

An Overview of Religion in Los Angeles from 1850 to 1930

Compiled by Clifton L. Holland

Introduction

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 on the banks of the Rio Porciuncula, now known as the Los Angeles River.

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 totalled 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).

SOURCE: Excerpts from Clifton L Holland, *The Religious Dimension in Hispanic Los Angeles: A Protestant Case Study*. South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974.

The Religious Situation in Los Angeles from 1850 to 1900: the beginnings of ethnic and religious pluralism

The historic presence of the **Roman Catholic Church** in Los Angeles and environs accentuates the region's distinct spiritual heritage. Under the charge of a resident bishop, by 1859, this denomination benefited from the ministrations of clergy and nuns, outside funding and capable administration. Roman Catholics also remained a numerical plurality in the Los Angeles area through the early years of U.S. statehood, and their clergymen spoke the Spanish of the Californio residents, who were the descendants of Spanish and Mexican settlers and the local Indigenous population (see Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846-1890*). The institutions of local Catholicism therefore endured the tumultuous 1850s and 1860s with a stable church organization, staffed by clerics conversant in the language of the majority of the citizenry: Spanish. The remnants of the Native American Indian population in the Los Angeles area lived near the Spanish Franciscan Missions established in San Fernando, San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano, as well as in the poorer sections of the growing town of Los Angeles, and were ministered to by clergy and lay workers of the Roman Catholic Church.

In the establishment of lasting congregations in the town of Los Angeles, Protestant settlers were initially far less fortunate than Roman Catholics, Jews and Chinese.

The greatest obstacle faced by pioneers of the Protestant tradition was the division of a small number of people into separate denominations. These "godly" folk struggled with a scarcity of clergy, a paucity of funds, local violence, and the distance from fellow believers. Lack of familiarity with Spanish also precluded outreach to the broader local community. Increased Anglo American immigration was necessary for the survival of the churches so long identified with western frontier Christianity. Neither the circuit-riding Methodist nor the Baptist farmer-preacher could succeed initially in this isolated pueblo of Los Angeles.

- The Rev. John Brier, a **Methodist** minister, was the first Protestant clergyman to preach in Los Angeles, in the spring of 1850.
- The Rev. John W. Douglas, a **New-School Presbyterian** minister, arrived in Los Angeles a few months after the departure of Brier in 1850. Douglas departed for San Francisco in August 1851.
- The **Roman Catholic Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles** was established in 1853, which included the southern California counties, under Bishop Thaddeus Amat (1810-1878, a Spanish-born theologian of the Vincentian Order who had previously served in Missouri and Pennsylvania), who arrived in Los Angeles in late 1855.
- In February 1853, the **Northern Methodist Episcopal Church** in San Francisco sent the Rev. Adam Bland to Los Angeles to begin Methodist work in the southland; he has replaced by the Rev. J. MacHenry Caldwell in 1854. Occasional Methodist worship services were held in private homes and rented halls, as well as a series of camp meetings for the Anglo American settlers.
- A group of **Texas Baptists** settled in the town of Lexington (now named El Monte) on the banks of the San Gabriel River in the 1850s. The first Baptist church was organized there in November 1853 with four members. During 1854, the Methodists and Baptists held joint services in Lexington.
- **Protestant Episcopal Church** services were first held in Los Angeles in October 1855 in a rented hall, where the Methodists also held their services. However, it was not until October 1857 that St. Luke's Parish was formally established.
- **The Hebrew Benevolent Society** was organized in Los Angeles on 6 July 1854, with 30 members, and a **Jewish Cemetery** was established on 9 April 1855.
- Methodist preachers only occasionally supplied the **Southern California District of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North** between 1854 and 1869, when first permanent Methodist congregation was established: **Fort Street Methodist Episcopal Church**. In 1856, this district reported only 42 worshippers.
- As early as 1854 a congregation of the **African Methodist Episcopal Church** existed in Los Angeles. The colored people of this denomination first held services at the house of Robert Owen ("Uncle Bob") in 1854. In 1869 a church was organized and a building was erected in April 1871, known as "Little Church on the Hill." The first members of this congregation were Mrs. Winnie Owen ("Aunt Winnie"), Mrs. Biddy Mason and Miss Alice Coleman. The Wesley Chapel (colored) was organized August 24, 1888, with twenty-three members and eighteen probationers; now there are fifty-six members and seventeen probationers. Services are held in a hall on Los Angeles street; Rev. F. H. Tubbs (white) has been the pastor of this body from its beginning.
- On 18 March 1855, the Rev. James Wood, an **Old-School Presbyterian** minister, organized the first Protestant church in Los Angeles, but it lasted only about six months, due to the departure of Wood for greener pastures.
- In May 1859, the "**First Protestant Society of the City of Los Angeles**" was organized as an interdenominational effort by the Rev. William E. Boardman, an

Old-School Presbyterian minister. A modest church building was constructed in 1862 that was passed over to the Episcopalians in 1866, who later sold it to the County of Los Angeles in 1883.

- On 2 November 1860, Boardman organized the **First Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles**, but only sporadic services were held until this congregation was reestablished in 1874 under the Rev. Fraser.
- In 1864, the Rev. Elias Birdsall, a "missionary pastor" from Indiana, arrived to reestablish the **Protestant Episcopal Church in Los Angeles**. In March 1865, Birdsall established **St. Athanasius Episcopal Church**, which was renamed St. Paul's Episcopal Church in 1883.
- In 1866, the **American Home Missionary Society of the Congregational Church** (related to New England Puritans) in San Francisco sent its first two missionaries to southern California: the Rev. R. A. Johnson to San Bernardino (originally a Mormon settlement) and the Rev. Alexander Parker to Los Angeles.
- In 1867, the Rev. J. C. Miller of the **Methodist Episcopal Church, South** arrived in Los Angeles to establish the Los Angeles Circuit; Miller was succeeded by the Rev. Abram Adams in 1869. The center of their work was in the rural community of Los Nietos-Downey, but by 1869 **Trinity Methodist Church** was established in Los Angeles.
- The **First Congregational Church of Los Angeles** was organized on 21 July 1867; the first church building was completed and dedicated on 28 June 1868.
- In August 1869, the **Los Angeles Baptist Association** was organized in El Monte (formerly known as Lexington), composed of five rural churches in the Los Angeles basin; by 1876, the Baptists had 16 organized congregations with 633 members in five counties of southern California.
- In 1870, the Rev. William C. Harding arrived in Los Angeles, where he organized a short-lived **Presbyterian Church** with only eight members; however, Harding retreated from Los Angeles and reestablished his ministry in the community of Wilmington, near the port of San Pedro. By 1872, six Presbyterian congregations had been organized in southern California under the Presbytery of Los Angeles. After several years of frustrating ministry in Los Angeles by the Rev. Thomas Fraser, he was successful in reestablishing the **First Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles** on 11 January 1874. However, a permanent pastor for this church did not arrive until 1875, when the Rev. A. F. White (from Carson City, Nevada) was appointed.

NOTE: By 1870 there were only five Protestant churches in Los Angeles that were fully organized: **Fort Street Methodist Church** (Methodist Episcopal Church, North) with 40 members; **Trinity Methodist Church** (Methodist Episcopal Church, South); **First Congregational Church** with 36 members; **St. Athanasius Episcopal Church** (later known as St. Paul's Episcopal Church); and the **African Methodist Episcopal Church** (organized in 1869). In 1870 the town of Los Angeles only had 5,728 inhabitants.

