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"Rivers of Living Water": The Movements and Mobility of Holiness-Pentecostals, 1837-1910

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“Rivers of Living Water”: The Movements and Mobility of Holiness-Pentecostals, 1837-1910

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Caroline Anne Bunnell Harris

2016
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“Rivers of Living Water”: The Movements and Mobility of Holiness-Pentecostals, 1837-1910

by

Caroline Anne Bunnell Harris

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Stephen A. Aron, Chair

This dissertation follows the fluid and dynamic movements of holiness and pentecostal worshipers who crossed boundaries of race, gender, language, and region at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. It demonstrates how the changeable, decentralized, and anti-institutional character of the holiness-pentecostal movement allowed for both radical social behavior and dynamic geographic mobility. The movement was in a constant state of flux as the sanctified traveled across the continent, as holiness ideas circulated amidst an explosion of print culture, and as worshipers moved in and out of socially transgressive practices. By the early twentieth century an expansive network of holiness and pentecostal folk, tied together by railroads and holiness newspapers, sprawled across the United States. The American holiness-pentecostal movement had flowed from the homes of Northern social reformers in the
1840s, to black sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta and white cotton farmers in East Texas after Reconstruction, and finally to the West at the turn of the century.

Popular depictions of Los Angeles on the brink of the Azusa Street Revival describe a seed about to sprout, a woman in labor, or a tree being transplanted. In contrast, this dissertation argues that Los Angeles was a catch basin of diverse streams, each one converging, mixing, adapting to one another and the new environment. It considers what happened when these diverse streams, of holiness-pentecostals - bringing with them diverse cultures - mixed, collided, and adapted to one another and to their new environments. It follows the streams, confluences, and tributaries of the holiness-pentecostal movements, which converged in a torrent of radical boundary-crossing at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906. However, the factors which allowed for such boundary-crossing were short-lived. While streams of Pentecostalism would continue to flow throughout the United States, and in particular outside the United States, the moment of the Azusa Street Revival’s torrent was liminal.
The dissertation of Caroline Anne Bunnell Harris is approved.

Brenda Stevenson

Darnell Montez Hunt

Stephen A. Aron, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016
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I am convinced that Writing Programs is one of the treasures of UCLA. The pedagogical training I received under Leigh Harris has made me a better educator, but also a more thoughtful reader of my own work. I also had the pleasure to work alongside Jen MacGregor, Randy Fallows, and Peggy Davis in Writing Programs.

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VITA

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Breath-taking harmonies entranced the men and women who crowded on the sawdusted floor of a former black church and warehouse near downtown Los Angeles in the summer of 1906. Arthur Osterberg, a radical holiness pastor and the son of Swedish immigrants, remembered the sounds of Azusa Street: a "soprano voice would leap out and you would hear it above the whole congregation. Then it would be mingled with other voices and it all formed a beautiful harmony."1 Those singing in unrecognizable tongues tangled with those worshiping in English to form a remarkable unity when chaos seemed more probable. The singers did not plan this improvised riff, but instead insisted that they were under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Traveling evangelist Frank Bartleman similarly gushed about heavenly moments of worship in which "suddenly in the meeting a dozen, or perhaps a score, will burst forth in the most beautiful chords, all in harmony, and all pitches of voice."2 Osterberg and Bartleman insisted that the unity of voices among such a diverse crowd could only signaled the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Testimonies of the Azusa Street Revival indicate that not just varied vocal ranges found a home at the mission, but also people of diverse cultural identities. Observers recounted how the revival brought together a slurry of unexpected groups including black migrants from the South, Anglo-midwestern social reformers, immigrants from Mexico, Eastern Europe and China, and white skeptics who ridiculed the absurdity of religion. In the third issue of the mission’s newsletter, the writer declared, “No instrument that God can use is rejected on account of color or dress or lack of education.”3 Because members of the Apostolic Faith mission, as it was


3 “Bible Pentecost,” Apostolic Faith, November 1906.
called, believed that the Holy Spirit could directly inspire anyone, regardless of race, class, gender, or education, white women and people of color found opportunities for spiritual authority.

Over the last five decades, the Azusa Street Revival and its accounts of interracial harmony have garnered the attention of many. Its leadership by black men and both white and black women and its multiethnic membership sharply contrast with characterizations of this historical period as the nadir of American race relations in which black men and black and white women occupied only segregated and subordinated spheres. Furthermore, claims that the Revival birthed the ecstatic religious movement of Pentecostalism, which now boasts at least 500 million adherents worldwide, have sparked the curiosity of both scholars and practitioners alike.4

However, the Azusa Street Revival was neither an anomaly nor a single point of origins. Outpourings of religious enthusiasm were common during this period. Significant Protestant revivals had occurred in Korea, Wales, and India between 1905 and 1907. Nor was this new for American religious history in general, which has been characterized by many religious “awakenings” since George Whitefield swept British North America in the 1730s and 1740s. A number of scholars have also proven that Azusa Street was not the first moment when radical religionists spoke in tongues, the practice which set Pentecostals apart from other Christians in the early twentieth century.5 Followers of Charles Parham in Topeka, Kansas in 1901 and Houston, Texas in 1905, reportedly spoke in tongues. At Mukti Mission near Pune, India

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between 1905 and 1907 several women spoke in tongues and sparked a revival of thousands, before they had heard word about the events on Azusa Street.\(^6\) A camp meeting in western North Carolina also reported that several worshipers spoke in tongues in 1896, nearly a decade preceding the Los Angeles revival.\(^7\) Azusa Street was also not the first event where interracial worship could be observed. Radical holiness folks and other marginal religious groups had carved out spaces within America’s rigid racial hierarchy for blacks and whites to worship together, often in temporary revival settings.\(^8\)

Indeed, the history leading to and the environment surrounding the Azusa Street Revival were as fascinating and significant as the event itself. Early Pentecostalism sat on the cusp of several intersecting streams at the turn of the century. The growth of radical religious enthusiasm converged with socio-economic forces of urbanization, industrialization, and westward migrations. With all of these intersecting streams emerged a more diverse populace, and in particular, non-white and immigrant peoples, whose citizenship within the United States was uncertain. This dissertation asserts that this milieu, which was characterized by the movement of people and ideas both religious and nonreligious, crossed geographic and social boundaries and provided spaces for religious belief and practice to be reimagined.

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\(^8\) This point will be developed in Chapter 1. For examples of literature on racial boundary-crossing preceding Azusa Street, see Paul Harvey, *Freedom’s Coming: Religious Culture and the Shaping of the South from the Civil War through the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 107-168; William Courtland Johnson, “‘To Dance in the Ring of All Creation’: Camp Meeting Revivalism and the Color Line, 1799-1825” dissertation (1997).
While early Pentecostalism has been frequently examined over the past few decades, and debates abound within Pentecostal Studies whether Azusa Street or other sites of revival were the seedbed of Pentecostalism, most of these studies seem to be limited to a search for a point of origins. The earliest histories of Pentecostalism, written within the Pentecostal community, insisted on a divine causation: the Holy Spirit descended on believers in the early twentieth century and no earthly explanation could be given. The study of Pentecostalism did not align with the academic interests of most scholars outside the Pentecostal community before 1970. Although the movement was experiencing significant worldwide growth, many within the scholarly community still viewed Pentecostals as intellectually backward and socially regressive. However, a second wave of global expansion, and the growth of the charismatic movement as Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran churches adopted “gifts of the Spirit,” grabbed the attention of scholars. The publication of Walter Hollenweger’s massive ten-volume work *The Pentecostals* provided the foundation for future scholarly explorations of the Pentecostal movement, and the formation of the Society for the Study of Pentecostalism created a community of scholarly investigation.

Because of Pentecostalism’s seemingly rapid entrance as a major player in world religions -- growing from virtually zero adherents in 1900, to 63 million in 1970 -- many

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scholars were understandably curious about the origins of this movement. Robert Mapes Anderson in *Vision of the Disinherited* sought a socio-economic explanation for Pentecostalism’s popularity. He insisted that industrialization provoked status anxieties that led disinherited rural folks to Pentecostal religion. He further argued that this religious response prevented disinherited rural Americans from creating any real socio-economic change. A number of historians following Anderson sought to expand their studies beyond sociological explanations. While Pentecostal religion did not lead to any real material change for its disadvantaged followers, most spirit-filled believers insisted that they were seeking something greater than socio-economic improvement. The religious rewards of Pentecostalism -- a sense of inner purity, empowerment, spiritual status, and purpose -- often surpassed desires for social mobility. These historians sought to find the origins of Pentecostalism within particular streams of historical-theological thought. For example, Vinson Synan situated Pentecostalism within the tradition of Wesleyan-holiness, which sought inner purity through Christian perfection, while Edith Blumhofer insisted that the Reformed Keswickian branches of holiness, which preached the Spirit Baptism as an empowering experience should be considered a more significant originator of Pentecostalism. In a related vein, Grant Wacker emphasized the importance of a restorationist impulse in early Pentecostalism. Pentecostals, he maintained, sought to emulate the first-century Christian Church they read about in the New Testament. Alternately, James Goff argued that the missionary impulse at the end of the nineteenth century best explains the growth of Pentecostalism, as the
gift of tongues was initially viewed as a tool for evangelism to foreign-speaking peoples worldwide.¹¹

With the growth in studies of African American history post-1950s, a number of scholars have also given greater attention to the African American contributions to early Pentecostalism. Scholars such as Iain MacRobert, Douglas Nelson, and Estrelda Alexander have located Pentecostalism within the trajectory of black religion.¹² Highlighting the fact that the earliest participants at Azusa Street were black, these scholars argue that the origins of Pentecostalism can be traced to the creative, invisible institutions of slave churches, and ultimately, back to an African Sacred Cosmos. Iain MacRobert, in particular, explained how primarily African roots, not white holiness traditions, fostered the radical, even syncretic, beginnings of Azusa Street. According to MacRobert, the fading of the revival was largely due to forces of white racism that pervaded American society.

Curiosity about how Pentecostalism emerged in the twentieth century is understandable, but the search for the origins of this religious movement has often led to simplistic explanations of a complex cultural process. Images of Azusa Street as the initial seedling or the transplantation

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of a particular culture imply one stable, immovable trajectory of growth. Culture, however, is anything but stable and monolithic, as scores of scholars have demonstrated.\textsuperscript{13}

In keeping with those understandings of culture, this dissertation utilizes the metaphor of the movement of water to describe the crossings and dwellings that holiness-pentecostals made at the turn of the century. Riparian movements reflect the fluidity and flexibility of streams of holiness-pentecostals who joined larger streams of migration in this period. Los Angeles on the brink of the Azusa Street Revival was not a seed about to sprout, or a tree being transplanted, but instead a catch basin of diverse streams, each one converging, mixing, adapting to one another and the new environment. This dissertation considers what happened when these diverse streams, of holiness-pentecostals - bringing with them diverse cultures - mixed, collided, and adapted to one another and to their new environments. It follows the streams, confluences, and tributaries of the holiness-pentecostal movements, which converged in a torrent of radical boundary-crossing at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906.

This riparian metaphor borrows from the work of two recent scholars of religion and culture. First, Thomas Tweed asserted that religions are “confluences of organic-cultural flows” which “make homes and cross boundaries.”\textsuperscript{14} This described well the movement of holiness-pentecotals who traveled across the continent thanks to the expansion of the transcontinental railroad, and holiness-pentecostal ideas that circulated amid an explosion of print culture.


Holiness-pentecostalism flowed from the homes of northern social reformers in the 1840s, to black sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta and white cotton farmers in East Texas after Reconstruction, and finally to the West at the turn of the century. Holiness-pentecostals also crossed in and out of typical social boundaries, like race, class, and gender. Many white women and people of color found opportunities for influence and leadership in these holiness-pentecostal communities, which often lacked the centralized governing authority that might attempt to maintain social respectability. As Tweed has argued of religions in general, holiness-pentecostal communities also provided spaces for migrants and pilgrims to make a new home amid changing environments. From rural southerners and midwesterners who struggled to cope with industrial transformation, to recent migrants who longed for a taste of the homeland, holiness-pentecostal religion provided dwelling places in these new environments.

Second, this dissertation draws on Jacob Dorman’s discussion of black religion and culture in *Chosen People: The Rise of Black American Israelite Religions*. In that book, Dorman insisted that culture can best be explained as a polycultural process based in “social networks, imagination, reinterpretation and invention” rather than the “acculturation, authenticity and retention” described in syncretism. The cultures that influenced holiness-pentecostalism, whether Wesleyan-holiness or black folk religion, were not discrete entities that could be simply transplanted from one time and place to another. Rather, they were constantly being reshaped and recreated by the individuals who inhabited them, much like how streams of flowing water are constantly shifting. Indeed, holiness-pentecostalism looked markedly different in the home of a

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white middle class woman in New York, an outdoor camp meeting in rural Kansas, a black-led revival in the Arkansas Delta, or a street meeting in Los Angeles, and each of these expressions represented the intersection of diverse streams.

Chapter 1 opens in the North in the decades preceding the Civil War, when many northern Protestants became increasingly concerned with attaining an experience of sanctification. Because seekers of holiness did not subscribe to one particular denomination, and there was no central governing authority for the movement, it could morph and shift in the coming century based on the environment it inhabited and the needs of its adherents. For example, as holiness moved southward it shifted away from a northern impulse toward social reform and instead adopted the concerns of rural southerners. The lack of centralized authority also allowed for the leadership and influence of women, both black and white, as evangelists of sanctification and of black men who founded churches and denominations under the banner of holiness.

Chapter 2 charts the movements, or the crossings, of rural holiness folks from the South and Midwest to Los Angeles from 1860 to 1890. While many historians have referenced the Anglo-midwesterners who made their way to Southern California at the turn of the century, few have considered how the journey westward shifted and reimagined the religious lives of diverse believers. Streams of holiness cultivated in the burned-over district of the North, the plains of Texas, and the wheat farms of the Midwest, converged and made a home for migrants in Southern California. Rural folks, both black and white, combined memories of religion of their homeland with new practices and beliefs they encountered in the environment of Southern California, to make a dwelling in their new setting.
The third chapter zooms in to focus on the religious environment of the city of Los Angeles between 1890 and 1905. Multiethnic urban growth, efforts toward Anglo homogenization, and the increasingly radical religion of holiness folks all interacted on the streets of Los Angeles, which between 1880 and 1900 would explode in population from 11,000 to 102,000. Ultimately, this chapter argues that as a result of such swift urban growth and the convergence of diverse people and ideas, the holiness-pentecostal movement in Los Angeles both increased in religious fervor and strayed from the norms of Anglo middle class respectability. Although recent scholarship of religion has insisted that Los Angeles provided a distinct environment for the growth of new spiritualties, most focus on the period of Los Angeles’ development after the 1920s. The presence and popularity of the Azusa Street Revival in 1906 demands that scholars consider the religious environment of Los Angeles in these earlier decades.

It is from within this context, the continued migrations of peoples to Los Angeles, their settlement in multiethnic neighborhoods, and the swirl of diverse cultural and religious currents that they carried, that the Azusa Street Revival emerged. Chapter 4 situates the revival in this polycultural process and highlights the roles of participants as bricoleurs, constructing and reimagining a religious experience that brought together both old and new and allowed for

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Matthew Avery Sutton cited the importance of Los Angeles as the place of Aimee Semple McPherson’s ministry, particularly due to ascendency of Hollywood and entertainment culture which paralleled the establishment of her Angelus temple. Darren Dochuk also found the growth of religious enthusiasm later in Los Angeles, when Dust Bowl migrants made their way westward in the 1930s, bringing holiness-pentecostal spirituality with them. James Gregory insisted that marginal religious groups first found a home in Los Angeles with the prohibition of Southern Baptist churches from the region in 1914. Darren Dochuk, From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 2011); Matthew Avery Sutton, Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America (Harvard University Press, 2009); James Gregory, American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 196-199.
transgressing of social boundaries. Placing the Azusa Street Revival in this context decentralizes the movement from any origins in one particular group or leader, but also acknowledges the individual agency of those who sought the Holy Spirit at the turn of the century in creatively reimagining their religious life in a changing environment and world. However, the factors which allowed for such boundary-crossing were short-lived. Anglos left multiethnic neighborhoods as zoning laws shifted the industrial and racial landscape of Los Angeles, and as new housing was constructed elsewhere. Many white Pentecostals also began to choose to worship at meetings led by white Pentecostals rather than at Azusa Street. While streams of Pentecostalism would continue to flow throughout the United States, and in particular outside the United States, the moment of the Azusa Street Revival’s torrent was liminal.

Because of the fluidity of the peoples and ideas explored in this dissertation, the terminology used to describe them by scholars is also often in flux. I use the term “holiness” or “sanctified” to identify those religious enthusiasts who, at least initially, did not speak in tongues. Those who adopted the practice of glossolalia, I refer to as Pentecostals. When such terminology becomes slippery, many holiness folks would come to adopt tongues-speaking eventually, while others initially referred to themselves as pentecostals although they did not speak in tongues, I refer to both groups as holiness-pentecostals
CHAPTER 1

The Headwaters of the Holiness-Pentecostal Movement

The changeable, decentralized, and anti-institutional character of the holiness movement allowed it to cross boundaries of space, time, and power. Like a river with diverse currents, it brought together a variety of communities that mixed, collided, and adapted to one another and to their new environments. This chapter considers what happened when these diverse streams of holiness people—bringing with them diverse cultures—moved back and forth across the continent.

The movement’s headwaters almost exclusively swept up northern middle class reformers in a period of great sectional tension between 1840 and 1870. As Reconstruction ended and transcontinental railroads spread, it flowed to black and white communities in the South and to migrant communities in the West. The flexibility of holiness theology and practice meant farmers in the New South and the Midwest could shift it away from northerners’ focus on social reform to address their own concerns. Many were disenchanted with the Gilded Age culture of respectability that had led Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches to focus on the rising urban middle class. The mainline had become too concerned with worldly things, such as large church buildings, membership records, and professionalized ministers with salaries and seminary degrees. Holiness appealed as a reaction to this shift in the mainline. It also bridged the divide the Civil War had wrought; holiness adapted just as easily to the wheat farms of Illinois as to the cotton fields of Texas.

This chapter builds on and departs from the work of several historians of religion, a couple who have made particular contributions to the study of this period. While historian
Edward Blum argued that religious communities played important roles in the reconciliation of the North and South post-Civil War, his study focused on the most popular mainline Protestant denominations, without much consideration for the holiness movement. Another historian of religion, Randall Stephens, traced the travels of the holiness movement from the North to the South after Reconstruction, but his study remained rooted in the southern iterations of holiness-pentecostalism. This chapter expands on Stephens research to situate holiness communities within a larger context of constant motion. Whether crossing from the North to South, the South to Midwest, or the North to Midwest, sanctified believers took advantage of a mobilized religious community and an industrializing nation which supported that tendency toward movement.

The fluidity of the holiness movement also allowed for radical social behavior, including leadership by white women and black men and women. In these spaces, racial segregation of meetings might be opposed, African American spirituality admired, and the institution of slavery condemned. Members of the holiness movement challenged the prevailing norms of their time. Their actions complicate the vision of scholars who have insisted that boundaries of race, class, and gender were everywhere hardening at the close of the nineteenth century. While Jim Crow laws, the widening gap between wealth and poverty, and a rising cultural focus on white middle


class womanhood represented this hardening, the holiness movement represented a prominent
challenge.¹⁹

This discarding of the ways of the social world depended in part on new lines of
separation that holiness folks erected between the sanctified and worldly: those concerned with
material things and those concerned with heavenly things. This approach brought disharmony
and conflict within the holiness movement and outside of it. For example, as the nineteenth
century came to a close, radical holiness sects excoriated holiness communities that permitted the
reading of secular literature, the wearing of neckties or gold jewelry, and investment in industrial
ventures.

The development of radical holiness sects was only one way in which the movement
changed over time and space. This chapter argues that the streams of holiness movement of the
nineteenth century flowed across and intersected with established boundaries. Most scholarship
on holiness and early Pentecostal communities has sought to plot a linear trajectory of the
movement from origins to prominence.²⁰ This dissertation, instead, borrows from Thomas
Tweed’s theory that movements and motion ultimately characterize religion. Ultimately, religions
both situate people in time and space, and facilitate their movement across time and space. The
holiness movements were not static, isolated, and immutable, but as Tweed suggested, a “swirl of

¹⁹ A number of scholars have already commented on the history of racial and gender boundary-crossing
within the holiness pentecostal community. Paul Harvey, Freedom’s Coming: Religious Culture and the
Shaping of the South from the Civil War through the Civil Rights Era (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North
Carolina Press, 2005); Randall Stephens, The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the
American South (Harvard University Press, 2010); Grant Wacker, Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and
American Culture (Harvard University Press, 2003).

²⁰ The debate about pentecostal origins will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.
transluvial currents” where “religious and nonreligious streams propel religious flows.” Indeed, such currents allowed the holiness movement to flow throughout the North and South despite sectional tensions and across lines of race and gender despite hardening social boundaries.

**Northern Headwaters**

John Wesley first suggested in 1777 that an experience of sanctification could purify a Christian from the desire to sin. His followers sought perfection, though a debate over whether it would be instantaneous or gradual, and initiated by God or humans left the practice in the margins of Methodism for another few decades. The message of sanctification gained greatest popularity amongst northerners between the 1840s and 1870s. The region’s exposure to the Second Great Awakening, its newly constructed means of transportation, and the popular social theology of reform in the North would facilitate the movement’s growth. The expanse comprised by upstate New York, Western Massachusetts, Ohio, and Michigan had become known as the “Burned-Over District” for the number of revivals which had blazed through the area. Such revivals also primed a generation of faithful worshipers to seek more than just individual salvation. Abolitionists, woman suffrage activists, and prison reform advocates in the region often insisted that they had a God-given responsibility and empowerment to improve society. Professors of sanctification provided a doctrine and practice to signal this, believing in the necessity and accessibility of perfection of an individual’s heart, which would then prepare

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him or her to improve society. Because any believer could attain holiness regardless of race or gender, northern holiness communities often allowed women, black and white, to teach and preach.

In the years after Wesley’s death in 1791, Phoebe Palmer, a grieving mother, would become the most influential northern holiness leader. Like many nineteenth-century women, the death of her children in infancy had driven her to a state of depression and a search for solace in the spiritual world. She longed for the fullness of joy and peace Wesley had promised. Palmer described waiting for a supernatural force to remove her from her grief and grant her the joy of sanctification. The words of Paul, “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,” brought a revelation. One did not have to passively wait for holiness to arrive. Surrender or sacrifice, she concluded, was the key to sanctification. She offered her life to Christ, trusting in the promises of Scripture that she would be made holy. The believer simply needed to place “all on the altar,” putting family, future, and possessions in the hands of Christ. Then he or she could receive the grace of sanctification.

Shortly after experiencing this perfection in 1837, Palmer convinced her sister, Sarah Lankford, to transform an informal Methodist Tuesday prayer meeting at Lankford’s home in New York to the teaching ground for this new method of sanctification. With time, women and men, clergy and laity, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Quakers, who


sought this higher Christian experience of sanctification would acknowledge Palmer as their instructor. By the late 1860s her altar phraseology was the dominant language of sanctification. Virtually all advocates of holiness in the second half of the century would adopt the metaphor of “laying all on the altar,” and evangelicals used it into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Palmer’s book *The Way of Holiness*, articulating her teachings, circulated with northern migrants along freshly constructed rail lines and canals throughout the Burned-Over District. These new pathways of transportation facilitated complementary forces of revivalism, social reform, and market revolution. The Second Great Awakening proved helpful priming for Palmer’s message in the area, and perfection’s most earnest advocates preached along the same routes as earlier revivalists had. Charles Grandison Finney, one of the major figures of this Second Great Awakening began to preach Christian perfection in 1839. Conversion had not dispelled sinfulness, depression, or apathy, and believers continued to want Christ to make them a “new creation,” as sanctification promised. The hope of freedom from the bonds of sin found many willing followers. The flexibility of the teachings of Christian perfection, and the fluidity of their movement facilitated its broadening beyond Methodists. Protestants from many denominations adopted holiness; Finney for example was Presbyterian.

This broadness went beyond congregational lines. If humans could be the active initiators of perfection in their own souls, then they could also be the primary agents for progress within society. Perfectionism became a driving theological force in the hands of northern reformers for


27 Other key northern Protestants, such as Asa Mahan, also advocated for the attainability of Christian perfection in their writings. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 45-60.
the improvement of prisons, women’s rights, temperance, and the abolition of slavery. The impulse for improvement joined a larger stream of progressive sentiment in the North during an Age of Reform.\textsuperscript{28}

White middle class women like Palmer in particular found opportunities for public influence, as speakers, lecturers, and writers, within reform movements outside of the mainstream of traditional male-dominated politics. Sarah and Angelina Grimke and Dorothea Dix were some of these women who carved out spheres of influence within abolitionist societies, women’s clubs and associations, and charitable groups.\textsuperscript{29} The holiness movement provided another location outside the spaces of traditional public influence - politics and the marketplace - for women to lead, speak, and teach.

These women typically avoided directly confronting the bounds of white middle class womanhood. Instead they negotiated with notions of domesticity to justify their spiritual leadership. Like suffragettes who emphasized the necessity of a maternal influence in society to leverage support for women’s right to vote, Palmer insisted that she was the “priestess” of her home. Palmer’s husband, a homeopathic physician, provided a stable and ample income such that she could spend her time, as she described it, consecrating every room and creating a sacred space for herself, her family, and visitors to meet with God. Even when the crowds of holiness seekers became too large for her house to accommodate them, the Palmers enlarged their house rather than meet regularly in a larger, public venue. She preached that women seeking holiness

\textsuperscript{28} Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, 135-224.

should surrender their families to the Lord so that they were less central to their thoughts and emotions.\textsuperscript{30} Like many influential women in the “age of reform,” Palmer insisted that her womanhood, and her mastery of the private sphere, bestowed her with distinct leadership responsibilities beyond child-rearing.\textsuperscript{31}

Because any believer, regardless of race or gender, might attain holiness, northern holiness communities often allowed black men and women of any race to teach and preach. However, black female leaders who preached sanctification had little opportunity to negotiate with the cult of domesticity, not least because they were more rarely at home. Amanda Berry Smith, who was born a slave in 1837, for example, would not be able to take up preaching in earnest until the death of her deacon husband in 1869. An anecdote from her early days in the holiness movement suggested the difference between her experience and Palmer’s. She sacrificed some of the little time she had with her children apart from her job as a domestic for a white family, leaving them home alone so she might attend a holiness service. As she walked to the church, she felt increasingly guilty for leaving them there, and worried that her husband would reprimand her. As she tried to listen intently to the preacher’s discourse on the experience of sanctification, she imagined the worst: her thirteen year old daughter dropping her infant son. She later described these fearful thoughts as the plantings of Satan; a still, small voice insisted that she trust God and follow his calls to the service, even if this meant she would lose her baby.


\textsuperscript{31} Hovet, “Phoebe Palmer’s ‘Altar Phraseology’,” 273-275.
She took the fact that no bad incidents occurred in her absence as confirmation that spiritual pursuits were her primary calling. Unlike Palmer, Smith had to choose between the two.

Smith’s first marriage to a man who was not a Christian ended when he never returned from the Civil War; she hoped her second, to a deacon in a African Methodist Episcopal congregation, would facilitate her leadership in the church. However, the marriage was unhappy and her husband was indifferent to her call to preach; their move to New York City, where he was a Mason and Oddfellow, compounded her loneliness. She refused his urging to join the women’s auxiliary societies of her husband’s fraternities, clinging to her true calling. Only his death freed her to travel to England, Africa, India, Italy and Egypt to share the good news of sanctification. Julia Foote, another black woman called to preach within the holiness movement, experienced the effective dissolution of her marriage to a man who took work on a ship, and instead, traveled with a female companion spreading the good news.

