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Protestant mission work among Italians in Boston

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Dissertation

PROTESTANT MISSION WORK AMONG ITALIANS IN BOSTON

by

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INTRODUCTION

The main objective before the student preparing this dissertation is to search out the facts regarding the history of Protestant work among the Italians in Boston; to find the true situation which confronts Protestant Missions in this field and attempt to offer a constructive program for the future.

A. PROBLEM

For over fifty years the Protestant Missions of various denominations have carried on a program of Bilingual work among the Italians in the larger cities of our country, especially where there has been a concentration of Italian population in one locale. The work has gone through many stages of development and a number of methods of approach. In Boston apparently these groups have met with only temporary success, these works now reaching a common state of withering away.

It is important to know the true facts which account for this apparent failure because the whole strategy of reaching people of Roman Catholic background hinges on the results of a study such as this. Many have been the expressions of hope that such a study would be made.
The problem presents many questions, such as:

1. Is the Italian immigrant and the second generation Italian inveterately Roman Catholic?

2. Has Protestantism made any consequential inroads among the Italians?

3. Should the apparent failures of Protestant efforts in this regard be interpreted in terms of its serving a temporary need, socially, culturally, and politically, but without any virile religious effect?

4. On the other hand, has Protestantism made a beginning among Italians so as to warrant the development of new techniques, large expenditures of money, and a renewed effort to win the soul of the Italian people?

5. What are the factors responsible for the apparent failure of Italian missions?

6. What are the prospects for the success of currently proposed programs and techniques in the light of the foregoing analysis.

B. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Bilingual - is a term used by the denominations to indicate institutions for people of foreign antecedents who now use both English and the mother tongue, especially in their worship services. In this context it refers to the Italian mission program.
Marginal men - signifies second generation migrants, on the borderline between two cultures, participating in both yet not fully accepted in either. In this context this reference will be made by the use of the phrase the second generation Italian.

City Missions - in this context refers to those institutions that serve in the area designated Missionary Boston. More specifically, denominational institutions ministering ultimately to make Protestants.

Missionary Boston - is a term used by H. Paul Douglass designating the North End, West End, South End, East Boston and South Boston, because they are areas of unusual need.

The area under consideration is rightly designated Missionary Boston because of its exceptional needs and because of the low fortunes of most of its people.¹

Upward mobility - is the process of advancing one's social and economic status. In this study it is shown in the phenomenon of moving out of "Missionary Boston."

Contadini - is the Italian word for peasants.

Paesani - are natives of the same part of the country; a township, village or city, where these are accepted as distinctly different places.

¹ Douglas MB, 5.
C. METHOD

The methods used in this dissertation will follow the following general order.

A review of the literature on Italian immigrants written by recognized authorities in English and Italian will be made to establish background material. The results of population studies in the designated areas will be charted to show the present conditions faced in Italian Missions. An investigation of the historical records of the City Missionary Societies in question will be made to determine the trend in membership and decline thereof in each Mission and the denominational attitudes toward these Missions as they have vitally affected their development. Interviews with ministers and constituents will be carried on to enlighten the facts discovered from historical investigation. Personal contact of non-resident members and former constituents will be made wherever possible to discover their present religious affiliation, their lack of it, and the causes thereof. Finally, a questionnaire will be sent to 179 Protestant Churches in Boston and vicinity to determine the Italian constituency in American Churches. This will serve as a guide for later generalizations and conclusions.
D. LIMITATIONS

This study is naturally limited by the lack of data available on the subject. It is further hampered by the largely diffused group in question and their availability to respond to questioning. To some degree the results of the personal contact of subjects is effected by the willingness or reluctance of these individuals, and the willingness of the preachers involved to give forthright opinions and information. Throughout the investigation there will be the difficulty of getting beneath the psychological attitude of escaping responsibility on the part of leaders in this field.

Further bounds are set in relation to the treatment of Roman Catholicism which naturally cannot be handled here. Also, only full treatment can be given where denominational work is recorded and has had a virile or consequential history in the field at one time or another.
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS

This study deals with immigrants from the regions of South Italy and Sicily and their offspring who settled in the city of Boston. Most of these were tenant farmers or unskilled laborers. The farmers were an agricultural people of terraced gardens and farms who used methods of farming centuries old creating for them circumstances of abject poverty due to their low productivity. Foerster's description of these methods dates them as far back as those of the Roman Empire.

 Implements and methods in 1818 were the same as those described in the Roman annals. In 1868 changes were rare.

Obsolete methods of cultivation have been so far perpetuated in Southern Italy that the productivity of the region is low.¹

As tenant farmers their labors resulted in a meager living and they found it necessary to resort to hiring themselves out as laborers out of season. Their abject poverty being the primary cause of emigration from Italy. In such a feudalistic state they were of practically no consequence, a passive element in the nation's economy.

¹ Foerster, IIOT, 82.
This has been noted in more detail by Foerster in the quotation that follows.

Half the cultivators of Basilicata, two-thirds of those of Calabria and Sicily, are hired laborers. They are a passive element in the agricultural economy, determining little, the victims of much; socially despised, a residuum of the population.²

Added to these circumstances was the fear of volcanic eruptions, (some prominent eruptions took place in 1854, 1870, 1894, 1907, 1908), floods and malaria which set the psychological mood of helplessness and apathy toward progress leaving the hearts of many with but one desire, to emigrate. This psychological mood is claimed by Forester to be the most serious motivating force of emigration.

Of all the consequences, the most serious is probably psychological, the creation of a mood of helplessness, or even worse, of apathy, restraining at once the impulse to progress and the energies needed for accomplishment.³

The laborers unskilled and unorganized, beset by burdensome taxation, living in misery sought the only release possible, that of emigration.

It can be truly said that Italians can be found in every country of the world. At least ten million Italians live under a foreign flag.

² Ibid., 85.
³ Ibid., 63.
The setting in the South of Italy is well known. From the reading in Foerster and Fairchild\(^4\) taken as comprehensively covering the work of the many others read in this respect the following picture is offered.

Sometimes a desolate scene, or a pleasantly picturesque one; sometimes a landscape rising to an association of mountain, sky and sea in a crystal and incomparable beauty. The "contadini"\(^5\) live in small and simple houses, placed generally in a town upon an elevation, those of the more wretched day laborers being on the periphery of the town. One story dwellings were usually made of tuff, stone, brick, mud and lava, but rarely of wood. Washing facilities were meager and drainage absent. Oil or petroleum was burned, but many a family had its meals in darkness. "The street is the parlor, the resort for gossiping, odors and wooing; it is where the children romp, the women work and the men have their games."\(^6\) The houses often of one room contained during the night and part of the day, not only the family, with a demoralizing collapse of privacy, but the ass, the goat, poultry and other animals, all making assaults upon order and cleanliness.

\(^4\) Fairchild, IB.

\(^5\) Contadini - peasants. See p. xi.

\(^6\) Foerster, op. cit., p. 94.
During unemployment hunger or at least privation was not uncommon. Otherwise the food was sufficient in quantity and wholesome, the staple diet being of home baked dry bread soaked in oil and salt. In general meat was seldom eaten, or only on a grand occasion, or when a sick animal had died.

Life in the South exalts the family. It has been said of Sicily that the family sentiment is perhaps the only deeply rooted altruistic sentiment that prevails. Gallant to his wife, the husband has almost complete control over the members of the family; the wife's affection tends to be slavish. Sicilian brides are usually young, their mates generally older by a number of years. Children are numerous except among the better-to-do contadini.

In these regions children have grown to adult life unlettered. Three out of four of the inhabitants six years of age or older, in the first years of the twentieth century could neither read nor write; the lowest expenditure for education in the whole of Italy being in Basilicata and in Calabria, and very low in Sicily also.

Until recent years illiteracy kept two thirds to nine tenths of these from the electoral lists. In Basilicata the contadini usually made up only one-tenth to one-third of the names on these lists. Voters were only mildly
interested in public affairs and commonly voted according to instruction. The 'galantuomini' a genre of gentlemen of leisure, exercised control and kept the contadini dependent and uneducated.

A lower disaffected class, seeing before it no established avenues of improvement, often sought to achieve its ends by collective force, revolution or strike. In Sicily in the early nineties the semi-revolutionary Fasci violently organized to demand tax reform, laws on the disposition of communal land, increased wages, and betterment in agricultural contracts. Blood flowed freely before it was put down. Later new organizations urged the same reforms in milder form.

As a result of their depraved conditions little patriotism and much resentment of military service was shown to their country. Patriotic ties were easily sundered. The new lands of plenty to which they immigrated received their questionable allegiance. Their fatherland became whatever country would give them bread.
There have been two fountain heads of emigration from South Italy.

From the mountains, as at once the poorest and the most populous part of Basilicata, emigration began and long continued before other sections were aroused. Fairchild says, referring to the Basilicata area, "emptied itself, leaving only the lame, the halt and the blind." Remoteness was no bar. Argentina and Brazil were favorite early goals with the United States soon supervening as the goal par excellence. It was mainly a permanent emigration, of day laborers, small proprietors and tenant farmers.

Gradually, the hill districts of Basilicata and Calabria became involved, and only very slowly the coast zone, with its large estates and meager population. Once begun, the exodus from Basilicata never appreciably slackened, soon attaining a ratio to population second only to that in Venetia. It did not take long before a sheer decline set in in the population of the mountains, while that on the coast continued to grow. In the first ten years of the twentieth century, the average annual emigration from Basilicata was three percent of the population and the region stood forth as the most notable instance in Italy in decline of population due to emigration.

7 Fairchild, op. cit., p. 110.
With surprising slowness, considering its adjacency to Calabria, Sicily became a land of emigration and when that happened it was upon terms which suggested an independent impulse. The beginnings were in the province of Palermo, substantially distant from the Calabrian shore; the rest of the island was in the early eighties not yet aroused from its age-long lethargy. From Palermo it continued with vigor, so that of all the Sicilian emigrants of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, nearly half came from that province.

Next it began in Messina where probably the contagion of Reggio, across two miles of straits, was more potent than that of Palermo. Only with the twentieth century, however, did the great outburst come. Then all the provinces were swept into a resistless current. In their ratio to population other South Italian compartments continued to show a stronger movement than Sicily, but nowhere was its growth so prodigiously rapid as in the island.

In the year 1906 the astonishing total of 127,000 Sicilian emigrants was reached. In some regions the annual emigration was five percent of the population; these are especially the regions of the interior where emigration began late and the past weighed heavily. It is significant that emigration should not have originated where misery was
greatest. It began where there was the chance of saving enough money for passage fares and has best maintained itself where wages were at a medium level.

In its intensity the movement in Sicily selected especially the day laborers, next those with rent contracts, lastly the small proprietors. Miners and various operatives and artisans have been numerous also, the firstnamed reflecting the various vicissitudes of the sulphur industry, the rest in part the consequences of the agricultural emigration; and both effected by the contagion of the exodus.

The Sicilians have gone to North Africa, to South America and to the United States. From the first and third of these goals many have returned to Sicily, so that it may be said a considerable portion of the emigration was temporary only, but mainly the emigration was permanent.
B. CULTURE

Southern Italy and Sicily are isolated from Northern Italy the cultural center of Italy by a barrier of mountains below the capital city of Rome. Due to this geographical barrier and a centuries old isolation the South Italian and Sicilian culture and customs have undergone the process of primitive crystallization, displaying the ignorance of the unenlightened in religion as well as customs. Semple, puts it in the following manner.

The effect of such isolation is ignorance, superstition, and the early crystallization of thought and custom.\(^8\)

Because of the common plight of South Italians and the Sicilians there is a uniformity in their mental character, and their beliefs. As Phyllis Williams states in her thesis; having come from a basic stock long unchanged their ways are much alike.

The older generation of South Italians come from a basic stock of people, who as a race have undergone very little change. There is uniformity in the matter of their beliefs.\(^9\)

In comparing the North and South one finds that in the North (of Rome) civilization has taken a general European complexion while south of Rome the fundamental char-

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8 Semple, IGE, 18.

9 Williams, HMSI, 4.
acter of the early history of pagan Rome has been preserved. Laing, in his "Survivals of Roman Religion", summarizes this thought briefly in these words.

North of Rome, civilization in Italy has taken the form more or less of European civilization. South of Rome the fundamental character of pagan civilization has been preserved.10

10 Laing, SRR, 242.
C. RELIGION

It is commonly assumed that the Italian is a Roman Catholic, historically and psychologically, as well as devotionally. Italy has an infinitesimal quantity of Jews and Protestants. The former never emigrate as they are treated better in Italy than anywhere else on the globe, the latter are confined to the groups of Waldensians in the North of Italy, and to scattered groups of Sicilian Baptists, converted by the many Baptist Missions on that Island. In recent years work has been begun by the Methodists, and Congregationalists in Italy itself; however, their number also is infinitesimal. In 1911 almost 1,750,000 were numbered among the Evangelicals. At this time about 34,000 Sicilians called themselves Protestants.\footnote{Sartorio, SRLIA, 78-80.}

The Italian Roman Catholic attitude toward the Church is one that puzzles the outsider like the Irish Catholic and the French Catholic (Canadian). The Italian being very conscious of a deep line of demarcation between spiritual and temporal things, does not therefore, listen to his priest in matters not affecting conscience. To the Irish and French this is an attitude of lesser meekness than theirs and the Italian Roman Catholic is looked upon as a lukewarm Roman Catholic.
A bitterness toward the clergy and the Church is found all over Italy, its source is in a fundamentally democratic feeling of separation of the Church from politics. The opposite has been the historical role of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, even to opposing the development of the national life. To understand this one must remember the mighty power the Roman Catholic Church has wielded in Italy and the fact that the priesthood in the past has often been corrupt, immoral, and the enemy of educational and economic reforms.

The South Italian and Sicilian furthermore, in the matter of ethics definitely will not obey the Christian precept which commands one to offer his right cheek to the slapper of his left. There is a strong urge (in all honor) to indulge in personal revenge if honor has been infringed upon. On occasions when such infringement has resulted in violence the violator has been protected from the law in devious manners by the citizenry at large.

The immigrants' religion as a whole is highly superstitious and full of pageantry. Fairchild says that the "Italians superstitions are endless." Beneath all this is evident a deep strain of early Roman paganism, a reflection of their crystalized primitive culture and beliefs.

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12 Fairchild, IB, 107.
Sartorio makes this point clear in these words.

... Indisputably there is still imbedded in the depths of the Italians soul a substratum of traditional paganism, of primitive culture and a belief in magic and folklore. 13

Science and logic have no bearing on their religious traits, and fatalism is quite prevalent.

Sacrilegious practices are not infrequent as is illustrated by the following practices in certain parts of Italy, even in the North, described by Fairchild.

During the great civic festivity of the Palio at Siena, Tuscany, each quarter of the city brings to its parish church the horse which will represent it in the historical race, to be blessed on the altar steps. Surely this custom is more sacrilegious than religious. 14

The Neapolitan sees the blood of Saint Januarius boil yearly in its glass receptacle on the day sacred to that saint. 15

The whole structure of the South Italian and Sicilian religion is based on the theory of a hierarchy of personages in the form of Saints, Apostles, and the Blessed Virgin. The Madonna though technically only an intermediary between man and God in this hierarchy has taken a position of all-pervading importance. She has risen in their eyes to a place of importance obviously beyond the role of intercessor and appearing to be the final and highest source of appeal.

13 Sartorio, SRLIA, 77.
14 Fairchild, IB, 106.
15 Ibid., 107.
They never think of praying to God in any of His Triune personalities. The South Italian in America (Comerville) in an interview with William Whyte author of "Street Corner Society" likens this religious hierarchy to the social structure of American cities. Those who are highest in political office being of great importance and simultaneously unapproachable, from them a gradation in power-capacity down to the common man. In this social hierarchy "little people" have access to the "big people" only through intermediaries. The whole relationship in this social structure is based on a system of reciprocal obligations.

According to Cornerville people, society is made up of big people and little people, with intermediaries serving to bridge the gaps between them. The masses of common people are little people. They cannot approach the big people directly but must have an intermediary to intercede for them. They gain this intercession by establishing connections with the intermediary, by performing services for him, and thus making him obligated to them. The intermediary performs the same function for the big man. The interactions of big shots, intermediaries, and little guys build up a hierarchy of personal relations based upon a system of reciprocal obligations.16

The Church says, the saints are to be honored and revered for their sainthood, but the South Italians attitude toward them is more than reverence, practically worship.

16 Whyte, SCs, 100.
In fact the saints are more often prayed to in place of the Almighty.

Emulating the virtues and purity of the saints is of no concern to the ordinary Italian Roman Catholic.

Each village or township has its own patron saint and each of these in turn has a peculiar power of his (her) own. For example, for most it is a truth that, Saint Rocco protects from epidemics, Saint Lucy from eye diseases, Saint Joseph grants a "good death," Saint Pasquale secures satisfactory husbands, Saint Biaggio cures diphtheria and all sorts of throat diseases, Saint Ann helps women in childbirth, and Saint Anthony is the finder of lost things. When the peasant leaves his native village, says Sartorio, "he will forget everything but his patron saint."17 Distortion in religious tenets is the general order of the day.

17 Sartorio, SRLIA, 103.
This "Christianity" of the South Italian is entirely different from the religion of the rest of the Roman Catholic world. It is bound in every respect with the simple every day needs for existence and no relation to the next world is felt except at the hour before death. In Williams' thesis this is profusely explained but in her following quotation we have the substance of the whole matter.

Christianity as represented by the religion of the South of Italy, has forms that are entirely different from the religion of the rest of the Catholic world. It has closer connection with the desires and aims of every-day material existence . . . the life in the next world is to them of secondary importance. 18 It is a sort of religious economy of primitive people bound by nature and ignorance. But it represents a cultural factor, as Williams concurs, that gives racial solidarity to the national group.

Religious motives have little if any influence upon Italian emigration. While freedom of worship is allowed the Roman Catholic Church predominates, at least in name, its adherents no longer pay wholly without question the excessive contributions which it exacts nor do they submit in absolute obedience to the arbitrary demands of the priesthood.

18 Williams, RMSI, 24.
D. SUPERSTITIOUS PRACTICES

In the realm of the supernatural among South Italians and Sicilians the following have made incredible inroads in the minds of these people: the belief in the jettatura or one who casts an evil spell upon others, the idea that the evil eye cast an injurious spell upon a victim by his enemies, the conception of the supernatural presence of spirits in dreams, belief in the souls' reluctance to leave the body after death, and the notion of the power of amulets. The power of spices to ward off evil spells or protect one from the full effects of evil spells is also an accepted belief, as is the idea that magic phrases and mysterious powders have power in the realm of love and hate.

These superstitious practices are almost universally held by South Italians. Their use in some instances is promoted by the Roman Catholic use of incense, relics, sprinkling of water and other magic articles. Williams describes the common acceptance of these practices in all classes of people in South Italy in the following quotation.

In South Italy no Italian, whether noble or peasant, would dare to doubt the validity of the power of the Evil Eye. The aristocracy wear amulets and observe the ritual in connection with the cult as fully as do their poorer and less educated neighbors. The Roman Catholic Church also promotes the continuance of this superstition by using incense, candles, relics, palms and many other magic articles, also by sprinkling dwellings and beasts of burden with holy water to ward off the evil influence.

19 Williams, REST, 108. "Joseph Bellucci of Naples collected more than 2,000 articles."
A priest going into a house of sickness sprinkles the threshold with holy water and says: "Peace be to this house and to all that dwell in it." 20

A person need have no knowledge that he is being given the evil eye. When a person is affected they speak of the deed as a fattura and go to an old woman or mago who know the mysterious powers needed to overcome it for a diagnosis and instructions which are carried out meticulously.

The supernatural presence of spirits in dreams are supposed to be prophetic visitations to warn the person against coming evil.

The practice of not abandoning the body of the deceased until the moment of the closing of the coffin is to guard the soul of the departed which is reluctant to leave it (and the dwelling of his loved ones) against the evil spirits who might steal it before the religious rites have been performed as the last protective measure. Williams quotes from a book "Sunny Italy" just such an incident, supposed to have taken place in Palermo, Sicily.

My husband's soul has not left the room yet. It often takes three days for the soul to settle, . . . and we sometimes have to call upon it from the street . . . The soul does not leave the house immediately, you know. 21

20 Williams, RMSI, 99.
21 Ibid., 64. From Mrs. Alec Tweedie, Sunny Sicily, p. 14.
Amulets are supposed to have a strong power in warding off evil spells or their effects. They are fetishistic symbols embodying the spirit symbolized, the touch of which imparts a magic spell or power. Religious statues and their functions fall in this category. The main function of the worn amulet is to ward off the evil eye. Their number is too numerous to enumerate. The following will suffice to illustrate their nature or likeness. Amulets in the form of horns may be made out of bone, silver, ivory, gold, mother of pearl, coral, lava, or celluloid and worn around ones neck or in the case of a man on his watch chain, on a vest in full view. Horse-shoes fall in this category also, and are hung on doors of houses, stores, banks, wine cellars and especially bedrooms. Children often wear them as charms.

Spices are chiefly used to ward off the power of evil already in a person. Chief of these are salt, oil, and spittle. Oil dropped in a dish of water, cut with a knife in the sign of a cross while uttering the magical phrase, "vattene mal occhio" (depart evil spirit) "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," is very common and supposed to be quite potent.
Mysterious powders are sprinkled on letters to cast a spell upon the person who is to receive them. These powders may have beneficial or evil effects upon the receiver. To the student's knowledge, these powders have been used to protect one from a designing woman or man, as the case may be; to keep one faithful by making it impossible for him (her) to fall in love with anyone else. This is really a spell by indirection. To counteract, a mago is consulted for the antidote. Invariably the mago supplies a spicy liquid to be sprinkled on the individuals wearing apparel. The most effective object to be sprinkled in use by the individual is considered the handkerchief. The reason for this may be in the fact that the handkerchief is constantly on the person and often used, serving to influence the person by touch and scent.

Mysterious potions can be put in drinks to have almost any evil effect upon the drinker.