- In 1872, Carl Zahn, a German dentist, established an **independent "deutsch-evangelisch" (German Evangelical) church** in Los Angeles; this congregation later joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, North and part of its German Mission, in 1876.
- On 8 September 1874, the [First Baptist Church of Los Angeles](#) was organized with eight members, under the leadership of the Rev. William Hobbs. He was followed by the Rev. Winfield Scott, who served as pastor during 1876-1878.
- The first **Chinese Temple ("joss house")** was established in Los Angeles in 1875 among an estimated 170 Chinese immigrants, some of whom had lived there since the early 1850s as "house servants" for Anglo American settlers. Most of the Chinese population lived together in an ethnic barrio (the first "Chinatown") near the town Plaza. It was here that the famous "Chinese massacre" occurred on 7 October 1871, when a mob of Anglo Americans killed 19 Chinese in the neighborhood known as "Nigger Alley." Chinese religion at that time was a polytheistic blend of Buddhist, Confucianist and Taoist teachings and traditions, known as the "Three Teachings."

NOTE: **Joss house or Miu** is a place for worshipping a variety of indigenous Chinese deities, saints and supernatural beings from [Taoist](#), [Buddhism](#), [Confucianism](#), heroes and folklore. Joss house is usually translated as temple, although it was in common use in English in western North America during frontier times, when joss houses were a common feature of places with [Chinatowns](#). Joss houses are distinct from [Taoist temples](#) and [Buddhist monasteries](#) in that they are established by nearby villagers or fishermen to pray for good luck; only few or none of monks, nuns or priests study religion or stay in joss houses. Joss houses are usually small houses decorated with traditional figures on their roofs although some evolve into significant structures. The name "joss house" describes the environment of worship. [Joss sticks](#), a kind of incense, are burned inside and outside of house. The Chinese character Miu means "ancestor hall," a place to worship ancestors. It is later extended to places for worshipping others.

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joss_house; also see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_language)

- The **First Christian Church/Disciples of Christ** was founded in Los Angeles in 1874; previous congregations of this denomination had been founded in San Bernardino, Los Nietos-Downey and El Monte.
- The **Unitarian Church** (Unitarian-Universalist) was informally established in Los Angeles under the leadership of Caroline M. Seymour Severance in May 1877; the congregation was inactive between 1880 and 1884 when Mr. and Mrs. Severance returned to Boston, but it was formally established in 1884 with the Rev. J. H. Allen as pastor and with the support of the Severances.

- **Trinity German Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)** was founded in Los Angeles in 1882. Later, other Lutheran churches were established that used English and Swedish for worship.
- **The Reorganized Church of Latter-Day Saints** was organized in Los Angeles in the autumn of 1882, with about a dozen members; it had about eighty members in 1890. Worship was held in a hall rented by the society.
- In 1862, the Jewish community of Los Angeles (about 200 persons) established the first Jewish synagogue with 32 charter members, **Congregation B'nai B'rith**, led by Rabbi Abraham Wolf Edelman and lay leader Joseph Newman.
- The nondenominational **Peniel Mission** was established in Los Angeles by T. P. and Manie Ferguson in 1886.
- In 1887, the **Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Vibiana** was dedicated at the corner of Second and Main Streets in Los Angeles; whereas most of the other Roman Catholic churches and Missions were constructed of wood, rock and adobe materials, the new Cathedral (see picture below) was made of steel and cement, and designed by Los Angeles architect Ezra F. Kysor.



- Several **Theosophy groups** (founded in New York City in 1875 by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, William Q. Judge and others) arrived in Southern California during the 1880s. A branch of **The Theosophical Society** existed in Los Angeles as early as **1886**. Jerome A. Anderson was active on the Pacific Coast and was an author of elementary books on Reincarnation and Karma, Immortality, and Septenary

Man. He was a frequent contributor to the pages of the *New Californian*, a Theosophical monthly founded in Los Angeles in **1891**. The editor of this magazine, Miss Louise A. Off, was among the most active members on the Pacific Coast, writing on Theosophical subjects for the California newspapers as well as in the *New Californian*. She also conducted in her home well-attended weekly meetings for the discussion of Theosophy. **The United Lodge of Theosophists** was formed in **1909** in Los Angeles under the inspiration and guidance of Robert Crosbie, who was a Boston Theosophist during the time of William Q. Judge. He worked very closely with Judge, enjoying his confidence. When, after Judge's death in 1896, the members most active at the New York headquarters raised Mrs. Katherine Tingley to the position of Judge's successor, Crosbie gave her his loyalty and support. About **1900** he went to Point Loma, near San Diego, to be of assistance in the work of **The Theosophical Society** there, founded in 1900 by Mrs. Tingley. However, in the course of a few years, he came to feel that nothing constructive was to be accomplished by remaining at Point Loma – that, in fact, the teachings and philosophy of Theosophy had suffered an almost complete eclipse by the methods and sensational program instituted by Mrs. Tingley – and he quietly left the Point Loma Society in **1904** and came to Los Angeles. He secured work in Los Angeles and gradually began to gather around him a few students – most of them entirely new to Theosophy – to undertake once more the task of promulgating Theosophy in the same form as originally presented by the founders of the movement. When, in **1909**, he had been joined by a small nucleus of persons who shared this ideal, **The United Lodge of Theosophists** was formed to carry out the purposes in view. The **Theosophy Company** began in 1925 as a non-profit corporation devoted to the dissemination of theosophical literature and the publication of the quarterly journal, *Theosophy* (a synthesis of science, religion and philosophy), first published in 1912.

- **The German Evangelical Friedenskirche** ("Church of Peace") was founded in Los Angeles in 1887 and had about 50 families by 1890. This church was named after the [Peace of Westphalia](#) of 1648, which ended both the [Thirty Years' War](#) in Germany and the [Eighty Years' War](#) between Spain and The Netherlands. This permitted the Lutherans in the Roman Catholic parts of the [Holy Roman Empire](#) to construct their own churches, to be built outside the city walls and made of wood with no nails.
- By 1890, the **Seventh-Day Adventist Church** had about eighty members in Los Angeles, and it also had churches in Pasadena, Norwalk and Santa Ana. The **Adventists** arrived in southern California during the 1880s and established an agricultural colony at Loma Linda, near Redlands.

After 1870 the growth of religious groups in Los Angeles can be attributed to four specific ways: increased membership, the construction of new church buildings, the

formation of new ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and the appearance of additional denominations.

The population of Los Angeles doubled from 15,309 in 1870 to 33,381 in 1880 as more Anglo-American Protestant families arrived from the Midwest and East, thanks to the new intercontinental railway connections via San Francisco that reached Los Angeles in September 1876 and to major real estate promotional efforts to attract newcomers to "sunny southern California."

The Southern Pacific Railroad reached Los Angeles in 1876, followed by the Santa Fe Railroad nine years later. The two rival companies conducted a rate war that eventually drove the price of a ticket from the eastern United States down to five dollars. This price slashing brought thousands of settlers to the area, sending real estate prices to unrealistically high levels. By 1887, lots around the central plaza sold for up to one thousand dollars a foot, but the market collapsed in that same year, making millionaires destitute overnight. People in vast numbers abandoned Los Angeles, sometimes as many as three thousand a day. This flight prompted the creation of the Chamber of Commerce, which began a worldwide advertising campaign to attract new citizens. By 1890, the population had climbed back up to fifty thousand residents.

In the 1890s, oil was discovered in the City of Los Angeles, and soon another boom took hold. By the turn of the century almost fifteen hundred oil wells operated throughout Los Angeles. In the early 1900s, agriculture became an important part of the economy, and a massive aqueduct project was completed. The city's growth necessitated the annexation of the large San Fernando Valley, and the port at San Pedro was also added to give Los Angeles a position in the international trade market.

According to Engh, by 1889, 17 religious congregations had been established in Los Angeles by the denominations previously reported above, and four of these denominations had begun missionary activities among the Chinese, Hispanic, German, Swedish and French population: the Presbyterians, Northern Methodists, Congregationalists and Northern Baptists. Between 1880 and 1885, the Seventh-day Adventists, the United Presbyterians, the German Lutherans (Missouri Synod), various Holiness groups, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Spiritualists, Theosophy and "a society of American Buddhists" established themselves in Los Angeles. Other religious groups created new settlements in nearby areas, such as the Quakers in Whittier, the Presbyterians in Westminster, and the German Brethren (now known as the Brethren Church) in Lordsburg, now known as La Verne).

