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# The Church of the Nazarene in the U.S.: Race, Gender, and Class in the Struggle with Pentecostalism and Aspirations Toward Respectability, 1895-1985

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THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE IN THE U.S.: RACE, GENDER, AND CLASS  
IN THE STRUGGLE WITH PENTECOSTALISM AND ASPIRATIONS  
TOWARD RESPECTABILITY, 1895-1985

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Division of Religion  
Drew University in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree,  
Doctor of Philosophy

Charles L. Perabeau  
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Madison, New Jersey  
May 2011



## ABSTRACT

### The Church of the Nazarene in the U.S.: Race, Gender, and Class in the Struggle with Pentecostalism and Aspirations Toward Respectability, 1895-1985

Ph.D. Dissertation by

Charles L. Perabeau

The Graduate Division of Religion  
Drew University  
May 2011

This dissertation considers how the issues of race, gender, and class factored in the response of the Church of the Nazarene to the Azusa Street Revival, and how the processes of anti-Pentecostalization, whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement have contributed to elevating the social respectability of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States. Drawing largely upon archival materials, I devote a chapter to each process after providing an introduction and literature review in chapter one. Chapter two shows how the Church of the Nazarene came to codify its anti-glossolalia position after having earlier merged with a group that had been permissive of the practice of glossolalia. Chapter three recounts the history of racial minorities, particularly blacks, within the Church of the Nazarene. The shift from a more emotionally-centered style of worship to a more regulated style is a subject of chapter four, along with a study regarding the declining percentage of women clergy throughout the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Chapter five documents the out-movement of Nazarenes from urban centers and outlines the qualitative improvement of Nazarene colleges and universities. Finally, a concluding chapter brings together these processes utilizing Weber's notion of elective affinities and makes the case that, through these processes, the Church of the Nazarene has gained social respectability in the United States.



To Gayle

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1895, Phineas F. Bresee and Joseph P. Widney began their Church of the Nazarene in downtown Los Angeles, California. Just over decade later, on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1906, William J. Seymour led the first service of the Azusa Street Revival just four blocks away from where the Nazarenes initially gathered. Their geographical proximity serves as a metaphor for their theological and social resemblances, resemblances that partly account for the careful guarding of the boundaries separating them.

This dissertation considers the formation of the social identity of Nazarenes in the United States as the Church of the Nazarene developed its anti-Pentecostal stance from 1906 until 1985. It argues that that the codification of the Church of the Nazarene's anti-Pentecostal stance is but one facet of a sect-to-church transformation which also entails, and is related to, a whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement of the denomination during that period of time. Drawing upon the sect-church literature within the sociology of religion, this project will give evidence that the Church of the Nazarene in the United States has moved in a church-like direction consistent with the research of Weber, Troeltsch, O'Dea, Stark, and others from as early as 1895, the time when Bresee's Church of the Nazarene was birthed in Los Angeles, and lasting until at least 1985, when the Church of the Nazarene codified its anti-glossolalia position.

#### *A. The Church of the Nazarene*

From early on in its history and into the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Church of the Nazarene has been the largest of all denominations in the Wesleyan-Holiness

tradition. Its history is marked by both evangelistic growth and increases by merger. The Church of the Nazarene, started by Bresee and Widney in Los Angeles, grew rapidly and birthed other Nazarene churches in the Los Angeles area. In 1907, these churches merged with the Pentecostal Churches of America, a group of Holiness churches throughout the Northeast, to form the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. The following year, on October 8, 1908, the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene merged with the Holiness Church of Christ (itself the result of a merger) at Pilot Point, Texas. Thus, at Pilot Point, Holiness sects from the West, East, and South united in the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. This national union in 1908 is deemed the official founding of the present-day Church of the Nazarene.

Though each of the historical branches (from the West, East, and South) contributed in salient ways to the formation of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, the Western branch holds special distinction. No one held more respect and influence in the early Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene than Phineas F. Bresee. His name stands at the fore of Nazarene identity and efforts to build a Holiness denomination. Bresee would be the most significant voice of the Church of the Nazarene until his death in 1915. The church he founded together with Joseph Widney, the Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene, is popularly regarded as the ‘mother church’ of the denomination. It was this church whose location was just blocks away from the Azusa Street Revival and whose pastor, Dr. Bresee, would help shape the position of the Church of the Nazarene toward Pentecostalism.

*B. Selected Literature Review on the Church of the Nazarene*

Several publications concerning the Church of the Nazarene will be germane to this dissertation. Most significant, Timothy Smith has recorded the “official” history of the Church of the Nazarene in his *Called Unto Holiness*.<sup>1</sup> Smith, once chair of historical studies at Johns Hopkins University, was commissioned by the Church of the Nazarene to write its official history from the time of the Pilot Point union until 1933.

In *Called Unto Holiness* Smith locates the roots of the Church of the Nazarene in the merger of several Holiness groups that were predominantly urban in context. Smith charts the course of events from the birth of the American Holiness Movement to 1933, weaving together the story of how Holiness associations from the Northeast, Tennessee, Texas, and California coalesced to form today’s largest Wesleyan-Holiness denomination.

William Purkiser contributed a second volume to *Called Unto Holiness*, detailing the second twenty-five years of Nazarene history. Relying more upon quantitative data than Smith, Purkiser documents the rapid growth and changes in organizational structure of the Church of the Nazarene from 1939 to 1958. In his 1983 epilogue, Purkiser already notes “changing evangelistic methods” and the “lessening of the ‘second blessing’ emphasis” in preaching subsequent to 1958, raising questions about longitudinal changes connected to the institutionalizing of the denomination.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Other noteworthy histories of the Church of the Nazarene include James B. Chapman, *History of the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1926), and M. E. Redford, *The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1961).

<sup>2</sup> William Purkiser, *Called Unto Holiness Vol. 2* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1983), 310.



Additional salient research projects concerning the Church of the Nazarene include the work of Harold W. Reed. Reed, long-time president of Olivet Nazarene College (now University), identified the contributing sociological factors that facilitated the birth of the denomination out of several different Holiness groups. After reviewing in a lengthy fashion the history of sect and church types throughout the history of Christianity, Reed suggests that personalities, social situations, and crises were catalysts in bringing about the unification of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene as a denomination.<sup>3</sup>

Ron Benefiel, president of Nazarene Theological Seminary, wrote a dissertation in which he hypothesized that the process of secularization had progressed at different rates within various subgroups of the Church of the Nazarene.<sup>4</sup> Benefiel argued that internal conflict within the Church of the Nazarene could be expected on account of these differing rates of secularization. The dissertation concludes that the rate of secularization differs most with respect to the age, education, and region of those polled. Benefiel makes a valuable contribution in recognizing that, even within a denomination, various subgroups are at various positions on the church-sect continuum, helping to explain some internal tensions.

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<sup>3</sup> Harold W. Reed, *Growth of a Contemporary Sect-type Institution as Reflected in the Development of the Church of the Nazarene* (Th.D. diss., University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1943).

<sup>4</sup> Ron Benefiel, *The Church of the Nazarene: A Religious Organization in Change and Conflict* (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1986).

Charles Edwin Jones's well-received 1974 book, *Perfectionist Persuasion*, documents the church movement of early Holiness believers from 1867-1936.<sup>5</sup> Jones, who provides a social profile of the Holiness Movement, reveals his particular interest in early Nazarenes by his in-depth research and knowledge of them. Particularly fascinating and creative is the pictorial evidence Jones provides of the betterment of properties rented or owned by early congregations, a form of evidence I will continue in this dissertation. Jones's passion makes this text a wonderful read, while not compromising the objectivity of his research.

In a detailed analysis, Mark Quanstrom's *A Century of Holiness Theology*, published in 2004, articulates and documents clearly the way in which the understanding of the doctrine of entire sanctification, the most distinctive theological tenet of the Church of the Nazarene, had evolved from 1906 to 2004. Quanstrom noted that the change in understanding,

has resulted in two contemporaneous and competing definitions of entire sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene. Needless to say, this poses a problem for a denomination that understands its primary reason for being as the preservation and proclamation of a doctrine of entire sanctification.<sup>6</sup>

Quanstrom's astute observations highlight a significant theological tension in the Church of the Nazarene that has spawned much conversation and debate.

Most recently, Floyd Cunningham edited *Our Watchword & Song: The Centennial History of the Church of the Nazarene*, authored by Stan Ingersol, Harold E.

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1974).

<sup>6</sup> Mark Quanstrom, *A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene, 1905 to 2004* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2004), 11.

Raser, and David P. Whitelaw.<sup>7</sup> Published in 2009, this monumental work provides the most comprehensive accounting of Nazarene history, citing the salient shifts, trends, and factual details of the Church of the Nazarene since its inception. Moreover, this publication expands the telling of Nazarene history by providing details of Nazarene developments outside of the United States. Prior to its publication there had not been an official history of the denomination written in fifty years.

### *C. Selected Literature Review on 'Sect-Church' Research*

The sect-church dichotomy is among the most dominant and enduring conversations in the field of sociology of religion. The terms *sect* and *church* first acquired sociological significance in the work of Max Weber. *Sect* and *church* are just two of many *ideal types* that permeate Weber's theoretical toolbox. Ideal types, for Weber, are heuristic devices that facilitate thought, research, and conversation about real, dynamic phenomena. In his own words, Weber states that an ideal type arises,

by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to these one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found anywhere in reality.<sup>8</sup>

Ideal types, therefore, are not strict, rigid, or definitive descriptors that are exactly equated with the subject matter to which they refer. Rather, ideal types are conceptual models to which real phenomena more or less conform.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Stanley Ingersol, Harold Raser, and David Whitelaw, *Our Watchword and Song: The Centennial History of the Church of the Nazarene*, ed. Floyd Cunningham (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2009).

<sup>8</sup>Max Weber, *Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949), 91. See also, Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2001/1930).

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, German sociologists and political economist Max Weber appropriated the terms *sect* and *church* as a means to differentiate two types of religious organizations according to the way in which membership is gained.

Accordingly, Weber considered sects are those religious communities whose members *choose* to become members. Sects require members to be religiously qualified by adopting particular codes of behavior. Such religious qualifications distinguish sect members from the masses and limit the size of the sect. On the other hand, churches are those religious organizations whose membership can be mostly attributed to birth, according to Weber. Churches accommodate the masses and are marked by their inclusiveness. It is vital to note that Weber's turn-of-the-century European context, wherein nation-states sanctioned religious institutions, shaped his thinking significantly.

In recent years social scientists have noted the limitations of Weber's ideal types for research. Most notably, rational choice theorists have criticized Weber's ideal types as being too imprecise to base scientific conclusions or theoretical premises upon them. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge are among those who warn that Weber's ideal types contribute to the precariousness of sociology of religion as a science-based field of study. They conclude, "Weber's types prevent comparison and measurement, despite his claim that they are indispensable for this purpose," and thus they render Weber's concepts of sect and church as "un-ideal" types.<sup>9</sup> Despite their immeasurability, Weber's contributions have spawned significant discussions and a line of investigation within the field that should not be easily disregarded.

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<sup>9</sup>Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 19-20.

German Protestant church historian Ernst Troeltsch, a student of Weber's, expanded upon Weber's sect-church distinction. Moving beyond the scope of membership, Troeltsch observed within sects and churches a differing ethical stance toward their respective societies. Churches, according to Troeltsch, are conservative of the social order and find an ally in the state. He writes,

the fully developed Church, however, utilizes the State and the ruling classes, and weaves these elements into her own life; she then becomes an integral part of the existing social order; from this standpoint, then, the Church both stabilizes and determines the social order; in so doing, however, she becomes dependent upon the upper classes, and upon their development. The sects, on the other hand, are connected with the lower classes, or at least those elements in Society which are opposed to the State and to Society; they work upwards from below, and not downwards from above.<sup>10</sup>

For Troeltsch, the roots of sects and churches can be traced in the social teachings of Christianity all the way back to the teachings of the gospel in the Early Church. With the onset of modernity, however, the concept of church diminished and sects began to flourish. Troeltsch also predicted the growth of mysticism, a third form of religious association, as the modern world developed. Troeltsch considered mysticism, a desire for direct and inward religious experience, to be highly individualized and the result of the increased role of the lay believer.

It was not until the late 1920s, however, when H. Richard Niebuhr contributed the first sect-to-church *theory*.<sup>11</sup> In his landmark work, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, Niebuhr transcended a mere descriptive analysis of *sect* and *church*

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<sup>10</sup>Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Vol. 1* (New York: Macmillan, 1931/1912).

<sup>11</sup> Helmut Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1957/1929).

and instead outlined an evolutionary process whereby churches give birth to sects, which over time transform into churches, eventually leading to new sects once again.

According to Niebuhr, sects arise when a group within a church becomes dissatisfied with the acceptance by the church of certain social norms. The sect then begins as a reform movement outside the structure of the church. Already by the second generation, however, members of the sect lose the intensity of the first generation and lessen their tension with their surrounding society. Inevitably sects take on more churchly features as they become more institutionalized. The tension decreases to such a degree that the process begins anew when a group within the church seeks reform and an increased degree of tension with society.

Niebuhr also introduced the concept of denomination in recognition of the inadequacies of the sect-church taxonomy for the U.S. religious landscape. Since there is no one religious institution that monopolizes the state, the European concept of church is limited in its usefulness as a sociological description of U.S. religious bodies.

Denominations, according to Niebuhr, are those religious communities that exist in low tension with society but lack the ability to dominate society. Thus, there can be several denominations within any given society. Within the U.S. context, then, it may be more accurate to consider the sect-to-denomination trajectory of religious organization.

While Niebuhr's sect-to-church theory has explanatory usefulness in describing the evolution of many religious communities, it has proven to be limited in scope. Niebuhr's theory has failed to give explanation to religious communities that have seemingly maintained their sectarian stance over long periods of time. These "institutionalized sects" include the Amish and Quakers, both of whom have changed

relatively little over their long history in the United States.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, recent research confirms that in some limited cases religious organizations can transition from church-like communities to more sectarian ones, a complete reversal to the traditional trajectory.<sup>13</sup>

Several variations of the sect-church theory have appeared in the years since Niebuhr, but few have advanced the field of research significantly. Stark and Bainbridge opine that, “sociological efforts in the church-sect area subsequent to Niebuhr have been, for the most part, retrograde.”<sup>14</sup> Even so, there are several important contributions worthy of mention to the sect-church literature post Niebuhr.

Subsequent research has produced numerous sect taxonomies. Among the most notable are those of Wilson and Clark. The late Bryan Wilson, who devoted nearly all of his research to the study of sects, delineated various types of sects according to their respective mission including revolutionist, introversionist, manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist, and utopian sects.<sup>15</sup> Elmer T. Clark arrived at another taxonomy that utilized the categories of pessimistic-Adventist, perfectionist-subjectivist,

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<sup>12</sup>Michael Yinger opts for the term “established sect.” See Michael Yinger, *Religion in the Struggle for Power* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1946).

<sup>13</sup> See Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), and Rodney Stark, “The New Holy Clubs: Testing Church-to-Sect Propositions,” *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 2 (2001): 175-189.

<sup>14</sup>Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*, (Peter Lang: New York, 1987), 121.

<sup>15</sup> Bryan Wilson, “A Typology of Sects,” In *Sociology of Religion*, ed. Roland Robertson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 361-83.

charismatic-pentecostal, legalistic-objectivist, and communist for sorting the different types of sects.<sup>16</sup>

Benton Johnson furthered the study of sects by arguing for an analytical concept of sect that could be tested rather than the manufacturing of categories based upon the research of isolated historical sects. Johnson “proposed a definitional rummage-sale” that redeemed the study of sect and church.<sup>17</sup> Johnson reduced the identifiable characteristics of sects and churches to one: the degree of tension between religious organizations and their social environments, a characteristic that he suggested had been common to most understandings of sects and churches.<sup>18</sup> By using a single category (degree of tension) to define sect and church, Johnson corrected what had been seen as a deficiency in Weber research by providing a criterion for comparison and measurement.

Not long after Johnson’s contribution, Thomas O’Dea delineated five dilemmas of religious institutionalization that remain to this day central to the study of sects and churches. O’Dea identified five tensions, or dilemmas, *within* religious organizations as they institutionalized. Taking for granted Weber’s principle that religious charisma is unavoidably routinized, O’Dea suggests that religious bodies, as they institutionalize, encounter the dilemma of mixed motivations for participants. Religious participants, once motivated only to respond to the charisma of their leader, now have other

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<sup>16</sup> Elmer Talmage Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949).

<sup>17</sup> Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, “Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 18, no. 2 (1979): 123.

<sup>18</sup> See Benton Johnson, “On Church and Sect,” *American Sociological Review* 28 (1963): 536-349.



motivations as positions of power, prestige, and security are necessarily created. Another dilemma O'Dea identifies concerns the act of worship. As ritual of worship necessarily arises, he posits that the "inner dispositions" of worshippers become alienated from the symbols created to give expression to that "personal religiosity." Third, O'Dea identifies the tension stemming from bureaucratization, namely that the growth and addition of offices and positions for increasing effectiveness invariably undermine effectiveness. Next, a dilemma surfaces as religious organizations must communicate their beliefs. In the process of clarifying those beliefs, mystical experiences become codified into written form, always committing the error of reductionism, and requiring further codes to be established. The complex regulations detract from the mystical experiences, which can only be communicated via regulations. Finally, O'Dea points out the tension between conversion and coercion as it relates to power. On the one hand, religious organizations call individuals to conversion while, on the other hand, especially as they institutionalize, religious organizations are coercive of individuals as they support and are supported by secular institutions with whom they have formed allies. While O'Dea's five dilemmas are operative to some degree within all institutions, "there is reason to suspect that because of the unique character of the religious experience, its elements of incompatibility with institutionalization are more exaggerated than is the case with other areas of human activity."<sup>19</sup>

Over the past twenty years, the sect-church theory has matured and reached a new level of sophistication thanks to the contributions of Roger Finke, William Sims Bainbridge, and Rodney Stark. In various joint publications, these sociologists of

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<sup>19</sup>Thomas O'Dea, "Five Dilemmas in the Institutionalization of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1 (October 1, 1961): 38.

religion and other rational choice theorists have sought to articulate a theory of religion through propositions that draw upon principles of exchange, costs and benefits, and supply and demand.<sup>20</sup> Finke, Stark, and Bainbridge have buttressed many of the previously unsupported claims within the sect-church literature with solid, scientific research and in the process they have invigorated new conversations regarding free riders, religious compensators, and sect-to-church processes.<sup>21</sup> For the foreseeable future, sect-church research will likely continue in the general trajectory set forth by Finke, Stark, and Bainbridge and rational choice theorists.

One important deficiency in the sect-church literature bears mentioning at this point. The research of sects and churches has frequently highlighted profiles of leaders, membership qualifications, educational achievements, levels of affluence, and theological positions toward “the world.” While Niebuhr and others have demonstrated the role affluence plays in aiding the movement of a religious organization from sect-like to church-like, there is a paucity of research examining how race and gender interact with the sect-to-church movement. This void in research in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is lamentable considering not only the ways in which race and gender are socially constructed, but also the profound significance of race and gender in shaping the social structure of the United States in ways that have privileged white, Euro-American males. This dissertation hopes to open more widely this conversation and to address this vacuum in the literature.

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<sup>20</sup>See, for example, Rodney Stark and Finke, Roger, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>21</sup>Rodney Stark and Bainbridge, William Sims, *The Future of Religion* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985) especially chapters 2-7.

The lack of attention within the sect-to-church literature to issues of race and gender, coupled with a multiplicity of sect/church frameworks, requires that more precision be given to the terms ‘sect’ and ‘church’ as they related to race and gender. First, however, an observation related to the social environment of the United States between the years 1895-1985 must be noted. It must be admitted that, throughout U.S. history, the socio-political and economic structures have been controlled by and have benefited white males, particularly those of affluence. Racism, patriarchy, and classicism have permeated U.S. society since its inception through its various social institutions. Though it may be argued that persons of color and women have gained social standing in the latter parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, racial, gender, and economic inequality continue to plague U.S. society. As such, social respectability has been and continues to be defined in a way that endorses, supports, and reinforces whatever behaviors, values, ideas, and cultural habits are identified with white men. In keeping with Benton Johnson’s criterion of tension with the surrounding social environment, I propose that, to the degree that a religious organization legitimates the privileging of whites, males, and persons of affluence, it is consonant with a sociological understanding of ‘church.’ Conversely, to the degree that a religious movement critiques such privileging, it is to be more akin to a ‘sect,’ using race and gender as barometers in 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. society.

#### *D. Popular and Official Religion*

Another theoretical framework that is helpful in examining the repositioning of the Church of the Nazarene from the margins of U.S. society to a more respectable and mainstream position considers the degree to which religious organizations and their practices may be considered as “popular” or “official.” Whereas popular religions and

their practices are perceived as socially deviant, “official” religions have gained respectability and are considered normative. A brief review of research related to popular and official religions merits now our consideration.

The relatively recent burgeoning of academic interest in popular religion has resulted in a less disparaging attitude among scholars regarding what was once considered “false,” composed of “ignorance,” “antiquated,” or as “superstitions that are merely ‘unorthodox or false beliefs’.”<sup>22</sup> While there is now less debate regarding whether popular religion even merits academic study, significant questions have arisen concerning the definition of popular religion. “Popular religion” has been associated with religious expressions from all parts of the world at nearly all time periods in human history.<sup>23</sup> While “popular religion” is perhaps an easy label to apply, its overuse has rendered it “elusive” and an “epistemological object” lacking recognized content.<sup>24</sup> “Popular religion” has appeared as though it were an ahistorical and monolithic reality

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<sup>22</sup>Ana Maria Diaz-Stevens, “Analyzing Popular Religiosity for Socio-Religious Meaning.” *An Enduring Flame*. Ed. by A. M. Stevens-Arroyo and A. M. Diaz-Stevens. (New York: Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, 1994), 17. Also, A. Gurevich. *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*. Trans. J. Bak and P. Hollingsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xiv. Also Daniel Levine. *Popular Voices in Latin American Catholicism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 6.

<sup>23</sup>See, for example, Roy Anker, *Self-help and Popular Religion in Modern American Culture: An Interpretive Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999). Rosalind B. Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe, 1000-1300* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984). William Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (Westminster: A. Constable, 1896). Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Christian Parker, *Popular Religion and Modernization in Latin America* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996).

<sup>24</sup>Thomas Kselman, “Ambivalence and Assumption in the Concept of Popular Religion,” *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America*, Ed. by D. Levine. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 24.

able to transcend time and space.

Such an understanding of “popular religion,” however, poses grave epistemological concerns that post-modernists who stress the need to recognize the particular over the general have been quick to point out. To be sure, if one statement could be made about defining popular religion, it is that no one statement can adequately define popular religion. Benavides declares, “it is important to avoid hypostatizing this concept, as if popular religion were an atemporal entity recognizable through centuries and continents.”<sup>25</sup> Popular religion is always contextualized and, therefore, must be understood as being contextualized. In other words, those interested in popular religion are now forced to define exactly what is meant by their usage of the term if their scholarship is to be taken seriously in the postmodern era.

In recognition of the inadequacy of the term “popular religion,” alternative nomenclature has surfaced to better articulate “popular religious phenomena.” Descriptors such as “folk,” “nonofficial,” “subaltern,” “local,” and “peasant,” to name but a few, have been substituted for “popular” in an effort to give more meaning to an otherwise ambiguous concept and to describe a specific manifestation of a “popular” religious phenomenon. Once the process of contextualizing so-called “popular religion” begins, it quickly becomes apparent that it is impossible to speak of a single “popular religion.”

Curiously, the desire of Benavides and others to contextualize the definition of popular religion seems to move in the opposite direction from what Johnson, Stark, and

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<sup>25</sup>Gustavo Benavides, “Resistance and Accommodation,” *An Enduring Flame*, Ed. by A. M Stevens-Arroyo and A. M Diaz-Stevens. (New York: Bildner Center Publications, 1994), 39.

others have recently argued for with respect to definitions of sect. Johnson in particular sees historically-based definitions as prohibitive of theoretical analysis. Ergo, Johnson opts for analytical concepts rather than *historical* definitions. However, scholars of popular religion have attempted to move away from *essential* definitions in favor of *functional* and *relational* ones. Functional and relational definitions of popular religion allow for diverse religious phenomena which either relate or function in similar ways to be classified together.

When “official religion” is defined, it is most commonly clarified as “orthodox,” “clerical,” “established,” and “organized.”<sup>26</sup> At first glance it might appear as though “official religion” is in need of little explanation. Jacques Berlinerblau, however, is one of the few to suspect this designation and has delineated four different themes often associated with “official religion.” They include understanding “official religion” as the religion representing privileged economic classes, as “metaphysical-ethical rationalism,” as patriarchal religion, and as coercive power.<sup>27</sup> Much of the scholarship has treated these themes as if they were carried out in full consciousness. Unlike “popular religions” which may be represented in all shapes and sizes in any given society, “official religion” is unified and dominant within a society. This is not to say, however, that official religion is “internally homogenous.” Despite any variety to be found within an “official

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<sup>26</sup>Ellen Badone, *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 3 and Peter Williams, *Popular Religion in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 3-6.

<sup>27</sup>Jacques Berlinerblau, “Preliminary Remarks for the Sociological Study of Israelite ‘Official Religion’,” *Ki Baruch Hu* ed. by Robert Chazon (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 155-59. For further detail, see Berlinerblau’s article. Berlinerblau borrows the term “metaphysical-ethical rationalism” from Wolfgang Schluchter and, by this, wishes to draw a correlation between a common understanding of ‘official religion’ and Weber’s notion of “rationalization.”

religion,” it is nonetheless unified and “ultimately stands as a unity against others.”<sup>28</sup> The difference, however, lies in the hegemonic nature of “official religion” to act in collaboration with other collective social forces and to control and dominate “popular religions.”<sup>29</sup>

It is my contention that the social processes that have occurred within the Church of the Nazarene in the United States, which will be delineated in the upcoming chapters, have functioned in such a way as to make more “official” the denomination that once sat on the margins of U.S. society. Furthermore, this has happened as the Church has contributed to the marginalization of Pentecostalism, particularly as it has been expressed in the practice of glossolalia.

#### *E. A Look Ahead*

The dissertation will primarily draw upon archival documents and published works to delineate these sect-to-church processes. Subsequent chapters will detail the movement from sect-to-church by providing analyses of Nazarene responses to glossolalia, race, gender, and class relations within the Church of the Nazarene from 1906 to 1985. A final chapter, drawing upon Weber’s notion of elective affinities, will address the inter-relatedness of these various social relations and how they each have buttressed the conforming of the Church of the Nazarene to a status of respectability within U.S. society.

The sect-to-church movement of the Church of the Nazarene will be analyzed over the course of four chapters. The next chapter, chapter two, documents the historical

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<sup>28</sup>Jacques Berlinerblau, *The Vow and the "Popular Religious Groups" of Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

<sup>29</sup>Berlinerblau, *Preliminary*, 159.

tensions between the Church of the Nazarene and the Pentecostal/charismatic movements, particularly as they relate to the issue of “speaking in tongues.” The chapter shows how the leadership of the Church of the Nazarene gradually exercised control regarding this controversial issue and how the Church came to adopt a defined doctrinal position on the matter.

Chapter three will consider the history of race relations within the Church of the Nazarene. Early ministries among ethnic groups in the United States will be examined in addition to specific efforts to reach out the African-Americans through the creation of a district and bible school for African-Americans. I will conclude by suggesting that a process of whitening has taken place within the denomination.

Next, chapter four will argue that critics of the Azusa Street Revival highlighted features of the revival that have been socially constructed as feminine in U.S. society. The chapter then examines two processes within the Church of the Nazarene: the gradual erosion of the use of emotion in worship and a decline in the clerical role of women within the denomination.

Chapter five will look at how the Church of the Nazarene in the United States has moved into a higher social class. Founded in primarily urban contexts with the purpose of spreading the gospel among the poor, the Church of the Nazarene now has become predominantly suburban in orientation. This research will also show the role played by Nazarene institutions of higher education in gaining social status.

Finally, a concluding chapter will explore the interrelatedness and interdependence of these aforementioned processes by drawing heavily upon Weber’s notion of elective affinities. After reviewing how the anti-Pentecostalization, whitening,



masculinization, and embourgeoisement of the Church have moved the denomination in a church-like direction, I will offer some thoughts related to future research possibilities.

## Chapter 2

### ANTI-PENTECOSTALIZATION

#### *A. The Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition*

The Church of the Nazarene is historically and theologically located within the Wesleyan-Holiness branch of the Protestant tradition. This branch traces its lineage from the person of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who stressed the doctrine of Christian perfection.<sup>1</sup> Methodism flourished in the frontier of the United States. The itinerant form of ministry of Methodism transported clergy members to the location of the laity and was ideally suited for the mobile, economically unstable population that spread from the New England colonies westward. By the mid 1800s, however, the migration had slowed as towns and cities became established and Methodist families gained financial stability.

Ernst Troeltsch's well-documented thesis that upwardly mobile religious movements decreasingly experience tension with their surrounding societies seems to be evidenced in the case of American Methodism.<sup>2</sup> Some Methodists, favorable to modern thought, found the perpetual debate within Methodism regarding holiness to be more divisive than helpful, and devoted less attention to this matter of doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Other

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<sup>1</sup> For a first-hand account of Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection, see John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as Believed and Taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley from the Year 1725 to the Year 1777* (Chicago: The Christian Witness Company, n. d.). See also Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion* (London: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 1-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, vol. 1 (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> The debate within Methodism regarding sanctification has concerned whether one is made holy gradually or in an instantaneous moment. See Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998),

Methodists, resistant to becoming modern, increasingly insisted on understanding sanctification as an instantaneous work of grace that followed justification, or entire sanctification. The doctrine of entire sanctification called for a radical break from the vices of society. As the constituency served by Methodist churches became more economically stable and inclined to modern thought, some anti-modern Methodists lamented what they perceived to be a lessened emphasis upon the message of Christian perfection, or holiness.<sup>5</sup> As a result, an extra-ecclesiastical movement known as the Holiness Movement arose. The mother of the Holiness Movement, Phoebe Palmer, held the “Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness” in her home for at least twenty years during which at least two Methodist bishops participated.<sup>6</sup> Some others from outside of Methodism similarly took an interest in the message of holiness and soon independent associations, publications, and camp meetings that stressed the “higher life” appeared and appealed to Methodists and non-Methodists alike.<sup>7</sup> These associations and promoters of holiness stressed their belief that there was a second experience, subsequent

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chapter five. See also Steven W. Manskar, Diana Hynson, and Marjories Suchocki, *A Perfect Love: Understanding John Wesley’s “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection”* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Since the eighteenth century Wesley’s notion of Christian perfection has been referred to as holiness, “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” perfect love, the second blessing, the higher life, and entire sanctification, just to name a few, depending upon varying interpretations of Wesley by his contemporaries and later theologians.

<sup>6</sup> Timothy Smith, *Called Unto Holiness* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), 12.

<sup>7</sup> The beginning of the Holiness Movement is often dated to the publication of Timothy Merritt’s *Guide to Holiness*, initiated in Boston in 1839, which disseminated the teachings of Phoebe Palmer, who later served as its editor after the paper was published by her husband, a New York physician. For a thorough history of the Holiness Movement, one should consult Melvin Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980).

to one's conversion, in which believers become entirely sanctified, or made holy, and which enabled one to live out the Christian life more obediently at a deeper level.<sup>8</sup> This "higher way" of living became manifested in one's life through the exhibition of a high moral standard that placed the believer at odds with his/her social environment. Thus, Holiness believers would dress conservatively, refrain from the consumption of alcohol, and not hold membership in secret societies.

Reactions against social norms lay at the foundation of the first distinctively Wesleyan-Holiness denominations. Opposition to slavery led Orange Scott, Luther Lee, and a group of followers to found the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1843. The founders of the Wesleyan Methodist Church understood their promotion of the abolitionist and holiness causes as contributing to a recovery of, rather than a departure from, their Methodist roots. They attempted to preserve Christianity, to "Christianize Christianity." Founders of Wesleyan Methodism felt that Methodism, once opposed to slavery, had compromised its stance in light of mid-nineteenth century social norms.<sup>9</sup> The Free Methodist Church began in 1859 after B. T. Roberts refused to permit pew rental as a means of raising funds for a new church building in upstate New York. Roberts, also an abolitionist, rejected the practice that rewarded the financially stable in the church. Both

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<sup>8</sup> As alluded to in footnote 3, one must be careful not to use too broad of a stroke to cover over the various interpretations of the doctrine of entire sanctification that existed *within* the Holiness Movement. Indeed, the lack of agreement over the precise definition of entire sanctification was a significant contributor to the formation of the Pentecostal movement. For more about the differences between altar theology, Oberlin perfectionism, and Keswick holiness, the reader is again referred to Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*.

<sup>9</sup> Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Metuchen, NJ: Hendrickson Publishers, 1976), 73-5.

the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Free Methodist Church embraced the doctrine of entire sanctification and became ecclesiastical homes for advocates of holiness.

Mainstream Methodists thought that the Holiness believers overemphasized an instantaneous doctrine of Christian perfection, preferring a gradual understanding of the doctrine. Charges of extremism and fanaticism were frequently leveled against those who promoted the cause of holiness. In one verbal attack, Holiness supporters were labeled, “a troupe of traveling gypsies, tramps, wild fanatics, and vagabonds...guilty of all kinds of crime known to human depravity.”<sup>10</sup> John McClintock, however, announced, “It [holiness] may be called fanaticism, but that, dear friends, is our mission.” McClintock was the first president of Drew Theological Seminary and chairman of the committee charged with the commemoration of Methodism’s one hundredth anniversary in 1866.<sup>11</sup>

Even with the birth of several distinctly Wesleyan-Holiness denominations, many Holiness believers felt that sectarianism ought to be avoided if at all possible. Most understood the pan-denominational associations as supplementing their weekly services. But by the end of the nineteenth century, several developments made it increasingly difficult for promoters of holiness to remain loyal to their established denominations. First, the rejection by the northern bishops of the Methodist church in 1881 to organize a Holiness convention despite requests from prominent Methodist theologians led to the belief that an emphasis of holiness would only come about outside of the Methodist church. Second, an academic attack begun in 1888 upon the writings of John Wesley

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<sup>10</sup> *Good Way* III (October 15, 1881), 2, as quoted in Dieter, 214.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, 15.

diminished the centrality of Christian perfection in the theology of Wesley. Instead of lessening an interest in holiness, however, numerous books on holiness were written as refutations and resulted in a more heightened defense of the doctrine of Christian perfection.<sup>12</sup> For many promoters of holiness, the answer to the Church Question<sup>13</sup> was becoming clearer. At the turn of the century, mergers among and the eventual denominationalism of many Holiness groups seemed inevitable. Several of them would find a welcome extended to them by Phineas F. Bresee's Church of the Nazarene.

### *B. The Birth of the Church of the Nazarene in the West*

Phineas F. Bresee was born in a log cabin into a Methodist family on December 31, 1838 in Franklin, New York. Bresee's family moved to Davenport, New York, when he was twelve years of age. In Davenport, Bresee became converted as a believer in February, 1856 during a Sunday afternoon classmeeting at the age of sixteen just a few days after his pastor, Rev. Smith, had spoken to him about the condition of his soul.<sup>14</sup> Bresee soon thereafter received from Smith an exhorter's license to preach, though at first he was reluctant to use it. Bresee's ministry as a Methodist minister prospered after his move in 1857 to Iowa, where he would spend the next twenty-six years. Bresee's

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<sup>12</sup> Smith, 38-44. The primary book launching an attack on Wesley's notion of Christian perfection was J. M. Boland's *The Problem of Methodism* (Nashville: J.D. Barbee, 1889).

<sup>13</sup> The Church Question refers to the question as to whether holiness advocates ought to remain in their established churches (particularly the Methodist Church, North and South) or leave them and contribute to the formation of new denominations. Students of the "Church Question" often discuss whether particular individuals were "pushed out" of their church or if they were "come-outers" who chose to leave.

<sup>14</sup> E. A. Girven, *Phineas F. Bresee: A Prince in Israel* (Kansas City: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1916), 27-8. See also Donald P. Brickley, *Man of the Morning* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1960), 22-3.

brother-in-law had moved out there earlier in the year, and Bresee's family moved to Iowa to be with him in advance of the coming of the rest of his family later that year.

Though young, Bresee found plenty of ministerial need in Iowa as it was just being settled at the time and lacked ministers. He would serve many congregations in Iowa for twenty-five years. In the Galesburg circuit his staunch advocacy of abolitionism was tested, as will be noted in the next chapter. While in Chariton, Iowa, in 1866, Bresee reported being "baptized with the Holy Ghost," an event later understood as his moment of sanctification.<sup>15</sup> After suffering a financial setback in a silver mining investment in Mexico due to an explosion and admitted embarrassment related to it, Bresee decided to leave Iowa and, after consultation with and approval from his Methodist superior, Bishop Matthew Simpson, Bresee's family moved to southern California in the fall of 1883.

At this point we should pause and consider Bresee's Holiness orientation. Although he identified a particular evening in Clariton as the time when he was "baptized with the Holy Ghost," Bresee later admitted that he couldn't explain what had taken place until later. Of that evening he recounts,

There came one of those awful, snowy, windy nights, such as blow across the Western plains occasionally, with the thermometer twenty degrees below zero. Not many were out to church that night. I tried to preach a little, the best I could. I tried to rally the people to the altar, the few that were there, and went back to the stove, and tried to get somebody to the Lord. I did not find any one. I turned toward the altar; in some way it seemed to me that this was my time, and I threw myself down across the altar and began to pray for myself. I had come to the point where I seemingly could not go on. My religion did not meet my needs. It

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<sup>15</sup> Carl Bangs, *Phineas F. Bresee* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 33. The understanding of being "baptized with the Holy Spirit" can be traced within Methodism back to John Fletcher, a contemporary of John Wesley's. See Laurence W. Wood, "John Fletcher and the Rediscovery of Pentecost in Methodism," *The Asbury Theological Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Spring, 1998), 7-34. As the Holiness Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century moved beyond Methodism, so did the notion of being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

seemed as though I could not continue to preach with this awful question of doubt on me, and I prayed and cried to the Lord. I was ignorant of my own condition. I did not understand in reference to carnality. I did not understand in reference to the provisions of the atonement. I neither knew what was the matter with me, nor what would help me. But, in my ignorance, the Lord helped me, drew me and impelled me, and, as I cried to Him that night, He seemed to open heaven on me, and gave me, as I believe, the baptism with the Holy Ghost, though I did not know either what I needed, or what I prayed for.<sup>16</sup>

It would not be until he arrived in Los Angeles over fifteen years later that Bresee would better grasp what he had experienced in Clariton and the doctrine of holiness. The holiness doctrine was much more discussed and debated in California than in Iowa. The most significant influence upon Bresee's understanding of holiness came through the ministry of Holiness evangelists Dr. William MacDonald, Dr. George Watson, and J.A. Wood, who held revivals at Bresee's churches beginning a few years after his move. Says Bresee, "If I had known more when I came to this coast, and had had experience and sense, I could have swept the whole of Methodism into holiness."<sup>17</sup>

Bresee established himself as a prominent preacher of holiness during his ministry in Los Angeles. So successful was Bresee that Methodist Bishop William Mallalieu appointed him as the presiding elder of the Los Angeles District in 1891. Bresee used his position of influence to promote the message of holiness throughout the district. In 1892 bishop John Vincent, an opponent of Holiness advocates, appointed Bresee to serve Simpson Tabernacle, a debt-ridden Methodist church that soon Bresee recommended for closure. Bresee's last appointment as a Methodist was at Boyle Heights Methodist Episcopal Church from 1893-94.

