

## Southern California Conference Leadership

The Southern California Conference reached its stride sometime within the decade 1904-1914. General Conference was held in Los Angeles in 1904, indicating the growing strength of Methodism in southern California. The creation of the area system in 1912 made possible more direct supervision by bishops than had been possible previously. The Los Angeles Missionary and Church Extension Society had been founded, and several important Conference institutions established. Some individuals who were influential in the rapid growth and importance of the Conference have already been suggested. It is appropriate now to indicate more of these leaders.

### I. A TRAINING GROUND FOR THE EPISCOPACY

The Conference had many good ministers. Before unification six of these were singled out by their fellow workers of the Methodist Episcopal Church and elevated to the episcopacy. Another, Glenn R. Phillips, was elected in 1948, as was Donald H. Tippet, who joined the Southern California-Arizona Conference in 1939, the year of unification.

#### i. *Bishop Robert McIntyre (1851-1914)*

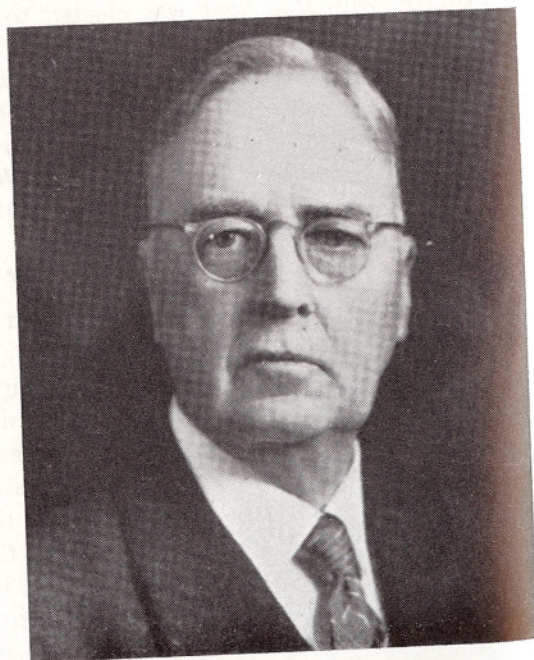
Born in Scotland, Robert McIntyre came to America when a lad. In 1878 he entered the Rock River Conference. He served three distinguished pastorates in Chicago and Denver before coming to First Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles in 1902. Elected bishop in 1908, Robert McIntyre was pre-eminently a powerful orator.<sup>1</sup>

#### ii. *Bishop Matt S. Hughes (1863-1920)*

Matt S. Hughes, son of a minister and brother of Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes, began his ministry in the Iowa Conference in 1887. From there he went to Maine and then served in Minneapolis and Kansas City. In 1908 he began an eight-year ministry at First Methodist Episcopal Church in Pasadena, following in the footsteps of such men as R. W. C. Farnsworth and P. F. Bresee. He taught homi-



Bishop Charles Edward  
Locke



Bishop George A. Miller

East, *Problems of the Town Church* (1902), *The Trial of Jesus the Christ* (a drama, 1912), *The Life Efficient* (1913). He retired from the episcopacy in 1936 and now lives in Fayette, California.

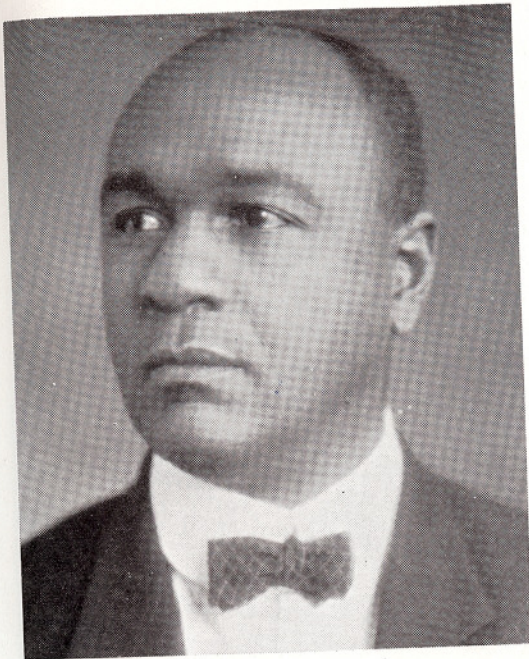
v. *Bishop Alexander P. Shaw* (1879- )

