The Historical Development of Religion in Los Angeles, 1846-2007

Compiled by Clifton L. Holland

5 May 2007

General Introductions


From the Preface

By 1848, when the American flag was hoisted over Monterey, the tradition generally known to historians as evangelicalism was enjoying its heyday: it had become the most powerful religious influence—and perhaps the most important single cultural influence—in the United States. Evangelicalism has generally meant, since the work of nineteenth-century historian Robert Baird, the voluntaristic, revivalistic Protestantism that aimed to shape American civilization along moral lines. Denominationally, it embraced the membership of Baptist, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches as well as a number of smaller sects; its chief opponent was Roman Catholicism. Evangelicals emphasized a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ established through prayer, devotion, and (often) a conversion experience; they supported strong churches to educate and fortify their members against the temptations of secular society. Through their educational, organizational, and revivalistic efforts, they made Protestant churches a bulwark of American society during the first third of the nineteenth century. Although evangelical leaders had to battle with secularists who resented religious influence in public affairs, and although they met with increasing resistance from the growing Roman Catholic population, on the whole they were successful in upholding traditional Protestant values as the norm for American society.

Evangelicals maintained their preeminence throughout the middle years of the nineteenth century by means of revivals, reform associations, and the popular media as well as through the churches. They were largely responsible for the great antislavery campaigns, for temperance and prohibition crusades, for maintenance of Sabbath observance in most communities, and for the establishment of private colleges, orphanages, and asylums. Their influence was felt throughout the nation, and they faced relatively few challenges until the 1870s. Then evangelicalism itself began to splinter into liberal and conservative factions. Still, however, Protestant values governed American public life and the private lives of most of the citizens.

At least, that is the picture of evangelicalism appearing in American histories if they treat of religion at all. Yet the portrait of a triumphant evangelical tradition is based primarily on data from east of the Mississippi. In the Far West developments were taking a different turn. Roman Catholicism was strong in the formerly Spanish areas, of course; but even in many areas where Anglos dominated, Protestantism did not fare as well as on earlier frontiers. Census data from nearly all the states of the Rocky Mountain region and westward suggest a lower level of Protestant church membership than in other regions. The lack of notable religious movements in the Far West, judging from the scant historical research thus far, suggests a lack of religious ferment or a lower level of religious interest than in the East and Midwest. Did religion die a slow death, even while denominations continued to exist, west of the Rockies? What happened to the great evangelical tradition?

Each area of the West—the Rocky Mountain region, the Pacific Northwest, the Southwest, and California—had its distinctive kind of religious development, and each deserves separate study. We will consider some of the significant developments in California, where traditional Protestantism evolved so differently that it may not be appropriate to speak of evangelicalism there as a distinctive and coherent system. While we see many examples of an evangelical approach among ministers and missionaries in the early years of American settlement, it is not long before we find instead a settled denominational Protestantism, mutually tolerant and seldom fired with the interdenominational zeal of the East's Second Great Awakening, the major series of revivals that occurred between 1790 and 1835. Because of the variety of attitudes among the evangelical denominations and the strong presence alongside them of Episcopalian institutions, we will use the term Anglo-Protestantism to refer to the tradition as it evolved in California. For in examining Californian Protestantism, we find ourselves looking at the adjustments to a new culture of one ethnic group among many, rather than at the transplanting of a clearly defined tradition. The evangelicals were visible in California as a vocal, highly significant ethno-religious group, but they no longer constituted a system that defined regional religious culture.

The research for this work has focused on areas of rapid growth in northern and southern California before 1910—the mining country, the San Francisco Bay Area, and early Los Angeles (after 1910 shifts in migration patterns changed the religious scene considerably). In the early period, the mining country and urban areas were chief targets of Protestant ministers and missionaries. Yet by 1906, after nearly sixty years of Anglo domination, barely 14 percent of California's population belonged to any Protestant church. Roman Catholics accounted for 30 percent of the population in 1850, but less than 20 percent in 1906, while by 1906 other small groups comprised 2 to 3 percent of the total. Thus in 1906 nearly 65 percent of California's population was unchurched. Considering the great effort of ministerial talent in California and the wealth of the population as a whole, which could have supported a strong religious establishment, the Anglo-Protestant churches did not fare well.

As we will see, there were several reasons why Californians did not join Protestant churches in as large numbers as their immediate predecessors in the East. One significant factor was the development of a small but significant minority who from the beginning interpreted life in religious terms that, explicitly or implicitly, challenged traditional Protestant interpretations by giving expression to an alternative tradition. This challenge and its effect on Protestantism in California will be the main subject of this book. Before pursuing it, however, we must introduce the main actors in the drama.

First were the leaders of the Anglo-Protestant churches, who viewed themselves as agents of the Protestant civilization that began in the New England towns and extended into the entire American empire. They saw themselves as representing true, mainstream Christianity. Doctrinally, they guarded standard Protestant beliefs in a personal God who saved mankind through the sacrificial acts of his son, Jesus Christ; in reward or punishment after death; in human sinfulness and the necessity of repentance; and in clear standards of morality and justice derived from the Bible and democratic traditions. They considered religion to be both individual and communal: individual in that each person had to develop his or her own relation to God (many, but certainly not all, expected this to include a clear experience of conversion), communal in that the churches provided the moral center and continuing education essential for a solid citizenry.
Anglo-Protestants in California generally avoided disputes between denominations, adopting the view that groups might have significant differences, but that it was not appropriate to fight publicly over them. This was more than a live-and-let-live mentality; the various denominations often cooperated on enterprises of joint concern. But they showed no interest in merging. Each denomination had its own clientele, and all together carried the Protestant banner.

Second were the liberals emerging in California, as in the East, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. While not giving up Protestant doctrines entirely, many softened their views on sin and punishment, or de-emphasized conversion. There was no cohesive, institutionalized liberal movement, but a diffuse California mythology arose, emphasizing the state's uniqueness and offering a liberal religious outlook. Many from traditional backgrounds came to consider themselves religiously tolerant, independent thinkers who transcended denominationalism. In the 1860s a strong and clear liberal voice arrived, that of Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King, the most popular Protestant preacher California has ever known. In the Bay Area, Laurentine Hamilton carried on the liberal tradition in the late 1860s and early 1870s. King's connections to eastern Unitarianism and Universalism and Hamilton's to liberal Presbyterianism exemplify an openness in matters of religion that would become firmly ingrained in the attitudes of many of their Protestant contemporaries. Starr King was more the transcendentalist, a visionary who seemed to know a mystical communion with nature and history; Hamilton more the rationalist, developing an intellectual understanding of the universe as organic and meaningful. Their ideas defined the outer range of liberal Anglo-Protestantism in California. Most leaders connected with the traditional denominations did not go so far, at least not before the end of the century. King the Unitarian and Hamilton the exiled Presbyterian (he was declared a heretic in 1869) were too radical to be comfortable partners with the regular churches.

In northern California, Protestant leaders seemed to be battling secularism and struggling with liberalism almost from the beginning. In southern California, traditional Anglo-Protestants seemed at first to gain a stronger foothold when that region began to develop rapidly after 1880. Yet by 1895 challenges from the even more radical metaphysical religions—Christian Science, New Thought, and Theosophy—had begun to undermine the hegemony of traditional Protestant beliefs. These are the third significant group of actors in the story. Liberals, who had already begun integrating some new ideas (for example, from science) into their beliefs, were most directly affected by the metaphysicians. But traditionalists too were challenged by the new movements, and even within conservative Protestantism one can detect evidence of alternative ways of thinking—notably in the leadership of the holiness movement that coalesced around the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles. In short, by 1910 Protestantism in southern California had many liberals within its ranks and had to face a multitude of small, competing religious movements. Most of these were rooted in the same tradition as the earlier northern liberals, namely New England transcendentalism, Unitarianism, and popular Spiritualism.

The challenging movements together formed a distinctive popular tradition that appeared in various shapes and guises over the decades, achieving a clear institutionalization in the metaphysical religions mentioned above. Before 1900 the main features of this distinctive tradition had been well articulated: belief in an impersonal divine principle more than in a personal God; a focus on the individual's inner life developed through study, concentration, or contemplation; an aim of union with or perfect apprehension of the divine; little interest in social reform, political activity, or institution building (except sometimes their own churches); an approach to spiritual progress, even after death. A yet more secularized version of this tradition appeared in a kind of nature-mysticism, drawn from Emersonian Transcendentalism and exemplified most fully in John Muir.

The institutionalized segments of this alternative, mystically-inclined tradition remained small. By 1915 its chief expressions, the metaphysical religions, were counted as 5 to 6 percent of the Protestant population and less than 2 percent of the population as a whole. Yet their influence on white Protestants of California was strong; for decades to come, the many related groups who came to California would find congenial audiences there, as would religious missionaries to Americans from Asia. They did not— we should observe here—immediately involve the many ethnically rooted Roman Catholics, Jews, blacks, Hispanics, or Asians. The struggle between traditionalists and mystics that we will portray was the history of the adjustment of one ethnic group, white Protestants of the East and Midwest, to their new environment. To be sure, Anglo-Protestants sometimes created mythologies of the others among whom they lived: they developed a nostalgic memory of Spanish California and encountered Asian thought in a mythologized form through such movements as Theosophy. Yet, while these myths undoubtedly nourished openness and tolerance in belief, they did not necessarily lead to relationships, religious or social, with Spanish-speaking or Asian neighbors.

Our reconstruction of developments, therefore, stays within the Anglo-Protestant camp. Even there, sources do not always permit us to trace clearly the development of the alternative tradition in relation to the regular denominations. From the nineteenth century there is evidence of a few important figures and debates plus widely scattered hints of the impact of new movements. After the turn of the century we find more systematic presentations, developed arguments, and some relations among individuals and groups that can be traced. In general, however, religious documents have not been so well kept in California as in the eastern states; in addition, popular movements with their less established character often do not leave clear traces. For these reasons the following chapters may seem more a series of essays than the story of a single clear development. Taken together, however, they form a coherent picture of significant religious formations in California.

For each set of materials I have tried to show how the California social situation, questions of religious and regional identity, specific personalities, and national trends interweave to create distinctive religious issues and attitudes in California. I hope this work will serve to suggest the importance in American religious history of locales, regions, and specific ethnic groups as well as national trends. It is precisely by more careful work in specific areas that we can bring forth the kind of comparisons that make national history interesting and meaningful. The writing of the religious history of the regions of the West has hardly begun; yet one day it will undoubtedly contribute new insights to our understanding of American history, American culture, and modern religion itself.

California's Spiritual Frontiers

Preface

1. California Dreams
2. The Gospel of Unity
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Between 1850 and 1890 the city of Los Angeles grew from about 1,500 to nearly 50,000 residents. Such striking population growth in such a compressed period brought radical dislocations in local politics, economics, society, and religion. "Frontier Faiths" analyzes the transformation of Los Angeles' religious life during that period--although some aspects of the political, economic, and social atmosphere are also illuminated.

Michael E Engh, S.J., in the faculty at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, has produced a useful monograph on the evolving interrelationships of the denominations in the area. It adds significantly to the understanding of the manner in which culturally diverse groups cooperated--and competed--when thrown together after dislocations brought on by military conquest and political annexation.

Engh's central themes revolve around how the religious community contributed to the creation of a unique urban culture. He notes that before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico recognized only Roman Catholicism as a legitimate religion. Suddenly, with annexation support of state religion was abolished and replaced with religious toleration. Over time, largely because of [Ango-American] migration to the city, Protestantism became the dominant religion. He traces this evolution in detail. Additionally, with strong sections on the Jewish and Chinese contributions to this development, Engh concludes with a discussion of the fall of Catholic culture and the rise of religious and ethnic diversity in Los Angeles.

"Frontier Faiths" is a useful case study in comparative American religion and how it helped to shape American society in one [geographical] area. It is one of several刷新 books to appear recently on the development of American religion. It should be of use to specialists interested in the development of American religion and culture during the nineteenth century.

Our Heritage and Our Hope:
the History of First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, California,
1874-1974

By Herbert L. Sutton

Sunday September 6, 1874: For the 6500 persons who then made up the total population of Los Angeles, it probably was not much different from any other Sunday. But for the small group of Baptists who met on that day to organize a church, and for the more than 15,000 who have identified themselves with that church during the one hundred years following, it was a very significant day, for it was on that day that the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles was organized.

The town of Los Angeles pre-dated First Baptist Church by almost a century. The first Europeans had visited its location in 1769 when Portola and his company stopped overnight near the Indian village of Yang-na, on the way from Sand Diego to search for Monterey Bay. They arrived on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe and gave the name of that day to the river on which they camped: Rio de Nuestra Senora de Los Angeles de Porciucnula. A member of the expedition, Father Juan Crespi, wrote approvingly in his diary: "a most suitable site for a mission ... a delightful place among the trees on the river.

A dozen years had passed when Felipe de Neve, greatest of the Spanish governors of Alta California, acted upon Father Crespi's recommendation and on September 4th, 1781, came from Mission San Gabriel to found a settlement which was given the name of the river on which it was located. The first residents were 11 couples and their 22 children.

On the other side of the continent a fledgling republic was reaching the turning point in its break from Britain, as General George Washington and French Marshall de Rochambeau lay siege to Conwallis at Yorktown.

FOR THE NEXT 70 YEARS, Los Angeles remained a peaceful village in an agricultural setting far from the mainstream of history. In 1850, the population was a mere 1610, but of these only 75 had come from the East and while most of the others were Mexican, there were also Blacks, California Indians, and Orientals. Thus at this early date, the field existed for a church whose gospel was international and interacial.

SUDDENLY the Queen of the Cow Counties was caught up in history. The War with Mexico began in April 1846, and the Mexican regime in California ended with the capitulation of Cahuenga in January 1847.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1870, when the population had grown to 5728, that the town had a modern hotel to house its visitors — so modern that it had gas lights, running water piped to each floor, and even separate bathrooms for men and women! This was the 80 room Pico House, owned by Pio Pico, last of the Mexican governors.

SR. PICO financed the project by selling some 60,000 acres in San Fernando Valley to Isaac Lankershim. Deacon Lankershim participated in the organization of First Baptist Church; and it was a member of his family who presented the Church with its first silver Communion service — now on display in the Hobbs Memorial Room.

THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD at Coloma in 1848 brought prosperity to the cattle ranches of Southern California. Los Angeles began to grow, but the behavior of its citizens evidenced the lack of religious influence and it became the most lawless town in the West. In 1853, with a population of only 2000, there was an average of a murder each day.

A measure of retribution came from the elements. Torrential rains and resultant floods and two terrible droughts in the period 1860-64 destroyed most of the cattle and brought economic disaster to their owners. The great ranchos were broken into small parcels by the money-lenders and sold to the thousands who swept in after the railroads began to operate.

AS EARLY AS 1853 there had been Baptist stirrings in the local area. In that year the Rev. John Freeman preached a sermon in Los Angeles, but apparently there were not enough Baptists, or even Protestants, to organize a church. In that year, however, a Baptist church was started at El Monte where most of the early emigrants had chosen to settle. **This was the first Baptist church (and the first Protestant church as well) in all of Southern California.**

FIVE YEARS after John Freeman preached in Los Angeles, a Presbyterian minister, William E. Boardman, tried to start a Presbyterian church, finding too few Presbyterians, he organized all of the Protestants into the "First Protestant Society of Los Angeles." Fifteen denominations were represented in its rather small membership. Mrs. Clara G. DuBois, who later joined First Baptist, was a member of this group and was chosen as its song leader. Mr. Boardman left in 1861, however, and without a pastor the church disbanded.

IN 1860 another effort was made to start a Baptist church in Los Angeles but this too failed. Richard C. Fryer, a lay Baptist preacher from Texas, who had organized the El Monte church, conducted services each Sunday in Los Angeles for about a year. These services were held in Schoolhouse No. 1, located at Second and Spring. Mrs. DuBois, one of the first school teachers in Los Angeles, taught here. High School courses started in 1873. In that year the first volunteer fire company
was organized and the Chamber of Commerce was formed.

IN 1864, the first Protestant house of worship was erected: St. Athanasius Episcopal Church which later became St. Paul's Pro Cathedral. It was built on the southwest corner of Temple and New High Streets at the foot of Pound Cake Hill — subsequently the location of the first Los Angeles High School.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1874

The situation in 1874 bore some resemblance to 1974. The world, momentarily, was at peace: The Franco-Prussian War had ended three years before. In the United States, the Civil War had concluded nine years earlier, but the ranklings and adjustments in its aftermath still continued. The country was in financial turmoil.

"Boss" Tweed was on trial in New York City for election fraud. In July, the kidnapping of a 4-year old caused a national sensation. Locally, the bandit Vasquez had been captured in April at the home of "Greek George" near the present location of Hollywood. Public transportation was a need then as now, but in that year the first street railroad began to operate a horse-car line from the Plaza to Sixth and Pearl streets (now Figueroa).

As it relates to starting a church, however, 1874 was very different from 1974. Today religion is popular. It is comfortable to be a Christian and we proudly reveal our church association. Therefore it is hard for us to realize that in the wild town of Los Angeles a century ago, it was difficult even to profess Christianity — let alone band with others to start a church. A Presbyterian minister who failed in such an effort wrote, "to be compelled to endure blasphemous denunciations of his divine Master, to live where society is disorganized, religion is scoffed at, where violence runs riot and life itself is unsafe. . . .is not calculated for the peaceful labors of one who follows unobtrusively the footsteps of the meek and lowly Savior."

Boisterous San Francisco was still the only sizeable community in the West. More people lived there than in the entire southern half of the State. It could be expected that Baptists in the big city would have a missionary interest in starting a church in the "cow-town" in the south. Four of the sponsoring group were from San Francisco: Deacon Isaac Lankershim, the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. John Francis and the Rev. Mr. Lee Key — the latter three being Baptist missionaries.

The idea of starting the church, however, initiated with Dr. William Hobbs. Some time earlier, the Hobbs family had arrived in Los Angeles and, failing to find a Baptist church, had drawn together a group of a dozen or so who met regularly in each other's homes. Not long thereafter, inspired by the enthusiasm of the Hobbs, the group decided to take the daring step of organizing a church. Eight of the number sent for their church letters and the date was set for the organizational meeting.

It was probably at this point, that Dr. Hobbs decided to get help from the denomination and so wrote to San Francisco. Thus began an association with the Baptist denomination which has continued unbroken through the entire century.

Dr. Hobbs also contacted the minister of the closest Baptist church and asked his cooperation and assistance. This was the Rev. J. C. Curtis, pastor of the Los Nietos Baptist Church. Dr. Curtis had come from Iowa to San Bernardino in 1864, bringing his wife and ten children. Two years later, with the aid of Richard C. Fryer of El Monte, he had organized The Baptist Church of Jesus Christ of San Bernardino — the second Baptist church to be established in Southern California. Mr. Curtis served as pastor for two years, then moved to the San Gabriel valley where he started the San Antonio Baptist Church, which in 1872 combined with the Los Nietos Baptist Church (This is now the First Baptist Church of Downey).

From the very beginning there was a touch of ecumenicalism. The organizational meeting on September 6th was held in the Zahn chapel, also called the German Methodist Church, located at what is now 433 South Spring Street where today stands the head office of the Title Insurance and Trust Company. In reality it was not a church building but a small chapel attached to the back of Zahn's one-story cottage. Dr. Johann Carl Zahn, who had just completed the building, had much in common with Dr. Hobbs. Both were physicians. Both were ordained ministers. Both had gone to Australia as missionaries. Neither was native to the United States, but both arrived in Los Angeles at about the same time and each started a church of his own faith.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1874

No one at that meeting could have dreamed that a century later, hundreds of people would be greatly interested in what took place so no one bothered to write an account. Fortunately the Clerks of the church have all kept records of the congregation's proceedings and these have been safely retained through the years, including the Minutes of that first meeting.

The Minutes show that the first item of business was the election of the Rev. Mr. Curtis as Chairman and T. D. Hancock as Clerk. Four of those present had brought letters from the Los Nietos church where Curtis served as pastor: Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Shirley; their daughter, Mrs. Annie Rose; and Mr. J.W. Patterson. In addition there were four others with letters: Mr. and Mrs. T. D. Hancock from Clinton, Missouri; and Elder and Mrs. Isaac N. Cooper from Pleasanton, Texas.

Unfortunately, there is no available biographical data of these early members, except of the Shirleys and of their daughter Annie who was grandmother of a present member — Mrs. Walter English. The Shirleys originally lived in the South and came West to Sacramento in 1860 and to the local area in 1868. Annie Shirley had married Anderson Rose in 1890 and was only 20 when she became the youngest charter member of First Baptist. At the 70th anniversary of the church, she was honored as the only living charter member. She died at 94 — 74 years after having had part in organizing the church. Her memory has been perpetuated through the gift by her daughters of the Rose window in the west transept of the present sanctuary.

The organizational requirements having been completed, Dr. Hobbs was unanimously called to be Pastor. T. D. Hancock was elected Clerk and B.F. Shirley, Deacon. The minutes then state: "The doors of the church then being opened", Dr. and Mrs. Hobbs and J. T. Gower were received into membership. The charge was then given to Pastor, Deacon, and congregation by Mr. Curtis, followed by the sermon by Mr. Francis.

It is noteworthy, from the standpoint of the interacial character of today's church, that the Minutes conclude with this statement: "After services in the Chinese language by Brother Lee Key, the Church adjourned."

Thus on September 6, 1874, the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles came into being with a total of 11 members.

THE MINISTRY OF DR. AND MRS. WILLIAM HOBBS

Both of the Hobbs had been born in Nova Scotia where Dr. Hobbs also began his ministry. Early in his chosen career, he and his wife, Anna, felt the call to go to the foreign field as missionaries. In order to make his ministry more effective, Dr. Hobbs equipped himself with, what was for that time, a very good knowledge of medicine, surgery and dentistry. Although he was an ordained minister, his doctorate was in medicine. The Hobbs first went to Hawaii but remained there only a short time before going on to Australia. In Australia, they ministered mostly to the people living in the southern and eastern areas.

Some time later they came to Los Angeles and lost no time in making their influence felt in the community. Mrs. Hobbs, then 39, was a bundle of energy and enthusiasm. Within a short time she opened a private kindergarten where for several years she taught the children of many of the prominent families of that day.

Meetings of the new Church continued to be held in the Zahn chapel — the Methodists having their Sunday service in German at 11:00 and the Baptists having theirs in the afternoon. There was strict adherence to the Baptist concept of the church as a group of Christians banded together to seek and do the will of God on the basis of an agreed upon covenant.

Of equal importance was a statement of faith, referred to in the covenant. Those who founded the church and those who joined it later were required to hold the beliefs stated in the confession of faith and to conduct their lives and maintain a relationship with God and each other as expressed in the covenant. (The covenant and church list of faith were from Pendleton's "Church Manual".

Accordingly, the Articles of Faith were read from the pulpit each quarter. Covenant meetings, for the purpose of keeping the members' obligations alive, were held monthly, followed by the business meeting. As was the custom in Baptist churches of that day, Covenant meetings were on the Saturday preceding the first Sunday.

Those attending found these services deeply meaningful. The Minutes state: "Nearly all present participated in remarks of a Christian character and a precious sense
of religious fellowship was enjoyed by all. Another time: "All present seemed to enjoy the presence of the Master; and nearly all took part in the exercise, including Some Visiting Brethren."

The first year saw only one baptism, — in February 1875. The baptism of Brother Malone was administered with difficulty, using a water tank in the Zahn's frontyard and with the passers-by on Spring Street stopping to observe the unusual event. Subsequent baptisms were in the Los Angeles River when it was not too swift and muddy or too low and stagnant; — otherwise the Zahn tank was used until 1880 when Dr. Zahn disposed of his Spring Street property. For the next two years there was made of a baptism in a chapel in the home of Benjamin J. Couler on Bunker Hill. Mr. Couler was the founder of Couler's Dry Goods Store and was also Pastor of the First Christian Church from 1881 to 1884. In 1882 they erected a church building on Temple Street and the baptismery there was available for First Baptist's use.

Most of the additions, however, were by letter. (One of these was Miss Gillis Workman from Missouri, of the well-known Workman family — pioneers in this area.) In the first year the membership almost tripled, bringing in of divergent views to as how the affairs of the Church should be conducted. Also, those personal characteristics which they had in common were not such as to contribute to the success of a cooperative venture. Having left their homes, relatives and friends to emigrate to a locality about which they knew almost nothing, most of those who arrived in Los Angeles before 1880 could be characterized as one of two types.

This heterogeneity, of itself, created problems. While it tended to make some people tolerant, it made others narrow and fearful of corrupting influences. Baptist doctrine and practice varied geographically and people came with divergent views as to how the affairs of the Church should be conducted. Also, those personal characteristics which they had in common were not such as to contribute to the success of a cooperative venture. Having left their homes, relatives and friends to emigrate to a locality about which they knew almost nothing, most of those who arrived in Los Angeles before 1880 could be characterized as one of two types. Either they had come seeking wealth — hence were self-centered and of a strong mind — or they had run away from a situation in which they were unhappy and restless and could not get along with their associates.

It is not surprising therefore that the business meetings frequently were stormy and the church did not act with harmony and agreement. Differences of opinion were involved in almost every consideration, usually resulting in a split decision.

The place and time of meetings caused arguments. Sunday services were changed to the Grange Hall, then to Leek's Hall (the B'nai B'rith congregation had worshipped there earlier), then back to Zahn's chapel, then to Union Hall and finally to the newly-built Good Templar's hall at 108 North Spring Street. The time of prayer meetings was changed from Thursday evening to Wednesday, then back to Thursday. The time of Covenant meetings and business meetings was repeatedly changed.

Personality clashes sometimes became vindictive. On the most stormy occasion, charges brought by the Deacon against the Clerk finally resulted in nine people being expelled, including the Deacon and the Treasurer who was also the chairman of the pulpit committee.

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On the subject of preachers, mention must also be made of Isaac N. Cooper, one of the founding members and a lay minister from Southern Texas. When no pastor was available, he organized and conducted services in his home, the B'nai B'rith meeting hall and later the Good Templar's hall. The meetings was repeatedly changed.

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This heterogeneity, of itself, created problems. While it tended to make some people tolerant, it made others narrow and fearful of corrupting influences. Baptist doctrine and practice varied geographically and people came with divergent views as to how the affairs of the Church should be conducted. Also, those personal characteristics which they had in common were not such as to contribute to the success of a cooperative venture. Having left their homes, relatives and friends to emigrate to a locality about which they knew almost nothing, most of those who arrived in Los Angeles before 1880 could be characterized as one of two types. Either they had come seeking wealth — hence were self-centered and of a strong mind — or they had run away from a situation in which they were unhappy and restless and could not get along with their associates.

It is not surprising therefore that the business meetings frequently were stormy and the church did not act with harmony and agreement. Differences of opinion were involved in almost every consideration, usually resulting in a split decision.

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Therein lies a mystery which hours of research have not solved at the time of this writing. The gift was made in 1875, but according to the records in Los Angeles, J. B. was married in 1881 to the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Jones who lived in an adobe opposite the Plaza. Was the newspaper in error — the donor really having been Mrs. Isaac Lankershim — or had he married a San Francisco girl earlier who had died sometime between 1875 and 1881? The latter theory seems reasonable, as he was age 31 when he married Carolyn Jones.

The Baptist Ladies Society mentioned in the article was the first auxiliary group in the Church. They were responsible for preparing the Communion. In March of 1875 the Sunday School was started.

The first annual meeting was held on January 4th, 1877. Officers elected at that time were three Deacons, a Clerk and a Treasurer. By the end of that year, exactly 100 members had joined the Church since its start — ten by baptism. Only three came into the Church during the entire year of 1878 and the Church roll was down to 66 — most of whom were not very active. The Clerk lamented that only 10 attended the Covenant and business meeting in July.

It is interesting that neither the Trustees nor the Finance Committee were considered elected officers. Both groups existed at that time, but presumably on a pro-tem basis. Prior to having trustees, a House Committee had performed their function. When that office was first created, a new member volunteered for the job, but his term of service and membership both ended when he failed to appear before the Church to defend against a charge of drunkenness.

Mistakenly, we have a nostalgic feeling toward the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But the “good old days” do not deserve approbation, whether considered internationally, nationally or locally, — either secularly or religiously. Wars, riots, strikes, financial panics, high interest rates, ethnic-prejudices were the order of the day. The churches seemed concerned only with themselves and spent their efforts in internal bickering and fighting each other. In Los Angeles, too, the crying need to Christian involvement were ignored: extreme poverty and pitiful living conditions, mistreatment and abuse of the poorer Mexicans, the Indians and the Chinese. We cannot be surprised that First Baptist does not seem to have been an exception. The extent of practice of Social Gospel was in the missionary offerings and the Deacon’s fund for needy members.

Strict adherence to the approved theological dogma was a sign of the times, and non-acceptance was dealt with summarily. In July, 1880, the hand of fellowship was withdrawn from two members: one for “embracing error” (?) and the other for belief in infant baptism. A few years later, two Sisters were excluded for holding “unscriptural views on sanctification” and another “for not walking properly with the Church.”

Just when its strength was at lowest ebb and the Church appeared to be doomed, the Lord sent an Angel whose first name was Henry. The Rev. Henry Angel, from the Trinity Baptist Church of New York City, began to serve as pastor in May 1878, and continued his tranquil leadership until his death a year and a half later. He never received a formal call to the Church, yet his ministry was essential to the miracle of survival. Nor was he paid a salary, although the Church did assume his funeral expenses (?) and placed an expression of appreciation in the newspaper.

One who knew him stated that he was “a man of godly spirit and sanctified wisdom” who performed “the function of the sacred office with great acceptance” until he received the call — the Church continued without the leadership of a pastor.

The bright spot at the start of the Eighties was provided by an evangelistic team of Dr. DeWitt and Mr. Maxham who were invited to conduct a series of meetings in 1880. They brought in 40 new members, but more important was DeWitt’s constructive criticism. He chided the members for their lethargy and procrastination and pointed out that other local churches, younger than First Baptist were progressing and prospering. He proposed that they should “search for a pastor among the super-abundance of good men in the East — many of whom are occupying smaller fields than they ought, and are willing and anxious to extend their labours.”

The Church was stirred by his admonishment, but nevertheless it was May of the following year before they took positive action.

THE MINISTRY OF P. W. AND SUSAN DORSEY

Whereas during the first seven years of its life the Church survived only by the grace of God, the next seven brought it to a state of strength and health that would augur its future as a great Church.

The economic situation in Los Angeles was now better. The Santa Fe railroad completed its line from Chicago to Los Angeles in 1885. There followed a rate war between the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe, with tickets from the East costing as little as one dollar. This started a mass movement of people to Southern California which raised the population of the City to 60,000 in 1887 — five times the figure of six years earlier. The Great Boom was on. The City spread in every direction and neighboring towns mushroomed up over night. The people who came were of a more stable character than those who had arrived earlier. They came because they were attracted to Southern California, not to get away from a painful past. And they came with money, not looking for it. The Depression was over and, for a time, Los Angeles prospered.

The Dorseys provided exactly the type of leadership to enable the Church to take full advantage of the situation. P. W. Dorsey was just graduating from the Rochester Seminary when he was invited by the Church to supply the pulpit for three months. In that era, very few preachers were seminary-trained, and in Southern California they were a rarity.

When Dorsey and his wife arrived in Los Angeles, the members promptly fell in love with them. Everyone was impressed with the graciousness, enthusiasm and energy of both Dorseys.

On August 4th, 1881, three months before he was ordained, he was called to be Pastor by a unanimous vote on the first ballot.

Mr. Dorsey was ordained on November 6th, with Dr. H. I. Parker, Pastor at Santa Ana, officiating. This was the same Dr. Parker who, four years before, had served First Baptist very briefly as Minister. Later, after retiring, he and Mrs. Parker became members of First Baptist.

The salary paid P. W. Dorsey certainly was not commensurate with Dorsey’s value to the Church. During the first five years he was paid $100 per month, with assistance from the Home Mission Society for the first two years. After the fifth year his pay was raised to $125 monthly. Small though this may seem, no Baptist minister in the Southwest was paid more.

Susan Miller Dorsey graduated from Vassar in 1877, having earned the honor of Phi Beta Kappa. Harriet Robbins says, “She was brilliant, well-read, very gracious, considerate of others, a wise administrator and a most delightful person.” Her career was in Education. She began as a teacher; then she served as Assistant Superintendent of Los Angeles Schools for seven years and Superintendent for nine years. In the opinion of a contemporary authority, she was “one of the outstanding educators in the country.” Dorsey High School is named in her honor — the only high school to have been named for a living person.

Regrettably, we do not have a picture of Mrs. Dorsey as she appeared when First Lady of First Baptist. This picture shows her with poet, Edwin Markham.

Probably the most important accomplishment of the Dorseys was the transformation they effected in the spirit of the Church. They quickly eliminated the lethargic attitude, and talk was replaced by action. Then the Dorseys’ own generosity brought some members to follow their example and others were shamed into liberality.

The Minutes report an instance of “reasoning” with a member to give financial support, and on other occasions the amounts of gifts and the names of non-givers were publicized!

Earlier the Church had been quite self-centered and more intent on the adherence of its members to dogmatic beliefs than on efforts to extend the Gospel and to be of service to others. True, there still were instances where the hand of fellowship was withdrawn for “embracing error,” but the Pentecostal influence was bothering all Baptist churches. At First Baptist, most of the evidence points to an unselfish broadening of interest and activities.
This was demonstrated in the starting of mission churches in the outlying, newly-developed areas of the City. This was done to such an extent that leaders in the denomination referred to First Baptist as the "mother of churches."

Sometimes the beginning would be made with a Sunday School, and in most cases with a nucleus of members who lived in the neighborhood. When the group grew to a sufficient number, it would organize as a church, at which time First Baptist would release its members and also give a cash contribution toward a building. As many as 23 members were released for a single church and as much as $3000 was contributed.

During the Dorsey ministry, six of these mission groups were initiated. At least four became churches (East Los Angeles, Memorial, Calvary and Swedish) but due to changes in the City, not a single one has survived until today. In fact, every American Baptist church in the City today began in the 20th century except First and Second, the latter having been organized in 1885.

In December 1886, H. C. Bristol was employed as Assistant Pastor to do missionary work in the City. His salary of $1000 was largely paid by Mrs. I. Lankershim. After serving only seven months, poor health forced his resignation and A. W. Rider took his place. This was before the existence of the Los Angeles City Mission Society, which did not have its beginning until 1906.

The most spectacular achievement during Dorsey’s ministry was the building of a house of worship on the northeast corner of Sixth and Fort Streets (now Broadway) where Silverwood’s store has been located for many years. The total cost was $25,000 which was just twice the amount subscribed for the purpose a year and a half earlier. Yet, on April 12, 1884, the new building was dedicated, completely free of debt! Actually, the Church had been operating "in the black" only for the last two years of its first decade. (On February 2, 1882, the Treasurer had reported that, for the first time ever, all bills were paid and a balance of $88.34 on hand.)

The new building provided the largest seating capacity of any Protestant church in Southern California or of any Baptist church on the Pacific Coast. A letter inviting the Los Angeles Association to hold its annual meeting in the new building states, "To erect this house of worship in honor of our Master, was a remarkable task for us in view of the fact that we were only few in number [there were only 140 members] and limited in means and it was accomplished by the most liberal giving on the part of all and by increasing toil; and now each rejoices and thanks God for the part he has been permitted to take in it.

"As a Church, we feel that we are now for the first time, in shape to do effective work for the Master and we have large hopes and extended plans for the future."

