


money to make a place for the Church of the Nazarene." It seemed the Lord then said to him, "I have given myself to you," which, said Bresee, gave assurance that with the Lord, "we have all things" (Girvin, p. 106).

The strategy that then emerged in the minds of Dr. Bresee and others was to lease a lot and build a temporary structure. A parcel was secured on Los Angeles Street between 5th and 6th, and construction began on the simple board tabernacle that later generations affectionately called "The Glory Barn." A personal loan co-signed by leading members of the congregation provided materials, while the congregation (which included a few carpenters) supplied most of the labor.

Considerations expressed in the planning of this tabernacle underline purposes and motivations of the founders in Los Angeles and elsewhere. Even before joining the Fergusons at Peniel Hall, Bresee recalled, "It had long been my cherished desire to have a place in the heart of the city which could be made a center of holy fire, and where the gospel could be preached to the poor." The socioeconomic status of present and prospective members (they were mostly "poor") was taken into account. Seated with about 400 chairs, the tabernacle was "plain and cheap, to save from financial burdens," and so arranged "that everything should say 'welcome to the poor.'" There he could "keep a red hot center of fire, and work the edges" (Martin, pp. 16-17).

A large number of outsiders testified to the success of the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles. Evangelist Henry Clay Morrison, editor of the *Pentecostal Herald*, who preached there 11 days in January, 1899, regarded the work there as a demonstration "that a church ought to be able to have a revival the year 'round."

After only three years of existence, membership stood at between 700 and 800. Although, said Morrison, "The most remarkable liberty" existed, "we saw nothing offensive to good sanctified taste. The people look upon a service as a comparative failure if some soul is not saved." Conveniently located, the "tabernacle, though a cheap frame structure, is excellently adapted to the purposes for which it is designed." "The people," the evangelist continued, "are perfectly satisfied with their place of worship, as their chief end is not the accumulation of masses of brick and mortar, but the salvation of lost men about them everywhere. Without doubt the times are ripe in all our large cities for just such churches as the Nazarene in Los Angeles" (*Pentecostal Herald*, 11 [Jan. 25, 1899]: 8). Three years later an article from the *Midland Methodist* reprinted in the *Nazarene Messenger* declared that although "lawyers, doctors, scientists, businessmen, men and women of education and refinement" had been gathered into its membership, this church was "emphatically" dedicated to the "salvation" of the poor (*Nazarene Messenger*, 6 [June 12, 1902]: 7). In a church for the poor, everything should say, "Welcome to the poor." 

THOSE EARLY NAZARENES CARED

*Compassionate Ministries
of the Nazarenes*

by J. Fred Parker

Dr. Phineas F. Bresee said the newly born Church of the Nazarene "selects as its special field of labor the portions of the cities from which they [the old-line churches] are drifting away." He further said, "The Church of the Nazarene is a simple, primitive church, a church of the people and for the people. . . . It is not a mission, but a church with a mission."

Underscoring this, Dr. Timothy Smith, in his history of the Church of the Nazarene, *Called unto Holiness*, states: "The chief aim of the church was to preach holiness to the poor. This fact is evident from every page of the literature which they published. . . . The first *Manual* announced the church's determination to win the lost through the agency of city missions, evangelistic services, house-to-house visitation, caring for the poor, comforting the dying" (pp. 113-14). No more positive statement of social concern could be made.

Reflecting this concern was the setting apart of deaconesses for Christian service. There were five in Bresee's original church. Their tasks included distribution of clothing to the poor and medical assistance to the ill.



Nazarene Archives

In addition, Bresee saw to it that early in its history the church became involved in the prohibitionist cause; in fact, so strongly so that the head of the Prohibition Party in California (a member of Bresee's church) declared that "The Church of the Nazarene . . . is emphatically a prohibition church; holiness and prohibition are two of its leading tenets" (quoted in *Called unto Holiness*, p. 125). And the way Bresee dwelt on both themes, it would seem to be a fitting observation. There is no mistaking the fact that the Church of the Nazarene was launched in a spirit of social concern to complement its second-blessing holiness doctrine.

