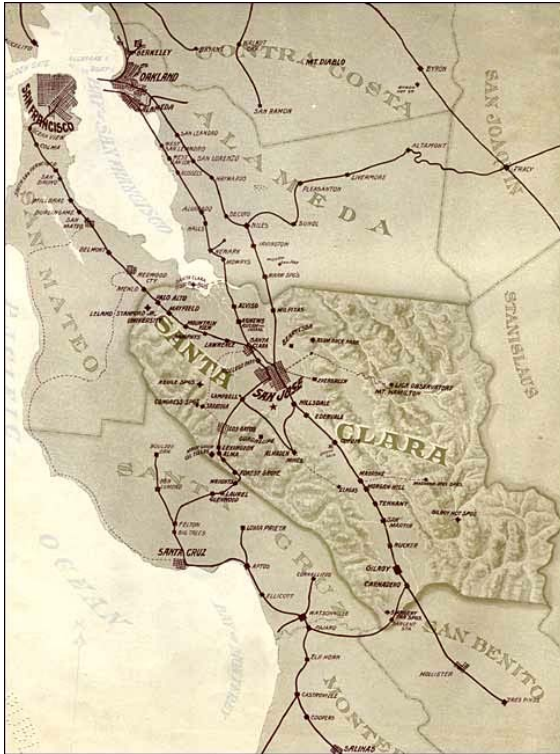


A Historical and Spiritual Map of

SAN JOSE

Compiled by Emily Gee



Jeremiah 29:7

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you... and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

As we move to San Jose...

our heart's desire is to experience the restoring love of God the Father ourselves and then to express His justice, mercy, and faithfulness (while partnering with other churches and organizations) to all people of San Jose, the Silicon Valley, and the world.

For The River Church Community
A Church in the City...for the City

INTRODUCTION

Each great city offers something unique to its surrounding community. New York offers its financial center, avenues of entertainment, and skyline. Los Angeles gives us Hollywood and the film industry. From New Orleans, the rich innovations of jazz sound forth.

But what about San Jose? What is San Jose's unique gift? The answer might at first seem elusive. In fact, an old song suggests that even just finding the way to San Jose can prove difficult. The following pages, however, attempt to lay down a map of the city, so that we might navigate the way to San Jose and in turn find the city's historical and spiritual heartbeat.

Recently, *San Jose Mercury News* columnist Joe Rodriguez went on a search for all things Very San Jose. With the help of his readers, he came to the following conclusions.

San Jose:

- ◆ Is built on a suburban principle and remains today essentially a very large suburb.
- ◆ Is all about families, cul-de-sacs, and real neighborhoods.
- ◆ Shows its multicultural face at places like the Berryessa Flea Market.
- ◆ Loves its outdoor festivals (They're outside and they're cheap!)
- ◆ Finds its strength in its people.

Rodriguez also suggests that San Jose is a city on the brink of discovering itself, a city that is about to come into its own. So, we ask: What will San Jose's identity be? Furthermore, what will the city's spiritual identity be? And finally, how will The River Church Community join God's movement in the city, as He reveals San Jose's true identity in Him?

Keep those questions in mind as you read the following pages and begin to gain an understanding of San Jose's essence. And remember that this is still a work in progress; the end of the story—the realization of San Jose's identity—still remains to be written.

NATIVE AMERICAN LAND: THE OHLONES

In the 16th century, over 10,000 Native Americans lived in the area between Big Sur and San Francisco. The population consisted of about 40 different tribes with 100-250 members each. For the most part, the tribes functioned independently of each other, each group having a distinct name, leader, territory, and set of customs.

When the European explorers arrived, they marveled at the diversity of culture and language encompassed in such a small area. To the native population as a whole, the explorers gave the name "Costeños" or "Coastanoans," meaning "coastal people." That name stuck for hundreds of years until the tribes' descendants decided to refer to themselves as Ohlones (origin unknown). The Ohlones specific to the San Jose area called themselves the Tamyen.

