, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>113</sup>Nagano, “United States Concentration Camps,” *American Baptist Quarterly* 13:1 (March 1994): 48.

to the full” (Exodus 16:3).<sup>114</sup> Speaking to Nisei leaving the camps, he used this passage to warn them not to look back to the security of camp, but to face the challenges of resettlement, knowing they would be challenged many times before coming to the Promised Land. Alice Kono, a young layperson living in Utah, shared a similar perspective, pointing out that the Israelites’ “lack of faith that God could and would protect them” resulted in their “utter destruction.”<sup>115</sup> Only two of the Israelites who left Egypt were allowed to enter the Promised Land; the rest perished in the wilderness as punishment for their doubt. Kitagawa and Kono used this theme from Exodus to provide a warning, but also hope. A white pastor preaching at Poston used Abraham’s story in a similar way, stressing the importance of trusting and following God.<sup>116</sup>

While Nagano and Kitagawa described the incarceration as a trial, Fukuyama focused on its benefits. He frequently meditated on a verse from Esther, “Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”<sup>117</sup> He recognized that the training he was receiving at Minidoka was “abnormal,”<sup>118</sup> but embraced the challenges he encountered. He agreed with a young person that the “Christian attitude of brotherliness is the only effective way of bringing about a permanent world peace. No political, economic, or social reform can match the deep, sincere, and non-prejudiced mind with which Christians are

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<sup>114</sup>Kitagawa, *Issei and Nisei*, 140-141.

<sup>115</sup>Alice Kono, “The Wilderness Experience,” *Young People’s Fellowship News*, Ogden Christian Union Church, July 1944, Box 5/Fld 15, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>116</sup>Sermon by Frank Herron Smith, Poston religion report, 16 Aug 1942, Reel 259, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>117</sup>Fukuyama, A Report of my Work at Minidoka.

<sup>118</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 3 Dec 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.



bridging the gaps of misunderstanding among people.”<sup>119</sup> He and others sought to show how the incarceration was uniting Japanese and American Protestantism, a model that could be replicated within other groups. But he did not mention its limited success within the camps.

Fukuyama took inspiration from unusual sources that were particular to the incarceration. During the harvest season he left camp with many other people to harvest crops on local farms that lacked their usual labor force because of the war. In 1944, this work resulted in Fukuyama’s “Meditations in a Potato Field,”<sup>120</sup> a sermon he delivered upon his return to camp.<sup>121</sup> While the metaphor of a harvest of souls is not infrequently used in Christian literature or sermons, Fukuyama’s examples were particularly fitting for Southern Idaho. When speaking of “obstacles to maturity,” he compared the risk of sunburned potatoes “caused by cracks in the ground exposing potato to sunlight” to the “bitterness and cynicism” prevalent in camp.<sup>122</sup> In such ways, he used aspects of the incarceration to reinforce his own faith and that of others. However, visiting ministers tended to repeat several of the same motifs, irritating some incarcerated. At Manzanar, a camp in a mountainous region, visitors based sermons on “I Will Lift up Mine Eyes unto the Hills” so frequently that Nisei were reportedly “sick of the hills” and “sick of every preacher choosing that text.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>Fukuyama, Christmas Letter, 16 Dec 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>120</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 31 Oct 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>121</sup>He later changed its name to “Harvest Meditations.” Fukuyama to Adkins, 20 Nov 1944.

<sup>122</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 31 Oct 1944.

<sup>123</sup>Suzuki, *Ministry*, 239-240.

Religious leaders also reminded incarcerated that while they might think their situation was difficult, other people around the world were suffering much more. These occasions were reminiscent of Lester Suzuki reprimanding his congregants for their poor attitudes during the days preceding their eviction. A 1943 letter from the Protestant Commission reminded Nikkei ministers of the same message, writing that their “affliction has been light . . . in comparison with what the Christian clergy and laity of Europe and parts of Asia have had to suffer.”<sup>124</sup> Dr. Yuasa, a visiting pastor, took this thread to the extreme, telling Minidokans that they were “lolling in idleness and luxury compared to people in wartime Japan . . . and not suffering from the war yet.” He disagreed with people who saw a spiritual benefit to their sacrifices, saying, “Christians in American lacked the earnestness and consecration of Japanese Christians.”<sup>125</sup> Fukuyama and others invoked the greater suffering of others as well, but not with so harsh a tone. Their aim was not to instill guilt, but to encourage congregants to view their situation from a different perspective.

In a private letter to Andrews and his wife, Fukuyama expressed gratitude for the Minidokans’ “extremely privileged” experience when considering the struggles of “the Burmese in India, the Chinese in far West China, [and] millions of war prisoners separated from their loved ones throughout the world . . . at Christmas time.” While he regretted that some incarcerated “cannot see anything but release from the boundaries of our Center,” he argued that “we should be grateful for life, a great degree of freedom and liberty, sympathetic authorities, and the possibilities for creative growth right here in Minidoka.”<sup>126</sup> A number of

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<sup>124</sup>Protestant Commission to Japanese Ministers in the United States, 9 June 1943, Box 4/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>125</sup>As recorded in Fukuyama to Adkins, 1 Oct 1944.

<sup>126</sup>Fukuyama to the Reverend and Mrs. Andrews, 16 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 44, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

incarcerees shared Fukuyama's attitude and looked for positive experiences within the incarceration.

Besides the day-to-day activities of every church in every camp, some leaders held occasional revivals or other special events to encourage Christians and attract others. Prior to their first Easter at Minidoka, pastors of the federated church sponsored a (Christian) Religious Emphasis Week,<sup>127</sup> which became an annual occurrence featuring local speakers of many denominations. Nearly a hundred people gave a "confession of faith" that Easter.<sup>128</sup> After a year at Minidoka, the Federal Council of Churches helped leaders to organize a National Christian Mission with speakers from around the country.<sup>129</sup>

Membership training classes for Issei and Nisei followed to accommodate the new members acquired during the week. Andrews took those who desired baptism by immersion to the First Baptist Church in Twin Falls.<sup>130</sup> On occasion, they held baptismal services at the Baptist Church in Jerome instead to "make more and different contacts" within the local communities.<sup>131</sup> Fukuyama recorded that the Federated Church baptized 103 young people at Minidoka, half of whom came from a non-Christian background. Families baptized nine babies and dedicated eleven to the church. Twenty-two Methodists were confirmed. A number of Nikkei requested baptism soon after leaving camp as well.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>"Re-Dedicatory Meetings Scheduled for this Week," *Minidoka Irrigator*, 29 Mar 1943, 2.

<sup>128</sup>Thompson to Apel, 18 June 1943.

<sup>129</sup>Fukuyama, A Report of my Work at Minidoka.

<sup>130</sup>Fukuyama, A Report of my Work at Minidoka.

<sup>131</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 9 Feb 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908- 003, UW.

<sup>132</sup>The Catholic Church at Minidoka baptized forty-one new members during the war, but also did not "extend . . . more than ordinary effort toward this end." Mary Hirashige to Andrews, 25 June 1942, Box 1/Fld 45, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW. Thomas to Andrews, 8 Sept 1944, Box 1/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW. James Sakamoto, "Report on Seattle's Maryknoll,"

Christians continuously left camp, but church membership remained steady. Fukuyama remarked that he knew less than half of the Nisei congregation by the fall of 1944 because many Buddhists had joined and some Christians began attending the camp's church for the first time.<sup>133</sup> Nagano joked that the ministers had a "captive audience," drawing many people toward Christianity's "wonderful message of the Savior."<sup>134</sup> Given the degree of "uncertainty and oppression," Nagano thought emphasizing the concept of a savior resulted in a "tremendous response, and . . . a lot of them became Christians."<sup>135</sup> The truth within his joke is the fact that many incarcerated began attending church as a way to occupy their time.<sup>136</sup> As they formed bonds with church members and listened to the gospel, many converted. Had they converted due to a perceived pressure from evangelists, the WRA or other sources, it could be assumed that conversions would occur earlier in the war, but many incarcerated who attended church in the camps did not convert until resettlement or after the war.<sup>137</sup>

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April 1944, in Takeo Koiwa ed., *Chibes\_a-shi no kotodomo: About Father Tibesar* (Tokyo: Gengokai, 1968), 59.

<sup>133</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 20 Nov 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>134</sup>Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.

<sup>135</sup>Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.

<sup>136</sup>An incarcerated hired to study life in the camps, Tamie Tsuchiyama, made this observation. Participation in Buddhist and Christian activities increased in the camps. Tsuchiyama, "Preliminary Report: Santa Anita," 31 July 1942, Reel 016, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB. Also, "Letter from Bob Okazaki to Andrews," 24 Feb 1943, Box 2/Fld 2, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW; Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 168; and Gary Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance in America's Concentration Camps" *Phylon* 45:3 (Third Quarter 1981): 224.

<sup>137</sup>Yosh to Andrews, 3 Nov 1943, Box 2/Fld 1, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW and Takeo and Leatrice Nakano, *Within the Barbed Wire Fence: A Japanese Man's Account of his Internment in Canada* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 84.

The WRA and most religious leaders involved with the camps went to great efforts to avoid giving the impression that coercive evangelism occurred in the camps. The vast majority of evidence suggests this was true: the WRA required the interfaith and community councils to approve new pastors from the outside in order to “keep out groups “which have no other purpose than proselytizing.”<sup>138</sup> When occasional revivals took place, participation was entirely voluntary. However, John Howard argued that “the WRA relied on religious organizing, revivals, and other modes of Protestant evangelism to shape the identity and conduct of their wards.”<sup>139</sup> Since Howard’s research examined the Arkansas camps, his data may have been skewed by Southern evangelist attitudes that were not representative of experiences in the rest of the country. However, he offered no evidence to support his claims that “officials advocated conversion” or invited missionaries to “win over the majority Buddhist population.”<sup>140</sup> If pressure to convert occurred, it came from Nikkei pastors and evangelists unassociated with the WRA or Protestant Commission. Leaders of the latter also made a point to demonstrate that it was not an evangelistic organization, officially recognizing the rights of Roman Catholics, Buddhists and anyone else to “enjoy the same privileges” as Protestant incarcerated.<sup>141</sup> Religious leaders at Minidoka even circumvented Idaho education laws that incorporated religious teachings within the public school system in

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<sup>138</sup>WRA Committee on Religion, The problem of setting up a policy for religious worship.

<sup>139</sup>John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 151.

<sup>140</sup>Howard also wrote of the “inherently supremacist activity” of evangelism implying that it only applied to Christians. Howard, 172-3.

<sup>141</sup>Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches, 20 July 1942.

order to avoid forcing Christian teachings on non-Christians.<sup>142</sup> The vacation schools may have been their compromise to the system—offer voluntary religious education for everyone outside of school term.

### **White Church Workers at Minidoka**

White religious leaders moved to towns near the camps, relying on denominational financial support. Five such people from Seattle immediately followed their flock to Southern Idaho: Emery Andrews, Everett Thompson, Esther McCullough, Margaret Peppers and Leopold Tibesar. Nora Bowman, Ethel Hempstead, Marie Juergensen and Gladys Kaiser. Charles joined later. Mary Andrews and Zora Thompson accompanied their husbands as did the Andrews children. While there was some initial confusion whether or not they would all be allowed to regularly enter the camp, WRA officials were exceedingly cooperative when religious workers had established relationships with a camp's population and their Nikkei congregants petitioned denominational and WRA authorities for their presence.<sup>143</sup> In addition to the comfort of retaining their prewar leaders, incarcerated in many camps benefited from the experience of American missionaries who were forced to leave Japan or its occupied territories when the United States entered the war. Like some leaders of ethnic denominational churches in the United States, these men and women were usually fluent in Japanese and had worked with Japanese communities for years in both Japan and the United

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<sup>142</sup>Buddhist, Catholic and Protestant leaders met with Minidoka school administrators to find a compromise. All agreed that the school system should “foster . . . spiritual and growth.” Instructors occasionally lectured to Buddhist and Christian youth groups outside of school and help train Sunday School teachers about “character education.” “Religious Workers Meeting,” 12 Jan 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB. Kleinkopf, 8 Oct 1942, 16-17 & 11 May 1943, 171-2.

<sup>143</sup>One account claimed that eight hundred young people asked the WRA to allow Thompson to continue his work at Minidoka. Warren to Harvey Coverley, Assistant Regional Director of the WRA, 31 Mar 1942, Box 1/Fld 9, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

States. Many incarcerated appreciated their unique perspective on racial problems.<sup>144</sup> Some returned missionaries managed to smooth relations among Nikkei ministers and foster a “cooperative spirit” between the Protestant and Buddhist churches within the camps.<sup>145</sup> Missionaries were generally well received by incarcerated and WRA staff.<sup>146</sup>

White Protestant leaders were not silent during the formation of the federated church, but records show that Nikkei played a more prominent role. The camp churches’ primary leaders were Nikkei, as advised by the Protestant Commission,<sup>147</sup> but they included white leaders in the rotation of preachers and frequently appointed them to chair committees, organize the Sunday School or lead choirs. Like Nikkei Protestants, white religious leaders held a range of opinions on the camps’ ecumenical arrangement. Working with incarcerated at Camp Harmony, Charles Warren, a Congregational missionary from Seattle, “believe[d] it [would] be a great opportunity lost if . . . work continued on a denominational basis,” and was “most heartily in favor of union work in religion.”<sup>148</sup> Andrews thought ecumenism “worthwhile”<sup>149</sup> and did not protest this arrangement or try to interfere with the organization of the federated church at Minidoka, but expressed many frustrations with it. He reported to

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<sup>144</sup>Ernie T. Yamamoto to Andrews, 31 Jan 1943 [the document mistakenly records the year as 1942], Box 1/Fld 52, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>145</sup>Henry Bovenkerk’s influence was apparent when the priest of Manzanar’s Buddhist church spoke at the first anniversary of the camp’s Protestant church. Merritt to Chapman, 18 June 1943, Box 1/Fld 1, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>146</sup>George Townsend defended the white religious workers at Minidoka against an erroneous report that claimed that they had “never won the Nisei” and their contributions were “ignored by both Issei and Nisei.” Townsend to Chapman, 27 June 1945, Box 4/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>147</sup>Chapman to Unoura, 20 Oct 1942, Box 1/Fld 51, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>148</sup>Warren to Coverley, Assistant Regional Director of the WRA, 31 Mar 1942.

<sup>149</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 13 Apr 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

his supervisor in the American Baptist Home Mission Society, “This church federation business is the ‘bunk.’ Things move so slowly, one does not feel like pushing. It is almost impossible to plan and work freely as one could in [his] own church<sup>150</sup> . . . because there are so many checks and limitations.”<sup>151</sup> Andrews preached and met with congregants regularly, but distanced himself from the organization of ecumenical services.

The households of Andrews, Thompson, McCullough and others served as lodging houses, tea parlors and wedding chapels throughout the war. Incarcerees shopping in town would frequently stop for a visit to talk about a particular problem or simply to enjoy the comfort of a normal home. Missionary women advertised their “Haven of Rest” in the *Irrigator*, urging incarcerated to “rest and refresh themselves” while visiting Twin Falls.<sup>152</sup> In a typical week, as many as three or four hundred incarcerated would be granted shopping passes. Another dozen or more might leave Minidoka for church activities or special occasions, like weddings.<sup>153</sup> Military police or camp administrators drove Nikkei to town and picked them up at an appointed time. Incarcerees did not require escorts and could freely conduct business. Many stayed at pastors’ homes while waiting to leave for college or jobs in the east after being released. After a number of Nikkei resettled in Twin Falls and nearby towns, white leaders working in the camps held monthly gatherings for them outside of the

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<sup>150</sup> Andrews to Thomas, 9 Mar 1943.

<sup>151</sup> Andrews to Thomas, 13 Apr 1943.

<sup>152</sup> “Haven of Rest: Welcome Sign up for Visitors,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 10 Apr 1943, 3.

<sup>153</sup> Ingress/Egress permits for the week beginning May 10, 1943, Box 2/Fld 10, Harry L. Stafford Papers: Records, 1942-1946, CSI.



camp.<sup>154</sup> On more than one occasion, youth groups of sixty or more children descended on a pastor's house during outings.<sup>155</sup>

While baptisms and weddings also took place in the Minidoka church building, many couples chose the more intimate and less institutional setting of a pastor's home. Not only did attendees get to leave camp and spend time in a real home, they received special foods or other treats. Andrews regularly offered incarcerated fruit, ice cream and flowers. One woman brought roses from a baptismal service at the Andrews' house back to camp and placed them in a special location, on a cedar chest in front of a picture of her parents.<sup>156</sup>

Monica Itoi's brother, Henry, and his fiancée, Minnie, held their wedding ceremony in Thompson's small apartment with family and close friends, but also invited incarcerated and administrators to a reception at the camp. This arrangement resembled many Minidokan Protestant weddings, though a few people arranged ceremonies at local churches. Nearly all non-Protestant couples married within the camp, since they lacked outside contacts. Rushing to wed before Henry shipped out,<sup>157</sup> Minnie and Henry's families planned the wedding in less than a week. The couple acquired a marriage license and wedding dress in Twin Falls the day after their engagement. Like most things, they had to improvise, but Minnie "made up her mind to have a full-blown civilized wedding, camp or no camp." In fact, the family felt more restricted by their impression of being "way out in the wilderness" (in Idaho) than being incarcerated. When they discovered the department stores had no veils in stock,

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<sup>154</sup>These gatherings are mentioned in several reports. One can be found in Andrews to Thomas, 3 Mar 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>155</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 19 Dec 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>156</sup>Mrs. Asuano to Andrews, 27 June 1944, Box 2/Fld 7, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>157</sup>In the end, the rush was unnecessary since the Army rejected Henry due to his poor eyesight. Sone, 221.

Minnie fashioned one complete with “an orange-blossom design” out of “a dozen baby pearl necklaces, wire and yards of netting.” Monica felt assured that her sister-in-law “could have willed even the most scraggly clumps of sagebrush to bloom calla lilies and orchids to adorn the wedding altar . . . if she had had the slightest inclination.”<sup>158</sup> The wedding notice in the *Irrigator* noted that the “sister of the groom was organist,”<sup>159</sup> but this element also took some improvisation. The couple insisted on having music during the ceremony, so, because the Thompsons lacked a piano, they acquired a battered, worn, portable organ. However, the music was so uncontrollably, blaringly loud that Monica was forced to play the wedding march from the small bathroom while seated on the toilet. Of course, the couple’s march from the kitchen to the living room only took a few steps, so she was quickly silenced. Trapped in the bathroom, Monica missed the entire ceremony, but her younger sister said the “music sounded as if it were floating right down from heaven!”<sup>160</sup>

While the Itoi wedding was a cheerful, comical celebration, continually hosting such events in one’s home must have grown tiresome. Since Andrews traveled often, the primary responsibility of attending to these visitors fell to his wife, a dutiful, if not always willing, partner. Mary Andrews kept house, raised her three youngest children in Twin Falls and hosted between 150 and 270 Nikkei visitors per month.<sup>161</sup> Over the course of the incarceration, Andrews’ family hosted 7,202 visitors at their Twin Falls house.<sup>162</sup> While

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<sup>158</sup>Sone, 202.

<sup>159</sup>Sone, 201-215. “Weddings: Yokoyama—Itoi” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 6 Mar 1943, 5.

<sup>160</sup>Sone, 209.

<sup>161</sup>Andrews reported these numbers in letters reporting his monthly activities to John Thomas of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Additionally, hand-drawn charts listing all of his activities include these visits to their Twin Falls home. Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>162</sup>Untitled Biographical Summary, 10 May 1946, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

Andrews referred to “our” house, his correspondence and reports never incorporated anecdotes about or even oblique references to Mary or his children, despite the tremendous work required of her and the difficulties they all encountered due to their association with the camp. The family was occasionally refused service at restaurants and stores in Twin Falls and the children were taunted at the public school.<sup>163</sup> Mary was close to many of the Japanese women and they appreciated her presence. She ran errands for them in Twin Falls, helped in the nursery and acted as a witness at weddings when Andrews officiated.<sup>164</sup> When he did not respond quickly enough to their requests, incarcerated wrote Mary in the hope that she could help or tell them when he would be available.<sup>165</sup>

Mary Andrews’ situation was not unique; the wives of other missionaries also were actively involved at the camps. Zora Thompson, for example, directed a choir, advised the youth program with Fukuyama<sup>166</sup> and even preached occasionally. Like Mary and other missionary women, she entertained within her Twin Falls home and helped with Sunday School. Typical of church appointments of this time, the pastor’s wife was expected to engage in full-time work for the church, only occasionally receiving a small stipend for her unofficial contributions. Their presence within camps was mentioned seldom within official employment documents or activity reports.<sup>167</sup> Throughout the war, couples, often former

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<sup>163</sup>Emery Brooks Andrews, interview by Tom Ikeda, 24 Mar 2004, Densho Visual Histories.

<sup>164</sup>Kazuko Hoshida to Mary Andrews, 19 Sept 1942, Box 1/Fld 45, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW. Marian Ohno to Andrews, 2 Dec 1943, Box 2/Fld 2, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>165</sup>Ohno to Mrs. Andrews, 8 Dec 1943, Box 2/Fld 2, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>166</sup>“Federated Christian Church: Organizations and its Officers,” undated, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>167</sup>Near the end of the statement announcing Thompson’s call to work at Camp Harmony, for example, the Seattle Council noted that his wife “who is equally qualified” would be working at Camp Harmony as well.

missionaries, worked at the camps and resettlement hostels, but the appointment and arrangements were always made for and by the man. Thompson was an exception in that he regularly mentioned his wife, Zora, and spoke of “our” desires or plans. In a letter expressing their desire to move to Idaho, he included her opinions and specifically stated that he was “speaking for a team.” He reminded organizational leaders that she “has been just about as busy as I at this task without getting any publicity or title or recognition.”<sup>168</sup> Ministers occasionally wrote of “their” concerns, but more often than not, their wives are not mentioned at all.

Single white female church workers took prominent roles within the ecumenical churches. Margaret Peppers, the Episcopal deaconess widow, did not wish to preach, but led other programs at Minidoka, including several for Episcopalians specifically.<sup>169</sup> Unfortunately, few primary records written by Peppers exist. This was typical of women working in the camps: little was recorded or saved.<sup>170</sup> What we know about Peppers suggests a fascinating story. After spending ten years as a missionary in the Philippines, she worked in rural communities for the diocese of Olympia, WA. After moving to Idaho for the duration of the war, she was assigned to work with Navajo in Arizona.<sup>171</sup> Her peers and

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“Protestants in City and State Unite to Serve Japanese, Call Rev. Everett W. Thompson,” 26 Apr 1942, Box 15/Fld 22, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>168</sup>Thompson to Smith,” 24 June 1942.

<sup>169</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>170</sup>An article in a denominational journal narrated her story based on diocese records. Linda Popp Di Biase, “Neither Harmony nor Eden: Margaret Peppers and the Exile of the Japanese Americans,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 70:1 (March 2001): 101-17.

<sup>171</sup>Di Biase, 116.

superiors regarded her highly.<sup>172</sup> Esther McCollough, a missionary who had worked at the Japanese Baptist Church's women's mission, Fujin House, acted as the advisor to a girls' mission study group at Minidoka and chaired the social services committee, but little else is known of her background. We know even less about Nikkei women who worked in the churches.

Wives and single women living in or near the incarceration camps endured difficult conditions and sacrificed years of their lives to aid the Japanese Americans, but their stories remain obscure. Their names appear on church bulletins and in the occasional letter, but their lives are largely invisible within the public memory and public records of the incarceration. More detailed, personal records and correspondence of female teachers have survived and several female incarcerated women, like Monica Sone, wrote memoirs and kept journals during the war.<sup>173</sup> Oral histories have also recorded the voices of incarcerated women and, to a lesser extent, those of white women who volunteered or worked at the camps. The exact roles of Nora Bowman and Ethel Hempstead (Methodist), Marie Juergensen (Assemblies of God) and Gladys Kaiser (Presbyterian), all of whom worked at Minidoka, are unclear, but they forsook their urban lives to move to Idaho and devote years to Minidokans.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup>S. Arthur Huston, Bishop of Olympia, to Reifsnider, 11 July 1942, Box 1/Fld 26, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>173</sup>University archives include the following paper collections: Guy & Marguerite Cook Nisei Collection (Mss33), Elizabeth Carden Japanese Relocation Papers (C266) within the Small California Collections (Mss3) and Marie Mitsuda Papers (Mss314) Holt-Atherton Department of Special Collections, UP and the Virginia Tidball Papers, University of Arkansas. Memoirs of incarcerated women and girls include May Matsuda Gruenewald, *Looking Like the Enemy: My Story of Imprisonment in Japanese-American Internment Camps* (Troutdale, OR: NewSage, 2005) and Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese-American Family* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982).

<sup>174</sup>“Protestant Ministers and Missionaries Now Laboring in W.R.A. Relocation Centers,” Mar 1944, Box 4/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

In addition to their pastoral duties within the Federated Church and hosting visitors in Twin Falls, white church workers performed myriad tasks for incarcerated. Andrews spent the war attending meetings with other church leaders, visiting congregants in other camps, arranging for relocation of the Nikkei farther east and constantly traveling back and forth from Seattle, keeping an eye on the congregants' properties and the church building. Some incarcerated had urgent business concerns that they could not manage from camp. Many families leased their houses or businesses to other people, but had little recourse when those individuals refused to pay rent or left the premises. Several requested that Seattle pastors find renters for their property, writing pages detailing the exact amount to charge if they wished the house to be furnished or not, detailing the differences in price if the renters wished to use some furnishings but not others. The pastors would then have to store or remove from storage these pieces of furniture or appliances.<sup>175</sup> More often than any other pastor at Minidoka, Andrews traveled back and forth between Idaho and Seattle, running these errands. Once Nikkei began leaving Minidoka, Andrews drove incarcerated' cars from Seattle to Idaho, so families could "drive off on their own power" to new jobs and homes."<sup>176</sup> He retrieved not only furniture and cars, but specific household items from vast storage warehouses, "pots of soil from the old place back home" or "a couple of bottles of shoyu from [a] basement."<sup>177</sup> At other times, he escorted incarcerated to Seattle for the burial of family members. On one occasion, he drove two incarcerated members of the Salvation Army whom he had never met to Seattle and back, interred the body of a Nikkei he had not

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<sup>175</sup>Fukiko Seki to Andrews, 3 Feb 1943, Box 2/Fld 3, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>176</sup>Thompson to Apel, 18 June 1943.

<sup>177</sup> Andrews, Untitled Draft: Summary of Tasks, undated, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

known and performed a burial ceremony.<sup>178</sup> Andrews also visited the other incarceration camps and met with resettled Nikkei all around the country.<sup>179</sup> Thompson and others usually remained at camp.

A meticulous record keeper, Andrews determined that he traveled 151,413 miles, wrote 3,538 letters and attended 644 meetings during this time, in addition to the religious duties of performing forty-nine weddings, baptizing seventy-nine young people and conducting 104 services.<sup>180</sup> Andrews's superiors, WRA staff and incarcerated regularly commended his "unselfish service and splendid ministry."<sup>181</sup> His superiors wrote, "I know of no other member of our staff that would be better able to service in this way than you,"<sup>182</sup> and frequently relayed compliments they had received on his behalf. One heard that Andrews "meant more to the people than any other one worker" and was "the ideal Christian missionary, able to allow others the credit while you did the work."<sup>183</sup> However, outside workers who remained at the camps and spent less time traveling still logged long hours. A returned missionary at Manzanar noted that he worked twelve to fourteen hours a day on average.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Andrews to Thomas, 6 Jan 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>179</sup> He "believe[d] . . . that each one visited was lifted and encouraged and that it brought joy and assurance to the parents back home." Andrews to Thomas, July 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>180</sup> Untitled Biographical Summary, 10 May 1946, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>181</sup> Gordon Lahrson, Northern Baptist Convention, to Andrews, 17 Jan 1945, Box 1/Fld 7, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>182</sup> Thomas to Andrews, 26 July 1943, Box 1/Fld 3, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>183</sup> Thomas to Andrews, 27 Oct 1943, Box 1/Fld 3, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>184</sup> Bovenkerk to Chapman, 12 June 1943, Box 1/Fld 1, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

White leaders also connected incarcerated with job opportunities in the East. For example, a family in Ohio who learned of the incarceration at church might write to their denomination's headquarters, offering to sponsor a family or individual, providing them a place to stay while attending school or giving them employment. The church would notify pastors like Andrews and Thompson who worked in the camps to select someone appropriate for the position or advertise the position in church bulletins.<sup>185</sup> National ecumenical organizations also facilitated this process.

The WRA required leave applicants to provide a list of non-Nikkei references, and hopeful resettlers frequently listed their prewar pastors. Thompson, Andrews and others received hundreds of these requests during the war. Some incarcerated joked about the formality, asking pastors to assure the government that they were not "a spy, saboteur, secret agent, or member of the Black Dragon Society,"<sup>186</sup> while others apologized for not asking before providing their names to the WRA, trusting that the clergymen would vouch for their loyalty.<sup>187</sup> Some had not been in contact for several years, but knew their former pastors would help.<sup>188</sup> White pastors also wrote letters on the behalf of congregants who had been arrested in December 1941 and were still interned in Department of Justice camps.<sup>189</sup> The

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<sup>185</sup>Order of Worship Service, 11 Feb 1945, Box 59/Fld 8, Manzanar War Relocation Center Records (Collection 122), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>186</sup>Bob Okazaki to Andrews, 24 Feb 1943, Box 2/Fld 2, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>187</sup>Fukiko Seki to Andrews, 1 Mar 1943, Box 2/Fld 3, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>188</sup>Yukie Yumibe to Andrews, 22 Jan 1944, Box 2/Fld 21, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>189</sup>Numerous letters from family members requesting and thanking Andrews for such affidavits of loyalty can be found in the Emery Andrews' paper collection. Box 1/Fld 43 to Box 3/Fld 42, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.



letters attested to their members' character, activities and loyalty to the United States.

Andrews wrote over eight hundred character recommendations during the war.<sup>190</sup>

## Conclusions

Notifications for religious services in camp newspapers, oral interviews and the personal records of Andrew Kuroda and Paul Nagano suggest that the experiences of white and Nikkei pastors working at Minidoka Relocation Center were generally representative of experiences in other incarceration camps. Many Christians hoped to inculcate an ecumenical spirit—and reality—among incarcerated Protestants, but the everyday demands of ministering to a people in a critical situation took precedence. Most lay incarcerated mention the ecumenical nature of the camp churches, but few express opinions or offer details on the topic. Kuroda's concern about indifference was likely at fault. Congregants were certainly aware of the changes and some described ecumenism as something they were "forced to have," few commented beyond a statement of its existence.<sup>191</sup> The lack of comments suggests the ecumenical structure may not have made a large impression on congregants.

Official publications lauded the smooth way church leaders and members blended their desires for a unified church. The Protestant Commission released a statement commending the Protestant churches within assembly centers for their exhibition of a "spirit of cooperation and unity."<sup>192</sup> While many incarcerated pastors and white church workers cooperated, their private statements attest that the endeavor did not go smoothly. Kodaira acknowledged it may have looked like "harmonized cooperation," but pastors encountered

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<sup>190</sup> Andrews, Untitled Draft: Summary of Tasks, undated, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>191</sup> Yosh Nakagawa, interview by Tom Ikeda, 7 Dec 2004, Densho.

<sup>192</sup> Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches, 20 July 1942.

“many troubles.” Calling for cooperation, he continued, is “very easy, but in reality it is very hard to organize one strong interdenominational church.”<sup>193</sup> Both Everett Thompson and Emery Andrews echoed this sentiment, acknowledging the challenge of changing people’s “set habits” and the continual negotiations required of a unified program.<sup>194</sup>

Privately, even the Protestant Commission’s director Gordon Chapman admitted that it took “several months to convince most of the Japanese and some of the denominations that a united work would be best.”<sup>195</sup> After four months in camp, denominational groups met together regularly for social hours or prayer despite meeting together for an ecumenical service each Sunday. Some religious leaders claimed that Nisei “on the whole glory in this new Federated Church,” while the Issei have only agreed “with reservations.”<sup>196</sup> Even towards the end of the war, many Issei pastors still primarily cared for their denominational congregants,<sup>197</sup> but they retained an ecumenical structure when they returned to Seattle, unlike Nisei.<sup>198</sup>

Privileging churches that mimicked the structural organization of mainline Protestants also shaped the ecumenical church. Mainline Nikkei intentionally formed their ecumenical

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<sup>193</sup>Kodaira to Townsend,” 1 Sept 1942.

