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The Rise and Growth of Reform Judaism in Los Angeles

Norman T. Mendel.

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
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Thesis Digest

This thesis is concerned with an account of the Rise and Growth of Reform Judaism in Los Angeles. It details the rise of Reform from an early, pioneer era of traditional Judaism. The thesis maintains that as the Jewish population of Los Angeles grew so also grew the spirit of Reform. In time, with the help of several rabbis, the liturgy and ritual of the city's one temple changed to meet the needs of the young reformers. By the advent of Rabbi Magnin the changes had become so pronounced as to make the service nearly Classical Reform.

With the coming of Rabbi Magnin, came also a softening of liturgical attitudes. This enabled the congregation to become more middle- of- the- road in its outlook.

Yet despite the changes in service and the presence of Magnin himself there came ever-more Jews. Many of these Jews wanted a more tradition-oriented Reform. As a result, in time, the second and third Reform congregations were born in Los Angeles, and due to the increase in population these new congregations flourished as well.

As the years went by, the area grew and so did the number of congregations with it. New congregations would sprout-up where the Jewish population did. Thus, Reform Jews were able to find a synagogue near their homes.

Each of these new synagogues was a little different in tone- so as to be distinctive, and these differences attracted new, young family members.

*Did Magnin
delivered
from coming
to S. A. 3*

With the coming of these new young families into the Reform fold, there came also a need for expanded services. As a result, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations set up a College of Jewish Studies in order to provide the young Reform Jew with more advanced Jewish education. Teacher training programs were set up, and it was hoped that through such efforts the growth and vitality of Reform would be assured. It was not long before the Hebrew Union College established a pre-rabbinic school in order to interest prospective rabbis in such a career.

With the establishment of the many Reform temples plus the agencies to support and aid them, the growth of Reform Judaism in the future seems to be guaranteed.

From the early days to the present days, the focus of the above has been the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. Through its rabbis and facilities that temple has led the way in Reform participation.

As the interviews in this thesis point out, Reform can only grow in Los Angeles with the challenges of future years.

what does this mean?

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Chapter One

Beginnings

In order to detail the evolutionary processes that lead to the Rise and Growth of Reform Judaism in Los Angeles, it is at first necessary to examine those early events and personalities that produced such growth.

Reform did not descend upon the city of Los Angeles "ex nihilo" but rather came from a traditional base reflecting the early pioneers. Consequently, it is necessary to speak at some length concerning those Jewish pioneers who made Los Angeles their home during the middle of the Nineteenth Century.

*// not clear
were early
50 years
Traditional
or
Reform*

According to the census of 1850, there were approximately 8,300 residents in the county - about half of whom were domesticated Indians.¹ This census classified the Los Angeles population as consisting in part of 650 laborers, 138 farmers, 65 ranchers and overseers, and 32 merchants.² The total population in and about the pueblo was approximately 3530.³ In those early days there was no pauperism, crime, or scale of wages—since hard cash was not common—hides were the medium of exchange.⁴

Of these residents of the city, living within a few doors of each other, were eight Jews—seven of whom were merchants while one was a tailor.⁵

///

The oldest of these early Jewish settlers was Jacob Frankfort, a tailor, age forty.⁶ The remaining seven

settlers were all merchants under the age of thirty.

As far as is known this Jacob Frankfort was the first Jew to reach Los Angeles; he was a member of the Workman-Rowland party which came west in 1841.⁷

The remaining seven Jews included in that early census were Morris Michaels, 19; Abraham Jacoby, 25; Augustin Wasserman, 24; Felix Bachman, 28; Philip Sichel, 28; Joseph Plumer, 24; and Morris I. Goodman, 24. These men were all single and merchants; six of these eight had come from Germany, while the other two came from Poland.⁸ Generally speaking, those Jews who headed west during the fifties were at times the victims of the repressive movements in Germany that followed the abortive Revolution of 1848. Often the reactionary government suspected those young people-usually university students- who were involved in liberal movements within the universities. As a corollary the faith of these university students was suspect as well.⁹ Consequently, it was natural for a number of young German intellectuals to migrate to the United States in order to seek their fortunes. Due to their unmarried state and early age, it was quite possible that the above mentioned young merchants were part of the aforementioned movement.¹⁰

*It is they
who they
not the
1850*

In 1851, and thereafter, many Jewish settlers arrived as brother-teams and family groups. The vast majority of these individuals engaged in general merchandising and

trade. It was later that a number of the settlers became wholesale commission merchants; they entered the tannery, lumber, and real estate businesses. It was in this general way that the Southern California community developed its Jewish population in much the same manner as those communities of the East and Middle West; however, in this instance Los Angeles served as the center of trade.

"The earliest known gathering of Jews in Los Angeles was a service, starting in 1851, which was conducted Friday evenings and Saturday mornings at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ephraim Greenbaum."¹¹ The names of all those who constituted the minyan at this informal yet first historic service were not recorded; however, it is known that in addition to Ephraim Greenbaum were Wolf Kalisher, Morris S. Goodman, Maurice Kremer, Solomon Lazard, Joseph P. Newmark, Herman Schlesinger, and Tobias Therwinsky.¹²

These first few Jewish merchants to settle in Los Angeles brought with them the attitudes of traditional charity and an affinity to Judaism. It is worthy to note that even back in 1851, the above mentioned Jews gathered for a minyan. This indicates a respect for the established traditions of Judaism as well as a grounding in what we moderns would call the more Orthodox modes of Jewish worship.

Perhaps because they felt isolated from other Jews those of the pueblo of Los Angeles extended their hospitality to fellow-Jews who visited their small city. This

fact is attested to by the response of Solomon N. Carvahlo, perhaps one of the first notable Jewish personalities to visit the city. Solomon N. Carvahlo was the artist of the Fremont expedition of 1853.¹³ In his text, Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West, Carvahlo notes:

To the brothers Samuel and Joseph Labatt, merchants, of Los Angeles, I am indebted for many acts of kindness; men who anticipate the necessities of their fellow-man, and spontaneously offer money advances to a perfect stranger, I have not often met with but when found, I make a note of it.¹⁴

During these early days, the Jewish population of the pueblo of Los Angeles did slowly grow. The men who lived there— despite their minyan for services in 1851— had not yet organized themselves into a Jewish community formally. It remained for the Newmark family to set in motion the institutionalization of the religious feelings of the Jewish settlers in Los Angeles.

While his nephew, J. P. Newmark had been in Los Angeles since that early informal gathering in 1851, Joseph Newmark arrived in Los Angeles in 1854, and it was he who grasped the reins of institutional religion in the city.¹⁵

Joseph Newmark was really quite typical of the disinherited young German merchant. He was born in Germany in 1799. Leaving Europe as a young man, he journeyed to the United States to seek his fortune. Although he had been trained for the rabbinate and ordained, he never held a

pulpit.¹⁶ He was in a sense as many of his day who were learned within Judaism but never made a living out of it. In 1824, Newmark came to the United States. While in New York, he helped found the Elm Street Synagogue, one of the earliest in the city.¹⁷ In 1831, he resided in Somerville, Connecticut; while there he joined the Masonic Fraternity. In 1840, he was in St. Louis, then five years later he turned up in the pioneer town of Dubuque, Iowa.¹⁸ A year later, Newmark was back in New York, this time aiding in the founding of the Wooster Street Congregation.¹⁹

*Physical
nobility*

During these years, Newmark had been in contact with the younger members of his family; he was asked by his nephew, the aforementioned J. P. Newmark, to come to California. J. P. Newmark had himself come to California, as we know, several years earlier because of the Gold Rush; he came to Los Angeles on the urgings of some of the local merchants there whom he knew.

At any rate, Joseph Newmark arrived in San Francisco in 1854, and thereafter made his way to Southern California where he was to take a vital role in the establishment of the Jewish community there.

These wanderings of Joseph Newmark were not unique for German and English merchants of the Jewish faith. The pattern for the establishment of many communities was the same. As one or two Jews from the same community in Europe settled in a town in America, they would write home to their

friends and family to come and join them in their enterprise.

As an example of this type of settlement, it can be noted that as late as the 1930's in Los Angeles, a rather large and influential group of Jews descended from those who traced their ancestors back to the town of Rechin-dorff, Germany.²⁰ In reality, it was a case of the success of one, causing others to follow in his path. Such was the case of Joseph Newmark.

Based upon both his past experiences and ability, when Joseph Newmark arrived in Los Angeles he represented the qualified and responsible type of person needed to spark the young Jewish community to organizational action.

In July of 1854, shortly after his arrival in town, Newmark established, along with thirty members of the community, the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Los Angeles.²¹ This group met for a time in Newmark's home, and was reputed to be the first charitable institution in the city of Los Angeles.²² This institution was based firstly upon the recognized need for obtaining a burial plot as in all Jewish communities the world over. Consequently, the very preamble of the constitution of the Hebrew Benevolent Society states that:

Whereas: The Israelites of the City, being desirous of procuring a piece of ground suitable for the purpose of a Burying Ground for the deceased of their own faith, and also to appropriate a portion of their time and means to the holy cause of Benevolence- unite themselves, for these purposes, under

1st
Society
New

the name and style of "THE HEBREW BENEVOLENT SOCIETY" of Los Angeles.^{23.}

Perhaps the need was based upon past years of persecution when the Jew could call only his grave his home and refuge. The fact remains in this instance, that the Hebrew Benevolent Society was founded in order to establish within the community a Jewish cemetery.

With this stated goal in mind the Society purchased from Jose Andres Sepulveda, part of a former reservoir in Chavez Ravine, at the modern day corner of Lilac Terrace and Lookout Drive. This land then became the first Jewish cemetery in the city, in the year 1854.^{24.} "The Burial Ground was named 'Beth Sholom' or 'Home of Peace,' traditionally the name of European cemeteries outside the ghettos or Judengassen where the Jew might finally find the sought-after peace."^{25.} The first Jew buried in the new cemetery was a child by the name of Mahler.^{26.} It can be noted as well, that according to the Los Angeles Star, by 1855, there was reported a wall around the small Jewish cemetery.^{27.}

The principle purpose of the Hebrew Benevolent Society was to "pay proper respect, according to Jewish ritual, to the dead, and to look after the Jewish Cemetery which was laid out about that time..."^{28.} This statement indicates an adherence to traditional Jewish ways, namely the attending to the dead within the framework of proper Jewish ritual. Thus, it can be said that the above is fit

evidence for the traditional base upon which the early Los Angeles Jewish settlers built their community.

It must also be noted that by its very name, the Hebrew Benevolent Society had other purposes than exclusively attending to the deceased. By its very name, the Society also had as its purpose the attending to of those in need. At this early time, however, there was no local poverty to be provided for.²⁹ Nevertheless, the Society was a dynamic group that functioned in other areas besides those above mentioned. Under the leadership of its first president, Jacob Elias, and its every membership of Jacob Rich, Morris Kramer, Sol Lazard (father of D. I. M. Lazard) and the Eliash brothers, the Society assumed the activity of a "Bikur Holim," that is, to visit and care for those who were sick.³⁰ The Society also "served as a 'Hevra Kadisha,' that is, to provide burial for the Jewish dead according to the Orthodox ritual."³¹ Through these various activities, the Society became a strong unifying and spiritual force amongst the early Jewish pioneers of the city. It must be observed that thus far the actions and directions of the Hebrew Benevolent Society were oriented to a traditional form of Judaism - not Reform.

Although there had been a minyan as early as 1851, formal services were unknown to the Jewish community before the arrival of the aforementioned Joseph Newmark. As has been mentioned, Newmark was an ordained rabbi,

although he did not make his living as one. Nevertheless, as a result of his influence and the establishment of the Society, it was not long before he conducted services on the various Jewish holidays under the auspices of the Society.³² Some of the known participants in these services were Herman Schlesinger, Baruch Marks, Hillard Lowenstein, and Solomon Lazard. These were the town's leading merchants and had been present in Los Angeles since 1851. Also in attendance were Wolf Kalisher, Morris S. Goodman, Maurice Kremer, Tobias Therwinsky, and the nephews of the acting rabbi, J. P. and Harris Newmark.³³ Joseph Newmark, while leading the services, did not accept payment as the rabbi. In addition, it can be pointed out, that by this time he did not need such payment because the Newmarks maintained a most successful merchandising business.³⁴

The names of those mentioned above, and other early pioneer Jews, were influential in the city itself. It is of worth to note that Solomon Lazard was the first President of the Los Angeles Board of Trade - later changed to the Chamber of Commerce; Lazard with his cousin, Maurice Kremer, was active in the retail business and in local politics.³⁵ Jacob Elias, became Master of the first Masonic Lodge.³⁶ S. K. Labatt, later President of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, was the owner of the town's leading dry goods store.³⁷ Isaias Wolf Hellman was a prominent banker and philanthropist; Herman W. Frank became a junior partner in

the clothing store of Harris and Frank; he was also active in community affairs. The fact is that due to the Gold Rush and the influx of migrants to California, the Los Angeles economic market grew as well in the desire to supply those Northern markets.

In those early days, the locations of various services were in the homes of the town's leading citizens. "In successive years, the Society sponsored services in Joseph Newmark's home, in the rear room of the Abode of John Temple, one of the Yankee Dons, in Arcadia Hall, in Leck's Hall on Main Street between Second and Third Streets, and in John Temple's large tavern."³⁸ A bit more dignity was added to the services when the Society was able to use the court room of Judge Ygnacio Sepulveda - the city's only court room - for its High Holyday services.³⁹

These were the activities which led from that first small group of pioneer Jews that gathered in Los Angeles to seek their fortunes to the juncture where a Hebrew Benevolent Society has been established which is conducting, if irregularly, its own services.

Chapter Two

The Rise and Growth of the First Reform Temple

While it is not commonly known, there was extant a congregation before Congregation B'nai Berith- which is commonly acknowledged as the first congregation in Los Angeles. There are two evidences for the existence of the abortive congregation. The first comes from the Los Angeles Star which mentions that a congregation known as Beth El existed from 1860-1861, and that the congregation was founded by Polish Jews. This article in the Star of August 17, 1861, mentions also that seats for the Holydays would be for sale for three dollars. The Polish Jews, such as Moses Norton and B. Cohn, that were involved with this short-lived congregation never became officers of Congregation B'nai Berith. Finally, however, the Los Angeles Star of October 14, 1862, mentions that a Rabbi Galland was brought from San Francisco to conduct
40.
Holyday services.

The second reference to the above congregation is found in I. J. Benjamin's Three Years in America.
41.

It must be recognized that aside from the above attempt at synagogue organization the first real viable congregation grew out of the Hebrew Benevolent Society and its activities.
42.
That is, as a natural extention of the holiday services conducted by Joseph Newmark came the beginnings of Congregation B'nai Berith.

In the year 1862, an historic step was taken with the hiring of Rabbi Abraham Wolf Edelman.^{43.} "Born in Warsaw in 1832, Rabbi Edelman came to America in 1851, immediately after he was married to Miss Hannah Pessah Cohn, and settled successively in New York, Paterson and Buffalo. Coming to California in 1859, he resided in San Francisco until 1862, when he was chosen Rabbi of the Orthodox Congregation B'nai Brith of Los Angeles, and soon attained distinction as a Talmudic scholar and a preacher."^{44.}

It is important to note the fact that Harris Newmark, one of the later leaders of Reform in Los Angeles classifies the congregation as Orthodox. Such tendencies can be further born out by the fact that the "B'nai Brith Congregation originally held its services entirely in Hebrew."^{45.} These first services held under the guidance of Rabbi Edelman were conducted in Stearn's or Arcadia Hall on Los Angeles and Arcadia Streets; next services were held at Leck's Hall which was on Main Street, between Second and Third. Still later the services were held in the courtroom of Judge Ygnacio Sepulveda; this was the one courtroom in town and was made available for services other than Jewish as well.^{46.}

Though they now had a full-time rabbi and a viable congregation, with Wolf Kalisher as president, the Jews of

Los Angeles continued to use the above various locations for their services for a full decade. Attempts apparently were made to finance a permanent synagogue, but these attempts failed. A Grand Ball was advertised in the local press to be held in the Teutonia Hall on October 16, 1862, tickets were selling for five dollars apiece.⁴⁷ Obviously, this affair and others similar to it did not meet the monetary needs necessary to construct a building, for a decade went by before this was undertaken.

