

CHAPTER V

Ministry to Others

I. "AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?"

In 1913 Francis M. Larkin, Superintendent of the Los Angeles District, Methodist Episcopal Church, closed his report with these words from Edwin Markham:

There is a destiny that makes us brothers:  
None goes his way alone:  
All that we send into the lives of others  
Comes back into our own.<sup>1</sup>

This has been indeed true of the Methodists of the Southern California-Arizona area. William Booth gave to the world as the motto of his life one word—"others." The deep concern that the Southern California Conference had for the people of other races and nationalities, as well as for its own kind, will always remain one of its most significant achievements.

i. *Chinese*

The Chinese had first been brought to America in large numbers to help build the transcontinental railroad. Through the efforts of the Rev. Otis Gibson of the California Conference, Christian service came to these people. He was instrumental in establishing a school for them. In 1870 he saw the dedication of a Chinese Church in San Francisco.<sup>2</sup> Tremendous racial prejudice prevented any significant advance for some years beyond this small beginning. In 1887 evangelism among the Chinese began in southern California when the members of the Los Angeles First Church organized a Chinese mission, which for the most part served as a Sunday School. The progress was slow but rewarding. Six years later seventy-five Chinese were enrolled with an average attendance of forty-five. A fine distinction came to First Church at this time. It licensed the first Chinese local preacher in the United States, Chan Kin Lung, who later became the pastor of the local Chinese Methodist Church.<sup>3</sup> As the Chinese population continued to grow, the Southern California Conference

attempted several times to get aid from the General Board, which, however, was more disposed to help other groups. Pasadena and San Diego Methodists sponsored Chinese missions as had Los Angeles, and others were opened later in Mexicali and Phoenix. In 1904 the Pacific Chinese Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized to try to give the units more stability. Thorough and effective work was continually blocked by racial prejudice. Moreover, the Old World ties of the overwhelming majority of Chinese made evangelism most difficult.

#### ii. *Japanese*

Christian activity among California Japanese also started in San Francisco. In 1877 three young Japanese presented themselves for membership at the Howard Street Church. The following year a Gospel Society was organized, and by 1886 the Japanese work in California and Hawaii had become a district of the California Conference.<sup>4</sup> Evangelism in southern California was very slow. Racial prejudice made the task difficult. Buddhism also attracted large numbers of the Japanese people. In 1900 the Japanese program on the Pacific Coast was organized into a Mission Conference. By 1910 there were Japanese missions at Oxnard and Santa Clara, where Japanese were employed in agricultural labor. A residence for working girls in Los Angeles, the Jane Couch Memorial Home, was operated by the Mission Conference with the help of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Southern California Conference. By 1937 there were eleven Japanese charges within the bounds of the Southern California Conference, all small. The same forces which early in the century had made work difficult were still present. In Los Angeles County, where 35,000 Japanese lived, there were only three Methodist churches.<sup>5</sup>

#### iii. *Korean*

Christian activity among Koreans was also scattered, but the Church was alert to whatever opportunity presented itself. In 1909 the only Methodist Episcopal Mission for Koreans in the entire United States was in Los Angeles.<sup>6</sup> The Los Angeles Missionary Society gave most of the support for it. Mr. and Mrs. Walter H. Fisher of First Methodist Church also worked part-time among these Koreans. This devoted lay couple was deeply interested in missions. Mrs. Fisher was at one time President of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. Mr. Fisher was one of the Trustees of

the first Japanese Methodist Church formed in Los Angeles. They also participated in the Chinese Mission at First Church. Koreans were never to be found in southern California in extensive numbers, but by 1939 a gradual increase was noticeable. At unification the Methodists had an organized society of one hundred and twenty-five members but no buildings.<sup>7</sup>

#### iv. *Italian and Portuguese*

The Latin American Mission encompassed the work among these two nationalities. The Portuguese program was completely in the northern part of the state. The Italian activity which was in southern California centered in Los Angeles. It was first organized in Los Angeles in 1919<sup>8</sup> but never increased notably. At unification only two small Italian societies were meeting.

#### v. *Filipino*

Christianization among the Filipinos began in conjunction with the Pasadena Methodist Church in 1916.<sup>9</sup> For more than ten years the group was housed by the Goodwill Industries. From it came nearly every leader among Filipinos on the coast.<sup>10</sup> Evangelism was extremely arduous because most of them were single men who migrated frequently. At unification when there was no property of any description in southern California for Filipino Christian work, the entire endeavor was placed with Chinese and Korean activity in the California Oriental Mission.

#### vi. *Hawaiian*

Hawaiian Methodism started in 1854 when W. S. Turner, a Methodist minister who had gone to Honolulu for his health, preached in the Fort Street Congregational Church. Some Methodists in the congregation, discovering that he was a minister of their denomination, urged him to start a society. This he did, but the mission thus begun had to be abandoned in 1861 for lack of funds.<sup>11</sup> In 1880 the task was resumed when Japanese and Chinese groups on the mainland showed signs of promise. The growth was steady. In 1906, when the first session of the Hawaiian Mission Conference was held, there were 19 churches with 419 members.<sup>12</sup> The Mission included English, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino nationalities. A significant project has been the Susannah Wesley Home in Honolulu, which ministers to orphans and women. Starting originally for Japanese, it soon embraced all other races. The pure Hawaiian was

never reached extensively, and the work centered, as it does today, mainly around the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. Christians have always been a minority in the islands, but the men and women who have labored there have given great devotion.