It must be remembered also that the other major groups which united to form the Church of the Nazarene were similarly motivated—especially so in the South. Perhaps the best-known institution of its kind among Nazarenes, and certainly the one with the longest history, was Rest Cottage in Pilot Point, Tex. The need for homes for unwed mothers was a much-promoted cause in the early years of the century. For example, when the 1912 Kansas District Assembly took an offering for Rest Cottage, \$546 was pledged and \$9.26 was received in cash. Sometimes linked with the problem of white slavery but more often merely the concept of ministering to the needs of "wayward girls," the subscribers to church papers of the time read much of the ministry to these "rest homes." Orphanages were often companion institutions such as the one in Peniel, Tex., opened in 1900 by E. C. DeJernett, with 65 children.

Similarly, in the East, William Howard Hoople and Charles BeVier launched their work on January 4, 1894, in an old Brooklyn saloon. Though the basic motivation was to establish a holiness work, their commitment to "preaching to the poor" was strongly avowed. Also, Rev. A. B. Riggs had cause in 1904 to commend the people

of the Holiness Association in New England for their "devotion . . . to rescue work and relief for the poor."

The work of J. O. McClurkan's Pentecostal Mission in Nashville, which did not affiliate with the Church of the Nazarene until 1915, was, from its early days, involved in mission and rescue home work. The "Door of Hope Mission" and the Volunteers of America received McClurkan's commendation and support for their work on behalf of the disadvantaged. As a practical expression of its social concern, the Pentecostal Mission Training Home for Girls in East Nashville, under the leadership of Mrs. Tim H. Moore, was dedicated on January 1, 1908, with 35 girls aged 1 to 16 in residence.

These are typical of the spirit and motivation of the holiness movement as a whole from which the Church of the Nazarene sprang. Donald W. Dayton, writing in the *Christian Century* (Feb. 26, 1975), says that abolitionism was the earliest issue of the 19th-century holiness movement, having its origin in Oberlin College. Another major emphasis was to elevate the role of women. The first recorded women's rights convention was held in the Wesleyan Methodist church in Seneca Falls, N.Y. Phoebe Palmer was a true activist, and in her book *The Promise of the Father* she declared: "Pentecost laid the axe at the root of social injustice."

A strong emphasis was repeatedly placed on "ministry to the poor and oppressed." Dr. Dayton illustrates this with the observation that the "free" in Free Methodist refers in part to the abolition of pew rental. The Salvation Army is, of course, the ultimate expression of social concern among holiness bodies—or among all other religious groups for that matter.

The Church of the Nazarene and Social Action

It is not known fully how many social welfare institutions were in operation under the egis of the Church of



Christmas dinner in 1911 at the Bethany Rescue Home.
Director Johnny Jernigan stands on the left.

Nazarene Archives

the Nazarene when it came into being in 1908. There were, of course, a large number of rescue homes, orphanages, and inner-city missions to which Nazarenes contributed support though not organizationally connected with them. Prime examples were the Florence Crittenton Homes, of which there were 75 at one time across the United States. Hope Cottage in Lynn, Mass., launched in 1907, was reputed at that time to be only one in the entire chain run by Nazarenes, but numbers of them have had Nazarene patrons.

Rest Cottage at Pilot Point

In 1901, W. L. Rogers bought at auction the former Franklin College in Pilot Point, Tex., and offered it to Oscar and Nettie Hudson for use as an orphanage. About a year or so later the Roberts clan moved down from Oklahoma and there J. P. Roberts purchased a six-acre tract just south of the college property. Here on February 3, 1903, Rest Cottage, a home for unwed mothers, began operation.