Foote and Smith also did not share Palmer’s experience of finding strong support for their preaching. Despite a history of allowing black women to preach, often due to a high demand and low supply of equipped preachers, by midcentury black Methodist and Baptist churches reversed this trend. Black denominations increasingly sought to professionalize the ministry, requiring seminary education and credentials for ministers and exhorters, which excluded women. Foote

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33 Ibid., 57.

34 Ibid., 61-62.

and Smith emerged as preaching women on the cusp of this change.36 When Foote held holiness meetings in her house, as Palmer did, her A.M.E. Zion pastor reprimanded her. She said she would not desist, saying God had bidden her to preach, and “I fear God more than man.”37 In 1844 the A.M.E. Zion church excommunicated her for continuing to hold these holiness meetings in her home. Smith never suffered such censure, but the A.M.E. Church never financially supported her activities or ordained her. White and biracial holiness communities provided Smith and Foote what support they had.38

This funding did not signify a lack of racial tensions. As the only black congregant in a white church in New York influenced by the teachings of Phoebe Palmer, Smith attributed her internal feelings of marginalization to the work of Satan, acknowledging, “Somehow I always had a fear of white people — that is, I was not afraid of them in the sense of them doing me harm or anything of that kind — but a kind of fear because they were white, and were there, and I was black and was here!” Smith doubtless did not feel comfortable describing any experiences of prejudice or discrimination she might have experienced in the holiness community, but this statement likely reflects their existence, as well as a context in which black people had reason to fear white people. Social and economic inequalities based in race and gender were present even in the religious experience of Smith and Foote.39


37 Foote, A Brand Plucked from the Fire, 72-76.

38 For some examples of this, see Smith, An Autobiography, 134, 207, 262; Foote, A Brand Plucked from the Fire, 103, 108.

Nonetheless, the eyes of the spiritual reoriented the women’s position in the social hierarchies of the day and gave them a sense of empowerment. Smith described an urgent impulse to shout praises to God one morning at the white holiness church. Expecting disapproval from the reserved white worshipers surrounding her, she got to her feet but restrained herself, only to hear a voice inside her, quoting the Scriptures: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Understanding this as the work of the Holy Spirit, reminding her that she was equal with the white parishioners in the eyes of Christ, Smith recounted, “As I looked at white people that I had always seemed to be afraid of, now they looked so small.” She shouted glory to Jesus and after the service testified to a group of white worshipers that she had been sanctified.40 Years later, when the National Holiness Association held a camp meeting in Knoxville Tennessee, some of Smith’s white sanctified brothers discouraged her from attending because “they were afraid it would hurt their movement.” However, after praying Smith felt a deep conviction to attend the meeting anyway, and a group of white sanctified women provided her the money to attend. Despite her fears of the Ku Klux Klan, she traveled southward and gave her testimony at the meeting, tapping into a divine power that transcended her fears of racial violence.41

While the message of the northern headwaters of the holiness movement did not topple social and economic systems of oppression, it created liminal spaces where men and women, black and white, operated as spiritual equals. It also empowered many reformers to insist on the spiritual necessity of improvement of society’s ills. This association of the holiness movement

40 Ibid., 79-80.
41 Ibid., 207.
with northern reform movements, namely the abolition of slavery, ensured that most white southerners would initially distance themselves from it. It also proved slow to take hold in the Midwest, but, even as the forces of industrialization had facilitated holiness’ spread in the North, the sense of moral decay in the face of growing industrialization would prove a reason for its spread in both regions.

*Southern and Midwestern Confluences*

The Civil War solidified southern suspicion of the holiness movement, but during the 1880s, with Reconstruction fading, the ministry of holiness began to flow southward. The flexibility that had traversed the boundaries between Protestant denominations proved able to create a form of holiness that could cross regional boundaries, one that condemned materialism and the moral dangers of industrialization. A split between urban and rural practitioners of holiness began to characterize the movement as it spread through the Midwest and the South.

The roots of southern holiness extended before the 1840s, when some southerners had sought entire sanctification at revivals, before sectional tensions heightened. Several prominent southern Methodists claimed to experience sanctification through the ministry of Lovick Pierce, including Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke. Much debate, but very little doctrine, centered on sanctification in the region in the early nineteenth century. At first, the Civil War solidified southern ambivalence toward the holiness movement, and the theology of Christian perfection fell out of favor as sectionalism intensified. In the immediate postwar period, southerners
remained suspicious of “religious carpetbaggers.”  

The revivals of the Second Great Awakening had been deeply entwined with the growth of industry and transportation in the North and the new religious currents, initially, did not flow southward. Further, the association with northern reformers, and particularly abolitionists, ensured that holiness did not meet with white popular reception in the South until the Civil War had ended.  

Throughout the 1880s, holiness evangelists retooled their message of sanctification to address the needs and concerns of black and white southerners as industrialization of the Gilded Age affected the region. A number of radical, rural holiness leaders traversed between the Midwest and the South on the newly constructed Cotton Belt Route. They encouraged adherents to seek a variety of experiences beyond sanctification including a baptism of fire, speaking in tongues, and ecstatic religious fervor. The challenges rural midwesterners faced were similar to those of rural southerners, and many holiness evangelists traveled between the two regions. The boundary between northern and southern Midwest was more permeable than decades previous. Benjamin Harden Irwin traveled between Iowa, Georgia, and Oklahoma; Charles Parham ministered between Texas and Kansas; and Ambrose Jessup Tomlinson, an Indiana Quaker, set up churches in North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee.  

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42 George Watson a Virginia preacher who had fought for the Confederacy drifted to the North after the war and received ministerial training from northern Methodists. He returned to the South in the late 1860s where he was called a “Yankee” or “black George” because he belonged to a “black Republican church.” Randall Stephens provides an in-depth consideration why holiness did not spread to the Old South until the 1880s: Stephens, The Fire Spreads, 15-55.  


Catherine, who had experienced sanctification in Jacksonville, Illinois, relocated to east Texas where he traveled as a holiness preacher with a band of followers in 1877.45

The most successful holiness evangelists in the South after the Civil War treaded carefully away from sectional politics or Radical Republican demands for racial justice. As Jim Crow ascended in the South, ideas about racial equality and integration were unwelcome, but northern abandonment of their commitment to racial justice quieted tensions. Across denominations northern, white Christians reconciled with the South under the banner of white nationalism in the 1870s and 1880s. Northern churches ceded to white southern control at the expense of African American freedom. Moderate northerners quieted the demands of prewar reformers, insisting that union with the South was a greater good than social change.46

When the Wallaces and other evangelists arrived from above the Mason-Dixon line in the late 1870s, white Democrats had just regained control of the region. Texas elites viewed Wallace and other transplanted holiness evangelists skeptically. Wallace’s preaching against materialism (or as holiness folk put it “worldliness”) and tobacco did not endear him to those who experimented with tobacco cultivation to boost the New South’s economy. B.F. Cassaway, who assisted in the east Texas holiness meetings, remembered “that strong opposition sprang up against it, and as this opposition was especially strong on the part of the wealthier members of the churches, the presiding elder and numbers of the preachers soon arrayed themselves against the doctrines.”47 To many white southerners who had experienced significant losses in capital

46 Blum, Reforging the White Republic, 3-4.
47 Macum Phelan, History of the Expansion of Methodism in Texas, 1867-1902 (Dallas, TX: Mathis, Van Nort Co.: c. 1937) 118-9
and social status with the abolition of slavery, the holiness evangelists’ condemnation of tobacco was regressive.

However, those who were disaffected by materialism and moral decay of industrial change found the message of sanctification compelling. As Randall Stephens has written, holiness men and women might be either beneficiaries or victims of the New South, but all expressed concern for the moral decay of economic expansion and even identified with the poor.48 Texans in the Cotton Belt and wheat farmers in the Midwest shared a dissatisfaction with the growth of wealth and industry in the Gilded Age. Rural holiness folk banded together, across state and sectional lines, to oppose increased formality in church, middle class pursuits, and worldliness.49

Rural midwestern forms of holiness also embraced this radical and enthusiastic religiosity. Like rural southerners, they felt manipulated by the pace and distribution of industrial growth. Agricultural overproduction, encouraged by industrial capitalists, had led to a massive wheat harvest but then a sudden drop in prices in 1887. Even greater economic insecurity arrived with a nationwide depression in 1893. The economic turmoil raised the ire of rural farmers who felt victimized by the greed of wealthy urban financiers. Many spoke with their ballot by voting forty five members of the Populist Party into Congress between 1891 and 1902. Others searched for answers in the spiritual world. Holiness religion could provide a meaningful response to the economic losses and uncertainty that wheat farmers faced.50

While Populists and holiness folk highlighted the dangers of industrialization, they also benefited from some of the economic developments of the age. The recently constructed Cotton Belt Route on the Houston and Texas Central Railroad allowed holiness evangelists like Wallace to share sanctification with northeast Texans, just as promoters of agrarian reform traveled the rail lines to spread the Populist vision.\textsuperscript{51} Advancements in mass printing of newspapers and distribution of literature also aided the growth of the holiness movement and the Populist movement alike. Wallace maintained a relationship with his sanctified flock in Illinois from afar by soliciting their subscriptions for an Illinois holiness periodical \textit{The Banner of Holiness} edited by John P. Brooks, and Phoebe Palmer’s holiness journal, \textit{A Guide to Holiness}, also circulated.\textsuperscript{52} The technological advancements of the Gilded Age made this possible.

As holiness spread to the Midwest and the South, and as evangelists discarded a concern for racial justice, sectional lines became increasingly insignificant. No longer would animosity between the North and South fuel political and social turmoil. New divisions would spring up that conformed more specifically to socioeconomic situations, philosophical differences, and modes of practice.

\textit{New Sectional Lines and the Growth of Radical Enthusiasts}

By the turn of the century new sectional lines had split the holiness movement and the nation. A division cast by the second Industrial Revolution separated those who attempted to

\textsuperscript{51} Charles Postel, \textit{The Populist Vision} (Oxford University Press, 2007).

\textsuperscript{52} Stephens, \textit{The Fire Spreads}, 48.
maintain a rural, agrarian lifestyle from urban industrialists. The radical holiness movement in
the late nineteenth century reflected and encouraged this division.

Many of those disaffected by the problems of industrial growth enjoyed the familiarity of
old-time religion in the holiness movement. Holiness meetings reminded pious southerners of
early nineteenth-century camp meetings in Kentucky and Tennessee. At the National Holiness
Association’s meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1872 one observer remarked that it invoked
“the camps of early pioneers of Methodism, when Peter Cartwright and his colleagues carried the
banner of the cross into the wilderness.” Aging revivalists from the early nineteenth century such
as Peter Cartwright expressed disdain with the materialistic turn of the Methodist Church toward
the end of the century. Lovick Pierce, who had been a southern holiness preacher before the Civil
War, even insisted in 1879 that a lack of sanctification had caused this materialistic turn.
Believers no longer sought perfect love which would free them from their earthly attachments.
Through their identification with the holiness movement, rural southerners could resist the
growing influence of middle class culture and materialism in the New South, and reconnect with
their pious frontier past. However, in the modernizing New South, mainstream Methodist
churches and even moderate holiness folks considered some of the practices, theories, and beliefs
of radical holiness folk backward.

An 1879 revival in Corsicana, Texas, led by N. J. Haynes exemplified this tension.
Texan leaders expressed concerns about the social dangers of these rural radical holiness folk,
unconstrained by denominational discipline. An offshoot of Wallace’s holiness movement, the
Corsicana revival led by Haynes was particularly concerning. The local Methodist paper warned

53 Ibid., 19-21.
loyal churchmen that these “Corsicana Enthusiasts” had devolved to fanaticism, claiming “extraordinary ‘gifts’ bestowed in the apostolic days…[such as] speak[ing] with tongues; heal[ing] the sick; [and] direct and frequent revelations.” Even more moderate holiness folks found the belief that entire sanctification would mean salvation from death backward. A local mob took action and ran the main leader of this revival, Haynes, out of town. Later, a Methodist chronicler of the holiness movement blamed the fanaticism in Corsicana on the Cumberland Presbyterians, a denomination with an unruly history on the Kentucky frontier. Those who envisioned a “New South” wanted to turn away from the uncivilized frontier past. When holiness evangelist Dennis Rogers later returned to Texas he found that certain members of the community, including those who insisted that holiness folk were Mormons and practiced polygamy, considered the sanctified with some derision.

At the same time, Harden Wallace gained a significant following in east Texas due to this tension with modernity. The region became an important base for the holiness movement. The Texas Holiness Association and annual camp meetings, both of which he started, continued to meet after he left in 1880 for his next mission, Southern California. A camp meeting Wallace established in Scottsville in 1887 continued for many years after and became an important annual holiness event. The Texas Holiness University was also founded in 1898, sponsored by the

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57 Dennis Rogers, Holiness Pioneering in the Southland (Hemet, CA, 1944) 16.
Holiness Association of Texas. Houston, further south on the Cotton Belt, would also become an important site of early Pentecostal fervor in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The opposition of mainstream churches fueled, rather than quelled, the holiness movement. Many radical holiness folks insisted that opposition signified the end times, while more moderate sanctified men and women, mostly from the Northeast, sought to maintain allegiance with mainline denominations. The more radical saints looked heavenward for signs and wonders indicating that the Second Coming was imminent.

In the Midwest, those from the more moderate National Camp Meeting Association, which had sprouted from holiness fervor coming out of Phoebe Palmer’s meetings in the Northeast in 1867, nurtured a postmillennial view of the end times. They believed that Christians had a duty to be a part of God’s redemption of the world before Christ would return. Postmillennialism fit into the northern streams of social reform and improvement, a belief that the United States was becoming the moral and spiritual leader of the world. This moderate holiness stream, which maintained close ties to northern Methodism, moved westward with the establishment of national camp meetings first in New Jersey in 1867, then Ohio by 1871, and Lansing Michigan in 1887.

Horace Holdridge was one of these more moderate holiness preachers who tried to keep his ties with the Methodist church as he moved westward. He was born in Albany, New York in 1821, in a region at the center of both the Industrial Revolution and religious awakening. The first successful steamboat line, the intersection of several turnpikes, and the ambitious Erie Canal project all reached Albany around the time of his birth. As Holdridge grew older, many northern

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58 Ibid., 22, 50.
industrialists looked westward as they considered how to connect farmlands of Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa to the manufacturing and trade routes centered in New York. As part of the northern headwaters of the holiness movement, Holdridge had a transformative religious experience he described as his conversion in 1837. He attended some of the meetings that spawned from Phoebe Palmer’s original “Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness,” which birthed the American holiness movement. He experienced the gift of perfection at age 18 and began preaching for the northern Methodist Church.

Holdridge married and started a family on a small farm in Conklin, New York with only a handful of dairy cows and a couple of pigs while he continued to preach. Stories of folks who had headed to Ohio, Illinois, and the Great Lakes region as he came of age in Albany, a transportation hub, would have surrounded him. Holdridge first moved his family to the town of Amboy, Illinois, where the Illinois Central Railroad had begun buying land, and settlers had established a town in anticipation of economic opportunity. Holdridge took a job as a teamster, likely finding that trade was a more lucrative industry than farming. He continued to preach although moderating his discussion of entire sanctification such that none in his family experienced sanctification in the Midwest.

A small group of Mormons also inhabited the town. These were remnants of a community that had fled to Illinois in 1840 from the violence of a Missouri militia and continued on to Utah in 1844 led by Brigham Young. Holdridge may have found the tension unpleasant, because his family moved further west to Iowa one year later. Rail lines had begun to reach the


60 United States Census Bureau, 1850, 1870, 1880.
eastern corners of Iowa, but the Illinois Central Railroad would not cross the state until 1867. In the town of Boonesboro, on the edge of the rail line, Horace preached for an English-speaking Evangelical (or Lutheran) church because they had a greater need for preachers than the Methodists. In 1875 his daughter Josephine and her husband James Washburn continued the family’s westward trajectory, leaving Iowa for California.61

At a gathering of midwestern holiness leaders at the Chicago Holiness Association meeting in 1885 it had become clear that a rift was developing between these northern, moderate streams who hoped to maintain positive connections to the Methodist Church, and rural, radical holiness streams who insisted on founding independent congregations.62 The rural, radical factions of the holiness movement, which arose in both the South and the Midwest, separated decidedly from mainline Protestant denominations, insisting that they had become too worldly. A belief in the premillennial Second Coming of Christ precipitated their urgency: Jesus was returning soon and would separate the true believers from the unredeemed. Increasing religious fervor and countercultural practices — such as interracial worship — were all signs that the end times were imminent.63 While the radical holiness communities remained outside of mainline Protestantism, and dispersed throughout the region, periodicals and traveling evangelists circulated their diverse religious ideas widely. Disconnection from the moderating influence of a mainline denomination facilitated radical practices and beliefs.

61 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 323.
A diversity of religious ideologies and doctrines influenced Charles Parham, a holiness preacher in Kansas, who began preaching in the Methodist church, but left it in 1895 because he disapproved of the denominational hierarchy. After reading about divine healing and experiencing a miraculous recovery from illness in 1897, he began to preach God as the Great Physician and moved his headquarters to Topeka. He investigated other holiness groups such as the Fire-Baptized Holiness folk in Kansas, the Shiloh community in Maine, and others throughout the Midwest in 1900. Traveling by rail and learning about new doctrines through print journals, Parham decided to finance his ministry “on faith,” or without asking for funding, only praying for God to provide. Through his travels and reading, he adopted teachings on the gift of speaking in tongues, beliefs in divine healing, an eschatology that Jesus’ Second Coming was imminent and a racial theory that Anglo-Saxons were the true descendants of God’s chosen people, the Israelites. He traveled throughout Kansas and Missouri holding tent revivals until he heard the unmistakeable voice of God telling him “Go to the Southland” in 1905. Followers encouraged him to obey, that the warmer climate may aid his ill health. He traveled by train to Orchard, Texas, where he led a successful revival that inspired him to remain in the Lone Star State, launching revival campaigns in the Houston-Galveston area.

Parham came of age in Kansas at a time of radical Protestant activism, but also of economic boom and bust in the late 1880s, when the population doubled. A growing dissatisfaction with the industrialization of the Gilded Age encouraged rural Kansans to look to either the Populist Party or the holiness movement (or sometimes both) for meaning and vision. Both movements insisted that elites had abused their power and material wealth, and both looked
to a restoration of evangelical faith. As Populists found that they did not have the power to shift the American economy in favor of agriculturalists, many looked to religion.⁶⁴

Ambrose Jessup Tomlinson, who suffered a stinging defeat as the Hamilton County auditor in Indiana under the Populist Party in 1892, soon gave up on a politics of dissent and instead chose a religion of dissent in the holiness movement. In 1893, a year in which serious economic depression rocked the nation, particularly the rural Midwest, Tomlinson experienced entire sanctification. Perhaps the failure of political activism to prevent such economic crisis, and Tomlinson’s transformative religious experience, encouraged him to turn away from Populism. “My interest in politics,” he wrote “vanished so rapidly that I was almost surprised.” The following year he refused to even vote, instead insisting that he would only “vote for Jesus.” Although Tomlinson may have left the Populist Party, elements of the politics of rural dissent continued to circulate within the atmosphere of the radical rural holiness movement. He traveled throughout the same region that had been mobilized by Populists, instead insisting that entire sanctification was the answer to growing rural dissatisfaction, not Free Silver. In 1903 he was invited to join and pastor a particularly radical congregation in Cleveland, Tennessee which had claimed to have witnessed speaking in tongues at a revival in 1896. He expanded the evangelical reach of this congregation to establish other churches in eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina, and northern Georgia.⁶⁵

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⁶⁵ Robins, A.J. Tomlinson, 110-113. Tomlinson’s Church of God (Cleveland, TN) would identify as Pentecostal in 1907 after attending a revival led by a participant from the Azusa Street Revival, Gaston B. Cashwell, and adopting the doctrine that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. See Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition, 79.
Holiness communities in the rural Midwest and South at the turn of the century essentially constituted laboratories of religious innovation and experimentation. More moderate holiness folks also invaded the region from the Northeast establishing camp meetings and holiness associations that remained connected to the Methodist church. However, rural adherents’ discontent with the social and economic turmoil that farmers had faced attracted them to new radical doctrines, particularly if they departed from the mainline or the middle class. Innovations in transportation and communication meant these open, pious farmers had greater access to literature on new doctrines and practices. And finally, their disconnect from denominational hierarchies and even geographic isolation allowed rural holiness folk to shout, seek healing, and anticipate the end times independent of ecclesiastical authorities.

Racial Interchange in the Holiness Movement

The openness of holiness doctrine to new teachings and the swift circulation of ideas and practices through publications, meant that holiness ideologies of race were complex and sometimes contradictory. Several scholars have remarked on the flexibility of social mores within early Pentecostals and holiness folk. Indeed, people other than white men often took positions of leadership and influence in the community, and worship across segregated lines of race was not uncommon.66 In 1901, William Godbey used scripture to argue that “the black man mixed up with the Jews in the early ministry of the gospel, no distinction whatever being recognized,” and therefore interracial worship should not be prohibited.67 Nevertheless, even the


most progressive holiness folks were not able to transcend or discard the racial hierarchies of the day. A benevolent paternalism rooted in notions of black inferiority pervaded even the most enlightened conversations about race, in the North or South. With some exceptions, most holiness groups cultivated a belief that African Americans were spiritually equal while ignoring social, political, economic, and cultural forces that promoted white supremacy.

Some holiness ministers subscribed to the idea that African Americans were uniquely spiritual. Benjamin Irwin, founder of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Association, especially found the religion of poor southern blacks both exotic and desirable, insisting that their emotional fervor reflected the Holy Spirit’s influence. After visiting a meeting of black worshipers in Abbeville, South Carolina, he remarked at the distinctive nature of black spiritual expression: “The colored people dance before the Lord differently than our white people….Such singing, such shouting, such dancing, such praying it has never before been our privilege to hear. Many of these poor colored people (rich in faith and perfect in love) have the real baptism of fire, and the hell-shaking dynamite.” The emotional fervor and physical expression of this African American congregation authenticated their true sanctification. Scholar Curtis J. Evans has called this portrayal of black religious expression as both unfamiliar and commendable as the “burden of black religion.” As Evans demonstrated, “white images of black religion had an almost ethereal, romanticized quality about them and rarely touched on the actual cultural and practical work that could bring the nation closer to some semblance of racial harmony and political-economic

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68 Benjamin Irwin, “Editorial Correspondence,” Live Coals of Fire, November 3, 1899, 1.
equality.” Irwin would have certainly discarded such socio-economic and political concerns as worldly.

When mainline blacks worshiped in a more subdued manner, Irwin expressed concern. He encouraged an A.M.E. church in Lincoln, Nebraska to throw off social constraints and show their religious fervor physically, writing in a letter to the congregation, “I would to God you would get saved up to the dancing point; saved so they would send the police around to see what is the matter, and talk about sending you to the asylum.” He castigated the refusal to engage fully in worship as protecting a middle class reputation and indicative of a failure to fully receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.  

However problematic Irwin’s view of black religious expression might have been, the possibility of racial interchange within holiness communities continued to make them a site for the weakening of racial barriers. Even in the segregated South, blacks and whites exchanged cultural and religious practices in revival settings. Black men and women shared their stories in holiness newspapers such as the *Burning Bush*, maintaining a black narrative tradition with relatively little theological reprimand from Protestants who worried about the influence of “heathenish” black religion. In one such article, an unnamed black woman shared her testimony. She described how she had been sick, to the point of death, when she fell into a trance that lasted for several days. Jesus appeared to her and beckoned her to follow and observe what “looked like a black, dry mass” which he explained was her body. Within the body there was “a living spirit

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that shall never die nor can it be destroyed.” Jesus led them on a long journey. “He knew everything that took place, for when I turned around and looked back, He reproved me saying, ‘Keep your eyes on Me.’” They finally entered the gates of heaven, but God told her to go back to earth to warn others that Jesus would return soon. The story’s literary form mirrored the testimonies of formerly enslaved men and women recorded in the early twentieth century. Black men and women recounted physical manifestations of a spiritual death, that “God struck me dead.” Then God or some angelic being would give him or her specific visions of the old self, headed toward death or hell. In a period in which both black and white mainline Protestant ministers sought to distance themselves from religion cultivated in slavery, the Burning Bush acted as a repository for black men and women to maintain black religious culture within a biracial environment.

The revival of traditional camp meetings, which had historically upended social norms, also provided opportunities for alternative race relations. Holiness meetings typically emphasized spiritual experience, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and emotive expression over doctrine, social status, or education. The blurring of these standard social divisions allowed space for alternative ways of relating cross-racially. Even black southern holiness preachers like Alice McNeill and Charles Jones reported leading biracial meetings at times. Charles Jones described his first holiness meeting in the Arkansas delta: "Black and white, Jew and Gentile sought God

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together.” Local authority, common practice, and mob violence insisted on racial separation in religious services, but transient black preachers represented less of a threat.

White traveling evangelists also found greater opportunities to push boundaries of racial interchange, because of their constant motion. Northern saints, whether conducting revivals locally or sojourning to the South, often spoke with greater boldness against racial segregation. Benjamin Irwin’s admiration of black religious expression led him to lead biracial meetings, such as one in Kingstree, South Carolina, at which he described, “A profound interest manifested among the people, both white and colored.” Joseph F. Lundy, a Church of God preacher, claimed that “no race divisions were recognized” at a meeting he attended in the South in the late 1890s. Emphasizing the primacy of the Holy Spirit over southern customs of racial segregation and ideologies of black inferiority, he noted that “all God’s people were free to obey the Lord.”

Further north, in Payne, Ohio, Church of God leaders took a similar strong stance in favor of integrated meetings. In a leaflet for a camp meeting in 1902, they insisted that they opposed the “Color Line,” and invited “the people of every race to be free to come to this meeting.” Organizers insisted that no distinctions would be made “in privileges or charities.” They saw this as a way of showcasing their “otherworldliness” in foregoing social boundaries, at least at the camp meeting.

Even at the most pragmatic level, radical holiness groups offered opportunities for interracial interaction through denominational ordination. The black-founded Church of God in

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76 Charles Price Jones quoted in Clemmons, Bishop C.H. Mason, 8.

77 Harvey, Freedom’s Coming, 107-168.

78 Benjamin Irwin, “Editorial Correspondence” Live Coals of Fire, November 3, 1899, 1.

Christ offered ministerial credentials to both blacks and whites so they could perform marriage ceremonies, receive discounted railroad fares, and object to serving in the armed forces. Although by the twentieth century most holiness-pentecostal congregations were segregated, whites continued to go to Mason’s black church body as the only Pentecostal organization that could offer ministerial licenses.80

Even in the nineteenth century, the space for interracial worship in the South was liminal and tenuous at best. While it was customary for white churches to give black worshipers “the privilege” of seats in the back of any church during services, white southerners retaliated against those who pushed social boundaries. They generally tolerated interracial meetings during a revival period, but policed integration that might become thorough or habitual. For example, when two black sanctified leaders brought their congregations with them to a white-led holiness meeting in Anderson, South Carolina in 1895, white southerners felt threatened. The holiness paper reported that, “All they did was sit peacably in the room and testify to salvation when opportunity afforded,” but, by testifying when the Spirit moved them rather than waiting until after all whites had finished they sounded the alarm for white southerners that such contact “would finally lead to equality between the races.” According to the newspaper, one hundred men gathered in the woods about a mile away and prepared to enact mob violence, causing many to flee. One holiness leader interpreted this event as a test for the sanctified church. Those who had truly received Christian perfection had the courage and love to stand firm in their...

