

RESETTLEMENT BULLETIN

September 1944

NEW YORK

Vol. II, No. 7.

RESETTLEMENT OF 100 FAMILIES THROUGH 100 LOCAL CHURCHES

As of August, 1944, nearly thirty thousand evacuees are reported to have left the Relocation Centers. This leaves in the camps about sixty thousand eligible for resettlement. In an effort to help this latter group, the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, in cooperation with the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, has undertaken a project called "Resettlement of 100 Families Through 100 Local Churches." It is the hope of the Committee that this will stimulate the interest of churches which have not yet had an opportunity to participate in the resettlement program. Both government and private agencies are ready to assist the churches.

Suggestions for the Local Church

- 1). It should be remembered that churches engaged in this project are cooperating with the Government in a program which has the cordial support of the Protestant Churches. Further, "The policies governing this resettlement have the approval of the War and Navy Departments. The program has been sanctioned by the Department of Justice as sound from the standpoint of national security and has been approved by the War Manpower Commission as a contribution to national manpower needs."
- 2). It is suggested that the minister or a committee interested in this project obtain full information on the background of the evacuation of the people of Japanese ancestry and on the Government's resettlement program before bringing the project to the attention of the general congregation. The Committee on Resettlement and the War Relocation Authority are in a position to supply this information.
- 3). The resettlement of a family might be a project for the whole church or one of the groups within the church, such as the Missionary Society, the Women's Club, or the Men's Club, which might wish to sponsor the project. In any event, there should be a committee within the church which would assume responsibility for carrying the project through to its completion, that is, until the family is well adjusted.
- 4). Although the Government will be ready to aid in opening up employment opportunities for the employable members of the evacuee family, jobs might be found through the membership of the church. (The Government pays railroad transportation and supplies a small amount of money to families needing such help.)
- 5). After the family is settled in its new home - allowing some time to recover from the excitement of resuming life "outside" - make an occasion of introducing the family to the members of the church and then, according to age levels and interests, endeavor to integrate them into the special groups or clubs in the church.

Interested churches should write to the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

THE CALIFORNIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

Sacramento, Calif., June 7, 1944

The following statement concerning Japanese-Americans was passed by a strong majority vote of lay and ministerial delegates:

In spite of more than two years of disrupting change in economic and home life a vast majority of both aliens and citizens of Japanese extraction have proved themselves staunchly loyal to the United States. It is the belief of fair-minded American people that this group should not longer be penalized because of their ancestry or for any other reason. To continue to delay the justice that is due this minority of American citizens and loyal aliens is contrary to every principle of fairness and in direct opposition to basic civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

In view of the above statement the California Annual Conference of the Methodist Church renews its pledge of confidence in all loyal Japanese-Americans and proposes to assist them in regaining their full rights as citizens of the United States.

We believe that democratic justice may best be served in the following manner:

A. By granting freedom of movement to loyal Japanese anywhere in the United States on the same basis as other Americans and aliens of other countries. This would include the right to return to the Pacific Coast. If this right is abridged by political, economic or racial pressure groups, we hold that such action is destructive both of essential democracy and Christian social relations.

B. By defeat of discriminatory legislation. For example:

(1) We are opposed to the disfranchisement of Japanese-American citizens, and attempts to make their life on the Pacific Coast and elsewhere in the United States an economic impossibility.

(2) We are opposed to the proposal to send all U.S. Japanese back to Japan after the war, to farm them out on Pacific islands, or to make them stay on isolated reservations in this country.

(3) We are opposed to the attempt to make property ownership difficult for Japanese-American citizens and impossible for their alien parents.

C. By realization of a strong, consistent domestic policy toward this and all minority groups, which would:

(1) Tend to balance war-time extremism and sectionalism now rampant.

(2) Help to convince our Pacific neighbor states that this country's conception of democracy includes the freedom of all people.

D. By increased co-operation with the War Relocation Authority to accelerate the program of resettlement in unrestricted areas.

E. By denunciation of the false principle of "protective custody" and aid in building public opinion which will repudiate the further use of such an un-American restraint against minority groups.