The first charter of the Rest Cottage Association was drawn up in 1907. A revised charter, dated April, 1919, was stated to run for 50 years. The home barely survived that term, finally being closed in 1972. Nevertheless it was the longest lived of any social institution "owned and controlled" by the church. J. P. Roberts headed Rest Cottage until his death in 1937. John Ed Roberts followed, turning over the leadership to Geren Roberts in 1955 while continuing as his assistant until 1964. During its history, Rest Cottage helped over 4,500 young women. It was supported by all the south central districts, and the superintendents of each district were on its Board of Trustees.

The Peniel Orphan Home

The home for orphans in Peniel, Tex., launched so successfully by Rev. E. C. DeJernett in 1900, continued with minimal success. A 60-acre farm was purchased and two frame dormitories erected, which someone classified as "primitive indeed." The orphanage was barely holding on when in 1919 the decision was made to move its sister institution, Peniel College, to Bethany, Okla., to unite with the school there.

The availability of the 20-acre Peniel campus with its four buildings sparked a number of suggestions for its use. One idea was to develop it into "a home for worn-out ministers and their dependents." But the proposal which prevailed was to make it into a "first-class orphanage," and a \$100,000 campaign for this purpose was proposed at the General Assembly. The abandoned campus was offered to the church for slightly more than the indebtedness against it—about \$30,000.

The initial step was for the General Orphanage Board to take over the old Peniel Orphanage, which they did in February, 1920. The next step was to raise the necessary money to purchase and develop the college property. November 21 (Thanksgiving Sunday) was named Orphanage Day, and the November 10 issue of the *Herald of Holiness* was made an "Orphanage Issue." But for all the publicity and effort, barely enough came in to purchase the property, let alone develop it or expand the program.

By the time of the 1923 General Assembly the mood of the church had greatly changed. Institutionalism was under fire. The Orphanage Board was instructed to turn over the property to the Southern Educational District or, if they would not accept it, sell the property and hold

the money for the general church. Then in a surprise move near the close of the assembly, a motion was passed that ordered the General Orphanage Board not to initiate further orphanage work.

The directive to dispose of the Peniel operation was only partially carried out; and, after a few more years of declining operation, on April 30, 1929, the general church took itself out of the orphanage business by transferring the deed to the property to Rev. James W. Benton, the superintendent, in lieu of \$4,000 in salary which was owed him.

Bethany, Okla.

When C. B. Jernigan led in the establishment of a "holiness community" northwest of Oklahoma City in what is now Bethany, three institutions were envisioned: a college, an orphanage, and a rescue home. A 10-acre property called Beulah Heights was purchased and deeded to the church on April 5, 1909. The building on the property was called The Nazarene Home, with C. B. Jernigan as president and Mrs. Jernigan as superintendent. Shortly afterward the property was sold in order to purchase a larger (40 acres) and more advantageous site on the interurban rail line running from Oklahoma City to El Reno.

An old barn on the property was cleaned up and used as a dwelling for the workers while construction began on the first buildings. On September 1, 1909, the first issue of *Highways and Hedges*, one of the forerunners of the *Herald of Holiness*, was published with Mrs. Johnny Jernigan as editor. In it was an article concerning the sale of the Beulah Heights property and the establishment of the Nazarene home "for penitent, homeless, and friendless girls." It was to be "the property of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene and its Board of Directors." By January, 1912, it was reported that 121 girls had sought shelter there, and 110 babies had been born.

Other Early Institutions

In 1901 the Berachah Rescue Society established a Berachah Child Institute in Arlington, Tex., under the leadership of Rev. J. T. Upchurch. In 1912, the organization made an agreement with the Church of the Nazarene "to establish [a] home on the Pacific Coast, subject to the approval of the General Board" but with no obligation to the denomination. This was apparently established in Oakland and was one of five listed in the official minutes of the General Assembly in 1915. When in January, 1939, the Arlington institution was offered to the Church of the Nazarene free of charge, the offer was "rejected because of existing conditions." By this time the general church's interests had long since turned from such projects.