A belief the student has never heard of is told by Williams in her thesis is that of the "spirit of the dead born in others." This spirit is commonly that of an infant lost by a parent in death. The parents then adopt another child to take the place of the deceased child. Williams says, "it is a very common practice among the South Italians."23

23 Williams, RMSI, 63.
CHAPTER II

THE ITALIAN IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES

A. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From the earliest days of the colonization of America to 1850 there was barely a trickle of Italian immigration. In 1870 there were about 90,860 Italians in the United States. In the period 1880 to 1890 the Italian population tripled to 182,580. However, the immigration figures for the years 1872 to 1890 show a much larger figure of 356,062 immigrants and entrants; apparently more than half of these within the recorded period had left the United States for their own or other countries. This trend remained throughout the history of Italian immigration. Between 1890 and 1900 this total increased to 655,888 but this influx only increased the number of resident Italians according to the last census, to a total of 484,703. For the years 1893 to 1895 outgoing Italians exceeded those entering by more than 25,000. For the 121 years of Italian immigration, ending June 1940, the total immigration was 4,719,223. Of this number it is estimated that 2,000,000 emigrated from the United States.\footnote{From the Statistical Abstracts of the United States. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Reports. Also, various issues of Handbook of Labor Statistics.}
In Chart I, "Italian Immigration, U. S. A.", which follows on page 24, the immigration trends are charted with a view to associating immigration figures by decades to peak years and World Wars I and II. The effects of Restriction Acts make striking contrasts with the movement as a whole.

Table I, "Italian Immigration and Emigration," on page 25 gives a detailed account of the movement of alien population between the United States and Italy, including Sicily and Sardinia where these are available.

Table II, "North Italy, South Italy, Emigration Contrasts," for the years 1903 to 1921 is offered to show that the largest numbers of Italians came from the South of Italy, including Sicily.
CHART I

ITALIAN IMMIGRATION U. S. A.

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Reports.
## TABLE I

### ITALIAN IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION

Movement of alien population between the United States and Italy, including Sicily and Sardinia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>From Italy</th>
<th>To Italy</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>From Italy</th>
<th>To Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>52,003</td>
<td></td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>5,250</td>
<td>8,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>76,055</td>
<td></td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1,884</td>
<td>38,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>61,631</td>
<td></td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>95,145</td>
<td>88,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>72,145</td>
<td></td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>222,260</td>
<td>48,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>42,977</td>
<td></td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>40,319</td>
<td>53,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>35,427</td>
<td></td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>46,674</td>
<td>23,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>68,060</td>
<td></td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>56,246</td>
<td>22,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>59,431</td>
<td></td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>8,203</td>
<td>27,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>58,613</td>
<td></td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>8,253</td>
<td>19,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>77,419</td>
<td></td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>17,297</td>
<td>17,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>100,135</td>
<td></td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>17,728</td>
<td>17,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>135,996</td>
<td></td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>18,008</td>
<td>12,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>178,375</td>
<td></td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>22,327</td>
<td>2,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>230,622</td>
<td></td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>13,399</td>
<td>2,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>193,296</td>
<td></td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>6,015</td>
<td>5,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>221,479</td>
<td></td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>11,681</td>
<td>21,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>273,120</td>
<td></td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>4,374</td>
<td>3,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>285,731</td>
<td></td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>6,566</td>
<td>2,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>128,503</td>
<td>167,335</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>6,774</td>
<td>2,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>183,218</td>
<td>83,300</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>7,192</td>
<td>1,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>215,537</td>
<td>52,323</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>7,712</td>
<td>1,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>182,882</td>
<td>72,540</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>6,570</td>
<td>1,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>157,134</td>
<td>108,788</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>5,302</td>
<td>1,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>265,546</td>
<td>88,621</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>283,438</td>
<td>84,551</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>49,588</td>
<td>96,903</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>33,665</td>
<td>72,507</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>34,596</td>
<td>12,542</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>529</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* From the Statistical Abstracts of the United States. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Reports. Also, various issues of Handbook of Labor Statistics.
# TABLE II

## NORTH ITALY SOUTH ITALY EMIGRATION

### CONTRASTS

**1903 to 1921**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>37,429</td>
<td>196,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>36,699</td>
<td>159,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>39,930</td>
<td>186,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>46,286</td>
<td>240,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>51,564</td>
<td>242,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>24,700</td>
<td>119,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>25,150</td>
<td>165,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>30,780</td>
<td>192,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>30,312</td>
<td>159,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>26,443</td>
<td>155,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>42,534</td>
<td>231,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>44,802</td>
<td>251,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>10,660</td>
<td>46,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>4,905</td>
<td>32,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>3,796</td>
<td>35,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1,074</td>
<td>5,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1,236</td>
<td>2,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>12,918</td>
<td>84,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>27,459</td>
<td>195,037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|        | 498,277 | 2,681,946 |

*Includes Sicily
The history of Italian immigration shows a close relation to the history of a growing America in need of cheap labor to build its roads and cities, the Italian immigrants to some degree displacing earlier immigrants on the low wage scale.

Certain attitudes and practices display an historical discriminatory attitude toward the South Europeans and the Italians. For instance, the 1896 "educational test" bill excluded chiefly the immigrant from Mediterranean ports. Lord, in his book, "The Italians in America" (1905), summarizes the American attitude expressed in his day in the following words.

It is urged that the Italian race stock is inferior and degraded; that it will not assimilate naturally or readily with the prevailing Anglo-Saxon race stock of this country; that intermixture, if practicable, will be detrimental; that servility, filthy habits of life, and a hopelessly degraded standard of needs and ambitions have been ... add to the labor problems in cities and slums.2

The later Restrictive Act of 1921 reenforces the acceptance of this theory concerning South Europeans and Italians.

---

2 Lord, IA, 17.
The two main streams of Italian emigration directed themselves toward South America and the United States respectively. In general, the former came from the North Western section of Italy and the latter from the South Western section and Sicily. The North Italians left Italy earlier than the South Italians, as early as 1850 and 1860; whereas the latter group began its exodus in the 1870s and 1880s.

The North Italians in South America and the United States have become successful business men and merchants. The South Italian groups, less intellectual, lesser inclined to go into business, generally unlettered and useful only as day laborers, were attracted to the United States cities due to their industrial opportunities in factories, railroads and the building trades.

When the South Italian began to settle down he did so first in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia and New Orleans. Wives and families were called from Italy as soon as the first savings would pay passage fares and "Little Italy" colonies within each of these cities sprang up.

In general the North Italians shunning the Southerners moved westward into California and rural areas where they have acquired an enviable position, both economically and socially.
The "Little Italy" colony was invariably in a slum area or a congested city area, industrially located which provided easy access to and employment for the immigrant. In work gangs on highways, in sewerage projects, in the building trades of every description the men flocked; the women taking jobs in the clothing industry as needleworkers. As they earned their families came. Their children given a rudimentary education went also to work with the parents at an early age.

In Table III, which follows on page 30, a list is given of some of the chief cities in the United States showing the Italian born population and the percentage of foreign born population this group represents.
TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF ITALIAN POPULATION IN THE LARGER CITIES
OF THE UNITED STATES

1940 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Italian born* Population</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Haven, Connecticut</td>
<td>12,652</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester, New York</td>
<td>20,429</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
<td>4,962</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newark, New Jersey</td>
<td>26,140</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse, New York</td>
<td>7,833</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany, New York</td>
<td>3,836</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa, Florida</td>
<td>2,684</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford, Connecticut</td>
<td>8,389</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
<td>2,451</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, New York</td>
<td>409,489</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo, New York</td>
<td>17,847</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
<td>24,063</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield, Massachusetts</td>
<td>4,727</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston, Massachusetts</td>
<td>31,555</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City, Missouri</td>
<td>3,130</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis, Missouri</td>
<td>8,131</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
<td>8,063</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha, Nebraska</td>
<td>2,834</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>20,961</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
<td>2,722</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
<td>66,472</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit, Michigan</td>
<td>26,277</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, California</td>
<td>13,256</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Foreign born Italian population
B. BOSTON

The Italians came into Boston about the year 1860. The areas they settled have been in this order; the North End, East Boston, South Boston, South End, West End, and Hyde Park. Simultaneously with Hyde Park, the Italians settled in the suburbs of Medford, Everett, Revere, Somerville, Quincy and Wakefield, later to Newton.

In the Corporate City of Boston shown on Map II, page 47, the foreign born Italian population is the second largest foreign born white group, with the following comparative figures for 1940.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Born White, Total</th>
<th>180,864</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish Free State</td>
<td>34,783</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>31,555</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>30,045</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>28,014</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>7,344</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>6,648</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>42,475</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Boston including forty cities and town within a 15 mile radius of City Hall in Boston, the Italian immigrant population is the second highest again. The following figures show the four highest percentage groups only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Born White, Total</th>
<th>414,668</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>90,134</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>67,956</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Free State</td>
<td>65,330</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>47,392</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Greater Boston Community Council, 1940 Census.
C. NORTH END

Because the North End and East Boston are the two most characteristically Italian communities in Boston and give an accurate picture of the immigrant group we are interested in in this study, a detailed picture of the two will be given. Because the other areas such as Hyde Park, etc., are typically suburban areas not especially involved in this dissertation no description will be attempted.

Until 1860, the North End district of Boston was an Irish settlement with a substantial representation of Jewish people. In 1860 the Genoese (North Italians) came in small numbers and settled in the community. In the 70s, from Naples came the first South Italian immigrants and a little corner of old Italy was established. The North Italians quick to move left for the suburbs, commuting only to conduct their businesses here. By the eighties and nineties the South Italians were settled in the community in large numbers. The Irish and many Jews moved out as each wave of immigrants moved in. All that was left of the Jewish population was in business interests, meat, and particularly dry goods; not in residence.
With the great wave of immigration from Sicily in the first decade of the twentieth century the North End was filled with South Italians and Boston's "Little Italy" was born. By 1915 the national composition of the North End was set, and it remains the same to this day.

This mass of immigrants settled according to a pattern not obvious to the outsider. People from the same town in Italy, paesani, settled together in close proximity. If one were familiar with the various 'paesi' and 'dialects' of Southern Italy and Sicily he could walk with listening ears and spot a little bit of Messina here, a touch of Calabria there; elsewhere Riesi, Pietrapizzia and Vilena. This goes on almost infinitely, for the Italian dialects and 'paesi' seem endless. One wonders how it could be possible in such a small spot of the world like the Island of Sicily and the toe of the Italian peninsula, to have so many varied forms of Italian language usage.

They brought with them their language and customs, perpetuating the same to this day. Yet, we can see, those of us who have lived with them, that the vigor and the zest of their transplanted culture is withering away as these immigrants age and pass from us to their rest. Their children are unqualified for the "high office" of carrying on, the lines of demarcation also fading with the growth
of the younger generation.

Today the North End is a slum district, inhabited almost exclusively by Italians, immigrants and their children. To the outsider it is a mysterious place, considered dangerous to walk in after dark, a depressing area. Although only a few minutes walk from uptown, downtown, Beacon Hill, and the Back Bay, it is little known and for this reason largely disrespected and held as an object of suspicion.

For many years, especially during the Prohibition Era, it was known as a problem area, where delinquency was high, and murders numerous. In our day, though the rackets are well hidden from outsiders, the reputation of former days lingers on. During the war, the high alien population in the North End made it the object of suspicion in government circles. The fear of subversive elements, and questionable loyalty to America on the part of Italian immigrants led the government to the enactment of laws excluding aliens from certain types of labor.

As one of the central districts of Boston, the North End is partly a waterfront neighborhood with rows of wharves on both North and East sides. Its area is heavily encroached by business and industry.
From the preceding description and a consideration of the following facts about the North End's considerably small residential area one can see why it has been called by H. Paul Douglass a part of "Missionary Boston."

Nearly 35 percent of its population is Italian foreign born, and its native population is almost entirely of Italian extraction. Its neighborhood population in 1940 was 18,500. Since 1910 its population has decreased 45.6 percent. For the decades 1910-20 its population loss was 21.1 percent, 1920-30 a loss of 21.6 percent, and 1930-40 a loss of 21. percent. Even with these losses it is the most congested neighborhood in Boston's 15 Health and Welfare Areas. The North End is two and a half times as densely populated as even the most congested of other Areas. Its density rate is nearly 1,000 persons per inhabited acre compared with less than 100 persons per acre in Boston as a whole.

In 1940, its children under 18 years comprised over 30 percent of its population, a larger proportion than any neighborhood in the Fifteen Areas except East Boston, Hyde Park and South Boston. In the decade 1930-40 it lost 40 percent of its child population, the largest decrease in Boston.
In 1940, 19.4 percent of the North End's homes needed major repairs, 89.9 percent were without private bath, 46.1 percent without private flush toilets. Nearly nine out of ten families in the North End share bath, toilet, or both.

The Public School enrollment in the North End has dropped alarmingly in the past six years. Its elementary and intermediate school enrollment of 1578 in 1940 dropped to 979 in 1947. One school is technically closed having only a handful of Long Island Hospital School pupils (The Hancock School). Another was closed and sold to the Roman Catholic Diocese in 1945 and is now the Christopher Columbus Parochial High School.

The Parochial School enrollment though suffering losses has risen by gaining some of the Public School losses by transfer, and by receiving more beginners from homes who now find it possible to finance Parochial School education for their children. In 1940 the Parochial elementary and intermediate schools had an enrollment of 1107 students while in 1947 the enrollment was 1343, a gain of 236.

The Michelangelo Public School which has a first year high school grade has dropped from 770 pupils in 1940 to 330 in 1947, a loss of more than half its student body. The new Christopher Columbus Parochial High School has had in-
creases, from 220 students in its first year 1945-46 to 528 in October of 1947. Unquestionably, though the Christopher Columbus Parochial High School draws its students from other neighborhoods and districts than the North End, some of the Michelangelo School losses have meant gain for the Columbus School.

The major cause for Public and Parochial school losses has undoubtedly been the factor of depopulation, rather than migration and Roman Catholic influence.

The Chart II, on the following page is offered to illustrate graphically the losses and gains in Public and Parochial School enrollment for the period mentioned.

In the employed labor force of the North End, operatives and laborers predominate. Half of the adult population has less than six years of schooling. Its median rent of $18.10 is evidence of its economic status. Its unemployed force in 1940 of 38.3 percent exceeded all but two neighborhoods of Boston. Even in periods of prosperity (1944) and maximum employment, it has been next to the highest in proportion of aided and welfare cases.

It is surprising, however, to note that the poor condition of the neighborhood as a whole is not reflected in the health of its people. Infant deaths have a lower rate than all but three of the Fifteen Welfare Areas. Its
CHART II

PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
NORTH END, 1940 and 1947

Source: Boston School Committee and Official Catholic Directory - Kenedy.

Legend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Parochial</th>
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<td>1578</td>
<td>1107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter. Sch.</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>1343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

- Public School Enrollment
- Parochial School Enrollment
tuberculosis rate is the third most favorable among 64 neighborhoods. The same favorable report is made in regard to juvenile delinquency, its rate decreasing since 1936 and now lower than five areas and higher than nine.

The neighborhood's health resources and social centers are quite adequate; however, its playgrounds are very small, all but one being smaller than the area required for a baseball diamond. Its school playgrounds were closed throughout the year of 1947. 4

The only remaining vestige of the North End's early religious life is Christ's Church on Salem Street. Organized in 1723 as the Second Episcopal Church in Boston, it is the single connecting link with the past. It is now a historic building. In its steeple, according to tradition, were displayed the signal lanterns of Paul Revere which warned the country of the march of the British to Lexington and Concord. Its communicants do not reside within the limits of the North End, its congregation chiefly sightseers.

At this time the only Protestant churches in the community are the Italian missions which are three in number and serve a possible constituency of no more than two hundred.

The Roman Catholic churches are four in number counting as their constituency the whole population of the neighborhood.

4 Source of material from page 35 to 39, Greater Boston Community Council, Community Studies.
East Boston is a natural geographic community since it is almost entirely surrounded by water. A distinct unit of the City of Boston, limited in extent and restricted in its interests by its relative isolation from surrounding areas, it is nevertheless near the heart of the city and is economically dependent upon the larger business centers. Its occupied area is about a mile wide and three and a half miles long, with a total land area approximately four square miles. Its northeastern section is known today by the neighborhood name of Orient Heights, and is more superior in social quality.

Until 1904 when the rapid transit tunnel of the Boston Elevated was opened between Scollay Square and Maverick Square, two ferries provided the only means of access to Boston proper.

East Boston was first settled by skilled native craftsmen connected with the shipping industry who came largely from the shore towns of New England. When the era of clipper ships ended, they left East Boston.

The second wave of settlers were immigrant laborers, largely Irish by nationality and supplied the cheap labor
necessary for the various operations of the shipping industry. In the face of this invasion of new and laboring immigrants the older prosperous and influential settlers moved out and the suburban character of East Boston moved with them. The large estates and middle class homes in the hands of speculators were turned into multi-family dwellings or replaced with the present three-story frame row houses.

The other national groups that moved in with the Irish, though in the minority, were Canadian, Portuguese, Greek, Scandinavian, Russian Jew and German, attracted by the same possibilities of work among the waterfront industries.

The Russian Jewish colony became the largest single settlement of Jews in New England by 1905, but following the Chelsea fire in 1908 they moved into that city and have dwindled to the smallest minority group in East Boston today.

The third wave of immigration began in 1905 bringing the Italians, who with their American born children today constitute the bulk of the population. These represented the overflow of population from the North End, the first stopping place of most Italian immigrants before 1905.
Because of their peasant background they were attracted by the small gardens at Jeffries Point, displacing the Jewish residents there. From here, they spread throughout East Boston, considerably improving their lot and raising their standard of living. The more economically substantial group later moved into the Orient Heights section where they built homes and maintained small gardens.

In 1934 a vehicular tunnel was constructed to open an easy access to the city proper and make East Boston a thoroughfare between Boston and the North Shore. Although this enhanced business and gave its residents swifter access to Boston its population has declined without abating since 1920.

In 1940 East Boston had a 26.3 percent foreign born population, a figure exceeded only in the North End, South End, and West End, a large preponderance of this population is of Italian origin. No figures are available for second generation Italians because such persons are classified by the United States Census as native white population.

In 1945 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Census for East Boston recorded a population of 53,901, representing about 7 percent of the population of the City proper. The population decreases of East Boston since 1920 have been at a rate twice as fast as the population of the city of Boston.
as a whole. From 1920 to 30 the population loss was 2.5 percent, from 1930 to 40, 3.9 percent, and from 1940 to 45, 5.3 percent.

In 1940, 1.4 children under eighteen years per family were recorded, representing one-third of East Boston's population, the largest proportion of youth to be found anywhere in Boston's Fifteen Health and Welfare Areas. The comparison with Boston on the whole is: Boston 26.4 percent persons under 18, East Boston 34.0 percent.

Despite the decreases in population suffered since 1920 the community is greatly congested with its 203.4 persons per inhabited acre. The streets serve as the playgrounds for children in the face of inadequate playground spaces and poor administration thereof. This has been confirmed by the Massachusetts Council of Churches Research Department in their recent investigation of this phase of East Boston's life.

The public schools have sustained serious losses of enrollment in recent years. Eleven school buildings have been closed since 1924. From 1934 to 46 the public school enrollment has decreased 47.6 percent (Boston 29.1 percent). The educational level for persons twenty five years of age and over was 7.8 years, lower than any other area except the North End. 5

5 Source of statistics, Greater Boston Community Council, Community Studies, East Boston.
Chart III on the following page is offered to illustrate the gains and losses of Public and Parochial School in East Boston for the period 1940 to 1946.

The Massachusetts Council of Churches study of East Boston has made a favorable report of their investigation of the social center settlement work in East Boston. There are five of these and they are reported to be operated efficiently, not suffering from abstract detachment from the community and its problems as were the findings of William Whyte in his investigation of the North End settlement work, in his book "Street Corner Society."

East Boston's Protestant constituency is over-churched. Its estimated constituency of 3087 is served by thirteen churches. The Roman Catholic churches, eight in number, serve an estimated Catholic population of 47,978. Of course, the estimated Catholic population includes practically all of the Italian population. Not all are practicing Roman Catholics; many have in reality no religious connection.

Finally, East Boston's residents display an intense reluctance to staying in East Boston as a place of permanent residence. The Massachusetts Council study gives these revealing figures.

"Among 603 respondents, only 63% were content to remain in East Boston. Only 49% of the Protestants intend to remain."

7 Ibid., 28.
CHART III
PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
EAST BOSTON, 1940 and 1946

Sources: Boston School Committee and Official Catholic Directory - Kenedy.

1940

Elementary and Intermediate Schools
- 76.1%
- 23.9%

High Schools
- 91.4%

1946

- 67.5%
- 32.5%

Legend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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<th>Public</th>
<th>Parochial</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elem. and Interm. Schs.</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>8234</td>
<td>2568</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>5623</td>
<td>2764</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>179</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>231</td>
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Key

- [] Public Sch. Enroll.
- ••• Parochial " "

Note: Don Bosco Trade School not included.

* Protestantism in East Boston, Massachusetts, 1920-1946.
The following pages will present in table and map form the description of Boston in terms of social statistics. Table IV on page 47 Boston Basic Social Statistics give a comparative picture of Boston and its areas with which we are concerned regarding social quality. Map II on page 48 gives a picture of the average rents in Boston. Map III on page 49 shows Boston Proper only in relation to population gains and losses for the decade 1930 to 1940.
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TABLE IV
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MAP II

BOSTON, AVERAGE RENTS

AVERAGE RENTS
(1940 US Census)

- Under $15
- 15 - 19.99
- 20 - 29.99
- 30 - 39.99
- 40 - 49.99
- 50 - 59.99
Gains & Losses of Population 1930-1940

- 20 or more loss
- 10-19.99
- 2.5-9.9
- -2.5 loss or gain
- 2.5-9.9 gain
- 10-19.99
- 20 or more

MAP III
BOSTON PROPER, GAINS AND LOSSES OF POPULATION
Map IV
Boston, Percentage of Italian Foreign Born

Source: Greater Boston Community Council, Research Bureau, Fact Books.
CHAPTER III

ITALIAN VALUES AND CULTURE PATTERNS IN BOSTON

A. WORK, POVERTY, SLUMS

The early picture of the Italian immigrants' lot is a somber one, bereft of the general comforts of life. Again speaking of the South Italian, being unspecialized farmers and day laborers, they had to take jobs out of doors wherever strong backs and compelling arms were needed. It is as if they had lived before the industrial revolution, as Foerster puts it.