The rise of strong indigenous leadership in recent years has been of much help. When California was divided into two areas in 1948, the islands came under the supervision of the bishop of the Los Angeles area. Until then it had been related to the California Conference. Dr. W. H. Fry served as superintendent from 1915 to 1947 and was succeeded by Leonard Oechsli. In 1954 the Rev. Harry Komuro was appointed to this position, which he still holds. Born in 1909 in Los Angeles, educated in the United States and Japan, he served as pastor of two Methodist churches in Honolulu before becoming superintendent.

The period since 1948 in the islands has been one marked especially by tremendous investment in church extension and relocation and of growth in self-support and indigenous ministers. A Wesley Foundation program begun under Dr. Oechsli in 1950 has rapidly expanded under Dr. Komuro's guidance. Physical growth is marked by a beautiful new structure completed in 1958.

With the achievement of statehood Hawaii has taken on even greater significance. Methodism intends to continue to expand and deepen its ministry there. The 1959 Southern California-Arizona Conference directed a memorial to General Conference requesting enabling legislation for Hawaii to become a district of the Annual Conference if conditions warrant. The challenge of the Hawaiian Mission was probably no better expressed than by Dr. Fry in an earlier decade:

Hawaii affords a center from which Christianity and democracy are carried to the Orient. Whatever is planted here soon spreads to the Orient and the islands of this vast Pacific area. This is the nerve-center of the Pacific, a place of supreme advantage to Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

#### vii. Scandinavians

Norwegian-Danish work, which was always joined on the West Coast, began there at Oakland in 1878. It spread slowly, remaining as a distinct nationality group until unification. The churches then dissolved and united with the regular Annual Conference. A class of six members was organized in Los Angeles in 1896 as the Bethany Methodist Church. A sanctuary was built the following year, and later Bethany Methodist Home for women was constructed on a

corner of the church lot. A program started in San Pedro soon became too spasmodic to continue. The small chapel built there was then sold to the Norwegian Government as a Seaman's Mission.<sup>14</sup>

Spreading slowly from the eastern United States, Swedish Methodism began in California at San Francisco in 1873. In 1887 the first Swedish church in southern California was organized in Los Angeles. This group, like so many others in Christian history, grew out of a small band of Christian men and women who had gathered together for Bible reading and prayer.<sup>15</sup> Another body started meeting in Pasadena in 1906. Two years later the entire Swedish activity in the West was placed within a Mission Conference. The Conference was never large, however, and in 1928 it dissolved and united with the English-speaking groups. Four charges with six hundred and seventy-four members came into the Southern California Conference as a result.<sup>16</sup>

#### viii. Germans

Christian endeavor among the Germans on the Pacific Coast was started by August Kellner in San Francisco in 1855. The following year a mission was opened in Stockton, and by 1865 there were four German pastors in California.<sup>17</sup> Although evangelism in southern California began about 1875, for nearly ten years it suffered from lack of men and funds. When the California German Conference was organized in 1891, nevertheless, there were six German churches in southern California with a total membership of two hundred and fifty. Progress was extremely slow. When the Conference dissolved in 1927 and merged with the English-speaking Conferences, only ten churches with a little less than seven hundred members came into the Southern California Conference.<sup>18</sup>

During World War I the tremendous pressure placed upon the Germans made their task very hard, but most of them remained loyal not only to their churches but also to the United States. Contact between the German Conference and the Southern California Conference always was slight until just before the merger because of the language barrier. The war, which brought the German language into disfavor and restricted immigration, was a contributing factor to the merger. After the joining of forces a few years were to pass before a complete feeling of unity was achieved. This was also normally true of the other national groups that fused with the Southern California Conference during the years.

ix. *Negroes*

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

x. *Indians*

Christian activity among the Indians in southern California and Arizona met with only partial success. As early as 1877 a missionary to the Indians was appointed from the Southern California Conference, but he accomplished little. The bitterness of years of frontier warfare was not conducive to much Christianization. Moreover, the Indians have always been deeply religious in their own way and set customs. The Sherman Institute in Riverside, a state institution founded in 1901 to give education and industrial training to Indian children, met with favor among nearly all Christians. The only significant contribution of the Conference was the Yuma Methodist Indian Mission, which was started in 1903. Many missionaries have served there and have emphasized the ministry of healing as well as that of the Book.

xi. *Latin Americans*

Christian outreach of the Methodist Episcopal Church in southern California to the various groups discussed above was consistently attempted. For the most part the success would probably have to be characterized as minimal. The greater part of the efforts among these people centered in San Francisco. Even since unification, with the exception of Negro and Japanese work, the picture has not changed too much in this regard. Except for the Latin Americans, none of these ethnic groups was attracted to the Methodist Episcopal Church,

South, probably because of the historical racial situation which has given rise to the denomination. It was upon the Spanish-speaking peoples that the Southern California Conference made its greatest impact, first because of the extensive number of those people in the southern region, and second because the Conference spared no efforts to reach that population.