<sup>194</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943; Andrews to Thomas, 9 Mar 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>195</sup>Chapman to Hannaford, 12 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>196</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>197</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 22 Sept 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>198</sup>For vastly different reasons, Japan’s leaders also required Christians to form one united Japanese church during the war. They experienced many of the same difficulties and ecumenical practices ceased soon after the war’s conclusion. Holiness and Seventh Day Adventists resisted the theological and liturgical demands of the Japanese national Christian Church and faced persecution from the government. Mark Mullins, “Ideology and Utopianism in Wartime Japan: An Essay on the Subversiveness of Christian Eschatology,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21:2/3 (Summer 1994): 261-280.

church to look a certain way. While they welcomed Episcopalians, Episcopalians attempted to combine with the Federated Church while also holding separate services, but ultimately separated. While they moved away from ecumenism, charismatic Christians were censured in some camps, reflecting widespread prejudices within the Protestant church. But while many critiqued fundamentalist Christians, one observer deemed a Nikkei pastor excessively liberal for repeatedly “calling attention to the inaccuracies and exaggerations of the New Testament” during Bible study classes.<sup>199</sup> Everyone could not be pleased.

The lack of space for lay Issei leadership in the camps may have contributed to Mukyōkai’s demise in the United States. The confusion and trauma of the incarceration eventually obliterated the religious group. As the war dispersed members of the Thomas church, individuals were left without anyone to worship with, something crucial for a group-oriented tradition. Since they had no ordained clergy, they had little influence within the ecumenical Protestant churches in the camps. Most of the group joined Protestant churches wherever they settled after the war. Gordon Hirabayashi’s parents joined a Methodist church and his siblings joined other mainline Protestant churches later in life.<sup>200</sup> He had joined a Quaker church at the University of Washington because it most closely resembled his parents’ tradition, which he admired. Hirabayashi explained to his parents, “You never heard of Quakers ‘til I became one, but your beliefs, and your way overlap so strongly to the Quaker way that I found it very easy to adapt.”<sup>201</sup> The Quaker’s lack of hierarchy, commitment to pacifism, frequent interactions with other Christian groups and emphasis on

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<sup>199</sup>Chapman to Jesse Bader, 26 Oct 1943, Box 1/Fld 46, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>200</sup>Gordon Hirabayashi Interview I, interview by Becky Fukuda and Tom Ikeda, 26 Apr 1999, Densho.

<sup>201</sup>He felt “comfortable there because of what [he]’d been exposed to at home.” Gordon Hirabayashi Interview II. Hirabayashi to Ring, 15 Apr 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

each believer's responsibility to find his or her own way strongly paralleled Mukyōkai teachings.

Other Protestants responded more extremely than the Episcopalians' separation.

After the war, the prolific preacher Jitsuo Morikawa said:

Ecumenism has deepened rather than weakened my sense of denominational identity. I have never felt lured or seduced to join other denominations; and I rejoiced with those who have remained loyal and steadfast in the face of every provocation. . . . I have always been proud of being an American Baptist [and] proud to represent American Baptists in ecumenical circles.<sup>202</sup>

Morikawa viewed the ecumenical experiment as a test of faith; one that complemented the larger test of Christian faith during the incarceration. Another Nikkei pastor thought that the efforts were "praiseworthy" and the experiences gained by laity and clergy were "valuable," but "church life without a denominational basis was not normal."<sup>203</sup> For normality's sake, he believed denominational worship must be resumed; ecumenical cooperation was only a "necessary stop-gap."<sup>204</sup>

On the other side, many Protestant pastors saw the experiment as a success. After the war, Nagano said that the "wonderful thing about the . . . incarceration was that we became one." Failing to mention the denominationally-minded religious leaders, he stated inclusively that "we weren't thinking in terms of denominational groups. . . . We all worked together, not denominationally."<sup>205</sup> Similarly a white returned missionary in Arkansas wrote of the "joy of taking communion together, where all are one in Christ Jesus, with no

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<sup>202</sup>Morikawa, "Jesus is Lord," sermon given on 21 June 1977, reprinted in *Jitsuo Morikawa: A Prophet for the Twenty-first Century: A Legacy of Sixty Inspiring Sermons*, eds. Paul Nagano and William L. Malcomson (Richmond, CA: Council for Pacific Asians Theology, 2000), 263.

<sup>203</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 98.

<sup>204</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 97.

<sup>205</sup>Paul Nagano, interview by Stephen Fugita (primary) and Becky Fukuda, 25 May 1999, Densho.

distinction,” though she acknowledged that the experience could not be “understood by those who have never had nor desired such an experience.” She rejoiced at seeing a “Baptist minister hold the bowl of water for the Presbyterian.”<sup>206</sup> These individuals offer the impression that, despite some resistance, the ecumenical experiment met with definite success on some accounts.

Fukuyama enjoyed the opportunity to work with members of all Protestant denominations and frequently cited these experiences as a benefit of the incarceration.<sup>207</sup> Had he remained in Seattle, it is unlikely that he would have learned to appreciate ecumenism so greatly. But while he held ecumenism in high regard, he never exhibited the passion of ministers like Kuroda. Ecumenism meant denominations all working together and he enjoyed moving among different denominations, but he still thought in terms of denominational divisions.

Kuroda embodied the manifestation of what the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council and the Protestant Commission desired for pastors in the camps. But without an established connection with the ideal of ecumenism, other Nikkei pastors may not have wanted or been prepared to embrace this ideology or its practical application.

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<sup>206</sup>Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 98.

<sup>207</sup>A congregational history written a decade after the war remembered the camp’s ecumenism in a similarly interested, but not fervent manner: There was a close relationship with the people of other denominations. It was possible to listen to the sermons given by the ministers of all denominations. *Watsonville Westview Presbyterian Church: The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1895-1958* (Watsonville, CA: n.p., 1958).

## Chapter Four: Experiences of Christianity in the Camps

*“How many of you can truthfully say that the past year in the relocation center has been the most glorious in your life?” With upraised hands and radiant faces, a group of fifty young people responded unanimously.<sup>1</sup>*

*-Paul Nagano, Streams in the Desert*

By examining select events and populations, this chapter addresses how Nikkei experienced Christianity in the camps. While all incarcerated had unique experiences, this chapter offers a variety of perspectives from several different camps. During and after the war, Christian Nikkei described how different aspects of their religion helped them withstand incarceration. Incarcerated drew two primary benefits from Christianity: solidarity and fellowship from religious communities and strength from their faith in God’s will. Digging into their stories reveals the diversity of groups organized by incarcerated within and outside of the ecumenical churches and rich personal testimonies from Christians who developed theological strategies to help understand the incarceration.

Both community and faith encouraged many Christian Nikkei to make the best of their difficult situation. After discussing these experiences, this chapter shifts to show how some non-Christians experienced Christianity in the camps. Drawn to the less explicitly religious Christian activities, many benefited from the same sense of community Christians enjoyed. Other non-Christians aggressively opposed the presence of Christianity and

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Nagano, “A Message from the Pastor,” in *Streams in the Desert*, Asako Takusagawa and Carl Yoshimine, eds., Poston III Christian Endeavor Society, Box 1/Fld 4, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA (GTU).

Christians in the camps. While non-Christians widely tolerated manifestations of Christianity at Minidoka, a number of Nikkei pastors and congregants elsewhere faced physical danger from fellow incarcerated. These Nikkei saw adherence to Christianity as a betrayal of Japanese heritage and accused Christians of being spies. This chapter concludes with the unusual challenges incarcerated Christians faced because of the war itself. The incarceration complicated pacifists' resistance to the draft, as well as memorial services, which were interfaith collaborations. These varied perspectives provide a number of ways Christianity was understood and practiced by Nikkei within the Japanese American incarceration camps.

### **Community and Faith**

Documents from the camps and recollections of former incarcerated reveal the wide range of roles Christianity played in their wartime lives. Christianity formed the basis for supportive social communities and Christians constructed theologies that helped them make sense of the incarceration. Ritual and other manifestations of Christianity played a significant role in many incarcerated's lives, but the roles of community and faith were mentioned more frequently and with more fervor than any other aspect of Christianity in the camps. The active Protestant youth groups at Poston, a camp in Arizona, illustrated the essential natures of fellowship and faith in dynamic memory books composed in the camps. Their wartime experiences reflect the sometimes startling range of responses to the incarceration among Nikkei Christians. Former incarcerated continued speaking about the importance of Christian community and faith long after the war.

Protestant youth groups exemplified the importance of community formation within the camps. (For the purpose of this discussion, "youth" and "young people" refer to upper

elementary to college-aged incarcerated.) Having few options for entertainment, many incarcerated enthusiastically participated in Christian groups and religiously affiliated organizations like Hi-Y, a club within the schools associated with the YMCA and YWCA. Monica Itoi participated in such youth activities at Minidoka and visited nearby churches with the church choir.<sup>2</sup>

Nisei and white pastors led youth groups in some camps,<sup>3</sup> but young people who had participated in Christian youth conferences in California led the strongest, most active groups.<sup>4</sup> Armed with leadership skills, they consulted adult advisors, but worked autonomously and developed their own forms of Christian life. They met independently from the main ecumenical Protestant church for worship, prayer, Bible study and other activities. This structure strengthened bonds among young people and exacerbated the rift between generations in the larger community.<sup>5</sup> The vibrant youth community demonstrated the necessity of fellowship during the incarceration.

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<sup>2</sup>“Deputation Team Visits,” “The Federated Church Herald,” 23 Feb 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, University of Washington Libraries (UW).

<sup>3</sup>The Nisei pastor Tom Fukuyama led Minidoka’s Protestant youth groups. Doris Hayashi, Notes on Young People’s Council, Summer 1942, Tanforan Assembly Center, Reel 016, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (UCB).

<sup>4</sup>An exceptionally large camp with exceptionally active Christian youth, Poston hosted twelve Protestant youth groups divided by age, four chapters of the Christian Endeavor Society and an active YWCA organization. James Sera, “Religion in Poston,” 6 Mar 1944, Reel 213, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>5</sup>Ministers tried unsuccessfully to bring these young people into the church, but lacked English-speaking pastors later in the war. WRA Monthly Report Narrative, 31 Jan 1944, Reel 212, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB. Poston Christian Church III Ministers Meeting Minutes, 8 Dec 1942, Reel 260, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.



The Poston Junior Church's yearbook, *Desert Echoes*, demonstrates the importance of community within the lives of incarcerated.<sup>6</sup> The book chronicles the social activities of this group of nine- to fifteen-year-olds during their first year in camp. The high ratio of social activities to devotional meetings recorded in the annual suggests the importance of social bonds within the community. Sports scores, descriptions of play days, singspiration gatherings, parties for students graduating middle school, Christmas celebrations and other socials fill the book. With the exception of introductory pieces by adult advisors and four short essays, a reader might not realize that the book came from a religious community. *Desert Echoes* closely resembles a typical school yearbook, showing the centrality of recreational activities in the lives of young Christians.

The religious testimonies of Junior Church members also emphasize communal aspects of Christianity—companionship, going to church and learning about Jesus with others. The editors of *Desert Echoes* included compositions from an essay contest, “One Year with God in Poston,” that reveal how individuals envisioned Christian community. The essays begin with testimonies of conversion, using straightforward language to describe the “unforgettable day” when the young people “accepted Christ . . . as [their] personal Saviour,” and then articulate how this conversion changed their sense of community and relationships with others. Margaret Murakami wrote of working hard to be “a real testimony for the Lord” by being a good friend. David Shimomura wrote that for him becoming an “everyday Christian” meant trying to keep the Ten Commandments all week long and learning to keep his temper.<sup>7</sup> Being Christian was a shared social experience that taught members of the

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<sup>6</sup>Joshua Shimomura, ed., *Desert Echoes*, Poston Junior Church, Reel 215, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>7</sup>Shimomura, *Desert Echoes*.

Junior Church how to cooperate, build good character and appreciate one another's fellowship.<sup>8</sup>

Replicating prewar activities allowed incarceratedees to retain the notion that they were still normal American teenagers. Since Poston youth had led strong Christian organizations in California, transitioning the same structure and activities to Poston may have helped retain that sense of normalcy. When group members left the camps, many expressed their longing for this solidarity, which they could not find outside of camp. Community and solidarity were essential for incarceratedees, particularly young people torn from school social networks.

Some Nikkei claimed that the incarceration fostered unique fellowship, something greater than that found in prewar churches. Paul Nagano, a pastor at Poston, explained:

The concentration camp experience drew people together in a deep fellowship that may not be experienced in ordinary circumstances. This was especially true for the Christian community of Poston. The common experience of injustice, suffering and deprivation brought people together in a spiritual fellowship of genuine mutuality and oneness. Differences and status were eliminated as everyone was suffering a common predicament. There is a true *koinonia* (deep fellowship of love) in suffering together. In this sense, the camp life was an unforgettable experience of joy and fellowship.<sup>9</sup>

Nagano described this communion fifty years after his release from camp, giving the ideas and memory time to percolate within his psyche. During that time, he earned his doctorate and developed forms of Asian American theology largely based on these experiences.

People often have an easier time recalling the good in a difficult situation after it is long past, and Nagano's bright memory of camp fellowship may have grown over time. However, his attitude long after the war bears similarities to comments made by other incarceratedees at the

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<sup>8</sup>At Minidoka's high school, the Hi-Y also focused on "the development of Christian character." Fukuyama served as the Hunt Hi-Y's "good friend and advisor." Itsuko Traji and Ben Ninomiya, eds., *Memoirs: 1943, Hunt High School Yearbook* (Jerome, ID: privately printed, 1943).and Kiyo Ueda, ed., *Memoirs: 1944* (Jerome, ID: privately printed, 1944).

<sup>9</sup>Paul Nagano, "United States Concentration Camps," *American Baptist Quarterly* 13:1 (March 1994): 71.

time. During the summer of 1942, an Issei at a Montana Department of Justice camp said, “the group esprit de corp and the cooperation and willingness to live harmoniously was [*sic*] something very inspiring and beautiful to see. It was truly a rich experience and anyone who lived through the grand feeling of real love and harmonious relations will thank the Almighty for giving them the chance to experience it.”<sup>10</sup> Poston’s Lloyd Waka described simply how “lives . . . changed” through bonds of fellowship.<sup>11</sup> Incarcerees of all ages in camps across the country generated communities that fueled positive experiences.

Incarcerees frequently associated fellowship with faith, the other primary component of Christianity in the camps. Christian Endeavor Societies united spiritual development and religious education with community. Endeavor Societies also exemplified the continuation of prewar practices in the camps. A number of Japanese Endeavor chapters, one of the first evangelical youth organizations in America,<sup>12</sup> operated on the West Coast before the war.<sup>13</sup> Intentionally limiting membership through strict rules and a lack of recreational activities, these groups of committed Christians focused on personal development.<sup>14</sup> In addition to

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<sup>10</sup>Doris Hayashi, JERS Religion Report, Tanforan Assembly Center, Summer 1942, Reel 016, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>11</sup>Takusagawa and Yoshimine, *Streams in the Desert*.

<sup>12</sup>Founded in 1881, the organization grew rapidly, spreading to sixty countries and claiming four million members within 67,000 individual groups by its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A *Time* magazine reporter disputed those high numbers. “History,” Christian Endeavor International, accessed 14 May 2011, [http://www.christianendeavor.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=132&Itemid=150](http://www.christianendeavor.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=132&Itemid=150). “Religion: Christian Endeavor,” *Time*, 11 July 1927.

<sup>13</sup>Early champions of the organization viewed this “adaptation to all races, . . . churches and ages” as “proof . . . of [the organization’s] divine origin.” Like other liberal Protestants of the time Endeavor founder Francis E. Clark believed that communication among international groups would reinforce the belief that “all nations should be friends, under the government of Jesus Christ.” Henry B. F. MacFarland, “The Christian Endeavor Movement,” *North American Review* 182:591 (Feb 1906): 196-198.

<sup>14</sup>If the “occasional social gathering” was arranged, organization rules stated that it must be “strictly limited to the active, associate, and honorary members,” so to prevent insincere or casual participation. Rules forbidding dancing and similar social activities also stemmed from the group’s ecumenical nature. Since some denominations forbade dancing, its elimination decreased conflicts along denominational lines. Francis E.

frequent testimonies, the weekly meetings of Poston's Endeavor Societies focused on a variety of religious topics, including missions, prayer, the historical origin of favorite hymns, evangelism in camp and "The Trials and Tribulations of a Christian."<sup>15</sup> An examination of the rosters of Poston's Junior Church and the Endeavor Society reveals that several incarcerated belonged to both groups, perhaps meeting a need for relaxed fellowship and religious contemplation.<sup>16</sup>

Members of the Poston III Endeavor Society (the chapter in the third sector of the camp) assembled theological statements taken during the incarceration within a testimonial booklet, *Streams in the Desert*. Three-fourths of the testimonies in *Streams in the Desert* refer to the authors' confinement. These brief compositions written by Society members exemplify the group's spiritual focus and express a representative range of Christian theological responses to the incarceration. Endeavor members and other Christians offered several reasons for their gratitude for the incarceration, including strength, perspective, contentment and a deeper understanding of Jesus' trials.

Many of Poston's young people expressed a response heard throughout the camps: gratitude that God helped them bear the "trials and oppression" of camp life, but others thanked God *for* the incarceration. The opening prayer within the testimonial booklet is one of "thanksgiving for our evacuation." One Endeavor member wrote, "I praise God for bringing me here because He has revealed His riches to me." After acknowledging the difficulties of camp life, another incarcerated concluded that the "days spent at Poston have

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Clark, *The Christian Endeavor Manual: A Text-Book on the History, Theory, Principles and Practice of the Society* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1903), 11-13 & 124-5.

<sup>15</sup>Takusagawa and Yoshimine, *Streams in the Desert*.

<sup>16</sup>Endeavor Society events drew only twenty-five to thirty attendees, while events sponsored by the Junior Church drew ten times as many. Shimomura, *Desert Echoes*.

proved to be ones of indescribable blessing.”<sup>17</sup> Beyond these general statements, a number of incarcerated offered more specified gratitude to God.

A few Endeavor members thanked God for the incarceration because it led them to Jesus or strengthened their faith. One wrote that she “wouldn’t exchange the last six months of [her] life for all the 14 previous years” because she converted to Christianity in the camp.<sup>18</sup> Another described how the incarceration “tempered” his faith, which could now withstand even greater challenges.<sup>19</sup> A youth pastor at another Arizona camp used the same metaphor, believing his congregants left camp with a “firmer and sounder faith in God.”<sup>20</sup> Sadaichi Asai, the Junior Church advisor in Poston I, agreed that the incarceration would mold “noble characters qualified to meet the uncertain difficulties ahead.”<sup>21</sup> Undergoing difficulties and injustices while retaining one’s faith in God could strengthen a person’s character and faith. After resettling in the East, a Christian man confessed, “Truthfully speaking, this was the first time I really needed Christ, somebody to guide me and see me through. I found him and he helped me.”<sup>22</sup> These transformative religious experiences permanently changed the lives of some incarcerated.

Some incarcerated said they appreciated the perspective the incarceration gave them. A Nisei man testified that he lost faith upon entering the camp, but later thought camp was

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<sup>17</sup>Takusagawa and Yoshimine, *Streams in the Desert*.

<sup>18</sup>“Christian Church Paper Testimony,” 14 Mar 1943, Reel 260, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>19</sup>Takusagawa and Yoshimine, *Streams in the Desert*.

<sup>20</sup>Paul S. Osumi, Foreword, *Rich Life in a Barren Desert*, July 1945, Box 5/Fld 8, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

<sup>21</sup>Shimomura, *Desert Echoes*.

<sup>22</sup>Yosh to Andrews, 3 Nov 1943, Box 2/Fld 1, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

“the best place in the world.” He believed that “the Lord wanted [him] to come” to Poston since that was where he came to “know the Lord and accept Him as [his] Savior.”<sup>23</sup> The difficulties granted this man the perspective to reassess his faith. Jeanne Mori, a Baptist at Minidoka, shared that “being [in camp] has helped me a lot. . . . I am glad that I had to go thru this for it helps me to appreciate from a different angle what ‘life’ really is.”<sup>24</sup> She might have changed her attitude after two more years in camp, but oral histories and memoirs show that such impressions stayed with people throughout their lives.

Numerous Christians found peace and contentment through submission to what they understood to be God’s plan. By focusing on his trust in God and his faith that he would be given “the power to . . . overcome sufferings and hardships,” Yoshisada Kayai, an Issei, felt that the experience gave him “some spiritual freedom by being confined physically in the barbed wires.” He explained, “I thought that I really experienced the freedom which was given to me by God, and I felt that it was the most important thing we can have.”<sup>25</sup> The incarceration did not make him more pious, or as he said “ritualistic,” but rather more carefree and content to follow the destiny God planned for him. Another man, Bob Okazaki, projected a particularly sunny outlook when he wrote, “As long as I am one of God’s children, I’m as content as one of Carnation’s cows. I’m not mad at anybody—even Roosevelt.”<sup>26</sup> Okazaki may have exaggerated the degree of this attitude to his white pastor, Emery Andrews, as he was writing to request a character recommendation. Tok Hirashima,

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<sup>23</sup>“Christian Church Paper Testimony,” 7 Mar 1943, Reel 260, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>24</sup>Jeanne Mori to Friends, 10 Jan 1943, Box 1/Fld 12, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

<sup>25</sup>Yoshisada Kayai quoted in Asako Tokuno, ed., *Issei Christians: Selected Interviews from the Issei Oral History Project* (Sacramento, CA: Issei Oral History Project, 1977), 15-19.

<sup>26</sup>Bob Okazaki to Andrews, 24 Feb 1943, Box /Fld 2, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

one of the contributors to *Streams in the Desert*, recounted how Jesus “showers countless blessings upon me daily, filling me with peace and joy.” Another Endeavor member, Tayeko Kitahata, wrote simply, “Yes, there is peace—real peace and certainty—in my heart and in my mind and a satisfying reality of Christ, which nothing in the world can take away.”<sup>27</sup>

From the inception of Christianity, Christians have placed a special value on suffering, interpreting it as a test, a punishment or an opportunity to emulate the suffering of Christ and Christian martyrs.<sup>28</sup> While no one tortured incarcerated, a number of pastors made analogies between their plight and Jesus’ trials, and some congregants expressed their appreciation to have the opportunity to “know the true meaning of Christ’s suffering.”<sup>29</sup> Masakazu Konatsu, a member of the Poston III church, expressed this sentiment after a year of incarceration.<sup>30</sup> An Endeavor member invoked the related notion that “God must bring torrents of tribulations upon us in order to wash out our impurities. Then, after the storm is over, we are pure and clean, ready for the Master’s use.”<sup>31</sup> This incarcerated believed in the redemptive value of the experience. In these ways, Christian beliefs equipped incarcerated with the theological tools to craft explanations for the injustice and develop strategies to appreciate its benefits.

However, many incarcerated struggled with the incarceration, and their religious communities did not always welcome dark perspectives. In addition to losing material goods and freedom, many Nikkei felt betrayed by their country and their government’s

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<sup>27</sup>Takusagawa and Yoshimine, *Streams in the Desert*.

<sup>28</sup>For the development of this theology, see Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representations in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 1995). Elizabeth Anne Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

<sup>29</sup>Masakazu Konatsu, Testimony, Poston III Christian Church newsletter, 12 Sept 1943, Box 5/Fld 2, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU.

<sup>30</sup>Konatsu, Testimony, 12 Sept 1943.

<sup>31</sup>Takusagawa and Yoshimine, *Streams in the Desert*.

unconstitutional actions. Others felt betrayed by their churches, which did not speak against the injustice. Members and leaders of Christian fellowship groups frequently pressured Christians to exhibit positive attitudes and friendly natures—resisting inclinations to express dissatisfaction or anger. Christian groups at several camps performed a play heralding the importance of retaining a positive Christian attitude. Mary Nakahara, a Nisei incarcerated in Arkansas, wrote “The End We Seek.” Acknowledging the destructive powers of the incarceration, the narrator within Nakahara’s play concludes, “We do not have to step out of this center to reach that outside. Spiritually, if there is understanding of the present situation, love for country and fellowship, faith and hope in God, and a desire to hold on to the Christian way of life, then, there is not a borderline. There is no barrier.”<sup>32</sup> This message encouraged incarcerated people to channel the strength of their community, their patriotism and faith in God to accept their current circumstances and live a positive, productive life.

This pressure to create positive rhetoric and a positive atmosphere surely contributed to the fifty young people mentioned in the epigraph who consented to their first year in camp being the “most glorious” year of their lives. Pressure to conform also may have contributed to the sentiments expressed in George Takaoka’s contribution to *Streams in the Desert*: “As I continue to live in Poston and see Christians living in testimony to our Lord, I feel I am increasingly unworthy to walk in the name of my Savior. . . . Self-examination has served only to reveal the pauperish state of my spiritual existence.” Self-criticism was a regular part of Christian Endeavor meetings. While many contributors to the testimonial booklet mentioned faltering or not living up to Christ’s demands, all but Takaoka concluded with

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<sup>32</sup>Mary Nakahara, “The Exit We Search,” 18 July 1945, Jerome Christian High School Fellowship, Japanese American National Museum: Hirasaki National Resource Center, Los Angeles.



their joy in God's continual forgiveness. The inclusion of this less positive testimony shows that the editors' censorship was not as strict as it could have been.

Other Christians retained their faith, but struggled to see anything positive about the incarceration. A poem from Heart Mountain exemplifies this attitude:

Father, you have wronged me grievously  
I know not why you punish me  
For sins not done or reasons known  
You have caused me misery.  
But through this all I look on you  
As child would look on parents true  
With tenderness come mingling in  
The anguish and Bitter tears;  
My heart still beats with loyalty  
For you are my Father, I know no other.<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, other Nikkei Christians alluded to Psalms 137, where Israelites expressed their despair in exile and inability to rejoice or sing songs of praise.<sup>34</sup>

The editors of *Desert Echoes* showed readers the resilience of their members, but never painted a glossy picture of life in camp. Much of the text seems to be written tongue in cheek. Even the Junior Church's advisors refrained from such positive messages. The Reverend Kowta wrote of his determination to "make this new community an ideal one," but also confessed that he had been "disillusioned in many things and in many ways." *Desert Echoes* closes by saying, "We . . . without a tear nor a sign, shall leave, when the time finally does come, our beloved Poston, with its wealth of dust, mosquitoes, too much heat and scorpions to whomever is dumb enough to take it." This sentiment could lend the annual's

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<sup>33</sup>Roger Daniels read this poem as a commentary on family tensions, but the capitalization of Father, the poem's message and the phrase "I look on you/As child would" suggest a religious theme. Alternatively, it could be read as a patriot message to America. Daniels' citation to an issue of the *Heart Mountain Sentinel* is incorrect, and I was unable to find the poem's original source. Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camp USA: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972), 119.

<sup>34</sup>Presumably incarcerated did not speak about the entire psalm, at least not in public. Psalm 137 concludes with the Israelites blessing anyone who murders their captives' "little ones." Sumio Koga, *A Decade of Faith: The Journey of Japanese Christians in the USA (1936-1946)* (New York: Vantage Press, 2002), 54.

foreword a shade of sarcasm: “May this yearbook help echo the sweet memories of the desert life.”<sup>35</sup> While Junior Church members projected an undeniably positive attitude in their annual, they did not thank God or anyone else for the experience.

Extremely positive sentiments about the incarceration can be difficult to comprehend, but they demonstrate the intense role Christianity played in some incarceratedees’ lives.

Anthropologist Michael Jackson offers a helpful model to explain how subjected groups and individuals use storytelling as a way to “subvert the power of the original event to determine one’s experience” of it. Further, he argues that sharing these stories can reduce the shame and isolation caused by a traumatic event.<sup>36</sup> Jackson analyzed narratives produced long after the event that precipitated, but constructing a narrative of their incarceration in *Desert Echoes* and writing testimonies for *Streams in the Desert* may have benefited incarceratedees similarly. It provided an opportunity to concretely express personal interpretations of events.<sup>37</sup> The memory books composed at Poston empowered incarcerated Christians to represent their experiences in a way that showcased their agency and personal growth. They mobilized their experiences of Christianity—both social and theological—to construct a narrative about their own actions and those of God, not a story about what was being done to them. The WRA and US government are not part of their storytelling.

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<sup>35</sup>Shimomura, *Desert Echoes*.

<sup>36</sup>Jackson developed this conclusion through a study of storytelling within refugee communities. Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press-University of Copenhagen, 2002), 59.

<sup>37</sup>Psychologists debate the value of writing about trauma later in life—whether it helps victims reconcile events or increase suffering as they are relived, but writing during trauma has not been adequately studied, particularly in terms of religion. Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). For a short bibliography on writing during trauma, see the footnotes of Peter N. and Maureen Daly Goggin, “Presence in Absence: Discourses and Teaching (In, On, About) Trauma,” in *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing*, ed. Shane Borrowman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

Many factors affected the faith of incarcerated and many factors influenced the articulation of that faith within the Poston annual and testimony booklet. This understanding corroborates Hannah Arendt's view that storytelling is never simply a social or personal project: political and public interests complicate the construction of every narrative.<sup>38</sup> While young Postonian authors framed their projects as mementoes for themselves and their advisors, many things could have impacted the content of these works, including a desire to represent how they wanted to remember the incarceration. Using the Pearl Harbor attack as an example, Daphne Desser points out the difficulties of trying to make meaning from a "meaningless" traumatic event. She argues that pressure to move beyond the event leads many people to accept dominant public understandings of the crisis at the time, particularly in cases of national trauma.<sup>39</sup> Protestant youth were under great pressure to present a positive attitude, which may have required an acceptance of the national understanding of the legitimacy of the incarceration. Religious views could have exacerbated or contradicted that acceptance. If incarcerated internalized the popular rhetorical explanation for the incarceration, it may have helped them cope with the injustice.

Faith also compelled some individuals to stand against the injustice of the incarceration.<sup>40</sup> Gordon Hirabayashi and other Quakers fought the government on the basis of religious convictions, but mainline Protestants echoed that rhetoric in camp as well. A

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<sup>38</sup>Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition, Second Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1958] 1998), 184-6.

<sup>39</sup>Daphne Desser, "Teaching Writing in Hawaii after Pearl Harbor and 9/11: How to 'Make Meaning' and 'Heal' Despite National Propaganda," in, *Trauma and the Teaching Writing*, ed. Shane Borrowman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 85-97.

<sup>40</sup>Gary Okihiro and David K. Yoo also claim that Christianity and Buddhism fueled resistance by strengthening ethnic solidarity. Yoo described how religious groups "acted as racial-ethnic centers of protest." Gary Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance in America's Concentration Camps," *Phylon* 45:3 (Third Quarter 1984): 220-33; David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California: 1924-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 114-123.

sermonette from Poston demanded Christians “turn the tide” and stand against injustice. The author wrote, “Apathy is a greater sin than blasphemy. Better make blunders in trying to correct an evil, than sit back and wonder why it could not have been done a difference way.”<sup>41</sup> The piece forcefully argued against complacency and resignation. The annual and testimonial booklet from Poston also exhibit how religion empowered Nikkei to take control of their situation. However, historian John Howard interpreted positive Christian statements about the incarceration as “a theology of resignation more than resistance.”<sup>42</sup> Howard specifically points to comments made by Mary Nakahara, the amateur playwright mentioned above. Her recommendation to channel faith to accept the injustice can be interpreted as resignation, but most evidence points toward faith being a positive influence in camp that gave strength to adherents. Howard implied that individuals were waiting to be delivered from their misery, but sources show incarcerated individuals actively creating community and developing ways to cope with the trauma of the incarceration and camp life.

In response to a Nisei’s speech encouraging young Protestants to harness their faith and trust in Jesus to “overcome” the “pain, disappointment and degradation” of the incarceration, Howard concluded that incarcerated Christians focused on how “the burdens of this life would be more than compensated by the bliss of the afterlife.”<sup>43</sup> If incarcerated

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<sup>41</sup>Sermonette, Poston III Christian Church newsletter, 25 Apr 1943, Box 5/Fld 2, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU.

<sup>42</sup>Brian Hayashi cites sermons that “sidestep[ped]” criticism to argue that religion dissuaded people from participating in politics and resistance, strikes specifically. The dissonance between my conclusion and these views may rest in our definition of resistance. The difference resonates with the disagreement between editors of *Christianity and Crisis* and other Protestant leaders when the latter warned against criticizing the government. John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 150. Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 168-169.

<sup>43</sup>The memoir Howard cited tells of a woman making a conscientious and considered choice to meet the demands of a community “hunger[ing] for spiritual food” with a positive if difficult message. She does not whitewash the experience of camp, but tells them to “live eternity day by day” and “model His indomitable

Christians used their theology in this way, they left little evidence behind. The incarceration was not so unbearable or permanent that Christian incarcerated anticipated their death and deliverance from earth.

