CHAPTER IV

The Methodist Episcopal Church 1876-1939 Growth and Program

1. GROWTH OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE

i. *Geographical Boundaries*

It has been seen that the Southern Church adhered to the Tehachapi Range as a natural dividing point between northern and southern California. This was not so in the case of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1876 when the Southern California Conference was organized, the line of separation was moved considerably north of Tehachapi about one hundred and seventy-five miles. The Conference thus took in part of the large San Joaquin Valley. During the life of the Southern California Conference there were numerous boundary changes, and each time the line of division remained considerably north of the Tehachapi line. The exception to this was Inyo County and Arizona. Probably because of its location north of the Mojave Desert and east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Inyo County was included for a long time in the Nevada Mission. In 1917 it was transferred to the Southern California Conference as was Las Vegas. In 1920 the work in Arizona, formerly a mission, became part of the Conference.

At unification the more natural line of demarcation of the southern and northern sections of the state was fixed, and it has thus remained almost precisely to this day. The Southern California-Arizona Conference boundaries today include southern California as far north toward Tehachapi as Lancaster, along the coast to the northern line of San Luis Obispo County, and in the eastern part of the state all of the Owens Valley up to Bishop; also the southern part of Nevada and all the state of Arizona.

ii. *Los Angeles: Missionary and Church Extension Society*

From the beginning the rapid expansion of churches was a vital concern to the Southern California Conference. As a concrete step

to promote this the first Conference initiated a Board of Church Extension and voted $2,500 to promote new churches.[1] Every year thereafter the establishment of new churches in new communities was under discussion at Conference. As noted previously, the Southern Church never attained any great numbers in southern California and was far outdistanced by the Methodist Episcopal Church even though intensive evangelism was common to both. The exact reason for this cannot be ascertained, but it quite possibly was twofold: (1) the antagonism to the South engendered by the Civil War, (2) the increasing strength of the Methodist Episcopal Church which gained momentum as it progressed so rapidly after the war. Whatever the precise reason the fact was there, and numerical strength for the Methodist Episcopal Church meant more money with which to work. This in turn meant more churches to attract more people.

The completion of the Santa Fe Railroad to Los Angeles in 1886 set off the second boom in southern California, particularly in San Diego and Los Angeles. Many people became inbued with the fever of real estate speculation. One visitor from the East told of worshiping in a Methodist church in Los Angeles. "When the services were over, the preacher grasped his hand, asked if he were a newcomer, and proceeded to sell him a lot in a newly opened subdivision." [2] In 1887 the Southern Pacific Railroad, which was chartered in California in 1865, transported 120,000 people to Los Angeles, while the Santa Fe Railroad averaged three passenger trains daily into the city.[3] During the three-year span of the boom, 1886-1889, the growth of the Southern California Conference was immense. The number of preaching appointments increased from 80 in 1886 to over 130 in 1889. In one year alone, 1886-1887, the membership rose from 3,909 to 5,175.[4] Two new districts were created, and expansion was thought to be so great and permanent that the Conference requested the General Conference to allow it to divide into two Conferences during the next quadrennium if it so desired. When the boom shriveled in 1889, the resolution was rescinded. The permanent growth of Los Angeles and the rest of southern California, nevertheless, assured a healthy future for the Southern California Conference.

How did the Conference continue to react to this growth and opportunity? From the start it was evident to many that Los Angeles was destined eventually to be a great city. Leaders of the Northern Church sensed this as had some of the Southern Methodists. The efforts of Robert W. C. Farnsworth in this connection were very important. In 1883 he was made Presiding Elder of the Los Angeles

District. A Home Missionary Society organized under his direction enabled him to keep men in charges not otherwise possible. This group was the foremost agent in the Conference for extending work to new communities. Dr. Farnsworth saw that locations were selected carefully; he then bought lots and erected churches. For this enterprise he enlisted the help of laymen who agreed to give funds to every church completed in the district. The Conference Church Extension Society matched the amount given by the individual layman. Thus, through the perceptiveness of Dr. Farnsworth, a substantial reservoir of funds became available for the purpose of establishing new churches.