F. By fostering post-war planning for the rehabilitation of Americans of Japanese ancestry, to ensure them against prolonged unnecessary hardships.

G. By protesting instances of destruction, despoilation, and fraudulent acquisition of Japanese property in California.

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY
OF THE *Evangelical Church*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Board of Missions, June 20, 1944

"Feeling deep concern over the mass evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry, we welcome the statement of the President of the United States that: 'We shall restore to the loyal evacuees the right to return to the evacuated areas as soon as the military situation will make such restoration feasible.'

"We believe that whatever the initial 'military necessity' invoked two years ago, such necessity no longer exists. This belief has the support of statements by the Secretaries of War and the Navy, assuring the nation 'that the Japanese enemy is not coming to our shores'; of the Army's declaration that 'the Pacific Coast is now a defense command, no longer a theatre of operations', and its policy of relaxing civilian defense requirements; and the statement by Admiral Nimitz that 'Since the battle of Midway in June 1942, there has been no serious threat from the Japanese to the Pacific Coast or America's Pacific possessions.'

"We therefore petition the President of the United States and the military authorities to take responsibility for, and immediate steps to designate a procedure under which loyal evacuees who may wish to do so may freely return to the evacuated area for visits, business adjustments, and residence, and that citizens of the United States, who are of Japanese ancestry, be restored to their full rights and privileges of such citizenship."

*The Southern California-Arizona Conference of the
Methodist Church... July 27, 1944.*

Concurring in the action of the California Conference of the Methodist Church, the Southern California-Arizona Conference of the Methodist Church declares that:

"Democratic justice will be best served by granting freedom of movement to loyal Japanese, anywhere in the United States, on the same basis as other Americans and aliens of other countries."

The Conference also urges:

"our people to exemplify the way of Christ by welcoming to our communities, our schools, our churches, and our homes, these victims of organized discrimination and war-time hysteria, and we call upon our members and friends throughout the Conference to make preparation for, and to write to Secretary Henry L. Stimson, offering to provide work and shelter for returning evacuees. Insofar as we are able we shall support such movements as are designed to aid evacuees in readjusting themselves to new coast conditions, and to insure for them the full protection of American law."

Chicago

The Chicago Advisory Committee for Evacuees observes that "Resettler outlook on relocation in this area has undergone a significant, though perhaps natural, change in the last five months. There is a definite and steady trend toward permanent residence in Chicago, at least in the thinking of more and more relocatees. This was not true in 1943.

"There is less talk about 'returning to the West Coast'; there is more shipment of furniture and belongings from California storage; there are more leases sought in contrast to the almost unanimous preference for month-to-month tenancy in '43; there is a more sober attitude toward 'post-war' jobs in Chicago; and, though the process is slow, whole family units are finding residence here.

"These observations are based on our experience in counseling and talking with over 3,000 resettlers who have called at our office at 1010 Security Building in the last 17 months."

(From the June 1944 Report)

Recently the Illinois Central Railroad recruited 58 workers to do track work. Shortly after they began working indications were received by the railroad that the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Workers, an AFL union, were opposed to the employment of persons of Japanese ancestry. The union did not threaten to strike but in a statement to the railroad indicated that many of their members would create a work stoppage if the resettlers were continued in employment. No decision had been reached by the railroad in regard to this labor situation when on July 28, the fifth day of their employment, the men were temporarily stopped from work at the request of the War Department pending individual clearance with the Provost Marshal General's office. Clearance not having been received within the expected time, the men were separated from employment. The workers were given their choice of a variety of jobs in the Chicago district or of returning to Heart Mountain. All but eleven accepted other employment.

..... APPRECIATION.....

My dear Miss W.....

I cannot find sufficient words to tell you how deeply appreciative I am of your many splendid efforts to make me and my children really feel a part of the community. With all due respect and credit to the fine families and neighbors, and to the ever faithful churches, I can safely say that our acceptance here on an equal basis with other Americans is due in a large degree to your guidance of the channels of thinking of the teachers and children. I listened to you last night with a lump in my throat as you eloquently pleaded for tolerance and understanding in dealing with races other than one's own.