The Annual Conference in 1879 appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of starting a Spanish mission. The Rev. J. P. Diaz had begun ministering in Los Angeles under the direction of the First Methodist Street Church and that eighty people had united with the Episcopal Church.<sup>19</sup> The next year a ministry was started near Santa Barbara, and slowly the Spanish-speaking people, particularly along the coast, began to respond. The work often was bitterly assailed by Roman Catholic priests, but this only intensified the desire of the native pastors to further the endeavor. By 1900 all three districts from San Diego to Santa Barbara and as far eastward as Riverside and Redlands. All of this early activity, nonetheless, was very sparsely organized and lacked cohesion and dynamic leadership.

In 1911 Vernon M. McCombs was secured to take charge of the Spanish work in Los Angeles. He proved to be the answer to the need of direction. The growth and increasing importance of the Latin American missions in southern California must be credited to the love of Dr. McCombs for these people and his untiring devotion to their needs. Having served for five years as a missionary superintendent in South America, Vernon McCombs came to the new responsibility not only with extensive experience but also with an understanding of the people and many of their problems. The Spanish American Institute and the Plaza Community Center were the dreams of his that became realities to minister to the thousands of Spanish young people and adults. Within a year after the district was created in the Conference for it. Societies in Pasadena, Los Angeles, and on the Riverside Circuit were strengthened. As rapidly as possible for the next few years other places were touched: Anaheim in 1914, Santa Ana in 1912, Santa Paula in 1913, Long Beach in 1915, Fernando in 1916, Watts in 1917. The efforts were not only easy, and churches were established often, as happened at Santa Paula, on the Imperial Border after "years of heart-breaking persecution."<sup>20</sup> The Imperial Circuit near the Mexican border, site of "the worst cesspool of immorality in the new world," was begun in 1918.<sup>21</sup> When the



Vernon M. McCombs

and Portuguese District was discontinued in 1918, the success of the program in six years under Vernon McCombs' guidance had been phenomenal. The line extended from two flimsy shanties in Pasadena and Los Angeles with only one pastor until in 1918 it reached from Calexico on the Mexican border, through many growing centers near Los Angeles, to Santa Paula, seventy miles north of Los Angeles.<sup>22</sup> World War I had brought thousands of Mexican immigrants, and the Conference could be grateful for the caliber of first line personnel present to meet this challenge.

In 1920 the Latin American Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. In northern California work moved more slowly and centered in Sacramento. In southern California it continued to flourish at a faster tempo. Although entrenched racial prejudice and misunderstanding made the task difficult nearly everywhere, Vernon McCombs and the Conference would not give up. He was convinced of the need for and the ultimate success of the endeavor, and he believed that the people would respond to understanding and kindness. The motto of the Latin American Mission

became "Helping folks to help themselves."<sup>23</sup> At unification Dr. McCombs reported 40 churches with 3,240 members.<sup>24</sup>

Today, since the Southern California-Arizona Conference has integrated with the Latin American Provisional Conference,\* southern California Methodists can look back with gratitude to the faith and service of Vernon McCombs. He inspired the group leadership which came from the Latin American Mission and its successor, the Latin American Provisional Conference, to make an impact upon the Mexican people.

## 2. INSTITUTIONS MINISTERING TO THE WORLD

Among the several institutions started during the existence of the Southern California Conference, there were four which ministered to the world, serving the people of many nationalities with special attention to the youth. These four—Frances DePauw Home, Spanish American Institute, Plaza Community Center, Church of All Nations—remain today, strengthened constantly by financial resources and by adaptation to changing needs. They are living symbols of the practical application of the home missionary spirit.

### i. *The Frances DePauw Home*

The early Latin American work in Los Angeles in 1890 sponsored by the Fort Street Church had to be abandoned two years later. Then in 1898 the activity was reopened by Mrs. A. M. Whitson, a former teacher in South America, and was sponsored by the old Grace Methodist Church. Classes and clubs were organized for the Mexican girls and women. The following year the ministry was enlarged when the Woman's Home Missionary Society rented another house and established a sewing school and preaching service. A year later Mrs. Frances DePauw donated a large house on Hewitt Street for the purpose of beginning a home and school for Mexican girls. The generous gift was accepted and became the first Conference project of the Woman's Home Missionary Society. In 1946, when the public schools met the educational needs of the Spanish-speaking students, the schoolwork was discontinued.<sup>25</sup> The new institution was an instantaneous success, and it became necessary soon to expand. The new site, now at 4952 Sunset Boulevard near the heart of Hollywood, became the permanent location of the school and home in 1902. As the enrollment increased, the school was enlarged

\* See Chapter IX.

and more classes added. Meantime each girl gained practical experience in homemaking through daily work assignments.