Son of a Negro pastor in Mississippi, Alexander P. Shaw entered the ministry in 1908 in the Washington Conference. After serving pastorates in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Arkansas, he came in 1917 to Wesley Chapel, a struggling church in Los Angeles. He worked here for fourteen years among his people and placed the church on a solid foundation. In 1931 he became editor of the *Southwest Christian Advocate*. Elected bishop in 1936, he supervised the New Orleans Area, 1936-1940, and Baltimore thereafter. Bishop Shaw retired in 1956 and now lives in Los Angeles.

vi. *Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam* (1891- )

The only native son of California among these six bishops, Bishop Oxnam likewise is the only one of them who spent his entire parish ministry in the Southern California Conference. He entered on trial in 1916 and came into early prominence as the guiding force in the Church of All Nations. He was pastor there for a decade, and during these same years he was Secretary of the Los Angeles Missionary and Church Extension Society. Then education called him. He had been for four years a part-time teacher at the University of Southern California. After leaving the Church of All Nations, he became professor of homiletics at Boston University School of Theology in 1927 for one year and then President of DePauw University for eight years. In 1936 he was elected a bishop.

Since unification Bishop Oxnam has been one of the leading voices of world Methodism and Protestantism. He was one of the first six Presidents of the World Council of Churches. Active in the Federal (later National) Council of Churches, he also has served in numerous advisory capacities for the United States Government. An outstanding preacher, he has been a guest in nearly all of the well-known pulpits of Methodism and has given many of the more important memorial foundation lectureships. An indefatigable writer, he has especially followed the direction of Francis J. McConnell in applying the Christian Gospel to the social scene. Probably as much as anyone else Bishop Oxnam turned the tide in the hysteria and fear of the communist witch hunt with his calm and deliberate



Bishop Alexander P. Shaw



Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam

defense before a Congressional committee in Washington, D.C., in 1953, and with his book *I Protest* (1954).

In 1959 he received The Upper Room Citation for leadership in world Christian fellowship. Dr. J. Manning Potts, editor of "The Upper Room," said: "No man on the American scene today has had a larger share in the extension of world Christian fellowship. For a generation he has been a colorful and dynamic leader in this field."<sup>4</sup>

## 2. THE TEACHING MINISTRY

Jesus of Nazareth was a supreme teacher, and many men and women have felt called to this aspect of the ministry. The Southern California Conference gave to the Church some of the finest men in this field.

### i. Presidents of the University of Southern California

#### (1) Marion McKinley Bovard (1847-1891)

Born in Indiana, Marion M. Bovard entered the ministry in California. He was a charter member of the Southern California Conference in 1876. His parish appointments centered at Compton, Los Angeles, and San Diego. In 1880 he was elected the first President of the University of Southern California. In these crucial days of the school's infancy, he guided her with wisdom and personal sacrifice. The tribute to Dr. Bovard at his death probably summed up the ministry of his life better than any other words could:

The school is a monument of his devotion to that work. By his unceasing care for those interests, he gave the educational work of the Church an impetus, whose importance the succeeding years of the University will never overshadow.<sup>5</sup>

#### (2) George F. Bovard (1856-1932)

"When the historian shall record the growth of Methodism in southern California, he can only fulfill his obligation by writing on high and in shining letters the name of George Finley Bovard."<sup>6</sup> When Dr. Bovard, brother of M. M. Bovard, the first President, assumed the Presidency of the University in 1903, the school was just beginning to find itself after a crippling depression and total reorganization. When he retired in 1921, the institution stood as a dynamic center of higher education in Los Angeles. Under Dr. Bovard's guidance the student body grew from 431 to 5,900, and the assets of the



George Finley Bovard

school increased from less than \$400,000 to almost \$2,000,000. Dr. Bovard was always conscious of the original vision and purpose of the men who had founded the University. Largely because of him Methodism in 1921 had in the West an institution of higher learning of which the Church had a right to be proud.