The testimonies of young people at Poston echoed the range of sentiments expressed by young and old Christian Nikkei around the country. That one group chose to commemorate the social world they constructed in camp while another catalogued religious experiences from the time attests to the diversity of Christian experiences within the incarceration camps. Pastors and congregants at all camps spoke during the war and later about the benefits of religious communities and faith in camp and the ways in which the incarceration strengthened their faith. Whether religious adherence gave them hope, provided a distraction, a caring community or put suffering in perspective, religious belief and practice—whether Buddhist or Christian—helped many incarcerated endure their incarceration and loss of rights.

### **Experiences of Non-Christian Incarcerated**

Evidence from Minidoka and other camps shows that many non-Christians also benefited from the community fostered by events like lectures, dances and socials sponsored by Protestant groups and Christmas celebrations. These programs involved minimal or no traditional religious content, providing a space open to all incarcerated. Attending socials and worship was voluntary generally, but incarcerated could not avoid events that permeated camp like Minidoka's Christmas celebrations. Some scholars claim this demonstrates the WRA's agenda to Christianize incarcerated, but evidence suggests otherwise. In addition to witnessing the aid provided by Christian organizations and participating in social events or

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spirit" by "taking one day at a time." Howard, 150. Mary Tsukamoto and Elizabeth Pinkerton, *We the People: A Story of Internment in America* (Elk Grove, CA: Laguna Publishers, 1987), 115-116.

lectures sponsored by Christian youth groups, the Christmas celebrations at Minidoka show that a primary way Buddhists experienced Christianity in the camp was as a secularized and politicized aspect of American life.

Many committed Buddhists and other non-Christians felt comfortable attending Christian youth activities because many contained minimal sermonizing, prayer or Bible study. During the first weeks of camp, Protestant youth meetings drew more attendees than any other religious activity. Nikkei sociologists working in the camps speculated that the popularity of such groups stemmed from the non-religious themes of most meetings.<sup>44</sup> They discussed pragmatic issues like resettlement, college admissions and the question of marrying while incarcerated<sup>45</sup> as well as more general topics, such as “War.” These discussions often had direct objectives. At Tanforan, a California assembly center, the Christian youth group hosted meetings to discuss “The Possibilities at Tanforan” and “How to Improve the Camp.”<sup>46</sup> At Minidoka, the Nisei pastor Tom Fukuyama held forums on current issues that attracted up to 350 people, including many non-Christians.<sup>47</sup> Christian youth groups also sponsored dances, record concerts and singspiration gatherings where participants would sing religious and non-religious songs. Incarcerees attended these youth events for the social interactions that broke the monotony of camp life.

As was the case for many pastors serving in camp, the main priority of several youth groups was to meet the needs of the community, not evangelize. The Student Christian Association at Tule Lake even considered dropping the “C” from their name in order to make

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<sup>44</sup>Hayashi, Notes on Young People’s Council.

<sup>45</sup>Journal clipping, Jan 1943, Box 7, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>46</sup>Hayashi, Notes on Young People’s Council.

<sup>47</sup>Thompson to Frank Herron Smith, Bishop Baker, the Seattle Council of Churches and the Methodist Board of Missions, 14 Dec 1943, Box 15/Fld 5, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

non-Christians feel more welcome.<sup>48</sup> Through sponsorship of many religious and non-religious events, Fukuyama focused on being a positive role model for all incarcerated, not just Christians.<sup>49</sup>

However, some Nikkei were more committed to evangelism and some church groups consciously sponsored activities with that possibility in mind. Church newsletters and bulletins encouraged members to “bring a friend to church” and warned of the “lost opportunities” to evangelize.<sup>50</sup> A Nikkei pastor explicitly expressed his excitement for the opportunities to evangelize “not only among the christians, but also heathern people [*sic*].”<sup>51</sup> One of the Nikkei pastors in Arkansas expended efforts to convert Buddhists in particular. This pastor bragged about the number of children from Buddhist families he had baptized, noting, “We are slowly swinging the Buddhists toward us.”<sup>52</sup> Presumably, he would have been making these same efforts if the incarceration had not occurred. Targeting evangelism at Buddhists was discouraged by most Nikkei and white pastors and the WRA.

The Buddhist community’s response to Christian evangelism is difficult to discern because censorship and unofficial pressures within the camp limited dissenters from speaking against camp policies and camp life. John Howard noted that some of the young Buddhists

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<sup>48</sup>Daisuke Kitagawa to Gordon Chapman, 2 Nov 1942, Box 1/Fld 44, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>49</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 5 Nov 1944, Box 1/ Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>50</sup>“Lost Opportunities,” Poston III Christian Church newsletter, 23 July 1944, Box 5/Fld 2, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU. George Takaoka, Sermonette, Poston III Christian Church newsletter, 22 Aug 1943, Box 5/Fld 2, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU. Andrews to Thomas, 11 June 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>51</sup>Thomas Machida to Gertrude Apel, 8 Dec 1943, Box 15/Fld 25, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>52</sup>George Aki to Stillson Judah, Spring 1943, Box 1/Fld 12, J. Stillson Judah: Japanese Camp Books Collection, GTU 2001-3-01, GTU.

felt “uncomfortable” during a weeklong Christian Mission, but attendance was always voluntary.<sup>53</sup> These individuals chose to attend and presumably could have left. That is not to say pressure was entirely absent, but it would be difficult to argue that incarcerated Buddhists experienced greater pressures to convert than they would have outside of the camps.

National Christian holidays also provided a break from routine for Christians and non-Christians. While every camp had Christmas parties and held parades on Labor Day or other holidays, Minidoka’s Christmas activities involved far more incarcerated. Every December, Christian and non-Christian incarcerated organized dances, variety shows, caroling, gift giving with Santa, decorating and tree trimming with little to no outside help or suggestion. Nearly every memoir and oral history from the camp mentions the annual decorating contests that distinguished Minidoka’s Christmas activities from those at the other incarceration centers. Some incarcerated recall their contributions in astounding detail, and most Minidokans participated, whether they were Buddhist, Christian or non-religious. Though many of the incarcerated at Minidoka had never celebrated Christmas before, most threw themselves into holiday preparations each December.

Community leaders urged fellow Minidokans to participate in the dining hall decoration contests. The competition was conceived by a group of five Buddhists,<sup>54</sup> and each housing block was given a limited amount of supplies from which they created extraordinary displays. Photographs of the dining room displays show a striking similarity to the department store window displays found in American cities at Christmas, which were likely a source for the incarcerated’ ideas. Most decorations depicted nostalgia for the traditional

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<sup>53</sup>Howard, 170.

<sup>54</sup>“High Wind,” *The Minidoka Irrigator*, 23 Dec 1944.





Densho Digital Archive, 2008

**Figure 4: Patriotic Christmas Display**

Source: National Archives and Records Administration, Densho



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

**Figure 5: Minidoka Dining Hall Display**

Source: National Archives and Records Administration, Densho

American home, patriotic military themes or a combination of the two. Others utilized secularized Christmas icons, such as Santa Claus. A representative example paired Uncle Sam with Santa Claus, demonstrating the conscious ties between celebrating the holiday and supporting the nation's war effort (Figure 4).<sup>55</sup> Exhibiting impressive ingenuity, one block constructed a Santa riding in a sleigh and suspended flying reindeer from the ceiling of their dining hall (Figure 5).<sup>56</sup>

Decorations and camp-wide activities rarely gestured to the religious origins of the holiday, but a few non-Christians chose to emphasize its religious aspects. A former incarcerated wrote:

The results were amazing. . . . Mae and Iwao lived in a block where most of the people were of the Buddhist faith. Many came to ask about the Christmas story. A beautiful nativity scene had been painted on one wall of their Dining Hall, with shepherds on a second wall and the wise men on the third wall. The ceiling was decorated with stars made from tin cans and there were Christmas wreaths made from wood shavings.<sup>57</sup>

These Buddhists might have been unfamiliar with the religious origins of Christmas initially, but they did not avoid them to focus on the secular aspects of Christmas.

Buddhists took proud ownership of their work as outsiders to the holiday. A column in *The Minidoka Irrigator* pointed out that "the original five members of the Christmas Contest committee members . . . were all Buddhists."<sup>58</sup> The author expressed pride in the

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<sup>55</sup>"Camp Christmas Decorations" (denshopd-i37-00013), 1943, Densho, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>56</sup>"Christmas Decoration Contest" (denshopd-i37-00015), 1943 Densho, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>57</sup>Ruth Hara, "December 1942," *Minidoka Stories I and II*, Tsuguo Ikeda and Akio Yanagihara, eds. (n.p., 2003).

<sup>58</sup>"High Wind."

ability of non-Christians to master the observation of this American holiday. One Buddhist incarcerated described her experience learning about Christmas:

One of the things that I, really impressed me and it still does is that Christmas was kind of—being Buddhist, it wasn't a real, real big thing before we went to camp—but then when we were in camp then Christmas became a big thing 'cause then we always had the, they had these competitions between the blocks . . . there was a contest and that's when you became real aware of Christmas.<sup>59</sup>

This woman remembered the large Christmas celebrations as a seemingly unavoidable, but positive aspect of life at Minidoka, something she would not have otherwise experienced or been a part of.

Arguably, these celebrations had little to do with Christianity and a great deal to do with being and showing that a person was American. The aspects of Christmas celebrated most widely at Minidoka related to patriotism, community and other shared values that could be separated from religious observations associated with the public holiday. By the 1940s, non-Christians increasingly celebrated Christmas as a national holiday.<sup>60</sup> During World War II, the popular media, public schools, retailers and Japanese American incarcerated emphasized the increased importance of celebrating the holiday, as Christmas embodied ideals the country was fighting for: home and family, hopes and dreams, peace on earth and goodwill toward men. Observing the holiday became a patriotic duty just like buying war bonds, growing Victory Gardens and organizing scrap drives. Rhetoric at Minidoka stressed the importance of celebrating this particularly American holiday as Americans. Without irony one Minidokan wrote, “Here behind barbed wires on top of sage brush cleared soil, we are about to celebrate our Christmas in an atmosphere none too familiar to us; but in an

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<sup>59</sup>Fumiko Uyeda Groves, interview by Larry Hashima, 16 June 1998, Densho.

<sup>60</sup>Penne Restad, *Christmas in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 158-59.

atmosphere where the Yuletide spirit will not go unprecedented. Christmas in an American relocation center...the American way.”<sup>61</sup> Whether this woman was Christian or not, the point of her message is clear: Nikkei are Americans and will continue behaving as Americans whatever the situation.

While some Minidokans surely were less enthusiastic about the holiday or showing patriotism for the country imprisoning them, their voices are hidden within the historical record. By placing patriotic symbols alongside representations of their current surroundings within Christmas displays, several incarcerated expressed the complex sentiment of simultaneously supporting the United States, politically or culturally, and disapproving of the decision to incarcerate innocent people.<sup>62</sup> These displays contained no reference to Jesus and offered no hints as to the artists’ religious orientations.

The inclusive nature of Minidoka’s Christmas celebrations posed a challenge for some Christians. They acknowledged the benefits of uniting incarcerated and wanted to share the holiday’s good cheer for the sake of morale, but it meant sacrificing some of the more overtly religious themes of the holiday. Everett Thompson, the Methodist pastor, explained, “The Buddhists are sharing in these [Christmas] plans, and of course it is a bit difficult to have the kind of a celebration that Christians would like without displeasing the Buddhists. Because this is a community wide affair, we are endeavoring to do this, and various kinds of compromise[s] are being worked out.”<sup>63</sup> Thompson’s comments suggest that community leaders may have pressured Christians into diminishing the religious aspects of some events.

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<sup>61</sup>Yuji Hiromura, “A Christmas Prayer,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 25 Dec 1942, 6.

<sup>62</sup>For a more detailed analysis of the patriotism and protest found within Minidoka Christmas celebrations, see Anne Blankenship, “Sagebrush Trees, ‘Slant-Eyed Santas’ and Uncle Sam: Christmas at Minidoka Relocation Center” (MA thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008).

<sup>63</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

While most public events secularized the anniversary of Christ's birth, the Protestant and Catholic churches held religious services attended by a large number of non-Christians.

All-camp celebrations of a Christian holiday understandably draw suspicions that coercive administrators were attempting to Americanize, if not Christianize, their charges. John Howard correctly states that Christmas could not be ignored within the camps, but exposure to the holiday would have been unavoidable outside of the camp as well.<sup>64</sup> Camp-wide celebrations of Bon Odori, a festival associated with the Buddhist holiday of Obon, held a similarly vague position between a religious observance and a cultural event. These dances drew Buddhists and non-Buddhists in the camps as they had before the war.<sup>65</sup>

However, while gifts arrived from Protestant organizations outside of the camps,<sup>66</sup> Nikkei, frequently non-Christians, planned the holiday activities at Minidoka, not white missionaries or administrators. WRA staff supported the events by providing space or giving personal donations, but incarcerated paid for most decoration supplies and other necessities. While the American-style events may have pleased white employees, administrators and ministers did not play significant roles in their production. As noted earlier, most white church workers and WRA staff made a point to avoid evangelizing to Buddhists.

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<sup>64</sup>Christianity filled a similar space at the Manzanar Children's Village, where the WRA placed Nikkei orphans. Grace was said before meals, but chapel services were optional and Catholic and Buddhist children attended separate religious services. Christian organizations (Protestant, Catholic and Salvation Army) operated all Japanese orphanages before the war, so this Christian orientation, like Christmas celebrations, was not different from the experience outside of camp. Lisa N. Nobe, "The Children's Village at Manzanar: The World War II Eviction and Detention of Japanese American Orphans," *Journal of the West* 38:2 (April 1999): 68.

<sup>65</sup>Bon Odori performances were and are local community celebrations in Japan, while Buddhist families observe Obon rituals privately in the home. Terence A. Lancashire, *An Introduction to Japanese Folk Performing Arts* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 61-64.

<sup>66</sup>As discussed earlier, the Christmas gift campaign organized by national Protestant groups made a significant effect on many incarcerated, particularly non-Christians. Many Buddhists reportedly "could not understand how the outside Christian people could be so interested." Andrews to Thomas, 6 Jan 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

Secular or not, the Christmas celebrations were virtually unavoidable and community members publicly scolded non-participants. No one could avoid the abundant decorations in the dining hall, nor the holiday “record concerts” broadcasted over the public address system to “imbue residents . . . with the proper holiday spirit.”<sup>67</sup> When counting the number of participants each year, the *Minidoka Irrigator* simply listed the entire camp population as if everyone within the fence was taking part.<sup>68</sup> While editors of the paper emphasized full participation, it cannot be determined whether this reflected a slight exaggeration of actual practice or if it was intended to encourage participation itself. Another article admonished three blocks that did not raise the \$35 quota to donate to the Christmas Fund, a general pot used for decorations and candy. The same article heralded staff members who donated money or supplies and the many blocks that accrued far more than their assigned amount.<sup>69</sup> These pieces suggest that participation, though not mandated, was expected. People who refrained bore the brunt of public shaming. In any case, Christians and non-Christians described these celebrations in a positive manner during and after the war. The actions and recollections of most Christians and non-Christians suggest that incarcerated used the holiday as a distraction from monotonous and difficult camp life and as a way to express their identities as Americans.

### **Acceptance of Christianity in the Camps**

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<sup>67</sup>“‘A Christmas Carol’ by Charles Dickens Record Concert,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 16 Dec 1942, 4. “Christmas Concerts Planned by CA,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 19 Dec 1943, 2. “Variety of Events Marks Second Christmas in Hunt,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 25 Dec 1943, 1.

<sup>68</sup>This article pledged that all 10,000 Minidokans celebrated in 1942, 8,900 in 1943 and 7,000 in 1944. “Annual Christmas Decoration Contest Set; Keen Interest Felt,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 9 Dec 1944, 3.

<sup>69</sup>“BLK 23 Caucasian Staff Donates Generously,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 19 Dec 1942, 8.

While Christians and non-Christians mixed within youth groups, celebrated secularized Christian holidays together and cooperated in interfaith memorial services at Minidoka and other camps, this harmony did not reside everywhere. Because people commonly identified Christianity with American culture, politics and society, Christianity and Christians were less welcome in the camps with the greatest antagonism between the WRA and incarcerated and strongest expressions of distrust and resentment toward the United States government. Animosity toward Christians rose when clergy members helped translate the government's 1943 loyalty questionnaire that marked incarcerated as loyal or disloyal. The WRA segregated members of the latter group at Tule Lake by the end of that year. This camp became a particularly dangerous place for Christians. Some Nikkei viewed these clergymen as traitors or government spies helping the WRA. This section will discuss the difficulties encountered by adherents and clergy at Tule Lake and others camps, but first consider why such intolerance was rarely, if ever, seen at Minidoka.

A number of outsiders familiar with the different camps considered Minidoka to be the "good" camp. James Sakoda, a Nisei sociologist transferred from Tule Lake to Minidoka, described the latter as a "mild place peopled by mild people who did not resort to violence."<sup>70</sup> After visiting several camps, Gordon Hirabayashi also commented upon the "quiet, submissive" nature of Minidoka as compared to the turbulent, "very resentful and hostile attitude" at Tule Lake.<sup>71</sup>

AFSC workers, newspaper reporters and WRA administrators marshaled quantitative and qualitative evidence and explanations substantiating Minidoka's reputation. They

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<sup>70</sup>Arthur A. Hansen, ed., *Japanese American World War II Evacuation Oral History Project, Part III* (Westport, CT: Meckler Publishing, 1991).

<sup>71</sup>Hirabayashi to Eleanor Ring, 15 Apr 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

claimed that Nikkei from Washington were more loyal to the United States, more amicable and ultimately more assimilated than Nikkei from the rest of the country, particularly those from California. Proportionately, far fewer Nisei Minidokans answered “no” to question 27 than Nisei in other camps, nine percent as opposed to the average of twenty-eight percent, so fewer Minidokans went to Tule Lake. This question asked if the person would serve in the US military. Though faulty, this questionnaire was the official measure of loyalty and some people must have believed it indicated loyalty. The relatively large number of Christians at Minidoka also strengthened its reputation, as did its large number of army volunteers and small number of segregatees.<sup>72</sup> Fewer strikes and no riots occurred at Minidoka.

Hirabayashi offered a sensible observation that helped explain why conditions at Minidoka seemed better than elsewhere. He saw “a very marked correlation” between prewar experiences and behavior in camp, noting that “resentment and bitterness [was] the largest [*sic*] where mistreatment was the greatest.” That the largest number of Nisei military volunteers came from Hawaii, where Japanese were more accepted, supported his hypothesis. Hirabayashi proclaimed simply, “Human beings like to be treated humanely.”<sup>73</sup> He thought the differences in behavior directly related to the status of the community before the war. Seattle’s populace did not accept Nikkei fully, but the minority’s general circumstances were better than elsewhere on the coast. In California, local and state politics reflected greater resentment of Nikkei’s economic success. Holding less hostility toward the US government and perhaps white people in general, Seattle Nikkei generally were more willing to cooperate and make the best of their situation.

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<sup>72</sup>Eric Muller, *Free to Die for their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 54.

<sup>73</sup>Hirabayashi to Ring, 15 Apr 1943.



When the differences among camps became apparent, even before the loyalty questionnaire, Nikkei from the Pacific Northwest requested transfers to Minidoka. While the WRA sent most Nikkei from Western Washington to Minidoka, smaller groups went to Manzanar and Tule Lake. Supported by Andrews, Walt Woodward of the *Bainbridge Review* and others, former Bainbridge residents wrote letters to the WRA, congress people and other outside contacts requesting a transfer. Many missed family, friends and fellow church members living in Idaho, but others disliked the atmosphere of the California camps. Washingtonians and Californians frequently argued and teenagers got into physical fights.<sup>74</sup> The Seattle pastor Emery Andrews lamented how Californians “ostracized” the group from Bainbridge despite the latter group’s “endeavor[s] to . . . cooperate.” He cited their different “cultural background, democratic ideas . . . and Caucasian contacts” as explanations for friction.<sup>75</sup> White and Nikkei observers concluded that the greater assimilation of Nikkei from Washington increased tension since they were “much more advanced in . . . American ideas” than Californian Nikkei.<sup>76</sup>

Several people warned that the association with Californians would reverse the assimilation process and result in the Washington Nikkei’s eventual rejection of the United States. A few white leaders claimed that the Bainbridge group would “revert” back to Japanese habits and customs. Whether people familiar with the group believed this or merely used it as an excuse to persuade WRA officials is unclear. But even after the war, a former

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<sup>74</sup>Tats Kojima, interview by Debra Grindeland, 22 Oct 2006, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection, Densho.

<sup>75</sup>Andrews to E.R. Fryer, 20 Jan 1943, Box 4/Fld 28, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>76</sup>Andrews to Fryer, 20 Jan 1943.

incarceree described the incompatibility of mixing [Washington] apples with [California] lemons, twisting the metaphor of a bad apple spoiling the bunch.<sup>77</sup>

In March 1943, the WRA complied with the Washingtonians' requests and about forty families from Bainbridge arrived at Minidoka.<sup>78</sup> While this move occurred before segregation, the action correlates with the same belief that loyal, assimilated Nikkei should be separated from "bad apples." The transfer was not a specifically Christian concern, but many Christian Nikkei and their pastors were involved, which may have bolstered their case.

A sociologist at Tule Lake observed that Christians seemed "to always have . . . a higher social status" and were "more Americanized,"<sup>79</sup> which, if true, may have fueled animosity from other groups. Buddhists may have resented the fact that few Christian Nikkei clergymen were arrested after December 7<sup>th</sup>, when the FBI interned most Buddhist priests.<sup>80</sup> Even before the war, the American public and government assumed greater loyalty from Christians, believing they had broken religious ties with Japan and were more Americanized. When tensions rose, this association made Christians a target for abuse.

While angry incarcerees ostracized and verbally abused congregants, they usually reserved physical violence for clergymen. Incarcerees attacked Protestant ministers and Japanese American Citizens League leaders for their supposed collaboration with the WRA.<sup>81</sup> The WRA expedited the transfer of these individuals, but often not quickly enough.

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<sup>77</sup>Kojima.

<sup>78</sup>Andrews to Fryer, 20 Jan 1943.

<sup>79</sup>Religious Activity in Tule Lake: Preliminary Report, Nov 1942, Reel 181, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>80</sup>Frank Miyamoto Interview III, interview by Stephen Fugita, 29 Apr 1998, Densho.

<sup>81</sup>Christians were not the only targets. The non-Christian editor of the Tulean newspaper had to get sixteen stitches after being hit in the head with a lead pipe. Klancy Clark de Nevers, *The Colonel and the Pacifist: Karl*

After a serious beating by a masked individual with a lead pipe, the WRA quickly transferred Topaz's Reverend Taro Goto to Denver.<sup>82</sup> His colleague, the Reverend Shigeo Shimada, greatly appreciated the church member who guarded his barrack.<sup>83</sup>

Camp security could not prevent the attacks, so congregants volunteered to protect their pastors. Paul Nagano never experienced serious problems in Poston, but a few "very husky weightlifters" volunteered to be his bodyguards "just in case anybody would attack [him] for being more . . . sympathetic and 'yes-yes.'"<sup>84</sup> "Yes-yes" incarcerated men, in contrast to "no-no" men and women, pledged complete loyalty to the US and their willingness to serve in the US military on the loyalty questionnaire. Nagano remembered that these "fine Christian fellows" would "kinda walk around with [him], just in case."<sup>85</sup>

The fear and inspiration generated by these attacks affected congregants as well as clergy. Incarcerated men at Jerome Relocation Center attacked the Issei Episcopalian priest Reverend John Yamazaki in early March 1943 for translating government documents into Japanese for Issei.<sup>86</sup> Soon after the attack, a fellow incarcerated man, the Christian artist Henry Sugimoto, painted Yamazaki "in clerical collar, in a striking crucifixion pose, blood all over his face and midsection" (Figure 6).<sup>87</sup> Two additional crosses formed by signposts and telephone poles further emphasize Yamazaki's posture, suggesting a parallel between the

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*Bendetsen—Parry Saito and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004), 203.

<sup>82</sup>Shigeo Shimada, *A Stone Cried Out* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1986), 128.

<sup>83</sup>Shimada, 128.

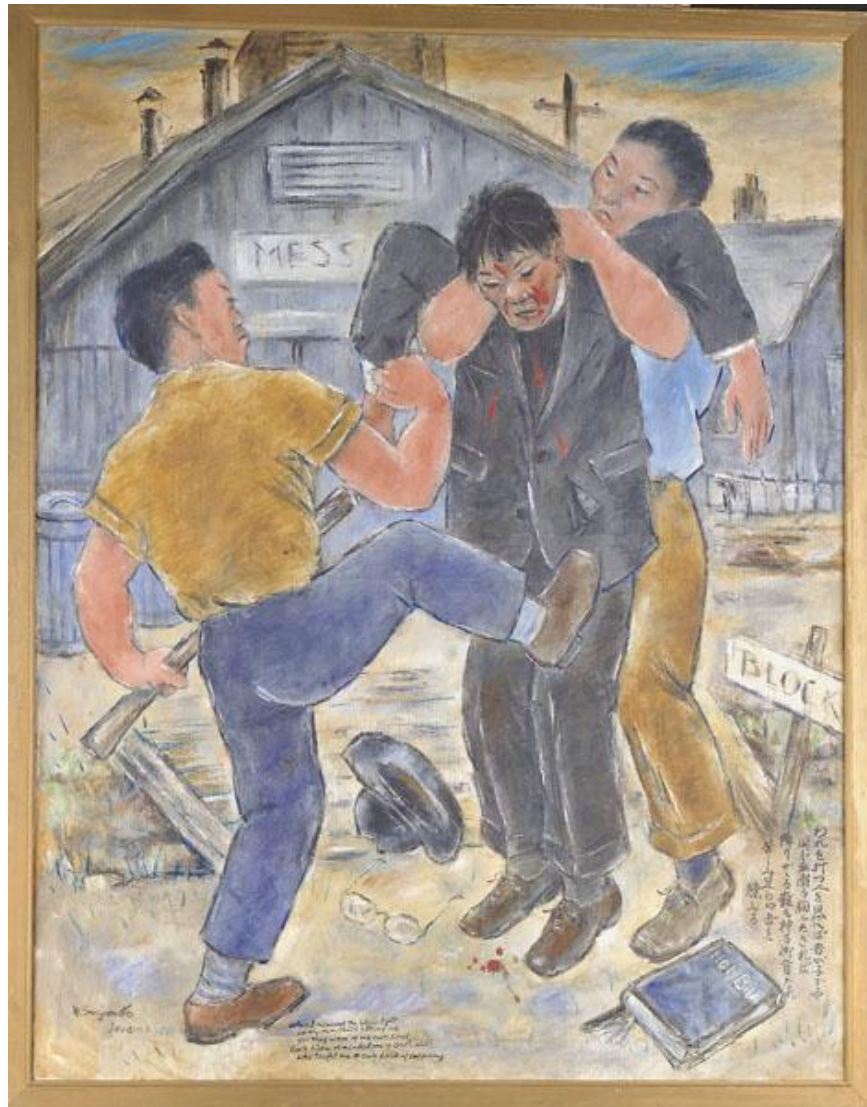
<sup>84</sup>Paul Nagano, interview by Stephen Fugita (primary) and Becky Fukuda, 25 May 1999, Densho.

<sup>85</sup>Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.

<sup>86</sup>"Assaulters Injure Two Residents," *Densen Tribune*, 9 Mar 1943, 1.

<sup>87</sup>Howard, 208. "Reverend Yamazaki Was Beaten in Camp Jerome," 1943, Henry Sugimoto Collection: A Life Transformed 1941-1945, Japanese American National Museum.

innocent suffering of Jesus and that of Yamazaki. The painting shows the priest's Bible, hat and glasses strewn on the ground, but Yamazaki recalled that his attackers were respectful,



**Figure 6: "Reverend Yamazaki was Beaten in Camp Jerome," Henry Sugimoto, 1943**

Source: Gift of Madeleine Sugimoto and Naomi Tagawa, Japanese American National Museum (92.97.6)

saying, "Reverend Yamazaki, we came here to beat you, so take off your glasses and hat and put them on this tree stump."<sup>88</sup> Presumably he set his Bible aside as well. Sugimoto did not witness the event, but reflected the incivility and disorder of camp life by depicting the

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<sup>88</sup>Sugimoto read about the attack in the camp newspaper. Yamazaki told him these details years after the war. Kristine Kim, *Henry Sugimoto: Painting an American Experience* (Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2000), 87.

objects scattered on the ground. He chose not to change this element of the painting after Yamazaki told him of the discrepancy. However respectful his attackers acted, Yamazaki was hospitalized for a month and sent to Chicago immediately after his doctors discharged him.<sup>89</sup> Yamazaki wrote a poem about the event:

When I received the blow I felt  
As my own child hitting me  
For they were of my own kind.  
Each blow reminded me of God's will  
Who taught me of our own lack of suffering.<sup>90</sup>

While attackers felt betrayed by the priest's cooperation with camp administrators, the rift in their community pained Yamazaki and other Christian leaders.

Even if public opinion at Minidoka usually favored cooperation with the government, people understood the fallibility of the segregation plan and did not mark all segregants as uniformly unwelcome or un-American. Like many others, Andrews thought the WRA's policy of segregation "sound[ed] very fine," but recognized that it "cause[d] a lot of grief . . . in practice."<sup>91</sup> While former Tuleans entering Minidoka received more attention in the *Irrigator* and were offered more assistance than departing Minidokans, administrators and incarcerated also held a camp-wide farewell dinner for people leaving for Tule Lake.<sup>92</sup> This event suggests that many people understood that the segregation was unreasonable. Lester Suzuki, a prominent incarcerated minister at Granada Relocation Center, clarified such

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<sup>89</sup>Andrew N. Otani, *A History of Japanese-American Episcopal Churches* (n.p, 1980), 66. Other reports say Yamazaki recovered from "slight injuries" in a few days. "Attackers Still Sought," *Densen Tribune*, 12 Mar 1943, 1.

<sup>90</sup>Historical Note, "Reverend Yamazaki Was Beaten in Camp Jerome," Henry Sugimoto Collection: A Life Transformed 1941-1945, Japanese American National Museum.

<sup>91</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 17 Sept 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>92</sup>Interfaith Council Meeting, 14 Sept 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

impressions explicitly. In a public letter to his congregation, Suzuki called the categorization of “disloyal” and “loyal” Nikkei a “misnomer” because people answered “no” on the controversial questions for a wide variety of reasons. To reconcile this incongruity, he used the word “segregatees” to describe individuals marked disloyal by the government survey.<sup>93</sup>

After the segregation, several individuals pleaded with ministers to intercede with the WRA for their release from Tule Lake.<sup>94</sup> One case exemplified the disorder of segregation: The WRA told some Nisei siblings that they would be separated permanently from their father who had been arrested as a “disloyal alien” if they did not renounce their American citizenship. After doing so, the Department of Justice released their father, but they were trapped at Tule Lake, fearing imminent deportation.<sup>95</sup>

As the WRA segregated its camps, Tule Lake became a particularly dangerous place for Christian leaders and many church members feared associating with Nikkei pastors and white missionaries. Gangs composed of Kibei roamed the camp, “tormenting”<sup>96</sup> and “intimidating everybody whom they judged to be pro-American, and branding them traitors.”<sup>97</sup> They threw “garbage in front of [Daisuke Kitagawa] and said, “Dogs should eat this.”<sup>98</sup> Nikkei viewed as collaborators with the WRA were called dogs, or *inu*, Japanese slang for spy or traitor. A false rumor that Kitagawa was a skilled fencer may have spared

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<sup>93</sup>Suzuki to Friends, 17 Aug 1943, Box 5/Fld 6, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>94</sup>Robert F. Kozelka to Gillett, 26 Sept 1945, Box 1/Fld 15, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>95</sup>Tamiko Sano to Mrs. Kozelka, 13 Sept 1945, Box 1/Fld 15, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>96</sup>Choichi Nitta, quoted in Eileen Sunada Sarasohn, ed., *The Issei: Portrait of a Pioneer, An Oral History* (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1983), 191.

<sup>97</sup>de Nevers, 203.

<sup>98</sup>Ai Miyasaki, quoted in Sarasohn, *The Issei*, 209.

him physical abuse, but young men also patrolled his block each night.<sup>99</sup> Andrew Kuroda, his fellow Tulean pastor, was not so lucky. Two other congregants guarded his barracks, but angry incarcerated beat Kuroda outside of their view. The WRA expedited the transfers of Kuroda and his guards after the incident.<sup>100</sup> Leaders of these sometimes outwardly pro-Japan gangs distributed lists of Tuleans considered to be sympathetic to camp authorities to ensure incarcerated did not elect them as block representatives.