The Ohlones enjoyed such an abundance of food supplies that their language did not include a word for starvation. Spiritually, the Ohlones were animists, and summoning power from the spirit world was a part of their daily life. In 1770, approximately 1,200 Ohlones inhabited the area that is now the Santa Clara Valley. Some of their villages and burial grounds sit under the downtown San Jose Holiday Inn and the Tamien Light Rail station. Once the sole inhabitants of the land, the Native Americans of Santa Clara County continue to dwindle in number. In 1990, they made up 0.4% of the population. In 2020, it is estimated that they will make up only 0.2%.

HISTORICAL SYMBOL: ABUNDANCE Since the native Tamyen inhabited what is now San Jose, the area has always provided abundantly not only for its residents but also for the surrounding communities. The focus of provision has changed, but whether it has been wheat, fruit, or technology, the San Jose area seems to overflow with resources. Let's pray that the city would also enjoy the abundance of an even greater resource—God's overflowing presence.

"Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in abundance" (Isaiah 55:2).

A CITY BEGINS: 1777-1885

Settling on the east bank of the Guadalupe River, a group of 66 people, led by Lieutenant Don Jose Joaquin Moraga, founded San Jose on November 29, 1777. Named after Saint Joseph (the patron saint of the Spanish expedition to California), the Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe was



California's first civil settlement and was established to supply the Presidios of San Francisco and Monterey with crops and cattle.

Almost 50 years later on April 11, 1822, California took an oath of allegiance to Mexico, making San Jose part of an official Mexican territory. However, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the Mexican War (which revolved mainly around land and expansion issues) ended. As a result, California was ceded to the U.S. The treaty favored the U.S. in terms of territorial expansion, and it also created problems concerning citizenship and property rights for the Mexicans who suddenly lived in U.S. territory.

HISTORICAL SYMBOLS: WHEAT AND THE HARVEST

For almost two decades (1850-1870), the country's wheat industry revolved around San Jose. The promise of a great harvest still remains for the city. Let's pray that San Jose will produce a harvest of true worshipers.

"But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together" (John 4:36).

Only a year later, California drafted the state's constitution in Monterey. The coveted honor of becoming the state's first capital went to San Jose on December 15, 1850. The first session of lawmakers that met in San Jose was referred to as the "Legislature of 1,000 Drinks." Because the representatives were a long way from their homes with little to occupy their time after work, the speaker would adjourn the sessions, saying, "Let's go have a drink boys...Let's go have a thousand of them." With the winter came heavy rain, making the lawmakers even more uncomfortable as they traveled on San Jose's unpaved roads. As a result, the city lasted only one year as the capital. In 1851, it was moved to Vallejo.

Progress infused the next decades. In an effort to lure the capital back to San Jose, the city worked on improving its streets. It also introduced the first streetcar, new hotels, and a courthouse. With half a dozen flour mills and newly completed railroads, San Jose became the central marketplace for the country's wheat production during the 1850s and 1860s. In the 1870s, orchards replaced the grain fields, and San Jose became California's fruit shipping capital.

St. Joseph's Cathedral

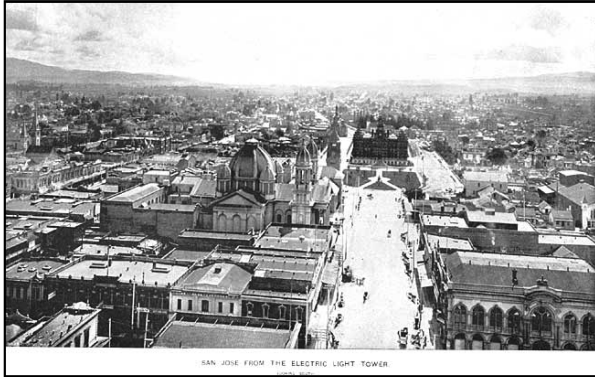
For the first 26 years of San Jose's existence, residents wishing to attend mass had to make the long and sometimes dangerous trek to Santa Clara, which involved fording the unpredictable Guadalupe River. On July 12, 1803, however, San Jose laid the cornerstone for its first church (on the site of the current cathedral at Market and San Fernando Streets). Like the settlement, the church was dedicated to St. Joseph, and it quickly became the center of the town's life. For many people today, the cathedral still remains at the city's core. Author Marjorie Pierce writes, "Since 1777, the heart of this valley has been the 'pueblo' of San Jose, and since 1803, at the heart of San Jose has been the church of St. Joseph." Currently St. Joseph's ministry to downtown San Jose focuses on the homeless population. For people in need, they provide a variety of services including a food pantry, a weekly medical clinic, job search assistance, and mail service. They also have four transitional housing locations.