Over the years, reports were published occasionally in the *Herald of Holiness* concerning various other social institutions which either bore the Nazarene name or received major support from local congregations. Among them were an orphanage in Old Fort, S.C.; the Alice Marie Children's Home in Eugene, Ore.; a Nazarene Children's Home in Davenport, Okla.; and the Bethany Training Home in Memphis.

In 1915, it was reported to the General Assembly that

there were five rescue homes "owned by churches or districts": in Pilot Point, Tex.; Bethany, Okla.; Hutchinson, Kans.; Wichita, Kans.; and Oakland. Four other homes were receiving substantial church support: in Kansas City; Arlington, Tex.; Lynn, Mass.; and Nashville. The orphanage at Pilot Point, however, was the only institution of its kind listed. Why Peniel was not named is not known.

Nazarene Hospitals

One of the most significant social institutions the church was ever involved with was the Samaritan Hospital in Nampa, Ida., founded there by Dr. Thomas E. Mangum in 1920. In October, 1921, in a large cottage across the corner from the campus of Northwest Nazarene College, the Reynolds Convalescent Home, a small 17-bed hospital, was established. In the late 1920s an ambitious expansion took place with the establishment of the Nazarene Missionary Sanitarium and Institute and the erection of a 50-bed hospital. As an accredited nurses' training school it graduated its first class in 1931. Over the years, dozens of its graduates went to various mission fields to serve with great distinction.

To maintain the accreditation of the nursing school it became necessary to enlarge the facility, and in 1950 an expansion program was begun which would more than double the bed capacity of the hospital and incorporate new treatment programs. But the supporting constituency, both within and without the church, was inadequate. In the 1952 General Assembly, memorials to include the Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing in the General Budget in the amount of \$18,000 were rejected. However, at the General Board meeting following the assembly a special grant of \$5,000 was paid to the hospital and in January, 1953, another \$10,000.

But these amounts, though appreciated, were inadequate to meet the need, and the half-completed building project had to be abandoned. The original hospital became a private institution, and the nurses' residence and uncompleted hospital wing were purchased by the college and ultimately completed for their purposes.

Whatever fears the general church leaders may have had concerning becoming involved in such a medical program may have been influenced by an abortive attempt in the mid-1940s to establish a Nazarene hospital in Columbus, Ga. A small hospital, built in 1940, became available for sale in 1945, and on December 2 a group of neighboring district superintendents got together to discuss the possibility of buying it for the church. This led to the formal organization of a hospital board on May 28, 1946, with Rev. Charles Strickland as president. A \$100,000 financial drive was launched in the community, and one month later the building was purchased for \$150,000. The terms were \$30,000 cash and \$500 a month.

The hospital's charter specifically stated: "The hospital and the training school shall at all times be operated, maintained, and conducted in accordance with the Christian principles of the Church of the Nazarene." But the project never came to full fruition.

Changing Church Attitudes

The administrative structure of the Church of the Nazarene in its earlier days reflected a strong social interest.

At the 1907 assembly there was a committee report on deaconess work and one on prohibition. In 1908 a Committee on Rescue Work was added, obviously in deference to the strong interest of the South in this work, particularly at Pilot Point itself where the assembly was being held. In 1911, City Missions were added to the responsibilities of the Committee on Rescue Work (one of 15 standing committees which were established), and in 1915 a Committee on Orphanage Work was added.

Social concern reached its zenith at the 1919 General Assembly when five of the committees were directly related to social welfare. District Boards of Social Welfare were recommended, work among the black population was encouraged, and a five-member General Orphanage Board was elected: it was there that the recommendation was made to purchase the old Peniel College property to enlarge the orphanage program and the \$100,000 financial drive was approved. To top it off, the office of deaconess was elevated to ministerial status! The climax came the following year with the church-wide Thanksgiving Offering for the proposed orphanage expansion.