Sixth and Fort Streets had not been the first site selected for the building. The first lot acquired had been at Fourth and Fort, but the Church decided against that location. That lot had been bought before the Church was incorporated and was purchased in the name of O. T. Barker as Trustee.

Obadiah Truax Barker (he preferred just "O. T.") was the founder of the present Barker Bros. He had arrived in Los Angeles in 1880 and, with a partner, started a furniture and carpet business on North Spring Street. When his partner retired, O. T. Barker and Sons moved to a store near the Pico House.

There were steps which were preliminary and necessary to construction of the building. In order to own property, the Church had to incorporate. This was finally achieved on May 8, 1882 — five years after Trustees had been elected and charged with the task. The original document, which is on display in the Hobbs Room, states that the purposes of the Church are "religious and benevolent; to hold and conduct meetings for worship according to the rules, regulations and discipline of the Baptist church and to do such acts of charity and benevolence as may be deemed best by said association to acquire and hold all land and property that may be necessary for the business and objects of this association and burial grounds for its deceased members." The matter of burial grounds was importantly at the time because of the lack of a decent Baptist cemetery in early Los Angeles. Such as was available on Fort Hill and later at Ninth and Figueroa were sadly neglected and evoked bitter criticism in the local press. Ultimately the need was met by the Evergreen and Rosedale cemeteries.

Three of the five Trustees signed the Articles of Incorporation. The two whose signatures do not appear were O. T. Barker and R. L. Patton, manager of one of Lankershim’s six great ranches in the San Fernando Valley. One of the signers was Isaac N. Cooper, charter member and lay preacher, Deacon and Moderator during the troubled Seventies. Texan Cooper was nearing the end of his years of faithful service to the Church. His death occurred two days after the new building was dedicated.

Another was James R. Millard who, in 1876, had joined the Church by letter from Ottawa, Kansas. Little is known of Mr. Millard other than that he had served as Clerk for a couple of years just preceding the coming of the Dorseys.

First of the three signers was the President of the Board, J. D. Bicknell. John Dustin Bicknell, born in Vermont in 1838, had joined First Baptist in 1876 by letter from Greenfield, Missouri, and had served as Clerk. He was a prominent attorney-at-law of the firm of Bicknell and White, later Bicknell, Gibson and Trask. His first partner, who was destined for national renown was Stephen M. White who became United States Senator and succeeded in locating Los Angeles’ harbor at San Pedro against the formidable opposition of C. P. Huntington and the Southern Pacific.

John Bicknell’s older brother was Frederick T. Bicknell M. D., president of the California Hospital and the California Health Resort. Dr. Bicknell’s wife, Carrie, was an officer in the Ladies’ Aid Society.

Other activities of John Bicknell were prophetic of First Baptist relationships 80 years later. He served as one of the original trustees of the Hollenbeck Home for the Aged, and was a member of the first non-partisan Board of Education selected by the citizens of Los Angeles. He was a leader in civic activities until his death in 1911.

"Heading the list of laymen who sustained the Church during its critical and development period, however, should be the name of Isaac Lankershim. Probably the Church would not be in existence today had it not been for the steadying influence, the financial counsel and the generous benefactions of Lankershim and his family and business associates. We do not know, but we suspect, that a major part of the cost of the new building came from that source.

Isaac Lankershim, born in Bavaria, had driven a horse-drawn wagon from Missouri to northern California in the early Fifties, bringing with him, his wife, Annis, and baby son, James. Having been a farmer in Missouri, he became a rancher in the Bay area. Apparently he was successful, because in 15 years he came to Los Angeles and paid Pio Pico and his brother Andres $115,000 for the southern half of San Fernando Valley. Ignoring advice that wheat would not grow in Southern California, he planted thousands of acres and his harvests were so bountiful that he built a flour mill in Los Angeles and shipped the flour to Ejingland.

In November, 1881, he was appointed as a member of the committee to select a building site and was also elected a Trustee. Unfortunately, failing health forced his resignation two months later and he died within three years.

Isaac Newton Van Nuys served as Trustee after Lankershim’s death. He had come to Los Angeles from Monticello, New York in 1870 and was employed by Lankershim to manage his property. Van Nuys solidified the relationship by marrying the boss’s daughter.

In addition to his agricultural and developmental work in San Fernando Valley, Mr. Van Nuys owned the Van Nuys Hotels and was vice-president of a local bank. (His death occurred in 1921, his wife’s in 1923.)

The Minutes for August 7, 1887, record that, "Through the Christian liberality of Mrs. Van Nuys, a handsome cement sidewalk has been laid in front of the Church." At a later meeting, recognition was accorded Mrs. Lankershim and Mrs. Van Nuys for their continuing generosity, "though not members of this Church." Assumably they never transferred their membership from the North because their ranch homes were so far from the City as to prevent regular attendance at First Baptist services.

Professor Alonzo C. Potter was another benefactor. (His picture will be seen later, as a member of the Official Board of 1900.) He and his wife, Delia, had united with the Church by letter from Fairfield, Iowa, in 1880. Both were active in the affairs of the Church, she as an officer in the Ladies’ Aid and the Missionary Society, he as a Deacon and as a Trustee.
In 1886 Potter presented the Church with a fine organ, shipped from Boston — the first pipe organ in Southern California. He also gave a piano for the use of the Sunday School. (The organ was later moved to Flower Street, then to the temporary structure on Sixth Street where it remains today, except for the presentation plaque which Dr. Henderson has recovered and placed with the Church memorabilia.)

On the last Sunday of August in 1887, Dorsey shook the congregation at the conclusion of his sermon by announcing, "The last year has been especially trying to soul and body. As a result of all this, my nervous system shows signs of disease. I am suffering from an affliction of the right arm which I fear may terminate in paralysis." So, after six significant years, the Dorseys left.

Because the Church had reached respected status in the community, it was imperative to secure the best attainable talent for its Pastor. Almost immediately the Church took unanimous action to call Dr. H. M. Bisby of Providence, R. I., but sickness prevented him from responding. Other ministers were approached but it was 15 months before Dr. Read came to the pulpit. In the interim, A. W. Rider served commendably. After Dr. Read's arrival, Mr. Rider continued for a few months as Assistant Pastor, — the first assistant pastor in Southern California. (Actually he served as Minister of Visitation, as does Dr. Dan Rider today! They are not related.) He then accepted a call to become the Memorial Baptist Church which First Baptist had started in 1886 under the leadership of Mr. Rider.

THE MINISTRY OF DANIEL AND LOVINA READ

Having enjoyed success with a very young pastor, the Church surprisingly shifted to the other extreme and called a man on the eve of his retirement, — and again made a discerning choice.

Daniel Read D. D., LL. D., was 63 years of age when he came to First Baptist, having been born in Orangeville, N. Y. on April 11, 1825. His father and grandfather were Baptist preachers and two sons followed in the tradition, one of whom preached at First Baptist while Read was Pastor.

Dr. Read was educated at Madison University. (Neither Orangeville nor Madison University exists today.) He had pastored a number of churches in New York and the Midwest, and for 14 years was president of Shurtleff College. Because of his wife's health, he left a pastorate in Waterloo, Iowa, to come to Redlands, and on December 2, 1888, began his service at First Baptist.

This evaluation of his efforts was written three years after his work at First Baptist concluded: "It was a most conspicuous blessing of heaven that a man after God's own heart, fully qualified to teach, to direct, and to sympathize in all matters pertaining to church work and individual life, should have been sent to us just at this juncture of the church's history. . . . For nine years he devoted his thought and strength to the great work of developing in the church the highest form of Christian character, cultivating the missionary spirit, instilling the virtues of consecration, benevolence, and an unwavering loyalty to the Truth; making it the end and aim of his life to have the church ready to present to the Master at the last day, without spot or wrinkle."

That oration misses one important point. Dr. Read's accomplishments were in spite of financial curtailments. As in the Seventies, this period was plagued with a shortage of funds. As before, the trouble was not with the Church but with a recessive economy. The Great Boom which had started in 1885 in Southern California had run its course. At first it had brought well-intentioned settlers, but with increasing momentum it had attracted those who wished to gamble in real estate and some who swindled ruthlessly. Quickly it had become a wild, hysterical frenzy in which property changed hands daily, — even several times a day. Within two years the price of town lots had advanced 30% and more.

In a period of three hectic years, the Boom waxed and waned and in its wake left nothing but grief. Syndicates went broke and their failure resulted in loss of lifetime savings, bankruptcy and often suicide. On the heels of this local disaster came the Panic of 1893, national in scope, and the depression which followed.

Aside from the financial situation, there was positive progress. The moral tone of the City had improved. The age of science and industry had begun and the benefits were noticeable in Los Angeles. Bell had invented the telephone in 1876 and local use began in 1882. With the advent of electrical power, cable cars replaced the horse cars — except when heavy rains flooded out the power plant.

Los Angeles had become the first city in the United States to be exclusively lighted by electricity when, in 1884, arc lights were installed on seven 150 foot towers spread a mile or more apart. There was opposition, though, to electrical lighting. It was claimed that it caused optical illusions, produced color blindness, and was a menace to ladies' complexion! (Of course, history shows that any change meets with resistance. The Revised Version of the English Bible was completed by the scholars in 1885 but it was years before it was accepted for use by most churches.)

The work of First Baptist was not enhanced by the "modern improvements." Rather, it was seriously crippled by the impoverishment of its members due to the economic conditions. The total financial need of the Church was only about $5000 to $7000 per year, but deficits were almost continuous. In August 1892, for the first time since Dr. Read's arrival, the Church was free from indebtedness and his salary was increased to $150. This recovery was only temporary, however, and a year later conditions were so bad that Dr. Read voluntarily reduced his salary back to $125. Nevertheless the Church continued to grow in numbers as the City's population continued to increase. This growth in membership was the more remarkable considering that by 1895 there were a dozen Baptist churches in Los Angeles and its suburbs. During Dorsey's period the number had more than doubled, and this was again more than doubled while Read was Pastor. Nearly all of the additions were newcomers to the area. Here are figures for the membership at the first of the year, by 5-year periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>182</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>349</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>563</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>928</td>
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Attendance was excellent. Whereas today the number attending any service is but a fraction of the membership, then the congregation at Sunday services, morning and evening, would regularly exceed the total membership. Upon occasion, the crowd on Sunday evening would fill the Church beyond its regular seating capacity of 450.

Partly, the good attendance may have been due to the fact that religion is more attractive during adversity. The principal reason certainly was that there were no counter-attractions. There was nothing else to do on Sunday! Also, as to the members, it was a Covenant obligation to support the Church, financially and in person. Covenant meetings were still held each month and anyone who failed to abide by his agreement was dropped from the roll.

More than 100 regularly attended the weekly Prayer meetings. In May 1894, a proposal to change the night of these meetings from Thursday to Wednesday was "carried by a large majority." Participation in these meetings proved so extensive that action had to be taken limiting the length of the service to an hour and a quarter. A prayer group also met each week during the day.

This was also the period of time when the Sunday School reached the acme of its effectiveness. As mentioned earlier, most churches started with a Sunday School and First Baptist may not have been an exception. The First Baptist Sunday School had been officially organized on March 28th, 1875 under the superintendency of Shepard Smith, but twenty years afterward, Anna Hobbs recalled that previous to its organization, "A few of the church members had assembled, with as many children as they could get together, at our residence on Alameda Street and had instructed the work of a Sunday School. These meetings were not held with perfect regularity, but they served to awaken an interest in the subject, and became the nucleus about which the subsequent organization crystallized".

Teachers at that early date included Mrs. Hobbs, Mrs. Zahn (a member of the German Methodist Church), Shepard Smith, Henry Angel, Isaac Cooper, James Millard and others. When P. W. Dorsey came, he assumed the superintendency for two years. This illustrates the prominent position held by the Sunday School in that era.
The Historical Development of Religion in Los Angeles: General Introductions

The Sunday School had an identity of its own, — almost on equal terms with the Church. It was independently organized with a separate Constitution and By Laws. It elected its own complete corps of officers, of which only the superintendents and attendance at the Sunday School was phenomenal. In March 1892, the average was 266. In April a new record was set at 277. This was surpassed in May, and in June the total reached 313, — almost equal to the Church membership.

Revival services also added new members to the Church rolls. Sometimes these were sponsored by First Baptist and other times they were in union with other churches and denominations. When the crowds were too large to be seated in one of the church buildings, the meetings would be held in Hazard's Pavilion on Fifth Street where the Temple Baptist Church property is now located.

By 1894 there were a score of Chinese who were members of First Baptist, brought into the fold through the Chinese Mission which the Church sponsored, beginning in the Dorse era. The Mission was located at 608 North Main Street and was under the leadership of Emma Fitch, who had been employed as City Missionary to fill the vacancy when A. W. Rider left to become Pastor at Memorial.

Many Chinese laborers had come to Southern California after the building of the railways. By 1880 there were 20,000 Chinese in Southern California — a sizeable part of the population. They ran laundries, worked as domestics, and produced and distributed nearly all of the vegetables for Los Angeles. They also developed the fishing industry and were the first laborers in the citrus groves.

Their treatment by the citizenry was deplorable. Historian Carey McWilliams reports, "Youngsters were given free license to stone the Chinese, upset their vegetable carts and laundry wagons, and to pull their Queues for good measure." Beginning at the time of the Panic of 1873, the Chinese were blamed for unemployment, depressed wages and bad business conditions. The political agitators who headed the Working-men's Party in California were responsible for this ever-increasing antipathy and they tried various ways to discourage both Chinese activity and immigration. One of their pamphlets read, "The Chinaman must leave the State of California. The white freeman with his wife and children cannot live in the same atmosphere as the Coolie slave. One or the other must leave the State and it must be the Chinaman."

It is much to the credit of the Church at that time that their spirit of Christian brotherhood kept them from heeding the rabble-rousers, even though such an attitude was very unpopular. First Baptist also sponsored a resolution adopted by the Southern California Baptist State Convention:

"Resolved, that as a Convention of Baptists we enter our decided and emphatic protest against the recent act of the House of Representatives in passing the Geary Chinese Restriction Bill, by which nearly all Chinese are forever prohibited from landing upon our shores, or gaining a livelihood in the United States."

The resolution went on to denounce the Bill as "unamerican, unchristian and outrageous." As a matter of political expediency however, Congress passed the Bill and it became law.

The Convention had just been organized (April 21, 1892) and its first meeting, when the resolution was adopted, was in the First Baptist building. Fifty-three Baptist churches from four associations in Southern California united to form the Convention.

Just a month after the Convention, the Church published its first printed handbook and Directory. It contained names and addresses of the 400 members and was kept up-to-date by printed supplements.

At the time of a large meeting, such as that of the Convention, it was possible to roll back the big doors which separated the sanctuary from the Sunday School room, and thus enlarge the capacity to about 800. There were occasions when even this was not adequate for the crowd. Also, the Sunday School had outgrown its space. It is not surprising, therefore, that as early as 1892 there were stirrings to build a "more commodious house of worship." It was the decision, however, that no move would be made unless the cost could be met by the sale of the Sixth Street property. Since that was not possible at the time, the matter had to be tabled.

There were other disappointments in the period. One was the defection of the Church's first foreign missionary. Miss Adele Phillips had been proudly sent to Japan, but in 1893, support and the hand of fellowship were withdrawn because she had joined another denomination. This did not deter the missionary efforts of the Church. Contributions to both the Home and Foreign Mission Societies were substantial to the point that the Church was reputed for its generosity throughout the entire denomination. Benevolences usually ran a full third of the expenditures.

In May 1897, the Church contributed substantially toward repaying of the massive debt of the American Baptist missionary organization. The indebtedness amounted to $486,000, of which John D. Rockefeller pledged to pay $250,000 if the churches raised the balance.

Locally, other struggling churches were helped and there always were several missions to be supported, and their activities were expanding. The Chinese mission had classes every evening and the Berean Mission now operated an industrial training school.

The courses available in the public high school at that time were exclusively academic. Thus the Berean Mission met a real need, located as it was in the poorer south-central section of the City, by offering vocational training which would equip its students to get jobs. (The Church had borrowed the money for the building from the State Mission Board. The interest rate was 11%! If that sounds like the present, note that gold sold for more than $100 per ounce.)

Two of the missions started about this time, rather quickly became churches; the Central Avenue Mission became Bethel Baptist Church and the Court Circle Mission became Immanuel Baptist Church. Unfortunately, a year later, the latter was reported as having "gone to pieces because of animosity among its members."

In July 1897, the Pico Heights Mission was started, with Mrs. A. L. Lankershim (Isaac's widow) giving $50 toward its expenses. Mrs. Lankershim frequently gave to missionary projects and was also the donor of two additional plates and cups for the Communion set.

Another missionary program to which the Church gave regular support — one which was peculiar to the times — was the Chapel Car "Emmanuel." This was one of six such railroad cars owned by the American Baptist Publication Society — this one serving the Far-western region. Its purpose was to visit towns without churches and to work among railroad men at division points. The effort was successful. Evangelists using the "Emmanuel" established or revived a number of small community churches and averaged over a hundred conversions per year.

Still another project which was given greater support, was not successful: the Los Angeles Baptist University, St. Vincent's College (now Loyola University) and the University of Southern California were both in existence at the time. Hopes were high that Baptists would have "a school worthy of ourselves, worthy of our denomination and the age, and worthy of the Master whom we serve."

Los Angeles Baptist University had opened its doors in the Fall of 1887 in a newly-constructed four-story building. The plant was too grandioso, the operating budget too high, and the response in enrollment fell short of expectations.

P. W. Dorsey became a financial agent for the University in 1893 and the Dorseys returned to membership at First Baptist, with Mrs. Dorsey resuming her career in the Los Angeles school system.

L. A. B. U. was nominally sponsored by the Los Angeles Association but among the church groups, First Baptist was the major supporter. For six years it struggled along, soaking up all of the money it could get, but like many other ventures of the time, it was unable to survive the economic depression of 1893. For a time it continued as an academy, even adding the inducement of a military department, but eventually it had to liquidate. At least alumni of the University of Redlands can find consolation in the demise of L. A. B. U. A second Baptist school in the area could not have been supported and would not have been proposed. Further, the campaign in 1907 to raise funds to establish the university at Redlands would have fallen short of the required goal had not the $60,000 of assets of the defunct college pushed the campaign over the top.

Many of the faculty and students of L. A. B. U. were members of First Baptist. Melville Dozier, a prominent layman in the Church and perennial chairman of the
Deacons, served as president of the school's Board. (You will find him in the picture of First Baptist's Official Board of 1900.) Professor Dozier had come to California by way of Panama before the railroads and was one of the staff of three when a branch of the State Normal School opened here in 1882. He served as an instructor and administrator there for 22 years. (Merle Miller, a leader in today's Church, claims him as "Uncle Melville").

To Dr. Read, the real calamity in the closing of the University was the loss of advanced education for young Baptists who were dedicated to become ministers and missionaries. To meet that need he started a training school of his own in the First Baptist building. The Southern California Baptist Training School began in September 1895, with 29 students and a volunteer faculty of six. Besides Bible studies, there were courses in Homiletics, Christian Culture, Systematic Theology, First Principles of Medical Science, and Elementary and Advanced English. The English courses were taught in the evening by Susan Dorsey. Dr. Read had this to say about her ability as a teacher: "By her rare skill and rare patience and perseverance, she has secured a measure of proficiency on the part of her students which is beyond our most sanguine expectations." (By this time the Dorseys had separated and her husband had a pulpit in Waco, Texas.)

Considering that it operated on a few hundred dollars per year, the school was remarkably successful. In a few years it had graduates filling the pulpits in nearby towns, and four who had come out of the Chinese Mission had returned to China as missionaries, supported in their work by the school!

Dr. Read was a good organizer and a capable leader. We cannot appraise his preaching ability because there are no copies of any of his sermons extant, but apparently it was appreciated by the congregation. On one occasion they voted that he should repeat a sermon. The topic was "The Condition of the Dead between Death and Resurrection."

The culmination of Read's ministry was the new house of worship on Flower Street. The inadequacy of the Broadway building had prompted frequent efforts to move to an improved facility; but these always were thwarted by an insufficient price for the old property. Lack of money also precluded its remodeling and refurbishing.

In March 1897, the Church approved exchanging properties with the Simpson M. E. Tabernacle but the deal fell through when the Methodists were unable to pay the $10,000 boot which was a condition of the transfer.

Just a month later the Church accepted an offer from Chester Williams of $45,000 for their property, without the windows and contents of the building. This was $5,000 less than was wanted and needed for the construction and furnishing of the new edifice. In order to make the move without indebtedness, the $5,000 was raised at the close of the last Sunday service held in the Broadway building.

Thirty pieces of property were then considered by the Location committee; the first and decisive choice being the 130 foot frontage on the west side of Flower Street between 7th and 8th Streets, priced at $11,000.

Five sets of plans were submitted to the Building committee for their consideration. Here their first choice was too expensive and the ultimate selection favored the plans drawn by Henry I. Stattuck.

If the Church ever honors lay servants of its early days, J. N. Van Noy should be given prime consideration. Although "a very busy man," he never refused an assignment and gave unspingly of his time and money. He served regularly as a Trustee for a quarter of a century. He was a leader in the building of the first church and in the move to Flower Street. He was one of three who each gave $500 toward the $5,000 that had to be raised on that last Sunday morning before moving. (Three of his children — Annis, Kate and Ben — are mentioned in Sunday School activities for several years. Annis had the title of Librarian — the first time that title appears in the records. Later, her sister Kate succeeded her in the office.)

The First Honorary Life Deacon was James Chapin. He had joined the Church by letter from Iowa on November 6, 1875, being the 33rd person to become a member. A score of years later he had become the patriarch because all of those ahead of him had passed on or moved away.

Alonzo C. Potter, the donor of the great organ, was the second Life Deacon. Although born in New York, he too had come from Iowa where he was known as 'Professor' Potter, head of the Fairfield Conservatory of Music.

When Potter came to Los Angeles in 1879, he expanded his interests by buying four acres lying south and west of 7th and Figueroa for $8,000. (The Statler Hotel now stands on part of that property.) He built his home there, surrounded by a garden of exotic plants which became a showplace for visiting tourists.

D. K. Edwards (David Kitz-Miller Edwards) was another pillar of the Church, serving for many years as a Deacon, Trustee or other officer — sometimes in a dual capacity. He was born in Tennesse in 1851 and taught in public school in Gonzales (near Salinas) before coming to Los Angeles.

Deacon Edwards was associated with Max Newmark, first in the grain business, then as a partner in Newmark & Edwards (which acted as escrow agent whenever the Church bought or sold property.) He was a member of the City's first Board of Public Works and was on the Board at the time the bond issue was passed to build the Owens River aqueduct. Later, he was chairman of the County's Highway Commission and was on the Board of Education for four years.

For 25 years Edwards was a director on the Board of the Southern California Baptist Convention and was elected Honorary President. He was an early Trustee of the University of Redlands, 20 years a director of the Y. M. C. A., a director of the Chamber of Commerce and of two local banks.

Other laymen who have not been mentioned but who served notably in this era were: C. H. Barker (one of the "Barker Bros."); . . . W. F. Jacobs (Church Clerk for eight years). . . . W. G. Shaw . . . Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Cressy (Captain Cressy was president of the Southern California Baptist Convention in 1896. She was superintendent of the Primary Department in the last days of that department, until it was the best organized department in the Sunday School. The program of their graduation exercises always took over a Sunday evening service . . . Richard Green . . . Samuel S. Chase . . . C. H. Brown . . . C. C. Boynton . . . E. C. Hurd (one time owner of the first railway to Hollywood which he extended to Laurel Canyon) . . . Charles O. Adams . . . Dr. F. M. Parker . . . H. Haskell . . . S. G. Bennett and C. A. Hubbard.

The burden having become too great for Dr. Read, past age 70 and in poor health, to carry alone, the Rev. J. Herron Garnett of San Jose was called as Assistant Pastor at the start of 1896. Dr. Read once again reduced his salary (he received less at the end of his ministry than at the beginning) in order to help pay $100 a month to Garnett. All was well until October of the following year when, due to the illness of both Read and Garnett, Joseph Smale was employed as a supply at $75 monthly. To meet this, the salaries of the two sick men were cut to $75 during their illnesses.

On November 6, 1897 the cornerstone of the new building was laid, without ceremony because both pastors were ill. On December 22nd Garnett resigned because of health. On the 29th, Dr. Read's wife, Lovina, died; and on January 12, 1898 he resigned because as he said, "Through sickness, sorrow, bereavement and age, I am no longer able to do the work."

Dr. Read had served the longest term of any First Baptist minister before Dr. Francis. The Church named him as Pastor Emeritus and voted him a tribute of $75 a month for three months and $50 monthly for life. He went East to visit his children's families and died in Emporia, Kansas, on May 27, 1898. The funeral was in the new building which Dr. Read had not lived to see. He had made two last requests. One that showed him a head of his time, was that instead of buying flowers, donations should be made to the Training School. The other was that Dr. A. J. Frost should preach the funeral sermon. (It is interesting that Dr. Frost might have become First Baptist's second pastor back in February 1876 had the Clerk sent correspondence as instructed by the Pulpit Committee.)

THE MINISTRY OF JOSEPH SMALE

The Rev. Mr. Joseph Smale was called by the Church to be their Pastor on January 22, 1898, just three months after he had come to supply the pulpit and just ten days after Dr. Read's resignation. Undoubtedly Mr. Garnett would have received the call had not poor health already forced his resignation as Read's assistant. In accepting the call, Mr. Smale expressed this bit of philosophy which is as applicable now as it was then: "Reformation is not the first need of humanity, but regeneration. If you would have pure politics, clean government, a moral society with peace and contentment reigning, men must have new hearts, and they must let God work through them as they seek to do His will."
We have no biographical data on Smale except that he had been born in Cornwall, England on July 7, 1867; that he lived with his mother, Ann Smale and that he had come to Los Angeles from Prescott, Arizona. (Arizona was still a Territory, and Prescott was then a town of 4,000, supported by stock-raising, lumber and nearby Fort Whipple.) He had been married but had separated from his wife before coming to First Baptist.

At First Baptist, everyone was occupied with the construction of the new building, and Smale was on the spot and available. Even so, he was not swept in with enthusiasm: About 10% of the voting congregation were negative on the secret ballot and the Moderator was unable to get an unanimous standing vote of approval.

The final service on Broadway was in the evening of March 27, 1898. A lengthy program included several papers by members of the Church. Professor Dozier's topic was "Our Pastors" and Anna Hobbs, widow of the first Pastor, gave "Early Reminiscences." This would be a better history and more might be reported on Mr. Smale, if those papers were still in the records. (Fortunately, all of the Clerk's minutes have been preserved but there is reason to believe that all other material, including a Scrap Book, to which the Clerk sometimes refers, were carelessly left behind when moving to the present structure). The first service at 727 S. Flower Street was on April 3rd and the Dedication Service was a week later, followed by four days of evangelistic meetings.

Dr. Frost preached the dedicatory sermon. He had frequently been both a guest preacher and lecturer at the Church during Read's ministry. One of his lectures had been on his experiences at the Columbian World's Fair in Chicago, and a later one was on the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. With Dr. Read's death, Dr. Frost became the dean of Southern California Baptist ministers.

Mr. Smale was an evangelist at heart and his evening services were always directed to the "unsaved." A series of evangelistic meetings lasting one to four weeks, with an outside speaker, were held about twice each year.

Dwight L. Moody was invited for one of the evangelistic series, but the building's capacity of 2000 was far too small for the crowds he attracted, so that after two nights the remaining meetings had to be held in Hazard's Pavilion.

A most unique meeting was held in the new building at the turn of the century, a plan which originated "in the fertile brain and kindly heart" of Mr. Smale.

All other Baptist churches in Southern California were invited to attend this Twentieth Century Baptist Conference, which began in the morning of the last day of 1900 and continued on into the new century. Forty churches were represented. The program included 35 speakers, and a midnight baptism of two Chinese.

Music was a significant part of these special services, as it was of the regular services from the time the Church had a worshipful place of meeting. There is a record of paid soloists. Mr. Nay were hired at $16 per month and $2 per week respectively. There was no law requiring equal pay for both sexes then.

It seems that at times music was given priority even over preaching. At the same meeting when Dr. Read voluntarily cut his salary by $25 a month, the Church voted to engage a chorister and an organist for a total of $40 a month. The Music Committee always was given an allowance of five dollars monthly for the purchase of music. In 1903, George H. Williams was employed full time with the title "Music Director and Sunday School Missionary."

The Sunday School had an orchestra of from fifteen to twenty instruments and sometimes played at the regular services — certainly always on Children's Day. On some special occasions outside musicians were used. For example, at an annual reception for new members, Lowinski's orchestra was brought in.

Some changes in practice coincided with the move to Flower Street. There would be no names on pews in the sanctuary, but this action "was not intended to discourage regular sittings."

The use of the common cup at Communion ended. Dr. M. E. Spinks, a member, used the argument of sanitation, and won the argument by presenting sufficient trays of individual glasses.

From the economic standpoint, conditions were good in this period. After recovery from the Panic of 1893, there were about ten years of relative prosperity. This was reflected in the financial picture of the Church. Total annual expenditures soon exceeded the $10,000 mark. By 1902 they surpassed $15,000 of which one half was in benevolences.

This was before the invention of that essential tool for the planning and control of spending: the budget. Possibly because of this lack, the outgo always exceeded the income, and the inevitable result each year was a deficit of a thousand dollars or more, — a considerable figure in relation to the total operating cost. An appeal after the Sunday morning sermon would yield pledges for the major part of, or sometimes exceeding, the amount asked for. Today's pledges are cancelable at any time but, then it was not so. It is part of the job of "Collector" (now refined to Financial Secretary) to inform each member of his payment status, and to get the money in.

If reminders failed, and the deficit was growing, retired or unemployed members would be hired as assistant collectors, sometimes paid on a per diem basis and sometimes paid 10% of the take.

Benevolences were entirely by special offering but pledges were taken annually for current expenses. This procedure was finally changed in September 1903 when dual weekly envelopes were adopted. At that time a separate envelope was provided for a "secret" freewill offering for the Pastor. This peculiar practice came at a time of financial emergency within the Church, and Mr. Smale elected to relinquish his regular salary. The situation that brought that about will be discussed later.

Because of its large membership, including some who were affluent, the Church was able to give financial assistance to those in unfortunate circumstances. The records do not show a single refusal to help. Even in the early days with a small and impecunious congregation, a collection was taken at the end of nearly every service for a poor widow, a hungry family, an injured Chinese, or a "colored brother" out of work. These were the outside membership but there were no government programs then to aid the poor.

In 1901 a sizeable offering was collected for the 10,000 who were left homeless by the Jacksonville fire, - an amount proportionately equivalent to that recently sent to the Nicaraguan earthquake victims.

Gifts within the denomination were especially generous. The Church obligated itself to pay a third of the existing debt of the Southern California Convention. It did this when their own deficit was more than the amount they were giving away. Under the same circumstances they paid off the remaining indebtedness of the Alhambra Baptist Church. A little later, four other churches were helped to build houses of worship. Two of them were small town churches many miles away from the City.

Colportage, like the Chapel Car, was a missionary endeavor which has passed away with time. The colporteur, usually a retired or churchless minister or licentiate, circulated from house to house across the countryside, giving away tracts, and supporting his evangelism with the sale of Bibles, religious literature and scriptural wall mottoes. In 1902 First Baptist purchased a team of horses for Brother Fred Vrigstead and set him up as a colporteur; sustaining him whenever his sales did not cover his expenses.

The Training School which was so successful under Dr. Read continued for a time but faded out after the Convention declined to take it over.

The Berean mission and industrial training school ended more suddenly when the property was sold to the Mt. Zion Baptist Church which had been started by the Second Baptist Church.

The proceeds of the sale were "to be held sacred. . . . for local missions." Ultimately most of the money went toward a building for the Calvary Baptist Church in Boyle Heights which had been formed by combining the Hebron Mission and the Occidental Heights Church. (The original campus of Occidental College was in Boyle Heights.)
In the meantime a new industrial school and home had started. It was not a church institution but its founder and its initial leadership came from within First Baptist. The Rev. Uriah Gregory D. D., chose to devote his mature years to his long-cherished idea of a home and school for homeless boys between the ages of 8 and 14.

On July 22, 1903, 116 letters were granted to unite with Temple Baptist Church in a single unanimous action, without comment or discussion. Evidently there was no bitterness or hard feelings.

Rev. Uriah Gregory D. D., chose to devote his mature years to his long-cherished idea of a home and school for homeless boys between the ages of 8 and 14. His school, then called The Industrial Home Society, was located in Artesia. On its Board were Joseph Smale, C. H. Barker, Prof. Dozier and S. I. Merrill.

Oh, how the discipline was firm. Dr. Gregory describes the system:

"Each week day is divided by tap of the bell into regular exercises of two hours length, thus systematizing the time and activities of the boys, which they enjoy greatly, leaving them no time for wicked devices, bringing them always under the watchful eye of a kind and beloved friend."

And after the assassination of President McKinley in 1901, S. I. Merrill who was connected with the wheat harvest on the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, persuaded the constituents of that organization to donate, as a memorial, $50,000 to equip and enlarge the school. Its name was changed to the McKinley Boys Home and it moved to Gardena and later to the San Fernando Valley.

The Chinese Mission continued to flourish and the salaries of the superintendent (usually a woman) and her Chinese assistant were paid by the Church. In February 1903 the First Chinese Baptist Church was organized with First Baptist rrmembers but the Mission continued to function.

Looking only at the first four years of Rev. Smale's ministry, indisputably he would deserve a favorable rating. He was completely dedicated to his task, a tireless worker and a captivating preacher. The accomplishments had been many and the failures few. In the light of that evidence alone he could not be blamed for what followed.

On the other hand, elements of his personality created problems which greater experience might have obviated. He was very young — only 30 when he came to First Baptist — and he followed a mature and experienced man. He was extremely self-confident and had a strong and unyielding will. He did not hesitate to make an enemy and thereafter never tried to heal the wound. His admirers considered him "the true ambassador of God".

Those whom he had injured used the terms: "spellbinder, was given his opportunity for rebuttal. He was "amazed that his utterances behind closed doors would be dragged into the public," but he answered the charges, person by person. The Clerk reported:

"Though not a member of this Church, she was so identified with its history and its efforts, that we have ever regarded her as one of our number. . . . She has gone to the reward of the faithful saint, and has left behind her a memory fragrant of good works and loving kindness."

That same annual letter reveals that members were still being excluded for various reasons: "The hand of discipline has not been withheld, but has been firmly and conscientiously employed, some nineteen members having required the reluctant exercise of this unpleasant function."

Mr. Jacobs and Mrs. F. J. Cressey, whose death had also occurred, had both had their difficulties with Mr. Smale. Therefore Smale's cryptic comment was interpreted by many as a pronouncement that the deaths were God's judgment for failure to support the Pastor. That was the beginning of the lamentable period of Smale's ministry.

Mr. Smale realized that his control was deteriorating rapidly and presumably decided to attack his young manhood. This strange comment, written by Mr. Smale, follows:

"Death has come again within our doors. We believe that in this inscrutable and startling providence, God has some serious and needed lesson... and we should enjoin upon each other the necessity of rigid self-examination to ascertain whether we are personally in perfect accord with the Divine Mind in all that relates to our personal characters and our attitude to our Master's work."

Mr. Jacobs and Mrs. F. J. Cressey, whose death had also occurred, had both had their difficulties with Mr. Smale. Therefore Smale's cryptic comment was interpreted by many as a pronouncement that the deaths were God's judgment for failure to support the Pastor. That was the beginning of the lamentable period of First Baptist history.