Yet as in many congregations the Jewish women here did not like the fact that they seemed to have a wandering synagogue. Consequently, the women assembled in 1869, with the idea of erecting a permanent house of worship. As a result in 1870, the women established the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society.⁴⁸ The function of this group was to provide ways and means for the establishment of a synagogue. Coincidentally, this group also saw to the preparation of the dead for internment as well as keeping proper vigil over the deceased until the time of burial. The women held their meetings in the Temple Block. (It is of some interest to note at this juncture that thus far all of the above Jewish activities were centered in what is today downtown Los Angeles and what was then the area near the central plaza.)

On the date of March 10, 1872, the ladies and gentlemen of the congregation met to devise a way of building a

synagogue. Although there are no known records extant of that meeting or others that inevitably must have followed, apparently the energies of the groups were spent in a profitable way for on August 18, 1872, the cornerstone was laid.^{49.} One of the chief sources of funds for this endeavor came from a trip made by Elias Laventhal and David Solomon, who traveled to San Francisco to obtain contributions from various merchants there. This trip to San Francisco did indeed meet with success for the two above-named gentlemen returned with the sum of one-thousand dollars, which in those days was almost certainly a substantial percentage of the cost of construction.^{50.}

Finally, on August 8, 1873, the synagogue building was completed and dedicated with the symbolic handing of a golden key from Miss Fanny Kalisher- daughter of the first president- to Mr. Isaias Hellman, who was then president.^{51.}

The building itself was of brick, entered by a steep stairway which led to a vestibule outside the room in which services were conducted. The Sunday School occupied the ground floor.^{52.} This synagogue was located on the east side of Fort Street- now known as Broadway- between Second and Third; its architecture was considered unique for the period, for the building was much admired. At the time the congregation was known as the "Fort Street Synagogue."^{53.} The synagogue immediately became the focal point of Jewish activity in the city. Several weddings took place there as well as the first confirmation class, which previously

*Reform
Hall 1890*

had been holding its sessions in Lawlor's Institute, a Los Angeles school of the day located on Second and Main Streets. The fact was that now the Jewish community had a central location at which to meet.

During the late 1870's and the early 1880's, there appeared in the United States a great debate in the synagogues of the land as the Reform Movement swept into conflict with the more traditional-Orthodox- form of worship. In the eastern states this conflict caused great turmoil, while the shift in the west was of a less violent nature, for the Western atmosphere was more relaxed and informal anyway.

Up until this period the services conducted by Rabbi Abraham Wolf Edelman had been of a traditional nature.^{54.} Joseph Newmark had been during these years a supporter of this mode of ritual, and as a result the remainder of the congregation deferred out of respect to this founding father of the congregation. Yet times were changing, and when Joseph Newmark died on October 19, 1881, the traditional forces lost their most influential supporter.^{55.} Due to the young age and liberal attitudes of the membership it became increasingly more evident that the feeling of the congregation was towards a liberalization of ritual practice, and that in time the adoption of a Reform ritual would be inevitable.^{56.} Yet still no change in ritual was made while Harris Newmark, who was president of the congregation from 1881-1885, was in office. Newmark was succeeded

by Herman W. Hellman, the younger of the Hellman brothers who had become prosperous bankers.^{57.}

It was in this same year, 1885, that the famous Pittsburgh Platform appeared in the east- detailing the basics of the Reform Movement in the United States.^{58.} The appearance of the Pittsburgh Platform set off a reaction within the congregation on the part of the ever-increasing number who wanted the implementation of Reform.^{59.} For the first time there appeared a genuine difference of opinion within the congregation as to how the ritual should be implemented.

By the year 1884, it had become obvious even to Rabbi Edelman that the congregation wanted Reform Judaism. This fact was driven home during that year with the adoption of the Jastrow Prayerbook, to replace the traditional Siddur.^{60.} With that event to bring Reform ritual into reality, Rabbi Edelman tendered his resignation stating that he could not in good conscience sacrifice his life-long convictions and habits for the sake of this new mode of worship.^{61.} "With Edelman went a small group of members who found a new Orthodox congregation, K'hal Yisrael."^{62.} It is of note due to its unusual nature that there was a lack of bitterness occasioned by this break in the Jewish community. Such can be pointed up by the fact that Rabbi Edelman's own son remained with the Congregation B'nai Berith to later

become its president.^{63.} Such positive feelings were in marked contrast to the congregational splits in the east, which often gave rise to long and bitter feuds.

While on a trip to the eastern cities, Isaias W. Hellman was informed of the retirement of Rabbi Abraham Wolf Edelman. Thus, at the request of Harris Newmark, who had succeeded Hellman as president in 1881, Isaias W. Hellman initiated investigations into the acquisition of a new spiritual leader. As a result, while in Denver, Hellman met and was suitably impressed with Dr. Emanuel Schreiber of Congregation Emanuel of that city. Therefore, Hellman invited Schreiber to become the spiritual leader of the congregation. The invitation was accepted, and the first services under the spiritual administration of Dr. Emanuel Schreiber were held during the High Holydays of 1884.^{64.}

Rabbi Schreiber was a thirty-two year old Austrian who had held pulpits in Mobile, Alabama, in 1881, and in Denver, since 1883.^{65.}

Rabbi Schreiber was undoubtedly a dynamic force for change within the Los Angeles Jewish community that he served. Evidence for such is made manifest by the number and types of changes made towards Reform during his tenure as spiritual leader of the congregation.

First, Dr. Marcus Jastrow's prayerbook was used in such a way that many of the Hebrew passages were changed to their English translations.^{66.}

In the year 1888, the use of hats during the service was discontinued on the part of the male members of the congregation. ^{67.} On Thanksgiving of that same year of 1888, "at the invitation of Reverend Eli P. Fay, the Unitarians and the Jews held joint services in the Fort Street Synagogue." ^{68.} One can well imagine that such a service must have represented a new era for the Jews of Los Angeles; to conduct joint services between Jews and Christians under the guidance of Rabbi Edelman would have been ludicrous to imagine. *1888 Joint service*

"At this time, the rite of Confirmation was conducted only in behalf of the girls, the boys being Bar-Mitzvoh; but as time passed, the boys were more and more included in the confirmation classes, and the ceremony of individual induction, after some years, came to be ^{69.} practically never used..." In the above mentioned confirmation class were several familiar family names. Fanny Kalisher, Mary Cohn, Teany Laventhal, and Estelle Newmark were the four girls confirmed. ^{70.} *Heali* *ca. 1890??*

In the spirit of Reform, Rabbi Schreiber became an important force in the general community as well. He became an instructor of German, Greek, and Latin at the Los Angeles College; he helped to organize the non-denominational "Associated Charities of Los Angeles." Rabbi Schreiber contributed to the local press, and he lectured to the local Historical Society, Theosophical Society, and

the Secular Union. ^{71.}

Nevertheless, in the year 1889, Rabbi Emanuel Schreiber resigned the pulpit, and he was succeeded by Rabbi Abraham Blum of Galveston, Texas. ^{72.} It was during these years that the congregation expanded and outgrew its Fort Street quarters. On January 9, 1895, Andrew J. Copp bought the Fort Street Synagogue, Fort Street was by now changed to Broadway, and a year later razed the building. ^{73.} Until a new house of worship was available the congregation held its services in the Unitarian Church, located at the corner of Hill and Third Streets. ^{74.}

In 1895, Rabbi Blum ended his stay with the congregation. As a result of the above, on October 12, 1895, Rabbi M. G. Solomon was chosen to continue as the congregational leader. ^{75.} In this same year the Union Prayerbook was adopted as the official prayerbook of the congregation. ^{76.} While all these changes were going on, a committee consisting of Jacob Baruch, Isaac Norton, and Jacob Loew was appointed to supervise the construction of the new synagogue on a lot at the northeast corner of Ninth and Hope Streets. ^{77.} This new temple facility played a role in the initiation of further reforms in the service.

As has been noted above, the Union Prayerbook was adopted by the congregation in 1895. The Minutes of the congregation state: "Moved and seconded that the Union Prayerbook should be adopted by this congregation as soon as the same can be procured. Carried. " ^{78.}

Thus, when the new synagogue was dedicated on September 6, 1896, this new prayerbook was brought into real continuous usage for the first time.

Apparently, the leaders of the congregation were expanding their thoughts beyond the prayerbook, for according to the Minutes of the temple "... the president appointed (a committee) to look into the matter of selecting a suitable organ for the new synagogue." ^{79.} There is still further evidence of the presence of Reform in the Minutes of June 5, 1896, which reveal that there were women in the choir by this date. Although it can not be ^{80.} determined when this policy was first introduced.

The fact that the congregation had a choir, and the fact that the congregation utilized mixed voices in the choir are sure evidences of the presence of Reform at this date.

The Minutes, dated November, 1899, give an indication of the tone of the congregation by the copy of an advertisement placed to secure the services of a rabbi.

"Wanted: The Congregation B'nai Brith of Los Angeles, California, a Reformed Congregation, will, owing to a vacancy in the Rabbinate, hold an election for Rabbi on June 20th, 1897... (Applicant should possess) a diploma either from the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati or from a well known University in Europe," ^{81.}

Therefore, even though Abraham M. Edelman, the son of the first rabbi, was appointed architect of the new temple, and his traditional father was present for the ceremony

of dedication; many changes had taken place since the days of his tenure as the spiritual leader of the congregation.

One might speculate as to the thoughts of Rabbi Edelman upon reading in the Minutes: "Moved by J. W. Hellman that from November 10, 1899, Friday evening services begin at 8:00 P. M. Carried."^{82.}

On May 5, 1899, Rabbi M. G. Solomon resigned, and in June, Rabbi Sigmund Hecht, who was spiritual head of the Congregation Emanuel, of Milwaukee, arrived in Los Angeles, at the invitation of the congregation. On Friday evening June 14th, he conducted services, and he was elected the Rabbi of the congregation during a trip to Milwaukee, on August 6th. He assumed his duties of office in Los Angeles,^{83.} on November 8, 1899.

At this point a word about Rabbi Hecht is in order. He was born in Hungary, 1849, and educated in Vienna at the Teachers' Seminary and the University of Vienna. As a student he came under the influence of Dr. Jellinek of Vienna, and he was influenced to pursue the rabbinate by Drs. Felix Adler and Gottheil of New York. Before being called to Los Angeles, Rabbi Hecht occupied a pulpit in Montgomery, Alabama, as well as Milwaukee, Wisconsin.^{84.}

Since Rabbi Hecht took up his post so very late in the year it would be well to survey the activities under his leadership beginning with the year 1900.

The year 1900, finds the congregation with a membership of one-hundred and fifty-one, an increase of twenty-six from the previous year.^{85.} As in most congregations the payment of dues varied from the \$140.00 per year which Mr. M. A. Newmark paid, to the minimum of \$18.00- a minimum which was continued for many years despite the desires of many to raise it.^{86.}

In the year 1900, it is notable that the programs of the congregation had expanded to include a full-fledged Religious School of one-hundred and ten pupils, which met- as the name implies, on Sunday mornings at 10:00 A. M.^{87.} In addition to the Religious School itself, the Confirmation class met on Wednesday afternoons, and a Bible class met on alternate Tuesday evenings.^{88.} Thus, one can readily see that the educational programs of the congregation were in full bloom.

By the same token, congregational services were being held from September through mid-June, at 8:00 P. M., on Friday evenings. Sabbath mornings, services were held at 10:00 A. M. There were also services for the children on these Sabbath mornings at 9:15 A. M.^{89.}

The complete change-over in attitude from that held in the tradition-bound early days of the congregation to that attitude made manifest at the turn of the century is probably most evident by the fact that the Vesper service sermon for Yom Kippur was given in German,^{90.} This

practice was continued in 1901, although later Yearbooks do not make any mention of either sermon topics or the language in which they were given.

In those early days, as basically today, attendance at services was not good. This attendance at services occasioned Rabbi Hecht to complain at the annual meeting.

I should certainly deplore the total abandonment of services on Sabbath morning, but unless conditions improve, this would be the only course left open to us as honest men. But the improvement is possible, and I trust that the correction of this evil will be your care at the opening of the new year. I am not favorably inclined towards Sunday-lectures, but I would not have you ascribe this disinclination to my unwillingness to undertake additional work, and if I could be convinced that by Sunday-lectures we might help the cause of Judaism, I should be ready to do my share. " 91.

We find here the proposal of Sunday services in order to pick up the slack in service attendance. Although Rabbi Hecht was not in favor of such a situation; the secretary of the temple was instructed by the temple board to send notices to the congregational membership to determine if they preferred to have the Sunday services at 11:00 A. M. or 2:00 P. M. ^{92.} Since there was no follow-up of this matter in the Congregational Minutes; it can be believed that the matter was eventually dropped.

The solid position of Reform can be further demonstrated by the statement in the Congregational Minutes that memorializes Isaac Mayer Wise on his death.

"In Memoriam: Congregation B'nai Brith of Los Angeles herewith desires to give expression to its feeling of sorrow and regret at the demise

of the Rev. Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise, the pioneer of Jewish reform in America....

We pledge ourselves to perpetuate his memory by cooperating with all our brethren in preserving the college, the monument he has erected for himself, that it be more enduring than marble shaft or brazen pillar..." 93.

From the Temple Yearbook of 1901, it can be learned that the congregation had a sewing circle as well as a literary circle, which met on the first Tuesday of each month. There is also mentioned in this Yearbook that a post-Confirmation class was meeting each Monday. Further, there was also listed an announcement of Hebrew classes meeting one hour before the Religious School, on Sunday morning.

By the year 1902, the need for a larger and more conveniently located cemetery was felt. Therefore, on January 30, 1902, the Board of the congregation authorized the purchase of thirty acres on what is today Whittier Boulevard- and was then known as Stevenson Avenue- for a new and larger cemetery. The dedication of the new cemetery took place on May 18, 1902, and the long process of transferring the remains from the old, aforementioned, cemetery to the new one. 94.

Also during this year the president of the temple- Kaspare Cohn-donated a house and grounds for the treatment of the sick and poor Jews of the city. This hospital was called the "Kaspare Cohn Hospital," and is today the world famous "Cedars of Lebanon Hospital." 95.

As early as the year 1902, there is a notation in the Minutes that Rabbi Hecht be given a vacation due to the fact that he "... was suffering from overwork." ^{96.} Probably related to this situation was the fact that a vote was taken and passed to close the synagogue during ^{97.} the months of July and August.

In the month of October, 1903, at the annual meeting of the congregation a vote was taken for the congregation to "join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations." ^{98.} At the time there was much discussion as to whether those members who were paying only the \$18.00 per year dues should be included in the "Union." After much debate the decision was made that they should not be included. Those persons paying the minimum dues were also not to be allowed a vote within the congregation; such members could only ^{99.} hold a seat in the temple and that was all. Even though a letter had been sent to those members paying the above minimum fee asking them to raise their dues to \$30.00 ^{100.} such a move, in general, failed. Apparently, there was at this time a distinction within the congregation of members and seatholders.

Practically speaking, in 1903, the policy of closing the synagogue during the summer months was abandoned with the laymen conducting srvice^s for the mourners on Sabbath ^{101.} evenings.

The years 1904-1905, were marked by the quiet and relatively smooth expansion of the congregation and its

religious programs. As usual, Rabbi Hecht was unhappy with the attendance at services, but in all, growth was the order of the day. This growth can be demonstrated by the fact that the temple's physical plant was rapidly becoming too small, and a committee was set up to inquire into the possibility
102.
of obtaining adjacent property.