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<sup>16</sup> Girven, 51-2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 85.



While serving at Boyle Heights, Bresee was asked by Theodore and Manie Ferguson to help establish an inner city mission, to be named Peniel Mission. According to Bresee,

It had been my long cherished desire to have a place in the heart of the city, which could be made a center of holy fire, and where the gospel could be preached to the poor. In the early part of this year (1894), such an opportunity presented itself. Persons into whose hands had come as a trust, an amount of money sufficient to open a work of this kind, came to me with proposals to enter upon such an enterprise...The conditions of this enterprise were such that, if it was entered upon, it must necessarily be undenominational.<sup>18</sup>

Bresee sought an appointment to Peniel Mission at the next Annual Conference of the Southern California District of the Methodist Church. Prior to the Conference, he had been informed that a regular appointment was not possible. He therefore requested a supernumerary relation, a “temporary exemption from traveling ministry because of ill health.” His request was denied, but Bresee was re-elected as a board member of the University of Southern California and kept his credentials in the Methodist church, being considered a local elder.<sup>19</sup>

Bresee began his work at Peniel Mission in October, 1894. During the summer of 1895, less than a year at Peniel Mission, Bresee went to Illinois to hold revival services. Bresee received the shocking news while out-of-state that the other leaders of Peniel Mission had terminated his connection with their work. The immediate cause is unclear. Bresee himself would only say that, “As to their [the leaders of Peniel Mission] course, and the treatment accorded me by them, which made it seem necessary for me to

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<sup>18</sup> Girven, 99-100.

<sup>19</sup> Bangs, 188-9.

withdraw myself finally from this work, I prefer to draw a veil.”<sup>20</sup> Smith suggests that the departure may have been related to an earlier visit to Peniel Mission by A. B. Simpson, whose views on divine healing and holiness Bresee considered extreme. Other possibilities include misunderstandings with the Fergusons over the role of young women at the Mission or Peniel’s foreign missions program.<sup>21</sup>

Bresee, together with Dr. J. P. Widney, former President of the University of Southern California, announced that they would continue with their desire to take the “good news” to the poor by offering a service on Sunday, October 6, 1895 in Red Men’s Hall, located at 317 South Main Street, one block south of Peniel Mission. Bresee and Widney’s Church of the Nazarene was birthed two weeks later at Red Men’s Hall with eighty-two members in attendance. The name had been offered by Dr. Widney, who wanted to convey the idea that the Church would identify with the “toiling, lowly mission of Christ,” whose enemies used the term “Nazarene” as a word of derision.<sup>22</sup>

The Church of the Nazarene flourished under Bresee’s leadership. Members of Bresee’s congregation started new congregations. In the five year period between 1900 and 1905, the Church of the Nazarene grew to twenty-six congregations and spread throughout several states. The Los Angeles congregation alone consisted of more than 1,500 members, roughly half of the 3,195 members of the entire denomination.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Bresee as quoted in Girven, 103.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, 109.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 110-11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 122.

### *C. The Azusa Street Revival*

Even as the Church of the Nazarene experienced significant growth, another movement soon entered the religious marketplace in Los Angeles. The Apostolic Faith Mission, of 312 Azusa Street, soon became the hub of the worldwide “Pentecostal movement.”<sup>30</sup>

There is some debate concerning the dating of the beginning of the modern-day “Pentecostal movement.”<sup>31</sup> On the evening of New Year’s Day, 1901, Agnes Guzman, a student of Holiness evangelist Charles Parham, testified in Topeka, Kansas to having been baptized in the Holy Spirit with the ability to speak in tongues. Within a few days, eleven other students received the gift of speaking in other languages before Parham himself received the gift.

It would be another one of Parham’s students, however, whose influence would create a worldwide stir after receiving the gift of tongues some five years after Guzman. William Seymour, a black student who wasn’t permitted to sit in the all-white audience, listened from outside to Parham’s lectures through a window of a Houston, Texas classroom. Seymour subsequently went to Los Angeles, arriving on February 22, 1906, at the request of Pastor Julia Hutchins, founder of a small Holiness congregation in Los

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<sup>30</sup> The Pentecostal movement has frequently been identified by the ability of its members to speak in known or unknown languages, or tongues, which believers hold is a gift given to them when they are baptized with the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal theology, however, is much more complex, as Donald W. Dayton has pointed out, and emphasizes, among other things, divine healing and particular eschatological views. The focal point of criticism by Nazarenes, however, is centered on the gift of tongues. See Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1996), 16.

<sup>31</sup> Dayton, 16.

Angeles. Hutchins, wanting to become a missionary to Liberia, extended the invitation to Seymour to pastor her congregation upon the recommendation of her parishioner, Ms. Neely Terry, who had been impressed by Seymour's preaching when she had visited relatives in Houston.<sup>32</sup> Respected Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan, now Dean at Regent University, had popularized the idea that Seymour was initially asked to come to Los Angeles to speak at a Nazarene church, which locked him out after hearing his teaching regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Subsequent research, however, has failed to substantiate that Mrs. Hutchins, the pastor of that church, was ever a Nazarene pastor or that there was a Nazarene mission at Ninth and Santa Fe Street.

While both Hutchins and Seymour agreed that sanctification came after one's conversion, they disagreed about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Hutchins, like most Holiness believers, understood the moment of sanctification as being the same time when one received the Holy Spirit. Seymour preached that the baptism of the Holy Spirit came after the time of sanctification and that it was accompanied by gift of speaking in tongues. This was too much for Hutchins who, by March 4<sup>th</sup>, that Seymour would not be the person most fitting to fill her pulpit. Having been denied opportunity to Hutchins's church, Seymour then held services at the home of Edward and Mattie Lee, attendees at Hutchins's church at whose house Seymour was staying. When the prayer meetings grew to about a dozen people, Seymour moved them sometime between March 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> to the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry. The Asberrys had a larger home at 214 Bonnie

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<sup>32</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 45-50.

Brae, two blocks away from the Lee residence.<sup>33</sup> The meetings shortly outgrew the home and the services were moved to 312 Azusa Street, a storage warehouse that had formerly been an African Methodist Episcopal church.

The services at Azusa Street were characterized by interracial gatherings, emotional outbursts, and speaking in known, but more often unknown, tongues.<sup>34</sup> The media in Los Angeles quickly took notice of the meetings on Azusa Street where, it was reported, they “preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal.”<sup>35</sup> Though the leaders of the Church of the Nazarene refused to initially comment upon the meetings at Azusa Street, it is clear that Nazarenes were attending the meetings. This is not surprising, after all, considering that the site of the Revival was about one-half of a mile from the First Church of the Nazarene.

#### *D. The Impact of Azusa Street upon the Church of the Nazarene*

The “tongues” movement quickly became a threat to the very existence of many established Holiness churches. A significant number of individuals abandoned their Holiness churches and joined the Pentecostal movement. According to Mel Robeck, half of the Holiness denominations listed in the *1906 Los Angeles City Directory* went out of existence that year.<sup>36</sup> Holiness denominations and missions such as the Church of the Nazarene, the Burning Bush, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Pillar of Fire,

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<sup>33</sup> Robeck, 60-5.

<sup>34</sup> Joe Newman, *Race and the Assemblies of God: The Journey from Azusa Street to the “Miracle of Memphis”* (Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), 18 April 1906.

<sup>36</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, “Azusa’s Initial Impact on the Holiness Churches in Los Angeles,” unpublished manuscript, 1.

and the Penial Mission all felt the impact of the pentecostal meetings taking place at 312 Azusa Street.

While the permanence of the Church of the Nazarene does not seem to have been seriously threatened, the literature demonstrates that the “tongues” movement made an impact upon the people called Nazarenes. In the very first issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, the publication circulated from Azusa Street, the Apostolic Faith Movement boasts of Nazarenes who were being filled with the Spirit. It states, “A Nazarene brother who received the baptism with the Holy Ghost in his own home in family worship, in trying to tell about it, said, ‘it was a baptism of love.’” Just a few paragraphs further down, the healing account of Brother Campbell, an 83 year-old Nazarene who received the gift of tongues, is recounted. Campbell’s son, a physician, verified that his father was not ill, but only “happy in the Lord.”<sup>37</sup> In addition to Brother Campbell, the publication reports that, “numbers of the different missions and the New Testament and Nazarene people are being filled with the Spirit and carrying the blessed light to other hungry souls.”<sup>38</sup> Nazarenes in the Elysian Heights neighborhood who received the gift of tongues left their church after being rejected and started their own prayer meetings.<sup>39</sup> Pentecostal missions sprang up all over the Los Angeles area in a matter of just a few months. Several of these missions became quite strong in areas where Nazarenes had established churches, including Pasadena and Whittier.

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<sup>37</sup> Untitled Items, *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (1906): 1.

<sup>38</sup> “Russians Hear In Their Own Tongue,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (1906): 4.

<sup>39</sup> “Spreads the Fire,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (1906): 4.

The Church of the Nazarene lost clergy members as well to the tongues movement. F. E. Hill, a Nazarene pastor for twenty years, testified that the Lord gave him “the evidence of Pentecost” on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1906, after three weeks of studying the Scriptures and praying.<sup>40</sup> By November of the same year, Hill went to San Diego and reported that there was great interest among the people in the message of Pentecost.<sup>41</sup> Hill continued to report the progress of his work in San Diego until at least April, 1907, to *The Apostolic Faith* and frequently contributed poems. Another Nazarene pastor, attending a Pentecostal campmeeting at Twelfth and Division streets in Portland, Oregon, received her baptism of the Holy Spirit during the summer of 1907.<sup>42</sup>

While laity and clergy members of the Church of the Nazarene were attending Pentecostal services and camp meetings, there are no accounts that indicate that Bresee made the trip just a few blocks over to Azusa Street to observe the meetings. This is not to say that Bresee was lacking in information about the services. Bresee made judgments concerning the activities based upon “our own observation, or that we have seen experted by competent examination.”<sup>43</sup> Over the course of the first six months of the Revival in 1906, leaders of the Church of the Nazarene made no statement regarding the well-reported services that were taking place just four blocks away. When Bresee finally broke his silence, he indicated that he had not deemed the meetings worthy of public attention. Bresee opined,

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<sup>40</sup> “Get Into the Cornfield,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (1906): 1.

<sup>41</sup> “Pentecost in San Diego,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 4 (1906): 1.

<sup>42</sup> “The Revival in Portland,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 9 (1907): 1.

<sup>43</sup> Phineas Bresee, “Editorial,” *The Nazarene Messenger* 11, no. 24 (1906): 6.

Locally it is of small account, being insignificant both in numbers and influence. Instead of being the greatest movement of all times, as represented—in Los Angeles, at least—it is of small moment. It has had, and has now, upon the religious life of the city, about as much influence as a pebble thrown in the sea.<sup>44</sup>

Bresee, however, underestimated the movement that would continue to increase throughout his lifetime and draw people away from the Church of the Nazarene. The publication of his response in the *Nazarene Messenger* itself points to the interest that other Nazarenes had with regard to the Apostolic Faith Mission. Bresee makes reference to the fact that there were many who were writing to him about the Azusa Street services.

Bresee's remarks merit careful analysis. As the General Superintendent of the Church and as one whose church was so near to Azusa Street, Bresee gained the attention of many Nazarenes. Leaders of other Holiness denominations undoubtedly read Bresee's observations and took his views into consideration in formulating their own responses to the Azusa Street revival, especially in light of the rapid growth that the Church of the Nazarene was experiencing.

The new religious movement, according to Bresee's editorial, suffered from two major flaws. First, it partook in fanaticism. While Bresee does not define exactly what he means by fanaticism, it is evident that extreme amounts of physical activity or emotionalism and physical activity without any discernible meaning, such as speaking in senseless tongues, partly contributed to his understanding of fanaticism.

Second, Bresee charged that the doctrine espoused in the meetings were heretical. Specifically, two heresies were committed, according to Bresee. The first heresy is the distinction between the sanctification of a believer and the believer's baptism with the Holy Spirit. The new teaching promoted the idea that baptism with the Holy Spirit is a

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 6.



separate act that comes after one is sanctified. The second heresy, according to Bresee, is the declaration that speaking in tongues is the essential and necessary evidence that one has been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

The tone and language of Bresee's remarks contribute to his disdain of the new movement. Bresee felt as though poor people in Los Angeles were being "deluded" by the heretical doctrines. Bresee delineates the differences between the "good old way of entire sanctification" espoused by his church and the "strange fire" promoted by the Apostolic Faith Mission where "they are blown about by every wind of doctrine." Even more directly and strongly stated is Bresee's judgment upon those who spoke in tongues: "These are more less people whose experience is unsatisfactory, who have never been sanctified wholly, or have lost the precious work out of their hearts, who will run after the hope of exceptional or marvelous things, to their own further undoing."<sup>45</sup>

C. E. Cornell is reported to have deliberately sent over individuals to Azusa Street after he succeeded Bresee as pastor of the Los Angeles congregation in 1911. According to George A. Rogers, in a letter written to Warren Black, there were six men that "Cornell sent to Azusa Street (in Los Angeles) to investigate and to report back to C. E. Cornell."<sup>46</sup> The negative images relayed by these six men would dictate the reactions of Nazarenes to the "tongues" movement for years to come.

#### *E. Other Nazarene Responses to the "Tongues" Movement*

Bresee's Church of the Nazarene was one of several Holiness groups that would later merge to become the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. Bresee's churches in the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>46</sup> Dan Brady, "Appeal for Integrity, 1983," Daniel Brady file, Nazarene Archives, Kansas City.

West joined together with the Association of Pentecostal Churches from the East in 1907 before uniting with the Holiness Church of Christ in Pilot Point, Texas, in October, 1908.<sup>47</sup> (It should be noted that the term ‘Pentecostal’ was used throughout the nineteenth and very early twentieth century in reference to the workings of the Holy Spirit. Its association with tongues-speaking would develop after 1910). Another major body to merge with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene in 1915 was J. O. McClurkan’s Pentecostal Mission from Tennessee. As the “tongues” message spread across the country from Azusa Street, the Holiness groups that would later become Nazarene were responding to the “tongues” issue.

Numerous articles were written in *The Texas Holiness Advocate* (later renamed *The Pentecostal Advocate*), the publication of the Holiness Church of Christ, that document concerns over Pentecostalism in Texas. Rev. R. L. Averill first reported about the Azusa Street services in late July, 1906.<sup>48</sup> Later, in an editorial, he noted that there were fifty-seven people in Wallace, Texas, as many as thirty-five in Bay City, Texas, and “in the Rymon neighborhood, near Bay City, nearly the whole community” who practiced tongues.<sup>49</sup> Readers of the *Pentecostal Advocate* also heard first-hand accounts of the “divisive” meetings at Azusa Street from I. G. Martin.<sup>50</sup> Yet another observer questioned “how any person with a thimble full of brains, much more a Bible student, can

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<sup>47</sup> For a detailed account of the histories of the various parent bodies, see Smith.

<sup>48</sup> R. L. Averhill, “Southern Texas Holiness,” *Texas Holiness Advocate* (July 26, 1906), 4.

<sup>49</sup> R. L. Averhill, “The Tongues People as I Saw Them,” *Pentecostal Advocate* (January 10, 1907), 2.

<sup>50</sup> I. G. Martin, “Los Angeles Letter,” *Pentecostal Advocate* (December 12, 1906), 2.

defend such performances in the name of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>51</sup> One can conclude that the “tongues” issue was significant for the members of the Holiness Church of Christ by the amount of space given to the subject by the editors of the *Pentecostal Advocate*.

The Texan churches would continue to encounter difficulties with the advocates of *glossolalia* after their merger with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. Members of the first assembly of the Abilene District stated,

We would sound a note of warning against formalism on the one side and fanaticism on the other; the “Tongues Movement” has destroyed three of our churches on this District and we warn our preachers and people of this, because it is destructive to Christian influence and paralyzing to the real work of God wherever it goes.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, the Holiness group based in Nashville, Tennessee, that would later merge with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene struggled with the message of Pentecost. J. O. McClurkan’s *Pentecostal Mission* appears to have been less willing to demonize the new doctrine than either the Nazarenes in the West or the Holiness associations in Texas. In 1908 some students and preachers of the “tongues” persuasion at McClurkan’s Bible school, which would later become Trevecca Nazarene College, asked to be granted preaching certificates. The response of McClurkan and his colleagues to postpone, rather than deny, the granting of certificates demonstrates the mixed emotions of the Board. The issue was taken up again thirteen months later. John T. Benson, later to be a Nazarene publisher and a key figure in the merger of the

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<sup>51</sup> Amanda Coulson, “The Tongues Movement as I Saw it,” *Pentecostal Advocate*, (May 18, 1911), 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Official Minutes of the First District Assembly of the Abilene District* (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives, 1909), 34.

Pentecostal Mission with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, is recorded in the Minutes as being in favor of granting the certificates.<sup>53</sup>

McClurkan and the Pentecostal Mission, however, ultimately rejected the issuance of certificates to those who spoke in tongues. Yet, despite their rejection, the Pentecostal Mission, until its merger with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, was a place to where future Pentecostal leaders seem to have been drawn. Both N. J. Holmes and John Todd, Sr. would leave the Pentecostal Mission and join the Pentecostal Holiness Church. Likewise, M. M. Pinson, one of the founders of the Assemblies of God, was an associate of J. O. McClurkan.<sup>54</sup>

#### *F. The Changing of a Name*

As the tongues movement grew in numbers and spread all throughout the world, a significant change in terminology transpired. Due to the claim among the tongues people that they were direct theological descendants of the group of believers that gathered together on the Day of Pentecost, recorded in the second chapter of the New Testament book of Acts, the adjective “pentecostal” was increasingly applied to them. For the previous one hundred years, members of the Holiness Movement frequently utilized the term “pentecostal” to emphasize their affirmation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. Such was the case with the Association of Pentecostal Churches, the Holiness group that merged with Bresee’s Church of the Nazarene in 1907 to form the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. It was not until after 1910, when the term

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<sup>53</sup> John T. Benson, Jr., *A History of the Pentecostal Mission, Inc.*, (Nashville: Trevecca Press, 1977), 93-95.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 93. See also Charles Bradshaw, *Profiles of Faith*, (Kansas City: Nazarene archives), for information concerning the involvement of the Pentecostal Mission with the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

“pentecostal” became routinely associated with the “tongues” movement, that believers in holiness began to discard its use.

At the Fifth General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene held in 1919 in Kansas City, thirty-six resolutions proposed the elimination of the word “Pentecostal” from the official name of the denomination. Individuals opposed to the name change considered the proposal as a capitulation to the “tongues” movement. Just prior to the assembly that began September 25, 1919, Rev. John Norberry argued, “Some one unwisely said in our hearing that the name ‘Pentecostal’ brought upon us some *reproach* because of the ‘Tongues’ people. Beloved, have we Holiness people got so *popular*, so *nice*, so *respectable* that we can not stand a little reproach?”<sup>55</sup> The motion carried, however, and the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene has since that time been called the Church of the Nazarene.<sup>56</sup> Recognizing the loyalty that many Nazarenes held for its name, the editor of the *Herald of Holiness* suggested that, “An advance step was taken in the change of the name of the Church to ‘The Church of the Nazarene.’ There was a general demand for a change of name, but as a rule, merely for the sake of abbreviating [*sic*] the name.”<sup>57</sup> Norberry’s article, however, coupled with other evidence, indicates that an aversion to the Pentecostal movement was the motivation behind the name change. It is important to note, however, that while the Church of the Nazarene thus

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<sup>55</sup> John Norberry, “Changing Our Church Name,” *Herald of Holiness* (24 September 1919), 11.

<sup>56</sup> See General Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene, “Minutes of the Fifth General Assembly,” *Herald of Holiness* (15 October 1919), 7.

<sup>57</sup> “An Epochal General Assembly,” *Herald of Holiness* (8 October 1919), 1.

distanced itself from the Pentecostal movement, it did not adopt any language at the General Assembly that specifically denounced Pentecostalism or speaking in tongues.

*G. The Merger of the Calvary Holiness Church (1955)*

During the period of time between 1919 and 1954 the Church of the Nazarene continued to expand in membership both in the United States and abroad with little recorded interference from or mentioning of Pentecostal churches.<sup>58</sup> This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that, despite the well-known antipathy of Nazarene members to the gift of tongues, no formal opposition to the practice was found within its doctrine. The issue, however, would soon surface again as the possibility of a merger with a British Holiness group, the Calvary Holiness Church, arose.

The merger of the Calvary Holiness Church with the Church of the Nazarene would be a source of hope for Nazarenes who would later receive the gift of tongues. While it had been clear since the beginning of the Azusa Street Revival that Nazarene leaders deemed the experience of speaking in tongues to be “fanatical” and “unsensible,” *glossolalia* had not been ecclesiastically outlawed in the church’s polity. The Calvary Holiness Church remained open to the practice of *glossolalia*, recognizing it as a valid gift of the Spirit.

As the Church of the Nazarene continued to grow by means of new converts, it also became the preeminent Holiness denomination through its mergers with other Holiness groups around the world. The Church of the Nazarene had taken pride in its spirit of diversity and always stressed its emphasis upon the essentials of Christian

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<sup>58</sup> Nazarenes, however, continued to write polemics against the gift of “tongues” during the 20s and 30s. Among the most notable writers were B. F. Neely, C. W. Ruth, and H. Orton Wiley, all of whom contributed articles to *Herald of Holiness*.

experience in dealings regarding mergers with other Holiness groups. In fact, Phineas F. Bresee was well-known for his quote, “Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, in all else charity,” which he appropriated from Philip Melancthon. According to Smith, “As for Bresee, the cornerstone of his doctrinal policy to the end of his days was liberality in all matters not in his view absolutely essential to salvation.”<sup>59</sup>

Bresee’s instruction on liberality had enabled the Church of the Nazarene to settle issues regarding church governance with the Association of Pentecostal churches in 1908 and to embrace members of the Holiness Church of Christ (of Texas) in 1907 despite their more rigid stances on strict pre-millennialism, the wearing of wedding rings, and tobacco use. The question posed to the Church of the Nazarene in the 1950s concerned whether the Church of the Nazarene would be inclusive of those who claimed the gift of tongues.

George Frame, district superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene in Britain, initiated the dialogue that would eventually bring the Calvary Holiness Church into his denomination. The Calvary Holiness Church began in 1934 when Maynard James, Jack Ford, Leonard Ravenhill, and Clifford Filer resigned from the International Holiness Mission (IHM) in Britain. The IHM had been incorporated in 1920 and was led by an Executive Council comprised of laymen and ordained ministers, though its Constitution legally prevented ministers receiving a salary from the IHM from having a recognized vote. In 1928 Maynard James initiated trekking within the IHM. Trekkers “tramped from place to place with their sleeping bags and the bare necessities of life on a two-wheeled trek cart, subordinating everything to the main purpose of winning the

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, 118.

uncommitted to a decision for Christ.”<sup>60</sup> The trekking efforts were overwhelmingly successful and, as a result, new missions were formed. Over the course of five years, the number of IHM ministers grew from five to sixteen.<sup>61</sup>

In 1934 Jack Ford and Michael Keely were chosen by the Executive Council to join James to evangelize through trekking and holding revival campaigns. However, differences of opinion with members of the Executive Council, in particular with George D. Holmes, soon created a high level of tension. Two issues lay at the root of the tension. First, James desired that a provision should be made to allow ministers a legal vote on the Executive Council. Second, Holmes feared that faith healing that had taken place in previous revival campaigns led by the Trekkers, if continued, “could be taken to fanatical lengths.” Holmes and others on the Executive Council felt that the previous healing campaigns “smacked too strongly of Pentecostalism for their liking.”<sup>62</sup> In January, 1934, the Executive Council voted to keep their constitution unalterable, thus preventing salaried ministers from a vote. But the decisive point came in October of that year when the council took up the issue of Pentecostalism. The council voted to require those leading revival campaigns to forbid speaking in tongues. James, Ford, Leonard Ravenhill, and Clifford Filer, none of whom claimed the gift of tongues, nonetheless felt it unbiblical to deny that such a gift existed. The four resigned together from the IHM with the support of Ravenhill’s church in Oldham and Filer’s church in Salford.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Jack Ford, *In the Steps of John Wesley: The Church of the Nazarene in Britain* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968), 114.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.



James, Ford, Ravenhill, and Filer formed the Calvary Holiness Church (CHC). Dealt a devastating loss of personnel and numbers, IHM nevertheless continued their mission to spread the message of holiness. For the next fifteen years various meetings would take place between the IHM and the Calvary Holiness Church for the purpose of reconciliation and possible re-merger, but the IHM eventually postponed the decision indefinitely.<sup>64</sup> The IHM never fully recovered from the split. The subscription list for the *Flame*, edited by James for the Calvary Holiness Church, soon grew to eighteen thousand, three times the subscription level of *Spiritual Life*, the IHM's counterpart publication.<sup>65</sup> The IHM, whose financial woes impeded their growing work in South Africa, merged with the Church of the Nazarene in October, 1952, as a result of conversations between the Executive Council and George Frame, district superintendent of the British Isles District of the Church of the Nazarene.<sup>66</sup>

George Frame, having successfully orchestrated the merger of IHM with the Church of the Nazarene, now in 1953 contemplated the possibility of completing a similar move with the Calvary Holiness Church. There had already been significant exchanges between the Calvary Holiness Church and the Church of the Nazarene. In the immediate months after resigning from the IHM, the founders of the CHC had been active in several Nazarene campaigns. Soon, however, they founded their own

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 127-8.

<sup>65</sup> Ian Randall, "The Pentecostal League of Prayer: A Transdenominational British Wesleyan-Holiness Movement," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33, no. 1 (1998): 195.

<sup>66</sup> W. T. Purkiser, *Called Unto Holiness: The Second Twenty-five Years, 1933-58* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1983), 261.

denomination to support the two churches that left with them and published the *Flame*. The Calvary Holiness Church flourished over the next twenty years, especially overseas in Colombia. Similar to the IHM, however, economic issues were a concern as missionary work abroad outpaced the denomination's financial base in Britain. World War II had dealt a financial blow and the CHC also suffered key losses in among its leadership due to health issues. Having welcomed the possibility to reconcile differences with the IHM, the Calvary Holiness Church now looked to the Church of the Nazarene after the merger of those two ecclesiastical bodies.<sup>67</sup>

After discussions with George Frame, the major obstacle to a possible merger with the Nazarenes was the same one that had caused the founders to resign from the IHM in 1934. Initially, hesitancy abounded among the clergy of the Calvary Holiness Church because they felt obligated to protect the interests of their own members who professed the gift of speaking in tongues.<sup>68</sup> James, trying to craft a compromise situation to appease both the Nazarenes and members of his own denomination, drafted a doctrinal statement and addressed it to Frame in a letter. In it James lists the position of the CHC,

- (1) We do *not* believe that speaking in other tongues is the initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - (2) We do not deny that there may be a genuine gift of 'tongues' in operation today, and so we dare not adopt the unscriptural attitude of forbidding to speak in another tongue *provided* we are *sure* it is really of the Holy Spirit...
  - (3) We believe that 'speaking in tongues' is the least of the nine gifts... Time and again it has been found that its unwise use in the church assemblies has led to strife, spiritual pride and division...
- Therefore... we feel, after painful experience, that we cannot encourage our people to speak in other tongues in Church gatherings...

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<sup>67</sup> Ford, 167-69.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 170.

- (4) We believe that the infallible proofs of a Spirit-filled life are: a) purity of heart..., b) the fruits of the Spirit ..., c) perfect love to God and men..., [and] d) power for effective service for Christ...
- (5) If freedom of conscience be given to us on the aforementioned matters, and confidence be reposed in us as ministers of Christ to do all in our power to further the interests of Scriptural holiness through the agency of the Church of the Nazarene, then we would gladly welcome the fusion of the C.H.C. into the Church of the Nazarene and would count it a privilege to serve as ministers in its ranks.<sup>69</sup>

While downplaying the gift of tongues in relation to the other gifts of the Spirit, the document clearly recognizes the validity of the gift of tongues. Frame forwarded the position of the CHC to the Board of General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene. After considerable debate before the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene, Jack Ford put forward the following resolution,

That the statement drawn up by our President, Rev. Maynard G. James, which has been laid before the General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene expresses the convictions of those of the Calvary Holiness Church concerning the Gifts of the Spirit.

We understand that, in welcoming us into the Church of the Nazarene, the authorities give us freedom to hold these convictions although they may not express the official Nazarene attitude.

We join the Church of the Nazarene loyally accepting the Manual and desiring to serve with freedom of conscience as loyal Nazarenes.<sup>70</sup>

This statement became the preamble to the statement that was formulated as the Basis of Union. On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1955 the union of the Calvary Holiness Church and the Church of the Nazarene was consummated in Manchester by General Superintendent Samuel Young.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 171-2.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>71</sup> Purkiser, 265.

Of particular importance is the historical shift that occurred with the merger of the Calvary Holiness Church with the Nazarenes. The Church of the Nazarene continued its process of church growth by casting a wide net out to denominations that share the same “essentials” of holiness. The conditions which were agreed permitted one to recognize the validity of “speaking in tongues” as a gift while discouraging its public practice.

#### *H. The Charismatic Movement*

The Pentecostal movement that spread from Azusa Street gave birth to a number of denominations including the Assemblies of God, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the Church of God in Christ, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church, to name only a few. Over the course of years the Pentecostal movement led to Pentecostal denominations which stabilized and institutionalized. Yet by 1960 a new, second wave of the Pentecostal movement, known as the Charismatic movement, or Neo-Pentecostalism, emerged.

Unlike “classical Pentecostalism,” the Charismatic movement did not give birth to new denominations. Rather, it was a movement of the Spirit that occurred among members of mainline churches within their respective denominations, including the Episcopal church, Methodist church, and Roman Catholic church. According to Richard Quebedeaux, the Charismatic movement can be traced to the formation of the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI) and to the voice of David Du Plessis, a minister in the Assemblies of God.<sup>72</sup>

A group of Pentecostal business and professional men started the FGBMFI in Los Angeles in 1951. Local chapters of the FGBMFI soon appeared all throughout the

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<sup>72</sup> Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 53-4.

country and helped give respect to Pentecostalism. The success of the FGBMFI arose, in part, on account of its publishing efforts. The FGBMFI published *Voice*, full of testimonies of men experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, on a monthly basis. The organization also published books that recorded the pouring out of the Spirit within specific denominations. David Du Plessis quickly became a spokesperson for Pentecostalism to mainline churches during the ecumenical movement. Du Plessis was instrumental in helping Pentecostal churches gain respectability within mainline Christianity.

The first significant impact of the Charismatic movement of the 1960s involved St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Van Nuys, California. Pastor Dennis Bennett had led his congregation in growth from 500 members to 2500 in eight years when he received the gift of tongues in 1960.<sup>73</sup> The division that came about when Bennett revealed to his congregation in a sermon that he had received the gift became headline news and led to his resignation as pastor. The movement, however, had begun and from there Bennett moved to another Episcopal church in Seattle and began a career as a popular speaker.

After being birthed in the Episcopal Church, it did not take long for the Charismatic movement to significantly impact the Church of the Nazarene. The FGBMF published a number of booklets in their promotion of the Pentecostal message. One of them, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit among the Nazarenes Today*, made public the testimonies of fourteen Nazarene pastors who received the gift of tongues and the reactions of their respective congregations and districts.<sup>74</sup> Among the contributors to the

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<sup>73</sup> Idem.

publication is Warren Black, whose employment at Nazarene Headquarters in Kansas City made him well-known throughout the denomination. Another testimony is that of Wilbur L. Jackson, a Nazarene pastor in Vandalia, Ohio, who was influenced by *Voice* magazine and received the gift of tongues after attending a message spoken by Bennett in 1971.<sup>75</sup> Similar experiences took place in the lives of Nazarene clergy and laity all throughout the nation and a network of charismatic Nazarenes was forming.

Though there were a limited number of Nazarene clergy who professed to having received the gift of tongues, many Nazarenes adopted a moderate view that recognized the validity of the gift of tongues without practicing it. Among those holding such a view were Dr. Ralph Earle, biblical professor at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Dr. T. W. Willingham, Dr. Albert Harper, and Dr. Norman Oke.

For many of the Nazarenes who held a “moderate” view regarding speaking in tongues, the real issue at hand concerned how one interpreted 1 Corinthians chapter 14 where Paul mandated the Corinthians not to forbid speaking in tongues. Some opponents of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements argue that the tongues to which Paul referred were known languages (xenolalia) similar to the tongues received on the Day of Pentecost. However, a significant number of Nazarene biblical scholars, clergy, and laity accepted the opinion of most biblical scholars that the tongues about which Paul wrote were unintelligible (glossolalia). As Nazarenes grappled with formulating a response to

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<sup>74</sup> Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit Among the Nazarenes Today*, (Los Angeles: Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, 1973). For more regarding the Charismatic influence and churches of the Wesleyan persuasion see Howard Snyder, *The Divided Flame: Wesleyans and Charismatic Renewal*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1986).

<sup>75</sup> Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, 12.

the charismatic movement, a significant question arose regarding who had the right to interpret scripture.

### *I. The Brazilian Crisis*

While local Nazarene congregations all throughout the United States had begun to respond to the charismatic movement, it was the Pentecostal influence of Brazilian nationals that became a catalyst of worry and concern for the Board of General Superintendents. According to the Nazarene missionaries in Brazil, approximately eighty percent of all Brazilian Christians were of the Pentecostal persuasion in 1971. In that year the Church of the Nazarene had nineteen churches planted in southern Brazil. About half of the Brazilian Nazarene pastors had personally received the gift of tongues and in four of the churches tongues were occasionally spoken during worship.<sup>76</sup> As the time approached for some of the pastors to be ordained as ministers, Earl Mosteller, the pioneer missionary of the Church of the Nazarene in Brazil and the Field Superintendent, discussed the issue with Nazarene missionaries Roger Maze, Jim Bond, and Don Stamps. Maze and his wife, Mary, had come to Brazil in 1964 and he wrote his master's thesis at Garrett on the issue of tongues. Jim and Sally Bond and Don and Linda Stamps had just been appointed missionaries. The Bonds and Stamps had only been in Brazil for a few weeks when the question of ordaining tongues-believing national pastors arose. Mosteller was disturbed upon realizing that all three missionaries acknowledged the gift of tongues as a valid gift of the Spirit, though not as the evidence of having been baptized in the Holy Spirit.<sup>77</sup> The missionaries recognized that speaking in tongues in public

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<sup>76</sup> Bob Burke, *Push Back the Darkness; the Story of Don Stamps and the Full Life Study Bible* (Springfield, MO: Lumina Press, 1995), 128.

services could lead to confusion and disorder and therefore they did not wish to promote its public practice. They felt, though, that they could not in good conscience deny that individuals may possess the gift.

Mosteller wrote to Dr. V. H. Lewis, the General Superintendent in jurisdiction for the Brazil district, concerning the matter. As a result Lewis requested that each missionary write out his position on the tongues question.<sup>78</sup> All three missionaries submitted their responses. In sharing their doctrinal positions with other members of the Board of General Superintendents, Lewis stated, “You will notice that they admit we have to hold ‘a hard line’ against tongues in Brazil if we are to keep from selling out to the Pentecostals. Yet these men evidently do not want to be a part of the ‘hard line’ – this I have yet to ascertain.”<sup>79</sup>

Maze, Stamps, and Bond essentially held the same position that many Nazarenes once part of the Calvary Holiness Church maintained. All of the missionaries looked to the Board of General Superintendents for a response and direction. As they waited to hear from Kansas City, however, matters in Brazil became more complex.

The Brazilian crisis climaxed in July, 1971 during the 12<sup>th</sup> District Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene in Brazil. According to Mosteller, “On the second night of Assembly there were some of the familiar ‘pentecostal’ excesses in blatant evidence, such as deafening screams, tense atmosphere, emotionalism without apparent blessing, speaking in ‘unknown tongues’ (jibberish), confusion, beating of the head on the floor

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 129-30.

<sup>78</sup> Dr. V. H. Lewis to Dr. Earl Mosteller, June 4, 1971.

<sup>79</sup> V.H. Lewis to George Coulter, Samuel Young, Edward Lawlor, Eugene Stowe, and Orville Jenkins, 23 July 1971, Nazarene Archives, Kansas City, Missouri.



and the promise on the part of some of the ‘hot line’ group that more was to come.” The Pentecostal outbreak prompted several Nazarenes to leave the Assembly and impelled Dr. Mosteller to include an addendum to his annual report, which was to be delivered the next day to the assembly. The addendum communicated Dr. Mosteller’s conviction that a “real Nazarene,” among other things, “is a Christian who does not speak in unknown tongues either publicly [*sic*] or privately.”<sup>80</sup>

Finally, a response from Lewis in Kansas City was received by Dr. Mosteller. It stated,

We will not ordain any tongues-speaking candidate or men who believe in speaking in tongues, whether they have gone through what they claim is the experience or not, and this I am sure would hold in any area of the church. So you can proceed with authority along that line.<sup>81</sup>

According to Stamps, the refusal to ordain those who even *believe* in speaking of tongues disappointed all of the missionaries, including Bob Collins and Roger Maze, who were the two other missionaries assigned to Brazil. After visits by former General Superintendent Dr. G. B. Williamson and Dr. Lewis, who was kind in his approach yet firm in his doctrinal position, the missionaries each had to make a decision. The three missionaries who had been in Brazil for some time each finished out their contractual terms before leaving the mission field. The Stamps and Bonds, however, decided to return to the United States since they were only in the language-training phase of their assignments.

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<sup>80</sup> Earl Mosteller, to Dr. V. H. Lewis, 26 July 1971, Nazarene Archives, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>81</sup> Burke, 131.

The situation in Brazil received considerable attention in the United States. Local churches in the Church of the Nazarene have always been highly encouraged to be involved with missionary work around the globe. When the Brazilian missionaries returned to the United States so quickly, news spread rapidly and questions were being raised by Nazarenes throughout the United States regarding the Church's stance toward the Charismatic movement.

*J. The 1972 and 1976 General Assemblies*

The "tongues" issue came to a climatic point in the United States the next year General Assembly, held in Miami Beach, Florida from June 18-23, 1972. Prior to the Assembly, a group calling themselves "The Committee of Charismatic Nazarenes" sent a letter to Assembly delegates. In the letter the Committee informed delegates of a proposed resolution that would alter the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* by adding a prohibition against the practice or support of the gift of tongues. The letter quoted biblical passages in support of the gift of tongues and noted that several other denominations, including the United Presbyterian Church and the Southern Presbyterian Church, have permitted charismatics to worship freely within their churches. The authors of the document also informed the delegates about the stipulations granted by the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene in connection with the Church's 1955 merger with the Calvary Holiness Church.

The proposed resolution, identified as resolution JU-417, stated that, "Any practice and/or propagation of speaking in tongues, either as the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit or neo-Pentecostal ecstatic prayer language shall be interpreted as inveighing against the doctrines and usages of the Church of the Nazarene." The Judicial

Committee unanimously recommended by a vote of fifteen for and zero against that the resolution be referred to the Board of General Superintendents for adoption.<sup>82</sup> The recommendation of the Judicial Committee came to the floor of the entire Assembly on its sixth day of business on June 23, 1972 while General Superintendent George Coulter presided. After the reading of the resolution, delegate Jack Ford moved that a commission comprised of administrators, pastors, and scholars be formed to study the gifts of the Spirit and to report to the next General Assembly. Ford's motion also affirmed the Nazarene understanding of entire sanctification and proposed that general and district church leaders be allowed to respond to the charismatic influence upon churches in their respective jurisdictions.<sup>83</sup>

It is not surprising that Ford sought to intervene with the adoption of the initial resolution. Undoubtedly Ford recalled the negotiations with the Church of the Nazarene during the merger negotiations with the Calvary Holiness Church, which he helped to found. Ford's attempt at crafting a compromise resolution failed. After John Harrison of Northeast Oklahoma spoke in favor of the initial resolution and C. B. Nixon of Florida argued against it, the chair called for a vote which resulted in the passing of the recommendation to refer the resolution to the Board of General Superintendents who had originally drafted the resolution.<sup>84</sup>

The Board of General Superintendents explicitly adopted the resolution at the 1976 General Assembly in Dallas, Texas. In their Quadrennial Address in which the new

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<sup>82</sup> *Journal of the Eighteenth General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, *n.d.*), 142.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 75-6.