### (3) Other Presidents of the University

Two other ministers of the Conference were Presidents of the University between the two Bovards. J. P. Widney (1891-1895) was responsible for reorganizing the school after the collapse of the huge real estate boom. Because of his business ability the institution survived. When he resigned as President, he took up mission work with Dr. Bresee. Later as a Conference member he was pastor of the Los Angeles City Mission. George W. White was President 1895-1899 after a successful parish ministry and ably guided the school through the transition period.\*

\* From 1899 to 1903, when M. M. Bovard became President, there had been no President. The Deans of Liberal Arts and other departments took care of the college affairs part of the time, but the President of the Board of Trustees performed the administrative and executive duties.

### ii. Deans of Maclay and the School of Religion

Throughout the long history of Maclay College of Theology several men served as Dean and were members of the Southern California Conference or its successor. Their guidance and dedication have been responsible for keeping alive the hopes of a trained Christian ministry in southern California and Arizona: R. W. C. Farnsworth (1887-1888), R. S. Maclay (1888-1893), school closed 1893-1894, George Cochran, a layman (1894-1899), school closed 1899-1907, Ezra A. Healy (1907-1921), John F. Fisher (1921-1931), Bruce R. Baxter (1931-1934), John G. Hill (1934-1936), Carl S. Knopf (1936-1939),\* Robert J. Taylor (1940-1945), Irl Whitchurch (1945-1947), Floyd H. Ross, a layman and acting Dean (1947-1949), Earl Cranston (1949-1956).

With the founding of the Southern California School of Theology in 1956, Dr. Cranston was appointed its Dean. In 1957 Ernest Cadman Colwell was elected its President.

### iii. Other Teachers

Many other ministers of the Southern California Conference also were teachers. Space permits only the merest suggestion of their work. One was a superintendent: O. S. Frambes, Los Angeles Academy (1874-1880), forerunner of the University of Southern California. The following were professors: O. W. E. Cook, Claude C. Douglass, R. T. Flewelling, C. V. Gilliland, John G. Hill, all at the University of Southern California; Murray H. Leiffer and L. E. Fuller, Garrett Biblical Institute; C. Percy Hedley, College of Pudget Sound; L. F. Ketchum, Pasadena University; Roy G. Bose, Chapman College; Fred Essig, Asbury College; Byron Horn, Simpson College; Stanley R. Hopper, Drew University; A. R. King, Cornell College. The following were Presidents or Chancellors: M. E. Phillips, Chancellor, Kansas Wesleyan University; Morgan S. Odell, President, Lewis and Clark College; C. V. Gustafson, President, Kansas City National Training School; Tully C. Knoles, President and Chancellor, College of the Pacific.

### iv. Other Ministerial Leaders

In addition to these men, there were numerous other dedicated Conference members who held important posts. Some served as District Superintendents, some as editors, some as outstanding pastors

\* From 1939 to 1940 President Von KleinSmid acted as Dean.



William Cashieus Botkin



Walter Coleman Buckner

and preachers. Although several are mentioned elsewhere in this book by name, one might well pause here to remember a few other notable figures, recognizing that these too are but representative of that leadership which was remarkably good.

(1) William Cashieus Botkin (1872-1956)

A native of Indiana William C. Botkin graduated from DePauw University. Entering the Indiana Conference in 1893, he remained there until 1902 when he transferred to the Southern California Conference. Secretary of the Conference for eleven years, he was for many years Curator of the Historical Society. Largely because of his labors in this latter capacity the present Conference possesses an extremely valuable library of Methodist materials.

