

THE PENTECOST

ISSUE #8 NOVEMBER



THE PENTECOST

Hello!

November is here and
with it, the eighth issue of
The Pentecost!



This is my niece, Ester and my nephew, Benjamin

This issue was put together to commemorate the 100th year anniversary of the Azusa Revival. Pentecostals worldwide trace their history back to this move of God. However, the blessings and fruit of this revival reached far beyond the Pentecostal movement into many churches and into the lives of Christians from a wide variety of Evangelical backgrounds. The *Apostolic Faith Mission*, as it was known, announced that it stood for “the restoration of the faith once delivered unto the saints the old time religion, of camp meetings, revivals, missions, street and prison work and Christian unity everywhere.”¹ Here is a brief account of its success.

Shawn Stevens

¹The Apostolic Faith, Vol. 1, No. 12, Jan 1908.

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It's Been a Hundred Years

The year, 1906, is marked in church history as the beginning of the great Azusa Revival. How did it start and how did God move in this outpouring? On May 2, 1870, William Seymour was born in Centerville, Louisiana. He grew up in the midst of difficult circumstances. Under slavery, his parents had been plantation workers. Slavery in the America was banned in 1863, however, Seymour and others of his race were the objects of terrible racial prejudice. Lacking formal education, Seymour went to the Bible as his primary source for learning. When he was twenty-five, he did what few black men of his generation dared to do; he moved north to Indianapolis, Indiana. Here he worked as a hotel waiter and here he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Seymour had a deep love for God and the call of God to ministry was upon him. He wrestled for a time with this calling and, during this season of his life, he contracted smallpox. Smallpox was often fatal in his generation but Seymour recovered. However, he went blind in his left eye from the disease.

Seymour eventually moved to Houston, Texas, and began a ministry. It was there, in 1905, that he met the evangelist, Charles Fox Parham. Parham not only was a traveling speaker but he had a ministry school in his home. Seymour attended the ministry school and embraced Parham's teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In 1906, Seymour was invited to do ministry work in Los Angeles. Many in Los Angeles were hungry for a move of God. There were already the stirrings of revival in the city. Seymour found himself preaching in a mission that was run by a Sister Hutchinson. Seymour's teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit was controversial and yet many in

attendance were fascinated by what he had to say. Sister Hutchinson was not impressed and forbade him to hold more services in the mission.

One family that was fascinated with Seymour's teaching was the Asberys. They invited him to move into their home and conduct meetings there. Seymour did so and unusual things began happening. Seymour's teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit became a living experience for many who attended the home. This experience was accompanied with the phenomena of speaking in tongues. The meetings were filled with songs, testimonies and prayer and soon the Asbery's home was too small to accommodate the crowds.

On Azusa Street, in the downtown industrial district, an old abandoned, two-story, frame building was rented to house the meetings. The name, *Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission*, was painted on the side of it and people from all social backgrounds and varying cultures came together to seek and experience God. Between April 1906 and until at least 1908, revival meetings ran almost continuously. Participants came to the mission at just about any hour of the day or night and heard messages on sin, salvation, holiness and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The sounds of prayer and worship coming from inside the mission carried out into the streets and everyone was talking about the Azusa Revival. The revival produced a seemingly unending stream of testimonies of changed lives. The newspapers also ran stories on the revival. Other unusual phenomena accompanied the meetings. Eyewitnesses on the street reported seeing a glow emanating from the building and heard sounds that were similar to explosions coming out of it. On more than one occasion, the fire department came to the mission building because fire was seen rising from it. However,

upon arrival, it was found that there was no natural fire.

One man who was both an eyewitness and a participant in the Azusa Revival was Frank Bartleman. He gives this account of the meetings:

Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer. There was no pride there. The services ran almost continuously. Seeking souls could be found under the power almost any hour of the day or night. The place was never closed or empty. The people came to meet God - He was always there. Hence a continuous meeting. The meeting did not depend on the human leader. God's presence became more and more wonderful. In that old building, with its low rafters and bare floors, God broke strong men and women to pieces, and put them together again for His glory. It was a tremendous overhauling process. Pride and self-assertion, self-importance, and self-esteem could not survive there. The religious ego preached its own funeral sermon quickly.

No subjects or sermons were announced ahead of time, and no special speakers for such an hour. No one knew what might be coming, what God would do. All was spontaneous, ordered by the Spirit. We wanted to hear from God, through whomever He might speak. We had no respect of persons. The rich and educated were the same as the poor and ignorant, although the former found it much harder to die to self. We only recognized God. All were equal. No flesh might glory in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:29). He could not use the self-opinionated. Those were Holy Spirit meetings, led by the Lord. It had to start in poor surroundings to keep out the selfish, human element. All came down in

humility together at His feet. They all looked alike and had all things in common, in that sense at least. The rafters were low; the tall must come down. By the time they got to Azusa, they were humbled, ready for the blessing. The fodder was thus placed for the lambs, not for giraffes. All could reach it.