The work in Los Angeles, nevertheless, still suffered for lack of funds and co-ordination. The reports of the Presiding Elders of the district, following Dr. Farnsworth, constantly reminded the Conference of the need for more resources. In 1895 a City Evangelization Union was created in Los Angeles "for the purpose of establishing mission services and Sunday Schools in needy sections of the city, planting new churches in unoccupied territory, and helping churches struggling with burdens of debt." [5] Methodism in Los Angeles had united in a district effort for aggressive evangelization. The following year, however, the group had to disband since it was unable to perfect its structure and to utilize its resources. For the next seven years a committee, composed of laymen and ministers, remained together to try to work out an effective plan.

On March 31, 1904, the long years of labor and hope came to fruition. The Los Angeles City Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formally organized to bring the churches into closer fellowship and co-operation. "The special privilege of such an organization would be to strengthen the weaker churches and to create new Sunday Schools and churches in this rapidly growing city." [6] In 1914 the name of the group was changed to "The Los Angeles Missionary and Church Extension Society," and the boundaries were extended to cover the territory of the Los Angeles District as well as the city. For the first few years funds were obtained by individual donations and voluntary church offerings. In such a method of fund raising there was a good deal of uncertainty. Thus eventually the work was made a part of the regular benevolence apportionment of the Conference, with apportionments to the Los Angeles District churches only. Still, the needs of the Society continued to be presented to the churches across the Conference. Emphasis was laid upon the great growth of the Los Angeles area and the lack of funds with which to meet the challenge. In 1921

Byron Wilson, Los Angeles District Superintendent, reported that over one million dollars was needed on his district to achieve the adequate expansion which the changing situations demanded.[7] Sometimes, at first, as these reports were read and requests for money made, the Society found that there was antagonism. Some pastors of large churches on other districts maintained that their churches had no responsibility to the city of Los Angeles, its problems, and its churches' programs. This was not the attitude of the Conference as a whole, however, and by the early thirties nearly all opposition had disappeared. When the enormous building fund drive for Plaza Community Center and the Church of All Nations was undertaken, 116 churches from all over southern California pledged over $100,000.[8] The achievements of this organization proved its value to the total Conference program, and throughout its history it has gained increasing support.

To recount all the activity of the Society would be an almost impossible task. Its members have included ministers of the calibre of G. Bromley Oxnam and George A. Warmer, Sr., and laymen such as George Cochran, an original trustee who served for thirty-five years as treasurer. The quality and purpose of the Society has been aptly summarized by Mildred Harris, its secretary for many years:

> They have been representative of the best business and spiritual leadership in the church, men and women of vision and understanding, keenly aware of the city and its problems and opportunities, and they have sought to serve the needs of the people of the city, to further the work of Methodism and the church at large, to promote interdenominational co-operation and to make the city a better place for everyone regardless of race or color or creed.[9]

The majority of the churches on the Los Angeles District today, as well as several on the Long Beach District, including El Segundo and Torrance (First), received their start with the aid of funds from the City Missionary Society.[10] Many of its offshoots, such as Westwood and Hollywood First, became strong and effective churches and still are serving the present Conference in positions of influence. Part of the program of this organization has been to keep up with a changing society in the downtown area. This has sometimes meant that it was better for some churches, such as Vernon Avenue, to merge and for others, such as Grace, to sell their property for reinvestment to establish churches in better locations.

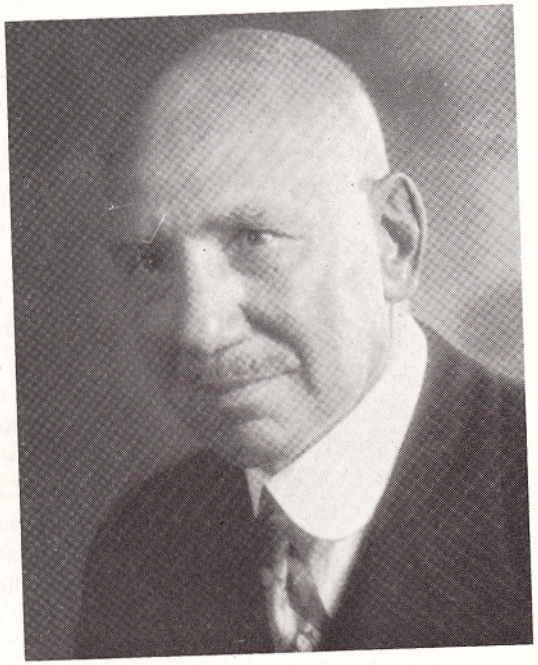
Many times the task of keeping up with the changing social patterns has been difficult, sometimes seemingly impossible. This