Today Frances DePauw Home serves primarily Mexican girls, but the home is open to others. Some, but not all, come from broken homes. Most come for education in the American public schools, and the students who live at DePauw have won many honors in their classes. Since the inception of the home, however, its primary purpose has never changed: "to give every type of training that a girl should receive in order to develop character, skill, personality, and fitness for home and community life."<sup>26</sup>

### ii. *Spanish American Institute*

The fact that the home for girls was meeting a need prompted the Annual Conference to establish a similar home for boys. Accordingly, the "Industrial Training School for Boys" was incorporated in 1909 with the express purpose of doing for boys what Frances DePauw did for the girls.<sup>27</sup> It soon became evident, however, that more than incorporation was needed; real guidance was lacking. For "while the great hope of the enterprise was alive in the heart of a faithful few, the blueprint for action was waiting for someone who, with experience and faith, would lead out and so stir the heart of the whole church."<sup>28</sup> Vernon McCombs was that person. Soon after his arrival to take charge of the Methodist work among the Spanish-speaking population he began to lay concrete plans for the school authorized by the Annual Conference.

Obtaining a suitable location was no easy matter. Dr. Charles Lewis, pastor of the Gardena Methodist Church, approached Vernon McCombs: "I believe our folks would welcome the School. Let's go to the altar of my church and pray!"<sup>29</sup> The people of Gardena did respond, offering time and funds to help start the project. In October of 1913 the Spanish American Industrial Training School for Boys opened in that suburb at 15840 Figueroa, where it is still located. The name later was shortened to Spanish American Institute. The aim of the school was to "give education, industrial, and spiritual training to Mexican boys and young men."<sup>30</sup> Established on a ten acre campus, it provided agricultural training, instruction in a multitude of crafts from ironwork to commercial arts, and a standard secondary education. Today, as in Frances DePauw Home, the high school curriculum is no longer maintained, and the boys attend the public schools. Slowly the grounds were enlarged to thirty acres, and buildings were added, many of which were paid for by various churches in the Conference.

The school was originally set up to meet the needs of Latin American boys. As time passed and it appeared that other peoples should be served also, the Institute in 1942 opened its facilities to all races. Like Frances DePauw Home, Spanish American Institute has become a home for many without homes and for others a home away from home. Some have come from comfortable surroundings, others from poorer and depressed areas. Many of the boys have made excellent records in the public schools. Greater still, the overwhelming majority have gone out to take up their places as Christian citizens in the world, fully equipped with an education and a skill. Some have become fine ministers. The germ of this achievement lies in the Bible Training Class begun at the institution soon after its opening.<sup>31</sup> The initial guidance of John Howe, the first superintendent, helped greatly to make another dream of Vernon McCombs become a reality. Since that time the Institute has continued to expand that vision and to uphold the original ideals of the school.

Following the superintendencies of Dr. A. Ray Moore and Dr. Alexander Stephens, in 1937 Dr. and Mrs. Richard Silverthorn began their ministry at the institution. Beloved by all because of their spirit of love and personal devotion to the boys, "Mom and Dad" Silverthorn guided its direction and outreach until 1959. That year the Rev. Richard L. Brooks was appointed the new director.

### iii. *Plaza Community Center*

Vernon McCombs longed to help the Mexican adults as well as the youth. He wanted to begin a social service center where many of their needs could be met. The Plaza Community Church and Center was another result of his hard work.

This project was organized by the Southern California Conference in 1915 at 125 Marchessault Street, later known as East Sunset Boulevard, in the heart of the Latin American population of Los Angeles. From the very beginning the services were varied. An employment agency was maintained to help men and women find jobs. A craft shop and a music department helped to encourage more creative use of leisure time. A medical clinic, staffed by volunteer nurses and doctors, ministered to the physical needs, while a welfare department helped in special cases, giving food and making calls in homes and hospitals. Girls and boys found health clubs available. Sewing clubs were also started for girls, and organized sports groups were begun for boys. In 1918 the project was given a beneficent boost when the General Board of Home Missions and Church Extension,

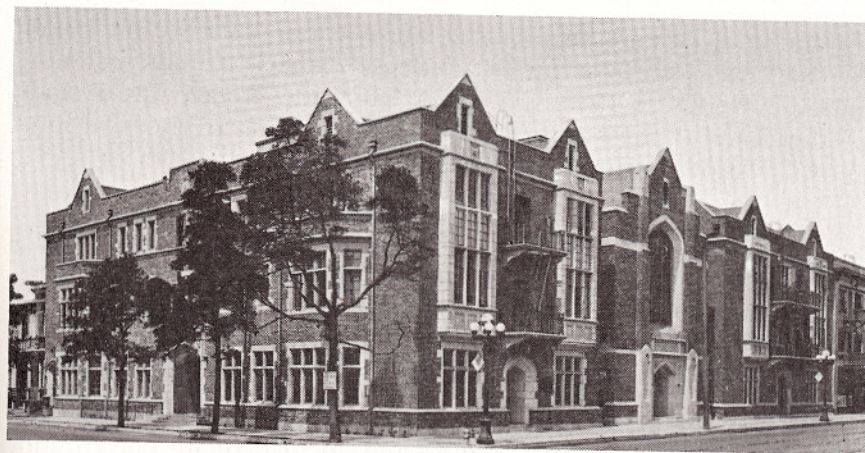
sensing the potentialities of this ministry, gave \$25,000 to expand the Plaza program.