Not long after the Jacobs episode, a group of lay leaders asked Smale to resign but he refused them. Their request was without official action and was made privately. In fact no one else knew about it until Mr. Smale himself told of it some months later when he accused them of having been "actuated by the devil." It did, however, cause him to resolve to clear out his opposition.

In August 1902, Mr. Smale took the initiative with a letter to all members, reminding them that 21 had voted against him originally, that this opposition had never ceased, and that he now would require a vote of confidence if he were to remain as Pastor. Mr. Smale wanted the division to show by a standing vote. A secret ballot prevailed but resulted in 260 favoring continuance of the existing pastoral relations, with 108 against.

The lay leaders who were in opposition had not been allowed to express their viewpoint and demanded to be heard. Three business meetings were held within two weeks or the hand of fellowship would be withdrawn.

Within three weeks the Committee was back with a partial report by the majority, specifying 22 members who should be asked to "resume their covenant obligations" within two weeks or the hand of fellowship would be withdrawn.

Although the majority report was adopted, it was by a mere two-to-one margin. Two weeks later the penalty clause in the previous action was deleted, again by a two-to-one margin but this time with the majority on the other side. Rev. Smale realized that his control was deteriorating rapidly and presumably decided to attack the problem in a more subtle way. Working with his wealthy and good friend, Robert Burdette, a new church was organized into which the dissatisfied members could happily move.

On July 22, 1903, 116 letters were granted to unite with Temple Baptist Church in a single unanimous action, without comment or discussion. Evidently there was no bitterness or hard feelings. Before Temple Auditorium was completed, Mr. Burdette and his people used First Baptist's baptistry, without the usual charge, and also a room in which to hold their prayer meetings. In the months that followed, at least another hundred left, mostly attracted to Temple. By October
the number of members had dropped to 867. The real loss though, was not in the number but in the quality. The departures included nearly the entire lay leadership of the Church, the Association and the Convention.

In March of the following year, after assigning one of his four sermons answering the question "Is there eternal punishment for those who die Christ-less?", Mr. Smale found it necessary to take an extended vacation to recover his health. In August he left with his mother for a trip to England, Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land. During most of the absence, Dr. Thomas Baldwin was acting pastor.

On their return in May 1905, 500 attended "the largest reception ever given in the history of the Church." The Social Hall was decorated with palms and all kinds of flowers, including 750 carnations. Besides numerous speeches of welcome, Mr. Smale was given a purse with $150 in gold. On the following Sunday Mr. Smale preached on "The Great Welsh Revival" and the congregation decried it as "a remarkable service, long to be remembered." It commenced at 11:00 a.m. and closed at 2:15 p.m. The next two nights Mr. Smale spoke on the same topic and on Wednesday night "was to have spoken on the Welsh Revival, but the Spirit led him to change his subject and to speak on the "Lord's Supper". The crowd was such that the meeting hall was ended and he said he was "a rejected man." The Clerk closed the Minutes with, "May God have mercy on this Church for rejecting His anointed."

This was the beginning of fifteen successive weeks of such revival services, twice each day at 2:30 and 7:45. The slogan was "Pentecost has not yet come, but is coming." It was not an evangelistic effort to gain new converts but was intended to restore the Church of the first century and to bring to those who were already Christians the mysticism and exhilaration of the Pentecostal experience.

All other activities of the Church were neglected or abandoned. Free will offerings replaced pledges and were insufficient to meet the current expenses. As an economy measure, the services of the choir director were discontinued and that brought forth the first protest.

Professor Melville Dozier had stood with the Pastor two years before, but now he sided with the choir in favor of retaining a paid director. He and his wife also objected to the noise and confusion of the meetings, and asked that members of other churches should go to their own services on Wednesday nights, and leave First Baptist to its own members for the one night, at least.

At least the following Sunday morning service, it was voted to give Professor Dozier a dismissal letter, which he refused to accept unless the whole Church voted it at a petitioned meeting. That evening Mr. Smale offered his resignation and it was accepted by the majority! Mr. Smale's ministry of over seven years was ended and he said he was "a rejected man." The Clerk closed the Minutes with, "May God have mercy on this Church for rejecting His anointed."

A Church always pays more than once for the sin of dissension. Within two weeks, 190 members had requested open letters to transfer elsewhere. These included most of the "second team" of officers as well as 26 of the Chinese and 14 of the Mexican members. The new slate of officers elected at the Annual Meeting held the following Tuesday (September 19, 1905) listed only three who had ever held office before.

Among the members who left were charter member Mrs. Eugenia Cooper and two of the Church missionaries: Esther Hargrave, the missionary to Venezuela, and Rev. Huen Cho of the local Chinese Mission.

The Period of October 1905 to August 1907, including the Brief Ministry of Stephen A. Northrop, D.D.

It was not easy to find a satisfactory replacement for Mr. Smale. Locally the reputation of the Church had suffered badly and certainly no Baptist minister in Southern California would consider the post. The membership had dropped below 700 and finances were in poor shape. Nevertheless, before the end of the year the Pulpit Committee, of which Professor Dozier was the chairman, proposed consideration of Dr. Northrop of Kansas City, Missouri. He was invited out and preached twice, after which the Church voted a call, with the annual salary specified at $2500 — the highest which had ever been paid. This time there was a unanimous affirmation.

Dr. Northrop recognized the disturbed and contentious condition of the members and his prime intention was to calm the agitation and restore peace and confidence. He had his term been longer he might have succeeded. In fact, the departure to other churches ended and occasionally some who had left earlier would return. The number on the rolls went down to 627 but this was due to a "cleanup" in which 77 inactive persons were dropped. The financial situation worsened. The business climate was not as good as it had been, and there were 40% less members to support the operation. Besides the expenses went up instead of down and were exceeding the income by $200 per month. It was necessary to borrow money, and one of the members was hired at 40¢ an hour to canvass the non-paying membership. The Chinese and Spanish Missions continued to do well and a French Mission was also started under the supervision of Rev. Timothy Tetrault.

On May 14, 1906, at a meeting held at First Baptist with ten local churches represented, the Los Angeles Baptist City Mission Society finally came into being. Its purpose was to unite all of the Baptist efforts within the City in a single planned program of expansion. Concern for such a project had first been voiced by First Baptist in 1890 and was repeatedly proposed during Dr. Read's pastorate. Mr. Smale, however, prevented the launching of the proposal in 1902, saying he could not work with the man who was likely to be in charge of the organization.

This resistance by Mr. Smale was one of the complaints cited against him and so the final impetus for getting the Society in operation came from laymen who had moved over to Temple. With Smale gone, First Baptist wholeheartedly supported the organization and even provided its first office in the north tower of the Flower Street building. They also donated a lot on East First Street. Naturally, though, there were occasions when there was disagreement concerning projects already started by First Baptist.

The San Francisco earthquake occurred April 18, 1906 but there is no record of a collection being taken for the sufferers. Perhaps it was because San Francisco was looked upon as a modern Sodom whose inhabitants were not worthy of aid. Surely it was not because of the financial situation. Just a few months earlier money had been raised "for the destitute Jews in Russia who had lost all in the last disturbance." (Now, Russia will not let the Jews leave. Then, they were driving them out by persecution.)

In January 1907, Miss Mary C. Merritt was added to the staff as Church and Sunday School Missionary. Her salary was paid by an anonymous donor.

Dr. Northrop became the victim of his own resolve to bring peace and harmony to the troubled Church. While still in Kansas City, he had had the pecuniary burden resulting from the long terminal illness and death of his father, which was more than his meager salary could bear. After coming to Los Angeles, he had received a dunning letter for the remainder of the indebtedness, - a mere $23 which he immediately paid. The letter accused him of laxity in paying his bills. (Installment payments and personal loans had not yet come into vogue.) Unfortunately, a copy of the letter surreptitiously came into the hands of the Board of Deacons who brought it to the Church Council. The Council exonerated the Pastor, but he insisted upon resigning rather than contribute to the contention that already existed. In his resignation speech he appealed for peace and love and unity and loyalty. "Many of the people were in tears." He left the first of May 1907 and returned to a pastorate in Missouri.
The Chairman of the Deacons, Professor Melville Dozier, was only indirectly responsible but the members blamed him for the loss. They failed to elect him to the new Pulpit Committee though he was the first one nominated; and at the next annual election he almost missed being retained on the Board of Deacons. Incidentally, Professor Dozier's brother, Dr. Barton Dozier, had opposed the professor in the first Smale controversy and had gone to Temple. Barton's wife had been the first woman member of the official board. She is in the picture on page 25.) Rev. W. F. Irvine, who was a member, was elected "Acting Pastor" during the interim, and a few months later became assistant Pastor under Dr. Henry.

**THE MINISTRY OF DR. J. Q. A. HENRY and MARGARET HENRY**

The Henrys had been well-known at First Baptist for many years. As early as 1892 he had "preached an eloquent sermon to a large audience." He had just completed an evangelistic series at the Church when the members decided that he was the man to lift them out of their spiritual depression. He became Pastor on August 11, 1907.

John Quincy Adams Henry, a direct descendant of Patrick Henry, began his life on a frontier farm in southeastern Iowa. At the age of 18, while teaching school in Indiana and studying to become a lawyer, he received a sudden and dramatic conversion and an uncontrollable desire to tell others of his change of heart. Within two months more than two-thirds of his ninety students were definitely converted. After further education at the University of Chicago and Union Theological Seminary, he was ordained as a Baptist Minister on July 2, 1880. He had several pastorates, concluding with five years at the First Baptist Church of San Francisco. While there he became identified with efforts for temperance, Sabbath legislation, civic reform, and youth education and welfare.

In the interim years between the San Francisco pastorate and the call to Los Angeles, Dr. Henry engaged in full-time evangelistic and temperance work. He was invited for a three month's mission in England but the great campaign throughout the British Isles stretched out to a full six years. The head of the National Free Church Council of the United Kingdom — the organization which had invited Dr. Henry — was impressed by his eloquence:

"The Lord made him in view of the needs of the day. He took a piece out of Vesuvius, a cross-section of an earthquake, a side light out of a tornado, and mixed them up with the gift of prophecy and the grace of enthusiasm and sent him to stir us up."

Dr. Henry's wife, Margaret Weddell Henry, was the daughter of a Baptist minister and a graduate of Chicago Female College. (Her brother, also a Baptist minister, preached at First Baptist during a month when Dr. Henry was away.) She was described as "the perfect complement of the man whom she so ably and strenuously helps." Her gracious and tactful way of dealing with new converts made her presence essential in evangelistic missions. Her gift of winning women and children to Christ was continually in evidence.

She was also prominent outside of her husband's work. For years she was vice-president of the Women's American Baptist Home Mission Society and continued to serve as Pacific Coast representative of that Society, as chairman of the California Board, and as president of the Federation of Women's Circles. In Los Angeles she worked closely with the Chinese people, First Baptist having over 100 Chinese members in 1910.

The Henry's had a son, William Mellors Henry (he was called "Mellors" then), who attended Los Angeles High School at the time but was destined to give prominence to the family name for years to come.

Deacon William L. Stanton, a staunch Southerner who had fought for the Confederacy when he was 17, had brought his family, including daughter Corinne, to Los Angeles and First Baptist in 1903. It disturbed him that Pastor Henry, despite a good Virginia family name, was a Northerner. When Dr. Henry, in a Memorial Day sermon, referred to the "War of the Rebellion" it almost caused a recurrence of hostilities. (It was not until Margaret Mitchell published "Gone with the Wind" that the War was properly reported.)

The situation worsened when Corinne and the "preacher's kid" became interested in each other. When Mellors performed the lead in the L. A. High School play in 1909 at the Belasco Theater, "The Girl I Left Behind Me", Corinne defied her parent's admonition not to be seen in theaters and sneaked off to go with Dr. and Mrs. Henry to the afternoon performance.

In the days when both sexes competed together in tennis, Corinne was L. A. High School tennis champion. To teach her "to become a lady" and also to thwart the romance, Corinne was sent back to Atlanta to the Cox College and Conservatory. (Her mother was a Cox.) Tennis was being played in Atlanta but not yet by "ladies". So Corinne teamed up with "Bitsy" Grant's father and won the Atlanta Men's Doubles tennis title in 1914. In September of that same year, Corinne and Bill Henry were married, and Dr. Henry performed the ceremony.

Bill had graduated from Occidental College and was working for the "Los Angeles Times" at the time of his marriage. He became Sports Editor and later a columnist, war correspondent and Washington correspondent. He had a pioneer interest in aviation and helped Donald Douglas found the Douglas Aircraft Company. He was official announcer for the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. He became a television commentator and in 1956 he introduced Chet Huntley to David Brinkley. Shortly before his death, in 1970, he arranged for his personal papers, books and other memorabilia to be given to the Occidental College library.

The Rose Window in the north of the sanctuary is a memorial from Bill and Corinne to their parents. They are also represented in the Church today by their daughter, Patricia Henry Yeomans, who is an active worker in the Church.

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Dr. Henry was aware that there existed the same state of affairs that had hampered his predecessors. At his very first Council meeting he "made a strong address demanding absolute harmony and devotion to the Church" by the official board. A week later the Council was so hopelessly and bitterly divided on a question before them that Dr. Henry had the whole matter tabled. There is repeated evidence that the fires of dissension were smoldering, ready at any moment to break into flame. Finally, Dr. Henry held a series of ten meetings "to deepen and extend the spiritual interest". The situation seems to have been relieved. The touchy problem was still the lack of funds for current expenses. The borrowed money had all been used in the first few months after Dr. Henry's arrival. At this point Dr. Henry insisted upon a budget. This first simple budget is an interesting contrast to today's list of nearly a hundred items totalling nearly a quarter of a million dollars a year:

- Pastor's salary - $250 per month
- Sexton's salary - 50
- Interest - 30
- Electric lights - 30
- Printing - 50
- Insurance - 19
- Music - 75
- Repairs, phone, taxes, misc. - 26

\[530 \times 12 = 6,360.\]

Modest as it was, the budget exceeded the income by more than $150 a month. The shortage was recovered in two ways besides reducing expenses. (Dr. Henry refused an increase in salary which would have meant cutting the funds for music.)

Whenever the deficit became sizeable, one of the trustees would voice an appeal after the Sunday morning sermon. The resultant offering and pledges would amount to as much as a thousand dollars.

The second method was a more lasting alleviative. The Board of Deacons were instructed to inquire of applicants for membership as to their intentions in respect to financial support. Any response except a promise to contribute regularly to the extent of ability was a basis to deny admission. This did not seem to deter the growth in membership. During Dr. Henry's term the roll increased by almost 50% to 933.
When California was admitted to the Union in September 1850, Southern California had experienced few changes through American control and settlement.

by Clifton L. Holland

An Overview of Religion in Los Angeles from 1850 to 1990

When California was admitted to the Union in September 1850, Southern California had experienced few changes through American control and settlement.
Only three small towns existed in all of Southern California: San Diego, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. However, smaller settlements were to be found around the old Spanish missions and on some of the large ranchos that dominated the economy of Southern California, a region that had a total population of only 6,367 in 1851 (McWilliams 1946:64).

The dominant religion in Los Angeles was Roman Catholicism, which had been established throughout California by Franciscan friars who came from Mexico, beginning in the 1770s, to establish a chain of missions for the purpose of evangelizing the Native Americans and of developing agricultural colonies using forced Indigenous labor. The pueblo of "Our Lady the Queen of the Angels" had been established in 1781.

As the Anglo American population of Southern California began to grow after 1850, small Protestant denominational churches grew out of union services in small towns. During the late 1860s and the decade of the 1870s, as more churches were planted in new settlements and the size of denominational groups increased along with the rapidly growing population, regional and state associations of Protestant churches were formed. Whereas the Baptist and Congregational preachers simply came with the people as part of the western migration, the Methodist preachers were usually sent west to form new churches, and the Presbyterian ministers were called to serve a church by a previously formed congregation.

Between 1869 and 1909, the construction of several railroad lines within the Southland spurred a series of real estate booms that brought a flood of Anglo American settlers from Northern California, the Midwest and East Coast, as well as from many foreign countries, to begin a new life in "sunny Southern California." Between 1880 and 1900, hundreds of towns and thousands of orchards and farms emerged in the region, and the population of the City of Los Angeles grew from about 50,000 in 1890 to more than 100,000 by 1900.

It is worth noting that the majority of Anglo Americans in Southern California during this period were strongly biased and discriminatory against Indians, Mexicans, Asians and Roman Catholics (see McWilliams, 1968; Bean, 1968; and Wollenburg, 1970). The Spanish-speaking population (mostly Roman Catholic) of Los Angeles totaled about 12,000 in 1887, or less than 10% of the Anglo- American population; also, there were a few hundred Chinese in Los Angeles, most of whom lived in an area north of the Mexican Plaza, near the present-day Chinatown (Pitt, 1970).


* * *

The Pentecostal Movement Arrives in Los Angeles in 1905-1906

Pentecost has surely come and with it the Bible evidences are following," writes the editor of The Apostolic Faith: "...many are being converted and sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues as they did on the day of Pentecost." The modern Pentecostal Movement began on January 1, 1901, with Agnes N. Ozman at Charles Fox Parham's Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. Then on April 9, 1906, at 214 Bonnie Brae Street, "the first Pentecostal effusion came" to Los Angeles. Although those events delineate the beginning of the modern Pentecostal Movement, their foundations are clearly found in the nineteenth-century Holiness Movement.

In Los Angeles, Joseph Smale, pastor of the First Baptist Church, after visiting Wales (then in the midst of a great revival) in 1905, began prayer meetings in his church modeled after what he had seen in Wales, and healings began to occur there. However, the things Smale was doing caused him trouble with his board, and he left to found a "New Testament Assembly," which met in a house on Bonnie Brae. Meanwhile, in April, 1906, at the instance of Neeley Terry, who had just visited Houston, the small black [Church of the] Nazarene congregation she attended invited [black Holiness preacher William J.] Seymour to preach in their church. He accepted the invitation, and preached his first sermon out of Acts 2:4 on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many in that Nazarene church believed Seymour to have preached false doctrine, and he returned that evening to find the door padlocked. Those who followed Seymour out of the Nazarene church started to meet in the home of some Baptists (from Smale's flock) on Bonnie Brae. On April 9, 1906, "the Spirit fell upon this small group of African-American believers." The group soon moved to a former Methodist church building at 312 Azusa St., where it met three times a day, 7 days a week for the next three years.

It is noteworthy that California had by far the most diverse population of any state in the U.S. and had no apartheid laws requiring racial segregation of public meetings. What started at Azusa Street was entirely inclusive; under Seymour's leadership, the Azusa Street congregation would tolerate no racial or ethnic divisions in the Body of Christ. Although it started among a group of African-Americans, the Azusa Street meetings were completely interracial, and many whites became involved. Many people of all races, and from various countries, came to Azusa Street to observe or to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Though Parham continued to preach in Houston and elsewhere, and his students also spread around the U.S., after April 1906 the focus of activity was in Los Angeles, not in Parham's ministry. The practice of glossolalia at Azusa Street was important for more reasons than its controversial nature. "The great significance of the Azusa Street revival," writes William Mencz, "is its role in transforming the embryo Pentecostal outpouring into a worldwide movement." Mills goes a step further: Azusa Street was not only the spark that ignited the Pentecostal revival, but in its earliest days, most of the doctrinal issues surfaced there that would later become determinative for the formation of the major Pentecostal groups. Those issues were: 1) doctrine of sanctification; 2) Jesus only doctrine; 3) latter rain covenant; and 4) race as a basis for denominational division.


After 1909 the influence of Azusa Street began to fade. One reason for this was the success of many of the children of Azusa Street. Pentecostal missions sprang up all across Los Angeles. Many of these missions replicated the success of Azusa. Added to this were the many thriving centers of Pentecostalism across both the United States and Canada. It became increasingly unnecessary to travel to Azusa Street to experience Pentecost.

Almost one hundred years later, the Azusa Street revival remains an important touchstone in the history of modern Pentecostalism. The building has long since been torn down. Today the Japanese-American Cultural and Community Center sits on the site where the Azusa Street mission was once located. However, Pentecostals fondly look on the site and the revival housed there as the cradle of Pentecostalism.

SOURCE: [http://www.gladysevelynhartministries.com/Azusa%20Street.htm](http://www.gladysevelynhartministries.com/Azusa%20Street.htm)

The famous Azusa Street Revival (1906 - 1913) in Los Angeles was a key milestone in the history of Christianity, and it helped to place the City of the Angeles on the world map as thousands of people came from far and wide to witness the new phenomena of "speaking in tongues," prophesy and divine healing. Los Angeles, with a population of about 300,000 in 1910, became known as the modern birthplace of the Pentecostal movement, which has had a significant worldwide impact as one of the fastest-growing religious movements on the planet. See the following websites for more information: [http://www.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/199904/026_azusa.cfm](http://www.ag.org/enrichmentjournal/199904/026_azusa.cfm) [http://www.azusastreet.org/](http://www.azusastreet.org/) [http://www.theazusastreetrevival.com/html/home.html](http://www.theazusastreetrevival.com/html/home.html)
Also, the interracial Azusa Street Revival touched the lives of hundreds of Afro-Americans and Hispanics in Los Angeles, and led to the establishment of several new Pentecostal denominations: the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (originally interracial but later composed mostly of Afro-Americans) in 1907 and the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Jesus Christ (Asamblea Apostólica de Fe en Cristo Jesús) in 1914 among Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans.

* * *

Religious Groups in Los Angeles in 1914

Most of the Protestant churches and denominations that existed in Southern California by 1914 were mainstream groups: Baptist (Northern Baptist Convention: 1853 in El Monte, 1874 in Los Angeles; Swedish Baptist Church in Los Angeles, 1887; Second Baptist Church in East Los Angeles, an Afro-American congregation, prior to 1890), Congregational (1865-67, American Home Missionary Society), Protestant Episcopal (1857), Methodist Episcopal (1853), Presbyterian (1855) and the Christian Church-Disciples of Christ (1874).

By 1913, a Comity Agreement had been established in Los Angeles between the major Protestant denominations, whereby they agreed not to enter neighborhoods occupied by another denomination. By 1914, some of these denominations had begun to minister to the minority population of Mexican, Asian and Portuguese immigrants.

Also, several other Protestant denominations had arrived in Los Angeles: the African Methodist Episcopal Church (1854), Lutheran (Trinity German Lutheran Church in Los Angeles, 1882), the German Evangelical Friedenskirche ("Peace Church," 1887), the Free Methodists in 1903, and various Holiness groups in between 1886 and 1906, including the nondenominational Pennal Mission (established by T. P. and Marie Ferguson in 1886); the Burning Bush Holiness Church, the First New Testament Church (Joseph Smale, formerly the pastor of the First Baptist Church, established the First New Testament Church in Burbank Hall at 542 South Main Street, Los Angeles, in early 1906); and the Household of God Church (1904-05, W. F. Manley, possibly linked to the Free Methodists).

The Unitarians began to hold services in Los Angeles in 1877, the Reorganized Church of Latter-day Saints in 1882, and the first Jewish synagogue (B'hai B'rith) was organized in 1862 by Rabbi A. W. Edelman. By 1890, the City of Los Angeles contained more than forty-four church organizations, of at least twelve different denominations, besides a few representatives of other faiths, such as Spiritualism, Metaphysical-New Thought (including Christian Science and Theosophy), Islam, Buddhism, Parseeism (a Zoroastrian religious sect in India), Confucianism, Shinto, etc., and also an organization auxiliary to the American Secular Union and Freethought Federation (formed in Albany, NY, in 1885 by Colonel Robert Green Ingersoll and his associates).

* * *

Los Angeles Pacific College was founded in 1903 as a four-year liberal-arts college by a group of ministers and laymen of the Free Methodist Church. The college ceased to exist as an independent entity in 1965 and was merged with another college to eventually form Azusa Pacific University. The founders of the college were the original founders of the community of Hermon, situated in a half square-mile valley bordered by the Arroyo Seco and the historic 110 freeway, 5 miles to the west, Monterey Hills to the south, and South Pasadena to the north and east. In 1903 a group of Free Methodists obtained the isolated valley from owner Ralph Rogers to establish a school. The school grew to become Los Angeles Pacific College in 1934, then merged with Azusa Pacific University in the 1960s.

Initially called Los Angeles Free Methodist Seminary, it was not a seminary for the education of ministers, but a school for young children of the community who wanted to raise their children in a Christian atmosphere. The Seminary (grades 1-12) opened in the fall of 1904 with 70 students. In 1911 the seminary added a junior college to its school, the first junior college in the state of California. As the community of Hermon continued to expand, a four-year college course was added in 1914 and the school came to be called Los Angeles Pacific College (LAPC).

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The Adventists also arrived in southern California during the 1880s and established an agricultural colony at Loma Linda, near Redlands. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church had about eighty members in Los Angeles in 1890, along with churches at Pasadena, Norwalk and Santa Ana.

On September 29, 1913, the Adventist College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda (near Redlands, in San Bernardino County) opened a small storefront clinic at 941 East First Street, in the heart of Los Angeles. It was from these humble beginnings that White Memorial Medical Center was born. Three years later, the influx of patients was so great that there was a need to expand the clinic. The fundraising campaign began for a hospital to be built at a nearby site on Boyle Avenue and named in honor of Adventist prophetess Ellen G. White. Thanks to the Herculean efforts of 50 Adventist women, the Adventist Church purchased property on Boyle Avenue in 1916. In 1917, a new dispensary opened on the site. Meanwhile, construction began on cottage-style buildings that were to become a permanent hospital. On April 21, 1918, a crowd of 2,500 people gathered to dedicate White Memorial Hospital, built at a cost of $61,000. When the first patient entered White Memorial "Cottage" Hospital in 1918, its 11 one- and two-story buildings could accommodate up to 200 patients. It quickly emerged as the largest facility of its kind west of Chicago. By the mid-1930s, the initial jolt of the Depression had passed, and White Memorial Hospital began looking again to the future. Responding to an ever-growing demand on its original facilities, the hospital built a 180-bed, five-story concrete and steel structure at a cost of $330,000. Dedicated in 1937, the building was the first earthquake-resistant hospital in California.

The Boyle Heights section of East Los Angeles was part of an area that eventually became the largest Hispanic community in the U.S. by 1950. Situated just east of the Los Angeles river, Boyle Heights has long been a gateway for newcomers to the city. From the 1920s to the 1950s it was Los Angeles' most heterogeneous neighborhood, serving as home to large concentrations of Jews, Mexicans and Japanese Americans, as well as Russian Molokans, African Americans, and people of Armenian, Italian, and Chinese descent. Today the neighborhood is primarily Latino, and it continues to serve as a port-of-entry for a number of the city's immigrant groups.

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Los Angeles Examiner, February 7, 1909

LARGEST AND COSTLIEST CHURCH ON THE PACIFIC COAST NEARS COMPLETION

When the Second Church of Christ, Scientist, on West Adams Street, near Hoover Street, is finished, Los Angeles can boast of having the largest and most magnificent church west of Chicago. Of Roman Corinthian architecture, it will be an imposing structure and will cost nearly a quarter of a million dollars.
NOTE: First Church of Christ, Scientist, was established by M. Paul Martin in Los Angeles in 1902; under Elmer Grey in 1911, First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Los Angeles moved to its second building (address unknown).

Abstract: Pacific Historical Review

May 2003, Vol. 72, No. 2, Pages 229-263

Pilgrims at the Golden Gate: Christian Scientists on the Pacific Coast, 1880–1915

By Rolf Swensen

There has never been a social history of Christian Science, a distinctive and controversial new religious group that emphasized metaphysical healing. The group appeared in the United States in the 1870s and 1880s under the leadership of Mary Baker Eddy. This article examines the early rapid growth of Christian Science on the Pacific Coast, for the religion flourished to a greater degree in this health-conscious and socially fluid region than in any other section of the world. Analysis of the occupations of more than 1,000 members and spouses of six Christian Science churches in California, Oregon, and Washington for the years 1905-1907 provides detailed conclusions at variance with previous conjecture. The new evidence shows that Christian Scientists on the Pacific Coast were an ethnically homogeneous, uprooted, and energetic lot from all social levels, with a surprisingly large contingent from the working classes.

Christian Science is “a religion and a system of healing founded by Mary Baker Eddy c. 1866, based on an interpretation of the Scriptures asserting that disease, sin, and death may be overcome by understanding and applying the divine principles of Christian teachings.” — Webster Dictionary

- After publication in 1875 of Science and Health, Eddy’s primary work on spirituality and healing, readers began meeting to discuss the ideas and share their healing results. Then, in 1879, Eddy established what became The First Church of Christ, Scientist (The Mother Church).
- The Church is designed “to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.” (Church Manual, page 17). Eddy had a lifelong reverence for the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and a deep desire that his healing works be universally practiced.
- It consists of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, and around 2,000 branch churches and societies of Christ, Scientist, worldwide.
- The Church has no ordained clergy. In 1895, Eddy named the Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures as Pastor for worldwide Churches of Christ, Scientist.

* * *

The Holiness Movement in Southern California

Background of the Holiness Movement

Originating in the U. S. in the 1840s and 50s, this was an endeavor to preserve and propagate John Wesley’s teaching on entire sanctification and Christian perfection. Wesley held that the road from sin to salvation is one from willful rebellion against divine and human law to perfect love for God and man. Following Wesley, Holiness preachers emphasized that the process of salvation involves two crises.

In the first, conversion or justification, one is freed from the sins he has committed. In the second, entire sanctification or full salvation, one is liberated from the flaw in his moral nature that causes him to sin. Man is capable of this perfection even though he dwells in a corruptible body marked by a thousand defects arising from ignorance, infirmities, and other creaturely limitations. It is a process of loving the Lord God with all one’s heart, soul, and mind, and it results in the ability to live without conscious or deliberate sin. However, to achieve and then remain in this blessed state requires intense, sustained effort, and one’s life must be marked by constant self renunciation, careful observance of the divine ordinances, a humble, steadfast reliance on God’s forgiving grace in the atonement, the intention to look for God’s glory in all things, and an increasing exercise of the love which itself fulfills the whole law and is the end of the commandments.

In the mid-nineteenth century several factors converged that contributed to the renewal of the Holiness emphasis, among them the camp meeting revivals that were a common feature in rural America, the Christian perfectionism of Charles Finney and Asa Mahan (the Oberlin theology), the ‘Tuesday Meeting’ of Phoebe Palmer in New York, the urban revival of 1857–58, and protests within the Methodist churches about the decline of discipline which resulted in the Wesleyan Methodist secession in 1843 and Free Methodist withdrawal in 1860. These two became the first denominations formally committed to Holiness. After the Civil War a full fledged Holiness revival broke out within the ranks of Methodism, and in 1867 the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness was formed. From 1893 it was known as the National Holiness Association (NHA) and in 1971 was renamed the Christian Holiness Association. Until the 1890s Methodists dominated the movement and channeled its enthusiasm into their churches.

The increasing number of Holiness evangelists, many of whom were unsanctioned by their superiors, a flourishing independent press, and the growth of nondenominational associations gradually weakened the position of mainline Methodism in the movement. By the 1880s the first independent Holiness denominations had begun to appear, and tensions between Methodism and the Holiness associations escalated. The gap between the two widened as Methodist practice drifted steadily toward a sedate, middleclass American Protestantism, while the Holiness groups insisted they were practicing primitive Wesleyanism and were the true successors of Wesley in America. The small schism The First Church of Christ, Scientist (The Mother Church) continued to form additional denominations, the largest of which were the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana (1880), Church of the Nazarene (1908), and Pilgrim Holiness Church (1897, merged with the Wesleyan Methodists in 1968 to form the Wesleyan Church).
The piosity of these bodies was a modified Methodism in that there was generally somewhat more congregational autonomy, and the "second blessing" of entire sanctification was an integral part of their theology. Most operated with a strict perfectionist code of personal morality and demanded from their adherents plain dress and abstinence from "worldly" pleasures and amusements. Also, nearly all of them allowed women to be ordained to the ministry and occupy leadership positions.

**The Holiness Movement on the Pacific Coast**

By the late 1870s some rural holiness preachers were organizing their converts into holiness "bands" independent of the regular denominations, and more local and regional "associations" were sprouting. By the 1880s the first independent holiness churches had begun to form. In California a radical Methodist named Hardin Wallace, who had already evangelized throughout Texas, began to preach in Los Angeles and elsewhere, often together with evangelist Harry Ashcraft and gospel singer James Jayns.

Out of their work the Southern California and Arizona Holiness Association was formed, led by James and Josephine Washburn. This organization was very strict: all members had to experience sanctification; all had to dress plainly, abstain from tobacco and the use of gold ornaments, and abjure membership in any secret society. They erected plain buildings and forbade musical instruments in church; ordination was by the "baptism of fire," with no preacher designated beforehand. The Southern California and Arizona Holiness Association remained quite small, establishing churches in only a handful of southern California towns; a more moderate organization, the Pacific Coast Holiness Association, appeared in 1885. Nevertheless the radicals caused concern in the Methodist church when in 1885 one of their leaders, B. A. Washburn, proposed that all holiness groups separate from the mainstream churches. The California Methodist establishment was not at that time antagonistic to the holiness movement—quite the contrary. The radicals, however, felt alienated from the regular Methodists. Eventually (1896) they organized into the Holiness Church, which continued to be very small.

The urban sector of the movement, more intellectual and interdenominational, less concerned about regulating details of outer behavior, had so far stayed within the Methodist church. Nevertheless tensions were building. Holiness Christians were inclined to ally with those in other denominations, at least for revivals and general meetings. They wanted more evangelism focusing specifically on sanctification, whereas the Methodist bishops believed all church activities were already designed to promote holiness, and no special means should be instituted. Meanwhile many churches supported activities such as fairs, plays, and concerts—not to mention higher biblical criticism—which, to holiness people, were tangential to the Christian life. Those seeking to help the poor through missions to urban families and neighborhoods were not getting much support for their efforts. The stage was set for a split in the Methodist church.

Southern California was rapidly being urbanized as Los Angeles grew, and developments there were similar to those in other large cities. The city mission approach was vigorously represented by the work of T. P. and Manie Ferguson. T. P. Ferguson, born in Ohio in 1853 and converted at Oberlin in 1875, came to Santa Barbara in 1879 and soon thereafter was sanctified at a holiness revival. He became an itinerant preacher and settled in Los Angeles during the boom of 1885–86. Late in 1886 he set up the Los Angeles Peniel Mission, the first in what would become a chain of missions dotting the Pacific Coast and mountain states. Together with his wife Manie, he offered street-corner meetings in the afternoons and evangelistic services nightly, with a meal afterwards. Their entire work, like that of most of the city holiness missions, was oriented toward soul saving and the promotion of holiness. The mission was not a church, however; converts were supposed to join one of the regular denominations. It was, rather, a holiness revival station spreading the message of Christian perfection.

The crucial development in Southern California came when Phineas F. Bresee arrived on the scene. Born in 1838 in Delaware County, New York, he had gone to Iowa in 1855 as a circuit pastor, and was highly successful for a time. In the early 1880s, however, he went bankrupt due to the failure of some Mexican iron mines in which he had invested, and he left Iowa for California, arriving in 1883. Soon he won fine appointments in the Methodist church, notably as pastor of the First Methodist Church in Los Angeles and as one of the editorial committee of the Southern California Christian Advocate.

Bresee identified himself with the holiness movement and experienced sanctification himself in 1884 or 1885. In his church he emphasized revivals, gospel singing, and spontaneous congregational responses. Some ministers opposed his outright holiness stance, but he was supported by his general popularity and the approval—or at least the neutrality—of the bishops until 1892. In that year an antiholiness clergyman, John Vincent, became Bishop, and he assigned Bresee to churches that could not offer adequate financial support. In 1894 Bresee sought a supernumerary relation so that he could do mission work instead of a regular pastorate, but Vincent refused permission. At that point Bresee withdrew from the Methodist ministry.