(2) Walter Coleman Buckner (1883-1953)

Walter C. Buckner had his early training in the law but felt a call to the ministry. In 1908 he joined the Southern California Conference. A graduate of Baker University, he was pastor of prominent churches in southern California. For twelve years he was District Superintendent in three different districts: Pasadena, Long Beach, and Los Angeles. For nineteen years he was a member of the Conference Board of Trustees and represented the Conference at seven General Conferences. After unification he was elected a member of the Judicial Council of the Church and remained a member until his death.

(3) Jesse Lee Corley (1877-1943)

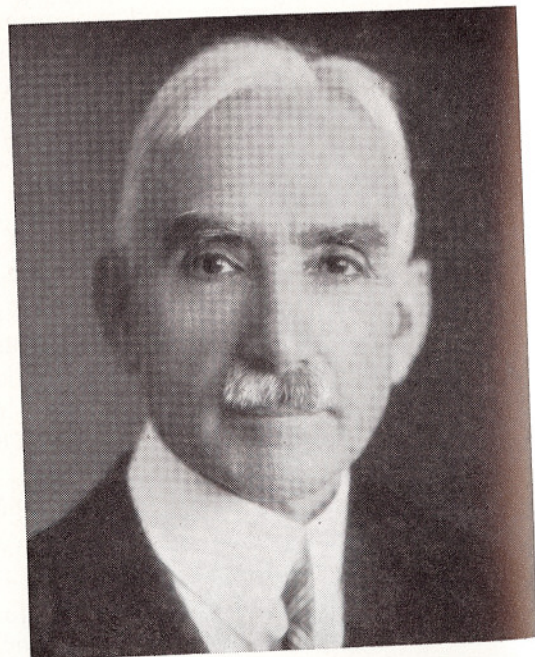
Jesse Lee Corley was a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan and of Boston University School of Theology. At his death in 1943, he had served the Southern California Conference and the united Conference for twenty-four years in educational work. In 1930 he went to China for one year to help further the program of Christian education. For several years he acted as chairman of an interdenominational committee seeking legislation to permit released time for religious education in California public schools. This law was passed in 1949.

(4) Alfred Inwood (1858-1946)

Born in England and educated in pharmacy, Alfred Inwood in 1882 decided to go into the ministry. He immigrated to Canada and thence to southern California, where he joined his brother Edwin in the Conference. Here he served as pastor, District Superintendent,



Jesse Lee Corley



Alfred Inwood

and for several years as chairman of the Conference Relations and Ministerial Qualifications Committee. In this latter capacity especially he guided many young men through their training. Held in high regard by his colleagues, he was twice elected to General Conference, in 1912 and 1916.

(5) Edwin John Inwood (1860-1937)

Deciding for the ministry in his teens, Edwin John Inwood left England for Canada. From there he went to southern California in 1884 as a supply to Soledad and Gonzales, then in that Conference. He had a ministry lasting over fifty years as pastor, District Superintendent, Secretary of the Conference, and member of the Board of Trustees. Like his brother Alfred, John Inwood was elected to General Conference—one time, in 1908.

(6) Francis Marion Larkin (1861-1933)