Quadrennial theme of “Lifting Up Christ” was unveiled, the Board of General Superintendents declared,

Let the word go out that the Church of the Nazarene will not compromise its traditional opposition to all aberrations of the doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Board of General Superintendents is unanimous in its agreement that “it is our considered judgment and ruling that any practice and/or propagation of speaking in tongues either as the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit or as a neo-Pentecostal ecstatic prayer language shall be interpreted as inveighing against the doctrines and usages of the Church of the Nazarene.” We continue to believe that the strongest defense against all such doctrinal deviations is the unrelenting preaching and teaching of full salvation in its biblical clarity and beauty.<sup>85</sup>

After the 1976 General Assembly, the Board of General Superintendents, now consisting of V.H. Lewis, William M. Greathouse, Eugene L. Stowe, Orville W. Jenkins, George Coulter, and Charles H. Strickland, further disseminated and elaborated upon the position of the Church of the Nazarene regarding the gift of tongues by printing their decision in the October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1976 issue of the *Herald of Holiness*. In their declaration, the Board referred to the practice of glossolalia as a “doctrinal abberation,” “a false gift,” and a “dangerous substitution.” The statement encouraged charismatics to seek membership in other denominations and advised Nazarenes not to “participate in services or meetings which include or encourage the practice of speaking in tongues, or schedule in our services speakers or singers who are known to be active in the so-called charismatic movement.”<sup>86</sup>

In addition to having effectively ended the possibility of charismatics finding acceptance with the Church of the Nazarene, the pronouncement raised many questions

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<sup>85</sup> *Journal of the Nineteenth General Assembly* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, n. d.), 240.

<sup>86</sup> Board of General Superintendents, “The Position of the Church of the Nazarene on Speaking in Tongues,” *Herald of Holiness* (October 15, 1976), 1-2.

among Nazarenes on account of the tone in which the Church's position was stated. In the *Nazarene Seminarian*, published by Nazarene Theological Seminary, Randy Maddox opined that "the statement [is] worded in a totally negative fashion." Rev. Richard Neiderhiser, a Nazarene pastor and former administrator at Mid-America Nazarene University, similarly observed, "I don't understand why it has been stated that firm."<sup>87</sup>

The printed interpretation by the Board of General Superintendents caused some charismatic Nazarenes to leave the denomination. Rev. Jim Rimmer of Archie, Missouri voluntarily turned in his preaching license and Rev. James List, a student at Nazarene Theological Seminary, signaled his intent to terminate his studies on account of the ruling.<sup>88</sup>

A sarcastic tone is heard in the response of *Herald of Holiness* editor M. E. McCumber to a subscriber who desired that the ruling of the Board of General Superintendents be explained in "simple English." McCumber quipped:

I share your interest in "simple English." Words, big or little, that I cannot understand do not edify me one bit. However, I enjoy learning new words even if they drive me to a dictionary. Since your letter complained about hard-to-understand statements, and since you desire 'short, simple answers' without having to be referred to another source for interpretation, I assume that you are opposed to unknown tongues, since they are both difficult to understand and require a source other than the speaker to interpret.<sup>89</sup>

For some Nazarenes, the Board of General Superintendents had assumed the position of the Roman Catholic Magisterium by becoming the authoritative interpreters

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<sup>87</sup> Mary Allison, "Speaking in Tongues: Issue Sharply Divides Church of Nazarene," *Kansas City Star* (13 November 1976), front page.

<sup>88</sup> Allison, front page.

<sup>89</sup> W. E. McCumber in "The Answer Corner," *Herald of Holiness* (November 15, 1976), 31.

of scripture. Many Nazarenes, in fact, felt that the Board had replaced Scripture as the rule of faith and that the Board misinterpreted 1 Corinthians 14. According to William Greathouse,

The most serious error in that statement was the presumption that the Board of General Superintendents has the authority to interpret the Bible for members of the denomination. In declaring that the tongues of Corinth were intelligible languages the Board of General Superintendents assumed the position of the Roman Catholic Magisterium, in clear violation of the Protestant principle of the private interpretation of Scripture.<sup>90</sup>

Greathouse, elected to the General Superintendency in 1976, found himself right in the middle of the denomination's handling of the tongues matter. In a letter to Joseph P. Knight, nephew of future General Superintendent John A. Knight, Greathouse notes that a number of prominent Nazarene intellectuals including himself, Dr. Albert Harper, Norman Oke, Dr. W. T. Purkiser, and Dr. Willard Taylor, all held that *glossolalia*, as recorded in Paul's writing to the church in Corinth, referred to ecstatic speech. In fact, Drs. Harper and Oke insisted that such an interpretation be rendered in the Beacon Bible Commentary volume, published by Nazarene Publishing House, that covered First Corinthians. Greathouse suggests that an alternate interpretation of 1 Corinthians arose later as an apology to the charismatic movement. He writes,

It was not until there was an incursion of tongues speaking among our Nazarenes in Brazil and Warren Black and the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association launched a campaign to infiltrate the Church of the Nazarene with *glossolalia* that some among our leadership were provoked to reinterpret 1 Corinthians 14 and equate the tongues of Corinth with those of Pentecost.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> William M. Greathouse to Joseph P. Knight, letter dated October 10, 1989 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives).

<sup>91</sup> Greathouse, 2

His correspondence also indicates that there was significant internal conflict regarding the Board of General Superintendents' ruling. Greathouse recounts a meeting he had with the Board of General Superintendents prior to his election to the Board in which he was questioned about the issue of speaking in tongues. Greathouse recalls that Dr. Samuel Young, then a General Superintendent, did not attend the meeting. Furthermore, Greathouse writes,

After I was elected General Superintendent in 1976 Dr. Young expressed himself freely and frankly to me on the subject. He was strongly opposed to the 1976 statement which appeared in the *Herald of Holiness* which appeared over the signatures of our Board. This statement was prepared before I was elected. I personally modified and softened many of the statements, but with Dr. Young's counsel I went along reluctantly with it not knowing that my signature would be affixed thereunto.<sup>92</sup>

The ruling by the Board of General Superintendents, however, appeared to be unanimous to those who read their opinion. Only time would reveal the internal debate over the ruling.

#### *K. The Debate Continues*

The ruling made by the Board of General Superintendents did not completely end the conflict regarding *glossolalia*. The issue escalated in the early 1980s on the campuses of two Nazarene colleges. At Eastern Nazarene College, Dr. Richard (Dick) Howard, New Testament scholar and Chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy, published a book arguing that Paul's understanding of tongues in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians referred to *glossolalia* (unknown tongues), rather than *xenolalia* (known foreign tongues). Despite the fact that biblical scholars generally accepted *glossolalia*, Howard's interpretation of Paul's writings placed him at theological odds with the ruling by the

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 2.

Board of General Superintendents. As a result, Dr. Howard's employment was terminated by the college in 1980.

At Mid America Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas, President Curtis Smith requested letters of resignation from four professors who supported the practice of speaking in tongues. According to *The Kansas City Star*, English professors Mark Wilson and Arlie Peck, communications instructor Ron Lawlor, and religion instructor Wes Adams were asked to resign after "calls from pastors and parents of students and a visit from the pastor of a Nazarene church in Omaha."<sup>93</sup> The professors had supported prayer meetings first begun on campus and later continued in the home of Professor Adams which were attended by about sixty students from the college. While the four professors stated that their personal interpretations of the gift of tongues differed from the denomination's, none of the professors claimed to "have taught, advocated or promoted speaking in tongues in their classes" and Arlie Peck even denied personally having the gift.<sup>94</sup>

With the executive branch of the Church of the Nazarene having made an interpretation of the gift of tongues, one charismatic Nazarene turned to the Church's judicial branch for hope. An historical moment in the history of the Church of the Nazarene's response to the charismatic movement arrived when Rev. Dan Brady, serving as a pastor in Dayton, Ohio, refused to turn in his credentials after communicating his personal experience of speaking in tongues to his local congregation. Brady's trial would

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<sup>93</sup> Deborah Neff, "College Dismisses Teachers," *Kansas City Star*. 15 March 1983.

<sup>94</sup> Randy Attwood, "MANC professors resign over 'tongues' issue," *The Daily News of Johnson County, Kansas*. 12 March 1983.



test the validity of the interpretation of the *Manual* by the Board of General Superintendents. Though initially intending to resign from the Church of the Nazarene, Brady sensed that God was commanding him not to resign. On July 15, 1983 Brady was tried and convicted of violating the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene. A subsequent appeal to the General Court of Appeal of the General Church of the Nazarene was also rejected.<sup>95</sup>

By this time numerous pastors had left the Church of the Nazarene both voluntarily and involuntarily on account of their charismatic gift. As a result Wilbur L. Jackson, Warren Black, and Stanley Pulliam signed the Articles of Incorporation of the Wesleyan Holiness Charismatic Fellowship based in Cincinnati, Ohio on July 2, 1986. The organization existed just over five years until October 24, 1991, when it was canceled by the Ohio Secretary of State's office for failure to file a renewal form. The organization also used the name, "Fellowship of Charismatic Nazarenes."

The Fellowship of Charismatic Nazarenes, according to its newsletter, was "a support to pastors who, because of their desire to be fully obedient to God, have had their material security and their future placed at jeopardy, whose families have suffered humiliation and rejection for the cause of Christ."

#### *L. The 1985 Manual Statement*

While the Board of General Superintendents adopted a resolution denouncing the gift of tongues, the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* remained unaltered until 1985. That year the General Assembly, meeting in Anaheim, California, entertained resolutions sponsored by the Illinois, West Virginia South, and Southwestern Ohio Districts

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<sup>95</sup> Dan Brady, *Appeal for Integrity*, (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives).

(resolutions JU-700, JU-700a, JU-700b respectively) that were merged by the Judicial Committee into resolution JU-700c. The General Assembly acted on the Judicial Committee's recommended resolution on the evening of Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, with General Superintendent Orville Jenkins presiding.<sup>96</sup> The resolution was adopted and became Article 905 in the 1985 *Manual*, which states in part that, "to affirm that even a special or any alleged physical evidence, or 'prayer language,' is evidence of the baptism with the Spirit is contrary to the biblical and historic position of the church.

*M. Tensions in the Anti-Pentecostalization of the COTN*

The history of the Church of the Nazarene's response to the "tongues" movement points out various tensions in the process of moving in a "church-like" direction. One of these tensions places the growth of the Church of the Nazarene as a religious institution at odds with the clarification of a distinct denominational identity. The mergers of Bresee's Church of the Nazarene with the Association of Pentecostal Churches, the Holiness Church of Christ, and the Pentecostal Mission were accomplished by embracing Bresee's notion that liberty should be given to everyone with regards to the non-essentials of the faith. Disagreements, for instance, over the wearing of wedding rings and the use of tobacco were ironed out so that the Holiness denomination known as the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene could be formed. The Church of the Nazarene continued to grow, in part through mergers, under the banner of "unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials."

The merger of the Church of the Nazarene with the Calvary Holiness Church in the 1950s demonstrated that the Nazarenes were willing to define the recognition of the

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<sup>96</sup>*Journal of the Twenty-first General Assembly* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, n. d.), 212.

validity of the gift of tongues as a non-essential. Yet the amount of discussion and the negotiations that took place to bring about the merger indicate that concerns abounded regarding the doctrinal identity of the Church of the Nazarene. With the emergence of the charismatic movement in the 1960s, however, the balance had shifted in such a way that the articulation of a distinctive Nazarene identity justified the loss of Nazarene members who claimed charismatic experiences. The scales had shifted from denominational growth at the expense of allowing individuals to recognize the validity of the gift of tongues to the rejection of the gift of *glossolalia* at the expense of denomination growth.

Another internal tension is what Thomas O'Dea refers to as the "dilemma of delimitation." According to O'Dea, institutions are driven toward protecting the spirit of their religious insights by the formulation of dogmatic statements and the establishment of interpretive processes. In the case of the Church of the Nazarene, there had always been a history of aversion to the tongues movement by ecclesiastical leaders. Right from the beginning of the Azusa Street Revival, Nazarenes held "religious insights" that were critical of the movement. These insights, however, were not formulated into an official, binding resolution until 1985. Thus, even the excision of the word 'Pentecostal' from the Church's name, while distancing Nazarenes from the tongues movement, did not formally preclude Nazarenes from recognizing that such a gift was possible. With the threat of the charismatic movement, however, the Church felt the need to clearly articulate its religious sentiments regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit and sought to do so by the formulation of an anti-tongues resolution. The process of establishing an anti-*glossolalia* doctrine was one that moved from anti-tongues sentiments of early

Nazarenes, to non-binding written articles and books by ecclesiastical leaders against the tongues movement, to the merger with a glossolalia-affirming denomination, to a firm interpretation from the Board of General Superintendents, to a judicial affirmation of the validity of the Board of General Superintendents' interpretation, to the adoption by the 1985 General Assembly of an anti-tongues resolution to be placed in the binding Manual of the Church of the Nazarene. Thus, one can see the graded formation of an anti-*glossolalia* stance by the Church.

A third tension relates to the centralization of ecclesiastical authority within the denomination. While the Church of the Nazarene has maintained a presbyterian form of government throughout its history, the authority granted to its General Superintendents has grown and centralized. This is evidenced, in part, through the establishment of the anti-*glossolalia* doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene.

Since its inception, the authority granted to the General Superintendents has been debated within the church. The 1911 General Assembly in Nashville clearly limited the amount of power of the General Superintendents by adopting the following resolution:

Our system of superintendency does not contemplate episcopal oversight. We would deplore and discourage any tendency in that direction. Our pastors are the overseers of their particular charges. Our superintendents are mainly for the oversight of pastorless churches, the work of evangelism, and the organizing and encouragement of organizing of churches, where there seems providential opening and call.<sup>97</sup>

Until the 1915 General Assembly, General Superintendents did not receive compensation for their work from the denomination. Their actions were also made as individuals, rather than as a Board. The authority of the General Superintendents was nearly dealt a fatal blow when one of them, E. F. Walker, supported the decision of a district

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<sup>97</sup> Smith, 247.

superintendent to disorganize a flourishing church in 1917.<sup>98</sup> Walker later repealed his support of disorganizing the Southern California church.

In 1944 General Superintendent H. V. Miller strengthened the office of General Superintendent by encouraging all the General Superintendents to begin acting as a Board, rather than as individuals. Miller had observed the unilateral action of General Superintendent J. B. Chapman in January, 1944, when Chapman called for the immediate building of a seminary. Miller had also witnessed the actions of General Superintendent Orval Nease, who refused to resign after being asked by the remaining General Superintendents after he granted what was perceived as special treatment to his son.<sup>99</sup> The end result, however, was the establishment of a policy wherein the General Superintendents began to act as a Board in all of their decisions related to the Church, despite whatever personal opinions existed among the individual General Superintendents. This policy ultimately bolstered the actions of the General Superintendents by giving the appearance of their unanimity in church matters. More frequently held meetings, a reduced workload by the addition of another General Superintendents, and other small but significant financial commitments adopted by the 1948 General Assembly also augmented the authority of the Board of General Superintendents.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> For more on this matter, which many speculated would split the entire Church of the Nazarene over the issue of ecclesiastical authority, see Smith, 272-89.

<sup>99</sup> Purkiser, 151-5.

<sup>100</sup> The 1948 General Assembly voted to pay for the long-distance telephone bills for the General Superintendents and to pay for each of their spouses to join them on their international supervisory trips once every four years. See Purkiser, 171.

By the time the charismatic movement brought to the fore the question of speaking in tongues, the authority of the Board of General Superintendents was well established. The 1972 General Assembly had referred the matter of speaking in tongues, for most a question of biblical interpretation, to the Board for their action. The Board's ruling on tongues became the basis upon which churches and clergy would be expelled from the Church.

The Nazarene response to the tongues movement clearly documents these tensions within the Church. As this dissertation will show in the chapters to follow, the Nazarene response to speaking in tongues is joined by other processes at work as the Church of the Nazarene has moved in a church-like direction.

## Chapter 3

### WHITENING

In this chapter we will explore some of the realities of ethnic and racial minorities, particularly African-Americans, within the Church of the Nazarene and how whiteness has shaped and informed those realities. Particular emphasis will be given to the matter of race in the Nazarene response to the Azusa Street Revival and how that moment provides a significant snapshot of the further whitening of the Church of the Nazarene.

#### *A. Nazarene Predecessors: Wesleyan-Holiness Abolitionists*

A review of race relations within the Church of the Nazarene requires us to first consider race relations within the broader Wesleyan-Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century, out of which the groups later giving birth to the denomination arose. Timothy Merritt published *The Christian Manual, A Treatise on Christian Perfection* in 1825 and a journal, *Guide to Christian Perfection* (later renamed *Guide to Holiness*), started publication in 1839. This latter publication, together with Phoebe Palmer's *Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness*, a weekly meeting first started in New York City in 1835 by Palmer's sister, Sara Lankford, launched what came to be known as the Holiness Movement. Quickly, there emerged a number of believers who, in addition to calling for a return to Wesley's emphasis upon a life of holiness, also ardently supported Wesley's abolitionist teachings, which many Methodist churches had passed over. Among the most prominent laypersons of the Holiness persuasion in the antebellum period were Arthur and Lewis Tappan, both of whom contributed financially to the abolitionist cause. In the mid-1830s, Arthur Tappan, a New York businessman

who profited from his silk company, eagerly pledged his full profits to support the newly formed Oberlin College<sup>1</sup>, where revivalist Charles Finney taught. Dayton writes, “There was apparently no bar at Oberlin to social intercourse between the races. Black students boarded and roomed with whites.”<sup>2</sup> The Oberlin-Wellington Case of 1858, in which Oberlin professors and citizens were placed on trial for not returning fugitive slaves, would elevate the abolitionist activism of Oberlinites into the national public scene. Oberlin perfectionists unashamedly rejected slavery, practiced integration with respect to housing and dining, and violated federal fugitive slave laws.

In 1843, the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America was founded in New York State as a direct revolt against slavery. Methodist minister Orange Scott, under the influence of William Lloyd Garrison’s *Liberator*, led the antislavery delegation at the 1835 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Cincinnati. Scott’s increased involvement as a member of and spokesperson for the American Antislavery Society placed him at odds with his bishops, who had urged ministers to remain silent on the question of slavery. Seeing no future within Methodism, Scott, together with LaRoy Sunderland and Luther Lee, formed the new denomination with the following of several thousand laity and pastors. According to Ivan Beals, members “quit the Methodist

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<sup>1</sup> Two important issues bear mentioning at this point. First, Oberlin’s abolitionist identity derived from a major conflict in 1834 at Lane University in Cincinnati, where Theodore Weld, later the first president of Wheaton College, stirred other students with his abolitionist opinions to the point that Weld and a host of other abolitionists were forced to then go elsewhere due to their push for immediate (rather than progressive) emancipation. See Donald Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1976), 25-35 for the full account. Second, while Arthur Tappan agreed to lend great financial assistance to Oberlin, a major financial crisis prevented him from accomplishing his goal.

<sup>2</sup> Dayton, 45.



Episcopal Church because of the conflict they sensed between the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification (perfect love) and slavery.”<sup>3</sup> Scott held the conviction that the Methodist Episcopal Church had drifted away from Wesley’s position against slavery and had succumbed to economic interests.

Opposition to slavery would also be a factor in the decision of B.T. Roberts and other Holiness believers near Pekin, New York, to inaugurate the Free Methodist Church in late August, 1860, on the heels of the Civil War.<sup>4</sup> Over one thousand laypersons joined Roberts and other Methodist clergy who had been expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Additionally, these Free Methodists espoused freedom in worship style, freedom from sin, and the right of the poor to occupy any empty pew during a time when privileged seats were frequently reserved for those able to rent the pew.

Oberlinites, Wesleyan Methodists, and Free Methodists shared the conviction that all Christians, regardless of social standing, could live a life free from the power of sin. They and thousands of other Holiness believers both within and outside of Methodism sought a “real Christianity” that changed society. They agreed with Finney that,

[T]he great business of the church is to reform the world—to put away every kind of sin. The church of Christ was originally organized to be a body of reformers. The very profession of Christianity implies the profession and virtually an oath to do all that can be done for the universal reformation of the world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ivan Beals, *Color Me Christian* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1975), 53.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the practices of the Methodist Episcopal Church that irritated Roberts included the renting of pews to those who could afford them and the hiring of professional musicians for more formal and less enthusiastic worship styles.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Finney, Letters on Revival #23, as quoted in Dayton, 21.

For antebellum Holiness believers, the inequitable situation between blacks and whites was chief among social sins, and the “great business” of the church was to actively promote the cause of abolitionism.

### *B. The Post-bellum Holiness Movement*

The years during, and the resolution of, the Civil War marked a watershed moment in the history of the United States, the significance of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. The war affected the entire life experiences of persons living in the United States, including the social institutions to which they belonged. Salient differences existed between antebellum Holiness believers and their post-bellum counterparts. First, the Holiness Movement in the post-bellum period became much more organized than prior to the Civil War. In 1867, a number of prominent Methodists launched the first Holiness camp meeting in Vineland, New Jersey, with 10,000 individuals in attendance. They formed the National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness and attracted Methodists and non-Methodists alike. Holiness associations sprang up all around the country and flourished.

Second, during the antebellum period, believers stressing an emphasis upon holiness remained for the most part within their established churches. The exceptions, however, were the Wesleyan and Free Methodist sects, both of which materialized as Methodist clergy responded to events within the Methodist Episcopal church. Those who had left the Methodist church prior to the Civil War generally had done so for reasons other than the doctrine of holiness. After the Civil War, Holiness believers initially attempted to remain faithful to their denominations, but many also joined Holiness associations. Subsequent events within the Methodist Episcopal Church eventually

prompted some members who had joined Holiness associations to leave their churches.<sup>6</sup> Resigning their hopes of remaining part of their respective denominations, the promoters of the second blessing looked for other ecclesiastical structures. The Holiness associations were the soil out of which Holiness denominations would soon emerge.

Third, the Holiness associations in the post-bellum period were clearly more interdenominational than the Holiness Methodist sects that had formed prior to 1861. These younger Holiness sects, including the Pillar of Fire, the Church of God (Anderson), the Salvation Army, and the Church of the Nazarene, reflected to a greater extent the interdenominational constituencies of the Holiness associations. Post-bellum Holiness revivals drew together Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, and a host of others drawn to the teaching of the second blessing.

A final, but pivotal difference was the differing social contexts of the ante and post-bellum periods. Up until the end of the Civil War, slavery had been the primary social issue. Holiness believers, seeking to reform the world, had rallied around the abolitionist cause and found in slavery a common enemy whose hopeful eradication largely defined the Holiness ethic. With the issue of slavery resolved, Holiness believers in the late nineteenth century faced new social concerns and, as we will see below, began to appropriate an ethic more focused upon personal piety than social reform.

Before addressing those new social concerns, however, one more key point should be made. One thing that did not change significantly throughout the century was

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<sup>6</sup>Timothy Smith, *Called Unto Holiness: The Formative Years* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), 38-46. Most significant among these events was the rejection by the bishops in 1881 of a proposal to hold a holiness national convention at the request of several prominent Methodists and the publication of several texts including J.M. Boland's *The Problem of Methodism* (Nashville: J.D. Barbee, 1889) that contested the doctrine of entire sanctification as a second work of grace.

the racial identity of Holiness believers. Both before and after the Civil War the Holiness Movement was predominantly white in its constituency. Prior to the Civil War, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and other historically black denominations had come into existence over the racial segregation within churches even earlier than the Wesleyan Methodist and Free Methodist sects. Early in the nineteenth century most masters gave slaves limited freedom regarding religious choice. Slaves frequently attended the services of black preachers. However, as abolitionists became more vocal, slave owners monitored more closely the religious activities of slaves. According to Franklin and Moss, most states outlawed black preachers between 1830 and 1835 and increasingly “slaves were required to attend the churches of their masters.”<sup>7</sup> After the Civil War, southern blacks who had remained within the established white churches began to leave their churches. Even though there was limited success with respect to racial integration in political and economic ventures after the war, segregation became more pronounced within churches in the North as well as the South. Blacks nearly completely withdrew from worship with whites, many of whom suspected blacks to be northern sympathizers.<sup>8</sup> Simultaneously, southern pride emasculated any efforts of whites to retain blacks within their churches. Nonetheless, as we will see, many Holiness associations and sects did reach out across the color line and many blacks and new immigrants found themselves at home within Holiness groups, despite the predominantly white population which characterized them.

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<sup>7</sup> John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 134.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Marty, *Righteous Empire* (New York: Dial Press, 1970), 142.

### *C. Agricultural Depression and Industrial Growth*

The economic effects of the War Between the States upon the South were significant. In addition to the destruction of lives, infrastructure, and land, Southern farmers had also lost a critical source of their economic grounding: free slave labor. Even though the number of small farms dependent solely upon white labor outnumbered large plantations by a margin of five to one at the end of the Civil War, even on these farms “the landowner was without money, credit, adequate transportation, or marketing agencies.”<sup>9</sup> A series of droughts in the years immediately following the Civil War added to the agrarian difficulties. Southern plantation owners soon tried to replace the loss of slave labor through sharecropping, a labor arrangement that maintained the wealthy owner-poor laborer relationship. Increasingly Northerners benefiting from industry purchased successful agrarian businesses in the South, creating additional dependence of Southerners upon Northerners.

Developments in mechanization, increased expansion of the railroad, and increased demand for agrarian products quickly caused Southern farms to rebound. Within a short amount of time an overproduction of goods materialized. By 1893, a twenty year economic depression in the South, spurred by agricultural overproduction, was reaching its climax.

Meanwhile the Industrial Revolution had arrived in full force to eastern and mid-western U.S. cities. Drove of rural whites joined millions of Eastern and Southern European immigrants heading to the Northern cities of the United States. They placed their hopes in employment opportunities at factories and merchant establishments that

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<sup>9</sup> Fred A. Shannon, *The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1989), 78-9.

were expanding on account of new inventions and developments in efficiency at the end of the nineteenth century. The labor demand for the production of steel, textiles, meat-processing, and other industries compounded the rapid urban growth. The history of Chicago from 1850 to 1890 details the rapidity of this mass urbanization. In those forty years the population of Chicago doubled every decade, and from 1890 to 1910 it again doubled from one to two million residents.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the benefits of economic growth, there were negative effects of urbanization upon the Northern industrial cities and their populations. The haste of urban growth placed difficult strains upon cities that endeavored to provide clean water, proper waste disposal, housing, roads, schools, and other necessities of life. Inadequate housing, pollution, poor sanitation, unsafe working environments, and disease were some of the by-products of the massive population shift to industrial cities. Ironically, poor social conditions resulted in increases in drunkenness and soaring poverty during this period of “U.S. progress.”

#### *D. Progressive and Religious Optimism at the Turn of the Century*

Economic growth in the northern industrial cities, social Darwinist notions of human progress, high millennial expectations, and immense national pride, all combined to fuel an unusual sense of optimism and hope about the future of the United States.<sup>11</sup> Underscoring this “optimistic age,” Mark Quanstrom writes,

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<sup>10</sup> J. John Palen, *The Urban World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 57.

<sup>11</sup> There was perhaps no clearer example of U.S. pride than the showcasing of the Western world’s “advancement” at the World Columbian Exhibition of 1893 in Chicago, commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus’ “discovery” of the Americas. See Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing, *The World's Columbian Exposition: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

Perhaps no time in American history has there been such an unshakable and generally shared confidence in the future than there was at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Political progressives, social reformers, social “gospellers,” evangelical idealists, and many Holiness people, while fundamentally disagreeing over the means to achieve the “golden age,” all agreed that the millennium was approaching. While they certainly did not share the same vision concerning the nature of the coming “millennial kingdom,” and while their philosophical and theological presuppositions were oftentimes in conflict, they all agreed that with the right technique, program, effort, reform, or grace, America as the land of promise would be realized.<sup>12</sup>

The rising political and economic influence of the United States in a world that primarily had been Euro-centered bolstered the confidence and optimism of Northern whites who benefited from the country’s prosperity. Such national optimism would last well into the second decade of the twentieth century, fading quickly only with the outbreak of World War I.

Though many Anglo-Americans prospered during this time of industrial growth, the term “progress” did not adequately reflect the life experiences of many newly arrived immigrants, poor whites, and blacks who had relocated to urban locations in hopes of finding economic stability. The urban poor found the Progressive Era to be much less optimistic. Newly arrived immigrants, largely from Eastern and Southern Europe (including roughly four million Italians between 1880 and 1920), quickly found themselves the scapegoats for urban crime and were considered suspect for their Roman Catholic faith. Tensions such as that exemplified in the Haymarket Riot of 1886 heightened between those of Northern and Western European descent, who now claimed the U.S. as their own, and the second-wave of immigrants arriving in mass from Southern and Eastern Europe (Greece, Italy, Austria, Poland, Russia, and elsewhere). Xenophobia

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Quanstrom, *A Century of Holiness Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2004), 17.

against new immigrants increased dramatically and, for the first time, immigration controls became federalized in 1875.

Nonetheless, the idealism of the age served as an impetus for many who sought to remedy the social ills present in the industrial cities. Political and religious idealists of many theological persuasions, including Holiness believers, maintained the position that social troubles could be overcome and that the lives of individuals could be saved from the social troubles and the moral laxity associated with urban living. One has suggested that this confidence helped define the Progressive movement: “The Progressive movement, then, may be looked upon as an attempt to develop the moral will, the intellectual insight, and the political and administrative agencies to remedy the accumulated evils and negligences of a period of industrial growth.”<sup>13</sup>

#### *E. Holiness Believers and Race Relations at the Turn of the Century*

Thirty five years after the Civil War, the closing of the nineteenth century arguably signaled the lowest point in the history of race relations in the United States. It is sometimes wondered how it is that race relations deteriorated after the criminalization of slavery. Several key events help explain this phenomenon. Just twelve years after the Civil War ended, the Compromise of 1877 gave the presidency to Republican Rutherford B. Hayes over Democrat Samuel Tilden in exchange for Hayes’s willingness to withdraw federal troops from the South. The withdrawal of federal troops paved the way for Redeemer Democrats<sup>14</sup> to take control of the South and to implement discriminatory

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Movement: 1900 to 1915* (New York: Touchstone, 1986), 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> Redeemer Democrats were a block of Democrats in the 1870s who gained much influence and who had as their goal to de-federalize controls over the South during



policies against blacks. By 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court had already rolled back much of the positive momentum gained by the North's victory over the South with several pivotal decisions.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the landmark decision of the Court in 1896 (*Plessy v. Ferguson*) ushered in the passage of Jim Crow laws which soon legalized segregation in nearly every sphere of life. Referring to this period of time as the nadir for blacks in the United States, historian Kenneth Clark posits,

This period culminated in the institutionalization of rigid forms of racism—the enactment and enforcement of laws requiring or permitting racial discrimination and segregation in all aspects of American life. This retrogression in racial democracy in America was imposed by white segregationists with the apathy, indifference, or just quiet acceptance of white liberals and moderates who served as necessary accessories.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, while the dominant culture expressed optimism and shared in the economic prosperity of the nation, the social marginalization of blacks worsened. Those blacks who had the resources frequently opted to relocate, some of them setting their course toward Los Angeles, whose reputation as a welcoming place for blacks was well-known. Many blacks, however, lacked the financial means to simply pack up and move either West or North.

Half of a century earlier, as explained before, believers in the message of holiness violated the Fugitive Slave laws and successfully sought to abolish the practice of

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Reconstruction. They appealed to conservative Democrats and sought to end the policies of the Radical Republicans who had been in power since the end of the Civil War. See Michale Perman, *The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869-1879* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Ivan Beals, *Our Racist Legacy: Will the Church Resolve the Conflict?* (Notre Dame: Cross Cultural Publications, 1997), 139.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Clark, "The Present Dilemma of the Negro," (*Journal of Negro History* 53 1968): 4. The phrase "the nadir" of race relations is attributed to the work of historian Rayford Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York: Collier Books, 1965).

slavery. Although not directly responding to racial injustice like their forerunners, Holiness believers at the turn of the century actively ministered with and to blacks and immigrant populations. Some blacks withdrawing from established churches found the primarily white Holiness sects to be supportive and theologically compatible with their social values. The personalities and associations that would later be significant in the history of the Church of the Nazarene affirmed an appreciation for minorities during a time of anti-immigration sentiments, Jim Crow laws, and lynchings of blacks. While serving as pastor in Pasadena, Bresee launched a successful work among Chinese immigrants in the same decade that anti-immigrant sentiment triggered the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act. After starting the Church of the Nazarene, Bresee strongly encouraged the ministry of Mary McReynolds, who started a ministry among Mexicans in the city of Los Angeles.

Black participation was also found among other white Holiness groups that would later merge into the Church of the Nazarene. The Pentecostal Mission, J. O. McClurkan's southern Holiness group from Tennessee, counted among its members black evangelist J.T. Brown, whose travels were frequently reported in *Zion's Outlook*. For these believers in holiness, the purifying work of God in one's life cleansed one even from racial prejudice. McClurkan proclaimed in early 1901 that,

The sanctified heart is absolutely cleansed of all war or race prejudice. Holiness deepens and sweetens and broadens the nature until every man of all and every section and nationality and color and condition is loved as a brother. There is no North, no South, no Jew, no Greek, no Barbarian to the sanctified. . . <sup>17</sup>

The other southern Holiness group that would join Bresee's Church of the Nazarene, the Holiness Association of Texas, went beyond recognizing the equality of

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<sup>17</sup> McClurkan quoted in Smith, 183.

blacks to the point of expressing an unusually candid confession. One year prior to merging with the Church of the Nazarene, these southerners admitted,

With humiliation we confess that we and our fathers, of the white race, of this country, have not done near as much as we might have done toward the well-being and advancement of the colored race and are willing to take our part of the blame for the unneighborly and unbrotherly feeling which has sprung up and seems to be growing every day. The white race ought to take the initiative in "correcting the wrong, and effecting a reconciliation, and if we have the spirit of Christ, to accomplish this, we will be willing even to yield up some of our rights and preferences, to suffer wrong rather than do wrong."<sup>18</sup>

Most remarkable about this 1906 resolution is that its sponsorship by a group of southerners came during the very decade when Jim Crow laws became most prevalent and when blacks were terrorized by the fear of lynchings. Clearly these soon-to-be Nazarenes felt strongly about the equality of blacks and the wrongfulness, indeed the sinfulness, of white racial prejudice.<sup>19</sup>

These individuals shared a radical optimism in the work of God through the act of sanctifying believers. These proto-Nazarenes opined that God's act of entire sanctification was instantaneous and complete and, in this act subsequent to one's salvation, God eradicated the sinful nature, including racial prejudice, and restored one's soul to a condition of "perfect love." The sanctification of believers would result in the transformation of individuals and, in turn, society would be transformed. Such was the hope of the first Nazarenes at the opening of the twentieth century. This theological optimism, embraced by many Protestants during the Progressive Era, paralleled the general optimism of a nation whose economic and political influence increasingly

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<sup>18</sup> Holiness Association Year Book 1906-1907 (N.p., [1907]), 67-69. Kansas City: Nazarene Archives.

<sup>19</sup> Carl Degler, *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

extended around the globe. The hopes of a restored perfection of humanity reinforced and were reinforced by the dreams of a perfect nation blessed by God.

#### *F. Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*

The striking disparity between optimistic hopes of the impending millennium and the real struggles of the marginalized urbanite finds clear expression in Los Angeles, the birthplace of Bresee's Church of the Nazarene and the site of the Azusa Street Revival. Understanding the context of turn-of-the-century Los Angeles illuminates the birth of these two movements and their relationship to one another.

Relatively young as a major urban location, Los Angeles only emerged as a significant metropolitan center since 1900. Compared to the previously established industrial cities in the East and Midwest, the growth of Los Angeles in the past century is astounding. Moreover, Los Angeles's demographical growth has consistently been heterogeneous, giving evidence to a racial and ethnic diversity that boasts, among others, those of African, Asian, European, and Mexican descent.

The city of Los Angeles began when settlers from a Spanish mission, the San Gabriel mission, arrived on September 4, 1781. Under the control of Spain until 1822 and then governed by Mexico, California consisted of a predominantly non-white population until the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo. The Gold Rush of 1849 further accounted for a significant immigration of whites. Los Angeles was incorporated as a U.S. city in 1850 and whites dominated the early local political structures.

The history of race relations in the latter part of the nineteenth century in L.A. depicts a city in transition. Recent scholarship suggests that many blacks moved to Los

Angeles believing that it had the potential, though not a guarantee, of providing a more welcoming and less threatening environment than that known in the southern states.

Black Los Angeles always had in view both the South and the West. Even those Angelenos who had not moved from Dixie . . . spoke the language of southern tyranny and western freedom. . . [There were] three fundamental views held by black westerners: that southern race relations were evil; that the Western Ideal promised a better life; and—critically important—that the West was in danger of becoming another South.<sup>20</sup>

Many blacks opted to relocate from their southern homes to Los Angeles at a cost much higher than moving to Chicago, Detroit, or other midwestern cities which were closer and already had a substantial black population. The California dream beckoned them to the West just as it had lured thousands of whites from the East and Midwest.

Several accounts, however, indicate that *actual* relations between whites and blacks in Los Angeles were far from ideal and were, in fact, quite tense. Mike Davis reports, “the racial terrorism and lynchings . . . made early Anglo-ruled Los Angeles the most violent town in the West during the 1860s and 1870s.”<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as the century came to a close, the impending millennium also fueled the hopes of many whites who aspired for Los Angeles to become the site of an Anglo-Saxon cultural renaissance.<sup>22</sup> Harvey Cox suggests, “[B]y the beginning of the twentieth century [Los Angeles] was being touted as the last citadel of Anglo-Saxon racial purity, the final remaining bulwark against the hordes of European immigrants streaming into the cities of the east coast.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Douglass Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Ewing, NJ: University of California Press, 2004), 37.

<sup>21</sup> Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* (New York: Verso, 1990), 26.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 92.

However, the rapidly changing demographics of Los Angeles in the decades surrounding the turn of the century soon eroded the dream of Los Angeles as the new Rome. “Between 1900 and 1910, 5,500 blacks, 5,000 Mexicans, 4,000 Japanese, and more than 30,000 Europeans also arrived in Los Angeles. By 1910 ‘non-whites’ and immigrants constituted fully 22 percent of its population.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, the dynamic social milieu of Los Angeles as it entered the twentieth century found the coexistence of competing racial hopes for the future of Southern California.