At first Bresee joined with the Fergusons at the Peniel Mission in Los Angeles, where he tried to persuade them to open a school and organize to receive members like a church. They refused, however, and other difficulties led to his parting with them after one year. In the fall of 1895 he, together with Joseph P. Widney, began holding independent services in a rented hall. Their ministry was so popular that three and a half weeks later they organized as a church, the Church of the Nazarene. Bresee and Widney were appointed to life tenure as pastors and superintendents.

SOURCE: [http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=ft1z09n7fq&chunk.id=d0e1883](http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=ft1z09n7fq&chunk.id=d0e1883)

**The Church of the Nazarene**, a holiness body, was founded in 1895 in the Los Angeles area by Dr. Phineas F. Bresee (1838-1915) and Dr. Joseph P. Widney (1841-1938). Their primary purpose was to bring the Gospel to the poor and underprivileged. Widney came up with the name for the new church. He explained the choice of the name had come to him one morning after spending the whole night in prayer. He said that the word " Nazarene" symbolized "the toiling, lowly mission of Christ. It was the name that Christ used of Himself, the name which was used in derision of Him by His enemies, the name which above all others linked Him to the great toiling, struggling, sorrowing heart of the world. It is Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth to whom the world in its misery and despair turns, that it may have hope." (Called Unto Holiness, Volume I).

Bresee, after moving to Iowa from New York state in 1856, was granted a district preacher's license by the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. Soon he was given his own church to pastor. He had a difficult time there, which was pleasantly interrupted by a trip back to New York in 1860, where Phineas married Maria Hibbard, the sister of a close friend of his. Shortly after the Civil War broke out, Bresee was ordained by the Methodist Episcopal Conference, which meant that he was now a full minister in the Methodist church.

The years that followed were rather difficult for the Bresee family. Numerous different preaching assignments and other occupations were assigned to Mr. Bresee, and the family lived in poverty most of the time. In 1883, they decided to move to California. With their six children they made the eight-day trip in a train wagon, into which they had stuffed most of their belongings.

In Pasadena, near Los Angeles, Phineas became the minister of a Methodist church, which grew strongly under his leadership. At the same time he was heavily involved in addressing social issues, such as the liquor business, which brought him many threats, but also contributed to his preaching, as more and more people
began Christians and members of his church.

Yet, Dr. Bresee (by this time he had received an honorary degree from the University of Southern California, established in Los Angeles in 1880) felt a calling for a new ministry - reaching out to the poor, the needy. He helped organize (along with T. P. and Manie Ferguson) a nondenominational project, which they called "Peniel Mission." The leaders of the Methodist church did not support this project. They feared it might hurt the image of the church. So Dr. Bresee was forced to either give up the mission or leave the church. After a night of struggle, he decided to leave the Methodist Church.

On October 20, 1895, the first Church of the Nazarene was organized in Pasadena, with 135 charter members who pledged to commit their lives to the work of Jesus the Nazarene. By the end of the first year, 350 people had joined the church. After five years the membership had increased to almost 1,000. New churches were started, and other groups joined the fledgling Church of the Nazarene.

Bresee sought to return to John Wesley's original goal of preaching to the poor and needy. The original name of the denomination was the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, however the term "Pentecostal" soon proved to be problematic. In the Wesleyan-holiness movement, the word was used widely as a synonym simply for "holiness." But the rise of 20th century Pentecostalism, especially after 1906, gave new meanings and associations to the term—meanings that the Nazarenes rejected. In 1919, the name was shortened to avoid any confusion in the public mind about the church's place on the theological spectrum.

Joseph Pomeroy Widney was a medical doctor and the second President (1892-1895) of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Prior to that, he was the first dean of the USC College of Medicine. He was the brother of Robert Maclay Widney, one of the founders of USC.

SOURCE: http://www.snu.edu/~?p=5BD939074-4289-440-B8B1-8AAD3B3BADD%7D

** Protestant Fundamentalism, which was decidedly anti-Liberal and anti-Pentecostal, received its name and crucial promotion in Los Angeles. In 1909, Lyman Stewart and his brother Milton (co-owners of the Union Oil Company of California, currently known as Unocal) anonymously funded the publication of a twelve-volume series of articles called *The Fundamentals*, published between 1910 and 1915, and distributed free of charge to a wide range of Christian teachers and leaders, "Compliments of Two Christian Laymen." These volumes were intended as a restatement of conservative Protestant theological teachings, primarily in response to the growing influence of modernist theology in the Protestant churches. In 1917 these articles were republished in a revised, four volume set by the nondenominational *Bible Institute of Los Angeles* (BIOLA). The term "Fundamentalism" is in part derived from these volumes.

BIOLA was founded in 1908 by Lyman Stewart and T. C. Horton, a well-known preacher and Christian writer. By 1912, the school had grown sufficiently in its outreach and constituency to call Dr. Reuben A. Torrey (1856-1928), a well-known leader in the field of Christian education, as the first dean. Dr. Torrey previously had been president of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and had conducted many well-publicized evangelistic crusades across America and in Great Britain. Between 1912 and 1928, BIOLA was an established leader in conservative Protestant Christianity in North America, publishing The King's Business (a magazine similar to Christianity Today), operating one of the largest Christian radio stations in the U.S. (KTBI), and running the BIOLA Press, which sold and distributed Christian literature worldwide, including for the Los Angeles-based pentecostal preacher, Amy Semple McPherson. After Stewart's death, Torrey and Horton's retirements, William P. White, a well-known Christian leader and speaker, became BIOLA's first president in 1929.

Dr. Torrey also helped to organize and served as the first pastor of the non-denominational Church of the Open Door (1915-1924). There he preached to great throngs and thousands were trained at the school, including Charles E. Fuller (1887-1968), famed radio preacher of the next generation. *For decades, the Church of the Open Door was the largest Protestant church in Los Angeles, located adjacent to BIOLA at Fifth and Hope streets.* Fuller was the radio pastor of "The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour" (1937-1968); for nearly 17 years (1941-1958), beginning with World War II, the program was broadcast each Sunday afternoon from the Municipal Auditorium in Long Beach, where it drew huge audiences. At the time of Dr. Fuller's death, the broadcast was heard on more than 500 stations around the world. Charles E. Fuller, a graduate of BIOLA, became chairman of the board and he later founded the nondenominational Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, which later became one of the largest Protestant seminaries in the world.

Meanwhile, BIOLA fell into hard times during the Great Depression and was forced to sell its publishing company and radio station. The 13-story downtown building that housed the school was also under threat of loss. It was during this time that Dr. Louis T. Talbot became BIOLA's second president in 1932. Talbot also served as the pastor of the **Church of the Open Door**, which held services in the school's downtown building, with its famous red neon "Jesus Saves" sign on the roof. In 1935, Paul W. Rood became BIOLA's third president. He was instrumental in establishing the *Torrey Memorial Bible Conference*, which is one of the longest standing Bible conferences today. He resigned in 1938. During Rood's presidency, Talbot was instrumental in helping to save the school from financial ruin caused by the Great Depression.

Talbot entered a second term as BIOLA's president from 1938 to 1952. During this time, the Institute program became a four-year course, leading to degrees in theology, Christian education and sacred music. The School of Missionary Medicine came into being in 1945, laying the foundation for BIOLA's current baccalaureate nursing program. In 1946, Talbot also established the Biola Institute Hour, a national radio program, that was later called the **BIOLA Hour**. The Institute was renamed **BIOLA College** in 1949. Under the leadership of Samuel H. Sutherland, president from 1952 to 1970, BIOLA moved its campus to its current location in La Mirada in the summer of 1999, where it later became an accredited four-year evangelical university.

** Religious Groups in Los Angeles after 1914**

In the 1920s, the flamboyant Pentecostal evangelist **Aimee Semple McPherson** (1890-1944) established a thriving ministry at the $1.5 million **Angelus Temple in the Echo Park district of Los Angeles**. This church created notoriety by allowing both Blacks and Whites to become members, as well as people of many nationalities, including Mexican immigrants. She also developed an international radio ministry under the auspices of the **International Church of the Foursquare Gospel**, which today has affiliated churches in 83 countries and claims more than two million members.

Wherever "Sister Aimee" went she was an immediate success. The novelty of a woman preacher brought out the crowds, but McPherson's power as a speaker and her reputation as a formidable "soul-saver" and healer built her reputation. In 1913, she embarked upon a preaching career in Canada and the US. In keeping with a promise she made to God during a serious illness, she began evangelizing and holding tent revivals, first by traveling up and down the eastern part of the US, then expanding to other parts of the country. Finally, in 1919, McPherson found her home base in the rapidly expanding City of Los Angeles, where the movie business was booming. She frequently recalled that she arrived there with "ten dollars and a tambourine" and her ministry quickly grew from a simple storefront to large auditoriums. "Sister Aimee" did not promote herself as a healer, but the crowds came in hope of miracles. She herself said, "Jesus is the healer. I am only the office girl who opens the door and says, 'Come In.'"
McPherson loved music, and she became credited with bringing popular music into the church—jazz in particular. She later composed operas, a natural outgrowth of her performances in the pulpit, which were elaborate spectacles featuring "Sister Aimee" in costume, props (which included animals) and a supporting cast of followers. In just four years she opened the 5,300 seat Angelus Temple in 1923, built by the contributions of her faithful followers, "entirely debt-free" as she proudly asserted. McPherson was the first woman in history to preach a radio sermon, and with the opening of Foursquare-owned radio station KFSG on February 6, 1924, she also became the first woman to be granted a broadcast license by the Federal Radio Commission (which became the Federal Communications Commission in 1934).

During the Great Depression, McPherson was active in creating "soup kitchens," free clinics and other charitable activities; with the outbreak of World War II, she became involved in war bond rallies. On September 27, 1944, shortly after giving a sermon, she was found dead in her hotel room in Oakland, California, of an overdose of prescription barbiturates. Once again, rumors flew, this time conjecturing suicide. However, it is generally agreed that the overdose was accidental, as stated on the coroner's report.

The famous controversial radio preacher Herbert W. Armstrong had its international headquarters in Pasadena from 1946 to 2006, when the Worldwide Church of God moved its offices to nearby Glendale. Armstrong was ordained by the Oregon Conference of The Church of God in 1931, and began serving a congregation in Eugene, Oregon. On January 7, 1934, the president of the Radio Church of God began broadcasting with the astonishing teachings of its founder, a former advertising man named Herbert W. Armstrong. Among his claims were that the British and their colonists in America had descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel and that God was not a Trinity but a family (Father and Son, but no Holy Ghost). On his program, The World Tomorrow, and in his magazine, The Plain Truth, Armstrong called his beliefs the product of methodical explication of the Bible, which he said was a coded message not allowed to be revealed and decoded until this time.

In 1933, the Church of God split, and Armstrong sided with the faction that located its headquarters in Salem, West Virginia. In 1937 the Church of God (Seventh-Day) revoked Armstrong's ministerial credentials, but he continued broadcasting. Armstrong moved to Pasadena, California, and he incorporated his church for the first time on March 3, 1946, as the Radio Church of God and later the Worldwide Church of God. His message has been described by those who disagree with him as an eclectic mixture of cultic doctrine, Jewish observances and Seventh-day Adventism. In 1947, Ambassador College was founded in Pasadena by the Worldwide Church of God. The campus of the college served as the headquarters for the church.

The Worldwide Church of God is established under a hierarchical, non-voting form of government. The chief ecclesiastical and chief corporate executive officer of the denomination is termed the Pastor General. Historically, Pastors General, as chairmen of their board, have appointed their own successor without representative vote from the membership. The current Pastor General is Joseph Tkach, Jr.

Young evangelist Billy Graham became a worldwide celebrity during a successful "revival campaign" in Los Angeles in 1949.

Add information on the Mid-Century Revival in Southern California: churches filled, large "healing crusades," prominent religious leaders, etc.
From 1990 until his death in 2005, controversial Pentecostal televangelist Dr. Gene Scott was based downtown on Broadway at the Los Angeles University Cathedral, which was the former location of the United Artists flagship Broadway Theater, built in 1927.

* * *

After the disastrous civil riots in Los Angeles in 1992, following the trial and acquittal of police officers who were caught on a home video camera beating Rodney King (an Afro American) in the San Fernando Valley, several leading Protestant pastors organized a monthly prayer rally for a wide cross-section of Protestant pastors and lay leaders representing many race-ethnic groups; these monthly meetings, usually held at Hollywood Presbyterian Church (HPC), were promoted under the name, "Love L.A." The two founding pastors of this prayer movement were the Rev. Floyd Oglesby of HPC (who later served as Chaplain of the U.S. Senate) and Dr. Jack Hayford of The Church on the Way (Foursquare) in Van Nuys. "Love L.A." was discontinued about 2002, following the retirement of Hayford.

In 1992, the Los Angeles Times conducted a public opinion poll on religious affiliation in the City of Los Angeles that showed the following:

ADD PIE CHART OR TABLE

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### Current Situation of Religion in Los Angeles, 2000-2006

Today, Los Angeles is home to adherents of many religions, with Roman Catholicism being the largest due to the high numbers of Hispanic, Filipino, and Irish Americans. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles leads the largest archdiocese in the country. Cardinal Roger Mahony oversaw construction of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, completed in 2002 at the north end of downtown.

The Los Angeles Mormon Temple, the second largest temple operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is on Santa Monica Boulevard in the Westwood district of Los Angeles. Dedicated in 1956, it was the first Mormon temple built in California. The grounds includes a visitors' center open to the public, the Los Angeles Regional Family History Center, also open to the public, and the headquarters for the Los Angeles LDS mission.

Los Angeles is home to the second largest population of Jewish people in the United States. Many synagogues of the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist movements can be found throughout the city. Most are located in the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles. The area in West LA around Fairfax and Pico Boulevards contains a large amount of Orthodox Jews. The oldest synagogue in Los Angeles is the Breed Street Shul in East Los Angeles, which is being renovated.

Because Los Angeles has a large multi-ethnic population, there are many religious organizations in the area that represent a wide variety of faiths, including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Bahá'í, various Eastern Orthodox Churches, Sufism and others. Immigrants from Asia for example, have formed a number of significant Buddhist congregations making the city home to the largest variety of Buddhists in the world, with over 300 Buddhist temples in Los Angeles. Los Angeles has been a destination for Swamis and Gurus since as early as 1909, including Paramahansa Yogananda (1920). The Self-Realization Fellowship is headquartered in Hollywood and has a private park in Pacific Palisades. Also, Los Angeles is home to a number of Neopagans, as well as adherents of various other mystical religions. One wing of the Theosophist movement is centered in Los Angeles, and another is in neighboring Pasadena. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi founded the Transcendental Meditation movement in Los Angeles in the late 1950s. The Kabbalah Centre is in the city. The Church of Scientology began in Los Angeles in 1954, which has several churches, museums and recruiting sites in the area, most notably the Celebrity Centre in Hollywood; in fact, Los Angeles has the world's largest community of Scientologists.


For a general history of Los Angeles County, go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Los_Angeles%2C_California

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Los Angeles is a major gateway city for new immigrants and is already home to a population where one person in three is foreign born. Given the context of this amazing demographic shift, in the fall of 1998 the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture launched a two-year research project to study the role of religion for new immigrants to Los Angeles.

The traditional view of the role of religion in the lives of immigrants stressed assimilation. Thus, the great melting pot subsumed cultures of origin and created an American identity that was tied to one of three religions: Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish. Today, a new paradigm of segmented assimilation is a more apt description of the ways in which immigrants adjust to life in the United States. Religious institutions, rather than merely incorporating people into the American mainstream, serve the dual functions of preserving national identities and aiding incorporation.

While immigration is affecting the entire nation, there is no question that immigrants are transforming the face of the existing religious marketplace in Los Angeles. Religious institutions are refocusing their efforts to accommodate the growing numbers of immigrants by altering their worship styles, creating multiple congregations inside the walls of a single church building, and seeking ways to show solidarity with immigrants. Moreover, denominations are creating innovative models to meet the social service needs of new arrivals to Los Angeles. Religion for new immigrants certainly includes the search for truth, but is also a human community that nurtures, expresses compassion, and challenges individuals to live up to their potential. Many immigrants who arrive without extended family and a social safety net are drawn to congregations. These congregations offer a safe haven, connection with the home country, a place to exercise leadership abilities, and formal and informal social services. For women, the new country often offers a greater sense of freedom and autonomy.

The most compelling finding during these first two years of research is that immigrants are a potential source of moral renewal at a challenging moment in United States history. The decline of civility, shared effort and civic cooperation in Western democracies is a legitimate concern in our civic context. Anchored in community, immigrants know something about extended family ties, the value of community, and the importance of preserving a cultural heritage while contributing to the new society. Immigrant congregations are contributing to the religious and civic fabric of Los Angeles. These institutions play an important role in the process of incorporating new immigrants into American society and play a mediating role to help maintain the values connected with their places of origin.

NOTE: To view the entire document, go to: http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crc/private/docs/publications/immigrantreligion.pdf

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Los Angeles Times - Opinion - January 5, 2003

A Revival Under Many Tents in L.A.

The area's religiosity has new faces and speaks in multiple tongues. Yet Los Angeles is increasingly demonstrating how faith can be a common ground.

By Joel Kotkin and Karen Speicher

From the suburban fringes to South-Central and the heart of downtown, the Los Angeles area is undergoing a remarkable and exuberant expansion of churches, mosques, Buddhist temples and synagogues. The best known of the new religious institutions is the $189-million Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in downtown Los Angeles. But the building program is remarkably varied and includes megachurches for evangelicals, the 1,600-seat Korean Valley Christian Presbyterian Church in Porter Ranch, the Faithful Central Bible Church at the former site of the 17,500-seat Forum in Inglewood and the Hindu Temple in Malibu.

The upsurge in religious building reflects an intensification of faith-based activities across the region. Church membership in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, according to the American Religion Data Archive, grew 24% in the 1990s, a rate of growth about twice that of the area's population. In contrast, membership growth nationally was flat.

This growth has numerous sources, most significantly the number of immigrants who have migrated to the Los Angeles area over the last few decades. Virtually all major denominations, from Catholicism and Judaism to Islam and evangelical Protestantism, credit much of their recent expansion to the spiritual demands of newcomers. Others note the rising need among L.A.'s dispersed middle-class population for a community connection in a city whose sprawling and high-pitched energy are obstacles to simple human contact.

The revival in religiosity represents a new stage in the evolution of Los Angeles as a city. It reflects both the city's changing character and its continuing spiritual restlessness. From Mesopotamian times on through the Middle Ages to the great Protestant revivals in Britain and America in the early 20th century, the quest for spiritual meaning has been among the most notable characteristics of great cities. "The city," observed French theologian Jacques Ellul, "is not just a collection of houses with ramparts, but also a spiritual power."

A heightened sense of religiosity is nothing new in Los Angeles. Founded as an exclusively Catholic city under the Spanish, L.A.'s first great religious transformation came with the huge influx of Midwestern and Northeastern middle-class Americans at the turn of the century. By the 1920s, the city was a bastion of such traditional Protestant groups as the [Baptists,] Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans.

The city's new Protestant consciousness had many positive effects. Mainstream Protestantism preached the importance of hard work and clean government, values that played crucial roles in the city's transition from a cow town to a major metropolis. But Protestant hegemony also fostered prejudice against other religions, effectively excluding their followers, most notably Catholics and Jews, from the city's ruling elites.

Also in the 1920s and especially during the 1930s, Los Angeles became a national center of Christian fundamentalism. Impoverished refugees from the Dust Bowl, cut off from their Great Plains roots and adrift in a large, seemingly unknown city, found solace in the "old-time religion" of such evangelists as [Charles E. Fuller of the Church of the Open Door] and Aimee Semple McPherson of the Foursquare Gospel Church.

In the ensuing decades, many marginal religious movements, from astrologers to faith healers, attracted followings. "Los Angeles leads the world in all the healing sciences," commented the journalist Morrow Mayo, "except perhaps medicine and surgery."

In the 1950s and 1960s, religion in Los Angeles fit a more normal American pattern. In a city of big businesses and global ambitions, L.A.'s
religious communities were represented by "serious" ecclesiastical leaders such as the Catholic archbishop, the leader of the Episcopal church and the head of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.

This said corporate model no longer describes L.A.'s religiosity. Although established religious institutions still matter, the current revival of religious life is essentially entrepreneurial, which befits a city that is ethnically diverse and whose economy is dominated by small businesses. It is dispersed and fragmented, unfolding across an archipelago of faiths rather than in a single, sacred precinct.

In the shadows of the city's new religious buildings grows a proliferation of smaller and more eclectic congregations. It's not uncommon for four or more congregations, each speaking a different language and professing a different faith, to share the same facility. This is particularly true of the more evangelical churches, whose rapid growth has yet to bring them the economic power to find permanent spaces amid L.A.'s high-cost real estate. Still, according to the American Religion Data Archive, the number of places of worship in the L.A. area in 2000 rose by about 400 over the previous 10 years.

Established religious institutions, although more well heeded than storefront houses of worship, may be unprepared to adjust to the fast-changing diversification of religious life. The Jewish Federation, for example, the traditional bulwark of the city's 600,000 Jews, is a diminishing force. Despite the growth of L.A.'s Jewish community in both numbers and wealth, says Rob Eshman, editor of the Los Angeles Jewish Journal, the federation annually raises about the same amount of money as it did a decade ago.

Instead, Eshman says, more Jewish money is flowing to specialized institutions like the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Skirball Cultural Center and the Museum of Tolerance. Fund-raising also is increasingly connected to the region's 30 Hebrew day schools that educate about 10,000 Jewish children, according to the Bureau of Jewish Education. "You have a kind of entrepreneurial spirit in the L.A. Jewish community that's also very dynamic and fragmented," Eshman says. "The overall organization of the community tends to be relatively weak, but the individual synagogues are very strong."

Greater ethnic diversity also has changed the profile of the city's Jewish community. First-generation immigrants and their offspring make up nearly 45% of the L.A. Jewish community. This has led to the establishment of numerous shuls, some of which attempt to maintain Jewish practices that originated in places like Iran and elsewhere in the Near East, where Jewish roots are deeper than in Christian Europe.

Similar patterns are evident in the growth of Christian churches. Large because of the influx of Latino immigrants, the Catholic Church gained about 1.5 million adherents in the 1990s, a 34% increase over the previous decade. As a result, Catholicism is once again the region's predominant faith.

Although the sexual-abuse scandal has tarnished the reputation of the L.A. archdiocese and threatens to strain church finances, grassroots Catholic religious life in Los Angeles continues to expand, with virtually all parishes reporting increases in attendance and social activities, according to Kevin O'Connor, director of development for the archdiocese. In much of the city, the church has become increasingly Spanish-speaking, but Mass is also celebrated in at least 30 languages every weekend.

Mainline Protestantism and more traditional fundamentalist groups have not fared as well. Yet, many Protestant groups are expanding their social services and redirecting their ministries to accommodate the region's changing population. The United Methodist Church, which shrank by nearly one-quarter during the 1990s, recently established 12 new ministries, 11 of which target Spanish, Chinese or other non-English-speaking constituencies.

But the most dramatic growth is in religions that historically have been outside the mainstream. The largest number of new building projects is being undertaken by evangelical Christian groups like the Assemblies of God. Pentecostal churches are the fastest-growing of all denominations in terms of membership. Many of these churches, such as the Vineyard in Santa Monica or the Oasis in Mid-Wilshire, are Southern California in their lack of traditional focus. Their strong emphasis on music and contemporary sermonizing appeals to a wide range of urbanites, among them singles, divorced parents and others alienated from more traditional churches.

[EDITORIAL NOTE: Many of the region's new evangelical megachurches are independent or nondenominational in character, which indicates a turning away from traditional denominational structures to a freer life-style; examples of these are Faithful Central Bible Church (Bishop Kenneth Ulmer) in Los Angeles; the Dream Center (Pastor Mathew Barnett) in Los Angeles; Harvest Rock Church (Pastor Che Ahn) in Pasadena; Faith Community Church (Pastor Jim Reeve) in West Covina; and Mariners Church (Pastor Kenton Beshore) in Irvine and Saddleback Church (Pastor Rick Warren) in Lake Forest, both in Orange County.]

These churches also have expanded their appeal beyond their traditional Anglo and African American congregants to recently arrived Latinos and Asians. For many newcomers, the evangelical message of close communion with God, discipline and self-help is a powerful magnet.

But not all newcomers to L.A., Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties are gathering under the tent of [Protestant] evangelism. Faiths once tiny in the area -- Buddhism, Bahai, Islam and Hinduism -- are gaining followers, including converts from other religious communities. The four-county area has more than 100 Bahai centers with more than 10,000 members, and 76 mosques serving about 153,000 Muslims. As many as 40% of the nation's 1.4 million Buddhists live in Southern California.

The upsurge in religious activities may be a better harbinger of L.A.'s arrival as a world city than the newest high-rise office building, museum or sport stadium. Like its population and cultures, L.A.'s religiosity has many faces and speaks in many tongues. Yet, the city is increasingly demonstrating how faith can be a common ground. The greater cooperation among L.A.'s religious congregations serves not only the spiritual but also the physical, emotional and social needs of the city's diverse communities.

These multifaceted religious efforts represent a critical element in the maturation and humanization of our urban society. Religious faith is often banished to the sidelines in our secularized culture; it's expansion may prove the most irreducible asset in helping create a true city of angels.

A Brief History of Los Angeles County

The area comprising present-day Los Angeles County was first explored by Europeans in 1769 when Gaspar de Portola and a group of missionaries camped on what is now the banks of the Los Angeles River. A member of the party, Friar Juan Crespi, suggested the area be named “Nuestra Senora de Los Angeles de la Porciucnula” (“Our Lady the Queen of the Angels of Porciucnula”).

In September 1771, Father Junipero Serra and a group of Spaniards founded the San Gabriel Mission as the center of the first “community” in an area inhabited by small bands of Gabrieleno Indians. Ten years later the Pobладores, a group of 11 families recruited from Mexico by Capt. Rivera y Moncada, traveled from the San Gabriel Mission to a spot selected by Alta California Gov. Felipe de Neve to establish a new pueblo. The settlement was named El Pueblo de la Reyna de Los Angeles (The Pueblo of the Queen of the Angels). In its early years, the town was a small, isolated cluster of adobe-brick houses and random streets carved out of the desert, and its main product was grain. Over time, the area became known as the Ciudad de Los Angeles, “City of Angels.”

In September 1797, the Franciscan monks established the San Fernando Mission Rey de Espana in the northern San Fernando Valley.

Although the Spanish government placed a ban on trading with foreign ships, American vessels began arriving in the early 1800s, and the first English-speaking inhabitant settled in the area in 1818. He was a carpenter named Joseph Chapman, who helped build the church facing the town’s central plaza, a structure that still stands. California was ruled by Spain until 1822, when Mexico assumed jurisdiction. As a result, trade with the United States became more frequent. The ocean waters off the coast of California were important for whaling and seal hunting, and a number of trading ships docked at nearby San Pedro to buy cattle hides and tallow. By the 1840s, Los Angeles was the largest town in Southern California.

After a two-year period of hostilities with Mexico beginning in 1846, the area came under U.S. control. The Treaty of Cahuenga, signed in 1847, ended the war in hides and tallow. By the 1840s, Los Angeles was the largest town in Southern California.

After the Civil War ended, there was a large immigration into the Los Angeles area. Several large Mexican ranches were divided into many small farms, and such places as Compton, Downey, Norwalk, San Fernando, Santa Monica and Pasadena sprang into existence.

During its history, the size of the County has changed substantially. Originally it was 4,340 square miles along the coast between Santa Barbara and San Diego, but grew to 34,520 square miles, sprawling east to the Colorado River. Today, with 4,084 square miles, it is slightly smaller than its original size. The County was divided up three times: Kern County received a large slice in 1851; San Bernardino County split off in 1853; and Orange County was established in 1889.

INCORPORATION

On Feb. 18, 1850, the County of Los Angeles was established as one of the 27 original counties, several months before California was admitted to the Union. The people of Los Angeles County on April 1, 1850 asserted their newly won right of self-government and elected a three-man Court of Sessions as their first governing body. A total of 377 votes were cast in this election. In 1852 the Legislature dissolved the Court of Sessions and created a five-member Board of Supervisors. In 1913 the citizens of Los Angeles County approved a charter recommended by a board of freeholders which gave the County greater freedom to govern itself within the framework of state law.

Soon thereafter Los Angeles, which had been designated as the official “seat” of County government, was incorporated as a city. It had a reputation as one of the toughest towns in the West. “A murder a day” only slightly exaggerated the town’s crime problems, and suspected criminals were often hanged by vigilante groups. Lawlessness reached a peak in 1871, when, after a Chinese immigrant accidentally killed a white man, an angry mob stormed into the Chinatown district, murdering 16 people. After that, civic leaders and concerned citizens began a successful campaign to bring law and order to the town.

IMMIGRANTS

Los Angeles and its surrounding territories were built by immigrants. The village of Los Angeles was a fairly cosmopolitan place early on. By the 1850s settlers included English, French, Basques, Spaniards, Mexicans, and Germans, and by the 1870s some 200 Chinese lived in the city as well. During the late 1880s and early 20th Century, foreign immigration to Los Angeles County was varied but continued to be steady. The new immigrants arrived from Europe, Asia, and Central and South America. Distinctive ethnic communities of Japanese, Chinese, Russians, and East European Jews had developed throughout the county by the 1930s.

When the Immigration Act of 1965 opened the door to new immigrants, it initiated dramatic changes in the area. According to the U.S. Census, by 2000 36.2 percent of the residents of Los Angeles County were foreign-born – more than triple the 11.3 percent figure of 1970. The 2000 census showed the area was home to 4.2 million people of Latino/Hispanic origin—only Mexico City had a larger number. A survey taken by the Los Angeles Unified School District that year counted more than 130 different languages represented among school-age children. By 2000 Los Angeles had become the nation’s major immigrant port of entry, supplanting New York City.

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<th>Ethnic Makeup of Los Angeles County (2000 Census)</th>
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RAILROADS AND GROWTH

The coming of the railroads changed everything. The Southern Pacific completed its Los Angeles route in 1880, followed by the Santa Fe railroad six years later. With a huge investment in their new coast-to-coast rail lines and large Los Angeles land holdings, the railroads set forth a long-term plan for growth. Southern California citrus farming was born. Tourism and the building of towns were promoted to attract investors, to raise land values, and to increase the value of railroad shipments.

In the late 1860s there was a population boom as the marketing to "Go West" caught on. Thousands of tourists and land speculators hurried to Los Angeles County. Lots were bought, sold and traded, and an almost instantly created industry of real estate agents transacted more value in land sales than the county's entire value of only a few years before. The boom proved to be a speculative frenzy that collapsed abruptly in 1889. Many landowners went broke. People in vast numbers abandoned the Los Angeles county, sometimes as many as 3,000 a day. This flight prompted the creation of the chamber of commerce, which began a worldwide advertising campaign to attract new citizens. The county as a whole, however, benefited. The build-up had created several local irrigation districts and numerous civic improvements. In addition, the Los Angeles population had increased from about 11,000 in 1880 to about 60,000 in 1890.

BLACK GOLD

In 1850 the first salable petroleum in California was the oil found at Pico Canyon near San Fernando. But the real boom began in the 1890s, when Edward L. Doheny discovered oil at 2nd Street and Glendale Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles. His find set off a "second black gold rush" that lasted several years. Los Angeles became a center of oil production in the early 20th Century. By 1897 the area had 500 derricks, and in 1910 the area near Santa Monica Boulevard and Vermont Avenue was an unruly oil shantytown. Drilling activity in the county reached new heights in the 1920s when major finds were made in Whittier, Montebello, Compton, Torrance, and Inglewood. The largest strikes were in Huntington Beach in 1920, and Santa Fe Springs and Signal Hill in 1921. These three huge fields upset national oil prices and glutted existing storage facilities. By the turn of the century almost 1,500 oil wells operated throughout Los Angeles. Oil production has continued down to the present throughout the Los Angeles Basin; between 1952 and 1988 some 1,000 wells pumped 375 million barrels of oil from these pumps.

AGRICULTURE

In the early 1900s, agriculture became an important part of the economy. The growth in the City of Los Angeles necessitated the annexation of the large San Fernando Valley. For about a half century between San Fernando's 1874 founding and the 1920s, the community was considered an "agricultural gem" set in the San Fernando Valley. An ample and reliable water supply was coupled with a coastal valley climate, in which the community's elevation of about 1,100 feet -- along with its receiving about 12 inches of rain a year -- made it ideal for growing crops.

Cattle ranching was common in the area when missionaries arrived in the late 1700s, but during the next 100 years the landscape became dotted with wheat plantings and fruit trees, whose growth was also aided by the irrigation systems in place from the mission's heyday. By the 1920s, fruit and especially citrus cultivation was San Fernando's biggest industry. The price of land for orange and lemon groves went as high as $5,000 an acre -- as much as eight times more than the cost of other land -- and the city had at least four packing houses with annual shipments of nearly 500 rail cars of oranges and lemons.

Olives also flourished in the Mediterranean-like climate, and the 2,000-acre Sylmar olive grove -- then the world's largest -- produced 50,000 gallons of olive oil and 200,000 gallons of ripe olives. Other crops grown in the County included alfalfa, apricots, asparagus, barley, hay, beans, beets, cabbage, citrus, corn, lettuce, melons, peaches, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, and walnuts. The area also had excellent dairy farms, including the world's largest Guernsey herd in the 1920s. The agricultural output led to other industries such as canning companies, a fruit growers association, and fruit preservers. The agricultural land gave way to development following World War II.

HARBORS AND TRADE

The San Pedro harbor became operational in the late 1840s and became the principal harbor for the trade in the county. The first steamer to visit San Pedro was the Goldhunter in 1849. The construction of a railroad from Los Angeles to the harbor in 1869 gave a fresh impetus to the development of agricultural resources in the county. Later in 1911 the Long Beach harbor was established and the port at San Pedro was also added to give Los Angeles a position in the international trade market.

MOTION PICTURES AND TELEVISION

In 1853 one adobe hut stood on the site that became Hollywood. The first motion picture studio in Hollywood proper was Nestor Film Company, founded in 1911 by Al Christie for David Horsley in an old building on the southeast corner of Sunset Boulevard and Gower Street. By 1930 the motion picture industry was in full swing. The county's good weather and picturesque locals lent itself to the production of the silent films and "talkies."

In the 1950s, the advent of television led to the opening of numerous television stations. Movie attendance fell to half its previous level during this time as audiences stayed home to be entertained in their own living rooms. Hollywood's yearly output in the 1930s had averaged 750 feature films; in the 1950s it was down to about 300 and still falling, despite efforts to win back audiences by installing new stereo sound systems, building wide screens, and employing new such visual techniques as 3-D. By the early 1970s the television and movie industries became interdependent with much crossover from one medium to the other. Today, each medium has found its niche. The Hollywood film has retained its position as the ultimate entertainment, but television has become the major disseminator of popular culture. Los Angeles has remained firmly in charge of American image-making.

Large manufacturing concerns began opening factories during that time, and the need for housing created vast areas of suburban neighborhoods and the beginnings of the area's massive freeway system. The Depression and the Midwestern drought of the 1930s brought thousands of people to California looking for jobs.