A NEW CENTURY: 1886-1930

The turn of the century brought the first automobiles, more paved streets, and Lechter's Garage (the first auto repair garage in the West) to San Jose.

By 1928, Santa Clara County had one car for every three people, and San Jose had the greatest weekday automobile count of any city in California.

This period also brought some notable guests to the city. President



McKinley addressed San Joseans in St. James Park on May 13, 1901 (a statue of the president, commemorating his visit, still stands in the park today) and President Theodore Roosevelt visited on May 12, 1903.

During this period, however, San Jose also suffered some significant losses. In 1887, the city's Chinatown, located on Market Street, was destroyed by fire. The earthquake on April 18, 1906 also caused considerable damage to the downtown area as many buildings crumbled to the ground.

Then a decade later, on December 3, 1915, the Electric Light Tower—which bridged Santa Clara and Market Street, stood 237 feet tall, and served as a downtown landmark—crashed to the ground after a series of storms.

The fruit industry boomed during the years of World War I, as San Jose supplied mass quantities of food for the U.S. troops in Europe.

In 1925, the city's reputation for agriculture reached its height, bringing with it the distinction of being the Prune Capital of the World.

San Jose's Chinatown

Chinatown suffered destruction from fire both in 1870 and 1887. The area harbored heavy anti-Chinese sentiment; the City Council even passed a motion that declared Chinatown a public nuisance. As a result, the Chinese community of approximately 1,000 people had to relocate several times.

An observer of the 1887 incident described people running through the smoke to salvage their belongings from the fire. Oddly, someone had drained the water tanks that day so that the usually efficient fire department did not have enough water to fight the fire effectively. On the site of the old Market Street Chinatown (destroyed in 1887) now stands the Fairmont Hotel.

With the financial help of John Heinlen, businessman and "friend of the Chinese," the next Chinatown was relocated and constructed entirely of bricks. Along with the Heinlen family, the Methodist Church (led by Reverend Thomas Dunn) also had actively sought to protect the Chinese community. This did not come without cost; in February 1869, the church was set on fire.

HISTORICAL SYMBOL: LIGHT

For over 30 years (1881-1915), the Electric Light Tower was a central feature of downtown and a symbol of San Jose. The tower became known worldwide because it was the most powerful concentration of electric light in the U.S. at that time.

The symbol was lost, however, when it fell down in a storm, and the city decided that it was not economically feasible to rebuild it. Let's pray that light would, once again, be a powerful symbol of San Jose. May the light of God go forth from the city to the world.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket but on the lampstand and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE, THE HUB: 1931-1950

By 1931, Santa Clara County revolved largely around San Jose, the area's commercial and economic hub. The county was called the Valley of Heart's Delight, and San Jose (often referred to as the Garden City) was its capital.

At this time, the seeds for the new technological revolution were being planted at nearby Stanford University. Innovators, such as Dr. Frederick Terman, David Packard, William Hewlett, and the Varian brothers, were making significant technological advances that would affect the area's future. Pioneering work in radio and radar, which began as early as 1912, led to innovations such as the integrated circuit, semi-conductors, and computers.

Like many cities around the country, San Jose suffered the effects of

the Great Depression. After the attacks on Pearl Harbor and U.S. entry into World War II, about a half million military personnel relocated to Northern California. Two-thirds of them stayed in the area after they completed their service. This massive surge in population would have profound effects on the city's future.

The month of November 1933 stands out as a dark period in the city's history. On November 9, Brooke Hart, the son of the prominent family that owned the well-known Hart's Department store, was kidnapped and brutally murdered. Near the end of the month, San Joseans took justice into their own hands. A mob—estimates of the size range from a few hundred to several thousand people—smashed down the door of the jailhouse, where the two murder suspects were being held and lynched them in St. James Park.

