



100 YEARS AZUSA

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AZUSA STREET, CATALYST FOR WORLD WIDE REVIVAL

The year of 1906 may have witnessed the events that made the Pentecostal revival a worldwide reality. In this year, the Pentecostal message gained a significant beachhead in the Midwest, especially in Texas and Illinois, under the leadership of Charles F. Parham. The revival in the Azusa Street Mission under the leadership of William J. Seymour not only impacted the city of Los Angeles but also established Pentecostal missions in California from San Diego to Oakland, and reached Seattle, Washington, and crossed the border into Canada. Missionaries, both foreign and home, began leaving Los Angeles to spread the revival across North America and around world. By the beginning of 1907, the revival was

poised to become a major worldwide movement.

The revival experienced in the mission located in a barn-like building on Azusa Street in Los Angeles ignited revival in cities, states, and nations. The glorious revival at the Azusa Street Mission was to fade and end in three years, but the revival it began beyond its wall still burns brilliantly across the landscape of the world.

The outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Los Angeles happened because several favorable conditions came together in harmony. First, Parham's doctrinal formulation of speaking in tongues as the sign of the baptism of the Holy Ghost was crucial to ignite the revival in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, but it was also vital to spark the

revival in Los Angeles. Since Seymour had accepted Parham's doctrine while attending the Bible school in Houston, he carried and used this key in Los Angeles.

Second, people in Los Angeles were seeking a spiritual renewal before Seymour arrived in the city on February 22, 1906. In 1905 Dr. Joseph Smale, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Los Angeles, traveled to Wales, England, to investigate the Welsh Revival under Evan Roberts. After his return, he and Elmer K. Fisher, pastor of the First Baptist church in Glendale, California, began holding congregational prayer meetings to seek for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

When Smale was forced to leave the pastorate of the Baptist church,

he organized the New Testament Church with people who followed him. Although at the time he knew nothing about the sign of speaking in tongues, he preached and prayed for an outpouring of the Spirit. Fisher, Frank Bartleman, and others often attended prayer services at the New Testament church, and in one of the services Fisher received the Holy Ghost with the sign of speaking in tongues. Jennie Moore, who received the Holy Ghost on April 9, 1906, during Seymour's prayer meeting in the home of Richard and Ruth Asbury on Bonnie Brae Street, was a member of the New Testament Church. The next Sunday, April 15, she testified of receiving the Holy Ghost in the morning service, causing many of the congregation to gather at the Asbury's home that evening.

Smale himself sought the baptism of the Spirit with the sign of tongues but never experienced it. At length he rejected the doctrine of tongues and called the revival at the Azusa Street Mission one of fanaticism. As a result, most of those who had received the Spirit left his congregation to open a Pentecostal mission under the leadership of Elmer Fisher on South Spring Street, only a few blocks from the Azusa Street Mission. This mission, known as the Upper Room Mission, would play an important role in the movement. Like other leaders of Pentecostal missions in Los Angeles, Fisher accepted the prominent role of the Azusa Street Mission, but he promoted some distinctions from Azusa in the forms of worship.

Bartleman, moving to Los Angeles in December 1904, became a part of the early prayer groups seeking the outpouring of the Spirit in Los Angeles. He attended the New Testament Church and often ministered in the small Holiness

missions in the city. In March and April 1906 he attended some of the prayer meetings held by Seymour in the Lee home and later in the Asbury home. He also wrote and distributed evangelistic tracts, did personal evangelism in the city, and corresponded with Evan Roberts.

Bartleman promoted a climate for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost in articles he submitted to Holiness publications. During 1905 many of his articles appeared in Holiness papers in the Midwest and South, especially the *Way of Faith* in Columbia, South Carolina; *God's Revivalist* in Cincinnati, Ohio; and *Christian Harvester*. After the outpouring of the Spirit in Los Angeles, he continued to write articles for these same papers, reporting on the revival at the Azusa Street Mission. His articles captured the interest of Holiness believers, preparing them to become a part of the Pentecostal movement.

