



Pastor's Column

Reverend Mark Nakagawa

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Dear Centenarians:

The annual Nisei Week festivities will be in full swing as you receive this month's Chimes, and once again Centenary will be at the center of all the action throughout the two-week annual celebration. This year's festivities take on a 'historic' quality in several important ways.

The City of Los Angeles marks its 50th anniversary of the Los Angeles-Nagoya Sister City relationship. The Mayor of Nagoya will lead a delegation to Los Angeles and participate in the Nisei Week parade and other events.

Besides being the "headquarters" for this parade, we are welcoming back our friends from Aomori, Japan, who bring with them a "Nebuta" float which will add to the cultural beauty of the parade.

We also welcome the Troop 12 Boy Scouts from San Francisco, who travel to Little Tokyo to participate every other year. They are 'historic' in being the first Boy Scout of America that was formed within the Japanese American community almost 100 years ago. Moreover, they were organized as an outreach of the Pine Methodist Church in San Francisco, the "mother church" of all Japanese American Christians.

Each year, the Nisei Week Foundation presents a number of Community Service Awards to organizations that provide (or have provided in the past) exemplary service to the local community. One of the organizations that will receive this recognition is the "Yellow Brotherhood," or 'YB.'

The 'YB' will be recognized for its groundbreaking work in helping the Japanese American community come to grips with the reality of drug abuse among its youth and young adults during the late 1960's and early '70's. Their work was instrumental in helping individuals and families break the cycle of pain, denial, shame, and in some cases, death, that was prevalent at the time.

Centenary was instrumental in YB's genesis, as we opened our doors and provided a place for the group to organize its work. This was done in spite of (or maybe because of) the fact that no other organization within the Japanese American community wanted to be associated a group of streetwise young people that was willing to confront an issue which everyone else wanted to sweep under the rug and pretend didn't exist.

It was simply a bold move on the part of Centenary's pastoral and lay leaders, and one that resulted in many future young lives being saved and given meaningful direction in life. Although YB ceased to exist as a formal organization over two decades ago, its influence continues to be known through the people who were "there" 40 years ago when the group began and who continue to be involved in grass-roots activities within the community today

At t time when technology encourages the rapid movement of information so quickly that we barely have time to absorb it, the many events taking place in and around us throughout this month give us an opportunity to pause and reflect on historic influences that continue to impact our lives and give meaning to them in the present day.

We at Centenary take a measured amount of pride in knowing that our past record of serving the community continues in the present, giving new life and meaningful purpose to people in all circumstances.

Grace and Peace,

Reverend Mark M. Nakagawa