Journalist and eyewitness, John V. Young recalls "people milling about making ugly noises in their throats like wild animals worrying a bone, a wordless, chilling sound like nothing uttered by humans." Mob mentality and a dark spirit had taken over the crowd, which included all types of people—rich, poor, professionals, students, and people of all ethnicities. This incident, the last recorded lynching in California—it was not spurred by any racial tension; the victims were all white—brought notoriety and national attention to San Jose. It had a lasting effect on the downtown area. The community had come face-to-face with its own capacity for violence.

First Christian Church

First Christian Church Disciples of Christ has roots in the city that stretch back to 1870. For the first 14 years of the church, the members wandered almost nomadically around the downtown business district, meeting in a variety of different places. Over the next century, the church's building was destroyed several times (by earthquake and fire), relocated, and then rebuilt.

First Christian is now located across the street from San Jose State University and is currently led by Pastor Larry Sweeney. The church houses its own ministries as well as the ministries of other local churches and groups, including CHAM (the **Community Homeless Alliance Ministry**). CHAM has been highlighted frequently in recent news because of its political activism and advocacy of the homeless in San Jose. First Christian opens its doors each night to homeless people, and CHAM (led by Pastor Scott Wagers)—along with other citizens' organizations—has been able to persuade the City Council to address problems in the downtown area that otherwise might be overlooked.

HISTORICAL SYMBOL: FRUIT

Referred to as the Garden City, San Jose once had a thriving fruit industry. Although little evidence remains of the area's agricultural capability, there is still spiritual fruit to be cultivated. Let's pray that San Jose will bear much fruit for the kingdom of God.

"Happy are those whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper"
(Psalm 1:1-3).

URBAN SPRAWL: 1951-1981

By 1960, the role of downtown as the center of trade and commerce had greatly declined. As suburban shopping centers, like Valley Fair, opened, downtown San Jose began to see its downfall.



The “Goals for San Jose,” drafted in September 1961 by city staff and citizen groups, demonstrated a longing to reverse the effects of urban sprawl and return to the flourishing downtown of the previous decades.

The goals outlined the city’s objective to “create and maintain an attractive central core and make it the cultural, commercial, financial, and entertainment center of the South Bay.”

Sadly though, by 1970, every department store in downtown had closed or relocated. The only reminders of the old downtown were the vacant buildings that lined the streets.

Cathedral of Faith

Since 1965, Cathedral of Faith (formerly The Friendly Bible Church and also Faith Temple) has maintained a consistent and far-reaching television ministry to San Jose and its surrounding areas. In addition to many other ministries, the church runs the **Reaching Out Center**, which distributes food and clothing to people in the city. The church also offers help to specific neighborhoods in San Jose through the **Adopt a Block** program. The ministry aims to transform one neighborhood at a time by providing on-going, hands-on assistance, which includes yard maintenance, graffiti removal, and holiday gifts.

RECENT YEARS: 1982-PRESENT

The 1980s ushered in an ambitious redevelopment program—fueled by private investors as well as public funds—which sought to create a downtown that was vibrant and alive, a pleasant place both to live and work. To meet that goal, the city planned to add parks, theaters, museums, and a light rail system to the city’s landscape. In 1988, author Kathleen Muller noted a resurgence in downtown: “Rising out of the rubble of structures demolished a decade or more ago, downtown San Jose today is again becoming the commercial and cultural center of the Santa Clara Valley.”

Today this redevelopment is still in progress. The San Jose Redevelopment Agency, which was created in 1956, continues to dedicate itself to improving the quality of life in San Jose. The agency’s responsibilities include building affordable housing, upgrading transportation systems, and rejuvenating neighborhoods. At the beginning of April 2002, a new five-site development project, which aims to blend new construction with the charm of historic buildings, began downtown.

CityTeam Ministries

CityTeam, the vision of Lester and Pauline Myers, began in 1957 as a feeding program for the homeless in downtown San Jose. Four years later, the ministry (then called the San Jose Rescue Mission) acquired a larger facility that allowed it to provide shelter as well as meals to the homeless. In 1969, CityTeam merged with the ministry of May and Mac McLean, which used a camp environment to reach out to troubled youths. In the years that followed, CityTeam expanded to many other cities nationwide such as Chester, Pennsylvania; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Seattle, Washington.

Currently, CityTeam San Jose provides meals, shelter, showers, and clothing to the homeless population of the city. The staff also cares for the needs of the youth and families of San Jose. In addition, men and women, who struggle with drugs and alcohol, can find help through CityTeam’s recovery program.

