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Responses to the Incarceration of Nikkei Among Churches of Christ in America

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ABSTRACT

During World War II (WWII), the United States of America relocated and incarcerated thousands of people of Japanese descent, also known as *Nikkei*, living in the western United States. Some of these incarcerated *Nikkei* were Japanese nationals, but the majority were American citizens. Most white Americans said and did very little to oppose the incarceration or to aid incarcerated *Nikkei,* and American Christians were no exception. This study examines how one Christian group, Churches of Christ, responded to the incarceration in light of this group's theological character.

While the responses of members of Churches of Christ to the incarceration are not categorically different from the responses of other white American Christians, this study shows how several theological characteristics of Churches of Christ shaped the movement's responses. The congregational polity, particular emphasis on Christian unity, and belief in the church as a millennial society combined with the prevalence of white supremacy within the movement to affect the movement's responses. This study looks at both public responses, which are seen as representative of the movement as a whole, and private responses, which represent the speech and actions of individuals. The relevant theological characteristics led many in the movement to not respond at all to the incarceration and shaped the words and actions of those who did respond.

Responses to the Incarceration of *Nikkei* Among Churches of Christ in America

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To my wife, Emily, who constantly gave me love, encouragement, and support.

Without you this project would never have been finished.

To my daughter, Elanor, who constantly brought me books to read to you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Focus

During World War II (WWII), the United States of America developed a policy resulting in the mass relocation and incarceration of people of Japanese descent, also known as *Nikkei*, living in the western United States. Displaced *Nikkei* were forced to abandon their homes, property, jobs, and even families as they were sent to Relocation Camps scattered across rural America, which would become their homes for several months or years. Some of these incarcerated *Nikkei* were Japanese nationals, but the majority were American citizens.

Echoing the response of most Americans, the majority of white American Christians, in the words of historian Mark Noll, "maintained a shameful silence" regarding the incarceration.[1] With a few notable exceptions, white American Christians turned a blind eye to the injustice perpetrated against thousands of people of Japanese descent, many of them Christians. In this thesis, I describe and analyze the responses to these events among Churches of Christ in America in light of the theological identity of Churches of Christ.

1. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 437.

Methodology

I examine responses among members of Churches of Christ to the incarceration of *Nikkei* during WWII in light of several key theological characteristics of Churches of Christ. Several studies have analyzed the responses of American Christians, but little research has attempted to contextualize these responses for particular denominations or faith traditions.[2] While much is learned from looking broadly at Christian responses, combining all American Christians into one category ignores the reality that each group's particular theology and history influenced its specific actions. Churches of Christ responded to the incarceration in much the same way as most American Christians did, offering little in the way of aid or support. Similar responses, however, do not necessarily indicate identical reasoning, and I show that several key theological characteristics of Churches of Christ influenced the responses among the movement. To accomplish this goal, I describe several fundamental theological characteristics of the movement's identity, then show how responses to the incarceration within the movement are tied to these characteristics.

2. Major studies analyzing the responses of American Christians broadly: Anne M. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice: A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans* (New York: Friendship Press, 1946); David K. Yoo, "Growing Up Nissei: Second-Generation Japanese Americans of California, 1924–45," (PhD diss., Yale University, 1994); Lester E. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II* (Berkeley, CA: Yardbird Publishing, 1979). Beth Shalom Hessel, "Let the Conscience of Christian America Speak: Religion and Empire in the Incarceration of Japanese Americans, 1941–1945," (PhD diss., University of California, 2015); Grant John Magiya, "Japanese-Americans and the Christian Church: The Struggle for Identity and Existence" (DMin diss., Claremont School of Theology, 1978). Studies that offer analysis from a particular denominational perspective: Joanna Bowen Gillispie, "Japanese-American Episcopalians During World War II: The Congregation of St. Mary's Los Angeles, 1941–1945," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 69.2 (June 2000); Sandra C. Taylor, "Fellow-Feelers with the Afflicted: The Christian Churches and the Relocation of Japanese During World War II," in Roger Daniels et al., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 123–29.

In chapter one, I offer a general overview of the incarceration of *Nikkei* during WWII to provide the necessary historical context for this study. I briefly explain the events that led up to the American decision to incarcerate *Nikkei* before describing the events and circumstances of the incarceration itself, including a brief look at post-war determinations by the American government regarding the incarceration's legality. Next, I describe responses by American Christians in general, focusing specifically on the aid offered to *Nikkei* in the camps by several Protestant organizations. These responses provide the necessary context for understanding the particular responses of Churches of Christ. In this chapter, I rely heavily on secondary sources, especially the few major studies that have analyzed the American church's responses to the incarceration, as I am not able to offer a comprehensive overview of the incarceration.

In chapter two, I describe the four theological characteristics of Churches of Christ that I use to analyze responses within the movement, offering historical and theological background for each of these characteristics and examples of how they manifested themselves in other places in the movement's history. Theological, social, and political factors beyond these characteristics certainly influenced responses to the incarceration, and not every particular response flowed directly out of these characteristics. As I show, however, these characteristics were fundamental to the identity of Churches of Christ in this period and played a significant role in their responses to the incarceration. By identifying these four characteristics, I hope to show how several fundamental pieces of the movement's identity manifested in a particular historical situation.

In chapters three and four, I offer the bulk of my analysis about specific responses to the incarceration. Chapter three focuses on public responses by institutions and leaders

within the movement. This chapter is limited to publicly accessible responses from the period of the incarceration (1942–1945) because I intend to identify the ways leaders in Churches of Christ attempted to influence the broader movement while the incarceration was happening. Data gathered from later dates are intended to provide information about the responses from the time of the incarceration. These publicly accessible responses are found primarily in religious journals but also include public statements by members of Churches of Christ and documents relating to the movement's colleges, especially lectureship records and school newspapers.

Chapter four focuses on individual, localized responses that may not have influenced the movement as a whole. These responses are found in archival documents, private papers, and information that was made public after the war. These responses reveal the ways that members of Churches of Christ acted as individuals, sometimes apart from the movement's institutions. Dividing the responses between public and individual responses raises questions about how much an individual's actions are privately motivated and how much they result from the influence of institutions to which they belong, such as their religious affiliation. I do not thoroughly address those questions, but I show why dividing the responses in this way is significant for understanding the responses among members of Churches of Christ due to their polity and theological makeup. I conclude by making some brief observations about the relationship between public and private responses and how this study contributes to our understanding of the history of Churches of Christ in the twentieth century.

The primary limitation of this study is the availability of records of how members of Churches of Christ responded to the incarceration. While several congregations that

existed near the incarceration camps during the war still exist today, none of these congregations have retained any record of ministry within the camps, even though outside sources attest to these congregations' involvement with *Nikkei*[3]. The hole in congregational records is tied to the movement's free-church identity but also suggests the possibility that local congregations were more involved in ministering to incarcerated *Nikkei* than is known. No leaders in the movement attempted to make broad statements in response to the incarceration on behalf of Churches of Christ as a whole, meaning my claims about the movement's response are based on generalizations rooted in the movement's character. I attempt to overcome these limitations by using the lack of records to highlight particular elements of the movement's character and avoiding unsupported assertions.

3. Despite attempts to gather data from congregations which existed near incarceration camps during WWII, I was unable to find any record or memory of ministry within the camp beyond that which is recorded here, which comes from a congregation that no longer meets in Granada, CO.

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF THE INCARCERATION OF *NIKKEI* DURING WWII

Background to Japanese American Incarceration

From the early seventeenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, Japan maintained policies of isolation and excluded foreign trading, with a few exceptions. However, following the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry from the United States of America and the Convention of Kanagawa in the 1850s, Japan began to develop economic and political ties with western nations. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japanese immigration to the western United States steadily increased, especially after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 created a labor shortage in California and other Pacific coastal states.[1] As the *Nikkei* population grew in these Pacific states, so did anti-Japanese sentiment among white Americans, leading to the formation of groups and organizations which perpetuated racist stereotypes of Asians in general and Japanese immigrants in particular.[2] Some of these groups argued that Asian people were more prone to drug use or violence and that an increasing Asian population in the United States would "mongrelize" and "weaken" white, Aryan families.[3]

1. Linda L. Ivey and Kevin W. Kaatz, *Citizen Internees: A Second Look at Race and Citizenship in Japanese American Internment Camps* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2017), 18–19.

2. Ivey and Kaatz, *Citizen Internees,* 18–25.

3. Ivey and Kaatz, *Citizen Internees,* 22–24.

Bias against *Nikkei* was formalized in several ways. The Naturalization Act of 1870 prevented anyone who was not white or of African descent from becoming a naturalized citizen, and a series of Alien Land Laws prevented *Nikkei* and other Asian immigrants from purchasing land in California and other Pacific states.[4] Some Americans felt as though the western states were not doing enough to prevent immigration from Japan and China, however, leading to the passing of the Immigration Act of 1924, which set quotas for European immigration and effectively ended immigration from Asia altogether.[5]

As tensions between the U.S. and Japan grew in the 1930s, several federal agencies surveyed Japanese American communities to identify potential threats to America's national security. Most agreed that the Japanese American community posed little threat to the U.S., but they formed lists of *Nikkei* who should be detained if war broke out between the U.S. and Japan. These lists were headlined by leaders in Japanese nationalistic societies but included other leaders and top participants in the Japanese American community, including some religious leaders.[6]

Nikkei Christians were not immune to this racial bias, as remembered by John H. M. Yamazaki, son of the founding pastor of the Japanese ethnic church St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Los Angeles. Yamazaki recalls making trips with his brother as a teenager in the 1920s and 30s to "remove the posters claiming property values would

4. Ivey and Kaatz, *Citizen Internees,* 25.

5. Stephanie Hinnershitz, "Demanding an 'Adequate Solution:' the American Legion, the Immigration Act of 1924, and the Politics of Exclusion," *Immigrants & Minorities,* 34.1 (2016): 1–21.

6. Tetsuden Kashima, "Custodial Detention: A-B-C List." *Densho Encyclopedia.*

plummet if St. Mary's was allowed to build a new multi-use parish hall."[7] In November 1941 an article was published in an Episcopalian periodical about the St. Mary's congregation with the opening line "California's unique and perennial problem is the Japanese."[8] The article praised John Yamazaki (John H. M.'s father) as a success story among the immigrant population but was also colored by ethnic bias. This bias would only increase following the Japanese attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941.

Executive Order 9066 and the Incarceration of *Nikkei*

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order (EO) 9066 authorizing the Secretary of War and any military commanders he designated to create "military areas . . . from which any or all persons may be excluded."[9] While the order does not specifically mention Japanese Americans or mention what would happen to them after removal, it led to the removal of over 100,000 *Nikkei* living on the west coast to concentration camps in rural America.[10] As made clear in post-war investigations, this order was related more to public and political pressure, including that created by the anti-Japanese sentiment described above, than it was to "military necessity" as was originally claimed.[11] The fact that "much of the opposition to the U.S.

7. Joanna Bowen Gillispie, "Japanese-American Episcopalians During World War II: The Congregation of St. Mary's Los Angeles, 1941–1945," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 69.2 (June 2000): 136.

8. Reynold E. Blight, "Where East Meets West," *The Living Church* (November 26, 1941): 18–19.

9. "Executive Order 9066," February 19, 1942, General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11, National Archives.

10. Samuel Walker, *Presidents and Civil Liberties from Wilson to Obama: A Story of Poor Custodians* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 87.

11. Walker, *Presidents and Civil Liberties,* 82–84.

policy came from pacifists and socialists, as well as from missionaries who had returned from Japan" limited the influence of dissenting voices.[12]

On March 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed EO 9102 establishing the War Relocation Authority (WRA), which became responsible for caring for the *Nikkei* removed from the west coast by EO 9066. Following public outcry about former west-coast Japanese moving to inland communities, "voluntary evacuation" was prohibited in favor of government-controlled evacuation and relocation.[13] The WRA and Wartime Civil Control Administration began sending relocated *Nikkei* to "assembly centers," which were constructed in locations such as racetracks and fairgrounds until more permanent facilities were established. The largest of these was established at the Santa Anita Race Track and housed almost 20,000 *Nikkei,* many of whom lived in horse stables and used straw to stuff their mattresses.[14] Forced to leave behind their property, businesses, and families, incarcerated *Nikkei* were then sent to ten "camps" in the inland United States: in California, Idaho, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Arkansas.

The WRA camps were built from the ground up and included simple barracks for incarcerated families, barbed wire fences and guard towers around the perimeters, public bathrooms, dining halls, and laundry facilities. Schools and libraries were not included in the initial designs of these camps but would eventually become a large focus of the WRA's efforts to support community life.[15] The camps were generally unfinished when

12. Robert Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment: Defending Japanese American Rights During World War II," *The Historian* 61.3 (1999): 598.

13. Greg Robinson, "War Relocation Authority," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

14. John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 14.

15. Robinson, "War Relocation Authority," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

Nikkei began to arrive, and many families were forced to help finish construction on their barracks as well as other facilities in the camp.[16]

Within these camps, the WRA established policies preserving the "Freedom of Religion," allowing Protestants, Catholics, Buddhists, and others to continue their worship while incarcerated. As many as a quarter of the *Nikkei* in some west coast communities identified as Christians, and many others practiced Buddhism.[17] A 1942 WRA survey found that 32,131 incarcerated *Nikkei* were Protestants, and 2,199 were Catholics, meaning that almost 31 percent of the 111,170 surveyed *Nikkei* claimed Christianity.[18] Buddhism remained the dominant religion, making up 54 percent of the incarcerated population.[19] The small religious sects known as *Tenrikyo* and *Seicho-No-Iye* made up very small minorities, and almost 15,000 incarcerated *Nikkei* chose not to identify with any religious group.

Most *Nikkei* who were Christians had encountered the faith in America, and many of them associated Christianity with America and Buddhism with Japan. Some parents who remained practicing Buddhists encouraged their children to attend church to help them assimilate into American society.[20] This association of Christianity with America

16. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (New York: Laurel Leaf, 1973), 23–25.

17. Anne M. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 7.

18. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People—A Quantitative Description* (Washington, DC, 1942), 79.

19. Gary Y. Okihiro argues that the prominence of Buddhism and other "ethnic religious beliefs" grew in the camps as part of a cultural-ethnic resistance against the 'Americanization' policies of the WRA. Gary Y. Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance in America's Concentration Camps," *Phylon* 45.3 (1984): 220–33.

20. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 6–9. Ryo Yoshida argues that for Japanese American Christians in California, Christianity was ultimately not a helpful tool for assimilating into American society, primarily because white Americans "failed to live by Christian principles" such as "brotherhood

was not unique to camp life. Prior to WWII, some Japanese ethnic congregations regularly hosted "Christian Americanization" programs, with age-based programming such as the Boy Scouts, youth sports programs, and adult courses in patriotism.[21]

Post-War Responses by the American Government

While this project focuses primarily on responses from Pearl Harbor until the closure of incarceration camps, the attempts at redress and reparations for *Nikkei* are important for placing this study in its proper context. Inspired by civil rights activism in the 1960s, the "redress movement" of the 1970s culminated in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided an official apology and financial payments to surviving incarcerees.[22] This movement and resulting legislation have helped to frame the subsequent historiography in the area.

Nikkei on the west coast began to strongly advocate for some form of compensation for the incarceration in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These advocates occasionally used the word "reparations" to refer to this compensation, but eventually settled on the word "redress" because it was seen as less demanding or controversial.[23] Beginning in 1970, the Japanese American Citizens League passed several resolutions calling for federal legislation to provide this redress. These resolutions included a

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and sisterhood under God." Ryo Yoshida, "A Socio-Historical Study of Racial/Ethnic Identity in the Inculturated Religious Expression of Japanese Christianity in San Francisco 1877–1924 (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1989), 350.

21. Gillespie, "Japanese-American Episcopalians," 137.

22. Alice Yang, "Redress Movement," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

23. Roger Daniels et al. *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991): 188.

proposal that "each individual or heir who suffered from the mass incarceration" should receive $25,000.[24]

In response to these suggestions from *Nikkei* leaders, the United States Congress created the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) in 1980, which eventually published *Personal Justice Denied,* a 467-page report about EO 9066 and the incarceration. This report ultimately concluded that EO 9066 "was not justified by military necessity" but resulted from "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."[25] Stated plainly, *Personal Justice Denied* claims that "A grave injustice was done to American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry who, without individual review or any probative evidence against them, were excluded, removed and detained by the United States during World War II."[26] The CWRIC recommended five action steps to achieve redress for *Nikkei:*[27]

1. That Congress pass a resolution, signed by the president, apologizing for the incarceration.
2. That the President extend pardons to anyone convicted of violating incarceration-related laws.

24. Daniels et al., *Japanese Americans,* 189.

25. United States. *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Washington, DC: The Commission, 1983), 18. The CWRIC was tasked with evaluating the case of all people in America who were detained due to the war, including people of German and Italian ancestry and Native Aleut people living in Alaska. *Personal Justice Denied* also addresses these people groups, but this project does not.

26. United States, *Personal Justice Denied,* 18.

27. United States, *Personal Justice Denied,* 8–10.

3. That Congress give special attention to applications "for the restitution of positions, status, or entitlements lost" due to the incarceration and related events, such as those who lost government aid or veteran status.
4. That Congress allocate funding for a foundation to educate and inform people about the incarceration.
5. That Congress establish a fund out of which to pay $20,000 to all surviving incarcerees.

These five recommendations were generally approved, except for the two that required significant financial investment on the part of the United States government. President Ronald Reagan's administration and fiscal conservatives in Congress opposed any financial redress, but all five recommendations were ultimately passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives in 1988. Ronald Reagan, despite his previous opposition, reversed his position and signed the bill into law on August 10, 1988.[28] Surviving victims of the incarceration began receiving redress payments in 1990.

The U.S. government's official apology and redress are important for this study for two reasons. First, they represent a significant form of "response to the incarceration" that both apologizes and makes amends for injustice. Second, the official position that the incarceration was an unjust mistake allows historians to move beyond debates over moral or legal justifications for the incarceration. As Linda Ivey and Kevin Kaatz argue, historians are no longer required to ask the question "Was the incarceration right or wrong?" but can now ask questions such as "How or why did it happen?" or "How did

28. Roger Daniels, "Redress Achieved, 1983–1990" in Daniels et al., *Japanese Americans,* 222.

certain groups respond to or participate in it?"[29] In this project, I do not argue that the incarceration is just or unjust. Instead, I assume that the incarceration was unjust, following the official stance of the U.S. government, and seek to explain why members and leaders in Churches of Christ responded the way that they did to this injustice.

Responses of White Christians in America

While some white liberal, left-wing, African American, and religious groups outspokenly opposed the removal and incarceration of *Nikkei,* the majority of Americans, including Christians, were silent on the issue.[30] Certain segments of the white Christian population in America were very active in aiding incarcerated *Nikkei*, especially those with a large presence on the west coast at the time of the war, those with robust infrastructures through which to organize aid efforts, and those with close ties to Japanese mission efforts. Historic peace churches, especially the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), were extremely involved in advocating for the rights of *Nikkei* through the legal system, while Protestant and Catholic groups focused on providing religious services for their incarcerated members and resettling them elsewhere in the country.

Public Advocacy on Behalf of *Nikkei*

Some Christian groups warned of potential anti-Japanese sentiment in America before the war began, as tensions between Japan and America were growing. Prior to Pearl Harbor, Quaker leaders circulated a letter warning of potential racism if America

29. Ivey and Kaatz, *Citizen Internees,* 3–5. Historians certainly can and do continue to debate the justification of the incarceration, but I here follow Ivey and Kaatz who claim that the U.S. government's official stance opens us up to ask questions beyond simply whether it was a good or bad decision.

30. Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment," 597–98. Notable exceptions are discussed below.

entered a Pacific war.[31] Quakers were among the first religious groups to protest the incarceration, as they "never accepted the excuses of military necessity or the need to protect *Nikkei* from angry mobs."[32] Immediately following Pearl Harbor, Quaker leaders began campaigns to preserve *Nikkei* civil rights through the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Other Christian groups were outspoken before incarceration as well. The Federal Council of Churches, Home Missions Council of North America, and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America issued a joint statement immediately on December 9, 1941, calling on the church to "maintain a Christian composure and charity in their dealings with the Japanese among us."[33]

Of these groups, Quakers most clearly argued that American Christians were guilty of a wrong in the incarceration or were obligated to remedy the situation.[34] One member of the AFSC, *Nikkei* Quaker Gordon Hirabayashi, became one of the very few *Nikkei* to openly defy the incarceration in the American legal system. In 1942, Hirabayashi refused to follow curfew laws restricting *Nikkei* movement, and instead of registering for incarceration, turned himself in to the FBI. Hirabayashi's case rose to the level of the U.S. Supreme Court, which chose to rule only on Hirabayashi's violation of a curfew rather than the incarceration itself. In *Hirabayashi vs. United States,* Hirabayashi's conviction of curfew was upheld as "an emergency war measure," a ruling

31. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 18.

32. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 18.

33. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 27–28.

34. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 56.

which remains a "virtually uncontroverted precedent" for national security measures that target citizens based on race.[35]

Throughout the legal process and prosecution of his case, Hirabayashi received support from Floyd Schmoe, head of the American Friends Service Committee, and other Quaker leaders.[36] A group of advocates led by the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service (PCJS) an ecumenical Protestant organization formed to aid *Nikkei* during the war, asked General John L. DeWitt, the Western Defense Commander, to hear petitions on behalf of *Nikkei* before they were incarcerated. DeWitt sent Congressman John H. Tolan to hear these petitions, and Christians were the most outspoken advocates for *Nikkei.*[37] Several former missionaries to Japan, including Gordon K. Chapman, Galen Fisher, E. Stanley Jones, Frank Herron Smith, and Charles Iglehart were among the most outspoken advocates of *Nikkei* rights.[38] The former missionaries who spoke out on behalf of *Nikkei* came from Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Disciples of Christ denominations, among others.

Christian leaders who argued against the incarceration through political and legal means generally focused on "empirical data and American values" instead of religious arguments "to prevent accusations that they based their support for *Nikkei* on idealistic, naïve notions of Christian love."[39] Support from the Quakers certainly complicated the

35. Caleb Ward, "Learning from the Past: Using *Korematsu* and Other Japanese Internment Cases to Provide Protections Against Immigration Detentions," *Arkansas Law Review* 73.4 (2020): 845–46.

36. Cherstin Lyon, "Gordon Hirabayashi," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

37. Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice: A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans* (New York: Friendship Press, 1946), 13–14.

38. Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment," 609–13.

39. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 21.

efforts of those defending *Nikkei*, as the Quakers' pacifism was an easy target for pro-incarceration voices. Pacifism was labeled as idealistic and anti-American during a war, undermining the testimony of Bernard Waring and Floyd Schmoe of the AFSC.[40]

Some Christian groups attempted to bring awareness to the plight of incarcerated *Nikkei* through publications. *The Christian Century,* a journal associated with the Disciples of Christ but with a broader audience among mainline Protestant Christians, "took up a crusade" against the incarceration during the war.[41] This crusade fit the general tenor of *The Christian Century,* which was known for taking up causes of social justice.[42] The *Christian Advocate*, the primary journal associated with the Methodist Church in America, published a series of articles describing the situation inside the incarceration camps beginning in October 1942.[43] These articles criticized American incarceration policies, but also praised the fair and humane treatment of *Nikkei* in the camps. Interestingly, these articles also focused explicitly on *Nissei*, or second-generation Japanese immigrants within the camp, rather than also including *Issei*, first-generation immigrants. These articles were written by Clarence W. Hall, a Methodist minister who visited the camps and spoke directly with incarcerated *Nikkei*.

Presbyterian photographer Frederick R. Thorne traveled to document the situation in which *Nikkei* found themselves, with a special focus on Presbyterian mission work

40. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 21–22.

41. John M. Buchanan, "*The Christian Century:* Past, Present, and Future," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 49.2 (Spring 2014): 335.

42. Buchanan, "*The Christian Century,*" 334–36.

43. Clarence W. Hall, "Inside Nisei-America," *CA* 117.44 (October 29, 1942).

within the camps.[44] The photographs that Thorne took were shared with the official Presbyterian denominational body and distributed to various congregations. The Protestant ecumenical organization, the Colorado Council of Churches, published a booklet in 1943 entitled *The Japanese in Our Midst*, which questions the morality of incarcerating *Nikkei* from a Christian perspective.[45] These efforts stand out as some of the few attempts at public advocacy on behalf of incarcerated *Nikkei* from American Christian groups. As Robert Shaffer shows, however, "the pacifism and radicalism of many of these activists made acceptance of their ideas more difficult."[46]

Christian Ministry Within WRA Camps

The PCJS, AFSC, and others who petitioned General DeWitt were ultimately unsuccessful and DeWitt, the primary military voice influencing federal policy and actions on the matter, continued to support incarceration. In the wake of their failure to change American policy, these Christian organizations would pivot their efforts towards offering support to *Nikkei* on the west coast and in incarceration camps. The ministry of these Christians took many forms, but the most noteworthy was the creation of Christian congregations within the camps. Some *Nikkei* Christian leaders, such as those sent to Minidoka, Idaho from the Pullyallup assembly center, began to organize long-term church plans while still in the assembly centers, and Christians at the Tanforan assembly center formed a council to conduct worship, allowing each of the thirteen Protestant

44. Frederick Thorne, "Relocation of Japanese-Americans During the Second World War," Presbyterian Historical Society Website. https://digital.history.pcusa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3Aslides_b34

45. *The Japanese in Our Midst, 1943* (Denver: Colorado Council of Churches, 1943).

46. Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment," 617.

groups represented there to take turns leading the ecumenical worship assembly according to their denomination's traditions and practices.[47] Generally, however, formal congregations were not established until the incarcerated *Nikkei* began to move to the more permanent camps.[48]

In their stated policies, the WRA "recognized" and "respected" "the right of freedom of religious worship," including the right to conduct services in the Japanese language.[49] This commitment to religious freedom did not extend to those who practiced Shinto, which the WRA did not classify as a religion, despite its status as the state religion of Japan.[50] Christianity and Buddhism were the primary religions practiced formally in the relocation camps, though *Seicho-No-Iye,* a non-denominational monotheistic religious movement established in the 1930s also had a presence. The WRA committed to providing meeting space for these religious groups, though the groups themselves were required to furnish them and generally had to set up and take down their meeting spaces after each use because they were shared among various groups.[51] The promise of religious freedom was seemingly intended both as an attempt to protect *Nikkei* civil liberties and as a way of showing white Americans outside the camp that *Nikkei* were good, religious Americans whose liberties were being preserved and protected.[52]

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47. David K. Yoo, "Growing Up Nissei: Second-Generation Japanese Americans of California, 1924–45" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1994), 289–90.

48. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 105–6.

49. United States War Relocation Authority, *Administrative Manual* (Washington, DC. 1943–1945), 30.5.20.

50. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 99. Shinto remained the state religion of Japan until after WWII when post-war treaties required the separation of church and state in Japan.

51. United States War Relocation Authority, *Administrative Manual*, 30.5.23.

52. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 99.

While free religious practice was encouraged, the WRA also established fairly strict policies against proselytizing.[53] Several incidents highlighted the problems of proselytizing, including the Reverend Douglas Noble's "Wayside Chapel," which he used to hold evangelistic revivals and meetings in several camps, causing tension and division among the incarcerated *Nikkei.*[54] Some Christians, including Catholic Thomas Kiernan, argued that evangelism, especially among Japanese Buddhists, would help to "Americanize" the incarcerated *Nikkei.* Kiernan claimed, as did other American Christians, that the attack on Pearl Harbor may never have happened if Christian missions in Japan had been more successful.[55]

The WRA helped establish an "inter-faith Council" in each camp to coordinate with the Chief of Community Management regarding issues of religious practice.[56] *Nikkei* religious workers such as pastors and priests could choose between "regular project work," which every member of the camp was allowed to participate in, and religious work for which they would receive no compensation from the WRA. The WRA did not even provide inter-faith chaplains for the camps, leaving religious and community care up to the incarcerated *Nikkei* and outside religious groups.

Each congregation or denomination was responsible for financially supporting any *Nikkei* religious workers who were devoting their full time to pastoral care and ministry within the camps. This policy essentially discriminated against congregational or

53. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 103.

54. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 62–63.

55. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 103.

56. United States War Relocation Authority. *Administrative Manual*, 30.5.21.

non-denominational groups who lacked a logistic and financial structure with which to support pastors. Incarcerated *Nikkei* were generally unable to financially support pastors without outside assistance due to the low wages they received for work in the camps. The in-camp income was set at a maximum of $12 per month for "unskilled" work and $19 per month for "professional" work.[57] Furthermore, the WRA refused to provide a clothing allowance to the families of religious workers whose denominations paid them more than $19 a month, leading ecumenical religious leaders to set the pay of all *Nikkei* religious leaders at $19 a month, making their salaries lower than they would have been making previously, and significantly lower than those of white workers within the camps.[58]

The WRA also established a policy for the recruitment of white religious workers from outside the camps. These workers were not permitted to reside within the camps and were required to receive a permit to conduct religious work within the camp, approved by both the camp director and the inter-faith council.[59] Catholic leaders argued that these policies were unfair to Catholics because no Japanese American Catholic priests resided within the camps, while Protestant and Buddhist *Nikkei* religious leaders did. At least one Catholic priest, Leopold Tibesar, "squatted" in a barrack in Minidoka, Idaho, and that camp's director Harry Stafford essentially looked the other way to allow him to continue

57. Howard, *Concentration Camps,* 73.

58. Robinson, "War Relocation Authority," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

59. United States War Relocation Authority, *Administrative Manual,* 30.5.22–25

to minister within the camp.[60] Most white ministers who worked within the camps lived near the camps and traveled into them to conduct their ministry.

Protestant Commission for Japanese Service

In an effort to coordinate Protestant worship within the camps, the Federal Council of Churches and the Home Missions Council founded an ecumenical organization known as the Protestant Commission for Japanese Service (PCJS). Gordon Chapman, a Presbyterian minister with experience as a missionary in Japan was tapped to head up the commission. The PCJS helped each camp establish an ecumenical, Protestant church, though they looked different in each camp. The PCJS worked closely with the WRA to establish guidelines for religious freedom within the camps, and the two organizations generally supported one another in their policies and procedures.

The cooperation between the PCJS and the WRA led to some tension between Protestant clergy in the camps and other *Nikkei.* Many members of the clergy helped to translate WRA documents, including the infamous 1943 loyalty questionnaire, to the distaste of other camp residents. Several clergy members, including Episcopal priest John Yamazaki, were beaten because they cooperated with government authorities.[61]

While some *Nikkei* ecumenical groups endorsed the authority of the PCJS over worship in the camps, most *Nikkei* pastors were never truly asked whether they wanted

60. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 102.

61. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 140. Lester E. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II* (Berkeley, CA: Yardbird Publishing, 1979)*,* 335. The misguided "loyalty questionnaire" famously asked incarcerees whether they would serve in the U.S. armed forces and forswear allegiance to Japan, putting many, especially those without American citizenship, in a very difficult position.

help from an ecumenical church leadership group.[62] Some *Nikkei* leaders established ecumenical worship practices before white missionaries sent from the PCJS arrived to work in the camps. Gordon Chapman worked to connect white ministers, generally former missionaries to Japan, with camp churches.[63] White missionaries under the direction of the PCJS also worked for the WRA to screen Japanese reading materials entering the camps to ensure that these materials were "American" and would not incite Japanese nationalism within the camps.

The PCJS seemed to use worship within the camps as an opportunity to pursue ecumenical goals. The camps gave ecumenists the chance to create new, ecumenical congregations, which seemed even more desirable to many than simply combining churches of multiple denominations.[64] While these ecumenical goals may have been well-intended, they also provide an example of how the camp setting forced *Nikkei* into new, unfamiliar experiences. Rather than retaining the beliefs, practices, and communities with which they were most familiar, *Nikkei* Christians were forced to adapt to a new church with unfamiliar practices and traditions. While some *Nikkei* Christians, especially clergy, actively supported the ideals of ecumenism, others were less enthusiastic or saw no purpose to ecumenical worship beyond pragmatism or necessity.[65]

In many ways, this removal of denominational boundaries among congregations within the camps was similar to the creation of denominational boundaries among

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62. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 61.

63. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 61.

64. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 60.

65. Anne M. Blankenship, "Foundations for a New World Order: Uniting Protestant Worship during the World War II Japanese American Incarceration, *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 72.3 (2018): 308–9.

Japanese Christians prior to the war. In both instances, the perspectives of white American missionaries superseded those of their Japanese brethren. In both the earliest American Christian missions to Japan and the white missions to Japanese American communities on the west coast, missionaries generally guided Japanese Christians along pre-established denominational lines, whether or not those denominational theories and structures made sense in the Japanese cultural context.[66] Many of the early converts to Christianity in Japan following the first American missions were generally uninterested in American denominational dogma and policy and established their religious groups along Japanese cultural lines.[67] Despite this resistance, American missionaries eventually "asserted the hegemony of denominationalism," resulting in the decline of nondenominational churches in Japan, including the first Protestant church in Japan, the Nihon Kirisuto Kokai in Yokohama, Japan.[68]

Some *Nikkei* Christians, including leaders, were unfamiliar with the kind of ecumenism that many white Protestant leaders imagined. For many *Nikkei*, ecumenicism simply meant the practice of Christians of different denominations worshipping in the same building.[69] Some saw ecumenism as simply a wartime necessity, never losing their identity as members of their particular denominations. Others, such as Andrew Kuroda in the Tule Lake Union Church, truly believed in the principles of ecumenism. Kuroda had

66. Yoshida, "A Socio-Historical Study," 356–57.

67. Yoshida, "A Socio-Historical Study," 38–40. In the early twentieth century, a significant movement arose in Japan to overcome Western denominationalism. This movement can be seen most clearly in the work of Kanzo Uchimura and the Non-Church movement, which emphasized independence, autonomy, and individual faith apart from an institutional church. See Akio Dohi, "Historical Development of the Non-Church Movement in Japan," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 2.3 (Fall 1965): 452–68.

68. Yoshida, "A Socio-Historical Study," 42–45.

69. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 111.

been the pastor of an ecumenical church in Oregon and attempted to emphasize the fact that ecumenism was an active choice, not simply a necessity while in camps. Kuroda hoped that his ministry would cause members of the Tule Lake church to spread ecumenical principles to the churches they would become members of after the war.[70] While the *Nikkei* in camps voiced few disagreements with PCJS policies of ecumenism, it is difficult to determine how the average congregant felt about the new Christian churches. Many *Nikkei* saw Christianity as a means of integrating into American society and therefore were unlikely to speak out against the white leadership of the PCJS that was encouraging ecumenism.

Catholics in the Camps

While most of the ministry within the camps was conducted by and for Protestants, the Catholic church also had a strong presence, working hard for the religious and civil rights of incarcerated *Nikkei.* Roman Catholic groups were some of the first to work towards resettling *Nikkei* into new communities outside of the camps.[71] Almost as soon as WRA camps opened, some officials began the process of finding *Nikkei* new homes away from the west coast for work, education, or permanent residence.[72] Many *Nikkei* were rightly wary of resettling to new locations given the potential for a hostile and unfamiliar environment. Despite guarantees of jobs and safety, resettled *Nikkei* still faced difficult circumstances, such as when a group of Utah townspeople fired over a

70. Blankenship, "Foundations for a New World Order," 307–9.

71. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 57.

72. Megan Asaka, "Resettlement," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

dozen shots into a Japanese American labor camp.[73] Missionaries and leaders in the Catholic church helped to ensure that Catholic *Nikkei* who were resettled to new parts of the country were connected to religious communities in the areas to which they moved.

The Catholic church's desire to quickly relocate its incarcerated members was likely related to the difficulty the Catholic church faced in establishing fully functioning congregations within the camps due to the lack of any Japanese American priests. Catholics within the camps were forced to work within the WRA system to request the services of priests, a policy that many Catholic leaders strongly opposed. Catholic leaders argued that Catholic priests and bishops alone should have authority over the Catholic worship, and therefore disliked WRA policies which required those incarcerated in camps to choose their pastors.[74] Some priests adhered to WRA guidelines, while others refused, but WRA administrators at times turned a blind eye, allowing priests to serve *Nikkei* in the camps regardless of WRA guidelines.[75] The Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, generally known as the Maryknoll Missionaries, was especially invested in caring for the needs of Catholics and others within WRA camps.

Practices of Protestant Christian Church

Each camp's Protestant congregation functioned autonomously, though the PCJS provided some continuity by ensuring these congregations followed approved ecumenical practices, were financially supported, and adhered to relevant WRA policies. Camp churches established church constitutions, which often adopted the Apostles' Creed as

73. Asaka, "Resettlement," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

74. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 100–101.

75. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 101–2.

their founding creed, baptism and the Lord's Supper as their sacraments, and required that members "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior."[76] The Protestant congregations generally held Sunday morning meetings, but also held several other meetings throughout the week, including Sunday School, youth meetings, English and Japanese services, and Saturday evening services.

Meeting times were scheduled in conjunction with Buddhist, Catholic, and other groups who used the same spaces. The WRA stated that they would provide the materials necessary for constructing church buildings because none had been built when the camps were first established. In the early days, resources were focused on higher priority facilities such as schools or bathrooms, and by the time the WRA was ready to build church facilities, relocation had already begun, and there was enough empty barracks space to house any religious groups that needed more room. Otherwise, church services were often held in community buildings, mess halls, or school facilities. Poor administrative communication meant that these facilities were sometimes double-booked or closed and locked at the scheduled meeting time of church groups.[77] In many of the camps, different religious groups were scheduled for some meeting or event every hour of the day on Sunday, and many other times of the week as well.[78]

The primary leaders in the ecumenical camp congregations were *Nikkei* pastors, many of whom had traveled with many members of their congregations from their homes, to the assembly centers, and finally to the WRA camps. Soon after the camps

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76. "Constitution of the Granada Christian Church," in Granada Christian Church, Miscellaneous 1942–1945, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library.

77. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers,* 326–27.

78. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers*, 211–311.

opened, white missionaries from the PCJS arrived and began to influence the practices of camp congregations, even though they did not usually hold formal leadership positions. The PCJS instituted a policy that required denominations to certify any ministers that were officially recognized on the board of clergy, but the nature of the camps meant that many untrained ministers conducted services of various kinds.[79]

The Protestant ecumenical congregations in the camps followed typical Protestant worship practices for their worship services including worship through song, Scripture reading, prayers, and sermons. The overall tenor of each camp's worship service was unique. In some camps, where Episcopalians were numerically dominant, more formal liturgies were common. In others that were dominated by Methodist or Baptist *Nikkei,* services were more casual.[80] Across the camps, many church leaders frowned upon highly emotional preaching and worship practices, such as those embraced by Holiness churches.

Overall, the ideal of free speech was upheld in Christian worship services, and clergy were able to preach about whatever they desired, though most preachers avoided talking too much about the injustice of incarceration.[81] The Protestant congregations in each camp also offered a variety of services including English and Japanese worship services, Bible classes, children's and young adult meetings, prayer meetings, sunrise meetings, and others. Many of these meetings included guest speakers such as ministers

79. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers,* 330–31.

80. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 114–17.

81. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers,* 335.

from nearby towns, visiting evangelists, and even representatives from the PCJS such as Gordon K. Chapman and Frank Herron Smith.[82]

Disagreements about the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist produced some tension within these ecumenical congregations. Incarcerees had to choose whether they would practice infant or adult baptism, essentially forcing them to choose which denomination they would affiliate with once they left the camp.[83] Several new Christians were baptized in the camps, or in baptismal services held at nearby churches, which were especially necessary for those who desired baptism by immersion.[84] Several camp congregations required that members must be baptized, which excluded Christians such as Quakers who do not regularly practice baptism, though most provided exceptions in this event.[85] Due to their denomination's teachings regarding the Lord's Supper, incarcerated Episcopalian Christians met separately for a communion service that was presided over by an Anglican priest.[86] Overall, these theological disagreements point to the fact that this attempt at ecumenism was only moderately successful. While camp congregations generally functioned smoothly, most incarcerated Christians continued to operate within denominational structures as a foundation for their faith.

One important element of Christian practice in the camps became the celebration of various holidays including Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. To share "the magic of Christmas" with incarcerated *Nikkei* whose loss of property and low salaries may have

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82. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers,* 217.

83. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 113.

84. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 125–26.

85. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 112.

86. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 116.

prevented an elaborate celebration, Protestant leaders proclaimed Christmas 1942 in the camps "America's Biggest Christmas Party."[87] The PCJS partnered with several religious and secular agencies to seek donations of gifts and money for the camps' Christmas parties, which they received in large amounts. Each following Christmas, the PCJS continued to coordinate deliveries of Christmas gifts from donors across America. These deliveries created some controversy because the PCJS insisted on emphasizing the Christian basis of the holiday while the WRA and other secular agencies encouraged non-religious or interfaith celebrations.[88] Ultimately, the celebration of Christmas in the camps became a blend of religious and secular celebrations that would become a common feature in many American Christmas celebrations in the second half of the twentieth century.[89]

Use of Christianity to "Americanize" Nikkei[90]

The WRA made no secret of its intended goal of "Americanizing" those within the camps. One of their primary goals, as publicized from the earliest days, was to assimilate the incarcerated *Nikkei* "into the normal currents of American life."[91] The fact

87. Beth Shalom Hessel, "Let the Conscience of Christian America Speak: Religion and Empire in the Incarceration of Japanese Americans, 1941–1945" (PhD diss., University of California, 2015), 2.

88. Hessel, "Let the Conscience," 4–6.

89. Hessel, "Let the Conscience," 5. Hessel argues that Christmas celebrations within the camp have provided an interesting dividing line between scholars who believe American Christians provided helpful support to incarcerated *Nikkei* and those who believe the Christmas celebration was a religious practice forced on a captive people.

90. Two-thirds of the incarcerated *Nikkei* were American citizens, and the rest were all legal residents. To speak of "Americanizing" these people who were already American is to assume that some element of their identity was "non-American." Therefore, it must be noted that the language of "Americanization" used by the WRA and others, as well as much contemporary scholarship, refers specifically to assimilating people from the non-dominant culture and heritage into white American society.

91. War Relocation Authority, *Relocation Communities for Wartime Evacuees*, 2.

that two-thirds of the incarcerated population were American citizens did not seem to convince the policy-makers, or the white American public, that these people of Japanese descent were truly "American." Furthermore, Americanization seemed to imply some level of "Anglo-conformity."[92] For many, Anglo-conformity could be described through religion. Many *Nikkei* emphasized their Buddhism while incarcerated as a form of resistance against the WRA's "Americanization" attempts.[93]

On the other hand, some *Nikkei* converted to Christianity after immigrating to America to seem as though they had assimilated into the country. During WWII, other *Nikkei* felt that claiming Christianity was a means of proving their American loyalty thereby providing them with protection.[94] White American leaders generally approved and encouraged this practice, especially targeting Buddhists as potential converts whose commitment to Christianity could prove their loyalty to America.[95] While the WRA officially opposed any forms of evangelism, especially those which specifically targeted Buddhists, it is likely that many incarcerated *Nikkei* looked more favorably upon Christianity in an effort to appear more American, even as others rejected the Christian faith as an act of resistance.

The resettlement period made the "Americanization" goals of the WRA and Protestant leaders even more apparent. The WRA, which had seen its role in the lives of *Nikkei* as temporary, began plans for resettling the incarceration population almost

92. Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance," 222.

93. Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance," 220–33.

94. Okihiro, "Religion and Resistance," 223.

95. Howard, *Concentration Camps,* 165.

immediately following EO 9066. Cities in the Midwest and the eastern United States were chosen as locations for resettling, and some *Nikkei* moved to cities like Chicago or Cleveland almost as soon as they arrived in the concentration camps. Religious groups played a vital role in the resettlement program, with several interdenominational organizations working to establish the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans. This committee published the *Resettlement Bulletin* beginning in April 1943, informing incarcerated *Nikkei* about the work, housing, and community situations in potential resettlement cities. Other organizations worked to establish hostels in these cities which provided temporary housing for newly resettled people and helped them find housing and work.[96]

These organizations provided services to all incarcerated people, regardless of their religion, but central to the Protestant resettlement plan was their encouragement to *Nikkei* Christians to join predominantly white congregations when they left the camps rather than return to or reestablish Japanese ethnic congregations. Before and during the war, ethnic congregations had been an avenue for *Nikkei* to engage with "institutions firmly rooted within Japanese America."[97] These communities provided first and second-generation Japanese immigrants with a space in which the racial and ethnic boundaries of much of the rest of American society did not dominate their lives. Following the war, however, Protestant leaders did their best to eliminate Japanese ethnic congregations along the west coast.

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96. Sandra C. Taylor, "Fellow-Feelers with the Afflicted: The Christian Churches and the Relocation of Japanese During World War II." Pages 123–129 in Roger Daniels et al. *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991): 126.

97. Yoo, "Growing Up Nissei," 107.

The pastors of most ethnic congregations had sold or leased their buildings and property to ecumenical or denominational groups when they were incarcerated, giving these groups power to eliminate ethnic congregations. Some denominations and ecumenical groups refused to return properties after the war, forcing *Nikkei* Christians to come up with funds to buy new property or join established predominantly white congregations.[98] Some *Nikkei* Christians agreed with these instructions, believing that they must join "normal" (white) congregations for the sake of Americanization.[99] However, for many *Nikkei* pastors, this meant they were forced to find a new vocation, as few white church leaders were interested in hiring *Nikkei* pastors directly following the war. Some Christians, including many in Colorado and Washington, were resistant to resettling *Nikkei* joining their congregations at all.[100]

Grant John Magiya argues that following WWII, ethnic congregations remained an important piece of the wellbeing of Christian *Nikkei* in America.[101] Citing examples of Japanese American Christians who left the church following the integration of their ethnic congregations into predominantly white ones, Magiya claims that *Nissei* were unable to assert themselves as leaders in new congregations, leading them to essentially become white-dominated congregations.[102] Despite PCJS instructions, and the efforts of

98. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 174.

99. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 175.

100. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 189.

101. Grant John Magiya, "Japanese-Americans and the Christian Church: The Struggle for Identity and Existence" (DMin diss., Claremont School of Theology, 1978), 115.

102. Magiya, "Japanese-Americans and the Christian Church," 115–16. *Nissei* are second-generation immigrants from Japan, while *Issei* are first generation immigrants, and *Nikkei* describes all people of Japanese descent living abroad.

many Protestant denominations, many *Nikkei* re-formed ethnic congregations in the American West, some of which continue to exist today.

Many in America, both white and *Nikkei,* worked hard to ensure that incarcerated Christians would have access to religious worship in the camps. Many pastors made immense sacrifices to provide for the civil and religious needs of those within the camps. However, it seems as though in many ways, the Christian church in America was complicit in the general displacement of the *Nikkei* Christian community which was perpetrated during WWII. Rather than fighting to ensure that the religious experience of *Nikkei* Christians could remain familiar and stable, many Christian leaders did the opposite, forcing *Nikkei* into new, unfamiliar practices to assimilate them into "normal" (white) American society. Many *Nikkei,* hoping to be seen as "American," willingly participated in the religious communities formed by the PCJS and WRA and agreed to join white congregations after they relocated or returned to the west coast.[103] Others simply stopped participation in church communities altogether. The Japanese ethnic congregations which were reestablished after WWII were generally more firmly grounded in their denominational and ethnic identities as the mainline Protestant attempts to remove these things "made *Nikkei* recognize their value."[104]

Conclusion

This brief overview of the incarceration, its causes, and the responses of Christians in America provides the foundation from which the core of my study proceeds. We have seen that the incarceration was rooted in longstanding racial prejudice and

103. Blankenship, "Foundations for a New World Order," 312–13.

104. Blankenship, "Foundations for a New World Order," 313–14.

constituted a grave injustice against *Nikkei,* American and Japanese citizens alike. In response to this injustice, a few Christian organizations, especially the Quakers, advocated for the civil rights of *Nikkei*, but this advocacy did not result in meaningful policy change or government action until decades after the war. Most Christians chose not to speak out against the incarceration, but many still contributed to efforts to support incarcerated *Nikkei,* especially those who were Christians. While these efforts may have been tied to genuine attempts to love and care for incarcerated people, they also contained strong threads of paternalism and ulterior motives, such as the "Americanization" of *Nikkei*.

Several common characteristics are seen in the responses to the incarceration from the Christian groups which have been described. First, many of the responses originated, naturally, on the west coast, where news and the effects of the incarceration were most obvious. Second, much of the formal "response" came from denominational organizations, but especially ecumenical and mission agencies. The PCJS and its close relationship with the WRA essentially excluded congregational and non-denominational religious bodies which did not have the organizational structure necessary to participate in their efforts or the theological rationale to participate in ecumenical ministry. Finally, the groups who were most active in aiding incarcerated *Nikkei* were those with already-established connections with Japanese and Japanese-American mission efforts. The Catholic response was headed by the Maryknoll Missionaries, while the Protestant response was led by the PCJS and its head, Gordon Chapman, a former Presbyterian missionary. These characteristics are important for placing responses to the incarceration among Churches of Christ within the context of the broader American church.

CHAPTER III

KEY THEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Before looking at the details of the ways members of Churches of Christ responded to the incarceration, I outline the four characteristics that are most relevant for understanding these responses. Three of these characteristics are ecclesiological, relating to beliefs about the church and how it functions. Ecclesiological beliefs have always shaped the way Churches of Christ collectively responded to circumstances, including the incarceration. The three ecclesiological characteristics I discuss are an emphasis on Christian unity, congregational autonomy, and the understanding of the church as a type of millennial society. In this chapter, I define each of these characteristics, and briefly survey their development in Churches of Christ and how they have influenced responses to particular issues within the movement.

In addition to these ecclesiological characteristics, I look at how white supremacist assumptions embedded in the theology of white Churches of Christ affected the movement and its response to the incarceration of *Nikkei* during WWII. While American studies of white supremacy rightly tend to focus on relationships between Black and white Americans, white supremacy itself is an underlying ideology influencing any interactions between white people and people of color, including the *Nikkei* incarcerated during WWII. Jemar Tisby provides a useful definition of white supremacy in the history of the American church, claiming that it has been "a concept that identifies white people and white culture as normal and superior—even if they claim people of

color as their brothers and sisters in Christ."[1] This definition reveals the tension between the explicit and implicit beliefs of white Christians. For many in Churches of Christ, white supremacy was not an explicitly held theological belief, but implicit assumptions about the normative and superior nature of white people and culture impacted how they discussed and treated incarcerated *Nikkei.*

In general, individual congregations among Churches of Christ and larger institutions such as religious publications and colleges were not outspoken about the incarceration or other similar issues. When they did address the incarceration publicly and collectively, their comments were generally focused on explicitly religious issues such as worship services, theology, or missionary activity. Those who addressed the incarceration more actively also generally did so in explicitly religious ways, though the ecclesiology of Churches of Christ allowed for minority views that varied from those of the movement generally.

Christian Unity

One of the most important ecclesiological characteristics of Churches of Christ has been their emphasis on a certain understanding of Christian unity. A desire for unity has been integral to their identity since Churches of Christ emerged out of the Stone-Campbell Movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This movement, born from the ministry of Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone, emphasized two primary goals: Christian unity and the restoration of simple, New Testament Christianity. The focus on unity led many in the movement to oppose

1. Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019).

sectarianism and division. However, a desire for unity also caused some members of the movement to ignore potentially divisive issues, especially those which were seen as political or social issues rather than explicitly religious ones. These patterns of ignoring potentially divisive issues are particularly relevant for this thesis because many in Churches of Christ appeared to, at least publicly, ignore the issue of the incarceration. This public silence does not appear to have been the result of overtly destructive motives or maliciousness but was tied to the theological character of the movement.

Douglas Foster claims that Christian unity was "at the center of the founding documents of the Stone-Campbell Movement": the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* (1804) and the *Declaration and Address* (1809).[2] These documents, the first written by several ministers, including Stone, and the second written by Thomas Campbell, critiqued divisions among Christians, but Foster argues that Stone and his associates held different views of unity from the Campbells. Stone saw unity as "the possession and manifestation of God's Spirit in each Christian," while the Campbells based it on a common understanding of "the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things" as described in the New Testament.[3] For Alexander Campbell, unity would be reached through the proper restoration of simple, New Testament Christianity.[4] As Churches of Christ emerged as a separate stream of the Stone-Campbell Movement they tended to follow Campbell's understanding of unity.

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2. Douglas A. Foster, "Unity, Christian," pp. 754–58 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement,* ed. Douglas A Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 755.

3. Foster, "Unity, Christian," 755.

4. Douglas A. Foster, *A Life of Alexander Campbell* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 277.

The approaches of Alexander Campbell and other Stone-Campbell leaders to slavery and the American Civil War provide examples of the role that Christian unity played in how social or political issues, including racial injustice, were addressed. Campbell, observing divisions in several American denominations over slavery, was frightened of potential division within his movement. Therefore, while Campbell opposed slavery, he was unwilling to claim that it was immoral to make it a "test of fellowship."[5] As Wes Crawford writes, "A denomination built on [restoration and unity] was destined for conflict and division and would find itself in desperate need of a mediating influence. Campbell attempted to play that role in the mid-nineteenth century." When debates about slavery broke out at Campbell's Bethany College, he silenced disagreement, and students who refused to lay the argument aside were expelled.

Campbell's work to preserve unity despite differences was lauded by many in Churches of Christ. Moses E. Lard and others in the mid-nineteenth century argued that the Stone-Campbell Movement was the only major denomination not to divide over slavery and the Civil War.[6] Given the emphasis on unity, it is significant that the Stone-Campbell Movement would eventually split along partially sectional lines. This split is clearly seen following the Civil War in the pages of the *Christian Standard,* which became the "northern paper," and the *Gospel Advocate (GA),* which became the "southern paper."[7]

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5. Foster, *A Life of Alexander Campbell,* 278.

6. Moses Lard, "Can We Divide?" *Lard's Quarterly* 3 (April 1866) 330–36.

7. David Edwin Harrell, Jr., "Civil War, The," pp. 221–24 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement,* ed. Douglas A Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 224

The ironic tension between an emphasis on unity and the frequency of division and disagreement within the Stone-Campbell Movement has not been lost on historians of the movement. Why would congregations in the movement support division over some issues while others, such as slavery or the incarceration of *Nikkei*, were ignored in the name of unity? The answer seems to lie in understanding the nature of the unity promoted by Stone-Campbell leaders in Churches of Christ. Campbell and David Lipscomb believed that unity was centered on faithful restoration of the simple, New Testament church. In other words, unity was predicated on "agreement on key restoration principles," though debates about the nature of these principles were common.[8]

The Stone-Campbell movement was influenced by leaders such as Isaac Errett, who claimed Christian unity was centered around faith in Christ and baptism by immersion.[9] For Errett, J. H. Garrison, and others, items of faith that were not "essentials" could not serve as the basis for disunity among Christians.[10] This distinction between essentials and nonessentials would become more significant in other streams of the Stone-Campbell Movement than it was among Churches of Christ, which were most strongly influenced by Lipscomb's argument that "the only basis for Christian unity was to follow meticulously the clear teachings of the Bible."[11] Lipscomb's arguments fed into the widespread belief that Christian unity could only come amidst agreement on particular readings of the New Testament. Mid-twentieth century works such as R. L.

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8. Michael Kinnamon, "Ecumenical Movement, The," pp. 289–92 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement,* ed. Douglas A Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 291.

9. Foster, "Unity, Christian," 755.

10. Foster, "Unity, Christian," 754–55.

11. Foster, "Unity, Christian," 756

Whiteside and C. R. Nichol's *Sound Doctrine* and Leroy Brownlow's *Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ* revealed the understanding that ecclesiological issues were generally understood as the most "essential" of biblically based beliefs. In the mid-twentieth century, ecclesiology became "the focus of the theology of mid-twentieth century Churches of Christ and . . . the body's theological identity."[12]

Unlike Lipscomb, who had little room in his theology for "nonessentials," many in Churches of Christ tolerated diverse beliefs on issues that were outside the ecclesiological center of the movement's theological identity. Debates over the proper structure of church leadership, the appropriateness of church-sponsored missionary societies, and approved worship practices were all instrumental in the split between Churches of Christ and Disciples of Christ or Christian Churches in the first half of the twentieth century. On the other hand, diverse opinions were tolerated about other issues that were not deemed essential, especially social issues such as racial justice.

While the generally northern Stone-Campbell congregations now known as Disciples of Christ participated in the growing ecumenical movement in the twentieth century, many in Churches of Christ felt that disagreement on key theological points prevented them from faithfully dialoguing with other Christian groups, including the Disciples of Christ. Churches of Christ, generally theologically and socially conservative, perceived the ecumenical movement as overly liberal in these areas, further causing Churches of Christ to avoid ecumenical dialogue.[13] The lack of a denominational

12. Williams, Foster, and Blowers, eds., *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* 139.

13. Foster, "Unity, Christian," 757.

infrastructure that would allow anyone to speak on behalf of Churches of Christ as a whole also made traditional ecumenism difficult for members of the movement.

Because of the definition and criteria for Christian unity held by Churches of Christ, the continued emphasis on those key restoration principles prevented Churches of Christ from engaging in ecumenism. Contributing to their ambivalence towards ecumenism was the extreme congregationalism of Churches of Christ. While individual congregations certainly cooperated from time to time, most people within the movement would not have seen systemic efforts to produce union between congregations and church bodies as necessary or worthwhile. Most of the cooperation between congregations happened on the individual and personal level, rather than as a part of a larger system or intentional effort.

The understanding of Christian unity common in Churches of Christ in the mid-twentieth century contributed to a refusal by many leaders in the movement, especially those in mainstream organizations and publications, to speak out clearly on several issues, including those related to the war. Issues that were not clearly tied to the movement's ecclesiological identity were not seen as being worthy of debate or division. The way that the two most influential papers in the movement addressed the question of Christian participation in the war will highlight this refusal to take strong stances on wartime issues. Specific examples of how the emphasis on Christian unity influenced responses to wartime issues such as the incarceration will be shown in the following chapter.

Congregational Autonomy

A second element of the ecclesiology of Churches of Christ important for understanding their responses to the incarceration is their commitment to congregational autonomy. Churches of Christ have never formed any official governing denominational bodies such as councils, synods, or conferences that have authority to make decisions for or speak on behalf of local congregations. While some Christian denominations organized large and systematic responses to the incarceration, Churches of Christ lacked any infrastructure through which to mount such a response. Individuals and individual congregations were generally left to themselves to act in whatever way they deemed appropriate, which helped lead several of them to work to address the incarceration on a localized, individual basis.

The lack of official governing bodies in Churches of Christ has been a direct byproduct of their ecclesiology, which Everett Ferguson describes as "strict congregationalism that co-operates in various projects overseen by one congregation or organized as parachurch enterprises, but many congregations hold themselves apart from such cooperative projects." Within the movement, each congregation has been completely autonomous; theological and practical decisions were made exclusively by local leaders, though several key loci of cohesion tied the movement together. Debates regarding the existence and influence of extra-congregational institutions would greatly shape Churches of Christ in the era surrounding WWII.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, congregations within the Stone-Campbell Movement faced disagreement over the permissibility of forming missionary societies to organize and direct mission work. These societies, intended to

streamline funding and logistics, were not under the direct control of a congregation's leadership but were generally funded by multiple congregations and elected their own leadership. Some in the movement argued that these societies had no basis in the New Testament and that they attempted to "dictate to the churches" on matters which should be left up to individual congregations.[14] Missionary societies were never intended to govern congregations as a denominational authority, but debates about their legitimacy eventually contributed to the three-way divide between Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and Christian Churches/Churches of Christ.

A similar debate would continue within Churches of Christ specifically in the years following WWII, as some argued that local congregations should not contribute money to extra-congregational institutions of any kind, including colleges and benevolent institutions. By 1960, ten percent of Churches of Christ had separated from the mainstream of the movement, largely due to the debate over church-sponsored institutions.[15] This debate began in the 1930s and early 1940s, making it a significant contributor to the movement's theology during WWII. Leaders such as Foy E. Wallace Jr., editor of several publications, strongly opposed congregational support of institutions such as schools, orphanages, and old-age homes.[16]

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14. W. Dennis Helsabeck Jr., Gary Holloway, and Douglas A. Foster, *Renewal for Mission: A Concise History of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2009), 94.

15. David Edwin Harrell Jr., "Noninstitutional Movement," pp. 567–69 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 567.

16. Newell D. Williams, Douglas A. Foster, and Paul M. Blowers, eds., *The Stone Campbell Movement: A Global History* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2013), 162.

Other leaders in the movement encouraged members of Churches of Christ to support such institutions. G. C. Brewer, a preacher, traveling speaker, and eventual editor of *Voice of Freedom,* voiced this encouragement at the 1931 Abilene Christian College (ACC) lectures, prompting the *Gospel Advocate* to run a series of articles debating both sides of the issue.[17] The heart of this debate, which continued into the 1950s and 60s, lay in the question of whether or not the New Testament permitted such institutions, but another central factor was the perceived influence these institutions may have on congregations. The "veritable explosion" of parachurch organizations within the movement in the post-WWII years brought this controversy to a head, but its origins in the pre-war years suggest that this debate is important for understanding the mood within Churches of Christ during the war.[18]

This controversy is important for this study because the varied responses to incarceration among Churches of Christ reflect the uncertainty surrounding the authority of individuals or institutions to speak about the movement as a whole. Many leaders were, at least on the surface, unwilling to exert authority beyond the individual congregation, particularly in relation to issues which were considered "social justice" issues. James F. Fowler, in a 1964 *FF* article, provides an example of the arguments made against taking stances on social justice issues when he warns Churches of Christ against taking strong stances on the Civil Rights movement, claiming that there is "'great freedom' to differ and that each congregation is autonomous."[19] Due to the understanding

17. Williams, Foster, and Blowers, eds., *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* 162.

18. Harrell Jr., "Noninstitutional Movement," 567.

19. James F. Fowler, "From the Midst of the Crisis," *Firm Foundation* 81 (March 31, 1964): 205.

of the church as a millennial society, which is discussed shortly, this unwillingness extended particularly to issues that were deemed social or political, such as the incarceration. Also, this theological position meant that Churches of Christ did not have the infrastructure or ecclesiological framework necessary to fully participate in the ecumenical ministry efforts within incarceration camps.

The Church as a Millennial Society

The third element of ecclesiology in Churches of Christ on which I focus is the concept of the church as a millennial society.[20] While leaders in the movement disagreed about the church's relationship to the millennium, the idea that the church exists somehow separate from other human societies or governments was prevalent. For many, this meant that the church as an institution should focus solely on explicitly religious topics, leaving social and political issues to others. This attitude contributed to the fact that Churches of Christ responded little to incarceration collectively and few leaders were outspoken about it. When the incarceration was mentioned, it was generally concerning specifically religious issues that were more clearly understood as being within the purview of the church.

For Alexander Campbell and other early Stone-Campbell leaders, the church was integrally tied to the coming millennium. Foster argues that Campbell believed that

20. "Millennial society" is here understood broadly as a group of people integrally tied to the millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth alluded to in the book of Revelation. Members and leaders in Churches of Christ have been premillennialists, postmillennialists, and amillennialists since the movement's inception, with different approaches dominating in different eras. The "premillennial controversy" among Churches of Christ in the early twentieth century, resulting in the marginalization of premillennial belief in the movement by the 1940s, makes the term "millennial" problematic. Use of the term "millennial society" does not imply any particular millennial view, but denotes that most members of Churches of Christ, whatever their views on the millennium, saw the church as integrally tied to the eschatological Kingdom of God, a reality which separated the church from other human institutions.

"restoring the ancient gospel and order of things . . . would bring the unity of all Christians and the conversion of the world, thus ushering in the millennium."[21] Richard T. Hughes describes this eschatology as "postmillennial," referring to the belief "that human progress would usher in the kingdom or rule of God (the millennium) and that Jesus would return only at the conclusion of that golden age."[22] Hughes describes Stone's ecclesiology, on the other hand, as "apocalyptic," by which he means, "the kind of piety that led Stone and many of his followers to place themselves directly under the rule of God and to refuse to conform themselves to the values of the world."[23] This apocalyptic eschatology led Stone and others to embrace "premillennialism," or the belief that "this world could not become the kingdom of God unless and until God himself ordained it."[24]

Stone's and Campbell's eschatological beliefs were quite different from one another, but their distinctive beliefs led to almost identical understandings of the church. Both eschatological visions included the idea that Christians would be unique participants in the coming reign of Christ and should therefore live somehow separate from the structures of the world. Hughes credits the merging of Stone's eschatology with Campbell's to Tolbert Fanning, who "fully embraced the [Campbellite] sectarian notion that the Church of Christ to which he belonged was the one true church of God and that

21. Foster, *A Life of Alexander Campbell,* 138.

22. Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 3.

23. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 3.

24. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 3.

all other denominations were simply false churches, [and] also fully embraced the Stoneite vision of countercultural sectarianism, apocalypticism, and apoliticism."[25]

Lipscomb continued the work of synthesizing these two beliefs and, according to Hughes, "stabilized that fusion and perpetuated the apocalyptic primitivism of the Stone-Campbell tradition among Churches of Christ well into the twentieth century."[26] A third-generation leader in Churches of Christ, Lipscomb promoted the view of the church as a millennial society, leading him to reject Christian participation in civil government or the military. Lipscomb may not have advocated a particular, explicit millennial view, but he believed questions of eschatology were of utmost importance.[27] According to Robert E. Hooper, Lipscomb believed that the kingdom of God would "conquer" human organizations such as governments."[28] Hooper and Hughes agree that Lipscomb was influenced by the American Civil War and Southern sectional bias, but Hughes argues convincingly that Lipscomb's primary motivations were legitimately theological.[29]

While Michael Casey claims that "most people in Churches of Christ" held pacifist views similar to Lipscomb's, Foster argues that "Lipscomb's position represented a minority in the churches of the Stone-Campbell movement, even in Churches of Christ."[30] Both of these statements hold some truth. Many in Churches of Christ believed

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25. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 117.

26. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 17.

27. Douglas A Foster, "A Fundamentalist-Modernist Crisis in Churches of Christ: The Premillennial Controversy, 1910–1940," *Restoration Quarterly* 62.1 (2020): 4.

28. Robert E. Hooper, *Crying in the Wilderness: A Biography of David Lipscomb* (Nashville: David Lipscomb College, 1979), 113.

29. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith,* 133–34.

30. Michael W. Casey, "From Pacifism to Patriotism: The Emergence of Civil Religion in the Churches of Christ During World War I," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66.3 (July 1992): 378. Douglas A.

that the church as an institution should remain distant from government and politics, even as many individual members of the movement were heavily involved in government and politics. This dynamic, shaped by ecclesiology within the movement, is seen in the responses to the incarceration of *Nikkei* during WWII. Organizations and institutions among Churches of Christ such as the colleges and journals associated with the movement, were generally not outspoken about the event, while some within the movement engaged with it on a more localized, individual level.

The way that theology common to Churches of Christ was used to diffuse discussion about socially and politically divisive issues is seen in the case of George S. Benson and James D. Bales at Harding College in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Benson served as the president of Harding College from 1963–1965, presiding over the school's integration in 1963. Benson, however, had been a staunch supporter of segregation and resisted student efforts to achieve integration as early as 1957. To promote segregation among the students and public, Benson enlisted the help of James D. Bales, a popular professor and Bible scholar at Harding College. Bales argued that "segregation should be viewed in the context of local customs," and in doing so "removed segregation from the realm of moral discourse and placed it within the context of cultural traditions over which Christians supposedly had little influence."[31]

Bales and Benson essentially claimed that segregation, as a social and cultural issue, was not a moral issue that Christians should concern themselves with. Because

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Foster, "The Effect of the Civil War on the Stone-Campbell Movement," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 20 (Spring 2017), 11.

31. Barclay Key, "On the Periphery of the Civil Rights Movement: Race and Religion at Harding College, 1945–1969," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 68.3 (Autumn 2009), 292.

desegregation may cause division and strife, it was not a worthy fight for Christians, who should be more focused on religious and moral matters. While these two were ultimately unsuccessful in preserving segregation at Harding College, their arguments reveal how the concept of the church as a millennial society affected discourse regarding certain social and political issues, including those involving racial justice.

Churches of Christ and White Supremacy

The final characteristic of Churches of Christ that is particularly relevant for this study is the prevalence of white supremacy among the movement in the middle of the twentieth century. Unlike the other issues that have been addressed, white supremacy was not always an overtly claimed theological belief in Churches of Christ and may have at times been directly denied. Its presence in the movement, however, is revealed by the nature of the relationships between the dominant, white members of Churches of Christ and the people of color in their midst. Understandings of white supremacy in America have often been focused on the relationship between Black and white Americans, but white supremacy itself is an underlying ideology influencing any interactions between white people and people of color. Therefore, the ways that white American Christians interacted with *Nikkei* during WWII is tied to white supremacist ideology.

Tisby traces the history of white supremacy in the American church from the 1667 decision by the Virginia General Assembly that baptism does not grant freedom to enslaved people through Christian responses to the Black Lives Matter movement in the early twenty-first century. Tisby claims that a common thread through the narrative of the white American church is the reality that, while "only a small portion of Christians

committed the most notorious acts of racism, many more white Christians can be described as complicit in creating and sustaining a racist society."[32]

While Tisby's work, and most research on white supremacy in America, focuses on relationships between white and Black Americans, white supremacy has affected relationships between other racial and ethnic groups. Tisby claims that "the principles outlined in [*The Color of Compromise*], when applied to other racial and ethnic conflicts, can help lead to greater understanding and positive change."[33] Tisby's work is therefore helpful in developing principles for understanding how white supremacy affected the responses to the incarceration among Churches of Christ. Specifically, Tisby's observation about the complicity of many white Christians in the racism of society is extremely helpful. White supremacist ideology has not only caused Christians to commit overtly racist acts but has also caused them to ignore or justify racist acts committed by others, such as the incarceration.

Churches of Christ have not been immune from the white supremacist ideology of American Christianity. The existence of white supremacy in the movement has been seen most clearly in the relationship between the majority, predominantly white Churches of Christ, and the minority but still significant network of predominantly Black Churches of Christ.[34] Many dynamics stemming from white supremacist ideology that influenced Black and white relations within the movement also impacted how Churches of Christ

32. Tisby, *The Color of Compromise.*

33. Tisby, *The Color of Compromise.*

34. The existence of this network of predominantly Black Churches of Christ makes it necessary to clarify that in my work, "Churches of Christ" refers to the predominantly white stream of churches, unless otherwise stated.

responded to *Nikkei.* However, it is also important to highlight several key differences, such as a willingness to integrate with *Nikkei* at a time when some institutions such as schools barred Black Americans.

White supremacy was a foundational ideology for many of the early leaders in the Stone-Campbell Movement, just as it was foundational for most white Americans at the time. Foster, Crawford, and others have shown that Alexander Campbell's theology, in particular his views on slavery, were undergirded by white supremacy.[35] Stone, though outspoken in favor of abolition, was also firmly entrenched in white supremacist ideology. He, Campbell, and other leaders in their movement supported the American Colonization Society, created to repatriate former slaves to Africa. Support of this movement points to the fact that many in the movement "held the same assumptions most white Americans held concerning the inability of blacks and whites to coexist without the subordination of the black race."[36]

The strength of white supremacy in some segments of Churches of Christ is seen in an editorial published in Foy E. Wallace's *Bible Banner* in February 1942. This editorial attacks Jimmie Lovell for reportedly claiming that Richard Nathaniel Hogan, a Black preacher, may be the best preacher in Churches of Christ. The editorial claims that "No doubt, Hogan has done and can do a great work among the negroes, but it is time for the brethren to put him in his place, keep him there, and quit the disgraceful practice of

35. Foster, *A Life of Alexander Campbell,* 284. Wes Crawford, *Shattering the Illusion: How African American Churches of Christ Moved from Segregation to Independence* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2013), 32–34.

36. Don Haymes, Eugene Randall II, and Douglas A. Foster, "Race Relations," pp. 619–22 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 619.

holding negro meetings for white people."[37] While the editorial was ultimately aimed at criticizing Lovell, mostly due to his premillennial beliefs, it contained the clear assumption that a Black preacher could not be considered of the same caliber as one who was white.

Not all white supremacy in the movement was as obvious as the *Bible Banner*'s comments. Many white Christians and congregations generously gave their resources and energy to aid their Black brethren. In his description of the ministry of Marshall Keeble, likely the most influential Black preacher in Churches of Christ in the twentieth century, Edward J. Robinson describes this reality as "white racism [accompanying] white benevolence."[38] Keeble's ministry in the early-to-mid-twentieth century was almost entirely funded by white Christians, whose support helped Keeble become a widely successful evangelist. White financial assistance was not the same as acceptance, however, as "Keeble and his white supporters in the South happily complied with segregation . . . to save the souls of black Americans."[39]

The example provided by Robinson regarding Keeble's ministry is significant for this study because it proves that white supremacist ideology and white generosity towards people of color are not mutually exclusive. This tension between racism and benevolence reflects the same tension Tisby describes when he writes that "Many individuals throughout American church history exhibited blatant racism, yet they also built orphanages and schools. They deeply loved their families; they showed kindness toward

37. "Editorial: The West Coast Jimmie Lovell," *Bible Banner* 4.7 (February 1942): 2–3.

38. Edward J. Robinson, *Show Us How You Do It: Marshall Keeble and the Rise of Black Churches of Christ in the United States, 1914–1968* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University Alabama Press, 2008), 74.

39. Robinson, *Show Us How You Do It*, 74.

others."[40] To claim that Churches of Christ were heavily influenced by white supremacy in the mid-twentieth century is not to say that many in the movement were not extremely kind, generous, and loving towards people of color, including incarcerated *Nikkei*. Similarly, a recognition of the legitimate love shown towards *Nikkei* by some in Churches of Christ does not negate the negative influence of white supremacy on the movement and its theology.

White supremacy's impact on responses to the incarceration should not be conflated with the way white supremacy influenced relationships between Black and white members of the movement. To conflate these two would be to overlook the particularities of the experience of both Black and *Nikkei* people in this period. Generally speaking, white members of Churches of Christ were more accepting of and willing to fellowship with *Nikkei* Christians than they were with Black Christians in the mid-twentieth century. This distinction is evidenced by the fact that Hirosuke Ishiguro, the first student of Asian descent to attend ACC, enrolled in the school in the 1920s, while Black students were not admitted until the 1960s.

The difference between how Black and *Nikkei* Christians were treated by white members of Churches of Christ in the mid-twentieth century is best understood in light of the system of racial hierarchy that Isabel Wilkerson describes in *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents.* Wilkerson describes America not as a racialized society, but as a society built around a "caste system," defined as "a fixed and embedded ranking of human value that sets the presumed supremacy of one group against the presumed

40. Tisby, *The Color of Compromise.*

inferiority of other groups on the basis of ancestry and often immutable traits …"[41] In this system, all people are stratified along with a hierarchical system, with wealthy white people at the top and impoverished Black people at the bottom. Everyone else finds themselves arranged somewhere along the hierarchy.

Wilkerson's understanding of the American caste system lines up squarely with the history of racial hierarchy in America. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, intellectuals in America, including leaders like Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, "did not doubt the propriety of racial rankings—with Indians below whites, and blacks below everyone else."[42] These beliefs were supported by various forms of pseudoscience including eugenics and craniometry. Nineteenth-century physician Samuel George Morton became famous for collecting and measuring hundreds of human skulls, believing "that a ranking of races could be established objectively by physical characteristics of the brain, particularly by its size."[43]

Morton's work has since been widely discredited both in its methods and conclusions, but the idea of inherent, biological racial differences that account for social and economic divisions lived on through the work of French physician and anthropologist Paul Broca and others. The racial hierarchy created by Morton unsurprisingly "matched every good Yankee's prejudice—whites on top, [American] Indians in the middle, and

41. Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (New York: Random House, 2020), 17.

42. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981), 31–35.

43. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man,* 50–51.

blacks on the bottom …"[44] Also in the middle of this hierarchy, and most relevant for the discussion of the incarceration, were people of Asian descent.

Even though *Nikkei* and Black Christians were treated differently by white members of the movement in the mid-twentieth century, people of Japanese descent were still affected by white supremacy. Yukikazu Obata suggests the impact of white supremacy on relations with people of Japanese descent when he describes the "universalism" of a longtime missionary to Japan, J. M. McCaleb. Obata claims that for McCaleb, "recognizing the inferiority of others was part of the motivation for missions."[45] McCaleb, who was instrumental in shaping how Churches of Christ viewed the Japanese people, had "a fixed notion of what constitutes proper Christians."[46] This fixed notion of Christianity was tied closely to Western culture and fits clearly into Tisby's definition of white supremacy, making it clear that white supremacist ideology was functioning in mid-twentieth century Churches of Christ and their relationship to *Nikkei* in America.

Conclusion

The following chapters contain a further discussion of these four characteristics and their effect on the responses among Churches of Christ to the incarceration of *Nikkei*, but the nature and historical background of each element is necessary for understanding them fully. By highlighting these four characteristics, I hope to show that responses in

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44. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 53–54.

45. Yukikazu Obata, "The Gospel is for All?: The Problem of Universality in J. M. McCaleb's Views on Missions and Race," pages 57–66 in *Reconciliation Reconsidered: Advancing the National Conversation on Race in Churches of Christ*, ed. Tanya Smith Brice (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2016), 61.

46. Obata, "The Gospel is for All?," 63.

Churches of Christ were not accidental or the result of strictly social or political factors. Instead, they are the result or byproduct of several theological commitments central to the identity of Churches of Christ, functioning in conjunction with the underlying white supremacist ideology common to white American Christians at the time. In the following two chapters, I describe the specific responses of Churches of Christ to the incarceration and show how these responses were tied to the theological elements I have described. First, I turn to responses of Churches of Christ at large by looking at the movement's publications, its schools, and its lectureships, which provided its primary loci of authority given the lack of governing denominational bodies. Then, I address several more localized, individual responses on the part of several congregations and their members.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC RESPONSES TO THE INCARCERATION

Churches of Christ contributed to the "shameful silence" maintained by the majority of white American Christians in response to the incarceration.[1] Some individuals and individual congregations were vocal and active in response to these events, but the movement as a whole said and did little. In this chapter I evaluate the public, collective responses to the incarceration from members and leaders in the movement in light of the key characteristics described in chapter two: congregational autonomy, Christian unity, the church as a millennial society, and white supremacy. This chapter focuses solely on public, collective responses, which I define as responses made in public spaces, such as publications or lectures, with the apparent goal of influencing Churches of Christ beyond individual congregations. None of these characteristics alone explains the nature of the collective response to the incarceration, but together they point to a response shaped by the movement's particular theological identity.

Some individuals and congregations responded independently in localized ways, but this section deals only with the collective response of Churches of Christ, or those responses which reflect or were intended to influence the movement as a whole.[2] To determine the collective response of the movement, I use the public evidence of the three

1. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 437.

2. Individual, localized responses are significant for understanding how Churches of Christ responded to the incarceration and are dealt with in the following chapter.

"loci of cohesion" that have historically bound Churches of Christ together: religious journals, Christian colleges, and lectureships.[3] The majority of this evidence is found in articles in journals published within the movement, but also includes college newspapers, speeches, and lectures. These publicly distributed materials were intended to influence Churches of Christ and can be said to reflect the movement's overall public stance on particular issues.[4]

One argument for a lack of response on the part of Churches of Christ could be that the issue was simply not relevant for them, but this was not the case. An entire congregation belonging to the movement was relocated to various incarceration camps around America, including many who had or would have positions of prominence in influential institutions within the movement. Hirosuke Ishiguro, the preacher at Westside Church of Christ, a congregation made up of *Nikkei,* was certainly a prominent figure in the movement. His son Masaaki "Robert" Ishiguro and Michio Nagai would become well-known at ACC for founding a men's social club and serving as its officers. Masaaki also worked for the school paper, *The Optimist*, while Nagai would spend decades as a minister in Los Angeles and Bible professor at Pepperdine College.

These were just a few of the *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ affected by the incarceration, but their stories would garner little attention from the movement as a whole. The stories of the Ishiguros and other members of the Westside Church of Christ

3. The term "loci of cohesion" is borrowed from Wes Crawford, *Shattering the Illusion: How African American Churches of Christ Moved from Segregation to Independence* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2013). This paper focuses primarily on the witness of religious journals due to the lack of explicit references to the incarceration in the college papers, public statements, and lectureships.

4. For an example of the potential influence that religious journals could have on the beliefs of members of Churches of Christ, see Mark Allen Elrod, "The Churches of Christ and the 'War Question': The Influence of Church Journals" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1995).

are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, but here I attempt to understand why their situation was not a larger part of the movement's public discourse.

Congregational Autonomy

The most basic factor influencing the collective response of Churches of Christ was the lack of an infrastructure enabling a collective response to anything. Because of their strong belief in congregational autonomy, Churches of Christ did not have, and often actively opposed, any system that would take decision-making authority out of the hands of local congregations, such as governing denominational councils, synods, or conferences. This "strict congregationalism" was especially influential in the movement in the mid-twentieth century, when divisive debates about the appropriateness of extra-congregational institutions were beginning.[5] This theological characteristic prevented the movement from engaging in the type of ministry performed by other denominations which had more centralized leadership structures.

More centrally organized and ecumenically minded Protestants formed the PCJS, which helped each camp establish an ecumenical, Protestant congregation, and coordinated clergy, supplies, and events for Christians within the camps.[6] The PCJS was able to operate because of funding and support from the denominational governing bodies of the Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and others. Churches of Christ, without any

5. Everett Ferguson, "Church, Doctrine of The," pp. 206–9 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement,* ed. Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 206. Newell D. Williams, Douglas A. Foster, and Paul M. Blowers, eds. *The Stone Campbell Movement: A Global History* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2013), 162.

6. Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice* (New York: Friendship Press, 1946), 58–59.

such body, were unable to participate in such an organization, and likely would not have anyway given their sectarian nature at the time.[7]

Inability to participate in the PCJS significantly limited the ability of Churches of Christ to engage in ministry within the camps. WRA rules required denominations outside the PCJS to financially support religious workers devoting themselves to full-time ministry, leaving congregationalist groups like Churches of Christ, unable to support ministers in the camps.[8] This fact surely contributed to the lack of attention the incarceration received among Churches of Christ. Clarence W. Hall, a Methodist minister and writer, wrote extensively for the primary Methodist journal, *Christian Advocate*, about the plight of incarcerated *Nikkei*, encouraging Methodists to lend aid.[9] Hall had extensive knowledge of the camps because of the access allowed to Methodist participants in the PCJS. Only a few ministers from Churches of Christ were able to enter the camps, and they wrote about their experiences much more sparingly.

Finally, the emphasis on congregational autonomy generally discouraged leaders in Churches of Christ from using journals or the publicity afforded by schools and lectureships to influence other Christians on matters deemed non-religious.[10] Leaders in the movement constantly strove to avoid seeming as though they were attempting to exert

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7. Michael Kinnamon, "Ecumenical Movement, The," pp. 289–92 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement,* ed. Douglas A Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 291.

8. Anne M. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 113.

9. e.g., Clarence W. Hall, "The Japanese Evacuation in Retrospect," *CA* 117.42 (October 15, 1942): 1318–20; Clarence W. Hall, "Inside Nisei-America," *CA* 117.44 (October 29, 1942): 1388–90.

10. The perceived distinction between religious and non-religious matters is discussed further below.

authority on local congregations. In speeches intended to elicit support for ACC, Don H. Morris and Batsell Baxter worked to convince their audience that colleges are valuable to society, support local congregations, and will not "depart from the faith."[11] Concerned with losing support if they attempted to become too influential, leaders at these colleges were unlikely to speak out strongly about controversial topics that were seen as tangential to their mission. These lectureships focused instead on religious topics such as biblical interpretation and evangelism.

In the February 1942 lectureship held at ACC, Charles H. Roberson offered a lecture entitled "Righteousness Exalted a Nation," in which he argued that the success and flourishing of a nation is due to its peoples' faithfulness to God. While Roberson mentions "national duties," such as paying taxes, and alludes to young men who "will go abroad over the face of the earth for the good of all," he generally focuses on the abstract religious concept of righteousness.[12] Similarly, the 1943 ACC lectures were centered around the claim that "Jesus Christ is the hope of the world."[13] In the middle of WWII, this theme is clearly heard as a corrective to American nationalistic spirit that derives its hope from nations, government, or military might. Despite the seemingly obvious connections, however, the presenters only allude to these ideas, continuing to focus on biblical interpretation and theological reflection.

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11. Don H. Morris, "The Future of Abilene Christian College" and Batsell Baxter, "The Work of Religious Education," in *Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures, 1944.* Delivered in the auditorium of Abilene Christian College (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1944): 63–65.

12. Chas. H. Roberson, "Righteousness Exalteth a Nation," in *Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures, 1942.* Delivered in the auditorium of Abilene Christian College (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1944): 121–146.

13. *Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures, 1943.* Delivered in the auditorium of Abilene Christian College (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1943).

The few articles that mentioned the incarceration made almost no direct recommendations for how to respond, likely due to the fear of leaders appearing to claim authority which rightly belonged in local congregations. Several articles report on the experience of *Nikkei* Christians, such as an editorial written by J. M. McCaleb, a former missionary to Japan, in the *Firm Foundation (FF)* that describes the fate of the Westside Church of Christ in Los Angeles. McCaleb relays a letter sent to him by Hirosuke Ishiguro, who had been confined to Lordsburg Internment Camp in New Mexico. Ishiguro describes his internment as "the best vacation" which gave him "lots of spare time [for] biblical researches."[14] McCaleb and Ishiguro also mention several young men and women who enrolled in school at ACC during the war.

Ishiguro's description of his time in an internment camp likely reflects two things. First, the fact that he could describe imprisonment as a vacation because it allowed him time for biblical scholarship reflects his deep commitment to his faith and vocation as a Christian minister. Rather than focusing on the injustices done to him, Ishiguro chose to highlight the possible doors opened to him by his negative situation. Second, Ishiguro's comments may reflect a defense mechanism common to people facing racial injustice, who, rather than fighting against those in power, acquiesce to racial injustice to keep the peace and potentially retain support and good-will from those in power. This dynamic can be seen in the ministry of Marshall Keeble, who sometimes "publicly acquiesced to white racism in order to secure financial gifts for the school he led, Nashville Christian Institute."[15] Ishiguro, whose home congregation in Los Angeles had been dependent on

14. J. M. McCaleb, "The Japanese Church in Los Angeles," *FF* 59.48 (December 1, 1942) 4.

15. Wes Crawford, "An Apple That Fell Far from Its Tree: The Protest Legacy of Floyd Rose," *Restoration Quarterly* 63.1 (2021), 12. Crawford's article highlights the fact that while many Black leaders

financial support from white congregations within the movement, may have been similarly accommodating to preserve this support.

Stories like Ishiguro's are told several other places, including in the *West Coast Christian (WCC),* which focused on the work of Churches of Christ in California and other western states, but still only included a handful of mentions of the incarceration. Only one article in the *WCC* calls for any direct action, asking for some congregation to take in the *Nikkei* members of the Westside Church of Christ who were being relocated: "Do we have a congregation in the nation with members who have farms where these brethren could go and work for a living during the war? Wonder what Jesus would do about it?"[16] This plea was ultimately unsuccessful, as all *Nikkei* from the west coast would be sent to incarceration camps, but it stands out as the only call for direct action in response to the incarceration from a major leader in the movement.[17] It should also be noted that Jimmie Lovell, editor of the *WCC,* was accused by anti-institutionalist members of Churches of Christ, such as Foy E. Wallace Jr., of exerting unbiblical authority over local congregations. These accusations were generally related to Lovell's work in raising and managing funds for missionary work.[18]

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in Churches of Christ, such as Keeble, accepted white supremacist attitudes in order to facilitate their ministry, others such as Floyd Rose protested these attitudes even as they worked within the system of Churches of Christ.

16. "Talking Things Over with Jimmie Lovell," *West Coast Christian* 5.1 (April 1942): 2.

17. This request's lack of success was due, at least in part, to a change in government policy which prevented *Nikkei* from the West Coast from choosing their own relocation site, instead confining them to incarceration camps.

18. E.g., "Editorial: The West Coast Jimmie Lovell," *Bible Banner* 4.7 (February 1942): 2–3; Foy E. Wallace, "Comments on the Janes Will," *Bible Banner* 6.6 (March 1944).

A few other articles, published in the *Christian Chronicle (CC)*, a periodical aimed specifically at providing news of Churches of Christ and mission work, relate specific ministry that members of Churches of Christ were doing in the camps. Margaret Upton tells the story of the *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ who were sent to Camp Amache near Granada, CO, and other incarceration camps across America. Upton writes that "there has been little done for the Japanese brethren," but also tells the story of several leaders and preachers from Churches of Christ who entered the camp to conduct revival meetings and worship services and performed other ministry among the incarcerated *Nikkei* in Amache. Over a year later, Clarence Gobbell, a preacher in Arizona, tells a similar story of entering the Gila River incarceration camp in Arizona with several other preachers to visit with members of the Westside Church of Christ in Los Angeles who were incarcerated there.[19] Neither of these articles included any requests for assistance or encouragement to others to participate in similar ministry.

Christian Unity

Understandings of Christian unity also contributed to the reluctance of leaders in Churches of Christ to speak out about potentially controversial issues. Churches of Christ were born out of a desire for Christian unity, but by the mid-twentieth century had been strongly influenced by Lipscomb's argument that "the only basis for Christian unity was to follow meticulously the clear teachings of the Bible."[20] Unlike Lipscomb, however, who had little room in his theology for "nonessentials," many in Churches of Christ

19. Clarence Gobbell, "Tempe, Arizona, Preacher Reports Growth in State," *Christian Chronicle* 2.26 (November 29, 1944): 5.

20. Douglas A. Foster, "Unity, Christian," pp. 754–58 in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement,* ed. Douglas A Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 755.

tolerated diverse beliefs on issues that were outside the realm of ecclesiology, which had become "the focus of the theology . . . [and] the body's theological identity."[21]

Wartime issues were seen as ones that Christians could, in good conscience, disagree upon, as seen in the way the major journals within the movement dealt with the question of Christian military service. Articles in the *GA* argued that a Christian should support the government as much as possible "without violating God's truth and his conscience," and placed high value on each person's conscience to determine their position on military service. Several editorials asked for donations to financially support objectors from Churches of Christ.[22] The *GA* also reprinted an 1866 article by then-editor David Lipscomb arguing that submission to world powers was limited by submission to God.[23] The *FF* made stronger statements opposing the war and advocating for conscientious objection, arguing that Christians should never kill in service to their governments and publishing very few articles advocating for military service.[24]

While the journals published more comments advocating for conscientious objection than supporting military service, neither journal condemned either position. Both journals understood that most eligible members of Churches of Christ served willingly in the armed forces.[25] They both mentioned the "many" members of Churches of Christ in the military, and the *GA* ran a weekly list of Churches of Christ near military

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21. Williams, Foster, and Blowers, eds., *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* 139.

22. "Concerning Conscientious Objectors," *GA* 84.6 (February 5, 1942): 124.

23. David Lipscomb, "Church of Christ and World Powers," *GA* 84.18 (April 30, 1942). Article originally printed December 18, 1866.

24. Hugo McCord, "What Should a Christian Do in Wartime?" *FF* 59.19 (May 12, 1942): 3.

25. Michael W. Casey, "Warriors Against the War: The Pacifists of the Churches of Christ in World War II," *Restoration Quarterly* 35.3 (1993): 162.

bases.[26] The *GA* and *FF* seemed to attempt to walk a line between supporting those who served in the military and educating their readers about conscientious objection.

This middle ground was surely related to the journals' awareness of the fact that most eligible members of Churches of Christ served willingly in the armed forces.[27] The *GA*'s appeal to each individual's conscience in deciding the issue illuminates the ecclesiological belief that they did not have the authority to dictate a particular stance on the issue. The journals certainly did advocate for and against certain beliefs, but the issues surrounding the war were dealt with cautiously, as many in Churches of Christ did not think the war should be used as a test of fellowship for Christians. The non-committal stance that these journals held about the issue of military service illustrates how they would approach the incarceration. These journals, however, dealt much less frequently with the incarceration than they did with other wartime events. In fact, one could diligently read the *GA* and *FF* and barely be aware that *Nikkei* had been incarcerated.

Numerous explanations for this lack of attention are possible, including the fact that, as Yukikazu Obata shows, these journals were "written primarily for the edification of Christians," rather than as "medium[s] to communicate daily news."[28] These journals both did, however, publish news-like articles regularly. The December 18, 1941, issue of *GA* dedicated an entire page and a half to an article sharing the news that David

26. This list began in the article "Where Your Boy Can Worship," *GA* 84.5 (January 29, 1942) 118–19. The list ran weekly, though its name was changed to "Where Soldiers May Worship" and eventually "Where the Saints Assemble."

27. Casey, "Warriors Against the War," 162.

28. Yukikazu Obata, "Against the Odds: J. M. McCaleb's Missionary Vision of Universality in the Context of Imperial Japan, 1892–1945" (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2016), 183–84.

Lipscomb College had become debt-free.[29] Several pages in each *GA* issue were dedicated to "News and Notes," a section which consisted of brief news updates from various congregations and leaders within Churches of Christ. The *FF* similarly published news reports from around the nation, with both papers focusing on news such as baptisms, successful gospel meetings, missionary reports, or new congregational initiatives. As already discussed, even wartime news occasionally made its way into the pages of these journals. To better understand why the incarceration was almost entirely ignored, we turn to our final ecclesiological issue, which seems to have been most influential for creating this silence.

The Church as a Millennial Society

While the two characteristics of Churches of Christ which have already been discussed turned the volume down drastically on any discussion of the incarceration within the movement, this third characteristic silenced it almost completely. Congregational autonomy and an emphasis on Christian unity may have meant that leaders were reluctant to discuss potentially divisive issues, yet they continued to hotly debate some things, even dividing outright over them. The question that remains, then, is why were some issues worth debating and dividing over, while others such as the incarceration were hardly mentioned? One possible answer is related to the perceived nature of particular issues and their relationship to the church's authority and mission.

While many leaders in the movement held different millennial views, the idea that the church exists somehow separate from other human societies or governments was

29. S. H. Hall, "David Lipscomb College," *Gospel Advocate* 83.51 (December 18, 1942): 1208–17.

extremely prevalent. For many, this meant that the church should focus solely on explicitly religious topics, leaving social and political issues to others. As already discussed, ecclesiology was the theological center for Churches of Christ in the mid-twentieth century. This focus meant that questions of church leadership, structure, and practice were deemed as particularly relevant for Christians to discuss, while most other topics became ancillary, contributing to the lack of attention given to the incarceration, except when it could be discussed in specifically religious terms.

The impact of this theological characteristic on the content of the public discourse among Churches of Christ can be seen in the way that major journals within the movement responded to the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, the occasion for America's entry into WWII and the ultimate cause of the incarceration. While much of the United States reacted strongly to this attack, Churches of Christ seemed to almost ignore the attack and America's subsequent entry into WWII. News outlets and leaders across the country were quick to issue statements about the attack, most famously through President Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech claiming that the date of the attack would "live in infamy."[30] Certainly it would have been difficult to engage with any media source in the weeks following the attack and not encounter commentary about the war.

Many religious groups, especially on the west coast, responded to Pearl Harbor by immediately calling for love towards *Nikkei* in America. Some groups had been warning about anti-Japanese sentiment for months prior, as tensions between America and Japan increased.[31] Quakers quickly advocated for the civil rights of *Nikkei* following Pearl

30. Franklin D Roosevelt, *Speech By Franklin D. Roosevelt, New York Transcript,* 1941, PDF, https://www.loc.gov/item/afccal000483/.

31. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 18.

Harbor by making statements and creating initiatives.[32] Catholic bishops and organizations issued statements focused on loving one's neighbors, especially *Nikkei*.[33] Several ecumenical Protestant organizations, issued a joint statement on December 9th, 1941, asking American Christians "to maintain a Christian composure and charity in their dealings with the Japanese people among us."[34]

While some religious publications were thoroughly addressing wartime issues, the *GA* and *FF*, the two most influential journals among Churches of Christ at the time, made no mention of the war until two weeks after the attack, and then only vaguely. A December 21 *GA* article refers to "a very dark year in human history" and "barbaric and dark forces of evil in the totalitarian states," though no specifics or details are given.[35] A *FF* editorial the same week calls "Pearl Harbor" a "startling event," describing it only as America's "occasion for entry into the war."[36] Otherwise, these journals focused on explicitly religious issues such as evangelism, church growth, and commentary on biblical passages.

Refusing to discuss or even acknowledge such a monumental event as the attack on Pearl Harbor was not an accident, nor was it a reflection of ignorance or indifference towards these events. On the contrary, the lack of response spoke volumes about the way Churches of Christ would collectively respond to many of the events of WWII, including the incarceration. Churches of Christ, rooted in the ecclesiological beliefs already

32. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 19–20.

33. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 38.

34. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 28.

35. John Allen Hudson, "'On Earth Peace'—and War." *GA* 83.52 (December 24, 1941): 1233.

36. "The Dying Year," *FF* 58.51 (December 23, 1941): 4.

described, saw themselves as a community set apart from society and felt no need to substantively address issues facing America and the world except when those events touched the ecclesiological center of their identity.

WWII was not the only time that many in Churches of Christ avoided addressing issues that were not seen to be central to the movement's ecclesiological identity. As described in chapter one, Alexander Campbell and other early leaders in the Stone-Campbell Movement were hesitant to make slavery a point of public debate out of fear that it would lead to division. After WWII, many in Churches of Christ would adopt similar attitudes to other nationally relevant issues such as the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. Even though the Vietnam War was instrumental to "the politicization of religion in the U.S.," journals and public figures in Churches of Christ did little to address it publicly.[37] Around the same time, the Civil Rights Movement was dominating much of the public discourse in America, yet the primary journals associated with Churches of Christ generally avoided the topic, as did leaders in the movement such as James D. Bales, whose approach to integration was described in chapter one.

The perceived silence of Churches of Christ on important social and political issues would lead some in the movement to create new avenues of having their voices heard. A new publication entitled *Mission* was started by some in the movement in 1967 to "address several topics of concern in the sixties with a new openness," including the Vietnam War and the political activity of Christian colleges.[38] In its first volume, *Mission*

37. Rick L. Nutt, *An Historical Study of United States Religious Response to the Vietnam War: A Matter of National Morality* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012), 521.

38. Thomas Olbricht, "New Journals for the Sixties: Restoration Quarterly and Mission," essay published on the ACU Digital Commons.

would devote significant space to the Vietnam War, and often provided members and leaders in the movement the opportunity to share their opinions in forums and letters to the editor.[39] Tom Olbricht argues that journals like *Mission*, which provided "a vehicle for alternate voices," were tied to the decrease in the prominence and authority of journal editors in the movement towards the end of the twentieth century.[40]

No such journal existed in the 1940s in Churches of Christ. The few mentions of the incarceration in the movement's prominent journals suggest a desire to frame the issue in explicitly religious terms. When McCaleb related the story of Hirosuke Ishiguro, the focus was on Ishiguro's continued faithfulness to God, as he sees his incarceration as an opportunity for "biblical researches, preparatory to my humble service after peace is restored."[41] Margaret Upton is careful to note that the *Nikkei* incarcerated in the Amache camp were faithful members of Churches of Christ, stating that they were led by "elders Yoshimuni (sic) and Shigekuni whose doctrine is set down by the Apostles in the New Testament teachings."[42] Clarence Gobbell confirms that those members of Churches of Christ incarcerated in the Gila River camp in Arizona were "meeting each Sunday morning, for Lord's Supper."[43] More space in these articles was dedicated to depicting

39. e.g., James David Bales, "Is the Love of Enemies the Supreme Love?" *Mission* 1.6 (1967): 10; James David Bales, "Mission Forum: Letter to the Editors," *Mission* 1.8 (1968): 29; Harry Akers, "Mission Forum: Letter to the Editors," *Mission* 1.8 (1968): 30; Cecil May Jr. "Mission Form: Letter to the Editors," *Mission* 1.8 (1968): 29.

40. Olbricht, "New Journals for the Sixties."

41. McCaleb, "The Japanese Church in Los Angeles," 4.

42. Margaret Upton, "Japanese Evacuee Group Continues Worship Even in Concentration Center," *Christian Chronicle* 1.2 (June 9, 1943): 7. Upton is referring to Shigeto Yoshimune, who, along with his wife, Ishiyo, was a prominent leader of the Westside Church of Christ.

43. Gobbell, "Tempe, Arizona, Preacher," 5.

the incarcerated *Nikkei* as faithful members of Churches of Christ than describing the hardships they faced or advocating for assistance on their behalf.

White Supremacy

The three theological characteristics that have been discussed may be enough to explain the relative silence and particular responses to the incarceration among Churches of Christ, but they are better understood alongside of the influence of white supremacy on the movement. Despite their reluctance to discuss controversial issues or those which were not explicitly religious, religious journals, schools, and lectureships all included some mention of social and political issues, including wartime issues. The *Graphic*, the school paper for Pepperdine College, and ACC's *Optimist* did not mention the incarceration at all despite both colleges having students directly affected by the event and regularly mentioning other wartime issues.[44] *The Optimist* ran a brief article praising Masaaki "Robert" Ishiguro, a student member of the paper's staff who had transferred to ACC from Pepperdine during the war to avoid incarceration. The article itself focused on Masaaki's personality and involvement around campus, describing him as an "amiable, capable, helpful fellow," but made no mention of the incarceration or his reason for transfer.[45] The prevalence of white supremacy within the movement, in conjunction with the above theological characteristics, served as the final muffler on any conversations about the incarceration in these publications.

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44. The *Graphic* included news of a social club's event focused on the situation of Japanese Americans, but few details were given. "'American Japanese and the War' Takes Decureans Attention," *Graphic* (February 11, 1942): 4.

45. "Orchids to . . ." *Optimist* 31.9 (November 12, 1943), 3.

As has already been seen, white supremacy in the movement was prevalent at the time, and people, such as Foy E. Wallace in the *Bible Banner,* were not afraid to make overtly racist claims in the movement's publications, revealing their clear assumption of white superiority. Even those who did not make overtly racist statements were influenced by white supremacy ideology, albeit more implicitly. This influence stretched as far as people like J. M. McCaleb, who harbored both deep compassion for the Japanese people and underlying white supremacist assumptions.

White supremacy within Churches of Christ manifested itself in the silence regarding the incarceration of *Nikkei*, even those from within their own movement. While this silence may not be overtly participatory in the injustice of the incarceration, as Tisby writes, "The refusal to act in the midst of injustice is itself an act of injustice. Indifference to oppression perpetuates oppression."[46] Whether they were ignorant of the plight of *Nikkei* in America, indifferent to the situation, or unwilling to speak out, Churches of Christ generally failed to serve and seek justice for incarcerated *Nikkei.* While several theological commitments contributed to this stance, so did the fact that many white Americans, including Churches of Christ, saw little reason to stand up for justice for people of color. The vitriol that met the Civil Rights Movement just a few decades later in the American South, the region where Churches of Christ had the strongest presence, is enough to show the influence that white supremacy surely had on responses to the incarceration.

46. Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019).

One of the challenges in understanding the role of white supremacy in shaping public statements about people of Japanese descent during WWII is the blending of cultural, ethnic, and national identities. During the war, Americans generally voiced positive sentiments about the American military and government while being more critical of the Japanese, German, and Italian nations. That anti-Japanese sentiment was tied to national loyalty as much as it was to white supremacy can be seen in the ways Chinese Americans were viewed more favorably during the war.[47] Furthermore, Japan's war strategy, which included the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the severe mistreatment of prisoners of war and civilians in occupied areas, created a significant opposition to the Japanese nation and government among the American people.[48]

The wartime mood makes it difficult to distinguish sentiments that are tied to perceived racial and cultural identities from those that are tied to national identities. Likely some combination of both is in play, but it is also possible that the wartime situation provided an opportunity for underlying racist attitudes to be brought to the surface. On a national scale, WWII led to widespread discrimination against *Nikkei* in America, most notably through the incarceration, using the rationale of "military necessity," despite the lack of evidence that there was any military necessity for the incarceration.[49] The fact that *Nikkei* in America faced greater systemic discrimination

47. Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 190–98.

48. For more on Japanese war strategy, "war crimes," and the anti-Japanese sentiment these things created, see Sandra Wilson et al., *Japanese War Criminals: The Politics of Justice after the Second World War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

49. Daniels, *Asian America,* 200–202.

than did German or Italian immigrants further leads to the conclusion that white supremacy at least somewhat affected wartime responses.

Publicly stated anti-Japanese statements among members of Churches of Christ are likely tied both to the wartime mood and the underlying white supremacy already seen to be prevalent in the movement. Hugo McCord argued that Japanese Christians should refuse to be drafted into the Japanese military to "attack innocent Americans or Chinese" in a lecture given at ACC.[50] McCord's statements could be seen as placing an expectation on Japanese Christians that was not placed on American or European Christians, but this was likely more of a rhetorical strategy than revelatory of his beliefs. Elsewhere, McCord argued that no Christian should kill for his nation.[51] His focus on Japanese Christians in the lecture likely reveals his understanding that his audience at ACC would be more receptive to his anti-war statements if he used Japanese soldiers as an example than they would if he openly criticized American servicemen.

The following year, Don H. Morris, also in a lecture at ACC, uses WWII as an image to discuss Christian perseverance in the face of apparent defeat. He describes the early victories that Axis powers enjoyed against America and her Allies by stating that "France was defeated" and "Great Britain was exhausted and well-nigh defeated," with no mention of German aggressors. In describing the Pacific war, however, Morris clearly refers to "the treacherous attack . . . upon Pearl Harbor by the Japanese."[52] Morris's

50. Hugo McCord, "Loyalty to Christ," in *Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures, 1944.* Delivered in the auditorium of Abilene Christian College (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1942).

51. McCord, "What Should a Christian Do in Wartime?," 3.

52. Don H. Morris, "The Future of Abilene Christian College," Delivered in the auditorium of Abilene Christian College (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1944): 63–65.

language fits a common pattern among Americans "to discuss acts of violence by non-white groups towards white people using the active voice while describing violence by white North Americans . . . towards non-whites in the passive voice."[53] Similarly, in a lecture defending the authority of Scripture, C. R. Nichol lists several non-Christian religions texts but chooses only to elaborate on the negative elements of "Shintoism of Japan."[54] Whether intentionally or not, both of these men chose to use negative language to speak of the Japanese people, while refraining from outright criticism of other people who could have been similarly categorized.

The derogatory slang term "Jap" was not used frequently to describe people of Japanese descent in publications within Churches of Christ, but it did appear from time to time, always in the context of stories that portray a Japanese person in a negative light.[55] Often, this term was used in a description of wartime activity and combat, and in the phrase "Japs and Germans."[56] This terminology was common during WWII and had not yet been publicly defined as a derogatory slang term. The term was clearly understood as a negative one, however, as evidenced by its use in negative contexts. Hugo McCord, in a

53. Jeremy Jimenez, "Race, Discrimination, and the Passive Voice: Hardship Narratives in the U.S. Social Studies Textbooks: 1860 to the Present," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 11.2 (2020): 1.

54. C. R. Nichol, "The Bible," Delivered in the auditorium of Abilene Christian College (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1944): 104.

55. "P. S. Woodbridge," *FF* 58.33 (August 19, 1941): 6. George W. Dehoff, "This and That," *GA* 85.5 (February 4, 1943): 104. W. M. Davis, "Things to Consider," *FF* 59.18 (May 5, 1942): 1. R. V. Wood, *FF* 60.12 (June 29, 1943): 12.

56. "Who Are the Martyrs?" *FF* 60.50 (December 14, 1943): 3. Guy N. Woods, "An Examination of Christian Science," *FF* 59.13 (March 31, 1942): 1.

criticism of the violent wartime spirit, claims that the phrase "Slap the Japs" is "not Christian."[57]

To claim that Churches of Christ were heavily influenced by white supremacy is not to say that many in the movement were not loving towards people of color, including incarcerated *Nikkei*. In fact, the willingness of white Christians to worship with *Nikkei* and welcome them into their schools at a time when congregations and colleges were still segregated shows that for many, Christian unity was more important than the differences between white and *Nikkei* Christians.[58] Several articles in the *20th Century Christian* critique the idea of racial prejudice, using America's wartime enemies of Germany and Japan to prove the evils of racism.[59] One noteworthy articles tells the story of a *Nikkei* student at the University of California named Mickey, who was mistreated following Pearl Harbor, and questions the American practice of "marketing *all* Japanese—or, for that matter, *all* Germans and Italians—residing here as enemy aliens."[60]

The vast majority of mentions of Japanese people in the movement's publications are, in some sense, sympathetic, as many people wrote about the need to evangelize the Japanese people or told stories about Japanese Christians. White supremacy can be most

57. McCord, "What Should a Christian Do in Wartime?," 3.

58. Isabel Wilkerson provides helpful context for why white Americans responded differently to *Nikkei* than to Black Americans in this period by describing whites and Blacks as "the poles of the American caste system," which situated all other ethnic groups, including Asians, somewhere in the middle. Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste*: *The Origins of Our Discontents* (Random House: New York, 2020), 28.

59. James D. Bales, "Christ and Color," *20th Century Christian* 5.3 (December 1942): 10–11. James D. Bales, "To My Colored Brother," *20th Century Christian* 5.10 (July 1943): 15. Logan Fox, "The Superior Race," *20th Century Christian* 5.5 (February 1943): 14–17. The fact that several articles were written by James D. Bales, who opposed integration at Harding College, points to the underlying white supremacist logic at play.

60. Woodrow Whitten, "My Friend Micky," *20th Century Christian* 4.5 (February 1942): 29–30.

clearly seen in the fact that, in much the same way as they spoke about Black Christians, white members of Churches of Christ described *Nikkei* as "Japanese," even though many of them were American citizens.

Tisby argues that "Many individuals throughout American church history exhibited blatant racism, yet they also built orphanages and schools. They deeply loved their families; they showed kindness toward others." As Obata notes, Foy E. Wallace, whose journal the *Bible Banner* did not contain the name of a single Japanese Christian during the war, according to his biographer, "was a person known for his pastoral spirit and generosity."[61] On the other hand, a recognition of the legitimate love shown towards *Nikkei* by some in Churches of Christ does not negate the negative influence of white supremacy on the movement and its theology. Obata continues his comments about Wallace by noting "what a difference" could have been made if he "had a personal acquaintance with Japanese Christians."[62]

Conclusion

Aside from a few notable comments, Churches of Christ were virtually silent as a movement in response to the incarceration of *Nikkei.* They were not alone in this silence, but their specific response was rooted in the particularities of the movement. None of these factors alone can account for such a response, but together they paint the picture of a movement without the infrastructure to take decisive action, unwilling to create controversy or division on issues that were not deemed essential, and, at least to some extent, unconcerned about or unable to identify injustice towards people of color in its

61. Obata, "Against the Odds," 183.

62. Obata, "Against the Odds," 183.

midst. Collectively, the movement failed to show that the situation of *Nikkei* Americans, even members of Churches of Christ, was significant, and leaders within the movement failed to call for any action on the part of its members. The historical characteristics of Churches of Christ are important for contemporary members of the movement because many of the same instincts are present, or at least still influential, in the movement today. Leaders in the movement would benefit from considering how these instincts affected the response to injustice in the mid-twentieth century, because this consideration may inform a response to contemporary and future injustice in America.

CHAPTER V

INDIVIDUAL, LOCALIZED RESPONSES TO THE INCARCERATION

Most of the noteworthy responses to the incarceration among Churches of Christ were by individuals who acted autonomously to perform localized ministry that was not intended to reflect or influence the attitudes of the movement as a whole. Several individuals, and even an entire congregation, worked to assist incarcerated *Nikkei* in numerous ways, but they did so as individual Christians, without encouragement from leaders in the movement or very much publicity within the movement. These acts of ministry were reflections of the lived faith of the individuals who performed them, as well as the personal connections established before the wartime, but were also influenced by the theological characteristics of Churches of Christ.

The lack of centralized denominational authority in Churches of Christ encouraged localized individual action in general, including as a response to the incarceration of *Nikkei.* While some denominations organized unified responses including sending funding and ministers into incarceration camps, members of Churches of Christ were left to decide for themselves how, or if, to respond to the incarceration. Most members of Churches of Christ, just like most members of the white American church more broadly, said and did nothing to aid incarcerated *Nikkei.* As has already been shown, the most influential members and institutions among Churches of Christ reflect the reality that, as historian Mark Noll writes, the church "maintained a shameful silence"

regarding the incarceration.[1] Some Christians, however, did speak out and act in support of *Nikkei.* Robert Shaffer has shown that members of historical peace churches such as the Quakers and former missionaries to Japan were the most likely to offer their support to *Nikkei* during the war.[2]

Churches of Christ are not considered a historic peace church, but former missionaries to Japan among the movement were more likely to try to aid incarcerated *Nikkei* in some way. Several other notable members of Churches of Christ also made intentional efforts to minister to *Nikkei* during WWII, including one entire congregation. These responses, while not reflective of the entire movement's actions, do reflect the theological characteristics of Churches of Christ that have been discussed. Congregational autonomy, an emphasis on Christian unity, the belief in the church as a millennial society, and white supremacy all contributed to some from Churches of Christ responding to the incarceration in individual, localized ways. These individual responses were natural in a faith tradition that lacks a denominational governing body that could instruct its members how to respond to particular situations.

Explaining and interpreting motives behind the isolated actions of individuals is much more challenging than doing the same regarding journals or institutions that have public and well-documented patterns of behavior. Individuals may have numerous reasons for each specific action, and the record of those actions likely provides no explanation whatsoever. Rather than attempting to provide the reasons behind each

1. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 437.

2. Robert Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment: Defending Japanese American Rights During World War II," *The Historian* 61.3 (1999): 597–98.

specific action, therefore, I first describe the actions of those individuals who responded in localized ways to the incarceration before proceeding to interpret the actions in general in light of key characteristics of Churches of Christ. By proceeding in this manner, I hope to avoid suggesting that the dominant characteristics of Churches of Christ were the only, or even the primary, motivators behind the actions of any individual. Instead, I argue that the theological character of Churches of Christ influenced particular patterns of response by these individuals, even though they were each uniquely motivated.

Former Missionaries to Japan

Robert Shaffer has shown that, despite the consensus that most Americans failed to defend the rights of *Nikkei* during WWII, some American Christians were in fact outspoken in opposition to incarceration policies.[3] Among those who were most likely to speak out in support of *Nikkei* were those with "close ties to Japanese Americans," especially former Christian missionaries to Japan.[4] Churches of Christ had been engaged in evangelistic mission efforts in Japan since the mid-nineteenth century, and a number of former missionaries to Japan did in fact work to aid incarcerated *Nikkei* during WWII.

J. M. McCaleb was the most publicly outspoken leader among Churches of Christ who seemed to advocate for the Japanese people and incarcerated *Nikkei.* McCaleb also clearly maintained a personal relationship with *Nikkei* in America, including those who were incarcerated such as Hirosuke Ishiguro. McCaleb's relationship with Ishiguro dates

3. Robert Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment: Defending Japanese American Rights During World War II," The Historian 61 No. 3 (1999): 597–8.

4. Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment," 598.

back to McCaleb's time in Tokyo, where Hirosuke was also ministering.[5] McCaleb was among several members of Churches of Christ who provided assistance to Ishiguro during the war.

Ishiguro had been arrested in March 1942 along with other leaders in the Japanese American community who were perceived as possible threats to American national security.[6] The names of these people who would be arrested had been compiled by the FBI years prior to the war and included members of Japanese nationalistic societies and community and religious leaders.[7] Some people on these "Custodial Detention Lists" would be arrested as soon as December 8, 1941, the day following Pearl Harbor, while others, such as Ishiguro, were not arrested until much later. Ishiguro himself recognized that he was arrested alongside "any alien Japanese who were leaders of schools, churches, and social organizations, which were affiliated with Japan in any way."[8]

Ishiguro was sent to a detention camp in Santa Fe, NM, and eventually an internment camp in Lordsburg, NM, where he was questioned about potentially seditious activity. Ishiguro was eventually transferred to the Amache camp near Granada, CO, where his family and most of his congregation were incarcerated. Several former missionaries to Japan, including McCaleb, H. R. Fox Jr., and E. A. Rhodes, visited Ishiguro during his detention and helped secure his transfer to Amache. Also instrumental

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5. Yukikazu Obata, "Against the Odds: J. M. McCaleb's Missionary Vision of Universality in the Context of Imperial Japan, 1892–1945" (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2016), 78–9.

6. Earl Irvin West. *The Search for the Ancient Order V. 4: A History of the Restoration Movement 1919–1950* (Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, 1987), 345.

7. Kashima, "Custodial detention /A-B-C list," *Densho Encyclopedia*.

8. S. H. Hall, "The Japanese Church of Christ in Los Angeles Reopens," *Firm Foundation* 63.21 (May 21, 1946): 3.

to Ishiguro's fair treatment and transport to Amache were Evan Johnson, the chief steward at the detention camp in Santa Fe, and W. Ray Johnson, a top administrator in the Amache camp, both of whom were members of Churches of Christ.[9]

E. A. Rhodes aided other incarcerated *Nikkei* from Churches of Christ as well, especially by taking care of their property when they were removed from their homes. Many *Nikkei* who were incarcerated lost their property, homes, businesses, and other things they could not take with them to the camps. The government provided no assistance in this matter, and most *Nikkei* were forced to either abandon their belongings or sell them at extremely low prices. Some white church leaders who remained on the west coast, including E. A. Rhodes and his wife, aided their *Nikkei* brethren by keeping an eye on their property during the war.[10]

The Rhodeses, who had served as missionaries in Japan for a number of years, had been heavily involved in the Westside Church of Christ.[11] Toshiko Aiboshi, who was incarcerated in Amache as a child, remained in possession of a piano that the Rhodeses had held for her almost seventy years later. The piano, a gift from her father, who had died when Aiboshi was young, continued to hold great sentimental value decades after the war.[12] Rhodes visited the Amache camp at least once on May 1, 1943, where he

9. West, *The Search for the Ancient Order,* 345; Margaret Upton, "Japanese Evacuee Group Continues Worship Even in Concentration Center," *Christian Chronicle* 1.2 (June 9, 1943): 7–8.

10. Anne M. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 175.

11. Toshiko Aiboshi, Interview by Richard Potashin, January 20, 2011, transcript and recording, Densho Digital Archive, denshovh-atoshiki-01.

12. Toshiko Aiboshi, Interview by Richard Potashin.

spoke and served communion.[13] He also preached that day at the Church of Christ in Granada.

Hettie Lee Ewing, another former missionary to Japan, was another member of Churches of Christ who worked to aid incarcerated *Nikkei.* Ewing's mission work in Japan had lasted from 1927 to 1940, excluding the period from 1937–1940 when she returned to America to attend ACC. Her initial interaction with *Nikkei* came when she moved to Los Angeles in 1925 to work with Hirosuke Ishiguro and learn Japanese language and culture.[14] She would eventually return to Japan to continue her work following the war, moving back and forth between America and Japan several times until she reached her late sixties. She made her final trip to Japan in 1976, at age eighty, where she was celebrated by her Japanese Christian friends in traditional Japanese fashion.[15]

Ewing's involvement with the WRA began when she lived in Washington, DC. and was asked by a WRA official to live with seven American-born Japanese girls who had been relocated to D.C. The WRA wanted these girls to live with a white woman who could help them assimilate into their new city and could also ensure that they did not create any tension. Ewing was asked to ensure that the girls did not all leave the house at the same time "so that the neighbors would not become excited."[16] Ewing's knowledge of Japanese language and culture made her an excellent candidate for WRA work and led to her transfer to the McGehee, AR camp, where she assisted incarcerated *Nikkei* in being

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13. "Reverend Rhodes to Visit Amache," *Granada Pioneer* (May 1, 1943): 5.

14. Orlan and Nina Sawey, *She Hath Done What She Could: The Reminiscences of Hettie Lee Ewing* (Dallas: Gospel Teachers Publications, 1974), 28.

15. Robert E. Hooper*, If Your Enemy Hungers Feed Him: Church of Christ Missionaries in Japan, 1892–1970* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2017), 293.

16. Sawey and Sawey, *She Hath Done What She Could,* 99.

relocated to new homes beginning in 1944.[17] She was particularly useful in relation with the older *Issei*, many of whom were not fluent in English.[18]

The stories that Ewing relates about her time living with several *Nikkei* girls and working in the McGehee camp reveal her awareness of the hardship that *Nikkei* in America were facing at the time, and her desire to aid them. She was aware of the animosity that some of the girls she lived with faced, acknowledging the irony that those girls were all American citizens.[19] Ewing also described the "drab" environment of the McGehee incarceration camp, calling it "not a happy place," but clarifying that incarcerated *Nikkei* were not generally treated poorly.[20] She helped many incarcerated *Nikkei* through the relocation process, including encouraging the relocation of several "old bachelors" who wanted to stay in Arkansas out of fear that they would not find a warm welcome or available work upon returning to California.[21]

Nikkei Students at Abilene Christian College

ACC had first admitted a student of Asian descent in 1920, when Hirosuke Ishiguro enrolled at the school.[22] Hirosuke was seemingly well-received at the school and became a member of the Harding Literary Society.[23] He taught a class on campus about Japanese language, culture, and customs and occasionally visited congregations in a

17. Sawey and Sawey, *She Hath Done What She Could,* 101.

18. Hooper, *If Your Enemy Hungers*, 284.

19. Sawey and Sawey, *She Hath Done What She Could*, 99.

20. Sawey and Sawey, *She Hath Done What She Could*, 101–2.

21. Sawey and Sawey, *She Hath Done What She Could*, 106–8.

22. "H. Ishiguro," *The Optimist* 8.10 (December 2, 1920): 1.

23. "Iberis Folk Hear Hardings' Lyceum," *The Optimist* 8.19 (February 17, 1921): 1.

number of rural towns near ACC to encourage support of missions and preach.[24] These visits to local congregations were generally in the company of ACC professor of Bible and Greek W. W. Freeman, who provided an introduction before Ishiguro spoke on the need for Christian missions in Japan.[25] Hirosuke also helped start a missionary preparation group with seven other students who volunteered for missionary work.[26] By 1921, a Native American named Scott Sherdee and a student from Mexico were also enrolled, both of whom, as reported by *The Optimist*, were intending "to return to their native people with the pure gospel."[27]

During WWII, ACC president Don H. Morris was instrumental in helping several incarcerated *Nikkei* enroll in the school. Morris's actions as the president of ACC are considered individual and localized because they were not publicized or heavily discussed in journals or other publications. It is difficult to determine whether Morris's actions were motivated primarily by his personal convictions or by policies and decisions made by ACC leadership, but it seems clear that he was personally invested in caring for the *Nikkei* who wound up at ACC and remaining on good terms with their families. Despite ACC's anti-integration policies which prevented Black people from attending the college, Morris helped the *Nikkei* students enroll and worked to make their time there as positive an experience as possible.

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24. "A Study of Japan," *The Optimist* 8.14 (January 13, 1921): 1; "Personals," *The Optimist* 8.13 (January 6, 1921); "Religious Activities," *The Optimist* 8.14 (January 13, 1921): 1.

25. "Good and Interesting Work Being Done by Dr. Freeman and Ishiguro," *The Optimist* 8.30 (May 12, 1921): 1.

26. "A New Mission Class," *The Optimist* 8.20 (February 24, 1921): 1.

27. "What Shall We Do with Abilene Christian College?" *The Optimist* 11.2 (September 27, 1923).

Morris's work to aid *Nikkei* began with his acceptance of Masaaki Ishiguro as a student at ACC. Masaaki, also called Robert, was the son of Hirosuke Ishiguro, and had been enrolled at George Pepperdine College prior to EO 9066. With the assistance of Pepperdine registrar J. Herman Campbell, Masaaki applied to transfer to ACC in 1942. Campbell wrote to ACC Dean Walter H. Adams, telling him of Masaaki's desire to transfer and commending him as being "above average in his school work" and having shown "marvelous spirit" as a student worker.[28] The timing of Campbell's letter, sent on March 19, 1942, reveals the urgent situation in which many *Nikkei* found themselves. Campbell requests "immediate information as to the possibilities for [Masaaki] entering Abilene Christian College, for all of his arrangement must be made by Monday, March 23, at which time the F.B.I. will get him if A.C.C. doesn't."[29]

Don Morris took it upon himself to assist in Masaaki's enrollment, responding within a day to Campbell's letter, saying "we will be taking [Masaaki] solely upon your recommendation but will be glad to take and assist him, if you recommend him."[30] Morris agreed to give Masaaki a "ministerial concession" and cover the entirety of his tuition, though Masaaki would be responsible for his own living expenses.[31] Morris was familiar with Masaaki's father, himself a graduate of ACC in 1922, just a few months

28. Letter, J. Herman Campbell to Walter H. Adams, March 19, 1942, Box 3, Don Heath Morris Papers, 1860–1974. Center for Restoration Studies MS #339. Milliken Special Collections, Brown Library. Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX (hereafter cited as MS #339).

29. J. Herman Campbell to Walter H. Adams, March 19, 1942, MS #339.

30. Don H. Morris to J. Herman Campbell, March 20, 1942, MS #339.

31. Don H. Morris to J. Herman Campbell, March 20, 1942, MS #339.

before Morris arrived at the college as a student.[32] The elder Ishiguro was notable as the first student of Asian descent to ever attend ACC and as one of the school's first missionary students.[33]

Masaaki Ishiguro was not the only *Nikkei* student to be accepted at ACC during WWII. Four other students who had been onetime members at the Westside Church of Christ in Los Angeles also enrolled: Lorraine Hasegawa, Michio Nagai, Alys Watada, and Emma Hasegawa. These students were beneficiaries of the WRA's policies which allowed university students from west coast colleges and incarcerated college-aged students to receive permission to leave the camps for school or, as in the case of Masaaki, avoid the camps altogether. Following Pearl Harbor, as rumors of the potential for incarceration began to grow, activists and administrators on the west coast began to try to aid *Nikkei* students in being resettled to inland or eastern colleges.

Several hundred of the roughly 3,200 *Nikkei* students enrolled in west coast colleges were successfully resettled prior to the incarceration, while thousands more were relocated out of the camps themselves.[34] The relocation efforts were headed up by the Japanese American Student Relocation Council (JASRC), a private agency that worked closely with the WRA and college administrators to obtain release permission for *Nikkei* and enroll them in colleges.[35] More than six hundred schools accepted *Nikkei* students

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32. Charlie Marler, "World War II Was an Early Test of Ethnic Diversity," *ACU Today* (Fall 2012): 18.

33. "What Does ACC of 1946 Have That ACC of 1920 Didn't Have? Nothing!" *The Optimist* 34.8 (November 22, 1946), 3.

34. Robert O'Brien, *The College Nisei* (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1949), 135–37; Austin W. Allen, "From Concentration Camp to Campus: A History of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, 1942–1946," PhD diss. (University of Cincinnati, 2001), 2.

35. Allen, "From Concentration Camp to Campus," 2.

through the JASRC during the war, though many institutions refused them, including Princeton University, which claimed they could not protect *Nikkei* students, and a Bible college in Idaho, which blatantly stated, "We don't want any Japs here."[36] Schools that did accept *Nikkei* students had generally positive experiences, in part due to the JASRC's commitment to helping students "serve as 'ambassadors of good will' in their new communities."[37] Don Morris and ACC provide an example of a school and administrator that arranged for *Nikkei* students to attend without aid from the JASRC. As Austin W. Allen points out, students who were resettled apart from the JASRC generally needed some sort of special connections to successfully do so. In the case of Don Morris and ACC, the special connection came through a shared Christian tradition, a tradition which included Morris, the students who came to ACC, and the director of the Amache incarceration camp near Granada, CO, W. Ray Johnson.

Morris corresponded with Johnson regarding Michio Nagai's enrollment at ACC. Johnson made a special request that Nagai should be accepted, citing the young man's "possibilities of leadership" including his ability and willingness to lead in church meetings.[38] Johnson recommended that Nagai receive training "along the lines of public speaking," which was a wise suggestion given Nagai's eventual long career as a minister in Churches of Christ and Bible professor and chapel director at George Pepperdine College. Hirosuke Ishiguro was surely proud of this vocational path, as he expressed the

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36. Anne M. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 175.

37. Allen, "From Concentration Camp to Campus," 2. Allen points out that this commitment may have contributed to the "model minority" stereotype of Japanese Americans that developed in the mid-1960s and hindered the MISSING END OF NOTE

38. W. Ray Johnson to Don H. Morris, March 29, 1943, MS #339.

hope that Nagai would "take biblical course as my successor" and the leader of the "second generation" of *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ.[39] Morris gladly accepted Nagai as a student, reporting that he seemed to be an "excellent worker" and was "greeted with a very hearty welcome by our students."[40]

Morris's willingness to assist the *Nikkei* students seemed to extend beyond their enrollment and into their life on campus. He graciously responded to a letter from Mrs. F. Nagai, Michio's mother, about her son's living conditions. Mrs. Nagai expressed concern regarding Michio's physical examination, which found him "ten pounds underweight," and asked Morris if he could help Michio move to a dormitory on campus and ensure he was getting plenty to eat.[41] She went on to express her desire to send food to her son but said that "under the present condition it is impossible for me to do so."[42] Morris responded promptly to her letter, which had been written in Japanese and apparently translated by Lorraine Hasegawa. He praised Michio's work so far, calling him "one of the very finest boys that we have in Abilene Christian College" and promised "to assist him in every way that we can."[43] Morris blamed the lack of food on staff changes in the campus dining hall but assured Mrs. Nagai that the situation had been rectified, saying that he asked Michio to promise "that if he doesn't get enough good in the dining hall he will come and tell me personally about it."[44] There is no indication from either Mrs.

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39. J. M. McCaleb, "The Japanese Church in Los Angeles," *FF* 59.48 (December 1, 1942) 4.

40. Don H. Morris to W. Ray Johnson, April 7, 1943, MS #339.

41. Mrs. F. Nagai to Don H. Morris, December 3, 1943, MS #339.

42. Mrs. F. Nagai to Don H. Morris, December 3, 1943, MS #339.

43. Don H. Morris to Mrs. F. Nagai, December 5, 1943, MS #339.

44. Don H. Morris to Mrs. F. Nagai, December 5, 1943, MS #339.

Nagai or Morris that Michio's troubles with the dining hall were a result of discrimination directed at him specifically.

Several of the *Nikkei* students who enrolled at ACC would become prominent members of campus life. Masaaki Ishiguro and Michio Nagai helped found the *Frater Sodalis* social club, the second chapter of a club by the same name which Ishiguro had served as Vice President of at Pepperdine.[45] Nagai served as the founding Sergeant at Arms of the club, which has the distinction of being the oldest men's social club to have a constant presence on Abilene Christian's campus.[46] Lorraine Hasegawa served for several years as the leader of the Girls' Training Class, a religious student organization dedicated to helping ACC's women grow as Christian servants.[47]

Masaaki Ishiguro's relationship with fellow ACC student Anne Ramsey became a well-publicized story over fifty years after their time on campus. Ishiguro and Ramsey became engaged while in school, but, according to Ramsey, ACC told Ishiguro that the relationship must end due to the school's policy on interracial dating.[48] The two continued to date in secret, but after Ishiguro graduated and moved to Chicago in 1944, something very strange happened. Both Ramsey and Ishiguro received a series of letters, supposedly from each other, that led to their eventual split up. At the time, neither of them realized that the letters were from some third party who remains unknown to this

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45. "Frater Sodalis Club Chooses Officers," *Graphic* 5.4 (October 15, 1941): 3; "A.C.C. to Have Frater Sodalis." *Graphic* 7 No. 4 (October 22, 1943): 3.

46. "Fifteen Boys Announce New Social Club Organized," *The Optimist* 31.6 (October 22, 1943), 1.

47. "GTC Selects New Leader," *The Optimist* 32.2 (September 22, 1944), 3. "College Girls Start Training Class Tomorrow," *The Optimist* 23.5 (October 10, 1935), 3.

48. Barrett Koczkur, "Founding Frat Returns to Campus," *The Optimist* 89.15 (October 13, 2000), 5B.

day.[49] Each of them married and had children, but following the passing away of their respective spouses, they reconnected in September 1999 and were married the following year.

The presence of *Nikkei* on campus alongside students of various ethnic backgrounds caused some ACC students to take pride in their college's diversity. A January 12, 1945, editorial in *The Optimist* describes a scene in which students from diverse backgrounds sat down together: "At a table in the ACC beanery last Tuesday," reads the editorial, "sat six students: one of Japanese extraction, one with German blood flowing in his veins, one of Chinese parentage, two descendants of the English, and one citizen of Mexico."[50] The editorial claimed that "In a world of materialistic intolerance, a miracle of understanding and an oasis of peace have been achieved." Surely the Black potential students, who would not be admitted to ACC for another fifteen years, may wonder if the reality of the college's diversity was overstated, but this article speaks to the sentiment among some members of the school who cherished and sought ethnic diversity.

The Westside Church of Christ

Perhaps the most notable story of an individual response to the incarceration was the response of an entire congregation, the Granada, CO Church of Christ, which engaged in ministry in the nearby Amache incarceration camp, where most of the members of the Westside Church of Christ in Los Angeles had been sent. The Westside congregation had been started by Hirosuke Ishiguro in 1923 with the financial assistance of Cora M.

49. Koczkur, "Founding Frat," 5B.

50. Editorial: There's No International Prejudice on ACC Campus," *The Optimist* 32.16 (January 12, 1945): 2.

Brooks and the guidance of S. H. Hall.[51] By 1932 the congregation had outgrown its original building and began to appoint its own elders and deacons.[52] The congregation was forced to close following EO 9066 when its members were incarcerated and sent to the Santa Anita Assembly Center, one of fifteen detention facilities hastily constructed by the Wartime Civil Control Administration in the spring of 1942. Many of the roughly 20,000 *Nikkei* sent to this center, built at the Santa Anita Race Track, were required to sleep in horse stables.[53]

After several months, the members of the Westside Church of Christ were mostly sent to the Amache incarceration camp. One difficulty that they surely faced upon entering the camp was the tension between their desire to attend Christian worship and their distaste for the single Protestant Christian Church that existed in the camp. The Granada Christian Church was the Protestant congregation formed in Amache by the PCJS and the WRA. The Granada Christian Church chose the Apostles' Creed as its founding creed and baptism and the Lord's Supper as its sacraments and required that members "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior."[54] Christians who had been members of Churches of Christ, however, were generally unwilling to participate in such a congregation because, as Tom Shigekuni, a member of the Westside Church of Christ

51. James L. Lovell, "History of the Churches of Christ in California" (1959), *Churches of Christ Heritage Center,* Item 2, 15.

52. Hooper, *If Your Enemy Hungers*, 148.

53. John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 14.

54. "Constitution of the Granada Christian Church," in Granada Christian Church, Miscellaneous 1942–45, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library.

who was twelve when his family was incarcerated, stated, "They thought they were the only Christians."[55]

This difficulty was alleviated, however, by the presence of W. Ray Johnson, one of the top WRA administrators in Amache, who had joined the Church of Christ in Granada when he had moved to the area for his work in the camp. Despite the fact that in Amache, and most other camps, only a few religious services were allowed, Johnson made an exception for the *Nikkei* from Churches of Christ and provided them a space to meet separately while in the camp.[56] Additionally, Johnson helped to encourage a relationship between the members of Churches of Christ in the camp and those in nearby Granada. Tom Shigekuni remembers that the members of the Granada Church of Christ "welcomed us royally despite the general hostility of the people of the region to us prisoners."[57] Hirosuke Ishiguro would similarly remember the brethren in Granada who "were very kind to all of us and helped us."[58]

Many members of the Granada congregation entered the camp regularly to conduct revival meetings and worship services among their *Nikkei* brethren. Perry Blue of Allen, Oklahoma, and Arley Bever both secured passes to enter the camp as clergy, a remarkable fact given the policies of the WRA, which generally required official documentation and verified ordination from a denominational governing body for all

55. Tom Shigekuni, Interview by Marha Nakagawa, August 31, 2010, transcript and recording, Densho Digital Archive, denshovh-sthomas-01.

56. Toshiko Aiboshi, Interview by Richard Potashin.

57. Hooper, *If Your Enemy Hungers,* 155.

58. Hall, "The Japanese Church of Christ," 5.

clergy entering the camps.[59] This policy made it difficult for nondenominational Christians, such as those in Churches of Christ, to receive visits from their respective clergy. Blue and Bever were surely aided by Johnson's role in the camp and desire to see the members of the Churches of Christ worship and fellowship together.[60]

Even more unusual than Blue and Allen receiving passes to enter the camp as clergy was the fact that many other members of the Granada Church of Christ were allowed to enter the camp for joint worship services. Arley Bever's son Ron, eight years old at the time, remarked that it was quite "unusual" for such a large number of *Nikkei* members of a Church of Christ to be incarcerated in a camp located near a Church of Christ and with a member of the movement as its administrator.[61] Johnson reportedly "did everything in his power" to get the Granada congregation together with their *Nikkei* brethren "on a regular basis."[62] Ron Bever has held on to a photograph from March 1, 1943, which shows roughly thirty people, some white and some *Nikkei*, who had gathered for a joint worship service on a Sunday afternoon.[63] Ron, working in his parents' grocery store, helped to write bus tickets for *Nikkei* traveling elsewhere in the country, especially once the war ended and the Amache camp closed, though some *Nikkei* remained in the Granada area, farming or opening businesses.[64]

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59. Upton, "Japanese Evacuee Group," 7; Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice,* 113.

60. Upton, "Japanese Evacuee Group," 7.

61. Ron Bever, E-mail to Ellen Lovell, September 2013.

62. Thomas N. Shigekuni, "Background On the Relationship Between Evacuees and Residents," Amache and Granada, Colorado 1942–1944 (Southern California Subcommittee for the Amache Reunion '94 of the Amache Historical Society, 1994), 2.

63. Ron Bever, E-mail to Ellen Lovell, September 2013.

64. Ron Bever, E-mail to Ellen Lovell, September 2013.

After the war, the members of the Westside Church of Christ mostly returned to Los Angeles, where they were essentially forced to re-build their church life from the ground up. The Rhodeses assisted Hirosuke Ishiguro in finding new housing for the *Nikkei* church members returning to the west coast, and the congregation met in a home for about six months until the church building, which had been rented during the war, was vacated.[65] Even once the congregation began meeting in its old building again, part of the facility was used to house several families who were unable to find housing upon returning to Los Angeles. Ishiguro continued to conduct a Japanese service for older members who did not speak English, while the Rhodeses conducted an English service for younger members who were not as fluent in Japanese. The Westside Church of Christ continued meeting, holding both Japanese and English services, until 2002 when the congregation sold its building and used the proceeds to set up an endowed scholarship to benefit graduate students in the Religion and Philosophy Division at Pepperdine University.[66]

At least one other incarceration camp received visits from local members of Churches of Christ, though it is difficult to determine how regularly these visits occurred. Clarence Gobbell, a preacher in the Tempe, Arizona, area reported visiting with several members of Churches of Christ incarcerated in the Rivers, Arizona, camp.[67] Gobbell reported that several members of the Westside Church of Christ in Los Angeles,

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65. Hall, "The Japanese Church of Christ," 5

66. https://www.westsidechurchofchristla.org/about-us. In repayment for the financial gift, Pepperdine University continues to maintain the website of the Westside Church of Christ to preserve the congregation's legacy.

67. Clarence Gobbell, "Tempe, Arizona, Preacher," *Christian Chronicle* 2.26 (November 29, 1944): 5.

"converts of Brother H. Ishiguro," were incarcerated in the Rivers camp, and that there were "at least four of them who are meeting each Sunday morning, for Lord's Supper."[68] Gobbell reported that he and several other preachers had made visits, and that they hoped to visit more regularly, but there are no further records of such visits by him or any other preachers.

Historical Analysis

Understanding the motives and reasons behind the actions of those involved in the incarceration camps can be very difficult. Members of Churches of Christ who were incarcerated showed remarkable perseverance and faithfulness amid hardship and injustice, exemplified in Hirosuke Ishiguro's statement that the incarceration was "the best vacation" for "us who have faith in Christ" because it gave them plenty of time to be "engrossed in biblical research." The perseverance and faithfulness of incarcerated *Nikkei* were also seen in the lives of those who continued to worship faithfully in the camps and returned to Los Angeles to restart their congregation upon their release.

Ultimately, Ishiguro's stated feelings about the incarceration, while amazing in retrospect, were not uncommon among *Nikkei* at the time. Few *Nikkei* refused to comply with incarceration laws, and only a few more were actively outspoken against them. Mary Tsukamoto writes of her incarceration experience that "As good citizens, we felt it was our duty to cooperate in this hour of need. Our President himself had signed the order; we had no choice other than to obey. None of us considered doing anything less."[69] Tsukamoto's words reflect the position of many incarcerees who "lifted no voice in

68. Gobbell, "Tempe, Arizona, Preacher," 5.

69. Mary Tsukamoto and Elizabeth Pinkerton, *We the People: A Story of Internment in America* (Elk Grove, CA: Laguna, 1987), 8–10.

protest."[70] Despite this sentiment, the history of the camps is filled with stories of dissent and resistance, especially worker strikes, disputes over pay for incarcerees, and even several escape attempts and riots.

Some scholars have argued that the lack of outspoken opposition to internment among *Nikkei* was due more to their fear of seeming rebellious or defiant than it was to their actual agreement with American policy. Whatever their motivations, it is clear that many *Nikkei* found themselves in a difficult position when their loyalty to America was questioned, a fact exemplified in the fallout from the infamous "Loyalty Questionnaire," in which incarcerated *Nikkei* were asked, among other things, whether they would serve the U.S. military in whatever way they were asked to, and whether they would forswear allegiance to the emperor of Japan and swear unqualified allegiance to the U.S.[71] These questions caused no small amount of frustration among *Nikkei*.[72] American-born U.S. citizens resented being asked to forswear allegiance to the Japanese Emperor, when they had never sworn any to begin with. Those who still held Japanese citizenship were worried about what would happen if they forsook Japanese ties only to be deported by the U.S. All concerned, especially young men of an age to serve in armed combat, were worried that declaring willingness to assist the U.S. military would be seen as volunteering for service. Despite these difficulties, over 80% of respondents answered "yes" to these questions.[73]

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70. Tsukamoto and Pinkerton, *We the People,* 8.

71. Wendy Ng, *Japanese American Internment During World War II: A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 55–76.

72. Cherstin Lyon, "Loyalty Questionnaire," *Densho Encyclopedia.*

73. Lyon, "Loyalty Questionnaire," *Densho Encyclopedia.* One of the unintended consequences of this questionnaire was the fact that many of those who answered "no" were upset enough by the questions

The drama surrounding the loyalty questionnaire reveal the difficulty of determining the motives behind *Nikkei* responses to the incarceration. On the one hand, some *Nikkei* were likely nervous about how any dissent would be received by white Americans. On the other hand, many of them likely were legitimately understanding of the U.S.'s decisions or, in the case of Ishiguro and other members of Churches of Christ, had theological reasons to remain positive and gracious despite their difficult circumstances. Whatever their motivations, the perseverance and faithfulness of many of the incarcerated members of Churches of Christ stands out as a remarkable witness to their Christian faith.

Evaluating the motivations of the white members of Churches of Christ who aided *Nikkei* can be just as difficult. Many of these people surely provided aid simply out of love for their neighbor and an attempt to imitate the love of God, but the theological character of Churches of Christ was also a significant factor in their actions. While I do my best to offer historical analysis of their actions in light of the theological character of Churches of Christ, it should also be stated that many of the individuals involved in these events were motivated by their pursuit of Christian love. My historical analysis is in no way intended to diminish the human complexities that caused events to unfold the way that they did, but instead provides one perspective on some of the factors that may have shaped the relationship between white members of Churches of Christ and incarcerated *Nikkei.*

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that they requested repatriation or expatriation, including American-born U.S. citizens. By 1944 roughly 16% of all incarcerated *Nikkei* had requested to return to Japan.

Congregational Autonomy

The most obvious theological characteristic of Churches of Christ reflected in the individual, localized responses described above is congregational autonomy. These responses were, by definition, based on decisions made and actions taken by specific individuals in specific congregations. Simply put, members and congregations within Churches of Christ were not wired to think and act collectively. There is no reason to expect that members of the Granada Church of Christ or Clarence Gobbell in Arizona would have tried to export their model of ministry to other congregations because Churches of Christ simply did not tend to do such things.

Other than a few brief mentions in major journals of the assistance offered to Hirosuke Ishiguro and the Westside Church of Christ, some of which came after the war, none of the individuals above made a clear attempt to encourage others in the movement to participate in or imitate their ministry to incarcerated *Nikkei.* The lack of any attempt to influence other congregations is particularly noteworthy given the prominence of several of the people involved in ministry to *Nikkei,* and the opportunity that they may have had to speak publicly about the incarceration.

As president of ACC, Don Morris was in a prime position to exert significant influence on Churches of Christ, yet neither his public actions nor his personal correspondence show meaningful evidence of any attempt to do so. J. M. McCaleb, a well-known missionary within the movement, was clearly not afraid to ask for support for ministry that he found important. In fact, during WWII McCaleb helped to organize the Service Committee for Conscientious Objectors, a Los Angeles based effort to raise

money to support members of Churches of Christ who objected to military service.[74] Those who helped organize the Service Committee for Conscientious Objectors received criticism for this venture from some within the movement, especially Foy E. Wallace and *The Bible Banner.*[75]

These leaders, including McCaleb, were willing to endure criticism for raising public support for some controversial issues they deemed important, yet McCaleb only made brief mention of the plight of *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ in some of his published articles and never encouraged any particular ministry efforts directed towards aiding them. None of the members of Churches of Christ who were employed within the camps took to religious journals or other public venues to speak about their work or mobilize the movement to act or respond to the incarceration.

Even leaders within the movement resisted any perception that they were attempting to dictate proper theology and actions to individual congregations. Morris's sense that Christian colleges such as ACC were under scrutiny by some within the movement is seen in his speech at the 1942 ACC Lectureship entitled "The Need for the Christian School."[76] In this speech, Morris does not directly address criticisms but instead lays out the benefits that ACC and other similar institutions offer as teachers of the Bible, being careful to acknowledge that "First of all, the church . . . must teach and lead."[77]

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74. Obata, "Against the Odds," 206.

75. Obata, "Against the Odds," 206.

76. Don H. Morris, "The Need for the Christian School," in *Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures, 1944.* Delivered in the auditorium of Abilene Christian College (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1943).

77. Morris, "The Need for the Christian School."

McCaleb had similarly faced criticism for his relationship with Jimmie Lovell, another missionary who was derogatorily called a "one-man missionary society" for his coordination of funding and organization for mission work.[78] Even if these leaders in the movement may have wanted to encourage others to aid *Nikkei* or influence their opinions about the incarceration, their wariness about appearing to exert authority outside the structure of local congregations may have prevented them.

Christian Unity

The emphasis on Christian unity within Churches of Christ can be most clearly seen through the fact that most white members of Churches of Christ who offered aid to incarcerated *Nikkei* focused on *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ. While other Protestant denominations were forming ecumenical organizations to coordinate joint ministry within the camps, members of Churches of Christ offered aid exclusively to others from their movement. The Granada Church of Christ entered the Amache camp in order to encourage and worship with members of the Westside congregation in Los Angeles. No evidence remains of these Christians taking specific actions to aid other *Nikkei* incarcerated within the camp. J. M. McCaleb and the Rhodes family similarly focused their aid on members of the Westside Church of Christ, especially its preacher, Hirosuke Ishiguro. Each of the five *Nikkei* who enrolled at ACC during the war, assisted by Don Morris, were members of Churches of Christ.

The fact that people like Morris, McCaleb, and the Rhodeses generally focused their aid on members of their own movement highlights the sectarian understanding of

78. "Editorial: The West Coast Jimmie Lovell," *Bible Banner* 4.7 (February 1942): 2–3; Foy E. Wallace, "Comments on the Janes Will," *Bible Banner* 6.6 (March 1944).

Christian unity dominant in Churches of Christ at the time. For the members of Churches of Christ involved in these events, their connection to other members of the same fellowship was a stronger tie than the divide created by racial or ethnic differences, even in wartime. The familial relationship of being brothers and sisters in Christ was strong enough that they were willing to worship together, and even actively sought out such connections. This sense of Christian unity, however, did not extend to members of other faith traditions. In fact, the connections between members of Churches of Christ inside and outside of the camp seem, at least partially, motivated by a desire to remain separate from the ecumenical Protestant Christian congregation created in each camp. It is unclear whether those from Churches of Christ ever met with the ecumenical groups in the camps, but they certainly did regularly meet separately, especially to take the Lord's Supper together each Sunday morning.[79]

The Church as a Millennial Society

The understanding of the Church as a millennial society, set apart from other political and social structures of the day, certainly influenced the fact that members of Churches of Christ did not attempt to make social or political changes in regards to the incarceration, choosing instead to focus on personal ministry to members of their faith tradition. The Christian bond shared between members of the same fellowship encouraged personal, individual aid from some members, but did not cause them to attempt any systemic change. The role of the church, and even of individual faith, was to deal with explicitly religious matters, while social or political issues such as the U.S.

79. Gobbell, "Tempe, Arizona, Preacher," 5.

government's policies of incarceration were generally seen as beyond the scope of religious attention.

The members of the Granada Church of Christ, Clarence Gobbell, and others who visited incarcerated *Nikkei* in the camps did so primarily to provide religious services. The Granada Church of Christ organized a worship service for their brethren in the Amache camp, and Gobbell participated in the weekly offering of the Lord's Supper. It seems likely that these Christians may have also provided other personal aid to their incarcerated brethren, including food, clothing, and emotional support. Don Morris certainly provided such personal aid by arranging for several *Nikkei* to attend ACC, as did McCaleb and the Rhodeses, who aided incarcerated *Nikkei* financially and by caring for their possessions. Morris, McCaleb, and the Rhodeses, however, did not openly advocate for any changes to public policy or procedure, nor did they clearly engage in the incarceration system itself to provide aid for *Nikkei*. In other words, members of Churches of Christ were generally comfortable working within the bounds of the systems and procedures the government established in order to provide the kind of aid, primarily religious and personal, that they felt called to provide due to their Christian faith.

Two exceptions to this pattern are noteworthy. First, W. Ray Johnson clearly worked within the incarceration system in a much more direct way than other members of Churches of Christ. Johnson's role as an administrator in the Amache camp is a clear participation in, and perhaps acceptance or even advocation for the incarceration itself, but he used this role to offer some relief aid to the incarcerated *Nikkei*, including helping members of Churches of Christ to organize fellowship and worship events. Johnson's work to support *Nikkei*, however, clearly extended beyond members of Churches of

Christ, as he was in charge of the entire camp. This aid was not only religious and personal, but also involved the use of his power within the WRA.

Hettie Lee Ewing similarly used her role in the WRA to offer aid to many *Nikkei*, with no apparent discrimination between members of Churches of Christ and other incarcerated people. First, she worked with the WRA to aid in the resettlement of several *Nikkei* girls to Washington, D.C., then she became even more directly involved by taking a job helping *Nikkei* be resettled from the McGehee, AR, camp. While Ewing's experiences as a missionary in Japan were surely integral to her receiving and taking advantage of these opportunities, her own telling of these stories does not clearly tie her actions to her faith or church experiences. This fact does not suggest that her faith and church experience were not core motivators for her, but instead that she likely saw her actions as her own individual actions rather than ministry on behalf of Churches of Christ or any particular congregation.

White Supremacy

The interracial interactions between white and *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ during the war represent somewhat of an anomaly among the movement at the time, especially considering the strong policies of segregation still present across the American south, including in colleges and congregations associated with Churches of Christ. While Morris was rejecting Black students from attending ACC, he was arranging for *Nikkei* students to attend, even taking special care that they were treated properly. These students were full participants in ACC's student life, including social clubs and student employment. Distinctions clearly exist between the way the white supremacy in Churches of Christ affected relationships between white members of the movement and

other ethnic groups, including Black and *Nikkei* members. Conflating white attitudes towards Black Christians within the movement with their attitudes towards *Nikkei* members would be to ignore historical realities and run the risk of minimizing the experience of Black members or invalidating the claim that *Nikkei* members were truly affected by white supremacy.

The system of racial hierarchy described by Isabel Wilkerson and supported for several centuries by pseudoscience such as eugenics and craniometry helps to explain the distinct ways white members of Churches of Christ interacted with Black or *Nikkei* Christians. This sense of racial hierarchy, with whites at the top, Black at the bottom, and *Nikkei* somewhere in the middle, helps explain how white supremacy functioned among white members of Churches of Christ to affect their attitudes and actions towards incarcerated *Nikkei.* These *Nikkei* were certainly given opportunities and treated as brethren in ways that Black members of Churches of Christ were not, yet they were also not considered to be social equals with white Americans. The tension between the notions of white supremacy and the acceptance of *Nikkei* can be seen especially in the stories surrounding *Nikkei* students at ACC.

Besides being a remarkably dramatic love story worthy of a Hollywood adaptation, Ishiguro and Ramsey's narrative points to the very real influence of racism in the experience of *Nikkei* students at ACC. No record exists of the conversation between Masaaki and a school official asking the young man to discontinue his relationship with Ramsey and no one has ever admitted to sending the falsified letters to the couple, but both actions are in step with a mid-twentieth century culture that frowned upon interracial relationships. Even at ACC, where they were generally accepted, becoming well-known

and well-liked members of the college community, *Nikkei* students could not escape the influence of white supremacy. This tragic story, though eventually redeemed, casts a shadow on the experience of these students and hints at the possibility that they each faced other similar experiences at ACC and in Churches of Christ more broadly that were less well-publicized.

The assistance that Morris and others at ACC provided for these *Nikkei* students is a notable contrast from the virtual silence of the school as a whole on the issue of the incarceration. Twenty years later, when Dr. Carl Spain presented a famous speech at the 1960 ACC Lectureships advocating for the integration of ACC and other colleges associated with Churches of Christ, Morris received numerous complaints from members of Churches of Christ and ACC board members alike.[80] It is possible that Morris feared similar repercussions should he speak out publicly on behalf of the *Nikkei* whom he privately supported, especially in the tense period of war between America and Japan.

Some hints of white paternalism may be evident in the ministry of the Granada Church of Christ and that of Clarence Gobbell and others who visited the incarceration camp. Embedded in the Granada congregation's decision to host regular worship services for the incarcerated *Nikkei* was the assumption that the *Nikkei* needed white church leaders to come into the camps to lead their worship services. This possible paternalism should not be overstated because there remains no evidence that the *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ resented the assistance of those who came into the camps nor that the white members entering the camps in any way subverted the autonomy of the *Nikkei*

80. Letter, B. Sherrod to Don H. Morris, February 26, 1960. Letter, Ira Carroll to Don H. Morris, February 26, 1960.

congregation. The assumption that people of color need white leadership in their systems and structures, however, fits a pattern of paternalism common in America, including in Churches of Christ, in the early twentieth century.[81]

Conclusion

These individual, localized actions among members of Churches of Christ reveal a different reaction to the incarceration among some in the movement than the movement displayed as a whole. Certainly, the difference between the actions of individuals and the collective group was not unique to Churches of Christ, but it does seem to relate to the theological character of the movement. While the movement's collective organizations remained silent, some within the movement, including those with close ties to the collective organizations, actively worked to respond to the incarceration and offer aid to affected *Nikkei.* The Granada Church of Christ stands out as the lone congregation that took an active role in responding to the incarceration, while Hettie Lee Ewing represents the opposite end of the spectrum as an individual who aided *Nikkei* with no clear ties to Churches of Christ through her own initiative.

81. Newell D. Williams, Douglas A. Foster, and Paul M. Blowers, eds., *The Stone Campbell Movement: A Global History* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2013), 51–60.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I set out to describe and analyze the responses of members of Churches of Christ in America to the incarceration of *Nikkei* during WWII in light of the theological identity of Churches of Christ. I described the historical context of the incarceration and provided a brief overview of the responses among American Christians. I then identified four key theological characteristics that are helpful for understanding Churches of Christ and explaining their responses to the incarceration. Using these characteristics, I analyzed the public and private responses of members and leaders in Churches of Christ, explaining how the theological identity of the movement contributed to its particular response to the events in question. I conclude by discussing several implications and questions raised by this research.

First, there is a clear distinction between the public, communal responses of the movement as a whole and the private, individual responses of some of the movement's members. Even prominent figures and leaders in the movement such as J. M. McCaleb, Don H. Morris, and the Rhodeses, who were heavily invested in aiding *Nikkei* in several ways, did little to publicly convince others in Churches of Christ to help them, much less organize any systemic aid program. As I mentioned in chapter four, this is not necessarily unique, as countless individuals aided *Nikkei* in ways that were not directly tied to a religious group or other body. Regardless of the similarities shared with other individuals

or movements, for Churches of Christ the disparity between communal and individual responses points to a deeper reality in the movement.

Because the few avenues of public discourse within Churches of Christ were primarily focused on explicitly religious topics, those who were interested in having conversations about social and political issues, such as the incarceration, generally turned elsewhere to do so. Similarly, those who may have wanted to provide aid to *Nikkei*, such as Hettie Lee Ewing and W. Ray Johnson, did so through governmental agencies rather than a church body or denomination. It seems likely that other members of Churches of Christ were involved in the camps, perhaps even offering religious services to incarcerated *Nikkei*, but the fact that they did so as private citizens or individual Christians rather than as official representatives of Churches of Christ makes it unlikely that there would be any record of such work.

The difference between public and private responses raises the question: how did *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ feel about the aid and support offered to them by members of their fellowship? Hirosuke Ishiguro thanked his Christian brethren for their aid, and other incarcerated *Nikkei* praised the members of the Granada Church of Christ for offering aid, but otherwise there remains little record of how those most directly affected by these events perceived the aid offered by their Christian sisters and brothers. Were they struck by the public, systemic aid offered by other Christian denominations while their own movement implemented no such program? Were they aware of the general silence regarding the incarceration in most of the movement's publications? If so, what effect did that have on their relationship to Churches of Christ both during and after the war?

Second, the relationship between white and *Nikkei* members of Churches of Christ seems to have been different from the relationship between Black and white members of the movement, yet responses to the incarceration were still affected by underlying white supremacy. White members of Churches of Christ were willing to fellowship with *Nikkei* in ways they would not with Black members of the movement. Don H. Morris pulled strings to help *Nikkei* attend ACC, even while America was at war with Japan, yet he would not allow Black students from Texas to attend the college. While Wilkerson's description of the American caste system is helpful in understanding this phenomenon, much more work could be done to analyze the inter-racial relationships within Churches of Christ, especially since Churches of Christ have historically had a global presence. Much work has been done to understand the relationship between Black and white members of Churches of Christ, but how have members of different cultural and ethnic groups viewed one another generally within the movement?

Finally, I believe this research has implications for understanding how and why Churches of Christ have responded to particular issues. Because, for the most part, the incarceration was seen as a social or political issue, the movement collectively did little to respond. Where the events of the incarceration became religious, however, such as when it seemed as though members of the movement were being deprived of the ability to have proper worship, Churches of Christ stepped in to offer aid. What other historical issues could be analyzed through this same lens? How have topics such as wars, tobacco and alcohol, women's rights, or political movements been defined as either religious or non-religious and therefore either addressed or not addressed in public discourse within

Churches of Christ?[1] And, perhaps most importantly, how might this lens help current and future leaders within Churches of Christ address important topics moving forward?

1. Towards the end of the twentieth century, social issues became a greater part of the fellowship's discourse, especially through the efforts such as the *Mission* journal. See: Thomas Olbricht, "New Journals for the Sixties: Restoration Quarterly and Mission," essay published on the ACU Digital Commons.

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