Another source states that, in 1890, Los Angeles contained forty-four church organizations, of twelve different denominations, besides a few representatives of other faiths, such as [Spiritualism](#), Mohammedanism (Islam), Buddhism, Parseeism (a

religious community of India, practicing [Zoroastrianism](#)), Confucianism, etc., and also an organization auxiliary to the National Secular Union (SOURCE: <http://www.calarchives4u.com/history/losangeles/socal1890-770.htm>).

American Protestants finally began to exercise an influence in the community of Los Angeles similar to what they had known in settlements extending from the Old Northwest to the Midwest. Gregory H. Singleton, in *Religion in the City of the Angels: American Public Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, presents an interesting discussion of the nature of the "voluntaristic" denominations that came to denominate the religious scene in Los Angeles at the turn of the century.

(adapted from Chapter 1 of Michael E. Engh's, *Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple and Synagogue in Los Angeles, 1846-1888*)

For a more detailed history of the religious development of the City of Los Angeles, see: [Churches in Los Angeles in 1890](#).

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 Street. 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 Street. 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 3 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 Menzies, "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.

SOURCES: <http://www.geocities.com/ian4christ41/early.html>
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Atlantis/5068/charismata/gaede.htm>

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/Azuza%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.azusastreet.org/>

<http://www.theazusastreetrevival.com/html/home.html>

<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/usnews/060424a.aspx>

<http://www.newlifefm.net/HistoryAzusa.htm>

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 & Environs 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; the first Congregational Church in Los Angeles was organized in 1867 by the Rev. Alexander Parker), 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. Ten of thousands of Mexicans began arriving in the Los Angeles area after the beginning of the Mexican Revolution in 1910; this created an emergency refugee situation in Los Angeles, which was responded to by most of the Protestant denominations by organizing settlement houses, welfare services and a variety of Spanish-speaking ministries.

Also, several other Protestant denominations had arrived in Los Angeles by 1914: 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 Peniel Mission (established by T. P. and Manie Ferguson in 1886); the Burning Bush Holiness Church; the First New Testament Church (Joseph Smale, formerly the pastor of the First Baptist Church, established this congregation 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).

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The nondenominational **Union Rescue Mission (URM)** was established in 1891, dedicated to serving the poor and homeless in downtown Los Angeles. Today, the URM is one of the largest rescue missions of its kind in the United States and the oldest in Los Angeles. The mission provides a comprehensive array of emergency and long-term services to their guests, including: food, shelter, clothing, medical and dental care, recovery programs, transitional housing, legal assistance, education, counselling and job training to needy men, women, children and families.

In 1902 Captain Charles Farr approached the Executive Committee of the **Los Angeles City Christian Endeavor Union** and asked it to support a Sailor's Mission to be conducted by him in San Pedro, CA. After an investigation by the committee, it took over the work. Meetings were held aboard the "Warrior", an abandoned tugboat moored on the east side of the San Pedro Bay. After about two years, a site was selected at 331 S. Beacon Street. A corporation was formed in 1905 under the name of **Southern California Floating Christian Endeavor Association** and the mission was named **The Sailor's Rest Mission**. In 1945 the name was changed to "**Beacon Light Mission**" and it became a regular rescue mission.

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The first **Jewish synagogue** (B'nai B'rith) was organized in Los Angeles in 1862 by Rabbi A. W. Edelman, the **Unitarians** began to hold services in Los Angeles in 1877, and the **Reorganized Church of Latter-day Saints** in 1882. By 1890, the City of Los Angeles contained more than forty-four Christian churches, 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 from 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).

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Claremont School of Theology traces its history back to 1885 with the founding of the **Maclay College of Theology in San Fernando**, California. In 1900, Maclay College moved to the campus of the **then Methodist-affiliated University of Southern California in Los Angeles**. In 1956, the School withdrew from the University and became an independent corporation, related to the Southern California-Arizona Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. The School moved to its present Claremont site in 1957.

Four distinguished past presidents have provided extraordinary leadership and have set a strong foundation for Claremont School of Theology: Ernest Cadman Colwell (1957-1968), Gordon Elliott Michalson (1968-1977), Richard Wilson Cain (1977-1990), and Robert W. Edgar (1990 - 2000). Dr. Philip A. Amerson became the fifth president of the School on February 24, 2001. Dr. Jerry D. Campbell began as Claremont's sixth president in June 2006. SOURCE: http://www.cst.edu/about_claremont/history.php

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The Religious Society of Friends established the town of Whittier in 1887 and the Whittier Academy the same year. **Whittier College** grew from the academy and was chartered by the State of California in 1901 with a student body of 25. The college began construction on its first building, Founders Hall, in 1893. Initially, Founders Hall housed all classes, dormitories and the library. Both the town and the college were named in honor of John Greenleaf Whittier, prominent Quaker, poet, and leader in the abolitionist movement.

Although the college is no longer affiliated with the Society of Friends, the college is proud of its Quaker heritage, which is evidenced in many ways, including respect for the individual, commitment to a diverse student body and faculty, freedom of conscience, and respect for human differences.

SOURCE: <http://www.whittier.edu/about/history.htm>

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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](#) 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 1934 and the school came to be called **Los Angeles Pacific College (LAPC)**.

The origins of **Azusa Pacific University** reside in 1899, when a group of spiritual leaders from various denominations met in Whittier, California, and established a Bible college geared to training students for service and missionary endeavors. This was the first Bible college founded on the West Coast. The initial class of students met on March 3, 1900, with Mary A. Hill serving as the earliest president.

The institution, named the **Training School for Christian Workers**, moved three times before settling in Huntington Park in 1907. In 1939, the Training School became **Pacific Bible College**, and four-year degrees were offered. Cornelius P. Haggard, Th.D., was appointed president and served for 36 years, until his death in 1975.

By the mid 1940s, Pacific Bible College had outgrown its Huntington Park campus. The Board of Trustees decided then to purchase a 12-acre school for girls in Azusa. Classes began on the new campus in 1947, and in 1956, the name was changed to **Azusa College**.

Azusa College merged first in 1965 with **Los Angeles Pacific College**, a four-year liberal arts institution founded in 1903 by the Free Methodists, acquiring the name **Azusa Pacific College**, and again three years later with **Arlington College**, which had been founded in 1954.

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The Seventh-day Adventists

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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The University of La Verne was founded in 1891 as Lordsburg College by members of the [Church of the Brethren](#). Both the surrounding agricultural community and the College were renamed La Verne in 1917. The College reorganized in 1977 as the University of La Verne. At present, the structure of the University consists of the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business and Public Management, the College of Education, the College of Law, and Regional Campuses. The school conferred its first master's degree in 1965 and began an adult education program in 1969. ULV awarded its first doctorate in 1979. In 1981, the University founded a campus in Orange County and has since opened campuses throughout Southern California. Today, the University of La Verne is an independent, nonsectarian and non-profit institution. SOURCE: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_La_Verne

East Los Angeles Church of the Brethren



3231 N. Broadway and Gates St., East Los Angeles, CA
Photos and text below courtesy of Jeanie L. Woo
Virginia, USA

In 1906, my grandmother, Caroline Dierdorff (Deardorff), moved with her family from Illinois to Los Angeles. They lived on Manitou Ave. I am sure you know there were many members of the Church of the Brethren of German descent who lived in Lincoln Heights at the turn of the century. **They built the East Los Angeles Church of the Brethren on Hancock St. (234 S. Hancock St. now renumbered as 2218 N. Hancock St.) in 1896.** I believe that church is now the **First American Indian church.** The Brethren also built the Berean Bible School, a three-story brick structure, at 3231 N. Broadway and Gates St. in 1911. That building no longer stands which surprises me since there are so many other vintage structures in the community. No one seems to know when, why, or how the building was removed from the site.