But the 1920s saw a precipitous decline in the church's emphasis on social work. By 1928 only three of the five general assembly committees concerned with this subject remained (Social Welfare and Orphanage; Deaconess; and State of the Church and Public Morals). By 1932, all three were lumped under one committee. In 1948 even this committee was reduced to include only "State of the Church and Public Morals." The 1972 General Assembly saw a further modification to "Christian Action Committee" to deal particularly with matters of church and state.

There were a number of possible reasons for the shift in social emphasis during the 1920s:

1. The financial squeeze which made the support of these institutions burdensome.

2. A mild revolt against institutions as adjuncts to the program of the church, whose central business was rightly perceived to be the salvation of souls. "Every effort should be made to keep down institutionalism," said the general superintendents' address to the 1923 General Assembly.

3. A pervasive feeling that the social gospel was related to theological liberalism and therefore was to be shunned.

4. A change in editorship of the *Herald of Holiness*. B. F. Haynes was an outspoken activist, and his own editorials and the content of the magazine dealt forthrightly with social issues of the day. With the coming of J. B. Chapman there was a perceptible shift toward education, missions, and church growth as major themes. This may have been by design but more likely reflected the temperament of the editor himself, though Dr. Chapman came out of the Texas hotbed of social institutionalism.

This is not to say that the church had become insensitive to social concerns. These activists were dominant in its world mission program where schools, hospitals, orphanages, and medical dispensaries were "standard equipment" on most of the fields (though it may be

recalled that General Superintendent Benner in the early 1960s issued a strong warning that such missionary institutions were sapping the vitality of the evangelistic program). Some districts and local churches were carrying on projects such as the Kansas City Rescue Mission, founded by Dr. Jarrette Aycock in October, 1950, with Rev. D. H. Tracy as the first superintendent; and the Boston Chapel project in Boston, sponsored by the New England District. Most Nazarene participation has been through supports of independent institutions such as the Crittenton Homes and inner-city missions.

Nazarenes have been deeply involved, though not officially, in such projects as Christian Counselling Services in Nashville, with its foster care program, children's camps, etc. The Lamb's Ministry in New York City, ministry of the Manhattan Church of the Nazarene, has also a strong program of social action in the heart of that great city.

But perhaps the most outstanding program, which many consider indicative of a swing within the church toward more active involvement in social concerns, is the Washington Community of Hope project led by Rev. Tom Nees. As pastor of First Church in Washington, D.C., Rev. Nees became increasingly burdened for the needs of the people of the inner city, which led to his resigning that pastorate and stepping into this tough assignment. The work began in 1973 with the organization of Jubilee Housing, Inc., in cooperation with the Church of the Savior. Their initial emphasis was on housing management and rehabilitation. Two apartment buildings were purchased and painstakingly renovated.

Leaving these initial projects in the hands of capable assistants, in 1975 the Nazarene people purchased the 48-unit Cresthill Apartments in the heart of Washington's "riot corridor." A new congregation was organized, and work began on a variety of community services besides regular services, including medical aid, counselling, and food and clothing distribution. Here the general church stepped in, providing initial funding and placing the work in the regular general church extension budget. The effort is transforming the neighborhood and has won the acclaim of local government leaders.

Another step closer to our first love of social concern has been the inclusion of such projects as the Lamb's Ministry, Kansas City Rescue Mission, and the Washington Community of Hope on the 10 percent Mission Specials Program of the general church. The organization of the Nazarene Hunger and Disaster Fund also reflects broadening Nazarene interest in ministry to those in need.

Some may look with apprehension on this developing trend toward concrete social development projects within the church, but for too long we have wrapped our cloaks about us and ignored the crying needs of the disadvantaged, sin-ridden, spiritually needy people who walk the streets of our cities. Methinks Dr. Bresee smiles from heaven as he watches Tom Nees and others like him as they minister to the destitute people of the land. And surely the Lord is pleased as we minister to "the least of these." It would appear that the Church of the Nazarene has come full circle and is back to Dr. Bresee's clear dictum to "preach holiness and carry the gospel to the poor."