1906 was the first year in which rules were laid down for children entering Confirmation Class. In that year, at a board meeting in May, a motion was passed that a child had to
103.
be fourteen years old in order to enter the class. As of this year, namely 1906, there were 162 children in Religious School. The membership of the temple itself was 230. Therefore, we can see a slow but steady growth in the membership since the turn of the century when the temple's membership was 95.

Once again in 1906, as in earlier years, we can see the disillusionment of Rabbi Hecht regarding the children's Sabbath services. He comments in that year:

It is with much sorrow and regret that I record here the waning interest of our parents and children in the simple Sabbath services arranged for the young. I knew, when I introduced these services, that it was the right thing; I have the approval of many of the Rabbis of the country, and I know now, in the face of the discouraging aspect of the matter, that such a short and simple service held at the opening of the Sabbath Day must leave the impression of the day's holiness upon the youthful mind, and is thus calculated, better than anything else, to supplement the theoretical instruction concerning the sanctity of the day, as taught on the Sunday.

I should consider it in the light of a defeat of an earnest purpose, to be obliged to discontinue these weekly gatherings on the Sabbath mornings for want of sufficient attendance, and I urge upon the parents in my congregation the necessity of their co-operation towards maintaining the Children's Sabbath Services. 104.

As early as the year 1907, there is mention of obtaining an assistant to the rabbi. This matter was referred to the board of directors. 105. It was voted in that year, that once in every month there should be a "song service." This was hoped to increase the attendance.

In 1908, for the very first time, there is the mention of several individuals trying out for the position of cantor with the congregation. 106. At the December board meeting of the congregation, a motion was carried that the congregation employ a cantor. Correspondence was carried on with several individuals and finally, in January 1909, a Rev. Schoor accepted the position and was employed as cantor at the salary of \$1500 per year. 107. Shortly thereafter, we can find in the Temple Minutes that Rev. Schoor's activities had not been satisfactory. Consequently, in 1909, he left. Exactly why is unknown at this time. 108.

Thus far, in the history of the congregation, little has been said about the aforementioned cemetery. The cemetery known as "Home of Peace Cemetery" has, in 1908, a new rule as to who can be buried in the cemetery: 109.

No interment of any body other than that of Jewish human beings will be permitted in this cemetery, except the body of the gentile wife of a Jewish husband or the gentile husband of a Jewish wife or the bodies of the children of such parents shall be admitted for burial in this cemetery. Provided further that the body of any Gentile closely related by marriage to a Jewish family may be interred in this cemetery at the discretion of the Cemetery Committee.

Also, in this year for the first time, we can find that one of the new requirements for entrance into Confirmation Class is attendance in Hebrew Class.

Therefore, at the end of these first ten years of the first century, a sizeable growth in temple membership can be noted; the congregation had obtained and established a new cemetery; it had created a hospital for the poor and sick Jews of Los Angeles; and it had both hired and fired a cantor whom the congregation had hoped would provide uplift to the services. Finally, it can be noted that the requirements of the religious school had been made over these years increasingly more strict.

In the years 1910-1911, several new programs were instituted at Congregation B'nai Brith. In June 1910, a new Kaspare Cohn Hospital was dedicated. Also, in the same month a Los Angeles Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women was organized, for the first time, with 15 members.

During these two years, several innovations were introduced. It was at first thought that everyone should rise, in the services, for the "Kaddish." However, the conclusion of this matter, at this time, was that there would be no change in the Kaddish Services.

At last it should be pointed out that the congregation was continuing to think along the Reform lines, for as we know, this is a practice common to most Reform Congregations today. Incidentally, it is known that by 1917, everyone was standing for the Kaddish, and when a motion was brought up to have the entire congregation vote on this matter, that very motion was defeated.^{113.} In the year 1917, it should be noted that it was the rule for the congregation to stand during the Kaddish. Thus, we can note that while this matter was brought forth for consideration as early as 1910, it was first instituted in the form of a rule in 1917.

Returning to the years 1910 and 1911, Rabbi Hecht continues to decry the notably poor attendance at the children's Sabbath services. As a part of a list of suggestions which Rabbi Hecht made in the Yearbook of 1911, was the suggestion that all children attending religious school from the age of ten upward should study Hebrew both reading and translating.^{114.} Also during this year, the age of the Confirmation had been advanced to fifteen.^{115.}

We can also observe that by this time the congregation had begun to publish informational leaflets concerning temple activities and it was these leaflets which later became the Temple Bulletin.^{116.}

During the years 1912-1913, a number of new innovations pointed up the rapid development of the life of the congregation.

At the end of 1912, the Temple Sisterhood was organized to take the place of the Ladies' Aid Society which had been disbanded during the previous year.^{117.} This new group sent representatives for the first time to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Convention in January, 1913.^{118.}

Also in the year 1912, there came forth the custom of having religious services during the summer months at a resort in the area of what is today known as Venice-Ocean Park. These services were held Friday evenings, and the attendance for the first service was 75 people.^{119.} By the way, this policy of summer services was continued with a great deal of success all the way through the summer of 1916, after which services were conducted the year round in the synagogue. Another institution begun in 1912 by Congregation B'nai Brith was the Temple Forum. This Temple Forum was very popular among the younger members of the congregation because, by its very nature, it appealed to those interested in the literary and musical arts.^{120.} Coincidentally, the Temple Forum exists to this very day and it serves today as the chief vehicle for adult education within the congregation. It attracts speakers from various fields of national note to address the congregation on matters of either current or scholarly interest.

During all of the foregoing years, the subject of the temple dues had been of concern. We can note, in 1913, in the

local Jewish newspaper of the day that only 55 members out of congregation of 317 members were paying dues of \$18.00 per year.^{121.}

During this and the succeeding few years, the only other mention of raising the dues from \$18.00 to a higher figure was found in the Minutes of a board meeting in 1916, when the motion to raise the dues, once again, to the figure of \$30.00, mentioned earlier in this paper, was deferred.^{122.}

After this time, there is no mention of minimum dues. Today, dues are based on the ability to pay that can be worked out privately with the appropriate administrative body of the temple. Finally, it should be noted that during the year of 1913, there is no longer found any distinction in congregational minutes between "members" and "seat holders." At this time, everyone seems to be classified as a "member."

By the year 1914, the search for an assistant to Rabbi Hecht had begun in earnest. In fact, a special congregational meeting was held that year in which a salary of \$2500 a year was set aside for an associate rabbi. Nevertheless, nearly an entire year went by before an associate was hired.^{123.}

During the year 1914, the congregation seemed to be expanding its religious program so that a "Moses Day Celebration" took place for the first time during that year. Apparently this was a commemorative service to honor the Jewish leader, Moses.^{124.}

As a matter of interest, we find the question of Women's Suffrage being taken up by the temple during the year 1914. Concerning such a question, Rabbi Hecht commented as follows:

I would advocate an amendment to our by-laws to provide that not only should the widow of a deceased member who retains such membership be allowed to vote, but any Jewish woman, whether the head of a family or single woman not so situated, should be allowed to present her name for membership, and if elected, be granted the same right to vote as do the men..... 125.

The most important event in the life of the congregation as it turns out, occurred during the years of 1914-1916. This event was the appointment to Rabbi Edgar Fogel Magnin as associate rabbi of the congregation in October, 1915. On December 8, 1915, Rabbi Magnin made his first appearance on the pulpit of the Congregation B'nai Brith and he spoke on the topic "The Stuff that Dreams Are Made Of." 126. 127.

During the first year of Magnin's presence in the congregation, we find that he introduced an "Open Forum" for post-Confirmants. Also, during this year, we find that he introduced the "Sanhedrin Club" which he founded for the purpose of holding social and cultural activities for graduates of the religious school. 128.

The B'nai Brith Reporter became a monthly publication project of the Sanhedrin Club. 129. It should be noted as well

that by the year 1916, for the first time in many years, Rabbi Hecht mentions the fact that congregational attendance and participation seemed to have increased since the coming
130.
of Rabbi Magnin.

At this point, it is proper to close this chapter dealing with the rise and growth of the Congregation of B'nai Brith. We have noted thus far the changes both in Rabbis and the expansion of facilities and programs within the congregation. The next chapter will deal with the congregation after the advent of Rabbi Magnin in 1915. The reason for this is that undoubtedly the character of the temple today is bound up with the fact that Rabbi Magnin has indelibly placed his personal stamp upon the face of the congregation during the succeeding fifty years that he has been rabbi there.

Chapter Three

Edgar F. Magnin and His Temple

Rabbi Magnin, by the dint of his own personality, produced changes in the spirit of the congregation as well as in its program.

In terms of its programs, we can note that beginning in 1917, there were held a children's assembly each Sunday morning before Religious School. ^{131.} Also, during this year, the teachers began to meet once a month to discuss their own work in the classrooms and the progress of the Religious School ^{132.} itself. In November, 1917, Magnin proposed a school for the further education and training of the Religious School teachers of the temple. This proposal became a reality during the next school year when Rabbis Hecht, Magnin, and Liknaitz, of a nearby ^{133.} congregation, alternated in instructing the teachers.

Under the guidance of Rabbi Magnin, evidence is found of the great success of the post-Confirmation class.

Finally, in March 1918, there is found within the confines of the temple, the formation of Troop 101 of the Boy Scouts of America, made up of members of the Congregation of B'nai Brith.

The years 1919-1920 mark the smooth transition of leadership from the hands of Rabbi Hecht to those of Rabbi Magnin. In 1919, Rabbi Hecht was elected Rabbi Emeritus for life. At this

time, Rabbi Magnin became the Rabbi of the Congregation. During the year 1920, under the leadership of Magnin, the new edition of the Union Prayer Book was used for the very first time. ^{134.}

By the year 1920, Temple membership stood at the figure ^{135.} of 444. Thus, we can see again the constant, steady growth of membership within the temple. The religious school, too, ^{136.} at this time had 408 students. One can generally say that the growth of the temple had more than tripled during the twenty years beginning with the turn of the century.

These twenty years mark the steady strengthening of Reform attitudes within the congregation. It seems that almost all of the actions taken by the membership during these years of growth were actions of a reforming nature. In fact, in a sense, it can be said as Rabbi Magnin has stated, that by the time he arrived on the scene the congregation was well on the way down the road to a modified type of Classical Reform.

Let us turn now to a look at the person and personality of Rabbi Magnin. There is no question that the growth of the temple from this point in our history to the present day is focused around Rabbi Magnin as the spiritual leader and driving force behind the congregation which is today probably the largest Reform Congregation in the world.

Over the years that Rabbi Magnin has been spiritual leader of the temple, we can see that, under his guidance, the

congregation moved, due to lack of space, from its location on Ninth and Hope Streets to its present location on the corner of Wilshire and Hobart Boulevards. This move was begun in 1922 with the acquisition of the initial property. Over the years, surrounding property was bought, so that today the land owned by the congregation at that location is the major part of a square block. By the year 1929, under the guidance of Rabbi Magnin, the present sanctuary and facilities for the religious school were well on the way to completion.

Since the temple was now located on Wilshire and Hobart Boulevards, the temple became commonly known as the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, although in its charter and constitution, it retained its earlier name of Congregation B'nai Brith.

As an aside, the congregation in its early days was known as Congregation B'nai Berith, as noted earlier. A note illustrating the change to Congregation B'nai Brith can be found in the By-Laws of the congregation dated 1916. Those By-Laws state as follows:

"The members of this congregation, anxious to preserve, cherish and exercise the doctrines and precepts of the Mosiac Religion, solicitous of perpetuating the time hallowed ancestral institution for the establishment of public worship in accordance with the principals and rituals of Reform Judiasm, desirous of maintaining schools for the instruction of the youth in the principals of Judiasm, and wishing to make proper provision for the interment of the dead -- have adopted the following constitution and by-laws:

"Article 1

Name

This Congregation shall be known as Congregation B'nai Brith." 137.

Today, the facilities include not only the above mentioned, but also the new Edgar F. Magnin School of Religious Education, an edifice of more than a million dollars, constructed to add an additional 44 classrooms to the older religious school.

Turning back to Rabbi Magnin himself, he was born in San Francisco in 1890, and was apparently attracted to the religious life at the age of ten. 138. At that age, young Magnin went to a synagogue in San Francisco where Rabbi M. S. Levy was the spiritual leader. Rabbi Levy apparently talked with the boy and convinced him that someday he would make a fine rabbi. It was that thought which carried Magnin through the next seven years at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. At the age of fifteen, Magnin entered the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and graduated also in 1914 from the University of Cincinnati.

Rabbi Magnin was guided to some degree by his paternal grandfather, I. Magnin, founder of the chain of exclusive California dress shops, which today dot the state. His own parents were separated.

Before his tenure at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Rabbi Magnin spent a year and a half as Rabbi of Temple Israel in Stockton, California, where he was quite beloved. However, by the year 1915, he was called to assist Rabbi Hecht.

Rabbi Magnin says of himself that "The trouble with my life is that I wasn't born in a log cabin and there's no adventure in it!"^{140.} This quote seems to belie the adventure of his life as rabbi of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. He says "I never regretted for an instant my determination to become a rabbi. If I had my life to live over again, I would do the very same thing."^{141.}

At the age of 77 today, he looks as though he's in his 50's. As has been said of Rabbi Magnin:

"He's a genial man who sees right through sham. He strikes you as the sort of person who could succeed in any of a dozen fields. He is deeply involved in any number of civic enterprises, but like most really busy people, he manages to keep a clean, uncluttered desk.

You wonder how he does it.

"In 40 years of experience in human relations, the main thing is to live day by day," he says. "That means giving back as much as you receive."

Rabbi Magnin is a giver, of his knowledge, wisdom and his time. Within an hour, as you sit in his book-paneled study, he will be several different people before your eyes. He will joke with an engaged young couple, fume at a friend who didn't come in with his

troubles, talk with a workman, and bandy banter with his secretary of 11 years, Esther Lewis.

"I never wrote a sermon in my life," he will tell you. "I make notes but never read from them. If I run dry, I stop regardless of how long or short a time I have been speaking."

Ralph Waldo Emerson was the dominant influence on Rabbi Magnin. "Be self-reliant. Be yourself."

Rabbi Magnin strikes you as a man of two worlds, both the spiritual and the mundane. He is equally at home in both.

He can jump from deep thought to trivia without missing a step. "I wish they would serve hamburgers on a bun at weddings," he says. He's a tremendous coffee drinker likes curries, tamales, enchiladas. He's not only a writer ("How to Live a Richer and Fuller Life"), but a constant reader: Hemingway, theosophy, classics, biography, anything. To get a rare moment of privacy, Rabbi Magnin will drive to a side street, park in his car.

Rabbi Magnin's birthday is July 1. For the heck of it, I gave this date to an astrologer, but did not give his name. Her report: "Protective of other people. Interested in old religions. Likes to deal with the public. Stickler for tradition. Sympathetic and kind. Loves the water."

This he does, for he travels whenever possible by ship. But no few sentences could capture Rabbi Magnin. He is, of course, an outstanding success. Any man is who has worked out a good life for himself.

Rabbi Magnin goes beyond that. He passed on that good life to anyone who asks for it. He is a man so seriously involved with life that he doesn't have to act solemn about it. An hour with him is something that you can take home and spread around during those minutes when you wonder what it's all about.

He's a jovial playtime partner, a modern man deeply versed in ancient wisdom, a tolerant grandfather (six grandchildren, whom he takes to Europe one at a time) and a stern moralist.

He is, in short, a mixture of many facets. But in his case, the mixture is a wonderful blend. And you feel much better for having been in his company." 142.

Associated with him at Wilshire Boulevard Temple are two long term rabbis. The three rabbis together have more than 100 total years of experience.

First, Rabbi Maxwell H. Dubin, came to the synagogue over 42 years ago. Previous to this time, he had been rabbi for several years in San Diego at Temple Beth Israel. Many honors have come to Rabbi Dubin during his long tenure at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. He has been associated with the City of Los Angeles Board of Education, the Urban League, the American Legion, and many of the community's cultural organizations. In addition, Rabbi Dubin has written nine widely-read books. Up until the present time, Rabbi Dubin has been responsible for the above mentioned nationally known Temple Forum.