Needless to say it was an honor and a delight to have one of my daughters partake in last night's performance which was truly a masterpiece of diplomacy in handling a delicate problem.

I herewith tender my heart-felt thanks to you for all you have done. Its value cannot be measured in dollars and cents but the results show in every democratic act. Truly you have helped to make your school a working democracy. The moment I step out of its boundaries I again feel the bitterness of the world. For that reason I have decided to settle my family here for the duration instead of braving the possible hostility of a new and strange city. I would much prefer being allowed to stay here where we are happily settled.

God bless you, and may your faith in us be forever justified. We will not fail you.

Sincerely yours,

(A young Nisei mother of five children)

A Story from Florida

By Mrs. W. C. White

Upon receipt of a letter from a Y.W.C.A. director in a Northern city that about two hundred Japanese-American soldiers, who had been stationed in a camp near there, were to be transferred near us and that some of their wives wished to come here to be close to them, a meeting was called of high city officials and representatives from the Housing Administration, U.S.O.'s, Chamber of Commerce, Y.W.C.A., Ministerial Alliance, and other interested religious groups. During a lengthy discussion of advisability, and ways and means, most of those present expressed a sympathetic interest but felt that it would be impossible because of the overcrowded condition of the city and because of prejudices and taboos which would have to be overcome.

Next a meeting was called of outstanding Methodist women but, again, although sympathetic interest was expressed, they concurred with the sentiments of the first group and even felt some concern for the bodily safety of the young women. I was reminded that even our few Chinese families did not live among the white people but in the backs of their own stores or laundries, or on outlying farms. It was not without some trepidation for their own happiness and safety that I wrote for the first two young women to come, telling them that unless I was able to find some suitable place for them to stay, they would occupy two of my three bedrooms in a parsonage family of five. The first hopeful break was a telephone message from the President of the Board of Directors of the Y.W.C.A. saying that if I would take the two young women in my home for the first ten days, she would rent them an apartment after that. This was splendid - her home was a beautiful place in one of our most select residential districts.

Their ten days in our parsonage was a delight which our family unanimously wished

might happen to every American family. The girls were so charming that not only did they completely and permanently win their way into our affections; but, upon matter-of-fact, casual introductions to our neighbors and friends, they were most hospitably received by the neighborhood and church. By the time anyone thought to ask their nationality (meaning ancestry) they had perfectly won their way where race and national prejudice abounds.

Altogether about twenty young wives came. At the very first we had two slightly unfortunate occurrences: A hotel which said it would take one of the girls refused when she reached there, and one place of domestic employment proved unsatisfactory. Through both of these incidents and in every other detail of their stay with us, all of the girls proved to be cultured young American women, thoroughly worthy of our trust and interest. They bore themselves in such a way that our city accepted them without an untoward incident except the two already mentioned. It soon became comparatively easy to obtain rooms for them, several of our nicest homes and one of our finest hotels cordially opening to them. At first we were up against a stone wall for any employment, even domestic; but at the end, employment was fairly easy to find, even our largest and most beautiful department store using them.

It is true that a supper and several parties were given for them, but what was done for them was not most important about their stay in our city. It was what they did for us: Scores of our people discovered that there were lovely as well as unlovely Japanese. To have even one small child make such a discovery in a day of a flood of prejudice towards persons of Japanese race was more than worth any little thing that may have been done for them.

Statement of Dedication

We commit ourselves--individually and in our Christian organizations--to a constant criticism of our own attitudes toward persons of other races in the light of all we know of love. We pledge ourselves to active effort against the discrimination and the segregation of any group, Negro, white, of Japanese descent, Jew, or any other, wherever our lives touch the question: in our personal relationships, in our churches, in schools, in housing in transportation, and in employment.

(The Christian Youth Conference of North America, Lakeside, Ohio, July 2, 1944)

Observations

By Mr. Galen M. Fisher

To: Christian Brethren at Denver Conference,
Especially Issei and Nisei

In response to an urgent suggestion that I send you a few observations concerning problems and prospects of the near future, I do so, but without the least assumption of superior knowledge or authority.