Since its origin Plaza has ministered to "thousands bruised in bodies and soul, and has sent them forth physically strong and filled with a spirit of thankfulness, hope, and courage."<sup>32</sup> Under the guidance of men such as Charles M. Schermerhorn, the present superintendent, the services of the Center have expanded to meet the growing needs and a changing city with minority groups and resulting problems. A Children's Home to provide Christian training for Mexican orphans, and also a Christian Training School for other youths, were added. More extensive clubs and crafts and a broadened clinic and welfare program have enlarged the total ministry.

In 1954 the East Los Angeles Plaza Center was established in a rented building with work limited to the Clinic. During the Conference year 1958-1959, in cooperation with the Welfare Planning Council, additional services were given. To meet expanding needs Plaza Center secured property on Princeton and Indiana Streets, where new facilities have been set up. The new clinic and service facilities were dedicated in January, 1960. While the administrative office is still on East Sunset, the whole program of Plaza is now being carried out in East Los Angeles.

#### iv. *Church of All Nations*

By 1917 parts of Los Angeles which had once been choice residential areas had turned into streets and houses teeming with thousands of foreign-born people. Moving in with industry, they had brought a crucial problem in terms of morals and health. Vast numbers of English-speaking churches and schools had moved to new locations, following the Caucasian migration. In this shifting scene the Southern California Conference had one poor church left in the area, the Newman Methodist Church. Highly concerned for this needy area, E. P. Ryland, District Superintendent, recommended the appointment of twenty-six-year-old G. Bromley Oxnam to the church in 1917. Young Mr. Oxnam responded to the challenge and endeavored from the start to adapt his ministry to the needs of the people. This, of course, meant a decided change from the former program, for it would have to include in its ministry people of every race, color, and creed. Working with the Los Angeles Missionary and Church Extension Society, Oxnam inspired others with this new type of ministry. Accordingly, in 1921 three groups joined forces to form the Church of All Nations—Newman Methodist Church,



Church of All Nations

Deaconess Friendly House, and Fifth Street Mission.<sup>33</sup> Its headquarters were two old apartment houses on Sixth and Gladys Streets and a very inadequate playground on an adjoining lot. For five years the work was mainly an experiment. Then when the project proved that it was the answer to a real need, a building fund drive was launched in conjunction with Plaza Church. Sufficient funds were secured, and a community house and clinic were opened in the fall of 1926. The following June a chapel, "The Church of All Nations," was dedicated. The enlarged program became known as the All Nations Foundation.

The accomplishments of the Foundation have more than justified the early faith and work of Bromley Oxnam. The All Nations report to the Annual Conference in 1925 presented this picture of the center of Los Angeles, one that is little changed today:

In the center of the city . . . a miniature world with inherent problems . . . thousands of people of varied nationalities have their homes in conditions which would give inexhaustible materials to a Dickens, leaving a residue sufficient for Victor Hugo . . . Conditions are such as to develop any deadly thing.<sup>34</sup>

That same year the Rotary Club of Los Angeles, after an extensive investigation, found that the area around the Church of All Nations had the highest juvenile delinquency rate per thousand population of any area in the United States. The place was populated with about 50,000 persons in four square miles, representing nearly forty-

five national backgrounds. Seeing the need, this service club took All Nations as a major project and put extensive funds and time into the work. In 1930, five years later, the Rotary Club made another careful investigation. Reporting on this territory around the All Nations Foundation, the group announced:

Within a brief period of five years, with no new churches entering the area, the schools carrying on the same program, no new activities on the part of any other social welfare agency, and the police arresting for the same type of crime—the only new factor being the establishment of the All Nations Foundation—there has been a sixty-five per cent decrease in delinquency among juveniles.<sup>35</sup>

The services of the Foundation have grown steadily since the early days of two apartment houses and an inadequate playground. A suggestion of the program may be seen in the report at Annual Conference in 1933:

The All Nations Clinic, with seventy-two physicians, dentists and optometrists voluntarily giving of their time, made available thirty thousand services to individuals. The All Nations Boys Club, with its 1,040 members, is the center for the life of the boys in the area it serves. The Community House, caring for women and girls above nine years of age, is the one bright spot in many a girl's life in the community. The Child Welfare Clinic supported by an unknown donor is being widely quoted by leaders in this field. The All Nations Children's Department, carried on by the Woman's Home Missionary Society, renders fine day-by-day service.<sup>36</sup>

In 1935 Hollenbeck Center on Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles was given to All Nations. Here, for boys and girls, young men and women, from ages six to twenty-five, were made available a gymnasium, club rooms, hand crafts, reading classes, and playgrounds. An interracial and intercultural camp at Big Pines provides the freedom of the mountains and the scent of pure air to children and youth who have known only the combustion of the crowded city.