For more than eighteen years, Rabbi Alfred Wolf has been associated with the temple. Rabbi Wolf is German-born and also a graduate of the Hebrew Union College. Rabbi Wolf has been, over these past years, not only active in the community -- for example as president of the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission -- but also has been the educational leader of the temple. As a scholar and administrator, Rabbi Wolf today, in conjunction with Rabbi Magnin, runs a religious school of a vast and varied program consisting of more than 2,000 students who come from all over Los Angeles County.

According to Rabbi Magnin, these three rabbis together have built, over the years, "a sort of cathedral synagogue for Los Angeles." To give an example of the depth of influence which the temple and Rabbi Magnin have in the total community of Los Angeles, recently a generous contribution to the building of the Edgar F. Magnin School of Religious Education was received from Reverend Francis E. Bloy, Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles.^{143.}

Through the efforts of Rabbi Magnin and later, as we shall see, Rabbi Wolf, after World War II many new congregations were founded. Yet despite this mushrooming of new congregations, Rabbi Magnin and the Wilshire Boulevard Temple still remained the center of Reform Judaism in the city. As Rabbi Magnin says, "we have more members from the west side of the city than many synagogues in that area, and the same is true for the San Fernando Valley. We could easily close our membership rolls, but I don't want to do it."^{144.} As Rabbi Magnin says these things, he sits back with his feet propped up on his carved desk, and fills his conversation with many anecdotes. He talks of why the temple has grown, and as he does so, he reflects of himself. Rabbi Magnin says "for one thing, the city grew and we grew with it. Then we had very fine help from all our congregational members, and our congregation cuts cleanly through all economic strata, all levels of society. It always has."^{145.}

In speaking of the Board of Trustees of the congregation, Rabbi Magnin says, "Our Board of Trustees is a very high caliber group, composed of people of a lofty character. No one man could have built this temple to what it is. It is a community effort. The temple has dignity,^{146.} there is nothing cheap or vulgar about it."

Speaking about the pulpit, Magnin says: "Our pulpit is forthright. I talk the language people can understand. No man can regularly maintain a high standard from the pulpit alone, so we rotate our sermons among our rabbis."^{147.} Rabbi Magnin continues to say that "I believe there is good in all religions, and I try to bring that out. I try to lift people up, to make them think. To me the pulpit is a place for an artist, a man who can convey to people great religious truths. It should make people depart, thinking and feeling deeply. It is a sort of like a Broadway production, a successful one -- it must touch your life: you must feel your life change through it, a matter of personal^{148.} identification with it."

In speaking about the temple itself, of which he has been such an important figure, Rabbi Magnin says, "Most of the work is intangible. I often wonder how many lives have been saved, how many people have found themselves who have lost their way in this world, how many have found a purpose and desire to live a fuller, richer life because of it. Today, we are one of the largest, most prominent synagogues in the world,

but this is no boast. Size is not everything. We hope to maintain the high quality and dignity of this great institution and to improve it in years to come."^{149.}

The same Magnin who can speak with such depth of feeling can also show a humorous side. Recently a lady of the congregation asked of Rabbi Magnin if he expected to live forever. He told her, "Madam, my grandmother lived until she was 96, my mother is now in her 93rd year and my grandfather is a caddy at the country club."

Rabbi Magnin has been influenced in his boyhood as we noted above, by Rabbi M. S. Levy of San Francisco; however, through his later years, Rabbi Magnin was influenced by Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, perhaps because that Rabbi Hirsch, as later Rabbi Magnin, was unafraid to speak his mind; he was a bold thinker.

The third important influence upon Magnin, reflecting his interest and love of poetry and philosophy was Ralph Waldo Emerson. The essence of Emerson's philosophy of "being yourself" has been a philosophy which Magnin has utilized throughout the long career of his rabbinate.^{150.}

This life style of Magnin's is perhaps best illustrated by the book he wrote in 1951. That book, through its very title -- How to Live a Fuller and Richer Life -- exemplifies the philosophies which Magnin uses. He is concerned with just such matters as how people should use their lives to the fullest for the benefit of both themselves and others.

Concerning the title of this book, it is humorous to note that Magnin does not like the title. It is, perhaps, too much like so many other popularized guides to living. As a result, Magnin puns, "I do not want to be thought of as a 'positive stinker'."

In concluding this chapter which depicts, along with the appendix at the back of this paper, the driving force of Rabbi Magnin over the many years, one can perhaps best sum up this giant of Reform Judaism in Los Angeles by saying that, "God it seems, has found an articulate instrument in Rabbi Magnin."^{151.}

Chapter Four

The Second and Third Reform Temples

"Although the B'nai Brith Temple was a full-fledged Reform Temple in the year 1919, yet there were some Jews in the Los Angeles who felt that Reform Judaism was no longer responsive to the demands of the "Zeit-geist".^{152.}

The leader of this new group was a man by the name of Samuel Hersh. He reflected the desires of a group of people who, while they wanted Reform Judaism, also wanted a temple with strong attachments to traditional Judaism. In other words, the group wanted to be liberal in spirit,^{153.} yet loyally attached to historic Judaism.

These people planned to pattern their new synagogue after the style of the Free Synagogue of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in New York. The location that the group decided upon was to be the Wilshire-Western district of Los Angeles. In order to bring their ideas to fruition, Mr. Hersh and another individual by the name of William W. Bierman gathered together those of the community who were interested in 1919, and formed an organization known as Temple Emanuel. This group immediately incorporated with Samuel Hersh as President, William W. Bierman as Vice-President, and Herman Segal^{154.} as Secretary.

The first rabbi of the congregation was Rabbi Liknaitz,^{155.} however, he was soon succeeded by Rabbi Schreiber.

The real active work of the congregation did not begin until 1921. In that year, Rabbi Ernest Trattner was called from Temple Beth Israel of San Diego to assume the leadership of the new fledgling congregation. 156.

The first services conducted under Rabbi Trattner were on Friday evening, September 2, 1921, at the Wilshire Masonic Hall. 157. Indicative of the harmony within the general Reform Jewish Community is the fact that Rabbi Magnin installed Rabbi E. Trattner at this service.

Temple Emanuel, as its officers decided, was to be first located on a lot on Sixth and Catalina Streets. In 1922, that lot was changed for a lot on Manhattan Place near Wilshire Boulevard, where in the year 1924, a building was erected at a cost of approximately \$400,000. 158.

In 1925, the new temple was dedicated and it was not long after that that Temple Emanuel grew from an organization of 45 charter members to one of over 450. The temple had all of the facilities of a much older temple, that is, it had a high school department, a club for the youth, and several organizations for both the ladies and the men of the congregation.

Regrettably, perhaps, a dark shadow crossed the path of progress made by Temple Emanuel with its spectacular beginnings. Two unforeseen factors soon appeared to block the phenomenal progress and growth of Temple Emanuel. The

at Third and Western Avenue. They remember also

first such factor was the erection of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, that is the Temple B'nai Brith, at its present location. That location happened to be very close to the location upon which Temple Emanuel constructed its new facilities. The fact remained that the Wilshire Boulevard Temple was a more established fixture in the Jewish community. And there is no question that both its presence and the presence of Rabbi Magnin so close to Temple Emanuel did affect its membership growth adversely.

The second unforeseen factor which affected much more than just Temple Emanuel was the coming of the depression in 1929. It is important to note that only a few years before, that is in 1924-1925, this new congregation spent the sum of \$400,000 -- a large sum for those days to be sure. After a struggle, Rabbi Trattner left for New York and the small assets which were left were transferred to the Sinai Temple (today a Conservative Congregation). The new and attractive structure built only a few years earlier on Manhattan Place became the Christ Church.

A personal reflection of this history can be seen through the eyes of Mr. Leo P. Cytron. The Cytrons have been members of a Reform Congregation since 1925, when they joined the newly organized Temple Emanuel. They were particularly devoted to Rabbi Trattner through his lifetime. They remember when Temple Emanuel met in a Masonic Hall at Third and Western Avenues. They remember also

a bit later when the new Temple was built on Manhattan near Wilshire Boulevard. Later, they were with Rabbi Trattner when he founded the City Temple at Eighth and Burlington in 1927.^{159.}

After a period in New York, Trattner returned to the Los Angeles area in 1937, and joined with a group in Westwood under Mr. Seymour Gold, which became the new Temple Emanuel. This new Temple Emanuel was located for a time above a drug store at the corners of Wilshire and Robertson and was then later located at Wilshire near Swall. After some in-fighting, Trattner left Temple Emanuel and became the rabbi of what is today known as the Westwood Temple.

The Cytrons, along with others, assisted Trattner in founding this temple and have been active in it for many years.^{160.}

Meanwhile, a sizeable portion of the membership did remain loyal to Temple Emanuel. They survived this period and grew later under the guidance of Rabbi Bernard Harrison and Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin, to become today, under Rabbi Sanford Shapiro, a congregation located in Beverly Hills, on Clark Drive, of more than 1,000 families.

In the desire to create a modern temple, in 1926, four men -- Sol Wurtzel, Isadore Bernstein, Edward Laennle, and John Stone -- banded together to organize a house of worship to their liking. The result of this was the birth of

Temple Israel. Services were, at first, conducted in the rented home of the Japanese movie star, Sessue Hawakawa, located on the corner of Franklin and Argyle^{161.} in Hollywood.

The first spiritual leader of the congregation was Rabbi Isadore Isaacson. The first president was Sol Wurtzel.^{162.}

Although there were periods of apathy, it was not long before the congregation began to grow under the guidance and wisdom of Rabbi Isaacson. The Brotherhood and Sisterhood of the congregation already sensitive through their location in Hollywood, to the positive effects of public relations, produced a temple bulletin known as The Observer.^{163.}

Publicity enhanced the growth of the congregation immensely, so that it was not long before the congregation needed a second and larger home -- namely, the Methodist Church located on the corner of Lexington and Vine Streets. This was a good example, by the way, of early interfaith co-operation in Los Angeles, for on different evenings, passers-by on Vine Street would hear either Methodist hymns or Hebrew chants. By now, the congregation had grown considerably, so that children from its Religious School came from areas outside of Hollywood, namely the then rather crude settlements of Beverly Hills and Bel Air.

Then came, regretably for Temple Israel, the stock

market crash of 1929. During these years, the only thing that grew, in regards to Temple Israel, was the mortgage. Yet the temple did survive and began to grow again, this time pretty much from scratch.

Yet tragedy struck again. This time in 1936. In that year, Rabbi Isaacson passed away. After the short tenure of Rabbi Merfield who was engaged after the death of Rabbi Isaacson, and resigned in 1938, came Rabbi Morton Bauman.

Rabbi Bauman immediately endeared himself, by his youthful freshness and great enthusiasm to the congregation. Under his leadership, the temple blossomed. Literally, hundreds of families desired admittance into the congregation. Even Miss Ethel Ewens, the school principal, during the lifetime of Rabbi Isaacson returned once again, from retirement, to become the superintendent of the religious school.

This time, the entrance of the United States into the World War II left its mark on the history of Temple Israel. Rabbi Bauman left the congregation, and making a personal sacrifice, joined the army as a chaplain. At this time, the temple did not have a spiritual leader.

Rumor had it that there was a young rabbi in the Midwest, who was becoming quite well-known through his fervor, learning, and eloquence. After investigating and finding this rumor to be true, the congregation hired that rabbi --
 164.
 Max Nussbaum.

With the coming of Rabbi Nussbaum, a new spirit prevailed in the temple. The temple began to have an aim and purpose. Everything that a temple stands for seemed to take shape under Rabbi Nussbaum. The religious school was enlarged, the scope of study was extended, the entire curriculum was revised and brought up-to-date, and an adult study college began to conduct forums on Sunday mornings. These forums became particularly popular among parents who waited for their children to finish Sunday morning sessions so that they could pick them up and take them home.

These parents began to take courses and hear lectures by the prominent men in various fields of activity. Never before in the history of the temple did the attendance at services grow to become as great as did it grow under Rabbi Nussbaum during those dark hours of World War II.

Beyond Los Angeles, these were months and years of crisis for world Jewry. Yet, in Los Angeles, the feeling of this crisis was brought home to the membership of Temple Israel through the eloquence of Rabbi Nussbaum. He informed the congregation of the mass murders of Jews in Europe. He informed the people of the viciousness of the British foreign policy with regards to Palestine. He brought home to the people of his congregation the need for a Jewish Homeland for those people who had survived the holocaust of the World's War. Through the efforts of Rabbi Nussbaum, the membership of Temple Israel began to become nationally

prominent through their participation on various committees and through their raising of huge sums of money to help the Jews of Europe, and later, the Jews of Palestine.

Locally, Rabbi Nussbaum was active in interfaith work. In 1943, the Interfaith Forum was founded, consisting of Temple Israel and the various churches in the Hollywood area. The purpose of this forum is summed up in the statement that "Its goal is a more brotherly world, reached through a wider and more whole-hearted acceptance of the fatherhood of God."^{165.}

By the end of the war, Rabbi Nussbaum had established himself securely as the leader of Temple Israel. On April 12, 1946, Rabbi Bauman returned from the war and resumed the pulpit. Yet, the dimension and scope of the program at Temple Israel had grown to such an extent, that there was now room to have both rabbis serve as co-leaders of the congregation. This co-leadership was unprecedented at the time.^{166.}

By this time, the temple no longer had a mortgage to worry about and had grown into an institution firmly rooted in the "black". The growth of membership was such that by the time Rabbi Bauman had returned, the temple had acquired a new site on Hollywood and Fuller. The temple today, of over 1,000 families, is situated on that corner. However, Rabbi Bauman is no longer the rabbi. Since co-leadership is, over the long haul quite difficult to maintain, Rabbi Bauman struck off to North Hollywood, where he, today, has

his own congregation, Beth Hillel, of well over 1,000 families.

Thus we can see here the spreading out from the foundation of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple other temples. Both Temple Emanuel, located first nearby the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, and much later, in Beverly Hills, and Temple Israel of Hollywood are examples of the continuing growth of Reform Judaism in Los Angeles. Albeit growth of a more traditional style of Reform Judaism.

Chapter Five

Population Trends and Congregational Mushrooming

There is no question that over the years the population of Los Angeles Jewry has grown tremendously. From the eight Jewish men present in Los Angeles a little more than a hundred years ago, the present Jewish population is more than 500,000 people, which today makes the Jewish population of Los Angeles the second largest in the United States. In order to bring this tremendous growth into proper focus, it is necessary to examine population trends over the intervening years. The information below comes from the Research Service Bureau of the Jewish Federation-Council of Greater Los Angeles.

In the year 1900, the area with the greatest Jewish population was the downtown area. Running not too far behind was the Westlake area. Before the turn of the century, it should be pointed out, that for all intents and purposes, the Jewish population was centered totally in the downtown area.

Gradually, from 1900 on until 1910, as increasingly the downtown area became a business area, the Jews who had their businesses there, moved into the Westlake area and the area of Elysian Park. The reason for this is because these areas provided quiet and elegant suburbs for the successful

Jewish businessman who worked in the nearby downtown
 167.
 area.

By the year 1910, the Westlake area where the Reform Jews of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple resided, became the exclusive residential area in town. There were still a number of Jews living in the downtown area, but it was the Westlake area which had grown to now more than rival the downtown area. This move not only illustrates a move to the suburbs, but illustrates a move westward as well.

As more Jews came to Los Angeles, the downtown area began to shrink in terms of Jewish population. So that now, by the year 1920, the following areas had grown considerably.--
 The Westlake area -- west of the downtown and the Boyle Heights area -- to the east of downtown. 168. At the same time, the Santa Barbara Street area was growing to equal the above, while the Elysian Park area grew slightly and the Hollywood area began to grow.