Third, a spiritual spark was needed to ignite the revival, and this spark came with Lucy Farrow, who had come from Houston, Texas, a short time before April 9, 1906. It was Lucy Farrow who laid hands on Brother Lee when he was baptized with the Holy Ghost. Brother Lee was the first person in Seymour's meetings to receive the Holy Ghost, and when Lee began speaking in tongues in the home on Bonnie Brae Street, six others received the Holy Ghost. Three days later, on April 12, Seymour received the Holy Ghost.

The Growing Revival in Los Angeles

The small group of Pentecostals in the Azusa Street Mission grew slowly at first, but soon the building started to become full. By August 1906 the revival had spread into several Holiness congregations in Los Angeles and its suburbs.

Several local ministers, including A. G. Garr, Glenn Cook, Thomas Hezmalhalch, A. H. Post, Florence Crawford, Frank Bartleman, Elmer K. Fisher, and William Pendleton, received the Holy Ghost, most of them at the Azusa Street Mission. People from the more spiritual churches in Los Angeles began pouring into the Azusa Street Mission. Bartleman wrote that "Holiness meetings, tents, and missions began to close up for lack of attendance. Their people were at 'Azusa.' Brother and Sister Garr closed the 'Burning Bush' hall, came to 'Azusa,' received the 'baptism,' and were on their way to India to spread the fire."

When William Pendleton and his Holiness congregation became Pentecostal, they lost their church building. Bartleman invited Pendleton to move his congregation to the mission he had started in a church building at Eighth Street and Maple Avenue, and this mission became an important center of revival.

In an article dated August 1, 1906, "Pentecost has come to Los Angeles," in the *Way of Faith*, a Holiness paper edited by J. M. Pike, Bartleman reported that in spite of opposition from churches and the struggle against fanaticism in the services, the meetings at the Azusa Street Mission "are crowded out." He wrote that "demons are being cast out, the sick healed, many blessedly saved, restored, and baptized with the Holy Ghost and power." He also predicted that "the revival will be a world-wide one, without doubt."

Working at the Azusa Street Mission

About a dozen people left their employment to become full-time workers at the Azusa Street Mission; these included Glenn Cook

(former Holiness minister), Clara E. Lum (who had been a white servant in the home of Charles F. Parham), Florence Crawford, Hiram Smith (formerly a Methodist pastor), Jennie Moore (who married Seymour in 1908), Ivey Campbell, and R. J. Scott (a minister from Canada). A room in the mission served as the business office, a large room upstairs was used as a place where people could tarry for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and other upstairs rooms served as work areas and living quarters. A cottage behind the mission was also used for living quarters.

The workers ministered in the services, evangelized in Los Angeles and other cities, prayed with and assisted people at the altar, and did other needed tasks. No one was paid a salary; they depended upon the offerings that came in the collection box that hung on the wall in the auditorium. Glenn Cook, whose ministry later played an important role in spreading the Oneness message, served as the business manager for the mission, and he also worked on the *Apostolic Faith* paper published at the mission.

Seymour, described as a humble servant of God, was the recognized leader of the mission. Bartleman acknowledged Seymour's leadership role but expressed the feeling of equality among the workers: "Brother Seymour was recognized as the nominal leader. But we had no pope or hierarchy. We were 'brethren.' We had no human programme. The Lord Himself was leading. We had no priest class, nor priest craft. These things have come in later, with the apostatizing of the movement. We did not even have a platform or pulpit in the beginning. We were on a level."

Bartleman attributed part of the success of the Azusa Street Revival to the seasoned workers: "One rea-

son for the depth of the work at 'Azusa' was the fact that the workers were not novices. They were largely called and prepared for years, from the Holiness ranks, and from the mission field. ... They were largely seasoned veterans."

Reaching California and Beyond

By the end of 1906, evangelists and workers traveling from the Azusa Street Mission had opened missions in most of the major cities in California, established a large work in Portland, Oregon, reached into Washington, and converted at least one congregation in Canada to Pentecostalism.

The west coast, however, was only the springboard toward worldwide revival. In November and December, ministers from the Azusa Street Mission began taking the Pentecostal message east, especially to the Midwest: Glenn Cook took the message to Oklahoma, Missouri, Indiana, and Tennessee; Ivey Campbell went to Ohio; and Tom Hezmalhalch opened missions in Colorado. The message they carried sparked revivals in churches and cities, adding thousands to the mushrooming Pentecostal movement.