In 1934 the All Nations Foundation received national attention and commendation at the National Conference of Social Work in Kansas City for "its unique service to individuals and to the community at large."<sup>37</sup> In 1956 the Foundation again was cited, this time by the National Council of Churches, for its long history of achievements and vision:

It renders significant service for Christ among neighbors of many races, ages, and creeds. Established . . . medical and dental clinics, a

dental teaching center, a nursery school, camping for indigent children, neighborhood houses and a boys club which have effectively decreased the incidence of juvenile delinquency, a community council, and other health and welfare services . . . has demonstrated effective leadership in religion, education, health, welfare, and community improvement . . . imbued with love of God and neighbor, this church has been guided by high ideals, reflected upon them prayerfully, anticipated their incarnation hopefully, labored for their benefits generously.<sup>38</sup>

In 1958 Hollenbeck Center moved three blocks away into the East-side Jewish Community Center, which was vacated because of the exodus of the Jewish population. Activities expanded rapidly, and the Foundation is now carrying out an enlarged ministry to the Mexican-American residents.

The Foundation's leadership has been of high caliber. Following Oxnam in 1927 R. A. McKibben became director of the program. John L. Mixon served from 1952 to 1959 when he left to become a professor at the Southern California School of Theology. He was succeeded by Harlan R. Waite. Today indeed All Nations still stands amid the changing city, meeting new faces and new problems with the same determination and faith that has been characteristic of its forty-year history.

#### *v. Neighborhood House*

Another endeavor, considerably smaller, but just as important in its own way, is Neighborhood House. Situated in Calexico on the Mexican border, it was started in 1937. Only after unification did the undertaking begin to grow. Like the Spanish American Institute and Plaza, Neighborhood House was an outgrowth of the concern of Vernon McCombs for the Mexican people. The project actually started as part of the parish ministry conducted by the Mexican Methodist Church in Calexico and Mexicali. In 1937 when the Woman's Home Missionary Society sent a deaconess, Miss Ruth Ferguson, to be a parish worker, it made possible a wider community service.<sup>39</sup> Subsequently the work grew rapidly and new activities were added to meet the needs of the community. In 1949 with the dedication of a new building, the ministry was greatly enlarged. Today Neighborhood House not only is helping to foster interracial understanding but also is ministering to the recreational, health, and spiritual needs of the Mexican people on the border.

## 3. CONFERENCE HOMES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Christian outreach of the Southern California Conference also included homes for orphans, working adults, and retired people. While this has not been as spectacular and far-reaching as the undertakings just discussed, it has been a continuing testimony to the wide expanse of the ministry of the Conference and its successor Conference.

i. *David and Margaret Home for Children*

The pioneer efforts of California Methodism with children was the Fred Finch Orphanage established in San Francisco in 1892. The first such project in southern California was the David and Margaret Home. In August, 1909, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kuns of Lordsburg, an earlier name for the present municipality of La Verne, offered the Woman's Home Missionary Society an unfurnished hotel. This was the La Verne, a three-story building of sixty rooms on seventeen and one-half acres of land. The gift was in memory of their son David and of Mr. Kuns' parents, David and Margaret Kuns. The Society accepted the generous donation and set about to turn the hotel into a home for orphans.<sup>40</sup> The following year it opened with six children and soon increased to ninety. The number of children waiting to enter became so large that more space was needed. Mr. Kuns gave additional land, and a successful building campaign enabled the construction of the present building in 1925. In this home, at 1350 Third Street, La Verne, orphans and half-orphans have been cared for and trained in an atmosphere of Christian love. Formerly only small children between the ages of two and twelve were admitted. Today, in keeping with the best social practices, children under school age are not admitted since they need a warm family life. In turn, the group work relationship has been broadened to include teen-agers.<sup>41</sup>

ii. *Esther Hall*

The Methodist women of San Diego in 1913 started a movement in the Woman's Home Missionary Society to begin work with immigrant women and girls. Because of the coming of the war, the expected influx did not occur, and the women decided to change the nature of the project to an industrial school for girls. For four years the project continued among the Latins, but the results were meager. Therefore, the nature of the work was again changed, and an Esther Home was established to minister to Caucasian girls between the ages

of twelve and eighteen.<sup>42</sup> The name was changed in 1926 to Esther Hall to conform with similar institutions sponsored by Methodist women across the country, and the age limits were raised to include girls in their twenties. The project was discontinued in 1955 since it was no longer needed in San Diego. While in existence it had offered Christian fellowship and social life to many college and business girls.

iii. *Pacific Homes, Inc.*

Kingsley Manor in Hollywood (formerly called Pacific Home) is an inheritance from the German Methodist Church. A devout Christian lady, Mrs. Margaret Amman, who died in 1909, left a bequest to help build a home for the aged in the vicinity of Los Angeles. A committee was appointed by the German Conference that year and was quick in acting. An organization was incorporated under the name "The Pacific Old People's Home for the German Methodist Episcopal Church."<sup>43</sup> The site finally selected, 1055 North Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, was part of the grounds of an old camp meeting of the Conference. A short time later a similar concern was evidenced in the Southern California Conference. A committee was appointed to seek a suitable site for a home similar to that of the German Conference, and Pacific Palisades Association set aside some land for it. The growing financial difficulties of the corporation ended the endeavor. When the merger of the German Conference took place in 1927, the "Pacific Home" Corporation with its Pacific Old People's Home became part of the Southern California Conference. The name of the home was later shortened to Pacific Home and in 1957 renamed Kingsley Manor to avoid confusion with the name of the Corporation.