These confrontations and the difficulties encountered by church members who associated with Nikkei or white pastors made Christian ministry nearly impossible. Kuroda, Kitagawa and the Hannafords, white Presbyterian missionaries working at Tule Lake, left as segregation neared its completion in the fall of 1943. While the WRA might have permitted Nikkei pastors to remain, counter to the segregation rules that would have resulted in their removal, Kitagawa explained that “it’s categorically impossible for me or for any other person to stay on after segregation to do church work.”<sup>101</sup> Not only could these pastors do more effective work outside or in other camps, Kitagawa recognized that his “position may be entirely misunderstood so that [his] presence and [his] activities may do more harm than good.”<sup>102</sup> He may have meant that his work could have drawn unwanted attention to the camp’s Christians or that Tuleans believing he was a spy would reduce his ability to work in the camp. Howard Hannaford was “relieved and glad” once Kitagawa was “safely out.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Daisuke Kitagawa, *Issei and Nisei* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 121.

<sup>100</sup>de Nevers, 203.

<sup>101</sup>Kitagawa to Gillett, 9 Sept 1943, Box 1/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>102</sup>Kitagawa to Gillett, 9 Sept 1943.

<sup>103</sup>Hannaford to Chapman, 3 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

Many outsiders and some WRA administrators did not understand the severity of the situation and asked the Hannafords to stay, incorrectly believing that the couple would be able to “work much more effectively . . . than the Japanese pastors” in camp.<sup>104</sup> It was clear to the Hannafords that they too needed to leave and they notified the Protestant Commission that they would be looking for a new post.<sup>105</sup> By the end of September 1943, the WRA had moved nearly the entire Protestant congregation to other camps. Hannaford described the camp as “grow[ing] stranger and stranger” as “few people whom we know remain in it and by the end of next week those few will be practically vanished from sight.”<sup>106</sup> By November, he felt that their mere “presence . . . at a church service”<sup>107</sup> “tends to be a hindrance rather than a help”<sup>108</sup> at this “sadly changed place.”<sup>109</sup>

Tule Lake’s strong Protestant church nearly collapsed when most Christians and the camp’s pastors left, but worship services continued despite these difficulties. Hannaford estimated that between one hundred and one hundred fifty Christians remained or had arrived at the camp after segregation transfers were complete in the fall of 1943. They had only one pastor, the Baptist Reverend Hashimoto, from Minidoka.<sup>110</sup> While the Tule Lake

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<sup>104</sup>A. J. to Marcia Kerr, 24 Aug 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU; Hannaford to Gillett, 5 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 7, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>105</sup>Hannaford to Chapman, 26 July 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>106</sup>Hannaford to Gillett, 24 Sept 1943, Box 1/Fld 7, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>107</sup>Hannaford to Chapman, 17 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 11, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>108</sup>Hannaford to Chapman, 3 Nov 1943.

<sup>109</sup>Hannaford to Chapman, 17 Nov 1943.

<sup>110</sup>Hashimoto and his wife had requested repatriation to Japan. Hannaford to Chapman, 29 Sept 1943.



congregation decreased in size, worship and educational programs continued and new members slowly joined the church. However only about a third of the camp's Christians attended services.<sup>111</sup> Attendance of thirty or forty contrasted sharply with the hundreds who attended when the ecumenical church opened. Many Christians left because of the severe stigma attached to their religion at Tule Lake.<sup>112</sup> At least one Christian Tulean joined the Buddhist group, but rejoined a Protestant church after leaving camp.<sup>113</sup> Many felt intimidated and isolated from fellow incarcerated.

Despite these challenges, one new Tulean convert considered this period of time "the greatest harvest of [her] lifetime" because the suffering, doubt, isolation and vast amount of free time led her to become "more serious, more deeply involved with the Bible."<sup>114</sup> Shigeko Fukuye's identification as a Christian, occasional church attendance and association with white Christians led non-Christian Tuleans to call her an inu. They shouted "Bow-Wow . . . when [she] passed by their door." However, perhaps because she was a single woman,<sup>115</sup> Tuleans did not threaten her physically. She explained that God and her Bible study gave her the "strength to . . . withstand all kinds of difficult situations" even though she was the only

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<sup>111</sup>Hannaford to Chapman, 29 Sept 1943, Box 4/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>112</sup>Gary Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance in America's Concentration Camps," *Phylon* 45:3 (Third Quarter 1984): 223.

<sup>113</sup>Ai Miyasaki interview, Sarasohn, *The Issei*, 210.

<sup>114</sup>Shigeko Fukuye, interview by Rosalie Wax, Dec 1981, Box 5/Fld 13, Rosalie H. Wax Papers, BANC MSS 83/115 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>115</sup>Her husband and children had repatriated to Japan. Fukuye.

Christian in her housing block. More than the taunts, Fukuye spoke of the kindness of WRA employees and Nikkei pastors at Tule Lake decades later.<sup>116</sup>



**Figure 7: Tule Lake Cross, 1943**  
Source: Klimek Family Collection, Densho

Even after segregation, a large wooden cross erected by incarcerated during the first Easter remained standing high above the camp (Figure 7).<sup>117</sup> In a way, its prominent location towering over the camp marked the entire community as Christian, so it is somewhat surprising that it was not torn down during tensions after segregation. The Tulean Church

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<sup>116</sup>White WRA employees seem to have attended the Protestant church at Tule Lake in greater numbers after the segregation, perhaps because the congregation was smaller and they felt like less of a minority within it. Fukuye; "Information Concerning Tule Lake Center," Sept 1944, Box 120/Fld 6, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>117</sup>"Tule Lake Relocation Center as seen from the summit of a nearby mountain," 28 Sept 1943, Series 15, War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement. Tule Lake pilgrims have held ceremonies at this cross in recent years. "Cross erected by incarcerated" (denshopd-p11-00007), July 1998, Densho, Klimek Family Collection.

never reached its pre-segregation level of membership, but grew persistently. Gordon Chapman of the Protestant Commission preached to three hundred incarcerated at the camp's 1944 Easter service, noting that the church "seems to be finding its strength."<sup>118</sup> By that summer, enough young people were participating that Hashimoto requested the aid of seminary students to help with vacation Bible school. When Douglas Noble and his Wayside Chapel stopped at Tule Lake in the spring of 1945, five people made commitments at the conclusion of his main service.<sup>119</sup> Chapman noted that Buddhists were causing fewer problems by mid-1944, since they did not "assert themselves" on Easter even though it coincided with Hana Matsuri, a Buddhist holiday.<sup>120</sup> However, at several other camps that year, Buddhist and Christian incarcerated collaborated for a joint service.<sup>121</sup>

While Chapman singled out Buddhists, the conflict at Tule Lake and elsewhere did not seem to be a situation of one religion set against another. Many of the troublemakers were Buddhist, but some were not, nor were all the victims Christian. Disruptive gangs were critical of Christianity's association with America more than its theology. They were not attacking as Buddhists, but as members of the Japanese community. Even without Christianity's association with the American nation, Christian Nikkei's closer relationships with numerous white Americans could have been enough to draw accusations.

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<sup>118</sup>Chapman to the Members of the Protestant Commission, 12 Apr 1944, Box 4/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>119</sup>Noble received little welcome at Tule Lake compared to other camps; only twelve incarcerated came to his first meeting held within his chapel car. After speaking to eighty people at the church, he led thirty-five young people on a hike. Douglas W. Noble, Report to the Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. on Wayside Chapel Tour to War Relocations Centers, March 15 to May 6, 1945, Box 1/Fld 13, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>120</sup>Chapman to Protestant Commission, 12 Apr 1944.

<sup>121</sup>Sandra C. Taylor, *Jewel of the Desert: Japanese American Internment at Topaz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 157.

## Christian Nikkei and the War

Amidst the challenges of camp life, Nikkei still had to face the difficulties of war and life on the home front. The incarceration complicated wartime concerns. Like all Americans, they deliberated over the morality of war, but their loss of rights complicated the draft and caused a particularly difficult situation for Nikkei pacifists. Like all Americans, they attended memorial services for fallen soldiers, but clergymen had to develop interfaith ceremonies. Like many Christian Americans, they adjusted to new leadership structures in their churches as pastors joined the military chaplaincy, but the incarceration camp churches also faced constant change as people joined the army and resettled outside of the camps.

Though many Nisei were already serving in the US military and Issei had fought for the country during World War I, the military turned away Nikkei who volunteered soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Approximately one year later, Roosevelt commissioned a segregated unit for Nikkei. Nisei began receiving draft notices in February 1944 and many young Nisei went to prison for refusing to register.<sup>122</sup> Initially, it looked as though there would be no such difficulties at Minidoka.<sup>123</sup> Two men resisted and sat in a county jail for six weeks, but capitulated to family pressure and were immediately inducted, bringing the

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<sup>122</sup>Muller, *Free to Die* narrates the stories of Nikkei draft resisters.

<sup>123</sup>More Minidokans than incarcerated at other camps said on the loyalty questionnaire that they would serve in the armed forces. Ninety-one percent of Minidokans answered that they would serve in the United States as opposed to the average from all camps of seventy-two percent. This difference was not simply due to Minidoka's greater number of Christians, most of whom answered in the affirmative. Among male Buddhists educated in Japan with a background in agriculture (the group least likely to answer yes), seventy-nine percent of those from California went to Tule Lake, while only fifty-six percent of that group at Minidoka did so. Northwesterners at other camps responded similarly. Muller, *Free to Die*, 54. Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *The Salvage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 100.

camp's compliance rate to one hundred percent at the end of April 1944.<sup>124</sup> However, thirty-eight refused induction by the end of that summer.<sup>125</sup>

Some Nisei refused to serve on pacifist and religious grounds. One Minidokan explained, "I cannot fight and uphold the principles laid down in the Bible" and "offered no further explanation."<sup>126</sup> However, because so many Japanese Americans, including many loyal citizens, protested the draft for political reasons, the government was not generous in granting conscientious objector status. It was difficult for any citizen to obtain unless the applicant was a member of a historic peace church, like the Quaker or Mennonite churches. Japanese pacifists received even less understanding from the government and the church.

Perry Saito, a Nisei pacifist, felt tremendous guilt over his position, feeling as if "he were forsaking the entire Japanese populace here in America," since many people would "blame it, on [him] as a Japanese and not as a Christian."<sup>127</sup> He qualified an answer on the loyalty questionnaire accordingly, "Due to my religious beliefs, . . . I could not bear arms for any force, whether it be for this nation or any other. . . . Insofar as I do not have to bear arms, I do swear allegiance to the USA."<sup>128</sup> His personal correspondence reflected a sense of shame or embarrassment even when telling close friends. To his closest Nisei friend, he admitted, "You probably don't know it, but I am a conscientious objector," suggesting his feelings had been a secret for some time.<sup>129</sup> Expressing a common sentiment, Saito remarked

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<sup>124</sup>Muller, *Free to Die*, 70.

<sup>125</sup>Muller, *Free to Die*, 74.

<sup>126</sup>Arthur Kleinkopf, *Relocation Center Diary* (Hunt, ID: privately printed, 1945), 9 Dec 1943, 308.

<sup>127</sup>Perry Saito to Norio Higano, 14 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 13, Higano Family Papers, Accession No. 2870-1, UW.

<sup>128</sup>de Nevers, 202.

<sup>129</sup>Saito to Higano," 14 Apr 1942.

that “most people will probably say I am opposed to war because we are at war with Japan, but that isn’t true. . . . I am most certainly a true American, but I consider myself also a true Christian.”<sup>130</sup> He regretted that his religious beliefs conflicted with a standard expression of patriotism and knew many people would misinterpret his actions. Saito praised both military volunteers and conscientious objectors in non-combat positions.<sup>131</sup>

Gordon Hirabayashi, a member of the Quaker church at this time, also refused to serve, instead directing his energy toward the foundation of an interdenominational organization in Spokane, WA. Through race reconciliation, Hirabayashi’s center worked towards the same global goals sought by mainline Protestants, to “remove the causes of war, and other social evils, and social disease.” Since he chose not to fight against fascism in a physically combative manner, he hoped that he could make an alternative contribution by forming “foundations for peace and freedom” and “further the cause for real peace.”<sup>132</sup>

Not all religious leaders supported pacifist draft objectors. Saito disapproved when a Methodist pastor encouraged members of his Nisei youth group to “do your duty to God [by joining the army], and show them that we niseis are true Americans!!” without ever saying, “Do your duty to God, and show them that we niseis [*sic*] are true CHRISTIANS.”<sup>133</sup> Many white and Nikkei pastors counseled young congregants and their families as they struggled over the choice to enlist.

While the question of Nisei in the military caused many arguments, it increased solidarity among the volunteers’ families. This unity and a desire to include Buddhists and

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<sup>130</sup>Saito to Higano, 23 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 13, Higano Family Papers, Accession No. 2870-1, UW.

<sup>131</sup>Fukuyama, “Democracy & Christianity,” “The Federated Church Herald,” 21 Mar 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

<sup>132</sup>Hirabayashi to Eleanor Ring, 6 June 1944, Box 1/Fld 7, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

<sup>133</sup>Saito to Higano,” 14 Apr 1942.

Christians led to interfaith allusions in speeches about patriotism and the war. At one of a series of banquets honoring army volunteers,<sup>134</sup> an Issei man, Kinya Okajima, gave an inclusive speech that equated the traditional values of Buddhism and Japan with those of Christianity and America.<sup>135</sup> He praised Issei parents for raising their children in such a manner that they would choose to make this “supreme sacrifice” to their nation. Okajima also spoke of the “moral code” in the new soldiers’ blood: wisdom, benevolence, bravery and honor.<sup>136</sup> Such equations between Christianity and Buddhism were not rare, nor untrue in many ways, but the two nations’ concepts of sacrifice differed considerably. Okajima attempted to reach every member of his wide audience, giving each generation of Buddhists and Christians a way to frame their united goal. The speech ironically closed with a prayer for “the glory of America which is founded upon the rock of justice, liberty and equality which can never be removed by any power under the sun.”<sup>137</sup> Evoking the sentiments expressed in this speech, every camp held interfaith memorial services. Catholic, Buddhist and Protestant leaders collaborated with WRA staff, the Community Activities Committee and the Parent-Soldier Association to develop the liturgies, design the altar pieces and write programs.<sup>138</sup> Minidoka’s religious leaders organized a memorial every few months to honor the sacrifices of young soldiers who recently had died.

The memorial services for Minidokan soldiers killed in action demonstrated patriotism and blended both ritual and rhetorical elements of Buddhism and Christianity. At

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<sup>134</sup>“Testimonial Banquets Held: 1200 Toast Volunteers,” *Minidoka Irrigator*, 20 Mar 1943, 5.

<sup>135</sup>Kinya Okajima, “Volunteers’ Banquet,” 19 Mar 1943, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>136</sup>Okajima, “Volunteers’ Banquet.”

<sup>137</sup>Okajima, “Volunteers’ Banquet.”

<sup>138</sup>Kleinkopf, 29 July 1944, 414.

each service, Catholic, Buddhist and Protestant leaders sat on a low stage alongside camp administrators and other participants. While difficult to determine on the basis of existing photographs, it seems that leaders did not display religious symbols at Minidoka's services. The simple stage usually held only flowers and a United States flag (Figure 8).<sup>139</sup> Religious leaders new to interfaith activities may have felt uncomfortable assembling religious icons together or simply found the challenge of visually balancing the representation of multiple traditions equally too difficult. Perhaps they decided that competing religious symbols would distract from the central patriotic message. Given the size of the flag, the former might have been overshadowed more readily. Funeral services for individual soldiers



Densho Digital Archive, 2008

**Figure 8: Memorial Service, Minidoka, 1943**  
Source: Wing Luke Museum, Hatate Collections, Densho

<sup>139</sup>“Memorial Service for a Nisei Soldier” (denshopd-i39-00010), 1944, Minidoka, Densho, Wing Luke Museum, Hatate Collection.





**Figure 9: Funeral for Nisei Soldier, Minidoka**

Source: National Archives and Records Administration, Densho

incorporated religious iconography and additional ritual (Figure 9).<sup>140</sup> Here, the US flag hung to the side and slightly behind the central white cross set against a black cloth. Since this funeral took place in a dining hall, where the flag already hung, the only option may have been to place the altar in front of the cross or, as they chose, to the side.

Components of the interfaith memorial service programs varied little: amidst patriotic songs and speeches, a representative of each religion—Protestant, Catholic and Buddhist—offered prayers, delivered sermons or other religious messages or read scripture. After a Buddhist invocation, a young woman would sing the “Niseis’ Stars and Stripes.” This revision of the traditional patriotic hymn opened dramatically with the stanzas,

In Old Glory’s stripes of Red

<sup>140</sup>“Funeral for Nisei Soldier” (denshopd-i37-00733), Minidoka, Densho, National Archives and Records Administration.

Now flows, the Nisei blood.  
In struggles great they fought and bled  
Stemming the enemy flood.<sup>141</sup>

The song emphasized Nisei's absolute loyalty and willingness to sacrifice their lives for America. The camp director spoke after someone read a non-religious poem followed by a speech in Japanese and a reading of a message from the WRA director. Speakers praised boys for proving the loyalty of Nikkei and helping save America from her enemies.<sup>142</sup> After military guards presented flags to the soldiers' families, Minidoka's Catholic priest Leopold Tibesar offered a benediction and Boy Scout buglers closed the ceremony with "Taps."<sup>143</sup> At Minidoka's fourth service, the WRA administrator George Townsend closed his message by saying, "Lord Buddha taught that to every good deed there is an equal result, and the lives given up by these brave men will benefit those of you left behind. The founder of the Christian religion said, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.'"<sup>144</sup> Like Okajima's speech at the 1943 volunteer induction, Townsend spoke to both religious groups, pointing to the similar meanings behind their shared sacrifices. Programs at other camps varied slightly from those at Minidoka. At Rohwer, for example, representatives of bereaved families offered incense following the Buddhist prayer.<sup>145</sup> Most leaders carefully balanced elements of Buddhism, Catholicism and Protestantism.

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<sup>141</sup>"The Niseis' Stars and Stripes," printed in the Memorial Service Program, 11 Aug 1944, Reel 330, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>142</sup>"3<sup>rd</sup> Memorial Services Honor 10 War Dead," *Minidoka Irrigator*, 23 Dec 1944, 1.

<sup>143</sup>Memorial Service Program, 11 Aug 1944.

<sup>144</sup>A photograph of the service depicts a massive US flag draped behind the stage. Large floral arrangements frame a low table holding two urns. "Memorial Services Honor Twelve Hunt Servicemen," *Minidoka Irrigator*, 26 May 1945, 1, 4.

<sup>145</sup>"Second Memorial Service: 16 Servicemen to be Honored by Centerites," 16 Dec 1944, *Rohwer Outpost*, 1.

One of the clearest examples of the effects of the interfaith memorial services can be found in the concise journal of Minidoka's school superintendent. He wrote:

The students in one of the elementary school classes had a pet turtle. It died recently. A group of the students buried the turtle outside the schoolroom door. A cross was erected at the head of the grave. A grave marker was made with the inscription, "Here Lies Tony the Turtle. He Came To Us on March 1, 1945 and Died May 2, 1945." The students then placed slices of oranges and bits of candy on the grave. At different times the teacher noticed them lightly sprinkling water on the grave and chanting. The children were using both the Christian and Buddhist burial services.<sup>146</sup>

By May 1945, these children had spent a significant part of their lives growing up in the incarceration camps. They likely had attended numerous interfaith memorial services and funerals that used the rituals they later reenacted for their pet turtle. Had the incarceration never occurred, these young Buddhists and Christians might not have been as familiar with the traditions of both religions or inclined to combine them. Camp life exposed children to a wider range of religions than they might have encountered in Seattle. During summer school, for example, Buddhists met just down the hall from Protestants and teachers caught students sneaking into friends' classrooms, regardless of their own affiliation.<sup>147</sup>

The close quarters in camp led incarcerated people to associate with people they might not have otherwise, leading to a greater exposure to different faiths. In prewar urban areas, non-adherents would have observed the celebrations of other groups, such as Bon Odori festivals or Christmas celebration, but fewer individuals participated in both before the war. In the confined and compressed living spaces of camp, however, these occasions drew observers and participants of all faiths. Non-Buddhists may have begun to view Bon Odori as a non-religious, cultural practice like non-Christians saw Christmas as an American holiday more

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<sup>146</sup>Kleinkopf, 3 May 1945, 515.

<sup>147</sup>Kleinkopf, 28 June 1943, 218.

than a Christian one. These examples model the ways in which the incarceration and the performance of religion within the camps affected incarceratedees' knowledge of and attitudes towards different religions.

One might assume that liberal Protestants would have supported these interfaith endeavors enthusiastically in hope that they might foster global harmony like ecumenical works, but they did not. National Protestant denominations and ecumenical groups did not oppose interfaith events, but they did not encourage them either. From their perspective, Christianity—not pluralism—was the root of the movement towards a new world order. However, a number of Christian and Buddhist leaders working within the camps saw the benefit of interfaith ventures. Tom Fukuyama attempted to design an interfaith creed that could be used in the schools, but Minidoka's other religious leaders showed less interest.<sup>148</sup> Buddhist groups at several camps invited Christian speakers to their gatherings to minimize "friction" and model cooperation and open-mindedness to their congregations.<sup>149</sup> Interfaith youth councils held joint discussions attended by members of both religions.<sup>150</sup> For Fukuyama and others, the interfaith works foreshadowed a brighter future.

These interfaith activities did not extend outside the camp. Global and national interfaith movements did not gain momentum for another twenty years. The army did not allow Buddhist clergy to join Christian and Jewish chaplains until several decades after World War II. However, the Nisei chaplain George Aki convinced his commanding officer at Camp Shelby to allow Buddhist clergymen from the nearby Arkansas incarceration camps

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<sup>148</sup>Fukuyama to the Rev. and Mrs. Andrews, 16 Dec 1942, Box 1/Fld 44, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>149</sup>Hayashi, JERS Religion Report.

<sup>150</sup>Hayashi, Notes on Young People's Council.

to visit regularly to offer services.<sup>151</sup> The chaplaincy structure accounted for minimal religious diversity in the 1940s, admitting only Protestant, Catholic and Jewish chaplains. They attempted to meet the spiritual needs of Buddhists during and for decades after the war.

With mixed feelings, several Nikkei Christians joined the military chaplaincy. Paul Nagano and his wife left Poston for Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota the day after their wedding. He planned to obtain the seminary degree required of army chaplains. Of this decision, Nagano wrote, “I can still remember walking alone across the fire-break in the evening making my way quietly and soberly to the recruiting office and registering my intent. That was a truly lonely and soul-wrenching commitment. . . . I would ordinarily be a conscientious objector—but as I thought of other Japanese Americans, many who were my dearest friends, volunteering and their need for spiritual strength, I was moved to make this decision.”<sup>152</sup> Though the chaplaincy is a non-combat station, the idea of joining a military force still bothered many pacifists.

Andrews volunteered for army chaplaincy for similar reasons a few weeks after the announcement of the 442<sup>nd</sup>’s formation, not many months after moving to Idaho. Though he may have considered chaplaincy earlier, a former congregant told him of the segregated unit’s critical need for chaplains. This young man realized how valuable “a firm and unwavering conviction in Jesus Christ” could be for men in the army as it aided one’s struggle to determine just actions. In particular, when faced with the difficult question of killing people in battle, the soldier recognized his need of a moral guide.<sup>153</sup> Andrews could

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<sup>151</sup>George Aki, “Memoir: My Thirty Months (1944-1946),” undated, George Aki Collection (AFC/2001/001/11135), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

<sup>152</sup>Nagano, “United States Concentration Camps,” 73-4.

<sup>153</sup>Yamamoto to Andrews, 31 Jan 1943 [the document mistakenly lists the year as 1942], Box 1/Fld 52, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

not have overlooked the urgency of the plea that lamented their unit's lack of a chaplain and the soldiers' difficulty and expense of attending distant local services each week. The War Department considered his offer,<sup>154</sup> but Andrews volunteered on the condition that he would not displace a Nisei chaplain and the army concluded that his services were not needed.<sup>155</sup> Andrews was disappointed, but recognized that he could accomplish more by meeting the numerous needs of incarcerated Nikkei.<sup>156</sup>

Indeed, as more volunteers went overseas, their families sought pastoral care. Fukuyama tried to reach out to the wives of soldiers, some of whom were expecting their first child, but was frustrated that he could only "touch but a fraction" of them.<sup>157</sup> Andrews observed that the war is "distressing enough to people in ordinary life, but to people confined it is much more so."<sup>158</sup> While rarely hindered by his lack of Japanese language skills, Andrews "wish[ed he] could speak Japanese" when it became necessary to conduct services for Issei mothers who had lost their sons in battle.<sup>159</sup> The war stretched the already thin supply of pastoral resources.

The rising number of people leaving Minidoka "sharply crippled" the Federated Church's "personnel resources."<sup>160</sup> Concerned, Thompson told outside leaders how their

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<sup>154</sup>Joseph D. Hughes to Andrews, 4 Mar 1943, Box 1/Fld 3, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>155</sup>Email from Brooks Andrews to the author, 1 Sept 2011.

<sup>156</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 9 Mar 1943, Box 3/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>157</sup>Fukuyama wrote to his fiancée for advice. Fukuyama to Adkins, 11 Nov 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>158</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 8 May 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>159</sup>This became particularly difficult after the Issei pastor Hashimoto left for Tule Lake in the fall of 1943. Andrews to Thomas, 9 Feb 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

“work [was] upset . . . almost every time some new person secured a permanent release from the project.”<sup>161</sup> While Nikkei could not return to the Pacific Coast until 1945, the WRA encouraged them to apply for leave clearance and move elsewhere in the United States. The most motivated individuals with the greatest leadership skills resettled first, leaving gaps within church leadership that could not be filled. Two-thirds of Minidoka’s Sunday school teachers left camp by June 1943, their positions filled by less experienced people. Nearly all of the young people’s church council members were gone by then as well.<sup>162</sup> By December 1944, only fifteen percent of Minidoka’s male Christian Nisei remained in camp. One-third of male Christian Issei had departed, as had nearly three-quarters of male Christian Kibei.<sup>163</sup> Fewer women of all generations resettled, though two-thirds of female Nisei Christians left Minidoka before the close of 1944.<sup>164</sup> Many camps lost Nikkei pastors who believed they could better serve the community from the outside.<sup>165</sup>

As more Nikkei left the camps, the responsibilities of remaining pastors grew. Because Nisei left in greater numbers than Issei, the ecumenical churches were frequently left with primarily Issei clergy. However, most incarcerated did not leave camp until after high school graduation, so a sizable number of school-aged Nikkei remained. Nisei

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<sup>160</sup>Thompson to Gertrude Apel, 18 June 1943, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>161</sup>Thompson to Smith, 14 Dec 1943.

<sup>162</sup>Thompson to Apel, 18 June 1943.

<sup>163</sup>James Sakoda, “The ‘Residue’: The Unresettled Minidokans, 1943-1945,” in *Views from Within: The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study*, Yuji Ichioka, ed. (Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, 1989), 269.

<sup>164</sup>Sakoda, “The ‘Residue,’” 260.

<sup>165</sup>Suzuki to Friends, 27 April 1944, Box 5/Fld 6, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

congregations did not shrink substantially until the final year of the war because new people from Christian and non-Christian families joined Minidoka's Federated Church.<sup>166</sup>

In many camps, white pastors filled the gaps left by Nikkei clergy who resettled or joined the army chaplaincy, but some white missionaries left to begin preparing for their return to Japan.<sup>167</sup> By 1945, the Manzanar church was largely staffed by white pastors visiting for the day or weekend.<sup>168</sup> To facilitate summer programs, each camp requested on average five or six additional workers, including Nisei seminary students, but camps needed leaders who could stay until the camp's closure.<sup>169</sup> While Minidoka's church suffered less because of its large number of outside workers, leaders still struggled to sustain basic programs for the duration.

## Conclusions

Christian life in the camps revolved around community and piety. The communities helped many incarcerated endure their current situation. Christians of all ages developed empowering testimonies that framed their experience not as victimization but as an opportunity for constructive growth as individuals and people of faith. Lectures, discussion series and more contemplative meditation and prayer sessions provided a place for young

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<sup>166</sup>Thompson to Scattered Members and Friends of the Federated Christian Church, 24 Aug 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

<sup>167</sup>Chapman to Bovenkerk, 16 Dec 1944, Box 1/Fld 1, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Rowena Kubo to Mark Dawber, 16 May 1945, Box 4/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>168</sup>Manzanar church bulletins: Box 59/Fld 8, Manzanar War Relocation Center Records (Collection 122). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>169</sup>Chapman to Members of the Protestant Commission, 26 Mar 1945, Box 4/Fld 3 and WRA Administrative Notice No. 103, 17 June 1944, Box 6/Fld 18, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 5-6 Apr 1944, Box 15/Fld 31, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.



Christian and non-Christians to consider their circumstances and devise practical approaches to resolving or reconciling their incarceration. Non-Christians participated in many of the more secular Christian activities, particularly those tied to patriotism and Americanism. Like Protestants, they welcomed the sense of community and distraction from camp life. Incarcerated Protestants, Catholics and Buddhists worked together as people of faith to acknowledge civic events, such as military induction ceremonies and memorial services. All of these manifestations of Christianity demonstrate ways incarcerated or otherwise subjected people utilize their faith for productive ends.

## Chapter Five: The End of Japanese Ethnic Churches?

*It is just as tragic to invite a Negro or a Japanese into a fellowship simply because he is Negro or Japanese as it is to restrict him on those grounds. The basis for true fellowship is on the grounds of common interest and personal quality.<sup>1</sup>*

*-Gordon Hirabayashi*

As Nikkei struggled to rebuild lives outside of the camps, government officials and national church leaders tried to prevent them from forming ethnic communities like those that existed in West Coast cities before the war. They believed it would prevent the minority from fully assimilating into the predominately white country and being accepted by other Americans. Decades before ethnic pride movements formed in the United States, the majority of (white) Americans saw homogeneity—not strength through diversity—as the path to unity. To strengthen the unity of the nation and church and improve Nikkei’s chance of success, mainline Protestants tried to eliminate ethnic churches, asking Nikkei to join predominately white congregations. After years of debate and the loss of Nikkei church members, American Christians begrudgingly began to accept ethnic differences among their congregations.

This chapter follows Nikkei out of the camps as they resettled in the East or returned to the Pacific Coast. Some moved east as early as 1942 to attend college, but resettlement increased in 1943 and 1944. In 1945, the government allowed them to return to the West Coast. Resettlers and returnees experienced many challenges to find work, new homes and

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<sup>1</sup>Hirabayashi to Eleanor Ring, 6 June 1944, Box 1/Fld 7, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, University of Washington Libraries (UW).

new communities. Protestant Nikkei had to decide whether to comply with instructions from their denominations to join established, predominately white churches or reject this step towards a certain type of unity in favor of forming ethnic congregations.

As Nikkei regained their freedom, differing ideological and practical concerns about segregated churches caused rifts among Nikkei pastors and congregants, national Protestant leaders, white pastors who had worked in the camps and regional organizations like the Seattle Council of Churches. Many politicians and religious leaders outside of the camps had been anticipating this moment since the beginning of the incarceration. They saw the re-entrance of Nikkei into American society as *the* opportunity to eliminate Japanese American urban enclaves and ethnic churches. Church leaders believed that racial integration, particularly of a high profile minority group, would benefit the “total Christian program” and facilitate Nikkei’s transition back into free society. These goals seemed beneficial for all, aside from their paternalistic nature, but they proved ephemeral as few Japanese Americans found homes in predominately white churches. Most often, these plans left Nisei without any religious community or leadership until their ethnic churches re-formed a year or two after the war.