The same individuals, had they lived two thousand years ago, would not have been harnessed to tasks materially different from those they toil at today.¹ They developed into muscular and healthy men. But, their development has been arrested because of the uncertainty of their employment, the long hours of their labor, and the slender wages received which limits their buying power. Their condition is to be utilized as they are.

In 1890 an elaborate statistical study was made by the United States Commissioner of Labor which revealed their deplorable condition. Foersters' quotation of this is as follows.

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¹ Foerster, IIOT, 343.
The Italians were shown to be living in deplorable poverty; and not many had yet been able to move into better districts.2

As periods of depression brought a halt especially to those kinds of work that the Italian immigrants performed their poverty became abysmal and it was mainly the compulsion of extreme poverty that led parents to take their children out of school to become wage earners, the women to become workers in manufacturing clothing.

It is in the housing of these Italians, more perhaps than anything else, that their characteristic impulses show. For the satisfaction of emotional security they will put up with much. As Walter Firey puts it,

For immigrants sharing certain common values and participating in common associations, the physical undesirability of a slum may be far outweighed as a criterion for selecting a place of residence by the status and recognition which goes with residence with their fellow nationals.3

Other reasons for living in slums are the following. Their task is to earn, to live, and to save. The reasons vary; in early years to send for loved ones, in later years to move to a suburb, in more recent times to educating their young. All three, earn, work, save, may be juggled somewhat because of the uncontrollable elements which creep

3 Firey, LUCB, 176.
2 Foerster, LIOT, 376.
into life's plans always. But the pattern is there as only a second generation Italian can really know. Therefore, the first halting places are generally the old, ever the oldest sections, where the houses are superannuated or in poor repair, sometimes remodeled, and generally ill-adapted to the demands made upon them by a people accustomed to living largely out of doors.

B. THE FAMILY

The most important cultural pattern planted in America by Italians is the unity and exaltation of the family. Most of the South Italians have large families. These units are constructed along consanguine lines so that each unit may include many households. Before the automobile, close proximity was very important in maintaining the solidarity of this extended family group. Nowadays reasonable distances between groups in the unit do not break the solidarity of earlier times when the family was all in one area.

Through the family the immigrant parents were able to extend their distinctly Italian traits, the exaltation of which was constantly dinned in the ears of the offsprings. In the earlier years of immigration the language
spoken in the home was invariably Italian, creating a socially satisfactory unit. By reciprocal services, group solidarity and emotional security were made possible.

The father or the oldest male member was usually the highest authority respected by all children, married and unmarried. In many families, however, though this titular role belonged to the father, its function and often its source of respect and honor for the family group was in the mother. This more often than otherwise strengthened the family loyalty ties.

The Italian family is a unique example of a "family economic unit." The children are expected to become wage earners early and turn in their full earnings to the head of the house. From here the funds are delegated according to the needs of the home and the individuals equally. This system provides for all the comforts during employment and unemployment. From the family chest, upon marriage, the children receive financial aid to start their new family.

The old customs have persisted and are clung to tenaciously. They have significant survival value. In the Italian colony type of life, frequent contacts with similar minds afford wide opportunities for strengthening the subjective conditions of cooperation. These old groups are
striving to be consistent with the traditions that they knew, looking back to the customs of their native land. The promotion of economic security is retroactive with the old generation for they look to their progeny in their old age for support, even as they claim they grew up and did for their parents.

**C. ASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS**

The second most important community organization in an Italian colony is the paesani group. In the early years these were formed as mutual aid societies for the protection of the members against sickness and death expenses. Their organization is usually spontaneous and at first were primarily motivated to maintain the old country associations, rendering emotional security and engendering an esprit de corps to sustain them in a strange land. Through these organizations the peculiar customs and traditions of the old country are kept and each year the celebration called the "Festa" of the patron saint is celebrated, serving to renew the acquaintance of the Italian paesani who have moved out of the colony. In more recent years these organizations have served as political blocs in the Italian community.
The associations in the form of clubs and lodges are inventions of the new country. These are often sponsored by the church and political organizations. They serve as mutual benefit societies. Their strength is in serving as a "ticket" to political favors.

These common associational groups serve to maintain the solidarity of Italians. They set the pattern of the Italian community's growing culture. And, though not often recognized, they help to slow down the Americanization process by accentuating the cultural differences between the Italians and other national groups in the area. This is manifested in the feeling of distrust of outsiders and the sense of self-sufficiency displayed when together.
The Italian immigrant invariably displays a strong affection for his native land, it is romanticized to the point of making complete loyalty to his new country impossible. It is expressed in a concern for the present welfare of Italy.

He (the immigrant) used to aspire to return to his native land after earning and saving enough to return and buy a villa or a farm. Two million of his countrymen did return. And those who remained displayed this sign by generally avoiding naturalization for a very long time. However, the trend has changed since 1920 according to the naturalization statistics, apparently a sign that many have abandoned the dream of returning to the land of their birth.

Up to 1920 only 858,111 Italians were naturalized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Naturalized</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-30</td>
<td>128,420</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930-35</td>
<td>94,585</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935-40</td>
<td>136,911</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>243,997</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>23,099</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,485,123</td>
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</tbody>
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In 1916 and throughout the period of the First World War, 170,000 returned to fight in the war under the flag of the country they intensely love, under which "they had seen only the worst straits."4

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4 Fairchild, TB, 111.
The identification of the Roman Catholic Church with their group consciousness and with their native land contributes to the integration of that Church in the cultural system.

What few Italians understood before they came to the United States was that in an alien culture they would be buffeted about by a process of unmaking and remaking. The older persons' inevitable resistance was so great that it made any substantial change impossible. Products of their own environment the only real "cultural unit" they could appreciate was that of the "little Italy" colony, settled by paesani and countrymen. They have been and still are poor soil for the seeds of assimilation. America would Americanize them, but it would do so down a one-way street which is ineffective and produces a maelstrom of a strange land.

Once rural dwellers, in an unaccustomed and brutal culture their destiny is at once one of loneliness, disappointment, and demoralization, enduring till the end. They have arrived too late to lend their traits perceptibly to the mass of the population and likewise too late in years to be changed by it.
The Italian provincial's nature must undergo atrophy or metamorphosis; which is more prevalent is a question.

It is generally unnatural for full-grown immigrants to make peace with and become adjusted to what Foerster aptly claims for Americans in these words.5

To be happy in America one must have a certain mechanical ability, a practical and opportunist spirit, a nature that is sharp in business but in other things narrow and matter of fact, with a tendency to conventionalism and the liberal following of approved standards, a great interest in whatever is American and a high disdain of all that is Latin or that glorifies the Latin life.6

5 From page 58 second paragraph to end of this page has been summarized from Foerster, IIOT.

6 Foerster, IIOT,
CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND GENERATION ITALIAN IN CONFLICT

A. CULTURE CONFLICT

It is the immigrants' children who most easily make concessions. Discarding the little of the old world they received from their parents during early impressionable years, they move so much faster than their progenitors that a breach ensues between them, and their lives are in constant conflict. A war is raging within them. "The standards are different in America," they assert and their elders cannot gainsay them. Their growth toward American ways rouses in them some of that contempt for their origin which has so often brought sadness to their parents. Too late to lend their traits to the mass of the population the Italians even by their own are held of little value.

Living in two worlds, one in which he is a citizen though not fully acceptable and one in which he is born but "unworthy" because of the accident of being born in America, he (the second generation Italian) is neither part of one or the other. The foreign world of his immigrant parents is the world in which he is earliest at
home; the world of his citizenship he discovers later in the streets at play and in the school at learning.

The dominating authority of his father accepted from early childhood and the intense love for the family bred in him early combine to urge him to be indulgent with the world of his forbears. Taught a new freedom as the American way of life in the schools he is resentful of the domination in the home. Many have been the rebellious who have severed their ties too early. Their education is always simultaneously and irrevocably learning and unlearning.

To be born a child of peasant South Italian stock is a gift, beyond measure which imposes an eternal obligation upon the child to his parents. So believe these peasants. No high anticipation of the blessings and obligations of giving birth to children are understood. The extent of their obligation is limited to the bare minimum required for the subsistence of life and that for as short a period as possible after which a child is expected to start paying-back for that great "gift" of being born.

Their provincial scorn for all that is American as inferior and their sentimental glorification of all that
is Italian sets the stage for perennial hell in which to grow, neither "fish nor fowl," without any real kith or kin, not accepted by their own and rejected by the native population of the lands of their birth. Consequent maladjustments are not infrequent.

B. DEPENDENCE OF PARENTS

The whole pattern of Italian family life is reversed as the child grows to maturity. Knowing the ways and customs of the land, being conversant in its strange tongue (to his parents) they become (his parents) dependent upon him, while in all natural processes he should still be dependent upon them. Park and Burgess have described this phenomenon as follows.

Owing to the children's knowledge of English and their more rapid accommodation to the conditions of American life, parents become dependent upon their children rather than the children upon their parents.¹

Such Herculean responsibilities bring many to an early state of maturity and make it impossible for many to seek a higher education and thus attain a better standard of living. His family loyalty makes the child accept those responsibilities as inescapable burdens. To his torment

¹ Park and Burgess, ISS, 926.
they are never ending, without gratitude, and by his parents considered rightful obligations on the part of the child.

C. REACTIONS

As the American born generation grows to maturity his pattern of loyalty to other social relationships within the Italian culture patterns undergoes changes. These have been classified by sociologists as follows: (1) in-group reactions, (2) rebel reactions, (3) apathetic reactions.2 Few individuals fit in any one of these categories but in most cases one of these reactions is likely to be dominant.

The In-group find their happiness and satisfaction through their identification with the Italian community which is the bearer of the South Italian's cultural system and its component values. They live in a world of family and paesani, usually in very close proximity.

The Rebel-group is a revolutionary group. Its desire is to abandon all Italian values and associations and to establish American values and associations. A rejection of the old for the new. They cease practicing the traditional family customs and invariably move from the colony

2 Child, IOA, chapters IV - VI.
into distinctly American communities.

The Apathetic group may be called a neurotic group. They need the old culture security and approval for emotional satisfaction, yet would like to be rebels. Their efforts may be described as atomizing the Italian social system. Their greatest need is emotional security which can only be found for them in the Italian community.

There is a fourth group that the sociologists seldom talk about, those who have made a normal adjustment: discriminatingly holding the best of the old world culture, appreciating the ignorance of their parents therefore remaining in loving relationship, and not gullibly accepting all of the new world mores. Theirs is a gift supreme, an understanding of the old and new which is unique, a depth of intellectual and emotional appreciation of both cultures unknown to others.

D. THE EFFECT OF AMERICANIZATION

The attempts at Americanization of these groups have been uncomplimentary to the agencies in this work. The major role in this respect has been played by the settlement houses in the communities of Italian population. Their role has affected the life of the second
generation, mostly the men. Therefore, the discussion will be limited in that regard.

It is a fact that most of the social workers have been women and come from middle and upper middle class people. All of these until recently have been American with no systematic knowledge of the social backgrounds of the people they worked with or their Italian homeland. Furthermore, as William Whyte also discovered in his study of "Cornerville" they made little effort to get such knowledge except as it came to them through the doors of their institutions. Their way of Americanizing has been a one-way street of superimposing American ways and standards. As is quite understandable, most people did not make the adjustment.

Social cleavages have been accentuated by devious ways. Supporting a Republican well-to-do gubernatorial candidate, attempting to persuade persons in whom they took particular interest to break with childhood acquaintances, to subordinate themselves to the social workers. Their actions betrayed their sincerity or probably their ignorance.

Assimilation involves both groups in question, it should not be contingent upon the willingness of a (the Italian) group to be "melted" into the Anglo-Saxon cultural

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3 Due to the reticence of the females, and the home tradition of Italians for their women. Whyte concurs with these opinions, SCS.
heritage. In such terms as these the settlement houses function. Therefore, they were restricted to dealing with the already maladjusted in the community, and hence doomed to failure.\(^4\) Williams in her thesis makes this criticism of some Americanization projects in her study on Italians in New Haven.

Much Americanization is done, not from the standpoint that it is advisable for people who are living together to be under the same institutions, but rather from the standpoint that American mores and institutions are superior to those of immigrant people and, therefore, should unquestionably be adopted.\(^5\)

E. DISCRIMINATION

Yankee attitudes toward Italians have been described in the following terms.\(^6\) The Italian belongs to a group that is the least desirable of the immigrant people. See Immigration Restriction Act in Chapter II. This situation has been accentuated by the War.

Although thoroughly Americanized the second generation Italian still may be rejected as a member of a nation-

\(^4\) Whyte, SCS, 104.

\(^5\) Williams, RMSI, 10.

\(^6\) Child, IOA, 35.
ality of low station. He may not be told to his face, but is unconsciously referred to as a "wop" or a "guinea" by his friends. Many communities resent his moving in. Many churches (American Protestant) would not tolerate his presence, much less his leadership in things of the Spirit. Occupational distribution of this generation of Italians is weighted considerably toward the lower end of the scale in prestige and income value. There is only one group the Italian can consistently look down upon occupationally and that is the Negro.

He is generally accused of having a chip on his shoulder, often it was put there by some well-intentioned American. His school teachers and priests are more often than not (or at least have been in the past) Irish. He is in need as no other group has been, but the Protestant Mission to the Italian is largely being withdrawn with all its democratizing influence. He has no tradition of his own since he is not a part of the land of his forebears; and he imperfectly possesses the traditions and love of America.

He is a marginal man, trying to forget a background which his neighbors will not let him forget. Marked by

7 Child, IOA, 36.
his physical appearance and the ending of his name he is blocked from the progress he might attain along many roads.

The preceding points have been briefly summed up in the following words by Whyte and Child.

The answer is that they (Italo-Americans) are blocked by two ways: by their own organized society and by the outside world. . . . . He (the second generation Italian) is marked as an inferior person - like all other Italians. To bolster his own self-respect he must tell himself and tell others that the Italians are a great people, that their culture is second to none, and that their great men are unsurpassed.

Also some of the fervent declarations of loyalty to the Italian group may function to conceal from the individual the frustrations that he suffers through his membership in it, and to conceal the presence of a contrary tendency which is at least partly repressed.

8 Whyte, SCS, 272.
9 Child, IOA, 149.
CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ITALIANS IN BOSTON

A. OLD WORLD RELIGION TRANSPLANTED

The South Italian has brought with him and perpetuated in this new land, his historical and psychological Roman Catholic nature almost in toto. The whole structure of the old world religion with its superstitions, pageantry, sacrilegious practices, saint worship and hierarchical conception of society from religious thought, may be found in the Italian colony life of Boston.

There are a few perceptible changes not obvious to the outsider. These are; (1) the deep feeling against the Church in politics is not expressed here. Though recognized as existing and potent, it does not interfere with the immigrants' economic condition and therefore is of little interest to him. (2) The historical bitterness toward the clergy in Italy where it has been said, "no one receives a priest," has been largely overcome. In its place is a feeling of indifference on the part of most, while many have gained a feeling of respect for the priesthood. The respect for the clergy often expressed
is tinged with a relation to that which is secular rather than connected with that which is sacred.

As Sartorio has said twenty years ago, "One who lives all his life in the heart of the Italian colonies of America is continually surprised at the primitive stage of religious development that still exists among some types of immigrants."¹ This is still true today in the North End and East Boston Italian colonies where a preponderance of Italian immigrants still live.

The most conspicuous hang-over in religious practices is saint worship which affirms the truth of Sartorio's statement, that "when the peasant leaves his village, he will forget everything but his patron saint."² This sums up his religious concepts and determines his concept of the social structure.³

The same classification of Roman Catholic Italians is evident here as was revealed to be evident in Italy by Sartorio in 1918 when he examined the Roman Church in South Italy in relation to its constituency. The three groups in the classification are as follows.⁴

¹ Sartorio, SRLIA, 100.
² Loc. cit.
³ Whyte, in Chapter I, p. 15 of this dissertation.
(1) The devout Roman Catholics, the majority of whom consist of peasants, largely illiterate. They simply believe in the external miracles and mysteries of the Church, without having any understanding either of its moral aspects or of its political ambitions.

(2) A smaller number of agnostics, materialists, freethinkers, and atheists, who are for the most part workingmen in large cities or professional men.

(3) Lastly, the most numerous are the apparently indifferent, that is, millions of all classes who seem to go through life without religious feeling or spiritual experience.

The devout have kept the closest connection between the economic and religious mores, and have preserved the old pagan tradition which interprets for them the essential part of their existence. The indifferent make up the hordes in which "the religious sentiment sleeps" waiting to be awakened.

All are claimed by the Roman Catholic Church as a part of its constituency indiscriminately. This fact is being reenforced by the popular conception that all Italians are Roman Catholics.

The Roman Catholic Church may be losing what Sartorio estimates as "60 percent of Italian immigrants completely free from the control of the Catholic Church," but it is not being unduly alarmed. Its small army of nuns in

5 Sartorio, SRLIA, 104.
parochial schools is rapidly educating future American Catholics of their children thus securing a new supply.

B. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ITALIAN COLONIES

As in all other Italian colonies, in Boston, the Italian Roman Catholic Churches help to integrate the community life, perpetuating the old world mores and gaining a virtual monopoly on the foreign born Italians. Although this may be largely a nominal gain, it is reenforced by the evidence of dying Italian Protestant work, thus, enabling the Roman Catholic Church to say, "The Italians of Boston are perhaps the most active Catholics in all of America." 7 According to the Massachusetts Council Study of East Boston the Roman Catholics accounted for 89 percent of the population; this figure included the Italian second generation group. The North End being even more homogeneous than East Boston in Italian population, they would account for probably 95 percent of the population.

However, a large number of the second generation go seldom to church. For many of these, the church is only a place to be baptized, married, and given the last rites before burial. In a growing number of cases these same nominal Catholics are sending their young to be educated.

7 Grimaldi and Mercandetti, OF, 46.
in the Parochial Schools, probably in an endeavor to give them some religion the parents do not possess.

For the second generation also, the perpetuation of the old world religious mores is of no importance. Their test of religion is based upon the economic slide-rule because of their all-absorbing efforts to get ahead and the fact that all the rites of the church must be paid for.

The Roman Catholic Church began its ministry in the North End in 1834 when it established the second church of the Roman Catholic faith in Boston to meet the spiritual needs of the then prevalent Irish Catholic population. This was St. Mary's Church, an imposing edifice on Endicott Street on the fringe of the residential part of the North End bordering the business and especially the subway and bus travel center. It has a seating capacity of about eighteen hundred and even today is extremely well attended. Many of its communicants come from the outside. At the Eastern Mass. Bus Terminal at Haymarket Square is a plaque stating the location of the church and the hours of its various services. It has been said, that up to 5,000 people attend its various services. (Though a mission church, its ministry is not restricted to those living within its parochial bounds). Since 1847 the
church has been in charge of the Jesuit Order. In addition to its ministry to the community and the commuter it maintains chapels at the city penal and pauper institutions on the harbor islands. Though an Irish Church, with the evacuation of the Irish it has accommodated itself to the new Italian population. At the same time it refuses to jeopardize its appeal to the outside Irish element who come here often and in great numbers.

Saint Stephen's Church, also shared with Saint Mary's the spiritual care of the Irish population in the early years of the twentieth century. Its location is in the heart of the North End, on Hanover Street across the Paul Revere Mall. Being merely a parish church it has been subjected to an almost complete change in constituency. The Italians have replaced the Irish. It has through the years attracted local politicians who use its social and charitable organizations as additional means of advancing their interests with the public.

Both these churches have spacious halls for social purposes. St. Mary's Hall is equipped with stage and scenery for dramatic performances. St. Stephen's is taking an active part in promoting the general welfare of the North End. Recently it turned its basement floor into a social hall where the youth of the community gather to
dance under the supervision of the church priests.

The Franciscan Fathers came to Boston in 1873 and since 1874 have worshipped on Prince Street known as the Church of Saint Leonard. Their present location consists of an older part dedicated in 1890 and a newer part added later. Most of the beautiful work adorning the interior includes some beautiful work done and contributed by the parishioners. With its shrine of Saint Anthony, a peculiar interest attracts Roman Catholics from all parts of Boston, seeking physical healing in behalf of themselves and their friends. The scene at the special service for visitors is like that at St. Anne de Beaupre, or even at Lourdes, on a smaller scale.

The Franciscan Fathers claim the Italians in Boston as the most avid Roman Catholics among the Immigrant population in America.

The Italians of Boston, among the immigrants of North America are perhaps the most affectionate and 'avvinti' to the religion of their fathers. Elsewhere the priests must work 'inauditi' unheard to induce the immigrants to attend mass, the sacraments, and other duties of the faith. In Boston as soon as a church is built the Italians attend in great numbers. It is the easiest place to fill parochial schools - parochial schools not being enough and public schools in abundance.8

8 Grimaldi and Mercandetti, Of, 46.
In 1895 dissatisfaction on the part of some communicants with the Franciscans' management of Saint Leonard's Church led to the establishment of a second Italian Roman Catholic Church. These dissatisfied communicants on their own initiative bought a building on North Square, and placed the title in the name of the committee of the church in which name it remains to this day. The church is under the direction and authority of the diocese. This unusual situation was in effect a special concession from Rome itself. This congregation became the Church of the Sacred Heart.

The church is large and its internal construction gives the atmosphere of the old country. Very many of the older Italian immigrants attend here. North Square before and after a service is populated with hordes of Italian exchanging greetings and enjoying the social fellowship of friends and neighbors.

The Roman Catholics now have three elementary and intermediate grade parochial schools with a growing number of pupils. The present number enrolled is 1343, an increase of 236 since 1940. In 1945 the Christopher Columbus Parochial High School was opened. Its present enrollment of 528 is a substantial increase over its 308 enrollment for the year 1945. This property was

9 See Chart II, page 38.
formerly operated by the City of Boston as a public school building. The present trend shows the public school enrollment decreasing while the parochial school enrollment is on the increase.

Recently, in order to meet the social needs of its immediate community the Sacred Heart Church in North Square turned the roof of the Saint John Parochial School next door into an open air roof garden for dancing and roller skating.