During the next ten years, the Boyle Heights area began to shrink in population and other areas began to grow. During these years, probably because of the movie studios, the Hollywood area began to grow. At the same time, the West Adams area, as well as the South Vermont areas, grew. On West Adams, and nearby, were many stately mansions which still were not far from the basic-downtown-central business

areas.

By this year, it can be noted that Jewish growth had expanded in all directions away from the downtown-central area -- to the west were the Wilshire and Westlake areas -- to the south were the Santa Barbara, Vermont Street, and West Adams Street areas -- slightly to the north and east was the Elysian Park area -- while east of the downtown-central area was the Boyle Heights area.

During the 1930's, the central and eastern areas began to excessively shrink in population. At the same time, the Hollywood area and the Wilshire areas continued to grow. So that, by 1940, these areas were well-populated with Jews.

During the war years, Jewish population continued to expand in size and the growth pattern was definitely to the West and into the San Fernando Valley. By the late 1940s, and 1950s, the Wilshire area near the Miracle Mile and the Fairfax area became the center of Jewish population.

After the war, with the need of many young couples for new homes, the San Fernando Valley area began to boom. Today, the San Fernando Valley has the fifth largest Jewish population in the United States. In the late 1960s, Jewish

population spread further west from the central-Wilshire-Fairfax areas, so that today, the Jewish population center is probably now in the general vicinity of Beverly Hills.

In the San Fernando Valley, the move has also been to the west and north valley areas rapidly expanding and becoming

centers of Jewish population within the San Fernando Valley itself.

With this phenomenal growth pattern, over the last twenty years, moving always to the west and into the Valley, came the mushrooming of many new Reform Congregations. Each of these congregations serves a Jewish area within its own district, so that one can see today Reform Congregations dotting the geography of both Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley.

Some of this discussion will be continued in the analysis of the growth of Reform Institutions in general. But it is noteworthy that since the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations office in Los Angeles in 1946, under the direction of Rabbi Alfred Wolf, and later others, expansion has been the by-word to the point of there being, today, more than fifty Reform Congregations alone in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. 172.

Since there has been such a profusion of congregations one of the chief points of interest is that each congregation attempts to make its own focus of interest distinctive. One can find congregations that are more traditionally oriented, and congregations that are very Reform. At the same time, one can find congregations that concentrate on social action movement, or congregations that concentrate on the peace movement. The point is that due to the very nature of the autonomy of congregational make-up, a prospective member

can have a great deal of choice in selecting the congregation which best meets his needs.

Finally, there are enough congregations extant so that today individuals do not even have to leave their basic living-shopping area in order to find a congregation that will both educate their children and fulfill their own religious needs.

Chapter Six

Growing Services

With the tremendous growth spelled out in the last chapter came the rise of associated Jewish activities of both an educational and social-service nature.

Just as in the early days the generosity of Kaspere Cohn of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple brought on the beginnings of today's famous Cedars of Lebanon Hospital so also over the years the horizon's of the leaders of Reform Judaism were constantly expanded. As Rabbi Magnin indicates, "All the Jewish philanthropies in Los Angeles started in our Temple. The so-called Federation-Council of Greater Los Angeles had its start in the Men's and Women's groups of Congregation B'nai Brith. All the early leaders were people of our Temple. Harry Hollizer who became the first president of the Federation-Council was also the president of our Temple." ^{173.}

This "Federation" was established in 1911, with the main purpose of providing "food, clothing, and shelter for the needy." ^{174.} Today the scope of this philanthropic organization is vast- covering all the areas of social concern. The Federation-Council of today deals with the problems of the young, the family, the aged. It aids the mentally retarded, and it trains those in need of vocational guidance. For several years Rabbi Magnin was the chairman of the Welfare Fund Drive of the Federation-Council; however, that was in the years of less-

professionalism in Judaism.

Along with the growth in social service areas that stemmed quite naturally from the solidification of Reform in the city came, in 1946, the first Western regional office of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The Union had observed the growth pattern that had been begun in Los Angeles years before- but that was now booming since the end of World War II-and decided it was necessary to be in on the ground floor of this developing metropolitan area. During the next two years the growth of congregations in the area was from an original six to twenty. The growth was due to the establishment of new congregations in the region and to the revitalization of previously dormant communities. ^{175.}

Under the guiding hand of Rabbi Alfred Wolf, and also Rabbis Phineas Smoller and Isaiah Zeldin, delegates from these congregations would meet together quarterly, in a democratic fashion, to discuss their common problems; this group became known as the Assembly of Delegates and still functions in much the same manner today. ^{176.}

Yet, the outstanding project begun by Reform Judaism in recent years in Los Angeles has been the establishment of a College of Jewish Studies in March, 1947. ^{177.}

This College was brought into being in an attempt to meet the need for an institution of higher learning

This institution of higher Jewish learning will be located adjacent to the University of Southern California.

in Southern California. Through the agency of the Los Angeles Bureau of Jewish Education it was not long before the College of Jewish Studies was opened up to interested people beyond the confines of Reform. As a result in the year 1947-1948, "over 400 students registered for its course in the fields of teacher-training and adult education and pre-rabbinic training. " 178.

These activities of the College of Jewish Studies met in the auditorium and classroom building of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple in those early days. To this day the College utilizes the facilities of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. 179.

The quality of education produced as well as its source is of note in that the College of Jewish Studies was, several years after its birth, able to obtain the services of the professorial staff of the Hebrew Union College. 180.

The beginning of the California school of the Hebrew Union College goes back to the year 1954, when it began by opening its doors for classes at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. 181. Gradually, however, this educational arm of the Reform Movement began to expand its programs of higher learning and academic connections. Today, the Los Angeles school of the Hebrew Union College represents an opportunity for the youth of Southern California to receive advanced educational training in Judaism. Soon, this institution of higher Jewish learning will be situated adjacent to the University of Southern California,

which should further aid its expansion and scope of interest.

From the early days, the institutions of Reform were centered around the Wilshire Boulevard Temple as can be noted from the above. This institution provided both the physical setting as well as the guidance and leadership necessary to build the charitable and educational institutions of Reform into their present position of eminence in the Los Angeles community.

Chapter Seven
Interview "A"

The foregoing, is a rare interview with Rabbi Edgar Fogel Magnin of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. This interview is a reflection of the attitudes of the man who has shaped and molded the tone of one of the world's largest Reform temples for a period of more than fifty years. Due to this author's friendship with Rabbi Magnin there is displayed a frankness of tone and an informality of format, which produced a rather informal yet important documentation of Los Angeles Reform Jewish history as seen through the reminiscences of a rabbi who has lived and made that history.

Mendel: "What I would like from you are your reminiscences concerning your tenure at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, detailing the rise of Reform."

Magnin: "I came here in about '15 or '16, from Stockton. I was there a year and a half. They needed an associate with Rabbi Hecht, a very fine man of the Classical Reform school, born in Hungary. Incidentally, his family are my dearest friends and we were always great friends. Dr. Hecht was one of the original Reform group. In those days there was less... I won't say less Jewishness in the service, but in a more conservative sense. They had no "shofar-" they had a trumpet. They had no "Bar Mitzvahs" and it was as I say, Classical Reform. I came here. I wanted to go to New York ultimately.

As a matter of fact, Stephen Wise had written to me about becoming his assistant also... there was some talk about it anyhow. Also Madduck in London... and I wanted to be in Stockton because I was a Californian, having been born in San Francisco. So I came to Stockton- and was there a year and a half when they heard about me. The way I came here was very peculiar. The Jewish Chautauqua Society was not what it is today. It was a different kind of an organization- half a dozen rabbis- Berkowitz- the old Berkowitz- Krauskopf, Martin Meyer, some of them of that generation. In fact, Berkowitz started the Jewish Chautauqua Society. He used to come and have a meeting- for instance they came to San Francisco- and seven or eight would come out- that's all... and they would have local talent, see? And they gave me a paper to read called "The Renaissance of Jewish Literature" which I'd just as soon write about as analyzing the entrails of a camel; I was no more interested in that than a Chinaman is in Yiddish. So I had to read this damn thing, but I got up and read it- and there was a little old- he looked old to me then- man by the name of Mr. Newmark. And he came up to see me afterwards, and he said 'I'm from Los Angeles and I was sent up- we heard about you- and we need an associate to Dr. Hecht, and I was sent up to see what kind of a man you are,' he says, 'and I like you,' he says. 'The

subject's terrible- anybody who can make that interesting can make anything interesting.' The man had some sense in values-human values. So he said 'You're my man.' So he went back and then I went down there from Stockton. I was a year and a half in Stockton. I had a great time up there. I had a little bunch of men called the 'dirty dozen'... and my predecessor, Rabbi Kopald, was a very fine gentleman with a lot of finesse and external polish, and he appealed to a few of the... they all liked him- but he appealed mostly to a few of the more, well, let's call what they were snobbish element ya know! I used to mingle around with the tailors and sit on the tailor's counter in the store and talk with him and everybody. The result was I packed the little temple and had people who were interested. So I didn't like to leave and yet I wanted to leave, and I came down here. And Dr. Hecht's temperment was as different from mine as night from day, but we never had any bad feeling, and when I had a chance to go to Cincinnati- Grossman resigned- they sent a committee out to see me. He really shed tears when he heard- when I told him about it- but I told him I was not going to go; I wanted to stay here. So we were friends to the very end and despite the difference of age... He loved me dearly; I loved him and was very considerate of his feelings as an older man; we never had any problems. And his family, who

is very prominent, have been devoted to me all through the years. So that's how I came here. Then we were down in Ninth and Hope Street- a brick building with two towers, peaked towers, in that Moslem style of Russian whatever you want to call it type of building. There are pictures of it around here you can see. And then we got the first of these lots out here, and then we moved out here... finished the school in '29, and the main temple in '30, was dedicated. That temple- the land we own today- if we could duplicate it which we can't- we could never duplicate- we'd never get the artists- and all this kind of thing. It would cost us about fourteen-fifteen million dollars today if we had to just buy fresh what we have. We couldn't do it. It's a thing of the past. We'd have to build a Safeway store with a star like they all do today. They wouldn't... with a "Ner Tamid" that looks like arthritic fingers or a crab on a platter. And so... a "Menorah" that God knows what it would look like... a Christmas tree upside down. So we're lucky to have this, and it should be good for the next thousand years unless it's destroyed or an earthquake or something... we even tried to make it earthquake proof as much as possible... we went to a hell of an expense and extra steel trusses and everything else. Then later on the Magnin Building was added and so on. Well. Dr. Hecht passed away. Even before he did I be-

gan to take over. As I say I wanted to go to New York, but people were so wonderful to me here that I'm the man who stayed for dinner, and here I am after going on fifty-one-fifty-two years I guess... in the same pulpit. When I was seventy I told the board of trustees, after all they're the trustees, that if they want me to resign I would, and they all carried on and yelled and howled and said I can't do it, and that's seven years ago, so here I am. People ask me when will I resign? And I say- when I get to be as stupid as most of my colleagues and as dull and unimaginative... when my memory fades, and I find myself physically upset easily, and (when I am) a bitter old man- I'll quit before they tell me. But so far, up to this day- the ninth of August, it hasn't happened; so what the tenth will bring who knows or the fifteenth... So that's the answer."

Mendel: "Could you outline some of the changes in liturgy over the years?"

Magnin: "First of all, I want to tell you one of my pet theories about liturgy. The average rabbi doesn't know how to read. He's never learned how to read. He's learned from some cheap elocutionist instead of getting the very finest. And not only that, they have to have the feeling, the temperment, the timing, so they take the prayers and ruin them by reading them, as I've said in Newsweek, through their adenoids. But it isn't only that- the prayers are mostly no good.

The traditional ones I love even though they may not be logical, but what's logical in religion? Religion shouldn't be logical. Mathematics is logical- religion, music, poetry, art aren't logical. And so I read the prayers- the ones written by the third rate first ones- I call it third rate poetry written by the Cincinnati rabbis, such as 'stepping on flagstones' and all this kind of crap. I hate 'em and I eliminate most of them. The old traditional ones at least have a certain quality of age and feeling, and they're Jewish, and they're religious; they're good. Now as far as the prayers are concerned, we use that miserable Union Prayerbook, and I'm afraid if they revise it, it'll be worse than it is now. They should have poets- men who are great writers- rabbis should give them the ideas, and they should write them up so they'll have decent prayers and not this nonsense. And then they'll probably simplify everything like they did in the new translation of the Torah by the Jewish Publication Society, which is atrocious. Hamlet still is better served saying 'To be or not to be that is the question' than 'shall I commit suicide or not?' If anybody is too stupid to know 'The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want' means that I'll have everything, then there's something wrong with them. And they're trying to reduce all this, to make it so simple that it becomes not literary. Now the prose part they can do what they want. When I used to translate the Torah I

would use the prose- my own prose, colloquial- I'd say, 'God said to Moses, What are you doing around here?' This is alright for that, but not the poetic parts, see?

Now getting back to the ritual- I brought back "Bar Mitzvah," and I brought back the "shofar" instead of the trumpet; they had a trumpet believe it or not."

Mendel: "Did they have the Union Prayerbook when you came?"

Magnin: "They had the Union Prayerbook when I came but they used a brass trumpet for a 'shofar! It was sort of that first period of Reform when they wanted to become so American that they gave up almost everything.

Oh, we never did have a cantor. It's got nothing to do with Reform or Orthodox. Fifth Avenue- Temple Emanuel- is more Reform than we are, and they have a cantor. But I don't like cantors- they're politicians, cheap rejected opera stars... they prolong the service... they don't know how to read English. They say, 'PRAISED BE THOU O LORD OUR GOD,' and I don't want them reading. And so I... and they're impressarios and politicians, and I don't want 'em. So we never had a cantor. (We) Never brought back the "tallis" or a "yarmulka"... I wouldn't object too much... what's a piece of cloth on top of your head or around your shoulders- it isn't bad, but as long as we are really the basic Reform temple here, and

we're so big and everything goes so well; why, leave it as it is and if people want to come here with a "tallis" on or a "yarmulka" on - which they frequently do during "Bar Mitzvahs"- guests- we have no objections; we let them alone. I even let them sit on the pulpit that way if they want- the grandfather- if it makes them happy. But we don't wear it. And so there's a certain type of Conservative Jew perhaps who would feel more at home if we did; but we don't really need him anyhow... We don't want those people because they're nuisance makers when they come. Let 'em make hell in their own congregations."

Mendel: "When you came here how many Jews did the community have?"

Magnin: "When I came here the community had about ten thousand Jews-roughly. They had about four -five hundred thousand people. They lived mostly down in the West-lake district, and some off the West Adams district, which was very fashionable in those days- not right on West Adams- that was for the 'goyim,' but they lived near it. They had one B'nai Brith lodge in a little wooden hall on 16th or 17th and Georgia- 17th and Georgia. They later went on to Beacon Street where they built a B'nai Brith lodge building where the floor was like elastic- if you walked on it you'd bounce like a

trampoline. They finally got rid of that- sold it to the Union or something- and so... Let's see, you want some other things... They had about three or four "shuls-" There was the Olive Street "shul" which was Orthodox. I used to study Midrash and Talmud with the rabbis there. They had some very learned men- some very nice men... In those days rabbis got together; the town was small. They also had the Conservative "shul," which was on 12th and Valencia, and they had one on Temple Street I think- a little one- and one on Breed Street... they had about five or six "shuls" at most; ours was the only Reform temple- as a matter of fact it still is. So then, they had, let's see, the "shuls" I've talked about; they had the Federation (which) is where Bunker Hill is now. That you can all look up in the history of the Jewish papers if you want.

We rabbis were all friendly; we got together. I started the first Board of Rabbis- was president for many years- then resigned and asked Rabbi Jacob Cohn of Sinai to become the second one. In those days we used to come together and talk over Jewish problems; we'd never try to solve every problem in the universe or walk down the street with picket signs or we... it wasn't that type of thing. They were all religious people too apparently, who were as much interested or more in religion than just

trying to prove that they were God's agents trying to solve all the problems of the world. But it was a different era, of course."

Mendel: "What about your degrees?"

