



August 21, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"He said to the paralytic 'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.' He stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them."

Mark 2:10,11,12

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The Blurring of a Vision

This is the story of one piece of land in the northeast section of what is now Pasadena CA, bounded roughly by Elizabeth and Howard Streets, on the north and south, and by Wesley and Oxford Avenues on the west and east.¹ The story covers more than 140 years.

Chapter 1- **Enjoying the Benefits of Riches:**

John William Hugus' Ranch (1890 – 1910)

John W. Hugus was one of the richest men in Pasadena near the end of the Nineteenth Century. Born in Pittsburgh, he moved west as a young man and opened a trading post (which ultimately included a bank) in Wyoming. Over the next few years, he opened similar successful stores/banks in twenty young communities throughout Wyoming and Colorado, which made him independently wealthy. At 49 he moved to Pasadena CA, where he continued to multiply his wealth through land speculation and banking. He settled his family on a comfortable 15-acre estate on undeveloped land to the northeast of the Pasadena of his day. This became known as the Hugus Ranch. He died in 1901, but the ranch was not sold until 1910.²

Chapter 2- **Expressing the Christian Message:**

Pasadena Nazarene College (1910 – 1977)

The Church of the Nazarene was a new Christian denomination in 1907, emphasizing the "holiness" or "entire sanctification" teachings that emerged through Methodist evangelism. They placed a high value on Biblically-based education, and the cluster of churches in the Los Angeles area soon began a post-secondary school. In 1910 the group purchased the Hugus Ranch and named the school *Pasadena Nazarene College*. In 1920 the college's signature structure was built, and it still stands today at 1539 Howard Steet (see image above).³ *Pasadena Nazarene College* became a Mecca for people in the denomination, and many Nazarene families relocated to Pasadena. After six decades, however, college leaders decided to move to another campus, and Point Loma Nazarene University was established as the denomination's West Coast school.⁴

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Chapter 3- Evangelizing the Lost Masses: *U.S. Center for World Mission (1977 – 2018)*

Dr. Ralph Winter was a Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary when he developed a passionate vision to bring the Gospel to all the world's "Unreached Peoples" in preparation for Christ's Second Coming. He and a dedicated group of visionaries focused on the old Pasadena Nazarene College campus as the place where this could happen. Over the next few years, they miraculously raised the money needed to buy the property, gathered a group of dedicated missionaries and agencies with similar visions and opened *William Carey University as a training center for young people zealous to reach the lost.*⁵ However, after Dr. Winter's death, much of the momentum seemed to diminish, and the Center never reached its imagined potential. Finally, it became unfeasible to support the campus financially, and the decision was made to sell it.

Chapter 4- Educating a Few Privileged Kids: *Education First Academy (2018 - ?)*

In 2018 Education First won a bidding war to purchase the U. S. Center property. Well-funded by their wealthy founder, Swedish billionaire Bertil Hult, the campus was transformed by the addition of several state-of-the-art buildings for teaching and housing students. COVID interrupted their plans, but now they are fully operational. The program is designed to provide 175 high-school-aged students from all over the world to come to the United States for an elite secular educational experience. An affluent family in Qatar, or Spain, or Argentina, or China can spend a mere \$80,000⁶ per school term to send their privileged son or daughter to the Pasadena EF Academy campus.⁷ Their child will be isolated from the natives by a high security fence surrounding the entire campus, and will be protected from local cultural influences (including religion).

Think of irony #1: Dr. Winter envisioned using this piece of property to reach lost people all

over the world; now lost people from all over the world are on this campus, but they are unreachable.

Think of irony #2: This story begins with a rich family enjoying the benefits of their riches, and it ends with many rich families making sure their descendants continue to enjoy their privilege.

Something to pray about.

Pastor George Van Alstine

¹ Of course, there were even earlier chapters in the history of this piece of land, but I don't have access to written Native American records, if any exist.

² Hugus (1838-1901) is memorialized in the Pasadena area by a historical marker at "Hugus Alley" in Old Town (<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=189647>), and by his gravestone in Mountain View Cemetery (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7934266/john_william-hugus).

³ Over the years, several classroom and dormitory structures were added on the campus, and more than 40 homes were built on or near the property to house teachers, staff and families of students.

⁴ Since the decision to sell was made in 1973, I became curious whether it may have been motivated by the building of the freeway interchange at that time, which uprooted the center of the City's African-American community and the caused the migration of those residents northward and eastward. After some searching, I found a published record entitled *Moving Stories: The Move from Pasadena College to Point Loma as Told by the Participants* (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3hMXF5MXi6EMUJ2RkxsX3ItVzQ/view?resourcekey=0-n0tLjXuc1UkWxKqA8S7A4Q>). In discussing reasons to move the college from its Pasadena campus, one board member mentioned "white flight" as a factor (page 20), while another spoke of a realtor's opinion that they were now in a "blighted neighborhood" (page 30). Familiar terms to some of us who were around at the time.

⁵ Dr. Winter's wife recounts the dramatic story of the decision to purchase the property and the decade-long struggle to pay off the mortgage in her 1987 book *I Will Do a New Thing*. During the years of the Center's existence, a number of people who came to this area to participate or study at the Center became part of the Altadena Baptist Church family, and some are still with us.

⁶ <https://www.efacademy.org/en-us/pasadena/admissions/tuition-full-boarding/>

⁷ <https://www.efacademy.org/en-us/pasadena/>