In the East Boston Italian Colony, there are eight Roman Catholic Churches serving an estimated population of 47,970. Five of these are geographical parishes. Of these some served the former Roman constituency which was Irish the same as in the North End in the case of two of its parish churches. With the coming of the Italians, two nationalistic churches were built. These are the churches of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Lazarus. The others have taken on the complexion of Italian churches also due to the predominant Italian population in every part of East Boston. The other church is a Portuguese nationalistic church.

The Massachusetts Council of Churches study of East Boston reports that these Roman Catholic Churches

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10 Villaume, PEB, 79.
carry on their social ministry program in conjunction with the social service agencies in the community. It is further reported that their use of these agencies is extensive.

Finally, the Roman Catholic Churches resent the presence of Protestants in the communities of high Italian population concentration. For the Roman Catholic Church, Italians are Roman Catholics, and any other groups perverters of this historically Catholic people. In their own words freely translated from the Italian we have this picture with which this chapter ends.

Even in Boston, Protestant Italian ministers have come in good number; as elsewhere, to use every means to pervert our people, and to deceive the unsuspecting youth. They have various churches and rooms for various reasons which they do not dare dedicate to the saints who are to us most precious to better beguile the simple and sincere people. But their efforts are in vain and their money does not entice the good Italian people, who recognizing the cleverness of the Protestants come always to feel more affection for the Catholic Religion. 11

11 Grimaldi and Mercandetti, OF, 74.
CHAPTER VI

THE PROTESTANT CHURCH AND THE ITALIAN IN BOSTON

In the year 1890, under the leadership of Edgar J. Helms a group of Boston University School of Theology students started a missionary settlement in the polyglot North End of Boston. In a house on Charter Street which had been at one time a parsonage of the famous Reverend Lyman Beecher, the first Protestant Mission in the North End began.

In this settlement work the Italian and Portuguese responsibilities were allocated to Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Helms. Mr. Helms was later the founder of the "Goodwill Industries" under the Morgan Memorial Settlement program in the South End of Boston.

The Mission was soon filled with immigrants from Italy and Portugal and Spain in need of friends and a helping hand to start them upon their new life in a strange land in which even their own countrymen abused and took advantage of them because of the recency of their arrival and therefore their complete ignorance about conditions here.
In his book "Pioneering in Modern City Missions," Helms says of his 'foreign' work in the North End:

Our Settlement home and halls were soon filled with a motley lot of folk. . . . The work among the Italians and Portuguese was especially prosperous. The people of both races were greatly abused. The Portuguese were victims of "sweating" in the clothing trade. The Italian workmen were being fleeced by the Italian bankers and padronis. In our ministry to the Italians we had to engage a lawyer. We were successful in returning large sums of money to those who had been swindled. . . . These people thronged our house day and night. ¹

The Methodist Church, under whose auspices this work was being carried on, in 1893 sent for an Italian minister from the Rome Conference in Italy to minister to the Italian constituency. The Rev. Gaetano Conti, his wife and five children arrived the same year and set forth in the service of the Italians under the City Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mr. Helms says that Conti was an effective preacher and a fine personality. "Gaetano Conti was a wonderful preacher and had a remarkable personality." ² Soon, under his ministry the largest hall in the North End was occupied and filled with Italians. A newspaper was published for the oppressed immigrants. "Amico del Popolo" (Friend of the People) was fortunate in having the invaluable

¹ Helms, PMCM, 35.
² Ibid., 36.
help of Mr. Helms who in his youth had trained in the printing trade.

The work soon interested the following well known personages, Edward Everett Hale, Julia Ward Howe, and Edwin D. Mead. No work could have received a more distinguished send-off. These leaders, in the interest of the Italian immigrants, held mass meetings in the famous Fanueil Hall protesting the exploitation of the Italian poor by their own kind, bankers and padronis. With the help of the business men of the community an Italian Bank was opened so that workers could safely send their earnings to their families in Italy.

At this time, it was Mr. Helms' desire to establish in this polyglot settlement a Church of All Nations. However, Signor Conti having achieved a portion of success insisted that an independent Italian church be established.

The Missionary Society, against the wishes of Dr. Helms consented to the plan of Signor Conti and the Italian Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1895. The Missionary Society felt that the work justified its organization.

This Church has been organized this year, and its work and its growth justify its organization. . . . Sixty-eight conversions are reported. Two hundred and three have received on probation, and twenty-nine into full membership. 3

3 NECN, 1895, 47.
Dr. Helms' opinion on the other hand, cited in his own words was, "the work was set back a quarter of a century."\(^4\) This he based upon the theory that the Portuguese, Scandinavian and Italian groups together could have succeeded; the resultant disintegration of the polyglot settlement he would say was due to their attempted independency.

At the outset it should be clearly noted that this work having achieved considerable success by 1897 was still located in a large hall, not a building with a church attached. Moving from Charter street, to the largest hall on Hanover street, then to a more commodius location on Commercial street, the whole movement was reminiscent of the "store front" missions.

Not until 1908 did the Methodist Missionary Society come to the realization (at least the expression of it) that the Italian having been accustomed to beautiful churches in his own country could not be effectively won to this new religion in bare halls for sanctuaries which lent a drabness to their worship. In 1908 the Conference Minutes expressed this thought in the following words.

The Italians are easily accessible and there is much that can be done, and many open doors that can be entered . . . they come from a land full of art, music and architectural splendors. But they cannot be successfully won to Protestantism in such quarters as are now occupied by the Italian Church; a more inviting place of worship is a positive necessity.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) Helms, PMCM, 36.

\(^5\) NECM, 1908, 80.
After much moving and the passing of twelve more years, thirty years in all, an appropriate place of worship was erected. The new church building was erected on Salutation Street, the narrowest street in the North End; a small building situated behind the five-story social service house, lost to the eyes of the community.

The New England Conference, in 1896 said, "We find it quite easy to reach this people and to do them good."\(^6\) Apparently the spirit of generosity and Christian love was effectively awakening the religious spirit of our Italian immigrants and the Methodists were proud of their early success. Their boast at the 1897 Conference, was, "Good work pays among Italians."\(^7\) Again in 1901, "The Italian church speaks for itself with a membership of 196."\(^8\)

In spite of this apparent success, Signor Conti, the Italian pastor from Rome, returned to Italy in 1901. According to Helms, he regretted his blunder in regard to independent Italian work. No evidence of this nature is revealed in any of the Conference Minutes reviewed by the student. Probably, Helms had a more personal knowledge of the fact concerned in this matter of Conti's resignation.

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\(^6\) NECM, 1896, 56.
\(^7\) NECM, 1897, 44.
\(^8\) NECM, 1901, 78.
Dr. Helms moved to the South End, the Morgan Memorial location, and the Women's Home Missionary Society undertook the responsibility for the settlement in the North End which was later to achieve marked success for a period at least. In the South End, Dr. Helms, working with a nucleus of Italians formerly from the North End later began his Church of All Nations, thirty-five years after he dreamed it for the North End.

Under new leadership and adapting itself to the new needs of the community the Italian settlement in 1905 added to its functions a day-nursery for working mothers. This added a considerable number of contacts to the minister of the mission. Young mothers would come, meet the minister, arrange to leave their children and invariably begin coming to Church themselves. A minister of the Mission for over twenty-years said in a recent interview:

In my administration no children were admitted to the day nursery without the consent of the minister. Therefore, a first hand interview with the family was the privilege and opportunity of the minister. . . . An invitation by the pastor to them was always extended. . . . In fact, I came in touch with two families this way, each of which produced a Methodist minister. One is now a Congregational minister.\footnote{Rev. Salvatore Giambaressi, in an interview on the subject, January 17, 1949.}
the immigrant needy effectively for Protestantism.

That this social service enterprise along with the many others was effective in bringing these immigrants to religious services is evident from the report of a full week of evangelistic preaching in 1908 at which ninety five people were converted, all of them former constituents of the Roman Catholic Church.

By 1920 the social service enterprise was so successful that the lack of adequate housing was claimed to be seriously limiting the Italian work. Encouraged to dream, the Italian Mission leaders, were compelled to wait. But in 1921 a five-story settlement house was purchased at 435 Hanover Street (its present location) and was immediately thronged with clubs, classes, and meetings of all kinds. Behind this building, as I have mentioned before was built the Church. By 1923 this work was called "a notable instance of successful work among Italians." The Conference rejoiced that its investment was fully proving itself fruitful. At the Conference of 1923 they said, "After thirty years we are reaping a golden harvest." And, of the settlements' part of this success, that it was the greatest asset to the success of the Church.

10 NECM, 1921, p. 387.

11 Loc. cit.
Our North End Church with its varied lines of service has been more than doubled through the settlement house. The congregation crowds the auditorium . . . week-day classes and clubs swarm the settlement day and evening.  

Confident of success, boastful that they had "the most important Italian work of the denominations working in Boston;" the Methodists poured money into this enterprise, without planning and without a long-range goal.  

Before we go on to the final chapter of this piece of missionary enterprise, from the depression to the present day, let us see what has been taking place behind the scenes with respect to immigration and its effect on the Italians and the North End Mission.  

In 1921 the United States enacted the second legislation curtailing immigration numerically. In 1924 another Act was passed, more restrictive than the former, in which the annual quotas for Italians were cut sharply. It has been said that this legislation was very definitely aimed at the great influx of immigrants from the south and east of Europe. The design was to allow only people who were similar to the prevalent idea of a fixed American type, to enter in great numbers. Italian immigration dropped from 284,000 in 1914, to a net addition of Italian population in 1924 of 33,342.  


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12 NECM, 1923, 50.  
13 According to U. S. Census and Immigration Statistics.
the quota, immigration from Italy was drastically curtailed.

The picture is one of sudden change. The denominations expected a continuous stream of immigrants but were suddenly faced with a trickle of immigrants. In 1921 Philip M. Rose of the Congregational Church in Connecticut expressed this thought in his book "Italians in America."

The present outlook is, that Italian immigration will continue a mighty stream indefinitely. Italian-American pastors and churches will have a place and work for a time indefinitely long. 14

Scarcely had this forecast been put in print when Congress closed the door to the Italian immigrant.

The decline of immigration was not felt by the bilingual churches for a while due to the fact of overpopulation of the areas in which they worked. The recession in this work which was soon to follow was due primarily to the depression. As soon as this took place the support from the denominations began to be curtailed drastically.

In the work we have been discussing, by 1931 all the paid missionary and social service workers were no longer employed. At the 1931 New England Conference, a resolution was adopted which gives evidence that the Conference was no longer in favor of continuing the support of some aspects

14 Rose, IA, 53.
of the Missions' program of ministering to the needs of the Italians in the community. This was the strategic time for a complete study of the situation but no such evidence is offered in the records. Instead, a trend toward the liquidation of this work begins here.

Resolved:
... adopt a definite policy of doing all within our power to build up into the established English speaking churches those converts won among the non-English speaking races.\(^{15}\)

It is to be noted in reference to this resolution that there was no "established English speaking church" in this community at this time, nor has there been since, or is now.

Resolved:
... we look with disfavor upon the expenditure of missionary money upon purely social-welfare work, where such welfare work is being cared for by municipalities or other agencies.\(^{16}\)

This very loose term "social-welfare work" does not adequately or truly describe the social service enterprises carried on by this Mission. Furthermore, this enterprise in this specific location was by no means a duplication of anything carried on within the proximity of the First Italian Methodist Episcopal Church on Hanover Street.

\(^{15}\) NECM, 1931, 567.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 566.
The North Bennet Street Industrial School carried on a social service work but its facilities were taxed heavily by its own immediate community.

In 1932 the pastor's salary was cut $200, in 1933 another $100, in 1934 $300, in 1935 $200 more. By 1938 the salary of the pastor of this Mission was down between $1,200 and $1,500 a year.

The decline in the support of the work and its minister's capacity to serve the needs of the community without the assistance of the workers formerly engaged to help him, made it impossible to continue to serve the large number of children and youth that made up the Sunday School and the week-day groups. A downward trend was inevitable. In 1923 there were 266 who made up this group, by 1939 the number dropped to 85, and in 1948 only 24.

In the Chart # IV which follows on page 91, vital statistics will be shown mapping the rise and decline in the membership of the Church as well as the enrollment in the Sunday-School. The membership trend is not quite parallel with that of the Sunday-School for the reason that the settlement-house program was not intimately related to the adult program. The membership trend shows a definite relationship with the trend of non-resident
members, that is, the moving of constituents out of the community. For a while these non-resident constituents are replaced by the acquisition of new resident members, however this is for a brief period only. By 1936 all three begin declining without a break until the very end. Table V as is shown on page 92 is offered to supplement Chart IV, and show other data not plotted in the chart.

The non-resident membership trend shows a phenomenon not discussed in this chapter. That is, the movement of the Italian population out of the North End to other parts of Boston and its suburbs. The statistics in Chapter II give this point more detailed explanation.

That the mission stimulated this movement out of the community is obvious, for practically all its former members and converts no longer live in the community, but have improved their lot by moving into better communities in which to raise their children. This will be a very important phase of the discussion in the next chapter; therefore, no further discussion of it will be made here.
FIRST ITALIAN METHODIST CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS


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- **Resident Members**
- **Non Resident Members**
- **Received into Membership**
- **Sunday-school Enrollment**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Added</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Non-Resident Highest</th>
<th>Sunday-school and Youth</th>
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<td>1918-20</td>
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<td>1921-25</td>
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<td>48</td>
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</table>

Totals 217 987

Source: New England Conference Minutes, 1895-1948
To summarize briefly the important facts concerning this missionary enterprise, only statistical data will be discussed here.

In a little over fifty years, 1895-1949, this mission took 987 persons into the membership of its church body. For a period of eight years between 1910 and 1917 there are no records available, therefore, the figure 987 must be lower than the actual total. Two hundred and seventeen (217) baptisms were recorded. If two hundred of the baptized persons represent members also, we may deduce from this that seven hundred and seventy (770) people at least were converts, formerly Roman Catholics. The very large numbers in the Sunday-school and week-day program speak for themselves of the great possibilities this work was pregnant with but did not achieve.

This year the New England Conference sold the property of the First Italian Methodist Church. Its congregation expects to vacate the premises in the near future. It is probable that a merger of this congregation with that of the Baptist Bethel will take place.
The Boston Baptist Bethel incorporated in 1852 and joined with the Boston Baptist Bethel City Mission Society in 1921 has been a center for seamen's work in the North End since its inception, fifty years at least before its association with Italian work in the community. Being in the community, and already established in its religious and social functions while the masses of Italians emigrated into it, its earliest ministry to these people was in conjunction with its American work. In 1893 when the first Italian joined its membership, he joined the membership of an American congregation.

As a result of its early history in the community, this institution was physically equipped to minister to the new-comers at will. However, though its physical aspects were favorable to such ministrations it should be noted that these were not always used with wisdom and foresight in view of the potentialities latent in working among Italian immigrants. The discussion of this point is made in a later context. As a result its success has been negligible in comparison to the possibilities and opportunities offered to it.
Because the Baptist Bethel has always been a separate corporation and operated on its own, the denominational records are of no help to us due to the fact that whatever records on membership and baptisms were kept have always been in the Bethel and not made a part of the denominational records. As the student was to discover, all entries were made in seamanlike manner, in one book, similar to a ships log-book. No attempt at comprehensiveness is evident.

The first Italian entry in this book was made in 1893 as I have stated previously. The first mention of an Italian minister was made in 1904, referring to one Reverend A. Peruzzi. From this we may conclude that it was on or about this time that an Italian minister was engaged by the Baptist Bethel to minister to the Italians in the community.

For many years, at least until the passing of the Rev. Mr. Florena, (1922-1940), who served this mission for eighteen years, the seamen's work and the Italian work, though in the same building, were carried on separately. Each had its own minister. Both ministers apparently served on a part time basis. Neither minister was a resident of the community. The seamen and the American
congregation used the sanctuary on the upper floor on Sunday mornings, the Italians used a large sized room on the street floor in the afternoon. During the week a children's program of Christian education for the community at large was carried on under the capable direction of a Miss Saunders. In this period there was apparently no effort made to tie together the weekday program with the distinctly religious program of the church carried on by the Italian minister.

From the very beginning the membership of this church has been small and transient. We find in the records early entries showing transfers to other congregations in other cities and the movement of its members to other parts of the country, California, South America, and a number to Italy.

In recent years with the coming of the capable leadership of its present pastor an effort has been made to tie in the weekday program with the Italian church work. However, because of the nature of Christian Center work (non-proselyting) this attempt has yet to show any considerable results. It is obvious to anyone familiar with bi-lingual work that this pastor will find his arrival too late to change the trend in any considerable degree.
The worship program has been changed in an effort to conserve the energies of the pastor. The pastor is in full time connection and resident. He serves both congregations. The English speaking constituency of the Italian group meet with the seamen's group in the sanctuary on Sunday Mornings. As this is the only English speaking service offered, the young people would like to attend. However, many do not join in the service because of the presence of seamen, drunks and just plain bums. This is certainly an unpleasant situation and parents of girls understandably keep them away. Furthermore, it is too much to expect respectable young people and girls whose lives are quite sheltered by jealous parents to accept this situation.

The present membership is still small, there being only sixty-one active members. As the Chart # V and the Table VIII which follow will show, no non-resident and sunday-school figures are available; therefore, only membership trends will be drawn.

For the Christian Center work we have these figures, a total of 210 children attended at least ten sessions during the year of classes October 1941 to May 1942. In this year 1948, I am told, about 150 of these are still
coming and are quite regular attendants during the week. This work serves the following age-groups: nursery, kindergarten, primary, junior, intermediate, and in the evenings young high school boys and girls. A capable staff of volunteers and paid workers enlisted from Gordon College and other Christian institutions make up its employed force, under the direction of the Italian pastor Reverend Louis Zibelli.

In 1949 when the First Italian Methodist Church is to be closed these congregations may merge. The Methodist property has been sold already, its congregation and minister are continuing on the premises temporarily by special arrangement.

The fact that this institution has had staying power in the community, in spite of its small contribution to Protestant evangelization of Italians, provides them with a leverage on the community which on the Protestant standpoint may be the redeeming feature of this entire enterprise. With the expected merged Methodist congregation and the hoped for vision of denominational leadership toward a new adventure in Italian missions this Church may become the strategic post in Roman Catholic territory for Protestant-ism.
CHART V

BOSTON BAPTIST BETHEL

MEMBERSHIP TREND

Source: Boston Baptist Bethel "Log book."
### Table VI

**Boston Baptist Bethel North End**

**Membership Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Received into Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1896-99</td>
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<td>1900-05</td>
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<td>1941-45</td>
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<td>1946-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>197</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No other statistics available.*

Source: *Boston Baptist Bethel Log book.*
The "Congregational" Mission

The Congregational work among the Italians in the North End began in the year 1900 when an American woman, Mrs. May, requested the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society of the Congregational Church to employ her to work among the Italians.

The first mention of this work as the Boston Italian Mission is made in the minutes of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society meeting of January 1902. It location was in a hall, rented for $25. a month, at 170 Hanover Street, Boston. Its pastor was the Reverend Enrico Riviere whose name later appears in the Methodist records.

The salary of the worker was assumed by the Women's Home Missionary Society, that of the pastor by the Massachusetts Board. This point will loom large in the later discussion of denominational support and policy. It may be stated here that this has always been the policy of Congregational missionary enterprises.

It appears that this work was for some time (at least until 1935) a substantial part-time work under the long ministry of the Reverend G. Merlino who is also

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17 These records are unpublished. Used by permission of Dr. Ralph Timberlake, president of the Massachusetts Congregational Churches.
a professor of Romance Languages. However, as in the case of other works described, the effects of a transient constituency decimated its ranks, a goodly number of these are now a part of the Italian Church in South Boston.

Sometime later this congregation and its pastor the Rev. Mr. Merlino severed relationship with the Congregational denomination and became an 'orphan' congregation. Its Sunday morning worship and mid-week Bible study program continues to this day.

Though few in number, they now meet in the location of the First Methodist Church of Boston, on Temple Street. Being further away from the North End additional losses in constituency were experienced. The First Methodist Church has given them aid and has hospitably included them in the over-all program of the Church. Its youth therefore, have the opportunity of establishing a connection with the American congregation of the Methodist Church if they so desire.

This work is a good example of a person-centered ministry. Because of the excellent character and sincerity of the minister this work drew its constituency,
in good numbers at least, from the congregations already established in the community of the North End.

In Chapter VIII a discussion of this feature of Italian work will be made. Although it is a minor phase of the work, it is one of the facts which definitely hindered the nurture of denominational loyalty.

Due to the lack of statistics regarding membership and other data, no chart or table can be offered here.
The Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi

In the year 1914 the Reverend William H. Dewart became Rector of Christ Church (Old North) on Salem Street in Boston. This location was less than one-fifth of a mile from the First Italian Methodist Church and the Boston Baptist Bethel. After six months as Rector of Christ Church Rev. Mr. Dewart became convinced of the necessity of starting an Italian mission in the immediate vicinity of his Church. Upon receiving denominational approval he went to New York seeking the right man for this position, and chose for the job the Reverend Henry C. Sartorio, a Presbyterian minister.

From this time till Thanksgiving day of 1918 Italian services were held in the Old North Church at four o'clock on Sunday afternoons. During this period there were seventy-three (73) communicants in the congregation and ninety-seven (97) in the Sunday-school.

Through the generous gift of Mrs. William H. Lincoln of Brookline the Chapel of Saint Francis of Assisi was erected on the property adjoining Christ Church as a memorial to Anna Eliza Smith her sister. The Chapel costs $35,000.00 was built in the beautiful style of the
Italian Renaissance and was endowed with $45,000.00 to ensure the continuation of its ministry to the Italians.

The words spoken by Bishop Lawrence at the dedication service on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 1918, bespeak the policy of the Episcopal Church relating to the ministry of this Chapel; that no proselytizing was the intention, but rather to serve the Italians who were not otherwise effectively affiliated with a religious body.\(^1\)

The utter sincerity of the Episcopalians toward the Italians as "fellow Christians" seems obvious from the fact that they considered it important to have at this time an official word to the new congregation in their own tongue. This was done by none other than Canon Nelson from the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York.