Reading and hearing about the revival at the Azusa Street Mission, foreign missionaries came to receive the Holy Ghost; they then returned to their mission fields to spread the revival abroad. Moreover, several individuals and families who had not been missionaries felt called to the mission field, and they departed from Los Angeles to go to nations in Africa, Europe, Asia, South America, and the Middle East. During the next several years, reports from Pentecostal missionaries revealed the tremendous revivals ignited in these nations.

A Methodist missionary to Norway, Thomas Ball Barratt, came to the United States to solicit funds

to enlarge the structure of his mission work in the city of Christiania, Norway. While in New York City, he heard about the revival in Los Angeles. He located and attended a small Pentecostal mission that had been started in New York City by people from the Azusa Street Mission. On November 15, 1906, he received the Holy Ghost when some of the Pentecostals laid hands on him. When he returned to Norway with the Pentecostal message, he began spreading the Pentecostal experience not only in Norway but also in other Northern European nations. In his meetings, Barratt drew large crowds, many times as many as 1,500 to 2,000 people. During a period of five to six years, he spread the Pentecostal revival through most European nations.

The Apostolic Faith Paper

One effective tool that helped to make the Azusa Street Revival a worldwide revival was *The Apostolic Faith* paper published by the workers at the mission. In September 1906, they published the first issue, calling it the same name as Parham's paper, which he began publishing in 1898. They also adopted Parham's policy of publishing and distributing the paper by faith without subscription, solely depending upon God to prompt people to send offerings to pay the expenses. The mission continued to publish the paper through thirteen issues over a period of almost two years; the last issue is dated May 1908.

The Apostolic Faith (Los Angeles) had a wide circulation as well as a wide influence on the revival. The first issue was for 5,000 copies; the demand then caused them to print and distribute 10,000 copies for the second issue, 20,000 for the third, 30,000 for the fourth; later distribution reached 40,000 copies. This paper often inspired

readers to begin praying immediately for the baptism of the Holy Ghost; it prepared and prompted thousands of people in North America and in nations around the world to believe God for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost in their areas.

The reports in *The Apostolic Faith* reveal some of the impact of the revival as it exploded in one place after another. Each issue pulsates with healings, baptisms of the Holy Ghost, miracles, and excited faith in action. It is little wonder that reading this paper drew the attention of multitudes, causing them to wonder and to hunger for the Pentecostal outpouring upon them.

The Apostolic Faith stirred missionaries, pastors, and people everywhere. Upon reading the reports, ministers and missionaries longed to be in the services at the humble structure that housed the Azusa Street Mission. (We should note that the parents of David F. Gray, who were serving as missionaries in Asia, learned about the revival in Los Angeles. When they were able to return to the United States, they visited the Azusa Street Mission and later received the Holy Ghost.)

Bartleman's reports and articles in Holiness publications also helped to create a climate for Pentecostal outpouring among Holiness groups. He wrote more than 550 articles promoting a Pentecostal revival published in Holiness papers both before the revival began in Los Angeles and after the revival began. His articles caused people to seek the Pentecostal experience, and drew many ministers and others to Azusa Street Mission to investigate and to receive the Holy Ghost.

Revival across the Land and around the World

The year of 1906 may have witnessed the events that made the

Pentecostal revival a worldwide reality. In this year, the Pentecostal message gained a significant beachhead in the Midwest, especially in Texas and Illinois, under the leadership of Charles F. Parham.

During the last months of 1906, several events served as a springboard for the Pentecostal movement to mushroom into a worldwide movement. One of these events was Parham's revival in Zion, Illinois. It brought into the Pentecostal movement about two thousand converts, many of whom were experienced ministers and leaders. It also opened the door to reach Zion gatherings in many other cities in North America and even in several foreign nations.

Many of these gatherings were converted to Pentecostalism and some became centers of Pentecostal revival and evangelism.

The revival in the Azusa Street Mission under the leadership of William J. Seymour not only impacted the city of Los Angeles but also established Pentecostal missions in California from San Diego to Oakland, and reached Seattle, Washington, and crossed the border into Canada. Missionaries, both foreign and home, began leaving Los Angeles to spread the revival across North America and around world. By the beginning of 1907, the revival was poised to become a major worldwide movement.