*G. Nazarenes in the Early Twentieth Century U.S.*

As we have seen, white Holiness groups that would eventually merge with Bresee’s Church of the Nazarene in 1908 to form the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene were sympathetic to blacks and other ethnic/racial minorities. Nonetheless, the strong social stigma against blacks and immigrants became manifest in ecclesiastical segregation, even within the Holiness Movement. As R. Stanley Ingersol summarizes,

The late-19<sup>th</sup> century rise of American Holiness denominations coincided with the onset of de jure racial segregation in the South and de facto segregation in the North. The Holiness Movement spoke no prophetic words to the situation, and the birth of the Church of the Nazarene and other white Holiness denominations paralleled the rise of black ones, such as the Church of Christ (Holiness).<sup>25</sup>

Charles Edwin Jones documents convincingly that the Church of the Nazarene drew its membership largely from rural whites who had relocated to urban locations at the turn of the century and who longed for the “informal worship traditions of the American camp meetings.” Furthermore he concludes, “Oblivious to the presence of

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<sup>23</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2001), 54-5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Stanley Ingersol, “Blacks and the Church of the Nazarene,” *Herald of Holiness* (March 1994).

foreigners around them, Holiness believers readily accepted the ethnic segregation which characterized these years. They identified instead with the lower middle class native whites with whom they lived and worked.”<sup>26</sup> While affirming a sectarian message of holiness that conflicted with many societal values concerning race, early leaders of the Church of the Nazarene did not live in a social vacuum. Concerning race relations, early Nazarene leaders, who held strong opinions and spoke sharp words against racial inequality, nevertheless lived within a racially stratified society. We now examine more closely the lives of three early prominent Nazarene leaders: Phineas F. Bresee, Joseph P. Widney, and Aaron M. Hills.

### *1. Phineas F. Bresee*

Phineas F. Bresee was twenty-two years-old when the War Between the States commenced. Born and raised a Northerner, Bresee unashamedly pronounced his commitment to the Union and to the cause of abolition from the earliest days of his ministry. Having been raised in New York, Bresee moved in 1857 to Iowa, where his ministry commenced. Bresee had charge over the Grinnell circuit in 1860, a year prior to both his ordination as an elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the beginning of the Civil War. Reflecting upon his time at Grinnell, Bresee later recalled:

They desired my return very much to that circuit, but the wear had already begun, and one of the appointments was made up largely of Southern people. They were very strong in their feeling of sympathy with the Rebellion, and I was very strong in my loyalty, and anti-slavery conviction. Hence, I did not feel that it was best for the church on that charge for me to go back. I had already more or less grieved these people by my preaching of what they regarded as Abolition doctrine, and I saw that it would be very difficult for me to get along with them.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Charles Edwin Jones, “Disinherited or Rural? A Historical Case Study in Urban Holiness Religion,” *Missouri Historical Review* 66, no. 3 (April 1972): 405.

The abolitionist blood ran so thick in Bresee that he requested a different assignment even though he knew it almost certainly would result in a less desirable appointment. H. D. Brown, who had ministered with Bresee in Iowa, later observed, “Dr. Bresee was a staunch Union man, and made his influence felt in the church and elsewhere for the freedom of all men, both black and white, and for the preservation of the United States as the greatest nation on earth.”<sup>28</sup>

Brown’s remark identifies a salient motif in the life of Bresee: namely, the national pride he exuded. For Bresee, a nation representing Christ ought to be characterized by freedom, a theme which played a key role in Bresee’s theology. Bresee unabashedly expressed his loyalty to the United States in both word and deed. Later, after founding the Church of the Nazarene, he would sometimes drape a United States flag over the pulpit from which he spoke. A well-known picture of Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene during his pastorate depicts four large U.S. flags adorning the front wall behind the pulpit. According to Bresee, Nazarenes were ‘to Christianize Christianity’ and thus ‘to save America . . . as a center of religious life to the world.’<sup>29</sup>

In order for America to become the “center of religious life to the world,” it was necessary to address the social problems that could potentially undermine America’s

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<sup>27</sup> E. A. Girvin, *Phineas F. Bresee: A Prince in Israel* (Kansas City: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1916), 39-40.

<sup>28</sup> H. D. Brown, *Personal Memories of the Early Ministry of Dr. Phineas F. Bresee* (published by the author, Seattle, Washington, 1930), 25 as quoted in Donald P. Brinkley, *Man of the Morning: the life and work of Phineas F. Bresee* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1960), 65.

<sup>29</sup> Church of the Nazarene. *Tenth Annual Assembly Proceedings*, 1905, pp. 10-34-36.



health as a nation. Bresee's relocation to Los Angeles in August, 1883, brought him face-to-face with a tremendous social reality – unprecedented mass urbanization. The plight of U.S. cities increasingly preoccupied Bresee's interests.

Bresee was particularly concerned with the propensity of the urban poor to be enslaved to alcoholism, a social problem further exacerbated by the arrival of Roman Catholic European immigrants. Bresee invested himself extensively in the temperance movement, particularly in Pasadena. Girvin writes, "Dr. Bresee took a very prominent part in that conflict, so much so, indeed, as to draw the fire of the enemy upon himself. The opponents of prohibition were so aroused that they burned him in effigy, and attacked him in the most vituperative manner in the public press of the city."<sup>30</sup>

Thus, Bresee's commitment to minister to ethnic and racial minorities ought to be understood within the context of his national pride. Alcoholism, poverty, and the growth of Eastern religions and Roman Catholicism were all viewed as threats precluding the hope that the United States could be "the city on the hill giving light to the rest of the world." Bresee opined that the United States must be saved first and foremost for her own sake so that the "heathen" immigrants of the cities who were converted might later take the gospel to their respective homelands.<sup>31</sup> The urgency to save the United States also helps explain his hesitancy to become involved too quickly in overseas missions work.

Within California, however, Bresee left no doubt as to his interest in ministering to ethnic minorities. As previously stated, Bresee called for, and initiated, a ministry

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<sup>30</sup> Girvin, 88.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 251.

among the Chinese while serving as a Methodist minister in Pasadena during the 1880s when the Chinese Exclusion Act became law. Clearly, Bresee's action was counter-cultural during a period of anti-immigrant sentiment. In 1904, after founding the Church of the Nazarene, Bresee also enthusiastically supported Mrs. Mary McReynolds's desire to begin a mission for Mexicans in Los Angeles. These actions, however, should be understood within the larger framework of Bresee's national pride, characteristic of the dominant culture. An honest assessment must take into consideration his patriotism and the way in which his national optimism shaped his perspective on minorities.<sup>32</sup>

The extent of Bresee's ministry among blacks appears to have been modest. Roger Bowman has pointed out that, although a few blacks participated in Bresee's worship services on a number of occasions, "evidence of church membership is uncertain."<sup>33</sup> In this respect Bresee's congregation corresponded to nearly every other white church of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. *Joseph P. Widney*

Bresee founded the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles together with his close friend, Dr. Joseph P. Widney. Together Bresee and Widney served as co-general superintendents of the newly formed church, initially holding life-tenures to that office.

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<sup>32</sup> Without question Carl Bangs's biography on Bresee is the most balanced. See Carl Bangs, *Phineas F. Bresee* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995). One notes immediately that Bresee's involvement in the Church of the Nazarene constitutes a rather small portion of the overall biography, which appropriately devotes the majority of its content to the years of Bresee's life as a Methodist, rightly conveying the degree to which Bresee's Methodist heritage was embedded within him by the time he launched the Church of the Nazarene.

<sup>33</sup> Roger Bowman, *Color Us Christian: The Story of the Church of the Nazarene among America's Blacks* (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1975), 31.

Their friendship spanned across decades, and both held considerable influence in the City of Angels.

Widney's life journey varied greatly from Bresee's. After serving as a medical corpsman in the Union army, Widney first came to California in 1862 for the benefit of his health.<sup>34</sup> He returned once more to Los Angeles in 1868 after a one year stint to serve again as an army surgeon. During that year away in the Arizona desert, Widney "experienced a series of mystical encounters with the Almighty Himself, who . . . spoke directly to him in a way that left Widney marked for life."<sup>35</sup> The physician later recalled the significance of these experiences in the desert in the formation of his lifelong interest in religion.

Widney quickly rose to prominence within Los Angeles after returning from his duty in the desert. In 1871, Widney founded the Los Angeles County Medical Association at only twenty-nine years of age and assumed the presidency of that association in 1878. Later he helped to save from financial ruin the University of Southern California, which had been established by a group of citizens led by his brother, Judge Robert McClay Widney. Joseph Widney and Bresee were both active Methodists at USC, on whose board of directors Phineas Bresee served as vice-president. In 1892 Widney became President of USC, and Bresee became the chairman of the board of directors. Both men shared common interests and visions for the university, including an

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<sup>34</sup> The short biography of Widney is: Rand, Carl. *Joseph Pomeroy Widney: physician and mystic* (Los Angeles: Anderson, Ritchie, and Simon, 1970). Rand, himself a physician, does not mention anywhere Widney's involvement with Bresee, the Church of the Nazarene, or Peniel Mission.

<sup>35</sup> Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 90.

expressed desire to keep the College of Liberal Arts closely affiliated with Southern California Methodism.

The friendship between the two had grown to the point that Widney joined Bresee in the work at Peniel Mission. The following year, 1895, Widney again partnered with Bresee, this time as they founded the Church of the Nazarene. Widney's initial involvement, besides his role as co-general superintendent, consisted of hosting a weekly Bible reading known as "Walks with the Nazarene" at three o'clock on Sunday afternoons.

J.P. Widney's most significant contribution lies in his choosing of the name of the church that would soon thereafter blossom into a denomination. Dr. Widney reportedly received the name after spending an entire night in prayer. According to Widney, the name Nazarene signifies "the toiling, lowly mission of Christ" and was "the name that was used in derision of Him by His enemies."<sup>36</sup> Widney hoped that the new denomination would number among its membership those who shared and identified with the humility of Christ.

Widney and Bresee held the position of co-general superintendents for three years. The emotionalism displayed by some early Nazarenes, however, eventually frustrated Dr. Widney, who decided in 1898, after four years away, to return to the Methodist Church. According to Smith,

There is no evidence at all of any hard feelings between Bresee and Widney. Their parting was most friendly. It happened that one night, after a great "outpouring of the Spirit," some of the most prominent members of the church went to the altar. Several were overcome completely, and a good deal of noise

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<sup>36</sup>Smith, 111.

and confusion resulted. Widney, a quiet-mannered man, decided that he could not be happy any longer amidst such scenes.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, Widney concluded his official connection with the Church of the Nazarene.

Widney subsequently embarked upon a spiritual journey marked by the spirit of independence and religious innovation frequently associated with southern California. After returning to the Methodist church for a brief time, Widney eventually founded his own church, named Beth-El. Widney welcomed those from all religious perspectives and preached a spiritual philosophy that drew upon social Darwinism and promoted religious universalism.

Widney's spiritual quest was connected to his understanding of the progress of human civilization. In 1907, Widney published a substantial two-volume work, *Race Life of the Aryan Peoples*, a culmination of twenty-five years of reflection put into writing. This *magnus opus* became the cornerstone of his writings later in life. In *Race Life*, Widney traced the progress of human civilization over the course of two thousand years, noting the contributions of several races along the way. Moreover, Widney argued that the early twentieth century was evidencing the superiority of the White race, and that Southern California, and Los Angeles in particular, was to be the new Rome of human civilization. Dubbed a "prophet of Southern California Anglo-Saxonism,"<sup>38</sup> Widney's

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 121. It is curious to note that at least one author suggests that Widney left the Church of the Nazarene because he believed sanctification to be more of a gradual process rather than an instantaneous act, a current conversation within the Nazarene denomination. See Sandra Sizer Frankiel, *California's Spiritual Frontiers: Religious Alternatives in Anglo-Protestantism, 1850-1910* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 96.

<sup>38</sup> Starr, 90.

message resonated with many rural, white Angelenos who had migrated from the Midwest.

Clearly Widney's religious universalism and overt adoption of the racial superiority of whites departed significantly from the message of holiness of early Nazarenes. His radical religious and racial theories certainly were not representative of the viewpoints of the Nazarenes. Neither the wide dissemination nor the full development of Widney's theory of Anglo supremacy occurred until well after his departure from the Church of the Nazarene.

Widney's embrace of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority, however, did not transpire overnight. He himself identified his experience in the desert in 1868, long before his connection with Bresee and the Church of the Nazarene, as the time when his spiritual awakening occurred. It is reasonable to assume that Widney had already adopted much of his racial bias by the time he gave leadership to the early Nazarenes, particularly in light of his desert experience twenty years prior. To what extent Widney reflected the racial philosophy held by other Holiness advocates is difficult to know. It is clear, however, that the superiority of the Anglo race that Widney articulated resonated with many in U.S. society at the turn-of-the-century.

### *3. Aaron M. Hills*

While not officially becoming a part of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene until 1912, Aaron Merritt Hills had already by that time significantly influenced the new denomination through his involvement with educational institutions that would become affiliated with the Church of the Nazarene. Hills, a Congregationalist believer in holiness, served as the first president of Texas Holiness University (a forerunner to

Southern Nazarene University) beginning in 1899, the first president of Illinois Holiness University (later to become Olivet Nazarene University) beginning in 1909, and from 1916-1932 as professor of systematic theology at Nazarene University (today known as Point Loma Nazarene University). Hills gained a reputation outside of the classroom as a powerful Holiness evangelist whose revival services inspired the birth of numerous local churches. A prolific writer, Hills contributed frequently to *Zion's Outlook* and *Herald of Holiness*, Holiness periodicals widely read. Hills numerous publications included several texts that at one time were required for the Ministerial Course of Study in the Church of the Nazarene. They included *Holiness and Power*, *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, and his systematic theology, *Fundamental Christian Theology*.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the influence of Hills's theology upon Holiness preachers was considerable and endured for many years.

While a student at Yale in the early 1870s, A.M. Hills had come under the tutelage of Professor Samuel Harris. Harris introduced Hills to a philosophy known as Anglo-Israelism, or British-Israelism. Anglo-Israelism links Anglo-Saxons with the ten lost tribes of Israel by employing scriptural argumentation. British-Israelites of the nineteenth century sought to explicitly detail the historical connection between Britain and the tribes of Israel, who were scattered after the destruction of Samaria in 721 B.C.<sup>40</sup> Fueled by millennial expectations, Richard Brothers and John Wilson, two key figures in the early promulgation of British-Israelism, believed that Britain would play a pivotal

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<sup>39</sup> For more about these texts and the interesting conversations concerning the acceptance of Hills's systematic theology within the Church of the Nazarene, see Quanstrom, 27-52.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), 4.

role in the unfolding of eschatological events. Edward Hine eventually promulgated this theory when he came to the United States in the 1880s, advancing the argument that U.S. Americans, as daughters of Britain, also shared in the divine inheritance of Israel.

On several occasions Hills delivered a lecture entitled, “Israel Disguised and Lost” in which he meticulously outlined the tenets of Anglo-Israelism. The sources Hills cites in his lecture clearly demonstrate that he keep up-to-date regarding the development of Anglo-Israelism well beyond his years at Yale. Hills first delivered his popular lecture on the subject in 1895 upon request to the Ministerial Association of Springfield, Missouri. Hills later delivered this lecture as part of the commencement activities in 1906 to the graduates of Texas Holiness University, later Southern Nazarene University, in one of his final acts as president, making “a profound impression [and] adding to the reputation of the departing president.”<sup>41</sup>

Hills systematically advanced historical, linguistic, cultural, and scriptural arguments as evidence that Anglo-Saxons are the “lineal descendants and . . . the actual representatives of the people of God.” Moreover, Hills posits,

The chosen people of God had a genius for religion. It was to be the Bible-making and ultimately the Bible-loving religious and religion-propagating people of the world. Even foreigners point out the likeness of the Israelites and the Anglo-Saxon in respect to this genius for religion and bear unsolicited testimony to the similarity between the two people.<sup>42</sup>

Hills’s thorough argumentation leaves little doubt that he himself was convinced that Anglo-Saxons inherited a divine blessing.

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<sup>41</sup>L. Paul Gresham, *Waves Against Gibraltar* (Bethany, OK: Southern Nazarene University Press, 1992), 220.

<sup>42</sup> Aaron Merritt Hills, *Christian Education and Anglo Israel* (Chicago: The Christian Witness, 1906), 62, 65.



Anglo-Israelism must have impacted the way in which he viewed missions in the Church of the Nazarene. Hills, in his lecture, cites the following words of Tullidge:

And to-day it is manifest to all eyes that the Anglo-Saxons are of all peoples that ever lived, the best fitted and circumstanced to spread the gospel and are now above all others being *used* to evangelize the world. How can we account for it, if they were not *trained* for it and avowedly set apart as were no other people? . . . If the Anglo-Saxons did not derive their fitness for their great mission from *fore-fathers* who underwent a training for it in the land of Canaan, we know not how else to account for it.<sup>43</sup>

What, then, are we to make of Hills's embracing of Anglo-Israelism? Hills's attraction to Anglo-Israelism may be best understood in light of his ardent support of postmillennialism<sup>44</sup>. It is not insignificant that Hills's printed lecture on Anglo-Israelism appears together with his lecture on *Christian Education*. Both topics relate to the role of Christians in ushering in the kingdom of God here on earth that will be consummated in the physical return of Christ. For Hills, this would come about as God redeemed the world through his servants. Christian education enabled the training of Christians to

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 64-5.

<sup>44</sup>Postmillennialism is the belief held by some Christians that a period of one thousand years of peace will take place before the Second Coming of Christ. Premillennialism, on the other hand, holds to the idea that the period of peace will begin with the Second Coming of Christ. The idea of millennialism itself is based on the biblical text of Revelation 20:1-6. An important distinction between post and pre-millennialists has to do with their approach to ethics. For postmillennialists, there is the expectation that society should progressively improve over time to the point of ushering in the millennial period. For pre-millennialists, the future of the present world will not improve before the coming of Christ. This has obvious implications for one's obligation to social concerns. A well-known, often underscored truth is that many holiness believers in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century were postmillennialists. As the Holiness Movement moved into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, pre-millennialism gained many followers within holiness denominations and Fundamentalism. See, for example, Timothy Weber, "Premillennialism and the Branches of Evangelicalism," in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991). See also Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970).

effect positive changes in society. Similarly, the perceived triumph of the Anglo-dominant United States indicated to Hills and proponents of Anglo-Israelism that God's plan was already being revealed within the world.<sup>45</sup> It must be noted, however, that while Hills and Bresee himself were postmillennialists, most early Nazarenes believed in premillennialism. These differing views of the "end times" became evident in some of the relationships Hills had with other Nazarenes.

Clearly the Holiness believers who would later become Nazarenes and the first Nazarenes themselves were reached out through various ministries to ethnic minority groups. They spoke boldly about the power of God to purge one of racial prejudice. Nonetheless, we are also reminded from examining the lives of Bresee, Widney, and Hills, that these individuals were products of their time and did not live in a vacuum. They lived in a time characterized by immense national pride and in which social-Darwinist and other theories of racial superiority abounded and affected their own views, sensitivity, and practice.

#### *H. Race Relations at Azusa Street*

In April, 1906, the Azusa Street Revival began. Of all the characteristics of the Azusa Street Revival, none generated more interest than the phenomenon of speaking in tongues. A front page caption of the *Los Angeles Daily Times* entitled "Weird Babel of

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<sup>45</sup> Admittedly, biographers of Hills and scholars of his works have often not known exactly how to interpret Hills advocacy of Anglo-Israelism. The most current research on Hills and arguably the one demonstrating the most mastery of Hills's writings is now completed in a Drew University dissertation written by Christopher Branstetter, who, in dialogues with the author of this dissertation, has suggested that Hill's Anglo-Israel leanings may be best understood within the framework of his postmillennialism. See Christopher Branstetter, "*Purity, power, and Pentecostal Light: The Revivalist doctrine and means of Aaron Merritt Hills*" (PhD diss., Drew University, 2006).

Tongues” typified media coverage of the gatherings and elicited great curiosity.<sup>46</sup>

Visitors to the Azusa Street revival anticipated hearing the new prayer languages, and some even wrote out the syllables of the new tongues they heard to share in their correspondence to others.

The “weird babel,” though, was not the only feature of the Azusa Street revival making headlines. The revival also attracted attention on account of its racial dynamics. Shortly after the revival began, the *Los Angeles Daily Times* reported “Whites and Blacks Mix in a Religious Frenzy.” Race relations between blacks and whites at the revival violated cultural norms, and commentators did not hesitate to point out the black beginnings and subsequent multiracial character of the assembly. Harvey Cox even declared the interracial fellowship the most unusual element of the Azusa Street revival, indicating the degree to which the racial integration contravened social norms.<sup>47</sup> Frank Bartleman, who later received the gift of tongues, asserted that “the color line was washed away by the blood” of Jesus at Azusa Street.<sup>48</sup> According to Pentecostal historian Walter J. Hollenweger, “In the Los Angeles revival white bishops and black workers, men and women, Asians and Mexicans, white professors and black laundry women were equals.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Weird Babel of Tongues,” *Los Angeles Daily Times* (April 18, 1906), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 60.

<sup>48</sup> See Iaian MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988). Leonard Lovett, “Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement” *Aspects*, 127. Frank Bartleman is quoted by Vinson Synan, “Memphis 1994: Miracle and Mandate,” *Reconciliation* 1 (Summer 1998) 14.

<sup>49</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 20.

Pentecostals consciously embraced the integration of the races. They believed that the universality of God's blessing upon all peoples and the resultant unity among the believers only confirmed that the "latter days," described in the book of Acts, chapter 2, had arrived. For Pentecostals, the first Pentecost, which found believers from many nations together "in one accord," now came in fullness to Azusa Street as the Spirit of God brought together diverse peoples. Thus, far from being incidental to the tongues movement, racial integration authenticated the activity of the Divine in the Azusa Street services. The deplorable status of race relations at the turn of the century only convinced Pentecostals all the more that only God could bring about such racial integration in a sinful world marked by divisiveness and inequality.

Perhaps even more remarkable is that egalitarianism also extended to the leadership of the movement. Blacks, whites, Hispanics, and other ethnic minorities joined William Seymour, the black pastor, in giving oversight to the nascent movement.<sup>50</sup> Although the multiracial leadership of the Azusa Street Revival would be short-lived, it nonetheless constituted an important element of the early Pentecostal movement that differentiated it from established churches in the United States.

Social ministries aimed toward ethnic minorities and poor whites were commonplace in Los Angeles at the turn of the century. As previously mentioned, Nazarenes in Los Angeles had already established social ministries among Chinese and Mexican immigrants. They and other Christian groups, had been working among ethnic and racial minorities, in addition to poor whites, years prior to the Azusa Street revival.

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<sup>50</sup> Cox, 59.

Thus, ministry among ethnic and racial minority groups was not unique or novel. What was distinctive, however, was the intensive sociability between whites and blacks transpiring at Azusa Street. While Holiness advocates welcomed racial equality in theory, they found the actual physical contact between blacks and whites at Azusa Street too scandalous and reprehensible. Charles Parham, the Holiness minister from whom Seymour first learned about the gift of tongues, attended the revival in its sixth month and saw that “whites and blacks knelt together and fell across one another; frequently a white woman, perhaps of wealth and culture, could be seen thrown back into the arms of a ‘buck nigger,’ and held tightly thus as she shivered and shook in freak imitation of Pentecost. Horrible, awful shame!”<sup>51</sup> This was too much for Parham, the Holiness preacher who once made provision for Seymour to hear his lectures in Texas even though Seymour was black. Subsequent to his visit, Parham became forever a critic of the Azusa Street movement.

Some researchers have explained the multiracial constituency of the Azusa Street revival by arguing that the very roots of Pentecostalism originated from black syncretized Christianity.<sup>52</sup> Can the beginning of Pentecostalism as a movement be described as having black, white, or racially mixed roots? Interestingly, the answer to such a question very well may depend upon to whom one directs the question. Iaian MacRobert notes that whereas most white Pentecostal historians associate the origins of Pentecostalism with interracial influences, most black Pentecostals see Pentecostalism as having

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<sup>51</sup> Parham as quoted by James R. Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 132.

<sup>52</sup> Iaian MacRobert, *The Black Roots of Pentecostalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988). See also Samuel Cruz, *Masked Africanisms: Puerto Rican Pentecostalism* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2005).

predominantly black roots.<sup>53</sup> Drawing upon the work of Walter Hollenweger, MacRobert argues the continuity of themes from black syncretized Christianity including oral communication, narratives, reconciliation through community, dreams, visions, and connections between body and mind that are also found within Pentecostalism.<sup>54</sup> MacRobert points out that Pentecostalism did not become a movement when the gift of tongues arrived upon Parham's white students at his Topeka Bible school in 1901, but only when the gift of tongues came upon a group of blacks in Los Angeles five years later, thus suggesting that Pentecostalism as a movement began in Los Angeles among Seymour's flock.

Not everyone, however, agrees with MacRobert's thesis. Some have criticized it on account of its brevity and for its alleged minimization of the influence of the Holiness Movement, which was predominantly "white." Martin, Dayton, and others maintain that the theological tenets of Pentecostalism are much more complex and historical than MacRobert acknowledges, and that his thesis suffers from myopia.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 78. MacRobert specifically refers to Vinson Synon's *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* and Douglas Nelson's *For Such a Time as This: the Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* for evidence of the former and the works of James Tinney and Leonard Lovett as evidence of the latter. See also Joe Newman, *Race and the Assemblies of God: The Journey from Azusa Street to the "Miracle of Memphis"* (Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 3. For more on the roots of the black Christian experience one may also wish to consult Lawrence Mamiya and C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), especially chapter one.

<sup>55</sup>Note in particular here the criticism of Martin Marty, "The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA," *Journal of Religion* 69, no. 4 (October 1989): 605, Randy Sparks, "The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (June 1990): 328, and Dayton, *Theological Roots*.

While the roots of Pentecostalism as a movement may be debated, the immediate roots of the Azusa Street revival are less disputable. Cecil M. Robeck, a prominent scholar concerning the revival, makes clear that Seymour's group

was first and foremost an African American congregation that grew out of a cottage prayer meeting on North Bonnie Brae Street. It had an African American pastor, and for the first couple of months at least, African Americans comprised the majority of the congregations.<sup>56</sup>

Moreover, Robeck identifies fifteen core members, all of whom African-Americans, who had consistently been gathering together in prayer before the move to Azusa Street in April 1906. Reports concerning the revival corroborate Robeck's conclusions.

According to the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, "colored people and a sprinkling of whites compose[d] the congregation" that gathered at Azusa Street.<sup>57</sup> The word "sprinkling" seems to purposely minimize the role of whites in the origins of the movement.

Similarly, Phineas F. Bresee, in his first-known public remarks for his Church of the Nazarene concerning the Azusa Street revival, stated that it had begun, "among some of the colored people in this city, reinforced after a little with some whites."<sup>58</sup>

The tenor of Bresee's entire response is dismissive of the new religious "fanaticism" that had arisen. That Bresee would commence his first public remarks about Azusa Street detailing the black origins of the movement is noteworthy. It could be that Bresee simply wished to provide some historical background concerning the movement to his readers, many of whom had been writing him and asking questions about the new

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<sup>56</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Revival* (Nashville: Nelson Publishing, 2007), 88.

<sup>57</sup> "Weird Babel of Tongues", *Los Angeles Daily Times*, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1906.

<sup>58</sup> Phineas Bresee, "Editorial," *The Nazarene Messenger* 11, no. 24 (1906): 6.

religious phenomenon. Bresee would have been an obvious authority from whom to seek comment since his ministry was taking place only seven blocks away at Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene. Certainly Bresee was trying to downplay the significance of the “gift of tongues.” Historians of the Pentecostal movement frequently enjoy pointing out the error of Bresee’s infamous statement that the Azusa Street revival “has had, and has now, upon the religious life of the city, about as much influence as a pebble thrown into the sea.”<sup>59</sup> Was the attributing of the movement to a group of blacks part of that disrepute? Why did Bresee highlight the black origins of the movement and allude that it only became reinforced after the involvement of whites? It would be speculative to presume Bresee’s intentions and there is a danger of reading too much into Bresee’s opening sentence. It is clear, however, that he accredited the movement to a group of blacks who subsequently gained the favor of some whites, and that he found the movement to be “insignificant in numbers and influence.”

Other Nazarenes also acknowledged the racial dynamics present at Azusa Street. When C. E. Cornell, who followed Bresee in 1910 as the pastor of Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene, sent six men over to the Azusa Street mission, they returned with a report that noted, among other things, that “they saw white and colored all mixed up.”<sup>60</sup> George A. Rogers, the son of one of the six men, posits that the report they made to Cornell “was the basis for the decision that changed the church’s name by taking off the word ‘Pentecostal’ and caused the leaders to take a stand against Pentecostalism and

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>60</sup> George A. Rogers as quoted in Dan Brady, “Appeal for Integrity.” Daniel Brady file, Nazarene Archives, Kansas City, 1983. Brady, 15.



to teach their young preachers it (speaking in tongues) was of the Devil.”<sup>61</sup> Rogers’s statement, however, lacks corroborating evidence. The 1919 General Assembly voted to change the name of the denomination in response to specific recommendations from numerous district assemblies in an effort to distinguish the Church from those denominations that affirmed speaking in tongues.

Thus, there is no evidence to suggest that leaders within the Church of the Nazarene intentionally spurned the tongues movement on account of the multiracial fellowship at the Azusa Street revival. The objections of Nazarenes to the tongues movement centered upon perceived theological aberrations regarding *glossolalia* and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, the issue of race cannot be completely ignored. There were Nazarenes who found the racial integration present at Azusa Street troublesome and uncomfortable. Moreover, the subsequent history of race relations within the Church of the Nazarene, particularly with blacks in the U.S., bears witness to the whiteness of Nazarenes and the continuing whitening of the denomination.

#### *I. From Azusa Street to 1936: Foreign Missions in the United States*

The primary interactions between early white Holiness believers and racial minorities occurred on foreign soil. Holiness associations shared a deeply held conviction that the gospel message needed to be proclaimed to all peoples. In order to carry out the Great Commission to “go into all the world and make disciples,” the groups that coalesced to form the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene established foreign mission programs. In the Eastern United States, the Association of Pentecostal Churches had begun sponsoring missionaries to India beginning in 1897 and to the Cape Verde

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 14.

Islands three years later. In the South, the Holiness Church of Christ encouraged missionaries to step out on faith, and missionaries professing to serve the church ministered in Japan, India, and Mexico.<sup>62</sup> Bresee's Church of the Nazarene from California also supported foreign missions. In 1906 Bresee's group began sponsoring Hope School, a home for orphans and widows in Calcutta, India. Thus, by the time of the Azusa Street Revival in 1906 and the birth of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene in 1908 as a full-fledged denomination, several foreign missionary endeavors were successfully functioning.

Within the United States, however, home missionary activity concentrated on starting new churches for whites. The General Missionary Board was responsible for both foreign and home missions from 1907 until 1911. Dr. Hiram F. Reynolds, who had given leadership to a similar committee within the Association of Pentecostal Churches prior to their merger with Bresee's Church of the Nazarene, acted as the board's secretary. In 1911, the General Foreign Missionary Board replaced the General Missionary Board, and home missionary work became the responsibility of district superintendents and district missionary boards.

The 1919 General Assembly recognized the importance of starting new churches within the United States with organizational support at the general church level and consequently moved to establish a General Board of Home Missions and Evangelism. Curiously, however, ministry to blacks and ethnic minorities in the United States was to remain the responsibility of the General Foreign Missionary Board. The assignment of black work to the General Foreign Missionary Board, as opposed to the General Board of

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<sup>62</sup> Smith, 250-1.

Home Missions and Evangelism, shows how blacks in the United States were thought of more as foreigners to be evangelized than as being in the same category as whites. The General Foreign Missionary Board understandably channeled most of its resources to populations outside of the United States. While there were a few missionaries from the General Foreign Missionary Board assigned to work among the North American Indian population, no missionaries were assigned to reach out to U.S. blacks.

Despite the lack of attention to the black population by the general church and district-level administration, there were a few individuals who were involved in ministries to blacks. In 1909, just three years after the Azusa Street Revival began, the Southern California District of the Church of the Nazarene recognized the credentials of Rev. Mrs. Mary A. Palmer, a black minister who served as pastor of Pasadena Grace Church of the Nazarene. Palmer's church grew modestly over the next five years, eventually numbering about thirty-five people, including blacks and whites. Though there are not many details available, it appears that Palmer's church embraced a quasi-pentecostal belief. According to one report, "members of her church believe in demonology, that is, that the flesh is possessed by unclean spirits and to be rid of these spirits it is necessary to enter into a physical, mental and spiritual struggle" that sometimes caused her members to act like "maniacs."<sup>63</sup> Palmer's mixed-race church withdrew from the Church of the Nazarene five years later, in 1914.

It was in this same year when the first recognized black Nazarene church in the United States became organized. In 1902, Rev. George E. Miller, a white Canadian transplanted to Brooklyn, had begun a ministry with his wife among immigrants from the

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<sup>63</sup> "Creeds Make Split In Church," *Herald of Holiness*.

West Indies. Miller worked closely with black minister Rev. William Murray Green.

Noting the length of time it took for the first black church to be started, Bowman acknowledges,

An honest appraisal of our first 40 years of existence reveals that our first black church was not officially organized until 1914, even though we were already doing missionary work in India, China, Japan, Mexico, South America, and South Africa. We early planted work among tiny minorities such as Chinese, Japanese, and American Indians. Records show over 700 organized white churches before our first black church came into being.<sup>64</sup>

After Rev. Miller concluded his ministry, Rev. Green assumed the pastorate at Miller Memorial Church of the Nazarene. Later Rev. Green moved a short distance to serve as the first pastor of Beulah Church of the Nazarene in Brooklyn, the second predominantly black Church of the Nazarene organized in the United States. Beulah was officially recognized in 1922, eight years after Miller Memorial. Miller Memorial and Beulah would remain the only predominantly black churches in the denomination within the U.S. for the next twenty-one years, until 1943.

The lack of support from the General Church with regard to ministry among blacks did not go completely unnoticed. At the 1919 General Assembly, C. B. Jernigan, chair of the General Foreign Missions committee, suggested that, "provision be made in our General Foreign Missionary Board instructing them to send missionaries to work among the Negroes of the South, and, as occasion demands, organize them into colored Churches of the Nazarene."<sup>65</sup> Despite this recommendation, the Board failed to assign any missionaries to such work. The General Foreign Missionary Board, whose

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<sup>64</sup> Roger Bowman, *Color Me Christian: the Story of the Church of the Nazarene among America's Blacks* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1975), 31.

<sup>65</sup> *Proceedings of the Fifth General Assembly of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene*, 1919, 112.

jurisdictions abroad were constantly growing, almost exclusively channeled its resources abroad. Though the Church of the Nazarene invested significantly in Africa through money and missionaries, the investment among blacks in the United States amounted to very little.

The inattention to the black population prompted some letters to the editor of the *Herald of Holiness*. In one such correspondence in 1922, H. M. Chambers observed that Nazarenes “are distinctively a missionary people and yet it is to be regretted that as a church we are so slow to take the truth of holiness to the Negroes of this country.” N. B. Herrell, General Secretary of the denomination, agreed in his editorial response to Chambers, proclaiming “if we can get some Home Missionary money for this cause we can start other churches among this needy race.”<sup>66</sup> Despite such calls for more immediate action, no significant efforts as a denomination were made to reach the black community.

Nazarenes were passive and complacent when it came to ministering to and being involved with the black population in the United States. While the denomination would merge with several white Holiness groups including the Pentecostal Church of Scotland (1915), the Pentecostal Mission (1915), and the Laymen’s Holiness Association (1917), a potential merger with the Church of Christ (Holiness), a black denomination founded by Charles Price Jones, never came to fruition. Jones had parted ways with Charles Harrison Mason in 1907 over the issue of speaking in tongues, which Jones rejected. Jones’s Church of Christ (Holiness) seemed to be a theologically suitable merger candidate for the Church of the Nazarene. According to Charles Edwin Jones,

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<sup>66</sup> “Our Church and the American Negro.” *Herald of Holiness*. August 9, 1922, p. 9.

Fraternal delegations sent by the Church of Christ (Holiness) to the 1923 General Assembly in Kansas City and to the 1940 General Assembly in Oklahoma City, though warmly received (and in the first instance reciprocated by a like Nazarene delegation being sent to Chicago in 1924) failed to lead to merger because of lack of positive action by either party.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, while several mergers with several white Holiness denominations came to fruition, a lack of action by both sides hindered the merger of the Nazarenes with the black Church of Christ (Holiness).

### *J. The Department of Home Missions*

Delegates to the 1936 General Assembly reassigned the responsibility of establishing black churches to the Department of Home Missions and Evangelism, then under the leadership of M. Lunn. The organizational structure hereunto may partly explain why there were still only two organized black Nazarene congregations in the U.S. at this point. Another quadrennial period would pass before the Church of the Nazarene became more intentional in starting black churches.

At the 1940 General Assembly a concerted effort to reach out to blacks living in the United States transpired. At the Assembly, C. Warren Jones acknowledged what many already knew,

When it comes to the Negro race, we have done nothing. We have a few and very few missions for the colored people, of which there are 12,000,000 in the United States. We have talked and promised ourselves to do something but that is as far as we have gotten. We seem to fail when it comes to consistency. We keep thirty-five missionaries in Africa and spend \$40,000 a year to evangelize 1 1/3 million people and neglect the millions of the same race in the homeland. We would not do less for Africa, but do you think we should do something for the black man of our own land? They may be black but they go to make up the

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<sup>67</sup>Charles E. Jones, *Black Holiness: A Guide to the Study of Black Participation in the Wesleyan Perfectionist and Glossolalic Pentecostal Movements* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 64.

human race and were surely included in the “all nations” of the Great Commission.<sup>68</sup>

Jones’s words resonated with the delegates of the Assembly. Delegates adopted a resolution calling for a commission to plan the work of evangelism among the American Negro that was to be “inaugurated at the earliest possible time.”<sup>69</sup> The Department of Home Missions recommended that organized efforts be launched among blacks to the 1944 General Assembly, which approved the recommendation. By September, 1944, the Board of General Superintendents proposed a new “Colored District of the Church of the Nazarene” that was to be overseen by General Superintendent R. T. Williams. General Superintendent J. B. Chapman assumed jurisdiction upon the death of Williams in 1946. When Chapman died a year later, General Superintendent Hardy C. Powers provided leadership to the efforts to evangelize blacks.

In 1942 the director of the music department at West Virginia State College campus, an historically black college, hoped and prayed for a revival on that campus. The wishes of the director, a Mrs. Phillips, were answered when Rev. Joseph Morgan, Rev. Warren Rogers, and Rev. J.J. Boggan held a service there. Boggan would become the pastor of the Institute, West Virginia Church of the Nazarene, organized in 1943 as the third black Nazarene congregation in the U.S.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile other works among blacks were beginning to take place in various parts of the South.

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<sup>68</sup> *Journal of the Tenth General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene*, 1940, 361.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>70</sup> Bowman, 52.

By 1947 there were five black Nazarene churches reported, and they were geographically scattered (New York, West Virginia, Louisiana, Mississippi). More importantly, however, an annual gathering began that year that would eventually lead to the birthing of new black Nazarene churches. The Annual Colored Conferences, beginning in January, 1947, continued for six subsequent years and provided a limited, more important network for black Nazarenes.