Here are photos of the students, teachers, and leaders of the **Berean Bible School ca. 1912.**



Berean Bible School, Chinese Sunday School, 1908-1951

A ministry of the East Los Angeles Church of the Brethren in Los Angeles, California

Back row: L. to R., (third) Tom Yee Woo (student); (sixth) Clarence Lehmer (Superintendent); unidentified leader and students. Front row: far right, Elder Solomon G. Lehmer (Trustee); unidentified students and little girl.



Berean Bible School, Minister and Missionary Training Branch, 1908-1916

A ministry of the East Los Angeles Church of the Brethren in Los Angeles, California

Back row: L. to R., (fourth) Bessie Deardorff Lehmer (teacher); (sixth) (Caroline) Carrie Deardorff (teacher); unidentified teachers. Front row: L. to R., (fifth) Clarence Lehmer (Superintendent) with unidentified students.



Berean Bible School, Minister and Missionary Training Branch, 1908-1916
A ministry of the East Los Angeles Church of the Brethren in Los Angeles, California
Back row: L. to R., (second) Bessie Deardorff Lehmer (teacher); (third) Clarence Lehmer (Superintendent); (eleventh) (Evangeline) Rhea Deardorff (teacher); (thirteenth) (Caroline) Carrie Deardorff (teacher); unidentified teachers and leaders. Center row: unidentified students; Front row: unidentified students

SOURCE: <http://www.lincolnheightsla.com/bibleschool/>

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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.

Second Church of Christ, Scientist
Alfred F. Rosenheim, Architect, 1907-1910



Located at 948 West Adams Boulevard in the Historic West Adams District, the **Second Church of Christ, Scientist** is a most imposing edifice in the Beaux-Arts Classical Style. Authors David Gephard & Robert Winter in their authoritative work *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles* claim the church was inspired by the Mother Church of Christian Science located in Boston, Massachusetts.

The church was declared a Historic-Cultural Monument in the City of Los Angeles in 1968 (No. 57). Six massive Corinthian columns and a copper-clad dome are its most striking features.

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.

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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 wilful 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 fulfils 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, middle-class American Protestantism, while the Holiness groups insisted they were practicing primitive Wesleyanism and were the true successors of Wesley in America. **The small schismatic bodies gradually coalesced into formal 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 polity 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 before the service. 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 **Peniel ("Face of God") 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 **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 anti-holiness 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>

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The Church of the Nazarene

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).

Breese, 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, Breese 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 Breese family. Numerous different preaching assignments and other occupations were assigned to Mr. Breese, 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 became Christians and members of his church.

Yet, Dr. Breese (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 like this project. They feared it might hurt the image of the church. So Dr. Breese 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.

Breese sought to return to John Wesley's original goals 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=%7BDD3F9D74-4289-44F0-B5B1-B8ADAE3B1ADD%7D>

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Fundamentalist Churches

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 material for the Los Angeles-based Pentecostal preacher, Amy Semple McPherson. After Stewart's death and 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

throng 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 1959, where it later became an accredited four-year evangelical university.

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Religious Groups and Activities in Los Angeles after 1914

The Midnight Mission established in 1914

The Midnight Mission is one of the oldest continuously operating human services organizations in the Los Angeles region. Centered in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles, the Mission runs one of the most efficient direct service operations in the

country. With only four executive managers through out its ninety-year history, the Mission has been a consistent beacon of light for those with no where else to turn.

The story begins with the founder of The Midnight Mission - **Tom Liddecoat**. In 1914 this kind man, nicknamed "father of the poor," opened the doors of the Mission as a refuge to the men of Skid Row. A successful business man and lay minister, Liddecoat would serve a meal at midnight (hence the origin of the name) after church services were completed. Realizing the need to offer more than a meal and that additional resources were necessary Liddecoat sought help from the local community.

After incorporating as a non-profit in 1922, The Midnight Mission named a Board of Directors and continued to expand their services with showers, shaves and haircuts. Religious services were no longer a requisite and the organization began to focus on the rehabilitation of men and boys.

SOURCE: <http://www.midnightmission.org/default.asp?pg=aboutus>

Evangelist Billy Sunday Comes to Town

The famous Fundamentalist evangelist **William "Billy" Ashley Sunday** (1862-1935) held an evangelistic campaign in Los Angeles during September and October of 1917. He returned to the Los Angeles area for a series of meetings in 1931 and 1934.

Converted to evangelical Christianity in the 1880s, Sunday left his [major league] baseball career for the Christian ministry. He gradually developed his skills as a pulpit evangelist in the Midwest and then, during the early 20th century, he became the nation's most famous evangelist with his colloquial sermons and frenetic delivery. He became an ordained Presbyterian minister in 1903.

By 1910, Sunday began to conduct meetings (usually longer than a month) in small cities like [Youngstown](#), [Wilkes-Barre](#), [South Bend](#), and [Denver](#), and then finally, between 1915 and 1917, in the major cities of [Philadelphia](#), [Syracuse](#), [Kansas City](#), [Detroit](#), [Boston](#), [Buffalo](#) and [New York City](#). During the 1910s, Sunday was front page news in the cities where he held campaigns. Newspapers often printed his sermons in full, and during World War I, local coverage of his campaigns often surpassed that of the war. Sunday was the subject of over sixty articles in major periodicals, and he was a staple of the religious press regardless of denomination.

Sunday was welcomed into the circle of the social, economic, and political elite. He counted among his neighbors and acquaintances several prominent businessmen. Sunday dined with numerous politicians, including Presidents [Theodore Roosevelt](#) and

[Woodrow Wilson](#), and counted both [Herbert Hoover](#) and [John D. Rockefeller, Jr.](#) as friends. During and after the 1917 Los Angeles campaign, the Sundays visited with [Hollywood](#) stars, and members of Sunday's organization played a charity baseball game against a team of show business personalities that included [Douglas Fairbanks](#).

Sunday held heavily reported campaigns in America's largest cities, made a great deal of money, and was welcomed into the homes of the wealthy and influential. Perhaps more than a million people came forward at his invitations, and he may have personally preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to more people than any other person in history up to that time. Sunday was a strong supporter of [Prohibition](#), and his preaching almost certainly played a significant role in the adoption of the [Eighteenth Amendment](#) in 1919.

SOURCES: adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Sunday

See also <http://billysunday.org/>

<http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/061.htm>

Sister Aimee and the Foursquare Gospel

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.'"



Sister Aimee, ca. 1920

McPherson loved music, and she is 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 allegedly became 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 became one of the first women in the USA 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.

For more information, see:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/sister/filmmore/fd.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aimee_Semple_McPherson <http://sisteraimee.com/>

http://womenshistory.about.com/od/protestant/a/aimee_mcpherson.htm

* * *

The **Self-Realization Fellowship** is a religious organization founded by [Paramahansa Yogananda](#) (1893-1952) in 1920 and based in [Los Angeles, California](#). The group carries on Yogananda's teachings, including [Kriya Yoga](#), a form of yoga the group claims originated millennia ago in India.



"Fighting Bob Shuler" **Pastor of Trinity Methodist Church in Los Angeles** **1920-1965**

Robert Pierce Shuler (1880-1965): A short biography of an out-spoken Methodist preacher

Robert Shuler was born August 4, 1880, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. At the age of nine, kneeling between his mother and his preacher-uncle in "the meetin' house" at Comer's Rocks, he received Christ to be his Lord and Saviour. His primary education consisted of a three-month school, where he mastered the McGuffey's Readers. In 1897 he entered Emory and Henry College as a sub-freshman, and was graduated in 1903. Two years later he married Nelle Revees, and the same year entered the Holston Conference of the Methodist Church. Endowed with a good mind and an even better wit, he was an excellent extemporaneous speaker. In addition to this, his great courage, coupled with his conservative theology and evangelistic fervor, prompted him to ever preach with the altar call in view.