Because of illness Rev. Mr. Sartorio found it necessary to leave in 1920 and finally to resign in 1921, at which time his brother-in-law the Reverend Henry J. Chiera, a Baptist minister, was placed in charge of the congregation. The work continued without much change and it was stated by Chiera in 1920 "we are not gaining - we are not losing"\(^19\) describing the fact that he likewise

\(^{18}\) Bishop Lawrence, "no idea of proselytizing in building the Chapel."

\(^{19}\) The Church Militant, an Episcopal Monthly, April 1929, page 9.
was feeling the shift in population from the North End to the suburbs. However, in spite of living away from the North End, it is reported that fifty percent of these non-resident members attend worship services regularly.

In 1931 Rev. Mr. Chiera accepted a call to Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and in 1932 the Reverend Pietro F. Giacobbe became the pastor of Saint Francis Chapel which he serves to this day.

The congregation was never large, its program never ambitious or evangelistic in the sense of proselytizing the community. Many have come and gone as the statistics show but the work has remained in the very small steady way. The trend has been as follows: 1917 - 73 members; 1922 - 153 members; in 1948 - 97 members, largely non-resident. Its budget in 1929 was almost $4000.00 with 76 members, its present budget is lightly over $2000.00 with about 100 members. The work is definitely a part-time ministry for the pastor.

There is no evidence to conclude that the Episcopalians are discouraged or thinking of closing the witness of the Chapel of Assisi in the community, nor any
grumbling about the small numerical results of thirty-five years of ministry. With the help of the endowment and the continued loyalty of the Boston Diocese this work will probably continue indefinitely.

Chart VI on page 108 shows the trend in resident members and Sunday school enrollment. These are the only statistic available for this work. The Table # VII on page 109 supplements Chart VI with data on the number of communicants and baptisms in the various periods outlined.
Source: Parochial reports, 1917-1948
TABLE VII

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHAPEL
NORTH END

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Communicants*</th>
<th>Sunday-school</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1917-20</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921-25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926-30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>1931-35</td>
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<td>1936-40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>1941-45</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>89</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
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</table>

* Average number is five.

Source: Parochial reports, 1917-1948
SAINT PAUL'S ITALIAN CHURCH

As has been stated in Chapter two, the Italians in East Boston represent an overflow of population from the North End. The greater number of these being American born Italians.

The Churches they found in East Boston stemmed from the earliest development of East Boston dating back to 1846, 1856 and the latest of these in Orient Heights dated as late as 1901. All of these were similarly affected by the influx of Italo-Americans who are of Roman Catholic origin.

As was the case with the North End the old residents moved out and the Italians settled permanently. By 1905 they represented the bulk of East Boston's population. The membership of the American established churches dwindled away forcing some to close, others to merge and all to contract their program.

The first Protestant attempt to adapt itself to the changing complexion of the community (the Italian emigration) was the gathering of an Italian congregation in the year 1920 at the Saratoga Street location under the leadership of John S. Orru their pastor, educated in
the Methodist College in Rome, Italy. This was done with the aid of the Union Church which sought to adjust its program to a community rapidly becoming foreign.

This work begun on the ruins of the American speaking work occupied the Saratoga Street Methodist Church building, its fellowship having joined with the Meridian Street congregation to form the Union Methodist Church. By 1923 Saint Paul's Italian Church had a membership of 163, a vigorous Sunday-school and a large Epworth League. Throughout its history as a Methodist congregation it has had the largest Italian Protestant congregation in East Boston. From time to time its youth group has shown excellent signs of promise but always short lived.

This work apparently never had any phenomenal success. With the community full of social-service agencies it did not need to carry on any such services to its constituency, which may be part of the reason for its mediocre record. On the other hand, other explanations must be sought to explain its unprogressive history and its final federation with the Episcopal Church of Saint John to insure its continuing in the community. This discussion will be made in Chapter VII.
This parish has had but two pastors since its inception. The Reverend John Orru who started the work was relieved of his responsibilities in June of 1927 at which time the Reverend Frank L. Pizzuto became its pastor. Rev. Mr. Pizzuto serves the congregation to this day.

In a recent article published in the Zions Herald of September 8, 1948, Mr. Pizzuto tells us that in 1927 when he became pastor this work was about to be closed. He had to begin "de novo." Though the congregation numbered from two hundred to two hundred and fifty in the subsequent years, his salary was very low. "For nearly a year, my salary ran from $36 to $56 a month, not even enough to pay for the house rent." Since this time the Board of Home Missions has supplemented his salary. However, since 1928 his salary has dropped from $2,100. to $1,200. in 1942, and $1,600. in 1947. Finding it necessary to supplement his income, in 1938 he began teaching romance languages at Suffolk University. Recently, having been relieved of his position with Suffolk University, he began teaching at Northeastern University.

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20 Zions Herald, September 8, 1948, p. 854.
From the facts presented, it is logical to conclude that this work has suffered from lack of enough attention from its pastor who has found it necessary to earn a living for himself and his family. Supplementing his income by teaching requires much time, therefore, leaving but a minimum for his parish.

Chart VII on page 114 traces the membership trend and is supplemented by the Table VIII on page 115 in regard to baptisms, and total members counted in the constituency of the church over the years 1921 to 1948.
ST. PAUL'S ITALIAN METHODIST CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP TREND

Sources: New England Conference Minutes, 1921 to 1948.
### TABLE VIII

**ST. PAUL'S ITALIAN METHODIST CHURCH**  
EAST BOSTON

**MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Baptisms All</th>
<th>Resident Added</th>
<th>Non-Resident Highest</th>
<th>Sunday-school Highest</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921-25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>226</td>
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<td>1926-30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>153</td>
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<td>1931-35</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>152</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936-40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-48</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>706</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** *New England Conference Minutes*, 1921-1948
The Italian Congregational Church in East Boston was organized in 1929. Having no edifice of its own it held its services in the Maverick Congregational Church building. In 1933 when the Maverick congregation merged with the Baker Church at Orient Heights (the other end of the community) this building was closed and the Italian Congregation moved to the location of the Saint Mary's Episcopal Church at Jeffries Point a distance of about two miles at another end of the community. This Church was closed in 1942 again leaving the Italian congregation homeless till it found refuge with the Union Methodist Church. Two years later they were again forced to move, this time into the Presbyterian Church at Maverick Square, the same neighborhood they had left at the very beginning of their trek around East Boston. In 1948 this work was federated with the Saint Paul's Italian Methodist congregation and that of Saint John's Episcopal Church; a last resort on the part of the Congregational Board for self-preservation in the community.
This history of homelessness and moving about has inhibited the growth of the congregation. However, though no records or statistics are available in the Congregational yearbooks for accessions in membership, baptisms and Sunday-school attendants we have the following figures as published in the study by the Massachusetts Council of Churches: in 1942, fifty-eight members resident and active; 1948, seventy-seven members resident and active. The congregation has had but one pastor from its inception, the Reverend John H. Romolo.

As is quite understandable a part-time work like this did not offer a program necessary for growth and progress. Rev. Mr. Romolo has also been employed as a translator at an Italian newspaper office during the week. He does not have a theological training. Finally, for lack of trained personnel the denomination has been unable to sponsor any ambitious program in East Boston.

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21 No other figures are available.
About 1930 an attempt was made by the Unitarian Church of Our Father in East Boston to establish an Italian congregation. Under the leadership of the Reverend Samuel L. Elberfeld, an Italian social worker was engaged as minister and preacher to a nucleus of about twenty-five Italians. "The experiment was abandoned in about six months. The following reasons have been reported:

1. Leadership not of the highest moral standards.

2. Lack of financial support from the Italians.

3. Interest of the Italians in social events to the exclusion of church membership.

4. Social distance between the Old-Unitarians and the Italians expressed in Unitarian resentment of the common use of pews and hymnals."

Further discussion on the reasons reported by the Unitarians of the failure of their efforts with Italian work will be discussed in the Chapter VII, under the discussion "The Evolution of Bilingual Work."

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22 Villaume, FEB, 121.
The Immanuel Italian Lutheran Church was organized in 1931 through the efforts of the Missouri Lutheran Church, a congregation of German origin. It has an Italian minister who is under the supervision of the pastor of the larger Immanuel Church.

Very little information is available on this work. The denominational yearbook shows that the congregation has not grown in numbers in recent years. Its membership is under 100. Its work not apparently significant.

The recent study of East Boston Protestantism by the Mass. Council of Churches revealed the same difficulty in obtaining information about this work.\(^2\)

\(^2\) Villaume, PEB, 121.
ITALIAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR

In 1924 from Irish Catholic South Boston, there came to the Methodist Conference, from twenty-eight families in the Italian colony there, a request for a preacher and Protestant services. The Wesley Methodist Church extended this group cordial hospitality and at the first Italian service conducted by Dr. Trappolini, forty-three persons were present. (Dr. Trappolini was a trained physician and ordained minister. He served his congregation in this dual capacity.) In 1925 the Italian Church membership in South Boston was reported to be seventy-nine (79), with a constituency of five hundred families.

When the American congregation vacated the Wesley building it became the permanent location of the Italian congregation which was called the Italian Church of Our Saviour.

From the very beginning all the pastors connected with this work served the Italian congregation in Morgan Memorial as well, or some other Italian Church in Boston. This work therefore, was a ministers' part time work. Thus, it was limited to modest results and achievements.
However, this work brings to the fore a new element in the study of bi-lingual churches, that is, the element of slow steady modest growth. In this instance no spectacular enterprises were attempted, no great advances expected; just a part time ministering to the Italian congregation in South Boston in a church building that would otherwise be closed. For part time ministry, the supply of a pastor was no problem, in fact it helped solve the problem of adequate pay for full-time Italian ministers at Morgan Memorial and later on at the First Italian Methodist Church, now with the Federated Italian congregations of East Boston.

The progress of this church therefore, has been one of slow steady growth, with little loss and accompanied by an apparent small-church stability which gives it promise of continuance and service in the community.

As Chart VIII on page 123 and Table IX on page 124 will show, this church unlike those in the communities of the North End and East Boston, has not been affected by an exodus of Italian population for better suburbs. The population here has been one of almost even residency. Therefore, the members have taken and are taking roots in the community, thus stabilizing the growth of the
church and ensuring its future. Though it may be inconspicuous at this time, it may at some later date, if no radical changes are made in East Boston and the North End, become the only conspicuous example of Italian Protestant work in Boston. If not by its size, then by virtue of its existence as the only Methodist Italian Church remaining in Boston, this church may have a significant future.
CHART VIII

ITALIAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
SOUTH BOSTON

MEMBERSHIP TREND

Sources: New England Conference Minutes, 1924 to 1948.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1924</th>
<th>1926</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1946</th>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
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<td>1945</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Resident Members**
- **Non Resident Members**
- **Received into Membership**
- **Sunday-school Enrollment**
TABLE IX

ITALIAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
SOUTH BOSTON

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Added</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Non-Resident</th>
<th>Sunday-school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924-25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926-30</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New England Conference Minutes, 1924-1948
In 1914 Mrs. Eunice Anna Clark began an Italian missionary project which later became the Evangelical Baptist Church of Hyde Park. Its first location was in a shack across the street from the present location which is at 1916 River Street. After several locations were tried the present site was acquired and building started to house a growing work in 1920. The early part of the building had only three rooms and soon was too small to meet the requirements of the community.

The Baptist Bethel City Mission Society of Boston assumed the major responsibility for this work in 1921. The Society called the Reverend Frank Valdina in 1922 to serve as missionary pastor to this community. Rev. Mr. Valdina still serves this congregation. By 1923 under the able leadership of the pastor the activities of the church had increased and the numbers of members grown so that it was deemed necessary to improve the property. The building was raised and three basement rooms and a vestry were added. It has since been the

24 Mrs. Eunice Anna Clark died in 1926.
policy of the group to achieve some improvement on the building each year. As Rev. Mr. Valdina said in a recent interview, "Ever since then it has been the policy of the people and the pastor, in order to improve the church building and its equipment, to undertake a project every year." 25

Through these projects there have been added to the church indirect lighting, pews, a baptistry, a new Organ-tone, a tennis court and a large playground. In 1935 the Mission was recognized by the Baptist denomination as a regular Baptist Church and as such it received its charter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the same year.

Until October 1947 the worship program was carried on with the Italian congregation taking the greatest part and receiving the most attention. The English speaking part has been a minor though necessary function. On this date a unified worship service was begun "in order that it might minister to all the people of the community," 26 meaning by this the inclusion in worship of non-Italian groups in the community. The 10:30 Sunday morning service

25 In an interview with Rev. Mr. Valdina, Dec. 1948.

26 Loc. Cit.
is entirely in English and the 11:30 service, carried on while the Church School is in session, in another part of the building, is in Italian. The pastor says, "We find this to be the most satisfactory for the present."27

The growth of this work has been one of substantial steady progress. In 1922, when its pastor came, the church had but one member though others were connected with the church. During this year and the next evangelistic emphasis was great and there was a great religious awakening in the community. Many joined the church and were baptized. That baptism by immersion was no obstacle here for former Roman Catholics was obvious from the remark of the pastor to the effect that conversion was the key to overcoming that hurdle. "When they get converted they want to be baptized and are only too glad to."28

Its present membership is one-hundred and twelve (112) and as the pastor has said, in this quite isolated community, "the Mission has been a great transforming power."29 Its services are rendered to the whole community and its congregation is made up of other national groups, as well as negroes.

27 In an interview with Rev. Mr. Valdina, Dec. 1948.
28 Loc. Cit.
29 Loc. Cit.
Transient constituents have been at a minimum through the years and have had little effect on the membership of the church. Only fifty members have transferred because of moving and thirty four others lost since 1922.

During the last fourteen years many have been converted and 126 have received Christian baptism. The present following of the church comprise about 300 persons, all fairly active. On this basis the building is definitely inadequate.

This is one Italian Church that is on the upward trend, that is likely to 'evolve' into what denominations hope to see in all congregations; self-support and complete Americanization. If the present trend continues this Church will again feel the need to enlarge its present small edifice.

Due to the fact that there are no other figures available for a statistical chart and table none can be offered for this work.
THE "IMPRESSIVE MINORITY"

Foerster asserts that an "impressive minority" of Italians in America are going over to Protestantism. From the study of Protestant work among Italians in Boston outlined in this chapter it is obvious that in Boston this is not true. In Boston no impressive minority is going over to Protestantism. That this is also true elsewhere is witnessed by the facts revealed in the thesis by Williams of Italians in New Haven. She likewise differs with Foerster's theory of the "impressive minority" which he states in his book "The Italian Immigration of Our Times."

In fact if all the Protestant agencies should completely drop out of the Italian and Irish colonies of the City of Boston, the religious situation would feel no effect at all, the Roman Catholic Church having done a complete job of wiping out almost every vestige of Boston's early religious life in those communities. The same thought is expressed in "Americans in Process" in relation to the North End situation in these words:

---

30 Foerster, IIOT

31 Williams, RMI, 33.
The serious truth is that if any or all of these Protestant agencies should drop out completely, the general situation in the North End would be effected almost not at all.\textsuperscript{32}

For the fifty-eight (58) years of evangelistic efforts with Italians in eleven churches (Protestant units) in Boston there are less than 2,500 Protestant members and a possible constituency of approximately 4,000. However, in what is left of the Italian Protestant work as such there is an active membership of approximately 600 persons.

The removal of constituents, with the resultant loss of connection between the members and the church, and the church with the community, has effected the bilingual churches more than the old line American ones. That is, the extraordinary recession of the Italian population from the North End and East Boston has taken the majority of the adherents of the Protestant Missions into other areas. This is the natural result of the removal of population from less desirable to more desirable areas. Although a loss to the Missions it is also a credit to their ministry of educating people to desire a better way

\textsuperscript{32} Woods, \textit{AP}, 257
of living for themselves and their children. The Mission therefore is seeking new people all the time. The same is true of Settlement House work as Whyte in his book "Street Corner Society" states referring to the Social Service Agencies in the North End of Boston.

Since upward mobility almost always involves movement out of the slum district, the settlement is constantly dealing with people who are on the way out of Cornerville.33

In itself this removal of constituency would not be alarming, were we dealing with old line American Protestants, for they would in due time associate themselves with the church in their new community. However, unlike the old line American Protestants these "new Protestants" are not relating themselves with the American Protestant Churches in the communities to which they are moving.

This fact was arrived at through personal contact of at least one hundred former constituents of Mission churches and queries of the actions of others through these already mentioned. Moreover, the fact is confirmed through a questionnaire sent to 171 Protestant Churches in Boston and vicinity with results being as follows.

33 Whyte, SCS, 104. Cornerville referred to in the Whyte quotation is the name he uses to signify the area of his study, the North End of Boston.
Of the 79 churches that responded, 47 reported many Italians in their communities with a total of 178 members of Italian origin; 53 received by transfer from other churches, 111 received into membership by affirmation of faith, and 189 as additional Italian constituents not members of the church. The 32 churches reporting few Italians in their communities have 71 members; 6 by transfer and 32 by affirmation of faith. Incomplete answers by many made balancing totals impossible. The figures for all the respondents as totals are as follows. Members 249, by transfer 59, by faith 143, additional constituency 207.

The following areas of Boston are included; Charlestown, South Boston, Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, Brighton, and Roslindale. The following cities and towns are included; Arlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Newton, Quincy, Revere, and Somerville. None of these have complete results due to the fact that 92 churches did not respond. Most of these very likely had no Italians in their churches.

Table X illustrating these results may be found on page 133.
### TABLE X

**QUESTIONNAIRE OF 171 CHURCHES**

**THE ITALIAN CONSTITUENTS OF 79 AMERICAN CHURCHES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Boston Proper</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Roxbury</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamaica Plain</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Hyde Park</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Quincy</td>
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<td>Somerville</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>32</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals**  
79 249 59 143 207 3

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*Responds R  
Membership It. M  
by Transfer T.  
by Faith F  
Constituency C  
Italian Population It. Pop.  
Italian Churches It. Ch.*
CHAPTER VII

THE EVOLUTION OF BILINGUAL WORK

The evolution of bilingual work is a phrase that has been frequently used to describe hoped-for results in Italian Protestant Missions. It is also to be noted that the phrase has been largely used by the Methodists and seldom heard from any other sources. It is questionable whether those who have used this phrase have really understood the field referred to. Therefore, due to the general failure of this missionary enterprise, many have unintelligently condemned the work for not arriving at the desired destination. Much of what follows is involved in this problem, though few have undertaken to attain the accurate perspective which results from a study of the work. Generally speaking they have meant by this phrase the description in terms of progress of the process of a home mission church becoming (by a process of growth), a self-supporting agency able to continue on its own. Also involved is the matter of Americanization. That is, the process of becoming an American Church with the complete use of the English language, customs and techniques.
By the very nature of the program and missionary philosophy involved in the early history of this work (to be discussed in the following pages), it was destined to be a "temporary one." Therefore, the term evolution can only be used in describing the history thereof after the fact.

It is difficult indeed to appreciate the adverse circumstances which converge to make a missionary Pastors' task so difficult. Missionary work has never been easy, and Italian work is such a pioneer work no less than foreign-missions in the islands of the Pacific. It is further difficult to tabulate the results of this work in mere figures even as it is impossible to consider spiritual work in terms of profit and loss.

The following pages will give a detailed analysis of the reasons that expected results in terms of self-support, stable congregations, Americanization and a continuing program for evangelizing Italians, were not achieved.
A. SELF-SUPPORT

Various reasons are discoverable to explain the lack of self-support to which the Italian Missions have been confined. In the first place, Italians have come from a country where Roman Catholicism is the religion of the state. Supported by the state they depend very little upon support by the constituency. Whenever appeals were made they were made to the moneyed class or the nobility, the only revenue being received from the 'contadini' being for "services rendered." These may be described as special services to individuals or to the family in the form of baptism, marriage, funeral, communion and a few others. This concept and the fact that Italians by and large are luke-warm religionists and engrossed in raising their standard of living has made the Italian in America react toward the Church in an economically conservative fashion. It takes a number of years to overcome this habit in the converted Italian. Sartorio estimates a period of three years must elapse before this takes place.

It takes about three years to bring an Italian who has joined the Evangelical Church to the point of realizing his responsibility toward the supporting of the church in the voluntary way which has been adopted in America.¹

¹ Sartorio, SRLIA, 111.
In the second place, the immigrants living in our congested areas, elsewhere described as "Italian slums" have been poverty stricken provincials. Many borrowed money to come to the United States and with low earning capacity have found it difficult to pay back such debts. Moreover, they send for their families while supporting themselves and raising their children who are here. Even in the best of times many have been on relief. As the statistics quoted on page 38 reveal, even in periods of prosperity (1944) and maximum employment the North End has been next to the highest in Boston's 15 Health and Welfare Areas in the proportion of aided and welfare cases. (See Boston Basic Social Statistics on page 47).

Those who by good fortune and the combined earning power of the family save by living frugally rightfully aspire for more favorable living surroundings and move as soon as they are able. This is the glory and the nemesis of the missionary enterprise, that it teaches the human soul to aspire for better conditions and a fuller life. Therefore, as soon as a mission family is able to support the church more adequately it moves out of the community and the mission while another in less favorable condition moves in.
By all logic, the missionary church is bound to "poverty" else its designation as a missionary church would be untrue. Its task is particularly difficult and requires intelligent direction and deep Christian sympathy. H. Paul Douglass has made a similar more cogent expression of this situation.

The area under consideration is rightly designated 'missionary Boston' because of its exceptional needs and because of the low fortunes of most of its people. It is a particularly difficult area for Protestant institutions.²

No phenomenal successes should have been expected by the denominational leaders. However, although this fact has been expressed by many; denominational expectations have been otherwise as shall be illustrated later. Concurring in opinion again, Mr. Douglass has this to say.

No one familiar with the situation will anticipate a story of triumphant institutional success for work undertaken in this area. This is why the mission agencies are where they are - at the place of unusual need.³

In this respect, see the Chart Basic Social Statistics on page 47 describing the Criteria of Social Quality of the Mission areas discussed in comparison with Boston as a whole.