*K. Black Churches in the 1950s and the Gulf Central District*

By 1950, despite the fact that there were only a few black Nazarene congregations in the U.S., several new ministries were beginning as Nazarenes felt called by God to reach out to blacks in the South. A number of communications, however, clearly demonstrate that not everyone was eager to support these ministries. Of particular significance is the frustration and anger depicted by several district superintendents in the South. Writing to General Superintendent H.C. Powers, Rev. J.D. Saxon, District Superintendent of the Mississippi District of the Church of the Nazarene, wrote, "I have almost decided these Negroes are equal to or surpass the whites in unsoundness!!! Hope I am not shot at sunrise for that statement."<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Elbert Dodd, District Superintendent of the Louisiana District, clearly articulates his lack of confidence in the leadership of blacks. In correspondence to General Superintendent D.I. Vanderpool, Dodd points out his frustration over the supervision of black work, stating,

I am taking over and will put the old Elder in his place – I know Southern Negro's – you have to handle them with a stick like a mule--our fellows who don't know Southern Negro's better listen to some who know we will have an awful mess. . . . Dr. Vanderpool, don't let those fellows get too much authority – if Elder Murray

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<sup>71</sup> J.D. Saxon to H.C. Powers, Aug. 20, 1950. (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives: Powers collection).



comes back with some big ideas I will have to kick his pants and I will do that very thing – He got smart once before. I had to take him in hand.<sup>72</sup>

Elder Murray came to the Church of the Nazarene from the Church of Christ (Holiness). He would later play a critical role in the establishment of Nazarene black churches. Such distrust toward blacks was not only found among district leaders, but also among some in higher positions at the general church level. For at least one individual, the social unrest that could potentially be caused by blacks warranted and demanded their evangelization. Roy Smee, Department of Home Missions and Evangelism, in a communication to Nazarene pastors writes, “if this great segment of our nation is not evangelized, they become fertile soil for subversive propaganda which could very conceivably help to destroy all that we hold dear in this land of ours. This becomes everybody’s business.”<sup>73</sup> Sadly, Smee’s motivation for evangelism seems to rest on protectionist thinking – blacks, seemingly more than any other racial group, are potentially threatening of the destruction of U.S. society. Such perspectives were not uncommon in the 1950s throughout the United States among many whites, and these Nazarene responses show the degree to which some Nazarenes accommodated to the racism permeating U.S. societal norms and values.

Others, however, displayed much eagerness to initiate and support black churches. Such was the case in the Oklahoma City area where Nazarene pastors pooled together to support a black ministry. Frustrations grew, however, when local ministers

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<sup>72</sup> Elbert Dodd to D. I. Vanderpool, November 6, 1950. (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives: Vanderpool collection).

<sup>73</sup> Roy Smee to all pastors, March 20, 1951. (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives: Smee collection).

felt little support from the general church. R.T. Williams, writing on behalf of the Oklahoma City Nazarene Pastor's Association, stated, "We felt with the lack of a commitment out of the Department of Home Missions and Evangelism, or whatever department is in charge of this project, that it did not seem to be the part of wisdom to continue the financial support indefinitely."<sup>74</sup>

The general church was not completely uninvolved, however. At the last Annual Colored Conference held at Institute, West Virginia in 1953, Dr. D. I. Vanderpool announced the establishment of the Gulf Central District for black churches. The Gulf Central District's jurisdiction included all of the black churches in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. According to Bowman, "The district was not organized as an instrument of segregation but as an instrument of evangelism."<sup>75</sup> Dr. Vanderpool chose Rev. Leon Chambers, a 30-year-old white minister, to serve as the first district superintendent of the Gulf Central District. Chambers recognized his young age and lack of preparation, stating,

The only preparation that I had was a realization that something needed to be done. I had preached to the black people and had lived around them all my life. Realizing that all people are of value to God because they are people, why was the Church of the Nazarene doing so little? This bothered me greatly.<sup>76</sup>

Chambers challenged white churches to sponsor work among blacks by starting Sunday School classes. These classes, however, failed to become organized black

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<sup>74</sup> R.T. Williams to D.I. Vanderpool, 8 January 1957 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives: Vanderpool collection).

<sup>75</sup> Bowman, 35.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 37.

churches largely on account of the lack of black clergy among Nazarenes. Chambers received enormous support from D.A. Murray, the first black minister ordained on the Gulf Central District, and C. C. Johnson, another black pastor on the district, both of whom deepened Chambers' insight into black communities. After serving as district superintendent for five years, Chambers resigned for health reasons and Warren Rogers became the first black district superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene. Rogers had been an evangelist and pastor in the Church of the Nazarene for over thirty years when appointed as district superintendent of the Gulf Central District. Under his leadership the number of members on the district went from 182 to 798, and Sunday school attendance surged from 346 to 2,244.<sup>77</sup> Rogers' ended his more than 10 years of leadership with the disorganization of the district in 1969 in accordance with legislation passed by the 1968 General Assembly that sought to end segregation. Under the new policy, black churches were reassigned to the districts already having geographical jurisdiction over white churches.

While supporting the idea of integration, many black pastors had concerns about losing their identity upon the disorganization of the Gulf District. According to Bowman, Dr. Raymond W. Hurn, newly seated as executive secretary of the Department of Home Missions, heard several concerns on a trip to Memphis. Some black pastors feared that there would be a lack of fellowship on the white districts. They lamented the loss of a black district superintendent, calling it a psychological blow to their self-esteem.

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 43-5.

Additionally, their district paper, the *Gulf Central Informer*, had functioned as an important means of communication.<sup>78</sup>

As a consequence of these concerns, the Board of General Superintendents appointed a Negro Advisory Committee in 1969 to advise the Department of Home Missions. This committee later evolved into a seven-person Council of Black Churchmen, which agreed to meet annually. Additionally, the Seventeenth General Assembly authorized the creation of an Advisory Committee for Racial Minorities. That committee met twice during the 1968-1972 quadrennium.<sup>79</sup>

#### *L. Nazarene Bible Institute*

A principal obstacle to the evangelism of blacks in the United States had been the lack of an established infrastructure for developing black leadership. Opportunities for new churches had greatly outnumbered the number of black Nazarene pastors. Responding to the challenge, the Board of General Superintendents appointed a special committee to explore the possibility of beginning a ministerial training school for blacks who felt a call to the ministry. Organized in 1948 in Institute, West Virginia, Nazarene Training College shared space with the black Nazarene church that had been organized there five years earlier. The choosing of Institute, WV, for the home of the training school served two purposes. First, Institute was the home to West Virginia State College attended by 3000 predominantly black students. Nazarene Bible Institute arranged an agreement whereby students could take supplemental courses at the state college. Second, a black Nazarene church was already established there.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 47-8.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 48.

General Superintendent Hardy C. Powers appointed Edwin E. Hale, a white clergyman who served as a chaplain during WWII, as the first president of the Institute. Hale earlier had become particularly interested in the possible union of the Church of the Nazarene with the Church of Christ (Holiness). His presidency lasted for five years until he accepted the call to pastor the Boise, Idaho, First Church of the Nazarene.

Despite the establishment of the Nazarene Bible Institute, the number of graduates could not keep up with the demand within the denomination for black pastors. In response to an inquiry from Rev. E. J. Ewell regarding the availability of a black minister for a Northern California church, D. I. Vanderpool writes,

I do not know of a Colored preacher that you can get . . . We are getting a few preachers out of the Nazarene Bible Institute in West Virginia but these individuals are being quickly used in the churches being organized on the Gulf Central District. We do not pay them much and they have to supplement their salaries by working on the side.”<sup>80</sup>

Hale’s presidential successor, Dr. R. W. Cunningham, took office in 1954 and would serve as its president for sixteen years. Since 1948 he had pastored the Nazarene church in Institute and taught on the faculty. Cunningham possessed great vision and hope for the Institute, despite the low number of graduates each year. Though many of the graduates of the Bible Institute experienced successful ministries, the paucity of graduates continuously raised the question about the financial viability of the institution. A resolution adopted by the 1968 General Assembly requested the Department of Home Missions, which held jurisdiction over Nazarene Bible Institute, to form a committee to “make recommendations as to the advisability of strengthening Nazarene Training

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<sup>80</sup> D. I. Vanderpool to E. J. Ewell, October 12, 1961. (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives: Vanderpool collection).

College of Institute, W.Va., or merging it with the Bible College in Colorado Springs.”<sup>81</sup> Dr. R. W. Hurn, Rev. H. Harvey Hendershot, and Rev. Alpin P. Bowes constituted the committee. Frustrations marked Dr. Cunningham’s presidential tenure as he had to deal with the “on-again, off-again atmosphere of the general church regarding continuance of the school.”<sup>82</sup> While Dr. Cunningham expressed optimism for the school, he questioned the confidence of the Board of Trustees:

May I ask you to stop and let us finish the evaluation of this Institution . . . as to its real usefulness in view of the other new institutions now opening. And should we think [it] worthy of retaining, may I beg you to put real heart into it and let’s *promote* it to the fullest and make it produce abundantly—it can be done.<sup>83</sup>

In 1970, the final evaluation with respect to Nazarene Bible Institute was made, and the school merged with the newly established Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Nazarene Bible College, in an effort to encourage blacks to study there, invited Clarence Bowman, who had taught at Nazarene Bible Institute for almost twenty years, to teach on their faculty. They also named one of the residential halls after Dr. R.W. Cunningham, the last president of Nazarene Bible Institute. While there were initially very few blacks attending Nazarene Bible College after the closing of Nazarene Bible Institute, by 1974 there were twenty-five black students attending.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Journal of the Seventeenth General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene*, 1968, p. 164.

<sup>82</sup> Bowman, 56.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

*M. Black Nazarenes from 1968 to 1985*

The 1968 General Assembly, in addition to calling for the disorganization of the Gulf Central District, approved a memorial strongly calling for harmony between racial groups. It stated,

We urge that each member of the Church of the Nazarene humbly examine his personal attitudes and actions towards other races as the first step in achieving the Christian goal of full participation by all in the life of the church and the entire community. We reemphasize our belief that holiness of heart and life is the basis toward right living. We believe that the complete understanding between racial groups will come when the hearts of men have been changed by complete submission to Jesus Christ, and that the essence of true Christianity consists in loving God with one's heart, soul, mind and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself.<sup>85</sup>

In 1971 two important groups met to advise general church leaders regarding black ministry. The first group, a Negro Advisory Committee, met at the request of the Board of General Superintendents, who had chosen its members. They would meet four times before the next General Assembly. The second group, the Advisory Committee for Racial Minorities, resulted from a mandate given by the 1968 General Assembly to the Department of Home Missions. It included representatives from several different racial and ethnic minority groups. By 1974, a Council of Black Churchmen began to meet annually to offer recommendations to the general church.

Throughout the 1970s the number of black churches continued to increase. One by one, each with a story of its own, black churches were launched by both black and white ministers in the Church of the Nazarene. Progress continued to be made, even though the denomination was still far from being ethnically diverse. By 1975, there were

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<sup>85</sup> Raymond Hurn, "Bonds of Brotherhood," *Herald of Holiness* 61 (Feb. 16, 1972): 22.

sixty-four predominantly black congregations in the U.S.A. with approximately 2,500 members. Still, according to Bowman, at that time a “fair estimate of black members or attenders would probably be 1 percent of the church’s 430,000 members in the United States.”<sup>86</sup> Blacks were finding words of encouragement from individuals in leadership positions, both at the district and general church levels. Rev. Charles Johnson, an African-American pastor in Meridian, Mississippi, tells of his experience on a white district in an interview, saying,

I believe that Blacks and Whites can exist on the same district . . . if the leadership is right, *if the leadership is right*, that’s where it all has to be done, in the leadership. I have seen on many districts that the Black church, which is a minority on the district, has been left to survive or die on its own without nurture or encouragement of the district superintendent. . . . So I see the need of a district where the Black church will get the same kind of nourishment as the White church . . . But, it can happen on a White district also. Talmadge did it! He did it! I got just as much nurture as anyone, and I felt a part of the district. He made me feel a part.<sup>87</sup>

Johnson clearly expresses his appreciation of the support given to him by Talmadge Johnson, Superintendent of the Mississippi District, who would later be elected as a General Superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene.

Clearly, more district and general church leaders were supporting the ministries of black Nazarenes in the 1970s than before. This is also evidenced in advertisements found in general church publications seeking funds to help establish grants and scholarships for black students preparing for the ministry. The *Herald of Holiness* also solicited “white workers” to volunteer to give time to helping black churches as teachers and musicians.

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<sup>86</sup> Bowman., 78.

<sup>87</sup> Jerry L. Appleby, “Blacks, Whites, and the Holy Spirit: an Interview with Charles Johnson,” *Preacher’s Magazine* 58 (Dec./Jan./Feb. 1982-83): 29.



As a result of these and other efforts, the denomination could announce that during the decade of the 1970s, black churches increased 54 percent to 94 churches by 1981.<sup>88</sup>

These advances, though, must be kept in proper perspective. Despite a rise in the presence of U.S. blacks in the Church of the Nazarene, it must still be admitted that black representation in leadership positions within the denomination was severely lacking through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Though Warren Rogers had been the district superintendent of the Gulf Central District and R.W. Cunningham the president of Nazarene Bible Institute, their leadership roles had been limited to positions of authority over other blacks. Up to 1985, no blacks had served as general superintendents, district superintendents, college presidents, or in any other executive position at the general church level exercising authority over white Nazarenes.

#### *N. Sect-to-Church Considerations*

Having briefly reviewed some of the salient events and important personalities related to Church of the Nazarene's historical relationship with blacks in the United States, we can consider in what ways they attest to or call into question the thesis that the Church of the Nazarene has experienced whitening.

One of the most apparent ways in which we see the Church of the Nazarene becoming more churchly is through the process of institutionalization. Stark and Finke posit the following regarding sects that are moving in a churchly direction:

Proposition 59. As the administrative sector expands, authority will become more centralized and policies will be standardized.

Proposition 60. As authority becomes more centralized it will tend to be more exclusively in the hands of **professional** ecclesiastics.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> "Ethnic Minority Churches Double," *Herald of Holiness* 70 (May 1, 1981): 34.

Clearly the story of black evangelism in the Church of the Nazarene supports these propositions. While various general church administrative departments have had oversight over black evangelism throughout the years, it is obvious that the general church exercised its authority, though only slowly. As I have shown, efforts to start black churches began with the energies of a few concerned individuals without significant pragmatic support from the district or general church. As jurisdiction of black evangelism passed from the General Missionary Board to the General Foreign Missionary Board in 1911, to the Department of Home Missions and Evangelism in 1936, to the Department of Home Missions in 1956 (when a separate Department of Evangelism began), and to the Department of Church Growth in 1974, the authority of promoting black churches increasingly moved to the general church level. In the 1940s, as the voices of Nazarenes continuously called for more general church leadership in this area, general church initiatives were made to start the Gulf Central District and Nazarene Bible Institute. By the 1970s, several different advisory groups began meeting to discuss with general church leaders concerns and possibilities for ministry to blacks in the U.S.

Another important way in which one can easily note the increasing centralization of authority is by observing the staffing and workloads of general church leaders responsible for black evangelism. Until 1936, evangelism among blacks in the U.S. fell under the supervision of the secretary of the General Foreign Missionary Board whose primary responsibility concerned missionaries abroad. From 1936 to 1948, the responsibilities belonged to the Department of Home Missions and Evangelism, a more

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<sup>89</sup> Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 162-164.

specialized department of the general church, but one whose secretary was actually part-time as he also held other important administrative roles in the church as well.<sup>90</sup> Finally, in 1948, Dr. Roy F. Smee assumed the assignment of full-time secretary of the Department of Home Missions and Evangelism. In the subsequent years staff would be increased within the respective departments to provide assistance at the general church level.

The sect-to-church trajectory of the Church of the Nazarene is also evident when one considers the degree to which Nazarenes lived in tension with their surrounding culture with respect to attitudes and behaviors toward blacks. Mid-nineteenth century Holiness believers, the theological ancestors to the Nazarenes, unashamedly deemed slavery sinful and advocated immediate abolitionism. Utilizing H. Richard Niebuhr's taxonomy of Christ and Culture for a framework, these Holiness believers are best characterized by Niebuhr's "Christ the Transformer of Culture" perspective.<sup>91</sup> This particular type of relationship is one whereby various attributes of culture are perceived as sinful, but redeemable as the gospel message is proclaimed, received, and affirmed. The gospel brings about not only personal conversion, but particularly a conversion of the social order. Such was the perspective of 19<sup>th</sup> century Holiness believers who believed that slavery could be ended.

The Holiness groups that would amalgamate into the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene continued to maintain such optimism toward the turn of the century, though signs of its waning were evident. Bresee reached out to the poor, to the Chinese, and to

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<sup>90</sup> Raymond Hurn, *Mission Impossible: A Study of the Mission of the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1973), 31.

<sup>91</sup> Helmut Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper, 1975).

Mexicans at a time when many others were pleased with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The Holiness Association of Texas openly confessed the negligence of Anglos to address the wrongs of prejudice toward blacks, even calling for the giving up of rights and privileges of whites.

Yet, as was shown, these early Nazarenes espoused and reflected the social context in which they lived, including perspectives concerning race. Early Nazarene leaders, while being socially progressive on the one hand, exhibited great national pride and, in the case of A.M. Hills, adopted biblical views of Anglo-Israelism. Reports that Nazarenes were troubled by the mixed gathering of whites and blacks at Azusa Street seem to corroborate the notion that Nazarenes were socially progressive with respect to relations between blacks and whites, but only to a certain point.

Over the next twenty-five years (and the first “official” twenty-five years of the denomination), Nazarenes appeared to be in little to no tension with their surrounding environment with respect to involvement with blacks.<sup>92</sup> For the most part, Nazarenes simply revealed an apathetic attitude toward the social condition of blacks. A few exceptions resulted in the founding of two predominantly black churches of the Nazarene in Brooklyn and attempts by individuals to start works elsewhere.

Already in the 1940s and through the 1960s, the racial dynamics within the Church of the Nazarene reflected more closely the segregated lives of blacks in the U.S. South. Far from being socially progressive as Niebuhr’s “Christ the Transformer of

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<sup>92</sup> It should be pointed out that in many ways Nazarenes exhibited much tension with society, embracing a Christ Against Culture ethos at times. Nazarenes were known for their prohibitions against social dancing, attending the theater, consuming alcohol, modest dress, and refraining from membership in secret societies, to name just a few examples.

Culture” perspective evidences, Nazarenes reflected the social conservatism more closely aligned and associated with Niebuhr’s “Christ Above Culture” or “Christ of Culture” perspectives. The Gulf Central District and Nazarene Bible Institute, though not organized for the expressed purpose of segregation, nonetheless followed the social patterns of segregation.

Finally, even the affirmation of and responses to an increasing black presence in the Church of the Nazarene during the 1970s and early 1980s are reflective of attitudes toward blacks in the U.S. Blacks are recognized as a presence within society, but given little space for leadership positions. For the denomination as a whole, however, blacks and minorities in the Church of the Nazarene in the United States do serve an increasingly important function for the church: they increase the number of Nazarenes in the U.S. Blacks and other minorities represent an “untapped” demographic for potentially increasing membership. The Church Growth movement of the 1980s fueled desire to evangelize blacks and minorities in the U.S., especially as rates of growth among whites were on the decline.

Thus, the historical relationship between Nazarenes and the black population in the U.S. does show a sect moving in a churchly direction. The evidence of such a movement is even more clear when one looks at another issue which cannot be disassociated from race, namely, that of gender, the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 4

### MASCULINIZATION

Thus far we have taken notice of two critiques of the Azusa Street Revival in the written and oral statements of Nazarenes: the use of *glossolalia* and the racial integration of the participants. There is another charge against Pentecostalism, however, that has been frequently voiced not only by Nazarenes, but by other skeptics as well: the complaint of excessive emotionalism, or fanaticism. In this chapter I will explore this topic to show how emotionalism was socially constructed in such a way as to disparage the Azusa Street Revival and how emotionalism within the Church of the Nazarene in the United States has waned in the Church's trajectory toward respectability. Furthermore, the prejudicial social construction of femininity in the United States has been such that emotionalism is expected of women, despite the clear independence of emotion from gender. Due to the social prejudice of women as emotional, however, I will also consider the acceptance of women clergy in the Church of the Nazarene to see if it mirrors changes related to the degree of emotionalism in worship.

#### *A. Enthusiasm at the Azusa Street Revival*

The Azusa Street Revival of 1906, situated a half-dozen blocks away from Los Angeles First Nazarene, experienced no shortage of freedom in their worship. Robeck describes the worship at 312 Azusa Street,

It was a life-changing moment, a transformative time that produced a range of experiences. There were those who, "surrounded by [His] glory" at the mission, broke into dance. Others jumped, or stood with hands outstretched, or sang or shouted with all the gusto they could muster. Others were so full of awe when they encountered God that their knees buckled – they fell to the floor, "slain in the

Spirit.” Some spoke, rapid-fire, in a tongue they did not know, while others were struck entirely speechless.<sup>1</sup>

Wacker provides insight, “What distinguished Pentecostals, at least in public perception, was not so much the presence of uninhibited emotion as its centrality.”<sup>2</sup> The “uninhibited emotion” took center stage not only in worship, but in the reporting of the revival as well.

Critics, both first-hand observers and reporters with second-hand information, latched on to this unpopular aspect of worship in their disparagement of the new religious phenomenon. As noted in previous chapters, Bresee published an opinion with respect to the Azusa Street revival in response to questions he had received. He opines that the movement has “had at least some of the elements of fanaticism,” and that, “It would be doing the few poor people who have been deluded by this thing no wrong to say that among clearheaded, faithful, reliable Christian people of this city the thing has no standing.”<sup>3</sup> Bresee’s dismissive remarks attacked what he believed to be the fanaticism, emotionalism, chaos, and incoherence of revival. Claiming that “clearheaded, faithful, reliable” Christians give no credibility to the meetings suggests that the Azusa Street Pentecostals were perceived by Bresee as not guided by rationality, but rather were controlled by their affections, and not in a way harmonious with the Spirit of God.

Certainly the “much physical exercise of various kinds, with laying on of hands” and the “senseless mumble” that Bresee also cited as features of the Azusa Street

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<sup>1</sup>Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 131.

<sup>2</sup>Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 100.

<sup>3</sup> Phineas F. Bresee, “Editorial,” *The Nazarene Messenger* 11, no. 24. (1906): 6.

meetings further convinced him of the fanaticism. From Bresee's perspective, such things, which had been "seen experted by competent examination" from visitors, could not be "of the Spirit of Truth."<sup>4</sup> Bresee, no stranger himself to services exhibiting free expression of worship, nonetheless believed there was a line not to be crossed and that worship at Azusa Street transgressed that boundary.

Criticism often breeds exaggeration. Admittedly the scene at Azusa Street was intensely emotional routinely. Even so, an accurate portrayal of the revival would have to include the quiet times, particularly at the beginning of a service, when a meditative reverence toward God was sensed. In many respects the services portrayed typical evangelical, Protestant elements: prayer, congregational singing, testimonies, sermon, etc. Robeck, whose research on Azusa Street is arguably the most comprehensive to date, concludes that "prayer was probably the centerpiece of the revival."<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, similarities aside, the "excessive" emotionalism at the height of the services received the most consideration.

Outsiders focused on the affective without an awareness of the deeper implications. Wacker explains, "Pentecostal worship was more than it seemed. Outsiders saw only fanaticism, but insiders saw more. They discerned order within disorder, reason within unreason."<sup>6</sup> Harvey Cox suggests that the perceived irrationality at Azusa Street was in actuality a *mis*perception. "Ecstasy, as my late teacher, the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>5</sup> Robeck, 139.

<sup>6</sup> Wacker, 111.



theological Paul Tillich, wrote, is not an irrational state,” argues Cox, “It is a way of knowing that transcends everyday awareness, one in which ‘deep speaks to deep.’”<sup>7</sup> Whether internally logical or not, opponents to the movement expressed dismay at the “senselessness” and “unreasonableness” of the spontaneous, emotional gatherings. Bresee’s criticism of the Azusa Street Revival is particularly significant. His words carried much weight in Holiness circles, and his proximity to the revival drew the attention of others. His opinion undoubtedly carried a lot of weight not only among Nazarenes, but among Holiness believers in general.

### *B. Sectarian Charisma and Religious Enthusiasm*

Sectarian religious groups frequently “encourage spontaneity of religious expression” in their worship.<sup>8</sup> This spontaneity is in part a protest against the formality found in more institutionalized forms of religion and is compatible with the goal of allowing full and wide participation of members. The authority of sects is frequently rooted in charismatic leadership.<sup>9</sup> Founding religious leaders frequently exhibit a high degree of charisma, which is often connected to the very *raison d’etre* of the new religious organization. According to Weber, the perceived charisma of such leaders

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<sup>7</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2001), 86.

<sup>8</sup> Ronald L. Johnstone, *Religion in Society* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007), 61.

<sup>9</sup> See F. B. Bird, "Charisma and Leadership in New Religious Movements," in *Handbook of Cults and Sects in America*, Vol. B, ed. D. G. Bromley and J. K. Hadden (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI, 1993): 75-92; Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

legitimizes their authority.<sup>10</sup> Groups naturally experience a *routinization of charisma* that brings about a diminished exhibition of charisma as organizations lose their first-generation zeal and become institutionalized, professionalized, and bureaucratized.

Wesleyan theology has never limited the scope of God's activity to the mind of a person. The Pietist influence upon John Wesley is clearly seen in this regard. Wesley's followers gained a reputation for their religious affections and outsiders would deridingly refer to them as "religious enthusiasts." One captures a sense of this even in Wesley's own conversion experience, where Wesley confesses that his heart "was strangely warmed." For followers of Wesley, God works in the whole of humanity: heart, soul, and mind.

The pragmatism necessitated by frontier living in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the United States augmented religion of the heart. Although Methodists would very quickly start their own schools and become increasingly settled throughout the 1800s, Methodism thrived as westward expansion and circuit preaching joined together. Pragmatism was necessitated more than intellectualism, and a religion of the heart was well-suited for the common person.

Revivalism provided the perfect context not only for spawning social reform, but also for affirming enthusiastic worship. Many of these revivals became a source of teaching the message of holiness. Many evangelists of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were important leaders of the American Holiness Movement, including Phoebe Palmer and her husband, who held meetings that attracted Methodists and non-Methodists alike. Camp

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<sup>10</sup>Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 215.

meetings provided a venue for urban dwellers, many of whom had been forced away from their rural upbringings due to economic realities, to relive and reaffirm their “anti-intellectual” faith, as it was judged by many. The theological emphasis the Holiness Movement proclaimed regarding the possible work of the Holy Spirit within all people resulted in sanctified believers whose style of worship evidenced the Spirit’s presence. Holiness meetings were alive, full of the manifestation of the Spirit, and held in suspicion those churches that seemed archaic and dead.

### *C. Let the Glory Down!*

Early churches of the Nazarene, consistent with their Wesleyan Holiness predecessors, were no strangers to worship services in which there was tremendous liberty of expression in the Spirit. In fact, the Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene, the mother congregation of the denomination, had gained quite a reputation for its Spirit-filled services. Phineas F. Bresee was known for often saying the phrase, “Let the glory down!” By this Bresee intended that there should not be any hindrances to the presence of God in a service, and that God’s presence ought to be sensed within the worship experience. God should be free to move as He so chooses, according to Bresee. Smith reports that even before his days as a Nazarene, Bresee’s preaching would sometimes be anointed to such a degree that there would be “a display of holy enthusiasm like that for which Dr. Bresee later became famous.”<sup>11</sup> During those days as a Methodist minister, Bresee was once asked what he planned to do after accepting an appointment to pastor in

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<sup>11</sup> Timothy Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), 99.

Pasadena. Bresee responded, “By the grace of God I am going to make a fire that will reach Heaven.”<sup>12</sup>

When Bresee launched his new church, the Church of the Nazarene, the glory continued to come down. In the early part of 1896, Los Angeles First Church moved to its first stable location on Los Angeles Street, a place where it would remain until 1903. Here, at a leased lot, the church constructed what would be nicknamed the “Glory Barn,” appropriately named in light of the glorious worship services Bresee led there.<sup>13</sup> Girven, Bresee’s biographer, captured in his diary an episode in the life of LA First Church that characterizes the worship of early Nazarenes:

Sunday, May 29, 1898. “The services on the Sabbath were peculiarly precious, and the outpouring of the Spirit in the morning was so blessed that songs of praise and shouts of victory burst out in the midst of the preaching of the Word, in such a way as to make it at times impossible for Dr. Bresee to go on with his sermon. . . . At times the waves of glory were such that amid the shouting and singing and dancing one could easily recognize what it was that made the outside world think that the disciples were drunk.”<sup>14</sup>

According to Smith, “getting the glory down” became a goal of the Los Angeles Nazarenes, and the shouts and affirmations from the congregation frequently interrupted the sermon:

Producing this powerful sense of God’s presence, or “getting the glory down,” as Dr. Bresee put it, was in his eyes the most important aim of every service. Though he instructed I. G. Martin and other musicians who assisted him to keep

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<sup>12</sup> Smith, 100.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Stanley Ingersol, Harold Raser, and David Whitelaw, *Our Watchword and Song: The Centennial History of the Church of the Nazarene*, ed. Floyd Cunningham (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2009), 102.

<sup>14</sup> E. A. Girvin, *Phineas F. Bresee: A Prince in Israel*, (Kansas City: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1916), 136.

off the platform any singers who would “make a show,” Bresee knew that simple choruses and popular hymns helped to create a sense of emotional expectancy. Since he himself could not carry a tune, he fell into the habit of clapping his hands slowly while the people sang. The audiences soon picked up the custom of clapping through the chorus of nearly every song. Far from halting such direct and simple expressions of feeling, the pastor encouraged them. After all, he was building a church for plain people. . . The good doctor would often have to restrain the “amens” and ‘hallelujahs’ so as to be able to complete his message.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Bresee would sometimes have to pause when Leslie Gay, one of his parishioners, would become overly anxious in shouting and how, after told he could proceed, “the walls of the church would reverberate with the people’s great audible affirmation of truth.”<sup>16</sup>

Though order was always maintained at Los Angeles First, freedom of the Spirit was not limited to an occasional “amen.” According to one eyewitness account,

Bresee allowed his “happy congregation” an “unrestrained freedom.” The people, he said, “laugh, clap their hands, shout ‘amen’ or ‘hallelujah’, [and] walk to and fro.” He had seen “a colored sister execute in her joy the most beautiful dance we ever beheld.” It was not thought disorderly “to ‘demonstrate’ in a natural way the gladness of the heart in the Nazarene Church.”<sup>17</sup>

Nazarenes were so notorious for their exuberance in worship that outsiders dubbed them the “Noisyrenes,” a nickname that would follow them for decades. Such religious enthusiasm, though, did not sit well with everyone, including at least one leader of the Nazarenes. Though freedom in worship would continue to leave its impression upon and characterize Nazarene worship, it would become more restrained as Nazarenes moved in the direction of sophistication. Indeed, even in the early years of the

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<sup>15</sup> Smith, 119.

<sup>16</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 111.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, 133.

denomination, some of the more highly educated Nazarenes had reservations about the emotionalism found in Nazarene services.

#### *D. The Limits of Emotionalism*

Even before the Church of the Nazarene merged with other Holiness groups to become the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene in 1908, some people were becoming uncomfortable with the emotionalism exhibited in many of the worship services of local congregations. Dr. Joseph Widney's story illustrates such unease with the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles, which represented the western stream that would form into and contribute the name to the denomination. Widney's contributions to and roles within the Church of the Nazarene have previously been cited in this dissertation. His relationship with Bresee is well-documented. The two had served together in leadership at the University of Southern California (Widney as president, Bresee as a board member), both were well-respected within Methodist circles in Southern California, and both served as co-founders and co-general superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene. Undoubtedly they shared common passions and interests, and they would remain friends throughout their lifetimes. Three years into their joint ministry at Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene, in late 1898, Dr. Widney resigned from his position as co-general superintendent of the denomination and co pastor of Los Angeles First Church. The reason? He returned to the Methodist Church because "the growing frequency of services of great emotional power at the tabernacle became at last too much." Smith contends that the "quiet-mannered" Widney became unsettled one particular evening

when several individuals made their way to the altar and “were overcome completely” with “a good deal of noise and confusion” resulting.<sup>18</sup>

The departure of Dr. Widney from the Church of the Nazarene may speak more to the person of Joseph Widney than anything else. Admittedly Widney’s spiritual journey led him on a perpetual exploration of the divine. Navigating from Methodist to Nazarene, back to Methodist, and then toward an independent faith embracing all religions, Widney turned out to be a religious entrepreneur of sorts. Nonetheless, Widney’s exodus from the Church of the Nazarene does offer us insight into the lively services of Nazarenes. One wonders if Dr. Widney’s discomfort emanated from a concern that his respectability within the Los Angeles community would evaporate. As a highly regarded leader in religious, educational, and medical settings, Widney’s reputation may have been at risk. There is no way of knowing for sure the source of Widney’s aversion to emotionalism, but the boundary line between a proper display of emotion and fanaticism would cause a struggle for others as well. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the Nazarenes in Los Angeles seem to have been content with their worship experiences. Widney, the one who struggled with the emotionalism, left the church. Before long, however, Nazarenes themselves would begin to clarify the limits of emotionalism.

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<sup>18</sup> Smith, 121. See also, 104. It should be noted that both Widney and Bresee resigned from their positions as co-general superintendents of the denomination and as co-pastors of LA First upon the request of Nazarene delegates who had decided that annual tenures were better than lifetime tenures. After resigning, Widney chose not to be re-elected, but Bresee was re-elected to his positions for a one-year term.

It bears mentioning at this point, although it was documented earlier, that the Azusa Street Revival emerged in the spring of 1906. Concerns over the perceived fanaticism of Pentecostalism, such as those cited by Bresee in his published opinions regarding the revival meetings, undoubtedly raised suspicions thereafter as to whether Pentecostalism was infiltrating some Holiness churches where freedom in the Spirit abounded. The associations constructed between Pentecostalism and emotionalism led to the raising of a guard in Holiness churches which sought to distance themselves from the nascent movement. Already before the Azusa Street Revival, Widney left the Church of the Nazarene due to its emotionalism. After the Azusa Street Revival, the boundary line of acceptable emotion would be more closely monitored in the Church of the Nazarene.

#### *E. The Seth Rees Controversy*

Such concerns lay near the center of a seminal moment in the history of the Church of the Nazarene. The “Seth Rees controversy” “rocked the church . . . and threatened it with the possibility of unraveling the union” of the groups that had merged to form the denomination.<sup>19</sup> In 1912, Seth Rees, a Quaker turned Nazarene, began ministering at University Church, which served the campus community at Pasadena College and held its services in her chapel. College president, Edgar P. Ellyson, and College dean, H. Orton Wiley, both befriended and supported Rees in his ministry. In 1913, Wiley followed Ellyson, who had resigned to become Vice-president at Illinois Holiness College, as president of Pasadena College.

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<sup>19</sup> Periods in Nazarene History, [Online] available, <http://www.usamission.org/Portals/1/Documents/Nazarene%20History%20Outlines62009.pdf>, 3.



Seth Rees had a long familiarity with the Church of the Nazarene dating back to his days as a pastor in Rhode Island. Rees later moved on to Texas, where he had significant interactions with those who would become Nazarene. Nazarenes in the West knew of Rees, and in 1912 he received the call to pastor at Pasadena University Church, the third largest Nazarene congregation in the United States. Due in part to Rees's Quaker background, there were philosophical differences between Rees and Bresee.<sup>20</sup> These differences, however, would not tear the denomination as would the impending storm.

The storm began to brew when a great revival broke out on the Pasadena College campus during the winter of 1914, disrupting the academic schedule of classes and resulting in numerous confessions of sin. One account of the revival reported that "more than two hundred were on their feet at one time, 'shouting and weeping and leaping and marching,' while others lay prostrate on the floor."<sup>21</sup> Rees, as pastor of University Church, had tremendous influence over the students on campus and encouraged the revival. Before long two influential pastors in the area, A.O. Hendricks of the Pasadena First Church, and C.E. Cornell of the Los Angeles First Church, raised concerns about the emotionalism of the revival. For his part, Seth Rees, whose church had been growing in number (as opposed to the declining and more affluent LA First Church), "discounted

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<sup>20</sup> For the best description of these differences, see Ingersol, *Watchword*, 204-206. Conflicts between Bresee and Rees included the role of pastors in the discipline of church members, the role of district superintendents, and other issues related to ecclesiastical authority.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, 273-5.

other Nazarene churches as spiritually dead.”<sup>22</sup> There soon emerged an apparent divide between, on the one hand, Wiley and Rees, who supported the revival and the freedom of the Spirit among the students, and, on the other, Hendricks and Professor Ramsay, dean of the theology department.<sup>23</sup>

Tensions continued to mount, leading eventually to doctrinal charges being brought against Professor Ramsay, who was cleared by committee members appointed to investigate him, save the vote of Seth Rees. Wiley, who supported Rees, did not have the support of the board of trustees, which included Hendricks. The board began a search for a new president, leading to Wiley’s resignation. The board also provided land for the University Church to move off-campus.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, two pastors filed disciplinary charges against Rees who, after a well-publicized case, was acquitted. The University Church, which had not yet taken the offer of moving off-campus, began to put up a temporary structure on the donated lots after being given a deadline to move off campus.

One week prior to their relocation, during their last Sunday service on the campus, the newly elected district superintendent, Howard Eckel, in consultation with general superintendent E.F. Walker, declared the University Church disorganized. (It should be noted that Walker had earlier served as pastor of both LA First, with Bresee, and Pasadena First.) Eckel had acted after receiving news that the University Church had placed its property in the name of an individual parishioner, a violation of denominational polity.

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<sup>22</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 207.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, 275.

<sup>24</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 208.

The news of the action spread like wildfire throughout the denomination. Nazarenes all across the United States voiced vehement concern about the top-down decision approved by General Superintendent E.F. Walker to disorganize a local church without having consulted with the other general superintendents. To many first-generation Nazarenes, this strong centralized authority was indicative of the top-down, ecclesiastical authority they had fled in becoming Nazarene. Though the tide eventually moved in Rees's favor (the other general superintendents rejected Walker's decision and seemingly the church would soon be reorganized), Rees had presumably reached the end of his patience. Rather than continuing his relationship with the Church of the Nazarene, Rees and many from his congregation launched on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1917, the Pentecost Pilgrim Church, later merging to become the Pilgrim Holiness Church.

The Seth Rees controversy had some bearing upon the history of Northwest Nazarene University. Eugene Emerson, from Nampa, Idaho, had accepted the Holy Spirit into his life at Rees's University Church when he had temporarily lived in the Pasadena area from 1912-1913. A new Nazarene, Emerson returned to Idaho and explored the idea of starting a Holiness school in Nampa. The Idaho-Oregon Holiness School, with many Quaker-turned-Nazarene supporters, opened first as a college in 1915, after beginning as an elementary school in 1913. Emerson's connection to Rees, in addition to the support of other heavily Quaker-rooted Nazarenes, led to the invitation to H. Orton Wiley to become the school's president after his resignation from Pasadena College.

When Rees launched the Pilgrim Holiness Church, a good number of Nazarenes joined with him. A few hundred parishioners from University Church transferred to become Pilgrims, as did the pastor of the San Diego Church of the Nazarene, and the pastor of the Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene, to name a few. Dozens of students and a few faculty left Pasadena College and, upon hearing of Wiley's move to Nampa, many of them transferred to what they believed would be a school more supportive of their viewpoints.

Wiley, after taking an initial one year leave of absence as president in order to pursue further education, came to Nampa in 1917. Wiley, whose appreciation for Rees continued, had nonetheless concluded that Rees should have remained with the Nazarenes and not have abandoned them. For two years there would be internal tensions at Nampa's college between those who were more lively and pro-Pilgrim in perspective and those who were more reserved in spirit. Wiley conveyed complete loyalty to the Church of the Nazarene, however, and by the third year of Wiley's full-time tenure, "the Pilgrim-leaning faculty and students left the school."<sup>25</sup>

The Rees controversy raised questions in the minds of many regarding the power of general superintendents to act individually, and regarding the authority of superintendents over local churches. In time it led to modifications in the *Manual* related to the role of general superintendents in disorganizing local churches. In this respect the Rees controversy shaped Nazarene polity for the future.

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<sup>25</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 212.