In 1920 he became pastor of the **Trinity Methodist Church in downtown Los Angeles** (organized in 1869), a position he occupied until his death. He began with a depleted

congregation and saw it grow to 5,000 in the 1930s. In 1929, he was given a radio station that was housed in the tower of his church. It became a strong voice against crime and corruption in Southern California. His life was threatened many times, his church was bombed, he was sued and put in jail. He ran for United States Senator on the Prohibition ticket in 1932 and lost by only 50,000 votes.

His writings included *The Methodist Challenge*, *What New Doctrine Is This?*, *Some Dogs I Have Known*, and *I Met Them on the Trail*. Three of his sons followed him in the ministry.

SOURCE: <http://www.believersweb.org/view.cfm?id=142&rc=1&list=multi>

The growth of Shuler's church paralleled the growth of the population on the West Coast with its "rootless" people from all parts of America. These masses found in him a "champion of the common man," for Shuler's cry against corruption was the complaint of the masses. The politicians hated Shuler and tried every means to silence his preaching. His life was threatened, his church was bombed, he was sued and finally put in jail. <http://www.higherpraise.com/preachers/shuler.htm>

Robert P. Shuler

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The [Prohibition Party](#) candidate who received the highest vote in any election in U.S. history was Rev. **Robert P. Shuler**. In the 1932 California election for the US Senate" US Senate, he received 560,088 votes (25.8%) and carried Orange and Riverside counties. Following his defeat, Shuler "placed an awful curse" on Southern California.

"Fightin" Bob Shuler owned radio station KGEF, which existed from 1926 to 1932. He said that KGEF stood for Keep God Ever First and your Kind Gentle Emphatic Friend. The temperance movement leader lost the broadcasting license for his station in 1932 after his controversial broadcasts attacking Catholics, Jews, African Americans, and the Hollywood elite for their consumption of alcoholic beverages and their alleged dishonesty, corruption, and immorality (1).

Shuler was pastor of the Trinity Methodist Church, South in Los Angeles, California. He is unrelated to the pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California.

- [Prohibition Party History](#)

The Prohibition Party candidate who received the highest vote total in a single election was Rev. Robert P. Shuler in a 1932 California race for the US Senate.

He garnered 560,088 votes (25.8%) and carried Orange and Riverside counties. He had previously played a key role in exposing corruption in other states. He was one of those involved in the investigation which led to the ouster of Gov. Ferguson in Texas.

- [Radio/TV Station Call Letter Origins](#)

I thought I knew all the meanings of the early Los Angeles radio stations, but recently, I did a websearch on KGEF in Los Angeles (1926 to 1932), and found a website that had the slogan for KGEF radio. KGEF was owned by Rev. Robert P. Shuler of Trinity Methodist Church in downtown L.A. He was also known as "Fightin" Bob Shuler.

This story on the website says KGEF stood for: **K)eeep G)od E)ver F)irst** That may be entirely possible, though I have never seen it in print in any of the Los Angeles radio magazines of the day....Unknown if it was heard on the air on KGEF, but that is likely. These slogans were mostly created after the call letters were assigned, and KGEF got their call letters in December 1926, assigned in sequential order. Shuler lost his license for KGEF in 1932, due to his controversial broadcasts attacking Jews, Catholics, Blacks, and going after the sinners in the L.A. Hollywood community who he deemed to be corrupt, dishonest, immoral and such.

I found another meaning for KGEF from an individual who did a thesis on the station in 1975 for journalism class. He found KGEF not only stood for **K)eeep G)od E)ver F)irst**, but they also made up this slogan: **K)ind, G)entle, E)mphatic F)riend**. I'm not sure if they mean the radio station or the pastor of the church, Bob Shuler, who owned the station and was pastor of Trinity Methodist Church where the KGEF studios were.

- [Temperance Movement Groups and Leaders in the U.S.](#)

Footnote 1: <http://www2.potsdam.edu/hansondj/Controversies/1124913901.html>

Shuler, Rev. Robert P.

The Prohibition Party candidate who received the highest vote in any election in U.S. history was Rev. Robert P. Shuler. In the 1932 California election for the US Senate he received 560,088 votes (25.8%) and carried Orange and Riverside counties. Following his defeat, Shuler "placed an awful curse" on Southern California and some people attributed a later earthquake in that region to his curse.

"Fightin" Bob Shuler owned radio station KGEF, which existed from 1926 to 1932. He said that KGEF stood for Keep God Forever First. The temperance movement leader lost the license for his station after his controversial broadcasts attacking Catholics, Jews, African Americans, and the Hollywood elite for their consumption of alcoholic beverages and their alleged dishonesty, corruption, and immorality. However, there is no evidence that he was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, which also strongly supported Prohibition. Shuler was pastor of the Trinity Methodist Church in Los Angeles, California.

SOURCE: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_P._Shuler

In the 1940s, Charlotta A. Bass (1880?-1969), the African American editor of *The California Eagle*, discovered that the powerful pastor, Robert Shuler had aided the Klan from his bully pulpit at his **Los Angeles' Trinity Methodist Church** from 1924.

With his fire and brimstone "Air Raids from the Pulpit" radio shows, Shuler delivered vivid scriptural revelations aimed at civil rights leaders and minorities, including Roberto Galvan [1911-1958, a labor union organizer and tireless worker for human rights], calling them "criminals who spoil paradise."

Historian Kevin Starr has labeled Shuler the "Methodist Savonarola of Los Angeles," referring to the Dominican priest who preached against the moral corruption of the clergy in the early Renaissance. Shuler and his close friend, John Clinton Porter, mayor of Los Angeles from 1929 to 1933, insisted that civil rights leaders would bring about Armageddon. They also fought against relief programs to aid those in poverty.

SOURCE: http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/v52-3/pdf/2006-3_galvan.pdf

Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s

Kevin Starr is the foremost chronicler of the California dream and indeed one of the finest narrative historians writing today on any subject. The first two installments of his monumental cultural history, "Americans and the California Dream," have been hailed as "mature, well-proportioned and marvelously diverse (and diverting)" (The New York Times Book Review) and "rich in details and alive with interesting, and sometimes incredible people" (Los Angeles Times). Now, in *Material Dreams* [published by Oxford University Press in 1999], Starr turns to one of the most vibrant decades in the Golden State's history, the 1920s, when some two million Americans migrated to California, the vast majority settling in or around Los Angeles. In a lively and eminently readable narrative, Starr reveals how Los Angeles arose almost defiantly on a site lacking many of the advantages required for urban development, creating itself out of sheer will, the Great Gatsby of American cities. He describes how William Ellsworth Smyth, the Peter the Hermit of the Irrigation Crusade, the self-educated, Irish engineer William Mulholland (who built the main aqueducts to Los Angeles), and George Chaffey (who diverted the Colorado River, transforming desert into the lush Imperial Valley) brought life-supporting water to the arid South. He examines the discovery of oil, the boosters and land developers, the evangelists (such as **Bob Shuler, the Methodist Savonarola of Los Angeles**, and Aimee Semple McPherson), and countless other colorful figures of the period. There are also fascinating sections on the city's architecture the impact of the automobile on city planning, the Hollywood film community, the L.A. literati, and much more. By the end of the decade, Los Angeles had tripled in population and

become the fifth largest city in the nation. In *Material Dreams*, Starr captures this explosive growth in a narrative tour de force that combines wide-ranging scholarship with captivating prose.