has been especially the case since 1940 when the process of decentralization greatly accelerated. It has also been true at other times in the past. The third great boom in California, which occurred in the early twenties as a result of oil and motion pictures, created complexities previously unknown to the churches in southern California. The District Superintendent of Los Angeles in 1925, Lewis T. Guild, entitled part of his report "A Close Up of the Process of Losing American Cities." More than fifty per cent of the immigrating Methodists were being lost. He found that the reasons were: (1) the lack of suitable buildings, (2) the tremendous heterogeneousness of people who came from all parts of the country, (3) the "countless bootleg religions" which drew many earnest but undiscriminating Methodists.[11] In 1947 this population influx in the twenties into southern California was characterized as "the largest internal migration in the history of the American people." [12] There were never enough funds to construct adequate buildings and to carry out well-balanced programs. The variegated character of the population only added to the difficulty. Robert Glass Cleland has ably summed up the religious confusion that resulted from all this:

> A highly polyglot population had transplanted its faiths from every portion of the globe to southern California. A large element in the population, coming from a background of strong church affiliation and early religious training, severed their denominational connections when they started for California, but they could not so easily rid themselves of the deep-seated craving for some form of worship and religious expression. Like boats without moorings, they were consequently blown about by every wind of strange or novel doctrine that sprang up so readily in the unstable society of the new land.[13]

Southern California, with Los Angeles as its center, became the land of the "Foursquare Gospel," of Theosophy, of Spiritualism, and a multitude of other religious sects, which for the next generation spread out from Los Angeles in an ever-widening circle. By the mid-thirties the Long Beach District Superintendent, Walter C. Buckner, reported that the work on his district was being increasingly hindered by the presence of "traveling evangelists," "renegade radio preachers," and "queer religious periodicals." [14]

In 1928 Dr. Guild again entitled part of his report "Losing the City." In five years almost a half million people had moved into Los Angeles. The gain of the Southern California Conference was less than 2,000. An average of 11 per cent of non-resident and inactive members in the Conference, and 9 per cent on the district, were



Lewis T. Guild

"dumped into the garbage can." While the population gained 70 per cent, the Conference had gained only 18 per cent. The shift of population continued to close churches.[15] During the depression of the thirties the difficulties were heightened since transiency was multiplied many times again. Amid all these frustrations the Missionary and Church Extension Society carried its work forward; significantly the group was always aware of the problems. It was the first to see the need for the co-ordination of Methodist agencies, an important step which was finally accomplished in 1936.

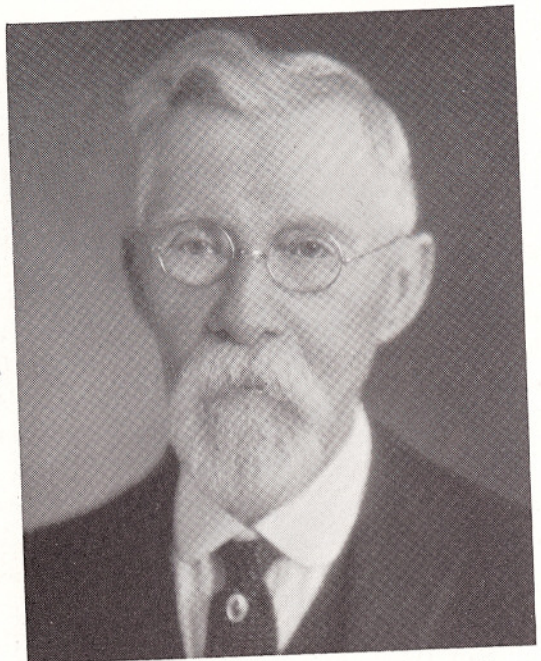
Dr. Guild, who was Executive Secretary of the Society, in 1928 reported that the weakness of Methodist work in Los Angeles was due to the fact that everything was administered under "five different Conferences, also from Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, and other General Headquarters." [16] With such decentralization of management it is small wonder that the Methodist Episcopal Church was fighting a losing battle in Los Angeles. Bishop James C. Baker, with the insight and wisdom that was to be a mark of his twenty years of administration, was quick to see the problem. In 1933, shortly after he had been assigned to the California Area, he called