At the same time, the Rees controversy is also important for another reason. It highlighted another question on the minds of Nazarenes: What are the limits of emotionalism? Though many events contributed to an escalation of the crisis, we should not quickly overlook the immediate irritant aggravating the problem: freedom in the Spirit at the revival.

The departure of Widney from the Nazarenes gives us a sense of the emotionalism abounding at LA First Church in 1898. The reaction to Azusa Street in 1906 by the LA First pastor, P.F. Bresee, and the opposition of pastors C.E. Cornell (LA First) and Hendricks (Pasadena First) to the Rees controversy show us an increasing concern regarding emotionalism within the church.

One should not have the impression, however, that exuberance in worship vanished completely in the Church of the Nazarene or even that it diminished at the same rates everywhere. Indeed, accounts can be found that demonstrate that the deeply-rooted sentiments of first-generation Nazarene worship burst forth from time-to-time and persisted longer in some places than in others. One witness records her observation of a specially-held revival:

An old-fashioned tent meeting was in progress at the corner of Broadway and Cross Street in Lawrence under the auspices of the Church of the Nazarene in July of 1924. Those fiery, zealous "Noisy-renes", as they were called, acted like people from another world. The marks of worldliness were not in evidence. Their fiery evangelistic services were unlike anything I had ever witnessed. The loud ringing shouts of "Hallelujah", "Amen" and "Praise the Lord" made me wonder if these people had not been released from Danvers, the mental institution for Massachusetts. At the close of the first service, when the invitation was given for sinners to come forward, my friends beckoned for me to leave with them. As we made our exit, my friends said that had we remained, they would have succeeded in converting us.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> C. Helen Mooshian, *His Ambassador*, (Sacramento: Mooshian, 1975), 19-20.

Increasingly, however, these outbreaks of the Spirit would be found more often at revival services and camp meetings than on Sunday mornings. They would find their place within the church calendar, making their appearances at expected moments of renewal and less often at the regular weekly services.

*F. Toward More Controlled Worship (1950-1985)*

By mid-century an increased emphasis upon graduate education for ministers helped lead to worship styles at many Nazarene churches that were more routinized and programmed. Interestingly, the reinforcing of a social boundary line also seemed to play a role in limiting expressions of emotion. Ingersol, Raser, and Whitelaw readily admit,

During the 1950s and 1960s many Nazarenes distanced themselves from the emotionally charged worship services that had characterized the church in earlier years. Third generation Nazarenes did not want to be confused with Pentecostals. Outside of camp meetings, loud “amens” and “hallelujahs” embarrassed many. Church bulletins, once considered too confining to the Holy Spirit, now were commonplace.<sup>27</sup>

A desire for professionalism extended into the arena of music as well. “Some church leaders feared that the church’s music, like its worship, was becoming too formal.”<sup>28</sup> Some began to openly ponder whether there was room left for the Spirit to work in Nazarene services. Stephen S. White, editor of the denomination’s landmark publication, *Herald of Holiness*, observed in 1960, “There seems to be a feeling in some circles, and it appears to be increasing, that we shouldn’t manifest any emotion these days, especially in

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<sup>27</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 436.

<sup>28</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 441.

connection with religion. You might be allowed to get excited about most anything else, but not about religion.”<sup>29</sup>

James de Pasquale had served the Church of the Nazarene as a faculty member at the Nazarene Bible School in Beirut for four years beginning in 1954. He later served as a missionary to Haiti. In 1960 he published a treatise, *Is the Glory Departing?*, in which he put in print the sentiments of many Nazarenes. Modeled after the rebukes to the seven churches found in the biblical book of Revelation, De Pasquale chided the denomination he loved for its loss of passion for the things of God. He writes,

There is definite evidence of a spiritual deadliness settling down upon our worship services. An unusually strange quietness has come over many of our local assemblies, with shouts of victory and praise seldom heard. Frankly, too many of us would suffer embarrassment if some Spirit-filled saint should give holy vent to the joy that fills his soul by shouting or singing or speaking aloud praises unto God in the midst of the congregation. More alarming than this, in some areas of our movement this quietness has become an accepted thing to the extent that any kind of emotional demonstration is frowned upon...What is happening to our beloved Zion? Is our growing silence an indication that the Glory is departing?<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the “Noisyrenes,” whose worship experiences once sought to “bring the glory down,” now were faced directly with the question as to whether the Glory had departed.

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<sup>29</sup> S. S. White, “Too Bad We Can’t Have Any Emotion,” *Herald of Holiness* (January 27, 1960), 13.

<sup>30</sup> James De Pasquale, *Is the Glory Departing?* (Oakland, CA: Color Art Press, 1960), 21-22.

*G. Emotionalism and the Social Construction of Gender*

As previously mentioned, emotionalism and irrationality have been and continue to be associated with femininity in 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. society. Although the linking of emotion to women has rightly been critiqued by late 20<sup>th</sup> century feminists, research clearly shows that women have been and continue to be unfairly characterized as being subject to their emotions.<sup>31</sup> Such thinking is deeply entrenched in history. Illustrating such stereotypical thought, Gustav LeBon, in 1879, writes,

All psychologists who have studied the intelligence of women, as well as poets and novelists, recognize today that they represent the most inferior forms of human evolution and that they are closer to children and savages than to an adult, civilized man. They excel in fickleness, inconstancy, absence of thought and logic, and incapacity to reason.<sup>32</sup>

Stereotypes do not fall easily. Despite the tremendous advances of women in many sectors of society in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the equating of unconstrained emotion with women continues. While recent scholarship has demonstrated that particular emotions, such as sadness, are feminized and others, including anger, are more often attributed to males, women are still considered “more emotional” overall.<sup>33</sup> Emotionalism itself is socially

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<sup>31</sup>See R. D. Ashmore and Del Boca, F. K. “Sex stereotypes and implicit personality theory: Toward a cognitive-social psychological conceptualization,” *Sex Roles*, 5, (1979): 219-248; L. R. Brody and Hall, J. A. “Gender, emotion, and expression.” In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland-Jones (Eds.). *Handbook of Emotions*. (New York: Guilford Press, 2000), 338-349; I. K. Broverman, Vogel, S. R., Broverman, D. M., Clarkson, F. E., and P.S. Rosenkrantz. “Sex-role stereotypes: A current appraisal.” *Journal of Social Issues*, 28, (1972): 59-78.

<sup>32</sup> Gustav LeBon, *Revue d'Anthropologie* (1878): 60-61, quoted in Vincent Parrillo, *Strangers to these Shores* (New York: Pearson Press, 2006), 475.

<sup>33</sup> See Maria Parmley and Joseph Cunningham. “Children’s Gender-Emotion Stereotypes in the Relationship of Anger to Sadness and Fear,” *Sex Roles*, 58, (March, 2008): 358-370.; Robin Simon and Leda Nath. “Gender and Emotion in the United



defined, constructed, and interpreted in terms of gender in particular ways. Having regarded the role emotionalism played at Azusa Street, let's now consider the significant influence of women upon early Pentecostalism.

#### *H. Women at the Azusa Street Revival*

Azusa Street Pentecostals granted unusual liberties to women. Robeck reminds us of the historical peculiarity of Pentecostals with respect to women:

And it came to Pentecostalism long before most historic Protestant denominations reached the conclusion that women should play a greater role in ministry. The differences in how Pentecostals and most Protestants reached this conclusion serve to underscore a key distinction between them. Pentecostals justified their position based largely on their understanding of Joel's promise (Joel 2:28-32). Protestants came to similar conclusions primarily after they had been subjected to the criticism of secular feminists.<sup>34</sup>

Although William Seymour is the recognized leader of the Azusa Street Revival, there is no doubt that women held important roles at the Apostolic Faith Mission and profoundly contributed to the success of the mission. Neely Terry, Clara Lum, Lucy Farrow, Florence Crawford, and Jenny Moore Clara each helped to shape the Azusa Street Revival.

Clara Lum serves as just one example. Lum was among the earliest of those to come to Azusa Street. Interestingly, Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan records that she had previously been the personal assistant to Dr. Bresee, though the evidence is lacking. According to Synan, she left Bresee and the Nazarenes and affiliated herself with the

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States: Do Men and Women Differ in Self-Reports of Feelings and Expressive Behaviors?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 109 (March 2004): 1137-1176; E. Ashby Plant and Janet Shibley Hyde, "The gender stereotyping of emotions," *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 24 (March 2000): 81-92.

<sup>34</sup>Robeck, 15.

Pentecostals' Apostolic Faith Mission in 1906.<sup>35</sup> Lum took on the vital role of editor of the *Apostolic Faith*, the newspaper of the Azusa Street Revival, which “became a powerful vehicle for furthering the revival.”<sup>36</sup> At its height, the *Apostolic Faith*, which was offered for free, had more than 50,000 subscribers. Lum's fingerprints were everywhere on the publication. She frequently wrote the editorials found in the publication. In 1908, for reasons that are debated, Lum left the Apostolic Faith Mission for Portland, where Florence Crawford, another former Azusa Street participant, was then leading a mission by the same name there.<sup>37</sup>

Women contributed in other ways as well. Many accounts document how instrumental women were in leading vibrant singing at the revival.<sup>38</sup> Jennie Moore Seymour, who had married William Seymour in 1908, led the Apostolic Faith Mission for a decade after his passing in 1922. Additionally, other women participants at the Azusa Street Revival took the Pentecostal message throughout the United States and globally.

Considering the ways in which emotion and irrationality are gendered in society, one might well argue that the meetings at 312 Azusa Street elicited critiques regarding a perceived femininity of the revival. Wacker admits as much stating, “The early

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<sup>35</sup>Vinson Synan, “The Lasting Legacies of the Azusa Street Revival,” *Enrichment Journal*. 08 October, 2010. [Online] available [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200602/200602\\_142\\_Legacies.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200602/200602_142_Legacies.cfm).

<sup>36</sup> Robeck, 99.

<sup>37</sup> For more details surrounding Lum's departure, see Robeck, 300-311. Some have speculated that Lum's departure came about perhaps over a disagreement with Seymour's marriage to Jennie Moore.

<sup>38</sup> Robeck, 149-150.

Pentecostal movement resonated with stereotypically female norms,” citing as an example, “They made public weeping – scorned among men, esteemed among women, not simply acceptable but a criterion of the success of a Holy Ghost meeting.”<sup>39</sup> The Nazarene response to the Azusa Street revival similarly condemned feminized characteristics of the revival. Nazarenes did not live in a social vacuum, and they were not immune from appropriating the gender stereotypes found within U.S. society at large. Admittedly, Nazarene attitudes toward freedom in worship and women in ministry were once quite sectarian. It can be persuasively argued, however, that there have been significant shifts in these areas. We turn now to a consideration of these trends in the Church of the Nazarene.

### *I. Women in the Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition*

As we will see, a considerable number of early Nazarene congregations had women as their pastors. The denomination that welcomed freedom in worship also opened its doors to and embraced those women who sensed God calling them into ministry. From its inception the Church of the Nazarene has recognized the right of women to preach and lead in positions of authority within the church. C.S. Cowles writes, “From the time Phineas Bresee founded the First Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles to its union with other Holiness groups in 1908, women preachers and leaders were very much a part of the life of the Church.”<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the 1898 *Manual* succinctly declared, “We recognize

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<sup>39</sup> Wacker, 161-2.

<sup>50</sup> C.S. Cowles, “In Praise of Women Preachers: An Analysis of Paul’s Position on Women in Ministry,” 1991, *The Evangelical Christian Library*, 07 October 2010, [Online] available at <http://www.ccel.us/place.praise.html>.

the equal right of both men and women to all offices of the Church of the Nazarene, including the ministry.”<sup>51</sup> Rooted in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, the Church of the Nazarene embraced the theological conviction that the Spirit of God does not discriminate and may infill any person, irrespective of their national origin, race, or sex. Nazarene women have served as pastors, evangelists, missionaries, seminary professors, and district superintendents. Rebecca Laird points out the “oft-repeated folklore [that] tells us that Phineas Bresee . . . was fond of saying, ‘Some of our best ‘men’ are women!’”<sup>52</sup>

The fact that women acquired acceptance in the pastorate and elsewhere in the Church of the Nazarene is not unexpected in view of the tradition from which the denomination emerged. One could convincingly argue that the Wesleyan-Holiness movement in the United States owes its founding, in no minor part, to two sisters, Sarah Lankford and Phoebe Palmer.<sup>53</sup> Beginning in 1835, these women gave leadership to a series of prayer meetings in New York City that would later change the religious landscape of the U.S. Sarah Lankford led the prayer meeting for women for two years, after which time Phoebe Palmer led a “Tuesday Night for the Promotion of Holiness.” Soon, men were allowed to attend the meetings in the Palmer house and, as time would later reveal, not fewer than four men who would later become bishops in the Methodist church attended those meetings. Palmer’s “altar theology,” stressing the immediacy and

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<sup>51</sup> *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (Los Angeles: 1898), 16.

<sup>52</sup> Rebecca Laird, *Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1993), 11.

<sup>53</sup> Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father* (Boston: H.V. Degan, 1859).

universal availability of sanctification, would leave a perpetual stamp upon the Holiness movement.

Revivalist Charles Grandison Finney traveled widely during the Second Great Awakening. Finney advocated a different flavor of the Holiness message than Palmer, one that emphasized consecration more than cleansing. Nevertheless, he shared the conviction that God could empower and use women as much as men for the sake of the kingdom of God. Unconventional at the time, Finney permitted women to voice their testimonies and pray at large, public revivals.

Having gained notoriety for his preaching, Finney was invited to teach theology at Oberlin College and later became its president. Oberlin, joined to the abolitionist cause very early on in its existence, stirred up controversy by permitting blacks and whites to attend together and by permitting women to obtain degrees. Antoinette Brown, whose parents had been converted to Christianity under the ministry of Finney, sensed a call to preach and attended Oberlin. Though barred from full participation in theological courses, Oberlin granted Brown the right to sit in classes and complete written work assignments. After graduating from Oberlin in 1847, Brown traveled and spoke until she was called to pastor a church in 1853 in New York. Brown's church, congregational in its form of government, would bestow upon her the privilege of ordination on September 15<sup>th</sup> of that year, giving her the distinction of being the first recognized ordained woman ever in the United States. Fittingly, Luther Lee, founder of the Wesleyan Methodist church, preached her ordination service, using Galatians 3:28 for his text.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Laird, 32.

Lee's Wesleyan Methodist church originated out of the abolitionist controversy. Strong abolitionist thought recurrently accompanied the free voice of women in the pulpit and in society. The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 met at the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls, New York in July of that year. The church's distinguished reputé as a sympathetic locale for social activism, together with its size, made it a logical choice for the radical Quakers and Methodist attendees who signed the Declaration of Sentiments that lamented the limitations placed upon women and insisted that they be accorded certain rights, including the right of elective franchise. To this day, though its relative importance is sometimes debated, the Seneca Falls Convention is noted as a salient and historic launching of the suffrage movement.

Thus, from Phoebe Palmer, Oberlin perfectionists, the signers at the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention, and numerous other Holiness women of conviction, there emerged a formative and formidable generation that would be the source of inspiration for women who would become pastors and leaders in the early Church of the Nazarene.<sup>55</sup>

#### *J. Early Women Leaders in the Church of the Nazarene*

Women contributed in significant ways in each of the three major streams that joined together to form the Church of the Nazarene. In the Northeast, Olive Winchester and Susan Norris Fitkin were each instrumental in their roles within the Association of Pentecostal Churches. Olive Winchester graduated in 1902 from Radcliffe Ladies College, a division of Harvard University. That same year Winchester worked for the

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<sup>55</sup> See also Benjamin T. Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, (Rochester, NY: Earnest Christian Publishing House, 1891); Louisa Woolsey, *Shall Women Preach? Or, the Question Answered*, (Memphis: Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Board of Christian Education), 1989/1891.

Pentecostal Collegiate Institute, raising funds for the school by traveling and preaching at churches. Winchester then studied theology in Scotland, receiving a bachelor of divinity degree at Glasgow University in 1912. For graduate studies, Winchester matriculated in the S.T.M. program at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley before continuing to Drew University, from which she earned a Th.D. in 1925. During her time in Scotland, Winchester came to know the Pentecostal Church of Scotland and its founder/leader, George Sharpe. Winchester's communications with Nazarenes in the U.S. facilitated the merger of the Pentecostal Church of Scotland into the Church of the Nazarene in 1915.<sup>56</sup> Dr. Winchester, remaining single throughout her life, spent the majority of her career as a professor, dean, and vice president at Northwest Nazarene College, influencing a generation of Nazarenes during their college years.

Susan Norris, born in 1870, possessed a strong sense of calling rooted in a dream she had as a young person. A Canadian by birth, Norris was an evangelist who settled in Vermont as a pastor. Later, after being invited by some Quakers to hold a series of revival services in New York, she responded to the Holiness message at a convention and experienced entire sanctification. She and her revivalist husband, Abram Fitkin, organized a church after a particularly successful revival in Hopewell Junction, New York. That church numbered one of the fifteen that soon joined together as the Association of Pentecostal Churches, the eastern stream of the eventual Church of the Nazarene.<sup>57</sup> Susan Norris Fitkin's official ordination took place when the Association of Pentecostal Churches merged with the Church of the Nazarene in 1907. Her most lasting

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<sup>56</sup> Laird, 93.

<sup>57</sup> Smith, 70.

contribution to the new denomination commenced with her election as the first president of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society in 1915. For over thirty years, Fitkin gave leadership to the growing denomination in this capacity and generated immense encouragement and support for foreign missions. A hospital in Swaziland, the creation of which Fitkin aided through intense fundraising, bears the name of her child, Raleigh Fitkin, who passed away at 10 years of age.

Winchester and Fitkin are only two of many women ministers whose contributions would shape the early Church of the Nazarene. From the Southern stream, Mary Lee Harris, whose husband had founded the New Testament Church of Christ, labored in ministry with her evangelist, Congregationalist husband. Mary Harris, after the death of her husband in 1894, unabashedly continued forward, holding revival services, organizing churches, and intentionally supporting the ministries of other women.<sup>58</sup> As a woman evangelist, Harris encountered strong resistance and was falsely accused of abandoning children.<sup>59</sup> Mary Lee Harris was ordained on December 14, 1899, by the Mulberry Canyon, Texas church she had earlier organized. In 1891, Harris married Henry Cagle, a man ten years her junior, who had been converted under her ministry.<sup>60</sup> Henry and Mary Cagle would serve faithfully in the Church of the Nazarene for many decades. Henry served as the district superintendent of several districts and Mary held the position of district evangelist for those districts in addition to helping out at several

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<sup>58</sup> Smith, 154-55.

<sup>59</sup> For the most complete detail of Mary Lee Harris Cagle's biography and ministry, see Robert Stanley Ingersol, *Burden of Dissent: Mary Lee Cagle and the Southern Holiness Movement*, (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1989), 168.

<sup>60</sup> Laird, 111.



local churches. The Cagles worked side-by-side in such way that Laird suggests that “their roles looked more like co superintendents.”<sup>61</sup> The account of Mary Cagle’s ministry from 1926-27 demonstrates her commitment and undeniable influence: holding 13 revival meetings, preaching 175 times, 216 conversions, 118 individuals sanctified, traveling about 10,000 miles by car, and visiting nearly all of the churches on the Hamlin, Texas District Church of the Nazarene.<sup>62</sup>

Likewise, women in Bresee’s western stream of the Church of the Nazarene were active and instrumental in promoting the message of holiness. Lucy Knott, wife of Judge William S. Knott, first gave leadership to a prayer and Bible study group, named Company E, within her local church in 1898. Knott received her district ministerial license in 1899 and, in 1901, began leading the Mateo Street Mission in Los Angeles. Dr. Phineas F. Bresee preached her ordination sermon in February, 1903. The Mateo Street Mission evolved, eventually becoming the Compton Avenue Church of the Nazarene with Lucy Knott still at the helm as their pastor. An author, successful fundraiser, and religious educator, Knott soon found herself serving as pastor of the second largest Nazarene church in the denomination, one that had expanded to include a private school for 1<sup>st</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades. Knott would eventually found, along with her son, J. Proctor, the Hollywood Church of the Nazarene, where she served as an associate to her son until 1940, the year in which she died at age 87.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Laird, 113.

<sup>62</sup> Ingersol, *Burden*, 291.

<sup>63</sup> Laird, 44-50.

The Church of the Nazarene in the West was indebted to other women as well. According to Smith, “In the founding of the Pacific Bible School, parent institution to Pasadena College, laymen again led the way, persuading a reluctant Bresee to support the venture. Interestingly enough, the leaders were women, as had been true also in the missionary, youth, and publishing work.”<sup>64</sup> Mrs. A.L. Seymour, Miss Leora Maris, Mrs. Herbert Johnson, Mary A. Hill, Mrs. A.P. Baldwin, Mrs. A.T. Armour, Mrs. Leoti McKee, Mrs. Lilly Bothwell, and Mrs. E.J. Kellogg all shaped the Bible school. Seymour and Johnson provided finances, Maris served as principal, and the remainder were faculty members. In fact, only three men offered any courses at all initially. These women mentored 42 students during the first year, instilling within them a sincere passion for missionary endeavors.

The contributions of these aforementioned women, from the eastern, southern, and western streams that united as the Church of the Nazarene, were multiplied over and over in the lives of those under their influence. Moreover, these who have been mentioned represent just a small percentage of the countless women who served in pastorates, missionary assignments, and educational settings under the auspices of the Church of the Nazarene in its early years.

#### *K. The Decline of Women Clergy Begins*

The marked decline in the percentage of ordained women in the Church of the Nazarene and in the percentage of women pastors would not begin until a few decades into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, from the time of the denomination’s birth until the mid 1920s, numbers and percentages related to the participation of women in ministerial roles

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<sup>64</sup> Smith, 137.

trended upwards. The first generation of women Nazarene preachers undoubtedly provided encouragement and nurtured the call to ministry that women sensed from God.

Already by 1925, the percentage of Nazarene churches headed by a female pastor had reached its historical height. Although a decline in the number of churches with female pastors would ensue, the precipitating factors preceded the actual decline, including the initial onset of Fundamentalism as a movement. Perhaps it was the beginning of this downward trend that General Superintendent J.B. Chapman had in mind in 1930 when reiterating the Nazarene position on women clergy in the Nazarenes' primary organ, the *Herald of Holiness*:

God calls men and women to preach the gospel, and when He does so call them, they should gladly obey Him and members of the church and of the ministry should encourage and help them in the fulfillment of their task. This is the teaching of the New Testament, the logic of the new dispensation, the position of the church of the Nazarene.<sup>75</sup>

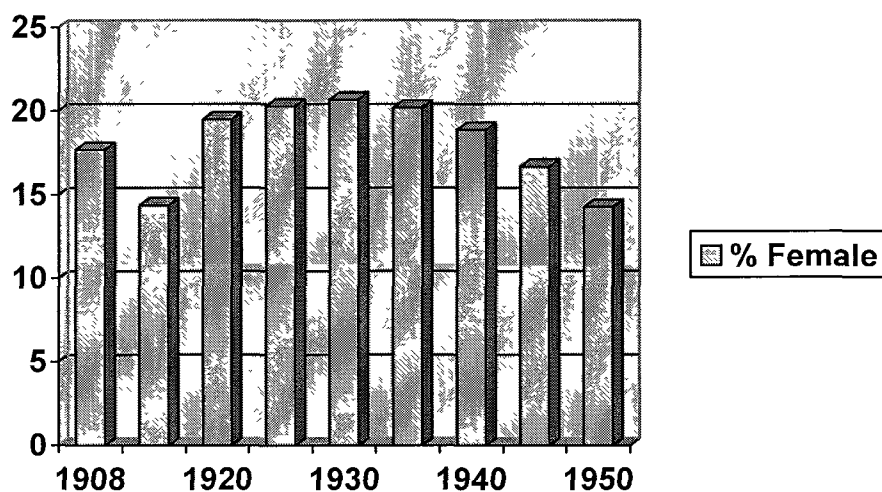
Richard W. Houseal, Jr., in a seminal master's thesis written for the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1996, collected startling statistic data illustrating several trends related to women clergy in the Church of the Nazarene.<sup>76</sup> The following table, utilizing his data, graphically shows the declining percentage of credentialed ministers who are women from 1908 to 1985. In the year 1930, the percentage of credentialed ministers who were women reached its height at just under twenty-one percent; in other words, more than one out of every five licensed or ordained ministers in the Church of the Nazarene was a woman. However, in just twenty years, that percentage would be

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<sup>75</sup> J.B. Chapman, "October Gleanings," *Herald of Holiness* (Oct. 15, 1930), 5.

<sup>76</sup> Richard Houseal, "Women Clergy in the Church of the Nazarene: An Analysis of Change from 1908 to 1995" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1996).

reduced by a third so that, by 1950, only fourteen percent of credentialed ministers in the denomination were women.

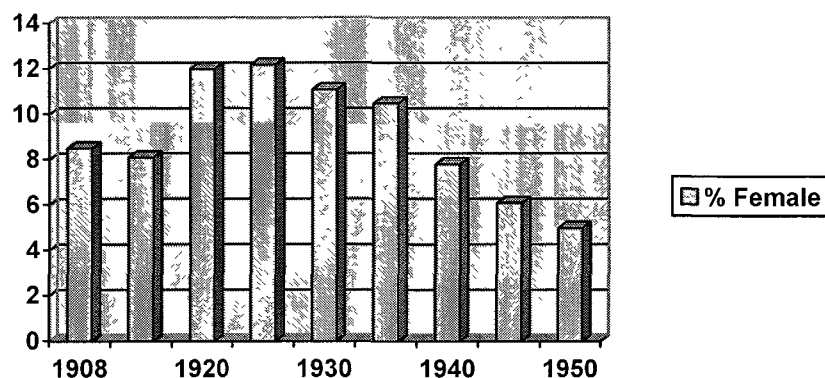


**Credentialed Clergy in the COTN, 1908-1950**

To be sure, the statistics related to credentialed female ministers are telling. More dramatic and dismal, however, is the data concerning the percentages of churches led by women senior pastors.<sup>77</sup> To be credentialed and available for employment is one issue; to be called by a congregation and actually employed is quite another.

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<sup>77</sup> Richard Houseal, "Nazarene Clergy Women: A Statistical Analysis from 1908 to 2003," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Nazarene Sociologists and Researchers, March, 2003.

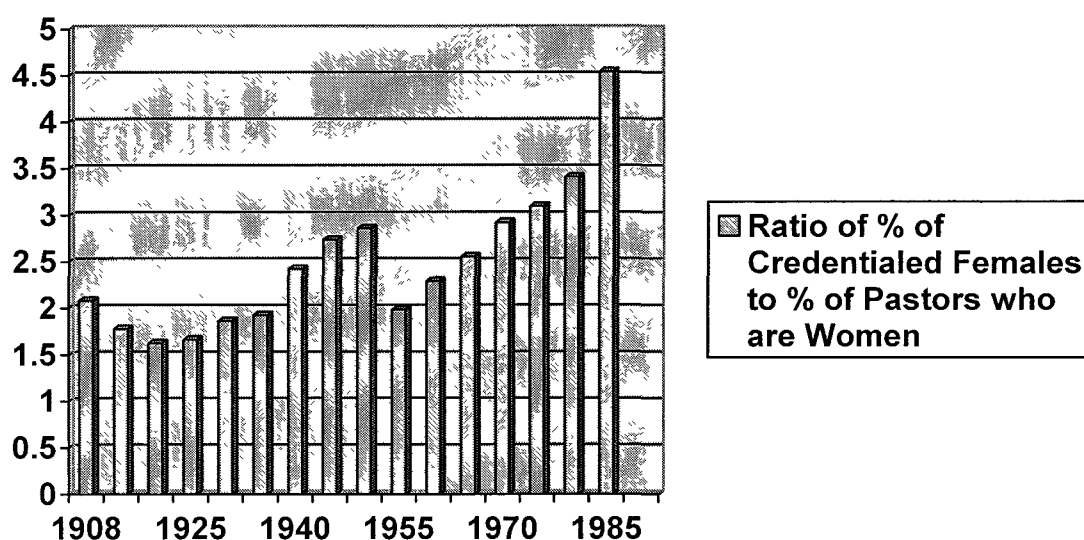


**Senior Pastors in the Church of the Nazarene, 1908-1950**

The figures reveal that, in 1925, slightly more than twelve percent of Nazarene churches had women pastors. By mid-century the percentage had been reduced by more than half, to just five percent of all local churches.

The two tables, taken together, reveal much. First, it is clear that women, compared to their male counterparts, decreased rather significantly in representing credentialed clergy and senior pastors between 1930 and 1985. Second, the decline began earlier with respect to female senior pastors than with credentialed clergy. It is reasonable to conclude that a decline in the percentage of credentialed clergy who are female would follow on the heels of the increasing desire of congregations to hire male clergy. As opportunities for employment dwindled, it would be likely that fewer women would pursue credentialed clergy status. Third, a comparison of the two tables shows that, across all the decades, there were consistently higher percentages of credentialed ministers who were women than percentages of church senior pastors who were women. One reason may be that, while there are many credentialed women, they may have had a

difficult time in securing employment. Another possible reason is that women ministers may have increasingly found themselves steered toward roles other than those of “senior pastor.” This may have been particularly true after 1950, when specialized ministerial roles emerged more fully. In fact, if one were to look at the ratio between the two tables above, that is, between the percentage of credentialed women and the percentage of women serving in the role of pastor, one would see that over time the ratio increased.



### *L. Fundamentalism and Higher Education*

Several salient factors curtailed the acceptability of emotion and women in ministry as mid-century approached. First, the rise of fundamentalist thought within conservative Christianity, including to some extent within the Church of the Nazarene, led to a stricter, more literal reading of Scripture. This movement, rooted in Calvinist interpretations of Scripture, not only imposed a certain logic upon biblical texts, but also divorced them from their original social contexts. Thus, biblical passages, including those related to the role of women in the church, were increasingly interpreted in a literal

fashion. While many Nazarene biblical scholars and pastors refused to capitulate to such renderings of Scripture, support for biblical inerrancy increased within the denomination. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, in her seminal work on fundamentalism, notes, “my relatively narrow definition of fundamentalism does not chart the influence of fundamentalist thought and practice in related traditions, especially immigrant and holiness denominations. But the similarities are clearly present, judging from the widespread adoption of strict fundamentalist teaching on women’s roles in groups historically more open to feminine leadership.”<sup>82</sup>

Additionally, the role of higher education, which Nazarenes embraced from the beginning, should not be discounted. Nazarene liberal arts colleges overcame financial adversities, developed their curricula, and improved their faculty in significant ways in the first half of the twentieth century. The schools, in spite of their challenges, grew in strength, quality, and viability. Nazarenes were achieving higher levels of education than in the past.

As laity became educated, expectations for clergy education also heightened. Pasadena College began offering a Master of Arts graduate degree in religion in the 1935-1936 academic year, although the Bachelor of Divinity graduate degree had been offered much earlier. Other schools would follow with graduate programs in religion, including Northwest Nazarene College’s M.Th. degree in 1941. Conversations increasingly turned to the need for a graduate seminary as a place for a more substantial

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<sup>82</sup> Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 12. Bendroth compellingly argues that fundamentalism inverted the Victorian notion that women were suited for piety by masculinizing spirituality.

graduate program. Efforts to seek the approval of the 1940 General Assembly proceeded forward, but the discussion was tabled at the Assembly. Ongoing conversations and efforts led the 1944 General Assembly to ratify the proposal for a denominational seminary.

The significance of the establishment of a graduate seminary can hardly be overemphasized. Specialized courses in homiletics and leading worship services influenced Nazarene clergy greatly. Emphasis upon administrative skills, coherent services that integrated music and sermon, and reasoned sermons with polished delivery would lead to regulated, programmed services that sought to severely constrain spontaneity and free worship.

Moreover, the establishment of Nazarene Theological Seminary would change the pastoral landscape in another substantial way. The pastorates of larger, more financially stable churches became reserved for NTS graduates. Almost overnight, the pathway toward successful church assignments, district superintendencies, missionary appointments, and administrative assignments at Nazarene headquarters passed through a graduate education at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

This, however, proved problematic for many women who sensed a call to preach, particularly those who were married. Societal norms facilitated the moving of men with their families in order to attend seminary. Married women, for the most part, remained limited in their mobility to the interests of their husbands. While alternative routes remained for individuals to meet the educational requirements for ordination, those avenues for obtaining education came to be seen as secondary to a seminary degree. Moreover, Nazarene Theological Seminary provided opportunities for engaging in



conversations and networking with others who would be a part of the future leadership of the denomination. Many women were simply absent from those conversations.

*M. Continued Decline of Women Clergy, 1950-1985*

An editorial in *The Preacher's Magazine*, an organ of the Church of the Nazarene, provides insightful clues to the status of women clergy in 1950. Titled "The Women's Sphere," the opinion notes that "there a few [women] who hold positions of leadership" and that "it would be honest for all to confess that such work has not been encouraged." Moreover, the editorial references an apparent "endeavor [that] was put forth" to prevent the election of women as delegates to the General Assembly. While the article encourages readers to "thank God for our women," lauding the influence of women in their roles as public school teachers and "in the technical field, such as in laboratories, aeronautics, and all types of manufacturing industries" that enable them to contribute to the "financial success" of the denomination.<sup>83</sup> The opinion calls for a recognition of the multifaceted contributions of women to the denomination, rather than issuing a challenge to reverse the declining voice of women within church leadership positions that had transpired.

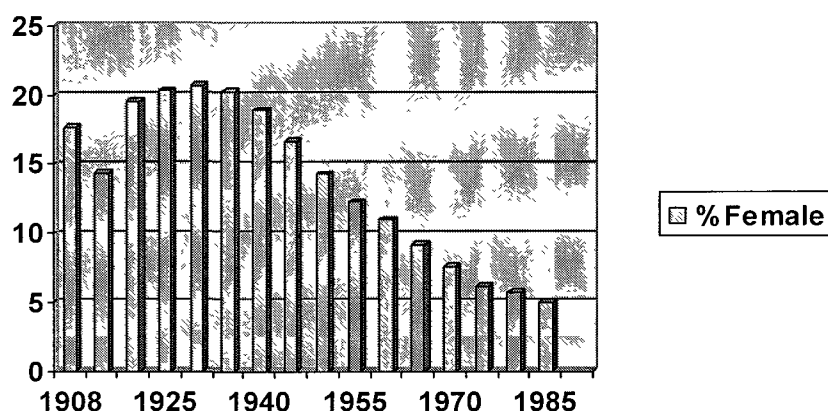
The percentage of female credentialed clergy continued to decline after 1950. By 1985, women numbered one out of every twenty credentialed ministers, representing a seventy-five percent drop from its high point in 1930.

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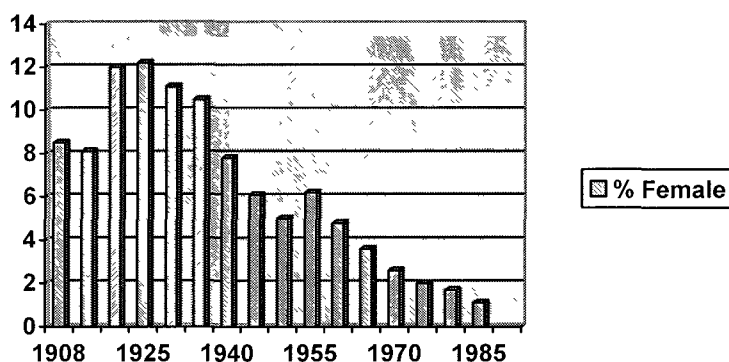
<sup>83</sup> "The Women's Sphere," *The Preacher's Magazine* (September-October, 1950), 3.

Similarly the percentage of female senior pastors continued to decrease from 1950-1985. The percentage of churches served by women pastors diminished from twelve percent in 1925 to just five percent in 1950. By 1980, the number evaporated to less than one percent of Nazarene senior pastors being women. Whereas 230 Churches of the Nazarene had called a woman their pastor in 1955, only 52 were doing so in 1985.

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#### Credentialed Clergy in the COTN, 1908-1985



#### Women Ministers in the Pastorate, 1908-1985

<sup>84</sup> "History," Church of the Nazarene. 8 October, 2010, [Online] available: <http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/ssm/adult/women/clergy/history/display.aspx>

Curiously, political boundaries also seem to play a role in terms of where women serve as pastors. Results from studies looking at the distribution of Nazarene church led by women clergy show convincingly that women pastors are overrepresented on smaller Nazarene districts. Houseal hypothesizes that smaller districts, possessing less political capital and fewer resources, are less attractive to male clergy.<sup>85</sup> Seemingly women pastors are not only relegated to the sidelines of the denomination as a whole, but also to the districts perceived to be less influential and prominent.

Despite the continued trends between 1950-1985 of women decreasingly holding ministerial credentials and serving as pastors, and perhaps in response to those trends, efforts arose in the late 1970s and early 1980s to recover the lost heritage of supporting women in ministry.

Delegates to the 1980 General Assembly, held in Kansas City, Missouri, affirmed the leadership rights of women within the denomination, adopting the following Statement on Women's Rights in the *Manual*:

That while man and woman are created equal spiritually in God's sight [Galatians 3:28], that in the interests of the Christian family, moral and ethical standards, Christian modesty and simplicity, we emphasize the distinction so that each may fulfill his or her highest place in the home and in the kingdom of God. We support the right of women to use their God-given spiritual gifts within the church. We affirm the historic right of women to be elected and appointed to places of leadership within the Church of the Nazarene. We oppose any legislation which would be against the scriptural teachings of the place of womanhood in society.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Houseal, 6-7.

<sup>86</sup> *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1985), 283.

Interestingly, the language in the statement affirming women in ministry is strikingly tempered. Although clearly reaffirming the historic position of spiritual equality within the denomination, the statement also expressed strong sentiments regarding gender differences. In this statement about women, the invoking of Christian families and modesty is conspicuous. Nazarenes, like other conservative Protestants, reacted strongly against the secular feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s. Dr. James Dobson, a graduate of what is now Point Loma Nazarene University and a fourth generation Nazarene himself, received praise by Nazarenes for his teachings on family values through his organization and radio program, *Focus on the Family*. While Dobson's views on women and the family did not characterize the thinking of all Nazarenes, he undoubtedly found great support among his denomination of loyalty.

Nevertheless, voices from within the denomination continued to lobby for increased participation of women in ministry. Among them was the voice of General Superintendent William Greathouse, who addressed the issue in a 1982 editorial:

The partial eclipse of women ministers in the church of today is lamentable. It reflects the influx of teachings and theologies which are in basic disagreement with our historic biblical position. The gospel is the Magna Charta for women's ministry. Once again the Lord is pouring out His Spirit on His handmaidens in the Church of the Nazarene and calling them to preach. At least 40 young women are now preparing themselves for various ministries at Nazarene Theological Seminary.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> William Greathouse, "Women in Ministry," *Herald of Holiness* (June, 1982): 2.

Greathouse's observation of young women preparing themselves for ministry was evidenced by the statistics.<sup>88</sup> Yet, as Crow and Crow have pointed out, education is not the issue. The primary limitation to women clergy is the fact that Nazarene churches will not call them to serve.<sup>89</sup>

#### *N. Conclusion*

Thus, the Church of the Nazarene, once known for its enthusiastic worship services and openness to the leadership of women in the pulpit, transitioned away from these sectarian characteristics. Partly on account of a fundamentalist leavening, an emphasis on higher educational for clergy, and a desire for professionalism, the Church of the Nazarene in 1985 saw ninety-nine percent of its churches in the United States served by a male senior pastor. Additionally, some were openly questioning whether the Spirit had departed from Nazarene services.