SOURCE: <http://books.google.co.cr/books?id=h-xCsPyii2gC>

The Strange Case of Maurice M. Johnson

A religious group known as **The Church Which is Christ's Body** was founded in 1925 in Los Angeles by Maurice McArdle Johnson [1893-1979], a former minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South [MECS]. He was licensed to preach by the MECS in Texas in 1912 and moved to California in 1921, where he served as an assistant to the Rev. Robert ["Fighting Bob"] Pierce Shuler [1880-1965] at Trinity Methodist Church in downtown Los Angeles, from 1921 to 1923. He was known as a gifted singer and preacher and served as a MECS Conference Evangelist and pastor during part of 1923-1925.

However, in the Fall of 1925, Johnson left the MEPS with about 75 followers and established an independent Fundamentalist church, Maranatha Tabernacle, in nearby Glendale. Then, in 1927, he renounced all formal denominational structures with their salaried pastors and began to form house churches, which he called "The Church which is Christ's body," led by laymen who were called to preach and teach a New Testament message along the lines of the **Exclusive Plymouth Brethren Assemblies**.

Although Johnson and his associates are known as "undenominational Christians," today they have affiliated assemblies in California, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, Mexico and Central America; their mission work in El Salvador is known as "Christian's who meet in the Name of the Lord" -- "Cristianos congregados en el Nombre del Señor." There are no formal headquarters and each affiliated group is an autonomous assembly.

At the time of Johnson's official retirement in 1972 at age 79, he and his wife were living in Orangevale, CA, in Sacramento County, but until 1969 his ministry was centered in the Los Angeles metro area. In 1972, he turned over his radio ministry to his associates Berl Chisum, Jack Langford and James Cox. The current presiding elder is alleged to be Robert A. Grove (known as RAG), President and Chairman of "Robert A. Grove Ministries, Inc." (A Virginia Corporation), 149 Edgemoor Street, San Leandro, CA 94579-1414.

Adapted from ***A Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas*** by Clifton L. Holland, pages 55-56; see: <http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf>

For more information, see the following websites:

<http://www.churchgrowth.cc/Holy%20Love.htm>

<http://www.churchgrowth.cc/April%201927.htm> <http://www.bibletruths.org/>

<http://www.bibletruths.org/contacts.html>

<http://www.mauricejohnsonarchives.com/index.html>

From FactNet Blog:

Is anybody familiar with the "non-denominational" no-name church assemblies that go by "The Church Which is Christ's Body" or "Christ's True Church"? There are groups in California, Texas, Virginia, Maryland, Canada, Mexico and Peru. Maybe a couple thousand members, all led by Robert A. Grove (California, was in Virginia), and his sons Scott Grove (Virginia) and Jeff Grove (Texas). This church was founded by Maurice Johnson in the 1920's in California, and has been under the leadership of Robert Grove since the 1970's.

This group purports to be a manifestation of the church from Christ's time, and requires of its members utmost subservience to the leaders and complete conformity to a rigid, hyper-orthodox dress code, speech code and behavior code. There is no room for any individual thought or life choices. Members deemed threatening are marked and shunned, and this fear of ex-communication from family serves to keep members in line.

See: <http://www.factnet.org/discus/messages/3/10119.html?1114246980>

http://www.batteredsheep.com/letters_tyranny.html

OUT OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

Robert P. ("Fighting Bob") Shuler, D.D., LL.D.

First appeared in the December 1945 issue of
"The Methodist Challenge" and reprinted in 1955 in
"Bob Shuler - Met These On the Trail"

I passed him on Spring Street. He was looking into a window where old books were being displayed. Something about his sagging shoulders and rather frayed clothing shook me. For a moment I felt compelled to speak to him. But a voice within seemed to forbid. I walked on. He did not see me. **I had first seen Maurice Johnson in Eastland, Texas.** He was my song leader in a tabernacle revival, and God was certainly with us. It seemed as though all Eastland County came the way of that revival.

Maurice had been a taxicab driver in Fort Worth, had been wonderfully converted, and God was using him as few young fellows I have ever known. He could sing like a lark.

He could win the toughest to Christ. Nothing was too hard for the Christ of Maurice Johnson.

I, too, was a bit spectacular in those days! So, one Saturday night I preached on "Some Dogs I Have Known." Maurice walked out just before my sermon and sang, "You've Got to Quit Kicking My Dog Around." No Negro in the Old South could sing the Negro songs with more telling effect, and he could mimic a "Hard-shell Baptist" preacher to perfection.

I persuaded him to go to Los Angeles with me. He became my young people's leader and directed the music of the church. It was a departure from all the rules of the game. He had never been trained for any of this work. He was simply God's man. That was enough.

Today, the leadership of Trinity Methodist Church is largely made up of men and women led to Christ and typed in their Christian lives by the influence of this remarkable fellow. No man ever came the way of Trinity who had a more vitalizing and invigorating effect upon the people, young and old.

But Maurice Johnson had what we call a "kink". Most of us have a dozen. His was fatal. He was impulsive and stubbornly insistent when he thought that he was right, but he lacked that something which the really great men of history have had -- a balance! He came just that near to being great as God's prophet. He was so effective that his faults seemed trivial. I recall that once I had an invitation to go to a camp as speaker with a Y.M.C.A. group of picked high school students. At the last moment, I discovered that I could not keep the engagement. I persuaded the Y.M.C.A. secretary, at first very reluctant, to take Maurice. That secretary came back tremendously enthused. It seemed the whole camp had been led to Christ through the personal touch and magnetic messages and singing of young Johnson.

"Where on earth did you get that fellow?" asked my Y.M.C.A. friend. "Off a Fort Worth taxicab," I said.

"But where was he trained?" he insisted. "He got his training, equipment, and everything else from Heaven," I replied.

Had Maurice Johnson been able to hold his balance, it is my honest opinion that he would have become a nationally-known power in the evangelization of this nation. But suddenly he became obsessed with the idea that he must brand all the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, castigate the false teachers and anathematize, as the agents of Hell, every man who happened to disagree with his thinking.

In almost every position that he took, he was right. He discovered Unitarianism and other poison in the Sunday School literature. Immediately he published a pamphlet

denouncing the Sunday School board of the church and quoting Scripture to show that the Sunday School editors of Methodism were the direct agents of the Devil. Time has pretty well vindicated his statements.

But the ecclesiastical heads of our church in California would not stand for such an attack. They brought charges of insubordination against him and moved his location, forcing him out. I fought for him to the last breath. I begged the brethren to give me a chance to talk with him and see if I could calm him down. But just as I had about succeeded in my defense, Maurice got the floor and reiterated all that he had said, and then said a little more. I confess I admired him for it. But his speech in his own defense finished it. They put him out.

He organized an independent church in Glendale, which failed. He tried out an auto, touring about, preaching to anybody who would listen. He got on the radio. He turned his guns on all organized churches. He fired cannonballs at men whom he had held up in his earlier ministry as his idols. He became a spiritual isolationist. So, there he stood on Spring Street, dressed shabbily and looking haggard. His face was the gray of ashes. His hungry eyes read the titles of the moldy volumes in the window of that secondhand book store. I said to myself as I walked down the street, "Why did it have to happen!"

He could have packed the **Church of the Open Door**, preached to crowds that would have overflowed the great Moody Church in Chicago. He could have done what Appelman did in the great tent in Los Angeles. He could have thrilled the crowd I saw in Hollywood Bowl on the Saturday night of October 6th. Why did it have to happen? Especially when he was so nearly right practically all of the time!

I don't feel good about it. I wonder if somehow I failed God and this fine young fellow who left his taxicab and followed Jesus! Every now and then I tune in on Maurice [Johnson's radio programs], when he can get hold of enough money to buy some time over the air. He is still 90 per cent of the time right! I wonder if I am!

I can hear him now singing, "There's honey in the rock!"

• • • •

Robert (Bob) P. Shuler
1201 S. Flower Street
Los Angeles, California

My Dear Brother Shuler:

Solomon said: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:6). He also said: "The legs of the lame are not equal ..." (Proverbs 26:7). It was, therefore, not at all surprising to me to observe the "long and short" of your article concerning me.