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² Douglass, MB, 5.
³ Loc. cit.
Finally, some responsibility lies with the leadership of the missions. Most of these are 'new Protestants' themselves without Sunday-school training background and often deficient in seminary training they have not trained their constituency in the matter of the spiritual value of giving. Although they have given of themselves unselfishly, they have encouraged the opposite unconsciously in some cases and consciously in others because of the fear of arousing suspicion of insincerity on the part of constituents toward its ministry. This latter aspect is due to the fact that Italians have an historical suspicion of the clergy in matters of money as well as politics.
B. STABILITY

1. Although the majority of Italians (immigrants and native born as well) are free from the control of the Roman Catholic Church, the very few in number that make up our Protestant Italian congregations are proof that they are not coming under the influence of Protestantism effectively. In speaking of the immigrants, Sartorio estimates 60 percent of these as free from the control of the Church after a few years residence in America.

I am not exaggerating when I say that 60 percent of Italian immigrants are completely free from the control of the Roman Catholic Church after a few years of residence in America.4

From too much control to extreme and complete disassociation from the Church has tended to enhance their ability to acquire the secular vices which are all too prevalent in American city life. Vainly considering themselves "free thinkers" the men generally absent themselves from Church and leave it for the women and children only. The same tendency has also been true of the Protestant Italian male and in general it has resulted in incomplete family relation with the church and an early loss of the male youth because of the example of the fathers. The resultant in-

4 Sartorio, SRLLA, 104
stability was aided by this phenomenon.

2. As has been noted in an earlier context, "upward mobility" is largely responsible for the loss of population in "missionary Boston." This movement of population affected the missions in the same manner. It decimated the Italian congregations even as the American Protestant churches were decimated with the coming of the Italians in East Boston and the North End. The missions' new converts never replaced those lost in any significant number, nor for any substantial period of time.

This phase of the missions' problem has been with the work from its very inception. It has been estimated that Italian churches lose one-third of their constituency every year because of this fact.

Every year the Italian Evangelical pastor in America loses one-third of his congregation, because Italians are constantly moving.5 Although this may be somewhat of an exaggeration, it is true that in a period of five years the complexion of congregations has changed by at least one-third.6 This is especially true of Italian colonies in Boston because

5 Sartorio, SRLIA, 111.

6 Confirmed in interviews with three pastors of City Missionary churches, December 1948.
they are in a constant state of disintegration as may be noted by a study of the charts on pages 38, 45, and 47, on Boston's moving population and the decrease in public school enrollments for these areas. Thus the pastor has constantly to seek new people.

In the space of three or four years every Italian congregation in America is almost completely renewed. With the restriction of Italian immigrants to a trickle, see pages 25 and 25B, new constituents were limited.

These facts were modified only in the cases of churches where a vital relationship between the church and the non-resident members continued. Whenever this has been so it has been short-lived. In due time connections are completely dropped, as in the case of the First Italian Methodist Church in the North End. Until the transfer to another Conference of the pastor who had been there for over a generation absentee members continued a comparatively close connection with the church and its services, but when this person-centered relationship ceased the non-residents quickly began to discontinue their close connection. As the chart on page 91 will show on this work, in the eight years since the absence of

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Sartorio, SRLIA, 112.
this pastor the participating non-resident membership dropped from 275 to 65.

3. A third element which has contributed more than any other combination of forces is the factor of division and denominational competition in the field.

From the very beginning as William Cole put it in *Americans in Process*, "the logic of the come outer has appeared in a division of the church itself," and he cites without specific mention the first division that took place in the North End work as far back as 1903. "Part of the people with the pastor, have taken up the Congregational form of organization." In East Boston though not in such an obvious manner the Congregational work was likewise begun by a splinter-group of the Methodist work.

The whole field has been rife with denominational agencies competing, duplicating and enticing the very same limited group which was attracted to the Protestant movement. In the North End within the radius of one square mile there were four Italian missions, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalean and Congregational. The Congregational work is now an independent work in the West End.

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To one familiar with these different groups many familiar faces could be seen periodically in the different congregations. As is quite obvious this denominational competition enhanced the possibilities of changing loyalty according to the individual's displeasure, whim or need; crippling any solid advance movement. At least in the North End, the Protestant Italians can be called an "overchurched minority."

One aspect of division about which the student was unable to receive sufficient information to deal with at length is revealed in the Minutes of the New England Conference for 1916, between the local church and the Conference. At the appointment of Rev. Mr. Panunzio the Conference is recorded as saying, "Let not the leaders of the Italian Mission delude themselves with the notion that they can ever take Panunzio from our Conference." In more recent years this division between the Conference and local church became a permanent one in regard to the administrative policy of the denomination as far as it concerned the Italian missions.

The cost of maintaining these competing enterprises over the years is beyond estimating. Property has been purchased, buildings maintained and salaries subsidized at a cost which is impossible to ascertain, it is enough to say

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9 NECM, 1916, 52.
that the cost has been completely out of proportion with the results achieved.

4. This unjudicious duplication of energies and the enormous expenditures of finances by the different denominations for the evangelization of the "overchurched Italian minority" made it inevitable that the cost to maintain this work would some day be considered prohibitive. This introduces the next factor in explaining the causes for the instability of Italian mission work.

In the early thirties, ten years after Congress closed the door to the Italian immigrants, the problem of supporting Italian missions became an issue in the Methodist work, the most important of the denominations in the area. Programs were trimmed to meet lower budgets. The missionaries engaged in the week-day program of the Church in the North End were dismissed. The ministers salaries were cut and the local churches asked to increase their giving.

The local churches were now faced with the necessity of funds to continue their work, or the discontinuance of many functions. The latter alternative was finally accepted. The North End work continued without its significant week-day program. This site was the Methodists' first
attempt in the bilingual field. It was originally the most ambitious program, the most generously supported, the best sponsored and to a very large degree equipped with the best qualified leadership. It is now the most conspicuous example of failure.

Because we have an accurate account of this particular work in relation to this section a description of these declining years in relation to waning support of all the Methodist work herewith follows.

No appeals were sufficient to challenge the Conference to support this work. Dr. A. F. Reimer, Superintendent of the City Missionary Society, was perhaps the only man not a bilingual preacher who saw the need to maintain this work in all its varied aspects. The District Superintendents of recent years and a resident Bishop seemed to know little of the actual situation faced by the Italian Missions or were inclined to have only stereotype report interest.10 Dr. Reimer's repeated appeals like the one recorded here went unheeded.

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10 I have been in conference with two District Superintendents and a resident Bishop and have learned they had no real knowledge or interest in regard to these missions.
If our church is to have a real future, and exercise leadership in the days to come in New England, there is no task before us more imperative than the evangelization of these people (75% of Boston's population - the immigrants) and the training of their children to carry on in our pulpits and in our pews.

In every one the trained, paid leaders have been discontinued. . . It must not be thought that the volunteers (local church people) fully supply the places filled by our paid helpers.\textsuperscript{11}

In 1934 by abolishing the bilingual conference and transferring these obligations to annual conferences the final doom of this work was sealed. This eliminated the personalized responsibility of this work and diffused it so that no individual or group could feel any real responsibility and be tempted to meet the challenge. From this time on the cry arose for "self-support" without intelligent basis for the cry. "The world is my parish," said John Wesley the founder of Methodism but his followers herewith renounced this unmodified phrase and adopted in its place "self-supporting churches are our parishes."

For lack of organization the bilingual preachers were now obliged to present their need personally in stirring messages to individual churches for their aid through the Conference. This was all to no avail, for

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{NECM}, 1933, 239.
the preachers hardened to such appeals, met in Conferences as if untouched by these pleas.12

As if preparing the interested parties for the ultimate blow, admission was made at the 1934 Conference that not much could be accomplished in this field. Quoting the Conference minutes we have the following statement.

That we cannot accomplish as much as these laborers who devoted their time especially to these fields must be apparent to all. However, the work is progressing and we are proud to say that we have the best piece of bilingual work of any denomination laboring in Boston.13

That in comparison the Methodists did have the best work at this time was true, however, to state at this time that "the work was progressing" was a gross exaggeration. It was a mediocre best they boasted of.

By 1937 the support of bilingual work became an issue indeed. When we hear about the 1937 Conference from a few of its attendants and read the Minutes, one must choose whether to believe that the Conference members bolted at any further support of this work, or that a new philosophy of missionary promotion was dawning.14 The following

12 There is no evidence in the records to support any contrary view.

13 NECM, 1934, 403.

14 The former position is accepted by the student as the most logical in view of the whole history of this work and a conference with two former bilingual preachers.
quotation is offered to support this interpretation.

There is no ground in logic why a portion of the churches in the Conference should support bilingual work while others just as deeply interested should not be asked to share the load (because in another district). The point was well taken, but taken too late and acted upon too little.

In spite of the gloomy outlook the year 1939 could have been the year of revolutionary action against defeat and directed toward a new adventure in the field. At the 1939 Conference the District Superintendent of the Boston District which has all the Methodist Italian work of the New England Conference of the Methodist Church in its orbit gave a challenging report which contained both vision and hope for a reversal of the present trend. He proposed the creation of a new organization for the study of and direction of a more ambitious program of bilingual work drawing on a larger source of revenue.

We request that there be appointed by the Conference a committee of five and the District Superintendents to make a study of our Missionary challenge for bilingual peoples within the bounds of the New England Conference and to consider the advisability of enlarging the Boston Missionary and Church Extension Society to a Conference Missionary and Church Extension Society for the purpose of ministering to these newer peoples.

15 NECM, 1937, 323.

16 NECM, 1939, 886.
The suggestion perhaps arose from Dr. Otto's study of the Congregational and Baptist system of supporting their bilingual work. These two denominations carry on their work as a state program, a department of bilingual work under a Board of Home Missions. In this way support is drawn from the missionary giving of all the churches in the state instead of the Methodist system of depending solely upon the District in which the work is located through the Annual Conference. The crux of this whole question of support is revealed at this point. That is, whether a philosophy of adequate missionary promotion will motivate intelligent action, planning and spending; or whether a system of temporary subsidizing will be adequate for the progressive development of this work. The latter system may be largely responsible for the disintegration of the Methodists' promising bilingual work. The Congregational work had little promise to begin with therefore though their philosophy of missionary promotion was good it was never really put to work. The Baptists have one instance of the successful use of this philosophy in Hyde Park where the work has developed with great promise for the future.
It is doubtful whether this suggestion of Dr. Otto was actually fulfilled for in 1940 he appealed again for a study of the "missionary work in the heart of Boston," and "in the North End, the Italian Church should be studied." In the same Conference Minutes Dr. Otto also describes in a succinct paragraph the doubts of his fellow-ministers concerning the validity, need, and worthwhileness of continuing to minister in any large extent to the Italian people of Boston.

The results of the work of these churches sometimes appears limited and even the most devoted and ardent friends of the immigrant wonder if it is all worthwhile, and when we observe what is being done by the state and by the public schools in their Americanization Classes, we wonder if our job has not been finished. In the spiritual kingdom is there any "front" where we have a chance of doing some real fighting? Your committee believes there is a "front." The Committee on Bilingual Churches then submitted five recommendations reiterating (again) the statements heretofore mentioned in various conference reports.

1. The work employing a foreign language still has its place and will have for another decade or two at least.

2. Your committee would suggest that the denominations chiefly responsible for the bilingual work of the state unite in a series of Bilingual Missions meetings during the Lenten period.

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17 NECM, 1940, 52.
18 Ibid., 91.
3. The English language churches with immigrant neighbors within their bounds should make plans and efforts to include such immigrants in their Christian fellowship.

4. The Committee approves the recommendation that the bilingual work of our Conference be considered as a responsibility of the entire Conference.

5. The Committee would respectfully suggest that in the reorganization program of our missionary work due care be exercised by our Bishop and District Superintendent's that the vital progress of our bilingual work be conserved.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1945 the Committee on Bilingual Work was discontinued. At the same time the Conference went on record to the effect that ministering to bilingual people was no longer necessary.

\ldots bilingual ministry is becoming less necessary, what is now needed is a broad, neighborly missionary spirit to welcome and win these people into our well established churches in their communities.\textsuperscript{20}

In East Boston there were many 'well established churches' to go to, but in the North End there were none.

Finally, in 1948 the Methodist Conference sold all its North End property. The work is expected to be discontinued soon.

\textsuperscript{19} NECM, 1940, 10.
\textsuperscript{20} NECM, 1945, 345.
During this period the Evangelical Baptist Church of Hyde Park was beginning to develop a new program for its changing ministry. It was beginning to serve its second and third generation Italian constituency with more interest and with a vision for the future of the church. In so doing the use of the English language became more prominent and thereby offered the Church the opportunity of serving the American constituency in its parish area. Having achieved this contact it recently found it necessary to have separate worship programs in English and Italian, thereby changing the whole program of service to the community. This successful accommodation to the changing needs of the constituency and community was made possible because of the Baptist's philosophy of adequate missionary promotion which has been discussed in this chapter. Missionary support was forthcoming with each new development in the growth of this work.

From an Italian mission it is now a regular church of the Baptist denomination with its own charter. From a very dependent organization it has become a substantial though small church.
This is an example of the possibilities of Italian Missions becoming American churches wherever the conditions warrant and denominational agencies are willing to support the progressive leadership in the local churches. In a very true sense this church has evolved successfully while the others have disintegrated.

The Baptist Bethel's program did not change perceptibly in this period. It continued to serve its dwindling congregation and maintain its Christian Center program during the week. It's part-time Italian pastor did not attempt any new services to his constituency. Poorly trained for the ministry and beset with a lingering illness his ministry was very limited. He served this congregation for many years until his death.

With the coming of its present pastor, an able leader, the entire program of the church was unified (for the first time) under one responsible head. Attempts are now being made to relate the week-day program with the over-all evangelistic program of the church. It is unfortunate that the English speaking group of the Italian congregation must worship with the seamen and derelicts in order to worship in English.
Again with its philosophy of adequate missionary promotion the Baptist Missions Society is planning the development of the entire church building. Anticipating the forthcoming end of the First Italian Methodist Church which is located just two blocks away, it is preparing for the absorption of the Methodist congregation which is destined to have no church building or pastor in the near future. The Methodist Conference has sold the property and the congregation is expected to vacate the premises soon.

The building in which the pastor has his quarters has recently been completely renovated. The basement of the church building is to be developed into a roller skating rink and also used for dancing under proper supervision.

Though its past history has been insignificant, the future of this church may be significant indeed.
The Congregational Italian Mission on Hanover Street in the North End during this time became an independent work under the leadership of its pastor. The pastor and congregation have severed relations with the Congregational Conference.

Due to financial and rental difficulties the congregation moved to the location of the First Methodist Church in the West End. Receiving aid and free rent from this old American church the congregation has been able to stay together. Also, by virtue of its meeting in an American church which carries on a large and varied youth program its second and third generation Italians have found it possible to enjoy the English speaking program. They have been invited by the American minister Dr. Stroud and have been cordially welcomed in his congregation.

In such a combination as this there is great possibility, a discussion of which will be made in the next chapter on future prospectus. This sharing of the benefits of the American church program without financial responsibility (which this small congregation would not be able to assume) solves the problem of support and fosters the progress of this congregation especially in regard to the native born groups.
C. A CONTINUING PROGRAM

The fact of declining immigration has been generally accepted as the fundamental reason for the decline and general abandonment of Protestant work among Italians. However, the fact is that the effect of this trend did not make itself felt immediately. The first legislation curtailing immigration was in 1921, the more restrictive measure was the Act of 1924. And, not until the middle thirties did Italian congregations feel the pinch of the virtual end of immigration. At this time some of the important contacts and aids to recruiting were lost, but the potential constituency was not lessened nor completely eliminated. Furthermore, a new and larger, more potentially permanent constituency was ripe for a new program in which these aids and contacts were not necessary.

While Italian immigrants streamed into our country and our Italian colonies the Protestant Mission had an important role to play and this was done well. These churches acted as interpreters, as friendly neighbors, as employing agencies and charitable societies for immigrants who felt lost in a strange country. They won the adults who in turn brought the Mission their children,
the second and third generation of Italians. When the effect of declining immigration was felt, and these contacts were lost, a new program for serving its present and potential constituency was needed. This new program would have established new contacts and aids to win the second and third generation of Italians who still over-crowd our Missionary communities. The loss would have been the sources of significant gain.

However, at the point of greatest need and possible achievement; with declining denominational aid and interest no new program could possibly be launched. At the point of greatest opportunity there was least understanding and interest.

It is very difficult to hold the young people who speak English to these foreign language churches if old programs are followed. The facts prove that this has been the case and the results have been disruption of amicable family worship and a continued loss to Protestantism of the second and third generation Italian. For instance, the Baptist Bethel's evangelistic program until very recent years has been geared to almost exclusive use of Italian; the resultant loss of its young people was inevitable.
The Congregational work in the North End, now independent, was not able to minister to its second and third generation Italians. Its young people dwindled in number until the moving of this congregation into the First Methodist Church, at which time the English speaking program of the American church began ministering to their needs. They will probably be absorbed in this American congregation in due time. The youth groups in Saint Paul's Methodist Church have had a varied history in this regard. Whenever English speaking leadership has been active the youth groups have been virile, and vice versa. As will be shown in a later context the efficient English leadership of the First Italian Methodist Church in the North End, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Giambaressi, nurtured an excellent youth organization. Its disintegration took place with the removal of this leadership and English speaking program.

As has been shown throughout the preceding pages in the section called "Stability" the causes and claims for the instability of Italian Mission congregations have been contradictory. The final cause of failure was due to the lack of "A Continuing Program." The failure on the part of the denominations and local churches to in-
stitute an adequately progressive program to meet the new needs of a situation pregnant with possibilities of success resulted in the loss of the American born Italians to the Protestant churches.
D. AMERICANIZATION

In the early years of bilingual work the Missions were proselytizing agencies and agents for the Americanization of Italian immigrants. The expectation being the acceptance on the part of Italian immigrants of a superimposed American mores. The success of this program depended upon their willingness to be "melted" into the Anglo-Saxon cultural stream of America. The Methodists were sincerely earnest in the hope of achieving the desired results. In the 1903 New England Conference they expressed the problem, the challenge and the hope of success in these words.

The city problem still confronts us. Instead of approaching a solution it is becoming more complicated and serious. The stream of immigration, largely from Latin and Roman Catholic Europe, is constantly flowing to our shores. To assimilate these diverse human elements, is a gigantic task, and its attempt would be discouraging were it not so absolutely necessary. We believe the digestive process and incorporating power of the Republic, with God's blessing and our effort, will be equal to the work.21

The Missions program in this behalf met with little success. To any student of sociology such expectations would certainly seem foolish in view of the programs instituted for the attainment thereof.

21 NECM, 1903, 74.
From the 1907 Conference we get the impression that some considered this "distasteful" task better met by excluding these immigrants from our country.

Resolved 1, That we congratulate the statesmen in Washington who have improved the immigration laws, increasing the character of the safeguards to shut out undesirable immigrants. We believe that these laws ought to be still further amended and made more restrictive. 22

This legislation was directed at South Europeans as a means to curtailing Italian immigration.

The Italian's background is quite alien to the Anglo-Saxon American and the obliteration of these inborn characteristics, supposedly necessary for the individual's Americanization, is an impossibility. His Italian nature remains and has remained, although, in some respects modified by the American way of life.

On this theory of social service Protestant institutions, social and religious, have met with little success. Of their social agencies in the North End in Boston, William Whyte has much to say concerning this aspect of their program and its complete failure as an Americanizing influence. Furthermore, he infers that this aspect of social service work has done more to emphasize cultural

22 NECM, 1907, 95.
differences than any personal experience the Italian may have had in contacts with other racial groups in his daily life. The same is true of the 'Americanizing' influence of the Protestant mission.

Why this is so may be due to the fact that in these agencies the immigrant and second generation Italian expects a true brotherly spirit and a recognition of his own merit as well as need. But, he receives a solicitous care as one who is in a lower racial strain than the Yankee or the Anglo-Saxon who attempts to do him good.

In general, no visible attempt was made by the denominational leaders to understand their new neighbors. These immigrants represented an undesirable element that crowded the American families out and made mission fields out of Protestant strongholds. "Immigrants are crowding in upon us driving out American families and virtually making mission fields where once our churches were strong." To these enlightened people Italians were ignorant, dirty, "dagos," whose diet was spaghetti and garlic and whose intimate association was unwanted. But the needs

23 Whyte, SCS
24 NECM, 1905, 49.
of these new immigrants must be met, thus the establishment of city mission institutions. For the many years of my association with bilingual missions, I have no recollection of ever seeing an American group of young Protestants come to our mission to fraternize or extend a token hand of Christian brotherhood. Our view of the American Christian world outside our slum was an extension of our experiences with the solicitous American women who made up the Ladies Auxiliary, who were in turn the vital connection between the mission and the denomination. Christmas parties were a week or more after Christmas so that the left-over or discarded Christmas gifts of parties in American churches could be collected and brought to the 'poor mission children.' The psychological effect on a thoughtful growing child pondering on these things tended to more deeply entrench his loyalty to the Italian society and its mores and resist or reject the American way of life thus sowing the seed of the perpetuation of nationalistic prejudice.

Further evidence of the failure on the part of Mission programs to Americanize the Italian is given us by the reading of the facts relating to Italians in our suburbs and their connections with American Protestant
Churches. As the results of the questionnaire sent to 171 churches shows, only 159 Italians are members of these churches in eleven suburban cities. In all of Boston and these suburbs only 249 Italians have joined American churches. Fifty-nine (59) of these have transferred and 143 have joined by affirmation of faith.25 Of the thousands of converted Italian Protestant Christians that have moved from our City-missionary areas, 249 associated with American churches is an infinitesimal number. Some of these Italians in American churches no doubt came from other parts, those formerly connected with Italian missions would therefore represent a much smaller number.

25 See Chart X, p 133.
E. ACHIEVEMENTS

In over fifty years of missionary work among the Italians in Boston at least two thousand former Roman Catholics have been converted to Protestantism. Through these another two to three thousand of the second and third generation of Italians can be added to make a constituency of some five thousand Italian Christians. However, due to the large number who have moved out of the mission areas to the suburban districts they represent but a "potential host" to American Churches, yet untouched.

