

BOSTON NAZARENE CHAPEL – “COME UNTO ME...”



1958 archival photo courtesy of Dr. Charles & Doris Gailey from their personal Boston Chapel collection

Sixty-four (64) years after this photo was captured in 1958, and subsequently since thoughtfully preserved by former Eastern Nazarene College Evangelistic Society members Chuck & Doris Gailey, we are able today to view together anew the 26 Dover Street Boston Nazarene Chapel plate glass windows then facing Dover Street at the corner of Village***.

Dover Street sidewalk passersby throughout the 1950s and early 1960s week after week were witnessing sights and sounds from inside those thick plate glass windows -- witnessing joyous gospel singing and enjoying beloved old-time congregational hymns and hearing anointed holiness preaching and being deeply moved by an altar filled with persons praying through – witnessing lives changed with young girls and boys and men and women called unto holiness and commissioned to go and do likewise here and elsewhere in furthering the Kingdom.

The mission of the Church of the Nazarene, as defined by founder Phineas F. Bresee generations before, was pressing prayerfully and persistently forward, with young and dedicated Eastern Nazarene College students God's chosen vessels and instruments in this ministry: *"The field of labor to which we feel especially called is in the neglected quarters of the cities and where ever else may be found waste places and souls seeking pardon and cleansing from sin. This work we aim to do through the agency of city missions, evangelistic services, house to house visitation, caring for the poor, comforting the dying."* Dr. Phineas F. Bresee, Founder, Church of the Nazarene, October 30, 1895. Sixty years ahead of its time, Dr. Bresee's 1895 vision vividly and accurately described Boston's infamous South End neighborhood, and the healing inner city ministry of Boston Nazarene Chapel...

One summer day in 1960 the Chapel's front plate glass window nearest Tremont Street was discovered to be



irreparably shattered near its center. The badly broken window's damage may have been the result of accident or vandalism, or some other cause never determined. The dedicated evangelistic students of Eastern Nazarene College were suddenly confronted with yet another expensive problem in facing immediately needed repair of unforeseeable window damage to the Dover Street side of the 4-story Boston Chapel building, as they were at other times with the finding of the failing brick rooftop chimney and missing sidewalk grating on the Village Street side.

(Thankfully, the Boston Chapel building's physical plant repair needs proved relatively rare and unusual over its 10-year history following initial preparation for Boston Chapel ministry occupancy and usage. **What was consistently normal and typical and usual and ongoing were the Holy Spirit-filled worship services together with the compassionate Sunday School and related ministries of the dedicated Eastern Nazarene College students. It must be noted that these same students were soon serving as missionaries and prominent pastors and laypersons, serving and blessing locales far from Boston Chapel. Some in time became authors known world-wide; some were recognized as Alumni of the Year or received other honors; all contributed of their time and talent and other resources through their Eastern Nazarene College student ministries, and beyond.**)

There was a hardware and glass shop nearby, located just about 6 blocks away from the Chapel, on Tremont. After assessing the Chapel's broken front window situation, four of our fellow ENC-ers begin the short trek of walking down Dover Street to the Tremont corner, then turning right towards downtown Boston to walk the remaining few blocks up to the Tremont Street glass store to purchase the large plate glass window and other necessary repair materials.

These four volunteer ENC students possessed a lively sense of humor, as did so many of the others. The names Paul Pierce and Jim Fischmann and Bob Farah and Merle Fetter come to mind. (Note: 1953-1957 Pastor Nevin Crouse recently assured me – with his own subtle touch of humor -- that the Reverend Merle Fetter will correct my memory of Boston Chapel names and events if I prove mistaken...). *If maybe you also can help us out memory-wise as Merle often can, it will be greatly appreciated.*

Before beginning the few minute walk to the glass supply store, one of the four suggested we pretend to be carrying a large and heavy plate glass window down Dover to Tremont and up Tremont to the glass shop. With 2 of the men in front and 2 to the rear, on opposite sides, the four did a credible acting job in pretending they were carrying a large plate glass window. People in cars passing by and persons on the sidewalk strained their vision, noticeably squinting strongly in trying to see the (invisible and nonexistent) large heavy pane of plate glass the four were pretending to be carrying in those several blocks to the glass shop.

During the return walk to the 26 Dover Street Chapel address the four students were now, of course, carrying along the actual large pane of plate glass – weighing about 102 pounds – destined for the Chapel's store front. Some people on the sidewalk then appeared even more perplexed, wondering why they could not see that large

piece of plate glass before when the men had gone past them earlier on their way to the glass shop!



Some with fertile brains may be asking: “How much did the plate glass cost, and how was it paid for? Did the Tremont Street glass shop have a delivery service truck, or could the ENC workers have borrowed someone's truck instead of carrying the heavy glass for all those blocks by hand? Wasn't there any concern that there

might be some sudden gusts of wind that could in several ways prove dangerous?" (There was one big gust, as I remember, as we were crossing Castle...).

I believe the Chapel's multi-talented Associate Pastor, the Reverend Mr. Merle Fetter, led in the essential glazing process, as all four of that day's worker-pranksters each helped position the heavy replacement window in installing.

*** I always felt special about that one window, from the very first time I peered into and through it. That first day in September 1959 I saw there displayed inside the store front plate glass window a large antique scythe – such as one might see on an old farm, interestingly placed beside a large baked but uncut loaf of Italian or French bread. And I saw through the glass clearly a white block-lettered sign conveying the wonderful scriptural promise from Matthew 28: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

Dr. Fletcher Spruce, New England District Superintendent, renamed the then 9 year old Boston Chapel student mission to "Boston Chapel Church of the Nazarene" in his meeting with the congregation in 1961, recognizing the District Assembly's elevation action to official Nazarene Church status under previous Superintendent Dr. J. C. Albright. The above Boston Nazarene Chapel Church of the Nazarene historical memory narrative has been respectfully and prayerfully prepared for ENC Archival inclusion consideration by Jim Tasker, Boston Nazarene Chapel Pastor September 1959 -- February 1963