

5. Japanese Americans, reparations for World War II (Memorial #38-PS)  
(1980 LCAM, pp.96, 318,324; 1982 LCAM, pp. 61, 315, 316, 360)

The 1982 convention of the church referred to the Executive Council the following memorial and the proposed response to it.

WHEREAS on February 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the forced evacuation and imprisonment of 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry; and

WHEREAS this incarceration was carried out without charge or trial and was carried out not on the basis of background, occupation, citizenship, sex or age, but solely on the basis of race; and

WHEREAS this action on the part of the United States Government resulted both from war hysteria and the culmination of decades of anti-Asian discrimination, beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882; and

WHEREAS Japanese Americans both as individuals and as a community still suffer from the tremendous personal, psychological, and monetary losses resulting from the camps and have never been adequately compensated for those losses; and

WHEREAS there still exist in this country ignorance about internment, prejudicial attitudes towards Japanese and other Asians, and the possibility that another group will have its rights violated by the government in the event of a crisis, and

WHEREAS the evacuation of the Japanese Americans took place on the West Coast and Hawaii and presently, the largest concentration of Japanese Americans resides on the territory of our synod; and

WHEREAS the Lutheran Church in America in its 1980 convention supported the formation of a Congressional Hearing Committee addressed to this issue and the LCA Asian Caucus meeting in 1981 endorsed the Redress Movement of the Japanese Americans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we endorse a form of monetary reparations on the part of the United States Government for the victims and the Japanese American Community, the education of the American public with regard to the camps, the overturning of the legal basis for the internment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Bishop be instructed to write a letter to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians of the United States Congress regarding our endorsement of reparations for Japanese American internees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Pacific Southwest Synod memorialize the Lutheran Church in America meeting in convention, September 1982 to endorse also this vital issue that affects the life of our country.

- 2. to establish a foundation for educational and humanitarian purposes to ensure that the detention and relocations will be remembered, and so that the causes of them will be illuminated and understood, and
- 3. to respond to the claims of the victims of this wartime policy in such ways as respect their gravity and to affirm the principle of reparations.
- c. request the Division for Mission in North America to prepare appropriate material for use in the congregations of this church on Sunday, February 19, 1984, which is the 42nd anniversary of Executive Order Numbered 9066.

It was VOTED that Bishop Stanley Olson of the Pacific Southwest Synod be given voice in the debate on this issue.

It was VOTED to amend by deleting "and to affirm the principle of reparations" in b., 3.

It was MOVED to amend by adding after "gravity", "including payment of reparations".

It was MOVED to amend the amendment by adding "to Japanese American internees".

The amendment to the amendment was DEFEATED.

It was MOVED to add to the amendment "to those Japanese Americans relocated or interned."

The amendment to the amendment was ADOPTED.

The amendment, as amended, was ADOPTED.

The recommendation, as amended, was ADOPTED.

Item b., 3. reads as follows: 3. to respond to the claims of the victims of this wartime policy in such ways as respect their gravity including payment of reparations to those Japanese Americans relocated or interned.

6. Conventions of the church, location of  
(1982 LCAM, p. 290)

The 1982 convention of the church adopted a resolution instructing the Executive Council "to re-evaluate the question of holding the convention of the Lutheran Church in America on college and university campuses" and "to consider holding the 1986 convention of the church on the campus of a church-related or secular college or university."

The 1980 convention of the church had before it a memorial which called for the endorsement of the creation of a Presidential Study Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act. The convention voted to record its support and convey that fact to the Office for Governmental Affairs, LCUSA, through the Division for Mission in North America. The study commission has not yet reported on its recommendations.

The Committee on Memorials from Synods recommends that the response to the memorial from the Pacific Southwest Synod be to register this church's strong concern for the Japanese Americans who were interned in 1942 simply on the basis of race and to advocate with the U.S. Government through the Office for Governmental Affairs, Lutheran Council in the USA, a just settlement of claims arising from that internment.

The Committee on Administration and Synodical Relations recommended that action on this item be postponed until the June 1983 meeting of the Executive Council.

The Presidential Study Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act has made its recommendations. In late June 1983 bills were introduced in the Senate (S1520) and in the House (HR3387) and have been referred to the respective Judiciary Committees but no date has been set for hearings.

The wartime removal and internment of American citizens of Japanese descent, of naturalized citizens of Japanese extraction, and of resident Japanese aliens was a monumental act of injustice, a contradiction of the very liberty in defense of which World War II was waged. It represented a denial both of fundamental human rights and of legal rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution. This removal and internment was the result of an unhappy combination of wartime hysteria, racism, and a failure of political leadership. It was one of many shameful instances throughout American history of injustice perpetrated on ethnic groups by deliberate government policy. It is recognized that the enormous damage done by this policy cannot be adequately assessed or compensated to these persons and it is equally recognized that injury has been inflicted on other groups throughout American history who have no hope for restitution.

The Committee on Administration and Synodical Relations

RECOMMENDED: That the Executive Council

- a. request the synods to call upon their congregations and ministers to remember in appropriate ways this shameful episode, to pray for the victims of the injustice done, to voice their concern to their elected congressional representatives and to ask God to grant to the American people the wisdom and the will not to repeat it.
- b. request the Bishop of the Church to write the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and House, to call upon the Congress of the United States
  1. to enact legislation issuing in a public apology to those persons and their descendants victimized by this wartime policy and providing for appropriate public remembrances of the episode, and