a meeting of all ministers and boards in Los Angeles. Committees immediately went to work. In 1935 they reported to Annual Conference the grave need for a permanent council of all agencies to correlate the entire program of the Southern California Conference and to perfect plans whereby the churches could better relate themselves to the many social and missionary problems of the Los Angeles area and the rural areas.[17] The following year "The Federation of Methodist Agencies" was organized. For the first time in the history of the Conference there was a way to correlate its whole program and to present it effectively to the entire constituency. As unification drew near, the council was able to report that "the Federation is already giving to our institutions and agencies a sense of unity and a consciousness of their relationship to the total program of the Church." [18]

iii. *The Coast and Valleys*

While the Methodist Episcopal Church was growing in Los Angeles, it was likewise extending itself across the rest of southern California. During most of the life of the Conference the work was carried on from San Diego in the south to Merced four hundred miles to the north. The task was aggravated at times by the switching of several churches in the San Joaquin Valley between the Southern California and the California Conferences, creating a sense of instability in some of these congregations. At other times difficulties presented themselves in the form of distance. For many years a close fellowship was difficult because all of the churches in the north were in the immense Fresno District. In 1885, John B. Green, the Presiding Elder, reported that this district was "250 miles in length, and of infinite breadth," a thickly settled area that "seemed remote from most of the Conference." [19] Three years later he pleaded on the Conference floor for the bishop to take steps to make the entire San Joaquin Valley a third Conference because of the expanse of territory involved.[20] Another thing that intensified the task was the feeling among the ministers of a lack of close episcopal supervision. The Southern California Conference sent a memorial more than five times to the General Conference requesting an episcopal residence in Los Angeles. It was never granted until after unification.

Although San Francisco was made an episcopal residence in 1884, until 1912 bishops traveled regularly throughout the connection. Thereafter with the introduction of the area system the bishops came to preside over a more limited territory, making a much closer



John B. Green, charter member, Southern California Conference, for many years Treasurer of Conference funds

supervision possible. Much the same situation existed within the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Notwithstanding these problems of distance and lack of episcopal supervision the Conference grew rapidly and established important churches in the seaboard region and in the valleys. The boom of the 1880's extended in all directions from Los Angeles. New churches were begun along the coast northward from San Diego and east of Los Angeles to Beaumont. When the boom collapsed, the churches beyond Los Angeles felt the financial pinch the hardest. Two districts were discontinued and churches showed decreases in nearly every respect. During the decade 1890-1900, however, despite the continuing tight financial situation, church membership nearly doubled and fifteen new churches were organized. After the turn of the century the great agricultural potentialities of the Imperial Valley began to be exploited, and the Conference moved into that region with an aggressive evangelism.

The period of the first World War was for the Conference one of

successfully trying to hold the line. Then came the 1920's, a time of prosperity for most of the nation—except farmers. While Los Angeles, as well as San Diego and Long Beach, was enjoying a gigantic real estate boom, the agricultural areas found themselves in a depression. This was reflected quickly in the churches. Charles Lewis, the Fresno District Superintendent in 1925, reported many cases where members were leaving, through loss of all of their land. Those who remained had no money with which to support the church. Debts and benevolences remained unpaid; salaries were lowered. Courageously the churches carried on, and the ministers worked as best they could. One pastor was told by his people that they wanted him to return but could not promise him any definite salary. His reply was "I will come back and take pot luck with you." [21] By 1928 the situation was little better, and then the general depression descended on the nation.

The Southern California Conference as a whole showed a continual growth since the organization in 1876. Starting with a little more than 1,200 members, by 1939 she could count more than 90,000. Only during five years of the depression, 1930-1935, did a decrease take place. Throughout the history of the Conference many churches were started in communities but later had to be discontinued because of financial reasons or the simple factor of community stagnation. Others which were started have continued to grow and today are strong ones in the united Conference.