Magnin: "My degrees... you see... I don't know... I've got to be a part of everything. I've dedicated almost every building around town with the Archbishop and later on the Cardinal, and the chief Protestant minister. I've spoken to every kind of church except the African witch doctors. That appeared in the newspaper recently. I found myself mingling very easily with people because I like people. And I keep my own self-respect. I'm very plain spoken. I try not to offend him unless it's necessary. And, I don't know, I got along with people. I get along with gentiles just as well as I do with Jews- in some cases even better. I find that all people are the same- Jews and Gentiles- the same kind of people. There are fools and idiots and smart people and villians and kind people. I never go with a chip on my shoulder or shy. I always figure I'm as good- no better no worse so I get along very well with them. So I got into every damn thing going on in the town. The Hollywood Bowl... but all you have to do is look up Who's Who in America, and you'll see there's a whole big column there and that doesn't contain all of it. That'll tell you all the things I've done."

Mendel: "Have you been involved in establishing any of the other temples in town?"

Magnin: "Well, we've always encouraged 'em and been friendly with 'em. Our relationship at other temples has been very friendly. I've never had any animosity against any rabbi; I don't think any against me. There may have been some little jealousies on the part of some of them, for which I wouldn't blame them. And I once told them to at least have the good taste not to show it to the public. They can hate my guts, but they shouldn't show it. But they really don't. Well, we get along. First of all, it's a big city, and we don't see each other too much. And each man has his own way of doing things. We're pretty tolerant of the man. We don't have any trouble with our colleagues; they get along, and they know that I'm for 'em, and if they have troubles- when they do have- they come running, and if I can help them I do, and so there's been a very friendly relationship in that way."

Mendel: "Were you influential in the founding of any other temples - for example, like Leo Baeck?"

Magnin: "Well, we started Leo Baeck. It started in the back yard of one of our members. They don't remember that. They don't seem to want to remember it! And we loaned them-or gave them- their first chairs and prayerbooks and all sorts of things. But it(Leo Baeck Temple) was intended to be in another area. It was intended to be down

around the Crenshaw or Pico area... or somewhere through there, but then they broke away and they started on their own on a different tack entirely."

Mendel : "Can you tell me about the growth of this temple and its Religious School?"

Magnin: "Oh, this temple is perhaps the first or second largest in the world. New York, Fifth Avenue, claims to be larger, but we have two thousand students - and they have seven hundred. So they're either all impotent or there are dead people on their list; I can't understand it. I told that to them, by the way. Nearly went in the papers. So anyhow, it's a very large (temple) 2400 families. There's a little bit of shifting in every temple. We get less of it than the others... a certain amount of changing but those who do get out... they're not happy and most of them come back, but we keep on growing and growing, and there's a great loyalty here, great feeling of affection- despite its size."

Mendel: "Why do you keep on growing?"

Magnin "They want it. It's like a cathedral temple, and we get them from all over the county. We get them from every part of the Valley; we get them from Westside, every side. It isn't a parish thing... in their homes... maybe we lose some people because of that- I 'm sure we do, but we couldn't have them all anyhow."

Mendel: "How do you get the kids over here?"

Magnin: "We have bus service, and we have car pools, and some drive their own. And we have the Forum on Sunday

in which, for the Sunday session at least, the parents can listen to some of the finest speakers. It's free of charge; we open it to everybody. Rabbi Dubin runs that end of it. To a large extent Rabbi Wolf... I put the school under him, and he does fine work."

Mendel: "Do you think you'll come to have need for other rabbis?"

Magnin: "Well, of course the size- the size of the temple- well, Wolf was with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which I despise... and its phony leadership and inefficiency, but Wolf was with them, and I saw he was a hard-working fellow, very conscientious, and he started a lot of these temples- some he never should have started; some broke up, but most of them have stayed and done very well. I needed someone; so I took him on. I always tell him the reason I took him on was I had to kick him out so often he might as well stay here, so he's on. Dubin's been with me for forty-two years. I never had an argument with any of them nor any bad feeling. And Dubin- he was down in San Diego, he had a congregation there- I brought him to work for the Community Relations Committee and take care of- or help to- with the Sunday School, and gradually I brought him in. And we've been together all these years."

Mendel: "Can you explain your willingness to speak all over town and to all kinds of groups?"

Magnin: "Oh, speaking to all groups... well I'm very choosy today. I can't afford to go to everybody who'll ask me. These damn lunch clubs with their lousy food... they'll kill you or your stomach in five minutes. They'll take anybody who'll talk for nothing- even a parrot. So I don't bother with them too much... once in a long while. But just from being choosy there's plenty to do. Then Alfred has his contacts. I never restricted any of my men. In fact, I never called them assistants; I called them associates, and they have absolute freedom in weddings, funerals, and anyone who wants them should have them, and anybody who doesn't want them doesn't need to. And any contacts they make on the outside are on their own; I never interfere with it in any shape or form."

Magnin: "What's the temple's relationship with what goes on at the "590" Building?"

Magnin: "The whole Federation grew out of this temple; you'll read that in the history; we started it all. And most of the chief officers in the olden days were from this temple. It has changed a bit now, but many of the board still are. No, we've always had a pleasant... I rather resent the "590" becoming an octopus. I think the rabbis have made a big mistake in giving up their integrity in letting all the lawyers and the would-be judges and all the 'machers' become the leaders; they're we; that's one of our troubles you see. And now they've done an even more foolish thing; they've asked money from

the Federation for an office-so now they can tell the temples what to do. They won't tell ours, but they'll tell anybody that they can. So it's one thing to co-operate with them and another to let them speak for the entire Jewish community. And I resent this, and I won't let them do it. They can do it-yes, but for instance when the Anti-Defamation League started to make a lot of noise about a little bit of a crèche down in a park in the Mexican part of town on Christmas, and I saw the thermometer was going up on anti-semitism; I simply came out and damned them and downed them, and they stopped it and there's been no trouble since. Too many of our Jewish professionals are trouble-makers; they're not helping us; they're hurting us. Fussing about every little technicality and all this kind of business with church and state... you'd think somebody was cutting their throats. I don't feel as suspicious as they do about all this kind of thing."

Mendel: "Why?"

Magnin: "Because I live and let live. Look at England; they have church and state, and the Jews are treated in all consideration there. It has nothing to do with that at all. Any time they want to turn Fascist here, they won't ask your permission; they'll do it and whether you have church or state or not... they'll beat the hell out of you. So I don't worry about that. That's got nothing to do with it. I'm not afraid of the churches;

I'm afraid of the people who've got nothing to do with the churches."

Mendel: "Do you think Wilshire Boulevard Temple has any role to play in the future growth of the city?"

Magnin: "Well, if they get the right rabbis here it'll always be the important temple. As far as the growth of the city is concerned- they'll be more temples, more hospitals, more everything. We don't want any branches. One fellow said if I move to Beverly Hills he'd become a member... so we'll give up sixteen million dollars for his lousy membership... I mean this is nothing... We don't want any branches at all. We can't control the whole world- let somebody else do it."

Mendel: "Do you have any ideas of leadership in the community in terms of guiding other temples?"

Magnin: "Well, I think they look up to this temple, in a sense, for inspiration and as a pattern. They don't always follow it out. Each rabbi is a little personality all his own, and he has his own integrity, and he has his own ideas... he wants to be a person, and I don't think he wants to be subsidiary to me or to anybody else. And I don't know why he should be. The only thing I want him is to represent our people properly- with dignity and common sense... that's all I ask- and sincerity. But we can't control them; it's up to their boards, and that's why they're having trouble in the temples- off and on... they always have had. First of all the average board is

too big. Ours is only about thirteen people in 2400 families. Most of them are seventy or eighty and you've got that many more people to fight and argue with you and mess things up with bad taste... you just can't run an institution like that."

Mendel : "So you'll appeal to your group and they'll appeal to theirs?"

Magnin: "That's right... like attracts like. Why do snakes go into the reptile house? Why do the snakes like each other? I don't want to get married to a snake, but they seem to twine around each other. They get along nicely."

Mendel: "Have other temples in the city ever been founded because they didn't like the policies and rituals of this temple?"

Magnin: "I don't think they did it in that sense. I think they did it because either the neighborhood or somebody wants to be a leader... or they felt more at home in their own group... I think it's largely a social thing. I don't think they have any resentment. Nobody resents this temple, or hates it, or hurts it, or wants to. I've never found any attacks at all. Sometimes the Orthodox speak of all Reform temples as 'goyim', and they speak of us as 'the cathedral,' but this is business with them, and it's sort of their stock in trade. But even then it isn't vicious a bit 'cause they'll come to me very frequently and feel very warmly towards me; so there really isn't a bad feeling at all."

Mendel: "How far west was this temple when you first moved here in comparison to where it is now?"

Magnin: "Well, Western Avenue- three -four blocks away - was west. Beyond that there was some development- Hancock Park- but most of it was nothing. When I came west of, say Crenshaw...somebody belonged to the temple near Crenshaw; we thought it was too far out. There was no bus service at that time. When I came here this was all fields, truck gardening, or empty lots all the way out to the ocean almost. When I moved to Beverly Hills- forty-two years ago- they thought I was crazy. Ours was the only house on our side of the street. So Los Angeles wasn't little- about four or five hundred thousand- but it wasn't what it is today- one of the great cities of the world...or anything like it. Hollywood had orange groves and lemon trees. My wife used to go to a picnic at Stearn's house at Hollywood and Vine."

Mendel: "Why did you move the temple to where it is now as opposed to where it was then? Why didn't you just build a larger building?"

Magnin: "No, because downtown... because people were beginning to move west and why be down in a grimy business district when you could get on a great boulevard like this? Then some of them wanted to build on some streets like Sixth Street, Eighth Street, and I was just a kid, and I got up and fought 'em. I knew the boulevard would

always be great. I didn't know it would be what it is today- like Park Avenue, but I knew it couldn't deteriorate... it had to be better; it couldn't be worse on account of the type of property and business, so here we are."

Mendel: "Now that the Jewish population and other temples are farther west, do you think that the present location is a hindrance?"

Magnin: "I don't think it makes any difference or will make any difference. I think it'll depend on how this place is operated. Fifth Avenue is just the same; they don't move. Some go to Great Neck, and others go to Westchester and so on, but it's still Fifth Avenue. I think if you keep it properly and with the kind of a plant we have..."

Mendel: "What do you mean-'keep it properly?'"

Magnin: "Well, I mean if you have the right leadership that people can respect, look up to, and feel it represents the Jews in the right way is what it amounts to... gives them the religious feeling they want."

Mendel: "Returning to the question of liturgy- was it difficult to turn from Classical Reform to a more conservative type of Reform?"

Magnin: "No, we haven't changed too much; I did it gradually. We never had a liturgy committee; I don't believe in them. You don't need ritual committees. I did all these things myself. All of a sudden we'd bring in the "shofar;" we don't ask them about it."

Mendel: "Did you have any oposition?"

Magnin : "No, no opposition at all. I brought in 'Bar Mitzvah.' We didn't make any silly questionnaires or silly surveys; we just did it. One morning somebody woke up- there was 'Bar Mitzvah'- and nobody objected to it."

Mendel: "No one objected?"

Magnin; "Of course not. Why should they?"

Mendel: "Why is it that the temples today seem to have more trouble when they arbitrarily attempt a change in ritual without consultation?"

Magnin: "Well, most of them don't. There are only a few temples that don't have 'Bar Mitzvah' and that is because of a few snobs the rabbi is afraid of.

Mendel: "Can you further indicate some of your community activities?"

Magnin: "The first Welfare Fund drives, the Federation- all this. All you have to do is look over the scrap-books and you'll see. There isn't an important building dedicated around town that I haven't had a place in there with the Archbishop and then the Cardinal- always."

Mendel: "Why has this relationship evolved the way it has?"

Magnin: "Because I have conducted myself the way they like. That's the whole thing. It's a matter of personality, probably."

Mendel: "Do you feel that by doing this over the years this is in any sense giving-in to them?"

Magnin: "Giving in to whom?"

Mendel: "To another part of the community perhaps?"

Magnin: "How?"

Mendel: "By in a sense aligning yourself with one sector of the community as opposed to another?"

Magnin: "I'm not aligned with any one sector of the community. I don't get involved in silly things. I choose; I use my head. I don't just go to every meeting that's called that every nut and doctrinaire theorist does; no I try to use my head. I'm representing Jews. If I go berserk... and a rabbi kills a man... it isn't John Jones kills him- it's Rabbi Jones kills him... or Jonahason..."

This is an interview with Rabbi Albert M. Lewis of Temple Isaiah of West Los Angeles. The interview, while in narrative form, depicts the establishment of one of the post-war congregations -- its early struggles and development into one of the leading congregations of the city.

It is noteworthy that many of the Los Angeles Reform congregations, which were born of the movement to the western part of the city, reflect their own particular style and tone. As we can observe from the reminiscences of Rabbi Lewis, the tone of Temple Isaiah was born of its own evolutionary development, and through such it exemplifies many of the modern Reform temples of today.

Rabbi Albert M. Lewis
Temple Isaiah, West Los Angeles, California

July 8, 1967

This will tell us something about the rise and growth of Judaism in Los Angeles in general, and in particular, I am talking about the beginnings of Temple Isaiah up to the present time.

As I have been told about the very earliest beginnings, there are a group of people in West Los Angeles who were members

of a B'nai Brith Lodge, including such people as Sam Green, Bert Freeman, Jerry Berris, Morrie Linow, Sy Diamond, etc. One time, Rabbi Ernest Trattner, Olav ha Shalom, evidently came into contact with this group and either he or they said they ought to have another meeting and discuss the possibility of having a temple in West Los Angeles. Anyway, the fact is they did meet and they became interested in the idea. I don't know whether they had one or more meetings, but they did meet at the home of Morrie Linow on Hargus, which is off Robertson Boulevard, in a section now known as Beverly Wood. The group met there, first with Rabbi Trattner and discussed the temple. Subsequently, they also came into contact with Rabbi Alfred Wolf, who was then the Regional Director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Rabbi Wolf, with his energy and ebullience got the group together and helped arrange for them to hold services in the little synagogue on the grounds of Vista Del Mar, the child care agency at 3200 Motor Avenue. They have a 32-acre estate there, and the little synagogue has been there practically since the place was opened in 1930. They began meeting there in 1947. They had held these meetings in the homes in the latter part of 1946. Now, as I recall it, the first speaker on a Friday evening was Arthur Rinehart, who was then the Executive Director of the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods. They met there with guest speakers for most of 1947. Occasionally Rabbi Wolf would come out and help them.

The original charter, when papers of incorporation were filed with the state, had 13 names on it, including the names of Sam Green, Jerry Berris, Bert Freeman, Lou Freeman, Sy Diamond, Morrie Linow, and others. You can get that record if you want it. Sam Green was elected the president, interesting because Sam, himself, had really not had any previous synagogue affiliation or temple affiliation to my knowledge. He had been active in A.Z.A. as a young boy with this same group of men and he had a strong Jewish consciousness. His father was deceased by the time I came here, but his mother was still living and is still living -- Lena Green. He has a sister and a brother. The sister is interested in Jewish life, the other brother is not. Sam evidently absorbed a relationship to the Jewish people and for all his limited knowledge of Judaism, he was willing to put himself in the place of a president. I first heard about the congregation through the following circumstance.

I had been in the service and had come back to Lexington, Kentucky. While I had been overseas, my wife had been living in Florida with our daughter and one of her sisters. She liked a warm climate. So I casually mentioned to Dr. Maurice Eisendrath that if there was an opening somewhere in a warm climate, either California or Florida, I would be interested. All I know, is one night in November 1947, I got a phone call from Dr. Eisendrath

saying would I like to go out to Culver City, California. All my wife heard was California and she said, "Take it! Take it!" Well, it wasn't quite that simple. I was pretty well ensconced in Lexington. But anyway I said we'd go. So in December 1947, we came out to California.