Even as they began building the camps, the WRA realized that holding 120,000 people for the duration of the war would be costly in terms of expenses and lost labor. Administrators hoped resettling incarcerated during the war would alleviate the difficulty of closing the camps and reduce the negative effects of camp life on Nikkei. The WRA pressured incarcerated to leave the camps soon after they entered, limiting support for community activities and events. After living in camp less than a year, the Reverend Emery Andrews observed that the “WRA is making it as hard as possible for people to stay in camp

and to come back . . . to visit.”<sup>2</sup> WRA employees thought opportunities for resettlement would raise morale in the camps, but it had the opposite effect. Despite many success stories, unhappy reports also trickled in from the outside and some resettlers returned to camp. Nikkei became hesitant to leave the camps’ security and minimal comfort.<sup>3</sup>

Pressure to leave the camps grew in 1945 when the government reopened the coast to Nikkei and made plans to close the centers. Many families had lost their homes, farms or businesses and had little to recover. Few had other financial resources after years of extremely low pay. Many older Issei felt that they could not rebuild their lives yet again, but the reality of the imminent closure of the camps pressed upon them.<sup>4</sup> Since the WRA met their essential needs in camp, only now did many Nikkei feel the full weight of the “terrific losses and the resulting bitterness” caused by the incarceration.<sup>5</sup> The looming threat could not be avoided, though some refused to accept it; this dilemma resulted in pitiful, tragic cases where WRA staff extracted elderly Japanese men from their barracks by force and physically shoved them onto trains headed west.<sup>6</sup> The “eviction” from Minidoka was exceptionally difficult, destroying what had been relatively good relations between incarcerated and WRA

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<sup>2</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 19 July 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>3</sup>To counteract these impressions, outside leaders encouraged successful resettlers to visit the camps over holidays to tell incarcerated about their successful transition. Elizabeth Emlen to Ray Gibbons, 3 July 1944, Box 2/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

<sup>4</sup>The WRA had already consolidated these wartime residences on June 30, 1944, evicting 5,700 Nikkei from Jerome Relocation Center in order to convert it into a German POW camp. John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 221.

<sup>5</sup>Tom Fukuyama to Betty Adkins, 28 Jan 1945, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>6</sup>A few older Minidokans hid to escape removal during the camp’s final days. 28 Oct 1945, Box 3/Fld 45, Harry L. Stafford Papers: Records, 1942-1946, College of Southern Idaho (CSI).

staff.<sup>7</sup> Over half of the population waited until the camp's final three months to leave.<sup>8</sup> Some incarcerated requested repatriation because they felt they had no where else to go.<sup>9</sup>

## Resettlement

Mainline Protestant leaders prioritized resettlement for different reasons. Some considered it to be a social aid project while others emphasized civic justice and its theological necessity. They agreed with the WRA that the incarceration's aftermath would be extremely difficult and advocated to gain public support. On March 16, 1943, the Federal Council of Churches took a vote, declaring that "the program of resettlement . . . deserves the wholehearted support and cooperation of the Protestant churches in America," and added that Japanese Americans, "as loyal Americans, . . . should be accorded the same privileges and freedom as are the right of other Americans."<sup>10</sup>

The Reverend Daisuke Kitagawa, who later became an active leader in the World Council of Churches, spoke of resettlement as "primarily a religious duty and not a political movement."<sup>11</sup> He based this view on the fact that the camps destroyed "the dignity of home or sacredness of family life" and limited motivation to live "constructive" lives. Additionally, he pronounced that "to tolerate the existence of relocation centers is in itself an inexcusable sin on the part of the Christians." He believed that such "complacency" could "not be tolerated . . .

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<sup>7</sup>Clarence Gillett to Joseph Kitagawa, 24 Aug 1945, Box 1/Fld 11, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>8</sup>Minidoka closed on October 23, 1945. James Sakoda, "The 'Residue': The Unresettled Minidokans, 1943-1945," in *Views from Within: The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study*, ed. Yuji Ichioka (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 265.

<sup>9</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 28 Jan 1945.

<sup>10</sup>Minutes of the Executive Committee, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 16 Mar 1943, in "The Concern of the Church for the Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans" (New York: Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, April 1944), 6.

<sup>11</sup>Report of the Rev. Daisuke Kitagawa, undated, Box 5/Fld 4, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

from the Christian standpoint.”<sup>12</sup> Not only did the incarceration harm Nikkei, it harmed all Christians by implicating them in its sin.<sup>13</sup> This type of logic stemmed from the social gospel, an influential theology developed forty years earlier in the United States. It called for people to correct sinful social structures that cause poverty or other societal problems. To help correct the injustice, Protestant church groups supported resettlement and the return to the coast by educating outsiders and incarcerated, locating jobs, housing and schools and operating hostels for people arriving in urban areas.

The WRA and religious leaders, for their part, focused primarily on educating incarcerated about resettlement and the return to local communities. Aid workers like the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) worker Floyd Schmoe gave presentations and offered private counseling to incarcerated, advising them of opportunities outside. Youth groups held discussions and panel forums on the topic. The WRA and church workers encouraged incarcerated to attend information sessions and visit special sections of the camp libraries with maps and books about different regions of the country (Figure 10).<sup>14</sup> The Congregational Committee designed two fliers intended to “influence opinion” inside the camps and alleviate incarcerated’ fears of the outside. One was directed to Nisei, “How to Be Happy ‘Outside,’” and the other, “Why Leave,” was in Japanese.<sup>15</sup> The churches encouraged all incarcerated, not just Christians, to

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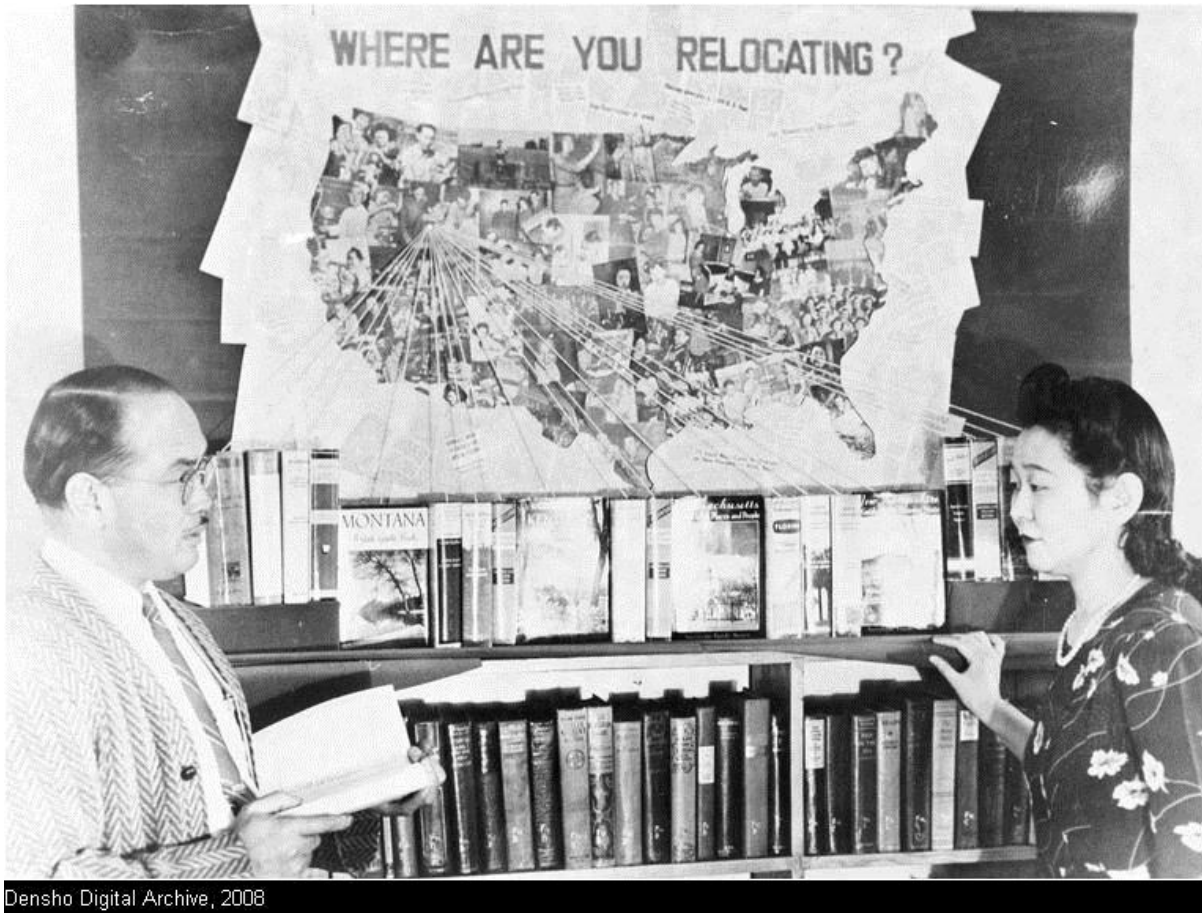
<sup>12</sup>Report of the Rev. Daisuke Kitagawa.

<sup>13</sup>Report of the Rev. Daisuke Kitagawa.

<sup>14</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 11 Aug 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW. “Incarcerated at the Library” (denshopd-i37-00044), January 1944, Minidoka, Densho, National Archives and Records Administration Collection.

<sup>15</sup>Unsigned to Steve, 21 June 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

resettle, so most publications omitted discussions of Christianity.<sup>16</sup> Church staff and volunteers filled newsletters with stories of successful resettlement. They published letters from former incarcerated who wrote of their surprise to be homesick for camp, but almost always ended



**Figure 10: Incarcerees at Minidoka Library, January 1944**

Source: National Archives and Records Administration, Densho

with a positive statement about life on the outside and a call for others to follow them out.<sup>17</sup>

Resettlers saved less positive stories for private correspondence, but complained little.

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<sup>16</sup>Truman B. Douglass, “70,000 American Refugees Made in U.S.A.,” undated, Box 53/Fld 2, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>17</sup>Examples can be seen in Carl Nugent’s *Your Visiting Pastor*, Box 5/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA and the literary editions of the *Rohwer Transmitter*, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA (GTU).

A number of pastors toured the nation to estimate the potential of various regions to serve as resettlement communities. Schmoe made a film of different resettlement communities during his scouting mission to excite incarcerated about life outside.<sup>18</sup> George Aki and his wife traveled to Chicago and St. Louis in the summer of 1943, reporting to their congregation in Jerome Relocation Center that the former was a “sad place for Japanese” despite the good jobs, but encouraged congregants to relocate to St. Louis, a “much more friendly [*sic*] city” inhabited by “better people.”<sup>19</sup> Schmoe, Aki, Andrews and others acknowledged their limited, anecdotal impressions of locations and invited resettled congregants to share their experiences within church newsletters. These first-hand impressions strongly influenced incarcerated who were anxious about being received harshly outside of the camps.

Christian Nisei eager to leave camp asked their prewar ministers for help finding jobs and housing.<sup>20</sup> Many incarcerated willingly took lower positions in order to leave camp. One young woman wrote:

I must have some kind of an employment out in East [*sic*]. Now, Mr. Andrews, I am asking for your help. I know you must know some people living out in Chicago where I can get a job even as a house girl. I would appreciate it a lot if you would see what you can do for me. I know I would be much happier working like that than living here.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Schmoe, Notes for speech, “The Role of Local Churches and Religious Leaders in the Evacuation, Internment, and Final Settlement of Americans of Japanese Ancestry,” Anniversary Conference: Topaz, Mar 1983, Box 1/Fld 48, Floyd Wilfred Schmoe Papers, Accession No. 496-008, UW.

<sup>19</sup>Community Christian Church Bulletin, Jerome Relocation Center, 11 July 1943, Box 5/Fld 7, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>20</sup>Dozens of these letters are filed within several boxes of Emery Andrews’ paper collection. Box 1/Fld 43 to Box 3/Fld 42, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>21</sup>Jean Endo to Andrews, Fall 1942, Box 1/Fld 44, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.



Incarcerees trusted church leaders to find them more suitable employment than they might obtain through the WRA's limited programs.<sup>22</sup> White pastors attempted to find placement for non-Christians as well, but were less successful because many host families or churches wanted only Christian Nikkei.<sup>23</sup>

As people moved out of the camps, pastors wrote them letters of introduction for local churches and later helped former congregants transfer their church membership.<sup>24</sup> Missionaries working in the camps like Andrews and Everett Thompson would ask outside pastors to visit these individuals and help them settle into their new community.<sup>25</sup> Recognizing the benefits this process had for the "social adjustment of resettlers," the Chief Community Management Division of the WRA requested that it become a "matter of routine for all church members."<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the most beneficial form of aid from religious groups was the many hostels opened to facilitate the former incarcerated's reintroduction to normal civilian life throughout the

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<sup>22</sup>Yoshie Oshite to Gillett, 7 Aug 1943, Box 1/Fld 17, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>23</sup>White leaders requested that employers in the East accept non-Christian Nikkei workers and encouraged Buddhists in the camp to apply for work outside. Gillett to Edward G. Marks, 24 Aug 1944, Box 1/Fld 21 and Citizens Committee for Resettlement: Meeting of the Executive Committee, 20 Mar 1944, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>24</sup>Likewise, churches on the outside would write camp pastors for referral letters when resettlers wished to join their churches. Thompson to Scattered Members, 24 Aug 1943. Marion Kline (Director of Religious Education at Calvary Baptist Church in Denver) to Hashimoto, 25 May 1943, Box 1/Fld 53, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>25</sup>Many such letters are stored within paper collections and institutional records. For one example, see Andrews to J.J. Frey, 6 Jan 1943, Box 4/Fld 28, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>26</sup>Notice to Assistant Project Directors in charge of community management, 2 Oct 1943, Box 6/Fld 18, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

country.<sup>27</sup> The WRA initially required incarcerated to secure housing and employment or acceptance to a school before leaving the camps, but incarcerated and potential employers found this arrangement unmanageable. Quakers developed the idea of operating urban hostels where Nikkei could live while finding employment and permanent housing.<sup>28</sup> The WRA agreed to this plan, eventually pressuring American churches to use all available property as hostels for resettling or returning Nikkei. A short hostel stay became a primary way for Nikkei to leave the camps.<sup>29</sup>

Ralph and Mary Smeltzer, previously teachers at Manzanar Relocation Center, developed one of the first hostels under the auspices of the Church of the Brethren Service Commission in Chicago.<sup>30</sup> It opened in March 1943, less than a year after the incarceration commenced.<sup>31</sup> The hostels operated as community living spaces where resettlers paid minimal fees, usually a dollar a day, for room and board and helped with chores, such as gardening or cooking. On average, hostellers stayed for a week and a half before securing permanent employment and housing.<sup>32</sup> Most hostels housed around thirty people at a time, though some had room for up to one hundred Nikkei. Since each hostel had a limited capacity, incarcerated had to apply for available vacancies. Hostel operators judged applicants on their potential for success in finding

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<sup>27</sup> Andrews to Thomas, 13 Apr 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>28</sup> Instructions and Procedure Regarding the Brethren Relocation Hostel, 15 July 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>29</sup> Chapman to Fisher, 13 Dec 1945, Box 1/Fld 6, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU. Instructions and Procedure Regarding the Brethren Relocation Hostel.

<sup>30</sup> Ralph E. Smeltzer, speech to center residents, 16 Nov 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>31</sup> Helpful Information About the Hostel, undated, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>32</sup> The Chicago Brethren hostel advertised that not one of its hostellers had returned to the incarceration centers. Relocation through the Brethren Hostel, Fall 1943, 53/Fld 4, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

employment, but also considered their character as described by white pastors or camp administrators.<sup>33</sup> Accepted Nikkei received detailed travel instructions with their invitation, advising them where to sit on the train, who to look for at the station and what to eat on the journey.<sup>34</sup>

Most hostels required Nikkei to attend group discussions about re-acclimating to life outside of the camps. The advice given by white hostel operators resembled that found in WRA pamphlets. Both encouraged Nikkei to make “hakujin” (white) friends and live inconspicuously, but the central message was to “learn to ‘take it.’ Do not let discrimination and persecution bother you and do not get a martyr complex. . . . Do not fight back.” WRA administrators and many church leaders pressured Nikkei to submit to difficult circumstance without complaint. While hostel operators and other outsiders involved in the resettlement process informed resettlers of their rights, they also reminded Nikkei that their actions “directly affect those who come after” them.<sup>35</sup> People called resettlers who quit or changed their jobs “six week Japs,” suggesting the unreliability of resettlers. Some aid workers warned Nikkei that they must be exemplary neighbors even if they were mistreated.<sup>36</sup> Nikkei were not to do anything that would harm the reputation of Japanese Americans or risk their fragile public acceptance. Before leaving Minidoka, the director of the WRA Employment Office warned Monica Itoi that quitting her job would give Nisei “a reputation as poor risks.” Despite repeated clashes with her employer, she

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<sup>33</sup>Instructions and Procedure Regarding the Brethren Relocation Hostel.

<sup>34</sup>“Travel Hints to Brethren Hostellers,” 23 July 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>35</sup>Resettler Group Discussion No. 1: “How can I adjust my personal life to this new community?,” 9 May 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>36</sup>Clarence Gillett, Notes taken at the Conference of Japanese Christian Leaders, 17 Dec 1943, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

worried that he might “go around telling everybody Nisei aren’t any good” if she left.<sup>37</sup>

Fortunately, a college scholarship allowed her to leave his employment with grace. While this advice was certainly unfair to individuals who had come to assume responsibility for the behavior of an entire culture, Itoi’s concern was merited by the level of discrimination against returnees. A woman in Iowa told Clarence Gillett of the Congregational Committee that her friends were interested in hosting Nisei, but would not consent before seeing “what kind of a girl” came to her house.<sup>38</sup> The placement of future Nikkei within that community relied on the successful assimilation and good nature of the first arrival.

The churches’ efforts to resettle incarcerated individuals provided an essential service for the government. Just as the army had failed to provide meals for evicted communities waiting for transport to assembly centers, the United States government failed to adequately organize the process of resettlement. In both cases, religious organizations offered care and assistance in the government’s stead. Government officials met with national church leaders in 1942 and 1943 to ask formally for their help with resettlement. A WRA administrator rationalized that clergy should “take the lead” in national resettlement programs since they are idealists and have “the ears of millions of people.”<sup>39</sup> Struggling to meet the needs of Nikkei returned to the West Coast, participants in the National Conference of Japanese Americans wrote to President Truman in November 1945 to request that the government address its “peculiar responsibility” for these problems.<sup>40</sup> The churches could not meet the demand for housing and jobs.

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<sup>37</sup>Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 223.

<sup>38</sup>Mrs. Perry to Gillett, 14 Apr 1943, Box 1/Fld 45, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>39</sup>Galen Fisher, Round Table on Japanese Evacuation, 13 & 20 October 1942, Institute of Pacific Relations, American Council.

<sup>40</sup>Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice: A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans* (New York: Friendship Press, 1946), 131-133.

Initiated by the government and supported by church organizations, programs to prevent the coalescence of new ethnic communities increased the challenges of resettlement. The thought that resettlement might permanently dissolve “Little Tokyos” on the coast cheered many white and Nikkei pastors. The director of the Student Relocation Committee stated, “This whole process of mass evacuation may possibly bring good, if the Japanese are scattered throughout the country—no more “Little Tokyos.”<sup>41</sup> John Howard titled a section of his book “Normal American Communities,” quoting President Roosevelt’s plan for “a gradual release program designed to scatter the internees.”<sup>42</sup> The president hoped to “distribute” Nikkei systematically, sending one or two families to each county of the country to “avoid public outcry.”<sup>43</sup> The Protestant Commission supported this “wide distribution” as a “sounder social policy” than resettling incarcerated in groups because it would “maintain the American character of citizens and aid in the Americanization of non-citizens and foster good morale.”<sup>44</sup> Such rhetoric echoed prewar concerns that ethnically homogenous camp life would reverse the Americanization process. In many people’s eyes, immigrants could not become true Americans if they primarily associated with one another. The Commission recommended Nikkei reenter the country “in a ratio not to exceed 1 to 300 of the general population.”<sup>45</sup> While such a calculated dispersal did

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<sup>41</sup>Fisher, Round Table on Japanese Evacuation.

<sup>42</sup>Howard, 223.

<sup>43</sup>Roosevelt to Acting Secretary of State and Secretary of the Interior, 12 June 1944 (denshopd-i67-00086), Densho, Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

<sup>44</sup>Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches in Japanese Relocation Centers and Settlements, 20 July 1942, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>45</sup>It is unclear how Commission members reached these particular numbers, but they felt this ratio would allow Nikkei to assimilate and remain “within easy visiting or courting distance of one another.” Challenging endogamy was not part of the Protestant plan to strengthen national unity. Memorandum on the Work of the Protestant Churches in Japanese Relocation Centers and Settlements,” 20 July 1942.

not occur, they instructed Nikkei to avoid one another socially after leaving camp.<sup>46</sup> Gillett wrote, “There is no doubt in my mind but that the seeking of places for relocating Japanese and Nisei in small groups, is one of the best things that we can do,”<sup>47</sup> but added:

In order to bring about an integration and not merely a dispersion of the Japanese into American democratic life, it will have to be understood that it is a two-way proposition. It is as much an obligation on the part of the Japanese who goes out as on the Caucasian who welcomes him. The work for this must begin in the relocation center to make the evacuee ready, fit and willing to be integrated.<sup>48</sup>

Gillett expressed a more nuanced understanding of integration. The approach of individuals helping with resettlement and the return varied radically, since a number of people recognized the need for ethnic solidarity in the face of national, institutionalized discrimination. However, most ecumenical aid societies instructed Nikkei to “avoid Nisei dances and Nisei churches” and not “cling only to [their] Nisei friends.”<sup>49</sup> Nearly all white church workers and many Nikkei worked with the underlying assumption that “public opinion demands [assimilation] for the sake of national unity.”<sup>50</sup>

Many Nikkei found it “lonesome” outside,<sup>51</sup> encountering difficulties adjusting to regular life while coping with racial stigmas. Andrews regularly visited Minidokans who had resettled outside because “many of the people . . . are lonely and do not feel at home.”<sup>52</sup> A teenage boy in

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<sup>46</sup>Resettler Group Discussion.

<sup>47</sup>Descriptions of the problems encountered by Nisei in Austin, TX and other interior locations appear in this collection as well. Gillett to Robert Inglis, 4 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 6, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>48</sup>“Congregational Christians Aid American-Japanese Evacuees,” undated, Box 1/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>49</sup>Resettler Group Discussion.

<sup>50</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>51</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 13 Apr 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>52</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 12 May 1943, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

Kalamazoo, MI wrote his former teacher at Jerome Relocation Center, telling her about struggles to find a Nisei girl to date.<sup>53</sup> He enjoyed the company of many white friends, but he did not consider dating them. The intense loneliness felt by many resettled Nikkei, particularly Issei, could not be overcome without their lifelong Japanese friends. Expressing a common view among older incarcerated, an Issei Methodist at Minidoka called the government's attempt to destroy their communities a tragedy, saying "he would rather stay with friends and die [in camp] with them."<sup>54</sup> After the government took virtually everything else away from them, the happiness of Issei was largely dependent on "Japanese community, their friends and associates, and their common cultural background."<sup>55</sup> For this reason and the fact that many Issei hoped to return directly to the coast, many incarcerated had no interest in leaving the camps.

Some Nikkei pastors disapproved of the mainline churches' unwavering support for the WRA's resettlement program. While they did not want to encourage resistance, these pastors did not believe religious leaders should bring "such controversial problems" into the church. They feared morale would drop lower if religious leaders pressured incarcerated to resettle.<sup>56</sup> Fukuyama reserved most criticism for the WRA, but questioned the program more broadly as well. He wrote, "The cold sociological interest of some of the WRA personnel sickens me. All they want to see is a high rate of relocation without consideration of the human problems involved."<sup>57</sup> "Wonder[ing] how lone individuals in far off places feel," he pondered whether

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<sup>53</sup>Bob Kiino to Virginia Tidball, 3 Oct and 7 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 1, Virginia Tidball Papers, MS T348274, University of Arkansas.

<sup>54</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 22 Sept 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

<sup>55</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 22 Sept 1944.

<sup>56</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 13-15 July 1943, Box 15/Fld 3, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>57</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 22 Sept 1944.

outsiders should “admire” resettlement.<sup>58</sup> He felt that “human sentiment and bonds of fellowship [were] sacred” and must be respected, regardless of race or political pressure. These latter relationships should be prioritized, especially by religious leaders. However, most Nikkei pastors supported resettlement.

While some Nikkei desired the support of an ethnic community outside of camp, others felt uneasy about public conglomerations of Japanese Americans, anxious about what impressions they might make or reprisals they might attract. Sue Aromura, Nisei in Ann Arbor, Michigan, noted her surprise at meeting “so many Hunt [Minidokan] Nisei . . . in such a small college town.” She felt “quite conspicuous” and asked Andrews if he did not think it was “a bit overpopulated for such a small community.”<sup>59</sup> The largest number of Nikkei moved to Chicago. While only 390 people of Japanese descent lived in that city in 1940, 15,000 to 20,000 resided there by the end of 1946.<sup>60</sup> The population of free Nikkei in Colorado grew by 9,000 over the course of the war, though 5,500 soon returned to the West Coast.<sup>61</sup> Utah saw a similar fluctuation in its number of Nikkei.<sup>62</sup> In these areas, it was difficult to keep Nikkei from meeting and spending time with one another.

Despite these challenges, many resettlers successfully reassembled satisfying lives outside of the camps. Itoi’s friend Matsuko found a job and a host family in Chicago through church workers and enthusiastically encouraged Monica to join her. Matsuko wrote that “for the

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<sup>58</sup>Fukuyama made this remark in reaction to the fact that Father Tibesar had resettled “most of his flock” into Catholic schools. Fukuyama to Adkins, 22 Sept 1944.

<sup>59</sup>Aromura estimated that 380 Nisei lived in Ann Arbor at that time. Aromura to Andrews, 11 Jan 1944, Box 2/Fld 7, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>60</sup>United States Department of the Interior & War Agency Liquidation Unit (formerly WRA), *People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans* (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Interior, 1947), 145-6.

<sup>61</sup>Department of the Interior & War Agency Liquidation Unit, *People in Motion*, 71-72.

<sup>62</sup>Department of the Interior & War Agency Liquidation Unit, *People in Motion*, 76.



first time in her life . . . she was breathing free and easy . . . and no longer felt self-conscious about her Oriental face.”<sup>63</sup> Monica’s siblings and sister-in-law also had positive experiences as they left Minidoka for work outside. Monica took their advice and the Rev. Thompson introduced her to Dr. and Mrs. Richardson, former missionaries to China who lived in a Chicago suburb. The couple found her a receptionist job and warmly welcomed her into their family. A number of host families in the Midwest anxiously awaited the arrival of former incarcerated. One woman bought a new Easter outfit for the Nisei girl coming to work in her home. She and her friends wanted to begin “making up to her for the humiliation of camp life.”<sup>64</sup> Others wrote to the incarcerated parents of young Nisei to express their excitement and reassure them of their children’s happiness.<sup>65</sup>

College students resettled more successfully than most Nikkei. Kenji Okuda, at Oberlin College, became the first Nisei elected as student body president, but others soon joined student governments at other schools.<sup>66</sup> A Nisei in Texas was voted “Most Charming Girl” by her classmates.<sup>67</sup> Monica Itoi’s host family arranged a work-study scholarship for her through their former missionary colleague in China who was now the president of Wendell College, a Presbyterian liberal arts school in Indiana. She lived with a minister’s widow on campus.<sup>68</sup> Her experience was quite positive and she made friends with many American and international classmates. Various campus organizations

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<sup>63</sup>Sone, 216-7.

<sup>64</sup>Perry to Gillett, 14 Apr 1943.

<sup>65</sup>Mrs. Howard Wright to Mr. and Mrs. Higano, 24 May 1943, Box 3/Fld 4, Higano Family Papers, Accession No. 2870-001, UW.

<sup>66</sup>Robert W. O’Brien, *The College Nisei* (New York: Arno Press, [1949] 1978), 91.

<sup>67</sup>Allan Austin, *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>68</sup>Sone, 225.

welcomed Itoi and the other three Nisei on campus. Though national rules barred them from sorority membership, the officers and faculty advisor of one such group met with Itoi personally to apologize and pledge their friendship.<sup>69</sup>

The AFSC refrained from supporting dispersion, but strongly advocated resettlement. The organization was critical “not of segregation itself, but of the injustices and inequities inevitably arising from it.”<sup>70</sup> They acknowledged the problems caused by segregated communities, but did not think enforcing certain behavior from a minority group was the solution. In clear language, AFSC documents reveal a concern for the “vicious circle” by which discrimination causes a minority group to become more insular, which in turn “invite[s] further discrimination.” The AFSC did not devote resources to segregated activities, believing Japanese Americans were capable of meeting that need for themselves, but also refrained from instructing Nikkei to avoid such activities. They hoped that increasing public acceptance would naturally create more diverse, integrated communities. Most AFSC efforts encouraged resettlement and sought to eliminate housing and employment discrimination. While Nikkei encountered fewer restrictions in the East than they had on the West Coast, racial discrimination still limited their access to public services and housing on many occasions. The organization also concentrated on essential issues such as health care. To alleviate that particular potential difficulty in Chicago, the AFSC contacted nearly one hundred of the city’s physicians, surgeons, dentists and optometrists to establish reliable contacts for resettlers. When crematoriums or cemeteries refused to accept Nikkei bodies, AFSC representatives lodged complaints about the businesses

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<sup>69</sup>Sone, 227. Sororities at some other schools, including the University of Pennsylvania, did initiate Nisei. Robert W. O’Brien, *The College Nisei* (New York: Reprinted by Arno Press, [1949] 1978), 116.

<sup>70</sup>AFSC Midwest Branch Office, Report on Chicago Resettlement, Nov 1944, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UBC.

and helped families obtain alternative services.<sup>71</sup> The AFSC reported and tried to overcome such problems around the country.

### **“The Future of the Japanese Church in America”**

Mainline churches supported the government’s plan to eliminate urban ethnic enclaves by attempting to eradicate Japanese American ethnic churches. Interdenominational conferences in 1943 determined a course of action for religious work with Nikkei after the war. Nikkei and white pastors, denominational representatives and members of the Home Missions Council Committee on Administration of Japanese Work and the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service gathered in Denver for the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work. Their primary goal was to determine “The Future of the Japanese in American Churches.”<sup>72</sup> Conversations reflected a recurring theme in church work related to Nikkei: upper-level national religious leaders with little to no personal experience with camp life or the Japanese American community made decisions based on their long term goals for American Protestantism. They rarely applied advice from Nikkei or the white pastors closest to that community.

Increasing national and Protestant unity motivated debates about restructuring Japanese worship, and leaders argued over the best way to foster unity. Should Protestants continue emphasizing ecumenism or work for a different type of unity? Since Nikkei of different denominations worshiped together in the incarceration camps, some church authorities reasoned that continuing this ecumenical pattern would be best. They valued “decreas[ing] denominational consciousness” even if participants did not “agree in all

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<sup>71</sup>AFSC Midwest Branch Office, Report on Chicago Resettlement, Nov 1944.

<sup>72</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

things.” Despite evidence to the contrary, a number of outside leaders argued that ecumenical churches were “more ideal and effective” because they were “more Christian.” They believed such Japanese churches could serve as a model for other American churches that would see “the value of union.” Howard Jensen, president of the Seattle Council of Churches and pastor of Seattle’s First Baptist Church, initially prioritized ecumenism over racial integration and encouraged returning Nisei to “avoid doing anything which would re-establish the old denominational pattern.”<sup>73</sup> But when the tide turned toward racial integration, Jensen reoriented his priorities.

Many people opposed forming ecumenical churches due to the problems encountered in the incarceration camps. Work was “slow, inefficient and confusing” and many groups refused to participate fully. Opponents also worried about financial support, since denominational resources would no longer be available to Nikkei if they worshipped in interdenominational churches.<sup>74</sup> This practical concern may have been the driving force behind the decision to forsake ecumenism, since managing the finances behind the incarceration camp churches had been a constant struggle. Consolidating Nikkei and white church members would reduce overall costs for each denomination as well. While leaders hoped to reduce denominational divisions, enforcing ecumenical worship for one relatively small group was impractical within a global church divided by denomination.

Participants at the 1943 Denver meeting voiced pragmatic and theological arguments to show how racially integrated worship would benefit the church and the nation. This plan framed conversation for the rest of the meeting. Attendees defined integration as “holding

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<sup>73</sup>In the case that interdenominational groups did not form, Jensen officially welcomed returning Nisei Baptists to become “a unit within [his] church.” Harold Jensen to Fukuyama, 4 May 1945, Box 15/Fld 24, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>74</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

membership in Caucasian or inter-racial churches and being a part of the intimate fellowship of such churches.” By November 1945, a few white church leaders begin referring to what they hoped would become integrated churches as “non-racial” or “intercultural,” acknowledging that Caucasian as a race too, not just a description of normativity.<sup>75</sup> However, this attempt to deracialize their religious organizations did not catch on and most people continued to speak exclusively, urging the Japanese to join “our Caucasian churches.”