2. "Only as Strong as the Laity"

Unlike the Southern Church the Methodist Episcopal Church never admitted laymen to membership in the Annual Conference on an equal basis with ministers. They were collaterally members of Annual Conference through their parallel Lay Conference, but in actuality they were never members of it. In the 1930's in southern California laymen often met in joint session with the clerical body, but this still was not a full equality. Only in 1939 with unification did they obtain this status. It is interesting to note, however, that nearly every General Conference from 1892 onward received a memorial from the Southern California Conference requesting equal status for laymen in the Annual Conference. The Southern California Conference voted overwhelmingly for an Amendment in 1919 which would have allowed them this equality had it passed. The fact that Southern Methodist laymen were more integrally involved in the organizational structure meant that the Methodist Episcopal

Church, South, had a much better lay organization than did the Methodist Episcopal Church at unification with a somewhat broader knowledge of the total structure and outreach of the Church.[22]

By no means, though, did this indicate that the laymen of the Southern California Conference were inactive or unaware of the problems of the region. The Lay Electoral Conference, which before 1900 met once every four years to elect delegates to General Conference, was cognizant of local conditions. Benevolences and stewardship were constantly their concern, and social issues were faced, though concrete action was often lacking, as it had been with the ministers. The Layman's Association was organized in 1899, and thereafter the interest of laymen increased rapidly. Replacing the former Lay Electoral Conference, this new group met each year during the Annual Conference and for a considerably longer time than had the former Conference. The men thus had more of an opportunity to understand the total task of the Church.

It would be difficult to single out any one layman as having been the most outstanding. Many served in different capacities and did their jobs well. The culmination of the Los Angeles work in the City Missionary Society was largely the result of the interest and time of devoted men through those formative years. When the General Conference of 1908 united various local groups into Methodist Brotherhoods, the Southern California Conference began an extensive cultivation of men. The benevolence program of the total Church became an important item to the Brotherhoods. The consistently high attainments of the present Conference can in large part be traced to this interest and concern for others on the part of southern California laymen in years past. In 1928, for example, when the Conference was becoming concerned about its own work in Los Angeles and other Conference areas, the Los Angeles District led the total Methodist Episcopal Church in the nation in per capita giving to World Service.[23] In times of depression the men stood by their churches with much devotion. In the agricultural depression of the twenties one layman "living in what was intended for a hay shed, with an open door for a window, paid $200 for the erection of a church in his town, and waited longer for his house." [24]

3. The Laywomen at Work

The same kind of spirit characterized the women's work in the Conference. Unlike the Southern Church, which had combined its two women's groups years before unification, the Methodist Episcopal Church continued to have three separate ones: Woman's Home Missionary Society, Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and Ladies' Aid. The first of these undertook missions and projects within the United States. The second concerned itself with similar endeavors on the foreign fields. The third promoted the program of the local church.

All three groups in the local Conference were strong in numbers and activities. Several of the institutions within the Conference, which will be considered in the next chapter, were either founded by the Woman's Home Missionary Society or were under its sponsorship and direction. While the special attention of the local societies centered in the Conference organizations, their interests went far beyond their pale. With prayer and finances they encouraged projects sponsored by other Conferences in the nation. The foreign fields often found themselves linked to southern California's Methodist Episcopal women. Teachers in Bible schools, full-time missionaries, inspectresses in mission schools, orphans on scholarship—these were frequently fully supported by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Southern California Conference.[25] The advancement of many churches to positions of leadership in their communities owed much to the Ladies' Aid. These local women were proficient at many jobs from repairing furniture to calling on people who were ill. In 1928 the women of the Arizona District alone made over 10,000 calls on the sick and the shut-in and raised more than $20,000 for the local churches of the district.[26] A few of the women became licensed local preachers. The first to do so was Mrs. Bella B. Bodkin of Neighbors (Blythe Charge) in 1920. In 1904 Mrs. Bodkin, wife of the Rev. P. H. Bodkin of the Conference, had been the first woman delegate from the Southern California Conference to a General Conference. Although the women of the Methodist Episcopal Church were not united into one organization when unification came, they were certainly one in spirit and purpose.