RECENT YEARS (Continued)

San Jose's downtown development has progressed hand-in-hand with its technological development. In the decades after World War II, the boundaries of the city expanded significantly, making San Jose the fastest growing city in the U.S. as well as the third largest city in California. Along with this geographical expansion, high tech factories spread south from Stanford through San Jose. Because of the heavy concentration of hundreds of technologically based businesses, the area was dubbed the Silicon Valley, a reference to the principal material used in semiconductors.



In recent years, the San Jose area has ranked near the top of quality-of-life studies sponsored by various universities. Since 2001, however, the city's lifestyle has experienced some friction.

HISTORICAL SYMBOL: INNOVATION

San Jose is now one of the world's main sources of technological innovation and creativity. Many people agree that the area's unique atmosphere seems to generate new ideas and works. Let's pray that God's new work would soon take precedent in the hearts and minds of San Jose's people.

"Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness. rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:18-19).

The dot-com crash of 2001 and the economic aftermath of September 11 left many San Joseans at a point of instability, both financially and emotionally.

Mayor Ron Gonzales addressed this instability in his 2002 State of the City address on February 6, saying that the Silicon Valley had "shouldered much of the pain" of the country's recent recession. In response, the mayor introduced a 10-point economic plan that included job training for the unemployed and the provision of experienced business mentors for small business owners.

In addition, he highlighted the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative—the City Council's commitment to strengthen San Jose's neighborhoods by working with neighborhood associations, expanding community services, and improving community safety.

The mayor also outlined a program called San Jose Prepared (which focuses on increasing disaster-preparedness) and a solution for, what he called, San Jose's "childcare crisis." In conclusion, the mayor emphasized that San Jose is the City of Solutions and its most important goal, at present, is to secure the future for its people.

CULTURAL SYMBOLS: SUCCESS AND PROSPERITY

According to a study on disposable income, published by the *San Jose Mercury News* in April 2001, San Jose ranks second in the U.S. based on its median household income of \$71,000. Let's pray that San Jose finds true success and prosperity by seeking wholeheartedly after God.

"Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

"You shall meditate on (the book of the law) day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful" (Joshua 1:8).

SAN JOSE AT A GLANCE

FOUNDED: November 29, 1777

INCORPORATED: March 27, 1850

INCORPORATED AREA: 177 square miles

SAN JOSE: POPULATION GROWTH*

1860	3,430
1880	12,567
1900	18,060
1920	39,642
1940	68,457
1960	204,196
1980	640,225
1990	790,600
1995	839,300
2000	923,600

**Official State Estimates, State of California, Department of Finance*

SAN JOSE: FORECAST POPULATION*

2000	928,100
2005	969,800
2010	1,001,600
2015	1,026,300
2020	1,047,800

**Association of Bay Area Governments*

DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE:

Encompasses the area bounded by the Guadalupe River on the west, 10th Street on the east, Julian Street on the north and Reed Street on the south.

CLIMATE: Temperatures vary from an average of 50 degrees in January to an average of 70 degrees in July. San Jose enjoys an average of more than 300 sunny days per year. It has a mean annual rainfall of 14.4 inches.

ELEVATION: The highest elevation is 4,372 feet at Copernicus Peak in the Diablo Range; the lowest elevation is sea level.

FACT: San Jose is the third largest city in California, following Los Angeles and San Diego. It is the 11th largest city in the U.S. (2001, *State of California, Department of Finance*)

FACT: San Jose was ranked the fifth best city in which to live and work in the United States. (1998, *Fortune Magazine*)

FACT: Of any metropolitan area in the nation, San Jose has the best public safety record. (2001, *City of San Jose*)

FACT: San Jose residents speak more than 46 different languages. (2001, *San Jose Unified School District*)

FACT: Biblioteca LatinoAmericana, one of the city's library branches, offers one of the largest collections of Spanish language materials in Northern California. (2001, *City of San Jose*).