*We were delivered right there from ecclesiastical hierarchism and abuse. We wanted God. When we first reached the meeting, we avoided human contact and greeting as much as possible. We wanted to meet God first. We got our heads under a bench in the corner in prayer, and met men only in the Spirit, knowing them **"after the flesh"** no more (2 Corinthians 5:16). The meetings started themselves, spontaneously, in testimony, praise, and worship. The testimonies were never hurried by a call for "popcorn." We had no prearranged program to be jammed through on time. Our time was the Lord's. We had real testimonies, from fresh heart-experiences. Other-wise, the shorter the testimonies, the better. A dozen might be on their feet at one time, trembling under the mighty power of God. We did not have to get our cue from some leader; yet we were free from lawlessness. We were shut up to God in prayer in the meetings, our minds on Him.*

All obeyed God, in meekness and humility. In honor we "preferred one another." (See Romans 12:10). The Lord was liable to burst through anyone. We prayed for this continually. Someone would finally get up, anointed for the message. All seemed to recognize this and gave way. It might be a child, a woman, or a man. It might be from the back seat or from the front. It made no difference. We rejoiced that God was working. No one wished to show himself. We thought only of obeying God. In fact, there was an atmosphere of God there that forbade anyone but a fool from attempting to put himself

THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

forward without the real anointing - and such did not last long. The meetings were controlled by the Spirit, from the throne. Those were truly wonderful days. I often said that I would rather live six months at that time than fifty years of ordinary life. But God is just the same today. Only we have changed.

Someone might be speaking. Suddenly the Spirit would fall upon the congregation. God Himself would give the altar call. Men would fall all over the house, like the slain in battle, or rush for the altar en masse to seek God. The scene often resembled a forest of fallen trees. Such a scene cannot be imitated. I never saw an altar call given in those early days. God Himself would call them. And the preacher knew when to quit. When God spoke, we all obeyed. It seemed a fearful thing to hinder or grieve the Spirit. The whole place was steeped in prayer. God was in His holy temple. It was for man to keep silent. The Shekinah glory rested there. In fact, some claim to have seen the glory by night over the building. I do not doubt it. I have stopped more than once within two blocks of the place and prayed for strength before I dared go on. The presence of the Lord was so real.

It's been a hundred years. May God find our hearts to be like the hearts of those in Azusa in 1906 and may He find us as open to the moving of the Holy Spirit. May we gaze into heaven and see all that God is wanting to pour out upon us and may our hearts become hungry for it to happen. May the morning dawn and may God drive back the darkness and flood our churches and land with His love and light. May we know revival again.

Shawn Stevens

“The Apostolic Faith” was a newspaper in print at the time of the Azusa Revival. It recorded testimonies, visions, reports and teachings from first-generation Azusa Pentecostals, as well as testimonies from others experiencing revival around the globe. This paper was the official publication of the Azusa Mission. In its issues are found repeated remarks by first-generation Pentecostals commenting on the friendship and openness extended to them by “The Christian Missionary Alliance.” Both were young movements, The Christian Missionary Alliance being a little older. Both had a strong missionary emphases. Both movements encouraged and blessed each other.²

Shawn Stevens

² Charisma, “100 Years of Pentecost : 1906-2006 : The Azusa Street Revival Rocked Our World in 1906. It Can Happen Again.” Vol. 31, April 2006, 51-51.

THE TESTIMONY OF FLORENCE CRAWFORD

Florence Crawford, (1872-1936), was baptized in the Holy Spirit at the Azusa Street Mission in 1906. She founded the Apostolic Faith evangelistic organization in Portland, Oregon. She became a leading voice among first-generation Azusa Pentecostals who affectionately refer to her as Sister Crawford. In the following piece, she tells her story of conversion, of baptism in the Holy Spirit and of the Azusa Revival:

When I was a girl, brought up in a home of unbelief - never knew what it was to hear a mother pray, never laid my hand on a Bible till I was a grown woman the God I now serve looked down into my heart and saw that I wanted something real.

One night as I was dancing in a ballroom I heard a voice speak out of heaven and say, "Daughter, give Me thine heart." I did not know the voice of God the first time and went on in the dance. Again the voice spoke from heaven, and it seemed that heaven came down into that ballroom, and my feet became heavy and the place was no longer beautiful to me.

Again the voice spoke much louder, "Daughter, give Me thine heart!" The music died away and I left the ballroom; and for three days and nights I prayed and wept and wrestled for my salvation.

If ever I realized my soul was a sepulcher of dead men's bones, I did then. It seemed there was no hope for me, but I thought: Why did God speak out of heaven if there was no hope?

At last I remembered a woman I knew was a Christian, and I went directly to her home. I told her, "I want Him more than anything else in the world." I fell

on my knees right there, and she prayed for me - and God came into my heart.

Oh, it was wonderful, the rest, the peace, the quietness that flooded my soul! And as I wept for joy, I said, "I must go and tell the others."