4. Youth Programs and Conference Assemblies

i. *Evolution of the Youth Program*

As in the Southern Church, so in the Southern California Conference, the early efforts to reach the youth centered in the Sunday School program. Early records reveal a continuing emphasis on the quality of teachers needed to instruct children and youth. With the formal organization of the Epworth League by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1889 the total youth program took on added

importance. The Southern California Conference immediately began to encourage it in the local churches, and a Conference committee on Epworth League functioned effectively until unification. Many approaches were used in attempts to reach the youth. Probably the most novel were the Boys' Brigade and the Epworth Guards. These boys marched with rifles when they went to meetings or on projects. The declared purpose was not to literalize the sword of the spirit but rather "to draw the boys into the church building . . . and . . . to lead them through the drill and practice of soldiering to the Prince of Peace." [27] This method was apparently not too effective and was replaced by such things as public installations of officers in the church services and the holding of District Conventions and summer Institutes. The institute program evolved out of the Long Beach Assembly and quickly increased in popularity with its well-balanced activities of recreation and explorations into the Christian faith. The oldest Methodist camp and institute ground owned by the present Conference is at Arroyo Grande, California. This is Camp Arroyo Grande which was deeded to the Southern California Conference in 1897 by Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Beckett.[28] By 1920 a minimum of three institutes was being held every summer in the Conference, and special emphasis was beginning to be placed on specific training for youth leaders.

An important step was taken in 1923 when A. Ray Moore was appointed Conference Epworth League Field and Life Work Secretary. He served until 1925. In 1924 when the Conference Board of Education was thoroughly reorganized, the whole youth progam became correlated. Overlapping of various groups was thereafter gradually eliminated and well-balanced programs became more the rule than the exception. All agencies, including the Epworth League, Church Schools, Wesley Foundation, Pacific Palisades, University of Southern California, and Boy Scouts were represented on the Board of Education. They retained their autonomy as each worked with the others in the total pattern of Christian education.

Another important step was taken in 1929 with the appointment of Royal H. Reisner as the first full-time Conference Director of Epworth League and Young People's Work. He remained in this position for three years and laid a good foundation. James McGiffin assumed the leadership in 1932 and continued as director until 1945. Under "Jim," as he was affectionately known by the countless young people whom he touched, the youth program of the Southern California Conference expanded rapidly. He developed an efficient organization and trained leaders on the Conference and local church

level. Midwinter and summer institutes, conventions and training conferences, and personal youth evangelism became an integral part of the Southern California Conference program. The strength of the youth program in the united Conference today in no small measure is due to the devotion and guidance of Jim McGiffin.

Since its beginning under James C. Baker in 1913 at the University of Illinois, the Wesley Foundation Movement has been increasingly important in keeping the Church in the life of college youth. The Wesley Foundation in southern California was started in 1927 by Edward L. Blakeman at the University of California, Southern Branch (today the University of California at Los Angeles) and was known as the "Wesley Club." [29] The Wesley Foundation on this campus has been instrumental in deepening the life of the students and in establishing a Curriculum on Religion in the University. In 1936 Herman N. Beimfohr was appointed the Conference Director of Wesley Foundation. By this same time the influence of the Foundation Movement had extended from the University of California at Los Angeles to Los Angeles Junior College, San Diego State College, University of Arizona, Stanford, Fresno State College, and Arizona State College. Through this avenue the Church not only was keeping in touch with college youth but also was encouraging trained leadership, interpreting religion in terms of modern thought, and fostering a vital Christian experience.[30] The Southern California Conference could be proud that her resident bishop had been the founder of this important movement.

ii. *Long Beach Ministerial Resort Association*

Many ministers felt that the Conference should own a campground for summer assemblies and family vacations within a Christian atmosphere. Accordingly, in 1883 the Methodist Resort Association was formed. That same year the Long Beach Land and Water Company most generously gave the group one entire block of land, lying between Third and Fourth Streets and between Locust and American Avenues. Here a chapel and pavilion were constructed. On completion in 1886, the chapel became the first home of the Long Beach First Methodist Church, which had been organized in 1884 and had been meeting in various homes and buildings.