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80 Harvey, Freedom’s Coming, 144.
convictions. The opposition separated the wheat from the chaff, the truly sanctified from the impostors.  

Such incidents reveal the limitations of the holiness movement’s interracialism. It did not and could not disrupt the social order. However, even as the spread from the North to the Jim Crow South and the Midwest diluted the racial radicalism that had characterized northern holiness around the Civil War, integration and ideals of racial equality, on a spiritual level if no other level, remained a hallmark of the movement.

*Racial Ideology in the Holiness Movement*

While the radical holiness movement offered significant alternatives to the white supremacy and segregation of Jim Crow, it never lived up to presentist ideals of multiculturalism. Even those who derided southern racial practices often embodied contemporary Progressive ideals of white benevolence and black inferiority.

Reverend J. Livesy for example, writing in the *Christian Witness and Bible Advocate* in 1886, appealed to a paternalistic sentiment, insisting that racial categories were indeed real and unfair. In his estimation, sanctification would have a profound effect on the post-Reconstruction world, curing the social and emotional wounds of enslavement, while dimming the power of white supremacy. However, Livesy’s interpretation assumed that black men and women needed white benevolence to progress. He insisted that the black community had “a special claim upon Christian sympathy” as “the nation’s and the church’s wards.” It was the responsibility of Christians, and holiness people in particular, to carry the heavy burden of slavery. Indeed, he

believed that only the sanctified could truly move past racial prejudices and speak to black men and women as spiritual brothers and sisters. Thus white holiness men and women held the responsibility of assuring African Americans that “no lines of caste, or of color, restrict the operations of the Holy Spirit; that the experience of purity and of perfect love is not limited to cultured minds, but is for every sin-sick and believing heart.” Everyone was welcome, but some needed greater attention from more “cultured minds.”

Livesy’s vision centered on ignorant, debased African Americans and civilized white Christian spiritual benefactors, but it also suggested that white Americans owed black Americans something. To Livesy, African American men and women after slavery were “embarrassed by all the disadvantages of ignorance, poverty, inexperience in self-government, and the universal debasement of a menial condition.” The deepest rooted problems within the black population included “the old feeling of social and personal inferiority, with its long-cultivated, deeply-rooted habits of fawning sycophancy, or servility, or cringing obsequiousness and abjectness of spirit.” Livesy understood that slavery would have long-term effects on the lives of African American men and women. However, his desire to be part of this change narrowed his vision such that only white Christians could be the actors in the restoration of the black community after slavery.

Like many holiness workers, Livesey looked to the message of sanctification as a catalyst for racial uplift and restoration of black manhood. Beginning with white holiness preachers, “The ‘Spirit of holiness’ will inspire the dark-skinned saints with an irrepressible consciousness of their dignity as redeemed and sanctified MEN -- as common heirs with all saints to the dignities and glories and privileges of ‘the brotherhood.’” The onus was on white sanctified

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pastors, those who benefited from the racial hierarchy, to tell former slaves of their worthiness.

To do this, Livesy insisted that white people needed the purifying work of sanctification as well. Perfection would cleanse them of “the undue assumption of superiority, the domineering insolence, the shameless imperiousness and haughtiness which have not ceased to mark much of their behaviour towards their former chattels.” According to Livesy, holiness would cleanse the stains of racial arrogance and black emasculation. His admonishment of white superiority certainly contrasted with most white Protestants in a Jim Crow America.

William Schell of the Church of God also spoke out directly against racist ideologies pervading the church, in particular those claiming polygenism. In 1901, he wrote over 200 pages discrediting Charles Carroll’s diatribe *The Negro, A Beast* which argued that those of African descent had non-human origins. Schell countered that all people, regardless of race, were created in the image of God as humans, and equally capable of achieving salvation. In fact, those who thought differently were sinful and shameful. “Oh, shame on the man who without a straw of evidence to prove his base and wicked theory would assert that only the Caucasian race is included in the atonement! God be merciful to such a sinner.” Schell also argued against notions that God was white, insisting that his complexion was less important than his righteousness and holiness. Here, if only ideologically, a holiness leader took a clear stand in chastising a theology rooted in pseudo-scientific claims of black inferiority.

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83 Ibid., 2.
85 Schell, *Is the Negro a Beast?*, 139.
86 Ibid., 171-2.
However, Schell asserted another racial ideology rooted in black inferiority. While denying that the African origins of black people were bestial, he nonetheless considered them a detriment to their uplift. He wrote that “we should remember the Southern colored man never had an even start with other races. He was caught a heathen roving over the dark continent of Africa, brought to America and enslaved 249 years, being kept from everything but hard work. . . Being then set free, the laws says he must equal the white man, who is 2000 years ahead of him.” Schell subscribed to the idea that Africans descended from the sons of Ham, their posterity cursed by Noah.\(^\text{87}\) As such, they were condemned to a “low state of barbarism, having no culture or training in civilization, except what they incidentally gathered from their association with the white race, can not be expected to have very exalted views of morality.”\(^\text{88}\) While he sought greater freedom for blacks, he frowned on miscegenation. In fact, he argued the extension of freedoms for African Americans would lead to lower likelihood of “amalgamation.”\(^\text{89}\) Because he believed that those of African origins descended from a state of barbarity, he could not trust their morality.

Neither Schell nor Livesy, even in their ideals, lived up to the present’s conceptions of racial equality. However, within the context of white supremacy and nadir of race relations at the turn of the century, their insistence that black men and women be granted status as spiritual brothers and sisters is worth noting. White strains of holiness would continue to offer a partial refuge for black saints; black holiness communities, by contrast, offered an alternative to partial integration in white churches that drew many.

\(^{87}\) Schell, *Is the Negro a Beast?*, 207.

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 237, 238.

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 236.
The Formation of Black Holiness Communities

Although white leaders and evangelists initially dominated the nineteenth-century holiness movement, black Methodist denominations such as the A. M. E. Church and the A. M. E. Zion Church had subscribed to a theology of perfectionism from their foundings in 1787 and 1800, respectively. The autobiographies of early nineteenth-century black female preachers, Jarena Lee and Zilpha Elaw, attest that sanctification was a significant pursuit of black followers of Wesley at this time. It was not until after the Civil War, as holiness spread South, that a distinctly black holiness movement emerged. Black female preachers would be intrinsic to its spread.90

Northern women, black and white, acted as initial conduits of holiness to freedpeople in the South after the Civil War. A white Baptist missionary who felt the call to minister to the southern black population at a revival meeting at Oberlin University, Joanna Moore, was one of the first to reintroduce the message of sanctification in the 1870s. In 1884 she formed small groups or Bible Bands of black women in southern Louisiana. Moore trained black women leaders to facilitate these groups, teaching other women to read the Bible and eventually start their own Bible Bands using Moore’s Hope magazine. By 1888 there were 90 bands with 1,683 members. This magazine also gave testimonies and instructions for receiving sanctification.91

Like white holiness folk, black sanctified men and women benefited from the developments of the modern world. While they shrewdly employed rail travel and print culture

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91 Butler, Sanctified Women in the Church of God in Christ, 15-17.
for the sake of the sanctified gospel, discrimination in both the North and South shaped their opportunities. Thus, the networks of black holiness communities looked different and sometimes less extensive than those white preachers had established. Early black holiness evangelists in the South initially had less mobility; the founders of the first black holiness denomination the Church of God in Christ, Charles Mason and Charles Price Jones, spent most of their early ministry in the Delta region.

While black holiness folk involved in biracial communities in the urban areas of the Midwest or far West often found more opportunities for mobility, early black-founded holiness denominations initially remained rooted in the Arkansas and Mississippi deltas. Between 1875 and 1900 railroad executives had spurred on the growth of railroads in the region, so that by the new century it was covered in a web of track. Passenger fares decreased and railroad companies offered reduced fares for black ministers and large groups traveling to conventions and meetings. These railway connections would eventually allow C.H. Mason to travel to Southern California to witness the Azusa Street Revival in 1907.

Railroads also led to a new spirit of sectarianism. Before the railroads arrived, black worshipers often went to the nearest church with a preacher, disregarding denomination. However, after the railroads arrived, Delta blacks often migrated near railroad depots. The growing populations, clustered around train stations, meant more churches in each town, and an increased sense of loyalty to one’s denomination. While the arrival of the railroad meant greater mobility for Delta blacks, it also reminded them of their second-class citizenship, with a separate

ticket counter and waiting room, and placement in the baggage car or the smoker car; the Supreme Court decision of Plessy v. Ferguson affirmed these practices in 1896.93

Black Baptist women enjoyed more minimal mobility, but print publications spread their message. Lizzie Robinson, a Black Baptist, became an exceptional recruiter for Joanna Moore’s Bible Bands, and credited Hope magazine for her sanctification. In 1908 Robinson reported that she had started thirty-five Bible Bands, sold one hundred people a Bible and Hope magazine, made 900 visits to homes and held 500 prayer meetings. In her visits she would read the daily lesson from Hope and explain how to study it. The Hope magazine connected black sanctified women, not just to others in their local community, but also to a larger network of southern holiness women. They read each other’s letters to the magazine, prayed for one another, and shared testimonies of sanctification. Although black women in the South were not able to travel on transcontinental rail lines to the extent to which white men did, print culture broadened their reach beyond their own region.94

The ministry of black women involved in biracial holiness communities from the North also expanded the southern black holiness movement, particularly the Church of God. Enterprising black women made use of their limited financial resources to introduce the doctrine of holiness to southern communities both black and white. For example, Jane Williams of the Church of God first preached and taught holiness between Charleston, South Carolina and Augusta, Georgia in 1886. White ministers of the Church of God did not begin their ministry there until 1889.95

93 Giggie, After Redemption, 38.

94 Butler, Sanctified Women in the Church of God in Christ, 23; Stephens, Fire Spreads, 46, 77

95 Massey, African Americans and the Church of God, 26.
Even those black holiness communities founded by men ascribed their experiences of sanctification and spirituality to women who had ministered to them. The accounts of early leaders of black holiness denominations attest to the influence of these women. Charles Harrison Mason and Charles Price Jones both received the message of sanctification through the prayers and testimony of women. Jones received sanctification soon after seeing Joanna Moore preach and receiving her benediction and assurance that Jesus would make him holy. Mason received sanctification in response to reading black evangelist Amanda Berry Smith’s account of her own perfection.96

While the message of sanctification compelled Mason and Jones to walk away from their Baptist and Methodist churches and create new religious communities, in many ways the religion they practiced was not new for black southerners. Sanctification was already in the atmosphere of the Mississippi and Arkansas deltas at the turn of the century due to the work of Bible Bands, holiness newspapers, and traveling evangelists, but also the religious practices of the formerly enslaved. Both Mason and Jones drew connections between their faith and the spirituality of their mothers and grandmothers in slavery. Mason, in particular, clearly fostered a spirituality that referenced his imagining of slave religion. As a child, Mason prayed with his mother earnestly that “above all things for God to give him a religion like the one he had heard about from the old slaves and seen demonstrated in their lives.”97 Many of his followers would later connect some of Mason’s practices to the history of black religion. His daughter remarked that “it seemed God endowed him with supernatural characteristics, which were manifested in

96 Butler, Sanctified Women, 26.

dreams and visions that followed him through life." Other followers of Mason remembered how he often preached using elements somewhat reminiscent of conjure traditions, such as picking up a stick shaped like a snake, or a potato shaped like a pig’s head, and from these divining messages from God. While the trajectory of such practices is likely not unidirectional and linear, their connection to the slave past is significant.

The holiness movement offered a home to those who longed to connect their religious experience to this past. The church that Charles Price Jones pastored as he began to adopt a more radical holiness doctrine, Mt. Helm Baptist Church, was a former slave church. While white supervision had sanctioned slave use of the basement of the nearby First Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, the Mt. Helm Baptist Church had been a place of secret meetings at sunrise on Sunday mornings while patrols slept. After emancipation, freedpeople had formed their own congregation on the same site. This church’s history may have influenced its congregation’s decision to adopt holiness and Jones, breaking from the Baptist Church and middle class religion.

Despite limited access to financial resources and transportation, the black holiness movement also experienced significant growth in the late nineteenth century. Holiness communities allowed black believers to break from ideals of white middle class restraint while

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98 Harvey, Freedom’s Coming 143.

99 Harvey, Freedom’s Coming, 145. In a tract written by Mason, he linked practices considered heathenish or imprudent, to a higher divine inspiration, likely in response to derision for his church’s expression of worship through movement. He considered "Should the Saints Dance?", giving evidence from the Bible of holy characters who danced as a form of worship. "The word of the Lord says: 'Let them praise Him in the dance' (Ps. 149:3, also 150:4)... 'There is a time of dance or a time of dancing' (Eccl. 3:4). 'David danced before the Lord with all his might' (2 Sam. 6:14). 'We may sing and dance' (1 Sam. 21:11). 'When God builds up his people as they are to be built up, then shall they go forth in the dance' (Jer. 31:4)."

Clemmons, Bishop C.H. Mason, 41.

100 Clemmons, Bishop C.H. Mason, 41.
also referencing and integrating elements of religion from generations past. The model would both attract many and repulse many.

Mason and Jones formed their black holiness communities amid a period of tension within the church. Middle class Christians, both black and white, had a history of disdain for traditional African American practice, fearing it meant that “heathenish” exercises would contaminate the purity of Christianity. In the late nineteenth century, at the end of Reconstruction, black Baptists and Methodists insisted that to battle white supremacy the black community needed to prove its respectability. Therefore, they assimilated to white middle class values with great fervor. In 1888, Daniel Alexander Payne, a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, for example, expressed concern for the “praying and singing bands” he witnessed at a “bush meeting.” Payne described what he had seen in a previous visit to the South, the traditional ring shout “After the sermon they formed a ring, and with coats off sung, clapped their hands and stamped their feet in a most ridiculous and heathenish way.” Payne immediately insisted to the leader that they stop this practice. “I told him also that it was a heathenish way to worship and disgraceful to themselves, the race, and the Christian name. In that instance they broke up their ring; but would not sit down, and walked sullenly away.” Payne was concerned that continuing the practice of the ring shout would not just pollute Christian practice, but also subvert his efforts to elevate the black community.

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Black holiness folk sought to maintain elements of spirituality passed down from older
generations, while also negotiating with or confronting claims that they were “savage” or
“heathenish.” Black holiness preacher Irvine Lowery in 1885 feared that “many of our older
people, as well as some of our younger ones, cling to many of their old slavery-time ideas” and
missed the biblical standards of holy living. Lowery seemed particularly concerned about one
misconception that true sanctification would kill a person. A common trope in slave religion
described how God might strike the seeker dead once he or she entered a state of trance. He may
have also witnessed African American believers practice certain folkways or conjure as some
blacks maintained these practices along with Christianity.102

Black holiness churches negotiated a complicated space. While they offered a refuge for
black saints unavailable to them in white or interracial churches, their practice represented a
threat to what many blacks saw as their best chance to overcome white supremacy: a complete
break from denigrated slavery practices. Nonetheless the echoes of those practices offered a
home to those who longed for that familiarity.

Divergent Experiences of Black Holiness Preachers

Some black holiness men and women learned of sanctification in the biracial holiness
communities of the North and Midwest. After the end of Reconstruction, as white southerners
retook control of Dixie, many formerly enslaved men and women exercised their freedom of
mobility and their disdain for Jim Crow by migrating to the North. One black evangelist, Susan

102 Irvine Lowery, “The Need for Holiness Evangelists Among the Colored People,” Christian Witness and
Bible Advocate, November 19, 1885, 1. Clifton H. Johnson, ed., God Struck Me Dead: Religious
Fogg recounted that when she first met Mr. and Mrs. Harvey, the leaders of the Burning Bush movement, she said, “Them’s my people.” She described this identification as more than a matter of shared belief, describing their worship practices as similar to her own: “I was glad to see some white people who could jump, and praise the Lord.”\textsuperscript{103} Although her experience of religion was quite different from the Harveys’ — her needs and hopes as a black washerwoman differing from those of a white minister — their faith found a similar expression in the holiness movement.

However, this is not to say that both groups understood one another perfectly. Like Benjamin Irwin, the \textit{Burning Bush} evinced an understanding of black people as endowed with distinct spiritual authority. Its description of Susan Fogg, remarked that God “tells Susan things that nobody else seems to get.”\textsuperscript{104} As proof the newspaper recounted that Fogg had prayed that God would send their pastor to a meeting in Kewanee, Illinois, and alerted the others that he would be there; the meeting concluded without the anticipated arrival, and as the leaders prayed in the parlor after the services, a preacher named Duke Farson arrived. \textit{Burning Bush} summed up, “God had told her all about it. . . Susan [who could not read or write] has no way of telling except by the throne. Her heavenly telephone was working.” The writers may have been trying to highlight an irony, that an ignorant black woman could have special gifts. While they likely misunderstood and underestimated Susan’s worldly abilities as an African American woman, they had respect for her relationship with God as something outside their realm of experience.\textsuperscript{105}

Regardless of white holiness believers’ understanding or misunderstanding of black religion, African American men and women took advantage of opportunities to lead within these

\textsuperscript{103} Susan Fogg, \textit{Burning Bush}, September 3, 1903, 5

\textsuperscript{104} Curtis J. Evans, \textit{The Burden of Black Religion} (Oxford University Press, 2008).

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Burning Bush}, October 8, 1903, 4
radical holiness communities. Anna McNeill, a Fire-Baptized black female evangelist, described preaching outdoors in Southport, North Carolina in 1899 “to quite a number of whites and my own color” claiming she fought Satan, stirred the devil, and received “the best wishes of both white and colored.” The black traveling preacher and evangelist Amanda Berry Smith received financial support and prayers from subscribers to God’s Revivalist in Chicago, as she opened a home for orphans in Chicago. William E. Fuller of Moundsville, South Carolina played a significant role as a planter and administrator of several black Fire-Baptized congregations in the South. When he first defected from the A.M.E. church, he organized a band of four holiness followers. A few months later, their numbers had already increased to thirty-six. The founder of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Association also insisted that Fuller had “the confidence of both white and black in the community in which he lives.”

Susan Fogg felt called to save both black and white souls, and in particular, encourage them to make restitution for past sins. “You think that is all left to the negroes, and the white people need not make restitution, but they are just as guilty.” She even responded to criticism that her purpose was to invoke white guilt: “Some people think I have come to the North to tell you people how they treated my mother and grandmother. If they had gotten religion they would have been all right, and I want to tell you I am not ‘round finding fault with white folks or negroes, but I want to tell both that they must get salvation.” She countered that she did not wish to judge white men and women but give them the freedom of salvation. Susan’s direct


107 Live Coals of Fire, October, 27, 1899; Stephens, Fire Spreads, 82-83.
confrontation of white believers, along with her own community, spoke to both her exceptional boldness and the opportunities which the holiness movement afforded.\textsuperscript{108}

In the holiness community, leadership was appointed without regard for social status or education. As such, black men and women and white women could claim authority, not through knowledge of doctrine, class, or education, but through their testimony. Fuller published his in \textit{Live Coals of Fire} as proof of his divine credentials, “I went down before God and got the wonderful experience of the fire, which filled my entire being. Then I cried aloud, ‘Here am I, Lord, send me’ (Isa. 6:8). Ever since that time I have been preaching the fire, and God has been wonderfully blessing my labor.” No holiness follower dared question Fuller’s authority once God had ordained it. Using expressive language shared by white and black holiness folk, he also described experiencing, “the mighty, hell-shaking dynamite that helps us and enables us to pray down the eternal zigzag lightning that will strike men and women to the heart.” By claiming to receive authority from such a powerful, dynamic force, Fuller counteracted southern ideologies of black inferiority.\textsuperscript{109} In a period when black men were belittled, and those who sought upward mobility were considered threatening, the FBHA took a significantly radical stance in supporting their leadership.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Burning Bush}, September 3, 1903, 5.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Live Coals of Fire}, January 26, 1900, 1

\textsuperscript{110} Another example of this can be found in the leader Isaac Gamble. Born in slavery, and a domestic servant after emancipation, Isaac Gamble also felt a call to preach and found support in the biracial FBHA community. Irwin remarked, after visiting a meeting in Kingstree, South Carolina, “Bro. Gamble was born and raised in this place and his life has been a standing proof of the reality of the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification.” A traveling man living in Charleston also attested to Gamble’s character, “no truer or more consistent Christian than Isaac Gamble could be found anywhere in South Carolina.” \textit{Live Coals of Fire}, November 3, 1899, 1.
Although in need of more conclusive primary source evidence, it is possible that William Seymour, the leader of the Azusa Street Revival, was among these black ministers in biracial holiness communities of the Midwest. Pentecostal biographers have claimed that William Seymour was ordained by the Evening Light Saints, the group that published the *Gospel Trumpet*.111 Another radical holiness paper, the *Burning Bush*, published a testimony in 1903 of “an old colored saint who is full of the Holy Ghost” they identified as Brother Seymour, which may have been William Seymour. It is likely that he had begun preaching holiness by the year of publication. “Brother” Seymour’s language on the love of God echoes the sermons and writings of William Seymour in Los Angeles: “You may jump and shout, but if you have not the love of God you cannot be a Bible Christian...you can fool each other here but you cannot fool God.”112

Both inside and outside the holiness movement, a cadre of black millennialist preachers at the turn of the century envisioned a greater racial destiny for black America connected to the Second Coming. To black millennialists, the restoration of the earth concurrent with Jesus’ return would include the resolution of the “race problem.” Irvine Lowery of Cheraw, South Carolina, pushed for support of ministries to the African American community because he believed their salvation and sanctification was in preparation for some greater work. Just as God had a purpose for the Israelites’ slavery in Egypt, “so He had an object in bringing the colored people, or suffering them to be brought to this country.” Many, like Lowery, believed this object was the transformation of Africa into a Christian, civilized continent. Black holiness folk would find the


112 “Brother Seymour’s Testimony,” *Burning Bush* May 28, 1903, 5
redemption of their enslavement in Africa. “We were brought here to be civilized and Christianized, and then to go back, and bring Africa, with her teeming millions, to Christ and to heaven.”\textsuperscript{113} Scholars of black religion have argued that pan-Africanism, as well as racist concepts of Western civilization and African barbarity, rooted such motivations, that the destinies of African Americans and Africa were intimately connected. Indeed, missions to Africa became especially prominent in the black church during this period.\textsuperscript{114} In the first decade of the twentieth century, Julia Hutchins, a black holiness minister in Southern California, would feel called to a mission in Liberia, necessitating her assignment of William Seymour to replace her ministry in Los Angeles.

In both biracial and black holiness communities, African American men and women found opportunities for leadership and influence. The lack of centralized institutions governing sanctified practice, a belief in the power of the Holy Spirit to influence anyone regardless of race or gender, and a conviction that the end times were imminent, made space most Christian communities could not readily access. Like white holiness men and women, they had complex relationships with modernity and industrialization, both condemning its vices while making use of the greater accessibility of evangelization. Women, black and white, played particularly important roles in spreading the message of sanctification to African American communities in the South.

\textsuperscript{113} Irvine E. Lowery, “The Need for Holiness Evangelists Among the Colored People” \textit{Christian Witness and Bible Advocate}, November, 5 1885, 1.

While white northern Methodists initially embraced the holiness movement in the first half of the nineteenth century, by 1900 it had attracted a much more diverse group: black and white, northerner and southerner, rural and urban, men and women. In this period it also began a journey westward, which the next chapter will follow. The flexibility and decentralized nature of holiness communities, their openness to the work of the Holy Spirit in virtually anyone, and the increased mobility of people and ideas allowed the streams of the holiness movement to branch out in diverging directions, crossing old boundaries and creating new ones.
This chapter follows the westward current of the holiness movement to Southern California. Although pious Protestants saw their migrations as inscribed with a sacred calling to spread the Gospel, their travels, like the journey of holiness from North to South and into the Midwest, were also deeply connected to the political, social, and cultural currents of late nineteenth-century America. Holiness folk went to Southern California as part of two larger streams of predominantly white rural, farming families who moved to the region in the second half of the nineteenth century. First, between 1850 and 1877, Anglo Southerners made the long trek to California crossing overland routes amidst sectional crisis, Civil War, and Reconstruction. Second, in the following decades, the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1876 and the Santa Fe Railroad in 1886 brought thousands of Anglo-midwesterners to Southern California. Businessmen and railroad boosters had papered the Midwest with flyers and brochures, advertising the mild and healthful climate of Southern California, and its affordable and fertile (when well-irrigated) land. Many people heeded the call. Within both of these waves of migration, southern and midwestern, a small population of black men and women also went West seeking greater freedom and opportunity in California.

While historians of Southern California have written on the significance of these migrations westward to the transformation of Los Angeles, little discussion has been given to their religious lives, and even less to the smaller population of migrants who experienced entire sanctification. Michael Engh charted the unusual plurality of Los Angeles religious life before
the arrival of the transcontinental railroad in 1885 and the rise of Anglo-Protestant dominance that followed it. Holiness Bands appear as little more than a footnote in his research, despite their significance in providing the foundation for the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, one of the most significant religious events in Los Angeles. Gregory Singleton argued that the establishment of Protestant institutions, in fraternal organization and voluntarism, provided the social infrastructure to receive Anglo migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sandra Frankiel countered that traditional Protestant institutions did not provide all that Anglo-midwestern migrants desired in their new environment, and in fact many Angelenos chose alternative spiritualites such as the holiness movement or metaphysical religion.115

New migrants to Southern California went through a process that scholar of religion Thomas Tweed called dwelling, to create a sense of home.116 They drew on religious traditions, practices, and communities to connect to a familiar past, homeland, or cosmology, and to reorient to their new landscape. While Baptist and Methodist churches, the hallmarks of Anglo-Protestantism in the United States, predominated in the East, these two denominations struggled to establish self-sustaining congregations in Southern California prior to 1880. They were often either unavailable or unsatisfying as a tool for dwelling.117 This in part reflected the fact that migrants nurtured memories of divine encounters outside of a formal church service. Revivals led by itinerant preachers, brush arbor camp meetings, and lay-led in-home prayer gatherings had created, outside of a church building, their most meaningful religious experiences. Their process


117 Frankiel, California’s Spiritual Frontiers, 72-77.
of dwelling, or home-making, involved re-creating informal spaces where they felt they could encounter God and remain connected to community.

In this second half of the nineteenth century, holiness folks did not just cross into a new geographic territory; they also crossed into a new modern age as industrialization transformed the United States. Between 1879 and 1920, almost 11 million Americans moved from farm to city, and another 25 million immigrants arrived from overseas. The number of people in the agricultural workforce would be cut in half. Particularly for Americans of rural background, like most radical holiness folks at this point, the transition from country to city, from agriculture to industry, and encounters with diverse peoples made them feel as if they were in a new country, if not a new world.118 As such, holiness folk of a rural background throughout the country sought their own navigation and location in this new, unrecognizable age.