"VERY SAN JOSE" ASPECTS OF THE CITY *

- Alum Rock Park
- Outdoor festivals
- Cul-de-sacs
- Tropicana Shopping Center
- Berryessa Flea Market
- Emma Prusch Farm Park
- Gypsy Cinema
- Village of New Almaden
- Japantown
- Shade trees on city streets
- The Prune Yard (So what if it's in Campbell!)
- San Jose Giants/ Municipal Stadium

**According to San Jose Mercury News columnist Joe Rodriguez*

SAN JOSE DEMOGRAPHICS: ETHNICITIES (2000)*

36%	White
30.2%	Latino
26.9%	Asian or Pacific Islander
3.3%	African American
3.6%	Other

**2000 Census*

SAN JOSE DEMOGRAPHICS: AGE GROUPS (1999)*

Age	%
0-17	26.8
18-24	9.9
25-34	17.2
35-49	24.8
50 and over	21.3

**2000 Sales & Marketing Management Magazine*

SOME OF THE CITY'S SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES

The Oasis

At the turn of the century, Lechter's Garage, the first of its kind in California, sat across the street from St. James Park. In 1987, the building was remodeled and used as a nightclub, The Oasis. But after a violent murder occurred on its front steps, the nightclub was shut down. The current owner of the property has dedicated the building for God's use. The building is still called The Oasis, but it now hosts bible studies, prayer meetings, and youth activities. Manager Raul Galan envisions The Oasis as a hub connecting churches together.

Whether it has welcomed cars or nightlife, the location of The Oasis has always served as a venue for innovation. The creativity continues today as the filming of a new Christian TV show, **SoulShow**, is beginning within The Oasis' walls. Through interviews, testimonies, and music, SoulShow will aim to be real, current, and relevant to the nation's youth. SoulShow's creator, Jaeson Ma, has a powerful ministry to the youth of San Jose. Fifteen high schools have invited Ma to preach on their campuses. His ministry has received a significant amount of unsolicited donations as well as overwhelming support from local churches.

Pastor Calvin Cook

Working under the covering of Cathedral of Faith, Pastor Calvin Cook and his ministry team serve full-time in downtown San Jose. Pastor Cook began his ministry in St. James Park in 1985. For the past six years, he has preached in the park every Sunday morning at 10:30 AM. After he preaches, he busses his audience of 70-100 people to a soup kitchen (provided by the City of San Jose) and feeds them. There has never been a Sunday on which someone has not committed their life to Christ. Pastor Cook is currently looking for a bigger facility so that more people can receive food. He is also trying to unite churches together in ministry to the downtown area. Pastor Cook says that this unity will compel the City of San Jose to make more money available to the St. James Park ministry.

Praying for the City

In the early 90s, a handful of students and parents, who called themselves **Pray Valley**, began praying each week for spiritual renewal on the Valley Christian High School campus in San Jose. This birthed a powerful prayer movement that led to a small group of pastors meeting weekly to pray for the South Bay.

As the group grew, Pray Valley turned into **Pray South Bay**. Pray South Bay now represents nine Bay Area counties. Almost ten years old, it is one of the oldest working models of prayer evangelism in the nation. Pray South Bay consists of three tracks—one for intercessors, one for pastors (the Pastor's Prayer Summit which involves a monthly meeting and an annual retreat), and one for individuals (Lighthouses of Prayer).

As **Lighthouses of Prayer**, people commit to blessing their neighbors daily through prayer. As of March 2001, Lighthouses of Prayer was also covering 134 Santa Clara County schools with prayer. One observer writes, "Never before in the history of the San Francisco Bay Area has there been such a large group making such a long term commitment to pray and believe God for the salvation of the general public." When Lighthouses of Prayer first started, San Jose was suffering an annual escalation in its crime rate. Now, the FBI has declared San Jose to be one of the safest large cities in the nation. In 1998, reports of violent crime declined 7% nationwide and 17% in San Jose. In 2000, residential burglaries were down by 8% and armed robberies were down by 21%.

Billy Graham

As Lighthouses of Prayer was taking off in the mid-90s, a delegation of pastors (who were not aware of the prayer movement) invited Billy Graham to come to the Bay Area. In September and October of 1997, the Billy Graham Crusade visited three cities—San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose. As a result, thousands of people committed their lives to Christ. The *San Jose Mercury News*, whose readership was nearly 350,000, covered the crusade on its front and back page. It also printed Billy Graham's prayer of repentance in its entirety.