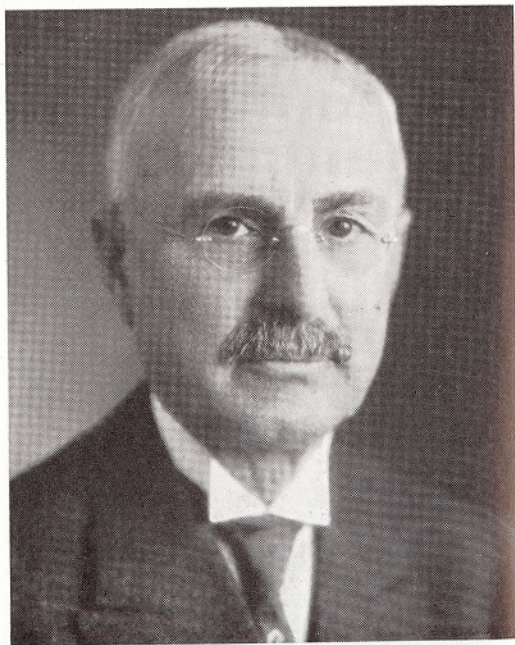
Francis Marion Larkin reached ministerial prominence early in his career in southern California. He was a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan and Boston University School of Theology. After a pastorate at University Church, Los Angeles, for some years, he was appointed to Grace Church, San Francisco, then the leading church of that city. In 1906, following the earthquake and fire, he was made Executive Secretary of Relief Funds, for the stricken churches. Upon his return to southern California, he was appointed to the Redlands Church, and from there he went to the Superintendency of the Los Angeles District. In 1914 he became Editor of the *California Christian Advocate*, a position he held until 1924. His last appointment was in 1932 as Executive Secretary of the California State Church Federation. He died the following year.

(7) Willsie Manning Martin (1876-1953)

Willsie Manning Martin was a native of Canada. At an early age his parents came to Santa Ana, California, where he attended public school. At the University of California, from which he graduated in 1900, he received a medal as champion debater. That year he joined the California Conference and entered Drew Theological Seminary. After pastorates in the California Conference, he became minister at First Methodist Church, Boise, Idaho, in 1912. Following a year of war work in 1918 with the Y.M.C.A., he assumed the pastorate of First Methodist Church in Hollywood. Later he was minist-



Edwin John Inwood



Francis Marion Larkin

ter at Wilshire Methodist Church until his retirement. In Los Angeles he served in various important civic capacities and was looked upon as one of the leading men of the Conference.

(8) Merle Neglie Smith (1872-1952)

Merle Smith was born in 1872 in Lake City, Iowa. Educated at Cornell College and Drew Theological Seminary, he was in the active ministry for fifty-three years. After graduation from seminary, he served as registrar at Drew for four years. Then he began a parish ministry, so effective that it embraced in total only four churches: Ackley and Marshalltown, both in Iowa; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and First Methodist, Pasadena, California (1916-1937), which under his direction became a leading church of the Conference.

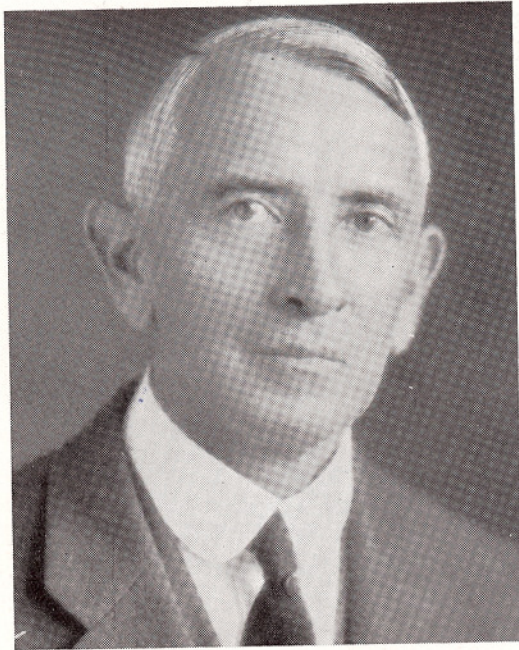
(9) Roy Lemon Smith (1887- )

Born in 1887 in Kansas, Roy Smith graduated from Southwestern College, Garrett Biblical Institute, and Northwestern University. After pastorates in Kansas, Illinois, and Minnesota, he came to First Methodist, Los Angeles. Here from 1932 to 1940, he did outstanding work, increasing the membership and church program during the depression. In 1936 he was chosen as one of six "most representative Methodist preachers in America" and in 1942 as one of the ten "most effective Protestant preachers in America." A delegate to General Conference three times, he was a member of the Uniting Conference in Kansas City in 1939. From 1940 to 1948 he was Editor of *The Christian Advocate*. Then, until his retirement in 1952, he was one of the two general managers of The Methodist Publishing House. Dr. Smith now lives in San Diego.