The journey of such religious cultures from homeland to a new environment was not a simple matter of transplantation. As Jacob Dorman has argued, culture does not operate along such a linear, unidirectional continuum. Indeed, while a camp meeting in a rural town outside of Los Angeles might look similar to an outdoor revival from decades previous in upstate New York, rural Oklahoma, or western Illinois, the contexts for each were distinct. The far West did not provide the same kinship networks and well-established institutions of Anglo-Protestantism that eastern states and territories had. Southern California in the final decades of the nineteenth century also experienced the changes of industrialization and urbanization at a distinctly rapid rate. Replanting a southern Methodist revival in Southern California was simply not possible. As

118 Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of American Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).
such, migrants engaged in a combining of the “old and new, familiar and foreign,” in order to reorient themselves in a new context.\textsuperscript{119}

\textit{Early Protestants in Southern California}

The first Anglo settlers to Southern California adapted to the dominant Mexican culture and Catholicism of the region. Mainline Protestant ministers did not seek to establish congregations in the small pueblo of Los Angeles until after the United States acquired California. Even after statehood most Protestant ministers, who were English-speakers, enjoyed limited success in Southern California before 1880, not least because the English speakers were few and dispersed. The majority of west-going preachers were sent to Northern California, where they achieved limited success. Holiness made an appearance early on in this region as a few ministers, including one Presbyterian and several Methodist, had advocated for the “higher life” of sanctification before 1880. However, they never gave much practical instruction.\textsuperscript{120}

Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians struggled to find converts in Southern California, much less explain the complex theologies of Christian perfection to them. Consistent religious institutions for Anglo-Protestants in Southern California were few before 1870. Eastern churches struggled to send ministers westward before the end of the Civil War.

Protestant missionaries’ entrance into California coincided with a period of rising sectional tensions and eventual Civil War, which delayed the establishment of formal


\textsuperscript{120} Engh, \textit{Frontier Faiths}, 67; John Collinsworth Simmons, \textit{The History of Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast} (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1886) 254.
congregations in the region. Beginning in 1850, the Georgia and South Carolina conventions of the southern Methodist Episcopal Church vehemently opposed the migration of their missionaries to California because they did not want to send resources to a Free Soil State. A small group of evangelists nonetheless traveled by steamer journey from New Orleans to San Francisco, which they viewed as overrun by vice and fortune seeking, and there found few converts.¹²¹

The few ministers who traveled to Southern California were also disappointed to find that the Mexicans, Californios, and rowdy Anglo men taking advantage of the gold rush boom had little interest in Protestantism.¹²² Adam Bland, a northern Methodist missionary assigned to Southern California in 1853, wrote of the region, “of all the society I ever saw, here is the worst.”¹²³ He wrote to a friend that unless migration changed things, evangelization of the region would not be worth it. Bland did not give up, however, and transformed the El Dorado saloon into a chapel, while his wife conducted school for girls. It was not until 1868 that a permanent Methodist Episcopal Church structure could be built.¹²⁴

The same connection between holiness and abolition that repulsed eastern southerners affected some Anglo migrants in Southern California, in spite of their geographic distance from the brewing sectional crisis of the 1850s. At a gathering of Methodists in Southern California in 1854, southern Methodists complained that northern Methodists engaged in a “distasteful”

¹²¹ Simmons, The History of Southern Methodism, 18.


¹²⁴ For more on northern evangelical missionary efforts in the Gold-Rush era, see Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Religion and Society in Frontier California (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
mixing of politics and religion by discussing the possibility of abolition in the eastern states.\textsuperscript{125}

With no more than forty Methodists in all the region, the community could ill-afford a split along sectional lines; the eruption of the Civil War dismantled both the northern and southern Methodist churches.\textsuperscript{126} Northern Methodists would not establish a more permanent congregation in Southern California until 1868, and it was not until 1870 that a Los Angeles Conference of the southern Methodist church was established.\textsuperscript{127}

Given its struggles in the region, the Protestant religious community formed in the 1850s and 1860s in Southern California did not follow the traditional frontier church planting process. The most permanent institution was an annual camp meeting of Texas Baptists in the town of El Monte at the end of the overland Santa Fe Trail which began in 1854; the town of Los Nietos (Downey) also received migrating southerners, particularly Methodists, and began to hold annual camp meetings for local Protestants in the 1860s.\textsuperscript{128} The largely Anglo population of El Monte renamed the town Lexington for a short time, indicating their distinct disdain for local Mexicans.\textsuperscript{129} This disdain turned to frequent ethnic violence as Anglo men, who likened themselves the vigilantes of Southern California, formed gangs they termed the El Monte Boys in the 1850s. It is not clear whether the Baptists and Methodists who sought to reach “hardened sinners” approved of the ethnic violence. If they attempted to discourage the El Monte Boys,

\textsuperscript{125} Simmons, \textit{The History of Southern Methodism}, 334-5. Simmons claimed this event occurred in 1854, while Jervey put the date at 1858.


\textsuperscript{127} Engh, \textit{Frontier Faiths}, 43-44.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 13-14, 45-47, 54.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 13, 14-15.
their efforts were not successful. Violence, often racially motivated, in the southland continued to characterize the following two decades after California’s statehood.\footnote{William Deverell, \textit{Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past} (University of California Press, 2005) 16.}

\textit{Southern Crossings, Before the Railroad}

Pious, transplanted southerners remembered their migration to Southern California as a providential movement, but nonreligious forces prompted their journey westward. The earliest Anglo-southern migrants to Southern California, who arrived in the years surrounding the Civil War and before the transcontinental railroad, most often arrived by wagon train. Dennis Rogers, who would become a successful holiness evangelist, recalled his crossing of the Shawnee Trail from Texas to Southern California with his widowed father and his siblings at the age of ten just after the Civil War closed in 1868.\footnote{Dennis Rogers, \textit{Holiness Pioneering in the Southland} (Hemet, California: 1944).}

His memories and imagination of the journey westward suggest how white southern racial attitudes and masculinity combined with evangelical religion. In the land west of Texas, he described an environment untamed by white civilization, where “Wild Indians,” deserts, rivers, and mountains would “try men’s souls.” To Rogers, the push westward was a triumph of hearty white settlers over the landscape, animals, climate, and non-white inhabitants who all united against them. The threat of Indian attack likewise allowed the men of the Rogers party to burnish their masculinity. Their route passed through \textit{Comancheria}, the Great Plains territory in which Comanches, Apaches, Mexicans, and Americans battled for control of resources and trade. The
Rogerses traveled with a multi-family party to ward off attack by hostile Indians. Men stood guard at night as the wagons circled to protect the families from attack.

In reality, the Comanche empire had experienced a significant decline in power in the decade prior, due to disease, encroaching Anglo settlement, and the decimation of buffalo. This may have been why Rogers did not recall any actual battles with Comanches, although his brother claimed to have exchanged fire with some Indians while scoping out camping grounds. Nonetheless, Rogers figured the West as a crucible of manhood and integrity, writing, “the majority of our men had just come out of the Civil War [on the Confederate side] and were not afraid of anything.” The West, both empty and wild, anticipated the Anglo men’s settlement Rogers wrote, “It will bring out all the good and bad qualities of men’s characters and will bind men’s hearts together as few things will.”

In Rogers’ account, evangelical piety mixed with Anglo masculinity. When another man’s oxen gave out while crossing through 90 miles of desert without stock water, Rogers’ father, William, retreated to the sage brush to pray. Dennis Rogers remembered how a miraculous cloud appeared in the clear sky and showered the tired travelers and their oxen, giving them enough sustenance to make it to the Pecos River. The faith his father modeled brought Rogers to an experience of justification at the annual brush arbor camp meeting near his home in El Monte two years later. However, he would later say he’d never been able to satisfy his spiritual longings in that environment before receiving entire sanctification.

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134 Ibid., 10.
135 Ibid. 8-9.
The community the Rogers joined included a very small population of African Americans. Some had traveled in forced servitude with southern slaveholders before the Civil War. Others fled the racial terror and violence of the postwar South. They sought greater economic opportunity and freedom on the western frontier. Before the railroad the black population in Los Angeles was only 102; in 1860 it was sixty-six, and ninety-three in 1870.\textsuperscript{136} Some joined the local Catholic church and a few pioneering families established the first black Baptist and Methodist congregations in Southern California.\textsuperscript{137} The two most remembered and most exceptional were Biddy Mason and Robert Owens. Both won their freedom before the abolition of slavery, and both became quite wealthy through their investment in downtown Los Angeles property. Mason was instrumental in founding the first African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1872, which operated out of her own home. While they began constructing a building for their church, they resumed meeting in members’ homes in 1877 because the congregation was too small to pay for the building.\textsuperscript{138} Similarly, the Second Baptist Church was organized in the early 1870s, but did not maintain a large enough congregation to build and maintain a church building until the boom of the 1880s.\textsuperscript{139} However small, these churches continued to meet as some of the only institutions to welcome the small and dispersed population.

The railroad would bring many more migrants to southern California, both white and black. Their predecessors set the stage for a growing holiness movement; the faith of people like

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Max Bond, “The Negro in Los Angeles” (Masters Thesis, University of Southern California, 1936) 22.
\item Bond, “Negro in Los Angeles,” 24.
\item Engh, Frontier Faiths, 44.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Dennis Rogers joined other streams of religious culture in Southern California to form a transmutation of holiness that appealed to migrants from diverse origins.

The Train from the South to Southern California

Harden Wallace, who had been instrumental in bringing the holiness movement to Texas, would bring it to Southern California in 1880. While he had itinerated through Illinois and Texas, like many others he came on the Southern Pacific line four years after it reached Los Angeles. Henry Ashcraft, a Free Methodist preacher, and James Jaynes, a Methodist singer, as well as his family, came with him. The three men announced the coming of sanctification to Los Angeles at the urban Methodist Chapel.

The most enthusiastic of Wallace’s congregants came from the small farming towns surrounding Los Angeles; he focused his ministry in the countryside. Many of them new migrants, they searched for a religion that would reference their homelands and make sense of their new environment. Wallace brought to California a spirituality that was recognizable to him and to other recent migrants from farming areas back East. Similar to his work in Texas and Illinois, he held camp meetings in the rural communities of Downey, San Bernardino, Pomona, and Artesia. These separate holiness bands joined together to form the Southern California Holiness Association, modeled after Wallace’s Texas Holiness Association in the South. The association provided a loose form of governance similar to a denomination. They elected officers, established the doctrine and discipline of the community, and appointed ministers, evangelists, and missionaries. Unlike mainline denominations, they had very few requirements.

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for their preachers in terms of education, gender, or race, but held stricter standards of behavior and morality for all members. The officers decided to adopt the doctrine of the Jacksonville Holiness convention, the organization where Wallace had first encountered sanctification in the Midwest. While joining a holiness congregation would be new for most migrants, some were familiar with the holiness movement. Like the former slaves of the South, they linked the holiness community to past memories of religious enthusiasm that typically were not rooted in sanctification but involved similar modes of expression.

Black men and women also joined the holiness band, but in much smaller numbers. Between 1880 and 1890 one thousand African American migrants from the South would arrive in Los Angeles. Fleeing racial terror and poverty in the Jim Crow South, the small community had more resources than the vast majority of black America, one generation removed from slavery. One historian has called them the Talented Tenth migration. To afford the journey to the far West, black migrants needed wealth and vision; a ticket to Kansas or Chicago was much cheaper. In these early days, before restrictive housing covenants forced the consolidation of the black community into particular neighborhoods, African Americans with a little wealth could buy property.

While very few had the means to migrate, the railroad did bring a small black population, some of whom join the holiness movement in Southern California. Less than ten of the holiness folk referenced in Josephine Washburn’s account of the Holiness Association were identified as “colored,” and most of these became home missionaries in the South. The black evangelists

who joined the Southern California holiness band included George and Laura Goings and Frank and Anna Chapman. Neither the holiness movement nor the U.S. Census Bureau recorded many details of their lives, but George originated in Ohio and Laura in Iowa, while Frank and Anna were southerners hailing from Virginia and Alabama, respectively. Both Goings and Chapman families owned houses in Pasadena. George Goings described his home as “lovely with its fruit and flowers,” particularly to a family that was used to harsh midwestern winters.\(^\text{143}\)

In the early days the Southern California holiness band maintained more direct ties to the past by worshiping along with southern Methodists in and around Los Angeles. This allowed migrants to experiment with new religious beliefs and practices in a familiar setting. At one of these camp meetings with other white southern transplants, a schoolteacher, Josie McKellar, heard the doctrine of entire sanctification for the first time. McKellar came to California with her father, a Confederate loyalist, and settled in Downey.\(^\text{144}\) They worshipped at a southern Methodist church in Mississippi and sought the familiar. The relationship between the Southern California Holiness Association and mainline denominations grew to a rift in 1881 around the same time that other separate holiness churches began springing up in rural areas across the country.

An independent holiness church formed in the following years, but continued to draw displaced southerners to their camp meetings. Religious revivals and meetings historically have provided both entertainment and religious meaning for attendees, but particularly in rural,

\(^{143}\) Ibid., 321.

\(^{144}\) 1860 United States Federal Census (Kemper, Mississippi).
isolated places, holiness meetings would draw curious onlookers. McKellar intended to be such a spectator at an independent holiness meetings in Artesia in 1882, but she engendered a deep longing in her heart for sanctification. She got it at that same meeting in an experience she knew would isolate her; she wrote, “Friendship's ties were never stronger than then when I thought of the many loved ones from whom this step could not but separate me.”

McKellar’s experience was typical of holiness folk at the time. Since holiness men and women maintained a tradition of enthusiastic religious experiences reminiscent of folk revivals in the South, many southern Methodists chose to leave their parent churches for the independent holiness folk. Holiness camp meetings provided the space for southerners to both connect with the religion of their homeland, but also for them to let go of their past. Southern Methodist and Baptist churches did not provide the same reorientation. The experience of sanctification in many ways paralleled that of migration: both necessitated releasing old friendships, habits, and values and embracing a new way of life. The holiness community provided a space and community to mediate these tensions between the past and present, between the homeland and the new environment. It connected southerners in Southern California to the pious past, but also released them from practices and people which inhibited their spiritual growth. Midwesterners who arrived with the railroad had a similar experience.

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147 Frankiel, *California’s Spiritual Frontiers*, 72-76.
Midwestern Crossings and Dwellings

Beginning in 1876 a wave of Anglo-midwestern migration overtook the southern population in Southern California and began making a dwelling in the next two decades. Like their southern counterparts, holiness folks originating in the Midwest followed both a sacred calling and a worldly booster scheme. Enterprising businessmen advertised the desert southland as the “Great Irrigated Garden of Eden,” focusing their marketing campaigns on the population which they believed would make the right type of migrant: white, middle class, and conservative midwesterners. These boosters hoped to build a city “better” than New York or Chicago. Los Angeles would be devoid of non-Protestant immigrants, protesting laborers, and overcrowded slums.

Horace Holdridge, who traveled westward along a northern trajectory from Albany, New York to the Midwest and finally to Southern California, in many ways fit the image of “good community” that boosters sought: pious, industrious, conservative, and white. Holdridge was drawn to the Southern California Holiness Association through his daughter and son-in-law, Josephine and James Washburn. They had arrived to the region, following the marketing of the area as the land of “health, wealth, and leisure” for hardworking farming families who longed for a milder climate and easier way of life. The Washburns joined a massive torrent of migration from the Midwest. Los Angeles took on religious symbolism as the “land of plenty” or the “promised land” for farmers to retire after years of toil.148 Under the influence of Social

Darwinism, boosters recruited a population based in hearty Anglo-midwesterners and bereft of troubling immigrants such as Italians, Jews, Irish, or black working class laborers. Holiness, which had led to the sanctification of Holdridge but never the rest of the family, would capture the Washburns in Southern California.

Alice J. Whiting, another leader within the early holiness community of Southern California, explained that it was the grace of God that removed her from the midwestern frontier. Alice Whiting was born Alice Ingalls and spent most of her childhood far from Anglo settlement in western Wisconsin. Her cousin, Laura Ingalls, would go on to write wildly popular memoirs, blending fact and fiction, of the family’s experiences as homesteaders. These images have become iconic in public imagination and memory of the American West. However, Alice described her frontier past not as a period of happy homesteading, but of dangerous irreligion. She lamented that by the age of fifteen she had only heard “three or four Gospel sermons.” Whiting extolled the “excellent preaching” of Methodist circuit riders, but infrequent camp meetings and no regular church community meant she never had “an experience with God.” Radical holiness folks necessitated a visible, emotional divine encounter both at conversion and sanctification as proof that the Holy Spirit was at work. In the “big woods” of Wisconsin, this experience seemed impossible.

Whiting moved to Southern California because of her husband’s failing health. Railroad boosters advertised Southern California as a place of healing for the sick due to the mild climate

149 Alice Ingalls even made an appearance in one of the books as one of the “double cousins” who came to visit Wilder’s family at Christmas. See Laura Ingalls Wilder, Little House in the Big Woods (Harper-Collins, 1971) 64-80.
150 Wasburn, History and Reminiscences, 66.
as early as 1880. A significant “health rush” to the southland brought white and wealthy people who could afford train tickets in a monopoly environment. Medical specialists, sanitarium stays, and the many pharmaceuticals advertised in local newspapers likewise cost money.  

The Washburns, the Whitings, the Goings, and the Chapmans, all attempted to make their new environment into a home. They incorporated familiar memories of their homeland, images marketed by boosters, and hopes for their future. Dana Bartlett would describe Los Angeles as a “city of homes” at the start of the twentieth century, emphasizing its distinction from the immigrant tenements of New York and Chicago. Boosters, in particular, marketed the suitability of the climate for gardening for pleasure rather than survival. Recreating what they saw in the advertisements for California, the Washburns, like the Goingses, built a “two-room California cottage” on four acres of land, enough for a garden but not a farm. The porch, arbor, and most of the house was covered with roses year round and thus earned the name “Rose Cottage.”  

Perhaps hearing news of the beauty of the “Rose Cottage”, Josephine’s father, Horace Holdridge, and his wife joined the Washburns and their other daughter in California in 1878.  

Holdridge, always a circuit-rider even at an advanced age, traveled up the coast preaching from Santa Ana to Santa Maria to Paso Robles and Salinas with the Methodist Episcopal Conference. As his family became associated with Wallace’s band, Holdridge rediscovered the beauty of sanctification and spent the final years of his life working with the independent sanctified instead of the Methodist Church. Summoning zeal from years of frontier circuit-riding, Holdridge continued to travel along the edges of “civilization” in Southern California preaching  

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152 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 8.
the “red-hot shot that makes sinners tremble.” Even in his 60s and 70s, he was known to cross the high waters of the flooded San Gabriel River in order to make a preaching appointment.153

Holdridge’s wife and children sought the experience of perfection after arriving to California. The milder version of Methodist-influenced sanctification, which lacked the fervor of radical holiness groups, had not attracted them.154 Harden Wallace, who had encountered some of the more radical holiness groups in Illinois and Texas, would bring more enthusiastic expressions of Christian perfection and strict doctrines of its necessity to migrants like the Washburns.155

Josephine Washburn described the role of living in a new environment in bringing her to her father’s religious experience. She recalled first encountering Wallace who appeared on her doorstep, after being invited by a sanctified brother, and announced: “Sister Washburn, this day has salvation come to your house.” She thought this was strange since she and her family had already received salvation. However, she agreed to let the evangelists hold a meeting in her house that evening.156 Her father had not shared much of his experience of sanctification and she had heard it preached with disdain at a church in the East; however, she became open to it in California. Sanctified folk who came from all the surrounding towns and cities, in one or two horse rigs and lumber wagons filled the Washburn house and barn. Josephine found herself listening intently to their testimonies.157 She yielded, saying, “the Holy Spirit showed me so

153 Ibid., 93, 104, 119.
156 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 8-9.
157 Ibid., 9.
plainly that this was my last chance, also that I was standing in the way of others.” Her husband also described California as a reason for his conversion to the doctrine of sanctification in this new context; “blessed moments of stillness” afforded by “California’s sunny clime,” as he put it, allowed him to reflect on the state of soul and the possibility of perfection. Only in California, away from the cold winters of Iowa and their attending toil, could he fully experience and understand sanctification.158

Alice Whiting also found holiness in California. Downey proved as isolated from church community as her childhood had been; she longed for a religious experience. She found both conversion and sanctification in solitary prayer and bible study, but joined a holiness band soon thereafter. She ministered locally and became the first pastor of the holiness congregation in the nearby town of Redlands. The founding president of this holiness community described her as “quick of perception” and gifted in the ability to impart “clear teaching, backed by scriptures which were given her in great abundance.”159 She traveled throughout Southern California visiting other small villages: Perris, Winchester, Bolsa, Burbank, Whittier, and Santa Fe Springs, until her husband’s health prohibited it.160

Black saints struggled more than Whiting or the Washburns to make a dwelling in Southern California. Schools were often segregated, restaurants and hotels frequently catered only to a white clientele, and local custom reflected notions of black inferiority. Blacks could

158 Ibid., 323.
159 Ibid., 60.
160 Ibid., 279.
only take the lowest paying jobs. Both George Goings and Frank Chapman worked as shoemakers and their wives took in laundry for white families.\textsuperscript{161}

Nonetheless, holiness communities were integrated. The flexibility of the holiness movement, the small numbers of sanctified in Southern California, and the much smaller number of African Americans allowed them to take on positions of authority. The Goingses and the Chapmans began preaching in Pasadena as members of an interracial church, but news of the poverty, lack of education, mob violence, and worse, lack of sanctification brought them East to the South. Both families maintained houses in Pasadena and considered the Southern California Holiness Association their home, however.

Despite integrated meetings, black evangelists in Southern California found the acceptance and support of their ministry by white brothers and sisters lacking. Writing from the South Goings confessed, “Sometimes I am tempted to think you may soon get tired writing or praying for us, and leave us down here alone.” As elsewhere, inequities existed in the Southern Californian holiness community. While he would find more converts among the black community in the South than the white community in Southern California, Goings struggled to convince his white holiness brothers and sisters that support of black ministries was a good investment. He admonished them in a letter that “God will hold somebody responsible for not supporting home missionary work better.”\textsuperscript{162} He suggested that they were more willing to send missionary money to China or Africa than the black South.

\textsuperscript{161} 1900 U.S. Federal Census (Pasadena, California).

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 322.
Goings also held a vision that sanctification would include transformation of societal injustices along with moral and spiritual change of the individual. George Goings wrote with righteous anger of the racial terror and violence blacks endured by whites in the South, and white believers’ lack of concern. He wrote, “I am not able to know how the vast army of red-hot home missionary leaders can ignore all these inhuman acts and neither raise their voice nor use a pen against them.” He called attention to the inconsistency when missionaries denounce unjust killing by shamans in Africa but disregard murder by lynch mobs “at our doors in a land of Bibles.” White saints tended to show less concern for social and economic inequalities, insisting that they were not so concerned with such worldly matters.

With sectional tensions not far in the past, northern and southern, black and white, transplants who joined Wallace’s California holiness band were, at first glance, unlikely allies. Just as the holiness movement crossed boundaries of region from the North to the South in the eastern half of the country, it also neutralized sectional tensions in Southern California. Continuing as he did in Texas, Wallace avoided discussions of sectional politics or racial justice in favor of an emphasis on an individual’s morality and sanctification. With the focus shifted away from racial equality, Wallace found common ground between farming families from disparate regions.

*Making a Home in the Industrial Age*

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163 Ibid., 368.

Although holiness families like the Washburns, the Whitings, the Rogers, and the Goings came from diverse regions and backgrounds they shared a similar sense of displacement in a modern age of industrialization and urbanization. Many rural holiness folk expressed feeling disoriented with the changing times and often linked themselves to an imagined rural past. Gilded Age materialism, the institutionalization of denominational hierarchies, and the loss of community and piety with urbanization gave them pause. The holiness movement, much like the Populist Party, provided a space for rural people to confront the changes wrought by industrial capitalism, to create community, and to negotiate tensions with this new society. Both holiness communities and movements of agrarian reform included those who felt displaced in their own homeland. Both also helped rural folks reorient themselves, connecting them to the virtues of their nineteenth-century agrarian past, the problems and concerns of the present, but also the promise of the future.¹⁶⁵

As holiness folk witnessed the uneven growth of Gilded Age wealth and industry at the end of the nineteenth century, they intentionally sought to locate themselves with movements of religious piety in the past. As contemporary society seemed to move away from religious enthusiasm, they instead linked themselves to “old-time religion,” a vague term that meant different things to different people at different times. It might mean the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening in the burned-over district, the Great Cane Ridge Revival in 1801, or even early Christian communities described in the New Testament. In any case, “old-time religion” allowed holiness folk to distance themselves from contemporary religious development. When

James H. Clark, a leader within the holiness community, eulogized his late mother in Josephine Washburn’s collection of reminiscences, he drew attention to this separation of holiness folk from the modern age. She was not, he recalled, “A woman of the period…whose white jeweled hands never felt the clasp of baby fingers.” Instead she was “a dear old-fashioned mother” who wore no cosmetics, whose hands had known toil and had cared for children in sickness and health. “Blessed is the memory of an old-fashioned mother,” he wrote.166

Refusing to partake in the fineries of the wealthy was an admonishment of the materialism and immorality of Gilded Age middle class society and in particular, its urban environments. Holiness folks separated those who articulated their inner purity in the simplicity of their dress from those who focused on outward appearance. The sanctified insisted that they were “peculiar people” who stood outside the concerns and values of middle-class society. Sanctified women were known for their simple clothing and the Southern California Holiness Association urged all members to “dress in plain raiment,” to not wear gold jewelry, or to smoke tobacco. Such prohibitions connected California residents to a network of radical holiness followers in the South and Midwest, who maintained similar standards of purity, but also separated them from local communities of Anglo-American middle class transplants.167

Holiness men and women’s disdain for outward adornment extended to their ventures into foreign missions as well. Like many Americans abroad during this period, they attributed their own cultural meanings to the jewelry they observed on indigenous people. To them, jewelry, regardless of cultural context, represented vanity and a lack of piety and modesty. One

166 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 113.
167 Ibid., 2, 53.
missionary to India looked aghast at the jewelry that Indian women wore: “So disgusting is the sight that after once seeing them a Christian woman would shrink from ever again putting on a jewel of any discription.” Like many foreign missionaries at the time, ideologies of white supremacy mingled with Anglo-American standards of piety that drew lines of separation between them and their potential converts.

Holiness folk separated themselves from material riches to insist that they were the recipients of a “spiritual gold.” Much of the poetry and hymnody of these holiness folk in California made allusions to the Golden Shores and Golden Streets of heaven, or a City of Gold. Some even suggested that a believer might receive a golden spiritual adornment when he or she received sanctification. Discounting the material gold pursued by capitalist investors, holiness folk insisted they had found a more precious jewelry in entire sanctification. “We hold the spiritual wealth in this world, the true gold. The Holy people of the world today keep [such wealth] from being bankrupt.” While Republicans, Democrats, and Populists were debating the merits of remaining with the gold standard, utilizing silver, or printing greenbacks, holiness folk insisted they were unconcerned with such things as their spiritual gold was eternal.

The sanctified also expressed disapproval of the business world, which they believed had become too concerned with the attainment of wealth, leading to greed and dishonesty. One sanctified man, William E. Moyle, distinguished holiness folk from the rest of American business culture, which benefited from dishonesty and manipulation. “I am glad that a man with the real experience of holiness can walk through this old sinful world and do business and look every

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168 Ibid., 171.
169 Ibid., 140, 171.
man, woman and child in the face and not be ashamed.” His statement suggested that businessmen of the day did not operate with the same integrity. As Karen Halttunen’s study of success literature described it, the idea of a supernatural power that would reward virtuous actions had fallen away; “only skillful manipulation of magnetic forces would ensure success in a scientific universe.” Like other Protestants, holiness folk believed the Gilded Age’s veneration of scientific methods would lead to the moral ruin of American society. Holiness folk responded to this change in culture after the Civil War by insisting on inner purity.