1. RETURN TO THE WEST COAST: There are good grounds for expecting that the War Department will remove most of the restrictions imposed on persons of Japanese ancestry before the end of the war. Presumably, such conditions will be set up as to preclude any precipitate mass return of evacuees. The severe housing shortage alone would make caution advisable, and the possibility of a virtual social and economic boycott in some communities should preclude a stampede.

2. RESETTLEMENT EAST OF THE SIERRAS: It is agreed by social scientists as well as by many friends of the evacuees that a large number of them should attempt to resettle permanently away from the West Coast. In middle and eastern states, conditions are likely to be more favorable, both for prospering economically and for becoming integrated into the American body-politic. It needs hardly be added that resettlers should continue to avoid forming concentrated colonies.

3. PREPARING FOR RETURN: All evacuees who have friends among Caucasians on the West Coast should make a point of writing them letters to renew mutual confidence and prepare the way for a welcome and for employment for such of the evacuees as may return. Issei who do not write freely in English can of course have their children write for them. Send such friends also copies of "American Fighting Men Speak Out," and Ben Kuroki's speech. Reciprocally, Caucasians who used to employ Japanese or who desire to do so are so informing the W.R.A.

While the advisability of resettling in the East can hardly be overemphasized, those who have good reasons for returning to the Coast should do so before the end of the war, for it will then be much harder to find work.

Impressions...

By Dr. J. Henry Carpenter

After visiting Topaz and Manzanar Relocation Centers, my impressions are as follows:

The younger Japanese Americans who have much spirit have largely left camp. Those left are below 18, have jobs in the camp offices or are tied by certain family inhibitions or loyalties. The major portion of those left in camp are older people.

There was a strong pull towards Chicago. It was reported that living costs there were cheaper and jobs better.

There is a very predominant feeling that the evacuees want to go back to the West Coast. This is based on two feelings:

- a. It is home.
- b. They have a pride about it.

I was greatly impressed with the general loyalty of the people and the way you could talk about the war objectively with most of them. I could not find the slightest trace of disloyalty or deep resentment.

(Dr. Carpenter is Executive Secretary of the Brooklyn Church and Mission Federation and Vice-chairman of the Committee for Resettlement of Japanese-Americans of the Brooklyn Council For Social Planning. He stopped at the two Centers on his way to the West Coast as Chairman of the Committee on the Church and the Cooperatives.)

4. REPATRIATION: Judging by the conditions that prevailed in Germany after World War I, conditions in Japan after her defeat will be very unfavorable for those evacuees who have petitioned for repatriation. The Japanese Government is quite likely to discourage them from going back to Japan, and those who do get in may find the country so impoverished and disrupted that employment and subsistence may be difficult.

(A message to the Christian Leaders' Conference at Denver, June 1944)

PERTINENT QUESTIONS: By Mr. Masao W. Satow

On Integration:

We resettlers are in varying degrees of socialization. Some of us have had many opportunities to participate in group life, others of us have not; some of us have lived with and moved among many Caucasian friends, while others have lived mostly with other Japanese. In the anxiety to be of help to resettlers, many of our well-meaning friends have sometimes failed to understand the processes by which integration takes place. They have failed to realize that integration depends upon a basis of common interest and background, that any program for integration must be satisfying to the evacuees, that all integration does not take place through the churches, that leadership for integration must be acceptable to the resettlers who are supposed to integrate, and that integration takes time. Not all people who talk about integration into a community mean the same thing. Just what do we mean by integration? When can we say that a person is integrated into a community? What are the processes by which a person becomes part of the community? Sometimes the very people who criticize the War Relocation Authority for trying to resettle evacuees en masse fall into the same error by trying to integrate resettlers into the community upon a mass basis.

We can help resettlers by reminding ourselves of the principles of leadership in good group work. These include such simple things as the fact that we must have proper rapport with the members of the groups, we must understand their backgrounds and the more immediate experiences through which they have come. Let us remember that we do things with people and not for them, that people learn to know and appreciate each other by participating in common projects, and that individual counselling is important but we only earn the right to counsel.