Like ecumenism, racial integration would be a step toward a more unified, peaceful world. Pragmatically, white and Nikkei leaders believed that integrating churches would help former incarcerated join American society more easily and reduce national racial tensions and divisions, problems that contributed to the “misunderstanding and suspicion which helped to produce the evacuation.”<sup>76</sup> They thought the elimination of segregated churches, like the elimination of ethnic urban communities, would fortify America’s future.<sup>77</sup> A related argument stated that bringing Japanese into predominately white churches could “stimulate higher Christian ideals in the Caucasian churches” and the Japanese community.<sup>78</sup> Integration would educate parishioners and lead to greater tolerance and fellowship. Theologically, many Protestants believed that racial integration would be a step toward a “full[er] . . . realization” of true Christianity.<sup>79</sup> Like ecumenism, they thought an integrated church would more closely resemble the church envisioned by Jesus two thousand years earlier.

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<sup>75</sup>Harold Jensen to Lincoln Wadsworth, 10 Nov 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-007, University of Washington Libraries.

<sup>76</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

<sup>77</sup>Paul Nagano, interview by Stephen Fugita and Becky Fukuda, 25 May 1999, Densho.

<sup>78</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

<sup>79</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

These arguments for integrated worship led to harsh criticisms of those who favored segregation. Many Protestant leaders saw a direct correlation between the extent of an individual's Americanization and his or her willingness to attend an integrated church.<sup>80</sup> Just as outsiders viewed the existence of urban Nikkei communities as a rejection of American society, some church leaders saw ethnic churches as a rejection of the American ideal of diversity. Since others viewed ethnic churches as a corruption or rejection of "normal" Christian worship,<sup>81</sup> refusing to attend an established, predominately white church could label an individual anti-American as well as anti-Christian.<sup>82</sup>

Some participants worried that non-Christian Nikkei would not join a predominantly white church, thereby hampering evangelistic efforts. Integrationists countered that ethnic churches only appeared to aid evangelism "at the moment,"<sup>83</sup> since conversion into an ethnic church would hobble the process of joining interracial churches later on. They wanted to introduce converts to "true Christianity," which could not be found in a segregated church. A year and a half later, many of the same leaders qualified this point, acknowledging that conversion might only occur through "special racial churches." However, this did not sway their determination to place Nikkei within "American churches."<sup>84</sup> The Denver participants

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<sup>80</sup>Minutes of Section Meeting No. 1: The Future of Japanese in American Churches, 16 Dec 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>81</sup>People of all races called predominantly white churches or communities "regular" or "normal," creating a value system by which ethnic organizations were inferior and abnormal. Ethnic members could only join such institutions through relinquishing a part of their identity or adopting something new. For a discussion of the era's conflicting drives for diversity and assimilation and their role in the development of the American identity, see Philip Gleason, "Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity," *The Review of Politics* 43:4 (Oct 1981): 483-518.

<sup>82</sup>Minutes of Section Meeting No. 1, 16 Dec 1943.

<sup>83</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

<sup>84</sup>This compromise may have been stated because, by mid-1945, people could see that integration efforts were failing. Reports given at the Denver meeting gave anecdotal evidence that suggested integration efforts might

concluded, "Integration must not only be the ultimate ideal, but it should become the immediate ideal as well."<sup>85</sup> Therefore, leaders planned to encourage Protestants on the West Coast to invite returning Nikkei into their churches and not reopen the ethnic churches. A united church, now bound by racial diversity instead of assorted denominations, was seen as the most Christian option, and thus the "most ideal and the most practical."

Organizationally, one of the most challenging elements of integrating American churches was finding a role for ordained Nikkei. The Denver committee discussed the "Nisei ministerial problem" and encouraged churches to call Nikkei pastors as they left the incarceration camps. Many churches welcomed guest sermons by Nikkei, but most questioned their ability to bring new non-Japanese members to the church or offer effective pastoral care to white people. Many Issei pastors did not wish to minister within predominantly white churches even if one did call them.<sup>86</sup> National leaders considered sending the "surplus of Issei ministers" to Japan, but few were interested and some missions boards opposed the idea as well.<sup>87</sup> Particularly pessimistic, one Nikkei said, "Issei ministers are more or less useless now. It would be a good and kind idea to put them on the retirement list with adequate pension."<sup>88</sup> A notable exception was the First Baptist Church of Chicago, which called Jitsuo Morikawa despite the opposition of many congregants. In a courageous

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succeed within some groups. Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 31 July/1 Aug 1945, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

<sup>85</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

<sup>86</sup>Gordon Chapman complained that "our Japanese ministers, especially the older ones, are still thinking in segregated terms." Chapman to Gillett, 23 Jan 1945, Box 1/Fld 9, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>87</sup>Memorandum of the Protestant Commission on Cooperation in Japanese Work, 21 Sept 1944.

<sup>88</sup>Toru Matsumoto, "American Baptist Home Mission Society Report," 25 Mar 1945.

and successful test, Morikawa soon invited African Americans into the church to expand its diversity further.<sup>89</sup>

The option of granting Japanese Americans the agency to choose which type of church to attend for themselves was not recorded as a consideration during this conference. White leaders acknowledged that integration might require “special effort, courage and self-sacrifice” of Nikkei.<sup>90</sup> Because Nikkei had demonstrated “a high degree of ability to integrate . . . into American society,” white leaders believed their policy was “fully justified.”<sup>91</sup> Japanese and Japanese American pastors voiced their concerns at this meeting, but received little response. While they agreed that “win[ning] souls” should be the “primary goal,” several clearly stated that “most Nisei wish for their own church.” They warned that pushing for integration was already causing “a deep current of resentment” among some Nikkei.<sup>92</sup> The secretary or someone else omitted these critical comments from the official minutes of the conference. Reflecting on these decisions, the Japanese American theologian Paul Nagano felt as if the denominations had “opened their arms, saying, ‘Japanese, Japanese Americans, come, become a part of the family of God in the larger church,’” but he resisted, believing that Nikkei needed to “determine [their] own future.”<sup>93</sup>

But the sides of this conflict were not racially homogenous; the struggle was not simply Japanese Christians versus white Christians. Numerous white leaders working with

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<sup>89</sup>Jitsuo Morikawa, “My Spiritual Pilgrimage,” sermon given on 23 May 1973, reprinted in *Jitsuo Morikawa: A Prophet for the Twenty-first Century: A Legacy of Sixty Inspiring Sermons*, eds. Paul Nagano and William L. Malcomson (Richmond, CA: Council for Pacific Asians Theology, 2000), 107-9.

<sup>90</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

<sup>91</sup>Memorandum of the Protestant Commission on Cooperation in Japanese Work, 21 Sept 1944, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>92</sup>Gillett, Notes taken at the Conference of Japanese Christian Leaders, 17 Dec 1943.

<sup>93</sup>Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.



Nikkei thought ethnic churches needed to exist for pragmatic and/or ideological reasons, while some Japanese pastors believed integration was crucial for the formation of a peaceful church, nation and world. The conflict was not purely a racial struggle for power or authority—though racial inequalities affected how the disagreement was negotiated.

Several Nikkei pastors spoke in favor of integration. The Reverend Mihara from Minidoka argued, “Christian forces must stand united as never before . . . in light of the [world’s] pressing problems.” While vague about specifics, he deliberately spoke for its necessity, describing segregated worship as “disastrous to their people.”<sup>94</sup> A pastor at Rohwer expressed similar feelings, believing that segregated worship would be detrimental to the new world order. He said that Nikkei must accept their responsibilities as “builders for tomorrow.”<sup>95</sup> Mihara also claimed that most Minidokans preferred a “united church ministry” through which young people would be integrated into “regular denominational churches, but other reports testify to the contrary.”<sup>96</sup> Some Nikkei pastors seemed to consider their ethnic churches as aberrant Christian institutions. An Issei Christian leader reportedly remarked, “In years to come we will see the good of it all, we shall be really a part of America and not only a part of a Japanese community in America.”<sup>97</sup> A number of Nikkei

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<sup>94</sup>Minutes of the United Church Ministry to Returning Japanese (UCM), 19 July 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>95</sup>Joseph Fukushima to Clarence Gillett, 13 Nov 1943, Box 1/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>96</sup>Reports from different camps varied. Protestant leaders at Rohwer thought ecumenical churches were “impractical” and were also opposed to integration, believing it to be “impossible.” They stated that “there will be always Japanese churches as long as there are Japanese people in America.” Issei ministers at Heart Mountain favored ethnic ecumenical churches after the war. Minutes of the UCM, 19 July 1945. Toru Matsumoto, American Baptist Home Mission Society Report, 25 Mar 1945, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>97</sup>“Congregational Christians Aid American-Japanese Evacuees,” undated, Box 1/Fld 2, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

agreed with white leaders that integration would lead to “normal” American Christian lives, while others felt uncomfortable in a segregated church after living in the East.<sup>98</sup>

Once attendees of the Denver meeting made their decisions, the Home Missions Council and the Protestant Church Commission sent a policy statement to all member churches and affiliated ecumenical organizations. The statement explicitly prohibited the establishment of Japanese ethnic churches except in “very exceptional situations.” It specified that pastors should organize these exceptions “on an interdenominational basis.” If integration was not possible, Protestant leaders wanted to retain the benefits of ecumenical unity. Most regional ecumenical groups, including the Seattle Council of Churches, agreed that Issei needing services in Japanese could form a segregated ecumenical church.<sup>99</sup> Issei representatives from each Protestant denomination agreed upon the continuation of this style of worship developed at Minidoka,<sup>100</sup> though the Seattle Issei group eventually disintegrated in the late 1940s after ethnic denominational churches re-formed.<sup>101</sup> In regions that did not form Issei congregations, white denominational churches offered a separate worship service in Japanese. National leaders ratified this policy again on January 18, 1945, expanding its reach to the West Coast.<sup>102</sup> It would be a gross exaggeration to say that most American

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<sup>98</sup>Osame Doi, interview, 17 Sept 1986, in *Nisei Christian Journey (Its Promise & Fulfillment)* (n.p.: Nisei Christian Oral History Project, 1988), 12.

<sup>99</sup>The Seattle Council encouraged the Reverend Wada, an Issei pastor, to “retire” in Seattle to minister to this group. They would not call him officially because he was past the American Baptist Home Mission Society’s obligatory retirement age. Action Taken at the Regular Executive Meeting of the Seattle Council of Churches and Christian Education, 19 Feb 1945, Box 15/Fld 3, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW. Jensen to Wada, 14 Aug 1946, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>100</sup>Meeting of Denominational Executives, 15 Apr 1946 & 22 Oct 1945, Box 15/Fld 29, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>101</sup>Andrew N. Otani, *A History of Japanese-American Episcopal Churches* (n.p., 1980), 40.

<sup>102</sup>Statement of Policies, 18 Jan 1945, Box 2/Fld 10, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

congregations genuinely welcomed Nikkei, but regional ecumenical groups across the country worked for this end.

### **Worship in Resettlement Communities**

Strong regional ecumenical organizations led efforts to integrate churches in the nation's largest cities, but plans in smaller locales like Columbus, Kansas City and Denver were not as coordinated.<sup>103</sup> The situation in Colorado, which Gordon Chapman of the Protestant Commission called the "happy hunting grounds of every group," was particularly problematic. White Protestant leaders in the area seem to have been under the impression that each denomination would be assigned a different region of the state in which to evangelize to Nikkei.<sup>104</sup> In June 1943, he reported, "There is a good deal of mutual treading on each other's toes already."<sup>105</sup> This confusion led to the formation of strong ethnic churches in that state. A few leaders in Colorado requested a white missionary, claiming the Japanese pastor in the area was not adequately integrating the churches.<sup>106</sup> After visiting resettlers around the country in the fall of 1943, Fukuyama expressed displeasure about the "Little Tokyo" forming in Denver.<sup>107</sup> He complimented Nikkei on their successful integration in the Midwest and East, where he felt the possibilities for integration were

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<sup>103</sup>Joint Conference on Future of Japanese Church Work, Resettlement and Return, 24-26 Apr 1945.

<sup>104</sup>Chapman to Royal Fisher, 3 Feb 1944, Box 1/Fld 7, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>105</sup>Chapman to Gillett, 12 June 1943, Box 4/Fld 3, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>106</sup>Chapman to Herrick Young, 20 June 1944, Box 1/Fld 39, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

<sup>107</sup>Fukuyama, "The Dispersion of the Nisei," "The Federated Church Herald," 12 Dec 1943, Box 1/Fld 6, Kaoru Ichihara Papers, Accession No. 1839-001, UW.

greater.<sup>108</sup> The history of discrimination in the West hindered integration. Some white pastors declined to oppose congregations “hostile” to Japanese Americans and did not allow resettlers to use their buildings.<sup>109</sup> Unwelcoming attitudes hurt some Nikkei Christians and prevented them from joining those people in worship.

The success of integrated worship relied on support from local Nikkei pastors. While only about half of the Nikkei who resettled in Chicago joined established churches during the war, the Chicago Council of Churches’s integration program was one of the most successful in the country.<sup>110</sup> By employing Nikkei ministers, the Chicago Council strengthened its ties to the ethnic community and decreased the chance that the pastors would gather their own ethnic flocks. Some Nikkei pastors hosted fellowship meetings for fellow resettlers and held ethnic worship services, drawing Nikkei Christians away from local white churches. Many Nikkei ministers elsewhere agreed that “it was unwise to set up Japanese churches,” but felt “purposely . . . left out.”<sup>111</sup> The Chicago Council hoped their program would make resettlers feel more “welcome in Caucasian churches.”<sup>112</sup> An invitation from a Nikkei pastor and a local white church member may have appealed to more Nikkei than being invited by the

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<sup>108</sup>Fukuyama believed that the eviction would have “a beneficial effect . . . in the long run as people migrated Eastward and really become a part of a greater America.” Fukuyama, “The Dispersion of the Nisei.”

<sup>109</sup>Riichi Satow, quoted in *The Issei: Portrait of a Pioneer, An Oral History*, Eileen Sunada Sarasohn, ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1983), 245-6. Colorado Council of Churches, “The Japanese in our Midst,” 1942, Box 53/Fld 2, William C. Carr Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>110</sup>Joint Conference on Future of Japanese Church Work, Resettlement and Return, 24-26 Apr 1945.

<sup>111</sup>Meeting Minutes of Chicago Evacuee Committee Executives, 15 June 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>112</sup>Meeting Minutes of Chicago Evacuee Committee Executives, 15 June 1943.

latter alone.<sup>113</sup> However, the Council only hired Nikkei from denominations that supported their ministry financially.”<sup>114</sup> This cooperative agreement meant that the Chicago Council would not personally fund the integration of a denomination. Limited participation to specific denominations may have narrowed the range of integration.

## **The Return**

Rumors of lifting the West Coast restrictions began circulating in early 1944, but Roosevelt withheld the announcement until his reelection was secured. On December 17, 1944, Public Proclamation 21 rescinded the exclusion orders for most Japanese Americans.<sup>115</sup> Within an hour of Roosevelt’s announcement, church councils on the West Coast began calling for congregations to support the return<sup>116</sup> and a few Nikkei pastors made plans to return to the coast quickly and be “pioneers” for their congregants.<sup>117</sup> While Japanese Americans welcomed this news, most had few ideas how to proceed. Was it safe to return to the West Coast? Were their homes available or occupied? Would they be able to find work or should they move east to avoid the worst prejudices? Andrews repeatedly

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<sup>113</sup>Letters inviting Nikkei to attend local churches included contact information for Nikkei counselors who would aid their transition within the new church. Ralph E. Smeltzer and John M. Yamazaki to Friends, undated, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>114</sup>Minutes of the Committee of the United Ministry to Evacuees, 28 June 1943, Reel 082, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB

<sup>115</sup>Those who had failed loyalty tests earlier in the war remained confined at Tule Lake Relocation Center. Wendy Ng, *Japanese American Internment During World War II: A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002), 96-97.

<sup>116</sup>Fisher to Gillett, 18 Dec 1944, Box 3/Fld 7, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>117</sup>M. Okimura to Gillett, 15 Feb 1945, Box 1/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

mentioned how the “insecure, unsettled and baffled”<sup>118</sup> Nikkei did not know “where to go and how to get there.” He explained that “up to now many did not think much about going out because the coast was still restricted. . . . Most are bewildered and uncertain what to do and [are] without means and unable to do anything. Many outside of camp lack security and have feelings of frustration.”<sup>119</sup> Pastors selected willing families to “act as guinea pigs” by returning to communities with “serious opposition” to Nikkei.<sup>120</sup>

Andrews began driving carloads of newly released families from Idaho to Seattle soon after the government lifted the restrictions. By mid-February 1945, only 150 Nikkei had returned to Seattle,<sup>121</sup> but that number grew to 700 by July<sup>122</sup> and approximately 1,500 by September.<sup>123</sup> Andrews’s first report expressed his relief and gratitude for the warm welcome the first returning family received:

I drove a family back in their car, and took them to their farm near Seattle. Their old friends were tickled pink to see them back. When we arrived at the farm house in the afternoon, some neighbor had put a bouquet of flowers on the dining room table and more flowers in the front room. During the afternoon some six or eight came, threw their arms around them and gave

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<sup>118</sup>Thomas from Andrews, 8 Dec 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>119</sup>Jobu Yasumura from Andrews,” 28 Dec 1944, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>120</sup>Joint Conference on Future of Japanese Church Work, Resettlement and Return, 24-26 Apr 1945, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Daisuke Kitagawa recommended that religious or civic leaders go first. Kitagawa, “One Day’s Observation of White River Valley Situation,” 20 Apr 1945, Reel 064, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14 c, The Bancroft Library, UCB.

<sup>121</sup>Floyd Schmoie, Statement Regarding Return of Evacuees to Seattle Area During One Month, 14 Feb 1945, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>122</sup>Minutes of the UCM, 19 July 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>123</sup>“Japanese Baptist Church Journal,” Sept 1945, Box 15/Fld 10, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

them a glorious welcome. Same was true of the next day. So far this is the way people are being received by their former neighbors.<sup>124</sup>

Similar stories reached the ears of Dillon Myer, the director of the WRA. While many West Coast businessmen expressed pessimistic predictions for Nikkei's success, "certain Caucasians, notably missionaries and ministers," spoke "glowingly" of possibilities. Myer was cautioned that "church opinion is not always public opinion,"<sup>125</sup> but optimistic reports still outnumbered negative ones. The presence of sincere, welcoming neighbors raised hopes, but boycotts, storefronts reading "No Japs Allowed," acts of vandalism, severe unemployment and housing shortages simultaneously barraged Nikkei. Most discrimination was not violent, but around one quarter of the property left behind by Nikkei had been stolen or destroyed.<sup>126</sup>

Members of Seattle's Remember Pearl Harbor League spoke vociferously against the return, aiming attacks at both Nikkei and the white church members who supported them. Principally, they cited the "menace" Nikkei posed "at the very time armed forces . . . are at death grips with the most dangerous foe in the history of our nation." Japanese invasion was no longer a threat by 1945, but some Americans feared retribution from Japanese living in the United States. In an open letter to all church groups, the League asked,

Are you good ministers unmindful of the menace these Japs you are pleading for will be when they see our valiant soldiers invade to destroy the only nation to whom these Japanese Americans are loyal? Surely, you gentlemen of the cloth, know that every Japanese-American you seem to favor has been indoctrinated with sadistic philosophy emperor worship [*sic*].<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Thomas from Andrews, 24 Feb 1945, Box 1/Fld 6, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>125</sup>Weekly Analysis Trend Report, Jan. 8-14, 1945, from John de Yong, Community Analyst Minidoka Project to Dillon Myer, Box 2/Fld 8, Harry L. Stafford Papers: Records, 1942-1946, CSI.

<sup>126</sup>Schmoe, Statement Regarding Return.

<sup>127</sup>Remember Pearl Harbor League, Inc., an open letter to all ministerial associations, 11 May 1945, Box 1/Fld 22, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

The League evidently did not want to publicly assail respected religious figures, so portrayed them as well-meaning, but “misguided.” They carefully avoided questioning the patriotism of Seattle ministers, but placed doubt on the religious leaders’ perception of the situation.

This letter received a sharp reply from the Seattle pastor U.G. Murphy. His editorial response did not beat around the bush, comparing members of the League to Southern slave owners, Hitler and the Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus, reminding readers of the disasters that befell these perpetrators of racial discrimination and subjugation. He also scolded them for “attempting to belittle the Church.”<sup>128</sup> His response resembled Andrews’ letter to the publishers of the crude comic strip insinuating the treachery of Japanese Americans. The Remember Pearl Harbor League suggested that the general populace of Western Washington was unduly influenced by the political views of their ministers. While Seattleites were divided in their feelings about Nikkei returning to their homes, religious organizations fully supported Nikkei’s rights.<sup>129</sup>

Returnees faced significantly greater problems elsewhere as people refused to sell Nikkei car and home insurance, business licenses and fishing permits, all of which led banks to decline their loan applications.<sup>130</sup> Produce and shipping boycotts hindered business all along the coast. Despite twenty-three hostels in Los Angeles alone,<sup>131</sup> religious and other

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<sup>128</sup>U. G. Murphy to Remember Pearl Harbor League, Box 1/Fld 22, Ring Family Papers, Accession No. 4241-2, UW.

<sup>129</sup>Church Federation of Los Angeles, “Fair Treatment for Persons of Japanese Ancestry,” 18 Jan 1945, Box 3/Fld 24, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>130</sup>Joint Conference on Future of Japanese Church Work, Resettlement and Return, 24-25 Apr 1945, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>131</sup>Hostel Directory: Los Angeles Area, 27 Sept 1945, Box 6/Fld 17, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.



humanitarian groups could not support the thousands of Nikkei “dumped,” as Clarence Gillett described it, into Southern California. The WRA opened six emergency camps in the fall of 1945, “subject[ing]” 1,500 former incarcerated “to a plan of psychological intimidation and terrorism.”<sup>132</sup> While this plan was supposed to alleviate the growing bitterness about the eviction from camps, it ruined the WRA’s remarkably good reputation for organizing the incarceration humanely. In May 1946, Nikkei remaining in these temporary camps—over half of the original group—were removed to a run-down, unsanitary trailer camp. Over three-fourths of the trailers lacked electricity and running water. In response, the County Bureau of Public Assistance brought mobile kitchen units to feed the hundreds of Nikkei.<sup>133</sup> With the support of the Congregational Committee, Gillett coordinated relief efforts with the ACLU, the AFSC and regional and national welfare agencies, all of which tried to tackle the immensely complicated task of restoring civil rights to a population that had lost everything and been displaced for years. While difficulties in Seattle existed, the city did not experience this level of chaos and disorder.

A few weeks after the coast re-opened to Nikkei, Andrews listed the general and specific needs of the Seattle community: conversion of the Seattle Japanese Baptist Church into a temporary hostel; a business agent to help secure jobs and negotiate potential boycotts; an increase in pastoral visitations; special fellowship meetings; and people to drive Nikkei to and from church “until they are actually a part of that church.”<sup>134</sup> Andrews’ predictions proved astute. Like the Protestant Commission, the AFSC and other religious groups,

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<sup>132</sup>Clarence Gillett, Recent Developments in the Metropolitan Los Angeles Area, 15 May 1946, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>133</sup>Gillett, Recent Developments in the Metropolitan Los Angeles Area.

<sup>134</sup>Yasumura from Andrews, 28 Dec 1944.

Andrews's first priority was to organize a hostel for the Nikkei arriving daily.<sup>135</sup> Hundreds of Seattle Nikkei found temporary shelter at a center operated by the AFSC and hostels in what were the prewar Episcopal, Methodist and Congregational Japanese Churches, but even more space was needed.<sup>136</sup> A middle school student at the time, Baptist Yosh Nakagawa recalled sleeping on a cot at the Japanese Methodist Church because the Baptist Church did not become a hostel. Nikkei of all religious backgrounds stayed at the church hostels. Nakagawa's future wife, a Buddhist, also stayed at the Methodist Church with her family.<sup>137</sup>

A number of Christian groups coalesced to help Seattle's returnees. The Christian Friends for Racial Equality worked through political and educational channels to reduce racial discrimination in hiring practices.<sup>138</sup> Floyd Schmoe and Andrews created the Japanese-American Relocation Project Work Camp to address the same problem. University of Washington students ran a weekly Saturday Work Party that helped Nikkei reopen their businesses.<sup>139</sup> The AFSC continued helping Nikkei as well. Volunteers cultivated fields, helped move stored belongings and scrubbed racist graffiti from houses and storefronts.<sup>140</sup> For a full year after their release from the incarceration camps, Nikkei in Seattle could not

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<sup>135</sup>Minutes and Findings of the Meeting of the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, 11-12 Jan 1945, Box 15/Fld 30, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>136</sup>Religiously affiliated hostels did not cater to their own congregants exclusively. Some were designated for elderly bachelors or families, but people of all faiths were welcome. Douglas M. Dye, "For the Sake of Seattle's Soul: The Seattle Council of Churches, the Nikkei Community, and World War II," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 93:3 (Summer 2002): 134. Schmoe, Statement Regarding Return.

<sup>137</sup>Yosh Nakagawa, interview by Tom Ikeda, 7 Dec 2004, Densho.

<sup>138</sup>Helen Amerman and Elmer R. Smith, Survey of Nisei in Seattle, 31 Dec 1945, Box 15/Fld 23, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW, 48.

<sup>139</sup>Resettlement Council Newsletter, 5 July 1945, Box 15/Fld 24, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>140</sup>Emery Brooks Andrews, interview by Joyce Nishimura, 7 Oct 2006, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Collection, Densho.

sell their produce on the open market because the Teamsters union refused to haul their produce. Support groups distributed and sold produce from Nikkei farms, returning the profits to the farmers at the end of the day.<sup>141</sup>

A group of Nikkei calling themselves the Resettlement Council met in the vacant Japanese Baptist Church. Minnie, Monica Itoi's sister-in-law, volunteered with the group and led their reception committee.<sup>142</sup> They planned to advise the many groups offering aid to Nikkei. These Nikkei organizers wanted to direct aid to projects that the Japanese needed and wanted, not those designated as important by (white) outsiders. This would heighten the efficacy of volunteer efforts. Their inaugural newsletter called for Nikkei not to leave these crucial tasks to others, but to guide the contributions of outsiders to goals of the Nikkei community.<sup>143</sup> Their ability to steer aid coming from Protestant churches, their primary source of aid, was limited. Tying church aid to integration programs complicated the resettlement process considerably.

In April 1945, the Seattle Council formed the United Church Ministry to Returning Japanese (UCM) to coordinate social outreach and integrate returnees into the city's established white churches. The group helped Nikkei open or reactivate bank accounts, organize housing and jobs and move belongings out of storage. The Council also initiated a "Newcomer" program through which a church worker visited returning families to personally

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<sup>141</sup>Emery Brooks Andrews, interview by Tom Ikeda, 24 Mar 2004, Densho; Andrews to Wadsworth, 29 Oct. 1945, Box 4/Fld 30, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>142</sup>Four members of the Itoi family returned to Seattle. Monica and her sister remained in Indiana and New York respectively. Henry and Minnie left St. Louis to help his father regain operation of the hotel, which they had left in the hands of employees during the war. Resettlement Council Newsletter, 5 July 1945. Sone, 232.

<sup>143</sup>Resettlement Council Newsletter, 5 July 1945.

welcome them back to the community, ascertain their denominational preferences and refer the family to a local church.<sup>144</sup>

The policies and rhetoric of the Seattle Council of Churches fully supported the rules about integrated worship instated in Denver. They voted unanimously to integrate “the Japanese people into [their] regular, established denominational churches” in 1943 and again on February 19, 1945. The Council discussed the possibility of their plans conflicting with the wishes of Nikkei, but concluded that a “return to the old pattern” would “be hard to justify.” Echoing Roosevelt’s hope to reassimilate Nikkei by diluting their visible solidarity, the Seattle Council urged churches to “do everything we can . . . to assimilate these people in the *normal* community life by tying them to . . . *regular* churches” [emphasis mine]. The Seattle Council spoke of seizing the opportunity to create “a new religious pattern in race relations.” Their notions of progress shone when speaking of the alternative: “reverting” to the “re-establishment” of ethnic churches. Why should they go backwards when “Christian forces” had the chance to “build anew” and “practice the principles and ideals for which Christianity stands”?<sup>145</sup> Council members sounded empowered and invigorated in the face of a new challenge, a chance to realize a truer form of Christianity. As a provision for potential discord, the Council established a moratorium on their decision. The Council planned to reevaluate the plan on May 1, 1946, but would not change course until then. Other church

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<sup>144</sup>It is unclear if the UCM sent greeters to every Nikkei family or just those known to be Protestant. Amerman and Smith, 45.

<sup>145</sup>Action Taken at the Regular Executive Meeting, 19 Feb 1945.

councils around the country ratified similar policies to incorporate Christian Nikkei into their churches.<sup>146</sup>

In an effort to obtain the opinions of Nikkei, the Seattle Council formed a Nisei steering committee and occasionally invited members to attend Council meetings. Since the steering committee usually expressed its opinions through its white advisors, the precise transmission of those messages is uncertain. In November 1945, the United Church Ministry pledged not to launch additional programs without the “definite approval” of the steering committee, suggesting that this had not always been the case. The UCM hoped this would decrease the “lack of unity and . . . sense of conflict” that had characterized Nisei programs.<sup>147</sup> The desires of Nikkei who wanted their former churches did not overpower the Council until hope for an integrated church was clearly lost. Some Nikkei and white leaders worked to reinstate the ethnic churches, but most Nikkei expressed their opinion of the integration program through their actions: the vast majority stopped attending church regularly. Many visited predominately white churches once or twice, but few joined these congregations.

After deciding to reorganize a Japanese Baptist group in July 1945, Nikkei met with the city’s Protestant church leaders. Andrews supported their plea by reporting that only twenty-five Nisei in Seattle were attending “regular churches.”<sup>148</sup> UCM members admitted that “it might be easier” to allow Nisei to worship together, but that it would be “detrimental

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<sup>146</sup>Gorman Y. Doubleday to Fellow Ministers of the Northern California Council of Churches, 15 Mar 1945, Box 3/Fld 20, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>147</sup>Jensen to Wadsworth, 10 Nov 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>148</sup>Minutes of the UCM, 26 July 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

to the group . . . in the long run.”<sup>149</sup> This sentiment echoed an argument made years earlier; integrationists had cautioned that “the segregated church should not be perpetuated as a practical solution to an unfortunate historical practice.”<sup>150</sup> The UCM acknowledged the immediate advantages, but thought they should be overcome. Support for the Nisei Baptist group was overwhelmed by “a number” of Council members who called for everyone’s “influence and support” in integrating youth.<sup>151</sup> Council members persuaded the group to “cooperate fully” with integration efforts “after considerable discussion.”<sup>152</sup> The UCM reacted negatively because they feared that even a segregated fellowship group might detract from the “desired assimilation program . . . at Caucasian worship services.”<sup>153</sup> They knew, given the option, most Nisei would choose a segregated group over the current scheme.

At the same meeting, perhaps in response to the UCM’s ruling, Japanese Baptists refused a request to relinquish their parsonage, a building they still held. Irritated with this outcome, Howard Jensen complained that the Council might need to rethink its “entire hostel program” because of their “unwillingness.” Curiously, the UCM and the Baptist Home Mission Society had resisted Andrews’ plans to convert rooms in the JBC into temporary living spaces that March.<sup>154</sup> He repeated this entreaty in every report to his superiors for months, but was never permitted to use the JBC as a hostel. With some bitterness and resignation, Jensen wrote to a Japanese pastor at Minidoka, “somehow the spirit of God was

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<sup>149</sup>Minutes of the UCM, 19 July 1945.

<sup>150</sup>Minutes of the Conference of Leaders of Japanese Christian Work in the United States, 15-17 Dec 1943.

<sup>151</sup>Minutes of the UCM, 26 July 1945.

<sup>152</sup>Howard Jensen to G. K. Watanabe, 27 July 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>153</sup>Minutes of the UCM, 26 July 1945.

<sup>154</sup>Andrews to Thomas, 3 Mar 1945, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

present and will continue to . . . direct the actions of the entire group so as to advance His cause.”<sup>155</sup> Jensen may have assumed “His cause” was the Council’s program to integrate churches.

Nisei eventually ignored the UCM’s advisement and the Steering Committee formed the ecumenical (Japanese) Young People’s Fellowship (YPF) in the final months of 1945. Between sixty and one hundred twenty-five Nisei, including several Buddhists and many non-Christians, gathered in churches around the city each week for three hours of singing, worship and social activities. Notably, only one hour was devoted to music and worship, while participants socialized for two hours.<sup>156</sup> While non-Japanese Seattlites came to some functions, the YPF was a Nikkei club. Speakers and guests included members of the Chinese Church and Joseph Kitagawa, Minidoka’s Episcopal priest who later became dean of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago and a seminal scholar of religious studies. In December, the young people went caroling and made Christmas baskets of special foods and practical items for recent returnees.<sup>157</sup> The YPF’s composition and agenda strongly resembled youth groups within the camps. Ruth Mayasaka, a former Minidokan who resettled in Philadelphia, expressed what many Nisei in Seattle may have felt. She complimented the “friendliness and kindness of Caucasians and Nisei,” but gushed about the fun had at Nisei social gatherings. She knew most leaders discouraged Nikkei from attending segregated events, but

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<sup>155</sup>Jensen to Watanabe, 27 July 1945.