I believe no Spirit-taught child of God can doubt that a preacher is "lame" when his "talking-leg" keeps fair step with the "fundamentalists" while his "walking-leg" maintains his place in what he condemns as often as Lot must have verbally condemned Sodom. For instance, in your Bob Shuler's Magazine, Sept. 1925, you thus daringly declared:

"We need not attempt to deceive ourselves longer ... Modernism is massing ... How can we live together if we be not agreed? How can a house divided stand? ... Therefore, I say the clash is certain ... I cannot see how there can come anything else less than a division ..." Then in December: "We Southerners are a loud-mouthed set. If Modernism begins to creep into our Sunday School literature, we talk. If our Mission Board begins to foster a liberal movement in China, we discuss. If the Methodist Review begins to look like one of Bob Ingersoll's books, we remark upon it ... We are hard to silence." "We reserve the right as a Methodist preacher, personally supporting with our money our Methodist schools, and taking collections every year from our people for this cause, to voice our protest when our educational leaders come out boldly and go on record on the side of materialistic philosophies that are wrecking the religious faith and zeal of our young people to right and left ... NOR WILL OUR PEOPLE AROUSE. Many of them recognize the futility of protest. There will never be another formidable stand against modernism in Methodism. The tide is set in against us." (March 1927)

"We can make, my brethren, by turning against the whole church and fighting everything and everybody." (Jan. 1928)

"Thus inch by inch we retreat before the advance of that sure and steady gain of modernism that few men will longer deny ... It is needless that we seek to comfort ourselves with the idea that such retreat will not in the ultimate prove fatal ... Methodism is being steadily, surely, purposely liberalized and modernized ... We are loyal to the church. We will not desert the banner of the fathers. We expect to stand and fight to the end." (February 1928)

"As pastor of the leading church within my denomination (Southern Methodist Church), I wish to say that I have never failed to send up to the proper authorities every cent of the assessments laid against my charge." (May 1928)

Now, Bro. Shuler, I am rather ashamed that I "shook" you by permitting you to discover me in front of that Spring Street secondhand book store as my "hungry eyes read the titles of the moldy volumes in the window" when my "face was the gray of ashes, looking haggard" with "sagging shoulders and rather frayed clothing ... dressed shabbily ..."

"For a moment I felt impelled to speak to him. But a voice within me seemed to forbid ... I walked on," you wrote. Was that the voice, Bro. Shuler, that says in I John 3:17: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" But I was no longer in "the church" to which you are so "loyal" and generous. It is quite true that I am now merely your brother in Christ.

However, I honestly wasn't in actual need of anything at the time unless it was that I was in need of a little more consideration as to my personal appearance in such a public place. You see, just about nineteen years ago, Bro. Shuler, Phil. 4:79 canceled all my earthly insurance policies; 2 Tim. 3:16,17 dynamited all my sectarian straight-jackets; Col. 2:6 and I John 1:5-7 provided me with the most intimate fellowship with the Triune God and all Spirit-led saints; and 2 Cor. 12:9,10 with Phil. 4:11-13 have been showing me the wicked extravagance and the obvious poverty of covetously "window-shopping" at Babylon's windows, so, for the life of me, I don't know how I happened to present such an inaccurate spectacle as that which you so minutely and tenderly described.

You were right when you said that I speak over the radio "when he can get hold of enough money to buy some time." Frankly I think that's all the radio speaking a Christian should do - only what he can pay for. By-the-way, Bro. Shuler, did you ever hear me asking for money over the radio? Nor has anyone else!

But how in the world do you suppose I "get hold of enough to buy" radio time for six weekly programs now in four states, Ohio, Kansas, Washington, and California? To be exact, the answer isn't "in the world" but in the WORD -- the Word of God. Remember that you said: "He is still 90% of the time right." (Of course, you couldn't KNOW that I was 90% of the time right unless you were likewise right so as to know right from wrong. It is possible, I admit, for one to be a hypocrite, knowing better than he is doing.)

By the grace of God, I believe that "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psa. 84:11). Incidentally, every penny of the money that I invest in radio time, renting halls, etc, is voluntarily placed in my hands without any stipulation as to

what I do with it, so, you see, Bro. Shuler, I COULD buy better clothes and PINK powder for my face (now "ashen gray"). Indeed, my "hungry eyes" could have read more than "the titles of the moldy volumes in the window" of that secondhand book store!

Don't let your conscience bother you too much, Bro. Shuler, for having obeyed that "voice within" that forbade you to speak to me (or even slip me 15 cents to satisfy my "hungry eyes" for I think I later went in and bought one or more rapidly molding books that were Methodist "best sellers" a couple or more years ago.

You see, there are others besides "we Southerners" who are "loud-mouthed", therefore, their yesterday's writings are quickly discarded to make room for their today's mouthings. I am thus enabled to keep just "a second-hand-book-store" behind you "men of the cloth" who buy the first-hand modernist mouthings before they are obviously "moldy". I only read those by BIG men "of the cloth", however. And there is some value, at least, in the light Bible prophecy, to see what the "black shirts", the black coats, the black vests, the "silver shirts", the silver tonguers, the "brown shirts", the Popish lock-steppers, the modernist high-steppers and the fundamentalist side-steppers are doing. (I'm speaking of the systems rather than the individuals.)

"He became a spiritual isolationist", you wrote of me. I pray that you are right for that would mean that I am separated ONLY to the spiritual. I can now sing: "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love" and sing it with understanding and satisfaction that I never knew nor could I know before I became "spiritual isolationist." "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from out from among the dead and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). "And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it ..." (Gen. 14:14,15). I would to God, Bro. Shuler, that you saw the inverted pyramid that your whole man-made Methodism is. You apparently don't dream that TIME and SENSE are the greedy Mortgage Co., from which you have so largely borrowed in building yourself up as a BIG preacher Fighting Bob Shuler. And when that heartless pair, TIME and SENSE, foreclose on you it will be the most sickening and frightful awakening you have ever known. Your fight has NOT been "the good fight of faith", but of sight. It has been the confused and confusing bluffs and wild swingings of a blood-bought, fearless and fervent soul that somewhere back in his life became an orthodox "Front" for that immense "holding company", TIME and SENSE, the silent but controlling partners.

I believe the day will come when your two usually talented boys, Bob Jr. and Jack, will all but curse you for not pleading with them to forsake their father's religio-political appeasement policy; your "magnanimous-back-slapping" with your denomination modernists and your "Good Friday" orthodoxy with inter-denominational

fundamentalists. I say these severe things ONLY because I love your soul and believe they may be used of God to arrest you before you bluff away the rest of your earthly opportunities.

Later, I expect to go more into the subject of just what is a "great man." Suffice it now for me to say that I firmly believe you would rather have had your son, Jack, appear on the platform, as he did, at that "Youth For Christ" mass meeting in Hollywood Bowl than to have had him be alone with John the Beloved on the Isle of Patmos or caught up to the third heaven with Paul, to have him, or yourself, DIRECTLY called by an angel of the Lord, as was Philip, to LEAVE the city and "go to Gaza, which is desert" (Acts 8:26) would suggest a "kink" or spiritual "isolationism" to you, I cannot doubt.

A servant of Christ,

/signed/ Maurice Johnson

SOURCE: <http://www.churchgrowth.cc/Bob%20Schuler.htm>

A Letter from Maurice M. Johnson about his retirement

Pershing Ave.
Orangevale, Ca. 95662
May 8, 1972

Greetings, my brothers and sisters in the family of God and fellow-soldiers in the good fight of faith:

As most of you know, in November of 1969 shortly before my seventy-sixth birthday, my wife and I moved permanently from Los Angeles County which had been our home base, so to speak, since our marriage in June, 1923. At that time I was soloist, choir director and director of young peoples work at **Trinity Methodist Church in Los Angeles.** In the fall of 1923 I resigned these positions and was appointed one of the Conference Evangelists at the Annual Methodist Conference in November.