On Public Relations:

Now a word about public relations: I have been disturbed no end because too much of our public relations story is based upon the negative. It is important to tell the general public about the experiences the evacuees have gone through, but it seems to me that our

story ought to start with showing how similar the evacuees are to other people by telling of the positive things Nisei are doing. By now most people have heard the story of Sgt. Ben Kuroki. More people are hearing about the famous 100th Infantry in Italy composed entirely of Japanese Americans, but not everyone knows that out of the 1200 or so boys who comprise that outfit, 900 have already been awarded the Purple Heart. Soon we will be hearing more of the 442nd Combat Unit made up entirely of Japanese American volunteers who have just gone over to Italy to join forces with the 100th Infantry. Few people know that their own sons fighting in the South Pacific are safer because many of our Japanese Americans are out there with them in the Intelligence Services. One of these boys is Sgt. Kaz Komoto, wearer of the Purple Heart after being wounded by a Japanese sniper in New Guinea. At the Gila River Relocation Center in Arizona is one of only two ship model factories in the entire United States making model ships for the U.S. Navy. Let us keep in mind that for many of these boys in the uniform of the United States Army, the only place they can call home is a two-by-four room in the tar-paper-covered barrack of a Relocation Center, and some of them will have to come back to this kind of a home after the war.

These are just a few of the things we must tell the general public so that it will sit up and take notice. These are some of the things evacuees must tell instead of harping upon the negative aspects of our evacuation. There are times when you, our good friends, must be critical of us in a friendly way for our own good. You must help us to see our problem in relation to the total problems involved in the war effort, that a group which comprises only one-tenth of one per cent of the total population is significant because of the role we play in helping to make America strong at home.

You must help us evacuees to express ourselves in various ways and become conscious of our responsibilities in the total resettlement picture. We evacuees

(Continued on next page)

must write letters of commendation and appreciation to newspapers, magazines and individuals who stand up on our behalf, commending them not just because they champion our cause, but because they stand for what is right and decent and American. Evacuees, whether resettled or still in Relocation centers, must keep in contact with our friends out on the Pacific Coast, keeping them informed with facts regarding the whole situation. One of the most important things we who are resettled can do is to write our friends and relatives still in the centers about the significant things we find in the real America and how we are

being accepted by our fellow Americans. This is the only way to counteract the vicious anti-Japanese sentiment which the people in the Centers read in the Pacific Coast newspapers. These are the minimum essentials which are mandatory for evacuees now to help ourselves. You can help by urging us to do these simple things. Only as we individual evacuees sense the responsibility of sitting down and writing these letters will we really begin to know what it means to actively participate in a democracy, and then perhaps you will no longer have to worry about our total integration into American life.

(Mr. Satow is a staff member of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations. His headquarters: 3209 West Highland Avenue, Milwaukee 8, Wisconsin)

NEW YORK RELOCATION HOSTEL

168 Clinton Street, Brooklyn 2, New York

The Reverend and Mrs. Ralph E. Smeltzer, who have been the directors of the Hostel, have "relocated" to Elgin, Illinois, where Mr. Smeltzer will direct the work of resettlement for the Church of the Brethren.

The new directors are Dr. and Mrs. Eldon Burke, who supervised a hostel in Philadelphia. Mr. and Mrs. Jisaburo Kasai are the house parents, Miss Midori Satomi, Hostel secretary.

Now Available

Copies of the Report of the Resettlement Workers' Conference held in Chicago, June 6 - 7, 1944, can be obtained at nominal cost. Write to:

Shunji Forrest Nishi, Field Counsellor
The Cleveland Church Federation
1010 Hippodrome Building, Cleveland 14, Ohio

RESETTLEMENT BULLETIN, published monthly, George E. Rundquist, Editor
by the

COMMITTEE ON RESETTLEMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

Sponsored Jointly by

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

The Home Missions Council of North America

in cooperation with

The Foreign Missions Conference of North America

297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

10¢ per copy: