

# *MM 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Internment of the Japanese Blue Sheet 2017*



## **ABIGAIL ODUOL, CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**

A lady was coming to our house for lunch. It was her idea. She wanted to visit with us about Church World Service. We have been contributors for many years. I like to know what they are doing with our money.

I was especially hoping she could tell us what Church World Service is doing for refugees and what CWS able to do with the overwhelming immigration problems.

Abigail Oduol was just the person I wanted to see.

It turned out she had been a caseworker in Africa for the U.S. Refugee Admissions program, the U.S. government citizenship and immigration services and U.N. agencies.

Her job right now is to cultivate and solicit mid-level and major gifts for CWS from the Western United States.

She does this against a rising anti-immigration and refugee mind-set in the U.S. Those who think these people need further “vetting” have no idea of the scrutiny refugees and immigrants already endure to even get on a waiting list. It can be years. Many die in refugee camps waiting.

The UN reports that there are 65 million refugees in the world. We think our community has homeless problems! But many millions more don't even have a country.

So here she is in our living room, having a cupful of soup and two hours of conversation with us. I don't know how many living rooms she visits. I feel a bit guilty that she spent valuable time with us. We felt honored.

She reminded us that CWS provides its services to refugees without regard for nationality or religion. It goes wherever need arises. It simply calls people to be humane to humans in need.

She went out into the rain and flooded highways of Oregon seeking support for those mired in life situations we can't imagine.

Bless you, Abigail.

## **HOW COULD WE? WHY DO WE?**

February 17 was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the internment of Japanese Americans in 1945, by Presidential order. Suddenly taken from homes.

My brain-file flicked through memories of Japanese people in my life.

- *Japanese truck farmers* at the Pike Street Market...

- *the couple that ran the grocery store* on my way to Leschi School in Seattle...

- *two well-known missionaries* from Oregon, Aigi and Kiyo Kamikawa...

- *two of numerous friends* from my LA years, Aki and Martha Suzuki, who returned to find the Japanese Christian Church had closed when its members were all taken away. It had been replaced by All People's Christian Church and Center. They became key leaders in the emerging All People's Church. They rebuilt their own lives while giving life to others...

- *A stop at the National Monument* called Manzanar in the California high desert. American Japanese were held there behind barbed wire with guard towers...

On December 18, 1944 the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that it was unconstitutional to keep U.S. citizens behind barbed wire. Many didn't like the Court's ruling, but on January 5, 1945 evacuation orders were revoked and release of prisoners began.

It wasn't until Ronald Reagan as Governor of California issued an apology and token reparations paid for how Japanese had been treated.

How could America have done this? How could we imprison over 100,000 of totally innocent citizens because of their national ancestry? Of course, we remember how Pearl Harbor fears numbed the American psyche.

How can America be doing this now? Are nationality or religion-targeted groups any more real threat today to the U.S. than Jews were to Germany or my Japanese American friends were to our nation on February 17, 1942? Is our present day psyche being stirred by fear?

Can the Court steady the hands of those who hold power?

— Art Morgan

*75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
Internment of the Japanese*

The feeling came on me as I read my notes on “Auschwitz.” It came again as I was reminded of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the internment of the Japanese on February 17, 1942, and January 27, 1945, Auschwitz liberation Day.

Both of those happened in my lifetime. In both situations innocent people were separated from their home nations because of race or religion.

I have heard survivors of the death camps speak, Victor Frankl for one, plus clergy who were part of the Resistance movement in Germany.

I have known survivors of Japanese internment camp in California. They came back into their communities. One was in my Rotary Club in California.

Two who stand out from my years of involvement with All People’s Christian Center are Aki and Martha Suzuki. Aki and Martha were strong leaders in All People’s Church and Center. I used to wonder how they could be so gracious and forgiving after what they had been through. I was not proud of what my country did to them

Lots of rehashing has been done about the rise of the Nazi movement. How could so few shape so many into doing what they did to Jews? I caught one insight from Lawrence Rees in his book, *Auschwitz*.

*Goebbels believed it was always preferable to reinforce the existing prejudice. Also when it was necessary to alter the views of the German people, his technique was... constantly to reiterate.*

That’s when I realized that I was not only being hacked, I was being brainwashed! Every time I went on Facebook I was being fed a lot of fake news, and carefully designed “shares,” many innocently forward by friends. In fact, we are all under a subtle siege...from all political sides. We find ourselves fearing...well, name your pre-existing prejudice.

Mark Zuckerberg admits that Facebook is an open channel for fake news. It’s up to us to think, question, doubt. Don’t give anger a chance. And Jean would say, don’t watch any news or Facebook with, or after, happy hour. Instead watch the sun set over the coast range, look for the stars and the moon. Hold on to something true. Breathe in peace. Think love.

*Art Morgan, Japanese Internment Day, 2017*

Both dates involve innocent people. The Japanese were mostly American citizens, working and living in American society. On February 17, 1942 by Presidential order, 120,000 were taken from their homes and transported to relocation/internment camps where they lived for the duration of World War II in what was called “one of the most flagrant violations of civil liberties in American history.” I thought of two wonderful Japanese people, Aki and Martha Suzuki, who came back to their former Japanese Christian Church after being freed from detention. What gracious people. They were instrumental in creating the All People’s Christian Center that flourishes today.

