

An Unusual Ordination Service

Another unusual thing has happened in California. On June 11, 1942 there assembled an ecclesiastical council of Congregational churches and ministers at San Juan Assembly center at the San Juan Race track near San Bruno just south of San Francisco. This council was called cooperatively by the Independent Japanese Congregational Church of Oakland, then in exile at San Juan, the Rev. Norio Ozaki, minister, and the Plymouth Congregational Church of Oakland, the of which the writer is the minister.

The purpose of this council was to examine and ordain Mr. George Aki, member of the Independent church and Mr. Masayoshi Wakai, member of Plymouth church. Both of these young men had recently received their B. D. degrees, ^{in divinity} from the Pacific School of Religion since they had been evacuated before commencement day.

Eleven churches and four individuals responded to the roll call. Dr. Clarence Reedtback of First Church, Oakland, read the letter mission. Dr. Herman F. Swartz, Pres. Emuley

of the Pacific School of Religion was elected
permanent moderator. Mr. Eugene Sill,
student minister at the Ocean View Church
in San Francisco was elected scribe.

It having been determined unanimously
to proceed with the ordination Dr. Swartz
called the people together with the following
words:

The sermon was delivered by Dr. Clarence
Reidertack on the subject "The Function of the Church
in a World at War."

The following is the ordination prayer
uttered by Prof. James Reidertack while
~~minister~~ both caucasian and negro ministers,
several of the latter representing other denominations,
participated in the saying of the words.
~~at the conclusion of the prayer~~

at the conclusion of the prayer Petty Officer
Lloyd Hanson, tenor soloist at Plymouth church,
sang Mallothes' arrangement of "The Lord's Prayer".

Dr. Percival Parker of North Church Buxley
gave the following charge to the candidates:

Two persons spoke to the Christians of San Francisco.
Rev. Masamoto Nishimura spoke in Japanese
in this manner:

Rw. Donald Gaylord, speaking in English
concluded his address with these words:

The minister at Plymouth extended the right hand of fellowship with these words:

The Church reaches through the fence and past the sentries to take hold of the hands of your people. This handshake is it.

Partnership - pledged cooperation.

Companionship - Retirement fund.
^{in same way.} The whole congregation for economic
 Brotherhood a fraternity is now behind you.

in which, fundamentally
 is built made of one blood all nations of men.

Symbol of Handclasp. The church reaches through the force
 and past the surface to take hold of the
 hand for your people.
 This handclasp is a symbol of the

~~is an~~ ^{is an} open challenge by the church of Christ
~~against~~ the racial bigotry, ~~at~~ prejudice, and fear
 which set one racial stock against another,
 one above the other. It is an open challenge
 by the church of Christ ~~against~~ that spirit,
 fanned by the flames of war which, condemns
 like old maids gossip, berminches the honor
 and loyalty of men without by whispering
 and without that. It is an open challenge
 by the church of Christ of those economic,
 political and spiritual forces which are
 tearing this fair earth into bloody shreds and
~~making~~ we pit the might of the church
 - against the disintegration of
 social order. This handclasp is a symbol

of the fact that the Christian Church reaching
 across all racial, national, cultural
 barriers ^{right in the midst of war} holds the world together. All the
 fear, enmity, ^{conscience} treachery, ^{poisonous} prejudice, ^{poisonous} self-interest,
 threatenings, ^{poisonous} accusation, ^{poisonous} 'death' cannot
 break this hand clasp. Only one thing
 can ~~so~~ break it. Disloyalty, ~~to Christ~~
 either by word or deed, to Christ.

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Am closing the service. Rev. George Abi
lead in the following prayer

and Rev. Masayuki Wabai pronounced
the benediction.

Others who participated in the service were
Rev. Nairo Ozeki, and Dr. Holland Burr of Piedmont
community church.

In the midst of war two churches, one Japanese
and the other mainly caucasian, united in calling
a council to meet in a mess hall, ~~the usual~~
~~place of worship for Protestant christians in the~~
~~center~~, in a concentration camp, ^{family a race track,} two within
two young men, both of Japanese ancestry, one
an alien, the other an American citizen,
going to and from the service members of
the council had to be checked in and
out by soldiers and as we went to our
homes we waved good bye to our friends through
the barbed wire fence.

The churches which convened
the council were

First Congregational church,	San Mateo
First Con	San Carlos
"	Campbell
"	San Jose
"	San Francisco
Ocean View
Grace United
First Congregational ..	Bubaly
North
First	Oakland

Four Japanese churches at San Fran
were invited. Only one, the Free Methodist,
of Bubaly was represented at
the examinations. But all
were present and participated
in the dedication service.