Of course, the weather was beautiful. It was once again a Sunday, December 7, 1947, and they were holding a Chanukah celebration (at least, the congregation was) at Vista Del Mar in the gymnasium, which was a large facility on the grounds, and I got there and lo and behold there were -- I guess it looked to me like 500 or 600 young Jewish children. I hadn't seen that many Jewish children since I left Cleveland in 1932. So I was fascinated. I was accustomed to about 80 - 85 children at the most -- In Lexington, Kentucky. And here was 600-700 youngsters and this was one little section. Rabbi Wolf was there and members of the congregation, etc., and we talked afterwards. They said if I would like to come, they would like to have me. I could see that there were several limitations -- they really hadn't organized. They claimed to have a membership of 70, but they really had no adequate record knowledge. The membership, I think, consisted of members who had agreed to pay \$50.00 a year. I didn't know that they hadn't been collecting it regularly -- they had, I think, perhaps \$700 or \$800 in the bank altogether.

But Rabbi Wolf seemed confident, and going on his assurance that he thought things would work out, my wife and I said O.K., we'd come out. We went back home, and we came out again in February 1948, and the very first night here there was a B'nai Brith meeting. This was a sort of overlapping thing. Most of the members of the temple were also members of the B'nai Brith Lodge and they were still trying to interest people who were in the B'nai Brith Lodge to coming into the temple. Anyway, I went to that meeting and there again were 200-300 people. I wasn't accustomed to seeing this number of Jews at one time. So we started. I think there was a Purim celebration at the B'nai Brith Lodge. Anyway, we began.

The first thing, we got an office in what was then known as the Flat Iron Building, in Culver City. And we became known as the Culver City Congregation. The fact is that these people did not live in Culver City -- they had offices in Culver City and businesses in Culver City. Sam Green had a laundry, Bert Berris had a men's shop, etc. Culver City is the kind of political and geographic anomaly. We have several of these in the Los Angeles area. Culver City was actually created by MGM so that it could control the pattern of growth or development of this immediate area around the studios - Metro Goldwyn Mayer Studios. But it is completely surrounded by Los Angeles. Culver City is really not a Jewish community -- there are a number of Jews living there

now, but in 1948, there were very, very few Jews living in Culver City. So the office in Culver City was really out of the area, but it was the best we could do at the time.

We continued to hold our services at Vista Del Mar and we were holding our religious school, Sunday School, also at Vista Del Mar although that was very inadequate as they had really no classrooms. They had already begun a Hebrew School, a three day a week Hebrew School, which was being held in the Culver City American Legion Hall, which was also very inadequate.

They had an Orthodox rabbi who was retired. A very fine gentleman, quite ascetic looking. His name was Rabbi Auerbach, Olav ha Shalom, who has since passed away. But he was a very fine individual and he was able to reach most of the young men who came to study Hebrew. He did a very good job preparation. The congregation was growing, but the financial structure was totally inadequate. We suffered for this for years. The dues, I think, were originally \$30.00, then they were \$50.00. They remained that way for a long time -- they finally went to \$75.00 a year, running a few extra dollars for Hebrew, etc., but the congregation was supported, really, by a number of affairs -- it ran dances, bazaars, rummage sales, and put out journals -- it was a constant struggle to have enough money to keep the thing going. But the people were willing, they were energetic, most of them were in their thirties. It was lively, interesting, and enjoyable.

One of the best things I think we ever did in those early days was -- We had Saturday night and Sunday night discussion groups. We would hold them in people's homes, and while I would always be there as a kind of resource person, the fact is that the individuals in the congregation prepared themselves on a variety of topics. I remember one man who was active in the congregation at the time, Dr. Eugene B. Levine, a very able heart specialist, Olav ha Shalom, who also passed away as a young man. He prepared a very excellent paper on *Sh' Ar* on interest, discussed the whole question of the Jewish attitude toward interest on money.

Then there was an enormous hulk of a man by the name of Bob Tarr, a plumber who had now turned to contracting, and eventually did become quite wealthy. But he was tremendous. I don't think he had more than a grade school education at most, but he volunteered once to lead a discussion and he read a fine book -- I wish I could remember the name -- but he read it. And however he mastered the material, whether by himself or with the aid of somebody, master it he did. And he gave an excellent review and a good discussion and it was really a great time. These people were adept at a variety of things.

We were also fortunate. Rabbi Wolf left the Union at that time and went to the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, and he

was succeeded by Rabbi Phineas Smoller, Olav ha Shalom. Pete, as we called him, was an able person, very sweet -- he was too nice to people. He had ulcers. I guess he contained much of his feelings. But one of the television studios had the idea that they'd like to put on a Jewish Holy Day service. At that time, we were using a brand new auditorium which had just been erected in Culver City, Culver City Memorial Auditorium, a very fine facility. We agreed that we would televise a separate service -- Rosh Hashanah Eve and also Rosh Hashanah Day. I thought it was a good idea that people actually see a service. He and I drew up the complete commentary. He sat at an old table with his commentary and while the service went on, he would give the commentary. The service was well done. The studio sent out a whole crew. They had at least two cameras, maybe three. It was really well done. The comment in the city was tremendous. It was the first time it had been done on such a scale, and the television was just getting into people's homes in mass. From that moment, the congregation took off like a rocket.

We were unable really to practically process the number of people who joined. I don't know that we had a really accurate record of our membership for another four or five years. Just joined -- but of course, we still never had the ability -- or I guess you could say the guts -- to ask what the congregation

needed. So that we were always lagging. And the dues were always inadequate.

Then we needed so much space now -- it was impossible to use Vista Del Mar for the Holy Services, we overflowed the little synagogue. But at least the people enjoyed coming there, although it was one of the hardest places in the city to find. You needed a map and a seeing eye dog to get there. We then decided to rent facilities from the city, and after a long search of this whole matter of questions of church and state, we rented a large number of bungalows at the Hamilton High School from Los Angeles City. We felt we didn't violate church and state regulations. We went through quite a soul search. For the Board of Education had two plans under which you could lease these buildings -- one was a public service where the fee was negligible and the other was a commercial lease arrangement where you paid what you would pay for comparable facilities rented from private entrepreneurs. And we paid a big fee. Those bungalows used to cost us \$8-\$10-\$12 per bungalow per Sunday. Our bills ran into \$4--\$5,000 per year just for the rental. It was a good move, though, it gave us adequate space. Though everyone of us had to bring everything in on Sunday and lug everything out. We had two little cabinets on the grounds - that was all. But we had good facilities, and were able to begin to devise and develop programs in religious

education which were not possible before. It was an idea in which I was greatly interested. I found two marvelous people at the University Elementary Training School at the University of California in Los Angeles. One was a young man by the name of Pennrod Moss, who had tremendous vitality and knowledge, and the other a young lady, Mrs. Sandra Bernstein, who also had a tremendous background in education and a good, warm Jewish heart. Neither one of them had, unfortunately, a good Jewish background, but both had excellent educational backgrounds. We bolstered the Hebrew and Jewishness out of my resources and resources of other people, Rabbi Auerbach and others. Well, the school prospered.

As I say, we experimented in a number of areas, we produced a great many materials. We also had a man that was here from Germany, Dr. Gerhardt Cohen. He and I worked together. I commissioned him to write several grades of curricula, which he did -- eighth, ninth, and tenth. Then there was another young lady, who came to us by the name of Edie Margolin. She was a young mother - she was interested. She had just a high school education, but a great deal of willingness -- she became involved. Sandra Bernstein talked her into going back to college, which she did. And she worked with us and studied with us. She had a great flare for working with youngsters

six, seven, eight years old. So we worked with her in our primary department and she kept going on to school. And I can tell you that a few years ago, she graduated with a Doctorate in Education. She is now lecturing at universities on early childhood education. One summer I suggested that she and Gerhardt Cohen and another young man we had brought in, Joel Lapedis, who was originally from New York but lived out here now and who had a good Hebrew background and who joined us -- I suggested that the three of them get together and create a syllabus that would be a week-by-week, hour-by-hour complete grade one through grade eleven. They worked on it, and ultimately we produced a mimeographed form - a three-inch thick book, which was a complete syllabus from the first day of the opening of school until the last day a person was Confirmed. We made that syllabus available to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations -- locally, the Western Regional Office -- for the use of all new congregations. Because at the same time Temple Isaiah started, a whole group of other congregations started -- Beth Hillel in the Valley, University Synagogue, etc. -- the school was growing - the adult education groups were meeting practically every week and were very well attended -- and I should say another word about these adult education groups that were meeting at people's homes, that were

really discussion groups. The format generally was that they were limited to 50% members and 50% non-members because it was our major way of introducing non-members to the congregation and having them join. And it was most successful. The people who were coming to us. I mentioned Sam Green and his limited religious background -- and I would say this was fairly true of that original 13. But we began then to get people who were originally members of Orthodox congregations, or at least their families had been affiliated with Orthodox congregations. They had been exposed to some Orthodoxy, mostly on the level of going to Hebrew School or having somebody teach them their "Bar Mitzvah" prayers and blessings, etc. and the "Torah" and "Haftorah" and then the "Bar Mitzvah" prayers, etc., and that would be the sum of it. Some do remember extremely Orthodox grandparents. And in most of their rediscussion groups, there was at some point in the evening some personal ventilation. They would say 'Oh, I remember when I went here, went there.' Some remembered with nostalgia, but I would say more remembered it with not the most pleasant feelings. So we tried to tell them that we were trying to adapt to a new period, a new era, a new time in Jewish life. That we were still interested in the values of Judaism - and in the homelife of Judaism - that we are interested in the social justice message in Judaism, etc. They accepted the thesis and came along with us.

Then one time, a man joined the congregation, also by the name of Lapedis, Dan Lapedis, who had never been affiliated with any religious organization. He considered himself an aesthet, but he was interested in "Yiddishkeit." He was a good friend of one of the men who ultimately became the president of the congregation, a man by the name of Seymour Fabric. We had a meeting at the home of one of our members, one of our members, one of our more affluent members at that time, Seymour Owens, who had a big home in Beverly Hills. At that meeting, Dan Lapedis said, "Well, I think this temple ought to have a social action group." Somehow, he had gotten wind of what the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was really contemplating at the time -- they were just talking about it -- and we had quite a debate that night because our president, Mr. Fabric, was opposed -- really opposed! His friend at whose home we were in, Seymour Owens, didn't enter the argument. But Dan Lapedis really slugged it out verbally. The mediator was a man by the name of David Gruttman, who was much liked by all, quite wealthy and a good individual. He suggested "Let's talk about a community affairs and education committee." Seymour Fabric could hardly argue with the idea that people needed to be educated in matters of social concern, and so that was agreed upon. That was our beginning.

We added now to the list of topics to come up, the matters of social concern. The Negro Question -- the old

matter of Civil rights and equal rights was beginning to perk a little bit and this became a topic along with other matters. We were already aware then that distribution of wealth -- the affluent society -- was uneven. We had some discussions on this. Air pollution. We had a man in Long Beach, A Christian doctor, who had already begun to say that air pollution could very well be a key to lung cancer. I remember him as being one of our discussions. But then we also organized. The group got together and decided we would have a public forum. So at first, we limited ourselves to local people. UCLA, USC, and Santa Barbara and various campuses, and some of the Christian clergy, liberal Christian clergy and others, and doctors. And for the first two years we started a very modest forum. But it started to grow.

Then at one of the Community Affairs and Education Committee Meetings, it was proposed that we go in for some major speakers. And so we did. We put, I think, one or two speakers into the program the third year. I cannot remember the names at this time. But the tickets sold; we were concerned about the cost. We had an overflow for our sanctuary. And before you know it, that also took off like a rocket.

And so that very soon our program consisted of six major speakers, at least people who had attained some reputation in their fields, or in public life, and one or two local people. We had people like Eleanor Roosevelt, Ashley Montagu, Anthony Wedgewood Bend, Indhira Ghandi, Jacob Javitz, Senator Case, Senator Eugene McCarthy, and then

we also introduced some people. Louis Lomax, who is quite a personity out here on the West Coast because of his television program, was brought to Los Angeles by us. He had written the book The Negro Revolt. At that time, it had just received some notice and we decided we'd bring him out. And we did -- and we had him on our platform. It was the first time he had appeared in Los Angeles. Also, Harry Golden. Harry Golden had never been to Los Angeles before, but both I and our executive director were conversant with the Carolina Israelite, so we invited him. He made a tremendous hit here. It was the first time he really had what you might call a national platform from which to speak. The forum kind of set the tone for the congregation, and began to influence the people who joined. So that we began to get a group of liberal people, quite liberal politically. Some of them were affluent. And they felt this temple was really in the forefront on social issues, at least it was opening up the pulpit.

We had among this group of the people who started to join this congregation after the initial group, a group from Milwaukee (Fabric, Grossman, etc.) and so we began to have a Milwaukee group. For a while people used to talk of this as the Milwaukee temple. The original group who joined this temple were, most of them, natives or near natives -- people I mentioned before, Sam Green, Jerry Berris, etc. -- but then we began to get newcomers. That was the result of

the discussion groups, "Lahndts-mahn schaft," etc. Most of these people were brand new to Reform. Here and there we've had a few who have had long-time connections with Reform, but most of the people were brand new to Reform, and their brand of Orthodoxy was quite limited. They had, not the kind of Orthodoxy we know in say Williamsburg, New York. It was just a kind of nostalgia, really. So we had a job to try and have this group have some comprehension of Reform Judaism. And I'm still not sure that we've done here the job we ought to have done. Yes -- the people who originally started this temple, as I said, had businesses in Culver City; they did not live in Culver City. They had come to West Los Angeles, many of them from childhood homes in an area known as Boyle Heights. That was the concentrated Jewish area in the early days -- 1900s, 1920s, etc. -- but as the city grew and began to expand, it expanded west. And there was some pressure on the Jewish community of Boyle Heights to move because of the growth of the Mexican-American Spanish group who were also increasing both by virtue of increased birth rate and by increased migration from the south, from Mexico itself. They began to put pressure on the Boyle Heights area, so the Jews began to move out. But it wasn't a matter of discrimination, even in the polite sense, but there simply was pressure. The Jewish people had become more affluent, so they began to move west. Then areas opened up in this area we mentioned before, Beverly Wood, and when I came here they told me that just a couple of

years before, it had been a bean field. A sub-divider came, after the war, developed it, and the Jewish people began to move in.

Why they picked that area --guess that would take some examination on the population trends. Then also, in this area, there were several large golf clubs. Of course, there is Hillcrest, which is still in existence, then there was a golf course which was originally owned by King Leopold of Belgium, called Rancho Park. There was a million dollars due in taxes, so the city took it over and that's now the Rancho Park Golf Course. Then there was another golf course, called the California Country Club and it had a working arrangement with a tennis club. These were in the close area to the Vista Del Mar. The tennis club is still there -- it's now known as the Standard Club, but the golf club was bought by a Detroit syndicate. Then they sub-divided it. So that golf course, now known as the California Country Club area, has about 600 homes -- I would say at least 550 are owned by Jews. And this is where the bulk of the membership of our temple is concentrated. We now have a membership of somewhere in the neighborhood of 700 families. I'll say that at least 400 of them reside in the California Country Club area. One of the reasons we picked our present site for our temple was two members of the congregation were doctors -- Dr. Feurer and Dr. Grossman -- sat down one night to pinpoint where members of the temple lived and they found that this was kind of the closest place with property available.

We had originally selected a site on Robertson Boulevard which we had in escrow, but which, for some reason, didn't come through. So we purchased this site on Pico Boulevard in 1950 or 1951. We really didn't have any money -- but we drained our treasury and put down something like \$12,000 or \$13,000, took a mortgage on the balance, and proceeded to raise it. Then we had plans drawn and broke ground for our present building in late 1952 (December) and built it in 1953. This building also kind of reflected the personality of the congregation a little bit -- it was extremely modern. And when it was built it was the largest so-called "lift-slab" attempted in the United States. Everything -- the floors, the ceiling, etc. -- were all poured on the ground and then lifted up in the air on hydraulic jacks. This is not a tilt-up building -- this is actually one layer poured on top of one another and then lifted into the air. The architect was a young man by the name of Kenneth Lynn who had originally designed homes in Chicago, but came out here. I think, at that time, this was one of the largest buildings he had attempted.