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS

In order to sustain future growth, the County needed new sources of water. The only local water in Los Angeles was the intermittent Los Angeles River and
groundwater replenished by the area's minimal rain. Legitimate concerns about water supply were exploited to gain backing for a huge engineering and legal effort to bring more water to the city and allow more development. Approximately 250 miles northeast of Los Angeles is Inyo County, near the Nevada state line, a long slender desert region known as the Owens Valley had the Owens River, a permanent stream of fresh water fed by the melted snows of the eastern Sierra Nevadas.

Sometime between 1889 and 1903, Los Angeles Times founder Harrison Gray Otis and his son-in-law successor, Harry Chandler, engaged in successful efforts at buying up cheap land on the northern outskirts of Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley. At the same time they enlisted the help of William Mulholland, chief engineer of the Los Angeles Water Department, and J.B. Lippencott, of the United States Reclamation Service. Lippencott performed water surveys in the Owens Valley for the Reclamation Service while secretly receiving a salary from the City of Los Angeles. He succeeded in persuading Owens Valley farmers and mutual water companies to pool their interests and surrender the water rights to 200,000 acres of land to Fred Eden, Lippencott's agent and a former mayor of Los Angeles. Eden then resigned from the Reclamation Service, took a job with the Los Angeles Water Department as assistant to Mulholland, and turned over the Reclamation Service maps, field surveys and stream measurements to the city. Those studies served as the basis for designing the longest aqueduct in the world.

By July 1905, Chandler's L.A. Times began to warn the voters of Los Angeles that the county would soon dry up unless they voted bonds for building the aqueduct. Artificial drought conditions were created when water was run into the sewers to decrease the supply in the reservoirs and residents were forbidden to water their lawns and gardens. On election day, the people of Los Angeles voted for $22.5 million worth of bonds to build an aqueduct from the Owens River and to defray other expenses of the project. With this money, and with a special act of Congress allowing cities to own property outside their boundaries, the city acquired the land that Eden had acquired from the Owens Valley farmers and started to build the aqueduct, which opened Nov. 5, 1913.

To accommodate its growing population, the County instituted a number of large engineering projects, including the construction of the Hoover Dam, which channeled water to the County from the Colorado River and provided electricity from hydroelectric power. The area's excellent weather made it an ideal location for aircraft testing and construction, and World War II brought hundreds of new industries to the area, boosting the local economy. By the 1950s, Los Angeles County was a sprawling metropolis. It was considered the epitome of everything new and modern in American culture—a combination of super highways, affordable housing, and opportunity for everyone.

Today more than 10 million people call Los Angeles County home, residing in 88 cities and approximately 140 unincorporated areas. It continues to be an industrial and financial giant, and is one of the most cultural and ethnically diverse communities in the world.

Los Angeles County, one of California's original 27 counties, was established Feb. 18, 1850. Originally the County occupied a comparatively small area along the coast between Santa Barbara and San Diego, but within a year its boundaries were enlarged from 4,340 square miles to 34,520 square miles, an area sprawling east to the Colorado River.

During subsequent years, Los Angeles County slowly ebbed to its present size, the last major detachment occurring in 1889 with the creation of Orange County. Los Angeles County remains one of the nation's largest counties with 4,084 square miles, an area some 800 square miles larger than the combined area of the states of Delaware and Rhode Island.

Los Angeles County includes the islands of San Clemente and Santa Catalina. It is bordered on the east by Orange and San Bernardino Counties, on the north by Kern County, on the west by Ventura County, and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. Its coastline is 75 miles long.

It has the largest population (10,292,723 as of July 2006) of any county in the nation, and is exceeded by only eight states. Approximately 28 percent of California's residents live in Los Angeles County.

The Board of Supervisors, created by the state Legislature in 1852, is the governing body. Five supervisors are elected to four-year terms by voters within their respective districts. The Board has executive, legislative and quasi-judicial roles. It appoints all department heads other than the assessor, district attorney and sheriff, which are elective positions.

As a subdivision of the state, the County is charged with providing numerous services that affect the lives of all residents. Traditional mandatory services include law enforcement, property assessment, tax collection, public health protection, public social services and relief to indigents. Among the specialized services are flood control, water conservation, parks and recreation, and many diversified cultural activities.

There are 88 cities within the County, each with its own city council. All of the cities, in varying degrees, contract with the County to provide municipal services. Thirty-seven contract for nearly all of their municipal services.

More than 65 percent of the County is unincorporated. For the 1 million people living in those areas, the Board of Supervisors is their "city council" and County departments provide the municipal services. The 2006-07 Final Budget is approximately $21 billion. Twenty-four percent of the revenue comes from the state, 22% from the federal government, 20% from property taxes, and 34% from other sources. The largest percentage -- 27% -- of the budget goes to pay for health services, while 25% is spent on public protection and 25% on social services.

The County, with 100,632.6 budgeted employees, is the largest employer in the five-county region. Of these, 30,359.5 are in health services; 29,470.5 are in social services. The spectrum of job listings - from clerk to truck driver, sanitarian to psychiatrist, scientist to scuba diver, attorney to helicopter pilot - encompasses nearly every trade and profession, and illustrates the complexity of county government.

SOURCES:  http://lacounty.info/history.htm  http://lacounty.info/overview.htm

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**Demographics on the City of Los Angeles: 2000**

**2000 Census**

As of the U.S. Federal Census of 2000, there were 3,694,820 people, 1,275,412 households, and 798,407 families residing in the City of Los Angeles. The population density was 7,876.8 people per square mile (3,041.3/km²). There were 1,337,706 housing units at an average density of 2,851.8 per square mile (1,101.1/km²).

The racial makeup of the city was 46.9% **White**, 12.0% **African American**, 10.0% **Asian**, 1.0% **Native American**, 25.9% from **other races**, and 5.2% from two or more races. Moreover, 46.5% of the population were of **Hispanic or Latino** heritage of any race and 29.7% were White, not of Latino/Hispanic origins.

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There were 2,275,412 households of which 33.5% had children under 18, 41.9% were married couples, 14.5% had a female householder with no husband present, and 37.4% were non-families. 28.5% of households were made up of individuals and 7.4% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.83 and the average family size 3.56.

The age distribution was: 26.6% under 18, 11.1% from 18 to 24, 34.1% from 25 to 44, 18.6% from 45 to 64, and 9.7% who were 65 or older. The median age was 32. For every 100 females there were 94.4 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 97.5 males.

The median income for a household was $36,687, and for a family was $39,942. Males had a median income of $31,880, females $30,197. The per capita income was $20,671. 22.1% of the population and 18.3% of families were below the poverty line, 30.3% of those under the age of 18 and 12.6% of those aged 65 or older were below the poverty line.

It is also of interest to note that the post-1950 population increase did not occur exclusively in suburban or peripheral locations. While many other American cities have experienced central area population declines, the opposite has been true here. The increase in the central area population is due, in part, to Los Angeles' large immigrant population.

In the period from 1920 to 1960, African Americans from the Southeast U.S. arrived in Los Angeles and its population grew 15 times. Since 1980, the African American population dropped in half as its middle-class relocated to the suburbs, notably the Antelope Valley and Inland Empire, and Latinos have moved into the once predominantly African American district of South-Central Los Angeles. African Americans still remain predominant in some portions of the city, including Hyde Park, Crenshaw District, Leimert Park, and Baldwin Hills (as well as neighboring View Park-Windsor Hills and Ladera Heights) which is considered to be one of the wealthiest majority-black neighborhoods in the United States. Los Angeles still has the largest African American community of any city in the western United States.

National origins

Of 2,182,114 U.S.-born people, 1,485,576 were born in California, 663,746 were born in a different state of the U.S., and 61,792 were born in a U.S. territory, according to the 2000 Census.

Of 1,512,720 foreign-born people, 100,252 were born in Europe, 357,767 were born in Asia, 64,730 were born in Africa, 94,104 were born in Caribbean/Oceania, 996,996 were born in Latin America, and 13,859 were born in Northern America. Of such foreign-born people, 589,771 entered the U.S. between 1990 to March 2000, 509,841 were naturalized citizens and 1,002,879 were not citizens.

By the next national census, Los Angeles is expected to have an Hispanic/Latino majority for the first time since 1850. The City of Los Angeles has the second largest foreign-born population of any major U.S. city, after Miami. The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is the number one entry for immigrants in the U.S. The Hispanic (Mexico, Central America and South America), Asian American, and Caribbean populations are growing particularly quickly — the Asian-American population is the largest of any U.S. city, which contains the largest concentration of Los Angeles County's 1.4 million Asians. Los Angeles hosts the largest populations of Iranians, Armenians, Belizians, Bulgarians, Cambodians, Filipinos, Guatemalans, Hungarians, Koreans, Mexicans, Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, Thais, and Pacific Islanders such as Samoans in both the U.S. and the world outside of their respective countries. Los Angeles is also home to the largest populations of Japanese living in the U.S., and has one of the largest Native American populations in the country. It is also home to the second largest concentration of Russians and people of Jewish descent in the Americas, after New York City. Los Angeles experienced minor waves of European immigration in the late 1800s and early 1900s and the city has sizeable populations of German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Romanian, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, Croatian and Ukrainian descent.

Los Angeles is home to people from more than 140 countries speaking at least 224 different languages. Ethnic enclaves like Chinatown, Historic Filipinotown, Koreatown, Little Armenia, Little Ethiopia, Little Persia, Little Tokoyo and Thai Town provide examples of the polyglot character of contemporary Los Angeles. Central American residents of the Westlake-MacArthur Park area of Los Angeles would like for their neighborhood to be called 'Central America Town,' while other long-term residents, such as Jewish merchants, are opposed to the idea.


The Jewish Community in Los Angeles

Los Angeles is home to the second largest population of Jewish people in the United States. Many synagogues of the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist movements can be found throughout the city. Most are located in the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles. The area in West LA around Fairfax and Pico Boulevards contains a large amount of Orthodox Jews. The first Jewish synagogue (B’nai Brith) was organized in 1862 by Rabbi A. W. Edelman. One of the oldest synagogues in Los Angeles is the Breed Street Shul (founded in 1925) in East Los Angeles, which is being renovated.

Historic Synagogues of Los Angeles

Congregation B’nai B’rith (later known as Wilshire Blvd. Temple) was organized on July 13, 1862. The Congregation’s first synagogue site on South Fort Street (now Broadway) between 2nd and 3rd. This was the first Jewish building in Los Angeles. The cornerstone was laid on August 18, 1872.

“The building itself was of Gothic architecture. In front were two massive buttresses surmounted by ornamental stone, with carved spires. A five-pointed star in a circle fronted the building…The interior was seventy feet long, forty feet wide, and thirty feet high,
and the sanctuary seated 365 persons."

In 1894 the building was sold due to its "cracked walls and antiquated appearance in a busy commercial street, [that was] not conducive to worship." [Destroyed]

In 1896 Congregation B’nai B’rith built a larger synagogue at 9th and Hope. The cornerstone was laid on March 15, 1896 and it was dedicated on September 5. The architect was Abraham M. Edelman, son of its long-time rabbi.

“The synagogue, which was long regarded as the finest church edifice in Los Angeles, was of red brick with twin towers and pomegranate domes, characteristic of ‘mosaic’ architecture.” The sanctuary seated 600. “The floor was carpeted in deep red, the pews were plush-cushioned, and the chandelier, containing sixty bulbs, was the largest in the city. Stained glass windows were presented by H. W. Hellman, Harris Newmark, Kaspare Cohn, and Mrs. J. P. Newmark.”

(Descriptions from Vorspan and Gartner, History of the Jews of Los Angeles, 1970. B’nai B’rith Congregation officially joined the Reform movement around 1900.)

The third synagogue of the B’nai B’rith Congregation was built between 1922 and 1929 at the NE corner of Hobart and Wilshire, designed by Abraham A. Edelman, S. Tilden Norton and David C. Allison, and the name changed to Wilshire Blvd. Temple Congregation Beth Israel was formed in 1899 by the merger of three congregations and is the oldest Orthodox congregation. Its synagogue at 227 Olive Street was dedicated on April 13, 1902, and it was used until 1940. It was a large building with twin towers with domes at the tops, also called the Olive Street Shul. The building was located on Bunker Hill, an area that was redeveloped in the 1960s.

Congregation Talmud Torah was established partly due to a need in the community for a Hebrew School close to the growing population east of downtown. In 1904 a house at 114 Rose Street was used as a synagogue. After 1910, with the Jewish population moving to Boyle Heights, property on Breed Street was purchased. The Beth Hamedrash was built there in 1915; this building still stands today at the rear of the property. The large Breed Street Shul was erected at this site at 247 Breed Street beginning in 1920, and dedicated in 1923. This was once the largest Orthodox congregation west of Chicago. The Jewish Historical Society of Southern California is raising money to renovate the building so that it can be used to serve the community.

Anshei Sephard Congregation was established by immigrants from Romania and used a house on Banning Street. Later it was known as the Custer Street Synagogue, and eventually merged with the Olive Street Synagogue.

Agudath Achim Congregation was incorporated in 1908 at 21st and Central. It established a Chevra Kadisha (burial society) and a cemetery on Downey Road in East Los Angeles. In 1936 it moved to 2521 West View Street.

Sinai Synagogue arose out a conflict between Orthodox Jews, and broke away from Beth Israel (Olive Street Shul) around 1906. It was the first Conservative congregation. They used facilities at 521 West Pico, then purchased a lot at Valencia and 12th in the Pico Union area, and dedicated a new synagogue there on February 5, 1909. “The new temple had weathered oak furnishings and tinting in blending shades in brown and blue, with splendid art glass and windows and magnificent pipe organ.” (Vorspan & Gartner) A large Star of David still exists in a window and above the interior chandelier.

Sinai Congregation moved to a site at 405 S. New Hampshire in 1926. This very large synagogue was designed by S. Tilden Norton. “A mixture of eastern Mediterranean areas - Byzantine, Moorish plus other odds and ends. A dome dominates the interior and exterior, and hand-cut bricks of various colors create a textured busy facade.” (A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles)

Sinai Temple’s third and current synagogue is at 10400 Wilshire Blvd. in Westwood. Website: www.sinaitemple.org

B’nai Amunah Congregation established a synagogue in 1914 at Broadway and 40th, then moved in 1921 to 4200 S. Grand Avenue.

Congregation Tifereth Israel held services in homes, halls and theaters, but finally dedicated their synagogue at the NW corner of Santa Barbara and La Salle Avenues in 1932. (Photo in Sinai Yearbook 1946 in JCSLA collection, Los Angeles Family History Center). The Sephardic community was made up of immigrants mainly from the Island of Rhodes, Asia Minor, Salonica, Constantinople, Smyrna, Morocco and the Balkans. Later the congregation moved to 10500 Wilshire Blvd. Website: www.sephardictemple.org

Temple Emanuel was organized in 1919 as the second Reform congregation in Los Angeles, but with a desire to adhere to “historic Judaism,” modeled on the style of the Free Synagogue founded by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in New York. After meeting at first at the Wilshire Masonic Hall, a synagogue was dedicated on Manhattan Place near Wilshire Blvd. in 1924. Despite growing rapidly for a few years, due to the Depression and the new Wilshire Blvd. Temple opening nearby, the synagogue was closed, and the building was occupied by Christ Church. However, the congregation was revived in 1939 and a synagogue was built at 8844 Wilshire Blvd.

Beth David, or the Cornwall Synagogue, was founded in 1918. Services were held on Brooklyn Avenue at the beginning; the temple was built in 1923 at 336 Cornwall Avenue in Boyle Heights.

B’nai Jacob, 2833 Fairmont Street in Boyle Heights. Dedicated August 14, 1927, with a meeting hall adjacent to the synagogue. Now
B’nai Zion Congregation met in rented stores in City Terrace and by 1928 had sufficient members to erect a synagogue. However, the group was split in two factions, the B’nai Zion group and the Menorah Center group. The B’nai Zion group built a synagogue at 3364 City Terrace Drive, though they had financial difficulties, especially during the Depression, but became very active and paid off their mortgage in 1935.

Congregation Tifereth Jacob began in 1922 with fifty families, rented space at first, and in 1925 purchased a building at the corner of 59th Street and Brentwood in the southern part of the city. After two years, the old building was replaced by a new and larger one, which served 1500 families.

Beth Jacob West Adams Congregation was organized in 1925 at a meeting in a house at 5175 West Adams Blvd. under the name “West Adams Hebrew congregation.” Services were held at 4759 West Adams. The name was changed in 1928 and a building was erected at the SE corner of West Adams and Hillcrest. By 1931, it was necessary to enlarge the synagogue to seat 800 people.

Congregation Mogen David was founded in 1925 in the Grammercy Place neighborhood. They used private homes until the women’s auxiliary raised the funds to purchase a site for a synagogue at 1518 Grammercy Place, which opened in 1933.

Temple Israel, the third Reform congregation, was founded in 1926 by four men from Temple Beth El who wanted to create a more modern temple. Services were held in the old Susue Hahajakawa mansion at Franklin and Argyle Avenue. In 1929 they moved to 1740 Ivar Avenue, and in 1945 they acquired a site for a new temple at Hollywood and Fuller. The temple became very progressive, and Rabbi Nussbaum created the Inter-Faith Forum in 1943 with the Hollywood area churches to foster better relationships. The website is www.tioh.org.

Etz Jacob Congregation opened at 7659 Beverly Blvd. in 1932 under the name “Congregation Share Torah.” Jacob Tannenbaum led a group in organizing a Talmud Torah in the same year, and the congregation was named in his honor. In 1946 they joined with the oldest Orthodox congregation, Beth Israel, which sold its Olive Street synagogue to build a new temple and educational center on Beverly Blvd.

B’nai Moshe Congregation, 2744 Wabash Avenue in Boyle Heights.

University Synagogue was organized in 1943 with services conducted by one of the members at 574 Hilgard Avenue near UCLA. The present site of the Reform congregation’s large synagogue is 11960 Sunset Blvd. Website: www.unisyn.org

Temple Israel, 1414 N. Wilton Pl.


Agudath Achim 21st and Central

B’Nai Shalom 4678 W. Adams Blvd.

Beth Jacob Congregation (O): 9030 W. Olympic Blvd., Beverly Hills; (310) 278-1911; www.bethjacob.org.

Rodel Sholem Jefferson Blvd and Cimmaron St.

Temple Israel, 1414 N. Wilton Pl.

Hollywood Temple Beth El 1414 N. Wilton Pl.


Congregation Etz Jacob (O): 7659 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles; (323) 938-2619.
Like any self-respecting East Coast native, I arrived in Los Angeles more than a decade and a half ago armed with the usual stereotypes of this city — namely, it lacked intellectual and cultural "gravitas," was distinguished by its traffic and smog and defied all known logic of urban organization. Almost immediately, I came to realize that while there was a grain of truth in all of these claims, Los Angeles had many virtues. To begin with, it was far more playful and open to reinvention than the solemn and self-serious East Coast cities in which I was raised and educated. More substantially, it is the site of immense cultural energy that encourages initiative and innovation.

Since arriving, I’ve also shed another stereotype that I had brought with me as a historian of the Jewish experience. Trained as a Europeanist, I had been inculcated to believe that Los Angeles was to New York as America was to Europe — a pale imitation of the real McCoy, a “parvenu” in a world in which antiquity and social stratification bestow merit. This view, unfortunately, is all too common among East Coast or Eurocentric academics.

It is quite surprising, for example, that Los Angeles, the site of frequent innovation, merits no place in the definitive account of American Judaism recently authored by Jonathan Sarna. What this lacuna suggests is that we are in need of more research on the L.A. Jewish experience leading to a new scholarly synthesis that blends cultural, political, social, religious, and institutional stories into one tale. This research must attend to both the local and national contexts of L.A. Jewry.

For it is hard to deny that America has been one of the most successful sites of Jewish settlement in history, if not the most successful of Diaspora communities. Nor can one quarrel with the premise that Los Angeles is one of the most interesting laboratories of urban experimentation today, including its Jewish community.

What make Los Angeles and its Jews so interesting and worthy of attention? Indeed, why should the L.A. Jewish community be a subject of serious study for researchers. Here are some reasons:

1) Size — Los Angeles is the second-largest Jewish city in North America and one of the largest concentrations of Jews in the world. Starting with but eight young men in 1850, the L.A. Jewish community has exploded in population over the course of its 150-year history, reaching its current population of 500,000–600,000. It has developed a vast network of organizations to which Jews of different religious, cultural and political persuasions belong. It also has a sizable majority of Jews without affiliation of any sort, who represent an important and largely untapped source for those intent on studying the challenges facing the American Jewish future.

2) Diversity — Similar to the larger city, the L.A. Jewish community is blessed with rich cultural and human resources. The arrival of thousands of Jews from Iran, Israel and the former Soviet Union over the past 30 years has injected tremendous diversity and energy into Jewish communal and institutional life. In Los Angeles today are some of the most textured and diverse ethnic Jewish neighborhoods anywhere in the world. We have an opportunity to observe in these neighborhoods, and among the recent arrivals, familiar patterns from the history of immigration to this country — the initial desire to organize among one’s own group, followed by a desire for integration into the mainstream, followed by a desire to reclaim parts of a fading or lost native culture. We also have the opportunity to juxtapose these recent waves of migration with the internal American waves that brought thousands of Jews to Los Angeles in early- to mid-
20th century.

3) The Sunny Side — Jews have come to Los Angeles for the same reasons that millions of others have: sunny weather and an accompanying sense of social optimism and economic opportunity. Los Angeles has been very good to its Jews, who have assumed positions of prominence in Hollywood, the real estate business and local politics. Moreover, Jews have thrived on the ethos of social mobility and cultural experimentation for which the city is known (and often mocked elsewhere). Thus, they have constantly moved, often westward, in search of open space. And they have constantly remolded themselves from new arrivals into city elders, political radicals, moviemakers, and neo-kabbalists. In this sense, the L.A Jewish experience may not diverge radically from the larger American Jewish template of opportunity and upward mobility. It is the same (in terms of seizing opportunity), just more so.

4) The Dark Side — Some have observed that the “sunshine” narrative of Los Angeles must be tempered by a healthy dose of the “noir.” According to that darker story, evoked by Mike Davis in “City of Quartz” and more recently in the film, “Crash,” Los Angeles’ veneer of opportunity and mobility barely conceal the barrenness of a vast urban wasteland, marked by anomie, isolation and a glaringly absent center. This “noir” account of the L.A. Jewish experience cannot be dismissed out of hand. It pushes us to think not just of the Hollywood studio bosses, but of the blacklisted writers accused of communist sympathies; not just of the conspicuously affluent, but of the invisible working-class poor; not just of the self-assured guardians of the faith, but of those who struggle to find anything meaningful in their lives as Jews.

Ranging between the narrative extremes of sunshine and noir, the Jews of Los Angeles make for one of the most intriguing and complex Jewish urban centers around. This is all the more remarkable given how understudied L.A. Jewry is. To say this is not to diminish in any way the pioneering labors of Rabbi William Kramer and Norton Stern, who did much to preserve the historical legacy of L.A. Jewry. Nor is to take credit away from groups like the Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly or the Jewish Historical Society of Southern California, which work to continue the work of Kramer and Stern.

Rather, it is to say that the last major monograph devoted to the history of Jewish Los Angeles was written 35 years ago by Max Vorspan and Lloyd Gartner. Their “History of the Jews of Los Angeles” (1970) covers a great deal of ground, especially in tracing the institutional history of the community over the course of its first century. But much more remains to be studied and written, especially since the city has grown and changed in dramatic ways. Scholars ranging from Deborah Dash Moore to Raphael Sonenshein have shed considerable light on one or another of the city’s Jewish history. But we need more.

A step in this direction will take place this weekend when leading scholars, community activists and political officials gather for a conference, “L.A. Jewry Then and Now,” to be held on consecutive days at the Skirball Cultural Center, the Autry National Center and the UCLA Center for Jewish Studies. At the heart of the deliberations will be two sets of key questions. First, how do L.A. Jews, in all their ethnic diversity and geographic dispersion, fit into the larger cultural and social mosaic of Los Angeles? In what ways is the Jewish experience different from and similar to the experience of other groups in this explosively multicultural city (Mexicans, Chinese, Koreans, Armenians, etc.)? A second set of questions is refracted through a broader national lens: What is the place of L.A. Jewry in the larger narrative of American Jewish history? Is L.A. Jewry unique or typical of the American Jewish experience?

Answers to these questions will, of necessity, be provisional. But they will set the stage for more systematic work over the coming years, work that will begin to fill large gaps not only in the history of the city of Los Angeles, but also in the history of the modern Jewish experience.

General historical overview of Afro-American population and churches in Los Angeles

Black in L. A. - The Vital Link

By Beverly Mateer Taylor

16th-century Spanish folktale about Queen Califa, ruler of an island inhabited by black Amazons living in caves full of gems, led the first Spanish explorers in search of this island called California. Since it’s only a folktale, this story doesn’t really qualify as the beginning of African American history in Los Angeles. The true story begins in February 1781, when 44 settlers founded “El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula” under Spanish rule. Half of these original pobladores — Antonio Mesa, Manuel Camero, Luis Quintero, Jose Moreno, their wives, and the wives of Jose Antonio Navarro and Basilio Rosas — had African ancestors.

By 1789, the pueblo of 139 inhabitants elected its first city council, to which Manuel Camero was elected. Descendants of these settlers were prominent in developing the Los Angeles area. Some, such as Andres Pico and Juan Francisco Reyes, acquired vast ranchos. Among those exercising considerable political and economic power were mayors Juan Francisco Reyes and Tiburcio Tapia. Pio Pico, the last governor of California under Mexican rule and the builder of Pico House, was a large landowner and businessman. Grandchildren of Luis Quintero included Eugene Biscailuz, who served as sheriff of Los Angeles, and Maria Rita Valdes Villa, whose 1838 land grant is now Beverly Hills.

The first African American known to live in Los Angeles was Thomas Fisher, a sailor captured by the Spanish when Captain Bouchard attacked Los Angeles. Little is known of him although he is believed to have played a role in the conquest of Los Angeles by American troops during the Mexican War. In 1822, a Joseph Vincent Lawrence settled in Los Angeles.

When American troops occupied Los Angeles in 1847, a few blacks accompanied them. One slave freed by an American officer was Peter Biggs, one of the more colorful characters of early Los Angeles. He set up business as the first barber in Los Angeles, but due to his high prices, was forced out of business when a Frenchman opened a shop nearby. California Statehood

American statehood in 1850 was a setback for blacks in Los Angeles and throughout the state. Slavery was not allowed, but neither was equality. During the first legislative session in 1850, statutes were enacted that denied them the rights to give evidence in court, to receive a public education, to homestead public lands, and to vote.

It took years of hard work for blacks to regain these rights. In 1863, the legislature restored the right to testify in court. Between 1872 and 1879, black children
gained some access to education, but the law proscribing African American children's right to a public education was not repealed until 1880.

Census records reported an increase in the African American population from 15 in 1850 to over 60 in 1860. Pioneer families who came during this decade included the Smarts, Owenses, Masons, Ballards, Greens, and Peppers. Their descendants were influential in the African American community into the 1940s.

Two who became wealthy through savvy real estate deals and were well known as philanthropists were Robert Owens and Biddy Mason. Owens came to Los Angeles in 1853 and, until his death in 1865, owned a successful livery and teamster business and invested in real estate. His son, Charles, is believed to have alerted the Los Angeles sheriff when Robert Marion Smith was preparing to leave for Texas, a slave state, with fourteen blacks. Smith was immediately served with a writ of habeas corpus, his "slaves" were taken into protective custody, and on Jan. 19, 1856, judge Benjamin Hayes of the United States District Court of Appeals ruled that they were not voluntarily accompanying Smith, and therefore must remain in California.

Robert Owens provided housing for four of them, Biddy Mason and her three daughters. Biddy's daughter Ellen married Charles Owens, and Biddy found work as a midwife and nurse. From an income of $2.50 a day, she saved $250 in ten years.

She then purchased two lots on South Spring Street between Third and Fourth streets. On one, she built the house she occupied until her death in 1891. The other she sold in 1875 for $1,500. Over, the years, her real estate deals enabled her to build an estate that was valued at $300,000 in 1909. She was generous to her family and to others in need. In 1871, she provided funding to establish the First African Methodist Episcopal Church. She is said to have obtained a certified copy of the court order granting her freedom, which she carried always.

Between 1860 and 1880, the African American population grew slowly—to 102 out of a total population of 11,000—due to a strong Confederate element in Southern California during the Civil War, racist comments in the Los Angeles News, and the state's refusal in 1869 to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment.

Los Angeles prevented African Americans from registering to vote until Louie Green led a successful battle resulting in immediate registration for the 1870 election by the 25 African American men eligible to vote.

The era of quick wealth between 1850 and 1870 was also a lawless one, in spite of a county sheriff and a city police officer. According to Homer F. Broome, Jr., African Americans managed to mind their own business and avoid the frequent lynchings that vigilante Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans inflicted on each other.

Between 1886 and 1889, a combination of a railroad rate war and aggressive advertising lured 39,000 people to Los Angeles, including at least 1,100 African Americans. Los Angeles became known as a good place for blacks. Housing was integrated, as people choose neighborhoods they liked and could afford. A strong sense of community began to emerge in 1890, and areas of African American concentration developed along Second Street between San Pedro and Alameda streets, and around Eighth Street and Maple Avenue.

From this time on, increasing numbers of African Americans came to the Golden State. The 1900 census counted 2,841 blacks; 1910, 7,599; 1920, 18,738; 1930, 30,893; and 1940, 75,209. As late as 1940, Los Angeles had one of only two significant African American communities in the eleven western states.

The Golden Era, 1890 to 1920

Los Angeles seemed to have almost outgrown its anti-black bias. The real estate mania had brought wealth to some families, and a small group of professionals, including, doctors, lawyers, editors, and ministers, were emerging as leaders in the black community. The building boom between 1902 and 1908 created a demand for black muscle, a need partly filled by Southerners driven off cotton farms by bell weevils and racial tensions. Los Angeles was one of the first communities in America to employ black firemen and policemen.

This small percentage of the total population had a surprisingly large share of the businesses. Among them were May's Ice Cream Parlor, Dawson Cafe, Golden West Hotel, Los Angeles Van and Storage, Shakelfords Furniture Store, Donnell's Blacksmith Shop, and J. B. Loring's real estate office. East First Street was a busy workingman's thoroughfare with Japanese, Russian Jewish, and black businesses side by side from Los Angeles Street to Central Avenue.

The community spread from First and Los Angeles streets to Boyle Heights and west of downtown along Jefferson Boulevard between Normandie and Western avenues. The Furlong Tract was built south of downtown, selling lots to black families for $750. It became a working-class area settled by people like the Guillebeaus, Postells, and Hixxes. Many were employed at such nearby plants as the Cottonseed Oil Mill, the Hercules Foundry, and the Pioneer Paper Co.

Businesses and services needed by a community of 200 homes opened, including three churches and a school. After the 1933 Long Beach earthquake damaged some of the homes, families began to leave the neighborhood. The remaining houses were torn down in 1942 and the Pueblo Del Rio housing project, designed by a team of talented designers including Paul Revere Williams, was built to house the defense industry workers. All that remains of the original Furlong Tract is Holmes School, built as the 51st Street School in 1910 and renamed in 1913 after a fire. It was the first all-black school in Los Angeles, except that the teachers and principal were all white initially.

The first African American teacher hired in Los Angeles, Mrs. Bessie Bruington Burke, joined the staff in 1911. In 1918 she became the principal at Holmes. She retired after 44 years service in the school district, most of them at Holmes.

Organizations such as the Los Angeles Forum, the Sojourner Truth Industrial Club, the Women's Day Nursery Assn., and the local branch of the NAACP began during this period. The Forum, a group of men from various black churches, worked on social issues from 1903 until 1942. The Sojourner Truth Club began in 1904 to protect the welfare of Negro women and provided Christian non-sectarian housing for single women for more than 84 years.

The Los Angeles Branch of the NAACP was formed in 1914 at the home of Drs. John and Vada Somerville by E. Burton Cerutti, Charles Alexander, John Shackelford, Betty Hill, Rev. Joseph Johnson, W. T. Cleghorn, and others.

Dr. Charles Edward Block served eight years as the first president. An early successful battle gained admittance of "colored students" to Los Angeles County Hospital's nursing school, once the Board of Supervisors was convinced that these students could have filled the desperate need for nurses during World War I if they had been admitted then.

Drs. John and Vada Watson Somerville had earlier fought their own integration battles as the first and second African American students at the USC School of Dentistry. Another USC dental graduate, Dr. Claude Hudson, served ten years as the second president of the local NAACP.

Many individuals—such as R. C. Owens, J. L. Edmonds, Charles Alexander, and Margaret Scott turned the fight against racism in the city into a collective rather
The Historical Development of Religion in Los Angeles: General Introductions

The 1920s saw the erosion of many gains. Activity by the Ku Klux Klan revived after World War I. Housing covenants with racial restrictions appeared in 1927.

Newspapers, such as John Niemore's California Eagle, and the Liberator, edited by J. L. Edmonds, reported news of the community, provided housing and job information, and advocated for African Americans. One early newspaper campaign was to stop businesses from charging blacks significantly higher prices in food and drink establishments.

When California Eagle editor Neimore, who had begun the paper in 1879, died in 1912, Charlotte Spears Bass became editor. Her husband, Joseph Blackburn Bass, was a partner in the business from their marriage in 1913 until his death in 1934. Mrs. Bass was a fearless advocate for her community, but she also recognized the need for a social page in the paper. She once pulled a gun from her desk and frightened off thugs sent by the KKK to intimidate her.

She kept the Eagle going until 1941, when she sold it to Loren Miller. Under all three editors, the paper was known for its political advocacy for equality and its fight against racial bigotry. Loren Miller sold the paper when he was appointed a municipal court judge in 1964, and within six months it failed due to poor management. The California Eagle Photograph Collection and the Charlotte Bass papers are available to researchers at the Southern California Library for Social Studies & Research.

Another long-running newspaper, the Los Angeles Sentinel, was founded by Leon Washington in 1933, and is still being published. His longest running campaign urged African Americans not to spend their money in places that would not hire them.

The first African American policeman, Robert William Stewart, was hired in 1886. By 1911, seven of the 505 sworn police personnel were black; by 1914, there were fourteen. These early police, black or white, were primarily chosen for their size, physical strength, physical stamina, and the ability to give and take physical abuse. Training consisted of a one-day orientation by a senior officer. Black officers were assigned to black neighborhoods, usually to foot patrol. In 1919, the first black policewoman, Georgia Robinson, was hired, followed by Lucile Shelton in 1925 and Juanita Edwards in 1928.

The first African American member of the Los Angeles Fire Department, George W. Bright, was hired in 1897. By 1902, he had attained the rank of lieutenant and the department was faced with a dilemma—segregate or allow a black to supervise white firemen. The department gathered up all the black firemen in the city and assigned them to Engine Company 30 under Bright's supervision. Fire Station 14 became all black in 1936. Civil service regulations were regularly violated to maintain the segregated system and retain captain as the highest rank open to African Americans.

Central Avenue, 1920s and '30s

The 1920s saw the erosion of many gains. Activity by the Ku Klux Klan revived after World War I. Housing covenants with racial restrictions appeared in 1927 and, with them, attempted evictions from many areas in the city. Central Avenue became the major African American business section as industrial development pushed businesses and residents further south.

More businesses and professional services opened along Central Avenue to fill needs that were denied blacks at white-owned businesses and offices.