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY: SPIRITUAL CLIMATE

“There is more spiritual openness than there used to be on the San Jose State campus, and it’s encouraging,” said Diane Stegmier, who has been a campus minister with SJSU’s **Nurses**



Christian Fellowship for the past five years. Growing spiritual openness was particularly noticeable during the time following September 11. Stegmier said that many people were shocked and angry about the events and asking, “Why?” The night of the 11th, the campus held a prayer vigil, which a significant amount of students attended. The vigil allowed students of different faiths to share their responses. That night in particular, there was an atmosphere of great spiritual receptivity, said Stegmier.

Another event that stirred spiritual openness was the Prayer Faire, which was held three years ago. On the day of the faire, campus ministries set up stations on campus and collected written prayer requests from students. At noon, representatives from those ministries, with the help of an amplified sound system, shared their testimonies with students.

Several years ago, campus ministries also met for weekly prayer meetings hosted by **Spartan Christian Fellowship**. The meetings went on for about a year, but stopped when the group’s leader graduated. Ministry efforts that last for two or three years are typical for the campus, which Stegmier described as a “come and go” place. Perhaps because of the “commuter campus” atmosphere and

because most ministries are student-led, there is a high turnover in the leadership of campus groups. Some groups—including the **Baptist Student Union** and **InterVarsity Christian Fellowship**—had a strong presence many years ago but now are no longer active at SJSU.

Recently in April 2002, a currently active campus group, **Faculty Christian Fellowship**, hosted a discussion between representatives of different faiths. Curtis Chang, Director of Expansion Ministries at the River, participated as the Protestant representative in the discussion that drew about 50 people. Chang noted that the campus has a strong multiethnic feel, which implies that there is a varied representation of religious groups as well. A representative from each of the following religions—Islam, Judaism, and Catholicism—participated in the April discussion.

Ministries on campus (which currently include Nurses Christian Fellowship, Faculty Christian Fellowship, **Campus Crusade for Christ**, and **Asian American Christian Fellowship**) look forward to the concentrated outreach effort that happens during the second week of September—the week that marks the beginning of the academic year. In the past, ministries have set up information tables in the main part of campus during this time. They have also distributed gift packets and school supplies, which parallel the university’s distribution of new-student packets. For the ministries, a great momentum leads into and surrounds the start of fall classes.

SJSU HISTORY AT A GLANCE

- 1857 Founded in San Francisco
- 1862 Established as the California State Normal School
- 1871 Moved to San Jose
- 1921 Renamed San Jose State Teachers College
- 1935 Renamed San Jose State College
- 1972 Achieved university status
- 1974 Renamed San Jose State University
- 1993 Reached cultural pluralism with no ethnic majority

THE RIVER CHURCH COMMUNITY IN SAN JOSE

Prophetic Words Concerning the City

In the past several years, various prophetic words have been spoken about God's movement in San Jose. Keith Zafren, Lead Pastor at The River, recounts his discovery of one of those prophecies:



“Before San Jose State was even an option for us, Brad Wong (Shepherding Pastor at the River) and I met with a group of pastors, who were primarily from San Jose.

We do this every five weeks or so; we have lunch, talk, and pray with them. At this particular meeting, I decided to talk a little bit about our belief that God was calling our church to San Jose.

I asked the pastors if they would welcome us into the city. I asked them if we could link arms with them and together have a passion for introducing people in the city to Jesus.

Every single pastor had a resounding response, saying ‘We would love to have you in this city.’ Then something very interesting happened.

The wife of one of the pastors said that there has been a word of prophecy spoken for years about the city of San Jose—that God would bring revival to the city.

Then she said that they believe that the revival will begin on the San Jose State campus. She said, ‘Your church would be perfect for that—the kind of values that you have, the mission that you have, the kind of church that you are.

‘For years we have been praying for the revival to begin at San Jose State, and nobody has broken in there. Your church would be perfect for that.’

At the time, The River leadership wasn’t even thinking about San Jose State as a meeting place. All we were thinking was: ‘If we were downtown, the campus would be a great ministry outreach.’”