June, 11, 1942.
Closing Prayer for
Ordination Service.

Almighty and most Merciful Father,
whose power and whose love eternally work
together for the protection of Thy children,
we thank Thee for the grace of this day. We
are sincerely thankful for the experiences
of this Day, and for the personalities who
have come here to enlarge the ministry.
Those loved ones, who physically were not
able to come here on this occasion, we
ask Thy guidance and speciall blessings.

From this Day on, let us not refuse Thy
leading or quench this light which Thou
hast kindled within us, but rather let us
daily grow in grace and in the knowledge
of our Lord and Master.

We beseech Thee to make over our souls
to Thy keeping for we pledge our lives to
Thy service. May the days ahead be days
of obedience and of charity, happiness and
peace. May all our walks and conversations
be such as becometh the gospel of Christ.
Fence round our lives with a rampart of pure
aspirations, and let X be formed in our
hearts thru Faith. We beseech Thee to make
us wise to see all things under the form of
eternity, and make us brave to face all the
changes in our lives which such a vision may
entail: Thru the grace of X our Saviour, Amen

O Thou Eternal Love⁶ that abideth forever and ever beyond our broken years, Thou Fountain Light of all our seeing, Lord of history and Disposer of the destinies of men, Thou hast been to us a help in ages past, Thou art our Hope for yrs. to come. Thou art the Eternal Presence that can never turn to absence, even though we turn from Thee in forgetfulness. This day we wait before Thee in behalf of George and Masoyoshi whose calling^{and} ordination to the ^{ministry} gospel of Christ we would this day celebrate together

For all those men and women standing in the hinterland of living memory who have led these Thy children to this hr. of self-dedication and commitment, we praise Thee, for fathers and mothers, for faithful pastors and devoted teachers, for leaders in student conferences and the inspiration beside the silent evening sea "just as the last fires of sunset burned", for fellows with whom they labored for the coming of Thy kingdom, O God of our Fathers and our fathers' God we bless Thee.

For the riches ^{abundant} ~~with~~ wh. Thou hast endowed these sons of thine we rejoice: for serenity and confidence amid trying hours, for steadiness and patience amidst ^{our} the reeling times, for that inner wisdom that doth not cry aloud nor cause its voice to be heard in the street, for the way in wh. they have put their hand to the plough without ever a look backwards, for their ~~knowledge~~ employmt of knowl. as an instru. for the

growth of Thy Kingdom - for all these do we bow before Thee in grateful recognition.

Father of ^{us} all men, we pray that Thy Spirit may brest upon these men, a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Upon them both may there descend the prophetic mantle of Elijah, so ~~that~~ that their hearts may be aflame with justice for the needy and the disinherited, their courage steeled by the conviction that they speak for Thee, their faith stirred by constant listening to Thy voice. Grant them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, a sense of personal dignity, a deep awareness of the mng of their calling, meekness of bearing, compassion of heart, simplicity of speech, singleness of purpose. Let that mind be in them wh. was also in ~~Christ Jesus. our Lord.~~ May they lift their eyes to the hills in hours of discouragement and boredom. When the forces of man overwhelm them, open Thou their eyes to see God's flaming chariots of fire.

O God, who hast commissioned all those ~~the~~ who would be Thy servants to be burden-bearers, make these shoulders strong to bear the burdens of others. Grant them the grace of laughter and the joy of music. Restrain them from self-pity. Equip them with such forgetfulness of self and such concern for others that the vast ranges of Christian ^{faith} may be their own precious reality. Reveal to them the revelation of Thyself in Script. Give them the spirit of prayer.

May they hold the lamp of a serene and steady faith before the wavering and cynical, extend the cup of living water to all weary and thirsting souls, give the bread of life to all who hunger and faint. In a world of misunderstanding and bitterness, grant them we beseech Thee if it be Thy will, sweet charity, charitableness and peace of mind. Bless them with the consciousness ~~of the~~ of the solidarity and unity of all Christian men, open to them afresh the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Almighty and everlasting God, in this hr. we would commend George and Masoyoshi into Thy hands That they may be led and inspired of Thee. Be Thou to them a refuge and strength a very present help in time of trouble. So lead them that when the road ends they may reach forth anew for the grasp of Thy hand

~~upon their hands~~
their
Fill thou ~~our~~ hearts with faith like theirs
Who served the days they could not see,
And give us grace through ampler years,
To build the kingdom yet to be.