When the 1906 earthquake struck San Francisco, holiness folk initially attributed this to divine judgment on the city, and the nation’s concern with mammon. As one sanctified man said: “The awful spirit of greed or commercialism that has so possessed America has received a telling stroke. . . . Money, which has been the God of so many, is taking its true place as a servant.” San Francisco, like other sites of natural disasters including the biblical Sodom and the contemporary, hurricane-devastated Galveston, was a godless city and “that may be the reason why Providence allowed ‘natural causes’ to ruin her instead of ruining Los Angeles, which no doubt contains ten times as many Christians in proportion to its size.” Perhaps the man felt that the influence of the Southern California Holiness Association had protected their region from divine retribution.

Black holiness preachers’ expression of disdain for the greed and commercialism of the Gilded Age extended to the continued poverty of African Americans. George Goings wrote:

170 Ibid., 23.

171 Karen Halttunen, Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle Class Culture in America, 1830-1870 (Yale University Press, 1982) 2.

172 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 372.
“There is not a welcome door open to the colored race on earth today. It is sad to know every business and industry is combining its forces against the colored race.” His wife Laura also remarked on the danger of commercial greed when white business owners opened saloons in black neighborhoods: “That kind of a white man is in for anything he can get money out of, and the kind of negro that patronizes him is in for anything he can get fun out of, even though it be streaked with blood.” She pointed out the way young teenagers and children suffered for the injustice often linked to commercial prosperity and urban growth.

Holiness folks’ rejection of commercial prosperity also extended to secret organizations such as lodges and voluntary organizations. Many Angelenos had achieved middle class status and contributed to the transformation of Los Angeles into an Anglo-Protestant society through such organizations. Mutual aid societies provided essential social welfare before state welfare programs existed, and holiness folk condemned them as supplanting of God’s role through the holiness church. The secret rituals, doctrines, and practices of lodges and clubs that mirrored and sometimes replaced one’s involvement in a Christian community offended, and perhaps threatened, holiness folk. Black holiness folk also expressed concern about lodges and secret societies within the black community. Anna Chapman recounted how in 1895, while living in Pasadena, her prayers for God’s healing were held up by her membership in a local lodge. When she shared this story with her unsanctified pastor, he expressed concern that this kind of testimony would challenge some of the few black institutions undergirding black society in

173 Ibid., 92.

174 Ibid., 305, 362.

Southern California and threatened to take her off the membership rolls of the mainline denomination. Once Chapman found the holiness church, she could discard her worldly ties completely.\textsuperscript{176}

While business, materialism, and secret societies drew their ire, mainline churches drew actual vitriol from holiness folk. The sanctified condemned Methodist and Baptist churches as bourgeois. A Southern California holiness worker who visited England described one of John Wesley’s churches in England as having strayed far from its roots to a “Modern Methodism. . . not the kind its founder taught and lived. The pipe organ and the choir decked off with their showy worldly conformity show they are not in sight of the land marks laid out by the word of God.”\textsuperscript{177} As the second industrial revolution created a middle class society, Methodists and Baptists sought to attract them with larger church buildings, firmly established ecclesiastical institutions, and professionally trained ministers. One Methodist described holiness folk in Southern California as preaching with “pity, if not contempt” against the “Churchianity” of the Methodist Conference.\textsuperscript{178} Holiness folk were becoming more anti-institutional, while Methodists were seeking to establish an institution.

At the turn of the century, emerging scientific and historical criticisms of the Bible caused strife within mainline churches. Scholars used the newly developed social scientific methods to try to explain Christianity’s basic tenets. Several critics agreed that the Bible was not verbally dictated by God, but a compilation of human documents, perhaps revealed or inspired but certainly not infallible or inerrant. Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, sought to defend their

\textsuperscript{176} Washburn, \textit{History and Reminiscences}, 168-169.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 157.

\textsuperscript{178} Simmons, \textit{The History of Southern Methodism}, 433-4.
institutions by increasing the intellectual rigor of their ministerial training. Although the majority of these debates surrounded universities and seminaries in Chicago and Boston, ministers in Los Angeles felt deeply connected to the conversation. The Los Angeles Times published a regular column in its Sunday issue between 1902 and 1903 confronting these criticisms of the Bible and asking well-known “experts” to weigh in on them. This further distanced the mainline from radical holiness followers, who believed such questions were arrogant, sinful, and worldly.

Northern and southern Methodists alike wrote disparagingly of the holiness movement after 1880. At a northern Methodist conference meeting one loyal Methodist remarked on the holiness movement’s “irresponsible, insubordinate, erratic and fanatical” leaders “who reject the advice and control of pastors and official boards, and set themselves forth as the special exponents and exemplars of holiness.” The more the conference sought to standardize doctrine and suppress fanaticism, the more holiness folk seemed to subvert their authority. The generation of holiness leaders that emerged after 1890 would become even more radical in their doctrine and practice, and divisions would grow even deeper.

Holiness folk’s criticism of industrialization did not stop them from continuing to use the innovations of industrial capitalism to spread the message of the sanctified gospel. The railroad and the growth of print continued to aid the spread of holiness. Holiness papers printed for a mass audience primed readers for the experience of sanctification before attending a meeting in which a holiness band would arrive to town via rail lines.

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180 Methodist Episcopal Church, Southern California Minutes, 1884 14-15 (177).

181 Simmons, The History of Southern Methodism, 368-371; Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 127.
Disdain for business aside, international and cross-continental travel, printing of newspapers, and purchasing of revival tents required capital. Throughout holiness newspapers, traveling preachers gently reminded their brothers and sisters of the costs of evangelizing the sanctified gospel by listing their travel and living expenses. One, John Wallace in Shanghai, insisted that it would take $500 in gold to support him and his wife, not counting other building and traveling expenses.\textsuperscript{182} Holiness folk often avoided asking for money directly, simply stating their needs and asserting they were “on the faith line,” trusting that God would provide even if they didn’t ask outright.\textsuperscript{183} George Goings wrote of his work amongst blacks in the South, “The harvest is white, but it requires grace and money.”\textsuperscript{184} The \textit{Pentecost} newspaper also frequently published the amount of gifts given as a “free-will offering,” giving credit to those communities which had been generous and perhaps inspiring conviction in those who had not.

Early scholars of religion frequently cast the holiness-pentecostal movement as simply anti-modern. Over the past two decades, historians of religion have complicated this image, showing that holiness-pentecostals often wielded a shrewd ability to negotiate with and utilize the innovations of modern society for the benefit of their religious community.\textsuperscript{185} Their distrust of industrialization and its moral decay appealed to members repelled by the excesses of the Gilded Age, but holiness communities adapted modernization to their purpose more than outright rejecting it. The religious communities they formed provided a point of reference to both the past

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 327, 332, 420.

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 84.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 322.

and present for men and women disoriented by migration and a sense of disconnection from the pervading ethos of the day.

_Dwelling in the Body, Dwelling in the Heart_

Holiness communities, beliefs, and practices also seemed to provide reorientation for migrants’ disordered bodies and hearts. Holiness men and women believed that at the moment of sanctification the Holy Spirit would take residence in a believer’s body and soul, exuding peace and love beyond a human capacity. Abbot Cheshire called himself a drunk before encountering the holiness mission in downtown Los Angeles. After falling to his knees, repenting, and asking forgiveness for his sins at a meeting, the next day he claimed to be sanctified “and the blessed Holy Ghost has been dwelling within ever since, guarding my actions, my walk, and my conversation; giving me strength at all times to resist the devil and frustrate him in all his evil designs.” Once the Holy Spirit had begun abiding in the believer’s heart, there was no room for sin, sickness, or disorder.

The promises of inward transformation likely spoke to migrants who felt inner disorientation in their new contexts. Many holiness men and women testified that they had felt the need for change in their inner world. They often prayed for “something more” from God than just forgiveness of their sins; they wanted “a more satisfying experience.” Lizzie Steel shared in her written testimony, “I came to Jesus to have that root of bitterness taken out of my heart. I gave up myself to be used in His service and He did remove it, root and branch, and filled my

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186 Ibid., 300-301.

187 Tamar Frankiel, _California’s Spiritual Frontiers_, 73-77.
heart with the fullness of His love.”  

In a space of transition where they felt out of place, powerless, and perhaps easily discouraged, holiness and sanctification could have a therapeutic effect. Perfectionism gave the sanctified the belief that they had greater power and love in their hearts than through their own resources.

The residence of the Holy Spirit in one’s body upon sanctification also meant the accessibility of healing. Holiness doctrine on sickness, healing, and the afterlife gave meaning to the disorienting experiences of illness and death. Rural migrants found their methods of coping with disease and death, and of negotiating with advances in modern medicine, meaningful. Disease and death were not new at the close of the nineteenth century, but the concentration of residents in urban areas heightened concerns about the spread of sickness. Many physicians in the late nineteenth century insisted that most sicknesses could be relieved or even cured by inhabiting an environment with a milder, arid climate. Enterprising physicians, railroad marketers, and other businessmen capitalized on the perceived need, directing consumptives to Southern California. Sanitariums, hospitals, and specialists all set up shop in the West, and in particular in Southern California, marketing the region as a land of sunshine and health. By 1894 an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 “health seekers” had already moved to Southern California for cures. By 1900 Los Angeles could claim more physicians per resident than any other U.S. city, and one out of four migrants had come for health reasons.

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189 As Thomas Tweed wrote, religion not only provides a mediating influence in the crossing of geographic territory, but also in one’s travels, and one’s body’s travels, to new stages of life. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 136-150.

Some whose suffering saw no cure from the climate found relief in the holiness movement’s practices of divine healing. Sister Herman Thier traveled 3,000 miles away from her family in the East to live under the care of California doctors with little alleviation of pain. Everything changed for Thier when, as she described, “A sister of the Holiness Church came to see me, telling me how the Lord had healed her of a long illness, and encouraged me to take Jesus as my physician.” Thier claimed to experience not just relief, but also cure the following morning through prayer.\textsuperscript{191} When medical practitioners in Southern California failed, divine healing provided another avenue for men and women seeking health. On a physical level, the practices of divine healing offered an alternative to the dangerous and unreliable surgical procedures of turn-of-the-century physicians. Late nineteenth-century America was on the cusp of the “therapeutic revolution” in medicine, as practitioners and researchers began to see sickness as one historian of the body put it, “A deviation from fixed norms that had a specific physiological cause.”\textsuperscript{192} Doctors, patent medicines, and sanitariums took ads throughout the \textit{Los Angeles Times}, insisting they had the expertise, formula, or conditions to fight disease. The holiness community countered that they had the ultimate physician in Christ. “Christ as your doctor brings a blessing every time He visits you.” Unlike earthly physicians who focused on discrete abnormalities, the Divine Healer cared about the whole person. Holiness could offer spiritual and emotional well-being as well as physical restoration. “God heals little troubles of all kind as well as big and difficult ones,” preached a sanctified brother at a Wednesday night

\textsuperscript{191} Washburn, \textit{History and Reminiscences}, 270.

meeting in 1906. According to him, even the incurable, such as “a consumptive or a leper, at the point of death” could be healed through prayer.\textsuperscript{193}

Albert Benjamin Simpson, the founder of the Christian Alliance in New York, made popular the doctrine of sanctification that claimed to not just purify a sinful heart, but also restore a diseased body. Finis Yoakum, a health seeker and physician who arrived to Los Angeles in 1895, experienced healing himself at a Christian Alliance meeting. His sudden release from infirmity led him to focus his attention on faith healing. Yoakum established a sanatorium for patients of consumption in 1896. Before discovering antibiotic cures for tuberculosis in 1943, physicians sought to cure or treat illness with the natural environment; fresh air, sunshine, and rest were the prescribed medications. In this way, Yoakum’s sanatorium fit in to the general framework of tuberculosis care at the time, adding that prayers for healing and sanctification could cure his patients completely. Yoakum also held public services at the Temperance Temple in downtown Los Angeles in which he prayed for the healing of the sick.\textsuperscript{194} Believing that forgiveness of sin and disease were connected, Yoakum began to advertise his home as more than just a sanatorium, but rather Pisgah Faith Home, a place which provided free care for “drunkards and outcasts who wished to reform” as well as the sick in need of divine healing.\textsuperscript{195}

Through the experience of sanctification, holiness men and women believed that the Holy Spirit would realign a person’s heart and body, restoring it to the perfect love and peace of Christ. The health rush to Southern California at the turn of the century meant that there was no shortage of potential converts to a sanctified body, including Alice Whiting and her husband who

\textsuperscript{193} Washburn, \textit{History and Reminiscences} 372, 270.

\textsuperscript{194} “Pouring Oil on the Sick,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, Aug. 31, 1903

came from Wisconsin. The inner transforming work of Christian perfection could also answer the displacement many migrants felt as they traveled far from their homes back East.

The independent holiness movement played an essential role in the reorientation of rural migrants to their new community in Southern California. Sanctified bands provided spaces for rural folk to practice religion that was familiar to their memories of homeland, but also ushered them in to the new place they inhabited. The vast transformations of the modern age could be adopted, critiqued, and negotiated. Despite their concerns about the urbanization and modernization of the United States, rural holiness folk would soon find that they could not escape the emerging metropolis in their midst. As the holiness community gained sanctified converts, the city of Los Angeles ballooned from a population of 11,000 in 1880, to over 50,000 in 1890, to over 100,000 in 1900. It swiftly gained status as one of the major urban areas in the United States. As holiness doctrine and practice circulated at the turn of the century, the population rush of midwesterners, southerners, Mexicans, Chinese, Russians, and Italians hit the heavily marketed region of Southern California. These two movements of population and religion, would converge within the holiness-pentecostal meetings in and surrounding Los Angeles at the turn of the century.
In 1906, Robert Jones Burdette, founder of the Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles, praised his city for upholding Anglo-Protestant virtues of temperance, morality and industry. He called attention to prohibition towns throughout Southern California as models of propriety and reminded readers that Los Angeles had the smallest number of saloons in proportion to population than any city in the United States.\textsuperscript{196} The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and other booster organizations likewise promoted Los Angeles as an “ideal Protestant city” and a “model Christian community.” With such slogans they hoped to attract Anglo-midwesterners to Southern California and to stimulate the regional economy after the bust of the late 1880s, promising blissful retirement in a comfortable climate with “good community.”\textsuperscript{197} Harrison Gray Otis, a close friend of Burdette’s, a founding officer of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and publisher of the \textit{Los Angeles Times}, shared the minister’s vision of Los Angeles as an Anglo-Protestant ideal.\textsuperscript{198}

However, the streets of downtown Los Angeles at the turn of the century were anything but peaceful, quiet, and homogeneous. Historian Mark Wild has shown that vibrant multiethnic working class neighborhoods surrounded the railroad station. Street speakers talked politics in the Plaza. Children played on idle streetcars. Men solicited prostitutes on Alameda Street. Rowdy

\textsuperscript{196} Robert Jones Burdette, \textit{Greater Los Angeles and Southern California: Their Portraits and Chronological Records of their Careers} (The Lewis Publishing Company, 1906) 31.

\textsuperscript{197} Phoebe S. Kropp, \textit{California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place} (University of California Press, 2006) 88.

prize fights filled the auditory landscape of downtown. Indeed, Los Angeles as an “ideal Protestant city” was more imagination than reality.

Also filling the streets of downtown Los Angeles were religious meetings, evangelists, and urban missions organized by a marginal but growing population of Protestants who styled themselves as holiness folk, the sanctified, or the saints. The holiness movement seemed to straddle this vision of Los Angeles as the “ideal Protestant city” with the realities of urban growth and diversity.

Initially a more moderate holiness movement in Los Angeles, hailing from the urban Northeast, seemed to reinforce white middle class Protestant values and gender roles. Like city planners and urban reformers, they envisioned Los Angeles as a city of pious Anglo-Protestants. However, nationally a more radical strain of holiness was developing in the rural South and Midwest and made its way to Southern California. Disenchanted with Gilded Age wealth and materialism, these radical religionists discarded many of the constraints of white middle class society in favor of religious fervor and enthusiasm. While they insisted they were set apart from modern, worldly society, radical holiness folks took advantage of modern innovations in transportation and communication in order to spread their message. They also borrowed from and reimagined southern black folk religion and urban vaudeville culture to gain an audience. The presence of such departures from the ideals of white middle class society were troubling to observers who envisioned Los Angeles as a peaceful site of retirement for conservative Anglo-midwesterners.

While historians of Los Angeles have long been fascinated by the growth and success of marginal religious communities in Southern California, their studies often begin with migrations from the Southwest in the 1920s and 1930s. While many Dust Bowl migrants did indeed bring a religious fervor rooted in Pentecostalism to Southern California, such religious enthusiasm had already begun flowing in and out of Los Angeles since the 1880s. James Gregory did push the timeline of new religions in Southern California back to 1912, when southern Baptists were prevented from establishing churches in Los Angeles. He argued that this opened the door for fringe evangelical groups to gain traction; however, this does not explain the Azusa Street Revival of 1906, an event centered in Los Angeles from which most of the 500 million Pentecostals and charismatics worldwide can find a historical linkage. While this global phenomenon cannot be overestimated in its importance, early twentieth century observers considered it little more than a fanatical outburst. The lack of research on early Pentecostals in Southern California before Aimee Semple McPherson, and even before Azusa Street, perhaps is also a result of a paucity of work on the first decade of the twentieth century in Los Angeles. And yet it was a decade of massive growth and change for the city.

“*Athens of America for Strange Doctrines*”

Although they would come to dominate the local religious landscape, the usual institutions of frontier church planting, Methodist and Baptist churches, had limited success

before 1870 in Southern California. Scholars of religion in Los Angeles have argued that a number of factors contributed to a slow start for traditional Protestant churches. In particular, the geographic isolation of the region and its diverse demography, historically dominated by Mexican Catholicism, did not take to the conservative orthodoxy of English-speaking Methodist and Baptist ministers.\textsuperscript{201} It was not until the coming of the railroad and Anglo-Protestants in the 1870s and 1880s that preachers found supportive congregations. Even after 1870, middle class Anglo migrants to Southern California still sometimes chose religious groups outside of the mainstream, including Christian Science, New Thought, Theosophy, and holiness.\textsuperscript{202}

An itinerant preacher from Chicago was confounded by the religious diversity he encountered in Los Angeles in 1904: “The city of Los Angeles seems to be the very Athens of America for strange doctrines. The whole catalogue appears to be upon the bill boards.” He described walking through the streets of Los Angeles where he observed “the picture of a man dressed in Oriental costume, hailing from India,” a window-card advertising “how to live forever,” and an advertisement for the “broader thought” movement. On the way, he picked up a pamphlet from one local practitioner who marketed himself as a “Mental Delineator, Phrenologist, and Solar Biologist.”\textsuperscript{203} Although Chicago was larger in population and ethnic diversity than Los Angeles at this time, this religionist believed Los Angeles the greater spiritual polyglot.


\textsuperscript{202} Frankiel attributes this attraction to marginal religions as a search by Anglo migrants for stability and orientation within their new, and rapidly changing, environment. \textit{California’s Spiritual Frontiers}, 74-78.

\textsuperscript{203} “Strange Doctrines” \textit{Burning Bush}, Aug. 18 1904.
Certainly, Los Angeles was not the only city that encountered religious diversity at the turn of the century. Only a few years earlier, in 1896, the *New York Times* wrote that a “great crop of healers,” prophets, and religions had swept the country and the Western world. The reporter claimed that a distinct hunger for religion outside the mainstream flourished at this time. Spiritual oddities included an African American group awaiting ascension in Georgia, the self-proclaimed messiah Cyrus Teed of the Koreshans, a French boy who saw visions of St. Joseph and gained the ability to speak foreign languages, and a Mexican woman who received visits from the Virgin.\footnote{“Great Crop of Healers” *New York Times*, Aug. 17, 1896. The *Los Angeles Times* published a similar article: “A Wave of Mysticism”, *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 29, 1896.}

Global trends of urbanization and industrialization proved to both germinate and mobilize new varieties of religious enthusiasm. A number of factors likely contributed to the increased religious fervor at the turn of the century. Americans operated in a swiftly changing world. The center of the economy was shifting away from agriculture to industry and manufacturing. Industrial growth also encouraged the movement of peoples, and consequently, cultures. The number of people in the agricultural workforce would be cut in half.\footnote{Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of American Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).} Innovations in transportation and communication allowed ideas and people to travel with greater speed. Religious leaders no longer needed to limit their influence to the surrounding community or rely on large institutions to spread their message. Transcontinental railroads facilitated their crossing of the continent for the purposes of evangelization. Advances in print culture allowed them to
maintain a network of believers in the leader’s absence. The growth of cities ensured a message’s extension to a larger audience.

Within a period of national spiritual awakening, Los Angeles was especially fertile territory for new religions. Transcontinental railroads and more affordable train fares meant evangelists could extend the sanctified gospel to this far-reaches of California with greater facility. Newly constructed interurban railways and electric streetcars meant that holiness folk could invade downtown districts with religious street meetings. Mass-circulating periodicals meant that holiness folk could advertise their doctrine, connecting communities across vast geographical distances to Southern California, and drawing strict divisions between the truly sanctified and the worldly.

However, the ease of access to Los Angeles meant also greater anxiety for Anglo elites. They wanted to construct Los Angeles as a quiet, conservative retirement destination for middle class white Midwesterners. Noisy street preachers, and the working-class, entertainment-seekers who listened, disturbed this image. As non-white and immigrant streams of laborers flowed into Los Angeles, white anxiety deepened and holiness practices became much less acceptable.

The growth of the holiness movement in Southern California which had attracted people like the Washburns and Alice Whiting coincided with the expansion of Los Angeles as an urban area. Between 1880 and 1910 industrial growth, transportation revolution, and multiple migrations transformed the city. In these few decades the population of the city would increase from 11,183 to 319,198. In 1885 two transcontinental railroads connected the city to the rest of the continent. What had previously been a Mexican pueblo on the “frontier” of American territory

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had become a much-desired destination of Anglo tourists and retirees - many of whom were also pious believers or even evangelists.

*Urban Missions: Sanctification as Moral Reform*

Beginning in the 1880s, a small group of sanctified men and women, largely white, middle class, and with origins in the northeastern streams of holiness arrived in downtown Los Angeles seeking to establish urban missions. This contingent believed that the gift of sanctification would lead to the improvement and reform of not just an individual’s soul but also the problems of urbanization, including vice, poverty, and loneliness.  

Those who swam in the waters of the northern holiness movement found plenty of opportunities and support for the reforming work of sanctification in Southern California. Prostitution and gambling in particular experienced a boom in Los Angeles in the 1880s and 1890s as the governing authorities struggled to keep up with the city’s unchecked growth. Los Angeles also became the winter destination for seasonally unemployed male laborers in the construction and agricultural industries throughout California. This steady population of white men in need of reform, a thriving vice district, and support from city authorities made the

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establishment of urban holiness missions in Los Angeles seem natural. With the advent of electric street cars, replacing cable cars in 1886, daring holiness folk could board a car in the sleepy village of Glendora and get off in the vice-ridden downtown.

Manie Payne Ferguson was one of these early holiness women who saw urban reform and sanctification as intimately connected. Born in Ireland, Manie Payne encountered holiness for the first time in Toronto, Canada at a camp meeting conducted by Phoebe Palmer. There she came in contact with the doctrine of sanctification, an impulse toward reform, and the acceptance of female leadership. Years later, while joining the health rush to Southern California with an ill family friend, she encountered the Southern California Holiness Association. There she also met Theodore Pollock Ferguson, a Presbyterian minister, who had been converted at Oberlin College, a hotbed of abolitionism only a decade earlier. They married and became ministry partners with a particular concern for the growing city of Los Angeles.

Believing that sanctification could defeat the vices of the city, the Fergusons opened their mission in November of 1886 at the rented Masonic Hall. Every evening during Los Angeles’ years of boom and bust, they held meetings outside the mission hall and walked the streets searching for lost souls. They encouraged pleasure-seekers venturing to nearby brothels, gambling dens, or saloons to instead join them in prayer and receive sanctification. Manie Ferguson described the downtown location of their mission as a setting where “the saloon, 

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210 Other urban missions unaffiliated with the holiness movement were also established during this period. By 1910 these included Dana Bartlett’s Bethlehem Institute, Union Rescue Mission, the Catholic Brownson Settlement Home, the Jewish Stinson Memorial Industrial School, the Episcopalian Neighborhood House, the Methodist Toberman Settlement, and two secular institutions, the Municipal Settlement House, and the College Settlement. See Wild, Street Meeting 72.


212 Manie Payne Ferguson, T.P. Ferguson: Love Slave of Jesus Christ and His People and Founder of Peniel Mission (1900).
theatre, billiard hall” and other “highways to death,” were “thronged” with entertainment seekers. They established a more permanent location in 1894 when George B. Studd, famed Cambridge cricketer-turned-missionary, donated the money for a 900-seat auditorium and mission center on Main Street in downtown. The Fergusons reopened as the Peniel Mission, naming their ministry after the Hebrew word for “the face of God.” In the following decade the couple would support the opening of more than twenty-five urban missions and rescue homes along the West Coast.

Similar to Phoebe Palmer and other women in the northern strains of the holiness movement, Manie Payne Ferguson entered the public sphere through her religious activities. She preached at the mission and even in a saloon while visiting San Francisco. She edited the mission’s newspaper, the *Peniel Herald*, wrote many of its articles, and authored the history of the mission. She even encouraged single women to lead other inner-city missions in the region despite the reprimand of local Methodist leaders. Outside of the purview of denominational authority, young women could take on these roles.

The Southern California Holiness Association established another holiness mission downtown, although smaller and more short-lived in 1892. Its leader, Willis Kelly, a native of Iowa, also hailed from the northern streams of the holiness movement. He began his meetings at the Old Courthouse with fifteen faithful saints present. Workers attempted to attract passersby

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213 “The Harvest,” *Peniel Herald*, October 1894, p. 1

214 Similar missions were set up or attempted in Chicago, Nashville, Cincinnati. See Timothy Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 41; Hittson, *History of Peniel Missions*, 11-17.


through their hymn singing and fiery exhortations. Any onlookers would be invited inside where “the power of God was manifested in the hearts of the saints;” encouraging observers to seek salvation and sanctification. Their numbers at prayer meetings remained small, but they often held five services each day. Many came for the food kitchen, which provided two meals for those who would attend the meetings after each meal.217

The Holiness Faith Home and Mission served especially large numbers of unemployed white men in downtown Los Angeles after the financial panic of 1893. Men “trapped in poverty,” far from their families, living in boxcars or downtown boarding houses received services at this holiness mission. Kelly described men coming to the Mission saying they were desperate, ready to rob a house or store, or enter the counterfeiting business, but at the mission God stopped them in their tracks and “spoke to them in a voice unmistakeable.”218 While Kelly and his fellow missionaries shared a particular concern for the downtrodden, they seemed to mostly serve poor, unemployed Anglo-American and European immigrant men, a group that was of particular concern to local elites seeking to build a city of homeseekers and families.219

The sanctified claimed that the experience of perfection had tangible, transformative, and gendered effects on wayward white men. They might receive release from moral guilt, physical healing, and reclaimed manhood. Kelly described one man’s end to a struggle with addiction and physical ailment: “The pipe and tobacco went, the load of guilt and sin went, the walking stick

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217 Ibid., 27-8.
218 Ibid., 39, 47.
219 Kelly Lytle Hernandez revealed that it was largely white men who filled the Los Angeles city jail cells between 1890 and 1910. Hernandez, “Hobos in Heaven,” 428-437.
went, he straightened up and was once more a man and walked upright.” He displayed his renewed masculinity by taking charge of the kitchen for the Mission. This convert’s previous unemployed status had emasculated him, according to Kelly, but honest work and the gift of sanctification restored his manhood.