The first meeting I held, preaching and singing with my wife assisting at the piano, was in the Southern Methodist Church building in Sacramento, Ca. The pastor and his wife were dear Christians, "fundamental" in their Bible beliefs, but completely discouraged by the coldness and indifference of most of the members. I preached my heart out, with no visible results except a profession of faith on the part of a young hitch-hiker who had stopped in the church vestibule late one evening for a drink of water.

Another meeting followed sponsored by the young people of the **Central Methodist Church in Phoenix, Ariz.** I had known many of these young people in Epworth League work. They were enthusiastic and worked hard and there were several who professed faith in Christ for the first time, but the pastor soon revealed himself as a modernistic infidel. I left Phoenix with a heavy burden for those young "lambs" with a wolf in sheep's clothing for a pastor and so-called shepherd.

A third meeting in San Diego was likewise a disappointment. The pastor and his wife were earnest Christians, but the Sunday School literature was almost completely modernistic in content; and again the few converts were left to feed on infidelity except for the pastor's Sunday sermons. I left that meeting convicted that I could not with a good conscience continue to help add to the membership of such a congregation. There were some troubled Christians in all three of these places; but they could do no more than "just Lot" vexing his righteous soul (2 Pet. 2:7).

The next nine months were spent in Chicago as choir director and assistant pastor to J. C. O'Hair at the **North Shore Congregational Church**; but the burden to preach the Word myself was growing on me. I went back to California to the annual Methodist Conference in November and was assigned to the pastorate of the **Broadway Methodist Church in Glendale, Ca.** During the year [1924-1925] we doubled the membership of the local church and many of the new members were admitted on profession of faith in Christ. Many of you have heard me say to my shame that I "opened the door of the Methodist church" and shut these babes in Christ in, because when I led in saying every Sunday morning, "I believe in the holy, catholic church" I had never really believed that there was only one church and that Christ was the only Door.

At the end of the conference year [1925] I was put out of the Methodist ministry on the grounds of general unacceptability, mainly because we had refused to use the official Sunday School literature and were teaching the Bible in All the Sunday School classes. Over seventy-five people came out of the Methodist denomination with me and we straightway organized a "fundamentalist church" [Maranatha Tabernacle in Glendale] modeled after three of the "best" in the nation. I thank the Lord, the Head of His church, that He did not let me succeed. A little over a year later we dissolved our corporation, I gave up my salary and began the walk of faith with El Shaddai, the All-Sufficient One. The small handful of Christians that had stood the storm with me also came out unto the Lord, free from all sectarian ties. We still have the joy of fellowship with many of them, and in some cases with their children and their grand-children.

In November of this year I will be seventy-nine years old; my wife will be seventy-four. It has been a grand and glorious battle, and we have worked together joyously and in unity, but we are both tired--not tired of the work, but tired in the work. I had hoped to continue in public ministry in the Orangevale area, but the Lord saw fit to "retire" me

by means of major surgery in 1970 and a stroke in 1971 that left me with a severe form of aphasia---a condition in which I know WHAT I want to say, but the right words do not come out. My poor health has placed a heavier burden of responsibility on my wife than she should have to bear and her health has suffered also.

After much prayer and waiting on the Lord, **I have decided to give up the radio broadcasts**, and since most of the money received by me is designated for the M. M. Johnson Gospel Fund I shall close that out, too. We have set the time for this closing out of funds and broadcasts for the end of May---the end of forty-nine years together in the work of the Lord. We do not intend to stop serving the Lord, of course, but will seek His mind for further direction.

The broadcasts I now am responsible for will be turned over to Bros. Berl Chisum, Jack Langford and James Cox, to be carried on in whatever way they may decide. The continuation of the local broadcast over K-POP will be left to the decision of the men in the Orangevale assembly and the financial responsibility will be theirs.

Some explanation may be necessary for some of you who do not know how the gospel fund is used. Until a problem with the Internal Revenue Service arose as to whether contributions to Maurice Johnson were tax deductible, our personal funds and the funds for the Lord's work were in one account. Twice before I had set up a gospel fund when we were working in Texas and the mid-west, but they were used up and closed out before 1953.

In 1957 I set up the Maurice Johnson Gospel Fund in South Pasadena so gifts to it would be tax deductible, and opened a separate joint account for my wife and me in Arroyo Grande, where we moved temporarily on account of her poor health. I was still active and she would have been alone at times and perhaps need immediately accessible funds.

From 1957 until now, the gospel fund has been used ONLY for the work of the Lord---hall rentals, radio broadcasts, advertising, office supplies and machines, traveling expenses, etc. I have taken for our personal needs only the cash in the offering box and checks made out to me personally without any designation as to where they were to be used. In many cases where we did not need the cash or the checks they were also deposited in the gospel fund. If it had been necessary to draw on the gospel fund for any of our living expenses I'm sure I would have felt free to do so, but it was never necessary.

When we left Los Angeles in November of 1969 Russell Ross made an examination of all accounts handled by us from 1942 to 1969. A copy of these accounts can be made for anyone who needs to verify this.

In Orangevale in December, 1969 I set up a new M. M. Johnson Gospel Fund in which were deposited checks from here and other areas. As before, we used the cash and undesignated checks for our personal expenses when needed. The expenses of the Orangevale assembly, office expenses, tapes, recording supplies and other miscellaneous expenses have been paid from the gospel fund as well as a total of \$11,996.00 to the Berl Chisum Gospel Fund up to date, as a part of the radio broadcasting expense to stations on which I shared time with Bro. Chisum. A total of \$2,900.00 has been sent to Bro. Jack Langford to help with his printing and radio expenses, and \$100.00 to Tom Murley for general expenses. Bro. Bill Hagan is preparing a summary of this account from December 1969 to May 31st of 1972 which can also be inspected upon request. At no time has our son, Jim Johnson, had knowledge of the amount in the fund, nor any access to it, nor profited from it personally.

Those of you who have contributed regularly to the Lord's work through my ministry are asked to send no more to me, but to seek the mind of the Lord through the leading of the Holy Spirit as to the distribution of your gifts to the other ministering brethren.

A second fund should be mentioned, called by my wife the "Postage Fund". It consists of all cash received from the radio audience and is used for mailing tapes, literature, issues of Sound Words, yearly calendars, etc. It is put in a desk drawer and used when needed, generally used up after each big mailing. All checks from the radio audience are put in the gospel fund. A shorter, but similar letter will be sent to our regular radio contributors as soon as it can be done.

This lengthy letter may seem unnecessary to some, but my wife and son and I are in full agreement that we want to be crystal clear in this matter, so that there will be no need for explanations or interpretations from other sources. If there remain any questions in the minds of any of you, will you please for Christ's sake, ask us FIRST? We will be happy to answer them.

We ask your prayers for further direction in our lives. For many years our children have begged their mother to write the story of our "adventures" in our long and eventful and happy Christian service, especially the years they were too young to remember. If the Lord allows us that much time we may do it, and have already begun to assemble material for that purpose. Whatever He allows us to do will be worthy of Him as long as we have a single eye and seek only the honor and glory of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

If present plans work out we also hope to be able soon to offer free tapes of previous sermons and radio broadcasts, and to mail out literature by request as long as our supply lasts. If you should be interested in the radio tapes, please let us know. We hope those of you passing through the Sacramento area will stop by often for a little visit. We do not expect to do much traveling now. EBENEZER -- I Sam. 7:12.

"Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen."

A servant and soldier of
the Lord Jesus Christ,

//Maurice Johnson//

SOURCE: <http://www.churchgrowth.cc/May%208%201972.htm>

Compare the parallel history of religion among the major race-ethnic groups in Los Angeles

Race, Ethnic, Ancestry and Religious Info & Histories

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(an overview of all subgroups)

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[County of Los Angeles](#)

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