At the same time, since it now included several homes, the Corporation was renamed "Pacific Homes." Increasing needs had necessitated expansion. Three new buildings were added before 1939. Two more buildings were constructed after unification, and when the waiting list continued to grow, plans were laid for a new institution at Claremont. Claremont Manor was opened in 1949 on a ten acre site donated by Mr. and Mrs. Lee Pitzer.

Since then the Corporation has continued to expand. For many years Casa de Manana at La Jolla was recognized as one of the famous hotels of southern California. In 1953 it became an institution of Pacific Homes Corporation. It provides facilities for some two hundred men and women. Two additional homes are to be found in the San Diego area. Wesley Palms, located at Pacific Beach,



Edward P. O'Rear, General Manager,  
Pacific Homes

is in the planning stage. When completed in 1961, it will accommodate about 350 residents. The second and older institution is an outgrowth of the Fredericka Home for the Aged, established at Chula Vista early in this century and reorganized in 1953 as the San Diego Methodist Home. First conceived by the Woman's Society of Christian Service of First Methodist Church, San Diego, the San Diego Methodist Home Corporation was established in 1947. In 1958 Pacific Homes Corporation took over management of the institution. In the following year its name was changed to Fredericka Manor, and it was merged into the Corporation. In Arizona there will be two homes. In June, 1958, Pacific Homes took control of Desert Crest, a Methodist Home in Phoenix. In January, 1959, the merger of this with the Corporation was completed. Oasis Del Sol in Tucson is the site of the proposed second Arizona home. The most recent undertaking is that of developing a new institution on the Island of Oahu in Hawaii. To be known as Pohainani, it is hoped that it will be ready in 1961.

Since the early days of the "Pacific Home" this organization, now

greatly enlarged under the direction of Dr. Edward P. O'Rear, a minister of the Southern California-Arizona Conference, has given to elderly citizens "many priceless advantages, the greatest of which are security, beauty, peace, friendship, and loving care."<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. CONFERENCE HOMES FOR RETIRED DEACONESSES AND MISSIONARIES

##### i. *Robincroft*

Conference concern for women workers in full-time Church vocations became evident with the establishment of Robincroft and Thoburn Terrace. A beautiful country estate of eight acres in Pasadena known as "The Castle" came into the possession of Mrs. George O. Robinson of Detroit in 1921. After making further improvements, this lady offered it to the Methodist Episcopal Church as a rest home for retired Methodist women who had engaged in deaconess, missionary, or other religious endeavors. The act was in honor of her sister, Mrs. Henrietta Bancroft. In recognition of this fact and in gratitude for the gift, the Woman's Home Missionary Society named the home "Robincroft."<sup>45</sup> Situated at 275 Robincroft Drive, the plant has been greatly enlarged within recent years by other donors. Here retired women, often without personal family and home ties, have found a haven where reading, recreation, and other forms of fellowship continue to enrich their lives.

##### ii. *Thoburn Terrace*

Thoburn Terrace, named after the Methodist missionary bishop, James M. Thoburn, is a second home for retired deaconesses and missionaries established within the confines of the Southern California Conference. Now located in Alhambra at 115 North Almansor Street, it was originally called Pacific Palisades Rest Home Society, established in Pacific Palisades in 1921 through the efforts of Mrs. Lucy R. Meyer. Like Robincroft, it is representative of Methodist missions in many places of the globe. For this reason it has been sometimes known as a "Crossroads of the World."<sup>46</sup> Three spacious buildings with adequate facilities provide the same kind of life as is found at Robincroft.

#### 5. GOODWILL INDUSTRIES: "NOT CHARITY BUT A CHANCE"

One of the most humanitarian projects of The Methodist Church anywhere in the United States has been the Goodwill Industries.

Focusing attention on the handicapped, this organization has given them the opportunity to help themselves to better living. Chapel programs and personal counseling as well as actual labor have been aspects of this constructive undertaking.

Begun in Boston in 1905 by a young Methodist minister, Edgar J. Helms, Goodwill Industries quickly spread throughout many parts of the nation. In California the pioneer work was done by the Rev. Samuel Quickmire. Starting in San Francisco, the institution branched out to Oakland and later to San Jose, Stockton, and Sacramento.<sup>47</sup> Although the name "Goodwill" was not used until two years later, it began in southern California in Los Angeles on December 29, 1916. On this day the Methodist Board of Latin American Missions authorized the purchase of two hundred coffee sacks at eleven cents each to start industrial work in an old church building donated for Spanish and Portuguese work by the former Vincent Methodist Episcopal Church. The bags were placed in homes of friends. Out of the collections clothing was sorted and sold, and the money received used to start a medical clinic.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile the Latin American Mission changed its name to Plaza Community Center, and its industrial department became affiliated with the national Bureau of Goodwill Industries of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As work progressed Plaza authorized the incorporation of this industrial department under a separate board. The express purpose of the institution was "educational, industrial, spiritual and benevolent" with the intent not only to secure the Americanization of the foreign-born but also, through giving work, to prevent pauperism, to encourage the unfortunate, and to establish and conduct industries, stores, and medical clinics. In short, the aim of Goodwill Industries has been "to carry on any and all kinds of welfare and benevolent work among the poor and needy."<sup>49</sup> Pecuniary profit has never been one of its objectives.