It has been said that many of these return to Roman Catholicism. The facts do not bare this statement to be true. Out of the four churches studied in this respect, the number that have gone back to the Roman Catholic Church is incidental indeed. These churches revealed the following reliable facts. The Evangelical Baptist Church, 126 members checked, it has been reliably established that only 4 have become nominal Roman Catholics. Saint Paul's Methodist Church, 151 members checked, 4 have become nominal Roman Catholics, having married Roman Catholic spouses; 4 have married Roman Catholics but continue to be active Protestants, at least
one of these with his children also. The First Italian Methodist Church, 180 members checked, 3 are now nominal Roman Catholics; 6 having married Roman Catholic mates still practice the Protestant faith, 4 of these with their children. The Baptist Bethel Mission, 197 members checked, 5 are known to have returned to the Roman Catholic Church.26

If only 16 out of 654 reliably checked have gone back to the Roman Catholic Church we may conclude that though generally absent from Protestant Churches, Italian converts are still Protestants, available to those in American Churches that would befriend and invite them into the communion of the Christian fellowship.

In the very areas where the Methodist witness is being withdrawn or merged there are still very many of these former constituents now mostly second and third generation Italians that can be drawn effectively by a new program which would meet their needs. What such a program would contain in its general structure and how its appeal should be sponsored will be discussed in the

26 The Evangelical Baptist Church members were checked with the pastor, Nov. 17, 1948. The two Methodist Churches - these names were listed in a notebook and checked with the pastors, Nov. 4, 12, 1948 and Jan 17, 1949. About 150 of these were checked personally by the student, some were traced through relatives and friends who were available for questioning by the student. The Bethel information came from the pastor on various occasions in October and December of '48, and from resident members who had knowledge of the others.
following chapter.

The Missions have produced a number of ministers of the Gospel.
F. THE MINISTRY

The Italian minister has had much reason for not being able to serve as well as he could. Desiring to engage Italian missionaries at the least cost, and unwilling to wait for properly prepared men; the denominations often chose unqualified men, gave them the rudimentary education considered absolutely necessary to carry on the work and put them to work in the missions immediately. The minister's salary, always much lower than that of his American Colleague, has been insufficient for living in large cities where he must work and living costs are so high. Usually with a larger family and greater demands made on him from needy folk he is in desperate straits for an additional source of income. Thus, a number of Italian ministers have resorted to part-time teaching or engaging in other trades. It is obvious, therefore, that few of them have been in a position to acquire the much needed education to equip them for an unforseen and changing ministry. The loss to the missionary enterprise has been great, its cumulative effect becoming obvious at this time of closing missionary enterprises. It is to be regretted that this knowledge
was not attained sooner.

Furthermore, from the earliest days of Italian missionary work there is evidence to maintain that the denominational leaders in planning this work often overlooked or ignored the common intelligence and knowledge of the Italian preacher in regard to his own people, in the formulation of these plans. In Sartorio's book we have an example of this very thing. A conference was being held on the planning of bilingual work as a whole and not a person of the foreign language groups concerned was invited as representative or even to offer closer knowledge of the immigrants in question so that intelligent planning would result. (At this time Sartorio was pastor of the St. Francis of Assisi Chapel in the North End.)

I attended last year (1917) a gathering of representatives of all the Evangelical churches in Boston. The gathering was to consider extensive religious work among the foreigners of the community. Not a single representative of the different foreign colonies was invited. . . . There are among the Russians, Greeks, Poles and Italians in Boston professional men, lawyers, doctors, and even Protestant ministers; but that did not seem to matter. The good representatives of that gathering felt no need of advice from the educated leaders of the different races which they desired to influence. 27

27 Sartorio, SRLIA, 59.
That this was not the only occasion is witnessed by a later statement in which the Italian work alone was involved.

Things of this kind are often done among Italians, many times thoughtlessly, and suggest a patronizing spirit which is bitterly resented.28

And yet this very pledge was made against the patronizing spirit in the book New England Methodism.

... it shall not be the condescending philanthropy of the superior to the inferior, but the brotherly putting of strength and prosperity behind weakness and worse.30

Like the social service settlements, workers were engaged by the administrators without regard to the question of adequate knowledge of Italians or interest in these people which would motivate the workers to learn of them and be sympathetic with them. The remark has been made by ministers engaged in missions where week-day workers were employed by the denomination that whenever a difference of opinion arose certain workers would reply, "you don't pay me," or "you didn't hire me." With irresponsible staffs like these the ministers' task was often made more difficult and an element of divisiveness introduced within the organization.

28 Sartorio, SRLIA, 60

29 Dorion, NEM, 74
Often the Italian minister has been venturesome for the Kingdom of God at his own expense. His hours of service to his constituency have been endless. His efforts for successful ministry to the community untiring. But, the successful fruition of energies have greatly been nullified by unambitious denominational programming. Finally, though he has spent a generation in bilingual work his voice has been listened to as one without authority on the subject.

It is a lonely life, the ministry of an Italian immigrant preacher. His education separates him from the "ignorant" constituency in the community in which he lives and his intellect starves for the creative satisfying exchange of fellowship in matter of the intellect which is the joy of American pastors. His is a solicitous fellowship with the American colleagues at the annual conference of his church.30

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30 At least six Italian ministers have been interviewed in the past six months on various subjects. On this subject only one was hesitant to admit the truth of the statements here made.
The second-generation Italian minister also feels the discriminating practice which the immigrant Italian minister feels. Although he may be as Americanized as any, completely without accent, and look like any number of nationalities besides Italian, his name is enough to set these practices in motion. One could engage in endless discourse about the subtleties and the subterfuge by which these experiences are made evident to those involved.

The Italian immigrant preacher was tolerated and treated with some care (for a while) because his was a language ministry which he alone could serve and the Americans needed him for the Italian Missions. But the young Italian minister, usually not prepared for the bilingual ministry, has gone into the English speaking ministry to face the cumulative prejudice of 75 years (the years of Italian immigration).

The American congregations, so the denominational leaders say, and it is generally true, do not care for an Italian American to lead them spiritually. It has been candidly and in all friendliness said to an Italo-American preacher seeking a position through a denomination office, "you cannot candidate in a good many of these parishes in need of ministers. After all, your name is --------."
Few Italian American ministers have had the opportunity to serve significant churches. Many have gone into settlement house work, social service work, teaching, and even left the ministry completely because of this obstacle to Christian service. In a few cases because the minister refused to go into bilingual work he would not be employed otherwise by the denomination. In a recent case, a resident Bishop invited such a man to join another denomination.

While I was in College and Seminary two very interested and well meaning professors prevailed upon me to change my name because of the obstacles that stood in the way of future success in the ministry as an Italian. After a recent unpleasant experience with an ordaining board, two professors candidly told me the cause of it all was prejudice. Recently an Italian American graduate of a religious school did change his name to avoid the struggle against ignorance and prejudice. A district superintendent even boasted of breaking a talented second generation Italian preacher because he came to New England as an American church preacher and would not go into the Italian ministry.
In order to discover how deep seated this type of prejudice and discrimination is, the student asked about fifty of his friends in the ministry what the reaction of their parishioners would be to Italians in their midst. The answers ranged from, "they wouldn't get inside the front door," to "we'd like them." The percentage shows that most of them would be unwilling to receive Italians, those who were anxious to have them were in suburban communities where Italians and their children have settled in great number posing a problem for the American churches.

Finally, in the face of such wide-spread misunderstanding between national groups in our churches, those responsible for handling personnel in our denominational headquarters have not done so wisely. These personnel 'directors' are in a position to help improve this relationship between national groups in the churches by a wisely instituted program of ministerial service so conceived as to bring these results to fruition. They must be the first to be emancipated.
CHAPTER VIII

FUTURE PROSPECTS

It is now time to begin a new program of effective evangelization of the Italians and to consolidate what has already been gained. In the following pages I will discuss three approaches which would be valuable to consider in the event of the launching of a new adventure in this field. As one who has been in close contact with the work for at least twenty years and a product of Italian missions I believe I can speak with authority wherever written data as such are not available.¹

¹ The student was raised in a Methodist Mission day-nursery, has been a member of the Methodist Church and closely related with bilingual missions all his life. During the years 1939 to 1943 the student was a volunteer worker in four of these Italian Missions.
A. IN DISTINCTIVELY BILINGUAL WORK

1. Those that hold this point of view believe that the Italian language is still the indispensable means to carry on the work. They further infer, that in order to win the child we must still put our major effort in winning the parents. This approach is definitely a valid approach for Italian missionary work in areas highly concentrated with Italians, specifically, where the immigrant Italian himself lives in great numbers.

However, as the chart on immigration shows us there has been no substantial Italian immigration since 1921. And since that time half as many in number as have come into the country have returned to Italy. Therefore, the large majority of immigrants living in concentrated areas of "national origin" are well on in years and have been exposed to Italian missionary work for a sufficiently long time to be considered "poor risk" in such a project.

Furthermore, the Italian family does not "weld" as strongly as is generally accepted, especially in city areas. The parents are no longer the only avenue to their children when we speak about the second generation.
As has been stated in a former context, being neither kith nor kin, fish nor fowl, they have acquired an independent nature which may be appealed to if done properly. Most of these being of adult age and largely independent from their parents, many being heads of families, pose another type of constituency than that formerly the main source of the missions membership.

From a close examination of these facts plus the history of the last twenty years in this type of distinctive-ly bilingual work it would seem that the Italian language though a very important item (somewhat indispensable) is not the indispensable item to successful missionary work in these areas. To prove this assertion we may cite cases wherever the English has been sacrificed for the sake of the Italian or because of the inability of the minister to use English well or make sufficient use of it in his prog-ram, the work has been in a state of general but permanent decline.²

² See pages 159-160. The Baptist Bethel, the former North End Congregational work, St. Paul's Methodist Church, and the First Italian Methodist Church.
We may conclude therefore as we have intimated that the distinctively bilingual work with the emphasis solely on the Italian has no further place in our missions today. In the first place, the types of community required for this specialized ministry no longer exist, nor will again under the present immigration quotas on Italian people. Second, the strictly Italian speaking generation is on the way out. Furthermore, those who are still in the areas in question have already been exposed to missionary work long enough to be considered not approachable to the Protestant evangelic movement.

However, by no means must we discount the importance of Italian speaking ministry as long as even a remnant remain to be ministered unto. Let us therefore, keep this ministry in its needed place but supply also the imperatively needed English speaking ministry.

2. There is another type of distinctively bilingual work just being manifest in some places. It was a fact in at least one place for many years but never recognized as it should have been and supported by the denominational leaders of that church. This type of bilingual work may be considered the logical evolutionary process of the old under competent leadership, yet though logical it has not been general. In it the English language has come into its
own and become the indispensable item, not discounting of course, the importance of maintaining the Italian language at the same time.

The First Italian Methodist Church in the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Giambaressi and his wife (1918-42) is the church referred to in the former paragraph. During these years this church was uniquely blessed in having an immigrant Italian preacher to minister to its Italian constituency as only an Italian immigrant preacher can do and his American wife and her mother both extremely well educated and teachers in their own right to minister to its English speaking constituency, the second generation Italian and his offsprings.

The second-generation Italian has been in need of such leadership from the very beginning when living in Italian colonies. The reasons being as follows, born in Italian households where no English was spoken to speak of, he invariably spoke in Italian or one of its dialects; in the school he learned English and in the streets which were his playground he spoke a conglomeration of English, slang, and Italian dialect. Therefore, the need of excellent English speaking leadership to cement his training in English with the actual use thereof until he was to leave the "little Italy" in which he lived for the outside world.
They conducted a program which was able to serve
the "new immigrant," the 'older immigrant" in terms of years
in this country and the understanding of English, and the
"new American" the marginal individual, the second genera-
tion Italian. This program could serve every need in every
stage of the mission's development.

Worship services, prayer meetings, quarterly con-
ferences, socials, plays, etc., though predominantly in
Italian for many years, were not without the necessary use
of English in its best form for a learning generation. In
recent years though its young constituency, the second gen-
eration was bilingual, the use of English became equally
important. In terms of the third generation who are much
less bilingual (if at all) this aspect of the church pro-
gram became supremely important.

Through this ideal combination the church served to
efficiently evangelize every segment of its constituency,
each according to his language ability. To nurture all in
a common faith and Christian family fellowship was the
aim. To minimize by its Americanization program combined
with its Italian program the conflict of cultures in the
home was its hope. Finally, to the goal of preparing a
harvest for the Kingdom of God that would always be
plentiful all its resources were dedicated.
The effectiveness of this program is proven by the fact that in these years the non-resident membership of the church was as active as the resident membership. Through its program this church was on the way to becoming the central point of Methodism's witness among the Italians in Boston. Yet today's picture is one of seventy-two years of service by these three people literally expunged from New England Methodism, maybe forever.

For the Italian immigrant pastor to become proficient in respect to the linguistic ability of this pastor and his wife would be an achievement indeed. That the achievement has not been general is evidence of its difficulty. The reason is the difference between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin in sentence construction and speech inflections. To illustrate, observe any Italo-American (second generation) born in a household where Italian is the language used for intercourse, English the language used in the school, and an indescribable combination of the two the common practice in the community. Even after much education the Latin sentence construction unconsciously comes out to make one ungrammatical, and the Italian pronunciation of vowels and consonant vowel combinations invades his speech to make it incorrect.
Furthermore, wherever Italian preaching has been successful it has been through the excellent use of Italian, as is fitting; which has also been true of English preaching in a bilingual setting. The reason may even be the very same that apply to good English in successful American pulpits. That this is no abstract generalization is borne out by the following ministries in this very church just mentioned. That of the Rev. Chris Di Pietro, an excellent Italian preacher but only a fair English speaker - the Italian congregation remaining the same while the American speaking part began to decline. His successor, handicapped in the same manner, could not counteract the trend. The present picture is serious indeed.
A more recent manifestation of this type of bilingual ministry is found in the Evangelical Baptist Church of Hyde Park under the leadership of its present pastor Rev. Frank Valdina. Here, sensing the need the pastor has instituted an English speaking service. The Italian service is held at another hour. By so doing the pastor is now consolidating the results of many years of sacrifice and service to his community. He is also insuring a future harvest in terms of the third and fourth generation Italians. Finally, because the church is located in a community where other English speaking national groups live, through his English speaking service, the pastor is beginning to serve the community as a whole. His church may be the first bilingual church (Italian) in the Boston area to make the transition in the near future and become the Church of the whole community losing its identity as an Italian mission. It may be the only one to do so.

In this case, the fact that this mission is located in a suburb of Boston and not in an Italian colony of Boston, has enhanced the rapid progress of this transition. Its constituency is becoming Americanized more rapidly because of its close proximity to the community as a whole which is American.
If Methodist support is maintained, the South Boston work which it has nurtured many years may some day evolve in the same way as the Hyde Park Baptist work just described though the process will be slower due to its location in a more Italian colony type community. Also, this church is in the midst of Irish Roman Catholic influence which is not conducive to rapid Americanization. The conflict which has always been evident between Irish Catholics and Italians as a whole enhances the colony type structure of the community thus slowing down its Americanization. The location in terms of the national origin of residents is all important.

In this church, the constituency seems destined to remain small in number and largely of Italian extraction, children of the present constituency. However, there is hope in the fact of the changing population trend going on in the community. It is reported that many of the Irish are moving out to Brighton and other suburban areas. If Protestant Italians from the mission areas of the North End and East Boston move into the community there is hope. Also, the complexion of the community may change again so radically as to redeem the situation completely, in a state of change all is possible.
This congregation represents a nucleus of Italian American Christians destined to remain. From it can be sponsored a new adventure in city missions - in fact it is an ideal location for such a project.
If the distinctively bilingual work is to remain in the communities of high immigrant concentration the latter type is the only type that can have permanence or prepare the way to the future when English alone will be the language of the missions and the missions will no longer be Italian missions as such but American churches in missionary areas. This leads us to the problem of leadership. Who will go, what preparation will be required over and above the average theological and sociological training?

Leading to the point in question let us draw some conclusions from the preceding pages. First, generally speaking the Italian immigrant preacher has been proficient in bilingual work with emphasis on the Italian. Where there has been success in this field with emphasis on the English speaking constituency it has been the exception in the Italian immigrant preacher and in some cases it has been the success of his American wife as his co-worker. Second, this leads us to accept the conclusion that a professional proficiency in both languages is imperative, thus posing what has seemed a dilemma to the denominational leaders for a long time.
The successful combination of these two languages has been sought in the second-generation Italian who is in the ministry. However, it has not yet been found. The reasons for this are simple; the second generation Italian who has been raised in the Italian mission has been sufficiently exposed to denominational policies and attitudes toward bilingual missions to be wary of preparing himself for such a ministry. Often, the Italian language has not been pursued in order to escape being catalogued as a bilingual preacher (by superintendents) and thus find it possible to say no to requests for his services in this field.

Yet this need not be a barrier, even as language is no barrier to sending missionaries abroad. If the second-generation will not go, train and send Americans into the cities and bilingual fields. Or make evident denominational sincerity in the project to minister to these people and a sufficient number of second generation Italians will be found to be trained and fitted for this task. Mr. Villaume, of the Massachusetts Council of Churches has suggested sending someone to Italy to learn the use of the language and the customs of the people then put him in the service of Italian city missions. I think it is a good suggestion - such interest would be evidence of seriousness in the business of ministering to these people.
After an intensive study of Protestantism in East Boston by the Mass. Council of Churches Research Dept., in an effort toward survival, conservation of finances, and more effective missionary promotion, the Italian Congregational Church, St. Paul's Methodist Church and St. John's Episcopal Church were federated last year. The Larger Parish Plan not being acceptable to the local churches, this Federation of the two Italian churches and St. John's American church was culminated in the hope of continuing the ministry to the Italians which form the predominant national group.

Uprooting their solidarity as homogeneous national groups and putting them into a congregation where there can be little in common to weld them together presents the difficult problem of trying to form a sudden and unnatural transition for the Italians and the Americans of this federation who are not yet prepared for it. Such transplanted elements may find it very difficult to survive successfully.

In terms of sociological theory and historical facts, it seems, the only logical merger in this situation should have been the union of both Italian congregations. Then, in order to affect the least loss, division or friction, the denominational leaders and the Mass. Council of Churches Research Department should have considered the
long and intimate relations of the two pastors and their congregations. Thus, providing a solution which would serve to preserve the unity between them without loss. The Reverend Mr. Romolo being almost of retiring age, could have been continued in its service until his retirement to serve as the Italian minister in pastoral calling, continuing his small salary. The Methodist pastor the Reverend Mr. Pizzuto, a capable preacher in Italian, being related to many in his congregation and a "paisan" to many in his congregation should have been placed in the position of serving as the Italian minister of preaching at his present salary. The combined salaries are less than the full salary of an American pastor in a church of two hundred members.

At the same time a minister to the second and third generation should have been engaged to serve the needs of a potentially large constituency. Furthermore, his talent could have been offered to the rest of the Churches in other parts of East Boston in an effort to reach out in their immediate community for an Italian American constituency. This may have been an expensive experiment, but it seems to be the only logical workable one.
Natural mergers of similar groups are wise and inevitable. This is the strategy that should have been pursued by the denominational leaders in bilingual work at least twenty years ago. For instance, in the Italian colony of the North End of Boston, for many years there were four bilingual congregations in an area of one square mile, competing, overlapping, and undermining one another in typical denominational fashion. For a while, before the Immigrant restriction Act of 1924 and the beginning of the dynamics of "upward mobility" they all fared well. With the decline in Italian immigration after 1921 and the restricted quotas beginning in 1924, coupled with the rapid exodus of "better-off" Italians from this district, these congregations began to shrink, solicit each others members and present a picture that required wise planning.

This was twenty years ago, at which time a natural merger of all these forces into one great institution with the continuing ministry of at least two of these preachers would have established an indestructable institution. However, having built on the sands of denominational fortunes instead of the Kingdom of God, the inevitable consequences of such policies are now taking place. With adverse conditions beating them about like the parabolic winds and rain of which Jesus spoke, their houses are about to be washed away.
When I mention sociological and historical evidences I am referring to the long history of bilingual work among Nordic immigrants who were, to begin with, largely Protestant. The only barrier this group had between them and the American people was the recency of their immigration and their language. Their ancestral background with the Anglo-Saxon's was the same. Yet the years required for their Americanization were many more than the denominations desire to give the Italians who are of a radically different strain of people.

The German immigration began in the middle of the 1800's on the heels of the German Revolution. They settled in immigrant colonies in the west. Served by immigrant German preachers in the German language it took at least two and a half to three generations before the transition was made and they considered themselves American. Furthermore with each wave of new immigrants that came later, during the years of the second generation, and settled in these homogeneous colonies, the second generation became more German by this fact than the Germans themselves, their parents. Thus, in general wherever this colony life was strictly nationalistic (aided by continued immigration) the Americanization process took another generation.
The Swedish national groups even to this day are quite largely ministered to in both languages with the exception of those who do not live in Swedish colony settlements and who represent the earlier immigration.

With the Italian people you have more complications when tampering with their natural transition into the American way of life. In the first place the Italian's ancestors came from a land that is recognized as Roman Catholic. His Latin heritage is considerably different from the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon. His name is musical, and whenever heard accepted as Roman Catholic. Finally he represents the most recent wave of immigrants and therefore is on the bottom rung of the ladder as far as cultural structure represents social position or class.

With these facts in mind it would be difficult to say that the federation in question in East Boston between two Italian congregations and an American one can possibly be successful.
If the Protestant witness is to remain in Boston, the Church must win the missionary areas of Boston. And, because there is a preponderance of Italians of the second and third generation in these areas there can be no Protestant advance without the evangelization of these groups. That we have not served these people thoughtfully is evidenced by the fact of the poor condition of the work in this area. New approaches must be made according to the difference communities circumstances and needs. No one approach would be satisfactory for the whole field in mind, just as no two communities are exactly alike. Each approach should be oriented toward the special needs of each community separately. The following discussion will attempt to outline a project for the communities or neighborhoods called East Boston, West End, and the North End.

First of all there should be an Interdenominational Commission set up to continue the study here made into the field of the working dynamics which motivate the Italian second generation in respect to their self development and their religious life. From these results certain practical experiments should be carried on in the fields mentioned. The results thereof should offer the key to reaching the soul long dormant of the Italian in our midst.
C. A NEW APPROACH IN EAST BOSTON

The attempt at unnatural union discussed in the earlier part of this chapter should be recognized as thwarting the ambitions of the Italian Protestant constituency to have their own church and their own integrated harmonious organization. The whole federation should be scrapped unless it can be affected on a higher plane of cooperation and coordination of the program of two distinct congregations in separate houses of worship.