The trends regarding women clergy within the Church of the Nazarene stand in stark contrast to what took place among mainline denominations, where the percentage of ministers who were women began to increase. Yet, if we consider those religious organizations that seemingly reinforce the patriarchal power structures in U.S. society to be churchly in orientation, the Church of the Nazarene clearly exhibited such reinforcement.

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<sup>88</sup> Houseal points out that women clergy have been overrepresented in the ministerial roles of "student," "missionary," and "associate pastor" while underrepresented in other the role of "pastor." See Houseal, 7-8.

<sup>89</sup> Kenneth Crow and Crow, Charles, "Dynamics of the Placement Process," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Nazarene Sociologists and Researchers, March, 2003.

## Chapter 5

### EMBOURGEOISEMENT: SUBURBANIZATION AND EDUCATION

In his *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, H. Richard Niebuhr articulates with clear expression his theory outlining the historical trajectory whereby sectarian religious groups evolve into more church-like organizations. In so doing, Niebuhr considers how variances in social factors such as race, ethnicity, nationality, and sectionalism characterize and legitimize the religious stratification indicative of denominationalism. Yet Niebuhr does not suggest that those social factors are to be given equal weight. Rather, critical to Niebuhr's thesis is the pivotal, even primary, way in which *economic* stratification functions as a crucial source in the formation and maintenance of religious boundary lines. Niebuhr remarks, "*for the divisions of the church have been occasioned more frequently by the direct and indirect operation of economic factors than by the influence of any other major interest of man.*"<sup>1</sup> These "divisions of the church" are manifest, in part, in the differences between sects and churches. Economic stratification appears in the lower socio-economic membership of sects, or "churches of the disinherited," and higher socio-economic membership of churches, which are "of the middle class." Moreover, Niebuhr is the first to give significance to the theory that sects, given the course of time, transition into churches as religious adherents succumb to affluence.

The history of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States generally evidences this transition as its members, through subsequent generations and by placing emphasis upon higher education, have ascended and continue to scale the social ladder.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1957), 26.

U.S. Nazarenes have been literally moving away from the marginalized toward the more affluent, as I will show in this chapter. In documenting this process, I will also detail the way in which social class distinctions functioned in the demarcation of early Nazarenes from Pentecostal worshippers at the Azusa Street Revival. This will provide key insights into the origins of religious stratification between two denominations whose histories, theologies, and relationship have often been confused.

A close analysis of two trends will demonstrate the *embourgeoisement* within the Church of the Nazarene. These include the repositioning of the denomination's focus and power base from urban centers to suburban settings and the increased quality of Nazarene institutions of higher education.

#### *A. Nazarenes and the Urban Poor*

The upward social mobility of Nazarenes in the United States is particularly fascinating and lacks no irony considering the initial intention and aim of Bresee's Church of the Nazarene. The Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles arose out of a specific concern for the urban poor. Although Bresee's ousting from Peniel Mission was the immediate cause leading to the formation of the Church of the Nazarene, it was Bresee's conviction that the gospel needed to be preached among the poor that initially led him to Peniel Mission. Recalling those early days some years later, Bresee stated, "It had been my long cherished desire to have a place in the heart of the city, which could be made a center of holy fire, and where the gospel could be preached to the poor. In the early part of this year (1894), such an opportunity presented itself."<sup>2</sup> That opportunity

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<sup>2</sup> Bresee quoted in E. A. Girvin, *Phineas F. Bresee: A Prince in Israel*, (Kansas City: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1916), 99.

arrived in the form of an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. T. P. Ferguson, who had received funds to construct a building, which later would be known as Peniel Mission. Wishing to maintain his status as a Methodist minister, Bresee sought the permission of his Conference to engage in the ministry at Peniel. When the request was refused, Bresee spent a night in prayer before deciding he would leave the only denomination he had ever known out of a conviction and sense that he was to minister among the poor. Thus, at fifty-five years of age, Bresee joined the Fergusons and the work of Peniel Mission.

Bresee evidenced his desire to preach the gospel to the urban poor in Peniel Mission's first paper, the *Peniel Herald*: "Our first work is to try to reach the unchurched. The people from the homes and the street where the light from the churches does not reach, or penetrates but little. Especially to gather the poor to the cross. . ."<sup>3</sup> Bresee's time at Peniel Mission, however, was brief. After spending much of the summer of 1895 leading revivals in Illinois and farther East, Bresee found himself unwelcome at Peniel Mission upon his return for reasons that are somewhat unclear.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, Bresee maintained a desire to work among the poor and, together with his friend J.P. Widney, launched the Church of the Nazarene in October, 1895. The

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<sup>3</sup>*Peniel Herald*, I, No. 1 (October, 1894), 1-2.

<sup>4</sup>Timothy Smith, *Called Unto Holiness: The Formative Years*, (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), 109. The nature of the dispute is most clearly hinted at by Smith, who indicates that the Fergusons and Bresee disagreed about the role of young women in rescue work in addition to an increased interest of the Fergusons in foreign missionary "schemes." Another reason for the ending of Bresee's work at Peniel could have to do with a visit at Peniel Mission by A.B. Simpson during the summer while Bresee was away. Apparently Bresee and Widney found Simpson to be extreme in his understanding of divine healing which, perhaps, foreshadows some of the later disagreements between Pentecostals and Nazarenes.



conscious, intentional desire for the Church of the Nazarene to be welcoming to the poor was unmistakable. Bresee recounted later:

We were convinced that houses of worship should be plain and cheap, to save from financial burdens, and that everything should say welcome to the poor. We went feeling that food and clothing and shelter were the open doors to the hearts of the unsaved poor, and that through these doors we could bear to them the life of God. We went in poverty, to give ourselves—and what God might give us—determined to forego provision for the future and old age, in order to see the salvation of God while we were yet here. God has not disappointed us. While we would be glad to do much more, yet hundreds of dollars have gone to the poor, with living ministry of every kind, and with it a way has been opened up to the hearts of men and women, that has been unutterable joy. The gospel comes to a multitude without money and without price, and the poorest of the poor are entitled to a front seat at the Church of the Nazarene, the only condition being that they come early enough to get there.<sup>5</sup>

The remark concerning the right of the poor to the front seat of the church may have been a direct refutation of pew renting, a practice found in some churches (including within Methodism) that permitted one to claim rights to a pew in exchange for a monetary contribution. Additionally, Bresee's church sought to accommodate the poor in other ways. Says Smith,

Dr. Bresee refused from the outset to allow money-raising methods which in any way distinguished those who were able to give generously. There were no pledges, no collections of tithes, no records of individual gifts. . . . Bresee urged individuals never to let others know what they gave. "This is a church of poor people," he would say, "and I want the poorest to give without being embarrassed and the richest to come without being begged."<sup>6</sup>

Extending open arms to the poor, the nascent congregation quickly grew. After one year the church numbered 350 in membership, indicative also of future growth the church and subsequent denomination would experience.

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<sup>5</sup>Phineas F. Bresee, *Nazarene Messenger* (1898).

<sup>6</sup> Smith, 113.

It would be a mistake, however, to consider the church as one without any financial resources. While Bresee clearly aspired to reach out to the poor with the message of the gospel, the church was not without persons of affluence. Though the Nazarenes unquestionably became a home to the urban poor, they also counted among themselves a number of citizens of influence. Bresee's pastoral leadership at several important Methodist churches, together with his position on the Board of Trustees of the University of Southern California, yielded good friendships with some affluent Angelenos. Prominent members of the Los Angeles Church of the Nazarene, whose wealth aided in financing the church, included a Mr. Howland, a paper manufacturer out of New York, a physician named Dr. Whistler, and Judge W.S. Knott and his wife, Lucy, who took a particular interest in foreign missions. Moreover, one certainly must not forget J.P. Widney, who co-founded the church and enjoyed city-wide respect as a physician in addition to, for a time, serving as President of the University of Southern California. This salient detail is touched upon by Harold Reed in his dissertation which suggests, among other things, that the previous leadership experience of the early Nazarene leaders aided in setting early the Church of the Nazarene on a "church-like" trajectory for the denomination.<sup>7</sup> This fact also distinguishes the beginning of the Church of the Nazarene from the movement that would begin a decade later just a few blocks away on Azusa Street, to which we now turn our attention.

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<sup>7</sup>Harold Reed, "The Growth of a Contemporary Sect-Type Institution as Reflected in the Development of the Church of the Nazarene," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Southern California, 1943).

### *B. The Azusa Street Revival*

Participants in and leaders of the Azusa Street revival occupied the lowest rungs of the social ladder. Initially William Seymour's audience primarily consisted of black washwomen who, without a church building, met in the houses of black families. These meeting places included the homes of Mr. & Mrs. Irish Lee and Mr. & Mrs. Asbury, who, according to Robert Mapes Anderson, "lived at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street in the depressed section north of Temple Street."<sup>8</sup> The Asbury family lived two blocks from the Lees in what is known today as Filipinotown. At the outset only a dozen or so blacks gathered together. After some of the women testified at nearby churches, Seymour's audience grew, precipitating a move to the now famous 312 Azusa Street location, about five city blocks from the new brick church opened three years earlier for the then eight-year-old Nazarene church.

While providing more space, the new setting for Seymour's group was in need of much repair. Anderson describes the scene:

... 312 Azusa Street was a rundown former African Methodist Episcopal church on a side street in the central urban ghetto amid wholesale houses, stockyards, stables, a lumberyard, and a tombstone shop. It had been converted into a stable and storage warehouse on the ground floor with a rooming house above. A relatively small, flat-roofed rectangular building finished with white-washed clapboards, the only indication of its origins was a single gothic-style window above the entrance. Seymour and his tiny flock cleared an area on the ground floor of discarded building materials and other debris, and arranged seating for two or three dozen persons by placing planks across empty nail kegs. Two empty packing boxes served as a pulpit.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 65.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, 66.

Seymour leased the building from its former tenants, the First African Methodist Episcopal Church. The church had been vacated two years earlier and had suffered damage after an arsonist set it ablaze.<sup>10</sup> Seymour's congregation cleaned up the partially remodeled building and provided space for a few dozen worshippers.

Here in the humble part of Los Angeles the Pentecostal faithful "found . . . the marginal religion that expressed and dignified [their] marginality."<sup>11</sup> While many attendees at the revival experienced social marginalization on account of their race, economic destitution was a common denominator that united those who began to congregate at Azusa Street. Cox notes: "Even when white people began to crowd into the Azusa Street revival, they were mainly unlettered, unrefined, and, as often as not, unemployed as well."<sup>12</sup>

Robert Mapes Anderson, in his seminal work, *Vision of the Disinherited*, substantiates the lower socio-economic status of early Pentecostal leaders at Azusa Street. Following the lives of forty-five leaders in early Pentecostalism, Anderson suggests that Pentecostalism provided its adherents with a venue to express their social marginalization. Although the deprivation theory which Anderson proposes in his work is less than fully satisfactory as an explanation for why people choose Pentecostalism today, his research concerning the social status of Azusa Street leaders and worshippers has been affirmed by others.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006), 71-4.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, 114, 136.

<sup>12</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), 46-7.

News of the Azusa Street Revival spread like wildfire. Curiosity arose both locally and regionally about the meetings at 312 Azusa Street. Phineas F. Bresee, after being repeatedly asked from Nazarenes beyond Los Angeles about the news reports, noted, “The meetings attracted some attention, especially among that *class of people* who are always seeking for some new thing” (emphasis added).<sup>14</sup> Reports described not only what was taking place, but among and between whom the Holy Spirit was at work.

It is impossible to discern exactly what Bresee intended by the phrase “that class of people.” Bresee may not have been thinking about class in the sense of one’s socio-economic position, but he was at the very least demarcating those at Azusa Street as a people with the distinguishing characteristic of “always seeking for some new thing.” That a group would always seek “some new thing,” of course, suggests that they are indeed disinherited and that they are willing to chase after any sign of hope. It indicates a lack of confidence in, dissatisfaction with, and doubts about present options in life.

### *C. Social Class Differentiation*

Bresee’s observation that a particular “class of people” were worshipping on Azusa Street points to a perceived social distance between early Pentecostals in downtown Los Angeles and those believers filling the pews in Bresee’s then decade-old Church of the Nazarene. Given the stated desire of the Nazarenes to reach and welcome the urban poor, it would seem that the gatherers on Azusa Street would be an audience

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<sup>13</sup> Rational choice theorists in particular have pointed out the shortcomings of deprivation theories, seeing them as being too reductionist. Even Charles Glock, whose taxonomy of deprivation has endured throughout many decades, has come to recognize their limitations. See Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), and Charles Glock, “On Nature, Sources, and Consequences,” *Religious Studies Review* 11 (January, 1985): 20-23.

<sup>14</sup> Bresee, 6.

the Nazarenes would endear. Overall the Pentecostals and Nazarenes attracted people of similar socio-economic attributes, though it must be pointed out that, unlike Pentecostals, the Nazarenes were not lacking Angelenos of affluence.

Although a consideration of social class primarily entails economic relations, a proper sociological understanding of class is more holistic in scope.<sup>15</sup> Social prestige, level of education, and family lineage also influence and give shape to social class. As Donna Langston suggests, social class is more than just a category one falls within; it is a reality in which one lives: “As a result of the class you are born into and raised in, class is your understanding of the world and where you fit in; it’s composed of ideas, behavior, attitudes, values, and language; class is how you think, feel, act, look, dress, talk, move, walk.”<sup>16</sup> Included with the concept of class is one’s expectations for the future, one’s hopes for tomorrow, and one’s life chances.

When Bresee reported to inquiries that a particular “class” of people was being drawn to the Azusa Street Revival, he likely was making the judgment that this was a people who looked at the world through a different lens than did the Nazarenes with whom he associated. The Nazarenes, with some prominent Angelenos among their ranks from the beginning, were looking up socially. Their vision for tomorrow was positive in orientation, an underlying assumption that life would improve. Anderson opines:

In a rough sort of way then, the split in the Holiness Movement occasioned by the Pentecostal revival was between those who aspired to rise from lower-class status

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<sup>15</sup> A minority opinion suggests that the concept of class is becoming irrelevant as a form of analysis. See Terry Nichols Clark, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Michael Rempel “The Declining Significance of Social Class.” *International Sociology* 8 (3): 293-316, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Donna Langston, “Tired of Playing Monopoly?” *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Routledge, 2000), 398.

and those who sought reconciliation to it, between a prospective bourgeoisie and a despairing proletariat. The religion of the Holiness believer was often a positive asset in achieving upward mobility. For the Pentecostal, success in achieving ecstatic religious experience became in large part a surrogate for success in the social struggle.<sup>17</sup>

Anderson rightly posits the differing interests and capital of the Pentecostals and the prospective Holiness bourgeoisie, a difference affirmed in Bresee's own comments. This similar theme is captured by historian Charles Edwin Jones in his analysis of Nazarenes in Kansas City, Missouri. Jones opines, "Concentrated in the artisan and clerical occupations . . . from the beginning they were clearly middle class in aspiration and performance."<sup>18</sup> The worshippers at Azusa Street and many of the Nazarenes down the street shared a similar socio-economic status; however, their socioeconomic trajectories and life chances led to their social stratification.

There are additional insights we can glean regarding the emergence of this religious and social stratification within the Holiness Movement when we carefully consider the broader context. We will return to the story of Nazarenes in Los Angeles shortly, but we must first lay out some theoretical aides. These aides will allow us to see more clearly the divergent paths of Nazarenes and Pentecostals, and the role class plays in the Nazarene path.

#### *D. Spatial and Social Distance*

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Georg Simmel advanced the field of sociology by identifying the relationship between spatial and social distance. In short, Simmel argued that the physical, spatial separation between groups of people correlated with the social

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<sup>17</sup> Anderson, 152.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Edwin Jones, "Disinherited or Rural? A Historical Case Study in Urban Holiness Religion," *Missouri Historical Review*, (1972) Vol. 66, No. 3, 412.

distance between those groups of people. According to Simmel, “spatial relations not only are determining conditions of relationships among men, but are also symbolic of those relationships.”<sup>19</sup> Simmel’s contribution provokes a line of questioning related to the spatial distances between early Nazarenes and Pentecostals, and what those geographical distances might indicate about the social relationships between the two groups. Furthermore, tracing the physical distances between Nazarene congregations and the urban poor over time could yield understandings related to the social difference between Nazarenes and the poor, giving evidence of embourgeoisement.

In the case of Los Angeles, Nazarenes will physically move away from Azusa Street. To be sure, Pentecostals will also experience upward social mobility throughout the twentieth century (a dissertation topic worthy in and of itself), but central to this dissertation is the “upper step” Nazarenes gained by their earlier birth, optimistic aspirations, and predominantly white constituency. Beyond Los Angeles, the clear movement of Nazarenes away from central business districts toward suburbia mirrors the upward social climb of Nazarenes through its subsequent generations. To better understand the out-movement, we turn to the study of city growth.<sup>20</sup>

Within the field of urban studies, the theoretical framework known as human ecology has long considered the migration of population groups from one area of a city to another. In 1925 urban sociologist Ernest Burgess proposed an urban, concentric zone

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<sup>19</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. by Donald Levine, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 143.

<sup>20</sup> See Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1974). Jones documents this out-movement in the first generation of Nazarenes in great detail.



hypothesis to help explain the invasion-succession transition of urban neighborhoods. Burgess's contributions speak directly to socio-economic realities and their connection to one's place of residence. Specifically, Burgess concluded that urban areas in the United States grew outwardly in concentric zones that correlated with the wealth of residents. In general, as urban residents in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century settled and accumulated wealth, they would increasingly move farther away from the central business district, or downtown area. The poor, seeking employment in factories, would by necessity live within walking distance of the downtown areas of industrial cities, where railroad and waterways provided the means of transportation for goods. This pattern held true in many U.S. cities during the first half of the twentieth century, most notably Chicago, though changes in housing, transportation, and communication rendered Burgess's theory less applicable after the 1950s.<sup>21</sup>

Taking the Burgess Growth Hypothesis and coupling it with Simmel's insights into spatial and social distance allows us to see more clearly a common pattern found among many Nazarene churches: the movement away from the urban poor in pursuit of upward social mobility. To illustrate this pattern, we continue investigating the history of Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene before turning our attention to the histories of Chicago First and Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene.

#### *E. Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene*

The city of Los Angeles experienced tremendous population growth in the years between the birth of the Church of the Nazarene and the Azusa Street Revival. From 1890 to 1900, the population doubled from 50,400 to 102,500 before tripling during the

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<sup>21</sup> John J. Palen, *The Urban World*, (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008).

next decade, eventually numbering 319,200 residents in 1910. Of significance is the rise in the number of African-Americans moving to and residing in Los Angeles during the first decade of the twentieth century. California, similar to states in the North, became the new home for many blacks who were fleeing the South during the decade which witnessed the passage of the highest number of Jim Crow laws. Just 2,100 African-Americans lived in Los Angeles in 1900; by the year 1920 there would be 15,000. Those who arrived in Los Angeles were most often poor, displaced agrarian workers coming by train and hoping to find employment. Joining displaced black and white were immigrants who concentrated themselves in the downtown area of Los Angeles.

As we will see, the Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene would physically relocate over a period of time to more affluent neighborhoods. To the credit of the LA First Church, it would always remain within the city boundaries of its birthplace, a pattern at odds with many Nazarene churches throughout the United States. Nonetheless, its moves illustrate the same pattern of many churches moving outside the city: relocating to more affluent neighborhoods.

As has been already indicated, the Nazarenes and Azusa Street crowds attracted those of the lower economic backgrounds. However, the eleven years separating the births of the two movements, and higher social respect given to white leadership, afforded to the Nazarenes a social capital lacking among the new Pentecostals. Even before the Azusa Street Revival, the Los Angeles Church of the Nazarene had moved from its first location:

By the time of the Pentecostal revival of 1906 many Holiness congregations were already following the mainline denominations in abandoning the inner city neighborhoods . . . One by one the Holiness churches followed the example set by

the Los Angeles Church of the Nazarene in 1902 when it moved out of its downtown location.<sup>22</sup>

The relocation of the Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene in 1902 moved the congregation just two blocks away from its former location and about six blocks away from Azusa Street. Yet those few blocks were telling. Writing from first-hand knowledge, James Knott remembers that in 1902, “. . . the corner-stone was laid at Sixth and Wall Streets in Los Angeles for the large brick edifice to house the First Church. The new building had a seating capacity of approximately fifteen hundred persons. Although close to the downtown area, it was in a respectable middle-class neighborhood.”<sup>23</sup>



Of particular geographic importance during this time was Main Street, which represented a social divide:

Most African Americans, Asians, and ethnic Mexicans lived on the Eastside (that is, east of Main Street), but the Eastside was still predominantly white. Colored people were shut out of some districts (virtually all the Westside), but when they encountered resistance on the Eastside neighborhoods, they usually moved in anyway— and then stayed put.<sup>24</sup>

The very first move of LA First was on the Eastside, though Knott points out it was a move to a “respectable middle-class neighborhood.” The subsequent move, taking place

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<sup>22</sup> Anderson, 151.

<sup>23</sup> James Proctor Knott, *History of Pasadena College*, (Pasadena, CA: Pasadena College, 1960), 13.

<sup>24</sup> Douglass Flamming 2004. *Bound for Freedom : Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*. Ewing, NJ, USA: University of California Press, 68.

in 1949, relocated LA First from its location on Sixth & Wall to Twenty-fifth and Magnolia, on the Westside of Los Angeles.

In 1964 the Church moved from Twenty-fifth & Magnolia to its present location at Third and Vermont.



Former LA First pastor and current President of Nazarene Theological Seminary, Dr. Ron Benefiel, writes:

One gets the feeling that the move to the then comfortable white middle-class neighborhood of Third and Vermont was intended to allow the church to minister to those who were socioeconomically similar in makeup to what the membership of the church itself had become. Further, seemingly the move was intended to assist the church in merely surviving by moving out of the neighborhoods that were deteriorating. And for awhile this strategy seemed to work. In the early middle sixties, fifteen years after the move to Third and Vermont, the church was flourishing. Sizable crowds attended the worship services. A number of the members had moved to upper-middle class status. The troops were rallied and a majestic new sanctuary building was constructed.<sup>25</sup>

As previously stated, Los Angeles First Church would hereafter take the unusual step of choosing to remain within Los Angeles, even as the neighborhood changed demographically. However, the first eighty years of its existence followed the pattern of relocating to more affluent neighborhoods, a case seen even more clearly with Chicago First Church of the Nazarene.

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<sup>25</sup> Ron Benefiel, *Internationalization: Perspectives from a Local Church, Whose Church is this Anyway?* ANSR, 1987, pg. 2.

*F. Chicago First Church of the Nazarene*

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chicago represented the ills and evils of industrial cities in the minds of many. Famed U.S. poet Carl Sandburg captured popular opinions regarding the urban setting when he wrote to a personified Chicago:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen  
your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.  
And the tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true  
I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again,  
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of  
women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.<sup>26</sup>

Chicago First Church of the Nazarene traces its history back to a Holiness prayer meeting in January, 1900, initially held in the home of Charles Philpot under the guidance of Rev. S. Rice.<sup>27</sup> The prayer meeting grew to become a mission, housed in three different locations in its beginning years, that would seek to help those suffering in the city that Sandburg describes. The South Side Mission, as it came to be known, quickly rose in influence and reputation among Holiness missions in the city and counted among its number three men who would soon be key members of the Illinois State Holiness Association: Edwin Burke, Jack Berry, and J.W. Akers.<sup>28</sup> Burke served as the mission's superintendent after Rev. Rice moved to St. Louis in 1903. Berry's travels led him to California in 1903, where he met Phineas F. Bresee. Berry thereafter encouraged his fellow believers in Chicago to become Nazarenes, having sensed theological sympathies with them while in California. After hosting a couple of revivals in the fall of

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<sup>26</sup> Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems*, (New York: Holt), 1916.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Moore, *Fifty Years and Beyond: A History of the Chicago Central District Church of the Nazarene*, (Kankakee, IL: Chicago Central District Church of the Nazarene), 1954.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, 148.

1903 and spring of 1904, the Mission extended an invitation to Dr. Phineas F. Bresee to come for a ten-day meeting with the hopes of organizing a church. On August 28, 1904, Bresee organized the congregation at a tent erected at Sixty-second Street and Lexington Avenue (now University Avenue), where the Holiness group had been meeting for a few months after outgrowing their location at 6333 Dorchester Avenue. Thus, Chicago First Church of the Nazarene came into existence.

South Side Mission and the site of the tent meeting had been located in the Woodlawn community in Chicago. After Bresee organized Chicago First, an immediate search for an adequate indoor facility for year-round weather commenced. Berry, in the course of his work, happened upon an empty church in the Englewood community of Chicago, just over two miles to the west of their tent location, at 6417 Eggleston. With winter coming, Berry interpreted the timing as a sign of God, and Chicago First did not hesitate in making the move, claiming the building within a week after Berry's discovery of it.

After just one year in its new facility, Chicago First recorded 400 members and 200 Sunday School attendees. Under the leadership of Pastor I.G. Martin, Chicago First rooted itself deeply in the Englewood community. Despite the transitions of a growing church, the congregation did not neglect its commitment to the poor. Smith reports,

By August, 1906, the congregation was operating three different missions to the poor, one of them for Swedish immigrants; it sponsored various prison and rescue-home endeavors and supported a group of deaconesses who not only made calls on needy families, but distributed clothing, bought coal, groceries, and medicine, and paid hospital and doctors' bills as well.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Smith, 149.

Such a commitment continued as Pastor C.E. Cornell commenced his tenure in the fall of 1907. Cornell saw drunkards, thieves, and gamblers come to the church where there was no place for the “highest social circles . . . in the pew.”<sup>30</sup> Eight years later the growth of the church led Chicago First to build a new sanctuary less than a block away on the corner of 64<sup>th</sup> Street and Eggleston.



Chicago First continued to prosper under the pastorate of Rev. W.G. Schurman from 1918-1932. Chicago First sponsored several tent meetings that resulted in the birth of several new Nazarene churches, including Chicago Northside Church of the Nazarene, founded in 1924. Meanwhile, Sunday School, youth meetings, and missionary activity all surged at Chicago First.<sup>31</sup>

Though there were many poor immigrants in Englewood, they were predominantly of white European descent, primarily Irish, Swedish, and German. These are the immigrants whom Chicago First reached out to and who were assimilated into the congregation. While more than 20% of Englewood residents in 1930 were born outside of the United States, 97% of residents in Englewood were white.<sup>32</sup> This, however, would change rapidly and dramatically.

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<sup>30</sup> Cornell as quoted in Smith, 150.

<sup>31</sup> Moore, 23.

The 1940s and 1950s were pivotal decades in the history of the Englewood community and Chicago First. By this time, many of the Euro-American immigrants had stabilized financially and, though not wealthy, they numbered themselves among Chicago's blue-collar workers. A significant demographical transition occurred as the African-American population increased from 2 percent of the population in Englewood in 1940 to 10 percent in 1950. Even though the percentage of Englewood residents who were black would rise to 69% by 1960 and to 96% by 1970 (due in large part to white flight), concerns about the presence of blacks in Englewood resulted in violence as early as 1949.<sup>33</sup>

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1949, Andrew Brinder, a union organizer, invited 16 stewards to his house at 5643 S. Peoria Street for a celebration. With half of the invited stewards being black, rumors quickly circulated that the blacks were moving into the home.<sup>34</sup> Over the next four evenings, a growing crowd, estimated by one source to have reached 10,000 in number, gathered at Brinder's home, breaking windows and threatening the two families living there. While there had been previous violence against blacks who had

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<sup>32</sup> Chanel Polk and Mick Dumke, "A Brief History of Englewood," *The Chicago Reporter*, [http://www.chicagoreporter.com/index.php/c/Sidebars/d/A\\_Brief\\_History\\_of\\_Englewood](http://www.chicagoreporter.com/index.php/c/Sidebars/d/A_Brief_History_of_Englewood) (accessed May 20, 2010), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 1

<sup>34</sup> N. Caroline Harney and James Charlton, *The Siege on South Peoria Street*, <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-siege-on-south-peoria-street/Content?Oid=901207>. Accessed May 20, 2010.



moved into the area, the Peoria Street riot is noted for both the targeting of a white family sympathetic to blacks and the reluctance of the police to intervene.<sup>35</sup>

From 1950-1970 an estimated 400,000 whites left Chicago for the suburbs. Chicago First Church of the Nazarene, now in a changing neighborhood, had a decision to make. Speculations about declining property values and violence fueled the move of middle-class whites further south. The church board decided to build a new complex and in 1953 the congregation relocated four miles to the southwest to 83<sup>rd</sup> and Damen in the Chicago community of Auburn Gresham, close to suburb of Evergreen Park, IL. At the time of the move, Auburn Gresham was over 99% white.<sup>36</sup>



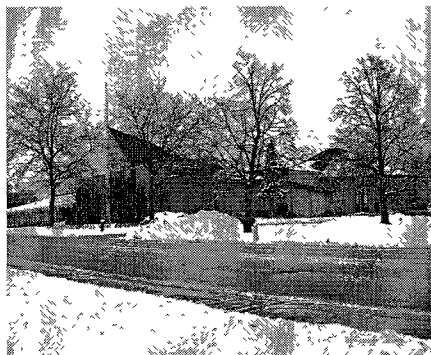
Before long, however, blacks, many of whom were being displaced by the construction of the Dan Ryan Expressway, began to move into Auburn Gresham, as they had into Englewood. From 1960-1970 the percentage of residents in Auburn Gresham who were black went from .2% to 69%. Predictably, this percentage escalated not simply because blacks moved to Auburn Gresham, but also because whites moved away. Finally, in 1974, Chicago First Church moved 17.5 miles to the west to its present location at 12725 Bell Road in Lemont, IL., a city whose population is over 97% white

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<sup>35</sup> Regarding the action of the police, see Eileen McMahon, *What Parish Are You From?: A Chicago Irish Community and Race Relations*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), 123-127. McMahon also notes, in agreement with others, the pivotal role of Visitation Parish in encouraging Irish whites to keep blacks out of the housing in Englewood.

<sup>36</sup> McMahon, 137.

and quite affluent. The percentage of those living in Lemont who are under the poverty line in the year 2000 is less than 2%. Though Nazarenes attending Chicago First have not exclusively been from Lemont, its location and facility tell us something about its constituency.



Thus, the church that began as a mission under a tent has changed considerably as it has moved toward affluence. We turn now to another case study.

*G. Kansas City, Missouri, First Church of the Nazarene*

The Church of the Nazarene has been headquartered in Kansas City since 1911 and both the Nazarene Publishing House and Nazarene Theological Seminary call Kansas City, Missouri, home. Not surprisingly, then, Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene has been a noteworthy church within the denomination. Four pastors from Kansas City First Church have thus far been elected to the position of General Superintendent within the Church of the Nazarene.

Rev. Albert S. Cochran, a Methodist minister who had once pastored in Iowa, later in his life became an evangelist for the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness, an organization to which many Methodist-to-Nazarene converts belonged. Assigned to Kansas City in 1903, Cochran continued working for the association and

held revivals as far west as California.<sup>37</sup> On one occasion while he was in California, Cochran reconnected with Bresee. In 1910, after a revival service in Kansas City led by Cochran birthed a small group of believers, Cochran's group petitioned Bresee for admission into the Church of the Nazarene. Permission was granted, and Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene entered the denomination with 26 charter members on March 15, 1911.<sup>38</sup>

The congregation first rented an unused church at Walrond and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets before moving to 2109 Troost in 1912 to share a building together with Nazarene Publishing House and Nazarene Headquarters. The shared arrangement would be short lived, as Kansas City First constructed their own tabernacle next door to the Publishing House, which they occupied within a year. On April 25, 1915, just a couple of years later, the congregation moved three blocks farther south to 41<sup>st</sup> and Harrison. This former church cost \$40,000, had stain-glassed windows, boasted a pipe organ, and served as the venue for the 1915, 1919, and 1923 Nazarene General Assemblies.<sup>39</sup> Very quickly the membership changed significantly, with denominational leaders and publishing house workers increasingly constituting a higher percentage of the members.<sup>40</sup>

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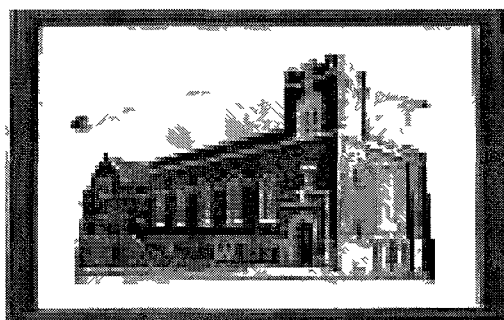
<sup>37</sup> Jones, 398.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 399.

<sup>39</sup> Jones, 410. Note a discrepancy in that Jones reports the church to have been previously the "Beacon Hill Congregational Church" while Ingersol, Raser, and Whitelaw refer to the church as having been Presbyterian. See Stan Ingersol, Harold Raser, and David Whitelaw, *Our Watchword and Song: The Centennial History of the Church of the Nazarene*, ed. Floyd Cunningham (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2009), 369. In either case, both Presbyterians and Congregationalists were of higher social status than the Nazarenes, who were now able to dwell in their old facility.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 410.

However, two decades later, lower income African-Americans were moving into the area. By 1940, 27<sup>th</sup> street would mark the dividing line north of which over 90% of the African-Americans living in Kansas City resided.<sup>41</sup> According to Jones, “From their original locations downtown Holiness members moved gradually to outlying areas. Although a few settled in older neighborhoods in Kansas City, Kansas, most followed the streetcar lines to newer developments south and east.”<sup>42</sup> In 1936, Kansas City First relocated to 40<sup>th</sup> and Troost, where they would remain until 1955.



Considering that a significant percentage of the membership at Kansas City First worked at or had close ties to Nazarene headquarters, Nazarene Publishing House, and, after 1948, Nazarene Theological Seminary, it would appropriate to pause for a moment in the history of KC First for a few considerations of these institutions. While KC First had relocated to the south in 1936, these institutions were still located, in 1945, when the seminary opened its doors, between 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> streets.<sup>43</sup> However, needing to move due to overcrowding and with concerns about the changing neighborhood, the General Board set up a commission to recommend where these general church institutions should be located. The committee reported to the 1948 General Assembly, “We are realistically

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<sup>41</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 368.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, 406.

<sup>43</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 368.

facing the fact that a strong Negro population in a community develops problems and situations that are not conducive to the best interests of work such as ours, and for which we are not justified in taking responsibility.”<sup>44</sup> Both Nazarene headquarters and Nazarene Theological Seminary were built anew in the early 1950s four and a half miles to the south, just a couple of blocks away from where Kansas City First Church would soon be located.<sup>45</sup>

In 1955 the Kansas City First congregation moved three miles farther south to their newly constructed church at Meyer Blvd. and Rockhill Road. This majestic building towered stories tall and accommodated the pipe organ that had been brought from the previous location.<sup>46</sup>



The dividing line that had been 27<sup>th</sup> street eventually evaporated. African-Americans moved farther south, reaching the locations of First Church by the 1970s. Citing safety concerns and costs of maintaining an aging building, the congregation

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<sup>44</sup> *Journal of the Twelfth General Assembly*, 61.

<sup>45</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 368-9. It should be pointed out that Nazarene Publishing House chose not to relocate because the publishing house manager “expected urban redevelopment in the inner city and opportunities to buy adjacent property cheaply.”

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

decided to sell its building in 1977 and move farther south.<sup>47</sup> In 1980, First Church moved to its newly constructed church beyond the beltway to State Line Road and 119<sup>th</sup> Street under Pastor Gordon Wetmore.



#### *H. Nazarenes and the Out-movement*

The case studies of First Churches of the Nazarene in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Kansas City provide a microcosm of a larger migration pattern away from the poor and African-Americans toward whiteness and affluence by hundreds of Nazarene congregations, among them Oakland, Detroit, Seattle, Boise, Salt Lake City, and Omaha. Sociologist Dr. Ron Benefiel notes the trend,

Although the founding fathers of the Church of the Nazarene saw that their primary ministry was to the poor, and to the cities, it is also apparent that the churches of this denomination were generally moving away from the poor and out of the cities. Most churches were not able to cope with the turmoil, the tension, and the frustrations of the inner city.<sup>48</sup>

Among the surprises of this trend is how early it commenced. Besides the move of LA First in 1902, Pastor C.B. Langdon rather proudly announces his congregation's move in

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 370.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Benefiel, *Nazarenes in the City: The Strategy for Los Angeles*, ANSR, 1986, pg. 1.

Kellogg, Idaho, in 1919 declaring, “We have just moved into our new church, purchased recently, which is located in the very best part of town.”<sup>49</sup>

In fact, a dramatic change had already occurred by the second generation of Nazarenes in terms of church location. “The first generation’s orientation was urban. . . . The second generation, by contrast, was rural in orientation.”<sup>50</sup> Timothy Smith long ago wrote about the Midwest as the “Nazarene Heartland.” Smith reported in reference to the developments in the Church by 1920, “Thus it was that the Midwest, where the denomination began latest, became the center of its chief strength.”<sup>51</sup> It is not surprising, then, that the denomination would eventually come to look more Midwestern and rural in orientation. The movement of congregations away from urban centers exacerbated the issue of reaching out to minority groups of lower socio-economic status. Roger Bowman asserted,

Part of the problem in reaching blacks today stems from the absence of churches in the inner city, where 80 percent of them live. The flow of churches evacuating to the suburbs only adds to the delay in getting the gospel to blacks, who, like other groups, desperately need to hear it.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> C.B. Langdon, “Letter to the Editor,” *Herald of Holiness* (9/17/1919), pg. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 10-11.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, 237.

<sup>52</sup> Roger Bowman, *Color Us Christian*, (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1975), 80.

Raymond Hurn, writing about the Church of the Nazarene in 1973, observed, “It is apparent that approximately 75 percent of our churches are located to serve the 25 percent of the population who live in rural and small-town areas.”<sup>53</sup>

Thus, the locus of the Church of the Nazarene changed considerably. The earliest minutes taken at Los Angeles First Church had reflected the original mission, “The field of labor to which we feel especially called in is the neglected quarters of the cities wherever else may be found waste places and souls seeking pardon and cleansing from sin.” The neglected quarters of the cities were replaced with suburban campuses, a reflection of the upward mobility of Nazarenes.

### *I. Nazarene Higher Education*

The contribution of higher education to the upward social mobility of social groups is unmistakable. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark provide convincing and undeniable evidence of how higher education advanced the social standing of late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Methodists in the United States in their climb toward respectability.<sup>54</sup> The Methodist import given to higher education carried over into the desires of early Nazarene leaders.

The story of Nazarene higher education within the U.S. reflects the growth and social embourgeoisement of Nazarenes. Unlike many colleges whose religious affiliation may be primarily historical and limited, Nazarene colleges have been inextricably linked to the denomination. Historically, Nazarene college and universities have drawn a

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<sup>53</sup>Raymond Hurn, *Mission Possible: A Study of the Mission of the Church of the Nazarene*, (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1973), 41.

<sup>54</sup>Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 154-163.



significant percentage of their students from Nazarene churches, and Nazarene churches have benefited from Nazarene educated laity.

The Church of the Nazarene has rigorously supported Christian institutions of higher education throughout her entire history. Each proto-Nazarene Holiness group shared this emphasis on higher education, a factor that helped unite the regional groups. Before the birth of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene at Pilot Point, Texas, in 1908, each of the major regional groups already had established a bible school. In the South, E.C. DeJernett, in response to a donation by B.A. Cordell, founded Texas Holiness University in Peniel, Texas in the fall of 1899. This college later underwent several mergers, moved to Bethany, Oklahoma, and became Bethany-Peniel College, the forerunner to today's Southern Nazarene University. In the East, the Association of Pentecostal Churches founded the Pentecostal Collegiate Institute (PCI) in Saratoga Springs, New York, in September, 1900.<sup>55</sup> The institute moved to North Scituate, Rhode Island in 1902 and eventually relocated in 1919 to Quincy, Massachusetts, where today it is known as Eastern Nazarene College. Across the continent in the West, the Pacific Bible College represented the initial endeavors in 1902 into what later would become Pasadena College, now Point Loma Nazarene University.

