

The presidents of three national Protestant bodies in this country--Dr. G. Pitt Beers of the Home Missions Council of North America, Miss Sue Weddel of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America and Dr. Luther A. Weigle of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America--issued the following message to the American churches on December 8, 1941:

"Under the emotional strain of the moment, Americans will be tempted to express their resentment against the action of Japan's government by recriminations against the Japanese people who are in our midst. We are gratified to observe that the agents of our government are dealing with them with consideration.

"Let us remember that many of these people are loyal patriotic American citizens and that others, though Japanese subjects, have been utterly opposed to their nation's acts against our nation. It is incumbent upon us to demonstrate a discipline which, while carefully observing the precautions necessary to national safety, has no place for vindictiveness.

"We therefore call upon the church people this country to maintain a Christian composure and charity in their dealing with the Japanese among us."

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The Churches and Enemy Aliens

The churches recognize a responsibility to render a Christian service to those who are technically regarded as "enemy aliens" and to prisoners of war. The Home Missions Council and the Federal Council have jointly constituted the Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War to aid the churches in the fulfillment of the responsibility. The Foreign Missions Conference cooperates in the work of the Commission. For the present, the Commission has outlined the areas of its task as including the following:

1. To make the necessary arrangements with government official for the work of the churches among interned aliens and prisoners of war.
2. To determine what perssonel is necessary to carry on the work of the churches in work among interned aliens and prisoners of war.
3. To secure and give general supervision to the perssonel representing the churches in work among interned aliens and prisoners of war.
4. To secure or provide material and literature for religious services among interned aliend and prisoners of war; e. g. equipment for the sacraments, devotional and study materials, and other religious literature.
5. To correlate the work of the churches with that of the War Prisoners' Aid of the Y.M.C.A.
6. To assist local groups which represent the churches in their ministry to the families of interned aliens and to other aliens; and to promote the setting up of such groups where necessary.
7. To encourage the development and expression of Christian attitudes and behavior of goodwill and helpfulness to aliens and others in our midst whose orgin was in nations with which our country is now at war, while observing the precautions necessary to national safety.
8. To collaborate with the corresponding Commission of the churches in Canada and with the Ecumenical Commission for Chaplaincy Service to Prisoners of War, with headquarters in Geneva.

Canon Almon R. Pepper is chairman of the Commission, and Roswell P. Barnes, Acting Secretary. Its adress is 297 Fourth Ave., New York, N.Y.

The major problem of the churches in this field since our involment in the war has been with the Japanese. The most immediate concern was for Japanese Christians. Some pators set out immediately on the day war began to visit and befriend the Japanese congregations. Reports have come of those who spent most of the night in rendering such assistance as was possible and appropriate. From the beginning it has been recognized that certain precautions are necessary in the interest of national safety and that some enemy aliens are not loyal to America, although the overwhelming majority are. Consequently, the Church representatives have cooperated with the local police and federal agents, who have almost universally been commended for their courtesy as they

have carried out their tasks.

Church groups on the Pacific Coast and officers of national agencies promptly issued statements calling for fairness and moderation. In some places prompt assistance was given to those who were left without money as the result of the restrictions placed upon withdrawals from bank accounts. Influence was exerted against wholesale and unwarranted discharge of Japanese from employment.

In connection with the discussion and formation of plans for the evacuation of Japanese aliens and citizens from defense areas, representative of the Commission have kept in touch with federal authorities in Washington and church leaders have appeared before hearings of the Tolan Congressional Committee on the Coast. Church groups on the Coast have also indicated their interest to local and state authorities there.

There has been a natural reaction among church people against proposals which will result in unnecessary hardships to the innocent; but at the same time it has been recognized, as many Japanese themselves point out, that it may be in the interest of the loyal Japanese themselves to remove them from areas where an unfortunate incident would inevitably bring indiscriminate blame and violence upon the innocent along with the guilty. The distressing way in which "rough justice" may work is indicated by a sentence in a report from a church federation secretary on the Coast: "One family case-- father 69, mother 64--has had two strokes, one boy in army, another ready to go in the draft--yet they must evacuate."

The churches plan to send their representatives along with the Japanese as they are evacuated into new settlements. Most of the members of some forty congregations on the Pacific Coast will probably be involved. Nearly all of the pastors of those congregations were born in Japan and therefore are not and cannot be American citizens.

Visitation and assistance with provision for services of worship have been begun at the points of detention for Japanese, Germans, and Italians. For example, Dr. C. J. Fylling of the Lutheran Welfare Society of North Dakota, along with his son, have conducted regular chapel services and special communion services at Fort Lincoln since September 14, 1941. There were interned aliens in detention before we became involved in the war.

Japanese-Americans to Be Resettled

A special committee to assist the churches and represent them in the resettlement of Japanese-Americans who are now in the relocation centers is being set up under the Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War. The War Relocation Authority is resettling individuals and small groups in communities where employment is guaranteed and where the people of the community are prepared to receive the Japanese and to facilitate their making a living and participating normally in community life.

For the present most of the resettlement will be in the territory between the Western and the Eastern Military Areas, that is, roughly between the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachians. It is not intended that large groups shall be settled in any one state or city.

The War Relocation Authority is especially eager to resettle the younger generation between the age of 18 and 30. Those who will be released from the relocation centers will all have been carefully investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and recommended by the War Relocation Authority as being beyond suspicion in their loyalty to America and as having capacity to fulfill the requirement of the employment offered. They are all well adjusted to American life and, of course, speak English fluently. Requests are already being received from numerous cities for those with various professional qualifications as well as for agricultural and other types of labor.

When these Japanese-Americans leave the relocation centers to accept employment under this plan, they will again have the freedom of normal citizenship which have been denied them under the exigencies of the war situation.

It is assumed that in many communities it will be the people in the churches who will be most concerned to assist the War Relocation Authority in the carrying out of this task. Inquiries should be directed to the Secretary for Japanese Resettlement, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York.

It is important that standard rates and conditions of employment be observed. This is required by the War Relocation Authority and is of concern to the churches. Local

groups which are prepared to assist in the resettlement program should also make quiet and careful inquiry concerning the reaction of other community leaders, making clear that no large influx is proposed. Everyone concerned is eager to preclude misapprehensions which might give rise to dissension.