Andrew J. Roberts sold his successful Los Angeles Van, Truck and Storage Co. to open the A. J. Roberts Funeral Home, which ran an apprenticeship program for morticians in addition to its other services. The Hudson-Ledell Building, designed by Paul Williams, was opened jointly by a medical doctor and a dentist in the '20s, and continued to house professional offices until World War II. Dunbar Hospital was opened by three black doctors in 1923. A pharmacy was opened by two pharmacists who had worked at the hospital.

Golden State Guarantee Fund Insurance Co. of Los Angeles was created in 1925 by Norman O. Houston, William Nickerson Jr., and George A. Beavers, to provide life insurance coverage for African Americans denied insurance by white owned firms. (The current company building on West Adams Boulevard, designed by Paul R. Williams, houses a significant collection of African American art.)

Social clubs, such as the Silver Fox Club and the Just for Fun Club, were formed, as was a literary group, the Phys-Art-Lit-Mo Club. The annual Lion Tamer's Ball was held for several years. The Golden West Lodge of the Benevolent and Paternal Order of Elks and the Prince Hall Free Masons were organized. The Marcus Garvey Universal Negro Improvement Assn. was active from 1921 to 1934. Among the leading figures of this era were Joseph and Charlotte Bass, J. D. Gordon, John Wesley Coleman, and W H. 'Pop' Sanders.

Black churches, such as the First AME [1871], [Wesley Chapel Methodist Church (1888)], the Second Baptist Church [prior to 1890 in East Los Angeles], St. John of God Catholic Church, and others, including many storefront churches, have always been a strong force in the African American community.

Built in 1924, the Lincoln Theatre became the leading venue for theater productions, music, films, and comedians on South Central Avenue. Jazz thrived in such clubs as Club Alabam, the Savoy, the Apex, and the Kentucky Club along Central Avenue.

Recreational opportunities were limited by whites-only policies at pools, beaches, parks, etc. Bruce's Beach, a popular black-owned resort in Manhattan Beach, was forced by officials and residents to close, and the Pacific Beach Club in Huntington Beach burned the day before it was to open. To fill this gap, the resort town of Val Verde was founded in the Santa Clarita Valley in 1924 by a group including real estate agent Sidney P. Dones, Charlotte Bass, community leader Hattie S. Baldwin, and Norman O. Houston. It soon became known as "the black Palm Springs," and prospered until the 1960s when once-segregated vacation spots throughout southern California were opened to everyone.

Hotel Sommerville was built by Dr. J. A. Sommerville in 1928 to fill a need for a good hotel for African Americans. The first national convention of the NAACP took place as soon as the hotel opened in 1928. After the crash of 1929, it was renamed the Dunbar Hotel by new owners. Many jazz notables, including Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie, frequented the hotel when they worked in nearby clubs. Dr. Sommerville rebuilt his fortune in the 1930s and entered politics. He was the first black delegate to the California Democratic National Convention (1936) and the first black appointed to the Los Angeles Police Commission (1949).

In the 1930s, prosperous African Americans, including actresses Louise Beavers, Butterfly McQueen, and Hattie McDaniel, lived in the West Adams district. An attempt by white homeowners to remove them and other black families from the neighborhood led to a U. S. Supreme Court decision in 1948 declaring housing covenants unenforceable. Within five years the covenants were outlawed.

The Citizens Protective League focused on fighting local displays of bigotry in hotels, cafes, clothing stores, etc. and the Independent Republic attempted to unite all voters of color in California. One result of this effort was the election of Frederick Roberts, a Republican, to the California Assembly in 1918. He was the first African American to hold a statewide office and represented his Los Angeles district, which included Watts, until 1934. He was unseated by Augustus Hawkins, a liberal Democrat, who held the seat until 1960 when he was elected to Congress from his Los Angeles district.

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Post World War II

Thousands of African Americans came from other states during the Depression and post-war period, resulting in Los Angeles becoming one of America’s major urban centers of black population. This tremendous surge of newcomers eroded the sense of community African Americans had before the war. Social problems, including segregation, were now viewed more as national problems and less as unique to Los Angeles.

In the late 1940s, Dr. H. Claude Hudson founded the Broadway Federal Savings to enable African Americans to obtain real estate loans. Under his son Elbert Hudson and his grandson Paul Claude Hudson, the business has continued to grow and is now publicly owned with multiple branches. All three men were also lawyers.

Another individual with a lasting impact on Los Angeles was Paul Revere Williams, first black member of the American Institute of Architects, who designed 3,000 residential, municipal, and commercial buildings, including the theme building at LAX, in a career that began in the 1920s and continued nearly until his death in 1980. To overcome the reaction of potential clients dismayed at the discovery of his race, he learned to sketch upside down so they could see their dream house on paper as described it to him. His many achievements have recently been detailed in a book by his granddaughter Karen Hudson.

Integration came slowly to the Los Angeles Police and Fire departments. As recently as the 1950s and 1960s, many African American sergeants studied law and went into legal careers because of a lack of promotional opportunities in the Police Department. Thomas Bradley, first African American mayor of Los Angeles, was one of them. In 1992, Willie Williams of Philadelphia became the first African American chief. Bernard Parks, promoted from within the department, replaced him in 1997. Ann Young became the first African American female captain in 2000.

By 1953, the NAACP was pressuring for equality in hiring, transfers, and promotions in the Los Angeles Fire Department. Politicians dragged their feet, and the media became involved, triggering a nasty fight. Black firefighters organized the Stentorians with the slogan, “We only fight the department on integration.” Firemen such as Wallace DeCur, who greeted his colleagues every morning knowing they would ignore him, and Reynald Lopez, who kept his cool when a “Whites Only” sign was hung on the kitchen door, eventually gained acceptance through their dignified persistence.

In 1956 all fire stations were finally integrated. Jim Stern became the first black battalion chief in 1968; he moved on to become chief of the Pasadena Fire Department, and was elected president of the International Assn. of Fire Chiefs.

Fire Station No. 30 was closed and now houses the African American Firefighter Museum, thanks to the work of Arnett Hartsfield, who kept detailed notes, clippings, and photos of the struggle. A roster of black firemen, 1897 to 1956, with service details, is on the museum’s website.

Postscript

Black history in Los Angeles from the days of Spanish and Mexican rule to 21st-century America is a complex maze of good times and bad. African American contributions to the development of the city have been—and continue to be—significant. The California African American Museum in Exposition Park and the A. C. Billbrew Library on El Segundo Boulevard are leaders among those who hold the keys to the whole story.

SOURCE: http://www.scgsgenealogy.com/esch-Black.htm

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AFRICAN AMERICANS IN GOLD RUSH CALIFORNIA

The status of blacks in California during the first decade of statehood indicated the precarious position of African Americans who sought freedom and opportunity in the West. Although only 1,000 blacks resided in California in 1850 out of a population of 175,000, they became the focus of intense legislative debate. In the account below historian Malcolm Edwards describes the debate which prompted 400 black Californians, ten percent of the state’s black population in 1858, to emigrate to Britain Columbia in that year.

As early as the autumn months of 1849 the proper position of black people in California had been debated long and heatedly by the constitutional convention at Monterey. San Francisco’s delegate had been instructed “by all honorable means to oppose any act, measure, provision, or ordinance that is calculated to further the introduction of domestic slavery into the territory of California” and they and their fellows agreed that slavery was unacceptable within the boundaries of the proposed state ....

Having disposed of the slavery question directly, the convention then moved to the critical question regarding the exclusion of ‘free persons of color’ from California... M.M. McCarver, born in Kentucky and arrived in Sacramento in 1848 urged the exclusion of all free persons of color and “to effectively prevent the owners of slaves from bringing them into this State for the purpose of setting them free”. McCarver’s logic, and that of many conventioneers, was that slaves freed by their masters solely to become indentured servants in the mines would constitute a threat to order “greater that slavery itself.”

The prejudice against free blacks expressed in the constitutional convention carried over into the first legislature and maintained momentum as the debate progressed. The state’s first governor, Peter Burnett, openly opposed...free negroes within California’s boundaries. The legislature, which gathered in 1850, was divided on the question.... Northern and Southern whites representing the mining districts, feared economic competition with alien or colored races and worked...without success for the exclusion of blacks. The majority was [opposed to] prohibition but promptly began to write statutes which humiliated,...restricted, and periled any blacks who chose to enter California.

By 1858 eight California legislatures had built an appallingly extensive body of discriminatory laws including: the prohibition of testimony in civil and criminal actions involving whites; the institution of poll and property taxes; the invalidation of marriages between whites and blacks or mulattoes; exclusion from the state homestead law; exclusion from jury eligibility; and the lapsing of legislation affecting free blacks’ rights under Fugitive Slave laws. In practical terms this meant that free blacks, and those brought in indenture to California during the late 1840s and early 1850s, lived a lean socio-political existence. In the account below historian Malcolm Edwards describes the debate which prompted 400 black Californians, ten percent of the state’s black population in 1858, to emigrate to British Columbia in that year.


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BIDDY MASON AND POST CIVIL WAR LOS ANGELES

Bridget "Biddy" Mason, born a slave in Georgia, became one of the first English-speaking African American settlers in Los Angeles when the city had fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. Here is a partial account of her life.

Nothing is left of the original homestead of Biddy Mason, the first black woman to own property in Los Angeles. In its place, at 331 South Spring Street, is the new ten story Broadway-Spring Center, primarily a parking structure. More than a mile away, close to the USC campus, an old church that Mason purchased in 1865 is currently the site of a new hotel. The First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Los Angeles, one hundred and eighteen years old, is a testament to the complexity of Mason's life, work, and impact on the city. Biddy Mason bought her land and built her house in 1866 in a town then so raw and new that the streets were trenches of mud or dust. Gas lamps were individually lit, one by one, every night, by a rider on horseback, illuminating a scant few blocks of humble houses in the bottom of a dark, sloping basin, now the valley of a billion lights.

Mason was born in 1818 in the state of Georgia and sold into slavery at eighteen. She walked across America in 1848 with the family who owned her and her sister—a Mississippi family who'd converted to Mormonism and were trekking west in caravans of wagons. They were a homeless people sloshing toward Zion, traveling with their slaves and stock and children in ox-carts loaded with everything they owned. Biddy thus became a western pioneer, a black slave caught up in a white religious pilgrimage. She had three children at the time, including the baby she carried in her arms. They walked from Mississippi to Paducah, Kentucky, to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Lincoln, Nebraska, and points less charted to the west, seven continuous months of walking, until eventually Biddy's party passed the valley of the Great Salt Lake in Utah where others settled permanently and went on to San Bernardino, arriving in 1851. But this Mormon family, named Smith, who owned Biddy and her sister and their children, didn't realize that California was a free state: "If you brought your slaves here, and they wanted to leave you, they could. That's exactly what Biddy wanted, but Smith was hoping to depart for Texas, taking his slaves along before anyone could stop him."

Biddy, however, had made friends with free blacks here, including Elizabeth Flake Rowan, Charles Owens, and his father, Robert Owens, who ran a flourishing stable on San Pedro Street. Owens got up a posse of vaqueros to rescue Biddy and her kin, slopping down on the Mormon camp in the Santa Monica mountains in the middle of the night. Biddy sued for freedom in court, won her papers in 1856, and moved her family in with the Owens. She was, at this time, thirty-eight years old.

Ten years after winning her freedom she had saved enough money to buy the Spring Street lot; she eventually built her own house there—the house in which the First African Methodist Church was born in 1871. In time she bought more land. Her grandsons were prosperous, in part because she gave them land to start a stable, and later she erected a two-story building. She became known for her good works. Before her death in 1891, she also became rich enough to know the joys of opening her hand and giving her wealth away.


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THE MASON LEGACY CONTINUES: ROBERT C. OWENS

The account below provides a brief description of Robert C. Owens, the most famous grandchild of Biddy Mason.

When Biddy Mason died in January 1891, she left a legacy of achievement and community service that was universally heralded. Her obituary in the Los Angeles Times read: "These...years have been filled with good works and we are sure she has been welcomed into the better land with the plaudit, 'well done!'"

Through the Afro-American community expanded in the late nineteenth century, the descendants of Robert Owens and Biddy Mason continued to exert great influence in the city until the coming of World War I. The families were united in 1856 when Charles Owens married Ellen Mason, Biddy's oldest daughter, a union that produced two children, Robert Curry in 1858 and Henry L. in 1860. Before his death in September 1882, Charles had continued the family tradition of acquisition, buying land on Olive Street and moving the Owens Family Stables to 1st and Main as the San Pedro Street property became too valuable to house horses.

Robert C. Owens, who the Los Angeles Times called the "richest colored man in Los Angeles," built upon the foundation of his ancestors and far surpassed their dreams in terms of wealth, political power and national repute. During his youth Owens, his brother and his mother attended J.B. Sanderson's school for blacks in Oakland. By the mid-1870s he worked as a ranch laborer for the Slauson family. Beginning in the 1880s, "R.C." tooled as a charcoal peddler, a railroad worker in San Pedro and drove the street sprinkler wagon for $1.00 per day. From this point, Owens managed the family holdings with great success. He purchased land throughout the city; an example of his skill is seen in a real estate purchase located near the original Mason homestead. In 1890 Owens purchased a lot on Spring Street between 7th and 8th for $7,200; when he sold the property in 1905 he earned a profit of $65,000. Owens and his family lived in regal elegance in one of the most beautiful homes in the city, located at 10th and Labanyo...

Owens...maintained a vision of California as a place of opportunity. [He said] "colored men with money to make even small purchases; who will work the soil; want to better their condition and enjoy every political right as American citizens should come to the golden West." While Owens did not urge "wholesale emigration of colored people to this section," he did believe that "a few hundred farm families" would find equal opportunity in the West. As a nationally known figure, friend of Booker T. Washington and patron of Tuskegee Institute, Owens' own words carried great weight in the Afro-American community.


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CENTRAL AVENUE: THE "PULSE" OF BLACK LOS ANGELES

In the account below historian Lonnie Bunch, III, describes Central Avenue, the center of black life in Los Angeles between World Wars I and II.

Central Avenue was in its heyday as the center of both the black business and residential communities. By 1920 the black population of Los Angeles had doubled from the 1910 level to 15,579. Unlike earlier migrations...black neighborhoods were unable to accommodate the influx. "Keep the neighborhood white" drives...eventually led to the overpopulation of the Central Avenue community by forcing all new arrivals into the area. Any discussion of the 1920s should begin...
with "The Avenue." The story of Central Avenue with its elegant neighborhoods, jazz clubs, business districts and trolley cars full of black faces has grown to mythic proportions. Some remember the "Avenue" as a miniature Harlem where musicians and literati gauged the community's pulse by day and transformed that energy into rhyme and music by night. Others recall with pride the offices of the black physicians and dentists, the storefronts of black businesses, and the fabled Dunbar Hotel. Many, however, have memories only of overcrowded homes and apartments, the underside of the Avenue...

By 1910 Central Avenue was the main thoroughfare of black Los Angeles, with the nucleus at 9th and Central, later moving south to 12th and Central. Soon "The Avenue" became an eclectic mix of stately homes representing the cream of black society, rentals and apartments that housed the new southern migrants, and the business and professional offices of the black middle class. In essence, poverty and prosperity existed side by side on Central Avenue.

The black businesses in the Central Avenue corridor were a continuing source of pride for black Angelinos. As one walked from 12th Street a myriad of businesses appeared...the offices of the California Eagle, the Lincoln Theater, the Kentucky Club, Blodgett Motors (with advertisements claiming "you can't go wrong with an Essex"), the Elks Auditorium...and the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company were just a few of the many enterprises that graced the street. Just off the avenue was the 28th Street YMCA, the site of political meetings, social gatherings, as well as the leading organization working with Negro youth in the city. Nearby...between Hooper and Central Avenues, the Dunbar Hospital...ministered to the needs of the community until World War II. Liberty Savings and Loan [was] located near 25th and Central from its inception in 1924 until it ceased operation in 1961... The Hudson-Liddell Building at 41st and Central...was designed by Paul Williams... Williams, the preeminent black architect, had already designed...the 28th Street YMCA, the Hollywood YMCA and the Second Baptist Church.

But the jewel of Central Avenue was the Hotel Somerville, later renamed the Dunbar Hotel. One of the most important landmarks in Los Angeles, it was more than just a resort for weary travelers of color. The lobby, restaurant and conference room became the central meeting place of black Angelinos, hosting a wide range of social and community events. It was truly the symbol of black achievement in the city. The hotel was the creation of John Somerville, a dentist in Los Angeles... Somerville and his wife, Vada were both graduates of the School of Dentistry of the University of Southern California and active participants in the affairs of the black community for over fifty years.

Central Avenue was also home to a musical and literary movement that followed the patterns of the Harlem Renaissance, though on a much smaller scale... Literati from Langston Hughes to native son Arna Bontemps periodically spent time in the ever enlarging artist colony. Poetry readings by local and nationally known writers became standard Sunday fare at the 28th Street YMCA...

The plethora of musical establishments, jazz dens and nightclubs...made Central Avenue the entertainment center of the city... Nightclubs such as the Kentucky Club, the Club Alabam, the Savoy at 55th and Central...the Apex at 4015 Central...all provided opportunity for black musicians to develop a following... Central Avenue was the home to many dreams...the hub of black life.


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BLACK HOLLYWOOD IN THE 1920s

Few Americans realize that African American actors have been a minor presence in Hollywood movies since the beginning of the industry in the 1890s. Fewer still know that their image on the big screen deteriorated in the second decade of the 20th Century into demeaning roles as servants or "natives," setting a pattern which would last until the 1960s. In the following vignette film historian Thomas Cripps describes the 1920s.

From the earliest days race was steeped into every corner of [Hollywood] life, from the "nigger" in the scenario marginal notes written for the sound version of The Birth of a Nation to the simplistic "how-to-write-for-the-movies" books that taught you how to answer the racial code. Some merely warned their readers to "stay away from censorable themes," while other defined the traits of racial stereotypes. One of the earliest lessons in comedy writing appeared in 1913 and featured a "shiftless, worthless, fat negro" whose eventual good fortune bring him quantities of chicken, pork chops, melons, and "other things dear to a darky's heart..." The absence of black opinion, except for an occasional writer such as Wallace Thurman in the early 1930s, allowed whites a smug confidence in the accuracy of their views..... Along with incidental racism, and in part the cause of it, Hollywood nurtured a Southern mystique. Many blacks and whites had drifted from the South to California and found work in the studios, and their beliefs colored life in the movie colony.

Between the wars there was little overt interracial hostility--nothing to bring racial prejudice to a conscious level. Liberals were punctilious toward the feelings of minorities; there were even acts of personal sacrifice and courage, but they effected no general changes. Ronald Reagan's father, for example, forbade his children to see The Birth of a Nation and slept in his car rather than stay in anti-Semitic hotels. Fred Astaire proudly boasted of appearing on the same vaudeville card with Bill Robinson.... More revealing of racial postures was the point at which art and life became one: the publicity campaign for MGM's Trader Horn in 1929. The small company on location in Africa had been beset by misfortune, the rumored death of an actress, and disappointing footage, so that for retakes and promotional uses they brought Mutia Omooloo, a young African who had given a sensitive performance in the movie, back to California. From his arrival onward his every wish was treated as a savage eccentricity. Segregated on the studio lot, he was made to seem fey because of his Islamic kosher demands, his sightseeing and wandering on Central Avenue, and shopping in five-and-tens. Feminine companions for him became the assignment of a studio toady who doubled as a pimp. Misunderstandings up and down the avenue resulted in bickering and violence, ending in a wild chase through Culver City; a confrontation with Irving Thalberg, the head of production; hospitalization and eventual escape; down to the very night of the premiere at Grauman's Chinese Theater, complete with Africans in loincloths in the lobby. There, even his balking at the segregation of the women he escorted was taken as no more than African orneriness. At no time was he taken seriously. The studio research department even forgot the names of the tribes, eventually labeling them "Gibbons" and "Joconeyes" after Cedric Gibbons and J.J. Cohn, two studio executives.

Blacks appearing Hollywood from deep down in the (Los Angeles) basin knew the social structure of the movie colony was unfair and corrupt, and yet the ills of the Afro-American could not be traced directly to it.... Furthermore, divisive elements within the ghetto contributed to the persistence of the racial system. Leftovers encouraged by the growth of a stratified black society, which divided black attention away from protest against discriminatory practices. Central Avenue north of Watts in the 1920s throbbed with life: dense, varied, sought after by white habitues of "hot-colored" clubs.... It seemed the servants of the stars came alive only in the jazzy sessions of Sebastian's Cotton Club in Culver City. Simultaneously the growing...ghetto included the families of the Beavers, the McNelis, and the Dandridge--the future black stars... Black papers reported the gossip of Twelfth and Central as though it were Hollywood and Vine, and generally supported the aspirations of the few Negroes in the studios. More automobiles, crowded street corners, new young stars such as Caroleynne Snowden at the Cotton Club, Stepin Fetchit flaunting his wealth, feeding the love-hate black images for him, angry complaints that Hollywood distorted black identity in such movies as Cecil B. DeMille's The Ten Commandments--all contributed to the tempo of the black West Coast.

Yet beneath the vibrant activity and black camaraderie there was a vague uneasiness. Movie roles were only resumptions of old Southern roles. Blacks were still dependent upon whites for jobs, status, and security. To do a sixty-eight weeks at the Cotton Club, win a featured role in Old Kentucky...attend cast parties,
have a dressing room on the MGM lot, a roadster and a maid, and best of all, a five year contract was still, at bottom, to be beholden to powerful white men and to be replaceable by any one of the sleek young "foxes" in the chorus line. That was Carolyne Snowden's story but it could have been the life of any black actress in Hollywood.

Success meant puffed press releases to disguise the wide spaces between jobs. It meant a hard journey from Omaha for Julia Hudlin, who saw an old Lincoln movie and quit her job as a social worker for a try at Hollywood. After six years of struggle she became a personal maid to the movie star Leatrice Joy, and later "secretary" to Dolores Del Rio. Other women, like Anita Thompson, a young black New Yorker who shocked her social set by taking a fling at show business, chose to stop short and leave Los Angeles before falling into the slough of servile life. Mildred Washington survived as a "Creole Cutie" in Sebastian's between roles in Uncle Tom's Cabin and In Old Kentucky. Even good performances brought few new roles, and many clung to their menial jobs or to ghetto hustling. Even at their best, black careers ended with no more than a friendly obituary praising a long succession of "mammy" roles.

Rather than make the rounds of the casting offices and agents, Negroes clustered in a little cadre along Central Avenue from the Dunbar Hotel...northward toward the Lincoln Theater and toward Hollywood. Studio scouts scanned the avenue looking for likely specimens and invited the most physical types to "cattle calls"--mass invitations to try out for spots in the coveys of natives in jungle movies. Between [acting] jobs they supported themselves through regular jobs with City of Los Angeles agencies such as the highway or the water department. Like longshoremen at the morning shapeup, they hung on the corners at the Dunbar and Smith's drugstore, to see and to be seen. Only Stepin Fetchit and a few other contract players remained agents.

Because casting directors preferred types rather than talent, success was measured in the number of hours, days, or weeks rather than in the quality of roles. Therefore the black actor counted himself luck to pick up his $3.50 per day as an extra, and aspired to no more than that. Indeed, a speaking part could easily lead only to another "cattle call" rather than an interview for a substantive role... Not that whites were not sometimes defeated by the system; rather, blacks never won... Segregation saw to that...

[Moreover] Stepin Fetchit and the lesser players together, consciously or not, acted both as a conservative force and as a palliative for black rage. Their foolish public roles and conspicuous consumption made them appear richer and more powerful than they really were, so black adored them even when they may have winked at the Hunkeys' roles that paid the bills. Fetchit cruised Central Avenue in his big car with 'Fox Contract Player' lettered on its side, claiming as his title "The King of Central Avenue." Because of his professional needs, Fetchit never revealed any inner dignity to whites for fear of undermining his public image. Only with black friends did he reveal the pleasure derived from his season ticket to the Hollywood Bowl symphony series. To a white reporter he hewed to type, insisting, 'If you put anything Ah says in the papah, it might be wise to kind of transpose it into my dialeck.' Except for Spencer Williams, who wrote stereotyped scenarios of Octavus Roy Cohen stories at Christy Studios, there was no black voice inside the studios to deny the universal nature of Fetchit's type.


***

In the period from 1920 to 1960, African Americans from the Southeast U.S. arrived in Los Angeles and its population grew 15 times. Since 1990, the African American population dropped in half as its middle class relocated to the suburbs, notably the Antelope Valley and Inland Empire and Latinos have moved into the once predominantly African American district of South-Central Los Angeles. African Americans still remain predominant in some portions of the city, including Hyde Park, Crenshaw District, Leimert Park, and Baldwin Hills (as well as neighboring View Park-Windsor Hills and Ladera Heights) which is considered to be one of the wealthiest majority-black neighborhoods in the United States. Los Angeles still has the largest African American community of any city in the western United States.

***


Wesley Chapel, organized in 1888, was the first Negro [Methodist] church in the Southern California Conference. In 1900 the Conference had become aware of the growing Negro population and felt a definite responsibility for these people. The quality of leadership among them was capable, as evidenced by the ultimate elevation of a Conference member, Dr. Alexander P. Shaw, to the episcopacy. The progress was relatively slow, but by Unification [in 1939], there were five Negro churches in the Conference: Hamilton, Shaw Chapel, Wesley Chapel, Scott and Las Vegas Zion. Hamilton [Methodist], formerly a Caucasian church, was sold to a new Negro congregation when the Caucasians moved out of the neighborhood. The others were Negro churches from the beginning, located in Negro sections. There were no integrated churches before Unification, although a few churches had one or two Negro members. This was true, for example, of the First Methodist Church in Santa Monica.

***

Alexander Preston Shaw was notable as an African American Pastor, Editor, and Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church and The Methodist Church. He was elected and consecrated to the Episcopacy in 1936. Bishop Shaw held the distinction of being the first African American Bishop of The Methodist Church (at the age of 71) to preside full-time over a predominantly white Annual Conference: the Southern California-Arizona Conference (in 1950, coincidentally the 100th annual meeting of this body), which met that year at the University of Redlands. The Rev. Shaw was pastor of the Wesley Chapel Methodist Church [founded in 1888] in Los Angeles from 1917 to 1931. He also was a member of the 1928 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North).


***

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC), was formed in 1897 by Charles Harrison Mason (1866-1961), who was expelled from his Baptist church in the late 19th century. Mason was licensed to preach by Mt. Gale Missionary Baptist Church of Preston, Arkansas. He entered Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock in 1893, but soon became dissatisfied and withdrew.

He became connected with Charles Price Jones of Jackson, Mississippi, J. A. Jeter, of Little Rock, Arkansas, and W. S. Pleasant of Hazelhurst, Mississippi during the Holiness movement of the late 19th century. As a result of these one of holiness revivals breaking out in Jackson, Mississippi, a new church, eventually called the Church of God, was formed. The first convocation called by these Holiness individuals was held in 1897 at the Mt. Helm Missionary Baptist Church in
Jackson, MS.

In 1906, Mason, Jeter, and D. J. Young were appointed as a committee by Jones to investigate reports of a revival in Los Angeles, conducted by the itinerant preacher, William J. Seymour. Mason's visit to what is today called The Azusa Street Revival changed the direction of his newly formed Holiness COGIC church. Upon his return to Tennessee from the Azusa Street Revival, Mason began teaching the Pentecostal message he experienced. However, Jeter and Jones rejected Mason's teaching, resulting in a mutual separation of these Holiness men. Jones continued to lead his COGIC adherents as a Holiness church, changing the name in 1915 to the Church of Christ, Holiness (USA). Mason, however, called a conference in Memphis, Tennessee, and reorganized the Church of God in Christ as a Holiness Pentecostal body.

The Church of God in Christ, Inc., experienced phenomenal growth since its inception, and is generally acknowledged to be the largest African-American and Pentecostal body in the United States, with 5,799,875 members. Worldwide membership is estimated to be 7 million in 15,300 churches. The COGIC organization is overseen by a 12-person general board. These are bishops chosen to oversee the national and international work of the church. Upon the death of Presiding Bishop Gilbert Earl Patterson, the founding pastor of the Memphis, Tennessee Temple of Deliverance Church of God in Christ, in March 2007, Bishop Charles E. Blake, pastor of the largest local church within COGIC, the Los-Angeles-based West Angeles Church of God in Christ, succeeded Bishop Patterson as presiding bishop in April 2007.


* * *

Mitchell, Pablo
To Live and Learn from L.A.
Reviews in American History - Volume 32, Number 4, December 2004, pp. 545-551


"'Los Angeles hurt me as much racially as any city I have ever known,' Chester Himes wrote of his experiences in Los Angeles in the 1940s, 'much more than any city I remember from the South' (p. 54). Himes's heartbreaking admission is at the core of Josh Sides's illuminating and pointed L.A. City Limits. While many African Americans in the middle decades of the twentieth century found much to celebrate in the relative personal freedoms and job opportunities available to them in Los Angeles, racial exclusion and violence—from police abuse to housing and employment discrimination to unequal schools—remained an insidious force in the lives of most black Angelenos. This maddening paradox was, according to Sides, due in large measure to the distinctive qualities of Los Angeles. Placing Los Angeles in a national context, Sides argues that three broad characteristics, 'its diverse racial composition, its dynamic economic growth, and its dispersive spatial arrangements,' distinguished the city from its urban counterparts throughout twentieth-century America (p. 6). First, unlike the largely binary racial dynamics in most cities in the East and Midwest, 'successive waves of Latin American, Asian, and European immigrants' joined African Americans in Los Angeles over the course of the twentieth century, leading to a racial heterogeneity unprecedented in its size and scope (p. 6). Second, the city experienced relatively novel forms of industrial growth, led by the rise of the...

* * *

The Shifting Grounds of Race:
Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles
Scott Kurashige

352 pp. | 6 x 9 | 20 halftones. 3 tables. Princeton University Press

Los Angeles has attracted intense attention as a 'world city' characterized by multiculturalism and globalization. Yet, little is known about the historical transformation of a place whose leaders proudly proclaimed themselves white supremacists less than a century ago. In The Shifting Grounds of Race, Scott Kurashige highlights the role African Americans and Japanese Americans played in the social and political struggles that remade twentieth-century Los Angeles.

Linking paradigmatic events like Japanese American internment and the Black civil rights movement, Kurashige transcends the usual 'black/white' dichotomy to explore the multiethnic dimensions of segregation and integration. Racism and sprawl shaped the dominant image of Los Angeles as a 'white city.' But they simultaneously fostered a shared oppositional consciousness among Black and Japanese Americans living as neighbors within diverse urban communities.

Kurashige demonstrates why African Americans and Japanese Americans joined forces in the battle against discrimination and why the trajectories of the two groups diverged. Connecting local developments to national and international concerns, he reveals how critical shifts in postwar politics were shaped by a multiracial discourse promoting the acceptance of Japanese Americans as a 'model minority' while binding African Americans to the social ills underlying the 1965 Watts Rebellion. Multicultural Los Angeles ultimately encompassed both the new prosperity arising from transpacific commerce and the enduring problem of race and class divisions.

This extraordinarily ambitious book adds new depth and complexity to our understanding of the 'urban crisis' and offers a window into America's multiethnic future.

Scott Kurashige is associate professor at the University of Michigan, where he teaches Asian/Pacific American history and U.S. urban history.

Endorsement:
'By offering a comparative and relational history of African Americans and Japanese Americans in Los Angeles and their respective struggles against racial segregation, Scott Kurashige extends our historical knowledge about race relations and civil rights to the West. Indeed, he shows just how many of the multiracial questions that vex us today were prefigured in Los Angeles in the early and middle twentieth century.'—Mae Ngai, author of Impossible Subjects
**West Angeles Church of God in Christ (COGIC)**, located in Los Angeles, was founded in the early 1960s and the first sanctuary was located on Adams Boulevard, near Interstate 10 (known locally as the Santa Monica Freeway). In 1969, Charles E. Blake, a son of a pastor and a native of Little Rock, Arkansas, took over as the pastor of West Angeles.

Under Blake's leadership, the church has grown from 40 members in 1969 to over 20,000 members in 2006. The sanctuary has moved twice, first to a 1,000-seat facility (today called the North Campus) located at 3045 Crenshaw Boulevard, and then to the present structure, the 5,000-seat West Angeles Cathedral at 3600 Crenshaw Boulevard. The Cathedral was dedicated in 1999.

Today, Blake is a bishop within the COGIC and is a jurisdictional head within the national organization. He is also the co-founder of Save Africa's Children, a charity that raises money and awareness for AIDS victims in Africa.

"West A" is known for both its influential pastor and for its celebrity members, which include Magic Johnson, Denzel Washington, Stevie Wonder, and Angela Bassett.


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The **Second Baptist Church**, an Afro-American congregation, was established prior to 1890 in East Los Angeles (History of Los Angeles County: [http://cali-fies.biofiles.us/1A1889-301-401.pdf](http://cali-fies.biofiles.us/1A1889-301-401.pdf)).

Lorn S. Foster, Ph.D., Charles and Henrietta Johnson Detoy Professor of American Government and Professor of Politics, Pomona College. My current project is: "Black Migration to Los Angeles, 1910-1950: the Role of the Black Church in Social Mobility." This is a study of eight black churches in Los Angeles and how they helped to shape the secular life of blacks in Los Angeles.

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(American Baptist Churches in the USA, formerly known as the Northern Baptist Convention).

As in other parts of the country, so in Southern California, the relationship between White and Negro Baptists has become more difficult in recent years. This difficulty may well be the prelude to better things, but the present difficulty is very real. **In 1920 there were 35 Negro Baptist churches affiliated with the Western Baptist Association, representing 3,058 members.** The State Convention was giving some financial help both through individual churches and in partial support of a missionary, Dr. W. R. Carter. Help was never sufficient. At the 1920 Convention, Dr. Carter "appealed to the white brethren to befriend the Negroes of the state. Those thousands cannot help themselves." Conditions had not improved much in 1936.

"Our Negro population represents a section of our own American population of between 75,000 and 100,000. This group is the most earnest, self-denying, and challenging of all the groups in the city, not excepting our white American English-speaking population. According to their population and needs, they are receiving less missionary assistance than any other group. **There are 35 Negro [Baptist] churches in Los Angeles, none of them receiving assistance to pay pastors' salaries.** The Los Angeles Baptist City Mission Society is making strenuous efforts to assist these wonderful people in improving their church buildings and equipment. Like all our groups, our Negro friends need assistance in improving their leadership and church organizations. By special gift, the Southern California Baptist State Convention and the Los Angeles Baptist City Mission Society are able to cooperate in a plan to help these pressing needs."

State secretary Kepner reporte to the annual Convention in 1955:

"We have a fine relationship with the Western Baptist State Convention of California [composed of Afro-American churches]. Many of them have a salary of less than $100 per month and no good place to worship God. I suggest we appoint a committee to work with the Western Baptist State Convention to advise that some of the Churches for New Frontiers funds be used to build churches for the Western Baptist State Convention and also to supplement salaries."

Even though more financial assistance would have been helpful, much more was needed. Once segregation was allowed to establish itself, no easy answers were possible. Not only white apathy and prejudice but Negro failings also must be taken into account. Negro leadership has been jealous of its prerogatives. A deep gulf of misunderstanding and suspicion has separated Baptists of different colors. After these many years, attempts at rapprochement are met with many frustrations and disappointments on both sides.

Although deep-rooted prejudice is present in every white church and appears to be dominant in some, the record of the Convention is mixed.

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**Abyssinia Baptist Church** was founded in December 1936 and named by the late Founder and Pastor Dr. L. D. Stevens. This church has an historical name, because the name Abyssinia originally came from a land in Africa, a country called Abyssinia. Its name is the former name of the country known as Ethiopia.

