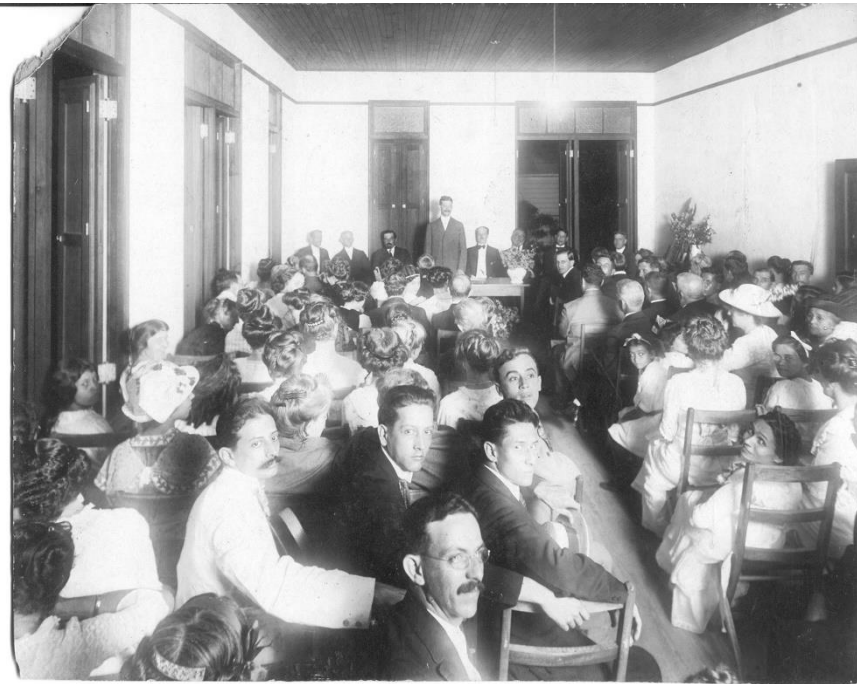


Spanish American Baptist Seminary

With longstanding commitment to train Spanish-speaking pastors, the American Baptist Home Mission Society in February 1921 began Los Angeles classes for five Mexican pastors. Initially housed in a Christian Center of the Los Angeles Baptist City Society, the school soon attracted students from Mexico, Central and South America and from across the country. Rev. John Francke Detweiler served as the first president and dean of the school. First known as the Spanish American Department of the International Seminary, a school established to teach pastors in their own (largely European) languages, the school soon became independent.

By 1931 supporters had raised funds and completed a new building, complete with classrooms, library, chapel, offices, dining room and dormitory. In addition to the American Baptist Home Mission Society, support also came from the LA



Gathering at Spanish-American Baptist Seminary circa 1920.

Baptist City Mission Society, the woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, the American Baptist Publication Society, and the Southern California Baptist Convention. In 1944 the school established a department to train women.

In 1954 the school's board selected the Rev. Benjamin R. Morales as the seminary president. Like the school, Rev. Morales began his Christian walk in a Christian Center, the Aiken Institute in Chicago. He continued in that leadership role until 1963. In 1964 the school was closed, with a Home Mission Society study citing as reasons decreased attendance from pastors in the U.S. and increased availability of seminary training in Mexico City and Puerto Rico. The AB Home Mission announced that Seminary scholarships designated for Spanish-speaking students would support the training needed for Spanish speaking leaders. Official records for the school were deposited with the American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS). ABHS staff would welcome additions to these records, particularly stories about their training and ministries from individuals who attended the Spanish American Baptist Seminary. Stories can be submitted by email to abhs@abhsarchives.org or regular mail, to AB Historical Society, 3001 Mercer University Dr., Atlanta, GA 30341.ss