### *J. Toward Liberal Arts Colleges*

Texas Holiness University, Pentecostal Collegiate Institute (later Eastern Nazarene College), and Pacific Bible College were the first three colleges of the Church of the Nazarene, after having been appropriated by the denomination upon the mergers of

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<sup>55</sup> See James Cameron, *Eastern Nazarene College: the First Fifty Years* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968), 20.

their respective sponsoring groups. In the next few years, numerous mergers and consolidations would take place among Holiness colleges and three other institutions would become distinctively Nazarene: Illinois Holiness University (now Olivet Nazarene University) in 1912, Idaho Holiness University (renamed Northwest Nazarene College in 1916) in 1913, and Trevecca College in 1915.

The prior involvement in and exposure to Methodist higher education by many first generation Nazarenes elevated expectations for higher education within the new denomination. These expectations would propel Nazarene colleges to eventual success, though, as might be expected, the births of most of these schools could be aptly described as humble and modest. Several Nazarene institutions initially provided pre-collegiate instruction. The origins for Illinois Holiness University can be traced to a series of interdenominational camp meetings and revivals which conveyed the need of a Holiness school to, among other things, “help counteract the skepticism and materialism in the public schools.”<sup>56</sup> Mary Nesbitt’s private grade school started in 1907 out of a vision of Illinois farmers attending these camp meetings. The school grew to include a high school in 1908 and the beginnings of a college in 1909. The goal of being a liberal arts institution, however, was ever present, appearing in its original Articles of Incorporation.<sup>57</sup> The liberal arts collegiate focus increasingly overshadowed the grammar and high schools, which were eventually dissolved over time.

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<sup>56</sup> Carl S. McClain, *I Remember: My Fifty-seven Years at Olivet Nazarene College*, (Kansas City, MO: Pedestal Press, 1983), 19.

<sup>57</sup> Leslie Parrott, *The Olivet Story*, (Newberg, OR: The Barclay Press, 1993), 8.

Pentecostal Collegiate Institute began as a bible school in Saratoga Springs, New York, on September 25, 1900. Just two years later PCI relocated to North Scituate, Rhode Island, where it would remain for the next 15 years. While in Rhode Island, PCI offered secondary education and classes for those lacking an elementary education.<sup>58</sup> In 1907, it became a Nazarene school with the merger of Bresee's Church of the Nazarene with the school's sponsoring group, the Association of Pentecostal Churches. In 1918, the curriculum, which had hereunto been limited and basic, was revised for a newer one that had "liberal arts at its heart."<sup>59</sup>

Nazarene leaders indicated their high expectations for quality college education in several ways. Phineas Bresee, for one, was initially reluctant to support Pacific Bible College. Bresee, who had sat on the Board of Trustees of the University of Southern California, had little interest in a school that only offered bible classes. Other church leaders who had received quality college instruction called for the renaming of several institutions out of a sense of integrity. Texas Holiness University was renamed Peniel College because J.B. Chapman believed that the university designation implied a higher level of quality than what the college then actually produced.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Olivet University changed its name to Olivet College in 1923.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Cameron, 36.

<sup>59</sup> Stan Ingersol, "Why These Schools? Historical Perspectives on Nazarene Higher Education," [http://www.nazarene.org/files/docs/Why\\_These\\_Schools\\_Historical\\_Perspectives\\_on\\_Nazarene\\_Higher\\_Education.pdf](http://www.nazarene.org/files/docs/Why_These_Schools_Historical_Perspectives_on_Nazarene_Higher_Education.pdf) (access May 27, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 314.

<sup>61</sup> Judy Whitis, ed., *To Alma Mater, Olivet*, (Cedar Rapids: WDG Publishing, 2007), 6.

### *K. Early Financial Struggles*

In their early stages, Nazarene liberal arts colleges, like so many new organizations, struggled at times to attain solvency. Infrastructure demands, World War I, the Great Depression, and natural? disasters, all contributed to the dire financial situations some of the colleges faced. Pentecostal Collegiate Institute (Eastern Nazarene College in 1918) had severe debt during World War I. Partly to blame for the declining enrollment of the college during the war years was the influenza epidemic.<sup>62</sup> The financial burden weighed particularly heavy upon the faculty in 1916. Cameron notes,

If there was any money left after the bills were paid, it was to be prorated among the faculty. Needless to say, there was never even money enough to go around. It was impractical to continue trying to run the school indefinitely in this fashion. Many committed people had broken their health in the service of the institute.<sup>63</sup>

ENC also suffered financially from 1932-1934, needing the help of General Superintendents and regional churches to prevent from entering foreclosure.

Pacific Bible College had to be reincorporated in order to avoid bankruptcy, taking on the name Pasadena University in the process. President A.O. Hendricks went without a salary for four years and sought financing for the university from his brother, a Canadian rancher.<sup>64</sup> Although Pasadena University regained financial viability within the five year presidency of Hendricks, it would not evade financial turmoil in the future. By 1933, Pasadena University had been named Pasadena College, with a debt of \$100,000, a sum that would require 10 years to overcome.

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<sup>62</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 315.

<sup>63</sup> Cameron, 116.

<sup>64</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 317. See also Knott, 28.

The Great Depression saw professors at the Northwest Nazarene College moving into student housing and receiving room and board, rather than cash, for their salaries.<sup>65</sup> Olivet College carried significant debt in the early 1920s. T.W. Willingham, having served as treasurer during those years, later reflected, “There were a number of judgments against us, lawsuits in process, and many accounts in the hands of lawyers and agencies for collection. . . More than once we have been called into court and more than once the sheriff has been inside the door.”<sup>66</sup> Olivet voluntarily entered bankruptcy in 1926, only to be saved by the purchase of the college at its auction by its treasurer and future president, President Willingham. On November 19, 1939, a fire destroyed the major building on Olivet’s 14 acre campus. The estimate to reconstruct the building was significant and, through a turn of events, the college seized the opportunity to relocate to the 42 acre former campus of St. Viator College in Bourbonnais, IL.<sup>67</sup> Though the price for St. Viator’s was drastically reduced due in part to the bargaining skills of Dr. A. L. Parrott, the mortgage was steep for the college. Yet, under Parrott’s leadership, the mortgage terminated in just four years after the move.<sup>68</sup>

Out of all the Nazarene colleges, Trevecca Nazarene College bore the heaviest consequences on account of the Depression. The financial devastation eventually culminated in an auction in which the entire campus and its items were sold in 1931.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 321.

<sup>66</sup> McClain, 85-86.

<sup>67</sup> Whitis, 7-8.

<sup>68</sup> Parrott, 59.

<sup>69</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 322.

Though Trevecca became reincorporated, desperate financial concerns led the college to buy dairy cows for income and some students reportedly trapped birds to provide food.<sup>70</sup>

#### *L. Increased Academic Standards*

Despite financial struggles and early growing pains, the expectations of high academic quality at Nazarene colleges became realized over time through deliberate actions. In 1919, Eastern Nazarene College moved to the Wollaston Park neighborhood of Quincy, MA. The move was precipitated in part by the desire to boost the academic quality of the college. The rationale presumed that relocation would provide Nazarene students access to the social and cultural amenities of Boston, and faculty members would have a range of options to further their own education in the Boston area. Seemingly, the move to Boston itself created an excitement for current and prospective faculty. According to Cameron,

The number of instructors who were college graduates had more than doubled, to eleven for 1919-20. Even more important is the fact that seven of these had graduate degrees. The norm for faculty members rose from the A.B. degree to the M.A. and many who held this degree were for the first time looking on toward earning the Ph.D. degree.<sup>71</sup>

Hindsight has shown the move to Quincy to have been wise. Numerous ENC faculty members have matriculated at Boston's universities (particularly Boston University) over the years to enhance their own academic credentials. The higher academic credentials of ENC faculty raised the bar for students as well. Whereas in 1920 faculty were looking toward earning the Ph.D. degree, by 1949 ENC graduates were looking in that direction,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 322-23.

<sup>71</sup> Cameron, *Eastern Nazarene College: The First Fifty Years, 1900-1950*, (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968), 149.

too. Writing to alumni in that year, Bertha Munroe, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, states,

E.N.C. has grown, in numbers and -- thank the Lord! in financial and scholastic recognition. This latter some of you have helped us win, and we do not forget. We wish we could have grown faster, but we have grown steadily and surely. Of this year's graduating class three members have just been accepted without reservation as candidates for the Ph.D. degree in chemistry: one at Harvard, one at University of Rochester, one at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. . . You know E.N.C.'s reputation as a maker of college professors, college presidents, college pastors, and general superintendents for the church! We believe you need not be ashamed of your Alma Mater and what she will have to offer your sons and daughters by the time they are ready to come.<sup>72</sup>

The “raising of the bar” and ENC reflects well the processes and trends that took place at other Nazarene colleges, especially in the aftermath of WWII. According to Ingersol, “during the postwar era, Nazarene schools elevated standards, hired well-qualified and committed faculty members, and increased the number of academic buildings. Among its various ministries, Nazarenes could be proud of their colleges.”<sup>73</sup>

The qualitative growth of education at Olivet Nazarene College can be illustrated by levels of faculty credentials. In 1940, only 46% of Olivet’s faculty held a master’s and a mere 2% of faculty held the Ph.D. degree. However, sixteen years later, slightly over half of Olivet’s faculty (54%) held a master’s degree while the percentage holding the Ph.D. degree climbed significantly to 33% by 1956. In raw numbers, the number of faculty holding the Ph.D. rose from 1 in 1942, to 6 in 1952, and to 25 in 1972.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Bertha Munro, *The Years Teach*, (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1970), 117-118.

<sup>73</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 460.

<sup>74</sup> Whitis, 51.

*M. Accreditation*

For a variety of reasons, including insufficient financial resources, low percentages of faculty with Ph.D. degrees, and outright disdain for denominationally-affiliated colleges, the road to full accreditation for several Nazarene colleges was long and arduous. Yet, in order to be deemed respectable and legitimate, each college gradually adapted and embraced the suggestions of accrediting bodies in order to gain their approval.

Though there were success stories in which graduates from Olivet College in her pre-1920 era gained acceptance into quality graduate schools, this was not the norm. As an unaccredited institution, Olivet degrees lacked credibility in the eyes of many graduate programs. Carl McClain tells of how the university examiner at the University of Illinois would only grant him transfer credit for *some* of his Olivet college course pending his success in subsequent sequential courses.<sup>75</sup> Lacking accreditations often necessitated additional study on the part of those who wished to attend graduate school and was “a considerable handicap” to many Olivet students.<sup>76</sup> The North Central Association Commission on Accreditation denied applications for accreditation in 1951 and 1955. Finally, after addressing prior concerns, Olivet gained accreditation in 1956. Northwest Nazarene College has the distinction of being the first Nazarene college to be accredited, a feat achieved in 1937 as a four-year college.<sup>77</sup> Pasadena College followed shortly thereafter in 1943. Trevecca Nazarene College had the most difficult journey to accreditation. With the recruitment of highly qualified faculty members and

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>76</sup> McClain, 117-118.

<sup>77</sup> Ingersol, *Watchword*, 320.



implementation of strategies to foster “creative thinking,” President William Greathouse advanced Trevecca significantly in the direction toward approval, which the Southern Association of Colleges finally granted in 1969.<sup>78</sup>

Mid America Nazarene College and Mount Vernon Nazarene College first opened their doors in the late 1960s. However, very quickly Mid America achieved full accreditation in 1974.<sup>79</sup> Mount Vernon originally operated as a two-year college from 1968, when it opened, until 1972. Accreditation as a four-year college came in March 1974.

#### *N. Conclusions*

Upward social movement is a clear indicator of movement from a sectarian to a more churchly orientation. In this chapter we have seen the evidence of how Nazarenes have risen socially through their patterns of moving from cities to suburbia, from increasingly African-American milieus to predominantly white neighborhoods and towns, as well as through the establishing and growing in quality of institutions of higher education in the United States.

In their patterns of relocation, Nazarenes at Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene literally moved farther and farther from Azusa Street and away from the poor. This out-movement pattern represents not only a spatially distancing from these groups, but a social and racial one as well.

The desire of early Nazarenes to emphasize Christian higher education has resulted in well-established, accredited universities that have come a long way from the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 465.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 476.

fledgling and financially insecure schools they once had been. From the beginning, the expectations for obtaining education have pointed Holiness believers in a churchly direction. Nazarene schools have been efficient catalysts for raising the social standing of Nazarene laity and clergy alike. Randall Spindle has rightly observed that Nazarene colleges are now a part of “mainstream of American higher education.”<sup>80</sup> Not only are Nazarenes a part of the “mainstream of American higher education,” but they are, in large part on account of their education, in the mainstream of U.S. society today.

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<sup>80</sup> Spindle as quoted in Ingersol, *Watchword*, 464. See Randall Spindle, “An Analysis of Higher Education in the Church of the Nazarene, 1945-1978” (Ed.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1981), 252, 261-62.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION: ELECTIVE AFFINITIES AND RESPECTABILITY

We return now to the thesis of this dissertation: The Church of the Nazarene in the United States has codified its anti-pentecostal position while undergoing the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement, beginning in 1906 in its struggle against Azusa Street Pentecostalism and lasting at least until 1985, the year when the Church adopted formal language against the practice of glossolalia.

In order to sustain this thesis, I adopted two goals for laying out the evidence. First, I purposed to detail the relationship between the Azusa Street Revival and the Nazarenes worshipping just blocks away at Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene. As I have documented, the most explicit and significant reaction of Nazarenes to the Azusa Street meetings came in the form of an editorial, written by Phineas F. Bresee, in October, 1906. Drawing upon that editorial, this dissertation has enumerated and elucidated Bresee's chief observations of Azusa Street Pentecostalism. A chapter of the dissertation has been devoted to each of these observations: the practice of glossolalia, the mixed racial constituency, the intense emotionalism/feminization of the revival, and the differing class identity of Azusa Street participants.

To further support my thesis, I aimed for a second and related goal, one that is derivative of the former. It has been my contention that, within Bresee's observations of Azusa Street Pentecostalism, we find early indicators of social trajectories that would later come to fruition (and that, in some cases, had previously already begun to happen) in the institutionalization of the Church of the Nazarene within the United States. These

social trajectories include the whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement of Nazarenes in the United States.

#### *A. A Glance Back*

In each chapter I provided ample evidence supporting these trajectories. I began by outlining the codification of anti-glossolalia doctrine in the Church. I recounted the Nazarene struggle with the Azusa Street Revival and then how, over time, the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene moved from anti-glossolalia rhetoric to dropping the term “Pentecostal” from its name, then to the quandary over the merger with a denomination open to the practice of glossolalia (the Calvary Holiness Church), and finally to the adoption of a statement in its 1985 Manual that codified its anti-glossolalia position, a position that the Church still maintains today.

With respect to whitening, I showed how Nazarenes, who initially were quick to start ministries in the U.S. among the Chinese and Mexican populations, were predominantly white. The whiteness of the church continued as it became stagnant in reaching out to non-white populations in the U.S., particularly to the black population, despite the appeals by some to become more intentional in reaching out. Though black Nazarene churches would eventually emerge, the delay in reaching out to blacks, the subsequent lack of resources given to their ministries, and the absence of blacks in leadership positions of influence further contributed and reinforced the whiteness of the Church of the Nazarene.

Chapter four considered the fanaticism and displays of enthusiasm at the Azusa Street Revival. Then, by examining different snapshots in Nazarene history, I showed how the group once known as the Noisyrenes transitioned from having worship services

that would stop the preacher during the delivery of a sermon to having more formal, controlled services highlighted by systematically structured sermons and more professionalized music. Considering the links between expected expressions of emotion and the social constructionism of gender, I also considered trends related to the representation of women who have sensed a calling to preach within the denomination. The statistics revealed sharp declines in the percentage of female pastors and the percentage of ordained ministers who are female while the role of emotion in worship services faded.

The process of embourgeoisement was illustrated through analyses of Nazarene migration patterns and higher educational achievements. The migration of Nazarenes and Nazarene churches that were birthed in urban areas followed a predictable pattern of out-movement to the suburbs. Such migration patterns, as noted in the Burgess Growth Hypothesis, are closely associated with a rise in socioeconomic status. The switch from an emphasis on plain, efficient buildings catering to the poor to more elaborate, affluent worship centers is also evidence of the upward social mobility of U.S. Nazarenes. A concerted and continued investment in higher education, a desire of Nazarenes from the beginning of the denomination, sowed the seeds to their embourgeoisement. Over time Nazarene colleges, several of which struggled financially early in their history, enhanced their academic reputations by bettering their faculties, becoming accredited, starting graduate schools, and increasing enrollments.

Thus, in this manner I have documented my thesis that the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. has experienced whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement from 1895 to 1985 as it has also has legalized its anti-glossolalia stance. We turn our

attention now to some concluding remarks and explore possibilities for future research projects.

### *B. From Sect to Church?*

This dissertation has identified and documented several processes stemming from Bresee's response to the Azusa Street Revival. One may well ask, "To where do these trajectories lead?" Before considering a response to that question, a few assumptions should be addressed. First, it cannot be presumed, of course, that these processes necessarily lead to the same end(s). Theoretically, these social trajectories could support one another, be mutually limiting, have merely tangential relationships, or operate in complete independence, among other possible relationships. Second, it should not be assumed that, even if these trajectories were to move toward a common end, that these processes would continue indefinitely. In fact, as I will later suggest, changes over the last twenty-five years lead me to conclude that these processes have lost or are losing their momentum. Third, it should be kept in mind that social processes may serve a given function at a particular time, while serving another, or even perhaps seemingly opposite function, at a different time.

In order to clarify and better understand the relationships between and among these social processes, it will be helpful to bring in theory to give form to these contents. In my introduction I suggested that the Nazarene responses to the "tongues" movement, together with the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement, might be made meaningful by the "sect-to-church" theoretical framework. Indeed, I have highlighted at several points throughout this dissertation places where sect-to-church

movement has been evidenced by the processes I have identified. So, one may ask, “Is the church-ward direction of the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. confirmed?”

As I pointed out in the first chapter, any analysis of the sect-to-church process is riddled with challenges. A principal difficulty lies in the attempt to quantify ideal types, which, by their very nature, are void of essential definitions and resist easy measurement.<sup>1</sup> Ideal types, including “sect” and “church,” are best understood as conceptual *gestalts*. As such, they are comprised of “a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, numerous sect-church typologies have emerged throughout the past century as sociologists have varied the “attributes” they associate with these ideal types.<sup>3</sup> The imprecision and lack of consistent definition of the “sect” and “church” ideal types further renders any attempt to measure the distance *between them* all the more challenging.

Niebuhr’s contention that religious organizations proceed along a continuum from sect-to-church necessitates and complicates the issue of measurability. One way to handle the ambiguity of “sect-to-church” literature is to seek to better define (either functionally or substantially) the ideal types of “sect” and “church” in ways that would facilitate the measurement of a religious organization from and/or to one of the poles on

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<sup>1</sup> I refer the reader again to the substantive critique raised by Stark and Bainbridge. See Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 1-20.

<sup>2</sup> Max Weber, *Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949), 91.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Stark and Bainbridge even resist the use of the term “attributes” in reference to ideal types, opting for the term “correlates,” as “attributes” are too easily understood as being essential to, rather than characteristic of, ideal types. Stark and Bainbridge, 19-23.

the assumed linear progression from “sect” to “church.” Such a strategy could yield salient, meaningful information about religious organizations and their anticipated future changes. Illustrative of such an approach is the work of Benton Johnson, following in the path of Niebuhr, who posited the criterion of “accommodation to culture” for determining whether a religious organization is primarily sectarian or churchly. This strategy is helpful, though it should be noted that it is necessarily reductionist, at least with respect to Weber’s ideal types, which are intentionally composite.

Has the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. become more accommodating to its surrounding social environment? This question is not easily answered utilizing Johnson’s criterion. Insofar as the Church has experienced a whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement from 1906-1985, as this dissertation has shown, one could very well argue that the Church has assimilated to the culture of the dominant white power base within the United States.

The social environment, however, is also dynamic. So long as U.S. society is characterized as Euro-American centered, prejudicial to the affluent, and patriarchal, then the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement lead the Church of the Nazarene to a lower tension with its social environment. It is my contention that, although significant critiques have been voiced by those who are marginalized and oppressed, the structure of U.S. society continues to serve and protect the interests of white, affluent males. In other words, U.S. society and social institutions continue to be characterized by patriarchy, racism, and classism.

Yet, it might very well be argued that significant shifts within U.S. society have been reshaping and continue to reshape the social landscape of the U.S. For example, the



second-wave Feminist movement of the 1960s created tremendous awareness about and called for an end to gender inequality within workplaces, educational systems, and family units, among other domains. Nazarenes generally perceived the second-wave Feminist movement as threatening traditional family roles. Nazarene support of organizations such as Focus on the Family, then, could be seen as *increasing* in tension with a social environment that is still characterized as patriarchal, but moving in a direction of having a more liberated view for women.

Moreover, as the U.S. presidential elections since the year 2000 have documented, the electorate in the United States, and seemingly U.S. society at large, is deeply divided and polarized on a number of social and economic issues. Measuring the degree to which a religious organization is at tension with a social environment that is fractured renders the endeavor difficult at best. There are significant complications of understanding U.S. society as a monolithic, uniform, and static entity.

Futhermore, one could point to other indicators that demonstrate a continued sectarian, anti-accommodationist position of the Church of the Nazarene. A continued emphasis upon conversion, an insistent maintaining of the need for a definite second work of grace, and a strong adherence to traditional moral values could lead one to conclude that the Church through 1985 and beyond has remained rather sectarian.

For such reasons, it is understandable that some would opt for designations for the Church of the Nazarene such as that of “institutionalized sect,” the preference given by Nielson.<sup>4</sup> In the end, it is my contention that one’s determination of what type of religious organization the Church of the Nazarene was and still is dependent upon which

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<sup>4</sup>Joseph Nielson, “A Conservative Church Challenged by Change,” Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971.

“ingredients” make up one’s ideal types and, from among them, which ones are given most authority. Whether the Church of the Nazarene has become more aligned with the “church” ideal type than it once was, I maintain that by most typologies this would be answered affirmatively. How much it has transitioned, however, is subject to debate.

Nonetheless, I do not hold the position that the sect-to-church literature is irrelevant or without value. There is much to be gained from its study. I propose, however, that an inductive approach, one that moves from the particular to the general, may be more useful than a deductive application of theory that moves from the general to the specific. More interesting and meaningful, I believe, is a consideration of the processes identified by this dissertation *in themselves and their relationship one to another*. If we begin with the sect-to-church literature and seek to find confirmation of it in the case of the Church of the Nazarene, the results may differ depending upon the factors constituting our sect and church ideal types. On the other hand, if we begin by examining the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement, we can then inquire as to whether those processes independently and collectively validate the sect-to-church theory, independent of other processes, attributes, and characteristics of the Church of the Nazarene.

### *C. Elective Affinities*

A significant limitation of this dissertation arises from its very organization. In keeping with Bresee’s major critiques of the Azusa Street meetings, I have organized the dissertation into chapters that align with those critiques. Considered in this way, each critique and its corresponding social trajectory appear to be more independent and self-contained than what actually is the case.

Even a cursory reading reveals that there is much overlap and interplay between and among the aforementioned processes. Let's consider one example: In order to provide support for the embourgeoisement of Nazarenes, I documented how Nazarenes, over time, followed the typical migration pattern of moving away from major, urban centers to the suburbs. Clearly the increasing affluence of Nazarenes served as a dominant "push" factor for this migration. Equally evident, though, is the evidence that the relocation of Nazarenes from city cores to suburbs also was a reaction to the in-movement of minority populations, particularly blacks, as city neighborhoods experienced "tipping."

In other words, though considered independently up to this point, we must not forget that the social processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement are intertwined. At the very least, Bresee, in responding to the happenings on Azusa Street, united these issues in his remarks concerning Azusa Street Pentecostalism. For Bresee, these social factors functioned to undermine the credibility of the revival just a few blocks away from Los Angeles First Church. In synergistic fashion, these processes functioned in a colluding, collaborative manner to socially denigrate Azusa Street Revival participants and, in so doing, provided social lift to Nazarenes. Furthermore, I believe that the processes stemming from those social factors, which I have enumerated in this study, functioned in a similar, cooperative way in order to help lift Nazarenes throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century to gain respectability in U.S. society.

At this point the work of Max Weber is beneficial. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber considers the relationship between Protestantism, particularly Calvinism, and capitalism. Weber appropriates the notion of "elective

affinity” (*Wahlverwandtschaft*) in order to describe the relationship between the two. Very likely borrowing from Goethe, Weber’s “elective affinities” refer to social phenomena that have a mutual attraction to one another and from whose attraction emerges something else.<sup>5</sup> Weber, in his seminal work, notes the elective affinity between the notion of “calling” and ascetic Protestantism from which emerges the spirit of capitalism. Similarly, I contend that there is not merely a correlation (as the term *Wahlverwandtschaft* is sometimes translated), but a mutual attraction between whiteness, masculinization, and embourgeoisement. From the collusion of these conjoining processes, I suggest that there emerges a sense of respectability for the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. society during the period of time from 1906 to 1985.

A clear distinction should be drawn, though, between the emergence of respectability and direct causality. Astute disciples of Weber know that ambiguity characterizes much of Weberian thought, including his notions of ideal types and causality. Weber never intended to explain the causes of social phenomena by his use of elective affinities. Rather, as Ritzer points out, Weber’s “notion of adequate causality adopts the view that the best we can do in sociology is make probabilistic statements about the relationship between social phenomena.”<sup>6</sup>

I believe the evidence is such that one could articulate a “probabilistic statement” that the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement have helped contribute to the gain of respectability of Nazarenes in U.S. society. My choice for the

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<sup>5</sup>For the most sophisticated and in depth consideration I have yet found of Weber’s notion of “elective affinity,” see Andrew M. McKinnon, “Elective Affinities of the Protestant Ethic: Weber and the Chemistry of Capitalism,” *Sociological Theory*, 28, (March 2010), 108-126.

<sup>6</sup>George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000, 114.

term “respectability” comes from several lines of thinking. First, it seems to me that the social factors cited by Bresee in his editorial critique function to disrepute the gatherings at Azusa Street. By discrediting those Pentecostals, he seems to be attacking their respectability. By the same action, Bresee lauds the “clear-headed, faithful, reliable Christian people of” Los Angeles who have not been “deluded” by the Revival.<sup>7</sup> There seems to be an implicit statement being made that “respectable” folks would not be a party to such fanaticism. Second, while the ideal type of “church” and the various social aspects of the “church” ideal type can vary greatly, the notion of respectability appears to capture a part of what it often means to be a “church.” Rather than rejecting and being on the margins of society, “churches” are considered mainstream and respectable. In this project, the social processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement from 1906 to 1985 support that particular aspect of the “church” ideal type.

#### *D. “Official Religion”*

In my introduction I suggested that another theoretical framework might also cast light on the processes outlined in this dissertation. While the scholarship regarding popular and official religions does not give much consideration to the morphing of religious organizations along a continuum, it nonetheless gives thick description to the role of power as it relates to religious organizations. Official religion, according to Berlinerblau, functions in a hegemonic fashion together with other collective social

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<sup>7</sup>Phineas F. Bresee, Editorial, 1.

forces.<sup>8</sup> In so doing, official religions both contribute to the social alienation of popular religions and sanction the social structure.

These functions of official religion seem to find support in the case of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States. In the first case, the critiques made toward the Azusa Street Revival operated to discredit and disparage the movement for its racial integration, lower class constituency, and fanaticism. Together with the outcries of other “respectable” Angelenos, early Nazarenes attempted to delegitimize the social standing of Azusa Street participants. This dissertation has clearly documented this disparagement.

Secondly, the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S., like official religion, sanctions the existing social structure in practice. Berlinerblau notes how official religions routinely represent privileged economic classes and patriarchal social structures.<sup>9</sup> The rising affluence of Nazarenes and the decreased opportunities for women clergy in the Church of the Nazarene through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century clearly support the case that the denomination has increasingly assumed the status of an official religion in a social environment where the interests of the wealthy and of males are protected.

There is a least one way in which the notion of official religion is not very fitting as a description of the Church of the Nazarene. Just as the sect-church taxonomy originates in a European context that assumed a church-state union, so also the research of official religions has normally considered the dominance of one religious persuasion over against all others within a society. The possibility of a multiplicity of official

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<sup>8</sup> Jacques Berlinerblau, “Preliminary Remarks for the Sociological Study of Israelite ‘Official Religion’,” *Ki Baruch Hu* ed. by Robert Chazon (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 159.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-59.

religions within a society has not been ignored. Of course, the Church of the Nazarene, despite its social lift, is but one of many respected religious organizations in the United States today. Although it may not fit perfectly into the category of official religion, the Church of the Nazarene has become more representative and supportive of the dominant white, affluent, male-centered U.S. culture through the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement.

Stated differently, the process of anti-glossolalia codification, whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement have gained for the Church of the Nazarene that which both “church-like” religious organizations and “official” religious possess – a social status of respectability. No longer viewed as fanatical “holy rollers” committed to the cause of aiding the poor, Nazarenes are well-educated, respectable people with their homes in the suburbs.

#### *E. Recent Developments*

The scope of this dissertation intentionally limited research to the period of time from 1895 to 1985. The latter date was chosen to coincide with the act of the General Assembly in 1985 to adopt a resolution with respect to the issue of speaking in tongues. Interestingly, some of the processes highlighted in this dissertation have seemingly changed course in significant ways since that time. Here I pause briefly to consider some of these changes, though by no means is this intended to be an exhaustive accounting of those modifications.

With respect to the issue of glossolalia, Nazarene congregations continued to be forced out of the denomination in the early to mid-1990s for embracing the gift of tongues. The most significant case arose in 1994 in Fairbanks, Alaska, where a

congregation of around 1,000 people led by Rev. Al Woods had to leave the denomination over the issue of glossolalia to form the Door of Hope church. A similar story also took place in 1994 in Lexington, KY and in January, 1995, the pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene in Bozeman, Montana resigned over his desire to permit speaking in tongues.<sup>10</sup> Yet, at the same time, greater latitude has been afforded to biblical scholars in Nazarene schools with respect to their interpretations of the passages of scripture, such as 1 Corinthians chapter 14, that refer to glossolalia. Moreover, some collaboration has taken place between Pentecostals and Nazarenes. In 1995, to the surprise of many, Rev. Steve Green invited to the pulpit of the then second largest Church of the Nazarene in the United States Rev. Jack Hayford, a well-known Pentecostal. According to Rev. Ponder Gilliland, formerly the president of Southern Nazarene University, the invitation was “unusual, and a bit daring.”<sup>11</sup> Today, Pentecostals sit routinely in Nazarene colleges and universities, who actively seek Pentecostals through print ads in *Charisma*, a prominent Pentecostal magazine. Though Nazarenes remain doctrinally opposed to glossolalia, they are actively engaging with Pentecostals in formal collaborations, such as through the National Association of Evangelicals, and through daily interactions. Pentecostals are not the “enemy” they once had been considered to be.

The process of whitening is somewhat changing within the U.S. Nazarene landscape. It is clear that the Church of the Nazarene in the United States is becoming less white in its demographics. Over the past eleven years, from 1999-2009, the number

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<sup>10</sup> “Nazarenes, Pentecostals Bridge Differences at Pasadena Service,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Idem.



of worshipers attending white Nazarene congregations diminished from 457,515 to 446,001 (-3%) while the number of worshipers attending ethnic services grew from 49,347 to 68,928 (+4%). The trends are similar when considering the number of white and non-white Nazarene congregations and members.<sup>12</sup> While a few positions of influence at Nazarene headquarters have been assumed by persons of color, there are still no district or general superintendents from the United States who are people of color other than the district superintendents for the few specifically-Latin districts.

The year 1985 marks a turning point with respect to women clergy in the Church of the Nazarene. After reaching historic low points in 1985, the percentage of pastors in the Church of the Nazarene who were women rose gradually from 1.1% to 3.7% in 2003. Particularly worthy of mentioning is the election in 2005 of the first female general superintendent, Dr. Nina Gunter, who served a four-year term before retiring in 2009. Dr. Gunter's election to the denomination's highest office marked a significant milestone and demonstrated the willingness of Nazarenes to embrace the leadership of a woman and to recognize her call as divine.

Also, the trends since 1985 related to worship have been particularly interesting. Charismatic worship styles, including the raising of hands during singing and the expression of emotion, are found among many younger congregations. Drums, guitars, and synthesizers have replaced organs in the sanctuary. At the same time, a more liturgical, sacramental, and contemplative strand of worship has gained a limited following within the denomination over the past decade. Worship styles have become

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<sup>12</sup>See <http://www.missionstrategy.org/missionstrategy/Home/MulticulturalMinistries/tabid/121/Default.aspx> [accessed December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010].

much more varied and contextualized, as is true perhaps in much of U.S. Protestantism at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Embourgeoisement among Nazarenes continues as they better their educational achievements through undergraduate and graduate degree programs and obtain professional occupational statuses. To cite an example, Olivet Nazarene University boasts an acceptance rate of 97% of their pre-medicine majors into medical school, far outperforming the national average. This school that once suffered from bankruptcy and at another time lost its campus due to a horrific fire has just opened its \$25 million dollar Centennial Chapel in October, 2010 with plans for a new \$30 million dollar recreation center, dormitory, and academic building over the next decade.<sup>14</sup>

The “Thrust to the Cities” program, first announced in 1985, sought to intentionally plant churches in ten major cities in the United States, beginning with Chicago. Twenty-five years later it must be admitted that the program had limited success. Many urban churches, mainly ethnic congregations, were started. In Chicago alone English, Filipino, Korean, Laotian, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, and Spanish works began. Few remain today. It must be conceded, however, that renewed attention has been given to urban locations after many decades of abandoning them. These more recent developments warrant academic investigation. It may be that these developments, in either providing continuity with or divergence from the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement still “lift” Nazarenes into higher levels of respectability within U.S. society. My sense is that much of the renewed interest in and support for women clergy, urban ministries, and compassionate ministry centers emerges

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<sup>14</sup>*Kankakee Daily Journal*, August 27, 2010.

not so much from a theological motivation that critiques social inequalities, but rather from the increased educational levels of Nazarenes who are more socially conscious. Future research opportunities abound.

#### *F. Future Research Possibilities*

Clearly the research for this project has raised as many, if not more, questions than it has provided answers. Many of the questions that lay the foundation for future research projects are logical expansions of this study. However, the necessary, limited scope of dissertations precluded a consideration of these questions.

One potential area of investigation includes expanding the particulars of this study to other Wesleyan-Holiness denominations. Have they too also undergone the processes of whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement? How have their responses to the Civil Rights and Feminist movements compared to those responses within the Church of the Nazarene?

Furthermore, these questions may be raised of Pentecostal denominations themselves. Arguably just a few decades behind many Wesleyan-Holiness denominations in their histories, could it be that Pentecostal denominations have experienced these same processes? This dissertation has not had as its aim to examine institutional changes within Pentecostalism itself, but it certainly has not been static as a movement.

As mentioned in the introduction, the sect-to-church literature has focused on economic indicators in tracing the changing social profiles of religious organizations. The construction of gender and race has been less examined in sect-church discussions.

Additional research projects examining the ways in which gender and race relations are constructed would contribute significantly to this literature.

Another important discussion touched upon by this research that is in need of further investigation is the initial point of social differentiation between religious movements. In many respects the people attending the Azusa Street Revival were similar to those to whom the Church of the Nazarene initially reached out. Their life chances differed, though, as did the social profile of the leaders. Race, class, and gender played an important role in the differing life chances of the constituents. In what other ways do two theologically similar movements begin to experience stratification?

The Church of the Nazarene “stepped up” the social ladder in part by contributing to the addition of a lower social rung in its disparagement of Pentecostalism. How does disparagement function in establishing the respectability of other religious organizations? These are some of the questions this research project has raised in my own thinking about the movement of religious organizations.

By providing an analysis of the whitening, masculinization, and embourgeoisement that has taken place in the Church of the Nazarene as it codified its anti-glossolalia position, and by noting these additional areas for potential research projects in the future, I hope to have made a contribution to the field of sociology of religion, one that can be contributed to by others in the days to come.

Bresee's Statement Concerning Azusa Street  
*Nazarene Messenger* (Vol. 11, No. 24)  
 December 13, 1906, pg. 6

Some months ago, among some of the colored people in this city, reinforced after a little with some whites, there began something which was called the "gift of tongues." The meetings were held in a large rented building on Azusa street. The professed gift of tongues was not the only peculiarity of the meetings, but much physical exercise of various kinds, with laying on of hands. The meetings attracted some attention, especially among that class of people who are always seeking for some new thing. We made no mention of the matter in the Messenger, not deeming it of sufficient importance to demand attention from outsiders. We feel that all men must know that as far as it was necessarily the same as is being carried on with so much success in this city of getting believers sanctified and sinners converted, and so far as it partook of fanaticism and was fostered by heretical teaching, we did not care to give it the prominences of public discussion.

But some parties who had the confidence of editors in the East sufficiently to secure the publication of what they have written, have given such marvelous statements of things as occurring in connection with this thing, that for the sake of those at a distance, and the many who are writing us about it, we deem it wise to say a simple word.

Locally it is of small account, being insignificant both in numbers and influence. Instead of being the greatest movement of the times, as represented – in Los Angeles, at least—it is of small moment. It has had, and has now, upon the religious life of the city, about as much influence as a pebble thrown into the sea; but what little influence it has had seems to have been mostly harmful, instead of beneficent. It seems not only to have had at least some of the elements of fanaticism, but to be trying to inculcate such erroneous or heretical [sic] doctrines as mark it as not of the Spirit of truth. The two principal things which are emphasized, and wherein they claim to differ from others, is, that Christians are sanctified before they receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, this baptism being a gift of power upon the sanctified life, and that the essential and necessary evidence of the baptism is the gift of speaking with new tongues.

As far as has come under our own observation, or that we have seen experted by competent examination, the speaking with tongues has been a no-thing-a [sic] jargon, a senseless mumble, without meaning to those who do the mumbling, or to those who hear. Where in a few instances the speaker or some other one has attempted to interpret, it has usually been a poor mess.

It would be doing the few poor people who have been deluded by this thing no wrong to say that among clear-headed, faithful, reliable Christian people of this city the thing has no standing. We have been surprised at reputable papers giving credence to the almost unthinkable-extravagant utterances in reference to such a matter before attempting to know whether there was anything to it or not.

Anything that is out of the good old way of entire sanctification, by the truth, through he [sic] blood, by the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, which entirely separates and burns up the chaff of carnality, and then abides to teach, lead and empower, may well be halted and carefully examined before being admitted to confidence, or given the semi-endorsement of publication.

These are more less people whose experience is unsatisfactory, who have never been sanctified wholly, or have lost the precious work out of their hearts, who will run after the hope of exceptional or marvelous things, to their own further undoing. People who have the precious, satisfactory experience of Christ revealed in the heart by the Holy Spirit, do not hanker after strange fire, nor run after every suppositional gift, nor are they blown about by every wind of doctrine. There is rest only in the old paths where the Holy Spirit Himself imparts to the soul directly the witness of His cleansing and indwelling.

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