The 1884 Annual Conference gave the Association official recognition. Then in 1886 the group, under the new name of the Long Beach Ministerial Resort Association, became a part of the total educational program of the Conference.[31] With this prominence the scope of the organization broadened considerably. Workshops

for instructing teachers and a Bible Training School became annual events. Likewise youth institutes originated here on an experimental basis and proved their value to the church. The grounds of the Association periodically became the meeting place for Chautauquas. There is little doubt that the Long Beach Ministerial Resort Association served a vital function in the early years of the Conference by providing fellowship and leadership training.

iii. *Huntington Beach*

By 1906 the city of Long Beach had outgrown the possibility of continuing as the seat of a camp meeting. The Conference thus began to look for a much less populated area. They found it at Huntington Beach. A land company and some private citizens gave the Conference a site valued at $60,000 as well as an additional $5,000 for a building.[32] Subsequently they improved the streets and supplied more money for buildings. The assembly grounds became known as "Arbamar," "the grove by the sea." The former tradition of camp meetings and institutes was strengthened by the presence of outstanding speakers such as Francis J. McConnell, Edwin Holt Hughes, and evangelist Dr. Henry Ostrom. "Arbamar" became very popular, and many non-Methodist groups began to use it. The Southern and Northern Methodist youth often united for joint assemblies and short period institutes.

iv. *Pacific Palisades*

Within eight years of moving to Huntington Beach there was a growing feeling that the grounds would eventually prove to be too small for the expanding program. In 1914 a committee was appointed to make a search for a more adequate site. They were very deliberate in their task. By 1920 they reported that a great assembly area modeled after that at Ocean Grove, New Jersey, was needed. In May of the following year 1,100 acres in the Santa Monica area were purchased for $660 an acre. The Pacific Palisades Association was organized. The assets realized from the sale of the Huntington Beach grounds were taken over by the new group. Certain space was set aside for institutional purposes and the remainder was subdivided and sold. In the middle of 1924 a foreshadowing of disaster appeared. A decline in the demand for property left much of it unsold, yet costs and carrying charges continued. Hopes that the sales would pay for the property set aside for institutional purposes thus were smothered. To make matters worse the Association had to purchase additional surrounding property to safeguard

residences from undesirable business. The indebtedness soared to over three and one-half million dollars. With the coming of the depression in 1929 matters grew more grave, and there was the constant danger that "Pacific Palisades may be eaten up by carrying charges." [33] Because adverse publicity created by irate bondholders made selling of property all the more difficult, it became impossible to retire the debt. In 1934 foreclosure to the bondholders was recorded, and this venture came to an end by official action of the Annual Conference the following year.

5. University of Southern California

Drawing inspiration from their founder John Wesley, Methodist ministers have nearly always been concerned that a Christian higher education be available to their people. In this long tradition California Methodists were no exception. In 1851 the California Conference chartered "California Wesleyan College," later changed to "The University of the Pacific" and eventually to "The College of the Pacific." In 1870 the Conference took over the ten-year-old "Napa Collegiate Institute" which had been struggling under private auspices." [34]

Methodists in southern California also manifested this unquenchable thirst for higher education. As early as 1871 two laymen, Robert Maclay Widney and Abel Stearns, were ready to erect a building and begin an endowment for a university, but the death of Mr. Stearns ended the endeavor. Four years later John Tansey, then Presiding Elder of the Los Angeles District of the California Conference, bought some land with the intention of starting a university. Upon his death in the following June this plan was abandoned.[35] Meanwhile, G. S. Hickey, pastor of the Fort Street (First) Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, became interested in such an institution. Enlisting the help of several ministers and laymen, Mr. Hickey opened a school in December, 1875, in the vacated brick church adjacent to the new church building. The Rev. J. D. Hammond, a tourist in the area and graduate of Genesee College (now Syracuse University), was enlisted as temporary teacher until the spring when O. S. Frambes took over the leadership.[36] When the Southern California Conference met for the first time in September, 1876, the members declared themselves officially in favor of legally establishing a school of high grade in Los Angeles to be known as "The Los Angeles Academy." This was to be a continuation of the school being operated by O. S. Frambes.[37] For the next three years