The people who died at Auschwitz were German or European citizens, guilty of nothing except being Jews. They died by the Fuhrer’s orders in mass executions, by the millions. It is called the Holocaust.

How can nations allow these things to happen? The Auschwitz author, Laurence Rees, had a couple of lines that jumped out at me.

1. “Reinforce existing prejudice”  
Hitler’s propaganda strategist, Dr. Josef Goebbels “*was perhaps the most effective propagandist of the twentieth century. Goebbels believed it was always preferable to reinforce the existing prejudice of the audience rather than to try to change someone’s mind.*” Hitler didn’t create anti-Semitism.

2. “Constantly reiterate”  
On those occasions when it was necessary to alter the views of the German people, his technique was... constantly to reiterate, in subtly different ways, the message he wanted the audience to receive...” Say it often and will seem like fact.

Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook. It’s a primary source for news and ideas, both fake and fact. That’s scary. A whole nation can be led into believing what is not true.

In my life-time fear has built Japanese internment camps, the Gulf of Tonkin War, Shock and Awe, to name three. Today Muslims and Hispanics are afraid of our fear. We’ve been hacked. We’ve been brainwashed.

Surely we aren’t that kind of people. Surely we wouldn’t be led to actions by fear. Surely we wouldn’t take people away from homes and jobs and select them on basis of religion or nationality.

We wouldn’t do that to anybody out of fear. Not unless we were brainwashed.

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I began to ask what was happening in our country. Allegations of Russian hacking. And of false information. Of how we can no longer tell whether news is fake or fact.

You can't help but notice how many people are into their cell phones. Facebook is a common source. I realize that I do the same thing. At first it was a place to see what friends and family are doing...to see latest antics of great-grandchildren.

In the last year it seems that I have to flick past tons of stuff I haven't been looking for. Little headlines or photos lure me to read what it's all about. My friends often post "shares" of someone else's thoughts and opinions rather than tell me what they are doing and thinking

So much information. Assertions. Accusations. Anger. Blame.

The political comments are often repetitive... "constant reiteration."

I hate it when I get hacked. I also hate it when I realize that I have been subjected to brain-washing.

Jean has it figured. She doesn't want news, fact or fake, during or after happy hour. She doesn't want that stuff in her mind all night.

We look out our front windows...Over green pastures... Sunset over the coast range...Check the moon and stars as we turn out the lights.

We need a time to renew our center...To be still...To flush out fear...To breathe...To love.

*Art Morgan, Valentine's Day 2017*

Goebbels had done that with a whole nation.

Hitler's election campaign talking points repeatedly blamed Jews and non-Aryan races as well as Gypsies and people with disabilities. He repeated these ideas for the decade before Auschwitz.

We have recently learned how extensively we have all been hacked. We have received fake news, so subtly and continually that we don't realize how our minds have been controlled. In the post-60 years, when we wondered how bright young people could be lured into cults, we learned about brain-washing.

When I thought of phrases and accusations appearing on Facebook and "shares" and debates and among friends discussing politics I realized how a few ideas dominated. We were saturated repeatedly. We were being brainwashed.

We could not clearly separate fake from fact.

The best defense against brainwashing is a questioning mind. When we take hold of an idea and cling to it before we have questioned it, we are in danger of brainwashing.

I try to do a one page write-up of every book I read. I've picked out a few things I noted while reading "Auschwitz."

*"Nazis built on pre-existing conditions.  
Anti-Semitism existed long before Hitler."  
In the author's view we can't limit the  
blame to Hitler alone."*

Millions of Germans voluntarily turned to the Nazis and elected Hitler to solve the country's ills. "Reinforce existing prejudice"

Hitler's propaganda strategist, Dr. Josef Goebbels "was perhaps the most effective propagandist of the twentieth century." (p. xvi)

*"Goebbels believed it was always preferable to reinforce the existing prejudice of the audience rather than to try to change someone's mind."*

"Constantly reiterate"

On those occasions when it was necessary to alter the views of the German people, his technique was... constantly to reiterate, in subtly different ways, the message he wanted the audience to receive...

As I re-read those notes I had the same feelings in my gut as when I realize I have been "hacked."

Only this time I realized I, like the Germans and American electorate, had been "brainwashed."

We have been victimized by First Amendment Freedom of Speech. Facebook admits it can't prevent fake news showing up on our computers.

The same talking points appear on news and Facebook "shares." So many have been proven "fake" that we ended up accepting as "fact."

Just as we made aliens out of Japanese Americans for no just cause, so are we

**brainwashed to think the dangers we face lie with a religious group or another nationality.**

**Lawrence Rees would not let us limit blame to one person today either.**

**Racism, white supremacy, religious righteousness, poverty, militarism, extreme nationalism and concentration of wealth all are festering sores in our human psyche that are all too easily stirred. Fear slips into hate. Fake news constantly reiterated becomes “fact.”**

**I hate being hacked. I also hate being brainwashed. I only have myself to blame.**

**Art Morgan, Valentine’s Day 2017**