The congregation is, on the whole, alive -- I think it has been interesting. In some areas, it's been quite exciting. We have been able to interest a number of people in various areas of general concern. We have a number of young people going into the rabbinate at the present time. I think there are 12 or 14 young men who have either finished

or presently in the rabbinate. One is Mel Zaeger who is in Israel, another is a young man by the name of Phil Posner. It was Phil who kind of sparked this congregation into a most unusual act. Phil had gone down south as a "freedom-rider." The congregation had put up his bond when he was finally arrested. Then he came back and looked around and said, "If we're going to do something, why don't we do something up here?" At that time, a tract, not in West Los Angeles -- a little further west, out towards Venice -- was being erected by a man by the name of Wilson. He was discriminating against the Negro group. So Phil Posner went out and picketed. Then he came back and said, "Why can't I picket in the name of Temple Isaiah?" I said, "Well, let's take it to the Community Affairs Committee." This I did, and they agreed that he could. But decisions of this kind had to go to the board. It went to the board; the board said they thought the matter was of such import it should go to the Congregation. So at one of the most dramatic congregational meetings we ever had, the congregation voted overwhelmingly that he could picket in the name of Temple Isaiah. And also, that in the event any individual was discriminated against in any housing program in West Los Angeles, the congregation as a whole would go out and picket against any kind of segregation in housing. So this resolution still stands on our books and the congregation is prepared to back it.

We also have a number of young people who are in the Peace Corp at the present time. I would say eight or ten

of those from this congregation. This congregation has a pretty strong stand on the whole question of Israel, too. And, of course, in the recent crisis has come through very well. Also, this congregation has been a strong backer of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. We have never moved away from the discipline of the group. We have tried very hard to make certain programs strong within the Union. When Rabbi Zeldin was the rabbi of Temple Emanuel, having just gone there, having left the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, he called me and suggested we start a Hebrew High School program. I agreed, and so he and I initiated the Hebrew High School Program in our congregations and we then asked the Union to undertake it, which they have done and done very well. We are extremely interested that this support of the Union Hebrew High School keep up, although we realize the high expense. We are also extremely interested in the camp program.

We send a large number of youngsters to Saratoga each year and also to Hess Kramer, so we are anxious that the Union camp program be expanded in this area.

In connection with the conclave program, I'd like to say a word. This congregation again, under the able leadership of Pennrod Moss and our present educational director, Jack Horwitz, pioneered the conclave program. We take our youngsters, beginning with grade seven out to Camp Hess Kramer for a full 48-hour weekend of intense Jewish living and concern. That has developed a great affinity among many of

our young people to Camp Hess Kramer, and normally, every summer, about 50 of our children go to Camp Hess Kramer. Out of the Hebrew High School has also grown a program which Rabbi Julian White of the Conservative Movement and I sponsored. That's the Ulpan to the State of Israel. Each summer we send a group of youngsters for a ten-week Ulpan to Israel. The initial Ulpan [which] began four years ago, all of the Reform and Conservative congregations were asked to join together. We did. We wanted, at that time, to start with about 30 youngsters. We were having a tough time, so finally, I persuaded the board to help subsidize a number of youngsters. We sent ten of the 27 that went. Since then, we have sent numbers like six, five, four, six, etc. I am very much interested in seeing that a youngster can go from grade one in a temple religious school, any/temple religious school, all the way to a Ph.D or D.H.L. at the Hebrew Union College without having to leave the educational system of the Reform Movement.

Just parenthetically, when I was growing up in Cleveland, if you even wanted to consider entering the Hebrew Union College from a Reform Temple, you had to go out and find yourself a tutor and get him to tutor you in Hebrew for months or years until you felt you could contemplate taking an exam. And in those days, I am sure, the entrance exams were much easier than they are now. Today, youngsters have

graduated from our Hebrew High Department. We now have a post-Hebrew High, and a post-post Hebrew High, very easily to enter the Hebrew Union College, at least the preparatory rabbinic department of the Hebrew Union College on the west coast. We are also very much interested in the Hebrew Union College and in the West Coast California school. We feel it's necessary. In fact, I myself have felt that they should move the entire Hebrew Union College to Los Angeles, and close down the Cincinnati School. This is where the Jewish population is tending, between here and New York, and if we ever get over these abominable quarrels in the Pacific and trade opens up -- with the Asiatic countries including China -- what you have on the East Coast will look like a small Iowa town compared to what is possible on the West Coast. A whole new era is possible on the Pacific basin -- and I still think it is going to come to pass, too. So I think the Reform Movement in Los Angeles has enormous potential, and what we have created is very limited -- there's a great deal yet to go.

I think in some areas we have done as well as could be expected, and in some there's a great deal more we could have done. I only wish we had been able to develop the necessary financial undergirding. We are still weak, too weak, and it stunts many things we could do. This year, 54 youngsters went to Israel on the Ulpan. By this time, we should be sending 400 - 500. Without any question, we should

organization -- San Francisco still a member. Morris Linsky,

the President, etc. -- We now have the children of some of

have been sending plane-load after plane-load -- I think Israel is a phenomenon of our time, and I think our young people should be acquainted with it. I think it represents, for us, that kind of a "sheep dip" for a youngster at age 14, 15, 16, 17 which is obtainable in only this way. And once he gets that "sheep dip," which I like to call it -- then he is immune to getting lost in American Society -- to sinking into an unrecognizable mass. His Judaism will not bleach out. It can set in a way all that you try to do. The only reason that we're not doing it -- isn't because the children don't want to go. They're ready and willing to go. We simply cannot afford to send them. And it's hard to convince people that one should make this kind of expenditure at one time for an individual. And yet, in the long run, you are not spending any more, and probably less, than you would giving a youngster an additional two or three years of Hebrew education. Not that he can't use that, too, but the inspiration can certainly come from six months period in Israel. In fact, we are now working on the Eisendrath exchange program. We have one boy who spent six months in Israel, Alan Weishardt, and we have a boy coming from his home in Tel-Aviv -- Tachon -- to Los Angeles this summer. But I think the interchange would be good. We would like to see this grow and develop. Roughly now, we're just passing twenty years, and we have managed to retain practically all of those early people affiliated with the congregation -- Sam Green's still a member, Morrie Linow, the Freemans, etc. -- we now have the children of some of

these people as members. Of course, we have a number of people who joined in 1949, 1950, etc. Our turnover really is more in the people who joined for three or four years for Bar Mitzvah or Confirmation or something like that, and then leave us. This is a familiar pattern in Jewish life in the United States, particularly among the Reform and Conservative movement congregations. Recently, we have made a bid to try and bring in young marrieds. One of the recurring things we heard was that the cost of temple affiliation was high and it is high. A congregation needs to operate, in order to offer any type of program, approximately \$250 - \$300 per family. Normally, we ask of our members approximately two percent of their net income. In other words, if a person makes \$15,000 to \$20,000, which is a median salary in this area (it might even be higher), we're satisfied if we get \$300 - \$400 per member family. We don't but it would be adequate. Anyway, young couples, even though they may have attained the \$15,000 range are not ready to part with that kind of money. So we made a radical change. We said that any young couple, where the wage earner was 36 or under, could join this congregation for a fee of \$70.00 plus 10% for the Union-\$77.00. This included couples with children in Religious School, although we do now charge a school fee, and for Hebrew there is an additional Hebrew School fee, but it still is way under the actual cost, the disproportionate prorated cost. It's been fairly successful. We have now about 80 young marrieds who are affiliated with us. But we haven't yet quite figured out how to "jell" a young married congregation. They are just part of our

congregation. We haven't separated them. They have tried to create for themselves a young married group. They have held some meetings and tried to sponsor some things, but it's not the way it is in the eastern congregations. In Cleveland, the young married couples congregation becomes a separate congregation and entertains its own identity and everything. I think the difference there is that most of the people who join congregations is the next generation -- they all know each other, they've all been accustomed to going together - high school, college, etc. Out here, most of these young couples have never seen each other before and their coming together in the congregation is their only real point of contact. Here they make individual contacts, some of them becomes good friends; they see each other in their homes, but they are not accustomed to working together as an organized group, as they might think of the Peavey Movement, or a Labor Union, or even a political party. They don't think of organizing in the same way. I don't know whether this is good or bad. But we haven't been able to get the discussion groups going that we've had in the earlier days. That has almost passed right out of the picture. We tried a couple of revivals, but they were not good. So we're going to have to figure out some new programs.

We have in mind a program that we are thinking of adapting from the UCLA Extension. UCLA Extension programs use our facility for a number of classes, and years ago,

we were kind of hand-in-glove with them. We kind of co-sponsored the classes they used to offer here -- art classes, dance classes, humanities classes, etc. -- and sent our people to these classes. We haven't had the same sort of working co-operation, but were thinking of re-entering and we have on the drawing boards a new building which would really be an adult building. At the present time, we're negotiating with the Jewish Federation Council, who also wanted a building in this area and we'd like to collaborate with them on a Jewish Cultural Center. We have the land, they would put up the building, and we would operate it in kind of consort. So that's in the drawing.

With reference to the religious service, I want to add, first of all, the newer congregations that were started here did not take their pattern from the Classical Reform, which is to some degree exemplified by the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. For instance, we have a cantor. We've had a cantor since our inception. Wilshire Boulevard has never had a cantor and Rabbi Magnin says he never will have a cantor. We do have -- we had a man who was with us about a year and a half, Livingston Smith, Olav ha Shalom, and then Cantor Robert Nadell. He's been with us since we began. And then another thing we've introduced into the service is once each month we have what we call Social Action Sabbath, when we do turn the pulpit over to the committee to hold some program -- sermon, talk, panel, symposium, forum, whatever

it may be, even a movie -- on some matter of social concern, current in American or Jewish life. It's been quite successful. We also had a number of fine people in the pulpit, and I think, it has helped open up the eyes of our congregation to the issues which otherwise, at least the religious dimension of which, might have escaped them.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

There is no question that the growth of Reform Judaism in Los Angeles, presents a fascinating study of dynamic growth and expansion.

In a little more than one-hundred years the growth of a Jewish community can be charted from less than a "minyan" to the second largest Jewish population in the United States. The story of the growth of Reform Judaism is intertwined with the growth of the total Jewish community.

Our history began with a traditional base- a firm foundation of interest and concern upon which to expand. Yet it was from this base that Reform grew and developed. There was present a respect for tradition and its adherents so that for many years the early "reformers" went along with the ritualistic desires of their elders.

Yet as the small population grew those younger elements of the Jewish community wanted to bring their religion into perspective. As a result of this desire the first, formerly Orthodox, congregation became Reform. Over the next several years many changes along a reforming nature were made in the liturgy of the service and in the ritual tone as well. In time the spirit of the congregation bordered on a Classical Reform. It can be said that during these years the progress of Reform under the guiding

hands of the various rabbis of the congregation was ever-constant.

With the coming of Rabbi Magnin to the first Reform congregation of the city came also a new spirit of verve and dynamic interest. The congregation gradually turned from the harshness of Classical Reform to a Reform of a more moderate variety. The "shofar" as well as "Bar Mitzvah" were returned to the synagogue. At the same time various congregational auxiliaries were started which in time became the forerunners of today's philanthropic institutions. Through all of these machinations Rabbi Magnin set the tone through his own spirit and personality. Over, now, more than half-a-century Magnin has continued reflecting his own views of Judaism upon the entire population of the city. The interview listed above- better than anything else- represents Magnin's thoughts and feelings; in the very rambling style of speech in which he talks, in his choice of words, in his inflection- one can see the spirit of a man who has placed his stamp upon the Reform Jewish face of a great city.

Nevertheless, there were Jews who, though of the Reform bent, wanted more traditionally tempered services. Those Jews banded together to form, in other parts of the city, the second and, later, third Reform temples.

As the years passed the Jewish population continued to grow ever greater, and with this growth came many new

congregations in various parts of the city. These new congregations usually followed the movements, of shifts of population, of Jewish families about the city.

Ever gradually the population moved westward and into the San Fernando Valley, and as it did so new congregations, of the post World War II variety, came into being. In an effort to meet the intellectual needs and fulfill the moral commitments of its members each of these new congregations would set its own tone. As a result some temples were more traditional than others. Still other temples were oriented to various social issues and movements of the time. Like attracted like, and these temples grew from ~~their~~ rich and ever-expanding source of population.

From this author's interview with Rabbi Albert M. Lewis, one can chart the growth of such a temple as that mentioned above, namely growth that polarized around social issues.

The growth of Reform services and institutions in the community were born as a result of the growth of population and its resultant needs.

Once again, centered around the city's first temple came the College of Jewish Studies and later a branch of the Hebrew Union College itself. In the early days of these schools, both utilized the facilities of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple; today they still rely on that temple for support.

Just as in the early days the Wilshire Boulevard Temple set the tone; so today, as through the years, many of that temple's members support and lend encouragement to the social service agencies, of a Jewish nature, in the city.

So the complete circle has been made. From earlier days to present days the apparatus of Reform Judaism has gained its strength from the founding temple of the city. Today, there are other temples to help inspire this endeavor to ever more worthwhile achievements. The commitment of these temples to build upon the past for the sake of the future can perhaps best be seen in the Constitution of one such temple:

"The purpose of this congregation shall be to worship God in accordance with the faith of Reform Judaism; to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage; to bring nearer the Kingdom of God on earth through an emphasis of the principles of Righteousness, Justice and Love to all the peoples of the world; and to stimulate an awareness of our responsibilities as Jews to the community in which we live.

As Americans of Jewish faith we are dedicated to the achievement of a Judaism that contributes to the up-building and maintaining of the Biblical ideals inherent in our free America; a Judaism that will aid us to become spiritually sensitive and morally strong human beings; a Judaism that draws its inspiration from the priceless traditions of our ancestral faith as well as from the rich and enduring elements of our American democratic heritage. We have allegiance to no country other than the United States of America but we are mindful of the bonds of kinship with our co-religionists throughout the world, and the obligation to discharge our responsibilities to those of our faith who live beyond our borders. " 182.

With such thoughts and beliefs rest the hope of the future.

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It would seem to be of value to note here the more important sources that one should check in the process of preparing a paper on the Reform Jews of Los Angeles. A paper such as the above represents a gathering of a vast amount of material, and it would seem to be of worth to note, for anyone who might be interested in such a study in the future, where much of this material is.

First, the Yearbooks and Minutebooks of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple can be found at that institution; they can provide insight into the early Jewish pioneers in Los Angeles. These books do reflect the growth of the temple.

Second, the personal Scrap books of Rabbi Magnin represent a picture of the man and his activities over the course of his career. Such a source is worthy of investigation.

Third, the local secular Los Angeles newspapers do present many articles on the Jews of the city and the temples/rabbis as well. In the area of newspapers, the B'nai Brith Messenger is a valuable source for survey histories and interviews.

Fourth, the offices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations have the records of the meetings of the

Assembly of Delegates, which provide a good picture of the growth of Reform Judaism and its institutions in the city.

Fifth, the Community Library located adjacent to the Jewish Community Building can make available copies of the older B'nai Brith Messengers as well as certain texts dealing with the area. As a rule the "anniversary issues" of B'nai Brith Messenger will often provide historical material.

Sixth, in dealing with an historical area such as the above, personal interviews with the area's rabbis can be most helpful, for they will provide some historical insight into their own temples. Quite often, also, these temples will have either their own record or minute books, or past temple bulletins which can provide accurate reflections of the past actions of the congregation.

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Extensive use was made of the aforementioned Minutes, Yearbooks, and Scrap-books of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple.

Extensive use was made of the Minutes of the Assembly of Delegates of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Extensive use was made of rabbinical interviews of Los Angeles rabbis.