Kelly insisted that not just their unemployment, but also a lack of feminine influence deprived men of a paternal role in a family system. Without the mission they were “poor, degraded, filthy, ragged men and boys, without friends or money, or home.” However, the influence of female workers at the mission transformed them to “the joy and pride of some loving heart, and no doubt, many of them now have good Christian mothers, and loving sisters.” Outside of the context of a pious Protestant family, men were prone to wildness, but a holiness mission could provide an alternative familial structure. One particularly hopeless character found sanctification at the mission and later slept peacefully “like a babe on the bosom of its mother.” With the involvement of female workers and an emphasis on love and nurture, the holiness mission claimed a maternal influence on the lives of lonely, downtrodden, white men.

Phineas Bresee sought to complement the two holiness missions with a more permanent congregation for the “common man,” as he put it. A Methodist hailing from western New York, Bresee came to Southern California by way of Iowa, where he had been part of the more moderate Iowa Methodist Conference. He received the grace of entire sanctification in the 1860s, likely through the National Holiness Association. Like Los Angeles’ holiness missions, his

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220 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 30.
221 Ibid 31, 35.
Methodist-influenced strain of the holiness movement had a more urban, moderate presence than the decentralized radical holiness bands of rural areas.

Like many holiness folks, Bresee had a complicated relationship with the Gilded Age wealth of the day. As a middle class Methodist minister in the Midwest, Bresee had invested money in a gold mining venture, which failed and left him penniless. The shame of “remaining in a country where I was supposed to be wealthy, when, in fact, I was very poor” forced him to leave for Southern California. After this humiliating encounter with Gilded Age investment, he resolved never to try to make money again.

Yet the National Holiness Association that had shaped Bresee’s understanding of holiness encouraged the sanctified to take advantage of opportunities for worldly influence. Bresee did not shy away from opportunities for financial gain or social prominence in Southern California. He became friends with prominent Methodists and staged weekly meetings for the promotion of holiness, modeled after Phoebe Palmer’s northern meetings. He pastored a church of the elite in Pasadena, and earned a salary greater than most Methodist ministers in the region. Working with the governing board for the new University of Southern California, he brokered close relationships between the university and California’s Methodist leaders, which gave him the leverage to call for high standards of spirituality and knowledge of the Scriptures among faculty. He also engaged deeply with social reform movements in Southern California. He was one of the first to propose a Methodist mission for Chinese immigrants in the region, was a vocal advocate

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223 Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 77.
for the campaign to make Pasadena a “dry town,” and supported the establishment of the Florence Crittenton Home for former prostitutes.\textsuperscript{224}

By the mid-1890s, even Bresee’s embrace of sanctification became problematic to denominational authorities as the rift between holiness advocates and Methodist and Baptist churches widened. In 1892 the Methodist Conference transferred Bresee to a largely anti-holiness, wealthy congregation in Los Angeles, and then demoted him to a smaller congregation, which effectively stripped him of his influence in the Methodist Church.\textsuperscript{225} In 1895 he broke completely with his Methodist origins and created a new church for the common person, the Church of the Nazarene.

Before 1890 many holiness men and women arriving from the northern streams of holiness sought legitimacy from their middle class peers by identifying with middle class values.\textsuperscript{226} Although their relationship with mainline churches was always complicated, holiness bands believed in this early period that they could fit in to the Anglo-Protestant imagination of Christian reform. One member of the holiness band wrote a letter to the editor in the \textit{Los Angeles Times} defending his group’s street preaching methods, claiming they reached the laboring classes for spiritual and moral transformation more than any other movement. Particularly when compared to the other noises on the street, he wrote, “Where guns are fired on the Sabbath day, and all kinds of obscene songs sang along the road,” the sounds of the holiness bands

\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 78.

\textsuperscript{225} Bresee often made the society pages of the \textit{Los Angeles Times}. See Feb. 23 1899 p. 10 and Oct 15 1902 p. 7. Also see Smith, \textit{Called Unto Holiness}, 70-82.

\textsuperscript{226} In the early days of the Holiness Association of Southern California, officers and committee members were listed along with the denomination of their their church memberships. See Washburn, \textit{History and Reminiscences} 18. In 1890 some Holiness women earned legitimacy as middle class reformers by participating in the Women's Christian Temperance union.
worshipping were much more civilized.\textsuperscript{227} These early holiness folks to Southern California suggested that sanctification would have implications for the problems of urbanization.

\textit{In the World and Not Of the World: Radical Holiness Culture in the City}

As urban holiness moderates sought to save the city, more radical strains of holiness folks, emerging initially from the rural South and Midwest, were taking shape. With a premillennial eschatology, evangelists, such as Charles Parham and A.J. Tomlinson, insisted Christ would return soon and separate the true saints from the sinners. They also adapted the doctrine of sanctification to their concerns about the Gilded Age culture of respectability. To radicals, sanctification was not a tool for urban reform, but a sign of one’s holiness, in an increasingly worldly and materialistic society. While many maintained congregations in rural Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, others joined the mass movement of peoples to the city. Itinerant evangelists also enjoyed a wider territory of travel thanks to transcontinental rail lines.

The cities in particular became important centers of revival, growth, and cultural exchange for radical religionists. Despite their “otherworldly” orientation, radical holiness folks seemed quite attuned to the popular styles surrounding them, particularly African American religious culture and working class popular culture. Diverse practices began to emerge in their meetings. Unconstrained by denominational authority, radical holiness folk expressed their religious commitment and enthusiasm with increasing vigor antithetical to the middle class respectability of mainline churches.

\textsuperscript{227} "Street Preaching," \textit{Los Angeles Times}, July 18, 1883.
As word of these more radical “fanaticisms” and “heresies” reached Methodist ministers in the 1880s and 1890s, their soft spot for the holiness movement waned. In 1888, a presiding elder in the Methodist Conference wrote that holiness people were “a standing menace to the spirit of the Gospel of Christ… They have been and are today, religious anarchists.” The conference objected to the premillennialist eschatology of the sanctified, as well as their lack of centralized governing authority. The conference replaced radicals with anti-holiness preachers to “correct” their churches and assigned holiness advocates to isolated, unsympathetic churches.

Tensions in mainline churches in Southern California grew as well. The sanctified remembered how ministers who reviled the holiness movement during this period “rebuked and preached at [holiness folk] from the pulpit... denounced [them] as hypocritical, religious tramps,” and issued warnings to their flocks to avoid the movement. By 1885, increasing numbers of the Southern California holiness bands, people from Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches chose to leave their congregations; Josephine Washburn described a common “conviction that God would have them give their time, money and influence in the Holiness work,” not toward mainline denominations.\(^{228}\)

Undaunted, the most committed holiness folk broke with mainline denominations, forming independent holiness associations, churches, and printing presses.\(^{229}\) They believed that the end times were imminent and the highest levels of religious fervor would usher in Christ’s second coming. Opposition only added momentum to already mobile holiness evangelists. They traveled along railroads, printed and distributed thousands of tracts and newspapers, and warned

\(^{228}\) Washburn, *History and Reminiscences*, 16

\(^{229}\) Timothy Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 24
supposed Christians that their salvation was not enough. True Christianity required an inner purity and denial of worldliness often including strict moral and behavioral guidelines.

The increased accessibility of cross-country travel meant a wider and more deeply connected holiness network, linking Southern California with the rest of the movement. The arrival of the Santa Fe rail line in 1886 caused a significant spike in travel to Southern California as competition with the Southern Pacific brought down prices substantially. Cheap fares brought thrifty radical holiness evangelists to Southern California. Between 1880 and 1905, dozens of radical holiness gatherings were reported in the Los Angeles Times and Los Angeles Herald. Although radical holiness folks saw strict lines of separation between their varied groups -- one might admonish the other for allowing its members to wear neckties -- local newspapers often considered them all within the same category of religious fanaticism. Most groups were given the name “Holy Jumpers,” although sometimes reporters might distinguish the place of origin, by indicating a particular group were the “Texas Jumpers” or the “Hoosier Jumpers.” The physically expressive spiritual practices of itinerant radical holiness groups, which often resembled the spirituality of African American southern folk religion or vaudevillian popular culture, drew attention. The Los Angeles Times, in particular, represented the interests of those who envisioned Los Angeles as the ideal Protestant city, and who found these practices most troubling. But opposition only reinforced radical holiness groups’ sense of being “otherworldly,” and their fervor grew.

William Shepard was among these radical evangelists who itinerated between rural Texas, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Although we do not know when Shepard first encountered the holiness movement in California, he began writing to the Los Angeles Times as early as 1889 on behalf of a Los Angeles holiness band and later joined the more moderate holiness Church of the Nazarene. In 1895 he attended a camp meeting in Waco, Texas, not far from the site of the Corsicana Enthusiasts from fifteen years prior, where he reported that, “If one wants to enjoy a shouting meeting, let him go to Texas. They take to religion well in that state.” Keeping his hand on the pulse of the holiness movement, Shepard traveled in 1901 to Chicago to attend the moderate Holiness General Assembly. While in Chicago, Shepard encountered a much more radical group, the Metropolitan Church Association, also known as people of the Burning Bush led by Duke Farson and Edwin Harvey. Farson and Harvey, unlike the more moderate members of the Holiness General Assembly, adopted the premillennialist doctrine and demonstrative worship of rural holiness folk and combined it with their knowledge of the modern business world to spread the radical holiness gospel. Shepard found this group much more compelling than holiness moderates and quickly began ministering with them.

As radical holiness itinerants, like Shepard, circulated throughout the United States, evangelism in urban areas was also expanding and maturing. Radical sanctified men and women began to envision the city, not the rural camp meeting, as the new site of revival. Industrialization brought a flood of diverse peoples to the city. In the process, saints came into contact with an emerging urban culture where immigrant, African American, and white rural


cultures collided, amidst a shifting economy and modern society. Shrewd holiness folks, while insisting they were “not of this world,” adopted worldly techniques of advertising, journalism, and popular entertainment to sanctify lost souls. Although radical holiness religion in rural America had already proved innovative in its adaptation and reimagining of diverse cultural forms, the urban environment provided increased opportunity to accomplish this. As Methodist and Baptist churches turned their attention toward the rising middle class and wealthy elites of the 1890s, many holiness evangelists filled the gap and made their homes in urban missions evangelizing to immigrant and working class neighborhoods.

Shepard returned to Southern California with the Burning Bush group in April of 1904 to lead nightly meetings near the business district downtown. Shepard’s approach to journalism had changed in Chicago. Taking on the tools of Progressive muckrakers, he brought exposé and sensationalism to Southern California in his contributions to the *Burning Bush* newspaper. The paper’s antagonism toward the elites of church and society became notorious. Shepard wrote about corruption, dishonesty, or worldliness in other holiness groups. Cartoons caricatured other churches and their leaders. Images and stories elevated the status of Burning Bush-supported preachers as heroes of the faith. Whether local holiness groups were remaining attached to traditional denominations or allowing divorce, remarriage, or membership in secret societies, Shepard chastised them. He compared the association of the sanctified with the unsanctified as akin to racial intermixing, and cited Scripture to denounce it. According to Shepard, “The thing that nauseates God is this mixing up business.”

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233 Ibid., 94, 98, 99.

day, such as miscegenation, Shepard used the most provocative images and symbols to arouse greater passion and fervor for the radical piety of the Burning Bush group in Chicago and Los Angeles.235

Shepard likewise condemned churches which appeared too worldly. He rebuked a visiting evangelist to the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles. Shepard wrote that the evangelist’s opening claim that “he was not here to say harsh things to the people” was not impressive to the truly sanctified, but in fact, represented a compromise to worldly popularity and a sinful culture.236 He also noted that the Methodist revival was plagued by the influence of worldly lodges and unions, and instead of coming forward to a mourner’s bench at an altar call, participants signed their names on a card if they had been saved. The Los Angeles Times even observed that this modern revival was “more rational…less picturesque though probably equally effective” to its antecedents, the camp meetings of old-time religion.237 Shepard, on the other hand, considered this exclusion of the Holy Spirit from meetings fatal.238

The Burning Bush even found the Church of the Nazarene, Phineas Bresee’s “church of the common man,” too refined and worldly for their taste. The First Nazarene Church in Los Angeles employed Methodist preachers for revival events and seemed less comfortable with the


236 “The Chapman Meetings,” Burning Bush, February 16, 1905, 7


acrobatic worship of Burning Bush people. Visitors from Chicago recounted how their “leaping, shouting, and jumping in the Holy Ghost...jarred and jostled the membership considerably and threatened to break the ‘bottle’ the very first hour. We soon found that our presence was not desired.”239 When William Shepard preached in the evening he chastised the congregation for “the badges, buttons, and insignia of the various members of the church,” representing their membership in lodges, unions, and secret societies. Shepard also objected when the pastor marketed his book in church, and his undertaking business in the church newspaper. Both indicated to Shepard an enslavement to an idol of mammon.240

Radical holiness folks encouraged restitution of sins, which was another point of difference with more moderate churches. The Burning Bush community emphasized that sinners should attempt to make right what they had made wrong, in addition to confessing, in order to receive sanctification. The Burning Bush revealed that this sometimes took the form of paying restitution to railroad companies that those seeking sanctification had avoided paying for rides, and quoted a reply from the Vice President of the Missouri Pacific Railway, “If it will relieve your conscience, you may consider this a receipt in full from this Company for any claim it may have had against you on account of this stolen ride, as we think the course you have pursued is highly commendable.”241 A Los Angeles Times reporter described a woman’s restitution of thirty cents with interest to the Salt Lake Railway Company for failing to pay for her child’s fare. Other holiness folk made restitution for neglected streetcar fares in Los Angeles. The importance of restitution became a significant aspect of holiness worship. One woman claimed she had a vision

239 “Items from Los Angeles” Burning Bush, June 9, 1904, 9-10.
240 “Let Both Grow Together Until Harvest” Burning Bush, April 7, 1904.
241 Burning Bush, April 28 1904, 5. Burning Bush, April 7, 1904, 31
of a “brown, chicken hen” that she had stolen, killed, and eaten in the past. Another farmer confessed to taking a pig that had wandered in his yard. Still another confessed he had never paid for the use of the agricultural machinery he had used from the Deering Company. The anonymity of the city made cheating and deception easy, but holiness folks attempted to adhere to a strict moral code.

The emphasis on the moral code complemented the holiness idea of rejecting modern worldliness. However, holiness folk’s relationship with modern culture was more complicated. They adopted some aspects of modern society and discarded others. If they could retool a cultural element for the divine purposes of spreading the sanctified gospel, as Shepard felt he was doing in his approach to journalism, they did. The Salvation Army, a powerful force of sanctification in urban areas of the 1890s, similarly, borrowed liberally from elements of working class popular culture to reach the masses. Like circuses, they promoted their ministry with parades. These processions would attract crowds and lead them to the place of meeting. They also discarded traditional hymns, rewriting popular minstrel songs to include religious lyrics. They even borrowed from the characters of minstrelsy. Salvationists employed and headlined those workers considered exotic or strange. Joseph Garabedian, who they called Joe the Turk, joined a converted Delaware Indian, a woman who they called “the Hallelujah Midget,” and a converted minstrel, who spoke in the idiom of a blackface comedian. These four were called “specials for the Salvation Army” and received much attention in local newspapers. At best, the meetings were unattractive to a middle class audience.242

At worst they threatened the order of class relations in the cities. In Los Angeles, holiness bands followed the Salvation Army in embracing working class popular cultural forms to share the Gospel. They intentionally sought to entertain downtown residents, to the chagrin of white middle class observers who hoped religionists would provide a civilizing influence. Shepard used tactics he had learned in Chicago, adopting working class popular culture to draw a large audience. The *Times* described William Shepard as lead entertainer of the holiness band. “The manager of the vaudeville aggregation styled the Holy Jumpers” who gave “nightly performances under a tent at the corner of Seventh and Spring streets.” Residents of the surrounding neighborhood testified to noise disturbances caused by the shouts of the Jumpers. Although members of the Burning Bush did not endear themselves to their neighbors, they did lure curious onlookers. “[T]he unusual spectacle of the queer gyrations of those inside” attracted a skeptic, on his way to the theater, who concluded the meeting was at least as entertaining as a play.243 Although such visitors may not have converted, Shepard was pleased to draw in crowds if only to offer them the opportunity for repentance.244

*An Ambivalent Reception*

While the *Los Angeles Times* received the holiness movement with favor, or at least toleration when it emerged in Southern California in the 1880s, by the early 1900s observers found its radical successors more problematic. Worship practices reminiscent of working class culture, dangerous gender relations, neglectful practices of divine healing, and unsavory


244 “Holy Jumpers’ Again” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 25, 1905, II2
hoodlums attracted to their bombastic street meetings, troubled those who wanted to keep Los Angeles a homogeneous place of peace and quiet.

Although Anglo-midwesterners constituted the largest migration stream to Southern California, the booms of the 1880s brought migrations of many non-white and foreign-born men and women. Mexican, Italian, African American, Russian, Jewish, and Chinese people arrived to work on the railroad, in construction, in manufacturing, or domestic labor. All of these service and construction industries would make Los Angeles an attractive destination for the white middle class. Yet the new populations working in these industries also tested the anxiety of many Anglo elites who imagined Los Angeles as a respite from the perceived problems of urban life. Reform-minded city builders feared that immigrants and nonwhite migrants would bring with them slums, unions, and saloons, and mar their image of the land as a place of peaceful suburban retirement.245

At first, the Los Angeles Times endured the holiness street meetings, hoping that the sounds of the church-going could drown out the cacophony that Los Angeles’ staggering growth had raised. Holiness folk may have worshipped too loudly, but Anglo-Protestants generally preferred the sounds of hymn-singing, Bible-reading, and street preaching to raucous political speeches, drunken songs, and prize fights. The Los Angeles Times attributed this preference to a matter of class. Lower class people disliked the sound of holiness folk while members of the middle and upper classes defended them. The newspaper reported in October of 1882 that a “number of the baser sort hooted, groaned, and otherwise interrupted the proceedings” of a public holiness band. A wagon even attempted to back into the group after being bribed by a

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245 Mark Wild, Street Meetings: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles (University of California Press, 2005) 38-60
local brewer. Newspapers reported that many downtown residents, particularly young working class men, enjoyed disrupting the religious meetings as an evening’s entertainment. The newspaper wrote that the “reputable people” nearby expressed disgust at the “hoodlums in the crowd” and sided with the religious folk.\textsuperscript{246} The reporter described the holiness band as a little strange, but advocated for tolerance. They concluded that “so unassuming and harmless do the Holiness Band appear that none but a few blackguard could have the ‘cheek’ to insult such people.”\textsuperscript{247} The police also tended to take sides in this class-based battle. They most often accused the crowds who interrupted the holiness bands of disturbing the peace.\textsuperscript{248}

Things shifted around 1890. Both the holiness band’s downtown street meetings and their working class audiences became increasingly problematic for Anglo city builders in Los Angeles. The ideal of offering peaceful retirement for white, Protestant midwesterners began to conflict with the aural landscape of downtown Los Angeles. The chasm between rich and poor was widening, and the working class was becoming increasingly organized nationally. When radical holiness folk sought to gather crowds on downtown city streets in order to experience sanctification, wealthy onlookers were ambivalent at best.

Holiness street meetings began to lose favor with business owners and local newspapers when they gained the attention of a working class audience. In 1887, the \textit{Los Angeles Herald} reported a “gang of hoodlums” followed and jeered a visiting holiness band and a local Salvation Army Band as they marched in procession. A crowd of 400 seekers, deriders, and onlookers had gathered by the time the holiness band reached their rented basement in the upscale Nadeau


\textsuperscript{248} “Disturbed the Peace” \textit{Los Angeles Herald}, June 24, 1887, p. 2.
Hotel. The *Herald* noted with some embarrassment the preemience of the Nadeau; it had recently received a celebrity guest in Mrs. General Custer. The newspaper prescribed, “the whipping post” as a “proper caper for these young hoodlums. . . . It is to be hoped that another such disgraceful scene as last night will result in some arrests.” While the onlookers, not the holiness band, were derided by the *Herald*, the landlord of the Nadeau looked to the instigators of the noise and ordered the holiness band to leave his building.

By the 1890s, city authorities worried that the holiness workers themselves seemed to be straying from “good society.” In July of 1890, a group of young boys interrupted a holiness band by singing along with their hymns. The leading workers defied any sense of middle class restraint: they rushed at the boys and beat one of them. When a Deputy Sheriff arrived on the scene, one of the sanctified leaders struck him on the head. Both holiness men were convicted in police court of disturbing the peace and received fines. The climate had shifted.

One letter writer to the *Los Angeles Times* expressed concern that “the Holiness Band does not seem to be accomplishing very much in the way of reforming Los Angeles.” He encouraged the holiness people to “dispense with parades and street music, and follow accepted and quiet methods of reaching the masses.” Radical holiness practices, which harnessed emotion to draw the attention of downtown residents, were particularly troubling.

Reporters observing these street meetings often associated the most physically expressive spiritual practices with either black southern folk religion or vaudeville theater. This connection was especially troubling for Anglo-Protestants who hoped to retain a “white spot” in Los

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250 “Willing to Suffer,” *Los Angeles Herald*, July 11 1890, p. 5
Angeles. In the first week of June 1903 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a group of “Texas Jumpers,” mostly white women, caused quite a stir with their physical and emotional expressions of religiosity: “eighty hands clapped together or gyrated through the air in erratic motions, while their owners sang at the top of their voices songs that reminded one of the darkey camp meetings.” Although it is not clear whether he viewed this with amusement, concern, or disgust, the reporter seemed uncomfortable with the idea that southern black religion had made its way to Los Angeles, and was being embodied by white women. This scene had disturbed their vision of Angeleno homogeneity and white female restraint.

Anxiety about women whose leadership and participation in radical holiness groups threatened patriarchal structures of family and society emerged in the censure of holiness folk. Stories of irrational, overly emotional women abounded in the *Times*, attempting to display the perceived dangers of holiness and fanatical religion. Detractors raised concerns that holiness might take women’s natural susceptibility for hysteria to the brink of insanity. One story described a woman who had joined the holiness band, a divorcee and a single mother who established a boarding house. The newspaper explained that she had “worked so hard that she reduced herself considerably” and joined the holiness band in a state of “nervous prostration.” She “became so infatuated with the religious tenets peculiar to the sect, that she surrendered her whole time to the work. For two or three weeks she acted very strangely, but on Thursday she became a raving maniac” and authorities committed her to the Stockton Insane Asylum. While the authenticity of this story may be questioned, it indicated fears about the influence of radical

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251. "Without Spot or Wrinkles" *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1903, p. A1

holiness on women. Radical religion seemed to exaggerate the already questionable behavior of the single working mother.

The *Los Angeles Times* expressed particular concern when holiness women appeared to put their religious pursuits above their families. In one case, the newspaper suggested that a holiness woman had incited her husband to abuse by turning her house “into a prayer-shop, at which gathered several of the Holiness people.” When Mrs. Foster and her sisters prayed in a manner that was “distasteful” to Mr. Foster, he went through the house slamming the doors and threw a bucket of water on her. On the witness stand Mrs. Foster showed no remorse for displeasing her husband, saying “salvation is more important than a man.” The judge declared that he “thought Mrs. Foster ought to be ashamed of herself, at her time of life, to create such a rumpus, and advised her to devote more time to her home and less to the Holiness Band, and she would be just as safe.”

Involvement and leadership in a radical holiness community represented a departure from the prescribed bounds of a white middle class wife, and thus a problem to those who insisted that the protection of a familial hierarchy was necessary for civil society.

Public health officials also deplored holiness practices of divine healing, which they considered dangerous and backward. Several cases emerged when children died or were injured without seeing a physician in time. In 1888 a coroner was called to investigate the death of a fourteen year old in a holiness band who had been sick for two months. The family had been living in a tent in the Arroyo Seco and the parents refused to call a physician saying the Lord would heal the child. A year later, Coroner Meredith held an inquest on the body of Howard

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253 *A Holiness Case* *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 1889.
Shepherd, a child of two years and eight months, who died of diphtheria under the charge of several “divine healers,” and one physician who came too late. Two years later, the parents of Johnnie Strang were accused of neglecting their eleven year old with a broken arm. Like other Angelenos, they had experimented with a variety of religious healing practices, including Christian Science and holiness faith healing before seeking a medical doctor. The *Times* insisted that legal means be found to punish these parents, citing a statute protecting the welfare of children. The Strang case was brought to court and the boys’ parents were found guilty of neglect, a misdemeanor. The court insisted that the father take the boy to a medical doctor within twenty-four hours, or incur a $25 fine and their son’s removal to the county hospital. The endangering effects of radical holiness religion on families remained a frequent topic of publication for the *Times*.254

Initially, in the early 1880s, followers of a more moderate, reformer current of holiness sought and received legitimacy from Anglo city authorities, including the *Los Angeles Times*, as a civilizing force. However, by the early twentieth century, a new set of radical holiness men and women had arrived. Rather than conforming to white middle class values, they sought to shake things up in the “white spot.” Radical holiness folk drew attention with their jumping, dancing, shouting, and divine healing. The similarity of these modes of expression to working class popular culture and southern black culture raised the concern of elites who already felt anxious about working class populations in the city. Although they did not win most Angelenos as

converts, these radical street preachers paved the way for Los Angeles’ most significant religious revival in the early twentieth century. Their disregard of social norms would foreshadow the interracial worship and demonstrative practices at the Azusa Street Revival beginning in 1906.
Frank Bartleman was anxious as he walked briskly through the streets of Los Angeles. Mother Wheaton, an itinerant, white-haired prison evangelist, trailed behind him. Bartleman later described his exasperation: “She was so slow that I could hardly wait for her…. I have always been a ‘lone wolf’ for this very reason. My time is not my own.” God’s judgment was at hand, and Christ would soon appear. All of the signs pointed to this. Sanctified men and women in Los Angeles had prayed for miracles and wonders, for deeper experiences of God’s power. When a massive earthquake and subsequent fire nearly destroyed the city of San Francisco on April 18, 1906, Bartleman felt it was the answer to their prayers. He and others felt the aftershocks during a church service in Peniel Hall in Los Angeles the next day. “It was an earnest time,” Bartleman wrote later, and it drew him to prayer. He recounted, “I seemed to feel the wrath of God against the people… He showed me he was terribly grieved at their obstinacy in the face of his judgment on sin.” His passion for sharing news of God’s impending judgment led him to print tens of thousands of tracts urging people to turn to God after the earthquake.

It also came to him, a white preacher, that he must attend a meeting on Azusa Street led by a black preacher from Texas. A group of the faithful had been meeting for several weeks, first at the house of an African American couple, then, as it grew, moving to a former A.M.E. Church building when the house no longer afforded enough space. The earthquake convinced him the
end times were imminent and he needed to attend this meeting on Azusa Street. Mother Wheaton was staying with his family and asked to join Bartleman.\textsuperscript{255}

Frank Bartleman was right, that if one wanted to attend these meetings on Azusa Street he should make haste. However, not for the reasons he suspected, that the end times were approaching. Los Angeles was ripe for religious innovation and for strange social and cultural behaviors in the first decade of the twentieth century. The swiftly moving streams of holiness-pentecostalism reached a torrent in the city’s multiethnic neighborhoods near downtown. While the atmosphere surrounding Azusa Street in this first decade of the twentieth century provided particular opportunities for both social transgressions and religious innovations, the delicate balance that supported this environment, and in particular its interracialism, was liminal. By 1908, city visionaries had begun implementing zoning laws and ordinances regulating the space, noise, and people of Los Angeles, including overtly race-based restrictions on residency, and thus radical social behaviors soon gave way to social conformity on Azusa Street.