I went into the house where my friends were. They had cards on the table ready to play, waiting for me; but I lifted my hands to heaven and said, "No cards for me; I have found Jesus, whom my soul has hungered for so long."

When they looked at me they saw the light of another world on my face. The cards were put away and we sang sacred songs, and oh, how God blessed my soul!

The flowers went, the feathers and the fine clothes. Everything I had loved that was of the world was taken out of my heart; but, oh, how I loved lost souls and wept as I saw those who looked sad, and many times I would stop and tell them the story of Jesus.

When I heard that God could sanctify wholly, I began to seek that experience. I went from place to place where they taught sanctification, willing to kneel at any altar, no matter how humble, if only I could find satisfaction for my hungry soul. I consecrated my life to God, hoping that that would bring, and thinking that consecration is the same as sanctification.

But oh, it is not! Though it takes consecration, laying your life, your all, at the feet of Jesus, it is more than that. You surrender your will, your innermost soul and being to God for time and eternity; and that brings the fire of God, the holy sanctifying flame down on the sacrifice, and your whole being is saturated with the presence and power of another world.

It stands like the Rock of Ages against every false thing that could rob Christ's bride of her purity. The holy, living flame burns through every fiber of your

Oh, how I thank God it was for me!

When evangelists came to the city, I found a way to get a private interview with them, if possible, and told of my hunger. They would say, "But you are sanctified." But I knew I was not. The hunger, the craving, the thirst that was in my heart, no human could know unless he had it. And though I lived a consecrated life, yet the fire had not fallen on the sacrifice.

How I thank God that when I heard of the latter outpouring of the Holy Ghost, He led me to that little mission (the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission on Azusa Street in Los Angeles). It was not a fine hall, just an old barn-like building with only an old board laid on two chairs for an altar. The floor was carpeted with sawdust; the walls and beams were blackened by smoke.

I looked around to see if anybody saw me go in, but I would not have cared if the whole world saw me go out. I had found a people that had the experience I wanted. The first "hallelujah" I heard echoes down in my soul. When I went out of there that day I felt so little. The only thing I wondered was, Can I ever get it?

From Monday morning till Friday at 4 o'clock, I lay on my face between my duties (you can do your work well and seek God, too) and shed tears and read my Bible. That Friday afternoon at the mission, the preacher stopped and said, "Somebody in this place wants something from God."

I pushed away the chairs that were in front of me and fell at the altar. And the fire fell and God sanctified me. The power of God went through me like thousands of needles.

"He sanctified me" were the only words I could speak for days after the fire fell on my heart. If you get the real experience you will never deny it. It will stand when you face all hell. It can weather any storm.³

³Ibid., 74-76.

The following song was composed by Evan Roberts. It counsels souls to come to Jesus, for no one will be cast away. This does not mean that no one will be lost. What it does mean is that those who come to Jesus in repentance, faith and surrender will not be rejected by Him. God bless you.

WHOSOEVER WILL COME SHALL NOT BE REJECTED

*Mercy's door is still wide open,
And the Throne of Grace is near;
Let us then go [now] straight to Jesus,
He our feeble cry will hear.
He will grant us full forgiveness,
He will hear us when we pray;
In His Holy Word He tells us
'No one will be cast away.'

Now for us He's interceding
In His Father's home on high;
Brother, Friend, and Savior is He,
When the helpless to Him cry;
He will lead the weary pilgrims;
He will cheer them on the way;
And His voice declares for ever,
'No one will be cast away.'*

*Jesus Christ today is calling
From the glorious realms above,
'Come, all nations, come, and welcome,
To the feast of heavenly love.'
Those who seek will find the treasure;
Blessings come to those who pray.
To His Throne we'll go believing -
'No one will be cast away.'*

*We must make a full surrender -
'Tis the path that Jesus trod;
Faith in Him alone will lead us
Through the desert, home to God.
In our weakness we'll draw near -
His own arm shall be our stay;
Though we're faint, and weak, and helpless,
'No one will be cast away.'*

*Little children, youths, and maidens,
And old men, with one accord,
Come to own Him as your Savior,
And adore Him as your Lord.
His great love and sovereign power,
With His wisdom, seem to say,
In a voice both loud and clear,
'No one will be cast away.'*

*Listen to Him, wretched sinner,
Listen to the voice Divine;
If thou wilt rely upon Him,
Life eternal will be thine.
Oh! how sad without a Savior,
In death's hour to be thy stay!
Sinner, come, Oh, come to Jesus,
'No one will be cast away.'*

B O O K S

In this issue I would like to feature one of my books. You may read this book on line or request a hard copy from this ministry. God bless you.

The Los Angeles of 1900's was on the brink of a great spiritual awakening. In 1906, that awakening came. From the north, south, east and west people flocked to the *Apostolic Faith Mission* at 312 Azusa St. Men, women and children were being transformed and the testimonies of changed lives spread across the globe. Read about this great move of God.

THE
AZUSA STREET
REVIVAL