Abyssinia Baptist Church  
4417 Ascot Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90031

Dr. Stevens was also the Founder and Organizer of the Baptist Ministers Wives Union and served as President of the Baptist Ministers Conference in Los Angeles, California.

The former Pastors of Abyssinia Baptist Church are as follows: 1. Dr. L. D. Stevens, 2. Rev. Meadows, 3. Rev. T. W. Grinnage and 4. Rev. Rabb.
Today (2006), Dr. Clifford Harris serves as our pastor and the director and instructor of the Sunday School Bible Expositor of the Baptist Ministers Conference of over 400 pastors in Los Angeles.

Our church is located in South Central Los Angeles, which has become largely a Spanish-speaking community. Pastor Harris has studied the Spanish language and is well known in Los Angeles as a Spanish Instructor.

Dr. Harris has a love for teaching the Spanish language to reach the Spanish-speaking community and businesses for Christ.

For more than 50 years Abyssinia Baptist Church has been affiliated with the Los Angeles District Association and the Western Baptist State Convention of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc.

Abyssinia Baptist Church is a church on the move for Jesus Christ, and a church with a sure foundation. Under the administration of Dr. Stevens and Pastor Clifford Harris, Abyssinia has been honored to Fellowship with well-known churches and pastors.

Victory Baptist Church  
The late Rev. Arthur Atlas Peters  
Los Angeles, CA.

Morning Star Baptist Church  
The late Dr. Perry C. Ellis  
Los Angeles, CA.

Little Zion Baptist Church  
Rev. Jerome Fisher  
Compton, CA.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
The late Dr. Edward V. Hill Sr.  
Los Angeles, CA.

Southside Bethel Baptist Church  
The late Dr. Elliott Brown  
Los Angeles, CA.

Mount Corinth Missionary Baptist Church  
Rev. A. Louis Patterson, Jr.  
Houston, Texas

Greater Fountain of Life Missionary Baptist Church  
Dr. Monroe E. Nunley  
Los Angeles, CA.

SOURCE:  http://abyssinia4417.org/Churchhistory.html

General historical overview of Hispanic immigration and churches in Los Angeles


Overview: This book describes the patterns of Mexican immigration, urbanization and assimilation in the Southwest in general, and in Southern California in particular. It gives an overview of the growth and development of the Hispanic (predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American) population of Los Angeles County, which is the specific setting for describing and analyzing the growth and development of Hispanic Protestant churches and their respective denominations.

Specifically, this study examines the historical origins of the Spanish-speaking Protestant churches, analyzes their growth patterns, evaluates their present problems in historical perspective, and seeks to determine the direction that the local congregations are now moving and to raise questions about the direction towards which they should be moving. It is hoped that denominational leaders, pastors and laymen in the Spanish-speaking churches, as well as key leaders in the Ango-American churches, will be stimulated to re-evaluate the growth history of Hispanic churches, to define their strengths and weaknesses in the light of the Christian Church's ministry of reconciliation in the world, and to set new priorities for the Hispanic Church so that revitalization and renewal will take place, thus enabling the local congregation to become an effective agent of God's reconciliation in their local communities.


The Appendices include a Directory of Hispanic Churches in Los Angeles and Orange Counties in 1972, with names and addresses for 227 Spanish-speaking churches. In 1932, there were only 30 known Hispanic churches in the greater Los Angeles area.

* * *

SOURCE: http://abyssinia4417.org/Churchhistory.html
The following table is taken from Appendix I of this study; translation by Clifton L. Holland.

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF HISPANIC WORK IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: A CHRONOLOGY OF BEGINNINGS**

Compiled by Clifton L. Holland

March 16, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DENOMINATION/FIRST MISSIONS OR CHURCHES/FOUNDER</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Church in the USA:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pasadena Mexican Mission, William C. Mosher</td>
<td>Pasadena</td>
<td>1875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- First Mexican Presbyterian Church</td>
<td></td>
<td>1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Los Nitos Mexican Mission, C. Bransby/A. Diaz</td>
<td>Whittier</td>
<td>1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Las Olivas Mexican Mission, Bransby/Diaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>1880s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1st Mexican Pres. Church, A. Moss Merwin</td>
<td></td>
<td>1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Azusa/Irwindale Mexican Church, A. Moss Merwin (became El Divino Salvador, 1941)</td>
<td>Irwindale</td>
<td>1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- San Gabriel Mexican Church, Antonio Diaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Iglesia Presbiteriana El Buen Pastor, Merwin</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- First Mexican Presbyterian Church, Juan Guerrero</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Riverside Mexican (became Casa Blanca, 1922)</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Azusa Mexican Pres. Church (El Buen Pastor)</td>
<td>Azusa</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Note: by 1930, a total of 20 churches and missions existed]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Methodist Episcopal Church, North (now United Methodist Church): |       |      |
|                                                               |       |      |
|    - Fort St. Church/Mexican Mission, Antonio Diaz           | Los Angeles | 1879 |
|    - Santa Barbara Mexican Mission                           | Santa Barbara | 1881 |
|    - Grace Methodist Church/Mexican Mission, Limbs/Whitson  | Los Angeles | 1898 |
|    - Missions established in Redlands, Riverside & San Diego/So. Calif. | Los Angeles | 1900 |
|    - Pasadena Mexican Mission, Oliver C. Laizure             | Pasadena | 1897 |
|    - Bloom St. Mexican Mission, V. McCombs & E. Narro       | Los Angeles | 1910 |
|        (became First Mexican Methodist Church, 1914; Became Plaza Methodist Church, 1917) |       |      |
|        [Note: by 1920, when the "Latin American Mission" was organized, there were 21 circuits; by 1929, there were 29.] |       |      |

| Congregational Church (now United Church of Christ):         |       |      |
|                                                               |       |      |
|    - Mexican Congregational Church, Alden Case               | Pomona | 1897 |
|    - Mexican Congregational Church, Alden Case/Blissell      | Chino | 1906 |
|    - Mexican Congregational Church                           | Barstow | 1910s|

| Northern Baptist Convention (now American Baptist Churches in USA): |       |      |
|                                                               |       |      |
|    - Santa Barbara Mexican Mission, Conrad Valdivia          | Santa Barbara | 1901 |
|    - Oxnard Mexican Mission, Conrad Valdivia                 | Oxnard | 1903 |
|    - Calvary Baptist Church, Mexican Mission                 | East L.A. | 1903 |
|        (now, Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana, 1912)         |       |      |
|    - Bandini Mission/Garret Street Baptist Church            | East L.A. | 1913 |
|    - Lorena Heights Mission                                  | East L.A. | 1923 |
|        [Note: by 1940, 71 churches and missions had been started, but only 30 still existed at that time.] |       |      |

| General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists:                |       |      |
|                                                               |       |      |
|    - Boyle Heights Mission, Juan Robles (now, Boyle Heights Adventist Church, 1929) | East L.A. | 1905 |
|    - Mexican Missions formed in: Van Nuys, Pasadena & Watts  | L.A./CO | 1920s|
|    - Belvedere Mission                                       | East L.A. | 1932 |

| Church of the Nazarene:                                     |       |      |
|                                                               |       |      |
|    - Primera Iglesia del Nazareno, Bunker Hill              | Los Angeles | 1910 |
|    - Iglesia del Nazareno                                   | Pasadena | 1930 |
|    - Iglesia del Nazareno                                   | Ontario | by 1930 |
|    - Iglesia del Nazareno                                   | San Diego | 1930 |
|    - Iglesia del Nazareno                                   | Santa Monica | 1930s|
|    - Iglesia del Nazareno                                   | San Fernando | 1900s|
|    - Iglesia del Nazareno                                   | Pomona | 1930 |
|    - Iglesia del Nazareno                                   | Boyle Heights | East L.A. | 1930s|
### Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Jesus Christ:  
- Spanish Apostolic Faith Mission, Los Angeles 1912  
- (No. Hill Street, 1914; Juan Navarro)  
- (Angeles & Aliso Sts., 1917; Francisco F. Llorente)  
- Watts Apostolic Assembly, Vicente Garcia, So. L.A. 1918  
- Oxnard Apostolic Assembly, Oxnard 1918  
- El Río Apostolic Assembly, El Río 1918  
- San Bernardino Apostolic Assembly, San Bernardino 1918  
- Riverside Apostolic Assembly, Riverside 1918  

[Note: by 1925, 15 churches had been organized.]

### Friends Annual Meeting/Quakers:  
- Jimtown Mission, Enrique Cobos, Whittier 1915  
- (now Pico Rivera Friends Church)

### Free Methodist Church:  
- Solitello Street Mission/No. Main Street Church, Los Angeles 1917  
- (now First Mexican Free Methodist Church)  
- Iglesia Metodista Libre Mexicana, Chino 1918  
- Terminal Island Mission, San Pedro 1920  
- Palo Verde Mission, East L.A. by 1932  
- Maravilla Park Free Methodist, East L.A. by 1932

### Assemblies of God, Pacific Latin American District (PLAD):  
- Plaza Olvera Mission, Alice Luce, East L.A. 1918  
- (now, Iglesia El Aposento Alto; joined PLAD, 1938)  
- Iglesia El Sendero de la Cruz, Francisco Nevárez, Mission, 1922; affiliated with PLAD, 1938)  
- Iglesia La Puerta Abierta, East L.A. 1934  
- Asambleas de Dios, Stanton 1940  

[Note: by 1940, only four churches had been organized.]

### Latin American Council of Christian Churches (CLADIC):  
- Iglesia de Bethel-Belvedere, Francisco Olazábal, East L.A. 1923  
- Templo Bethel-El Monte, El Monte 1926  
- Templo Bethel-Watts, Francisco Olazábal, So. L.A. 1928  
- Iglesia Bethel-San Gabriel, San Gabriel 1930  
- Templo Belén, Guadalupe Armendariz, Azusa 1933  
- Iglesia El Salvador (Mission, 1933), Lynwood 1934  
- Templo de Belén, Lago District (mission, 1929), East L.A. 1935  
- (Founded by Manuel O. Vásquez)  
- Iglesia Evangélica de CLADIC, Tomás Perea, East L.A. 1939  
- El Tabernáculo Central, Lic. Melquiades Almanza, San Pedro 1939  
- Iglesia El Buen Samaritano, Frank Flores, Pico Rivera 1940  

[Note: by 1960, 14 churches existed.]

### International Church of Foursquare Gospel:  
- Misión Mexicana McPherson, Antonio Gamboa, East L.A. 1929  
- (now Iglesia El Buen Pastor, independent)  
- Pan American Foursquare Church, East L.A. 1930s  
- Boyle Heights Foursquare Church, Eduardo Mata, East L.A. 1949

### Church of God (Anderson, IN):  
- Belvedere Church of God, A.T. Maciel, Los Angeles 1931

### The Salvation Army:  
- Belvedere Garden Corps., Los Angeles 1933

### Southern Baptist Convention:  
- Primera Iglesia Bautista del Sur, Jesús Rios, Los Angeles 1949  
- Iglesia Bautista El Camino, Carlos Carreón, Los Angeles 1953

### Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA:  
- East Los Angeles Parish, East L.A. 1950s

### Conservative Baptist Association:  
- Jimtown Mission, George Bowman, Whittier 1953  
- (now, Carnerita Baptist Church, Norwalk)  
- Fullerton Mission, Fullerton 1962  
- Hawaiian Gardens Mission, Hawaiian Gardens 1963  
- First Baptist Church of Commerce, Commerce 1964

### Church of Christ:  
- Los Angeles 1950s

### Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod:  
- La Santa Cruz Lutheran Church, Los Angeles 1957

### Church of God (Cleveland, TN):  
- First Spanish Church of God, Belvedere, Los Angeles 1960s  
- Boyle Heights Church of God, Los Angeles 1960s  
- Montebello Church of God, Montebello 1960s
In 1985-1986, the Hispanic Association for Theological Education (AHET) sponsored a Hispanic Church Growth Survey of Southern California, which was conducted by Mr. Lou Cordova of the Institute of Latin American Studies at the U. S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena, CA, with technical assistance provided by Clifton L. Holland of IDEA-PROLADES Ministries. This study, published in May 1986, identified 1,048 Hispanic Protestant churches in Southern California, which included the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Imperial, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Kern. The total for the Greater Los Angeles Metro Area (GLAMA) was 767: Los Angeles County 687 and Orange County 80. A total of 60 Protestant denominations were identified with affiliated Spanish-speaking or English-speaking churches and missions, composed predominantly of Hispanics of many nationalities, although Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were the predominant ethnic components. The following table gives the totals for the 12 largest denominations with Hispanic ministry in Southern California.

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE 12 LARGEST HISPANIC DENOMINATIONS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CHURCHES</th>
<th>MISSIONS</th>
<th>TOTAL CH &amp; MIS</th>
<th>TOTAL MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seventh-day Adventist Church</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>12,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostolic Assembly of Faith in JC</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>11,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Baptist Churches</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>8,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Baptist Convention</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foursquare Gospel Church</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God (Cleveland, TN)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Church</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Baptist Association</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Church-USA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of Christian Churches</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>582</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>674</strong></td>
<td><strong>70,117</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of all denominational listings: 60.1% 65.2%

* Table columns sorted by membership

### A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:
**HISPANIC POPULATION BY COUNTIES WITH NUMBER OF ESTIMATED HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS, 1985, 1990, 1995 & 2000**

Created by Clifton L. Holland, PROLADES
10 May 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOS ANGELES</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>3,351,242</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>3,796,726</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td>4,242,213</td>
<td>1,122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORANGE</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>564,828</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>720,204</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>875,579</td>
<td>230</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLAMA TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>767</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,916,070</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,064</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,816,930</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,208</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,117,792</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,352</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN BERNARDINO</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>378,563</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>523,975</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>669,367</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVERSIDE</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>307,514</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>435,545</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>559,575</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VENTURA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>176,952</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>214,343</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>251,734</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE: GLAMA = GREATER LOS ANGELES METRO AREA (LOS ANGELES & ORANGE CO)

SOURCES:
1. HISPANIC CHURCHES IN 1985 = CORDOVA, 1986
2. HISPANIC POPULATION 1990 = 1990 FEDERAL CENSUS
3. HISPANIC CHURCHES IN 1991 = PROLADES DATABASE OF HISPANIC CHURCHES
4. HISPANIC POPULATION 1995 = HOLLAND, 1995
5. HISPANIC POPULATION 2000 = 2000 FEDERAL CENSUS
6. HISPANIC CHURCHES IN 2000 = ESTIMATE BY PROLADES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

* * *

NUMBER OF HISPANIC PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 1932-2000

CODE YEAR

SOURCES

Created by Clifton L. Holland, PROLADES
May 10, 2007

* * *
Protestant Hispanic/Latino Ministry in Los Angeles: 2000

Arlene Sánchez-Walsh provides an overview of important issues facing Latino Protestant churches in Southern California today.

Transitional Ethnic Communities

The changing demographics of cities have dramatically affected the urban church in the last 30 years. These churches have had to cope with transitional ethnic communities in ways difficult to anticipate. Illuminating some past problems and possible solutions might help churches work through these problems.

The series of problems faced by established congregations, often follows this pattern. The congregation, usually Anglo, is in a neighborhood with a burgeoning Latino population, and the congregation has two pastors. The Anglo pastor, unable to communicate with his new congregants, watches as his Anglo congregation shrinks, and the Latino congregation grows. First Baptist Church in Huntington Park is an example of this general case. Between 1994 and 1999, the Latino congregation grew from 80 to 300 people. The dwindling English service has remained traditional and the Anglo pastor is monocultural and monolingual. The Latino pastor does not have the English fluency that he needs to pastor the entire church beyond the immigrant generation, which will likely be English-speaking. In this instance, one possible solution would be to hire a bilingual, bicultural pastor to work through the transition.

Often, working through a transition phase such as this means little more than brokering an arrangement over financial details such as money and property. There are many documented cases of these situations across the denominational spectrum. For example, a church, be it Anglo, African American, or U.S.-born Latino, sees its membership dwindle and its coffers no longer full, but a growing Spanish-speaking church meets on the premises. It does not give as much in tithes, but the pews are filled. After several years of this trend, the Spanish-speaking congregation wants its own reserved time for worship, youth night, and their own pastor. Tension results as members of the host church begin to grumble about how the Spanish-speaking church has not "paid" for their church use.

Eventually, members of the host congregation want some compensation for either hiring a Spanish-speaking pastor, and/or losing "their" church property. The Episcopal Church, the subject of a recent Los Angeles Times article dealing in part with transitional ethnic communities, is, according to their spokesperson, dedicated to staying in these communities, no matter what ethnic group takes up residence. Similarly, the Evangelical Covenant Church reports that problems in their churches are usually avoided because of the clergy's progressive ideas about working in diverse communities. Nevertheless, even the most progressive clergy cannot deter the inevitable clash of cultures when one group sees its influence, often colored by money, diminish in the wake of the overwhelming numbers that Latinos bring to certain churches. Sometimes, in extreme cases, the conflicts cannot be resolved and the groups controlling church property refuse to sell the church to their Latino ministry group, selling it instead to another denomination.

Some see the conflict rooted in cultural barriers that prevent the smaller Anglo, African American, or English-speaking Latino group from acknowledging that immigrant Latinos now comprise the majority in their churches. Potential problems arise as the well-meaning Anglo member wishing that "they" would learn English confronts some Latino pastors. The lingering issues of stewardship and paternalism have no simple solutions. One can expect more issues to arise in transitional ethnic communities where the fallout from the post-1965 increase in immigration changes into problems retaining the second generation.

Retaining the Second Generation

As Latino churches grow rapidly, the issue that surfaces is their sustainability, i.e. retaining the children of the Spanish-speaking parents and members of the second generation. Problems retaining the second generation in churches are intimately tied to culture. But, to what extent are churches responsible for conveying culture and maintaining cultural traditions? In general, the findings indicate that the church can serve as a maintenance organization for specific things like language, but it often does so at the expense of its second generation.

Churches that do not preach, teach or worship in English have lost and will continue to lose their second and third generations. Youth enjoy popular culture and are attracted to current music, movies, and fashions. Evangelical youth can be geniuses at appropriating worldly accoutrements to build ministries. Such cultural appropriations should be nurtured by pastors to create new strategies to reach youth within the church and their friends outside. But, can churches strike a balance with the needs of first-generation Latinos, many of whom find church a more welcoming place if their language, culture, and traditions are recognized as valid? Certainly, returning to the outmoded idea that becoming a Christian equals becoming an Anglo American is not a productive course. Following are some examples of what churches are and are not doing to retain their second generation.

- One way churches like the Episcopal Church, Evangelical Free Church, and American Baptist Church are coping with the language/culture issue is to insist that future pastors become proficient in and use English in their services. Youth activities in nearly every church are held in English. However, either through resistance or lack of resources, churches have had considerable difficulty finding a place for youth in traditional Spanish-speaking churches, for instance in La Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana, an ABC church in East Los Angeles founded decades ago as a Mexican church. This church imports its leadership, has traditional worship, and for the foreseeable future, will continue to be a Spanish-speaking congregation. The ABC has churches that have made successful accommodations to all its constituents. One church, First Baptist in South Gate, has Spanish, English (traditional), English (contemporary), and Portuguese services.

- The Vineyard, known for its casual and contemporary worship, tends to attract young Latinos. Offering a mixture of traditional Latin American hymns and translated Vineyard songs, the Vineyard often serves as a bridge for Latino immigrant youth, offering them a church where they can worship in a contemporary style in English or Spanish. Because of its casualness, the Vineyard tends not to endorse the legalism that marks much of traditional Latin American Protestantism; therefore second generation youth seeking to carve out their own space often respond positively to a more welcome atmosphere.

- Traditionalism and legalism, even in growing churches, prove to be a difficult mixture for churches like the Assemblies of God. The findings of this survey support the idea that variety in worship, and English use by pastors, is essential if churches want to keep their second generation. The Salvation Army, often viewed as the keeper of one of the great traditions in Protestantism--the uniform--has seen the need to modify in order to retain their youth. Currently, it has no English-speaking Latino churches. There are problems building up a second- and third-generation base because many pastors cannot preach or offer youth services in English. The Spanish-speaking Latino churches are all contemporary, and though the youth may find a place in these churches for a time, they learn English and then begin to find other churches that will offer services in their new language.

- Some churches, wanting to prevent that exodus, have begun to ask the young leaders themselves for solutions. The Christian & Missionary Alliance has begun consultations with young leaders and begun working with a bilingual church model. This movement by the CMA has come as they have seen resistance from some pastors to speaking English. Additionally, the CMA, recognizing that the second generation is often in a different social location, has
begun to plant churches among the middle-class.

- One solution that blends theological education with retaining youth has been developed in the Church of God, which has instituted a discipleship program that finds, mentors, and sends young leaders into the community to reach English-speaking Latinos. This program seems to be working to stem the losses of youth. The church also allows for contemporary and traditional worship.

Finding a bicultural, bilingual, multigenerational church is a difficult task. Often, churches decide that they will give up one for the sake of the other. Whatever solutions churches choose, they do well to implement something soon. Recent estimates indicate that this generation is one of the largest, most technologically adept, multicultural, and unchurched-ever.

Social Mission

Latino churches are involved with social missions to varying degrees. Whether they are involved in formalized programs or informal networks depends largely on what the church sees as one of its chief goals. Social missions can be categorized along several lines:

1. Programmatic social missions—marked as a part of the historic mission of the church,

2. Mixed programs with formal missions, evangelism, and informal networks that serve the varied needs of specific congregations, and

3. Informal networks that react to needs in the congregations as they arise. These churches are usually heavily focused on evangelism.

The first type of social mission is usually represented by historic traditions that emphasize programs that the churches see as part of their larger social and evangelistic mission. The Episcopal Church, Disciples of Christ, American Baptists, Salvation Army, United Methodist, Evangelical Free, and Seventh Day Adventists were among those that have formal programs offering a multitude of services, including food and clothing distribution, ESL, health services, immigration help, family services, counseling, and drug rehabilitation. For some, social mission entails political action focusing on economic and social justice issues in the Latino community. These services are often offered through the local church, but in the cases of the Disciples of Christ, American Baptists, and Salvation Army, there are separate social service centers to provide health, family, social programs, and other services. Many, if not all, of these churches have mixed programs that vary from church to church. Nearly every church surveyed had some form of informal or formal program and had some type of evangelistic mission—whether it was directed through a person witnessing, through literature distribution, or through social mission itself.

Finally, there are some churches that operate almost entirely from informal networks: Assemblies of God, Foursquare, Vineyard, Christian & Missionary Alliance, and others rely on an informal, but extensive network of volunteers to help congregants with ESL, food and clothing distribution, after-school help, childcare, employment networks, and immigration help. These churches also have very active personal evangelism outreaches and often credit that effort to their church growth.

There appears to be room for experimentation within these three models. Churches that focus on evangelism and do not offer formal programs are often in the position of reacting to problems as they arise, whereas if they had formal programs, they might be better able to meet the needs of the Latino community consistently. Latinos are seeking alternate ways to find after-school care, childcare, intervention for at-risk youth, employment, health care, food and clothing assistance—incorporating a more systematic way of approaching the practical needs of their congregations would only bolster the reputation of the church and make the church a part of the larger social network of the communities and neighborhoods where they minister.

For decades, the evangelical churches were criticized for focusing too heavily on personal evangelism, often at the expense of practical needs. Though this critique is not always valid, there are plenty of cases of unsystematic and irregular social missions among them that simply do not consider the social location of many Latinos, especially immigrants.

Formalizing programs does not mean retreating from evangelism, and as this study suggests, churches that incorporate both have a much better chance at meeting practical and spiritual needs. Conversely, some churches have retreated from personal evangelism and have become, as many informants reveal, little more than social service centers. Those churches that fail to recognize the spiritual nature of Latinos—why they go to church, why they worship as they do, and why they choose certain churches over others—ignore personal evangelism at their own peril.

Conclusion

Latinos are some of the largest denominations in the U.S. at such a rate that they are largely responsible for church growth in denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, and others. Latinos are among the most sought after ethnic group because of their sheer numbers and the projected increase in population.

Latinos will join churches and support their work if they are made to feel welcome, if they find spiritual solace, if their practical needs are met, and if they are viewed as equal partners. Churches that succeed in welcoming large numbers of Latinos, especially first-generation immigrants, are rare today, but there is a growing consensus among churches that working toward ethnic diversity is a good thing. Part of this impetus has come from emerging church leadership. Young people have grown up, gone to school with, and worshiped with people who are different from them all their lives. To them, diversity is a reality. Another impetus for diversity in the church has come from the sheer weight of the demographic shift. Once strong Anglo churches that held sway in neighborhoods for decades, have—over the last 30 years—found their numbers decline only to be repopulated by the new residents in neighborhoods such as Baldwin Park, Azusa, South Gate, Huntington Park, South Central Los Angeles, and soon, anywhere in Los Angeles and the desert communities, valleys, and sea-side of Southern California. Churches in urban areas are now overwhelmingly Latino or Asian. How Anglo churches and leaders of respective denominations cope with this shift says much about their willingness to accept diversity.

Latinos, though, must be treated neither as a "mission field" nor as a monolithic group. They are newly arrived immigrants, U.S.-born, English and Spanish-speaking—from dozens of Latin American and Caribbean countries. The paradigm that Latinos are a mission field must be changed along with the lingering concept that Latinos require special care due to some deficiency. These outmoded ideas have marked too many past encounters with the Protestant church. As the second and third generations have and continue to begin to take power in the churches, care should be taken that the denominations do not commit the same errors of the past-relegating immigrant Latinos to second-class status. This unfortunate trend has occurred in some churches, where Spanish-speaking immigrants are not place in decision-making positions, their Spanish services are relegated to and off hour, on an off day, their buildings are sold, and they are never made to feel welcome.
First-generation immigrant Latino churches also need to welcome the diversity that their second-generation, bicultural, bilingual youth bring to the mix. Unfortunately, many are losing their English-speaking youth because they view themselves as maintainers of culture, rather than as promoters of their first cause. By the second generation, 75% of Latinos become English-only; by then, they will also tend to abandon their home church for an Anglo church, or no church at all. Youth want to come to church and be accepted as they are. They also want to reach their generation with the cultural tools that prove to be effective.

Diversity in the church requires accommodation to demographic and generational changes. Latinos are young, becoming more socially mobile, and will form the largest voting blocks, consumer base, and church constituency within the next few generations. It would be a shame if traditionally Anglo denominations did not wake up and take stock of their changing circumstances. Latino Protestants also must realize that they have the cultural capital to affect their own communities and the resources to affect the whole of American Christendom.

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General historical overview of Asian immigration and churches in Los Angeles: Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese and other Asian churches

Chinese Churches


The Chinese had first been brought to America in large numbers to help build the transcontinental railroad. Through the efforts of the Rev. Otis Gibson of the California Conference [of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North], Christian service came to these people. [Otis] was instrumental in establishing a school for them. In 1870, he saw the dedication of a Chinese [Methodist] Church in San Francisco. Tremendous racial prejudice prevented any significant advance for some years beyond this small beginning.

In 1887 evangelism among the Chinese began in southern California when the members of the Los Angeles First [Methodist] Church organized a Chinese mission, which for the most part served as a Sunday School. The progress was slow but rewarding. Six years later, seventy-five Chinese were enrolled with an average attendance of forty-five. A fine distinction came to the First [Methodist] Church at this time: **It licensed the first Chinese local preacher in the United States**, Chan Kin Lung, who later became the pastor of the local Chinese Methodist Church. As the Chinese population continue to grow, the Southern California Conference attempted several times to get aid from the General Board, which, however, was more disposed to help other groups. Pasadena and San Diego Methodists sponsored Chinese missions as had [Methodists in] Los Angeles, and others were opened later in Mexicali and Phoenix.

In 1904, the Pacific Chinese Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church [North] was organized to try to give the units more stability. Thorough and effective work was continually blocked by racial prejudice. Moreover, the Old World ties of the overwhelming majority of Chinese made evangelism most difficult.

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Excerpt from *Our heritage and our hope: the history of First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, California, 1874-1974*, by Herbert L. Sutton.

By 1894 there were a score of Chinese who were members of First Baptist [Church of Los Angeles], brought into the fold through the Chinese Mission which the Church sponsored, beginning in the Dorsey era. The Mission was located at 608 North Main Street and was under the leadership of *Emma Fitch*, who had been employed as City Missionary to fill the vacancy when A. W. Rider left to become Pastor at Memorial.

Many Chinese laborers had come to Southern California after the building of the railways. By 1880 there were 20,000 Chinese in Southern California — a sizeable part of the population. They ran laundries, worked as domestics, and produced and distributed nearly all of the vegetables for Los Angeles. They also developed the fishing industry and were the first laborers in the citrus groves.

Their treatment by the citizenry was deplorable. Historian Carey McWilliams reports, "Youngsters were given free license to stone the Chinese, upset their vegetable carts and laundry wagons, and to pull their Queues for good measure." Beginning at the time of the Panic of 1873, the Chinese were blamed for unemployment, depressed wages and bad business conditions. The political agitators who headed the Working-men's Party in California were responsible for this ever-increasing antipathy and they tried various ways to discourage both Chinese activity and immigration. One of their pamphlets read,

"The Chinaman must leave the State of California. The white freeman with his wife and children cannot live in the same atmosphere as the Coolie slave. One or the other must leave the State and it must be the Chinaman."

It is much to the credit of the Church at that time that their spirit of Christian brotherhood kept them from heeding the rabble-rousers, even though such an attitude was very unpopular. First Baptist also sponsored a resolution adopted by the Southern California Baptist State Convention:

"Resolved, that as a Convention of Baptists we enter our decided and emphatic protest against the recent act of the House of Representatives in passing the Geary Chinese Restriction Bill, by which nearly all Chinamen are forever prohibited from landing upon our shores, or gaining a livelihood in the United States."

The resolution went on to denounce the Bill as "unamerican, unchristian and outrageous." As a matter of political expediency however, Congress passed the Bill and it became law.

SOURCE: http://genealogytrails.com/cal/la/firstbaptistchurchhistory.html

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SOURCE: http://genealogytrails.com/cal/la/firstbaptistchurchhistory.html

25/07/2012
A History of Japanese Americans in California:

ORGANIZATIONS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The first Japanese American community organization of record in the United States was the Gospel Society or Fukuuin Kai, established in October 1877 in San Francisco. The Gospel Society offered English classes, operated a boarding house, and provided a place for Japanese to meet. With the influence of White Christians, the religious orientation of the society developed. Out of this organization eventually came the Japanese Christian churches, some of which were established in the 1890s.

The issei established three types of organizations in the communities they settled: churches, political/social organizations called by various names, and Japanese-language schools. Churches, whether Christian, Buddhist, or Shinto, were the focus of activity for most Japanese communities, and often were the earliest organizations to be established. Subsequently, churches expanded beyond religious services as women's organizations (fujinkai) became active, and youth groups were established with the advent of children. The churches provided both religious sustenance and a social life. It is estimated that before World War II, 85 percent of Japanese were Buddhist. Possibly the sole Japanese American community with only a Christian church was Livingston (Yamato Colony). During the World War II internment, churches served as storage centers for personal property left behind by Japanese Americans, and as hostels for returning evacuees. The churches themselves organized into umbrella groups such as the Buddhist Churches of America, the Japanese Evangelical Mission Society, the Holiness Conference, and the Northern and Southern California Christian Church Federation. Most of the original congregations still exist today.

SOURCE:  http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/5views/5views4c.htm

A History of Japanese Americans in California:

PATTERNS OF SETTLEMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Most Japanese immigrants entered the United States through San Francisco. Other ports-of-entry were Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. As a result, the first large settlement of Japanese in California was in San Francisco. U.S. Census figures trace the movement and settlement of Japanese over the years.

In 1890, 590 Japanese were in San Francisco, with 184 in Alameda County and 51 in Sacramento County. A scattering of residents appeared throughout California, with the smallest number in the Southern California area. Little is known about these early Japanese immigrants. Speculation is that they worked for the railroad, were laborers, or performed miscellaneous tasks, such as chopping wood or domestic service. By 1890, the move into agricultural work had begun in the Vacaville area, Solano County. By then a Japanese had been buried in the Visalia Public Cemetery in Tulare County, and labor contractors were beginning to gather new immigrants to work in a number of industries such as the railroads, oil fields, and agriculture.

By 1900, the same Northern California counties still had the largest numbers of Japanese, but the population had increased tremendously with movement into other parts of the state. San Francisco had 1,781 Japanese, Sacramento County 1,209, and Alameda County 1,149. In addition, Monterey County had 710, Fresno County 598, San Joaquin County 313, Santa Clara County 284, Contra Costa County 276, and Santa Cruz County 235. Agricultural work drew immigrants to what were then rural areas. In many communities, nihonmachi (Japanese sections of town) were developed, with establishment of small businesses catering to the needs of immigrants.

By 1900, Southern California had a Japanese population of approximately 500, with the largest concentration in Los Angeles County. But already the immigrants had begun efforts to establish themselves. Ulysses Shinsei Kaneko, for example, became one of the first Japanese naturalized in California, in San Bernardino County in 1896. Businesses in towns and cities had been in operation for almost a decade. Buddhist churches and Japanese Christian churches had been established earlier. Japanese had purchased property, and a few nisei children had been born.

City trades included domestic service and businesses catering to other Japanese — boarding houses, restaurants, barbershops, bathhouses, gambling houses, and pool halls. Labor contractors drew immigrants away from the cities to work for the railroads, canneries, and farms. Japanese laborers were an important element in California agriculture by the turn of the century.

Other immigrants initiated their own enterprises and industries. Some of these included industries the Chinese had pioneered earlier. Fishing and abalone industries developed at White Point and Santa Monica Canyon in Los Angeles County, and at Point Lobos in Monterey County. Kinji Ushijima, also known as George Shima, continued the reclamation work begun by Chinese in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta. Shima eventually reclaimed more than 100,000 acres of land with the help of many laborers. The land now grows potatoes, asparagus, onions, and other produce.

Between 1900 and 1910, Japanese began to buy property and establish farms, vineyards, and orchards. All-Japanese communities developed in agricultural areas in central California, including Florin in Sacramento County (which the Japanese called Taishoku), Bowles in Fresno County, and the Yamato Colony at Livingston in Merced County.

By 1910, a distinct change had occurred in the California Japanese population, which then numbered 41,356. A move to the southern part of the state began, and the number of women in the community steadily increased. By the late 1920s, females constituted one-third of the Japanese population. Los Angeles County became the most populous Japanese settlement, with 8,461, and has remained so to this day. A major stimulus for the move south was the rapid expansion of the Los Angeles area during the Southern California boom period. Many Japanese also migrated to Los Angeles in 1906 after the San Francisco earthquake.

San Francisco remained the second most populous, however, with 4,518 Japanese. Next came Sacramento County with 3,874, Alameda County with 3,266, Santa Clara County with 2,299, and Fresno County with 2,233. Other counties having more than 1,000 Japanese included Contra Costa, Monterey, and San Joaquin. The large increases in the population were a reflection of unrestricted immigration of male laborers until 1908, entrance of Japanese women into the United States, and
adult children of immigrants began to dominate in all spheres of Japanese activities, previously occupied by Japanese Americans. The war was also a turning point in generational control of businesses, churches, and community politics, as the Japanese population did not return. Moreover, some nihonmachi did not survive. Non-Japanese businesses and residents had moved into sections of town. Some never returned to the West Coast.