\textit{Complicating the “Search for Origins”}

This chapter seeks to understand early Pentecostalism, not as a search for the origins or roots within a particular leader or cultural stream as most recent scholars of Pentecostal Studies have attempted, but as an examination of the complex processes of cultural bricolage. Recent scholarship has rightly credited as significant the black prayer meeting beginning at Bonnie Brae Street led by a black pastor William Seymour. Indeed, scholars from previous decades had largely ignored the influence of African Americans, until Swiss theologian Walter Hollenweger’s

seminal work *The Pentecostals* in 1965. Subsequent scholarship has typically asserted the significance of the “black roots” of Pentecostalism, but without a full explanation of the complex processes of cultural generation as context.\(^{256}\)

As a number of historians of black culture, including Robin Kelley and Jacob Dorman, have written, new religious communities and cultures do not simply emerge through spontaneous regeneration, or transplantation from a “cultural seed,” but through the complex process of polyculturalism. A search for origins or roots of Pentecostalism implies that cultures are “fixed, discrete entities that exist side by side.” Polyculturalism, on the other hand, sees culture as fluid and hybrid. Pentecostalism would thus not be the result of “syncretism” or the combining of bounded systems of black and white identity, but the creation of “many individual bricoleurs” who bring together the “old and new, familiar and foreign, in a process that takes advantage of similarities between cultures.”\(^{257}\)

Examining early Pentecostalism through the lens of cultural bricolage acknowledges the diverse backgrounds of individuals who worshiped on Azusa Street and their agency in fashioning a religious experience that fit their particular contexts. Most accounts of the Azusa


Street Revival have not given much weight to the distinct biographies of early black Pentecostals, reflecting a monolithic conception of black identity as well as a lack of sources. Scholars of the Azusa Street revival have assumed that because the earliest leaders and participants were black, and had parents or grandparents who lived through slavery, a direct line of transmission exists between one generation’s practices and the next. Several have taken evidence that congregants were listed as “black” in U.S. Census data as proof that early Pentecostal practices, particularly those that were emotionally or physically expressive, can be connected to Africa.

Certainly self-identified black people played prominent roles as bricoleurs of the Azusa Street Revival. Black sanctified men and women, several of whom had already encountered radical holiness communities, lived in multiethnic neighborhoods, and prayed in an atmosphere of new and diverse spiritualties. They spun a web of religious practice that combined both the familiar and the foreign. While black participants at Azusa Street were likely attracted to a religion that reminded them of their family heritage, they also chose to integrate new practices, beliefs, and community into their worship.

Even the “origins stories” of the Azusa Street Revival, those narratives compiled from oral histories and testimonies of participants, seem to suggest an effort of cultural collaboration rather than the work of one gifted leader. Most recent scholarship points to William Seymour as the founder and originator of the Pentecostal movement. Seymour, a black man, arrived to Los Angeles from Houston in January 1906 at the invitation of Neely Terry, who sought his services as a pastor to a small black holiness congregation. Seymour carried stories and memories of observing others speak in tongues from Charles Parham’s ministry, but so did Neely Terry and
another black woman, Lucy Farrow. In fact, Emma Cotton, a black female participant at the revival insisted that Farrow received the gift of tongues before Seymour and taught him about this experience in Houston. While many scholars attempt to suggest that Seymour brought the gift of tongues to Los Angeles, this evidence suggests a more collaborative effort.

Furthermore, given the vast circulation of holiness newspapers nationwide during this period, it would be surprising if the Los Angeles sanctified had not already read accounts of tongues-speaking from Charles Parham’s ministry.

When Seymour arrived, the church was already connected to a network of radical holiness folks, including the Southern California Holiness Association, Joseph Smale’s New Testament Church, and itinerant holiness bands discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. These groups included prominent black evangelists and preachers, but they were dominated by whites. Seymour himself had left Louisiana for the Midwest at age 30, joined a biracial group of radical holiness folks in Cincinnati called the Evening Light Saints, before visiting Houston and Charles Parham’s largely white radical holiness ministry. When Seymour arrived in Los Angeles, his

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258 Charles Shumway, a white USC sociology graduate student, interviewed William Seymour and other Azusa Street participants at the revival’s end, and wrote a narrative on his findings in an unpublished thesis. See “A Study of the Gift of Tongues” (master’s thesis, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1914) 173-5. Although this source has its problems - no transcripts or substantial excerpts of the interviews are given - it has been the primary evidence for much writing on Azusa Street Revival. Emma Cotton, a black participant in the revival countered that Lucy Farrow taught Seymour about tongues. Emma Cotton, “The Inside Story of the Azusa Street Outpouring” in The Azusa Street Revival: When the Fire Fell ed. Roberts Liardon (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2006) 181-182. In an unpublished doctoral dissertation, Douglas Nelson attempted to discount Cotton’s account due to an unsubstantiated “inherent feminine gender bias” see Nelson p. 80 f. 22. Whoever originated this prayer for the gift of tongues becomes less significant when one considers the collaborative process of cultural creation occurring within early Pentecostalism.

259 Nelson, “For Such a Time as This;” Rufus Sanders, William Joseph Seymour: Black Father of the Twentieth Century Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement (Sandusky, Ohio: Alexandria Publications, 2001); Cotton, “The Inside Story of the Azusa Street Outpouring” 181-182. However, James Goff insists that the Pentecostal movement should be traced back to Charles Parham for his adoption of speaking in tongues as evidence for Baptism in the Holy Ghost, see James Goff, Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism (University of Arkansas Press, 1988).
congregation was deeply embroiled in a discussion of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and its accompanying signs, including physical healing and ecstatic religious expression, just as he had been. His predecessor, a black woman named Julia Hutchins, was still attending services although she had made plans to travel to Africa as a missionary.²⁶⁰

Seymour proved divisive at first. In his first sermon he seemed to suggest that one was not truly sanctified without evidence of baptism in the Holy Ghost through speaking in tongues, a problematic assertion to those who insisted they were already sanctified. An account written by black female participant Emma Cotton and an interview with Seymour conducted by a USC sociology student indicated that either Julia Hutchins, or the Holiness Association, locked him out of the church because of these assertions.²⁶¹ While the radical holiness community had benefited from the fluid development of sanctified theology and practice, they also drew sharp lines of distinction between true and false sanctification. With Neely Terry’s help, Seymour hosted prayer meetings in a private home in lieu of support from an official church for several weeks thereafter.

According to Seymour’s account to the USC student, his prayer group held a ten-day season of fasting and praying, beginning April 6, 1906 and culminating on Easter Sunday. It was amidst this season of fasting that most accounts of the revival insist that Edward Lee, a black sanctified man who worked as a janitor, first received the gift of tongues. This may be the same Edward Lee who was already deeply connected to the radical holiness community of Los


Angeles years before Seymour arrived. While Lee is often depicted as a simple janitor who sought a deeper religious experience, he may have been an evangelist of the Pentecost message himself, before Seymour even arrived to Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Times* in 1901 had reported that an Edward Lee, a recent arrival from Fresno, ran a holiness mission on the corner of Seventh and Mateo Streets and was seeking funding from local businessmen. The *Times* described the meetings at Lee’s mission as nearly half black, half white. They said, “There is no ‘color line,’ persons of all nationalities, age, and previous condition being welcome.”262 Such a description could have described the Azusa Street Revival five years later. The revival fervor was building within the black community in Los Angeles and Houston long before Seymour arrived.

In any case, Lee erupted into tongues again during the prayer meeting, and another black attendee, Jennie Evans Moore, began to play the piano and sing in French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Hindustani although she claimed to have no prior knowledge of playing piano or speaking in those languages. Moore then went to a mostly white holiness congregation, the New Testament Church led by former Baptist Joseph Smale, to describe the experience. The fluidity of Los Angeles’ urban environment in the first decade of the twentieth century, and well-networked black sanctified men and women, allowed word of this practice of speaking in tongues to spread rapidly. Over the next week, Seymour’s prayer group attracted growing interracial crowds, which triggered the move to the church building on Azusa Street.263

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263 Shumway, “A Study of the Gift of Tongues,” 174-5. Robert Mapes Anderson assumed that the Brother Lee who first spoke in tongues was Owen Lee, an Irish Catholic. However, all other sources point to Edward Lee. 312 Azusa Street was still listed as a Stevens AME Church building until at least 1903 according to Los Angeles city directories.
Frank Bartleman would attend his first meeting at Azusa Street later that same year. He became a significant bricoleur of the revival’s memory as well; his writings in holiness and Pentecostal newspapers provide the most comprehensive accounts of this early revival period. He lived as a spiritual radical from a young age, traveling from one city to the other with his family, much like the itinerant radical holiness preachers described in Chapter Three, and relied solely on God to provide for them. His vigorous evangelism also likely resulted from the untimely death of his young daughter, Esther. Several pages of his account of the Azusa Street Revival described in heart-wrenching detail the stormy day in January 1906 when he carried his child’s coffin alone, resting it on his knees on the rainy carriage ride to the poor peoples’ graveyard. Indeed, he wrote that his daughter’s death was a turning point in his ministry; he remembered, “Beside that little coffin, with heart bleeding, I pledged my life anew for God’s service. In the presence of death how real eternal issues become. I promised the rest of my life should be spent wholly for Him…. I then begged Him to open a door of service quickly, that I might not find time for sorrow.” He chose a life of vigorous evangelism in reaction to the pain of his daughter’s death, focusing on the hope that she had gone to a better place in Heaven. A conviction that the Second Coming of Jesus was near gave him an even more powerful hope that he would see his beloved “Little Esther” again very soon. If the return and judgment of Christ were close at hand, then soon afterward would be the resurrection of the dead and the reuniting of all believers in the New Jerusalem. The approaching end times gave him hope that he would see his daughter soon, but also explained the massive earthquake in San Francisco and the strange gathering of worshipers of “every tongue, tribe, and nation” on Azusa Street.

264 Frank Bartleman, How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles, 6-9.
Black and white sanctified men and women who were already connected to networks of the radical holiness movement both carried early Pentecostal beliefs and practices to Los Angeles and reimagined them. Previous life and ministry experiences, cultural backgrounds, and diverse identities of race and gender informed what they saw in revival meetings. Indeed, the Azusa Street Revival was a collaborative process of cultural creation, in which men and women acted as bricoleurs piecing together a religious experience based on their memories of home and the available spiritual resources in their new environment.

The Multiethnic Environment of Los Angeles

Los Angeles was experiencing rapid growth in the first decade of the twentieth century. It proved to be particularly prolific for cultural exchange and religious innovation across racial lines, not least because it lacked the zoning laws of other cities that limited where black people could live. One black realtor and booster touted a more integrated environment to readers of the “race paper,” Liberator: “The Negroes of this city have prudently refused to segregate themselves into any locality, but have scattered and purchased homes in sections occupied by wealthy, cultured white people.” Los Angeles’ African American community was small, between one and two percent of the total population. There was no defined black neighborhood, or even a multiracial “colored” section of town. There were often significantly more white people living in the districts surrounding downtown, even if nonwhites also inhabited

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the area.\textsuperscript{267} Whites did resist blacks’ attempts to move into the most desirable all-white neighborhoods, but Azusa Street existed in a racially integrated neighborhood, and it seems likely the congregation reflected this integration.\textsuperscript{268} Representations of it as a black church in a black neighborhood are simplifications.

The neighborhood in which Seymour’s prayer meetings occurred largely consisted of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Canada, Ireland, and Sweden and white migrants from Midwest or South. Only a handful of black families, almost always identifying themselves as “mulatto” on the census, lived in homes nearby. The neighborhood surrounding Azusa Street, closer to downtown and just a short ride on the “red car” from the Bonnie Brae house, called the Five Points District, was quite mixed as well. The majority of residents in this district were boarders, living in temporary rooms within a house or building. The census reveals a family of Russian Jews and a couple black families, who worked domestic jobs and took in boarders for their open rooms, lived around the corner from the church building. Most of the roomers were of mixed ancestry, including Irish, Germans, Japanese, Canadians, Kentuckians, Pennsylvanians, Georgians, Russians, and Ohioans. Records even suggest the building and house at the rear of 312 Azusa Street took in lodgers before, during, and after the revival.\textsuperscript{269}

In fact, most neighborhoods surrounding the train depot downtown were largely multiethnic before the 1920s and thus provided opportunities for intercultural exchange. The booms of the 1880s had filled the downtown area with immigrants, African Americans, and some

\textsuperscript{267} Douglas Flamming, \textit{Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America} (University of California Press, 2005) 68

\textsuperscript{268} Flamming, \textit{Bound for Freedom}, 67.

\textsuperscript{269} Los Angeles City Directories (1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, and 1909); U.S. Census Bureau, Los Angeles, 1900, 1910.
Anglos looking for temporary housing on the way to more permanent settlement. Many sought single-family homes but there was a housing shortage. Sonoratown and Chinatown, which had previously served as ethnic enclaves to keep nonwhite populations separate from the city center, began to absorb newcomers of diverse backgrounds after the 1880s, including Italians, Mexicans, blacks and poor Anglos.

The responses of Anglo city reformers to these diverse neighborhoods surrounding downtown were ambivalent, but overall they agreed that Los Angeles should not replicate the slums of New York City or Chicago. Some reformers, such as Dana Bartlett, advocated for the protection of residential districts that favored the single-family home. Others insisted that policy should promote commercial and industrial development in certain districts—often those inhabited by nonwhites. All found multiethnic neighborhoods troubling. In 1917, the Community Survey of Los Angeles would decry “bad housing, frightful overcrowding, congestion of peoples in houses and houses on lots” in the Five Points neighborhood that included Azusa Street.

Evidence suggests the population inside the mission doors was, like its immediate neighborhood, diverse. Frank Bartleman remarked how over time this largely black prayer meeting at one point had “more white people than colored coming. The color line washed away


in the blood.” Azusa Street Revivalists and observers reported that blacks, whites, immigrants, the wealthy, and the working class all participated in the meetings near downtown. The *Apostolic Faith* newspaper claimed to have witnessed several “nationalities” of people: “Ethiopians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities” including Russians, Armenians, Swedes, and others. 

In particular, evidence suggests the strong presence of Mexicans in early Pentecostal congregations. In 1910 the Pisgah Home Mission near the Arroyo Seco, a place where the sick and injured could seek rest and the hope of divine healing, reported that one fourth of their patients were “Spaniards and Mexicans.” At least one Mexican American woman, Susy Valdez, played a significant role as a ministry leader there. There were also numerous accounts of Latinos receiving the gift of healing in the Azusa Street Mission. Scholar of Latino religion Gaston Espinosa argues that the receptivity and conversion of Mexicans and Mexican Americans to early Pentecostalism reflects the familiar practices of divine healing witnessed on Azusa Street. Espinosa remarked that Mexican immigrants were more likely to see health and wellness from curandero/a folk healers than white medical practitioners. Latinos maintained traditions of folk healing, and early Pentecostals’ practices of divine healing performed by lay people who considered physical and spiritual well-being to be deeply connected were approachable in this context.

\[\text{274 Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*, 54.}\]
\[\text{275 *Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles, California), September 1906, 1.}\]
\[\text{277 Ibid., 41-42.}\]
Nor did the congregation draw solely from its nearest, disadvantaged neighborhoods. As the Holiness Association became more institutionalized, developing doctrine, organizations of governance, and rules for worship services, the Pentecostal meetings on Azusa Street became more attractive to rural midwestern and southern Anglos who had settled in the towns outside of Los Angeles. William Pendleton, a southerner who owned a farm in Downey and led a holiness meeting in Los Angeles, encouraged the sanctified to seek the gift of tongues. He warned that they had not necessarily received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit even if they had been sanctified. Many left the holiness band for this new Pentecostal movement, which promised even higher enthusiasms than sanctification.278

The ethnic diversity of the downtown area also translated into a diversity of religious communities. Indeed within the city center numerous worship services could be found on Sundays and throughout the week: a Roman Catholic cathedral, a Jewish synagogue, a Chinese Temple or Joss House, Northern and Southern Methodist edifices, German Evangelical churches, urban missions, Salvation Army barracks, and several rented halls where holiness and Pentecostal healing services were held. Along Broadway between 7th and 8th, observers could often find tent meetings set up by temporary evangelists, holiness bands, or street preachers. South of downtown and in scattered residences one could also find the Church of Christ (Scientist), and the Home of Truth, or practitioners of New Thought, both esoteric religions that emphasized the significance of positive thinking.279

278 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 390.

279 Michael Engh, Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple, and Synagogue in Los Angeles, 1846-1888 (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press,1992) 58; Los Angeles City Directory (1903, 1905, 1907).
As discussed in Chapter Three, growing divisions within Protestant institutions meant that Anglo-Protestant Angelenos at the turn of the century were often more open to experimenting with religious communities outside the mainstream of Baptist and Methodist Churches. Even some established white, middle class ministers of traditional Protestantism chose to break away from their parent churches. Joseph Smale, the pastor of First Baptist Church, visited a holiness revival led by Evan Roberts in Wales and felt inspired to return to Los Angeles and stoke the fires of a renewal movement there. In September 1905 he discarded his ties with the Baptist Church and began holding meetings at Burbank Hall, inviting parishioners to seek the Holy Spirit as the apostles had, and naming the congregation New Testament Church. Later, another established Baptist preacher, Elmer Fisher, would leave his congregation in Glendale to gather a meeting of Pentecost-seekers in downtown Los Angeles that he styled the Upper Room.

The multiethnic environment in downtown Los Angeles and the openness to diverse spiritualities translated to a greater fluidity and openness to diverse beliefs and practices without centralized authority. Regardless of location, culture-making is often a process of bricolage—where people share, exchange, and reimagine their beliefs and practices with one another—but Los Angeles in 1906 provided a distinct environment for this process.

*The Holy Spirit as a Mechanism of Inclusion*

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281 Ibid., 84.
The religion practiced by early Pentecostals, like that of radical holiness folk, emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit. The belief that the Holy Spirit could bestow anyone with spiritual authority lubricated the atmosphere for a felt sense of intercultural exchange and community. Whether participants felt a sense of cross-cultural understanding universally in the revival is uncertain. Sources from the Azusa Street Revival emphasize the experience of Anglo participants over those participants of color or immigrant backgrounds. Nonetheless, the professed belief of the congregation was that the gift of speaking in tongues allowed for the participation of diverse peoples, crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Early Pentecostals insisted that the practice of speaking in tongues dismantled language barriers that immigrant groups might encounter at an English-speaking service. As discussed in Chapter Two, communication barriers meant that most evangelistic ministers in California had initially focused on reaching people of Anglo descent. Even when Southern California Protestant churches began establishing missions to foreign-born populations, and in particular to the Chinese, they often focused on Americanization, teaching English and assimilation to Anglo-American culture. Azusa Street was different in that participants could speak in their own language, and according to Pentecostals, still communicate with those outside of their language group by means of speaking in tongues.

Pentecostals claimed speaking in tongues allowed those of different nationalities to feel a part of the community. The *Apostolic Faith* newspaper remarked, “It is noticeable how free all nationalities feel. If a Mexican or German cannot speak English, he gets up and speaks in his own tongue and feels quite at home, for the Spirit interprets through the face and people say

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282 For more on the history of evangelization of the Chinese, see Engh, *Frontier Faiths*, 121-137.
amen.” While they might be mutually unintelligible in other settings, Pentecostals believed that they understood one another during the worship service. Furthermore, Azusa Street revivalists considered their mission a place of “home” for non-English speakers amidst a new strange city. Sources from immigrant groups who attended the revival are extremely limited, and those few (by Mexicans and Armenians) did not directly address issues of immigrant identity and language barriers. However, the avowed sense of unity differentiated Pentecostal churches from other churches.

In one case of the Holy Spirit transcending language on Azusa Street, *Apostolic Faith* described a man “from the central part of Mexico, an Indian” who heard a German woman speaking a message in his own tongue and converted on the spot. While most observers did not understand what they took for his avowal of faith, another man, apparently from his tribe, translated them as a testimony of salvation. He then laid hands on a woman and, according to the *Apostolic Faith*, healed her of tuberculosis. While linguistic barriers render this incident unclear —the newsletter may not accurately report the statements anyone made—it also illustrates the sense of unity offered by an emphasis of the Holy Spirit.

The fluid movements of the Holy Spirit could also lead to the spread of the Pentecostal message before evangelists even arrived. A mixed group of black and white Pentecostals from Azusa Street who visited Native Americans at a boarding school for Americanization in the Mojave Desert in January 1907 reported that the Holy Spirit transcended barriers of culture and

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283 “Gracious Pentecostal Showers Continue to Fall,” *Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles), November 1906, 1.


language. When one, identified as “Indian brother George,” preached in his own language, a white Pentecostal observer claimed the Holy Spirit’s interpretation had allowed him to understand everything, and that this confirmed that the converted Mojave people knew the Holy Ghost even though their white Christian teachers did not. At least according to the white Pentecostal man giving testimony of this encounter, the gifts of the Holy Ghost meant Spirit-filled whites saw themselves as more connected to the Mojave people than to their white missionary teachers.286

Similarly, the Azusa Street Mission’s newspaper recounted a visit by Sister Anna Hall of the Mission in September of 1906 to the Spiritual Christian Russians in their Los Angeles church, at which she gave them a message from the Holy Spirit in their own Russian tongue. Their response was electric: “They were so glad to hear the truth that they wept and even kissed her hands.” From the perspective of the Azusa Street folks, the Russian listeners were amazed at Hall’s ability to speak in their native tongue. They knew little of these self-dubbed “Spiritual Christians” who had refused to obey certain orders and customs within the Russian Orthodox Church. They had made their way to Los Angeles in the first decade of the twentieth century. Local Los Angeles newspapers assigned them with contradictory descriptions such as a local curiosity, a “backward” group, religious fanatics, or a community of admirable spiritual solemnity.287 The group also had long-cultivated a practice of speaking in tongues in their religious services; their exuberant response to Hall may not reflect a familiar language but

286 “Among the Indians at Needles, California,” Apostolic Faith, Jan. 1907, 2

287 For a picture of the Molokans as admirable but backward, see “Modern Ways Leave no Mark on Molokanes” Los Angeles Herald April 21, 1907 p. 3. For an example of their portrayal as religious fanatics see “Death Dance of ‘Priguni’” LAT OCT. 9 1906 p. 17. For contemporary sociological observations of this Russian community in Los Angeles, see Pauline Young, “Russian Molokan Community of Los Angeles” American Journal of Sociology Vol. 35, No. 3 (Nov., 1929), pp. 393-402.
instead a familiar spiritual practice. In another similar instance, *Apostolic Faith* described a Russian man embracing a man who spoke in tongues, reflecting a custom common in the church of Russian “Spiritual Christians.”

While the multiethnic and spiritually diverse environment in and near downtown Los Angeles provided an atmosphere in which a polycultural exchange of religion could potentially occur, Pentecostals emphasis on the Holy Spirit allowed for actual moments of such bricolage. Pentecostals believed that the Holy Ghost, as “no respecter of persons,” influenced men and women across boundaries of color, language, and class, and thus forged connections between diverse peoples.

**Dangerous Fanaticisms**

To outsiders, activities on Azusa Street strayed into the realm of “religious fanaticism,” a vaguely defined but often-used category indicating the dangerous effects of a religious community on society. While most observers considered religion, and in particular traditional Anglo-Protestant Christianity, an important force for social good and civilization, they believed that religion could have perilous effects on the vulnerable and ignorant without the intercession of mediating institutions and educated ministers. Observers representing both religious and secular institutions found much of what they encountered on Azusa Street dangerous subversions of Christian civilization.

Some of the original holiness band members, living in rural towns surrounding Los Angeles as described in Chapter Two, believed that tongues-speakers had crossed into a realm of

dark spirituality; Satan, not the Holy Ghost, had inhabited Azusa Street members. These critics told of Sister Bobbins who, after enjoying some pleasant feelings while speaking in tongues, later felt “awful darkness and agony of soul from which it seemed almost impossible for her to be delivered.” The less-controlled practices of glossolalia could lead believers, particularly vulnerable, unknowing women, down a dark path. Sister Bobbins was delivered from this unnamed, evil force while reading her Bible; holiness folks interpreted this as connecting her back to a more orthodox truth. Willis Kelly, the former superintendent of the Holiness Mission and Faith Home in downtown Los Angeles, became a vocal critic. He claimed to have visited a meeting led by tongues-speakers intending to be open to the Holy Spirit. While the believers crowded around him, Kelly remembered hearing the voice of a spirit suggesting he say a few words in Spanish (he “knew a little of the language” or that he say a few words in gibberish). Kelly was convinced that this was a “lying spirit” attempting to lead him into deceiving the hearers and did not obey. Tongues advocates’ insistence that salvation required tongues speaking, that the simple gift of sanctification was not enough, offended holiness band members, perhaps influencing these accusations.

Critics also described four religionists who had felt called to fast in preparation for the Second Coming. James Washburn recounted the story; all of them died. Washburn conceded that most Pentecostals likely did not approve of such practices, but described them as the logical extension of “delusive seeking and searching for the highly emotional.”

289 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 378.
290 Ibid., 378-9.
291 Ibid., 384.
292 Ibid., 388-391.
September of 1910 the Los Angeles Times ran a series of articles on the four religionists who had purportedly fasted together, placing the blame on another dangerous brand of religious fanaticism.

The Times seemed particularly concerned with “religious fanaticism” during this period. Between 1906 and 1909, the paper mentioned “fanaticism” 258 times, most often referring to communities perceived as dangerous cults in the United States, but also abroad. One such article described a young man, Roy Hess, who was, according to the Times, declared “violently insane” after claiming the gift of tongues in Chinese. The Times attributed his insanity to the “religious emotionalism” of the Holy Rollers on Azusa Street. The same article described a Pentecostal man who shot his wife, and another Pentecostal man who killed his son and daughter with an ax. According to the Times, both killers had become dangerous and unbalanced from “the same religious mania.”

The Times also attributed the attendance of supposedly respectable members of society to foul play on the revivalists’ part. These members included noted physician Dr. Henry S. Keyes and his daughter, who joined the early Pentecostals, and two leading Baptist pastors who left their congregations in order to start churches that embraced the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The paper mused that revival leaders must have used hypnotism or manipulation to lure these people. In 1907 it attributed another addition to the Azusa Street congregation to a “nervous strain” brought on by the death of his child some years before; the Times said Will Trotter, an

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evangelist with the Union Rescue Mission, had “put himself into a condition where the hysterical teachings of the Apostolics appealed to him.”

Discourse on religious fanaticism sometimes used racialized language to describe the religionists and their practices. James Washburn, one of the founding members of the holiness band, emphasized the black origins of the tongues movement in denouncing its influence. He recounted the coming of Seymour from Texas to work at the Santa Fe Street holiness mission and its subsequent rejection of him. He emphasized Seymour’s race and charged that the Azusa Street mission was “once used by the colored people but now converted in part into a tenement house.” Washburn didn’t directly suggest that race made this mission illegitimate, but implied the movement’s blackness might have made it easy for Seymour to lead others astray. He objected particularly to the insistence on the baptism of the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues, which was turning the sanctified away from the holiness band.