Soon after the establishment of this organization in the Conference, the Methodist Episcopal Church was left an annuity of \$100,000 by the estate of Charles Wesley Munger of Monrovia. The funds were used to purchase the larger Baker Block at North Main and Arcadia, Los Angeles. This became the home of Goodwill Industries until 1938 when it moved to 324 San Fernando Road. Since then six additional facilities have been opened: Phoenix, San Bernardino, Santa Ana, San Diego, Long Beach, and a new one in San Fernando Valley in December of 1958.

Much credit for the expansion of Goodwill Industries should be given to Dr. Frederic H. Blair, who was with the organization from



Frederic H. Blair

1919 to 1950. Coming from Boston to be Religious Director, five years later he was named Executive Director. Later he became Regional Director of the West Coast Industries. It was largely through his initiative that the facilities at Long Beach, Santa Ana, and San Bernardino were started. He and Mrs. Blair exerted strong leadership in the First Methodist Church of Pasadena and in various civic enterprises. Mrs. Blair, still living, has been a link between the churches of America and India.

A day nursery, medical clinics, social clubs, Bible classes—these have all been part of Goodwill in addition to its workshops. Particularly during the depression the institution gave tremendous relief to distress and unemployment. In the second World War it served the nation by collecting needed salvage material and by preparing the handicapped to fill post-war jobs. In 40 years Goodwill has employed 43,500 people. Throughout its existence Goodwill Industries has demonstrated its continuing purpose to build character, encourage integrity, and foster self-respect. Because it works in the name of the Carpenter of Nazareth, who knew what it was to toil at the bench, it has dedicated itself to "Not Charity But a Chance."

## 6. THE MINISTRY OF HEALING

All of the institutions previously discussed have continually either been sponsored by the Woman's Society or have been Conference Christian Social Relations Projects very generously supported by the women. Undoubtedly the most extensive and perhaps the most important project of the Missionary Society has been the Methodist Hospital. Through this group's initiative and continuing support, the Southern California Conference entered fully into the ministry of healing. The women purchased the old Frances DePauw Home in 1903 and began a five-bed hospital in conjunction with the deaconess home. Almost overnight the hospital was swamped with patients; it became quite evident that much larger quarters were necessary. Six years passed before anything was done. Then a site at 2826 South Hope Street was purchased, and an eighteen-bed hospital opened, ministering to one hundred and ninety-five patients the first year.<sup>50</sup> In 1912 it was incorporated as the "Methodist Hospital of Southern California." Facilities were still not what the Society desired. Consequently a building fund drive was started, and in 1915 the North Wing was completed. The new hospital, with a capacity of one hundred and eighty beds, was called by the *California Christian Advocate* "one of the great achievements of southern California Methodism during the past decade."<sup>51</sup> Since its beginning the hospital has cared for "patients of all races, colors and creeds without discrimination or segregation."<sup>52</sup>

Additional improvements were gradually made. A Nurses Training Home was begun in 1920 and continued until dropped during the depression. During its existence many hundreds of nurses were sent forth from its halls. In 1944 the Training Home was re-established. An additional hospital wing, erected in 1925, had increased the capacity to two hundred and six adult beds and forty-eight bassinets. An Out-patient Clinic began operation in 1949 to minister to those unable to pay the full cost of private care.

In 1948 the Hospital Foundation of The Methodist Church was organized with Roland Maxwell, Pasadena attorney, as President. The purpose was to aid and to promote care of the sick and to help all organizations with similar purposes. Associated with the Methodist Hospital now for over twenty years, Mr. Maxwell was approached in 1952-53 by the City Council of Arcadia, which after a survey of many hospitals, asked the Methodist group to establish a hospital in that city. The Foundation entered into a lease for sixteen and one-half acres of land with the provision that a one hundred

bed hospital be built in three years. At this same time Los Angeles County was needing and looking for additional county hospital facilities. Since the area around the Hope Street Methodist Hospital was becoming more and more in need of a county type facility, the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Hospital leased the building to the county for ten years.

Meanwhile \$437,000 of Federal funds from the Hill-Burton Hospital Construction Act were made available on condition that an additional \$1,306,171.00 in cash and/or pledges be evidenced by December 26, 1953. The Methodist Hospital assumed responsibility for one-half of this. Then at a special session of Annual Conference December 18, 1953, held in the First Methodist Church, Los Angeles, the Conference assumed the other half of the obligation.

In June, 1955, the Conference assigned all interests of the Methodist Foundation in the Arcadia project, including the Federal grant, to the Methodist Hospital Corporation (legal title of the Conference Woman's Society). Ground was broken on August 10, 1955, at 300 West Huntington Drive, Arcadia, adjacent to Santa Anita race track. Opened in May, 1957, it was the first General, Medical, and Surgical Hospital in southern California to include facilities for neuro-psychiatric patients.<sup>53</sup>