<sup>156</sup>Amerman and Smith, 46.

<sup>157</sup>“Japanese Baptist Church Journal,” December 1945, Box 15/Fld 10, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

people “who realize[d] Niseis need[ed] social contacts and relaxation” outnumbered “dissenters.”<sup>158</sup>

The ways in which Nisei and white Protestants joined for worship hindered the likelihood of integration. In the fall of 1945, members of the YPF attended Woodland Park Presbyterian, University Temple, University Baptist and the Renton Baptist Church. Attending a different church each week complicated Nisei’s ability to become part of an established congregation. Predominately white congregations gave special attention to Nisei in ways that singled them out from the congregation. Churches regularly invited Nisei to special events related to their wartime experiences, asking them to speak about life in the camps. Andrews also visited churches to present a slide show about the incarceration.<sup>159</sup> While these churches literally welcomed Nisei, these events did not create any sense of normalcy or routine. Being singled out surely was uncomfortable for some. The Quaker activist Gordon Hirabayashi astutely observed, “It is just as tragic to invite a Negro or a Japanese into a fellowship simply because he is Negro or Japanese as it is to restrict him on those grounds. The basis for true fellowship is on the grounds of common interest and personal quality.”<sup>160</sup> Churches did not ask Nikkei to join as individuals so much as representatives of their ethnicity.

In an oral interview decades after the war, Paul Nagano speculated why many Nikkei still resist joining predominately white churches:

Not only do they feel comfortable [in ethnic churches], not only are there some cultural hangover [*sic*] from Japan, but . . . they don't feel at home in the larger group in the sense that they become the victims of a paternalism. And,

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<sup>158</sup>Ruth Mayasaka to Kitagawa, reprinted in “The Minidoka Churchman,” 19 Aug 1944, Japanese-American Internment Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters collection, GTU 94-9-02, GTU.

<sup>159</sup>“Japanese Baptist Church Journal,” December 1945.

<sup>160</sup>Hirabayashi to Ring, 6 June 1944.



you know, "We, we're so happy to have you with us," and all that. But no, not in places of real decision-making leadership. They're always . . . subservient to the dominant group. . . . I mean, there's not that strong leadership. And in order to develop that, I think they figure, well they'd rather be with their own, and take their own initiative and making their own decisions. And so they would prefer to be with the Japanese group -- not only just feeling comfortable, but they feel that they're more involved in it. And they're taking leadership, making decisions.<sup>161</sup>

Nisei increasingly took leadership roles within the postwar community, but it occurred slowly. The majority of diligent, motivated Nisei leaders had left the camps earlier in the war, moving to colleges or work in the East. Having established lives there, few immediately moved back to the West Coast. Many others had joined the army and were not yet discharged. The population that came to Seattle directly from Minidoka primarily contained older Issei and families with small children—people who needed support and were less able to take charge of their community's future. The dearth of leadership in the camps toward the end of the war foreshadowed the need for strong Nikkei leaders on the coast after the war.

### **Re-Opening the Japanese Ethnic Churches**

Immediate needs eventually overruled desires for integration within Seattle churches and some ethnic churches re-formed. By the end of October 1945, Presbyterian Nikkei began holding separate services and opened a Sunday School in Seattle.<sup>162</sup> Japanese Episcopalians also began meeting independently for Sunday services.<sup>163</sup> Under the authority of Frank Herron Smith, the director of Japanese Methodist missions in California, a Japanese pastor prepared to reopen Seattle's Japanese Methodist church in the spring of 1945, but the Seattle

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<sup>161</sup>Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.

<sup>162</sup>Andrews to Wadsworth, 29 Oct. 1945.

<sup>163</sup>Andrews to Caldwell, 25 Mar 1946, Box 4/Fld 30, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

Council of Churches “immediately registered strong protests” and stalled his activities.<sup>164</sup>

The Japanese Baptist Church confronted the same problem. Neither group attained independence until mid-1946.

While the Seattle Council insisted that any group was “perfectly free” to establish their own church, the Council and local denominational churches controlled several Japanese church properties. At the time of the eviction, most Japanese churches on the coast had been signed over or “sold” to denominational or regional Christian groups for “the sum of \$1.00,” leaving Nikkei with no legal recourse to regain their buildings. Japanese congregations had to trust these groups “to do what [was] right with the property and to return it to the church if, and when, the congregation [was] able to return.”<sup>165</sup> At the time, it seemed sensible in case the government impounded Japanese Americans’ property. While it never came to pass in the United States, the Canadian government confiscated all property belonging to Japanese Canadians. The arrangement also allowed the buildings to be used for wartime purposes during the Nikkei’s absence.<sup>166</sup> Practically speaking, Nikkei congregations could not re-form their churches without cooperation from the group that held their deed.<sup>167</sup> The Washington Baptist Convention gave the Seattle Council of Churches authority over the Japanese Baptist

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<sup>164</sup>Jensen to Brimson, 17 May 1945, Box 15/Fld 24, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>165</sup>Paul Osumi to Gillett, 1 Apr 1942, Box 1/Fld 14, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>166</sup>Jensen to Brimson, 17 May 1945.

<sup>167</sup>Not every Japanese congregation encountered this problem. The Quaker missionary Herbert Nicholson maintained a Methodist church in Los Angeles during the incarceration and helped the congregation reopen its buildings on August 28, 1945. The Japanese leaders of a small Presbyterian church south of San Jose explained that they were not interested in integration, asked the city to return their building and reopened by in January 1945. *West Los Angeles Community Methodist Church, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dedication, 1930-1960*, Box 381, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. *Watsonville Westview Presbyterian Church: The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1895-1958* (Watsonville, CA: n.p., 1958).

Church until May 1946, the moratorium for Seattle's experiment with racial integration. The Baptist Convention assured Nikkei that this was in their best interests and falsely claimed that Japanese Christian groups would retain their "utmost freedom in . . . Christian activities."<sup>168</sup> Similarly, the Seattle Council continually mentioned that Nikkei were free to do as they liked, but they also cited the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline after which point Nikkei "would be free to make their decisions, but only "at that time."<sup>169</sup> Their contradictory messages frustrated ethnic church supporters.

In the summer of 1945, Fujin Home, a Baptist society for Japanese women, reopened after "much deliberation."<sup>170</sup> This building was returned relatively soon because Nikkei Baptist pastors agreed to use the building for ecumenical Japanese-language ministry.<sup>171</sup> However, Nikkei did not submit to pressures from the Council and local Baptist authorities to remove its Baptist affiliation.<sup>172</sup> Before the war, Fujin Home had welcomed all Japanese women, most of whom were not Christian. Its unique mission directed resources to and provided temporary homes for immigrant women, including many picture brides, as they adjusted to life in the United States.<sup>173</sup> The wife of a Japanese Baptist pastor opened Fujin

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<sup>168</sup>Washington Baptist Convention to G. K. Watanabe, Secretary Board of Deacons, Japanese Baptist Church, 29 June 1945, Box 1/Fld 7, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

<sup>169</sup>Jensen to Wada, 14 Aug 1945.

<sup>170</sup>"Japanese Baptist Church Journal," July 1945, Box 15/Fld 24, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>171</sup>Joseph K. Watanabe, Seattle Baptist Church Board of Deacons Meeting, Hunt, ID, 26 May 1945, Box 15/Fld 24, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>172</sup>Jensen to Brimson, 17 May 1945.

<sup>173</sup>The Japanese Methodist House had a comparable facility from the prewar years, the Catherine Blaine Home. Mae Kanazawa Hara, interview by Alice Ito, 15 July 2004, Densho.

Home in 1904.<sup>174</sup> After the war, Fujin Home provided housing for returning Nikkei and organized gatherings for the “spiritual welfare” of Issei.

Upon her return from Minidoka, the Baptist missionary Esther McCullough operated the Home under the purview of the Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society. McCullough pledged, “As I understand it, the [Nisei] Steering Committee is to steer us and I, personally, will go wherever they tell us to go.”<sup>175</sup> While the Council did not contradict her, leaders doubted her sincere commitment to the UCM’s “program” of long term Christian “progress.” Howard Jensen and others thought McCullough could not be “objective in [her] thinking” after being “so close to the Japanese people and suffering so much with them.”<sup>176</sup> Hinting at this distrust, they included a line specific to her job: “Miss Esther McCullough . . . shall in every way cooperate with the Hostel Committee of the Council of Churches . . . and follow [its] rulings.”<sup>177</sup> The Council emphatically ruled that she be under their administration. Their comment that McCullough lacked objectivity because of her close relationship with Nikkei became a frequent trope among combatants. Just as political leaders and other outsiders felt that the churches’ personal acquaintances with Nikkei tainted their understanding of national security, regional and national leaders felt that McCullough’s experiences hindered her perception of the goals of the global church.

White and Nikkei pastors grew frustrated as they wasted energy fighting with denominational and regional boards while trying to minister to their scattered congregants. Emery Andrews attempted to minister to the Nikkei community, but had to carefully avoid

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<sup>174</sup>Shigeko Sese Uno, interview by Beth Kawahara and Alice Ito, 18 Sept 1998, Densho.

<sup>175</sup>Jensen to Wadsworth, 10 Nov 1945.

<sup>176</sup>Jensen to Brimson, 17 May 1945.

<sup>177</sup>Presented by Alice W. S. Brimson to the Committee on United Church Ministry, 12 June 1945, Box 15/Fld 24, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

doing things that might be perceived as re-forming an ethnic church. Andrews could not reopen the Japanese Baptist Church without authorization from his denominational superiors, due to its status as a mission church chartered by the Home Mission Society. He was their employee and had no control over the church properties. However, he did not lack for work; Andrews made nearly 300 pastoral house calls every month following his return to Seattle.<sup>178</sup>

In response to continual difficulties, Andrews insisted:

[The churches] need to be opened NOW. None of our Baptist buildings in Seattle have been opened to returning people. The people in camp have been betrayed by so many people—the government, some WRA employees, so-called friends who promised to keep their things but stole them instead—that they have had only their church to sustain their hope. For the past three months it has been when?when?when? is the church and the Home going to be opened. If those buildings are sold or are not opened, it will be the last straw. The church, the one thing they have confidence, will have failed them. The Buddhist [*sic*] group and other groups are going ahead, but no word from the church.<sup>179</sup>

Andrews' distress could not be hidden. After moving his family to the desert for three years to help the Japanese American community, the Home Mission Society and the Seattle Council of Churches now tied his hands. He felt helpless and increasingly angry.

Andrews hoped to use the Japanese Baptist Church building as a community center as well as a hostel. Had the churches opened earlier, he thought they could have become a center of Nisei social life. Instead, he complained that public dances attended by hundreds of Nisei had become their primary social outlet. Andrews lamented that the many Nisei soldiers coming through Seattle “congregated in colored taverns and places of cheap amusements”

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<sup>178</sup>Emery Brooks Andrews, interview by Ikeda; Andrews to Wadsworth, 29 Oct 1945.

<sup>179</sup>Andrews, Report to the American Baptist Home Mission Society, 2 Apr 1945, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

because they felt unwelcome in white establishments and “no wholesome place” existed.<sup>180</sup> Nikkei mothers requested the kindergarten be reopened as well. “Mothers,” Andrews wrote with passion, “whose husbands were killed, whose husbands are still in service, whose husbands have not been able to get jobs because of prejudice” needed the churches’ support.<sup>181</sup> For these reasons and many more, Andrews vowed to reopen his church for the 6,000 Nikkei in Seattle.

In addition to fulfilling practical needs, pastors were concerned that Nisei would leave the church permanently and effective evangelism to the community would cease. Andrews wrote that “many niseis are bitter and resentful because the church has not been open, and have now lost interest.” When a group of sixty-five young Christians and Buddhists attempted to organize their own Sunday fellowship meetings, the Seattle Council of Churches “objected to their meeting together . . . and the group as a potential Christian influence was lost.”<sup>182</sup> Andrews worried that many of these people would be impossible to reach in the future due to their disenchantment and anger with the church. He confessed, “I have stalled so long that I have lost the confidence of many people. We knew that relocation and resettlement would bring more headaches and more problems than the evacuation, but no one dreamed that on top of all those problems, there would be all this quibbling, discussions and delay over our churches.”<sup>183</sup> Since the jurisdiction of the Council of Churches did not

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<sup>180</sup>Untitled Biographical Summary, 10 May 1946, Box 2/Fld 4, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-003, UW.

<sup>181</sup>Andrews to Caldwell, 25 Mar 1946.

<sup>182</sup>Andrews to Caldwell, 25 Mar 1946.

<sup>183</sup>Andrews to Wadsworth, 29 Oct. 1945.

extend beyond the city limits at this time, Christian groups in the suburbs thrived, reaching people uninterested before the war.<sup>184</sup>

Members of the Council accused Andrews of deliberately sabotaging plans for integration. Specifically, some thought he was secretly trying to revive the Japanese Baptist Church. He claimed to go to great lengths to avoid such accusations and insisted, “I have not spoken at or conducted any of these [singspiration fellowship] meetings. I have not even held a baptismal service in the church as some have requested, for fear someone will say that the Baptists have broken away.”<sup>185</sup> To be restrained from initiating new members to the faith surely would have distressed the Baptist Home Missions Society and Andrews astutely demonstrated how the current structure was keeping him from doing so. However, the Missions Society still spoke in terms of doing what they believed was best for Nikkei and all other Christians in the long run. They chided Andrews for denying “Nisei the benefits they may receive if [he would] help them accept this challenge.”<sup>186</sup> Agendas intending to bring racial equality by restricting the agency of racial minorities were doomed to fail.

While higher authorities thought integration into established churches would most effectively and rapidly lead to the (re)assimilation of Nikkei into the larger society, Andrews saw it failing before his eyes. For over a year, Andrews and Gertrude Apel, the head of the Seattle Council of Churches, exchanged vehement correspondence outlining their conflicting plans for the future of the Japanese Americans in Seattle and their perceptions of the current situation. Apel ranted in Council meetings, telling area leaders that Andrews could not be

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<sup>184</sup>Japanese churches in Winslow and Bellevue opened soon after the war. Andrews to Caldwell, 25 Mar 1946.

<sup>185</sup>Andrews to Wadsworth, 29 Oct. 1945.

<sup>186</sup>Wadsworth to Andrews, 1 Oct. 1945, Box 1/Fld 5, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession No. 1908-001, UW.

trusted,<sup>187</sup> “refuses to be a gentleman,”<sup>188</sup> and is “out to defeat any united program.”<sup>189</sup> She relayed her suspicions to Andrews’ superiors within the American Baptist Home Missionary Society and questioned their choice to “retain a man” who may “seriously jeopardize, if not . . . wreck entirely, a constructive Christian program.”<sup>190</sup> Apel blamed Andrews solely for the failure of the United Church Ministry,<sup>191</sup> perhaps veiling her personal doubts or discomfort. She wrote that he used “clear tactics” to dissuade Japanese Baptists from complying with the programs, concluding one letter, “The method used is one that any respectable organization (to say nothing of a Christian one) would not resort to and, therefore, Mr. Andrews feels quite safe in releasing such items which are intended to mis-lead, misrepresent, confuse the issue, put the united program in a bad light, and discredit the Council of Churches.”<sup>192</sup> In other words, no one would believe someone in his position could be capable of such reprehensible actions. Her comments regarding Andrews, whether in letters to him or in meetings in or without his presence, were scathing condemnations of the deceit and guile with which he aimed to undermine her projects. Her typed notes included a suggestion that

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<sup>187</sup>Apel to Jensen, 21 July 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>188</sup>“Difficulties involved in Carrying on the United Church Ministry to the Returning Japanese,” 21 Sept 1945, Box 15/Fld 29, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>189</sup>Telegram from Apel to Jensen, 17 July 1945, Box 15/Fld 24, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>190</sup>Apel to Jensen, 21 July 1945.

<sup>191</sup>Difficulties involved in Carrying on the United Church Ministry.

<sup>192</sup>Apel to unknown recipient, 15 Sept 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.



the Council “try being as slick as E.A.”<sup>193</sup> She lost any professional demeanor and took Andrews’ actions as personal attacks.

Andrews gave measured, polite responses to Apel’s accusations, even when his frustrations and anger seethed from the pages. He never directly identified a particular person or group as the cause of the problems, blaming ineffective work on miscommunications and an excess of bureaucracy. Responding to accusations ranging from secretly reopening the Japanese Baptist Church to not attending church every Sunday to refusing to return phone calls, he wrote, “In all my sixteen years at JBC never have I worked for Baptists alone. And do not intend to start now. . . . I don’t know what kind of a game has been going on or who is responsible, but it is certainly unfair and unjust. If the Council has made a mistake, why do a lot of false accusations have to be laid against me, because I have refused to betray our own people?”<sup>194</sup> Andrews’ indignation and frustrations stewed through the winter of 1945/46 before he decided to take further action.

A number of white congregants in Seattle echoed Andrews’s concerns and supported the rights of returning Nikkei to reopen their churches. Representatives from the Japanese Woman’s Home Board, comprised of women from various mainline churches in the Seattle area, wrote a strongly worded letter to the Council of Churches. They criticized the Council for not supporting returnees’ efforts to “build their own church physically and spiritually” before proposing major changes and giving Nikkei cause to mistrust their few supporters.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup>Recommendations for Procedure, Nov 1945, Box 15/Fld 26, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>194</sup>He also explained that he had been bringing Nikkei groups to churches of different denominations each week, as the Council had suggested. Andrews to Wadsworth, 29 Oct. 1945.

<sup>195</sup>Pricilla Forna, et al. to Jensen, 4 June 1945, Box 15/Fld 10, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

Mrs. F. R. Leach, a member of the Board, wrote a personal letter as well, expressing her disgust with the way things had been handled:

Dear Dr. Jensen,

If as much thought and trouble had been taken in helping and not hindering our returning Japanese Baptists, of welcoming them and not making them feel they had also been betrayed by the Church, and if a real Christian hand of fellowship had been given to their fine American pastor and consecrated missionaries, and the church had been helped onto its feet again, there would not be the unhappy situation which exists.

I hang my head in shame.<sup>196</sup>

Both letters reflected divisions within Seattle churches. They also further demonstrated that the debate was not defined by race.

Other white pastors along the coast, particularly those who worked most closely with Nikkei before the war and in camp, fought to restore ethnic churches. Methodists Frank Herron Smith and Shigeo Shimada were labeled “troublemakers” for their insistent demands to reopen the Japanese Methodist Church in San Francisco.<sup>197</sup> In Los Angeles, Ralph Mayberry, the former executive secretary of the L.A. Baptist City Mission Society, spoke for Nikkei, disturbed that denominations would require Nikkei churches to “lose [their] identity to help the others” cause. He rejected the idea that Nikkei should relinquish their right to self-determination. Using a potent metaphor in a 1968 sermon, Mayberry said, “They must have the privilege to determine for themselves what they were, and what they wanted to be, and what they would be. And so I say, with some emotion, I have too large an investment in this whole ethnic idea to be a theorist of the popular type and surrender my friends or any

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<sup>196</sup>Mrs. F. R. Leach to Jensen, 4 June 1945, Box 15/Fld 2, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>197</sup>Shigeo Shimada, *A Stone Cried Out* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1986), 146.

group to the gas chamber of anonymity and oblivion.”<sup>198</sup> Once the immediate needs of the Japanese Baptist Church were met, Andrews’ rhetoric shifted to support Mayberry’s emphasis on Nikkei rights and leadership.

Discontent and rising charges of delinquency among Nikkei youth demanded attention and the city’s Christian leaders were not unaware of these problems. In December 1945, the Seattle Council of Churches, the YMCA and the YWCA sponsored a survey to “define the problems of Nisei between the ages of 17 and 22 years.”<sup>199</sup> Undertaking this task and completing it with such thoroughness showed the considerable amount of dedication the Council felt toward this largely non-Christian population. Church workers met with community leaders, school teachers and principals, religious leaders, Issei and 180 Nisei within the target age-range.<sup>200</sup> The Council’s report of several dozen pages concluded that most young people had recreational, religious and economic needs. Its recommendations sounded strikingly similar to those Andrews had desired and requested a year earlier, before the incarcerated were released. The survey compilers called for the organization of a “Nisei dominant inter-cultural church,” a community center with recreational opportunities, employment services, housing assistance and an improved communication system to tell all Nisei in the area about the available activities.<sup>201</sup> The Council accepted these results, but made no immediate changes.

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<sup>198</sup>Paul Nagano and Joan Thatcher, *The Asian American Experience* (Valley Forge, PA: Fund for Renewal, 1973), 20.

<sup>199</sup>The Seattle Public School system carried out a similar study, but did not release the results to the Council of Churches. Amerman and Smith, 44.

<sup>200</sup>Amerman and Smith, 3.

<sup>201</sup>Amerman and Smith.

According to white representatives from each denomination, not every Japanese Protestant group in Seattle wished to re-form their denominational church at this time, but none wanted to integrate into existing congregations. Congregational Nisei wished for an interdenominational ethnic group led by a Nisei pastor. Methodists only wanted a united service if every denomination participated. Episcopalians desired denominational churches united under a separate organization, essentially a Japanese Council of Churches. Presbyterians were currently “satisfied,” but reserved the right to separate later.<sup>202</sup> The Baptist separation disappointed some groups by ending hopes for an ecumenical church. Most notably, no group wished to follow the Council of Churches’s plan to assimilate into predominately white churches; everyone wanted some variety of an ethnic church. While individuals of every denomination joined and remained in predominately white churches, these other mainline Japanese Protestant groups eventually capitulated and re-formed ethnic denominational churches in Seattle.

By the end of March 1946, Andrews prepared to reopen the church, regardless of his authority to do so. Former members of the Japanese Baptist Church had voted the church reopen “with the Nisei taking full responsibility, backed and helped by the Issei.”<sup>203</sup> Andrews wrote, “I am so tired of these people being used as guinea pigs to try out some idealistic theory of integration, and I can no longer stand on the sidelines and watch the Nisei go down. After May 1<sup>st</sup> I am going to break my handcuffs. If the Home Mission Society

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<sup>202</sup>Meeting of Denominational Executives, 15 Apr 1946, 22 Oct 1945, Box 15/Fld 29, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>203</sup>The latter decided to continue their ecumenical worship, since only eighty-two Issei Baptists lived in the city. “Japanese Baptist Church Journal,” April 1946, Box 15/Fld 10, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

will back me, well and good. But if not, then, I am going on my own.”<sup>204</sup> His “Japanese Baptist Journal” reported that only twenty-two of the one hundred sixteen Baptist Nisei in Seattle had joined churches, though many returned over a year earlier. Pointedly quoting Milton Evans’ 1911 speech at the Northern Baptist Convention, Andrews wrote, “The one demand we Baptists make of our fellow men, the one gift of grace we seek from God is the opportunity to become in Christ free members in free churches in free lands.”<sup>205</sup> With the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline approaching, Seattle’s mainline Protestant leaders “request[ed]” that returnees “determine their future policy,”<sup>206</sup> as if they had been waiting impatiently for them to take responsibility for themselves all along.

On April 21, 1946, Seattle’s Japanese Baptist congregation proudly stood in front of their newly reopened church to pose for a photograph (Figure 11).<sup>207</sup> Andrews’ insistence on behalf of his flock finally succeeded and the congregation could once again meet together for worship and fellowship after four long years. Andrews knew how best to solve their problems because he took the time to know each person as an individual and listen to their personal requests and fears. While he believed in the goals of ecumenism and integration, he prioritized the needs of Seattle’s Nikkei. The Japanese American community showed its love and appreciation for him until his death. He retired from full time work at the church in 1955 to allow the church to call a Nisei pastor. Paul Nagano eventually assumed the position of senior pastor. Becoming the second white person to receive Fifth Order of the Sacred

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<sup>204</sup> Andrews to Caldwell, 25 Mar 1946.

<sup>205</sup>“Japanese Baptist Church Journal,” April 1946.

<sup>206</sup>Meeting of Denominational Executives, 15 Apr 1946, 22 Oct 1945.

<sup>207</sup>“Seattle Baptist Church” (denshopd-i35-00203), Densho, Densho Collection.

Treasure, the Emperor of Japan awarded the Reverend Andrews with the honor in 1970.<sup>208</sup>

Three months before his death in 1976, the Japanese Baptist Church held a testimonial dinner where 700 people recognized Andrews' immense contributions to their community.<sup>209</sup>

Andrews' extreme devotion to Seattle's Nikkei community cost him his family. After they returned to Seattle in 1945, Andrews's wife Mary announced her intention to divorce him. While they did not argue publicly, it was clear to friends that theirs was an unhappy marriage.<sup>210</sup> As Emery Brooks Andrews, their youngest child, recalled in oral histories



**Figure 11: Seattle Japanese Baptist Church Reopening, April 21, 1946**

Source: Densho Collection

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<sup>208</sup>Emery Brooks Andrews, interview by Ikeda.

<sup>209</sup>“History,” Japanese Baptist Church, accessed 6 Apr 2008, [www.jbcseattle.org/history.html](http://www.jbcseattle.org/history.html).

<sup>210</sup>Fukuyama to Adkins, 10 Nov 1944, Box 1/Fld Incoming Letters, Betty Fukuyama Papers, Accession No. 4411, UW.

decades later, Andrews was distraught about the divorce, but said he always knew their marriage would end this way. While Brooks is understandably proud of his father's accomplishments, he has publicly stated his disappointment that they were not closer. He explained to one interviewer, "I think my father had a huge amount of love and commitment to give, but it wasn't to his family, it was to the community." Brooks confessed that most of the family only begrudgingly accepted Andrews's commitments and priorities, but thought the estrangement resulted in Andrews's even greater involvement in the Japanese American community.<sup>211</sup>

## Conclusions

The Japanese Baptist Church still stands today and has a thriving and active church life.<sup>212</sup> It became a self-supported church in 1955 and is now a member of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, formerly known as the Seattle Council of Churches. The Japanese Congregational Church, a Japanese Presbyterian church, the Methodist church, St. Peter's Episcopal Parish<sup>213</sup> and many other Japanese Protestant churches maintain active congregations in Seattle and all along the West Coast today.

The Congregational Committee worked toward integration through 1946 with little success, perhaps because they were less willing to force the choice upon Nikkei. The Committee periodically cautioned that leaders should "be on guard that we do not over step

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<sup>211</sup>Emery Brooks Andrews, interviews by Ikeda and Nishimura.

<sup>212</sup>The congregation changed the church's name briefly to the Nisei Baptist Church, but changed to Evergreen Baptist Church in order to welcome subsequent generations of Nikkei. Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.

<sup>213</sup>St. Peter's is no longer a Japanese mission church, but people of Asian descent comprise seventy percent of the congregation. "St. Peter's Episcopal Parish: About Us," accessed 2 Apr 2012, <http://www.stpeterseattle.org/about.html>.

Christian and democratic relations in our efforts to promote integration.”<sup>214</sup> In September 1946, the Committee clarified its policy on integration. They reasserted that the “policy of doing everything possible to increase membership of Japanese Americans in Caucasian groups together with their becoming an active part in the group life is being continued.”<sup>215</sup> However, they accepted that Nikkei needed “a sense of security and freedom which in many cases can only be achieved by membership and activities in Nisei groups.”<sup>216</sup> While Congregational churches fully supported the racial integration programs for Nikkei during and after the war, the denomination did not speak about the problem of segregated churches more generally until 1955.<sup>217</sup>

Some Nikkei congregations never re-formed after the war. Seattle’s Japanese Holiness Church, always one of the smaller congregations, did not survive, though a number of Japanese holiness groups re-formed in California. While segregated Salvation Army posts along the coast prospered prior to the war, the denomination refused to grant Japanese congregations permission to re-form after the war or reopen the large Salvation Army Home in San Francisco that served Japanese.<sup>218</sup> Denominational leaders instructed adherents to join local posts wherever they resettled. At least one ordained Japanese officer left the

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<sup>214</sup>Minutes of the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy, 4 June 1946, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>215</sup>Minutes of the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy, 10 Sept 1946, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130) Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>216</sup>Minutes of the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy,” 10 Sept 1946.

<sup>217</sup>In 1955, the denomination formed its Committee on Racial Integration, which studied segregated churches in the Southeast, Study Packet #46 Racial Integration in the Church and Housing.

<sup>218</sup>Many denominations eventually used the buildings as hostels or other places to benefit returning Nikkei, but that was not always the case. Chapman to Fisher, 13 Dec 1945.



denomination as a result of these changes.<sup>219</sup> While Seattle's Catholic Nikkei could return immediately to their ethnic parish, Our Lady Queen of Martyrs closed at the end of 1953. Despite a number of conversions in camp, an inadequate number of Catholic Nikkei returned to their old neighborhood; most joined parishes in other parts of the city. The church property became the St. Peter Claver Interracial Center, a mission and social service center for the International District.<sup>220</sup>

Studies of these events showed that interdenominational groups across the country continually urged assimilation and integration, but most denominations eventually relented and allowed ethnic denominational churches to re-form. The agency formerly known as the WRA observed that "there had been a general abandonment of the effort to prevent the reestablishment of segregated churches by the summer of 1946. . . . Once this was done, leadership among Nisei religious workers became more active in the direction of eventual broad religious participation with the wider community."<sup>221</sup> Many Nisei agreed to this compromise, retaining their autonomy, while pledging to make steps toward union with the larger Protestant community.<sup>222</sup>

No one imagined it would be easy to integrate Japanese into predominately white churches, and more recent attempts to racial integrate churches have met similar

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<sup>219</sup>Suzuki, 18.

<sup>220</sup>"Queen of Martyrs Parish, Now St. Peter Claver Interracial Center," *Catholic Northwest Progress*, 1 Jan 1954.

<sup>221</sup>United States Department of the Interior & War Agency Liquidation Unit (formerly WRA), *People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans* (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Interior, 1947), 233.

<sup>222</sup>*People in Motion*, 233.

difficulties.<sup>223</sup> But even when the united church program was clearly failing, members of the Seattle Council of Churches agreed to “eventually” expand the integration program to include other racial groups.<sup>224</sup> This never occurred. Canadian churches sought integration in a similar manner at this time and individual churches in the United States have not relented in their pursuit of unity. While many American Protestants still believe in the ideal of racially integrated, united churches, they are more knowledgeable about its challenges. In the last few decades, evangelical Protestant churches have attempted similar experiments in hope of reconciling racial inequality.<sup>225</sup> These steps toward integration are most often made on a congregational level.

A recent integration experiment examined by Kersten and Robert Priest elucidates the problems encountered within the national integration program for Japanese Americans during World War II. The Baptist pastors of a predominately black church and a predominately white church in South Carolina convinced their congregations to try to prove how “Christ dissolves racial boundaries” by combining their churches in 1995. The union failed for a number of reasons. First, it necessitated the loss or demotion of leadership positions. Second, despite the communities’ similar theological beliefs, socio-economic level and common public schools, their divergent histories had established incompatible worship styles. They could not find common ground when one group thought God preferred loud,

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<sup>223</sup>Douglas Dye, one of the few scholars to examine the issue of Nikkei integration, deduced that the incarceration “clearly . . . had created a unique situation that demanded specialized ministries,” but, the great number and diversity of ethnic churches then and now demonstrate that the need for postwar Japanese churches was not unique to that historical situation. More than a failure to respond to immediate needs of the community, the efforts of integrationists failed to change established, prewar worship patterns. Dye, “For the Sake of Seattle’s Soul.”

<sup>224</sup>Christian Work: Japanese and Japanese-Americans in Seattle Area, 6 Feb 1946, Box 15/Fld 23, Church Council of Greater Seattle Records, Accession No. 1368-7, UW.

<sup>225</sup>For a description of some of the complications inherent within these evangelical programs, see Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

emotive worship and the other saw silence as the highest sign of reverence. Congregants also attended worship for very different reasons: one faction sought a worship experience that lifted participants high and the other expected a service to humble members and lay them low. Ultimately, several church members, including former church leaders, began abstaining from services. At the end of the trial period, white church members were “shocked” to hear that black members voted against their permanent unification. The socially dominant group still could not understand the other’s perspective.