Washburn described the practices at these early Pentecostal meetings as if they were an exotic ritual: “strange phenomena and wild, hysterical demonstrations followed” including falling on the floor “with strange noises, as in deep agony” and “strange manipulations” on those seeking tongues such as “laying on of hands, patting their jaws, and speaking over them in their eagerness to help.” Even some African American churchgoers found the worship practices at Azusa Street Revival dangerously close to black folk religion. One black participant, Lawrence Catley, remembered that Black Baptist and Methodist churches would admonish practitioners for attending the revival. More staid parishioners warned that revivalists might “put something on

295 “To Continue Rescue Work” Los Angeles Times July 25, 1907 p. II 3
296 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 388-391.
297 Ibid., 388-391.
you,” or “hoodoo you.” They were concerned that Pentecostalism was connected to “pagan” black folk spirituality of conjure.298

The Times also used racialized language to describe meetings on Azusa Street, as if they were witnessing an exotic ritual. Adjectives such as “queer,” “peculiar,” “hideous,” indicated that what they witnessed on Azusa Street was foreign and unfamiliar. The prominence of “colored men and women, with a sprinkling of white people” indicated the “otherness” of these meetings even more strongly.299 While the happenings on Azusa Street might have been a cultural bricolage or combining of familiar and foreign practices, outsiders at the time found innovation and re-imaginings threatening.

Social Transgressions

As in other parts of the holiness movement, Azusa Street’s worship services featured a crossing of social boundaries. Revivalists seemed to disregard the social norms of the day that barred interracial mingling and that maintained hierarchies of leadership that favored Anglo-American males. Pentecostals would not discount the public influence of anyone baptized by the Holy Spirit. Lawrence Catley remarked that “everybody was somebody” through receipt of the Holy Ghost. He further insisted, there were, “No differences at Azusa Street;” the participants were “all one in Christ, every man, woman, girl or boy.”300

298 Lawrence Catley, interview by Vinson Synan and Leonard Lovett at Society for Pentecostal Studies meeting, (Orange, Calif.: Gospel Communicators, 1974).


300 Lawrence Catley, interview.
Black women frequented the pages of *Apostolic Faith* as they shared testimonies, spoke in tongues, traveled as missionaries, and exhorted the crowds gathering on Azusa Street.\(^{301}\) In the first issue of the Azusa Street Mission’s newspaper, the author established a narrative centered on the work of black women: “The work began among the colored people. God baptized several sanctified wash women with the Holy Ghost, who have been much used of Him.”\(^{302}\) As Chapter One of this dissertation recounted, black women had a strong influence within the holiness movement and within the black church; therefore those Azusa Street participants that came from the holiness movement were already familiar with their strong presence in spiritual leadership. Some women who led prayer, spoke in tongues, gave testimonies, and preached, such as Lucy Farrow and Julia Hutchins, had already led their own congregations before Azusa Street.

While black women found empowerment to preach through the Holy Spirit, white men described a humbling experience. In one description of the revival, Bartleman wrote, “Strong men lie for hours under the mighty power of God, cut down like grass.”\(^{303}\) Indeed, the “mighty power” of the Holy Ghost was displayed most vividly to Bartleman when educated, white men were slain in the Spirit. In fact, those considered most respectable, white male Protestant ministers, often described struggling to receive the Holy Spirit because their pride got in the way. Bartleman wrote, “The preachers died the hardest. They had so much to die to. So much

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\(^{303}\) Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*, 64.
reputation and good works.” It was harder for them to receive the Spirit because they had filled themselves with worldly accomplishments and reputations. Bartleman even recounted destroying all evidence he owned of his status and achievement before receiving the Holy Ghost.  

Outsider accounts of revival events indicated the extent to which they traversed social boundaries of race, class and gender. Observers in particular found interracial commingling and the public influence of white women and people of color troubling. Both religious and secular papers drew attention to the involvement of women in testifying, preaching, and speaking in tongues, suggesting that such scenes were unseemly and unfeminine. While women had been given opportunities to testify and preach in the holiness band, their involvement there was still highly structured into an orderly service. Willis Kelly added a critique of the prominent role of women to his claim that he had experienced a “lying spirit” in a Pentecostal meeting. He remarked, of Pentecostal women who spoke for God and granted him a message of rebuke or exhortation despite his status as a preacher in the holiness band, that practices of tongues-speaking “seemed rather bold in these young girls” who testified in tongues without the approval of male leaders. He described having seen a woman lying outstretched on the floor while others crowded around her in prayer at a Pentecostal meeting, and of a female leader telling him he might hope to have the experience of the prone woman if he waited on God. When Kelly refused to pray for the gift of tongues, another woman rebuked him in tongues “and shook her finger at me,” and still another stood up to announce that she felt the Spirit was grieved by his actions. By implication Kelly expressed his disapproval of these women who failed to maintain

304 Bartleman, How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles, 60, 62, 64, 77-78.
305 Washburn, History and Reminiscences, 383.
306 Ibid., 384.
an orderly, controlled presence in worship—and their boldness in chastising him doubtless fueled his disapproval.

The *Los Angeles Times* also found the participation and physical expression of white women on Azusa Street unseemly. One reporter was aghast at the sight of several “fanatical and almost hysterical” white women lying on the (dirty) floor “each endeavoring to kick her heels higher in the air than the others” “practically standing on their heads in the midst of the large audience” and gaining improper attention from men. Describing the hysterical screams of women when police broke up the meeting at 12:30am, he claimed that one woman ran in to the street and embraced a man. “[T]hrowing her arms around his neck,” she “declared that he was hers, that she loved him, and the he was a sinner and must confess his sins.”\(^{307}\) Fanatical religion seemed to have a troubling effect on these women who preached, testified, worshiped, and evangelized without inhibitions.

Interracial commingling on Azusa Street likewise won detractors. One reporter wrote “The surprise is that any respectable white person would attend such meetings as are being conducted on Azusa Street.”\(^{308}\) Indeed, the *Times* often emphasized the black presence and leadership of these meetings as if race explained the strange proceedings. Cross-class and cross-racial interactions were unnatural and dangerous, the newspaper indicated. One reporter expressed concern for a “dignified mining man, well dressed and well groomed” who gave his testimony before a mixed crowd. His clothing and jewelry “would have attracted attention in the lobby of the swellest hostelry in town,” and made him stand out from the more motley crowd.

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The reporter worried that he would be vulnerable to a “the colored brethren” who “did not fail to notice the sparklers in this little one-story shack.”

Even visiting radical preacher, Charles Parham, who had preached on the gift of tongues in the same Houston congregation that Lucy Farrow and William Seymour had attended, found the interracial commingling in Los Angeles repellent. He wrote in 1912 of his visit:

Men and women, whites and blacks, knelt together or fell across one another; frequently, a white woman, perhaps of wealth and culture, could be seen thrown back in the arms of a big ‘buck nigger,’ and held tightly thus as she shivered and shook in freak imitation of the Pentecost. Horrible, awful shame!

The perceived defilement of white womanhood had its corollary in the fear of miscegenation, which also pervaded the *Times’* coverage of the revival. One reporter observed with disgust: “men and women embraced each other in an apparent agony of emotion. Whites and negroes clasped hands and sang together. It was no uncommon sight to see a comely young wench throw her arms about the neck of some white man in the audience and beg him to ‘come to the altar.’” Such intimate physical contact between blacks and whites incited fears that revivalists were doing more than just worshiping with one another.

African American men leading young white women seemed to upset observers even more than “comely young wenches” embracing white men. The *Times* suggested the practice of

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310 *Apostolic Faith* (Baxter Springs, KS) 1 (December 1912): 4-5.

“laying on of hands” by black elders to young white women posed an inherent sexual threat.\textsuperscript{312} One such article described “a rather prepossessing white woman” who testified that she had left her husband and children “in order to follow the negro” after receiving a message from God. “In her frenzy she threw her arms about the greasy-looking leader and shouted his praises.”\textsuperscript{313} Articulating the direct threat to the patriarchal family, the reporter added: “Another woman, young and well-dressed, testified that she has left her husband and child in order to enjoy ‘more power.’” He claimed additional such testimonies joined the fray. One woman “appeared to press her face against [William Seymour’s] perspiring chops in her eagerness to tell her story.”\textsuperscript{314} No one, the horrified observer wrote in the \textit{Times}, offered any rebuke to these displays.

The \textit{Times} described the influence of black women at meetings as dangerously sexual or comical. A reporter described the shouts of “an old colored mammy in a frenzy of religious zeal” as if they were a vaudeville performance: “Swinging her arms wildly about her she continues with the strangest harange ever uttered. Few of her words are intelligible and for the most part her testimony contains the most outrageous jumble of syllables, which are listened to with awe by the company.” Other black women, surrounding her, shouted, spoke in tongues, and then collapsed to the floor.\textsuperscript{315} Another depiction of a meeting suggests an evening service took a sinister and chaotic turn as African Americans began to dominate: “Pandemonium reigned supreme.... Black wenches threw themselves on the floor and cackled and gabbled.” \textsuperscript{316}

\textsuperscript{312} Ibid., p. II1.
\textsuperscript{313} Ibid., p. II1.
\textsuperscript{314} Ibid., p. II1.
Comparing the coverage of Azusa Street with the *Times*’ earnest attempt to depict Los Angeles as a quiet, conservative city of Anglo-Midwesterners suggests the reporters felt Azusa Street threatened the city’s image. A reporter bewailed that the noise emanating from meetings of such “religious fanatics” made it impossible to sleep anywhere near the vicinity of Azusa Street. It described neighbors advocating for a police crackdown to the city prosecutor and police about the late-night noise problem after patrolmen did not address the problem of a meeting of “probably 700 people” until 1:30 in the morning. “The noises which emanate from within the meeting sound as though the organization had something to [do] with unions, and every occupant of the place might be a walking delegate from the excellent control of lung power which is exercised at the most surprising and continued intervals,” the newspaper wrote. The paper had cultivated a deep antagonism toward the labor movement, so this comparison was particularly critical. Just as the *Times* had compared itinerant radical holiness folk who led street meetings in the years preceding Azusa Street to vaudevillians, the *Times* compared early Pentecostals to characters from working class popular culture: “The fanatics rolled and jumped about, screeching at the top of their voices, and one adventurer dived through an open window as cleverly as though he did the stunt nightly on a vaudeville stage.”

Observers seemed alternately entertained, confused, and horrified by the scenes on Azusa Street. Their objections indicate the extent to which revivalists’ belief in the primacy of the Holy Spirit as bestower of spiritual authority led them to discard typical social boundaries of the time—and the strength of the threat that posed.

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The Liminality of the Revival Moment

The delicate balance of ethnic diversity, spiritual fluidity, and uncontrolled urban growth in the first decade of the twentieth century in Los Angeles would be short-lived, and so would the social transgressions of the Azusa Street Revival. Visionaries for the city of Los Angeles began to implement laws and ordinances to fulfill their imagination of a peaceful city of single-family residences as the first decade of the twentieth century came to a close. Advancing racial segregation was a direct result of laws which sought to limit industrial growth to certain districts, most often where people of color resided. As white residents of multiethnic neighborhoods surrounding downtown left for outlying communities, white Pentecostals would begin to leave the mission on Azusa Street for Pentecostal meetings with white leadership.

The social equality revivalists espoused had its limitations. The involvement of white women and people of color in prominent and vocal positions at the Azusa Street Revival did not mean that social norms had been completely suspended. For example, when white women and people of color were afforded opportunities to lead, it was often in the context of their involvement as “vessels of the Holy Spirit,” a passive role that did not ascribe much agency to the religionist. The language Bartleman used to described their involvement belied his previous assumptions about the intellectual superiority or rationality of white males. The weakening of body and mind one encountered through the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was even a feminizing experience. In his own memory of receiving the gift of tongues, Bartleman wrote how he had to abandon his mind and surrender to God, much like women in natural childbirth. He wrote that Azusa Street “had to start in poor surroundings, to keep out the selfish, human element. All came down in humility together, at His feet.... The fodder was thus placed for the lambs, not for
giraffes. All could reach it.” He came to believe that white women, people of color, and children needed to surrender less to receive the Holy Spirit than white men, and thus found more successful experiences. Those who were already “lowly” had an easier time accessing this experience.

White ministers had been wooing white Pentecostals from Azusa Street from its earliest days. Joseph Smale of First Baptist Church encouraged his followers to seek the gift of tongues at his own meetings in Burbank Hall downtown. Frank Bartleman led a successful alternative meeting on 8th and Maple Streets; William Pendleton who was also white, succeeded him. The Upper Room, led by Elmer Fisher, also became remembered as a primarily white church.

Oral histories from Azusa Street participants suggest that racial prejudice existed in other forms at the revival. When asked at a meeting for the Society of Pentecostal Studies by an attendee if he was made to feel inferior for being black at Azusa Street, Lawrence Catley explained, “When you’re used to something when you’re brought up with it, you take it as a matter of fact, and that’s it. See what I mean?” Because of that background he did not expect to see complete social change in Los Angeles: “You didn’t try to break down things.” One white worshiper at Azusa Street suggested that black participants were the ones who had more “extreme” spiritual beliefs or practices: “There were colored people who, I think, were extreme. They had the blessing but they didn’t know how best to express it or something like that.”

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319 Bartleman 84; Lawrence Catley, interview; Ernest S. Williams, interview by unknown student from Central Bible College and James S. Tinney (International Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center: November 8, 1978),

320 Lawrence Catley, interview.

321 Ernest Williams, interview.
discomfort of some white revivalists with black prominence in Pentecostal meetings likely fed the reversion to segregated meetings. The same white Azusa Street participant claimed that black Pentecostals objected to white men gaining leadership roles. Beginning in 1911, two-thirds of Seymour’s leadership left Azusa Street to join emerging white theologian and minister William Durham who established a mission at 7th Street and Los Angeles Street.\textsuperscript{322} Left behind were about twenty of the original African American members, and only half a dozen whites.\textsuperscript{323} Seymour continued to preach on Azusa Street to the veteran faithful, until, as his followers claimed, he died of a broken heart in 1922.

The efforts of white Angelenos to address what they perceived as blight in the multiethnic neighborhoods surrounding Azusa Street likely fed white flight from the Mission itself. The \textit{Los Angeles Times} called for a “city of homes,” a vision historian Mark Wild interpreted as “beautiful, ethical, prosperous, and by implication, white.”\textsuperscript{324} Decades prior, the city of Los Angeles had established “social nuisance” laws that effectively segregated Chinese-owned hand laundries to certain neighborhoods. Under the influence of reformers like Dana Bartlett and the City Beautiful movement, the city began to enforce housing standards and demolishing poor residents as a way to prevent the blight of urban development–slums, tenements, cramped quarters.\textsuperscript{325}


\textsuperscript{323} MacRobert, \textit{The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988) 63.

\textsuperscript{324} Wild, \textit{Street Meeting}, 42.

In 1908, the city of Los Angeles established zoning legislation which restricted the industrial development of the city to the areas around downtown, an area mostly inhabited by working class residents, immigrants, and African Americans. The city Prosecutor Ray Nimmo, in a 1913 article entitled “Accomplishing the Segregation of Industries” described the city government’s vision of Los Angeles as the first city “to undertake a plan for the separation of its homes from its works and factories.” He claimed for the city “a deserved reputation for its ideal residence conditions.”

These zoning laws had implications for race relations in the city. While homeowners could appeal for exemptions from the ordinances, renters could not. Those Anglo residents who had settled near the downtown district began to move outside of the newly developed industrial zone, taking advantage of an open housing market the city offered to white families. Immigrants and African Americans had fewer opportunities for mobility due to realtors’ developing practices of restricting racial and ethnic integration.

The multiethnic neighborhoods that had spurred the racial integration of the Azusa Street Revival proved fleeting. The cultural exchange between black and white, immigrant and native-born, working-class and middle-class residents did not continue past the first decade of the twentieth century. As the infrastructure city visionaries proposed caught up with urban growth, social groups were separated, contained, or sanitized. While Pentecostals continued to seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the twentieth century, transgressions of social boundaries in favor of interracialism in their churches would not recur until well after the civil rights movement.

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326 Weiss, The Rise of Community Building, 82.
However, this period of intercultural exchange would prove a solid memory on which later reformers would draw.
Conclusion

In June of 1906, at the start of the Azusa Street Revival, Frank Bartleman wrote a tract urging believers to jump in the rushing waves of the Holy Spirit: “there is a time when the tide is sweeping by our door. We may then plunge in and be carried to glorious blessing, success, and victory.” To miss these streams of living water was “to miss all, and most miserably fail both for time and eternity.” To Bartleman this was a unique moment, not just in the history of the United States, but for all of Christendom. A few months later, he explained that 1906 would mark a momentous year in the history of the church: “Los Angeles seems to be the place, and this the time, in the mind of God, for the restoration of the church to her former place, favor and power.” He encouraged believers near and far to “plunge in” to this river of revival insisting that it would “be a worldwide one, without doubt.”  

While this belief, that the Azusa Street Revival represented the restoration of Christianity may be reserved for the sanctified, this dissertation has agreed that the movement of early Pentecostalism resembled “streams of living water.” As Bartleman wrote, such currents flowed with increased speed and power as the early twentieth century approached. Indeed, Thomas Tweed’s recent definiton of religion as the “confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering” seemed to match Bartleman’s imagination of early Pentecostalism as a raging torrent, rushing through sites of revival fervor such as India, Wales, and Southern California, and changing the lives of individuals.

327 Frank Bartleman, How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: As It was in the Beginning (Los Angeles: F. Bartleman, 1925) 11.

Rivers of Living Waters has highlighted three ways in which the fluidity of holiness-pentecostalism mobilized the generation and growth of the early Pentecostal movement. First, holiness-pentecostalism seemed to cross geographic boundaries and shift courses in the hands of diverse peoples. Second, the intersections of various streams, and their adaptability, allowed holiness-pentecostals to act as polycultural bricoleurs, reimagining religious belief and practices based on their changing environments. Finally, such fluidity also translated to frequent transgressions of social norms. As the sanctified created and re-created religious communities, they moved in and out of spaces of social respectability.

Since the 1840s, the holiness-pentecostal movement was characterized by a fluidity that facilitated its crossing into a variety of geographic regions. Although most adherents of sanctification in the 1840s were white middle class northerners, by the end of Reconstruction holiness had moved southward and westward along with the movements of evangelists such as Harden Wallace. As the message of sanctification flowed into new territories, the streams of holiness-pentecostalism shifted and adapted to meet the needs of its new adherents. The southward movement post-Reconstruction shifted the message of sanctification away from concerns about social reform and uplift, which had historically been tied to abolitionist movements, and instead highlighted the anxieties of rural farmers confronting the industrialization of the Midwest and New South. Holiness was thus no longer linked to public improvement, but instead to inner purity. Those who had become disenchanted with the wealth and materialism of the Gilded Age found meaning in this message that they were sanctified, or “set apart,” unlike their contemporaries.
These diverse and varied streams -- both northerners and southerners, urban social reformers and disillusioned farmers -- made their way westward in the second half of the nineteenth century. These tributaries mixed and mingled in Southern California, in both small rural towns and in the city of Los Angeles, as this population of migrants adopted sanctification. Those coming from the East to the West brought memories of camp meeting revivals or urban missions and combined them with new practices and beliefs that helped them cope with the unfamiliar territory.

This intermixing of the familiar and the foreign in the streams of early Pentecostalism in Southern California provided spaces where a process of polycultural bricolage could occur. Individuals brought together diverse cultural memories and added elements from their new environments in a creative and innovative process. This happened in a variety of different spaces but with greatest facility in the city, and in particular, a city like Los Angeles that was experiencing astonishing growth. In these tumultuous years at the turn of the century, a diverse set of religious and non-religious streams flowed to Los Angeles, paving the way for religious innovation and multiethnic commingling.

The fluidity of streams of holiness-pentecostalism allowed adherents to cross social boundaries as well. The sanctified believed that the Holy Spirit, like a moving tide, was “no respecter of persons” and could flow through anyone, regardless of race, gender, or education. Thus black men, white women, and black women found opportunities to lead and influence in the holiness-pentecostal community. One black woman, wrote of the rushing waves of “power” through the Holy Spirit as she sang in tongues for the first time: “It seemed as if a vessel broke
within me and water surged up through my being.” The torrent of the Holy Spirit had given her body and voice new purpose as a witness to this power. The unpredictable movements of the Holy Spirit also created several spaces where interracial worship could occur at the turn of the century. The troubling nature of socially transgressive practices was most clearly displayed in the reactions of observers. White southerners threatened radical holiness preachers who preached to mixed audiences and overstayed their welcome. The *Los Angeles Times* lambasted the interracial meetings, and loud, vaudevillian worship they witnessed in downtown street meetings. The *Times*, like other mouthpieces for “respectability,” expressed particular dismay about the leadership of black men and women, and the immodest physicality by white women at the Azusa Street Revival.

Despite outsiders’ reactions to their practices, holiness-pentecostals were not necessarily advocates of radical social change. Many sanctified believers saw the involvement of white women and people of color not as a progressive ideal they hoped American society as a whole would adopt, but as evidence of the Holy Spirit’s power to influence even the most “empty vessels.” Furthermore, streams of interracialism and unconventional leadership did not flow through every holiness-pentecostal community. Charles Parham found the interracial worship he observed on Azusa Street a “horrible, awful shame.” Indeed, a stream of white superiority flowed through holiness-pentecostalism, just as did a current of interracialism. As such, social transgressions were rarely consistent. It comes as no surprise, then, that the interracial worship on Azusa Street, and within early Pentecostalism in general, did not lead to lasting change.

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330 *Apostolic Faith* (Baxter Springs, Kansas) 1 (December 12): 4-5.
Despite the fading revival in Los Angeles, Pentecostal mobility did not relent. Just as sanctified preachers in the final decades of the nineteenth century were constantly on the move with the help of transcontinental railroads and printing presses, Pentecostal missionaries traveled both across North America and across the world, sharing the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” and an end-times orientation with believers and unbelievers alike. Many holiness associations throughout the United States would adopt the Pentecostal message, emphasizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in particular, speaking in tongues. The Churches of God in Christ, the Free-Will Baptists, the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church identified as Pentecostal after receiving the good news of the Holy Spirit from Azusa Street revivalists.\(^{331}\) The mobility of early Pentecostals coming from Los Angeles extended beyond the nation’s borders as well. In 1916, ten years after the beginning of the Azusa Street Revival, western Pentecostal missionaries could be found in 42 nations outside of North America and Europe.\(^{332}\) The continued popularity of periodicals and availability of cross-country and international travel would establish networks and a transnational “meta-culture” of Pentecostalism that connected missionaries, evangelists, and spirit-filled believers, just as holiness newspapers connected the sanctified across the continent of North America.

However, the continued fluidity of holiness-pentecostalism also counteracted any attempts to unify the diverse and decentralized Pentecostal evangelists. Just as the holiness movement shifted as it flowed from north to south, and east to west, the Pentecostal movement


continued to change and adapt in its new contexts and settings. As the twentieth century progressed, numerous Pentecostal denominations splintered and formed new congregations. Sometimes these were doctrinally-based divisions, such as the split between Oneness Pentecostals who emphasized a singular divine spirit, and Trinitarian Pentecostals who maintained one God and three persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Other times, divisions were rooted in social norms of white supremacy and racial segregation.

While the Pentecostal explosion on Azusa Street had far-reaching and lasting effects, radical forms of cross-racial worship were cut short between 1914 and 1922 when Pentecostal congregations separated along racial lines. In 1914, a group of white Pentecostal preachers from across the nation, recognizing their need for a denominational organization and fellowship, met in Hot Springs, Arkansas to formulate it. While their denomination claimed to serve “all Pentecostals,” they did not invite any black ministers to participate. This explicit segregation of the charter, thus named Assemblies of God, and now one of the largest Pentecostal denominations globally, ended any hopes that Pentecostalism would carry the practice of interracial worship beyond the revival. In 1948, racial separation was formalized again in the creation of the all-white Pentecostal Fellowship of North America. By the fiftieth anniversary of Azusa Street in 1956, the story of the revival’s African American leadership and interracial beginnings were largely forgotten.

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334 “Golden Jubilee: Azusa Street Revival,” 1956 pamphlet from Special Collections at Fuller Theological Seminary Library.
Racial dynamics of white supremacy in Los Angeles also remained unchanged, and even intensified, after the revival. In 1915, the film *Birth of a Nation* premiered at Clune’s auditorium in downtown Los Angeles to an enthusiastic audience of white moviegoers, despite protests from the NAACP. By the 1920s, residential segregation had ossified with the establishment of racial housing covenants and zoning of industrialized neighborhoods, the KKK had regained power, and conservative radio minister “Fighting Bob” Shuler launched a campaign of attacks on African Americans, Catholics, Jews and many others. Los Angeles no longer provided an environment in which social boundaries could be crossed by religionists.

However, the same fluidity that enabled Pentecostals to move in and out of social norms of white supremacy also allowed Pentecostals in the post-civil rights era to reconsider alternative race relations practiced decades before. In the more recent past, many Pentecostals have resurrected the memory of Azusa Street with the hopes of igniting a season of racial reconciliation and unity within their community. A number of scholars and ministers have sought to bring Azusa Street back to the forefront of Pentecostal minds to reform the denomination and eradicate church policies rooted in white supremacy and racial segregation. At the opening evening service of the 1994 conference for the all-white Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, Bishop Underwood lamented decades of racial segregation in the church, saying “we grieve over the 88 years of rebellion against the reconciliation work of the Holy Spirit.” Then as a call to action, he exhorted Pentecostals to “return with all our hearts to the unity of the Spirit

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manifested during the blazing revival at Azusa Street.” According to Underwood, Azusa Street was a distinct and exemplary moment when Pentecostals were attuned to the Holy Spirit’s work of reconciliation. Reclaiming Azusa Street as the “point of origins” for Pentecostals accomplished a number of goals for revisionist Pentecostal clergy. It reinstated practices of interracial worship and harmony as central to Pentecostal identity. It also brought back African American leadership and influence into the narrative of Pentecostal history. And finally, it acknowledged Pentecostalism’s acquiescence to racism in the twentieth century.

The conference climaxed with a symbolic display of this reimagining of Pentecostal race relations. Black and white Pentecostals worshiped in tongues together, once again. In the midst of this enthusiasm, white pastor Donald Evans from Tampa, weeping, claimed he felt led by the Holy Spirit to wash the feet of the African American bishop Ithiel Clemmons of the Church of God in Christ, begging forgiveness for the sins of whites against their black brothers and sisters. The next day, delegates of the all-white PFNA agreed to dissolve their organization and begin a new group with equal representation of blacks and whites on the governing board, as well as a Racial Reconciliation Manifesto built into the constitution of the fellowship.

While such images and memories of Azusa Street clearly have been productive in creating some structural change within Pentecostal denominations, they have also missed some of the remarkable complexity of this early Pentecostal community. Holiness-pentecostals, traveling as they felt led by the Spirit and societal pressures, moved in and out of social boundaries at the time. Some believed that interracial harmony was a sign that the Holy Spirit

had descended and that the end times were near. Others saw this as an abomination of God’s natural order. None saw interracial practices on Azusa Street, or elsewhere, as the catalyst for social or political change beyond that time and place of worship.

Yet, the polycultural nature of Pentecostalism has allowed the religious movement to cross boundaries and reinvent itself once again on a global scale. Scholar of religion, Donald Miller, has observed and written about the ways that Pentecostals has adapted to its new dwellings in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Bricoleurs in the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea have creatively woven together Pentecostal theology and practice with their own history of Korean folk religion and shamanism. South African independent churches have broken away from the governance of Americans and Europeans in order to support radical independence movements with their own nation.337 Although the Azusa Street Revival was a transitory moment in the history of global Pentecostalism, the streams and currents that flowed through it, cultivating an environment for boundary-crossing and religious innovation, have continued to surge and carve new channels in their new landscapes today.

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