Beginning to enter the labor market. This subtle change can be noted in such things as Japanese-language newspapers adding English sections to their

The 1940 census shows little change from the 1930 figures. During this decade, the Japanese population of California decreased from 97,456 to 93,717, although a number of Japanese entrepreneurs operating general merchandise stores had regular routes to the surrounding countryside, taking orders and making deliveries for food and other supplies. Kamikawa Brothers in Fresno and Tsuda's in Auburn provided this service.

During the decade of 1910-20, Japanese farmers became important producers and growers of crops: truck farming along the coast, in the Central Valley, and in Southern California; grapes and tree fruit in the Central Valley and Southern California; strawberries in a number of different locations; and rice in Northern California. Japanese were very much involved in experimenting with different strains of rice at the Biggs Rice Experiment Station in Butte County where Kenji Ikuta demonstrated that rice could be produced commercially. In addition, a large number of other Japanese were engaged in farming, distributing, and retailing of rice during this period. In later decades, Keisaburo Koda, known among the Japanese as the 'rice king,' established a ranch near Dos Palos in Merced County, where he produced new strains of rice.

The 1930 census shows that Los Angeles County still had the most Japanese, almost doubling its population, to 35,390. California's Japanese population numbered 97,456. Los Angeles had more than four times as many Japanese as did the second county, Sacramento, which had 8,114. Close in number were San Francisco with 6,250, Alameda with 5,715, Fresno with 5,280, San Joaquin with 4,339, and Santa Clara with 4,320. Again, the increase can be attributed to immigration of Japanese women as well as the birth of children. Because immigration was totally curtailed in 1924, however, the birth of children probably was the more important reason, numerically speaking. Another source for population increases was migration from other parts of the country. Some Japanese residents of Seattle, Washington, for example, moved to Los Angeles County during the 1930s because of increased economic opportunities during a period of nationwide depression.

This period, however, was a time of growth for most nihonmachi throughout California. Almost every agricultural area with a population of Japanese residents had a flourishing Japanese section of town. Cooperatives established in previous years were functioning at their peak. Nisei children were in schools and beginning to enter the labor market. This subtle change can be noted in such things as Japanese-language newspapers adding English sections to their publications, and Japanese church youth organizations being organized.

The 1940 census shows little change from the 1930 figures. During this decade, the Japanese population of California decreased from 97,456 to 93,717, although a few counties like Los Angeles continued to increase. During the years 1942-45, Japanese Americans were incarcerated in 10 fenced and guarded concentration camps. Two of these camps were located in California: Manzanar in Inyo County and Tule Lake in Modoc County. The camp at Tule Lake did not close until March 1946. Encouraged by the War Relocation Authority to resettle in the East and Midwest, approximately one-third of the internees chose this alternative. Some never returned to the West Coast.

Those who did return had to rebuild lives that had been dramatically altered by the concentration camp experience. In some communities, one-third or more of the Japanese population did not return. Moreover, some nihonmachi did not survive. Non-Japanese businesses and residents had moved into sections of town previously occupied by Japanese Americans. The war was also a turning point in generational control of businesses, churches, and community politics, as the adult children of immigrants began to dominate in all spheres of Japanese activities.

The Japanese population of California decreased to 84,956, according to the 1950 census. Los Angeles County had the largest population, with 36,761. San Francisco, Alameda, Fresno, Sacramento, and Santa Clara counties each had 4,000-6,000 Japanese residents. This period was one of intensive efforts to re-establish Japanese American communities. After serving as hostels for returning internees, churches re-instituted their usual activities and services. The struggle for economic survival began anew. Those nihonmachi able to be rebuilt were again the centers of the Japanese American community, but were less oriented to the immigrant generation. For example, during the 1930s, landscape gardening emerged as an occupation. It gained in importance after World War II as the numbers of nisei working as gardeners increased.

The decade 1950-60 saw almost a doubling of the Japanese population in California, to 157,317. Los Angeles County again led the state with 77,314, more than seven times the number in Santa Clara County, which had 10,432 Japanese residents. This large increase is generally attributed to the birth of sansei, the third generation of Japanese. A secondary but far less important reason numerically was the gradual return to the West Coast of individuals who had resettled to other areas during the World War II internment. A minor increase may also be attributed to Japanese women immigrating from Asia as wives of U.S. servicemen.

The birth of children resulted in a resurgence of activities in churches, Japanese-language schools, and athletic leagues. The Japanese population had made the transition from a rural to an urban population with the economic base less oriented to agriculture, although this was still important. In urban areas, Japanese women frequently worked in secretarial-clerical positions, while men obtained jobs in technical professional areas. This pattern generally holds true today, although with sansei children in their adult years now, there is increasing technical and professional training, and occupations of greater diversity for both males and females.

SOURCE: http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/5ivews/5iviews4b.htm

The Japanese Community on Terminal Island, San Pedro

* * *
In an extreme instance, the historical memories of one Japanese community were lost in its entirety. What had happened in Terminal Island, a fishing community near San Pedro, California, is the case in point. It was their misfortune that this community of fishermen who cruised and fished in the coastal waters for their livelihood happened to be located adjacent to naval facilities. Authorities kept their watchful eyes on the activities of these Japanese fishermen in the late 1930s. And, soon after the Pearl Harbor attack, Issei fishermen together with community leaders were taken into custody as suspected enemy aliens. Some families began to move out of Terminal Island voluntarily. Then, the Navy suddenly issued an order on February 25, 1942, demanding that the still remaining two hundred families be removed from Terminal Island by the night of the 27th, only three days later. The forced evacuation of the Japanese residents from Terminal Island, therefore, began five days before Executive Order 9066 went into effect. As most of the adult men had already been detained, women and children had to try to comply with the order in panic. They were forced to sell their families' belongings for a few dollars to wicked dealers who flocked to prey on these unfortunate victims. Whatever they could not get rid of, they dumped into the bay. Reportedly, sunken to the bottom of the bay were books, personal records, photographs and newspaper files.

According to Nanka-shi Nihonjin Shichij-nen Shi [characters] Japanese in Southern California: A History of 70 Years, Terminal Island was a rapidly growing center of the Japanese fishing industry on the West Coast. A fishermen's association was established in 1915 with a membership of 268 and 152 fishing vessels. In 1930, Issei and their Nisei children, a total of about 3000, were living in this community. In 1940, there were 5 medical clinics, 2 drug stores, 21 stores, 14 restaurants, 5 tailors, 2 photographers, 5 barbers, three Japanese language schools, a Japanese language press, a Baptist Church, a Tenriky temple, and a Shint shrine. Nearly all of the 600 pupils who were attending the Terminal Island Public School were Nisei children in that year. Most of the Issei men worked as fishermen, or were employed in the fishing industry; most of the Issei women worked in canneries.

Today, researchers can learn very little about this interesting Japanese fishing community in Southern California. The former residents of Terminal Island could not return to the community after the war, as their community became part of the expanded naval facilities, a restricted area. The returned evacuees from this community, therefore, were scattered throughout Southern California and had to seek new places of residence and employment. Few of the historiographical materials are known to have been saved. For example, the publisher's file of the Minami Engan bō [characters] The Southern Coast Herald, a weekly newspaper published in Japanese on Terminal Island, continuously since 1927 until the outbreak of the Pacific War, was lost. Nor are there any materials which can inform researchers about the experiences of fishermen and cannery workers, the working conditions at canneries, or daily lives in this community. Even when a former resident of Terminal Island is fortunate enough to be located, one has to listen to a sad story that everything is at the bottom of the bay.

SOURCE: http://content.cdlib.org/view/permission/KrHx2qjfr8s2rK9T?docld=kt19bh6ykk&chunk.id=biochist-1.8.7

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Christian activity among California Japanese started in San Francisco. In 1877, three young Japanese presented themselves for membership at the Howard Street [Methodist] Church. The following year a Gospel Society was organized and by 1886 the Japanese work in California and Hawaii had become a district of the California Conference [of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North].

Evangelism in southern California began very slow. Racial prejudice made the task difficult. Buddhism also attracted large numbers of Japanese people. In 1900 the Japanese program on the Pacific coast was organized into a Mission Conference. By 1910 there were Japanese missions in Oxnard and Santa Clara, where Japanese were employed in agricultural labor. A residence for working girls in Los Angeles, the Jane Couch Memorial Home, was operated by the [Japanese] Mission Conference with the help of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Southern California Conference. By 1937 there were eleven Japanese charges [churches and missions] within the bounds of the Southern California Conference, all small. The same forces which early in the century had made work difficult were still present. In Los Angeles County, where 35,000 Japanese lived, there were only three [Japanese] Methodist churches [in 1937].

The Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles was established February 7, 1918 through the merger of three congregations, the Los Angeles Presbyterian Church (Japanese, est. 1905), the Los Angeles Congregational Church (Japanese, est. 1908), and the Japanese Bethlehem Congregational Church of Los Angeles (est. by 1911). By combining resources, it was hoped that a larger church with expanded programs could be created to better serve the community. Rev. Gichi Tanaka was appointed as the first pastor of the church.

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"Bunji and Toshi Kida: Quaker Missionaries to the Japanese in California"

by Stephen Ward Angell, Earlham College

Under Quaker auspices, Bunji and Toshi Kida helped to found several churches for Japanese-Americans in the period from 1907 to 1917, including a Friends mission in Los Angeles that was eventually absorbed into the Los Angeles Holiness Church. The Kidas' role in the Christianization of Japanese Americans, however, has been overlooked by scholars. Arriving in the U.S. in 1907, Bunji Kida became the Japanese Evangelist for the California Yearly Meeting of Friends. His theology blended together concerns of holiness and Social Gospel Christians. In 1912, the Kidas opened a Friends mission in Los Angeles, but because of difficulties arising from this, Bunji Kida lost his position as Japanese Evangelist in the Yearly Meeting in 1913.


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American Baptist Mission work among the Japanese in Southern California


Baptist missions among the Japanese residents in Southern California have received small but continuing attention. The modern Baptist aversion to controversy...
kept most from even attempting to bring a Christian word into the long-term and vicious anti-Japanese controversy. The Anti-Alien Land Act of 1913 attempted to prohibit Japanese ownership or even tenancy of agricultural land in California. This objective was strengthened by the initiative amendment in 1920 and by another legislative act in 1923. Whether or not there was a legitimate fear of too rapid Japanese immigration, the objectives and methods of the anti-Japanese movement were obviously wrong. In spite of frequent warning from missionaries as to the bad effect of this action on missionary work in Japan, California Baptists remained silent. Long-term Japanese missionary, E. H. Jones, reminded the Convention in 1923, "Every California sign telling the Japanese that they are not wanted here, does more against the Kingdom of Christ than a dozen missionaries can overcome in Japan."

The Japanese work was, of course, disrupted by the evacuation of these people from the Pacific Coast during the Second World War. At that time there were some mild resolutions urging humane treatment. One passed in 1944 read:

"Resolved, that we, individually and as a community, cooperate in every was with the War Relocation Authority and with all governmental agencies by receiving with true Christ-like spirit those persons of Japanese ancestry whose return to the Pacific Coast has been duly and regularly authorized, and whose return to their homes in this area will not, in the judgment of those authorities, be inimical to the best interest of our state or nation."

In spite of these various experiences, there has been a slight increase among Japanese Baptists. In 1935 the various missions formed the Japanese Baptist Union in Southern California. This structure gave some unity and direction to the scattered congregations. Like all minority racial groups, the Japanese are still caught in the ambiguities of integration. More widely accepted than the Negro, the more progressive Japanese would move purposefully toward the extinction of Japanese churches. Others argue the necessity for some Japanese language services and the desirability of maintaining at least the remnants of Japanese culture.

### Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles

In 1977, Japanese Christian missions celebrated their 100th anniversary in America. Early Japanese immigrants to America met regularly with White church members to learn about Christianity and the English language. Later, as Japanese attendance at these group meetings increased, segregated congregations were often established. The significance of ethnic churches is that they served as social centers as well as places of religious worship for the Japanese American community.

The Union Church of Los Angeles has been particularly important in both these aspects, serving large numbers of Japanese in Los Angeles and surrounding communities. In addition to its Christian work, the church became known as a place where Japanese could gather. Japanese-language films were shown in the sanctuary auditorium, and the gymnasium encouraged development of Japanese athletic leagues. The church also sponsored social services programs, a language school, and a hostel on another piece of property.

The Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles building is a three-story, brick and concrete structure. Its San Pedro Street frontage is characterized by four Ionic columns and three stained glass windows. The tip of the cross that sits atop the building is 45 feet above the street level. Inside are various offices and classrooms. The church's sanctuary is on the second floor, with a balcony on the third floor. The basement area once served as a gymnasium, but was later converted into a social hall. Today, the basement has been partitioned to create office space for the Japanese Community Pioneer Center.

The building is located in the heart of the Little Tokyo district of Los Angeles, directly across the street from the Los Angeles Police Department.

The Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles was established February 7, 1918 through the merger of three congregations, the Los Angeles Presbyterian Church (est. 1905), the Los Angeles Congregational Church (est. 1908), and the Japanese Bethlehem Congregational Church of Los Angeles (est. by 1911). By combining resources, it was hoped that a larger church with expanded programs could be created to better serve the community. Rev. Giichi Tanaka was appointed as the first pastor of the church.

By 1920, the need for a new church building had become apparent, and a building program was initiated. Three years later, on March 25, 1923, the new church building at 120 N. San Pedro Street was dedicated. In the years that followed, the Union Church benefited the entire Japanese American community through its many programs.

During World War II, church members, along with other Japanese Americans on the West Coast, were interned at Heart Mountain in Wyoming. Rev. Donald Toriumi, who was the church's minister immediately before the exodus, continued to lead the congregation at Heart Mountain. The church building was used as a Black community center during this period of Japanese absence.

Rev. Sohei Kowta, formerly with the church's social service institute, recognized the need to establish a center to aid Japanese Americans returning from the concentration camps. Along with the Presbytery and the American Friends Service Committee, he established a resettlement center in the institute's building. This became known as the Evergreen Hotel, and Rev. Kowta conducted religious services for Union Church members and other residents.

In 1949, the Black community center was relocated, and the Japanese congregation resumed meeting in the San Pedro Street building on November 14 of that year. In 1955, the name of the Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles was changed to the Union Church of Los Angeles.

In the mid-1960s, the City of Los Angeles began formulating plans for redevelopment of the Little Tokyo district. Plans included widening certain sections of San Pedro Street. In the years that followed, the congregation weighed its options, and decided to search for a new site. The church property was sold to the City of Los Angeles, which leased the building to the Community Redevelopment Agency. The building is scheduled for demolition. New property was purchased at the corner of Third and San Pedro streets where groundbreaking ceremonies were held on October 12, 1975. On November 7, 1976, the new building was dedicated.

Today, the Sunday congregation numbers about 285 (165 for English-language services and 115-120 for Japanese-language services). Hiroshi Izumi is the Japanese-language pastor, and Duane Takayama is the Director of Christian Education. Since the retirement of Rev. Howard Toriumi, the church has not appointed a permanent English-language pastor.

In addition to its church services, the Union Church continues to work with the Japanese American community by providing space for various groups. The church itself sponsors youth and adult fellowship groups, as well as Boy and Girl Scout troops. The neighboring Little Tokyo Towers, a senior citizens' housing project, uses the church for some of its cultural and social classes. The church also serves as headquarters for the Southern California Church Federation, an association of Japanese Christian Churches.
Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles

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Korean Churches

Korean Immigrants In America

By Minjok Tongshin

January 18, 2002

Adapted from Chapter Ten: THE ROLE OF IMMIGRANT CHURCH

In Los Angeles the situation, however, was somewhat different. A retired missionary, Mrs. Sherman, opened a residential mission center in March 1904 with assistance from a Methodist church. The center had evening classes in Bible study and English for Korean immigrants and services were conducted on Sunday until June, 1910.

After this, a number of Korean preachers served the mission but it became inactive. By October 1930, the Korean Methodist Church of Los Angeles was officially established, not by a Korean but by Rev. Davids, an American preacher. Rev. Whang Sa-yong was invited to serve the church soon after that. And much like the situation in San Francisco, Rev. Whang Sa-yong retired and moved to Honolulu. The church invited a brilliant young minister, Chiang Key-hyung, for the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. For the first time, the church had a bi-lingual minister to serve the second generation congregation.

Besides the Methodist church, there was a Presbyterian church, which also served the Korean community in Los Angeles. According to Mrs. Chung He-kyong of Los Angeles, the Korean Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles began in 1918. She came to Los Angeles in 1916 as the picture bride of Mr. Chung In-young who had gone to Hawaii in 1904. Mrs. Chung said that the church started with the members of a social club—Chinae-hoe—under the leadership of Rev. Hong Chi-bum, a brother-in-law of Rev. Min Chan-ho. There were about 40 to 50 people in the congregation which lasted until 1922 when Rev. Hong moved out of the church with about 20 followers due to a difference in opinion among the church leaders.

Rev. Hong was soon invited to the Methodist church and the remainder of the Presbyterian church met without a minister. The determined congregation worked hard to recover their strength and the congregation again increased to about 40 by 1925. A small group of the officers of the church went to see and appeal to the Presbyterian church headquarters for official recognition. The Los Angeles Presbytery responded happily and sent Dr. Preacher and two other delegates from the office to meet with the Korean congregation. It so happened that there were about 50 people attending when these official delegates came to see them at one Sunday service.

Dr. Preacher said to the congregation that if they have that many worshippers, then an official recognition is in order. The Korean Presbyterian Church was officially established on the spot. Mr. Cho Sung-hwa was ordained as a presbyter. From that time on, the congregation saved money for a church building. They bought a house as a worship place for $3,000 down and made 19 monthly payments thereafter. In 1927, Rev. Kim Jung-soo, who came to America to attend a Sunday School Convention from Korea, was invited to stay as a minister. Later Rev. Kim resigned his position and started an independent church of his own which was primarily to care for the elders in Los Angeles. The church was again left without a minister.

In 1937, Rev. Kim Sung-nak was invited to minister to the Presbyterian church as a national mission worker by the Los Angeles Presbytery. Rev. Kim, then was building a pioneering church in a slum area, Pyongyang, Korea, while teaching a course in philosophy at Soongsil Christian College. Because of his patriotic activities and pioneering in a slum church, he was under constant surveillance by the Japanese police.

The Korean Presbyterian Church was sharing a Black church building on Denker Street when Rev. Kim Sung-nak arrived. There were about 1,000 Koreans living in Los Angeles. Rev. Kim recalled: "When we arrived...there were three Korean churches in Los Angeles and the Korean community was so small, and didn't need three churches, so I thought of creating a single Korean community church. At that time, Rev. Whang Sa-yong worked with the Methodist. The
Presbyterian Church was without a minister. I was to fill it. I really thought one church would serve the community best.”

Dr. Kim didn’t get much support from anyone. He was disappointed, but had to meet his assignment for his church. He felt that the church needed a building. He started efforts to raise funds for a church building. He recalled, “I spoke, my wife sang, and since we didn’t have a car, we took the street car to everywhere with our infant daughter two months old. We made a total of 76 appearances.” He remembered that it was customary to get paid $5 for preaching, but he told the host church to send the contribution to the Presbyterian headquarters to add to the Korean church building fund instead of paying him. They all sent in more than just $5 but about $50. The Vermont Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, Rev. Kim recalled, sent in the largest contribution of $500.00.

By Thanksgiving, the foundation was laid and the next year, Easter, 1938, the Korean Presbyterian Church on West Jefferson Boulevard was dedicated. It became a source of pride of the Korean community and has remained as a historical site there. This was the first Korean Presbyterian Church to be owned by Koreans. It is still the only Korean owned Presbyterian church according to Dr. Kim. Dr. Kim is not only a recognized church leader but also a well-known educator, and a community leader. He was one of the five who were invited to Korea by the American Military Government in 1945 immediately following its liberation from the occupation of Japan.


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Christian activity among Koreans was also scattered, but the [Methodist] Church was alert to whatever opportunity presented itself. In 1909 the only Methodist Episcopal Mission for Koreans in the entire United States was in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Missionary Society gave most of the support for it. Mr. and Mrs. Walter H. Fisher of the First Methodist Church also worked part-time among these Koreans. This devoted lay couple was deeply interested in the missions. Mrs. Fisher was at one time President of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. Mr. Fisher was one of the Trustees of the first Japanese Methodist Church formed in Los Angeles. They also participated in the Chinese Mission at First [Methodist] Church. Koreans were never to be found in southern California in extensive numbers, but by 1939 a gradual increase was noticeable. At Unification [in 1939] the Methodists had an organized society of one hundred and twenty-five [Korean] members but no buildings.

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Korean Ethnic Church Growth Phenomenon in the United States

By Chul Tim Chang

A paper presented at the American Academy of Religion in Claremont, CA

March 12, 2006

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The growth of the Korean ethnic church in the United States, or the Korean American church, from its beginning in 1902 to 2001, is both a social and spiritual phenomenon. It started with one congregation in San Francisco, and after one hundred years, it has grown to more than three thousand churches. This paper seeks to provide a historical outline of how this large growth, both socially and spiritually, has taken place and also to provide a general description of its organization.

First, I'll discuss the beginning of the Korean ethnic church movement in San Francisco in 1902 with Changho Ahn and his wife. Second, I'll note how it grew from the early 1900s to the Korean War. Third, I'll outline its rapid growth from post Korean War to 2001. And fourth, I'll share what I believe to be twenty-two characteristics of a typical Korean ethnic church in the United States.

1. Beginning of the Korean Ethnic Church Movement

The first Korean church in the United States started on October 14, 1902 in San Francisco after the arrival of Changho Ahn, also known as Dosan (“island mountain”), and his wife, “Helen.”

Dosan became a Christian while attending the Salvation School in Seoul, established by Horace G. Underwood, the first ordained Presbyterian missionary from the United States to Korea (B. I. Kim 1995:23). After his conversion, Dosan sought to convert others to the Christian religion, which he believed would help Korea to become a strong nation. Yong-Taek Chon attributed the following quote to Ahn: “Only in the days when our people all have a Bible in their hands will our nation be able to stand on its own feet” (Gardiner 1979:25).

With the help of Underwood and other missionaries, the Ahns were able to immigrate to the United States to do “further studies in theology and education” (J. Pak Interview 2001). When they arrived in San Francisco, there were less than fifty Koreans in Hawaii and on the mainland (Choy 1979:72). When Dosan first met the Koreans living in San Francisco, he was appalled. They lived reckless lives and were prone to much fighting.

He became concerned with their welfare and also with the negative image they gave to Americans about Korean people (Choy 1979:80).

Dosan’s concern for Koreans in America, together with his passion for theological study, led him to initiate a church for the Koreans to study the Bible and to better themselves as one nation. As well, he found himself very busy meeting the practical needs of the San Francisco Korean community. At first, some were suspicious of his motive for cleaning, planting, and doing whatever he could at no charge, but eventually he was able to win their hearts and became their pastor, friend and trusted advisor (Choy 1979:81).

It was during his stay in San Francisco that Dosan changed from pursuing “further studies in theology and education” to becoming a “social activist and community organizer” (J. Pak Interview 2001). In 1905, Dosan founded the first Korean political organization, Kongnip Hyop Hoe, the “Mutual Assistance Association,” in the United States (Choy 1979:81).
When Dosan moved to Riverside, California in 1905, he founded another church for the Korean people who worked there as fruit pickers and domestic helpers. From 1907 until his death in 1938, he gave most of his attention, with limited involvement in the church, to freeing the motherland from Japanese oppressors.

2. Growth of the Early Korean Ethnic Church

The second Korean ethnic church in the United States [Hawaii], led by Seung-Ha Hong from Neri Methodist Church, was founded on January 13, 1903 after the arrival of the first large Korean immigration which brought one hundred and one Koreans to work on Hawaii’s sugar and pineapple plantations. By 1906, just three years later, there were 4,700 Koreans on the plantations (Patterson 2000:55).

Living on the plantations was no paradise. Using a collection of first-hand accounts of the daily life on the plantations, we may see what they experienced: (1) “During those early days on the plantations, we lived in one big camp. The families were given small houses for themselves, and the single men lived in big barracks.” (2) “A working day on the plantation followed the same pattern day in and day out. The cook would get up at three in the morning, prepare breakfast, and make lunches for the field hands, who got up at five. A train would take them to the place of work in the fields, after the lunas [foremen] had gone to the head boss to get their assignments for the day.” (3) “We worked in the hot sun for 10 hours a day. I was not used to this kind of work, and I had a difficult time.

But I did the best I could and struggled along with the other men.” And (4) “[t]here were three laole [white] bosses. They were good men. They gave us free houses and anything we needed, if we were good and did not cause trouble” (Patterson and H.-C. Kim 1977:29-32).

More than any other denomination, the Methodists were successful in reaching the Koreans working on the plantations. By 1916, there were as many as thirty-one Korean Methodist churches and thirty-five Methodist mission stations with over 2,800 members collectively throughout the Hawaiian islands (K. Chong and M. G. Son 1991:50).

Hawaiian Methodist Mission Superintendents, often in cooperation with the plantation owners, employed Korean ministers to work with the immigrant churches and mission stations.

Syngman Rhee, a well educated man with a Ph.D. from Princeton University, who would eventually become the first president of the South Korean Republic, did not work well under the control of Methodist Superintendents. He broke from the Korean Methodist Church in Hawaii in 1916 and formed his own church and denomination, the Korean Christian Church. By the time of World War II, the Korean Christian Church had 1,000 members in Hawaii (Patterson 2000:67).

In search of easier and better lives, the Koreans left plantation and farm work and moved as soon as possible to the cities, consolidating the many plantation and farm churches and mission stations to a small number of city churches. By 1950, there were only fifteen Korean ethnic churches serving about 10,000 Koreans living in the United States (Chang 2003:86; Shin 1971:200).

Woong-Min Kim cites nine Korean ethnic churches on the mainland before the break of the Korean War, (1981:55):

- The Korean Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles [1918]
- The Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in San Francisco
- The Korean Christian Church in Los Angeles [Syngman Rhee]
- The Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in Delano
- The Korean Presbyterian Church in Reedley
- The Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles
- The Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago
- The Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in Oakland
- The Korean Church and Institute in New York

For the early immigrants the church, more than any other social organization, acted as the center of the community. According to Bon Y. Choy, the church served three key functions (1979:263): (1) as “the social center and means of cultural identification for Koreans in America;” (2) as an “educational function by teaching American-born Koreans the Korean language, history, and culture;” and (3) as the place that kept “Korean nationalism alive.”

The church, for many early Korean immigrants, was much more than a place to worship God and learn about the Bible. It was their home. It was the one place where they could be themselves, eat their own food, speak their own language. The church consequently became an extended family with the church pastor as the father and priest.


At the end of the Korean War, the United States gave special permission to four different groups of Koreans to immigrate: the wives of U.S. servicemen, orphans who were usually mixed race, students, and highly skilled professionals. The last two groups were primarily responsible for starting new churches from 1951 to 1973.

Taek-Yong Kim lists a total of twenty new churches that were started between 1951 to 1967 (1985:93):

- The Korean Church of Washington, D.C. (1951)
- The Korean Church of Boston (1953)
- The Korean Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. (1956)
- The Korean Church of Philadelphia (1957)
- The Berendo Street Baptist Church in Los Angeles (1957)
- The Korean Central Church of New York (1962)
- The Korean Presbyterian Church of Chicago (1964)
- The Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington, D.C. (1965)
- The Korean Bethany Church in Chicago (1965)
- The United Church of Dallas (1965)
- The Gospel Church of Chicago (1965)
- The Pittsburgh Korean Christian Fellowship (1966)
- The Korean Church of Christ (1966)
- The Reformed Korean Presbyterian Church in San Francisco (1966)
- The Buena Memorial Presbyterian Korean Church in Chicago (1966)
- The Korean Christian Church of Chicago (1966)
By 1967, there were 35 churches, by 1970, 100 churches, and by 1973, 200 churches (Chang 2003:86; T-Y Kim 1985:95). As in previous cases, the church acted as the community center where Koreans gathered to meet their social and spiritual needs.

After the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, tens of thousands of Koreans annually immigrated to the United States. From 1976 to 1989, a steady flow of 30,000 to 35,000 immigrants arrived each year. By 1991, the number of Korean churches had swelled to 2,515 (W-S Chung 1996:11).

By 2001, there were 3,375 Korean churches in the United States listed in The Korean Church Directory in America (2001:1-264). California alone had 1,108 churches. Nine states had over 100 churches: New York (356), Illinois (221), New Jersey (171), Virginia (157), Texas (153), Maryland (141), Pennsylvania (113), Washington (111), and Georgia (110). Three states possessed 50 to 99 churches: Hawaii (77), Florida (61), and South Carolina (54). The remaining 37 states had less than 50 churches.

In regard to Korean American church membership, Ryan Chang found that 68 percent of Koreans in Los Angeles were church members (1989:197, 201). However, Woo-Song Chung argues, depending on location, church attendance fluctuated from 45 to 75 percent (1996:15).

**Filipino Churches**


Christianization among the Filipinos began in conjunction with the Pasadena Methodist Church in 1916. From it came nearly every leader among Filipinos on the [Pacific] Coast. Evangelism was extremely arduous because most of them were single men who migrated frequently. At Unification [in 1939], when there was no property of any description in southern California for Filipino Christian work, the entire endeavor was placed with Chinese and Korean activity in the California Oriental Mission.

**Vietnamese Churches**

**Other Asian Churches**

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**Additional Bibliography**


*City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* is a 1990 book by Mike Davis examining problems facing Los Angeles. The underlying material was originally intended as a Ph.D. submission in completion of the requirements for his history doctorate, but it was rejected. Davis completed the work and found a publisher for it, and it became a standard text in many courses in urban sociology.

The book is a historical, economic, and cultural dissection of Los Angeles, its residents and their lifestyles and their interactions with real estate developers. Davis contrasts the campaigners for 'slow growth' with the needs of minorities living on the margins and the never ending growth of Los Angeles with environmental considerations. Given its origin as a Ph.D. dissertation, the book is well-annotated.

*City of Quartz*, and various stories from the work, are occasionally cited in local newspaper articles in the Los Angeles Times, the now-defunct New Times LA, and particularly, LA Weekly. The edition of the book published in 2006 contains a preface detailing changes in Los Angeles since the work was written in the late 1980s.


*City of Quartz* covers the history of Los Angeles' modern era. What sets this book apart from other histories of Los Angeles is that Davis devotes much time to the history of Los Angeles' street gangs, a culture that has become synonymous with Los Angeles. It was and still is the most thorough history of Los Angeles street gangs going back to the 1940s up through the development of the Crips and Bloods. If you are researching gangs, trying to unravel its formation process, and just want to learn about the diverse city of Los Angeles, this is a must read.

OTHER INFO

In this excellent book on Los Angeles, Davis reconstructs the city's "shadow" history, analyzes its economy, and brilliantly reveals the power
relationships that exist behind the scenes. From the offshore Japanese capital to the local gangs, from the L.A. Police Department to the homeless people on the streets, the author introduces most of the players in the life of the city, both the powerless and those who run the show. City of Quartz is a masterful account of how real and paranoid fear plays a role in the decoration of the city's public sphere to secure its 'chosen people.' Davis argues that authoritarian control of the public space, the fragmentation of the landscape caused by the physical 'protection' and isolation of specific areas, and the growing use of surveillance cameras are leading to a militarization of the landscape. Davis, as a native son, affectionately criticizes the city where the past has been erased, dreams have failed, and the image rarely maps into reality—the city that so many Americans love to hate.


* * *

Mike Davis, City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles: No one has ever vilified Los Angeles like Davis does. Doubtless, this is why City of Quartz has been such a success.

Amazon.com

Mike Davis peers into a looking glass to divine the future of Los Angeles, and what he sees is not encouraging: a city—or better, a concatenation of competing city states—born by racial enmity, economic disparity, and social anomie. Looking backward, Davis suggests that Los Angeles has always been contested ground. In the 1840s, he writes, a combination of drought and industrial stock raising led to the destruction of small-scale Spanish farming in the region. In the 1910s, Los Angeles was the scene of a bitter conflict between management and industrial workers, so bitter that the publisher of the Los Angeles Times retreated to a heavily fortified home he called 'The Bivouac.' And in 1992, much of the city fell before flames and riot in a scenario Davis describes as thus: 'Gangs are multiplying at a terrifying rate, cops are becoming more arrogant and trigger-happy, and a whole generation is being shunted toward some impossible Armageddon.' Davis's voice-in-a-whirlwind approach to the past, present, and future of Los Angeles is alarming and arresting, and his book is essential reading for anyone interested in contemporary affairs. --Gregory MacNamee

See other reviews:
http://www.kc.gatech.edu/~bruglio/1101/davis.html
http://www.ludd.net/essays/davis.html
http://www.streetgangs.com/bookclub/quartz.html

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Review: Rieff's premise seems to be that Los Angeles is wrestling with its high level of immigration, soon to result in a white minority. And he appears somewhat miffed that people are going about their daily lives in the face of this encroaching reality.

Rieff seems to want to debunk the notion that this influx of people from all over the world means that L.A. has a bright future as the "gateway to the Pacific Rim." But he rarely mentions the real ill effects of immigration—social services strained to the breaking point, poor health care, and disgraceful public schools. Instead, he just seems peeved that some people dare to be optimistic.

Rieff doesn't bother to punctuate that optimism by discussing exactly where he thinks L.A.'s future lies. He's more interested in attitudes, and he reserves much scorn for the white middle class living on Los Angeles's Westside—the people who put him up during his stay in Los Angeles (hey—you're welcome).

They live "in a First World way on Third World prices," he says, meaning that they reap the benefits of cheap labor to tend their children, clean their houses, mow their lawns, park their cars, and clean their high-rise offices. Meanwhile, they jog or go to the gym instead of getting their exercise in the back yard, as they would if they were truly integrated beings.

Worse, according to Rieff, these bourgeois yuppies don't truly interact with the immigrants working for them. This is because they're products of television, and on TV, families in sitcoms don't have servants, yet their houses stay clean anyway. Of course, the author didn't spend any systematic time with the immigrants; he just did things like sit with an attendant in the valet parking lot for a few hours.

Yes, there are a lot of rich jerks on the Westside of Los Angeles (and in the many other middle class areas of the city), and yes, people on the planet Earth tend to be concerned with parochial things like their own circle of friends and their neighborhood. This is particularly true in a city like L.A., which unlike Manhattan, say, has a large middle class sharing space with a huge immigrants population—and with remarkably little xenophobia. Yet Rieff seems to be saying that L.A. residents who aspire to own a home with a little patch of walled-in green around it are racists.

Rieff flirts with a real issue now and then, as when he talks about whether the new wave of immigrants will assimilate in a different way than previous waves, but he is not concerned with what sort of mass psychology of can-do-ism, with a tone of "Boy, are they in for a surprise..." Angelenos, he keeps saying, seem to have an illusion that they can control their own destiny, that things will work out. If these mass psychologies really exist, it's hard to believe they differ that much from city to city, or even nation to nation. Will New Yorkers be less capable of solving their problems because they're more 'Old World' and cynical? Rieff keeps seizing on ephemeral cultural attitudes and trying to turn them into determinants of history.

SOURCE: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1316/is_n10_v23/ai_11383250

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Tom Sitton and William Deverell's collection of essays on Los Angeles in the 1920s represents an important step forward for historical research on the West coasts most important twentieth-century metropolis. The editors have drawn together many members of the new generation of scholars on L.A., from the disciplines of history, urban planning, and religious studies.

SOURCE: Urban History Review, March, 2003 by Angela Blake

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Carey McWilliams's *Southern California, an Island in the Land* (Peregrin Smith, 1973) is probably the only book about Southern California that adequately portrays both the humanity of the forces that created its societies and the viciousness of the powers that shaped them.


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Last updated on May 15, 2007