St. Paul's Italian Methodist Church should be reopened and completely remodeled for a more modern and progressive program. It should be the dwelling place of both the Italian congregations as one on a non-denominational basis. The best name for it would be the Italian Protestant Church of East Boston. The financial resources should come primarily from the Methodists and Congregationalists, and insofar as an effective program through this church would serve the Protestant churches in East Boston, financial aid should be forthcoming from these denominational boards.

The working pattern of this new organization should be as follows. First, it should serve the whole community, wherever possible to strengthen the work of the other
churches in their immediate locality by tying into their organizations Italians of the second and third generation.

Such an organization as this should employ a second generation Italian who is well trained and has a better than average education to direct the whole program of the churches in the neighborhood in regard to the winning of Italians. His function furthermore, should be as minister to these people preaching dynamically to their need and their hope of redemption in the Gospel. The printed word would be indispensable to reaching the community at large, even those who would never become Protestants.

It would be impossible for a project like this to be successful without the aid of at least one minister who has served the Italian population in East Boston long enough to know the people that are to form a nucleus at the start. There are many former constituents now inactive in the community who could be gathered in at the start and the young people waiting for such a program would soon fill the place to overflowing.

It would be further advisable, at this stage imperative, that the American church called the St. John's Episcopal feel a kinship and common destiny with this program
thus combining its efforts to lend the visible evidences of Americanization throughout the program, facilitating the development of American ways in the Italian second and third generation.

A potentially large Italian Protestant constituency is dormant in the hearts of the Italian people in East Boston. A generation without religion and without a country awaits the redemptive power of the Gospel. A new adventure undertaken without regard to cost should awaken the soul of the Italian by the evidences of what Protestantism is really like.

It is the opinion of the student that East Boston is the most likely place for Protestant advance among the Italians. It is further proven by the facts presented in the statistical section of this study. East Boston is 'young' Boston, there are more people of youthful age in East Boston than any other section of the City. These second generation Italians in East Boston represent a constituency that is not tied as effectively to Italian ways and customs as seems apparent to the outsider. They await the message that will give them a sense of belonging to the human race in any respect, by their Christianity, by their ancestry, or by the fact of their American birth. Combine the three and you have the vital dynamics to begin the program.
D. A NEW APPROACH IN THE WEST END

The West End offers a new opportunity to attempt another "Church of All Nations" project such as is being carried on in the South End in the Morgan Memorial plant.

With a foreign born Italian population of 36.1 percent, a Lithuanian group of 2.9 percent, a Canadian group of 5 percent, a 1 percent Negro population and its large transient population of all groups, the West End is a potential field for Protestantism. Added to this is the fact that it is an area of "unusual need."

The logical center of this enterprise should be in the First Methodist Church under the able leadership of its wise pastor, the Reverend Arthur D. Stroud, who has to some degree begun the creation of such an institution as this. In view of the fact that this church faces a possible relocation of its building in the tentative plans for State House expansion, it will offer an ideal opportunity for centrally locating itself on Cambridge Street and modernly equipping itself for its social service, week-day education and religious program with a
view to absorbing the Heath Christian Center project in its new building; transferring the Heath leadership into this united project thus eliminating denominational duplication and placing at a minimum the social services of Protestantism to the West End's active Roman Catholic and Jewish constituency.

Due to the fact that the highest potential group is the Italian, the American leadership should develop with a view to transferring its responsibilities to an Italian second generation minister. This combination of Baptist and Methodist energies would solve this problem because of the fact that the leadership of the Heath Christian Center is now in the hands of an able Protestant second generation Italian who could be further trained to minister in the Italian language to the limited degree it will be required.

As has been stated in an earlier chapter the movement of the former Congregational Italian work from the North End into the First Methodist Church building some years ago may now become the seeds of a continuing ministry to the Italians and a nucleus needed to begin this new adventure. A redeeming feature of the whole situation is possible here.
The Negro element, traditionally Protestant, should be cultivated and included in the over-all ministry of the Church, thus presenting a potential interracial structure which if necessary, can absorb any future negro migration increases, and redeem a situation which might lead to the discriminatory setting up of a distinctively negro mission.

The prospect of a closing Methodist ministry in the North End, would in the event of inactivity on the part of the remaining Protestant agencies bring to this West End project a new though small constituency traditionally Methodist. The whole West End situation is pregnant with possibilities which if wisely directed might become the opening wedge for a renewed Protestant life in this community. Its present condition is too fluid to venture an opinion as to the probability of such action on the part of the denominations involved.
The North End neighborhood presents the most difficult problem for Protestantism of any of the other neighborhoods discussed in this study. Its parochial school enrollment increases, and the fact that it is an area where Roman Catholicism more than anywhere else is really on the march makes difficult any proposal for Protestant work. The recent establishment of the Christopher Columbus Parochial High School as a regional High School for Catholics and the proposed Christopher Columbus Youth Center which has been much publicized and is being highly anticipated by the community lead this student to conclude that here at least the Protestant situation is well nigh impossible.

In all the years of Protestant work in this community there has been bitter feeling on the part of the Roman Catholics. As has been quoted in page 78, directly from a Roman Catholic publication, the Protestant ministry has been accused of villainy and treachery against the Italian people. As may be discovered by a review of the Methodist Conference Minutes of 1911, there was at least one instance when the Roman Catholic Church offered legal opposition to the Protestants, in this case in regard to some property rights.
His Grace, the Archbishop, now Cardinal, was compelled by the court to sign the deed, and after spending nearly two thousand dollars in fitting up this fine five story building, which was formerly the North End Mission, we moved our work into it.\(^3\)

In recent years a former Roman Catholic priest serving as a minister was seriously put in jeopardy because of a "Roman Catholic" whisper campaign. He left the neighborhood.

The many years of Protestant social service in this community, through the settlement houses, have served only to strengthen the Catholic position by conserving their money and allowing the Protestant agencies to do the work needed by their constituents while they controlled through the local administration of these institutions. From authoritative\(^4\) sources the student was informed that in the case of social service leaders who had religious affiliation in a local Protestant church, instructions were given to remove same or transfer such membership out of the community. It is too late to say this money should have been serving the community through the agencies of distinctively Protestant proselytizing groups such as the Italian Mission Churches.

It further appears that the Roman Catholic strategy for Boston is to completely take over the North End as its first prize among the Italians and from there move out into other areas. Therefore, in the face of such heavily organized

\(^3\) NECM, 1911, 51.

\(^4\) A former employee, ordained Methodist Minister, member of a local church.
opposition and such completely disintegrated Protestant work, even the most ambitious program would be almost impossible to succeed if it were launched.

If some project were attempted in the North End, it would now have to be centered in the Boston Baptist Bethel because of the proposed closing of the Methodist Italian Church in the neighborhood. Such a program would have to be very much like that suggested for the East Boston Italian congregations with the exception of the connection with an American congregation, there is no American Protestant parish in the North End.

Furthermore, if such a program were instituted it seems imperative that the seamen's work carried on by this institution on Sundays be relegated to the Seamen's institution further up the street and not be allowed to jeopardize the efforts of the mission in dealing with fine families and young people. With this in mind, it is likely, that any work carried on by this church would naturally have much opposition, especially when it becomes the last institution doing Protestant work among the Italians in the North End.

The Boston Baptist Bethel's present leadership is excellent, its English speaking leaders, though of American extraction have effectively won the loyalty and confidence of the children and they should now go forth and minister to these young people in their own tongue, English.
SUMMARY

The great wave of immigrants from Roman Catholic countries that settled in Boston and vicinity posed a serious question for the Protestant churches which were being moved out before the avalanche of Roman Catholics. The denominations were faced with these alternatives; relinquish Boston to the Roman Catholic Church, or invest in City Missions to this "motley" lot of people in the hope of regaining some ground for Protestantism.

The first missions to the South Italians were established in the North End, the earliest stopping place for most Italian immigrants, in the hope that through ministering to their temporal needs they might be reached for Protestantism. The Italians being in great need, and "lukewarm" religionists, gave an early impression to American missionaries in the field that it was easy to win them to Protestantism, because they flocked in great numbers to mission halls for aid where many were converted.

No doubt, in the early years of this missionary history the Americans in the established Protestant churches were conscious of the prospective Americanizing influence the missions could become. The hope was that with the Americanization of the Italian and his children
many would become Protestants.

In the normal course of events it was expected that these mission churches would develop into the pattern of American churches. This pattern involved a combination of a number of complex sociological phenomena which included the eventual use of English as the exclusive language of the mission, the phenomena called self-support, the reproduction of leadership in terms of ministry to the Italians and the Italo-Americans, finally, the infiltration of Italian Protestant converts in the suburban American Protestant churches.

To achieve these hoped-for results certain logical steps are required in the ministry to these "new Protestants." First, these missionary agencies must be maintained and supported wherever self-support is insufficient. Second, a continuing program must be used to meet the needs of three generations, each considerably alien to the other, although they might represent three generations of the same family. (The foreign born, born of foreign extraction, and American born). Third, Americanization must be carried on in a friendly unsolicititous manner. In dealing with the native born groups this task must be carried on by those qualified to teach American ways and customs, often this must be an American person. Furthermore, those doing
this work must know what is happening to the second-generation Italian sociologically. The various psychological reactions described on pages 60 to 64 must be used as the sociological criteria upon which this work must be based. Fourth, the language problem must be handled in its various stages; the early use of Italian, the development of the use of Italian and English simultaneously, and finally the transition to English as the language of the whole group.

Fifth, the fact that Italians are "always on the move" presents the problem of coping with the mobility of this people. They must be related to suburban churches as soon as they move. They must be prepared to make this transition which most of them face sooner or later. The suburban churches must be prepared to meet them as equals in the Christian fellowship. Sixth, the availability of established churches in the communities of missionary enterprise must determine the length of time the mission is to remain in active function to fulfill its purpose. This availability of American churches must be used to facilitate the transition of the American born wherever the mission is on the way out. Finally, the handling of personnel to deal with the missions must be done judiciously, considering the discriminating pattern of our social structure. Furthermore, the handling of personnel which is Italian must be done with a view to
engaging them in Italian-American work wherever possible without coercion and with an interest in the successful development of these individuals in their chosen field of Christian service.

The following successes and failures may be noted in a review of the study made in the previous pages.

1. The Protestant churches have ministered for over fifty years in the Italian colonies of Boston and have won "no impressive minority" of our people to Protestantism. They have left no significant signs of their efforts in the form of stabile Italian Protestant institutions.

2. Their ministry may be called one of immediacy. They have ministered to the immediate constituency (the immigrant Italian) without anticipation for change and logical development.

3. The Americanization program, by and large, has been unsuccessful, solicitous and discriminatory. The greatest responsibility in this respect lies with the lack of sufficiently trained leadership and the administrative policies of the denominational leaders in regard to engaging trained leaders or handling the personnel available so that the best possible results might be attained.
4. The need of a progressively changing language ministry has been met only in isolated cases. In only one case is there any remaining evidence of its successful use. In all the others the leadership has been unable to cope with this problem. In some cases not enough employed leaders were engaged to supply the dual need of the mission for Italian and English ministries.

5. The mobility problem with its resultant effect upon the missionary enterprise and the hoped-for infiltration of Italians into suburban American churches was probably never adequately recognized. It is not a harsh judgement to say that generally there was little interest in the moving Italian by the American churches and inactivity served to protect these churches from the necessity of receiving Italians into their fellowship. The individual mission churches tended to attempt to hold their non-resident and absent members rather than relate them to American churches in their new communities.

6. Wherever American churches were available in the same neighborhood there was little or no exchange of fellowship. This slowed down the process of Americanization and contributed to the inability of Italians generally to feel at home in American churches thus remaining without church connection in the suburbs to which they moved.
7. Denominational inefficiency has in the final analysis been the determinative cause for the almost final failure of this whole Italian missionary enterprise.

Finally, there is evident a renewed interest in the Italian missionary enterprise that arises out of the desperately poor condition of the whole Protestant enterprise in "Missionary Boston." In East Boston the recent Federation of two Italian and one American church gives evidence that the denominations have not entirely given up and are willing to renew their attempts in this field. In some areas it is not too late. The optimistic view of the possibilities in a "new adventure" in this field expressed by the Presbyterians and others may renew the whole enterprise in the near future.
CONCLUSION

If the Protestant witness is to continue among the Italians in Boston the old methods of concentration on the immigrant will not do it. New methods and approaches must be studied and devised to effectively evangelize the second and third generation Italians. Having discussed these methods at length we need only point out the fact that one method will not work in every place. Each approach must be made in view of the special needs of each community.

Considering the difficulties involved and the mistakes to be overcome no phenomenal success should be expected. In at least one place, the North End, it must be recognized that the Protestant mission is well nigh impossible.

A revival of Protestant work among Italians in a new way is what has been called in this study as "a new adventure" and without the full cooperation of the denominations in this work it will be impossible to launch. There are possibilities in Hyde Park, South Boston, East Boston and the West End for the success of such an adventure.
In any event, if the Protestant witness is to remain in Boston and have any future it must seriously reckon with the winning of the Italian population in our midst. As Charles Clayton Morrison wrote in his series of articles in the *Christian Century* on "Can Protestantism Win America," secularism and Roman Catholicism are the two other forces besides Protestantism bidding for ascendancy.

Three major forces are now bidding for ascendancy in the cultural and spiritual life of America, these forces are Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Secularism. Each is profoundly in earnest in holding and proclamation its convictions; each is incompatible with the other two.1

In Boston, it is time the Protestants recognized their second adversary, the Roman Catholic Church, and in so doing carry on an ambitious program of advance among the Italians of the second and third generation through whom Protestantism may be able to balance the power in force to win Boston.

The Italian ministers have not finished their work, rather, they have begun ours and their long untiring efforts will be of little value if the Protestant Church is not challenged by their new adventure.

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PROTESTANT MISSION WORK AMONG ITALIANS IN BOSTON

ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

BOSTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

by

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1949
This study deals with South Italians and Sicilians, tenant farmers and laborers who emigrated because of their depraved economic condition and settled in the Italian colonies of Boston.

Their traits reveal an early crystallization of culture and religious beliefs which is a result of their geographical separation from the rest of Italy north of Rome. Superstitious practices envelope the whole people.

It is commonly assumed that all Italians are Roman Catholic, Italy's Protestant population is infinitesimal, in 1911 less than 2 million in all of Italy including Sicily. However, the Italian Roman Catholic is a luke-warm religionist and in the secular aspects of life suspicious of the Church and the clergy. Most of them are free of the control of the Church. Distortion in religious tenets is the general order of the religious life. Their religion is bound in every respect with the simple every day needs of existence and no relation to the next world is felt except at the hour before death. Religious motives have little if any influence upon Italian emigration. The Roman Catholic Church is closely integrated with their cultural system and group life because it perpetuates their old customs and contributes to the spirit of the group's solidarity due to its identification with their native land.
The Italian has a romanticized love for his native land. In 1918 170,000 returned to serve under the flag of the country under which "they had seen only the worst straits."

Until 1870 few Italians came to our shores, then a mighty stream began; numbering in the 121 years of Italian immigration ending in June 1940, 4,719,223 of which it is estimated 2 million emigrated from the United States.

Discriminatory legislation toward the South Europeans began in 1890 and by 1921 their quotas were greatly restricted. Since 1934 the highest number of Italians to enter the country was 7,712 in 1938. These restrictive acts tend to express the American theory that South Europeans and Italians are of an inferior national group. This has become part of the discriminatory phase of American life which has even pregnant religious organizations.

The Italians settled in the big cities and tended to form Italian colonies through which they maintained the contacts of the old world and received psychological and emotional satisfaction. Thus, old world mores were continued and passed on to the younger generations. However, the American born Italian has not fully accepted or promoted these and generally speaking has reacted in various ways to throw off these "foreign" ways.
Most of the Italian immigrants have worked as laborers and lived bereft of the common comforts of life in order to save and raise their standard of living.

Culturally speaking, the family is the most important unit in the Italian colony. Constructed along consanguine lines there is an extended family solidarity which contributes to the exaltation of old-country ways and the slowing down of Americanization in the immigrant and second generation. This family unit is also an economic unit where all earnings are pooled for the benefit of the group.

Associational groups aid the perpetuation of the old world customs and religious practices and serve to form a nationalistic bloc of people in the political structure of Boston, thus enabling the Italian through his group to attain "favors" which he otherwise would be unable to attain.

There is a serious cultural conflict taking place in this very close knit cultural system between the immigrant generation and the second and third generation, their children. The latter accommodating themselves to the mores of this country find themselves in conflict with the mores of their parents and the struggles perceptibly change the psychological development of these immigrant offsprings. They are neither "fish nor fowl" not accepted by their own and rejected by the population of their native land.
The Italians began settling in Boston around the year 1860 in the North End, the oldest and poorest section of the city. In 1940, its 31,555 Italians made up 17.4% of Boston's foreign born population. In Boston including 40 cities and towns within a radius of 15 miles of City Hall the Italian population (immigrant) numbers 67,956 or 16.4% of the foreign born population, the second largest group in this area.

The North End is over 90% Italian and Italian extraction. In spite of its 45.6% population decrease since 1910 its density rate is nearly 1,000 persons per inhabited acre, the highest in Boston, ten times that of Boston as a whole.

East Boston was settled by the overflow from the North End, beginning about 1905, here the Italians have improved their living conditions. Of 53,901 East Boston population in 1945 more than 80% represent Italian stock. Its population loss has also been great, 1920-30 2.5%, 1930-40 3.9% and 1940-45 5.3%, yet in spite of its losses, its density rate is 203.4 persons per inhabited acre, twice that of the City of Boston as a whole.

The population decreases in these neighborhoods show that the Italians are moving out to suburban areas where living conditions are greatly improved.
Protestant missions to the Italians began in 1890 when E. J. Helms and a group of Boston University School of Theology students began a missionary settlement in the North End. In 1893 the first Italian minister was engaged. The early history of this work is reminiscent of the "store front" missions. Serving a certain line of their needs, the missions were able to reach them and many were converted giving evidence that the Italians were amenable to Protestantism. In 1923 the Methodists built a church for this mission on Salutation Street and acquired the five-story settlement house in front of it on Hanover Street where they carried on their work. For many years this was an extremely successful enterprise, the most auspicious in Boston. In recent years it has become the supreme example of utter failure. In 1948, its properties sold, the tiny congregation finds itself soon to be homeless.

The Congregational Mission started in 1900. Always a part-time work it remained small. Later as an independent group its congregation moved to the West End.

The Episcopal work adjacent to the Old North Church was started in 1914. Their Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi still serves a small following.

The Baptist Bethel began to work with the Italians in 1921 through its center for seamen and the aid of an Italian
minister. This work was never significant. Serving a small group it has not contributed greatly toward the evangelization of the Italians in the North End.

In 1920 soon after the migration of Italians into East Boston, the St. Paul's Methodist Church began working with a nucleus of former North End Protestants. With the removal of the American congregation the Italian group took over the building. Its work has had periods of significant success, in recent years it has deteriorated more rapidly than any of the others in the field. In 1948, in an effort toward survival, its congregation and the Italian Congregational congregation were federated with the American congregation of St. John's Episcopal Church. The Congregational work always a mission without a church, made impossible any significant growth.

The Immanuel Lutheran Italian work although very small still continues under the supervision of the larger Lutheran Church in East Boston.

The present membership of these churches is considerably under 100 for each, a possible total of 400.

A nucleus of former North End Protestants in the South Boston Italian colony formed the Italian Church of Our Saviour as a Methodist group in 1924. Its membership has always
been small, but steady. A part time work, it is destined
to continue and grow.

In Hyde Park, the Evangelical Baptist Church started
as a mission in a shack in 1914. Today its church and work
is identified with the community as a whole and thus serves
a larger constituency than its Italian people. It is the
only church in Italian work which shows visible evidences
of a significant future.

There has been no "impressive minority" won to Prot-
estantism after over 50 years of Protestant endeavor. The
apparent failure of most of these missions bespeaks a very
inconspicuous future for this Protestant enterprise to the
Italians in Boston.

Failure has been due to a number of causes. 1. The
missions have generally carried on a ministry of "immediacy",
without anticipation for change and logical development.
2. Americanization has been arrested because of solicitous
and discriminatory techniques used. 3. There has been an
inadequacy of trained personnel due to the fact that denom-
inational administrators have not been able to handle the
talent available with wisdom and a sense of Christian equal-
ity. Simultaneously, denominational policies have discour-
aged young Italian Americans from going into Italian missions. 4. The Italian people have been constantly on the move toward better communities and higher standards of living, but the missions have not successfully connected these with any of the Churches in their new communities. The American churches have not attempted to meet these new people, their inactivity has enhanced their insulation from unwanted relationship with the Italians coming into their communities. Finally, the field has been rife with denominational competition. It was inevitable that this duplication of effort would eventually become financially prohibitive and self-destructive. The Italians became an "overchurched minority" without any future.

However, in spite of all this failure, there has been a recent revival of interest in evangelizing the Italians in Boston. For Protestantism, any advance in Boston must reckon with the Italian people. Therefore, it is possible that a "new adventure" may be launched by the Protestants which may redeem the future of this work in some areas where conditions offer this possibility. These areas may be South Boston, Hyde Park, and East Boston. The North End appears to be beyond any further help.
Francis D. De Bilio was born on February 3rd, 1918 in Boston. His parents Francesco and Gaetana were Italian immigrants, wed in this country and settled in the North End of Boston. Here his father died in 1918.

He was raised in the Methodist Mission in the North End where his mother was converted and raised her children in her new found faith. Graduating from Boston English High School in 1935 he went to work until 1939 at which time he began his college training at Gordon College in Boston.
In 1943 he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Gordon College of Theology and Mission. During his four years at Gordon he also studied at Boston University as a special student.

At Boston University School of Theology he began his theological training in 1943 and after two years of intensive studying received the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology, (1945).

Since 1942 he has served as student pastor and pastor of the Pines Community Church in Revere, Mass. He was instrumental in the building of its church and the acquisition of its property. For many years a Methodist, he was ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1946.

He married Josephine Giardina a graduate of Vesper George School of Art, a child was born in 1947.