The Priests concluded that differences in culture, cultural flexibility, leadership and worship practices outweigh good intentions.<sup>226</sup> Misunderstandings stemming from cultural differences led to apathy or outright antagonism. For the African Americans, church was no longer a “safe space for valued expressions of worship that received continual intervalidation by others.” Instead, these “practices received ambiguous or negative assessments” and “solidarity evaporate[d].”<sup>227</sup> While the particular issues differ, this case demonstrates on a simplified scale what occurred when predominately white churches invited Nikkei, who were not their social equals, to join. Even if all else was equal and both groups voluntarily chose integration, Nikkei still would have been entering another group’s sacred space without their usual leaders and authority. Nor did the recent experiences of Nikkei increase their trust in white people. No possibility existed for an equal exchange and communion.

The limited amount of scholarship on racial integration in American churches primarily focuses on black and white churches, but a few scholars have noted the unique concerns of Asian American Christians. Because Asian Americans have a reputation of

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<sup>226</sup>Kersten Bayt Priest and Robert J. Priest, “Divergent Worship Practices in the Sunday Morning Hour: Analysis of an ‘Interracial’ Church Merger Attempt,” in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 288-9.

<sup>227</sup>Priest and Priest, 287.

being “honorary whites” or, more commonly, a “model minority,” one that has succeeded economically, complaints of discrimination or prejudice are sometimes casually dismissed. Since these ethnic groups are relatively successful, many people assume that they could not have been restricted. Third and fourth generation Asian Americans describe an alternative experience. They speak of being “forever foreigners” simply because they *look* foreign to the eyes of many non-Asian Americans.<sup>228</sup> They are continually complimented on their English and asked where they are from. This experience increases the need for ethnic religious organizations for some. Their fellow churchgoers understand their situation and the community provides a space to discuss the role of ethnicity within their faith and lives. Some Asian Americans report that they are unwelcome at predominantly white churches because of racial prejudices, regardless of their supposed assimilation.<sup>229</sup>

Frank Herron Smith, a man who saw the costs and benefits of Japanese integration in the 1940s,<sup>230</sup> continued to voice his broader perspectives on integrated worship after the war. In 1956, he wrote a statement on integration for the Annual Methodist Conference, cautioning ethnic churches against integrating too hastily. While Smith believed the Christian mission requires individual churches to minister to different groups in their immediate proximity, he acknowledged the difficulty and the high rate of failure. It is unclear how he derived the exact numbers, but he suggested that a minority group would be ready to enter the Caucasian Annual Conference successfully when sixty percent of that ethnic group within the United States belonged to a Christian church. He advised individual

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<sup>228</sup>Jonathan Y. Tan, *Introducing Asian American Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 36-51.

<sup>229</sup>Tan, 60.

<sup>230</sup>Chapman to Fisher and Kojiro Unoura, 6 Apr 1945, Box 1/Fld 7, Gordon K. Chapman: Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, GTU 2002-9-01, GTU.

congregations to consider integration once thirty percent of their members were of other races. Smith's warnings were specific:

If and when you integrate your CHIEF GAIN will be in a sense of belonging to a strong and virile unit of Methodism. You will lose the happy fellowship of the present annual conference and be lost in the crowd. . . . You will have no closer fellowship with neighboring churches than at present. You will lose your close contact with the [Mission] Board which has been our faithful sponsor through the years.<sup>231</sup>

He also noted the loss of "feasts and banquets," cultural events unique to their churches.

Extremely frank about congregational realities, Smith benefited from decades of experience watching ethnic churches fade and disappear after following the guidance of other denominational representatives. Bluntly, he stated that kindly, but misguided "Caucasians . . . feel that it is a stigma on Methodism to have racial churches. . . . They have no comprehension of your real problems."<sup>232</sup> This statement summarized the greatest challenge to the situation of Nikkei in the 1940s and to integrated worship today.

Many leaders in the 1940s held high hopes that integrating churches would decrease national racial tensions, but others noted the shaky ethical premise of a plan for racial equality that required the subordination of a minority group. Many Japanese churches and communities have thrived since reopening in the late 1940s.

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<sup>231</sup>Frank Herron Smith, "Integration," 25 July 1956, Box 136/Fld 3, Shima Papers, Japanese American Research Project (Collection 2010), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>232</sup>Smith, "Integration."

## Afterword

*The challenge of the New Community brings to light many new facets of approach and action. In the search for its soul, Western Christianity and democracy can be purified and re-examined by the confrontation which the Asian Americans can bring. In America's search to find its soul as a people, and Western Christianity's struggle to find authenticity in the world, the Asian Americans within our borders have a unique contribution to make.<sup>1</sup>*

*-Paul Nagano & Joan Thatcher, 1973*

Armed with dreams for a New World Order, Nikkei and white mainline Protestants faced the crisis of the Japanese American incarceration. Responses ranged from calls for “Christian behavior” to protests against the government’s decision, but all leaders in my dissertation sought to reduce the extent to which the injustice might tear Nikkei from American society. Mainline Protestants tried to mend domestic rifts in the church and nation through experimental worship patterns during and after the war. Those specific projects failed, but ultimately resulted in a redefinition of unity that welcomed greater pluralism in American Protestantism.

While mainline Protestants and Quakers worked toward the same ultimate goals of peace and unity, their responses to the incarceration demonstrated their differing approaches and worldviews. The AFSC devoted all resources toward alleviating and righting the political injustice through legal support, material aid and services, doing whatever possible to improve the physical circumstances of Nikkei. The AFSC’s pragmatic approach realistically

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Nagano and Joan Thatcher, *The Asian American Experience* (Valley Forge, PA: Fund for Renewal, 1973), 25.

faced the realities of the current political climate and challenged the flaws within America's society and political system rather than trying to work around them. They worked within that system to create positive social change while alleviating the harm caused by its current problems. Mainline Protestants also devoted a portion of their resources toward alleviating the suffering caused by the incarceration, but focused energy on building stronger Christian foundations on which a new world order could be built. Rather than directly confront the injustices within government, they opted to strengthen fellowship and faith. These other methods relied on the belief that increasing unity on a congregational level would be reflected throughout society. In some ways this clearly makes sense—as different cultures, ethnicities and other differences become familiar to more congregants, national tolerance could increase if the programs were on a large enough scale. Healing rifts within American Protestantism would strengthen the moral foundation of the nation and contribute to the new world order. The attempts to ecumenize and integrate Nikkei required a great deal of faith in that projection. Protestants were not insular in their focus on ecumenism and integration within their own churches, but simultaneously tackled national rifts through print media and speaking tours, trying to reduce widespread racial prejudices. Not surprisingly, the white people working most closely with Nikkei had a harder time and less desire to sacrifice their individual welfare for these dreams of eventual transformation. The greatest supporters of ecumenism and integration were national Protestant leaders who did not know Nikkei personally and did not see their immediate needs and suffering. This distance eased their ability to sacrifice immediate concerns of a relatively small group for the national change that they might initiate.

Nikkei and white leaders offered mixed assessments of the churches' work with incarcerated. Paul Nagano felt greatly disappointed by the churches' failure to do more, but, like many former incarcerated, felt grateful that Christian groups did anything at all. This complex web of exchange ultimately made a positive, lasting impression on most Nikkei. A large portion of latter day accounts, perhaps the majority, mention their gratitude for the churches' efforts, but most often they were more grateful for what the aid signified—allies among the American public and assurance that they had not been forgotten—than for the material aid itself.

Floyd Schmoe gave the churches a poor appraisal for their wartime behavior without apology: "The non-Japanese churches, on the whole, fell far short of their opportunity and responsibility; both in the attempt to prevent the tragedy of relocation and in helping to heal the wounds that resulted from it."<sup>2</sup> Many Christian leaders closely involved with the incarceration saw these moments as a missed opportunity. As Nagano later wrote, "The internment . . . could have been a glorious time for the church to reveal its true nature and mission under God."<sup>3</sup> A number of Christian Nikkei felt "deserted" and "suspicious" after the churches did not speak against the incarceration and took their churches after the war.<sup>4</sup> Negative sentiments about the church were stronger among California Protestants. Since so many of the white pastors of Japanese churches moved to Southern Idaho with their

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<sup>2</sup>Floyd Schmoe, "Seattle Peace Churches and Relocation," in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, rev. ed., eds. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor and Harry H.L. Kitano (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989), 117.

<sup>3</sup>Marshall M. Sumida and Paul M. Nagano, "Review, Resolve and Redress of the Internment of Japanese Americans During World War II," *American Baptist Quarterly* 13:1 (March 1994): 96.

<sup>4</sup>June Toshiyuki, interview, 10 Oct 1983, in *Nisei Christian Journey (Its Promise & Fulfillment)* (n.p.: Nisei Christian Oral History Project, 1988), 63. Nobuko Lillian Omi, interview, 27 Nov 1983, in *Nisei Christian Journey*, 100.



congregations, fewer Minidokans expressed feelings of abandonment to that degree. The actions of those white leaders actually led many new converts to the church.

Public relations work to discourage racial discriminations and work within postwar communities taught valuable lessons that aid workers applied to the African American civil rights struggle in coming decades. In the final months of the war, the Protestant Commission and other groups began considering the implications of their campaigns for better race relations in the United States. As religious leaders confronted cases of racism targeted at Nikkei when they coordinated relief efforts in resettlement areas and on the West Coast, they became more aware of the discrimination against other minorities. The “Japanese problem,” as Mark Dawber described it, “compel[led] the church to face other minority problems” in Chicago and other cities, and workers were taught where the majority of other minorities lived in relation to Japanese American resettlement communities.<sup>5</sup> As a result, Protestant leaders began framing their arguments in terms of the universal fair play deserved by all minorities. More significantly, the Congregational Committee adopted the guiding principle “service directed toward people as human beings rather than as members of particular races or groups” will be most successful.<sup>6</sup> Aid workers concluded that working for justice as a universal goal was superior to focusing on a particular disadvantaged group. Publications

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<sup>5</sup>Charles Long recommended church leaders working with Nikkei in Chicago read Edwin Embree’s *Brown Americans*, Charles Johnson’s “To Stem this Tide” and a collection of speeches, “The Role of the Races in our Future” to confront the larger issue of racial tensions. Dr. Charles Long listed these publications in a session entitled, “The Church and Minority Groups.” Clarence Gillett, Notes taken at the Conference of Japanese Christian Leaders, 16 Dec 1943, Box 4/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

<sup>6</sup>Seido Ogawa, Report of the Congregational Committee for Christian Democracy, June 1948, Box 1/Fld 2; and Committee for Christian Democracy, “A Primer on Prejudice by Law,” 4 Mar 1946, Box 3/Fld 14, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

like *The Races of Mankind* contributed to this goal and religious leaders like Gordon Chapman and Clarence Gillett made concerted efforts to broaden other types of advocacy.<sup>7</sup>

A number of Christians involved with the incarceration continued their efforts to unify the country during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.<sup>8</sup> The Smeltzers, who operated a Brethren hostel in Chicago, became prominent civil rights leaders in the South.<sup>9</sup> Perry Saito participated in sit-ins and other nonviolent demonstrations with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to gain rights for African Americans. He posted lists of local businesses that supported equal rights on church bulletin boards and congratulated shop keepers for their “democratic and Christian practice” from the pulpit.<sup>10</sup> Tom Fukuyama and his wife directed the Brotherhood Home in Denver for years, building intercultural programs and leading an attempt to desegregate the YMCA’s swimming pool. After returning to Washington State in the 1960s, Fukuyama endured complaints from his parishioners who did not approve of his civil rights work and involvement in protests against the Indo-China war.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Poster campaigns and a booth at the Second Southern California Industrial Exposition were used to encourage better race relations and tolerance. Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Congregational Committee on Christian Democracy, 4 Sept & 9 Oct 1945, Box 1/Fld 1, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>8</sup>Several scholars have noted how Gordon Hirabayashi’s articulation of his ethical argument for civil disobedience strongly resembles the rhetoric used by Martin Luther King, Jr. and others in that later time period. Cherstin M. Lyon, *Prisons and Patriots: Japanese American Wartime Citizenship, Civil Disobedience, and Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 63-4.

<sup>9</sup>See James F. Findlay, *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement, 1950-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Stephen L. Longnecker, *Selma’s Peacemaker: Ralph Smeltzer and Civil Rights Mediation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

<sup>10</sup>Klancy Clark de Nevers, *The Colonel and the Pacifist: Karl Bendetsen—Parry Saito and the Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004), 235-6.

<sup>11</sup>Tom Fukuyama, *My Spiritual Pilgrimage: Autobiographies of Asian American Baptist Ministers*, compiled by the Asian American Baptist Caucus, 1976, Box 10/Fld 8, Pacific and Asian American Center for Theology and Strategies collection, GTU 2001-9-01, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA (GTU).

The experimental churches within the camps failed to create a style of worship pleasing and adequate for all Protestants, but despite, or perhaps because of, the fractures that manifested within the federated churches, the needs of most incarcerated Christians seem to have been met. A dearth of leadership limited the churches' capabilities at times, but this was not a result of ecumenism. Incarcerated Christians expressed appreciation for their churches in whatever form they came in memoirs, oral histories and correspondence. Two predominant problems stalled the success of ecumenism in the camps: irresolvable conflicts about doctrine and exceptionally inefficient decision-making constraints. The former should have come as no surprise as disputes over communion, baptism and biblical interpretation are the primary reason so many denominations exist within Protestantism. Irreconcilable differences over the meaning of communion trumped ecumenism and could not be negotiated. The second difficulty was exacerbated by constant changes in leadership, but pastors suggested the inefficiencies were inherent to ecumenism where every decision or activity must be discussed at length, compromises forged at every step.

The ecumenical experiment benefited some individuals, widening their perspectives of Christianity and providing a unique experience and education. Though many pastors disliked the program and participation was not voluntary, they learned a great deal from the collaboration. These were formative experiences for future Asian American theologians like Jitsuo Morikawa and Paul Nagano. Tom Fukuyama organized civil rights work across denominations. Lasting effects could also be seen among Protestant Issei, many of whom formed ecumenical churches after the war. But ultimately, the experiment ended as the

camps closed, since white mainline Protestants were not prepared or necessarily interested in eliminating denominational barriers among their own churches.<sup>12</sup>

National ecumenical groups like the Protestant Commission struggled to retain authority, but were not faced with that extent of difficulties because their objectives did not relate to doctrine or even worship styles. While Gordon Chapman could fuel ecumenism by assigning individuals of certain denominations to certain camps, the organization's board worked to improve general Protestant life in the camps and resettlement communities. Individuals might have been motivated by different elements within their denomination, but everyone agreed on the universal goals of the organization. Frustrations over inconsistencies of denominational contributions occurred, but did not significantly hinder the Commission's progress.

While the promise of ecumenical congregations was tried and arguably proven impractical through the experimental churches in the camps, extra-congregational ecumenical organizations with broader responsibilities were successful. Chapman's work within the Protestant Commission demonstrated the practicality of consolidating resources and decision making powers when tackling a challenge as large as this one. Not only would the total demands been greater had each denomination approached the problems associated with the incarceration, but the total efficacy would have been greatly reduced. Mainline Protestants around the world were becoming increasingly interested in this type of ecumenical cooperation in the 1930s and 1940s and such organizations expanded exponentially after World War II. Initially conceived to reduce conflict among denominations, the Protestant

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<sup>12</sup>When missionaries entered Japan after the war, they did not continue to build ecumenical churches though they were given a virtually clean slate. Christians in Japan had been forced by the government to form one solitary church, so denominational loyalties had already diminished. Harold F. Menges to Friends, 7 Jan 1946, Fld B, Guy W. Cook Collection, University of the Pacific.

Commission's success demonstrated the benefits of larger ecumenical organizations. Most Protestants directly involved with the incarceration realized that their ultimate goals of a New World Order could not be reached by ecumenism on a congregational level, but particular goals could be best realized through ecumenical efforts.

When not directed at their particular affiliates alone aid sponsored by denominational organizations like the Congregational Committee or the American Friends Service Committee was also successful. Like the Protestant Commission, they targeted the larger problems, challenging discriminatory legislation, aiding and encouraging the matriculation of young people into colleges and universities and reducing prejudices and misconceptions through public relations campaigns.

One conflict within the camp churches would have eventually risen within the Japanese churches without the incarceration: generational conflict. Peter T. Cha has investigated the increasing number of non-European immigrant churches in the United States in an effort to paint a more accurate picture of the American religious landscape. In addition to noting their cultural function, Cha concluded that intergenerational conflicts are the primary internal struggle among Asian American churches. Unequipped to overcome language and cultural barriers, a "silent exodus" of the second generation has occurred in most immigrant churches.<sup>13</sup> Corresponding with the postwar experiences of Nisei, the children of immigrants regularly form independent ethnic churches rather than join

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<sup>13</sup>Cha used a case study of a Korean American Presbyterian church to show that these divisions are avoidable. By emphasizing a narrative in which the two congregations are equal to and complement one another, this church re-imagined the Confucian value of filial piety in a way that honors the cultural tradition, but moves away from the absolute subordination of younger generations. Peter T. Cha, "Constructing New Intergenerational Ties, Cultures, and Identities among Korean American Christians: A Congregational Case Study," in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 261.

predominantly white establishments or stay in their parents' church. Intergenerational tensions are perhaps inevitable within immigrant communities.

The incarceration and subsequent confusion in postwar communities increased generational divisions within Japanese ethnic churches. As discussed in the Prologue, the government's reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbor negatively affected family ties by arresting many of the male heads of households and then removing their role as the family's provider. The second generation assumed leadership roles over their elders because they spoke better English and were more westernized. Chapter Two showed how these generational divisions were reflected within camp churches, often resulting in entirely separate congregations for the two generations. While language needs demanded this on some level, many church leaders expressed their regret at the lack of communication between generations. The most active youth groups, such as those in Poston, functioned autonomously, separating themselves from the main camp church. After the war these divisions were formalized as Issei formed ecumenical groups and worshipped separately from the Nisei who eventually reestablished ethnic churches for themselves. While generational divisions did not occur within every community, this was a common pattern. If Issei and Nisei did belong to the same congregation, leadership roles were generally reversed, reflecting the changes in community hierarchies.

The re-formation of these ethnic groups relates to the second experiment of mainline Protestants. A small percentage of Nikkei joined established, predominantly white churches after the war, but the Protestant authority's attempt to integrate Japanese and white churches ended in abysmal failure. Ironically, their efforts had the opposite effect: removing the ethnic churches made Nikkei realize their value. The battle over ethnic churches is reflected

within Asian American theology that articulates why segregated worship improves Christianity in America. Few white leaders, if any, changed their position before the ethnic churches were reestablished and the widespread failure impacted how they viewed future prospects of interracial worship.

Two successful experiments in interracial worship that occurred in the West in 1944 shed light on this conflict. A Japanese Quaker, Gordon Hirabayashi, founded an ecumenical, interracial Fellowship Center in Spokane, WA, and Howard Thurman, one of the most influential African American theologians in the twentieth century, co-founding the nation's first intentionally integrated, interfaith (though largely Protestant) church in San Francisco.<sup>14</sup> Like leaders passionate about the integration of Japanese Americans, Thurman believed that "American Christianity has betrayed the religion of Jesus almost beyond redemption" through its racially segregated worship.<sup>15</sup>

Two factors explain why these groups succeeded while the integration of Nikkei into established congregations failed. First, they coalesced with interracial worship as a primary goal, so such changes were not pushed on an established, uninterested congregation. Because all participants had a similar agenda, "superficial" actions, like sponsoring a special interracial tea, were eliminated. Second, the churches' leadership was interracial and they met in buildings unaffiliated with any participants, so no group felt controlled by the other. Hirabayashi stressed the importance of individual choice and agency within the organization. Similarly, Thurman emphasized the necessity of "two freed spirits" for a privileged and an

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<sup>14</sup>A Japanese pastor praised this effort toward reconciliation in his congregation's newsletter. *Your Visiting Pastor*, February 1944, Box 5/Fld 10, Clarence Gillett Papers (Collection 130), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

<sup>15</sup>Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Boston: Beacon Press, [1949] 1976), 98.

underprivileged person to love one another and worship together.”<sup>16</sup> Additionally, the fact that Hirabayashi’s center was not a complete church allowed interested members from the city’s churches to partake in activities without abandoning their established practices. Seattle Protestants lacked the unifying goals of these two groups. The Nisei had been told what was best for them, as had white parishioners, many of whom adamantly disliked the notion of integration.

Members of Japanese ethnic churches discovered the unique value of their congregations, something they had rarely questioned before the war. When the status quo was challenged, they realized exactly why that structure of worship was beneficial and enjoyable. Many Nikkei craved affirmation of the solidarity created through common experience. At these churches, they did not need to explain their experiences of incarceration or of being a visible minority in America because everyone understood. One pastor described this as “Tsukemono Theology.”<sup>17</sup> Tsukemono are Japanese-style pickled vegetables and an essential component within Japanese meals, but one that someone might hesitate to bring to a potluck at a predominantly non-Japanese gathering. The pastor’s point was that parishioners cannot establish “a true dialogue with God” if they do not feel “comfortable” revealing their true selves. He wrote, “It is wholesome to be honest with ourselves and simply be what we are.”<sup>18</sup> A seminary scholarship in Haruyama’s name currently supports the “uniqueness and special religious needs of the Japanese churches.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Thurman, 101.

<sup>17</sup>Justin Haruyama, *Tsukemono Theology* (1965).

<sup>18</sup>Haruyama.

<sup>19</sup>“Justin Haruyama Scholarship Fund,” Japanese American United Church, accessed 22 February 2012, [http://www.jauc.org/haruyama\\_e.html](http://www.jauc.org/haruyama_e.html).



Concerned that Nikkei were only able to influence policy “by the good graces or paternal gestures” of the white majority, many Protestant denominations founded ethnic caucuses within their hierarchical structures to give the minority an official voice in their own futures and acknowledge the contribution of these groups.<sup>20</sup> A postwar study criticized Baptist churches for “perpetuat[ing] the existing superior white and inferior Japanese American dichotomy.”<sup>21</sup> American Baptists finally formed an Asian American Baptist caucus in August 1972. Fighting a related problem, the Reverend Andrews petitioned American Baptists to call Nisei ministers. While he staunchly supported Nikkei’s right to operate their own church, he also believed in the loftier ideal of racial integration, but recognized that individual congregations had to openly welcome minorities. Since so few churches called Nikkei pastors, many Nisei graduates of American Baptist seminaries joined other denominations that would hire them.<sup>22</sup>

Omitting the authority of Japanese Christian leaders within the churches led Nikkei to organize ethnic ecumenical groups to meet their unique needs. One of the earliest was formed in response to a Baptist policy barring Japanese American ministers from missionary work in postwar Japan. While some national leaders saw this as a solution to the “Nisei ministerial problem,” the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society disagreed. Nagano co-founded the Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society (JEMS), a very successful group that sent the unique skills and perspectives of Japanese American pastors to the Japanese mission

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<sup>20</sup>Sumida and Nagano, 84.

<sup>21</sup>Sumida and Nagano, 84.

<sup>22</sup>Shizue Seigel, *In Good Conscience: Supporting Japanese Americans During the Internment* (San Mateo, CA: AACF, 2006), 166.

field.<sup>23</sup> In the mid-1970s, Nikkei leaders worked with other Asian Americans to form the Pacific and Asian American Center for Theology and Strategies (PACTS). The panethnic organization offered workshops and seminars to Asian American church leaders to expand their collective “political, economic, social, cultural and spiritual liberation.”<sup>24</sup> In the same spirit they accepted a different type of integration: a number of Asian American congregations formed in the 1990s. Due to demographic changes, the union was necessary in some areas, though a few formed as intentional communities.<sup>25</sup>

As ethnic pride movements rose in the 1970s, ethnic churches grew stronger and pressure to assimilate into (white) America waned. One consequence of this shift in attitude was an interest in the history of Japanese churches. With varying degrees of scholarly aptitude numerous publications chart the history Japanese Christian churches in America, denominational histories and timelines of individual ethnic congregations.<sup>26</sup> While notable that so many Nikkei desired to celebrate their ecclesiastical accomplishments, these texts still reflect the feelings of shame that kept the incarceration from being openly discussed within most Japanese American communities at this time. The incarceration and its profound effects on ethnic churches are largely overlooked and sometimes omitted completely.<sup>27</sup> Rather, these informal histories celebrate the churches’ uniqueness and necessity within

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<sup>23</sup>Paul Nagano, *My Spiritual Pilgrimage: Autobiographies of Asian American Baptist Ministers*, compiled by the Asian American Baptist Caucus, 1976, Box 10/Fld 8, Pacific and Asian American Center for Theology and Strategies collection, GTU 2001-9-01, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA (GTU).

<sup>24</sup>Biography/Administrative History, Pacific and Asian American Center for Theology and Strategies collection, GTU 2001-9-01, GTU.

<sup>25</sup>These developments are discussed in Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

<sup>26</sup>For several examples, see Boxes 318 and 381, Japanese American Research Project (Yuji Ichioka) collection of material about Japanese in the United States (Collection 2010), UCLA.

<sup>27</sup>Some Nikkei questioned why the role of the churches as hostels in particular was left out. Yosh Nakagawa, interview by Tom Ikeda, 7 Dec 2004, Densho.

Japanese American communities. They overflow with pride for their achievements within an American narrative of perseverant, stalwart immigrants.

Like commemorative histories of many Japanese congregations, the history presented on the Seattle Japanese Baptist Church website does not mention their postwar battle. The struggles of the Japanese American community are overshadowed by the successes in this otherwise detailed history of the JBC. The incarceration itself is only discussed through a lengthy description of Andrews' great work, detailing how he moved his family, suffered prejudice in Idaho and made many trips back and forth from Minidoka to Seattle. Aside from the reopening of the Fujin Home in late 1945, the era of postwar history only reenters their narrative in 1955.<sup>28</sup> This polished story presents the picture of a church with strong, amiable ties to the outside community when moments in its history are truly dimmer.

A history of Japanese Episcopal churches concluded that ultimately "Blood is thicker than water" and Japanese Americans could be "better Christians" within their predominately segregated congregations.<sup>29</sup> The author agreed with the Reverend Alfred Akamatsu's opinion that "each . . . ethnic group ought to make a contribution to the United States with the culture which their ancestors had brought into this country, instead of abandoning it by being assimilated" in order to "better" the broader culture.<sup>30</sup>

Today, churches across the country remain predominantly segregated by race. A 2004 Gallup poll showed that sixty-four percent of non-Hispanic white people in the United States worship surrounded by few people of other races. Fifty-six percent of black Christians

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<sup>28</sup>"History," Japanese Baptist Church, accessed 6 Apr 2008, [www.jbcseattle.org/history.html](http://www.jbcseattle.org/history.html).

<sup>29</sup>Andrew N. Otani, *A History of Japanese-American Episcopal Churches* (n.p. 1980), 104, 98.

<sup>30</sup>Otani, *Japanese-American Episcopal Churches*, 98.

worship in congregations that are all or mostly black.<sup>31</sup> However, some exceptions exist. Only a third of Hispanics belong to churches that are comprised of primarily Hispanics.

Japanese ethnic churches fostered the earliest conceptions of Asian American theology, which blended experiences of isolation and persecution with values prized in Asian American communities. Jitsuo Morikawa and Paul Nagano became prominent in this field. Within a 1986 sermon, “Toward an Asian-American Theology,” Morikawa told how Japanese Americans, “through their experience of rejection and collective incarceration, have learned the extravagance of God’s grace, that even pain, suffering and injustice He often transforms into blessing.” Like many incarcerated Christians, he believed God had used the injustice for positive ends by teaching incarcerated people how to identify with “that vast community of people in this land and around the world who live in chronic and unending suffering and deprivation.” Morikawa emphasized, however, that this theology was viable for any person faced with the “pervasive anxiety of weakness and powerlessness in society.” Without naming it, he applied their experience and revelations to liberation theology to justify why American Christians must “become creatively identified with the weak, poor and oppressed, without fear of intimidation,” and learn to value “life and meaning without things and possessions, nor even the minimal amenities of life.”<sup>32</sup> This “theology of marginality” was later embraced and expanded by Korean and Vietnamese American theologians.<sup>33</sup> Paul

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<sup>31</sup>Albert L. Winseman, “Race and Religion: Divisions Steeped in History,” 10 Aug 2004, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/12664/Race-Religion-Divisions-Steeped-History.aspx>.

<sup>32</sup>Jitsuo Morikawa, “Toward an Asian-American Theology,” sermon given on 3 Jan 1986, reprinted in *Jitsuo Morikawa: A Prophet for the Twenty-first Century: A Legacy of Sixty Inspiring Sermons*, eds. Paul Nagano and William L. Malcomson (Richmond, CA: Council for Pacific Asians Theology, 2000), 220-1.

<sup>33</sup>Jonathan Y. Tan, *Introducing Asian American Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 134-138.

Nagano also developed the concept further after concluding that his marginality within America was a “permanent predicament.”<sup>34</sup>

Speaking for the future of American Christianity, Paul Nagano wrote that the church must “mean the humanness of the minorities as well as the majority—the majority freed from their peculiar arrogance and the minorities freed to be what God has meant them to be as persons.”<sup>35</sup> As alluded to in the Afterword’s epigraph, Nagano argued that Asian American ethnic churches can play a vital role in changing not only America, but move the world toward what he called the New Community, a variation on the new world order envisioned by white Protestants in the 1940s. Striving for true pluralism, where people “respect and affirm each other,” Nagano believed Japanese Americans must first “take pride in who [they] are and . . . really feel good about . . . [their own] background” before they can respect the diversity of others.<sup>36</sup> He increasingly called for Nikkei to assert pride in their ethnic identity and quit accepting their role as the “silent minority.”<sup>37</sup> Once that understanding is reached and everyone is on “a level playing field,” society could have “genuine community.” Without this dignity, he believed that a “dichotomy of superior and inferior” would result in their culture being “swallowed up and absorbed by the dominant group” or they would become “an ingrown, self-supported group,” which could only find security “in being with

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<sup>34</sup>Paul Nagano, “A Japanese-American Pilgrimage: Theological Reflections” (1999), 78-79.

<sup>35</sup>Nagano and Thatcher, 20-21.

<sup>36</sup>Paul Nagano, interview by Stephen Fugita and Becky Fukuda, 25 May 1999, Densho.

<sup>37</sup>Kevin Omi, “Final Paper: Rev. Paul Nagano,” (term paper for Theologies of Asian American Faith Communities, Graduate Theological Union, 2009), 14-15.

[their] own.”<sup>38</sup> While integration clashed with Nagano’s immediate hopes for his people, he supported the ecumenical work in the camps and had hoped it would continue on the coast.

Paul Nagano blended the ideals of a new world order with his experiences from the incarceration to map a path to what he called the New Community. It requires people to turn “individuals, society, and culture away from man’s glorification of himself” and “deal realistically with the evil and injustices in the world.”<sup>39</sup> His revision of the New World Order demands that people face the world’s injustices rather than focus on a continual redefinition of oneself and others. This can be read as a direct critique of the churches’ response to the incarceration, but also a motion to move beyond past events and face today’s injustices. The contestations among Protestants during and after the war proved to be fertile ground for Nisei pastors like Nagano, who shaped early Asian American theology.

While Japanese American Christians constitute a minority within Asian American Christianity,<sup>40</sup> their strong influence within Asian American theology is manifest for two reasons. One, multiple generations of Japanese Americans began developing the theology before most other Asians immigrated after 1965. And two, the incarceration and its unusual worship styles acted as catalysts, inspiring many Japanese Americans to enter the ministry and heavily influencing their formative professional years. Many pastors who may not have moved beyond parish ministry were thrust into challenging situations, where they discovered that their training could not adequately address the pressing needs of their parishioners. Their novel approaches to ministry during the war, including involvement with the

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<sup>38</sup>Nagano, interview by Fugita and Fukuda, 25 May 1999.

<sup>39</sup>Nagano and Thatcher, 21-22.

<sup>40</sup>Korean and Filipino Americans, both predominately Christian, and are the two largest Asian populations in the United States. Tan, 58.

ecumenical and integration experiments and subsequent reflections on those experiences accelerated the construction of new theologies.

Mainline Protestant denominations and ecumenical groups may not have reached their New World Order, but they have taken steps in that direction. John Foster Dulles, Reinhold Niebuhr, Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders expounded upon and adjusted their visions for the future world. The Cold War and other factors fueled ecumenical and inter-faith working among mainline Protestants, Jews and Catholics during the 1950s and '60s. Americans Christians progressively shifted their tolerance of differences to a pluralist attitude that expanded their understanding of unity and altered their vision of a new world order. The development of Asian American theology helped define this new pluralism and the ways in which individuals must understand themselves and others for it to succeed. Efforts to dissolve barriers of denomination and ethnicity continue, but on more egalitarian terms.

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