(10) Fred B. Trotter (1891-1955)

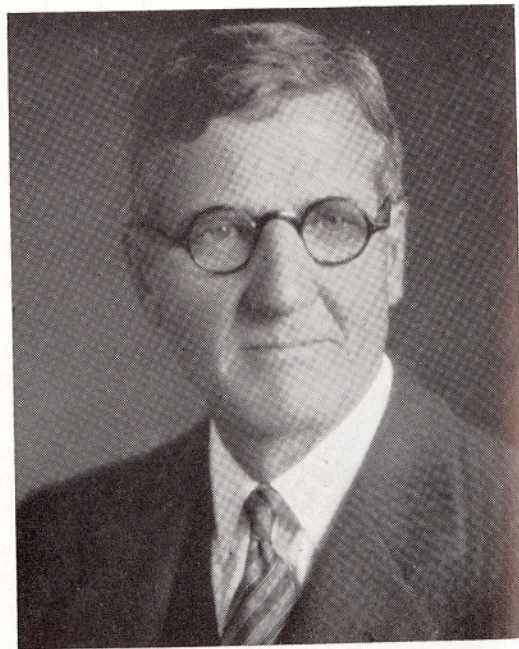
Fred B. Trotter, born in Ireland, was the son of a Methodist preacher, one of whose forebears was jailed with John Wesley for preaching in the streets of Cork, Ireland. Emigrating to the United States in 1912, Fred Trotter received his seminary training at University of Southern California. Outside of a year with the A. E. F. in France in 1918, his ministry in this Conference was uninterrupted from 1912 until his death.

Fred Trotter's Conference leadership was outstanding. In 1934 he began a sixteen-year ministry at Huntington Park, making that church a prominent one in the Conference, and then served four years at First Methodist Church, Alhambra. After unification he



Willsie Manning Martin

Merle Neglie Smith



Roy Lemon Smith

Fred B. Trotter





George Acheson Warmer

was chairman of the "Advance for Christ and His Church" 1948-1952, and was chairman of the Commission on World Service and Finance 1952-1954. Three times he was elected to Jurisdictional Conferences and in 1952 led the delegation to General Conference. Death prevented his attendance at the 1956 General Conference. In 1954 he was appointed District Superintendent of the Pasadena District. Through the last years of his ministry he was active on the Board of Social and Economic Relations. Wherever and whenever Fred Trotter worked, he was highly respected. As one eulogist said, "Some members of this Conference speak frequently on the floor of the Conference but are seldom heard. Fred spoke seldom, but was always heard."

(11) George Acheson Warmer (1882-1957)

Born in Drayton, North Dakota, George Warmer transferred in 1913 to this Conference after serving in the Northern Minnesota and New England Southern Conferences. Three great pastorates—First Church, Santa Ana; First Church, Riverside; and First Church, San Diego—covered a span of twenty-one years (1927-1948). His

last appointment was as Los Angeles District Superintendent, serving until his retirement in 1954. As District Superintendent he supplied able direction to the Los Angeles Missionary and Extension Society. During World War II he gave his tireless energies to servicemen, serving in the U.S.O. and the Red Cross, directed a Lounge for servicemen in his church, and counseled with hundreds of boys in need.

George Warmer earned the name of being a champion of minority groups. He opposed loyalty oaths for teachers and churches. For many years he was a leader in the American Civil Liberties Union. He was elected eight times to General Conference and elected to the Uniting Conference in 1939. He was an honored member of the General Board of Education and as a member of the General Conference Committee he helped organize the Methodist Youth Fellowship. From 1936 to 1945 he was chairman of the Conference Board of Education. For his magnificent educational leadership University of Southern California conferred upon him the Doctor of Divinity degree in 1942.