the Conference zealously promoted the Academy while a committee sought to obtain lands that might become the basis of an endowment fund for an institution of higher learning. Robert Maclay Widney and the Rev. A. M. Hough were active workers on the project. In July, 1879, three years of searching came to an end. After receiving and appraising various offers of land, Mr. Hough secured an offer in July from Southwest Los Angeles (then known as West Los Angeles). This proposal then was accepted by the trustees of the Conference. Messrs. O. W. Childs, John G. Downey, and Isaias W. Hellman, Protestant, Catholic, and Jew, gave three hundred and eight lots in West Los Angeles for the establishment of a university.[38]

This institution was to be known as the "University of Southern California" and was "to be under the control and management of the Methodist Episcopal Conference of Southern California, or such other Conference as it may be changed into." Further, "a majority of said Trustees shall be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church." [39] The University was to be controlled by a Board of Directors elected annually by the Southern California Conference in whatever manner the Conference might choose to adopt.[40] The endowment was placed under the control and management of a separate Board of Trustees.[41] Until 1893 each catalogue issued by the University made it absolutely clear that the University was "firmly secured to the Methodist Episcopal Church." By action of the Trustees of the Los Angeles Academy the school founded in 1875 by Mr. Hickey was closed in June, 1880, and all assets were transferred to the University.[42]

The University of Southern California opened with fifty-three students on October 6, 1880. Marion McKinley Bovard, beloved minister of the Southern California Conference, assumed office as the first President. Streets surrounding the University were named after the donors of the property as well as bishops and other prominent figures of the Methodist Episcopal Church. These street names were carried for many years.[43] The following spring the University Methodist Church was organized to minister especially to the University faculty and students.

Progress was slow as the University tried to assert itself. Much credit for its continuance must always be given to President Bovard and his brother, Freeman D. Bovard. Both worked sacrificially, often without any remuneration except expenses, asking only for the high privilege of educating men and women. Other influential Methodists slowly began to realize the potentialities of the University to the life of southern California. In June, 1885, Mrs. Sarah Tansey gave

extensive land to endow a Chair of Christian Ethics at the University.[44] In September of that year an announcement was made at Annual Conference which was to have far-reaching effects on the life of southern California Methodism.

The *California Christian Advocate* in 1873 had commented that "no church can grow and prosper and accomplish its mission in saving the people, whose ministry is uneducated." [45] Many Californians had long realized that this was true and hoped that somehow a seminary might be established. One of these was a state legislator, Senator Charles Maclay. He had come to California in the early days of its settlement as a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He labored for a time among the pioneers and then went into business. After helping to establish the University of the Pacific, he came to southern California in 1875 and purchased extensive properties. In September, 1885, the Annual Conference heard that this layman had made a magnificent gift of $150,000 to endow a college of theology to be known as the Maclay College of Theology.[46] In addition to this endowment Maclay presented a beautiful campus site of ten acres in San Fernando and agreed to erect a suitable building. Generously he donated additional land as a reserve fund to meet any deficits or unusual necessities in the running expenses. In August, 1887, R. W. C. Farnsworth was elected the first Dean, and on October 5th that year the first term at Maclay began. Classes were held in whatever space was available, including the Dean's study and the San Fernando Methodist Church, since the main building and boarding hall were still under construction.

The new building at Maclay was formally dedicated in September, 1888. Senator Maclay made the presentation:

> Bishop Bowman, I now present to the Methodist Episcopal Church this building, free from debt, hoping that I may live long enough to see it filled with earnest students who shall go out into the world to preach Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.[47]

Robert S. Maclay, brother of Senator Maclay, was installed as Dean, succeeding Mr. Farnsworth, who had died. Robert Maclay, born in Pennsylvania in 1824, graduated from Dickinson College in 1845. Ordained in 1846, the following year he went in the first group of Methodist missionaries ever to go to China. Here in Foochow he served from 1852 to 1872 and became practically the founder of the Methodist missions in China. He did extensive work in New Testament translation into local dialect. From 1872 until 1888 he was in charge of the new Methodist mission which just opened in Japan.