Right around the same time, Robert Jacobson, Restoration Ministries Pastor at The River, encountered another prophetic word. He tells about his experience:

“In February 2002, I attended the Pastor’s Prayer Summit in the Santa Cruz mountains. I had been to the summit in previous years, and this year we began by breaking into groups of three and praying for each other.

I was in a group with an Indian woman, a Korean woman, and an African-American woman. All three were very powerful in prayer, and they asked me what I could use prayer for.

I explained to them the position we were in as a church and my particular role in the area of intercession and prayer ministry.

As I began to share about our vision for downtown San Jose, they literally popped out of their seats—really happy and joy-filled.

They shared with me that they had actually received a prophetic word a number of years ago about downtown San Jose, and specifically San Jose State—that God was going to bring revival to the city and it was going to start at San Jose State.

Even as I shared just briefly our story, their sense was that somehow God was going to use The River in the fulfillment of what had been spoken some time ago about renewal and revival in the city.”

THE RIVER CHURCH COMMUNITY IN SAN JOSE

Some Conclusions

- ◆ **Diversity:** Beginning with the indigenous Ohlones, the geographic area of San Jose has always housed a variety of cultures in close proximity to each other. This co-existence, however, has not always been harmonious. San Jose represents a land that has been reclaimed, first from the Native Americans, and then from Mexico. The repetitive relocation of Chinatown in the downtown area also symbolizes the tensions between the city's diverse people groups. Concerning San Jose's current ethnic diversity, the Church's role is to be an agent of unity—renouncing divisions and embracing all cultures. The San Jose area then is an ideal host for The River, for the church's name comes from Revelation 22:1-2, which reads “The angel showed me a river that was crystal clear, and its waters gave life. ...on each side of the river are trees that grow a different kind of fruit. ...the fruit gives life, and the leaves are used as medicine to heal the nations.”
- ◆ **Unity:** At present, several Christian groups in downtown San Jose desire a greater unity among the many different ministry efforts focused on the city. In fact, unity in purpose and Spirit may be key in seeing God's work move forward in the city. Consider the words spoken by local intercessor Chuck Pierce in July 2001: “Three streams flow toward one river in San Jose...what God is going to do in San Jose will not be located in one specific congregation but will be in multiple congregations and spread across the city.” Unity among the churches may in turn lead to citywide unity. Together let's envision San Jose as a city of God's people.
- ◆ **Homelessness and Hunger:** The fact that so many downtown ministries focus their efforts on the homeless and the hungry indicates the importance and urgency of those issues. It almost seems impossible to minister to the downtown area without addressing and engaging with these types of poverty. Being a

church in the downtown area compels The River to ask: How will we respond to the homeless and the hungry?

- ◆ **Neighborhoods:** Looking at the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative and writer Joe Rodriguez's recognition that “the real San Jose is evolving off the (downtown) map, in its neighborhoods and communities,” we can conclude that neighborhoods are very important to the city. The River Delta—which seeks to create partnership between the River and neighborhoods—seems strategically positioned then to engage with San Jose's identity as a neighborhood city.
- ◆ **San Jose as Provider:** Founded as a place that would meet the needs of its neighbors—San Francisco and Monterey—San Jose has continued to meet the needs not only of its surrounding cities, but also of the nation and world. Once the provider of the country's agricultural needs, San Jose now provides technological resources for the world. Therefore, the Church might ask: How will God provide for the world's spiritual needs through San Jose? Might San Jose become a place that enacts God's provision on a global scale?
- ◆ **Identity:** Since its brief stint as state capital in 1840, San Jose has hungered for recognition as a great city. It has longed to be the center of attention both politically and commercially. Yet the city remains in the shadows. Although its population is greater than that of San Francisco, San Jose still does not enjoy the same attention as its neighbor to the North. Recognition may come, however, when San Jose embraces its unique characteristics and finds its own path, apart from the great cities it has tried to emulate so far.

God longs to direct the unique path of San Jose. He longs to go before and forge the way. He longs to protect and provide for the city. He longs for the path of San Jose—its journey and destination—to revolve around Him. God invites the Church to forge this path with Him and reveal this way to San Jose. He invites The River Church Community to join in His path-making movement that is already taking place.

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This city guide is by no means an exhaustive account. For further information, refer to the sources that were used to compile this book.

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