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**Glenn A. Cook
and Revival in Indiana**

Glenn Cook, a Baptist who converted to become a minister in the Holiness movement, was working at a daily newspaper in Los Angeles in April 1906 when Seymour began services in the Azusa Street Mission. Out of curiosity, Cook visited the mission in late April, but the meeting did not impress him. He dismissed the teaching on tongues as heresy. However, after "Pentecost came to the place, and many began to speak in tongues," he began attending regularly and soon received the Holy Ghost.

In the November 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles), Cook wrote that after seeking the baptism at the Azusa Street Mission over a period of five weeks, he received the Holy Ghost. He then quit his job at the newspaper and began working full time with W. J. Seymour at the Azusa Street Mission. Among other duties, he handled the mission's finances and correspondence and assisted in the publication of *The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles).

On December 4, 1906, he left Los Angeles to take the message of Pentecost to his acquaintances and others in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he had lived before moving to California. About a week later he arrived in Lamont, Oklahoma, where he conducted services among a group of Holiness people. By the first week of January 1907, a number of people had received the Holy Ghost, but Oklahoma was not his destination, nor was it to be the site of his most important revival.

On January 14, Cook left Oklahoma, spent a couple of days in Chicago, and arrived in Indianapolis on Friday, January 18. The following Sunday he gave his testimony during the afternoon service to the Christian and Missionary Alliance congregation

pastored by George N. Eldridge. The next day, January 21, he reported that "quite a number here are seeking the baptism" (*The Apostolic Faith*, January 1907, p. 1). However, Pastor Eldridge, who was out of town when Cook testified, returned and denounced Cook's teaching and closed the church to further prayer meetings. It was troublesome to find another meeting place, but eventually Cook secured a room upstairs at 1111 Shelby Street.

Before Cook returned to Los Angeles in March, he went by Memphis, Tennessee, where he preached in the Church of God in Christ. The pastor, Charles Harrison Mason, and two of his assistant ministers had gone to Los Angeles to receive the Holy Ghost at the Azusa Street Mission. Several of the people in this black Holiness church received the Holy Ghost in the few days Cook was there.

After Cook returned to Los Angeles he reported on March 20 that in Indianapolis "many received the baptism with the Holy Ghost and are speaking with tongues. They came from different parts of Indiana and are now going forth to spread the good news" (*The Apostolic Faith*, February-March 1907, p.3). He also predicted that Indianapolis "will be a great center of power, being an inter-urban railway center like Los Angeles."

After Cook left Indianapolis, Tom Hezmalhalch, an evangelist from Azusa Street, arrived with a group of workers to guide the young Pentecostal revival. By April the Pentecostals began holding services downtown in Murphy League Hall at the corner of New York and Alabama. On April 20, Hezmalhalch reported that many others were receiving the Holy Ghost in spite of unfavorable articles in the newspapers. From his

report we learn that the services were interracial and growing (*The Apostolic Faith*, April 1907, p. 1.)

An article in the *Indianapolis Morning Star*, April 27, 1907, confirmed that crowds were attending the Pentecostal meeting: "Murphy League Hall was crowded last night. The meetings, being conducted by Apostolic Christians, speakers of strange tongues, are approaching their acme of wild enthusiasm. Odd demonstrations, strange words, sidewalk arguments, gifts to brothers and sisters, with something decidedly now relative to the doctrinal experience of converts marked last evening's gathering."

In Los Angeles, Cook encouraged Henry Prentiss, a black minister in the Azusa Street Mission, to go to Indianapolis and minister. Prentiss arrived in the city in 1908 and opened a mission on West Michigan Street in a building used for a tin shop. It was in this building that Garfield T. Haywood received the Holy Ghost. Haywood became the assistant pastor, and when Prentiss left the city in 1909, Haywood became the pastor. Under Haywood's ministry, the mission grew to become one of the largest and most influential churches in the Pentecostal movement. It also became a strong center for Oneness Pentecostals.

By the end of 1909, the Azusa Street Revival was over, but the sparks of the revival continued to ignite revivals around the world. ■



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